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G20

BRAZIL 2024

**HARMONY
OR DISCORD?**

IN FOCUS

AFCFTA : BALANCING ASPIRATIONS
WITH GEOPOLITICS

COVER STORY

G20 SUMMIT IN BRAZIL: MANAGING
CONFLICTS AND ASPIRATIONS

WAR STRATEGY

CHINA DISENGAGEMENT A
HALF-STEP FWD?

TNJ'S POWER PANEL



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|| FOREWORD



BALANCING G20'S APPROACH TO CONFLICTS AND GOALS

In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the G20 has emerged as a critical platform for managing conflicts and balancing aspirations among the world's major economies. As the forum that unites diverse nations—spanning developed, emerging and developing economies—the G20 is tasked with tackling issues that not only affect its member states but have far-reaching global consequences.

This edition of The News Analytics Journal delves into the intricate dynamics at play within the G20, exploring how the forum addresses critical issues like economic disparity, climate change, digital transformation and global health. With members who often have conflicting priorities, the G20 must work toward achieving a compromise and building consensus—tasks that require remarkable diplomacy and commitment. These challenges are especially pressing as the world grapples with rising geopolitical tensions and social inequalities that hinder sustainable progress. This current summit at Brazil will take inspiration from the G20 Delhi Summit last year which witnessed some deft diplomacy at play to arrive at a consensual joint statement at the end.

Our contributors examine how the G20 has navigated the competing aspirations of its members, such as balancing climate ambitions with energy needs or advocating for connectivity while ensuring conflict management. Through these analyses, we gain insights into the G20's achievements, challenges, and evolving role as a mediator and facilitator of change.

In this edition, we aim to provide a nuanced perspective on how the G20 is addressing its dual responsibilities: managing global conflicts and supporting the collective aspirations of its diverse membership. We hope this issue of The News Analytics Journal offers valued readers a deeper understanding of the G20's role in shaping a more equitable, resilient and sustainable future.

Jai Hind!

Prof Sanjay Srivastava
Vice Chancellor
Mahatma Gandhi Central University,
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Editor's Note



G20 - FROM DISCORD TO COLLABORATION

The G20, comprising the world's largest economies, serves as more than a platform for economic discussions—it is a stage where

diverse national priorities intersect with global ambitions. As nations face pressing challenges like climate change, trade disparities and multiple regional conflicts, the G20's role in fostering cooperation is more crucial than ever. Yet, beneath its lofty goals lie entrenched geopolitical tensions and competing interests that test its harmony.

This intricate balancing act underscores the G20's dual mission: addressing urgent global crises while shaping a vision for sustainable, inclusive development. Recent summits have highlighted the difficulty of achieving consensus, with debates over energy transitions, technological governance, and debt relief often reflecting broader divisions. The Brazil summit appeared no exception to that.. Despite these challenges, such discussions also pave the way for innovative solutions and reinforce the importance of multilateral collaboration.

In this edition of The News Analytics Journal, we explore the dynamics of the G20, analysing how its leaders navigate conflicts while seeking to align global strategies with individual ambitions. Although divisions and discords appear sharp and challenging, G20 also remains the only organisation that amalgamates Global South and North and thus remains the most meaningful forum to pave a workable solution ahead. The G20 must demonstrate its potential as a unifying force in an increasingly polarized world.

Jai Hind!

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Editor &
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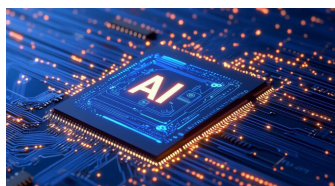
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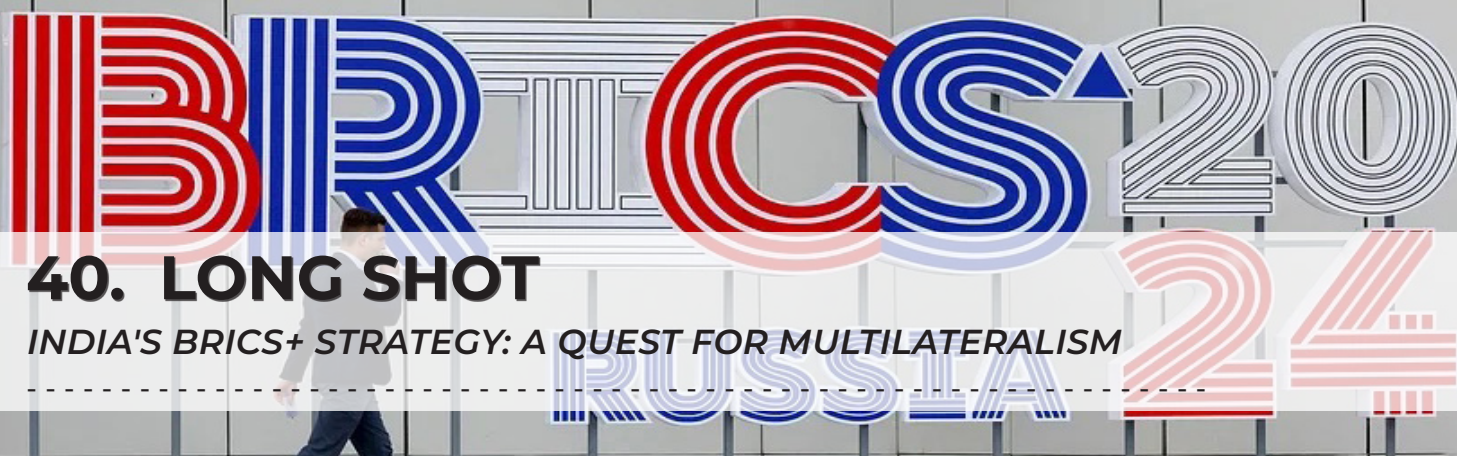
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AfCFTA AND THE QUEST FOR AFRICAN ECONOMIC UNITY

IN FOCUS

Signed in 2018, The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a landmark agreement mirroring Africa's pursuit of economic integration, aiming to unify markets, enhance trade, and foster sustainable development. However, achieving this requires overcoming political, economic, and infrastructural challenges while leveraging strategic measures for long-term success. This article evaluates AfCFTA's geopolitical dimensions, historical foundations in regional trade agreements (RTAs), and the substantial barriers to its success. It also outlines strategic measures for Africa's leaders to maximize AfCFTA's transformative potential realistically and pragmatically.



**BY JUSTUS NAM,
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The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), signed in Kigali, Rwanda, on March 21, 2018, marks a significant step in Africa's journey toward economic integration. To promote intra-African trade, industrial growth, and sustainable development, AfCFTA aligns closely with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda. As of November 2024, the agreement has been signed by 54 African Union (AU) member states, with 47 ratifying it, laying the groundwork for the largest free trade area globally by country count. While AfCFTA embodies the vision of a unified African market, achieving this goal requires navigating complex political, economic, and infrastructural landscapes.

Africa, yet they also revealed the underlying political and economic tensions that complicate a pan-African free trade area. ECOWAS has been central in reducing tariffs and encouraging trade within West Africa, yet political friction and security threats—particularly in the Sahel—undermine its efficacy.

SADC has achieved notable progress in infrastructure and economic policy, but internal political divergences and resource-based interests have often limited cohesive action. COMESA's efforts to reduce tariffs have demonstrated the benefits of integration, yet regulatory discrepancies and infrastructure challenges have prevented it from reaching its full potential. Meanwhile, the EAC, known for its relatively

advanced policy integration, exemplifies how coordinated trade policies can facilitate cross-border movement despite political differences. AfCFTA aims to scale these lessons continent-wide, yet it inherits the same geopolitical complexity that has limited

these RTAs. Nations within these RTAs have divergent interests and economic priorities that often create competing pressures between national sovereignty and continental unity.

AfCFTA symbolizes the vision of economic unity, but its success depends on overcoming geopolitical complexities, protectionist tendencies, and diverse economic priorities.



Creating One African Market

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

PAN-AFRICAN FREE TRADE

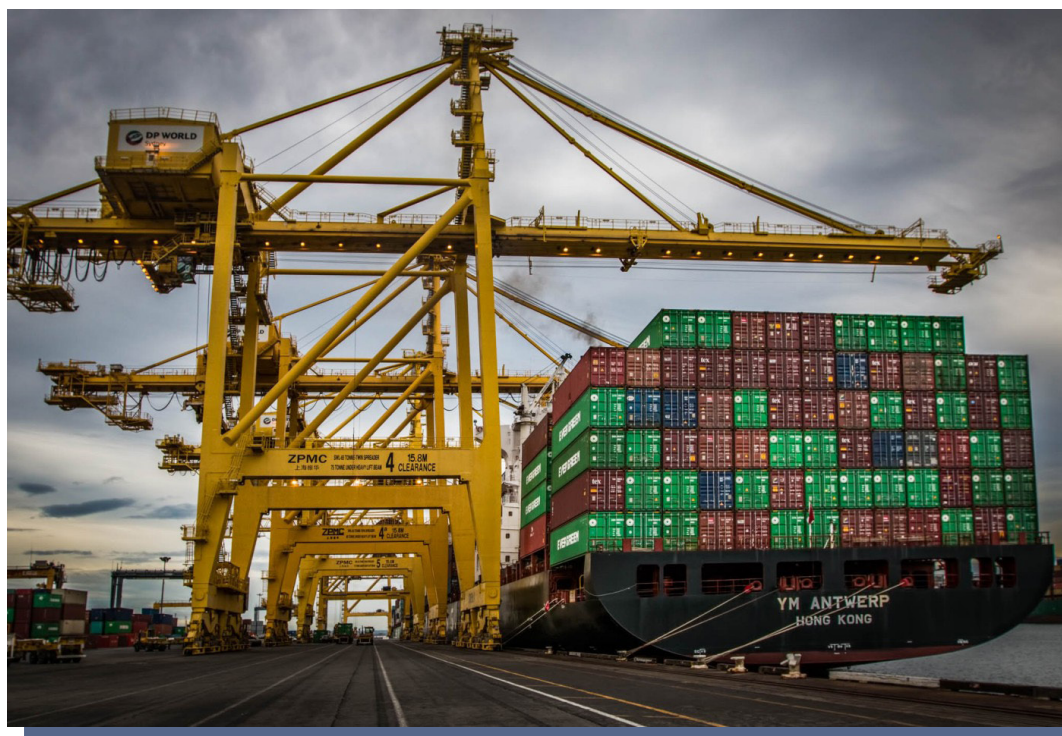
The AfCFTA draws on decades of experience with Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) across the continent, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the East African Community (EAC). These RTAs set vital precedents for cooperation and integration across

KEY CHALLENGES

Protectionist Policies and Market Fragmentation : Despite the goal of economic unity, national protectionism continues to hinder AfCFTA's aspirations. Many African countries maintain tariffs, subsidies, and non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to protect their domestic industries from competition, especially with larger regional economies. For instance, Nigeria's initial hesitation to fully embrace AfCFTA underscored the protectionist concerns that powerful economies may dominate less industrialised nations. Such protectionism creates fragmented markets where inconsistent tariffs, taxes, and regulatory frameworks inhibit seamless trade flows and discourage foreign investment. Without mechanisms to resolve these discrepancies, AfCFTA risks becoming entangled in bureaucratic complexities, undermining its goal to create a coherent, integrated market. Harmonizing these standards will require substantial policy coordination and political will across the continent.

Diverse Economic and Regulatory Environments : AfCFTA's ambition of creating a single African market is complicated by the diversity of economic policies and regulatory environments among member states. African countries vary widely in development levels, economic structures, and policy priorities, from high-income oil producers to agriculture-dependent economies. These differences affect regulatory harmonization, currency exchange rates, and fiscal policies, adding complexity for businesses that operate across borders. For example, inconsistent standards around customs, safety, and labor regulations can lead to costly delays, while fluctuating currency values create additional trade risks. Addressing this diversity will require strategic policy alignment and a standardized framework that can be adapted across countries while allowing room for national flexibility.

Institutional Capacity and Governance Constraints : The success of AfCFTA will depend heavily on the institutional



strength of member states, yet institutional weaknesses persist across much of Africa. Strong institutions are essential for implementing trade policies, monitoring compliance, and enforcing regulations. However, some countries lack the institutional capacity to manage AfCFTA's requirements effectively, which could lead to gaps in enforcement, governance inconsistencies, and even disputes. Strengthening institutions at both national and regional levels is crucial to ensure compliance and manage trade-related disputes. Implementing frameworks for transparency, accountability, and monitoring will be central to AfCFTA's credibility and effectiveness.

