

ENVIRONMENT SCAN: 17OCT 2016

Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Iran, Asean, West Asia, Iraq, Syria, Yemen

Russian Silence at Brics on PM Modi's Pak Terror Tirade Stuns India

China blocked India's attempts to name JeM and LeT in the Goa Declaration, wherein the Brics member states pledged to "relentlessly pursue" outfits designated terrorist groups by the UNSC, but what has hurt the government more, official sources said, is Russia's disinclination to argue India's case, Times of India reported on Tuesday.

The result, of course, was a declaration which failed to address India's core concern, or the issue of state-sponsored terrorism. What compounded the matter for India was Russia's recent military flirtation with Pakistan in the form of an anti-terror exercise. In current global power play, Russia is increasingly seen as needing China more than the other way round, but Moscow's support to Beijing's position on an issue related to India's security has still come as a revelation to New Delhi. While Russia did not help India name-check JeM in the declaration, it ensured that Syria-based Jabhat al-Nusra was.

With Russia doing precious little for India, China has managed to shield Pakistan not only at the UN Security Council but also at a multilateral summit on Indian soil.

The Goa Declaration came just a day after President Vladimir Putin assured PM Narendra Modi that Russia would do nothing to hurt India's interests. But, as MEA Secretary Amar Sinha admitted, there was no consensus on naming Pakistan-based alleged terror groups because other nations are not affected by their actions.

India Says terrorism isolated Pakistan, China disagrees. Benaulim: Pakistan was isolated because of its pro-terror policies, India said on Monday and offered the neighbour help in acting against terrorists. China strongly defended Islamabad, its "all-weather" friend, for making "great sacrifices in fighting terrorism".

The Chinese support to Pakistan came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, without naming Pakistan at the Goa BRICS Summit, said the "mothership" of terrorism was in India's neighbourhood.

India's tirade against Pakistan also remained in focus at the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) meeting held alongside the BRICS Summit. BIMSTEC leaders on Monday called for greater cooperation between the two blocs, especially on fighting terror. In a joint statement, they slammed attempts made to glorify terrorists and described terrorism as "the single-most significant threat to peace and stability" in the region. "We reiterate our strong commitment to combat terrorism, and stress that there can be no justification for acts of terror on any grounds. We condemn in the strongest terms the recent barbaric terror attacks in the region," the statement said. "There should be no glorification of terrorists as martyrs," the statement said, in a reference to Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's remarks hailing slain Kashmiri militant commander BurhanWani as a martyr who was killed in fighting for "freedom" of Kashmir. The statement said the fight against terrorism "should also identify, hold accountable and take strong measures against States who encourage, support and finance terrorism, provide sanctuary to terrorists and terror groups and falsely extol their virtues".

After the BIMSTEC statement, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Vikas Swarup said Pakistan's isolation was its own doing. "If someone is isolated, it is because of the policies followed by that country. India did not have to do anything, because countries in one voice said there cannot be constructive dialogue in the terror-tainted atmosphere in the context of Saarc," Swarup said. He was replying to a question if India had succeeded in isolating Pakistan that led to the cancellation of the November summit of the regional South Asian grouping that was to be held in Islamabad. Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said in Chandigarh that India had no ill will against Pakistan and called upon Islamabad to "close down the factory of terrorism". "Pakistan has adopted terrorism as its state policy and harbours terrorists. That is the reason it has been isolated not only in South Asia but also in the world," Rajnath Singh said. "India is ready to help Pakistan take action against terrorists, including Pakistan-occupied Kashmir," he said. Brazil also backed India's actions against terrorism with Modi, who met President Michel Temer on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit here, thanking him for his country's backing. "We deeply appreciate Brazil's support for India's actions in combating terrorism."

But China reacted sharply to India's allegations against Pakistan. Foreign Ministry Spokesperson HuaChunying said "China and Pakistan are all-weather friends" and Beijing opposed "linking terrorism with any specific ethnicity or religion". "Everyone knows that India and Pakistan are victims of terrorism. Pakistan has made huge efforts and great sacrifices in fighting terrorism. I think the international community should respect this," she added.

Pakistan, in a fresh denial, returned India's allegations, saying Prime Minister Modi had "no moral ground" to speak about terror "when his own government is involved in state terrorism in Kashmir". "The Indian leadership is desperately trying to hide its brutalities in Jammu and Kashmir ... where innocent people are being killed and injured by security forces daily with impunity," said Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to Pakistan Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs.

Pakistan Wants Peace with India, Rabbani tells Maldives' President. ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Raza Rabbani has said that Pakistan is a peace-loving country and desires peace in the region for the stability, well-being and alleviation of poverty of our peoples but regretfully India continues to sponsor state terrorism in Pakistan.

These views were expressed by Mr Rabbani during his meeting with President of the Maldives Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom at the Presidential Palace in Male, according to a handout issued by the Senate secretariat here on Monday.

The Senate chairman was accompanied by Senator Sardar Zulfiqar Khan Khosa and Senator Najmul Hassan, besides Pakistan's ambassador in the Maldives.

