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Editor

M. S. Prathibha

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The East Asia Centre at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) publishes the bi-monthly newsletter, the East Asia Military Monitor. It tracks important news developments in the military and security issues from the East Asian region. We hope that the continuous coverage help in keeping abreast of the trends in the region and future scenarios.

The news section covers the latest weapons platforms and the PLA military activities and training exercises. It also covers issues regarding the recent events regarding Taiwan and the significance for the region. Important issues on Japan and the Korean peninsula has also been covered as the countries in the region are pursuing security and foreign policy goals.

The members of the East Asia Centre at IDSA strive to make accessible the military and security trends in East Asia to the larger strategic community and students.

M. S. Prathibha

Associate Fellow, IDSA

MAPPING EAST ASIA

CHINA

Weapons Platform Development

Ships

- It is learnt that China will “build Type 071E amphibious transport dock ships, “also classified as a type of landing platform dock”, for export to Thailand. It is reported to be the largest, and perhaps the most sophisticated, naval ship China will export for the first time. “The Type 071E is an export version of the Type 071 landing platform dock.” A 210-meter long and 28-meter wide ship, with “a full-load displacement of 25,000 metric tons”, Type 071 is the PLA Navy’s (PLAN’s) “largest landing craft”. The PLAN has six Type 071s in service, which can sail more than 18,500 kilometres in a single operation.” The export version will have “better weapons” and “carry more helicopters.” The *HTMS Similan*, a Type 908 replenishment ship, with “a full-load displacement of 22,000 tons” has been the largest ship that China has exported thus far.¹
- The media recently reported about the launching of China’s first amphibious assault ship (a Type 075). The yet to be named military warship is “domestically developed and built” and “capable of conducting amphibious combat and other tasks.” It is still under construction, as it is yet to undergo “outfitting and fine-tuning [of] equipment” and has to “conduct mooring tests and sea trials.” Once completed, it “will be about 250 meters long and 30 meters wide”, with displacement of “nearly 40,000 metric tons.”²

Helicopters

- The Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) has produced “China’s first domestically developed medium-lift utility helicopter”, the Z-20. This “twin-engine [turbo-shaft engines], multipurpose helicopter can “operate in many areas, and can fly in difficult weather conditions.” Primarily meant for transportation missions, it “can be conveniently refitted for other operations.” It has a “streamlined aerodynamic structure, new anti-icing technology and a cutting-edge control system” and is equipped with a “fly-by-wire flight control system”, the media reported.³
- China has upgraded its Z-19 attack helicopter, which is “its large transport helicopter for plateau missions”, “and added [an] extra radar comparable to [the] Apache’s Longbow, to its light attack helicopter for more lethality.” This radar now “enables the Z-19 to search and track targets over long distances in complicated weather conditions day and night, and provide accurate targeting data for guided weapon systems.”⁴
- It is estimated that AVIC can sell around 300 AC352 utility helicopters in 20 years. The helicopter is expected to receive the airworthiness certification soon. “Good economy and low operational and maintenance costs”

¹ Zhao Lei, “Deal for Biggest Naval Ship Inked with Thailand”, *China Daily*, September 16, 2019 at <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201909/16/WS5d7ee55fa310cf3e3556b8f8.html> (Accessed October 14, 2019).

² Zhao Lei, “PLA Navy Unveils Its 1st Amphibious Assault Ship”, *China Daily*, September 26, 2019 at <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201909/26/WS5d8bd68da310cf3e3556d7bc.html> (Accessed October 14, 2019).

³ Zhao Lei, “Z-20 Called One of World’s Best”, *China Daily*, October 11, 2019 at <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201910/11/WS5d9f95aaa310cf3e3556fc7f.html> (Accessed October 14, 2019).

⁴ Liu Xuanzun and Yang Tiehu (*Global Times*), “Firm Displays Upgraded Helicopters at Tianjin Expo”, October 14, 2019, *People’s Daily* at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/1014/c90000-9622330.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

are said to be this helicopter's USP. It is advertised as being "useful in rescue missions, medical air services, maritime patrols and offshore oil rigs' transport operations." This helicopter was co-developed with Airbus Helicopters in 2006. Its European model is known as the H175. Around 800 to 1,000 AC352s are expected to be sold by the companies "over the next 20 years", "with profits to be split equally." The helicopter is reported to have "a maximum takeoff weight of 7.5 tons, a maximum carrying capacity of 3 tons and a cruising speed of 275 kilometres per hour." Also, "it can fly up to 850 km in a single operation", with two pilots and "up to 16 passengers."⁵

- China is working on the Super Great White Shark attack helicopter, "which looks like a flying saucer", "a scale prototype of which is scheduled to make its maiden flight in 2020." The project is "highly experimental and may not be put into practical use anytime soon." However, it is being underlined as "beneficial to China's technology development for future helicopters." This helicopter is being developed as "a high-speed helicopter designed for future digitalized warfare." Its proposed high-speed and stealth capabilities are drawing attention, though there are questions whether "it could be unstable and might not be able to fly safely." However, Chinese sources insist that "high speed, intelligence, stealth and low noise are four technological directions that future helicopters are headed toward."⁶

Fighters Jets

- "J-20 stealth fighter jets have been commissioned" into the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) air force, which "is China's fourth-generation medium and long-range fighter jet, which made its maiden flight in 2011."⁷

Missiles

- At the National Day Parade on October 1, 2019, "China unveiled Dongfeng-41 intercontinental strategic nuclear missiles", when "a formation [made up of two missile brigades from the rocket force] consisting of 16 new-type strategic nuclear missile launchers carrying Dongfeng-41 passed through Tian'anmen Square." These missiles are "the mainstay of China's strategic nuclear strength."⁸

The Gulf of Aden Deployment

- The PLAN's 33rd Fleet, "composed of naval forces from the Northern Theatre Command of the Chinese navy" sailed "for the Gulf of Aden to escort civilian ships" under China's anti-piracy operation in the Gulf. It included "a destroyer, a frigate and a supply ship... more than 600 officers and soldiers, dozens of special operation soldiers and two helicopters on-board. "The PLAN "has dispatched 106 vessels and over 28,000 officers and soldiers to escort more than 6,700 Chinese and foreign ships" since December 2008 when it

⁵ Zhao Lei, "AVIC Bullish on New Helicopter's Potential", *China Daily*, October 14, 2019 at <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201910/14/WS5da3d228a310cf3e35570456.html> (Accessed October 14, 2019).

