

## ENVIRONMENT SCAN 01-15 NOV 2018

### **CHINA (Geo-Strat, Geo-Politics & Geo-Economics)**

Brig RK Bhutani (Retd)

#### **US 'Could Lose a War Against China or Russia'.**



The USS Gerald R. Ford, America's largest aircraft carrier CREDIT: U.S. NAVY

A report commissioned by Congress, and compiled by a dozen former top Democratic and Republican officials, suggested the US was facing a "military crisis" and would struggle to conduct more than one war at a time. A US focus on counter-insurgency operations in recent years had caused stagnation in areas including missile defence, cyber warfare, and anti-submarine warfare.

The report said: "America's military superiority has eroded to a dangerous degree. It might struggle to win, or perhaps lose, a war against China or Russia. The United States is particularly at risk of being overwhelmed should its military be forced to fight on two or more fronts simultaneously."

The report concluded: "Many of the skills necessary to plan for and conduct military operations against capable adversaries, especially China and Russia, have atrophied. The report said Mr Trump's strategy, focusing on Russia and China instead of counter-insurgency, meant the Pentagon was moving in the right direction, but it "too often rests on questionable assumptions".

The Pentagon's annual budget of more than \$700 billion is far more than Russia and China combined, but it was still "clearly insufficient," the report warned. The commission recommended an annual increase of three to five per cent in the defence budget.

**Papua New Guinea: Now the Latest Battleground in the Tussle for Economic and Political Influence between China and the West.** According to the Lowy Institute's recent studies, in the last decade the scale of Chinese aid and investment across the Pacific has increased substantially.

According to the institute's Pacific Aid Map, China's aid spends in Papua New Guinea (PNG) totaled \$20.83m (£15.99m) in 2016. A year later it was three times that amount. Australia still spends far more in Papua New Guinea than China does - 70% of the country's aid comes from its former colonial ruler. Papua New Guinea is the poorest member of Apec and around 40% of the population live on less than \$1 a day, according to the UN. Australia has historically invested in areas like education and providing training for better governance. China meanwhile is investing in areas that Papua New Guinea says it desperately needs right now: infrastructure and it's not just in PNG. The ambition is right across the Pacific.

Australia has committed \$1bn Pacific fund last week to invest in infrastructure and counter China's growing influence here.

The problem with Chinese money is that there's no transparency in how the funds are disbursed and whom they go to. Part of the problem is the lack of governance and high levels of corruption within Papua New Guinea itself. But the other issue is that Beijing often spends the cash first - and asks questions later. This often leads to unnecessary and wasteful projects, when the money could have been used for other more pressing needs in the country like healthcare.

**Aid Becomes Political.** There are economic and diplomatic reasons why Beijing is investing in the Pacific: Papua New Guinea for instance is home to many natural resources including rare earth minerals, and the Pacific Island nations are home to a third of the world's supporters of Taiwan - something analysts say China would like to influence.

But it's China's long-term strategic ambitions that are raising the biggest questions. The big fear of countries like Australia and the US is that Beijing's end game is to set up a permanent military base somewhere in the Pacific in the next twenty to thirty years. Papua New Guinea sits a few thousand kilometers from Guam, a US base.

A recent report from the US Department of Defense on China's military power highlights how it is entirely plausible that the Chinese army will want to "extend its operations beyond the first island chain, demonstrating the capability to strike US and allied forces and military bases in the western Pacific Ocean, including Guam."

That is why it won't just be China splashing the cash at Papua New Guinea this week. The US, Australia and Japan are all likely to come bearing gifts for the Pacific island nation when they visit Port Moresby for Apec.

[\(https://www.bbc.com/news/business-46217267\)](https://www.bbc.com/news/business-46217267)

**China Believes Maldives will make 'Correct Choice' on Trade Deal.** Mohamed Nasheed, the chief of the Maldivian Democratic Party, which leads the ruling federal alliance, told that it was a mistake to strike a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China. The Maldives parliament would not pass the law changes required for the zero tariffs agreement to come into force, he said.

