

ENVIRONMENT SCAN: 27 JUN 2016

NUCLEAR

Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)

NSG Plenary on 23 and 24 Jun16 at Seoul its outcome and Indian Response.

India failed to get a berth in the Nuclear Supplier Group(NSG) for lack of consensus among the members. Of the 48 members of NSG 38 supported the Indian bid. Ten members led by China expressed reservations. China took a stand that under the NPT rules the membership is not open to non NPT states .While others essentially expressed their reservations for lack of process to admit the non NPT members .

The ensuing debate in the media covered the outcome of the event. In general, Chinese were criticized for its motive to oppose India. One section even questioned relevance and need of NSG membership knowing fully well that it would be opposed by China. This however, is a defeatist approach. If India is to play a global role then we cannot remain outside the multilateral forums which lay down the ground rules for international interactions. NSG membership is assertion of our right as a global player. It reflects the status and prestige of the country. The event has actually provided us a reality check about Indian clout in the international fora. Though a temporary setback, the event has isolated China which it is despairingly defending.

Fortunately, the chapter is not closed, there is path forward and the NSG membership question would again be taken up for consideration in next plenary of the NSG in the end of the year. A panel for informal consultations on India's membership has also been set up by the NSG and it will be headed by Argentine Ambassador Rafael Grossi. The panel will consult the members with divergent views and collate their views on induction of Non NPT state in NSG and process needed for this.

Points of Disagreement by Some Members

- (a) Group needs time to complete an internal fact-finding and consensus-forming process in part to prepare the NSG for the consequences of possible Indian membership.
- (b) All NSG members are parties to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. NPT membership means that they have legally committed themselves to nuclear disarmament and not to assist others in obtaining nuclear weapons.
- (c) In addition, NSG members have taken other important steps toward a nuclear weapon-free future, by joining the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), by joining treaties that create nuclear weapons-free zones, and/or by permitting the International Atomic Energy Agency to verify that no aspect of their nuclear programs are being used to produce uranium or plutonium for nuclear weapons.
- (d) Why should members go with it without India having made non-proliferation commitments that many others in the group have made and virtually all say are important.

(e) India is not a party to the NPT, it is not a party to a nuclear weapon-free zone treaty, it will not join the CTBT, and it will not make legal commitments identical to NPT articles concerning its nuclear arms.

(f) New Delhi wants a decision now, before Obama leaves office. The desire to build a special relationship is commendable, but this should not come at the expense of the NSG's fundamental nonproliferation mission.

(g) Consequences of admitting India into the group. Unstable south Asian region. To allow India in without admitting Pakistan, Islamabad might respond with a nuclear escalation.

(h) In looking at Indian membership, the NSG needs to consider the risk that making exceptions to its rules for one state might pose for the group's objectives.

(j) If the group waits until after India is admitted, and India then uses its veto power to prevent adjustments to NSG rules in response to Indian membership, the credibility and effectiveness of the NSG could be seriously damaged.

Arguments in Favour of Membership.

(a) Bringing India into the group would be good for nuclear nonproliferation. After all US signed nuclear deal with India with same logic.

(b) India's credible track record of non-proliferation.

(c) India has not signed NPT on a matter of principle but, it conforms to all provisions of NPT in practice and have put its civil nuclear assets under inspection by IAEA.

(d) India is willing for CTBT and FMCT if other go along.

Indian Response.

Actually, China was the sole opponent of India's entry in NSG and did not allow building of consensus amongst the members. China cannot sit on moral high ground being a serious violator itself which is in public knowledge. Others states, while sought a process for induction of non NPT state as a member, and did not actually oppose Indian membership. Indian foreign office officially commented on the uncooperative approach of China in NSG plenary and unequivocally stated that mutual accommodation of interests, concerns and priorities is necessary to move forward bilateral ties between us . Therefore, the adverse impact of the event on the bilateral relations is certain. An aspiring world power China has more to lose .This has put Chinese in defensive who asserted that NSG rules bar entry of Non NPT states in NSG and they were not alone but, 10 NSG members had doubts about India entry in the regime. We need to continue interacting with China diplomatically but gradually raising stakes at strategic and economic level for China to see reason.