⁶ Liu Xuanzun (*Global Times*), "Flying Saucer-like Attack Helicopter to Take to the Sky in 2020", *People's Daily*, October 12, 2019 at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/1012/c90000-9622034.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

⁷ Xinhua, "Stealth Fighters Join PLA Air Force Ace Unit", *People's Daily*, October 14, 2019 at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/1014/c90000-9622375.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

⁸ Xinhua, "China Unveils Most Advanced Dongfeng-41 Intercontinental Strategic Nuclear Missiles", *People's Daily*, October 01, 2019 at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/1001/c90000-9620061.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

began the operation there.⁹ The Fleet has the *CNS Xining*, which is a Type 052D class commissioned in January 2017. The media reported that “a Type 052D destroyer has a standard displacement of 6,300 metric tons and carries a wide range of weapons, including a single-barrel 130 mm naval gun, a close-in weapon system, 64 HHQ-9 long-range anti-aircraft missiles and YJ-18 or YJ-83 cruise missiles.” It “has a stealth design and can act as a flagship for a strike group.” The ship, “capable of conducting anti-ship, anti-submarine and air defense operations”, is popularly termed a “carrier killer.” There are around 17 Type 052Ds, with 11 in service. Besides, the Fleet also has the *CNS Weifang*, a Type 054A guided-missile frigate, and the *CNS Hob Xil Hu*, a Type 903A supply ship.¹⁰

Training and Exercise

- Recently, the 74th Group Army of the PLA organised “a joint land assault exercise featuring multiple military branches,” which contained drills like maritime amphibious assault training. The exercise was conducted keeping the Taiwan contingency in mind, “off the eastern coast of Guangdong Province”, towards Taiwan. Amphibious armoured vehicles moved from western Guangdong to participate in the exercise. It was a joint exercise of the navy and air force in which “amphibious assault ships, with additional air support, a combined arms brigade of the army launched a joint assault on a coastal area. Navy minesweepers and obstacle breaking boats first cleared a path through the sea, and amphibious assault vehicles of the army stormed the coast from multiple directions. As the army closed in on the coast, warplanes, artilleries and tanks launched simulated joint strikes from multiple points and successfully seized the position. While the defending team attempted counterattacks, the army called in air strikes from a communications command platform, guiding fighter aircraft and long-range rockets that eliminated the defender’s threat.”¹¹
- Chinese Type 99A main battle tanks, for the first time, along with “some of its most powerful weapons and equipment” like “battlefield robots used for mine sweeping and reconnaissance”, participated in a live-ammunition exercise for “potential plateau warfare” in “a snow-covered plateau” area, somewhere in western China. The PLA is likely to conduct more such exercises with new weapons and equipment.¹²
- In an important advance, the China Coast Guard patrol mission sailed to the North Pacific Ocean from July 20 to August 15, 2019, with the aim of strengthening “fisheries regulation on the high seas.” The two-ship patrol mission sailed 9,857 sea miles. The media particularly informed that the patrol was “in accordance with the Convention on the Conservation and Management of the High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean, which came into force in 2015.”¹³

⁹ Xinhua, “China Sends New Naval Fleet for Escort Mission”, *China Daily*, August 29, 2019 at <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201908/29/WS5d67c730a310cf3e35568a8d.html> (Accessed October 14, 2019).

¹⁰ Zhao Lei, “Navy Sends Its Most Capable Combat Ship on Escort Mission”, *China Daily*, September 10, 2019 at <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201909/10/WS5d76fe60a310cf3e3556aad1.html> (Accessed October 14, 2019).

¹¹ Liu Xuanzun (*Global Times*), “PLA Conducts Joint Land Assault Exercises near Taiwan”, *People’s Daily*, September 09, 2019 at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0909/c90000-9613086.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

¹² *Global Times*, “China Uses Advanced Weapons in Plateau Military Drills”, *People’s Daily*, August 20, 2019 at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0820/c90000-9607646.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

¹³ Xinhua, “China Coast Guard Ships Conduct Fishery Patrol in North Pacific”, *People’s Daily*, August 19, 2019 at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0819/c90000-9607163.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

- The Australian Army and the Chinese PLA, with 10 personnel from each side, held a joint exercise “taking part in the adventurous field training ... and [to] build teamwork between the two armies.” The activities included “orienteering, a survival exercise on a desert island and a sea-kayak journey.”¹⁴
- Chinese Su-34 fighter jets participated in the Center-2019 military exercises in the Orenburg region of Russia in September 2019. This exercise, in which “128,000 troops, more than 20,000 units of weapons and military hardware, about 600 aircraft and up to 15 ships and support vessels” from eight countries participated, was spread across three countries and the Caspian Sea.¹⁵
- China has set up its “first military maritime medical aid simulation training system”, which the Sixth Medical Center of the PLA General Hospital and a number of other institutions have jointly developed. As per the details available, “employing simulation technology, the system offers training in four categories including medical aid theory, skill training and life support in cases of naval battle injuries. With its original simulated patients and body parts, the system can allow a maximum of six trainees to conduct surgery training simultaneously.”¹⁶
- The media reported that Chinese military vessels and aircraft warned the US warship *Wayne E. Meyer* to leave the maritime area off the Xisha Islands as it has entered in China’s ‘territorial waters’ without permission.¹⁷