Infrastructure Deficits and Trade Logistics : Africa's infrastructure gap remains a significant hurdle to AfCFTA's success. The continent's limited and unreliable transportation networks, such as road, rail, and port infrastructure, increase operational costs and hinder the efficient flow of goods. This infrastructure gap disproportionately affects smaller and landlocked nations, limiting their access to larger markets and making intra-African trade costlier and slower than trade with other regions. Moreover, infrastructure disparities exacerbate economic imbalances within the continent. While some countries, like South Africa, have more advanced infrastructure, others struggle to modernize. Addressing these imbalances through targeted investment in roads, ports, and energy networks will be crucial to making AfCFTA a practical reality.

MAXIMIZING AFCFTA'S POTENTIAL

Harmonising Trade Standards : To facilitate cross-border trade, African leaders must reduce NTBs that limit the flow of goods. This involves streamlining customs procedures, simplifying licensing requirements, and creating a digital platform for reporting and addressing trade barriers. Establishing a standardized framework for NTBs across member states can help minimize delays and reduce costs for businesses. Harmonizing trade standards and regulatory frameworks across RTAs will also be essential for AfCFTA's success. By adopting consistent customs procedures and shared quality standards, Africa can simplify intra-regional trade and make cross-border transactions more predictable.

Public-Private Partnerships : AfCFTA’s effectiveness depends on modern, efficient infrastructure to connect African markets. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) offer a sustainable way to finance large infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, and ports, essential to lowering trade costs. Additionally, prioritizing the development of strategic transport corridors that link major economic hubs can enhance connectivity across Africa. Investing in energy infrastructure is equally vital, as a reliable power supply supports industrial growth and reduces production costs. Improved customs technology and streamlined border procedures will also help reduce trade delays and make cross-border trade more efficient.

Building Institutional Capacity : Strong governance is necessary for enforcing AfCFTA’s standards and managing compliance. African governments must invest in developing institutions capable of monitoring trade flows, resolving disputes, and upholding fair trade practices. Establishing a robust customs framework, training customs officials, and adopting electronic systems for customs processing are critical steps to improve trade facilitation. Collaborative governance mechanisms—such as regular consultations between trade ministers, business leaders, and civil society—can also help address emerging challenges. Transparent reporting and monitoring frameworks are essential to maintain accountability and build trust among stakeholders.

GLOBAL VALUE CHAIN

Supporting Inclusive Growth : For AfCFTA to have a broad, positive impact, its policies must be inclusive, addressing the needs of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and marginalized communities. Providing SMEs with access to financing, training on trade regulations, and digital tools for e-commerce can empower them to expand across borders. Supporting inclusive trade policies ensures that AfCFTA’s benefits extend beyond large corporations to reach all levels of society.

Geopolitical Implications : Beyond its economic goals, AfCFTA holds strategic value for Africa’s geopolitical positioning. As AfCFTA creates a unified African market, the continent gains a stronger bargaining position in global trade negotiations, allowing it to advocate for fairer trade terms with major partners such as the European Union, China, and the United States. This strengthened position could attract foreign investment, particularly as Africa’s consumer base and middle class grow. AfCFTA can also support Africa’s integration into global value chains by encouraging value-added production rather than relying on raw material exports. With the rise of the digital economy, AfCFTA offers Africa an opportunity to expand its e-commerce and digital trade, making African businesses more competitive globally.



Beyond economics, AfCFTA strengthens Africa's geopolitical positioning by integrating into global value chains and embracing the digital economy. Africa targets to reduce dependence on raw material exports and boost competitiveness.



The African Continental Free Trade Area presents a transformative opportunity for Africa's economic future, yet its success hinges on addressing the continent's political and economic complexities. While AfCFTA can catalyze economic unity, it must overcome protectionist policies, infrastructure gaps, and regulatory fragmentation to achieve its goals. With strategic investment, harmonized policies, and institutional capacity building, AfCFTA can foster a new era of African economic integration, growth, and global influence. If African leaders and institutions are willing to make the necessary investments and policy adjustments, AfCFTA has the potential to reshape Africa's role in the global economy and promote sustainable prosperity across the continent.

AfCFTA's potential extends beyond economic benefits. A unified African market enhances the continent's bargaining position in global trade negotiations with partners such as the European Union, China, and the United States. By integrating into global value chains and promoting value-added production, AfCFTA can reduce Africa's dependence on raw material exports. Additionally, the rise of the digital economy offers opportunities to expand e-commerce and digital trade, making African businesses more competitive on the global stage.

(Justus Nam is an expert on Africa. He is an international relations specialist from Nairobi, Kenya. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)

G20 SUMMIT IN BRAZIL: MANAGING

COVER STORY

The 19th Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Governments from the Group of 20 was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 18-19 November 2024. World leaders gathered in Rio against the backdrop of intense geopolitical tensions between the Western world marshalled by the US on one side and Russia & China on the other side.



**AMBASSADOR SRIKUMAR MENON, IFS(RETD)
FOR TNJ**

The incredibly nebulous, uncertain and complex global security situation has been brought into sharp focus by the conflict hotspots in Europe/Ukraine, the Middle East and the Red Sea, not to mention the potential threat of escalation of disputes in the Korean peninsula, the Taiwan straits and the South China Sea. The 33-month-long Ukraine war in Europe has accentuated the deep fissures within the G20 grouping - as Russia receives tacit support from China - while the United States and its Western allies robustly and overtly back Ukraine.

The crisis in Gaza and the Middle East continues unabated as Israel and Iran (through its proxies Hamas and Hezbollah)

refuse to de-escalate -sticking to their belligerent and confrontational stance. Another area of concern for global peace seekers is the ongoing nuclear and missile activities by North Korea in violation of UN Security Council resolutions and the increasing military cooperation between North Korea and Russia.

THE SUMMIT AGENDA

The Rio Summit offered a great opportunity for world leaders to forge a consensus and agree on strategies to tackle long-term global challenges; devise solutions for social



CONFLICTS AND ASPIRATIONS

development issues and reduce the gaps and shortfalls that bedevil development policies in areas of governance, agriculture, education, healthcare and climate change.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, yet again, gave a miss to the summit for the third successive time, with the ICC arrest warrant continuing to hang like the 'Damocles sword' over him. Foreign Minister Lavrov represented Russia at the Summit.

In the lead-up to the summit, there was a significant and positive development vis-a-vis India and China. The BRICS summit held in Kazan on 24 October witnessed the landmark agreement between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi to



de-escalate the long-running border stand-off between the two neighbours along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

This timely agreement and the consequent thawing of tensions between the two important G20 players bode well for, what one may term as a 'qualified success' of the Rio Summit. The Sino-Indian detente, albeit temporary - a work still in progress, afforded the space for both nations to focus on jointly charting a more constructive and collaborative approach with the developed countries - toward addressing the concerns of the Global South.

India, as the previous host of the G20 summit, played a significant supporting role in shaping the agenda at Rio. Prime Minister Modi emphasised the need for sustainable development, food security and prioritising the concerns of the Global South while advocating the continuity of G20's core ambitions at the summit.

FOCAL POINT

The Rio summit revolved around the theme of "Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet", which in many ways underlined global aspirations as well Brazil's commitment to addressing pressing global issues like global governance reforms; sustainable development; combating hunger, poverty & inequality.

International economic cooperation continued to be the focal point for negotiations between the Global North and Global South. It is noteworthy that the G20 grouping - comprising of 19 major economies globally, along with the European Union and the African Union - currently represents over 79 percent of the world's population. What sadly stands out is that

a vast majority of countries in the world - totalling almost 170 in number, are not part of the G20 negotiations.

It is also a striking statistic, that almost 2.6 billion population from G20 countries continue to live below the 'economic empowerment line' - a notional benchmark that measures an individual's ability to afford basic needs and save money. This is even though the G20 has achieved significant progress since its inception in 1999, by lifting large numbers of people from the crippling effects of poverty. Having said that, the world and the G20 recognise that a lot still needs to be done in this area.

In pursuance of this aim, a multilateral treaty drafted by Brazil titled:

"Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty" was ratified during the summit and a task force was established thereof to coordinate efforts of governments and international organisations to implement practical solutions to eradicate hunger and poverty.

The skewed scenario vis-a-vis the "have nots" and the poorer countries, was partially set right with the belated inclusion of the AU into the G20 fold. With South Africa taking over the G20 Presidency in 2025, the voice of the Global South will now be heard much louder.

The Rio Declaration outlined future-oriented, politically binding commitments - covering aspects like economic and social equality, ecological sustainability, global governance reforms, political security and artificial intelligence.

BRAZIL'S PRESIDENCY

Brazil, presiding over the Rio Summit, was faced with a testing time, as it had to navigate its way through this minefield of challenges within the G20 grouping. The challenge for developing countries like India, Brazil, South Africa and Indonesia has been the need to address the complex dynamics of big power geopolitics and unite the diverse voices within the Global South to present a unified front on key issues. This required quiet diplomacy and persuasive back-room negotiations - an approach that brought in rich dividends during the New Delhi G20 summit in 2023.

The Rio Summit took place during the same week as the UN Conference of Parties COP-29 on Climate in Baku, Azerbaijan. There was a renewed push for enhanced levels of commitment from Developed countries on Climate Financing to combat the negative impact of climate change

and generate revenue for sustainable development.

A high priority area for Brazil was to push for further reforms in Global Financial Institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and WTO so that developing countries have a larger say in the conduct of these agencies. A crucial part of the Rio Declaration was the call for the restoration of the dispute settlement system at the WTO.

The G20 Summit in Brazil reinforced the growing perception of a shift in the global power dynamics, something which has been in the making since the G20 summit in Indonesia. A sharp contrast to the geo-political scenario of the past decades, which prevented the emergence of a more representative multipolar world. This only underscores the universal perception that the rotation of the G20 Presidency among member countries has ensured that diverse perspectives are represented - challenging the traditional Western hegemony.



and for the Carbon markets financial system to help fund climate projects. President Lula of Brazil pledged that deforestation would end in his country by 2030 - a major victory for Amazon's climate activists.

Issues relating to global hunger, poverty and famine dominated the proceedings with proposals being pledged to forge new partnerships to implement public policies and develop social technologies for combating hunger. Importantly the Task Force for a Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty will be open to all countries, not just ones in the G20. To reduce global economic inequality, Brazil advocated for a global minimum tax on the 3000-strong club of the world's top billionaires. This would help address income inequality

POST-RIO

Despite Brazil's efforts to focus on economic development issues and sidestep geopolitics, critics have been quick to point to the Summit's failure to address and resolve pressing security issues like the war in Ukraine and the Middle East conflict and inability to produce concrete outcomes and secure commitments from member states.

Yet, the G20 remains hugely relevant, as the developed countries realise the need for collaboration with the developing countries and the Global South - to unlock new markets, technologies and innovations to drive sustainable growth and development. The G20 platform continues to provide a workable platform to engage with emerging economies to

shape global governance.

From the perspective of the West, the G20 will remain a useful staging ground to promote its global agenda, amidst rising competition from countries like China. The West can use the G20 to continue to push forward and secure its interests on issues such as climate change, economic inequality, international security, establishing fair trade practices, regulating financial markets, addressing economic inequality, human rights and advancing democratic principles to offset what it sees as the negative influences of authoritarian regimes.

in Sino-US relations. These protectionist measures by the US have raised the hackles among developing countries, while also attracting criticism from some of its own allies in the EU.

The world will have to contend with - what some observers described as - the new era of 'Trumpian disruption' in international politics - charting out a new brand of geopolitics that could lead to significant changes in the US approach to the war in Ukraine and the Middle East crisis, while upping the ante with countries like China and Iran.

The first real test of the G20 grouping's resilience to withstand and absorb future shocks would be the imminent changes that one foresees in geo-political relations once Donald Trump takes over as US President in January 2025.



FUTURE CHALLENGES

Future challenges for the G20 would be in forging consensus on various issues despite the divergent perspectives of its members - especially the US, China and Russia - and translating the collective commitments and pledges into concrete actions and meaningful outcomes.

There is also the growing competition between the US and China to carve out global influence for their own interests in strategic economic sectors of international trade, industrial and investment policies. The imposition of US tariffs on Chinese goods and the injection of huge subsidies by the US government to protect its domestic industry against Chinese imports - are issues that have contributed to increased friction

All said and done, despite the ongoing global and geo-strategic challenges and uncertainties, the G20's relevance post-Rio, will continue to be crucial and significant. It will remain the prime global forum for fostering international economic cooperation, promoting strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth and encouraging collective action in a collaborative spirit.