Strategic.

(a) Let us act as per our size and power. Too much attention to Pakistan leads us to hyphenation with it. This is what china wants to do by binding India to the South Asian region. Deal with Pak sponsored terrorism as it comes by preventive and offensive actions on merit of each case without trying to equate our self to Pakistan. Build capacity to strike china effectively.

(b) Build up the military capabilities of others on China's periphery who share India's worry about China. ASEAN countries look forward more proactive India, diplomatically as well as militarily. It will act counterweight to China in our region.

(c) Expand the Malabar naval exercise to include all other countries in the Asia-Pacific region who are worried about China.

(d) Initiate quadrilateral dialogue with Australia, Japan and United States which was suspended due to Chinese concern.

Economic.

We are not benefited from the bilateral trade with China as the balance of trade is highly in China's favour. Chinese leadership have not acted to bridge the gap despite promising. We need to impose anti-dumping provisions to stop this. This will benefit India in Make in India campaign and job creation which are affected by cheap imports from China.

ASEAN

Brig Jai Singh Yadav, VSM

Singapore Caught in the Middle as China-ASEAN Country Coordinator.

BEIJING - An hour before a special ASEAN-China meeting was convened last week, officials from China and Singapore sat down for a discussion. Against the backdrop of South China Sea tensions, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi pointed out that Singapore should play a role in addressing "historical issues" between China and some ASEAN countries.

Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan responded that Singapore hopes to help build up mutual trust between ASEAN and China. But he prefaced his remarks with: "Singapore is just a coordinator, not the leader." That point was made to stress Singapore's impartiality, underscoring the tricky balance it has to strike even as most ASEAN countries press for a stronger stand against China.

Singapore faces several challenges as country coordinator, noted Professor Tommy Koh, chairman of the governing board of the Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore. These include the South China Sea disputes, disunity in the ASEAN family, intense competition for influence between the major powers, and the deficit of trust between China and some ASEAN member states, he told The Straits Times. Indeed, the idyllic scenery of the lakeside resort near Kunming could not hide the storm that brewed in its meeting rooms.

Singapore's middleman task has been made more onerous by an impending United Nations tribunal ruling over an arbitration case brought by the Philippines on China's claims in the South China Sea. The decision - widely expected to go against China - is likely to be announced in a few weeks' time. Despite China playing down the

arbitration's significance, its attempts to rally support for its position have laid bare its concern about an international backlash.

At the end of the meeting, the Chinese held a press conference, where Mr Wang described the meeting's atmosphere as "good" and urged ASEAN not to view the South China Sea dispute as "the sum of ASEAN-China ties". But the press conference was held by China alone, not jointly with ASEAN as originally announced. Mr Wang also made no mention of a 10-point consensus agreement that China had reportedly sprung on ASEAN at the last minute, which was viewed negatively by some ASEAN member states as China's attempt to bring the grouping on board, and to tell external parties such as the United States not to interfere.

ASEAN countries had already been wary before the meeting that China would turn it into a public relations exercise for its own purpose, experts and diplomatic sources told The Straits Times. So they balked at the proposed 10-point consensus statement and made a unified decision not to attend a joint press conference with China, but to issue a statement that reflected ASEAN's stand instead.

Since Singapore was the coordinator of ASEAN-China relations and co-chair of the meeting with China, it was Dr Balakrishnan who was the public face of the decision. He did not attend the press conference. "It may have been seen by China as undiplomatic and left a negative impression about Singapore," said political analyst Tang SiewMun, head of the ASEAN Studies Centre at the Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute. "But the alternative - openly disagreeing with Wang Yi on Chinese soil - would have been worse."