Mr Rabbani informed the president that recently a serving Indian naval commander Kulbhushan Jadhav was arrested in Pakistan who had been involved in fostering unrest in the country. "Such steps being taken by India clearly show its expansionist designs in the region," Mr Rabbani was quoted to have stated in the meeting.

The Senate chairman further said that Pakistan despite these provocative actions looked for a lasting peace in the region for which the Kashmir dispute needed to be resolved in line with the UN resolutions.

He also highlighted the gross violation of human rights and international laws by India in held Kashmir. He brought to the notice of the president the use of pellet bullets and the loss of eyesight of innocent children. He further stated that over 90 days had passed and the valley continued to be under curfew.

The chairman said Pakistan noted the Maldives decision of leaving the Commonwealth and respected it as it was a sovereign country's decision. He said the Commonwealth was an important organisation and said that constructive engagements should continue.

The Senate chairman stressed improving bilateral relations between Pakistan and the Maldives and called for a reassessment of the role of Saarc, particularly keeping in view India's attitude.

Pakistani Journalist Cyril Almeida 'Barred from Leaving Country'

A top Pakistani journalist says he has been barred from leaving the country, after he reported a row between military and government officials.

Cyril Almeida said on Twitter he had been told his name was on the "exit control list", a border control system.

The row erupted over an article saying the government bluntly warned military chiefs Pakistan faced isolation unless it acted against homegrown militancy. The government rejected the report, calling it "a fabricated news story".

Relations between Pakistan's civilian government and the military have often been tumultuous with three coups since independence. Nawaz Sharif's government took office after Pakistan's first ever civilian transfer of power. But the timing is sensitive because it comes just weeks after India blamed Pakistan-based militant groups for an attack that killed 18 soldiers in Indian-administered Kashmir, the deadliest assault on the army there in years. Pakistan has consistently denied any links to the attack.

India has long accused Pakistan's ISI spy agency of secretly supporting jihadi groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba, saying they wage attacks against India, particularly over Kashmir - which is claimed by both countries.

The ISI is a military intelligence organisation, seen as a central organ of Pakistan's army and run and staffed by military officials.

What Did the Article Say? The 6 October article by Mr Almeida, published in the English-language Dawn newspaper, quoted unnamed sources who said they were present for a meeting chaired by Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the director general of the ISI spy agency, Rizwan Akhtar.

It claimed that the prime minister, Punjab's chief minister and other members of the government raised concerns about a lack of military action against certain militant groups because of their ties to the spy agency. They allegedly warned military chiefs present that Pakistan risked facing international isolation.

The prime minister's office and the Punjab chief ministers office have strongly denied the report saying there was no conflict of that nature at the meeting. However Dawn stood by the story, saying it had repeatedly fact-checked - and accused the government of "scapegoating the country's most respected newspaper in a malicious campaign".

The ban on the journalist was later removed by the Pakistan government.

NEPAL

Col Saikat Roy

Trilateral Meeting between PM Modi, Jinping, Prachanda. Pitching Nepal as a “dynamic bridge” between India and China, PM Prachanda floated a proposal for trilateral strategic ties to Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

According to the statement, Prachanda said during the meeting that "we (Nepal) are located between two giant countries. We want to become a dynamic bridge between the two countries and reap the benefit". He further said Nepal was inching towards the goals of development and wanted to establish a balanced, friendly and strategic relationship with both the neighbours, the report said.

Comments. During the Oli regime Nepal had tried to cosy up with China following the differences which had crept with India. The friendly and pragmatic attitude of the current regime is not going too well with China after Xi's visit to Nepal was put off, as China was upset over the delay in implementation of agreements by the new government to link both countries. Nepal of course had to tread its path carefully lest it gets trampled in the confrontation of its giant neighbours.

President Pranab Mukherjee to Visit Nepal from November 2. Indian President Pranab Mukherjee is scheduled to pay a three-day state visit to Nepal from November 2.

Nepal has been urging India for regular exchange of high-level visits. President Mukherjee will arrive in Kathmandu on the invitation of his Nepali counterpart Bidhya Devi Bhandari. After Mukherjee's visit, the Nepal President will embark on a state visit to India.

BANGLADESH

Col Saikat Roy

Chinese President Xi Jinping's Visit Cambodia, Bangladesh and India. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Cambodia, Bangladesh and then attended the BRICS Summit at Goa, during his October 13-17 visit. In all, 11 Heads of State from BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries attended the meeting.

Xi's visit to Bangladesh is regarded as significant as it is taking place after 30 years. China is set to sign off on loans worth over \$24 billion to Bangladesh during President Xi Jinping's visit on Friday, October 14, Dhaka's biggest foreign credit line to date. China plans to finance around 25 projects worth roughly \$24 billion including a 1,320 megawatt (MW) power plant, and is also keen to build a deep sea port in Sonadia which has been on hold for years. Bangladesh has backed Xi's "One Belt, One Road" initiative to boost trade and transport links across Asia and into Europe, seeing it as an opportunity to lift growth.