TAIWAN

Taiwan’s Arms Purchase from the US

- Overlooking China’s warning, perhaps as a move to convey a strategic message, a US naval ship “sailed through the Taiwan Strait ... [two days] after Beijing warned Washington [about] a possible sale of advanced F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan.” It should be noted that the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) had “notified Congress of a possible sale of 66 F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan” two days before the ship sailed. The media cited the Ministry of Defense (MND) that this was “the seventh such sailing by US Navy ships in 2019 and the 10th since July 2018 when US military ships began to sail through the Taiwan Strait more assertively.” Separately, “three military ships from France, Canada and the Philippines” have also sailed through the Taiwan Strait in 2019, as has been reported.¹⁸

¹⁴ Xinhua, “China-Australia Joint Military Exercise Starts in South China”, *People’s Daily*, October 11, 2019 at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/1011/c90000-9621646.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

¹⁵ Xinhua, “Center-2019 Military Exercises Held in Russia”, *People’s Daily*, September 21, 2019 at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0921/c90000-9616705.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

¹⁶ Xinhua, “China Develops First Maritime Medical Aid Simulation Training System”, *People’s Daily*, August 23, 2019 at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0823/c90000-9608660.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

¹⁷ CNTV, “Chinese Military Monitors, Warns U.S. Warship Meyer to Leave”, *People’s Daily*, September 16, 2019 at <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0916/c90000-9614999.html> (Accessed October 15, 2019).

¹⁸ Matt Yu and Emerson Lim, “U.S. Military Sails through Taiwan Strait after Chinese Protest”, *Focus Taiwan*, August 23, 2019 at <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201908230017.aspx> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

- While the DSCA notified Congress of the possible sale, Taiwan's Cabinet on its part passed a draft bill to allocate necessary funds to buy a total of 66 F-16 fighter jets from the US "at a cost of NT\$250 billion (US\$8.08 billion)." The bill was needed "to create a special budget to cover the spending over several years until December 31, 2026." Mass production of the jets for Taiwan will take two more years to begin. All 66 fighter jets will be delivered between 2023 and 2026.¹⁹ As per the Taiwanese assessment, Taiwan will pay "less than the average price paid by Bahrain, Slovakia, Morocco and Bulgaria, about US\$149 million per F-16V."²⁰
- Taiwan has placed its request to the US for the purchase of M109A6 Paladin self-propelled howitzers, which has "quick reload and big firepower" capabilities. Although the number of the intended purchase is not known yet, unconfirmed media reports put this number at 100. Separately, it is said that "the army's rangefinder and positioning systems are partly digitized and that the relevant equipment and training can be upgraded in the future to maximize the capabilities of the Paladin artillery." Presently, Taiwan uses M109A5, M109A2, M114 and M110A2 howitzers. It is learnt that "compared with the [latest] M109A5, the Paladin has superior capability in the areas of Reliability, Availability, and Maintainability (RAM), armament and survivability. The Paladin can fire the first round on the move within 60 seconds, while its "shoot and scoot" capability allows it to avoid counter-battery fire, and it has a range of 30 kilometres using assisted rounds." The intended purchase is important from a diplomatic point of view. The proposal has been sent within two months of the US approval for selling "108 M1A2T Abrams tanks and 66 new F-16 Block 70/72 jet fighters."²¹
- David Helvey, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs recently advised Taiwan that since "Taiwan cannot match China's defense spending, and does not have to", it should invest more in "cost-effective" asymmetric warfare. He also underlined that a "distributed, manoeuvrable and decentralized force," a force of "large numbers of small things" is something Taiwan should focus on. Elaborating his idea, he said that "this force should be able to operate in a degraded, electromagnetic environment and under a barrage of missile and air attacks", employing "cost-effective and survivable" "highly mobile coastal defense cruise missiles, short-range air defense, naval mines, small fast-attack craft, mobile artillery and advanced surveillance assets."²²
- Taiwan's Vice-Minister General Chang Guan-chung, at the annual US-Taiwan Defense Industry Conference in Ellicott City, Maryland, appealed to the US "to provide Taiwan long-term logistic support in addition to the sales of arms made to bolster the country's defenses." Describing "such support as crucial and something that should be a focus of future Taiwan-US cooperation", he remarked, "US businesses can take a step further in working with Taiwanese companies by building depot-level maintenance capacity in Taiwan", which "will lower maintenance costs and raise maintenance efficiency for better operational sustainability... building a local maintenance supply chain will provide life cycle integrated logistic support to countries in the region and therefore raise the operational rate of US-made equipment in the region."²³

¹⁹ Ku Chuan and Joseph Yeh, "Cabinet Passes Bill for NT\$250 Billion F-16 Budget", *Focus Taiwan*, September 5, 2019 at <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201909050010.aspx> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

²⁰ Staff Writer, "Taiwan Getting a Bargain on F-16V Jets: Lawmakers", *Taipei Times*, September 2, 2019 at <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2019/09/02/2003721559> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

²¹ Matt Yu and Emerson Lim, "Taiwan Plans to Buy Paladin Howitzers from U.S.: Defense Minister", *Focus Taiwan*, September 9, 2019 at <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201909230015.aspx> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

²² Staff Writer, "Taiwan must Focus on Cost-effective Defense: US Official", *Taipei Times*, October 10, 2019 at <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2019/10/10/2003723717> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

²³ Chiang Chin-yeh and Elizabeth Hsu, "Taiwan Seeking Long-term U.S. Logistic Support: Defense Official", *Focus Taiwan*, August 8, 2019 at <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201910080004.aspx> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