His comments followed a warning from the new President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, who took office on Saturday that the Maldives was in financial difficulty after racking up debt with Chinese lenders. Former Maldives President Abdullah Yameen, who lost the election in September, signed the trade deal during a December visit to Beijing. The Maldives parliament ratified the treaty despite opposition protests that he had rushed through the 1,000-page document in less than an hour without any debate.

Between January to August this year, the Maldives' imports from China were \$342 million, while its exports to China were just \$265,270, according to Maldives customs data. China believes the Maldives will make the "correct choice" to continue with a bilateral free trade deal, a foreign ministry spokesman said on Tuesday.

[\(https://www.reuters.com/article/us-maldives-politics-china/china-believes-maldives-will-make-correct-choice-on-trade-deal-idUSKCN1NP123\)](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-maldives-politics-china/china-believes-maldives-will-make-correct-choice-on-trade-deal-idUSKCN1NP123)

## NORTHEAST

Brig HS Cheema

**Rohingya Return Starts 16 Nov.** Fear, confusion remain; Myanmar's neighbours may call for 'accountability' in Rakhine crisis.

Bangladesh and Myanmar are set to begin the long-awaited repatriation of Rohingyas 16 Nov. In the first batch, 2,260 refugees are expected to go home. The authorities have built two repatriation centres -- one on the bank of Naf River at Kerantoli of Teknaf in Cox's Bazar and the other at Ghundhum, a bordering area under Naikhyangchhariupazila of Bandarban. Initially 2,260 Rohingyas of 485 families verified by Myanmar will be taken to these two centres from the camps before repatriation. They are part of some 5,000 refugees verified by Myanmar. Meanwhile, the UN Refugee Agency in an internal paper said it will not provide humanitarian assistance to Rohingyas if they are interned in camps on their return to Myanmar. The confidential briefing paper, dated this month and reviewed by Reuters, reflects a desire not to be drawn into supporting long-term camps for the minority. Myanmar has been building transit centres for the refugees that it says will be temporary, but many Rohingyas fear the sites could become permanent because of harsh restrictions on movement imposed on the largely stateless minority, reports Reuters.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/rohingya-crisis/news/defending-the-indefensible-malaysias-mahathir-slams-suu-kyi-1659925>

**Comments.** Repartition of Rohingya refugees is a litmus test of both Bangladesh and Myanmar Govts as also of international community. The movement of just a small number will set the ball rolling on one of the worst kinds of man-made refugee crisis to resolve. It is going to be long time for seven million refugees to step foot back to their homes. This will also set an agenda to repatriate 40,000 of these refugees staying in India to move back.

**Supreme Court Rejects Plea Seeking Recusal of Judges Hearing Manipur Encounters Case.** The Supreme Court on 12 Nov rejected a plea seeking the recusal of two judges hearing the Manipur fake encounters case. The plea, filed by Manipur police personnel and serving army officers, had sought that Justices Madan B Lokur and UU Lalit recuse themselves from hearing the case for making comments prejudicial to the accused in the case. The plea hinged certain remarks made by the bench of Justices Lokur and Lalit while hearing the fake encounters case. The remarks contained phrases such as "murderers" and these, the police and army personnel felt, were prejudicial. The Supreme Court however declined to get Justices Lokur and Lalit recused from the case. Earlier, the Centre represented by Attorney General KK Venugopal had supported the police and army men's plea saying the reported remarks of the bench that these security personnel were "murderers" had "completely shaken" the morale of the police and armed forces. The fake encounters case relates to a PIL that was filed seeking a probe into as many as 1,528 instances of alleged extra-judicial killings in Manipur. On July 14, 2017, the apex court set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) comprising CBI officers and ordered registration of FIRs and investigation into the alleged extra-judicial killings in Manipur. The court had ordered the registration of FIRs in 81 cases, including 32 probed by a commission of inquiry, 32 investigated by judicial authorities, 11 in which compensation was awarded and six probed by a commission headed by former Supreme Court judge Santosh Hegde.