(Ambassador Srikumar Menon, IFS (Retd.), former Ambassador of India to South Sudan, Angola and Sao Tome & Principe. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)



INDUSTRY WATCH

The News Analytics Journal Features AiKAIROS Pvt Ltd.

AiKairos Pvt. Ltd. is a Startup India-recognised company formed in Nov 2020. It specialises in areas of Underwater Sensor systems and AI/ML and NLP. It has experience in building end-to-end systems incorporating Underwater sensors and AI. It has expertise in Underwater solutions as well as Design & Development of mission-critical C4I system architecture. The News Analytics Journal (TNJ), in an exclusive interview with the Founder & CEO, Mr Milind Kulshreshtha examines how the company has positioned itself in this niche domain, the expected challenges and its vision for the future. Excerpts of the conversation.

TNJ: Sir greetings from The News Analytics Journal. Firstly, tell us what is AiKairos all about.

With a rich background in Naval real-time systems, we established ourselves in November 2020 and COVID onslaught years were tough. Our Defence MSME's journey is closely related to our own personal expertise in Naval R&D, especially MPMSDF (Multi-Platform Sensor Data Fusion) project which was launched by TDF (Technology Development fund) of DST. We further got multiple opportunities and kept winning various Defence Innovation challenges. Earlier we had won the 2nd Edition of Indian Army Start-up Search on Algorithmic Warfare.

Presently, we have completely developed the technology and are in the final stages of making the use-case based deployment for the Indian Navy. This innovation makes us one of the few OEMs in the world with this niche' technology. This is developed is a dual use technology. For example, the Shipping noise as underwater radiated noise as a major pollutant issue and it's been observed that a 32-fold increase in low-frequency noise along major shipping routes has developed over

the past 50 years. For measuring and analysing such underwater noises we have developed a commercial product called Sea-polyps.

Interestingly, this technology led us to win the pioneering India-US Defence Accelerator Ecosystem (INDUS-X) challenge jointly launched by US Defense Innovation Unit (DIU)/DoD and iDEX - DIO /MoD(India).

INDUS-X second edition Summit was organized by iDEX/Ministry of Defence, India and US Department of Defense (DoD) from 20-21 February, 2024 at New Delhi and winners were declared. The work is closely related to the crucial role of technological innovation in defence within the broader context of the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership.

TNJ: Given the risks associated with integrating AI into autonomous critical systems, how does AiKairos address safety and ethical concerns in such high-stakes deployments?

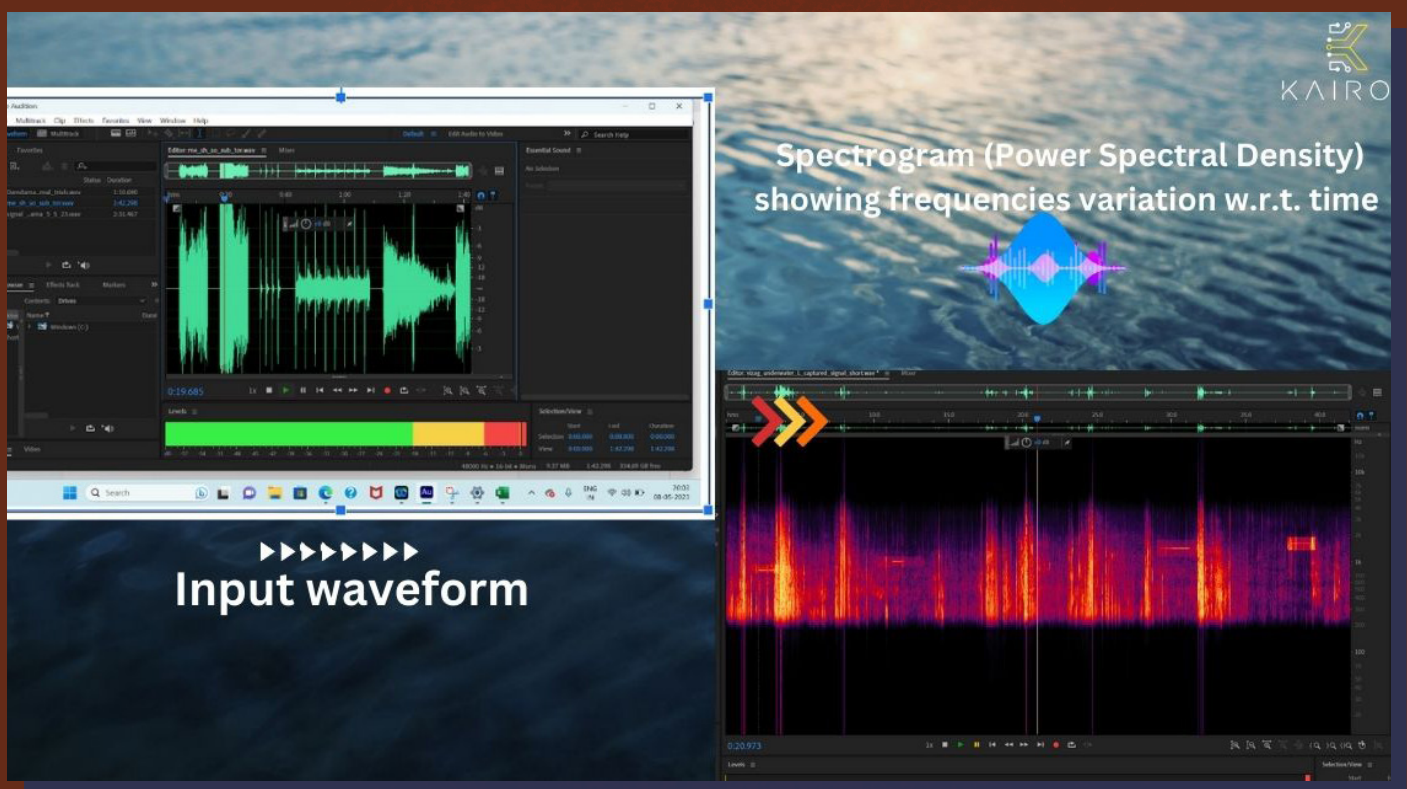
Till recent times, the AI application in the military terms was believed to be associated with autonomous weapon systems. However, this definition has evolved and the military applications of AI are much wide-ranging, so much so that AI has now changed the very warfighting concepts. As an example, the warfare decision-making processes



Mr Milind Kulshreshtha
Founder & CEO
AiKAIROS Pvt Ltd

that lead to the use of actual force evolves through multiple echelons and is a complex process, involving multiple command level actors at various echelons, like from the political level down to the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Reducing humanitarian risks, maintaining an ethical framework and various key compliances has traditionally relied upon human judgement in warfare decision-making.

AI is already inducted into this process and shall only be on the rise, with ultimate decision for launch of a weapon being decided by AI. With the complex AI techniques making the in-roads, this gambit of interaction of human judgement with the AI participating is a uncharted waters, affecting the civilians and combatants alike. Hence, in Aikairos based systems, we always have a ‘man in the loop’ to firstly confirm a threat detection, even when the AI provides the associated ‘certainty’ score as a recommendation. Also, an additional suitable measure is when it comes to the actual final ‘fire’ push button to launch a weapon, a soldier decides here. As I see, unfortunately, this AI versus human control in military is tilting towards the AI mechanism, and something has to be done here fast before AI ‘smartens’ to beat the interlocks themselves.



TNJ: With AI technology evolving rapidly, how does AiKairos ensure its solutions remain scalable and relevant in the face of constant innovation?

Yes, it’s a challenging world of AI out there. AI technology is rapidly moving forward and can be said to be a self-sustained engine today. Our AI based solutions are latest and niche. However, it is the dataset for fine-tuning which makes our solutions unique. The Gen AI application developed shall be provided with large training dataset from the client side and this shall ensure continuity of a dynamic solution. Everyone is well aware of NVIDIA hardware and resulting demands for enhanced processing power for AI systems.

We expect GPU based hardware too providing the compatibility to ingest more and more data for improved system performance. Such infrastructure level solutions are being established by the Armed Forces over military cloud or locally as ‘offline solutions’. The installation and maintenance of such solutions are usually beyond the Startup, including the cyber-security aspects, which are Organisation wide.



TNJ: In the context of multi-domain operations and defense systems, how do you balance the potential risks of system failures, cyber-attacks, or technological malfunctions?

In a cyber-domain, components and subsystems/systems exist in the form of networks, physical infrastructure, electromagnetic systems etc. The cyber hygiene has to commence with the very start of coding and with the 'good-practices' in place, the system can be made secure.

Defence forces in India too have a well-defined cyber security system in place and Aikairos solution has been tailored to suitably inserted in the overall cybersecure environment of Naval domain, after necessary cyber checks in terms of VAPT (Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing) by the Naval team.

Compliance to well established cyber-domain rules and standards of the Indian Navy is the way forward in multi-domain operations since such measures are mostly implementable at the broader Organisational levels.

TNJ: How do you think the defense sector can ensure AI innovations remain transparent, accountable and aligned with democratic values, rather than becoming tools of unchecked power?

With Atmanirbhar initiative, AI innovations in India are most likely to be driven by the indigenous Industry. As stated regarding the Decision Support Systems, even when the AI solution have been developed and deployed as per Armed Forces' requirements, keeping in check the prevalence of accountable AI shall always be the prerogative of Defence, while recommendations from Industry should surely exist.

To make this a fool-proof concept, necessary guidelines for transparent and ethical solutions needs to be co-evolved by Industry and Defence. Again, National security and confidentiality shall be the over riding factors here and this makes it mandatory for Defence to internally work-out the Ethics guidelines on such issues. Please be assured that with time, AI solutions are going to be more complex for human grasp, hence, checks and balances have to be evolved at the earliest.

TNJ: As defense technologies become increasingly interconnected, the risk of cyber spoofing is real. How does AiKairos contribute to securing defense systems against malicious external threats?

Interconnectivity is the backbone of interoperability in the modern warfare. Tactical Data Link are the key element here as the means to disseminate processed information from radars, electronic warfare systems, sonars and combat action information systems. The TDLs have several components like the radio set, encryption devices etc. to move the 'intelligence' across various levels of the combat echelons for net centricity.

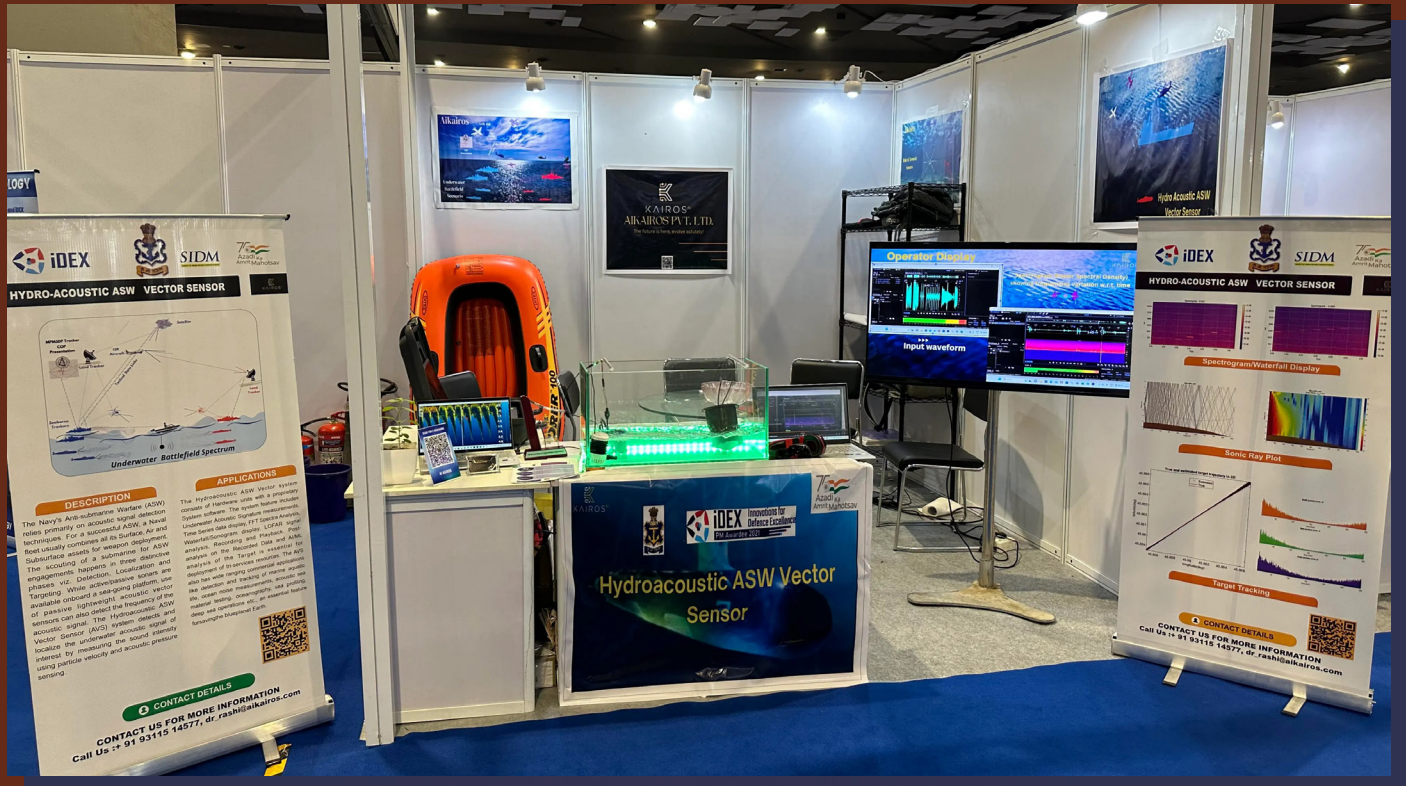
The exchange of digital information on a near real-Time basis occurs on a common encrypted and secure network. This tactical data is continuously updated by each of the Net Units (or Node). Aikairos equipment is usually a subset system providing necessary information of say, underwater sensor to the Underwater Domain framework onboard and this compiled and collated information is further shared with various Net units through the Navy designed and developed Tactical Data Links.