With more than two years to go in its three-year term as ASEAN-China country coordinator, one key task for Singapore is to ensure that the overall promise of China-ASEAN economic relations will not be undermined by the deepening South China Sea crisis, Prof Heydarian said. Already, a more immediate challenge looms, he added. "Once the arbitration case at The Hague is finalised, ASEAN is expected to issue a statement, particularly if the verdict is inimical to China."

ASEAN, China to Formulate Environmental Cooperation Plan.

KUNMING, 16 June 2016 – The Seminar on Formulating ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Action Plan 2016-2020 was held on 14-15 June in Kunming, China. The seminar aims to operationalise the ASEAN-China Strategy on Environmental Cooperation (2016-2020) which was recently endorsed by senior officials on environment from both sides.

Part of the seminar was a technical field visit for the participants to witness how the Environmental Protection Bureau of Kunming Municipality utilizes a state-of-the-art information and communications technology system to continuously monitor air and water pollution in the municipality, in close cooperation with private and public enterprises.

Among the activities to be included in the proposed five-year Action Plan are biennial high-level policy dialogues, joint research, capacity building and technical exchange in the areas of Environmental Data and Information Management, Environmental Impact Assessment, Biodiversity and Ecological Conservation, Environmentally Sustainable Cities, Environmental Industry and Technology for Green Development, and Environmental Education and Public Awareness.

Upcoming activities in 2016 include the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Forum focusing on Sustainable Urban Transformation for Green Development to be held on 22-23 September in Nanning, China. The Action Plan will also contribute to the implementation of the post-2015 ASEAN Strategic Plan on Environment, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Peng Bin, Director for China-ASEAN Environment Cooperation Centre, and Ms. Adelina Kamal, Director for Sustainable Development Directorate of the ASEAN Secretariat co-chaired the seminar. Senior officials from ASEAN Member States and China, and representatives from the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, United Nations Environment Programme, and national and local agencies in China attended. The seminar was organised by China-ASEAN Environment Cooperation Centre in close collaboration with ASEAN senior officials on environment and ASEAN Secretariat. The Centre was established in 2010 by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China, following the endorsement of the ASEAN-China Strategy on Environmental Protection Cooperation (2009-2015) in 2009.

Malaysian Plane Intercepted by Indonesian Fighter Jets: Official.



Kuala Lumpur: A Malaysian military transport plane was intercepted by two Indonesian jet fighters while flying a regular route over Indonesia's Natuna Islands.

The C-130 aircraft was flying from west Malaysia on Saturday towards the eastern Malaysian state of Sabah, a senior official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "That (flying over the Natuna Islands) is a regular route," the official said, adding that the C-130 continued its journey to Sabah despite the interception. Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein confirmed the incident.

The incident came two days after Indonesian President Joko Widodo visited the islands on a warship in an apparent show of force after clashes with Chinese fishing vessels in the area. Unlike some of its Southeast Asian neighbours, Indonesia has no maritime disputes with China over reefs or islets in the South China Sea. But Beijing's claims overlap Indonesia's exclusive economic zone -- waters where a state has the right to exploit resources -- around the Natunas. Hishammuddin played down the incident, saying Malaysia and Indonesia enjoy close relations.

The Natuna Islands are located in the middle of the South China Sea separating peninsular Malaysia and the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak on Borneo Island.

In 2002 Indonesia lost a case against Malaysia at the International Court of Justice over Sipadan and Ligitan, two small islands in the Celebes Sea off Sabah state.