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/supreme-court-rejects-plea-seeking-recusal-of-judges-hearing-manipur-encounters-case-1386598-2018-11-12>

**Comments.** The judicial intervention is going to create major problems for those Armed force personals who have been alleged to have committed these crimes as the cases are of

old vintage most of the persons are either retired or moved out their units. They will have problems to assess the documents and other witnesses as it will be difficult for them to get it. Army has to set up special assistance centers to assist these personal as they were carrying out bonafide duties. Army needs to institute new methods including detailed commitment from Govt to ensure that their personals are not involved in legal battles later in their lives. Judicial action is likely to affect the ongoing CI operations as it is going to put caution in the mind of soldiers seeing suffering of their comrades much later in their lives.

**Nepal-India Panel Report Awaits Modi's Attention.** The much-anticipated report of Eminent Persons' Group on Nepal-India Relations is unlikely to be submitted to the prime ministers of both countries ahead of the general elections in India next year. The eight-member EPG team—four each from Nepal and India—that prepared a single report after minor corrections in the first week of July has sought an appointment with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to present it to him. According to three sources privy to the matter, New Delhi's reluctance to receive report stems from the content of the report. The sources said New Delhi's security and diplomatic officials are not convinced by the concept of 'smart regulated border' the report proposes. They say the EPG report is vague on this topic and lacks clarity. New Delhi's second apprehension is, Madhesis were not taken on board while forming the EPG and throughout the consultation process. This, officials said, gives New Delhi an excuse not to receive the report for the moment. General election in India is the third concern. Any major diplomatic upheaval in the neighbourhood could snowball into election propaganda for the opposition parties in India. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led ruling coalition would want to avoid any diplomatic issue with Nepal.

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2018-11-15/nepal-india-panel-report-awaits-modis-attention.html>

**Comments.** Indo- Nepal relations are going through the testing times specially after the new Govt has come into power in Nepal. India and Nepal have special relationship and it needs to continue taking into account of current realities on ground. It will be too early for Nepal to redraw its relations taking into account that China could replace India in its journey ahead. Both countries need to work overtime to improve their relations for the sake of its people and ensuring peace prosperity for both the stakeholders.

## **JAPAN, MALDIVES, SRI LANKA**

Col Arvinder Singh

**India to Hold Quad Security Dialogue with US, Japan and Australia<sup>1</sup>.** The third round of Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad, comprising India, US, Japan and Australia, since it was revived last November, will be held in Singapore on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit (EAS). Four countries will discuss ways to balance China's growing ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region, share their perspectives on the geopolitics in the region, and emphasize on the centrality of ASEAN for the Quad process.

**Comments.** US has stepped up its efforts to hedge China in the Indo-Pacific region, even as the two largest economies are engaged in a trade war by slapping tariffs on their imports. This will be the second Quad meet this year. The last round in June, too, was held in Singapore. Then, the four sides had reaffirmed their support for a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region and noted their commitment to promote rules-based order. The four countries had decided to organize a meeting of Quad every six months. While larger

<sup>1</sup><https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>

goal of Quad is to balance China in the Indo-Pacific region, both India and Japan view it as one of many plurilateral to keep the Indo-Pacific region stable.

**India Hopes to Restart its Projects in Maldives<sup>2</sup>.** India will seek to kick start its projects in the Maldives during PM Modi's daylong visit to Male on 17 November to attend Ibu Solih's swearing-in ceremony. The projects, including in the defense sector, were stalled under the regime of outgoing President Yameen. Solih has signaled to bring back 'India First' to Maldives' foreign policy and deblock stalled projects. There are indications that the new government will safeguard India's security interests in the region, including disallowing any Chinese military base in the archipelago nation.