Joint Exercise and Research Exploration

- The media reported Vice-Premier Chen Chi-mai as saying that Taiwan would “test its cyber war defense capabilities in the first-ever [five-day] Cyber Offensive and Defensive Exercises to be held with the United States in coming November.” These exercises “will be similar to the Cyber Storm exercises, which are the US Department of Homeland Security’s biennial exercises to strengthen cyber preparedness in the public and private sectors”, which began in 2006. As per the details, the exercise “will be divided into two parts, with the first testing the response of government staff and officials to phishing emails or text messages, which are the most common form of cyber attack. The second part of the drill is to examine responses in the public and private sectors to cyber attacks launched from foreign countries” and locally. It was reported that 15 countries are expected to participate in the exercise.²⁴
- Wang Ting-yu, Convener of the Legislature’s Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee, travelled to the US and made a pitch for inviting “Taiwan to participate in the upcoming multi-national military exercises in the Pacific, based on U.S. laws that have already been enacted.” He argued, “Under those existing laws, visits to the US by senior Taiwanese officials should also increase.” It should be noted that the US passed the Taiwan Travel Act in 2018.²⁵
- The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), the *de facto* US embassy in Taipei, clarified that the port call by US naval research vessel *The R/V Sally Ride* to Taiwan was “unrelated to the F-16V sale recently notified by the Trump administration to US Congress.” The research vessel, “which can accommodate 20 crew and 25 scientists”, “is owned by the U.S. Office of Naval Research and operated by Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) under the University of California, San Diego.” It stayed at Taiwan’s Keelung Port for around 10 days.²⁶

TAIPEI Act: A Move that Needs to be Closely Followed

- In a significant move that proved of far reaching importance, the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations passed the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act to support “Taiwan’s international presence.” The Act has bipartisan backing as Republican Senator Cory Gardner authored it and Democratic Senator Chris Coons sponsored it. It “authorizes the U.S. Secretary of State to consider modification of US diplomatic presence in nations that take action to downgrade official or unofficial ties with Taiwan. It further directs the US government to advocate Taiwan’s membership in international organizations in which statehood is not required and to speak for Taiwan’s observer status in other international organizations.”²⁷ Taiwan losing its diplomatic allies to China in quick succession has raised concerns in the US. Vice President Mike Pence cancelled his planned meeting with Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh

²⁴ Ku Chuan and Joseph Yeh, “Taiwan to Test Cyber Defense in First Joint Exercise with US”, *Focus Taiwan*, September 22, 2019 at <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201909220004.aspx> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

²⁵ Chiang Chin-yeh and Joseph Yeh, “DPP Lawmaker Lobbies for Taiwan to Join Pacific Military Exercises”, *Focus Taiwan*, September 15, 2019 at <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201909150005.aspx> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

²⁶ Yen Cheng, Matt Yu and Emerson Lim, “Visit of U.S. research ship not related to F-16V deal: AIT”, *Focus Taiwan*, August 23, 2019 at <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201908230008.aspx> (Accessed October 10, 2019).

²⁷ Stacy Hsu, Wen Kui-hsiang and Emerson Lim, “U.S. Senate Committee Passes TAIPEI Act”, *Taipei Times*, September 26, 2019 at <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201909260005.aspx> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

Sogavare “after the latter decided to cut ties with Taiwan earlier this week.” An unidentified official remarked that The Solomon Islands was “hurting a historically strong relationship by doing this” ... it’s a setback, and it is prioritizing short-term gain with China over long-term commitment with the US.”²⁸

The KMT Approaches the US

- As the presidential election is approaching in Taiwan next year in January, the leading opposition party the Kuomintang recently “sent a high-profile delegation to the US-Taiwan Defence Industry Conference to try to reassure the Americans about the party’s security and defence policies if its presidential candidate Han Kuo-yu wins the upcoming election.” This is an important annual conference, organised by the US-Taiwan Business Council. The KMT representative Alexander Huang Chieh-cheng, chairman of the Council on Strategic and Wargaming Studies, remarked at the Conference, “The primary focus of our national defence and force-building should be aimed at preventing [China] from making a decision to use force.” Huang, who is also a former vice-chairman of Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council, assured that if the KMT comes to power next year, it would “refrain from being a “troublemaker in the region,” and would be “a responsible partner for security in the Indo-Pacific.”²⁹

China-Russia Defence Cooperation: Tsentr2019 Manoeuvres

Moving forward in military ties with Russia, the Chinese military troops participated in ‘Tsentr 2019 Manoeuvres’ from September 16-21, 2019 in Russia. Military contingents from India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also participated in the exercise.

The objective of the exercise was to verify the level of readiness of the military command and control units of the Central Military District, the command staff of the military contingents for command and control of a joint grouping of troops, increase compatibility and level of interaction in solving joint problems in peacekeeping, protect the interests of, and ensure security in, the Central Asian region, and demonstrate the readiness of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the state in the Central Asian region for the protection of national interests.³⁰

The six-day exercise featured manoeuvre and defence, fire strike, comprehensive counter-attack and maintaining stability. About 130 army aviation helicopters of the Russian Federation and the People’s Liberation Army of China were involved in the exercise.

²⁸ Chiang Chin-yeh and Joseph Yeh, “U.S. Vice-President Confirms Cancellation of Solomons Meet”, *Focus Taiwan*, September 19, 2019 at 2019/09/19 <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201909190004.aspx> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

²⁹ Lawrence Chung, “Taiwan’s KMT Opposition Tries to Reassure US over Defence Policies It will Adopt If It Wins Next Year’s Presidential Election”, *South China Morning Post* (SCMP), October 8, 2019 at <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3032013/taiwans-kmt-opposition-tries-reassure-us-over-defence-policies> (Accessed October 16, 2019).

³⁰ Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, “Tsentr 2019 manoeuvres kick off in Armed Forces of Russian Federation”, September 16, 2019 at http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12252532@egNews (Accessed on October 18, 2019).