RUSSIA

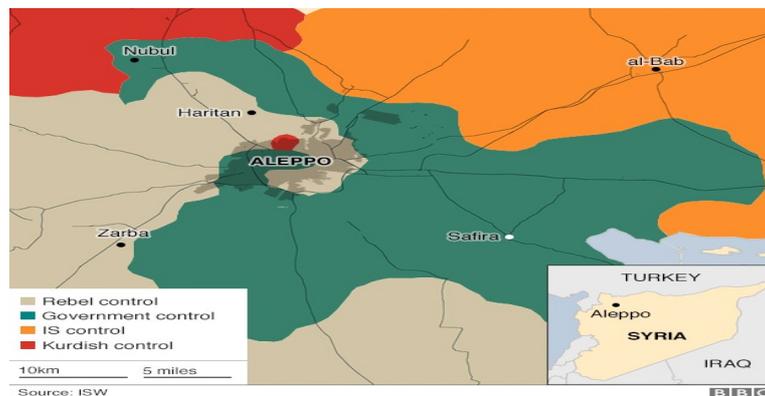
Col Anadi Dhaundiya

Brexit “I think it’s comprehensible why this happened: first, no one wants to feed and subsidize poorer economies, to support other states, support entire nations,” the Russian president said at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Tashkent. As per the Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov the impact of the UK leaving the EU on the Russian economy will be limited and it may result in a further drop in oil prices, the weakening of the ruble and growing volatility.

Comments. The Russian president's comments come in reply to UK Prime Minister David Cameron’s claims that “Putin would be happy if the UK left the EU.”

IAAF Ban on Russian Athletes. As per Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko, 67 Russian athletes will submit their individual requests to participate in the Olympic Games, which they have the right to.” Earlier the IAAF left the door ajar and clean athletes could still compete in Rio if they can prove they have not been tainted by the disgraced Russian system.

Comments. To prevent widespread discontentment amongst the Russian athletes the move will open some doors for the sports persons. For info only.



Syrian Truce. Post the recent truce brokered by the US and Russia which expired earlier this month without renewal, the Russian air force has bombed the rebel stronghold of Aleppo with the intent to recapture it. The bombing targeted the rebels' last remaining supply route on the eastern side of the divided city. The truce agreement had been announced on 09 May 2016. Aleppo was Syria's largest city before the civil war.

Comments. Russia had responded well to the US call for ceasefire inspite of the fact that Syria’s military was positioned to capture the city of Aleppo at that time. One month since 09 May would have enabled the west to beef up reserves in Aleppo. The march to dominate Syrian territory is progressing well for Assad forces.

Duma. The Russian Lower House has given its final approval to a bill obliging all civil servants and candidates for posts in state agencies to present detailed reports about their activity on social networks, blogs and even internet forums and chats. The Russian Lower House has passed a bill introducing life sentences for international

terrorism and lowering the age threshold for extremist crimes, but scrapped a proposal to automatically strip convicted terrorists of Russian citizenship.

Comments. For info.

China Visit. As per Mr Putin 58 different deals worth a total of around \$50 billion were currently in discussion.

Rosneft, Russia's top oil producer, agreed with China National Chemical Corporation (ChemChina) that ChemChina would take a 40 per cent stake in Rosneft's planned petrochemical complex VNHK in Russia's Far East.

They also signed a new one-year contract under which Rosneft could supply up to 2.4 million tonnes of crude oil to ChemChina between 1 August, 2016 and 31 July, 2017. Rosneft and Beijing Enterprises Group Company Limited agreed the key terms of a potential sale of a 20% stake in Rosneft's oil producing subsidiary, Verkhnechonskneftegaz, to a unit of Beijing Gas Group.

The Russian firm also signed a framework agreement with Sinopec regarding the construction of a gas processing and petrochemical plant in East Siberia, aiming to set up a joint venture in 2017 focused on the Russian and Chinese markets.

Kremlin website from the two governments called on nations to strictly abide by the norms of international law, keep military capabilities at the minimum level required for national security and refrain from steps aimed at expanding existing military-political alliances.

Comments. For info. The deal would help Rosneft finance the projects and get expand more into the Chinese markets.