Comments. Xi's trip, is aimed at boosting China's involvement in infrastructure projects at a time when India is pushing investments of its own in Bangladesh. Last year Mr. Modi announced a \$2 billion credit line during a visit to Dhaka, but China looks set to go well beyond that. Japan, helped by India, has also got involved in Bangladesh, offering finance at low interest rates to build a port and power complex.

However, the converging interests in Bangladesh need not necessarily be detrimental to the overall Indian interest in the region. India must remain cautious and carefully plan to counter balance aspects of economic interest which could be exploited for strategic gains by China, at a future date.

Bangladesh Hangs Islamist Extremist Leader over 2005 Blast. Prison authorities in Khulna, hanged a senior Islamist extremist Asadul Islam, 42, a leader of the outlawed Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), for his role in a 2005 blast that killed two judges, on Sunday, October 16. Islam, also known as Arif, was one of seven senior JMB officials, including founding leader Shaikh Abdur Rahman, sentenced to death for a bomb attack that killed two lower court judges on November 14, 2005.

His execution comes as Bangladeshi security forces push a deadly new crackdown against Islamist extremists following the cafe attack that has shaken the image of Bangladesh as a moderate Muslim nation. Since July, police have shot dead nearly 40 suspected extremists including JMB's new leader Tamim Chowdhury, a Canadian citizen of Bangladesh descent who allegedly masterminded the cafe carnage. As part of the crackdown, Bangladesh's courts have also fast-tracked prosecution of Islamist extremists.

Comments. Since December 2013, Bangladesh has also executed five top leaders of the country's largest Islamist party and a senior opposition official for atrocities connected to the country's war of independence in 1971. Their trials and executions have triggered the country's

deadliest political violence, with more than 500 people killed in clashes with police and thousands of Islamists arrested.

SRI LANKA

Col Saikat Roy

Sri Lanka to Sign Agreement with China on Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Hambantota. Sri Lanka in the near future will sign the proposed agreement with China to lease 15,000 acres of land for a SEZ, that would create one million jobs, State Finance Minister Lakshman Yapa Abeywardena said. Addressing the media the Minister said that the land for setting up of a SEZ will be in Hambantota in the Southern Province.

Japan, India, and Singapore have also expressed interest. The government had earlier said in addition to the South, they were also looking at Trincomalee, Kandy and Wayamba and the two zones in Meerigama and Horana to set up SEZs.

Sri Lanka Navy holds Training Exercise with Indian Coast Guard on Oil Spill Prevention. Sri Lanka Navy and Indian Coast Guard on Wednesday October, 12 held a joint training exercise on oil spill prevention and response onboard the Indian Coast Guard Ship "Samudra Paheredar", which is on a two-day official visit to Sri Lanka. As both India and Sri Lanka are located close to one of the busiest network of international shipping lanes, the readiness is of paramount importance for both countries to take remedial action against oil spills.

Comments. Oil spills from vessels that occur as a result of sudden collisions with oil platforms and various other related reasons, poses a significant threat on the marine environment to date. The exercise has enabled the participants to rehearse and improve own capabilities and enhance operational effectiveness required to maintain marine environment in the region.

Chinese President Calls for High-level Contacts with Sri Lanka. Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, vowing to deepen bilateral pragmatic cooperation within the Belt and Road framework. To further their relations, Xi suggested the two sides maintain high-level contacts and political communication, and continue to show mutual support on issues concerning each other's core interests. China appreciated Sri Lanka's support for and active participation in the Belt and Road construction. He called on the two sides to deepen cooperation in the sectors of trade, port operation, infrastructure construction, port-vicinity industrial parks, production capacity and people's livelihood. He said the two sides should continue to advance their mega cooperative projects such

as the Colombo Port City and Hambantota Port. The Chinese president also suggested the two sides expand cooperation in the fields of tourism, ocean, security and disaster preparedness and mitigation. He said the two countries should enhance coordination within multi-lateral frameworks and continue to support each other in international and regional affairs.

For his part, Sirisena said Sri Lanka is willing to speed up the implementation of relevant economic and trade agreements with China as well as cooperation on mega projects. He welcomed Chinese enterprises to increase investment in Sri Lanka.

AFGHANISTAN

Capt Ranjit Seth

Hydel Projects with Indian Assistance. India and Afghanistan are actively exploring the possibility of Chenab-like run-of-the river projects on Afghanistan's eastern rivers. Of particular interest is river Kabul. This river has a few identical features to River Chenab in J & K, including similar recorded average flow of around 23 million acre feet. Afghanistan wants to tap irrigation and electricity potential of its eastern rivers, most of which flow untapped into Pakistan.

After the Uri attacks, India is contemplating giving the go-ahead to three run of-the-river projects on the Chenab. These had earlier been put on hold due to objections raised by Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty. .

Pakistan does not have any water sharing treaty with Afghanistan. The rules governing flows of Afghanistan's eastern rivers, mainly Kabul, Kunnar and Chitral, into Pakistan would be based on loose internationally accepted principles.

In helping Afghanistan build some of these run-of-the-river projects, India will end up sending a very strong signal to Pakistan, which is already quite concerned over repeated Afghan requests to donors on this issue.