Describing the outcome of Chinese military participation in Tsentr 2019, Colonel Ren Guoqiang, the spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defence of the People's Republic of China, stated that, "The exercise fully tested and improved the capabilities of the Chinese troops in trans-border projection, overseas command, joint operation and logistics and released the effects of the Chinese defence and military reform." Also, "The exercise has further consolidated and developed the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for the new era, and further improved the strategic coordination between the two militaries."³¹

Meanwhile during the 24th meeting of the Russian-Chinese mixed inter-governmental commission on military cooperation, the Russian Federation's General of the Army, Sergei Shoigu declared that Russia and China have developed a plan for cooperation between military departments for 2020-2021, where it expected to get approval sooner and later. On the future course of military cooperation with China, General Sergei Shoigu reiterated that, "we will continue to strengthen our cooperation and relations" with China.³²

China set to join Arms Trade Treaty

Strengthening a global arms trade governance, China declared that it will join the UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Its intention of joining the Treaty was specified by Wangi Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China during a deliberation at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly on September 27, 2019 at New York, stating that, "China has initiated the domestic legal procedures to join the Arms Trade Treaty."³³

Initially, China abstained from adopting the resolution at the UN General Assembly on the ground that it "lack[s] consensus" on the treaty. On the decision to join the treaty, however, Geng Shuang, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson, emphasized that, "China attaches great importance to issues caused by illicit trafficking and abuse of conventional arms" and is "in favor of the purpose and objective of the ATT." China as a "responsible member of the international community" is "ready to strengthen exchange and cooperation with all parties to establish a well-regulated and sound order for arms trade and contribute to safeguarding international and regional peace and stability."³⁴

ATT, which regulates international trade in conventional arms, was overwhelmingly adopted on April 2, 2013 by the UN member states; and subsequently, entered into force on December 24, 2014. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), China was the 5th largest global arms exporter between 2014 and 2018, where, during the same period, China exported arms to 53 countries, with Pakistan being the largest recipient, followed by Bangladesh.³⁵

³¹ Ministry of National Defence of the People's Republic of China, "Defence Ministry's Regular Press Conference", September 27, 2019 at http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2019-09/27/content_4851488.htm (Accessed on October 16, 2019).

³² Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, "Military Department of Russia and China develop cooperation plan for 2020-2021", September 20, 2019 at http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12253360@egNews (Accessed on October 18, 2019).

³³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "China Today: A proud member of the global community", September 28, 2019 at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1703219.shtml (Accessed on October 15, 2019).

³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Remarks on China's Announcement on the Arms Trade Treaty", September 28, 2019 at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1703343.shtml (Accessed on October 15, 2019).

³⁵ Stockholm Institute International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), "SIPRI Fact Sheet", March 2019 at https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs_1903_at_2018.pdf (Accessed on October 16, 2019).

China, Russia and Kazakhstan: Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise, 2019

To boost capabilities in the operation against terrorist activities, the Chinese PLA has participated in joint exercises with Kazakhstan and Russia respectively. A joint counter-terrorism drill, 'Fox Hunting 2019' between China and Kazakhstan was held from October 14-19, 2019 in Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan. The Chinese participants were selected from the PLA's 76th Group Army. During the exercise, the Chinese and Kazakh troops were mixed into command group and special force squads to carry out training focusing on four subjects including night reconnaissance, helicopter search, drone reconnaissance and firepower strike, and night ambush.³⁶

Another joint counter-terrorism exercise 'Cooperation 2019' between the Chinese People's Armoured Police (PAP) Force and the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardiya), began in the suburbs of Novosibirsk, Russia on October 11, 2019. During the 11-day exercise, China and Russia set up joint command. Each side sent 58 officers and soldiers to participate in the joint command training, mixed grouping training, and centralized grouping training, who were troops from the Falcon Commandos under China's PAP Force and the independent 'Yermak' Special Operations Force under the Russian National Guard respectively.³⁷ This is the fifth joint exercise between the Chinese and the Russians, following the serial "Cooperation" joint counter-terrorism exercises in 2007, 2013 and 2016. The Cooperation-2017 was held in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, China in December, 2017.

JAPAN

Japan Releases its Annual Defense White Paper

On September 27, the defence ministry issued its annual White Paper titled, *Defense of Japan 2019*. This is the first Defense White Paper of the *Reina* era. More importantly, this is also the first White Paper following the revision of the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) and the Mid-Term Defense Program (FY2019-FY2023; MTDP) that were formulated in December 2018. The latest White Paper has underscored the need for Japan to 'face the realities of national security' and focus on 'quality and quantity'³⁸ while building new defence capability. The US-Japan alliance will remain the core component of Japan's post-war security policy despite the fact that the decades-old alliance has often been critically analysed through the prism of the abandonment complex. In addition to the fluidity in the regional power balance, the latest White Paper focuses on new domains; for instance, space, cyber, and electromagnetic waves which are posing threats to national security and demands re-orientation of traditional focus which is exclusively centred on land, sea, and air domains.

Furthering the official discourse of Japan navigating the most severe security environment in its post-war history and prioritising Tokyo's threat perception, the 2019 White Paper has emphasised the 'serious security concern' as opposed to the 2018 assessment of 'strong security concerns' with regard to China's unilateral and coercive

³⁶ Ministry of National Defence of the People's Republic of China "China, Kazakhstan conduct Fox Hunting -2019 joint counter-terrorism drill", October 16, 2019 at http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2019-10/16/content_4853075.htm (Accessed on October 19, 2019).

³⁷ China Military, "China-Russia 'Cooperation -2019' joint counter-terrorism exercise kicks off", October 12, 2019 at http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-10/12/content_9649625.htm (Accessed on October 19, 2019).

³⁸ 'Defense of Japan 2019', Ministry of Defense, September 2019 at https://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2019/DOJ2019_Full.pdf accessed on October 30, 2019

attempts to alter the status quo and dilute the rules-based maritime order, PLA's anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities, and the strategic component of the BRI.³⁹ For the defence of remote islands, Japan has stepped up its defence build-up in the southwest. The Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) deployed some units, including an area security unit in Amami Oshima, Miyakojima Island and Ishigakijima Island in 2019. Moreover, R&D is undertaken for technologies related to anti-ship missiles and Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectiles (HVGP) for the defence of remote islands. For immediate transportation and deployment of units, Japan is relying on V-22 Ospreys and C-2 transport aircraft. Earlier in 2018, Japan established the Rapid Deployment Brigade. It also instituted the Southwestern Air Defense Force in 2017. Japan is also developing supersonic glide bombs which can be launched from missiles, and is also promoting the deployment of surface-to-ship guided missile units on Miyako and Ishigaki Islands in Okinawa. Besides this, Japan instituted the ninth Air Wing at its Naha Air Base to advance its defence posture in the south-west. In addition, a coast observation unit was established at Yonaguni.