**Comments.** Pro-China Yameen had stalled a number of Indian projects, including a training academy for the Maldivian armed forces and demarcation of an exclusive economic zone. Indo-Maldivian defense partnership is now likely to be expanded to cover various areas in the maritime domain. China has deputed its tourism and culture minister, to attend the swearing-in-ceremony of the Maldives' President.

**Sri Lanka, Without Prime Minister and Cabinet, Grinds to Political Halt<sup>3</sup>.** Sri Lanka appeared to be politically rudderless as the speaker of parliament declared there was no functioning prime minister or cabinet after a no-confidence vote on 15 Nov. Parliament passed the no-confidence motion against recently appointed Prime Minister Rajapaksa and his government with the backing of 122 of the 225 lawmakers in a voice vote, followed by a signed document. But President Sirisena, in a letter to Speaker Jayasuriya, said he could not accept the no-confidence vote as it appeared to have ignored the constitution, parliamentary procedure and tradition.

**Comments.** Sirisena, who triggered the crisis by firing Wickremesinghe as prime minister and naming Rajapaksa to the job last month, dissolved parliament and ordered elections to break the deadlock. But the Supreme Court ordered a suspension of that decree until it had heard petitions challenging the move as unconstitutional. Rajapaksa is mostly backed by Buddhists, who make up more than 70 percent of Sri Lanka's 21 million populations, while Wickremesinghe is backed by a cross-section of the community. Sirisena has faced international criticism for plunging the country into crisis at a time when the economy is growing at its weakest pace in 16 years. Sirisena's decision came after Wickremesinghe's party rejected the president's request to back him for second five-year term in the 2020 presidency. They had also split over whether to back Chinese or Indian investors in various projects. India and Western countries have requested Sirisena to act in line with the constitution while raising concerns over Rajapaksa's close ties with China.

## TELECOM & IT

Brig Navjot Singh Bedi

**Security Testing of Telecom Products.** The government has started a facility for testing telecom products and equipment to ensure security in digital communications at the national level. The Department of Telecom has set the deadline of April 2019 for mandatory testing of some telecom products including mobile phones and equipment. This will be applicable on all equipment that are imported to India or are sold in the country. However, there are some other telecom gears that would go through the mandatory testing starting 01 Jan 2019. These equipment include modem, audio conferencing, fax machines, satellite equipment etc.

<sup>2</sup><https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.channelnewsasia.com>

**Comments.** There has been huge growth in uptake of telecom services in the country since 2014. Broadband subscribers have grown seven times from 61 million in 2014 to 447 million in 2018. Average data consumption has grown 51 times from 62 MB per month in 2014 to 3.2 GB in June 2018. As a result, India today has the highest mobile data consumption in the world at the most competitive rates seen anywhere in the world. India is also one of the fastest growing mobile phone markets and it is the right of our consumers to be provided quality services efficiently and in secured manner. This facility will work for security from the national perspective and also facilitate the development of testing and certification ecosystem in the country.

<https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/govt-starts-facility-for-security-testing-of-telecom-products/66663234>

**New Additional Secretary (Telecom).** The government has appointed Anshu Prakash (presently working as a chief secretary of Delhi), as an additional secretary in Department of Telecom (DoT), while N Sivasailam has been shifted to the Department of Commerce.

**Comments.** The move is also seen as a step to fast-forward some of the ongoing ambitious initiatives in the telecom department, including Bharat Net and Broadband for all as well as connectivity in the 115 most-backward districts, being monitored by the Prime Minister Office (PMO).

<https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/telecom-department-special-secretary-n-sivasailam-moves-to-commerce-ministry/66670101>

**Quality of Service.** The telecom department will also hold a meeting with mobile operators this month to discuss several issues like quality of service, fibre first and digitalisation. An Independent Drive Test (IDT) report published by TRAI found that all telecom operators, except Reliance Jio, failed to meet call drop benchmark in drive test conducted by TRAI on different highway and rail routes like Asansol to Gaya, Bengaluru to Murdeshwar, Sri Nagar to Leh etc.

