

# Weekly Newsletter

## US in favor of asserting influence in Pacific against China:



The United States of America has been opposing the China's expansionist behavior and territorial claims in South China Sea for a long time. In order to contain the influence and expansion of China in Pacific, the USA sends warships via strategic waterway almost frequently. These exercises and objecting the claims of China by the USA has upset Chinese authorities. China believes that it has restrained the relationships and also undermining the stability in the region. South China Sea is a part of Pacific Ocean and China claims ninth-tenth of South China Sea. About \$3 trillion worth of trade takes place in South China Sea every year. Along with China, Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam hold

the competing claims.

In August 2020, a US Navy aircraft carrier carried out an exercise in the disputed South China Sea. A strike group, led by the USS Ronald Reagan, conducted flight operations and high-end maritime stability operations and exercises. This drill took place amid the heightened tensions between China and USA. USA has accused China of taking advantage of pandemic to enforce claims over South China Sea and elsewhere. On August 28<sup>th</sup>, The United States Department of Defense said that China launches tests of four ballistic missiles during military exercise around the Paracel Islands in the disputed territory of South China Sea which is a clear threat to peace and security in the region. The Pentagon claimed that such exercises by China violated her commitment under 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea that would complicate the relations and escalate tensions. It is said that over the past few decades China has built up military installations on several disputed reefs and outcrops in the South China Sea to assert its claim over much of the area. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Indonesia also have maritime claims to the sea. China claims that USA is grossly interfering in her internal affairs and that China will take firm measures to uphold the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies and individuals.

Recently in December 2020, the USA has warned China that her warships will be more assertive if China violated International Law and expansionist policies in South China Sea. Pentagon has claimed that "several countries, notably Russia and China are contesting the balance of power in key regions and seeking to undermine the existing world order". Pentagon further added that US Navy will be more present and visible in the Pacific to detect and document any breach of

International Law. China responded that US is involved in rousing up the conflict in the region.

## After Years of Considering Them a Foe, US Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Meet Taliban:



On Tuesday, General Mark A. Milley, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff met Taliban officials in Doha, Qatar and senior leaders of Afghan Taliban on Wednesday in Kabul. General Milley for prolonged time considered Taliban as the formidable foe that would not fade away in dust easily. The Associated Press has reported that Milley met with Taliban officials

earlier this year in June, but the meeting was kept a secret. Milley met with senior US officials and the President Ashraf Ghani. The officials discussed the contemporary security environment in Afghanistan in which they emphasized specifically on the immediate reduction of violence. If the violence continues and the attacks increase, it will put the progress of Peace talks and agreements at risk. The Taliban led violence is creating a burden on the Afghan security forces, for which the innocent civilians suffer. Taliban have been deliberately destroying the roads, infrastructure and bridges of the country in order to halt the deployment of Afghan troops. According to the military spokeswoman, Commander Sarah Flaherty the meeting was a part of the military channel established as a part of deal in February between US-Taliban. The deal called for the withdrawal of the US troops from Afghanistan in spring and Taliban to initiate negotiations with the Afghan government. As a part of deal, Taliban are to cut off all ties with Al-Qaeda and not allow the land of Afghanistan to be used as terrorist's safe haven. But US did not withdraw the troops, as it claims that the withdrawal of forces depends upon the on-ground condition in Afghanistan. On the other hand, Taliban still maintain contact with Al-Qaeda and have been involved in violent attacks that target Afghan security forces and civilians. Flaherty further added, "The Chairman discussed the need for an immediate reduction of violence and accelerate progress towards a negotiated political solution which contributes to regional stability and safeguards U.S. national interests." The agenda of such meetings is to achieve credibility and trust in Afghanistan and that the US is fully committed to bringing peace and stability in the country. However, Biden's policy on the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan remains unclear and has not publicly declared if he will continue with the February agreements or not. If the US troops withdraw, some of the military equipment will be taken back to America, some will be handed over to Afghan security forces while remaining will be destroyed.

# Smoke Box in South Asia:



Analysts call air pollution as a “Silent Killer” and the SMOG will be increased yearly in plain lands of South Asia. Rice farmers traditionally use combine harvesters to cut their rice in October, leaving behind about four inches of stubble. With less than two weeks before they have to ready their fields to sow wheat, burning is the fastest way to clear the land without any cost and without any effort. In Pakistan, rice is grown on an area of about two million hectares, mainly in the Punjab and Sindh provinces. Most of the fields are cleared by burning every year. Farmers say the new farm equipment can help combat smog, but note that crop burning produces only a small share of the province’s pollution.

These cities are the most populated cities around the globe and the air pollution index is getting higher every year

because of factories and massive use of automobiles and lastly at the end of year burning of field make it more badly. Now the Governments are providing Machines to the farmers for shredding the field waste rather than burning it, farmers have been using the rice stubble shredder and Happy Seeder for the past few years technology will facilitate farmers and government in their own ways technology could cut greenhouse gas emissions by 78 percent. Efforts to curb air pollution will benefit South Asia in the future and this will have a positive impact on people's life and most importantly hospitals will be less burdened.

South Asia took over China and other countries of the world and become the hub of the most polluted cities in the world. In 2020, twenty-one of the world's 30 worst polluted cities were in India, the Pakistani city of Lahore and Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, also made the top 10, making South Asia a particularly toxic region. Air pollution is a longstanding problem in Pakistan, India & Bangladesh in every October and November, contaminates in the air in Punjab province shoot up as farmers burn rice stalks left behind after harvesting to clear their fields to plant wheat. South Asia failed to meet WHO PM 2.5 targets. PM 2.5 is fine particulate matter that is good to inhale and not harmful to the human body. It is a health emergency the air quality monitors in South Asia routinely show hazardous levels in November and December. An estimated 1.2 million people have died because of India's dirty air in 2017.