During Afghan President Mohammed Ashraf Ghani's visit to India last month, he specifically raised the possibility of developing Afghanistan's eastern river system while complimenting India on the Salma dam project despite serious terror threats.

The development could open another front in India's strategic offensive against Pakistan.

IRAN

Capt Ranjit Seth

GCC, Turkey Allegations. The GCC (Persian ‘Gulf Cooperation Council’) and Turkey held the fifth session of their strategic dialogue in Riyadh on Thursday. In a joint statement GCC and Turkey claimed that Iran was interfering in their internal affairs and called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to respect their national sovereignty in line with the UN Charter.

Iran strongly refuted allegations levelled by the GCC and Turkey against it. “Countries whose irresponsible interference in the affairs of other states has led to the spread of insecurity, war and terrorism and who have violated the national sovereignty of their neighbours are not in a position to advise others not to interfere in regional affairs,”. Iran said that the “catastrophic” situation in Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Iraq and Libya is the outcome of meddling policies adopted by most of the countries that gathered in Riyadh and who have no option but to blame others for their “failed” strategies.

Iran urged the international community to swiftly adopt measures to put an end to genocide and heinous crimes against humanity in Syria.

The GCC and Turkey also urged Iran to find a peaceful solution to its dispute with the United Arab Emirates over the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf. The islands of the Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa are under Iranian control. The United Arab Emirates has laid claims to the islands.

Iranian Ships in Gulf of Aden: How far might Yemen Escalation Go?

The U.S. Navy launched cruise missile strikes from its destroyer USS Nitze to knock out three coastal radar sites in areas of Yemen controlled by Houthi forces. The US insists its strike was a defensive measure against a reported attempt by the Houthis to target a US navy vessel in the Red Sea. The accusation that Ansar Allah fired missiles has been denied by Ansar Allah and the Yemeni army.

Iran holds that this is a fabricated story to allow the US to enter the fray on behalf of Saudi Arabia to boost Saudi morale. The Arab supported forces’ bombing of a funeral had brought poor media focus on Saudi Arabia and the latest American strike has helped blank out further discussions on the bombings. The US strikes draw attention away from the killings of over 150 civilians in the funeral to ease pressure on Saudi Arabia.

Iran has promptly established a military presence off the coast of Yemen soon after Washington carried out its first direct strikes against Houthi forces. Two Iranian warships were sent to the Gulf of Aden ostensibly to protect trade vessels from piracy.

ASEAN

Brig Jai Singh Yadav, VSM

Terrorists Shouldn't be Glorified: BIMSTEC Backs India's Stand.

The BIMSTEC document also strongly condemned the “recent barbaric terror attacks in the region” — a reference to attacks in Uri and Dhaka.

The BIMSTEC also said “there should be no glorification of terrorists as martyrs” — a clear reference to Hizbul militant BurhanWani who was killed by security forces in Kashmir on July 8 and later hailed as a “martyr” by Pakistan.

A day after the BRICS failed to reach a consensus on including Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in its Goa declaration, the BIMSTEC countries Monday, endorsing the Indian stand without naming Pakistan, slammed states which “support and finance terrorism, provide sanctuary to terrorists and terror groups”.

The BIMSTEC also said “there should be no glorification of terrorists as martyrs” — a clear reference to Hizbul militant BurhanWani who was killed by security forces in Kashmir on July 8 and later hailed as a “martyr” by Pakistan.

The BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat 2016 Outcome Document issued on 17 Oct stated: “We strongly believe that our fight against terrorism should not only seek to disrupt and eliminate terrorists, terror organisations and networks, but should also identify, hold accountable and take strong measures against states who encourage, support and finance terrorism, provide sanctuary to terrorists and terror groups, and falsely extol their virtues. There should be no glorification of terrorists as martyrs.”

Of the seven countries in BIMSTEC, five are part of the SAARC grouping and two are from South East Asia. The BIMSTEC or Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation comprises Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal.

The BIMSTEC document also strongly condemned the “recent barbaric terror attacks in the region” — a reference to attacks in Uri and Dhaka. “Recognizing that terrorism continues to remain the ‘single most significant threat’ to peace and stability in our region, we reiterate our strong commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and stress that there

can be no justification for acts of terror on any grounds whatsoever. We condemn in the strongest terms the recent barbaric terror attacks in the region. We recognize the need for urgent measures to counter and prevent the spread of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalisation,” it stated. The statement also said that the countries expressed their determination to take concrete measures to step up cooperation and coordination among law enforcement, intelligence and security organisations.

On the reference to BurhanWani, the Ministry of External Affairs’ Secretary (East) Preeti Saran said the grouping was not looking at any specific individual, but each leader recognized terrorism as a scourge. “They were united in their approach... terrorism has no boundaries, there are no good or bad terrorists and terrorists are not martyrs.” She said the BIMSTEC leaders agreed that there will be an annual meeting of the NSAs from BIMSTEC countries.