**Comments.** As per quality of service rules, not more than 2% of total calls in a telecom circle on a network should automatically get disconnected. 'Fibre First Initiative' has been submitted 'by DoT to the Cabinet Secretary on which committee of secretaries will deliberate in coming days. The fibre first initiative aims to take fibre to the home, to enterprises and to key development institutions in Tier I, II and III towns and to rural clusters to improve telecom networks.

<https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/dot-to-discuss-service-quality-with-telcos/66663101>

## PAKISTAN & IRAN

Col Karan Singh, VSM

**UAE Visit of Pak PM.** Prime Minister Imran Khan visited UAE on a day-long visit to the gulf country, for seeking financial assistance to minimise the cash-strapped Pakistan's dependence on an IMF bailout package.

**Comments.** This is Pak PMs second visit to UAE in the last two months. Pakistan approx requirement of funds is \$12 bn to service its current debts in this fiscal year. The external financing requirement for the years has been pegged at \$31 bn with fiscal deficit of \$18 Bn. Pak has already obtained \$ 6 Bn from Saudi Arabia (including \$3bn for differed oil payment), has got assurance from China reportedly for \$6 bn and is expecting same from UAE

including funds for oil deferred payment. The funding from friendly nation including cost cutting measures instituted will enable Pak to negotiate better terms with IMF which is known for tight fiscal monitoring and spending.

**Sanction on Iran.** Trump administration's strategy of maximum pressure on Iran took full effect on Nov. 5. It included the re-imposition of oil sanctions.

**Comments.** Though, it's too early to appreciate, the impact of sanction appears to have fallen short of what will be required. There is no internationally agreed campaign against Iran this time (European Union has designed a work-around to achieve some financial flows, Russian is dealing in national currency, some waiver has been accorded to India and seven other countries). The limited impact, was also visible in resilience shown by rial in second week of November wherein gained by 7%. The Kashoggi event and weakening of Saudi Arabia also has gone in favor of Iran. The sanction have also revived the need for alternative channel of exchange in world trade which even if partially successful, can inflict serious damage standing of the dollar and of the ability of the US to weaponise it in future to US supremacy.

India can import 300,000 barrels of crude oil per day for the next six months from Iran. Half of its money will be wired to accounts belonging to the Iranian banks in Indian banks in rupees. The remaining half of the oil money may be exchanged into Euros or other foreign currencies for Iran to receive and transfer.

## **ASEAN**

Col Shyamji Yadav

**ASEAN-India and East Asia Summits.** Prime Minister Modi was on two-day visit to Singapore on 14 & 15 Nov and delivered his keynote address at the prestigious Fintech Festival one of the largest events on financial technology. He also held separate bilateral meetings with the premiers of Singapore, Australia and Thailand and discussed ways to further strengthen ties, including in areas of trade, defence and security. PM Narendra Modi participated at ASEAN-India Breakfast Summit in Singapore. Reaffirmed cooperation in maritime domain and centrality of trade and investment towards prosperity of Indo-Pacific,

At the 13th EAS, Prime Minister joined other leaders to discuss international developmental issues such as information and communications technology, smart cities, maritime cooperation, education, finance, food security, environment and energy and deliberated on global and regional issues of mutual interest

PM Narendra Modi met with Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Hsien Loong on the sidelines of East Asia Summit and exchanged views on cooperation in financial technology, enhanced connectivity and regional economic integration.

In bids to reach two billion people worldwide who are still without bank accounts, Prime Minister Modi launched the APIX (Application Programming Interface Exchange), a banking technology platform in Singapore.

**Comments.** PM Modi's participation in the ASEAN-India and East Asia summits symbolised India's "continued commitment" to strengthen its engagement with ASEAN members. His visit to Singapore would impart fresh momentum to New Delhi's growing partnership with ASEAN and East Asia Summit nations.