The threat assessment vis-à-vis North Korea remained unchanged in the 2019 White Paper, since Pyongyang continues to possess several hundred ballistic missiles capable of reaching every part of Japan. For the North Korean threat, Japan depends on a multi-tier defence system with upper and lower tier interception by Aegis-equipped destroyers and Patriot PAC-3 system, respectively. Meanwhile, Japan is also introducing Joint Strike Missile (JSM) for its F-35A stealth fighters and modifying existing Japanese F-15 fighters to be furnished with Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles (LRASM) and extended-range Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles (JASSM-ER). Japan's budget has factored in the Lockheed Martin Aegis Ashore land-based ballistic missile defence (BMD) system, which is expected to be operational in 2023 and the batteries are likely to be deployed in the Akita and Yamaguchi prefectures. Meanwhile, the deteriorating relations with South Korea over the history issue has percolated into the security domain with the suspension of the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), enabling military intelligence-sharing for managing regional security threats emanating from the North Korean threat. The 2019 White Paper downgrades South Korea's significance in Japan's scheme of things despite the maiden National Security Strategy stressing the vitality of strengthening relationship with South Korea, both being key US allies in the region and with whom Japan shares universal values.⁴⁰

Japanese defence ministry proposed budget for FY 2020

The Japanese defence ministry on August, 30, 2019 proposed a defence budget of JPY 5.32 trillion or around US\$ 50 billion for the FY 2020,⁴¹ with special focus on three new defence domains, cyber, space, and electronic warfare (EW). This proposal which represents a 1.2 per cent increase from the present budget will be analysed by the finance ministry prior to approval by the Cabinet at the end of this year. If approved, this will mark uninterrupted increase in the defence budget for eight straight years. This is the first defence budget proposal following the 2018 Mid-Term Defense Program (MTDP), which provided for spending of JPY 27.47 trillion (US\$ 242.7 billion),⁴² representing an 11 per cent increase compared to the previous MTDP, over the next five years on Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF). Some of the key points in the proposed budget are enumerated below.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ 'National Security Strategy', Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013 at http://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/documents/2013/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2013/12/17/NSS.pdf accessed on October 27, 2019

⁴¹ Kosuke Takahashi, 'Japanese MoD asks for 1.2% budget increase for FY 2020', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, August 30, 2019 at <https://www.janes.com/article/90771/japanese-mod-asks-for-1-2-budget-increase-for-fy-2020> accessed on October 27, 2019

⁴² Kosuke Takahashi, 'Japan to spend more than USD 240 billion on defence over next five years', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, December 18, 2018 at <https://www.janes.com/article/85299/japan-to-spend-more-than-usd240-billion-on-defence-over-next-five-years> accessed on October 27, 2019

In keeping with the priorities identified in the 2018 NDPG, the ministry requested ¥52.4 billion to reinforce Japan's space capabilities including procuring equipment for detecting electromagnetic interference with satellites. Amidst the space race among major powers, a space operation unit will be launched within the Air Self-Defense Force. Furthermore, a ¥23.8 billion is requested for strengthening cyber security and expanding personnel in the cyber defence unit. Also, a budget of ¥20.7 billion is set aside for developing a stand-off electronic warfare aircraft that would jam enemy equipment. Regarding the scheduled deployment of the Aegis Ashore land-based missile defense batteries, ¥12.2 billion is requested for acquiring the vertical launching system, nurturing human resources and undertaking surveys for ideal deployment sites. While there are plans to introduce the Aegis Ashore system in Akita and Yamaguchi prefectures, some reservations emerged from the local community earlier, drawing from usage of erroneous data. The budget proposal seeks ¥3.1 billion, as Japan upgrades its Izumo-class helicopter destroyers into an aircraft carrier that can deploy the F-35B Lightning vertical short take-off and landing strike fighter. This will eventually convert the helicopter destroyers from sea control platforms into potential strike carriers. ¥84.6 billion is requested to purchase six F-35B fighter jets to be used on the Izumo.⁴³

India-US-Japan Boost Security Ties with Malabar Exercise

India, US and Japan conducted the 23rd edition of the annual trilateral maritime exercise from September 26-October 4, 2019, off the coast of Sasebo, Japan. The key objective of the Malabar Exercise is to enhance interoperability between the three navies in addition to strengthening mutual understanding and building synergies for maritime security operations. The focus has been on complex maritime operations in the surface, sub-surface and air domains, Anti-Submarine Warfare, Anti-Air and Anti-Surface Firings, Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO), including Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) and tactical scenario-based exercises at sea.⁴⁴ The Japan Maritime Self-defense Force (JMSDF) participated with its Izumo Class Helicopter Destroyer, *JS Kaga*, Guided-Missile Destroyers *JS Samidare*, and *Choukai* and a P1 Long-Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft. The Indian Navy participated with its two indigenously-designed and built Multipurpose-Guided Missile Frigate *Sahyadri* and *ASW Corvette Kiltan*, together with a P8I Long-Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft. Meanwhile, the US Navy joined with its *USS McCampbell*, a Los Angeles-Class Attack Submarine and a P8A Long-Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft.⁴⁵

Originally begun as India-US initiative in 1992, the Malabar Exercise expanded its operational scope and complexity, and incorporated Japan as a permanent member in 2015. This joint exercise involving the three democracies is one of the several activities that underlines a robust trilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Earlier, on July 18, 2019 the Indian Navy took part in a ten-day Mine Warfare Exercise (MWE) along with the JMSDF and the US Navy around the coast of northern Japan. This is a first instance when the Indian Navy became a full participant with four Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel partaking with diving equipment in the Exercise.⁴⁶