The BIMSTEC statement said the leaders committed to expedite the signing of the BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, and early ratification of the BIMSTEC Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called terrorism as Pakistan’s “favourite child” at the BRICS-BIMSTEC outreach summit. “Terrorism, radicalisation, and transnational crimes pose grave threats to each of us. Geographical barriers and borders pose no limitations on those who wish to harm our societies. They not only threaten the lives of our nationals; they also block our march towards economic prosperity. In South Asia and BIMSTEC, all nation states, barring one, are motivated to pursue a path of peace, development and economic prosperity for its people,” Modi said.

“Unfortunately, this country in India’s neighbourhood embraces and radiates the darkness of terrorism. Terrorism has become its favourite child. And, the child in turn has come to define the fundamental character and nature of its parent,” he said.

Modi said the time for condemning state-sponsored terrorism is long gone. “It is time to stand up and act, and act decisively. It is, therefore, imperative for BRICS and BIMSTEC to create a comprehensive response to secure our societies against the perpetrators of terror. To those who nurture the philosophy of terror, and seek to de-humanise mankind, we must send a clear message to mend their ways or be isolated in the civilised world,” he said.

Does China get what it wants in East Asia? East Asia's regional order is in the throes of a remarkable transition, but the nature and potential results of this transition are deeply contested. By mobilising developing countries, a constituency that has been too often neglected, China seems to be altering the regional balance of influence. But how much influence over these countries' choices and policies does China actually have?

China has cultivated apparent patron–client relationships with small peripheral states that can play 'spoiler' roles in regional initiatives. Cambodia and Laos played this role within ASEAN in 2012 and 2016 to forestall a collective stance on the South China Sea territorial disputes with China. Politically motivated Chinese trade deals, favourable lending and targeted investments in surrounding developing countries help Beijing to buy favour and cultivate dependence.

In contrast with the United States' security-focused approach, China's intensifying ties with Asian developing countries privilege their shared developmental imperative — the strong commitment to generating economic growth and development — as the key means to ensuring the domestic legitimacy and therefore sustainability of the ruling regimes within these states. China's security relations with these neighbours are therefore more explicitly nested within wider political and economic relationships. The economic relationship is also more strategically pliable because state-owned enterprises spearhead Chinese regional investment, in contrast to US, Japanese or South Korean private investment.

When analysing the impacts of China's rising influence on the regional order, there are five key aspects that must be considered.

First, there are not many cases in which Beijing tries to make its smaller and weaker developing neighbours do what they otherwise would not have done. Instead China exercises its power by leveraging shared economic development imperatives and meeting many of these governments' demands for quick and non-transparent bilateral investments. So China's influence often results in more continuity than change: rather than being revisionist, China often mobilises and reinforces these developing states' existing preferences.

Second, in taking a developmentalist approach, China's broader strategic intent is to invest in its future influence in Asia. Since the mid-1990s Beijing's consistent aim has been to foster stability in its immediate periphery and promote economic growth opportunities to ensure the security of its regime and support efforts to recover its international position and status. Avoiding attempts to coerce its small neighbouring states helps China mask the risks associated with its growing resources and hoard goodwill as a hedge against future opposition.

Third, China does not easily achieve what it wants — even with these weaker states. Instead, the extent of China's influence tends to depend on these neighbours' domestic dynamics. It can be undermined by various unintended consequences. Competing political actors and interest groups

in these states can facilitate or resist Chinese interests. Some leaders actively courted Chinese investment and attention rather than the other way round. Others exploit Chinese resources to diversify their strategic options and still manage to resist Chinese pressures on key national issues.

Fourth, the systemic impact of China's growing power in developing Asia is also constrained by broader structural conditions. International institutions and rules — such as the Bretton Woods financial institutions and the United Nations — are still dominated by the West. Such constraints may be a broader phenomenon associated with the entrenched postwar US-led Western liberal order, which is either too attractive or too costly to replace entirely.

The final constraint lies in the way China practises its power. Chinese policymakers and analysts seem to have two blind spots about their small developing neighbours. The first is a tendency to downplay the autonomous agency of these weaker states, preferring to attribute their lack of acquiescence to the machinations of other great powers. The second is to overlook the connection between China's more benign modes of influence and the undermining effect of its at times inconsistent or coercive behaviour on the very same issues.

Both of these problems are especially acute in the South China Sea territorial disputes. Chinese policymakers have tended to read the toughening stances of their smaller rival claimants as having been instigated by the US 'rebalance' to Asia, rather than as nationalist responses to Chinese assertiveness in bilateral conflicts. Chinese analysts, policymakers and public opinion are experiencing a dissonance between their growing material power and their perceived lagging status, influence and effectiveness in the international realm.

It is by no means clear that Beijing is easily able to win over developing countries to which it can promise quick credit and cheap infrastructure. If power transition theories are correct, the growing sense of frustration with the 'influence gap' among Chinese leaders may foreshadow that dangerous point when a rising power is intensely dissatisfied and may challenge an incumbent. For this reason alone, China's growing strategic developmentalist agenda throughout Asia merits sustained attention alongside the intricacies of its strategic relations with the US and other major powers.