India can take on a greater role for the economic integration of the region. Mr Modi's interactions with US vice-president, Mike Pence, and the premiers of Singapore, Thailand and Australia were opportunities to take a closer look at pressing issues in bilateral relations and the overall security and economic situation in India's extended neighbourhood. Many of the ten members of the Association of South East Asian Nations perceive India as a much-needed counterbalance to China, though their leaders are unlikely to say so in public, given the large Chinese presence in the economies of several ASEAN states.

India could take a page out of China's playbook by speeding up work on long-gestating connectivity projects, such as the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway, and building new trade and transport linkages with all the ASEAN states. Stronger strategic and security relations that are underpinned by equally strong economic ties will create greater inter-dependence between India and the ASEAN members and serve as an effective counter to China's growing clout in the region.

**ASEAN Ministers Ink Deal to Grow e-Commerce as Summit Starts.** They signed a landmark pact to create a more conducive environment for e-commerce in the region - the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce - that seeks to strengthen trust and confidence in online transactions and help members seize opportunities in the sector to grow their economies. People and businesses across ASEAN will be able to buy and sell goods and services within the region more easily following deals sealed by the grouping's economic ministers.

**Comments.** It will encourage cooperation in areas such as consumer protection and privacy, legal and regulatory frameworks, and electronic payments, among others. Further against rising anti-globalisation sentiments and trade tensions, ASEAN will need to continue to stay open and connected, and leverage on their collective strength to navigate disruptive trends and anchor their relevance to the global economy and to that extent this deal will facilitate to open up the ASEAN markets and make it more integrated and conducive business environments.

**ASEAN Nations Must Work Together Amid Global Challenges.** Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong underlined ASEAN strong belief that multilateralism and working together are key to the region's growth and stability.

This comes against the backdrop of a shifting geopolitical landscape that has seen some countries, including major powers, resort to unilateral actions and bilateral deals. "The international order is at a turning point," he said, adding that, at the same time, threats such as terrorism and climate change loomed on the horizon.

ASEAN will work with its external partners to tackle the challenges facing an interconnected world, PM Lee said "We are determined to maintain an open, inclusive and ASEAN-centric regional architecture," he added.

But he also listed the new challenges it needs to address, including disruption from digital technology and transnational threats like terrorism and climate change. "All these mean that multilateral cooperation is now more urgent than ever," he said, adding no country can deal with these complex challenges alone.

<https://www.news18.com>

<https://www.hindustantimes.com>

<https://www.straitstimes.com>



## WEST ASIA

Col Sumit Rana

### SYRIA

**Norwegian Diplomat to be New UN Envoy to Syria .... 31 Oct 18.** UN chief Antonio Guterres informed the Security Council he intends to appoint Geir Pedersen as his special envoy.

UN chief Antonio Guterres has informed the Security Council that he wishes to appoint Norwegian diplomat Geir Pedersen as the next special envoy to war-torn Syria. Diplomats speaking on condition of anonymity said Pedersen, currently Norway's ambassador to China, had the informal approval of the council's five permanent members - Russia, China, the United States, France and Britain.

#### **Syria War: UN Convoy Reaches Rukban Desert Camp.**

- A UN aid convoy has reached about 50,000 civilians stranded on the Syria-Jordan border - bringing the first aid the camp has received since January.
- The convoy was meant to arrive at Rukban camp on 27 October, but was postponed for security reasons.
- Syria's army controls access to Rukban, which is near a US-backed rebels' base. Jordan is also blocking aid supplies.
- There have been reports of children dying due to poor sanitary conditions and a lack of healthcare at the camp.
- A cluster of about 10,800 makeshift tents and mud huts, the camp has been called "one of the most desperate places in Syria".