⁴³ 'Japan seeks record ¥5.32 trillion defense budget with new focus on space and cyberspace', *KYODO*, August 30, 2019 at <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/08/30/national/japan-record-defense-budget-space-cyberspace/#.XZg5xkYzbIU> accessed on October 27, 2019

⁴⁴ 'Indian, Japanese and US maritime forces to participate in exercise Malabar 2019', Commander, US 7th Fleet, September 24, 2019 at <https://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/1970309/indian-japanese-and-us-maritime-forces-to-participate-in-exercise-malabar-2019/> accessed on October 27, 2019

⁴⁵ 'Exercise MALABAR 2019', Ministry of Defence, September 25, 2019 at <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1586112> accessed on October 27, 2019

⁴⁶ Dinakar Peri, 'Navies of India, Japan, US hone mine sweeping skills', *The Hindu*, July 24, 2019 at <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/navies-of-india-japan-us-hone-mine-sweeping-skills/article28692821.ece> accessed on July 20, 2019 accessed on October 27, 2019

India-Japan annual defence dialogue held in Tokyo

The India-Japan Defence Ministerial Dialogue was held at Tokyo on September 2, 2019. Situating the annual dialogue within the framework of India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Japanese counterpart Takeshi Iwaya prioritised maritime security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region during the meeting, given the mutuality of strategic interests and shared universal values. In the maritime security domain, the navies have advanced bilateral cooperation in the area of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), based on the Implementing Arrangement for Deeper Cooperation between the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the Indian Navy signed in 2018. Negotiations on the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) have also gained momentum. Regional security challenges including developments in the Korean Peninsula and in the South China Sea featured in the discussions.⁴⁷

Besides maritime security, deepening exchanges between respective forces and bilateral defence equipment and technology cooperation was also discussed during the annual dialogue. During the defence dialogue, both leaders encouraged deeper exchanges between the defence industries and fostering cooperation among the public and private sectors. There are high-level exchanges between the Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency (ATLA) and the Department of Defence Production (DDP). The Fifth Joint Working Group on Defence Equipment and Technology Cooperation (JWG-DETC) meeting is expected to be held this year. While the Mahindra Group had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Japan's ShinMaywa Industries in April 2018 with the objective of manufacturing and assembling the US-2 amphibious aircraft in India, the defence ministerial dialogue did not elaborate on the status of the negotiations.

Buttressing cooperation between the forces, the maiden bilateral exercise between the air forces, 'Shinyuu Maitri' was held in December 2018 focussing on Mobility/Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) for Transport aircraft.⁴⁸ Moreover, the Japanese Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) participated in the India-US bilateral exercise, 'Cope India' as observers in December 2018. In the maritime security domain, both navies focussed on anti-submarine warfare and mine countermeasures as witnessed in the annual Malabar Exercise. Strengthening cooperation between the armies, the maiden bilateral joint exercise focussing on counter-terrorism, was held in November 2018.

Adding further qualitative depth to this strategic partnership, the maiden 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue is scheduled to be held before the Japan-India Annual Summit.

Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting held in New York

The India-US-Japan-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held on the sidelines of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA74). The discussion was focussed on aligning strategies for the pursuit of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, underpinned by ASEAN centrality and the ASEAN-led regional architecture. The focus of the Quad consultation has been on maritime security, quality infrastructure, and

⁴⁷ 'Joint Press Statement on Japan-India Annual Defence Ministerial Dialogue', Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Defence, September 3, 2019 at <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=192969> accessed on October 27, 2019

⁴⁸ 'EX SHINYUU Maitri-2018 With JASDF Commences', Press Information Bureau, Government of India Ministry of Defence, December 3, 2018 at <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/printrelease.aspx?relid=186087> accessed on October 27, 2019

regional connectivity in support of a rules-based order that promotes stability, growth, and economic prosperity. Regional security challenges including counter-terrorism and cyber security were also discussed.

Japan's National Security Council evaluates dispatching SDF to the Middle East

On October 18, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide confirmed that beyond diplomatic engagement, Japan is also discussing policy options including utilising SDF assets for securing vessels related to Japan. Instead of joining the US-led maritime security initiative, Japan will go for dispatching SDF vessel and units in the Gulf of Oman and Bab el-Mandeb Strait with the objective of information collection based on the defense ministry's establishment law for the purpose of research and study.⁴⁹ Safety of navigation around the Strait of Hormuz is critically important to Japan's energy security. In 2017, 87 per cent of Japan's imported oil was sourced from the Middle East and around 80 per cent of this is transported by tanker through the Strait of Hormuz. Earlier on June 13, two vessels, one of which was operated by the Japanese shipping company Kokuka Sangyo, was attacked near the Strait of Hormuz. The incident took place at a time when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was on a historic visit to Iran, the first such visit by a Japanese Prime Minister in more than four decades. The objective of Prime Minister Abe's visit to Iran was to urge Iran to play a constructive role in maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East.

China, Japan conducts goodwill exercise

China and Japan conducted goodwill naval exercises for the first time in eight years in October 2019. The Japanese destroyer *Samidare* and the Chinese guided-missile destroyer *Taiyuan* reportedly participated in this goodwill exercise. During this goodwill exercise, both sides tested radio communications and coordination procedures. The maiden goodwill exercise was conducted in 2011. This is a positive development in terms of reviving defence cooperation, which suffered due to escalating tensions over the contested Senkaku Islands. Earlier in April, Japan sent a Maritime Self-Defense Force vessel to China to participate in the fleet review for the first time in more than seven years.⁵⁰

President Kovind's visit to Japan

President Ram Nath Kovind was in Japan from October 21-23 to attend the accession ceremonies to the Chrysanthemum Throne by His Majesty the Emperor, Naruhito. He attended the Court Banquet hosted by the Emperor and Empress and also the official banquet hosted by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.⁵¹ To further civilizational linkages, he visited the Tsukiji Hongwanji Buddhist Temple during this visit. He also visited the Meiji Shrine dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and his wife, Empress Soakinin Tokyo. On October 23, President Kovind attended the foundation ceremony of Sino Soto temple in Kakegawa. President Kovind's visit to Japan underscored the growing depth and scope of India-Japan relations. Shared universal values of democracy, freedom, and rule of