China to help Cambodia Modernize its Armed Forces: Government.

PHNOM PENH - China has agreed to help modernize Cambodia's military, Cambodia's defense minister said on Monday 17 Oct , after the two countries signed new agreements to boost military aid.

Cambodia is China's loyal ally in Asia, routinely backing Beijing's position at international forums in a region where China and United States vie for influence.

Cambodia has shielded China from criticism by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) over the South China Sea. ASEAN members Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei are in disputes with China over rival claims to the waters.

"We signed some protocols with each other in providing supplies in order to modernize our work and as a contribution to strengthen stronger capacity of our national defense," Defence Minister Tea Banh, who returned from an official visit to Beijing over the weekend, told reporters on Monday.

His comments follow a visit to Cambodia by Chinese President Xi Jinping last week in which Xi praised the close ties between the two countries. China and Cambodia signed 31 agreements during the visit, including soft loan deals worth around \$237 million.

The Chinese leader also canceled around \$89 million in debt and pledged another \$14 million in military aid to Cambodia.

Banh said that Cambodia plans to acquire fighter jets from China in the long term but that the military needs to focus now on strengthening its airspace.

Cambodia has had border disputes with neighboring Vietnam and Thailand. A border dispute with Thailand has in recent years resulted in sporadic exchanges of fire.

China Navy Fleet Visits Cambodia. Chinese vessels are in the Southeast Asian state for a goodwill visit in a further boost for defense ties.

This week, a Chinese naval fleet is visiting Cambodia to boost ties between the two countries. The 23rd Chinese naval escort task force of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy arrived at the port of Sihanoukville on Sunday for a five-day visit. It had just returned from its four-month mission in the Gulf of Aden and the waters off the Somali coast and had visited two other Southeast Asian states, Malaysia and Myanmar, before ending up in Cambodia.

On Monday, Senior Colonel Wang Hongli, the commander of the task force, paid a courtesy visit to Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister General Tea Banh in Phnom Penh. Banh said that during the five-day visit, Chinese personnel would visit Cambodian communities, share experiences in the area of maritime defense with their Cambodian counterparts, and participate in sporting activities.

The Chinese naval task force will also visit the Ream Naval Base of the Royal Cambodia Navy (RCN), the Chinese defense ministry said in a statement.

The visit, which the defense ministry classified as the fourth port call by Chinese PLA Navy warships "in recent years," comes just days after Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Cambodia. During the visit, China had reportedly pledged \$14 million in military aid.

Banh himself had also visited China last week. After his meeting with General Fan Changlong, the vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, last Thursday, China's defense

ministry said in a statement that the two countries had vowed to push their ties to a “new height.” Few details were available, though, on the exact meaning of that phrase. Khmer Times quoted Banh as saying that China would help Cambodia improve its military capacity and provide military technical skills.

“If agreement is possible, China will install and place military equipment in Cambodian national defense units to improve protective capacity,” he reportedly said.

Reuters, meanwhile, quoted Banh as saying that Cambodia planned to acquire fighter jets from China in the long term, but that the military was currently focused on strengthening its control of its airspace.

USS Coronado Arrives in Singapore, Continues Historic Deployment. CHANGI NAVAL BASE, Singapore (NNS) -- Littoral combat ship USS Coronado (LCS 4) arrived in Singapore on 16 Oct to begin a rotational deployment to the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

Coronado's arrival in Singapore marks the first deployment of a Independence-variant littoral combat ship to Southeast Asia and the third overall, following USS Freedom (LCS 1) and USS Fort Worth (LCS 3). Coronado, homeported in San Diego, will operate from Singapore as a maintenance hub and exercise with allied and partner navies across the region during her deployment.

"The rotational deployment of littoral combat ships is an important part of our nation's rebalances efforts to the Indo-Asia-Pacific," said Rear Adm. Don Gabrielson, commander, Task Force 73.

"Littoral combat ships are ideal for South and Southeast Asia, easily integrated into exercises and operations in the shallow and congested sea lanes, enhancing U.S. presence and deepening ties with allies and partners. Littoral combat ships are in high demand out here; we're happy to welcome Coronado and her crew."

The ship is outfitted with the surface warfare (SUW) mission package, comprised of two, 11-meter rigid hull inflatable boats (RHIBs); two visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) boarding teams; two 30MM machine guns; two MQ-8B Fire Scout unmanned aerial vehicles; and, for the first time deployed on board a LCS to Southeast Asia, a MH-60S Seahawk helicopter.

"Coronado is one of our Navy's most advanced platforms operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet," said Capt. H. B. Le, commodore, Destroyer Squadron 7. "Having an Independence variant deployed to South and Southeast Asia will further expand the operations we can conduct with regional navies, as well as the rest of the AOR."

The Independence variant boasts a larger flight deck than the Freedom variant, allowing for expanded aviation operations including dual helicopter-UAV operations, and has more fuel capacity providing increased operational capabilities.

Coronado and its combined crew of approximately 100 Sailors and embarked Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 23 began their deployment June 22, after departing San Diego. Prior to her arrival in Singapore, Coronado participated in the multinational Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2016 exercise, in which the ship conducted a Harpoon Block 1C missile LCS-based launch, the first of its kind.