AFRICA

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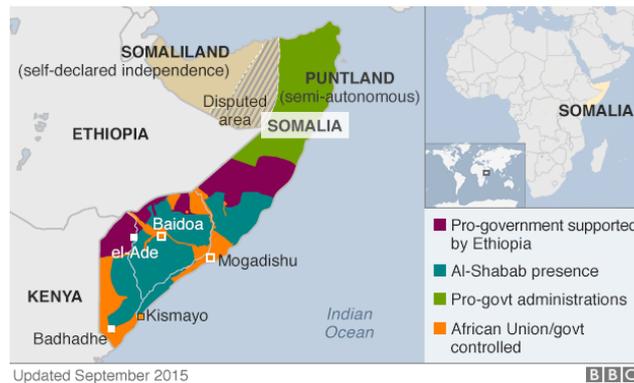
Somalia: Deadly Al-Shabab Attack on Mogadishu Hotel. An attack by the Islamist group al-Shabab in a hotel in the Somali capital Mogadishu on 25 Jun has left at least 14 dead.

Security forces retook the Naso-Hablod hotel after gunmen stormed it and took hostages. Those killed are reported to include security guards, civilians and some of the attackers. Al-Shabab militants frequently carry out attacks in the city in their bid to topple the Western-backed government.

A suicide bomber first detonated a car with explosives at the gate of the hotel, and the attackers moved in. A gun battle then erupted between the attackers and security forces.



Police said at least four men were involved in the assault. The Naso-Hablod hotel, in southern Mogadishu, is often used by politicians and tourists.



Earlier this month at least 10 people were killed and 50 injured in [an attack on another hotel in the Somali capital](#), which was claimed by Al-Shabab.

The al-Qaeda-linked group was driven from Mogadishu in 2011 but still remains a threat and frequently carries out attacks in the city. The government, with the help of African Union forces, is fighting al-Shabab militants in several parts of the country.

Uganda to Withdraw Troops from Somalia's Amisom Force - 23 June 2016.

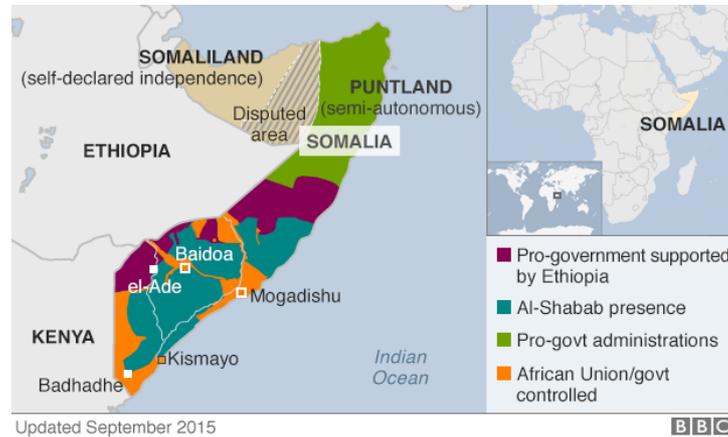


Uganda will pull its soldiers out of the African Union mission fighting Islamist group Al-Shabab in Somalia, its military chief has said.

Gen Katumba Wamala said the decision to withdraw Ugandan troops by December 2017 was taken because of frustration with the Somali army and military advisers

from US, UK and Turkey. Uganda provides the biggest contingent of soldiers to the AU force, Amisom. Amisom has helped push al-Shabab out of most of Somalia's major towns. But the militants continue to mount deadly suicide bombings and guerrilla attacks.

AU Troops in Somalia:



Uganda 6,223, Burundi 5,432, Ethiopia 4,395, Kenya 3,664, Djibouti 2,000 Uganda joined Amisom in 2007 and has just over 6,000 troops in the 2,000-strong force.

Gen Wamala told that it was time for the Somali army to take over its own security, but that it was not happening. Countries including the US, UK and Turkey have been training Somali soldiers and police officers. Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Burundi also have troops in Amisom.

In May, Kenya also threatened to withdraw its troops from Somalia if the United Nations did not offer funding to support the mission. Amisom's effectiveness has been questioned because it has struggled to secure areas outside of the big towns and has been plagued with accusations of corruption.

Gen Wamala says Uganda could pull out before its deadline of December 2017 if another country is found to replace it.