⁴⁹ 'Press Conference by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet', October 18, 2019 at https://japan.kantei.go.jp/tyoukanpress/201910/18_p.html accessed on October 27, 2019

⁵⁰ 'Japan, China conduct 1st goodwill drill in 8 years', NHK, October 21, 2019 at https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20191022_02/ accessed on October 27, 2019

⁵¹ 'President of India in Japan; attends Enthronement Ceremony of Emperor Naruhito', President's Secretariat, October 22, 2019 at <https://pib.nic.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1588709> accessed on October 27, 2019

law alongside convergence of strategic, political, and economic interests laid a strong foundation for an enduring partnership. India is expected to host the first Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue (2+2) ahead of the Japan-India annual summit, reportedly scheduled in December 2019. In recent times, India and Japan have had a 2+2 Vice-Ministerial level dialogue.

India-Japan conducts joint military exercise in Mizoram

The India-Japan annual joint military exercise, 'Dharma Guardian' was conducted between October 19 and November 2, 2019 at the counter-insurgency and Jungle Warfare School, Vairengte. The focus was on platoon-level joint training on counter-terrorism operations in a jungle and urban scenario. This annual exercise involving the Indian Army and the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Forces (JGSDF) was begun in 2018, adding further depth to India-Japan defence co-operation, thereby strengthening the Special Strategic Partnership.⁵²

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

India-South Korea deepen defence cooperation

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met with his South Korean counterpart Jeong Kyeong-doo for the India-South Korea defence ministers' meeting, held in Seoul on September 5, 2019. India has extended unwavering support to South Korea for pursuing the goal of complete denuclearisation and permanent peace in cooperation with the international community. Supporting the Special Strategic Partnership conceived through the convergence of India's Act East Policy and South Korea's New Southern Policy, the leaders decided to advance exchanges in military education by signing the *Implementation Contract for Exchanges and Cooperation in Military Education* and the *Enforcement Contract for Logistics Support in Case of Navy's Mutual Visit to Vessels*.⁵³ Furthermore, India and South Korea have formulated a roadmap for advancing defence industry cooperation in areas such as Land Systems, Aero Systems, Naval Systems, R&D cooperation and collaboration in Testing, Certification and Quality Assurance.⁵⁴ India called upon the South Korean defence industry to consider the viability of local production of items, used in weapon systems, imported by Indian defence PSUs. The objective is to forge a win-win equation by way of collaboration, cooperation, co-production and co-development. India, in its effort to persuade the Korean defence industry, announced that attractive discounts will be considered for Korean companies who will participate in the Def Expo 2020, scheduled to be held from February 5-8, 2020 at Lucknow. Earlier, the Defence Minister delivered the keynote speech at the Seoul Defense Dialogue 2019.

⁵² 'Curtain Raiser: Indo-Japan Joint Military Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN – 2019', Press Information Bureau Government of India, Ministry of Defence, October 12, 2019 at <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193756> accessed on October 27, 2019

⁵³ 'South Korea and India agree to strengthen cooperation between their defense industries', Ministry of National Defense, September 9, 2019 at http://www.mnd.go.kr/user/boardList.action?command=view&page=1&boardId=O_47261&boardSeq=O_225702&titleId=null&siteId=mndEN&id=mndEN_020100000000 accessed on October 27, 2019

⁵⁴ 'Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh invites South Korean Defence manufacturing companies to invest in India', Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Defence, September 6, 2019 at <https://www.pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1584355> accessed on October 27, 2019

US-North Korea talks fail to make progress

Chief negotiators for the US and North Korea failed to make progress when they met in Stockholm on October 5, 2019, to discuss the resolution of differences over denuclearisation and sanctions. This is an important development after President Trump's meeting with Chairman Kim Jong-un at the demilitarized zone earlier. While the US stressed that it 'brought creative ideas' to the discussion, the North Koreans stated that in spite of Kim's demand that the US approach negotiations with a "new method of calculation", Washington came 'empty-handed'. The State Department said, "The United States and the DPRK will not overcome a legacy of 70 years of war and hostility on the Korean Peninsula through the course of a single Saturday. These are weighty issues, and they require a strong commitment by both countries. The United States has that commitment".⁵⁵

Japan-South Korea meeting

South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon visited Japan to attend the accession ceremonies to the Chrysanthemum Throne by His Majesty the Emperor, Naruhito. During this visit, he met with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on October 24 and delivered a letter from South Korean President, Moon Jae-in. The discussion focussed on the current state of bilateral relations, South Korea-US-Japan trilateral cooperation and North Korean denuclearisation.⁵⁶ While this meeting will not resolve all the challenges dominating the bilateral relations currently triggered by the South Korean Supreme Court's ruling asking for compensation for forced labour during the Japanese occupation of Korea, it may open opportunities for senior-level dialogue between both sides. Both sides will explore possibilities for non-governmental exchange and people-to-people contact for restoring mutual trust and confidence between these two crucial US allies in East Asia.

⁵⁵ 'North Korea Talks', Press Statement, US Department of State, October 5, 2019 at <https://www.state.gov/north-korea-talks/> accessed on October 27, 2019

⁵⁶ 'Lee Nak-yeon and Abe agree S. Korea-Japan relations cannot remain in current state', Hankyoreh, October 25, 2019 at http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/914625.html accessed on October 27, 2019

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

DR. PRASHANT KUMAR SINGH

ASSOCIATE FELLOW

DR. TITLI BASU

ASSOCIATE FELLOW

DR. OPANGMEREN JAMIR

RESEARCH ANALYST

We appreciate the support of the Center Coordinator Dr. Jagannath P. Panda.

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