Prior to Coronado's deployment, Fort Worth spent more than 16 months rotationally deployed to Singapore. During the first 14 months of the ship's deployment, Fort Worth participated in the search and recovery efforts for Air Asia flight QZ8501, made 12 port visits in South and Southeast Asia, and participated in 10 bilateral and multilateral exercises across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

Fast, agile and mission-focused, littoral combat ships are designed to operate in near-shore environments and employ modular mission packages that can be configured for surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, or mine countermeasures.

Commander, Task Force 73 conducts advanced planning, organizes resources and directly supports the execution of maritime exercises such as the bilateral Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) series, the Naval Engagement Activity (NEA) with Vietnam, and the multilateral Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) with Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

U.S. 7th Fleet conducts forward-deployed naval operations in support of U.S. national interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific area of operations. As the U.S. Navy's largest numbered fleet, 7th Fleet interacts with 35 other maritime nations to build partnerships that foster maritime security, promote stability, and prevent conflict.

WEST ASIA

Brig Ranjit Singh

IRAQ

ISIS Imposes Curfew in Mosul. ISIS has imposed curfew from 8 pm to 5 am, possibly to prevent people fleeing Mosul due to the impending offensive by the Iraqi forces to liberate Mosul from ISIS.

ISIS Thwarts Revolt in Mosul. It is reported that ISIS has executed 58 of its elements by drowning, suspected to be conspiring revolt within its ranks in Mosul. ISIS has withdrawn IDs of local leaders to prevent them from fleeing along with their families from Mosul.

ISIS Cuts 4 Bridges in Nineveh. ISIS has cut off four major bridges in Nineveh Province to prevent civilians from fleeing to Camps created by Security Forces.

Military Reinforcements Arrive in Qayyarah. Large military reinforcements have arrived in Qayyarah in last couple of days as part of preparation for Mosul offensive. The reinforcements include Federal Police, armoured brigades and combat brigades of militia forces.

Preparation for Mosul Offensive. It is reported that Iraqi forces preparation for Mosul offensive is in the final stages, it expected to launch offensive in next few days. Approx 65,000 Iraqi soldiers are ready for Mosul liberation battle.

US has Provided Anti Aircraft System to Fight ISIS Drones. US has provided anti aircraft system 'Drone Defender' to Iraqi forces to pick up and shoot down drones employed by ISIS.

US – Saudi Arabia Agreement to Allow ISIS to Retreat from Mosul. Russian news agency has reported that US – Saudi Arabia have reached an agreement to allow ISIS elements to retreat from Mosul to Syria, during the offensive to liberate Mosul from ISIS. The agreement is likely to allow approx 9,000 ISIS elements to flee to eastern Syria, could launch an offensive to capture cities of Dier ez Zor and Palmyra.

Comments. The preparations for launch of offensive to liberate Mosul from ISIS are almost complete, the offensive could be launched any time.

The defeat of ISIS is imminent; ISIS has been fearing revolt in its ranks and taken several measures to prevent it. ISIS has been preventing civilians from fleeing the city, who are likely to be used as human shields.

A humanitarian crisis is looming large as the operations gain momentum for capture of Mosul. It is expected that IDP are likely to touch about a million. However, 20 Camps have been established by the security forces to take care of IDPs.

US – Saudi Arabia is believed to have concluded an agreement to allow ISIS to retreat from Mosul to Syria. If it is true, it would prove to be disastrous for fight against ISIS in Syria. It would strengthen ISIS presence in Syria, particularly in its strongholds in Eastern Syria.

SYRIA

Turkey Backed Rebels Capture Town of Dabiq from ISIS. Turkey backed rebels have taken control of northern Syrian town of Dabiq from ISIS, following heavy shelling and months of airstrikes. It was a major stronghold of ISIS, not only strategically important but had great symbolic value to ISIS.

Eastern Part of City of Aleppo Pounded as Assad Vows to Retake the City. Govt forces backed by Russian strikes have pounded the eastern part of Aleppo city with a new wave of airstrikes, causing large number of civilian casualties and colossal damage to property. Assad believes that capture of Aleppo city would serve as a springboard to pushing terrorists back to Turkey.

Peace Talks Fail to Break Deadlock in Syria. Peace talks recently held in Switzerland, hosted by US Secretary of State, Russian Foreign Minister and seven foreign ministers of the region failed to make a joint statement, on termination of talks. The talks were held amidst raging violence in the city of Aleppo.

Comments. Loss of town of Dabiq, strategically important, symbol of presence is a major setback to ISIS.

Syria peace talks sponsored by US have failed to make any headway.

Assad forces backed by Russian airstrikes continue their offensive to retake eastern part of city of Aleppo, which is strategically important to expand their presence towards east in to ISIS strongholds.

YEMEN

Govt Forces Control Vital Road in Marib. The Govt forces are reported to have cut off a vital supply line of Al Houthis in Marib Province, after taking control of strategic road that connects city of Serwah to the capital city of Sana'a. This is a major success, as it would help in cutting of supplies to Houthi rebels in Sana'a.