**Syria war: Army Frees 19 IS Hostages - State Media.** The Syrian army has freed 19 women and children held hostage since July by so-called Islamic State, state media say. They say the captives were rescued when troops launched an operation north-east of the desert city of Palmyra. The hostages were seized during an IS attack in the southern Suweida region. More than 200 people were killed. Suweida is a stronghold of the Druze religious minority, and the captives were drawn from this community.

### ISRAEL

**Israel Defence Minister Lieberman Resigns over Gaza Ceasefire..... 14 Nov 18.** Israel's defence minister has resigned over the cabinet's decision to accept a ceasefire ending two days of fighting with Palestinian militants in Gaza.

Avigdor Lieberman denounced the move as "surrendering to terror". He said his right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu party would leave the ruling coalition, which could lead to an early election.

Eight people were killed on Monday and Tuesday as militants fired 460 rockets towards Israel and Israeli forces bombed 160 targets in Gaza. The ceasefire was largely holding on Wednesday and schools and businesses in southern Israel reopened after no rocket attacks were reported overnight.

**Final Warning, Israel Threatens to Destroy Hezbollah's Munitions Factories.** Israel has apparently sent a final warning to the Lebanese government that it will seek to destroy Iranian proxy, Hezbollah's munitions factories, unless they are promptly shut down.

Iran is known to have recently supplied Hezbollah with precision-guided munitions, enabling a much greater number of their vast arsenal – thought to be in the region of 120,000 – 150,000 rockets – with an ability to strike within a 10-meter radius of an intended target. The prospect of Israel having to contend with such a large number of unguided rockets is causing concern, but the threat of high-precision weapons significantly ramps up the threat.

## TURKEY

**Erdogan: US Sanctions on Iran Wrong, Aimed to Unbalance World .... 06 Nov 18.** Turkish president rejects reimposition of economic sanctions against Iran, saying they are wrong and unfair.

Turkish President [Recep Tayyip Erdogan](#) has slammed the new US economic sanctions on Iran, saying that Turkey will not abide as they are aimed at unbalancing the world.

"US sanctions on Iran are wrong. For us, they are steps aimed at unbalancing the world; we don't want to live in an imperialist world," Erdogan told reporters on Tuesday after addressing ruling party MPs at the parliament in the capital, Ankara.

His comments come after Washington this week imposed a second set of sanctions on [Iran](#) that aim to isolate the country's banking sector and slash its oil exports.

**Erdogan and Trump Meet in Paris Amid Khashoggi Crisis.** Meeting came hours after Turkish president announced that Ankara shared tapes related to Khashoggi's murder with the US. 11 Nov 18 US President Donald Trump and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan met during a dinner in Paris, as international pressure grows on Washington to put pressure on Saudi Arabia over the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Erdogan arrived in Paris on Saturday at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron to attend the Armistice Day commemorations, along with other world leaders.

## SAUDI ARABIA

**A Price Needs to be Paid': US Senate Bill Targets Saudi Arabia.** Bipartisan move follows decision to place sanctions on 17 Saudi nationals involved in killing of writer Jamal Khashoggi.

A bipartisan group of US senators introduced legislation on Thursday seeking to punish [Saudi Arabia](#) over the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi and for the kingdom's role in the devastating war in Yemen.

The move comes hours after the US slapped economic sanctions on 17 Saudis allegedly involved in the murder of Khashoggi inside the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul.

If the bill were to become law, it would suspend weapon sales to Saudi Arabia and prohibit US refuelling of Saudi coalition aircraft conducting air raids in Yemen.

It also would impose sanctions on anyone blocking humanitarian access in Yemen and anyone supporting the Houthi rebels.