TNJ: How does AiKairos work with governments and defense organisations to align its AI solutions with national security policies and military strategies? What are some of the challenges faced in this collaboration?

AiKairos pre-dominantly work in close association with highly professional Naval organisations. Our AI solutions,

especially in Underwater domain are very much co-evolved to meet the existing and future Maritime security problems highlighted by the User.

The challenges faced by a young startup are that Government orders have a long and hard R&D cycle, before fructifying into Orders. Underwater ecosystem in India is still nascent and, thus, sourcing of key components is never a smooth sailing.



TNJ: Looking ahead, what innovations do you foresee in AI-powered defense systems and how do you think they will shape the future of military strategy and international relations?

Military operations at major and minor levels have high degree of unpredictability associated with an ever-evolving situation. Hence, AI based Situational Awareness shall be more precise to predict the future course of action. Accordingly, international relationships too would evolve. A large transformation in the way information is processed onboard warfighting units and at the command level or by a field soldier shall change. With intricate and also a large volume of information available today, it is humanly impossible to ingest this fast-moving information for optimum decision making and, AI is the solution here.

AI applications provide capability enhancements which are far superior to today's conventional technologies. Defence is already carrying out projects in AI and Generative AI (Gen AI). For example, Large Language Models (LLMs) creates new content, like text or images, based on patterns in data. These have significantly advanced in organising, inferring and conversing with vast amounts of Data, be it structured or unstructured. They now integrate and synthesise information more effectively across multiple formats, with a better contextual understanding and inference. Enhanced by better memory and context management, LLMs deliver more natural interactions.

The future military strategies with AI are likely to be more robust in handling Multi-domain Operations. A nation lacking in indigenous military AI initiatives and infrastructure today may soon find itself incompatible in the sophisticated warfare of the next decade!

CHINA DISENGAGEMENT A HALF-STEP FORWARD?

WAR STRATEGY

Both nuclear-armed powers, have been engaged in an ongoing standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) since April 2020. The LAC remains a site of tension between India and China, with years of stand-offs and negotiations defining their strained relations. This article explores the progression of the conflict, recent developments, and the cautious optimism surrounding steps toward resolution while emphasizing the challenges ahead for both nations.



LT GEN KJ SINGH (RETD)
FOR TNJ

India and China, two rising powers armed with nuclear weapons, have been locked in a dangerous standoff on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) since April 2020. These four years after the Galwan clashes in May 2020, both sides have witnessed the buildup of large forces and combat infrastructure. Chinese stalling tactics and stubbornness had hampered the initial attempts to disengage. It forced India to undertake quid-pro-quo operations by undertaking an audacious pre-emptive occupation of Kailash Heights, forcing the Chinese to relent at least partially in Feb 2021.

In the intervening period, there was another incident of physical clashes, mercifully without firing at Yangtse (Arunachal) in Dec 2022. Even after twenty-two rounds of talks between

military commanders, only some semblance of disengagement and creation of buffer (no patrolling) zones could be achieved in PP-14 (Galwan), PP-15 (Hot Springs), PP-17-A (Gogra) and North Bank of Pangong Tso (between Finger-4 and Finger-8). Depsang and Demchok were left unresolved and described as legacy issues. Both are strategically important and amounted to denial of access to PP-10, 11, 11-A, 12, and 13 in the Depsang plains, and two PPs in Demchok.

India was forced to review and re-orient its deployment and effect induction of large formations from the Western borders against Pakistan to the Northern unresolved border against China. In effect, China had to be designated as the primary adversary.



Key challenges remain unresolved at strategic locations despite India's firm stance and strategic quid-pro-quo operations, like occupying Kailash Heights and forced partial disengagement.

KAZAN AGREEMENT

The BRICS summit in Kazan catalysed the announcement of an agreement in the run-up to the summit meeting. This set the stage for a brief bilateral meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian PM, Narendra Modi. Both leaders, in short and limited exchange, endorsed the agreement and gave the go-ahead to Special Representatives on Boundary talks to resume negotiations for settlement.

As per some media reports, the broad contours of the agreement were nearly sealed before the BRICS summit in Aug 2023. However, it could not be clinched, as the Indian side stuck to its position of restoring patrolling rights in unresolved and strategic Depsang and Demchok sectors. Media speculation inferred that China had initially proposed no-patrolling, buffer zones, akin to PP-14 (Galwan), PP-15 (Hot Springs), PP-17-A (Gogra), and North Bank of Pangong-Tso, which amounted to no-patrolling zones. There is still considerable opacity and speculation as only sketchy details have been disseminated. Instead of a joint statement, both sides released their separate versions with some differences, thereby adding to avoidable confusion.

The experience of differing interpretations and some amount of obstinacy and retraction on the part of China calls for caution and the need to carefully monitor the progress of implementation. Indian reports are anchored on the hope

for the restoration of the status quo ante as of April 2020. China referred to 'progress on border problems', averring tranquillity/stability. with a focus on the resumption of trade and commerce without any restrictions. In a somewhat disingenuous manner, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) seeks to legitimise altered positions in its favour and downplays unilateral forays.

Some credible reports indicate the commencement of the dismantling of temporary structures in Depsang and Demchok, yet modalities remain cloaked in secrecy. The frequency, methodology, and extent of patrolling, which resumed at the end of Oct are yet to be fully disclosed. Commencement of disengagement is indicative of detailed negotiations in multiple

rounds of talks between formation commanders and contingency preparations. It is hoped that both sides, especially the Chinese continue to display accommodation and patience to obviate Galwan type of skirmish.

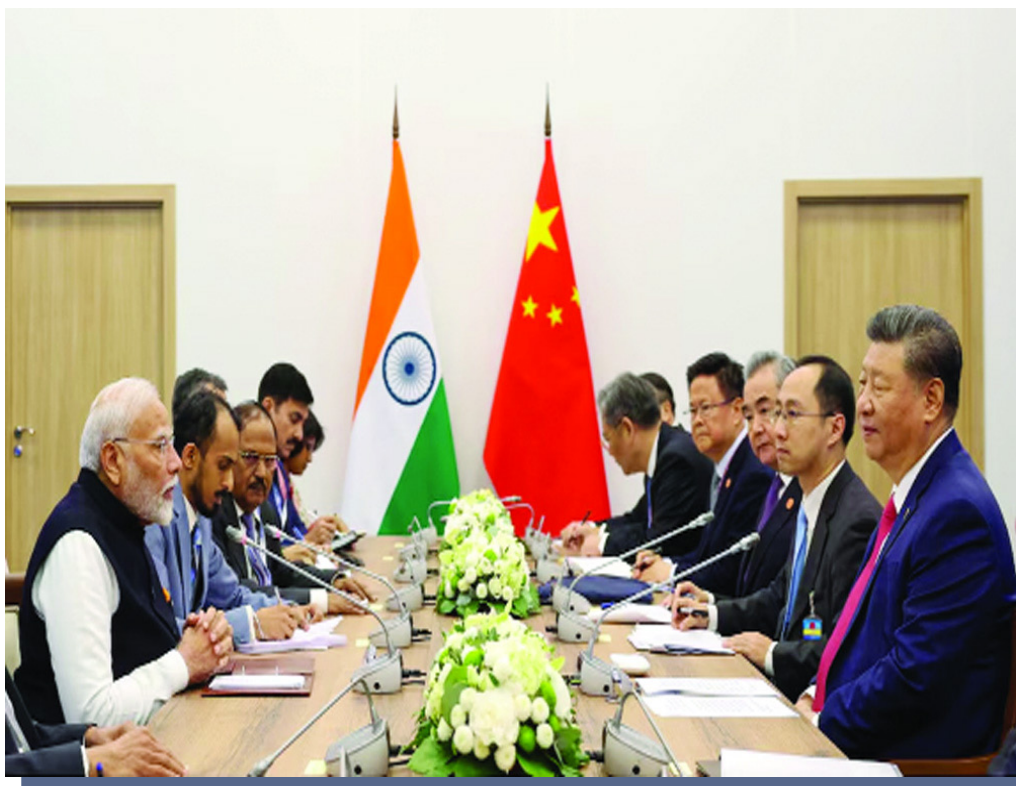
India is likely to be allowed to access PPs 10, 11,11-A, 12, and 13, thereby marking presence in 650sq km of Depsang plains. India would be able to send regulated patrols (15-18 soldiers) as per mutually agreed periodicity. The catch is what kind of control/ domination PLA is likely to maintain on the vital choke-point of 'Bottleneck' (Y-junction). Equally, the sensitive issue is- Will PLA be allowed to access strategically important areas near Burtse? India will also be allowed to access two PPs in Charding Nallah in

Demchok-Chumar. The initial patrolling has resumed in both sectors but details are only sketchy.

Reportedly, graziers will be permitted traditional grazing rights. Translation of this into reality is likely to be beset with problems, as in the past, PLA has prevented even minor, livelihood-related infrastructure projects, by accusing India of altering status-quo. These have included minor and routine development works like irrigation channels and track improvement. There are conflicting reports and speculation on negotiations about the resumption of patrolling by PLA in Yangtse and Asaphila in Arunachal.

PRAGMATIC ASSESSMENT

It is fair to infer that China in Eastern Ladakh unlike the South China Sea has shown flexibility and even some accommodation. Far removed from pragmatism and realistic appraisal, armed with the make-believe template of having



forced China to tow the Indian line, some of our media is in celebratory mode and building unrealistic hype. In retrospect, the PLA has not yet offered any explanation for its surprise coercive manoeuvre in 2020, defying all protocols and border agreements. It has also managed to create an inexplicable category of 'legacy' issues to describe Depsang and Demchok. Unfortunately, it also entailed acquiescence by some of our ill-informed experts. The fact that a slew of measures is being initiated in these sectors validates that there was a significant alteration of so-called agreed legacy positions before April 2020.

In the cacophony of chest-thumping, the most mature articulation has been by Gen Upendra Dwivedi, the Army

Chief. He has expressed cautious optimism and has reiterated the need for confidence building through incident-free patrolling. Unlike Twitter-yodhas, the buck and bullets, finally stop at his command post. The domino effect, leading to hype and expectations, marked with a changed lexicon of peace, tranquility, and normalcy, needs to be moderated as both sides have an arduous, long way to complete the 3-D process of disengagement, de-escalation, and finally de-induction.

The infrastructure created by PLA in terms of communications (roads, bridges, helipads, and airfields) and habitation (shelters for troops and Xiaokangs, border villages) indicates plans and intentions for an enhanced long-term presence in proximity and striking distance of LAC. Lowering of guard and vigil on our part based on unverified hype will only amount to hara-kiri.