Govt Forces Advance to Rebels Heartland. Govt forces secured positions on the border with Saudi Arabia, the stronghold of Houthi rebels in North of the country. The Govt forces are making slow headway towards Ketaf, the largest district in Saada Province.

UN Envoy may Announce Yemen Ceasefire Deal Shortly. The UN envoy after meeting Houthi rebels in Oman hoped to announce ceasefire deal in next few days, after discussing with Hadi Govt.

Houthi rebels missiles target US Navy. Two missiles fired by Houthi rebels fell short of US warships patrolling in Red Sea off Yemen coast. USS Mason, a destroyer, detected two inbound missiles within an hour of each. The incident comes after Houthis struck a civilian vessel belonging to UAE, in the strategic Bab Al Mandab, a week back.

US target Houthi radar installations. US warships stationed off the coast of Yemen fired Cruise missiles on the radar installations of Houthi rebels, used to target US ships. US has promised more such strikes, if required.

Comments. UN sponsored ceasefire could be announced shortly, post talks with the Hadi Govt.

US has destroyed Radar installations used by Houthi rebels to target ships moving in Red Sea off the coast of Yemen. US has promised more such strikes, if required.

The preparations for retake of the capital city of Sana'a are progressing slowly but steadily. The cutting off of strategic road link between Serwah and capital city of Sana'a would prevent supplies to Houthi rebels in Sana'a.

SPACE

Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)

Chinese Space Sojourn. On 17 Oct 16, a Chinese Long March-2F rocket launched Shenzhou 11, the reentry module with two astronauts. Shenzhou will dock with Tiangong-2 space station which is the second space station launched by China. It is reported that aboard the space station, astronauts will conduct experiments in medicine and other space related technologies for thirty days before returning. It is the sixth time China has sent men into space. China views the Tiangong space station as a stepping stone towards a mission to Mars later in the decade. The Chinese government is also looking at putting astronauts on the moon in near future.

Earlier Chinese space programme was managed 2nd artillery of PRC however, since 1990, the space programme is being managed by the China National Space administration (CNSA) but, it continues to have strong military characteristics. What is not commonly known that today Chinese have credible strike capability with its own GPS (Baeidu), Anti-satellite capability and ISR capability with dedicated constellation of ELINT satellites. These spaces together have bolstered its Anti-ship ballistic missile capability which is estimated to have achieved the initial operational level capability.

United States for security reason kept China out of the International Space Station which is a multilateral effort otherwise. Even now, US does not permit use of PRC satellite launch services by American industry due to concerns over alleged civilian technology transfer that could have dual-use military applications to some rouge countries such as North Korea.

A larger basic permanent space station, Tiangong -3 would be in place by 2020. It has also a plan to place in orbit an orbital solar power plant with 10,000 MW capacity massing 50,000 tonnes in long run.

Chinese space programme was heavily dependent on the Russian support which is evident from the designs of the space launch vehicles and modules etc. Despite this, Chinese have made great stride in Space arena which is also facilitator towards modernization of its armed forces. India and China have started out on the space journey together sixties but, it has stripped far ahead of us particularly in military use of the space.

NUCLEAR

Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)

India Likely to Lease another Russian Nuclear Submarine. A section of the media reported that India is likely to take on lease another Russian nuclear attack Submarine.

Meanwhile, the news also says that indigenous 6000 ton Arihant SSBN has already been operationally deployed with its arsenal of strategic missile with ranges up to 3500km. If true, then we have achieved the deterrence triad. Even though the missile range in is nearly half of in comparison to the Chinese Dong-Feng nuclear missile it , The Indian strategic capability will be under Chinese reckoning. It will be gain further traction after we deploy at least three Nuclear SSBNs. Pakistan In any case does not have nuclear submarine thus lacks triad.

NSG Membership. In the aftermath of BRICS Summit, it has become clear that India cannot count on Chinese support in gaining NSG membership anytime soon. Meanwhile US Ambassador Mr. Richard Verma in a recent interview has stated that US would continue to support India's candidature, since it is based on consensus between the member countries, he cannot give any time line for the membership. Hence, it is clear that for some time to come India is not likely to get membership of the NSG.

We need to take a holistic approach and examine the impact of non-availability of NSG membership on our civil nuclear energy as the strategic nuclear plan as such is not affected. NSG was formed to deny India access to sophisticated technology after 1974 peaceful nuclear explosion. Our civil nuclear generation does not get seriously affected without NSG membership. In view of this, we need not clamour for NSG membership and give undue handle to China to block India's membership because of its narrow view and Pakistan factor.

India has committed to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and ensure that 40% of its energy is sourced from renewable and clean sources, there is a pressing need to scale up nuclear power production. India should apprise P5 nations that in absence of new technology, which is barred without NSG membership. India may not meet above target. China is not member of MTCR but, it has not constrained China in missile proliferation, then why should the absence of NSG membership constrain India in Nuclear Trade with non-nuclear states.