The Senate proposal comes a day after House Republicans moved to block a bill aimed at ending US support for the Saudi involvement in Yemen

## **UK DEVELOPS FIRST QUANTUM COMPASS**

Air Cmde T Chand (Retd)

The UK MoD has been investing heavily for development of an independent navigation system, especially for use on its nuclear submarines. Under the UK National Quantum Technologies Programme, British scientists have developed what they claim to be world's first quantum compass, a navigational device independent of the satellite-based Global Positioning System (GPS)<sup>4</sup>. The instrument, built by scientists at the Imperial College in London, England, is claimed to be able to ascertain the exact location of anything on Earth without relying on satellites, as does the GPS network. The GPS network can be jammed or interfered with as has also recently been reported by Norway during NATO exercises.<sup>5</sup>

At the heart of the new compass is a quantum accelerometer which measures changes in object's velocity over time. Although accelerometers already exist in several applications such as mobile phones and laptops, they need periodic calibration. The recently developed quantum device measures how super cooled atoms move at very low temperatures, where atoms behave in a 'quantum' manner, acting simultaneously as both particles and waves. Quantum Physics has been displaying many unknown results based on the principles of superposition and entanglement. Quantum cryptography is among the most advanced technology with highly specialised small and medium-sized enterprises already selling their products to governments, banks and other customers with highest security requirements. Quantum compass when operationalised will have the potential to revolutionise the navigation world both civil and military.

## **SPACE**

Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)

The launch of GSAT-29 satellite from Sriharikota by ISRO using an indigenously developed Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mk.3 (GSLV Mk.3) has many positive fall outs. Firstly, now we have a reliable satellite launch vehicle for launching heavier satellites for which earlier we were using satellite launch sources abroad paying heavily. Now not only we will save our foreign exchange but also could earn revenue by launching foreign satellites similar to PSLV launches. Hopefully, ISRO will be preferred because of our lower launch cost compared to the exorbitant cost of launches by the external space agencies. Earned revenue could be ploughed back to meet agency's expenditure and for pursuing greater space research/ activities.

Secondly, the success in this critical technology will encourage the space agency to attempt to pursue more ambitious space projects. Already, it is planned to use GSLV Mk-III to launch the prestigious projects like India's Chandrayaan-2 by early next year and manned mission Gaganyaan before 2022. GSLV-MkIII rocket will however would need to tested in series of

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.gpsdaily.com/reports/Worlds first Quantum compass will supersede GPS 999.html](http://www.gpsdaily.com/reports/Worlds_first_Quantum_compass_will_supersede_GPS_999.html)  
dated 12 Nov 2018

<sup>5</sup>

[http://www.gpsdaily.com/reports/Russia blocked GPS data during NATO exercises Norway 999.htm](http://www.gpsdaily.com/reports/Russia_blocked_GPS_data_during_NATO_exercises_Norway_999.htm)  
[ dated 13 Nov 2018

launches before it flies three Indian astronauts to low-Earth orbit in India's first manned mission to space. Indian astronauts are expected to stay in space for a seven days in low-Earth orbit. The astronauts are yet to be selected and will be subjected to rigorous training before the manned mission.

**Future of QUAD.** India as in earlier two dialogues remained stuck to a cooperative and inclusive stance in the third informal Quadrilateral Security dialogue held between Japanese, Indian, Australian and American officials who met at Singapore. The other participant also affirmed to the Indian stand and agreed to promote free open and rule based and inclusive order in the Indo- pacific. The focus during discussion remained on cooperation in connectivity, sustainable development, counter terrorism, non-proliferation, and maritime and cyber security. On these China cannot take offence while it surely is meant to balance irresponsible Chinese behaviour and its belt and road policy which has underlying an aim to enhance Chinese strategic influence in the South China Sea and beyond. China has earmarked \$126 billion towards its belt and road initiative which surely cannot be matched by the QUAD countries. However, considering the current concerns caused by lack of transparency in BRI projects and consequent debt trap faced by some countries has turned countries cautious of Chinese intentions and in long run may affect the viability of the future BRI projects.

The QUAD even though is focusing on the cooperative and collaborative approach, its creation and purpose is not lost on China and will exerts some sobering influence on Chinese abrasive behaviour who now could be expected to tread with caution lest this grouping takes on the military stance. All four countries thus unlike last time will subsist in the grouping.