Russia. In the current and future dynamics, China in the lead role is increasingly veering towards Russia. A new power axis is emerging around China Russia-Iran-North Korea and Turkey. China, despite building BRICS as an alternative to QUAD is likely to always remain wary of India's rise.

The third factor is perception, where we need to remain alive to challenges of narrative crafting, lawfare, and imaginative cartography, backed up with whole-scale renaming by China. The most important issue is the perimeter or boundary, which China wants to resolve on her terms. China has resolved land frontiers with all except India and Bhutan. However, the latter is increasingly in conciliatory mode. Our diplomats and troops have formidable challenges ahead. They should abide by verification before trusting, and also be prepared for the long haul.

China's strategic infrastructure near the LAC suggests a prolonged intent to dominate, alarming India to modernize border capabilities and maintain heightened vigilance.

MACRO PERSPECTIVE

Sinologists opine that dealing with China is a function of the 4-Ps. The first is power asymmetry, which between India and China is considerable. Chinese GDP (USD 17.8 trillion) is five times the Indian GDP (USD 3.5 trillion). China's known defense expenditure estimated at USD 222 billion is three times India's USD 75 billion. India has a trade deficit of USD 101.28 billion and it is increasing with continued dependencies in primary sectors of pharmaceuticals, electronics, solar energy, batteries, and chemicals. Our endeavors for de-coupling supply chains and dependencies on China seem to have produced counterproductive.

Many other countries like Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, and Turkey have gained more than India in China's plus One policy. Asymmetry is reducing but may take decades to build up to credible dissuasion. However, despite asymmetry, we are aided by terrain-high altitude, where power application is limited by terrain and weather, above all force deployment is sequential and graduated. Most importantly, we have unmatched expertise in high-altitude warfare. Our focus has to be on ramping up border infrastructure and focused modernization for quid-pro-quo (QPQ) options like Operation Snow-Leopard on Kailash Heights in Sept 2020.

India's other strength is our maritime geography and sea-faring skills with the domination of sea lanes, creating a Malacca dilemma for China. We need to leverage this more optimally with higher capital investments. It will be important to persist with de-risking and minimizing dependency on Chinese supply chains, to reduce asymmetry and vulnerability. The second determinant in the Sino-Indian matrix is partnerships and alliances, China in the Cold War power-play, initially partnered with Russia to combat the USA. It did a flip-flop and joined the USA, in Kissinger's great game to check-mate



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TRUMP'S PRESIDENCY AMIDST MIDDLE EAST DYNAMICS

TIMEPIECE

Donald Trump is guided by an “America First” philosophy and it’s evident from his initial presidency in 2017, where he brought a seismic shift to U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, marked by bold, often polarising decisions. From the Abraham Accords to escalating tensions with Iran, his administration reshaped regional alliances, upended diplomatic norms and left a complex legacy that continues to influence Middle Eastern geopolitics. Author spoke to Ms Nadine Araji, Attorney at Law in Beirut to explore detailed perspective.



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The presidency of Donald J. Trump, beginning in January 2017, marked a significant departure from traditional U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. His approach was characterised by bold, often polarising decisions that sought to reshape America’s role in the region. From the controversial recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital to the withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, Trump’s administration left a lasting impact on Middle Eastern politics. The key policies implemented during Trump’s previous tenure, their implications for regional stability and the broader consequences for U.S. influence in the Middle East will likely offer a perspective of things to come in his next tenure from January 2025.

THE INTELLECTUAL POWERHOUSE

Trump’s foreign policy was guided by his “America First” philosophy, emphasising U.S. interests over multilateralism. Unlike his predecessors, who sought to balance America’s strategic interests with international diplomacy, Trump favoured direct, unilateral action. This shift was evident in his administration’s prioritisation of strong alliances with certain Middle Eastern nations—namely Israel and Saudi Arabia—while adopting a more confrontational stance toward others, particularly Iran.

One of Trump’s defining moves was his unequivocal support

for Israel. His administration cultivated close ties with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, leading to landmark decisions such as recognising Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and relocating the U.S. Embassy there in 2018. This decision broke with decades of U.S. foreign policy and sparked widespread outrage in the Arab world, as it was perceived as undermining the Palestinian cause.

At the same time, Trump deepened ties with Saudi Arabia, viewing the kingdom as a critical partner against Iran and a key player in achieving regional stability. The administration’s arms sales to Saudi Arabia, despite criticism over human rights abuses and the war in Yemen, underscored its commitment to this partnership.



Trump's acrimony with Iran, pro-Israel policies and strong Saudi ties deepened regional divisions, sidelining multilateral diplomacy in favour of strategic partnerships.

THE IRAN FACTOR

Trump's Middle East policy was perhaps most defined by his antagonism toward Iran. In 2018, he withdrew the U.S. from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, labelling it as a "terrible deal" that failed to prevent Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons. This decision was followed by the reinstatement of crippling economic sanctions on Iran, which led to heightened tensions and further destabilised the region.

The administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran aimed to curtail its influence in the Middle East, targeting its support for militant groups like Hezbollah and its involvement in conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.



However, this approach also escalated hostilities, exemplified by the January 2020 assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in a U.S. drone strike. While the move was hailed as a significant blow to Iran's military leadership, it also risked provoking a broader conflict, with retaliatory attacks by Iran against U.S. assets and allies.

BREAKTHROUGHS & BACKLASHES

One of Trump's most significant achievements in the Middle East was the brokering of the Abraham Accords, a series of normalisation agreements between Israel and several Arab nations, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan,

and Morocco. Signed in 2020, these accords marked a historic shift in regional dynamics, as they represented the first formal normalisation of relations between Israel and Arab states since the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan decades earlier.

The Abraham Accords were celebrated as a triumph of diplomacy, fostering economic, cultural, and security cooperation between Israel and its new Arab partners. For Trump, they represented a cornerstone of his foreign policy legacy, showcasing his administration's ability to achieve breakthroughs where previous efforts had failed. However, critics argued that the accords sidelined the Palestinian issue, effectively bypassing the peace process and further marginalising Palestinian aspirations for statehood.

Trump's policies toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were another area of contention. His administration's "Peace to Prosperity" plan, unveiled in January 2020, was widely criticised for being heavily skewed in favour of Israel. The plan proposed the creation of a fragmented Palestinian state with limited sovereignty while allowing Israel to annex large portions of the West Bank.

Palestinian leaders rejected the plan outright, accusing the Trump administration of undermining their rights and unilaterally determining the outcome of negotiations. By aligning closely with Israel and disregarding Palestinian concerns, Trump's approach alienated many in the Arab world and further complicated efforts to achieve a two-state solution.

The Trump administration faced significant criticism for its role in the Yemeni conflict. The U.S. provided military support to the Saudi-led coalition fighting Houthi rebels in Yemen, a war that resulted in one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. While Trump justified this support as a means to counter Iran's

influence in the region, the civilian toll of the conflict, including widespread famine and disease, drew condemnation from human rights organisations and members of Congress.

Despite bipartisan efforts to end U.S. involvement in the war, Trump vetoed a resolution passed by Congress in 2019 that sought to halt military assistance to Saudi Arabia. His administration's unwavering support for Riyadh highlighted its prioritisation of strategic alliances over human rights concerns, a stance that drew both domestic and international criticism.

In Syria, Trump adopted an inconsistent approach that drew

both praise and criticism. His decision to withdraw U.S. troops from northern Syria in 2019 was met with backlash from allies and lawmakers, who argued it abandoned Kurdish forces that had been instrumental in the fight against ISIS. Critics warned that the withdrawal risked creating a power vacuum that could be exploited by Turkey, Russia, and Iran.

However, Trump also took credit for the territorial defeat of ISIS during his tenure, a significant achievement in the fight against terrorism. The successful operation to kill ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2019 was a major victory for U.S. forces and underscored the administration's commitment to combating extremist groups.

Trump's arrival at the White House marked a transformative period for U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. His administration's bold, often controversial decisions reshaped the region's political landscape, from the historic normalisation agreements of the Abraham Accords to the heightened tensions with Iran and the sidelining of the Palestinian issue.

While some of Trump's policies were celebrated as groundbreaking achievements, others drew criticism for their short-sightedness and potential to exacerbate regional instability. The long-term impact of his presidency on the Middle East remains a subject of debate, with proponents highlighting his successes in fostering new alliances and

The Abraham Accords reshaped Middle Eastern diplomacy, but their impact on the Palestinian cause with humanitarian concerns in the Yemen war and mixed Syrian legacy remains a contentious aspect of Trump's legacy.



STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Trump's policies in the Middle East had far-reaching economic and strategic implications. His administration's focus on energy independence and fostering partnerships with oil-rich Gulf states underscored the importance of the region to U.S. economic interests. At the same time, the administration's confrontational stance toward Iran and other adversaries often heightened geopolitical risks, leading to volatility in global energy markets.

Strategically, Trump's preference for bilateral agreements and unilateral action reflected a departure from the multilateral diplomacy that had characterised previous administrations. While this approach yielded some successes, such as the Abraham Accords, it also alienated traditional allies and raised questions about the sustainability of U.S. influence in the region.

critics pointing to the unresolved challenges left in his wake.

As the Middle East continues to grapple with the legacies of Trump's presidency, the region's future will depend on how subsequent administrations build on or reverse the policies implemented during his tenure. For better or worse, Trump's time in the White House left an indelible mark on one of the world's most complex and volatile regions.

(Nadia Hallak, senior correspondent and distinguished journalist from Beirut, Lebanon. She has extensively worked in the Arab region. She covers major developments in the Arab world for TNJ. The views expressed by the author and any guest experts do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)



GLOBAL INFLUENCER

BRAZIL'S PRESIDENT LULA

TNJ | Special Coverage

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, popularly known as Lula, has firmly reclaimed his place on the world stage. A transformative leader who served as Brazil's president from 2003 to 2010, Lula returned to power in January 2023, armed with a renewed mandate to address global challenges. Revered for his dedication to social equity, sustainable development and diplomatic ingenuity, his November 2024 accomplishments have catapulted him into the spotlight, making him a true global influencer.

Born in 1945 in Caetés, Brazil, Lula's rise from poverty to prominence is the quintessential story of resilience. As the seventh of eight children in a working-class family, Lula began working as a shoeshiner and metalworker to support his family. His career as a union leader ignited his political ambitions, driven by a deep-seated commitment to fighting inequality. After becoming president in 2003, Lula oversaw an era of economic growth and groundbreaking social programs that lifted millions of Brazilians out of poverty. His return to office in 2023, despite years of political turbulence and personal challenges, is nothing short of remarkable.



PIONEERING CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

In November 2024, Lula reaffirmed his legacy as a climate champion during COP29. His fiery address underscored the urgent need for global action against climate change. Unlike leaders who merely pay lip service, Lula's rhetoric translated into actionable pledges, particularly for protecting the Amazon rainforest—often referred to as the "lungs of the Earth." As Brazil ramped up reforestation efforts and curbed deforestation, Lula demanded that wealthier nations follow suit by committing greater financial resources to tackle climate change.

The Amazon, central to both Brazil's identity and global environmental health, has long been a political battlefield. Lula's policies emphasise a balance between environmental preservation and economic growth, despite resistance from agribusiness. His leadership positions Brazil as a climate diplomacy leader, reminding the world that sustainable development isn't just an ideal but an achievable reality.

REVITALISING BRAZIL'S DIPLOMACY

In the arena of international relations, Lula is proving to be a maestro. This November, his high-stakes trade agreement with China made headlines, underscoring Brazil's resurgence as a major global economic player. The deal has reinvigorated Brazil's trade dynamics, particularly within the BRICS—a coalition of emerging economies that now includes new members like Saudi Arabia. Lula's vision for a united Global South, advocating for equitable global governance, is reshaping geopolitical dynamics.

Through deft diplomacy, Lula is redefining Brazil's relationships ensuring the nation is no longer a passive observer but an active shaper of global narratives. Whether it's negotiations with China or his outreach to Africa and Asia, Lula is crafting a multipolar world where Brazil has a seat at every important table.

OF THE MONTH

RESHAPES GLOBAL DIPLOMACY

DEFENDER OF DEMOCRACY

Lula's has shown a nerve of steel in the face of internal turmoil. After the January 2023 storming of Brazil's government buildings by far-right protesters, Lula took decisive action to restore order. His unwavering commitment to democratic integrity resonated globally, particularly as many democracies grapple with polarisation and populism.

In an era where democratic values are under siege, Lula's resolve serves as a model. His emphasis on dialogue and unity is helping Brazil heal from its divisions. The world has taken notice, with global leaders, including the U.S. president, acknowledging his efforts. Lula's ability to navigate such challenges highlights his resilience and diplomatic finesse.

ECONOMIC VISIONARY

Lula's economic strategy is as forward-thinking as it is transformative. At the G20 Summit in November 2024, his advocacy for sustainable trade agreements, like the Mercosur-Singapore pact, showcased Brazil's potential as a leader in the green economy. Lula's focus on renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and industrial innovation aligns Brazil's economy with global priorities.

His push for a "green revolution" is turning Brazil into a hub for sustainable development. From solar energy projects to biofuel innovations, Lula is spearheading initiatives that could redefine the country's economic future while addressing global environmental concerns.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Despite his achievements, Lula's path is riddled with challenges. Domestically, Brazil remains politically polarised, with factions opposing his progressive agenda. Economic inequality persists and balancing environmental policies with the powerful agribusiness sector requires delicate negotiation.

Globally, Lula faces the intricacies of navigating U.S.-China tensions while fostering Brazil's independence. As a key player in BRICS, Lula's support for the bloc's expansion could strain ties with Western allies. However, his commitment to multilateralism offers a roadmap for balancing these complex dynamics.

BRAZIL-INDIA RELATIONS

Lula's foreign policy toward India reflects shared ambitions for a greener and more inclusive future. Both nations, as BRICS powerhouses, are working to deepen ties in technology, trade and energy. Collaborations on green hydrogen, biofuels and sustainable infrastructure are strengthening their partnership.

Culturally, Brazil and India have also fostered goodwill through mutual respect and shared values, paving the way for enhanced cooperation. As emerging global leaders, the two nations are aligning their strategies to shape a more equitable world order. Lula embodies the essence of transformative leadership.

His vision, rooted in social equity and global solidarity, ensures that Brazil's voice resonates across continents. In a world fraught with uncertainty, Lula's resilience and determination shines through, proving that leadership is not about rhetoric but action. As Brazil reclaims its place on the global stage, Lula stands at the helm, steering the nation—and the world—toward a brighter and more sustainable future.

SKY WARRIORS: INDIAN NAVY'S FIGHTER FLEET

SPECIAL FEATURE

Aircraft carriers allow unmatched maritime power projection, blending air, sea, and joint operations for diverse missions. The Indian Navy's growing carrier capabilities, exemplified by INS Vikrant and INS Vikramaditya, showcase India's strategic focus on securing the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Carrier-based assets, including MiG-29Ks, advanced helicopters, and potential UAVs, provide robust offensive and defensive capacities. With plans for modernisation and expanded blue-water operations, India's carrier-based airpower enhances maritime security, disaster response, and deterrence, solidifying its role as a regional power in the Indo-Pacific.



AIR MARSHAL ANIL KHOSLA (RETD)
FOR TNJ

Maritime aviation refers to using military aircraft by naval forces to extend their reach and effectiveness in maritime operations. It encompasses various roles and responsibilities, including reconnaissance, air defence, anti-submarine warfare, strike missions, and search & rescue. Naval aviation is crucial in maintaining a nation's maritime security and projecting power over the seas. Aircraft Carriers are large warships equipped with a flight deck for on-board aircraft. They are mobile airbases, allowing navies to project air power far from their home bases. The carrier-based aircraft are specially designed to operate from the deck of an aircraft carrier. They include fighters, bombers, early warning aircraft, and helicopters.

EMPLOYMENT OF CARRIER-BASED AIRPOWER

Carrier-based airpower has been pivotal for nations to project strength, maintain regional stability, and respond to crises worldwide. With their unique mobility, flexibility, and force projection capabilities, aircraft carriers allow them to exert influence across vast oceans and landmasses, often far from their borders. The mere presence of an aircraft carrier near a crisis area signals a readiness to escalate, which can compel adversaries to negotiate or de-escalate tensions. By deploying carriers to allied nations or engaging in joint naval exercises, Maritime powers reassure allies of their commitment to regional stability.



Carrier-based fighter aircraft have unique design features and operational capabilities that enable them to operate from aircraft carriers' limited space and moving platforms. These fighter aircraft are typically equipped with catapult hooks for rapid acceleration on take-off, allowing them to reach flying speed in a short runway distance. Some also have vertical or short take-off capabilities, like the F-35B's STOVL (Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing) technology, enabling them to launch from carriers without catapult systems. Landing on a moving carrier requires extreme precision. Carrier fighters are equipped with a tail hook that catches

on arrestor cables on the deck, allowing them to decelerate from high speeds to a complete stop in a very short distance. Carrier landings are much harder than land-based landings. Carrier-based fighters have rugged, reinforced landing gear and overall structural durability to withstand these impacts. Carrier space is at a premium, so many carrier-based fighters, like the F/A-18 Hornet, have foldable wings. This design allows more aircraft to be stored and manoeuvred on the carrier deck and hangar spaces, optimising space usage. Operating at sea, especially in saltwater environments, can lead to high corrosion levels. Carrier fighters are designed with corrosion-resistant materials and coatings to withstand harsh, moist, and salty conditions.

Vikramaditya, enhancing operational flexibility and redundancy. The aircraft carriers are equipped to operate in the Indian Ocean and project power into nearby strategic areas, especially along vital maritime chokepoints like the Strait of Malacca.

The MiG-29K is the Indian Navy's primary carrier-based fighter. It is a multirole fighter with advanced avionics, sensors, and a range of air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles. The MiG-29Ks offer versatility for various missions, including interception, strike, reconnaissance, and anti-ship warfare. The Indian Navy is considering the Rafale M, the carrier-based version of the Rafale, to supplement or replace the MiG-29K

Carrier-based airpower offers India unparalleled flexibility for maritime security, enabling rapid responses to regional crises, protecting sea lanes, and deterring potential adversaries in the IOR.



soon. The Rafale M is a multirole fighter with air superiority, deep strike, and maritime strike capabilities. It would add significant combat capability to the fleet if procured.

Indian Navy carriers and other ships also host a variety of helicopters that support a range of missions, from anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and search and rescue (SAR) to logistics and airborne early warning (AEW). Kamov Ka-31 helicopters are equipped for airborne early warning, providing surveillance and monitoring against aerial threats. MH-60R Seahawk helicopters, recently acquired from the U.S., bring sophisticated sensors, sonobuoys, and torpedoes to counter submarine threats, a critical role given the growing presence of submarines in the Indian Ocean.

CARRIER-BASED AIRPOWER

The Indian Navy's carrier-based airpower is critical to its maritime strength and regional influence. The Indian Navy's aircraft carriers focus on enhancing blue-water capabilities and ensuring security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). INS Vikramaditya is India's flagship carrier. It is a modified Kiev-class carrier acquired from Russia and commissioned in 2013. It is a STOVL (Short Take-Off but Arrested Recovery) platform, primarily operating MiG-29K fighters. INS Vikrant (IAC-1), India's first indigenously designed and built aircraft carrier, was commissioned in 2022. It's also a STOVL carrier and can operate a similar air wing as

ROLES AND TASKS

Carrier-based aircraft and ship-borne helicopters can cover vast maritime areas, targeting enemy ships and submarines. The MiG-29Ks, equipped with anti-ship missiles and precision-guided munitions, enhance India's offensive capabilities, allowing the Indian Navy to engage adversaries over the horizon. Carrier-based fighters are vital in defending the Indian fleet from aerial threats. The MiG-29K fighters, equipped with BVR (Beyond Visual Range) missiles, enhance fleet air defence capabilities and provide aerial cover for Indian naval assets, ensuring protection against hostile aircraft and missiles. These assets also support broader

naval operations, including protecting shipping lanes, conducting interdictions, and supporting amphibious operations. Indian carriers have proven useful in disaster response and humanitarian missions.

This capability strengthens India's ability to provide aid in the IOR, reinforcing regional influence and goodwill, which aligns with India's role as a "net security provider" in the region. The Indian Navy participates in exercises like Malabar with the U.S., Japan, and Australia, using its carriers to enhance interoperability with friendly navies, while reinforcing maritime security in the Indo-Pacific. These exercises also demonstrate India's carrier capabilities and

carrier-based airpower into a game-changing force multiplier by focusing on strategic and operational enhancements, technological modernisation, and optimised doctrines.

Enhanced Blue-Water Capability : By deploying carriers in critical chokepoints and key maritime zones, the Indian Navy can strengthen its presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and South Asia, deterring hostile actions and reassuring allies. Consistent patrols and joint exercises with regional navies would signal India's ability to respond to regional crises and project sustained influence, ensuring greater security across the IOR.



readiness, sending a strategic message to potential adversaries in the region.

HARNESSING SHIP-BORNE AIRPOWER

Future Developments : India is planning another indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC-2) with advanced technologies, which would enable the use of heavier aircraft, potentially including UAVs and AWACS systems, and support greater operational flexibility. India is also developing the Twin-Engine Deck-Based Fighter (TEDBF) to replace the MiG-29K eventually. HAL and the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) are developing this indigenous fighter to meet future carrier-based combat requirements. The Indian Navy is also exploring the integration of UAVs for ISR and strike missions from carriers, enhancing reconnaissance capabilities and operational reach. The Indian Navy can transform its

Joint and Network-Centric Operations: Integrating carrier-based assets with air and ground forces would enable seamless joint operations. This integration is a network-centric approach, with shared real-time intelligence and a secure data link, that would enable Indian Navy carriers to act as floating command centers, coordinating strikes, reconnaissance, and ASW operations across a dispersed battle space.

Bolstering Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Capabilities: With rising submarine activities in the Indian Ocean, robust ASW capabilities are crucial. Enhanced ASW capabilities This can be achieved by expanding the fleet of ASW Helicopters equipped with modern sonar, torpedoes, and sonobuoys. Deploying unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) and UAVs, integrated with the carrier's air wing for ASW surveillance, would create a layered ASW network around the carrier group, extending detection and



engagement capabilities against adversarial submarines.

Integrating Long-Range Strike Capabilities: Equipping carrier-based aircraft with advanced long-range anti-ship and land-attack missiles, such as the BrahMos-NG and future Indigenous missiles, would enable carriers to strike targets over 500 kilometers away, beyond the line of sight. Long-range strike capabilities also make the carriers a credible threat to adversarial naval and ground installations, enhancing India's maritime deterrence and extending its strategic reach in the Indo-Pacific region.

UAVs for Persistent ISR and EW : UAVs like the Predator MQ-9B (currently operated by the Navy) and future indigenous models could be launched from carriers for ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) missions. This would extend the carrier's situational awareness by providing real-time surveillance across a larger area. UAVs equipped for electronic warfare (EW) would enable the Indian Navy to detect, jam, and disrupt enemy communication and radar systems, reducing adversary effectiveness in a contested environment.

excellent force projection and strategic flexibility, allowing the Navy to respond to simultaneous challenges across the IOR and enhance its role as a regional security provider.

Strengthening Doctrine and Tactical Flexibility: Developing an adaptive maritime doctrine for carrier-based operations focused on the Indian Ocean's unique geostrategic demands will allow the Navy to respond to evolving threats rapidly. Adopting a mix of offensive and defensive tactics would help balance the roles of power projection and area denial.

Carrier-based fighter operations are among modern naval warfare's most demanding and technically sophisticated aspects. They provide unmatched power projection, enabling navies to carry out a wide range of missions, from combat to humanitarian relief, often in the most remote parts of the world. The Indian Navy's carrier-based airpower enables India to secure its maritime interests, provide regional security, and project power across the Indian Ocean. With ongoing modernisation, India aims further to enhance its carrier fleet and air wing capabilities to ensure dominance in the strategically vital Indian Ocean Region.

Modernisation efforts, including the development of Indigenous aircraft, UAV integration, and advanced ASW capabilities, position India to counter rising submarine threats and expand its strategic reach.

EXPANDING CAPABILITIES

With the addition of the INS Vikrant and potential future carriers, the Indian Navy could deploy multiple carrier groups to different strategic areas or concentrate them in one for a more powerful deterrent. Multi-carrier capabilities enable

*(Air Marshal Anil Khosla (R), Former Vice Chief, Indian Air Force Researcher & Analyst Distinguished Fellow - USI & CAPS. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**.)*



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AI AND THE BALANCE OF POWER

COUNTERVIEW

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is set to restructure the global balance of power, promising unmatched innovation while posing existential risks. With capabilities far surpassing human intelligence, AI is revolutionizing industries, geopolitics, and warfare. However, its unchecked growth risks widening global inequalities and creating digital hierarchies. Challenges lie not only in technology but also in ethics, regulation, and strategy. For India, AI represents both an opportunity and a responsibility to align its evolution with national security and cultural sensibilities in the Amritkaal era.



**LT GEN RAJ SHULKA (RETD)
FOR TNJ**

Here are some attributes of Goddess AI that might be of particular salience and interest. In the wake of AI, we are told that the world will be reborn and remade. AI will solve the complex problem of intelligence, and the crystal logic of AI algorithms will, in turn, help solve the problems of the world.

THE INTELLECTUAL HORSE POWER

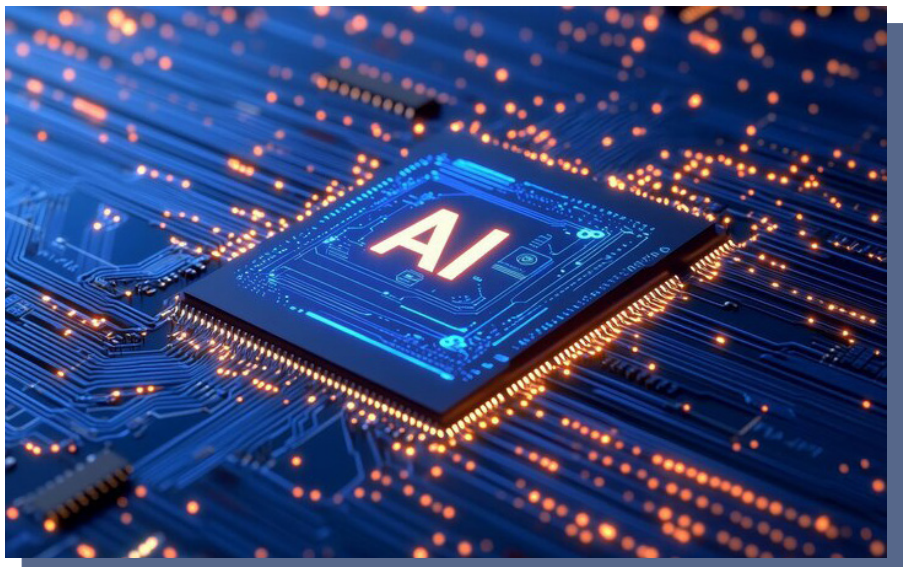
Look at the sheer intellectual horsepower of the technological beast. One of the world's smartest humans, Albert Einstein, was blessed with an IQ of 160. Chat GPT-4 has an IQ of 155; Chat GPT-6, three years down the line, will have an IQ of 1550. By 2037 or so, AI will be a billion times smarter than humans.

Just as the advent of personal computing fundamentally changed humanity, AI will transform the way we live and work: it will impact white- and blue-collar jobs equally and in dramatic ways. Like other technological waves before, AI also seems to be following an immutable law: it is getting cheaper, easier to use, and increasing far and wide—as it does so, it could also become infinitely dangerous – perhaps more than nuclear weapons. In the case of atomic weapons, the decision to launch is still with us; we still train AI models and control them, we can shut them off, but if we are not careful about protocols, AI could elude human control.

AI's unrivalled computational abilities are revolutionizing work and life, but its unchecked growth risks escaping human control, potentially exceeding even nuclear weapons in danger.

GLOBAL DIVIDE

The real game in AI may be moving to the frontier models, barely three or four in number, where the only players are the USA and China. These models which will set the tone and tenor in AI for the future, are not only huge energy guzzlers but are also phenomenally expensive – they need



huge investments, in the realm of \$350 billion apiece. For a while there was hope for the democratization of AI – the gap between the frontier and trailing models had begun to reduce; of late, driven by intensifying Sino-US competition, the gap has once again started to grow exponentially. We may be heading, therefore, towards a kind of AI hegemony; those who utilise will avail the products and fruits of AI alright but will be at the mercy of those that determine the structuring of the philosophical frame of AI. According to the global accounting firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers, AI will add \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030 – and the two AI superpowers will romp home with 70 % of the spoils. AI, therefore, is poised to transform the balance of power – and create a new set of strategic haves and have-nots in the international system. The prospect of Digital Colonisation as Rajiv Malhotra points out in his remarkable book – AI & the Future of Power, is real.

need to develop a larger conceptual frame, an ambit in which this very intelligent, powerful, technology piece of AI can be fused productively.

The Chinese outlook on AI, interestingly, is sharp but worrying: it talks of a regulated civilian path and a freewheeling strategic-military sphere. In the arena of national security, it is simply charging ahead – there are no barriers.

GEOPOLITICS AND AI WARFARE

The intersection of AI and geopolitics may be even more impactful. As Yuval Harari points out in his latest offering, 'Nexus,' just as the Iron Curtain was pervasive in Cold War 1.0, the Silicon Curtain (one embedded in codes & chips) will shape Cold War 2.0. The Silicon Curtain will not only divide the world into two rival, digital orders with very



SOCIO-TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

AI is also a socio-technological challenge. Only 20-30% of the AI piece is technological - about coding, LLMs, etc. 70% of the challenge in AI is about proficiencies in allied domains – philosophy, strategy, culture, sensibilities, the richness of data, domain-specific leveraging, ethics, safety, the nature of regulation, et al. Henry Kissinger points out quite incisively that AI is a rapidly exploding technology in search of a guiding philosophy - in the absence of a larger philosophical view, the technologists are running wild. We

different worldviews – a USA-led West and the very nascent CRIK (China-Russia-Iran-North Korea); two orders that barely communicate, agree on very little and are certainly incapable of regulating the explosive power of AI. Such a Silicon Curtain will not only divide one group of humans from another but also separate humans from their new AI overlords – unfathomable algorithms that manage our lives, and shape our politics, information systems, media, health care, culture, social structures, diplomacy, and economics. The beginning perhaps of an Artificial Intelligence Empire

– cascading algorithms of non-human intelligence that will rule the world.

AI has begun to drive the world of Deterrence and Warfighting in profound ways. In the Ukrainian & Middle Eastern war theatres, the infusion of AI-powered data analytics has taken the traditional combat domains of intelligence, fire, manoeuvre, targeting, and logistics to a new high. Machine learning-driven decision-making cycles have compressed the OODA loop and target engagement cycles by an order of magnitude. Soldiers/humans are no longer ‘in the loop,’ they cannot influence AI engagement cycles; they can merely oversee combat by being ‘on the loop.’

and sensibilities? Indian Statecraft may like to explore AI and its many splendour attributes with deep thought and care and develop a distinctly Indian worldview on AI - our destiny in Amritkaal may well ride on our predilections in this regard. It may also be fair to conclude that the problem really is not AI but the human prompt: unless we leverage the many positives of AI (a wave of unprecedented prosperity) with thought and wisdom, we risk getting overwhelmed by its negatives (a destructive tsunami).

Can India rise to the challenge and embrace the AI Moment in human evolution to our collective well-being, one that is also in accord with the Indian National Security Interest?



AI's integration into military strategies is reshaping conflict, accelerating decision-making, and suppressing engagement cycles, raising concerns about human oversight and algorithmic dominance in combat.

AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

Each of the aforementioned issues deserves our collective attention and investigation—Chintan and Manthan, so to speak. If the world in the wake of AI is indeed going to be reborn, must/could we endeavour to do so in Indian values

*(Lt Gen Raj Shukla (Retd), former Army Commander and currently a Member of UPSC. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**.)*

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

ICC ISSUES ARREST WARRANTS OVER WAR CRIMES



The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif. The charges include war crimes and crimes against humanity, such as murder, persecution, and using starvation as a method of warfare during the 2023-2024 West Asia conflict. Netanyahu's office has dismissed the warrants as "antisemitic" and politically motivated. He rejected the court's decision and vowed to protect Israeli citizens, while Hamas has denied Deif's involvement, citing claims of his death in 2024.

UKRAINE FIRES US-MADE LONG-RANGE MISSILES INTO RUSSIA



On the 1000th day of war, Ukraine escalated its defence against Russia by firing six US-made ATACMS missiles at Bryansk, marking the first use of such weapons in the conflict. This follows President Biden's recent authorization for Ukraine to use long-range missiles against targets within Russia. While five missiles were intercepted, debris from the sixth caused a fire at a military site, though no casualties were reported. Ukrainian President Zelensky highlighted Ukraine's growing arsenal, including domestic long-range missiles. Meanwhile, Russia responded by updating its nuclear doctrine, further heightening tensions in the ongoing war.

PUTIN UPDATES RUSSIA'S NUCLEAR DOCTRINE



Russian President Vladimir Putin has approved changes to the country's nuclear doctrine, expanding conditions for nuclear responses. Now, attacks by non-nuclear states supported by nuclear powers, or major assaults using drones or missiles, could prompt a nuclear response. Additionally, aggression against Russia's allies, like Belarus, could meet this threshold. The revision comes after the U.S. approval for Ukraine to strike Russian territory with long-range missiles, which Russia warns signals direct Western involvement in the war. Critics view the move as heightening nuclear risks amidst the ongoing Ukraine conflict.

CHINA DRAWS FOUR RED LINES FOR US



Chinese President Xi Jinping cautioned the US against crossing four "red lines," including Taiwan's status, human rights issues, and South China Sea disputes, during talks with President Biden at the APEC summit. Emphasizing Taiwan's significance, Xi stated that "Taiwan independence" threatens peace in the Taiwan Strait. Despite tensions, Xi pledged cooperation with President-elect Trump, aiming for a smooth US-China relationship transition, which is critical for global stability. His remarks follow years of strained ties, marked by trade wars and heightened regional tensions, especially during Trump's first term.

ZELENSKY: UKRAINE WAR MAY END 'FASTER' UNDER TRUMP 2.0



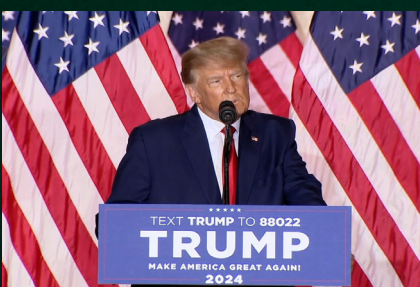
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that the Ukraine-Russia war might conclude sooner under Donald Trump, citing potential U.S. policy shifts. Trump, recently re-elected, has expressed skepticism about prolonged U.S. support for Ukraine. Zelensky emphasized Ukraine's aim to end the conflict diplomatically by next year, despite Russia's recent battlefield advances and heavy casualties. Meanwhile, Zelensky criticized German Chancellor Scholz for a conversation with Putin, calling it a setback to isolating Moscow. The war continues with significant challenges and high stakes for both sides.

PROTESTERS STORM PARLIAMENT IN ABKHAZIA OVER RUSSIAN DEAL



Protests erupted in Sukhumi, capital of Georgia's Russian-backed Abkhazia region, as demonstrators stormed parliament against an investment deal with Moscow. Using a truck to breach gates, protesters occupied the building and demanded President Aslan Bzhania's resignation. Opposition leaders argue that the deal could inflate property prices, disadvantaging local residents. Eight injuries were reported. In the aftermath, the presidential administration of Abkhazia announced plans to withdraw the controversial agreement with Russia. Abkhazia, recognized by Russia but largely seen as part of Georgia, has faced unrest over governance issues, echoing similar events in 2014 and 2020.

TRUMP WINS



Donald Trump has been re-elected U.S. president nearly four years after his last term, with projections indicating he easily surpassed the 270 electoral votes needed for the White House. Democratic opponent Vice President Kamala Harris reportedly called Trump to congratulate him, offering support for a peaceful transition of power. Projections show Trump winning key battleground states, including Michigan, Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Several world leaders have already extended their congratulations following Trump's declared victory on November 5. Additionally, the Republican Party has regained control of the Senate, further solidifying their influence in government.

INDIA - AUSTRALIA HOLD JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE 'AUSTRAHIND'



India and Australia are currently conducting the third edition of their joint military exercise, AustraHind 2024, at the Foreign Training Node in Aundh, Pune. The two-week exercise, running from November 8 to 21, focuses on enhancing cooperation and interoperability between the armed forces of both nations. In the first phase, troops are engaged in physical fitness, martial arts, joint tactical planning, and special arms skills. They also practice combat scenarios such as raiding hostile targets and providing first aid. As part of cultural exchanges, the Australian contingent visited the National Defence Academy. The exercise will culminate in a 48-hour validation exercise from November 19-20.

CANADA HITS ANOTHER LOW

INVESTIGATING

The relationship between India and Canada follows decades of steady trade and cultural connections. However, the current situation is shockingly different. The Indo-Canadian relationship is strained to its lowest point over allegations concerning Khalistani separatists. The nuances of this diplomatic rift, which exposes deep political and ideological divides between the two democracies are aggravated by domestic political pressures in Canada and its controversial stance on extremist elements.



**AMBASSADOR SOUMEN RAY, IFS (RETD)
FOR TNJ**

Since the time kings and monarchs ruled their kingdoms, the practice of exchanging royal emissaries between kingdoms to strengthen their relations has been in vogue. Those imperial envoys and their entourage were extended all the facilities they required to perform their duties without any hindrance. In many cases, they were royal guests and were treated with utmost courtesy. In the events of animosities between two kingdoms, those envoys played a crucial role in mitigating the disputes. Even during wars, they were never mistreated by the host kingdoms. This practice continued for centuries.

THE LEGACY

This convention has been institutionalized in modern days. All sovereign countries have their diplomatic missions in countries far and wide except in the “enemy” countries which vow to destroy each other. In 1961, the United Nations

Conference on Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities adopted a resolution - the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. It is a framework for diplomatic relations between independent countries.

The diplomatic missions and posts are tasked with improving political, economic, educational, cultural, and people-to-people relations, facilitating travel of the host country’s citizens etc. It is also their responsibility to look after the welfare of its citizens working and residing there. Additionally, and importantly, they are tasked with safeguarding their country’s political and strategic interests while serving in those countries. In discharging their responsibility, particularly in the last category, junior diplomats, guided by the Ambassador/High Commissioner/Consul General, are required to meet various persons and collect required critical information in the complete



knowledge of the host country. However, this is somewhat of a grey area. In many instances, diplomats have been “caught” for spying on the host countries and/or interfering in their internal affairs which are considered harmful for their political and social structures. Such cases are sometimes genuine but often malicious.

Nonetheless, diplomatic rows between states are not infrequent. In many cases, those turn ugly and violent. Sometimes the events are overtly or covertly sponsored by the states. Non-state actors also play a significant role in such cases. Even after the signing of the Vienna Convention, following the Islamic revolution, the US embassy in Tehran was

stormed by Iranian students, taking 53 American diplomats and citizens hostage. They kept the mission surrounded for 444 days with the active support of the ruling elite. The Indian mission and consulates were ransacked in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and even in the US and UK by the miscreants by active support of concerned governments or the government authorities kept a blind eye to those heinous activities defying standard norms of diplomatic protocol.

demanding from the Indian government to waive off their diplomatic immunity so that they could be investigated for their “crimes”. This is something unheard of in the realm of international relations.

The sharp dip in Indo-Canadian relations has a perspective. Canada’s Liberal Party-led government and its increasingly unpopular Prime Minister Justin Trudeau face a growing

Diplomacy safeguards bilateral ties but political opportunism often undermines these protocols, exposing vulnerabilities in international relations.

FROSTY FOR DECADES

However, it is rare in modern history that bilateral relations between two democratic countries situated far apart on two different continents which have been frosty for decades, have now reached apparently to a point of no return. However, there

risk of early elections they appear all but certain to lose. After winning power with a majority of parliamentary seats in 2015, elections in 2019 left Trudeau’s Liberals with much fewer seats. And PM Trudeau led a minority government. The Liberals retained it following a snap election in 2021. Then, on Sept. 16 this year, the Liberals hit an iceberg. They were



is no dearth of warmth between the peoples of both sides and no geo-political and or strategic conflict of interests, these two countries have strong business partnerships and bilateral trade has been growing steadily.

But still, Indo-Canadian political and diplomatic relations are presently at the lowest ebb so much so that over a period of a couple of years they forced each other to downsize their missions and now Canada has put forward charges against the Indian High Commissioner and other diplomats and,

defeated in a ‘safe’ seat in Montreal, LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, in a by-election.

SEPARATIST ELEMENTS

The latest polled public opinions show a sizeable portion of the public animus - the feeling of ill will and hostility towards the government. It has become deeply and inextricably rooted in the prime minister himself. Justin Trudeau, who promised “Sunny Ways” as he won an election on a wave of public fatigue with an incumbent Conservative government

in 2015, has now become 'Dark Ways'.

Under the circumstances, to regain his lost popular appeal and return to the limelight, Justin Trudeau took a leaf out of his father's book on political survival in Canada. Sikhs constitute more than 20 million of India's population. Canada has the largest Sikh diaspora. Approximately 800,000 Sikhs constitute around 2% of the total population of Canada. Over the decades, Sikhs have become a dominant force in Canadian politics, and as a result, clamours for Khalistan have found support across political lines. Canadian politicians and their parties have supported such so-called "activism" in the name of "freedom of expression" on Canadian soil. For those who question India's tagging of Khalistani separatists as "terrorists", Canadian government support is assured.

Justin's father, former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, had refrained from taking action against Khalistani separatists and presided over scaled-down cooperation with India. For India, Canada has been a haven for such separatist elements threatening India's sovereignty and integrity.

Canadian allegations of the Indian government's role in killing a Khalistani separatist leader on Canadian soil, from the US, the UK, and Australia, which did not even name India, seemed to confirm the reality of the Western geopolitical-economic strategy. The West needs India (against China) more than India needs the West, goes the premise. Moreover, without any hard evidence, India's position stands vindicated. Though some Western countries like the US and UK did urge India to "cooperate" with Canada in their investigation of the murder case and the issue was raised during various bilateral meetings, there has never been any pressure on India to 'plead guilty'. Therefore, it is a matter of political convenience for the West to downgrade the concern raised with India on such issues.

Be that as it may, the West's stance is not likely to have major implications on its relations with India. It is a similar case with Australia. India's ties with the West are deeper and stronger than ever. Be it in the strategic sector, trade, or their alliance against the Chinese presence, their global cooperation is growing. With the US and the larger West remaining vague

Canada's strained relations with India highlight the geopolitical realities where the West's dependence on India outweighs their alliance with Canada's narratives.



in their responses, the Canadian PM is somewhat frustrated.

The India-Canada diplomatic row, sparked by allegations of Canadian support for Khalistan separatists, has strained bilateral relations, and there is no hope for an immediate resolution. However, with a substantial Indian diaspora in Canada and the potential for further economic cooperation, both nations have much at stake. The future of their ties hinges on addressing this issue sensitively while recognizing their broader partnership opportunities.

A RISING SUPERPOWER

Furthermore, the Canadian PM premised his success in his recent tirade against India on the expectation that he would get unconditional support from his Western allies. Canada is a member of G7, founder of the NATO military alliance and part of the exclusive Five Eyes intelligence alliance—Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and the US are other countries in Five Eyes, which has closely guarded its exclusivity. But when the news broke, most Indian commentators argued that Canada would find itself friendless in this fight against PM Modi's India, a rising superpower.

Rather guarded and mild initial statements concerning

*(Ambassador Soumen Ray, IFS (Retd.), Former Indian Ambassador and the noted Columnist on current world affairs. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The News Analytics Journal**.)*



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INDIA'S BRICS+ STRATEGY: A QUEST FOR MULTILATERALISM

LONG SHOT

In this day and age of shifting geopolitical orientation, India leverages BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) to assert its leadership in a multipolar world. From green diplomacy to countering global powers, India's strategy within BRICS and BRICS+ highlights its commitment to multilateralism, sustainable development, and strategic autonomy. This article analyses India's proactive role in shaping a balanced global order.



BY LT GEN A B SHIVANE (RETD)
FOR TNJ

In an era marked by shifting geopolitical alignments, India has been proactive in advancing its role within BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) to navigate a multipolar world. BRICS, originally an economic bloc of emerging markets, has evolved into a strategic platform for these nations to engage in multilateral dialogue and cooperation. For India, BRICS serves as a crucial avenue to pursue a balanced foreign policy, maintain strategic autonomy, and counter the influence of major powers like the United States and China. India's approach to BRICS, however, is not confined to its interactions with these two global superpowers. It involves a broader vision of leading the Global South, promoting sustainable development, and advancing multilateralism.

ASTUTE DIPLOMACY

India's multilateral diplomacy within BRICS showcases its commitment to shaping global narratives, particularly in reforming international institutions that reflect outdated post-World War II realities. The United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank, though pivotal in the past, no longer accurately represent the interests of developing economies, a sentiment India shares with other BRICS members.

In BRICS, India advocates for the reform of these institutions to give developing countries a greater say in global governance. By building coalitions within BRICS, it has positioned itself as a voice for the Global South. These diplomatic engagements have also provided

a contrast to China's often coercive diplomacy, positioning India as a constructive and responsible global leader.

Through BRICS, India champions multilateralism as the solution to global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and trade reform. This narrative resonates with many developing nations and strengthens India's leadership role in shaping a more inclusive global governance framework.

India highlights its drive to reform outdated global institutions, promoting fairer representation for developing economies in BRICS. This strengthens its leadership among emerging nations.



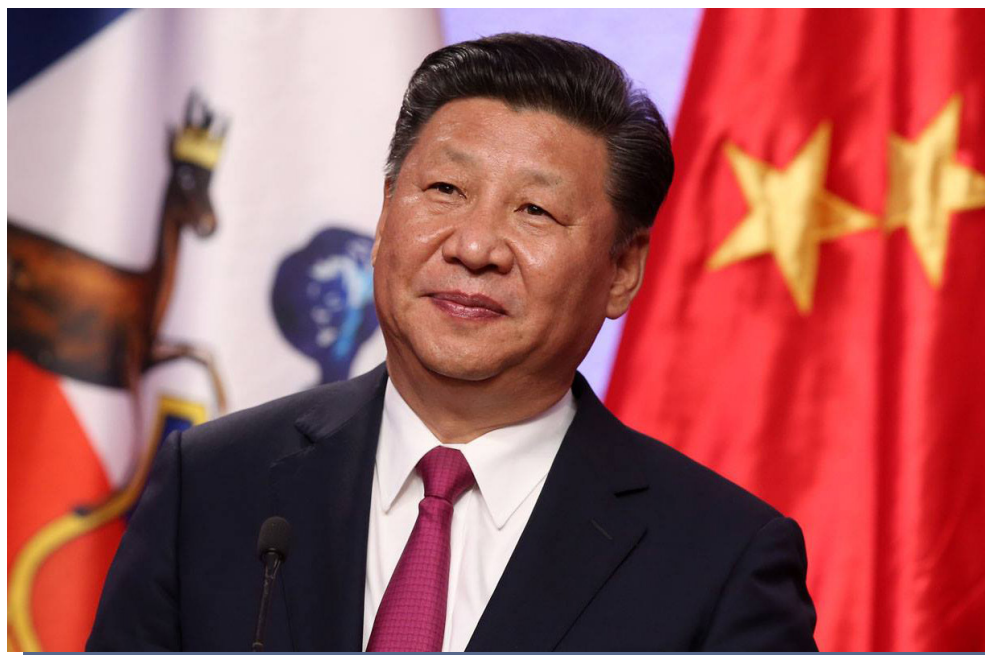
STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

India's leadership in the International Solar Alliance (ISA) is another key component of its multilateral strategy within BRICS. The ISA, which India and France co-launched in 2015, aims to promote solar energy in sun-rich nations and encourage collaboration on clean energy initiatives. By integrating the ISA into the BRICS agenda, India underscores its commitment to sustainable development and renewable energy solutions.

The ISA is a cornerstone of India's broader green diplomacy, positioning the country as a leader in the global energy transition. It provides a counter-narrative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which often focuses on traditional energy infrastructure. India's advocacy of the ISA in BRICS allows it to showcase its leadership in providing innovative, environmentally friendly solutions that resonate with both developed and developing nations.

One of the central tenets of India's foreign policy is strategic autonomy, an independent approach to global affairs that does not align fully with any one power. Within BRICS, India's participation sends a strong message to both the United

States and China. For the U.S., India's active engagement with BRICS signifies its intent to pursue an independent foreign policy that does not follow Washington's directives. India's relationship with the U.S. remains essential, particularly in defence, technology, and trade; however, BRICS provides India with a platform to engage with other emerging economies without being anchored to Western-dominated institutions like the G7.



States and China. For the U.S., India's active engagement with BRICS signifies its intent to pursue an independent foreign policy that does not follow Washington's directives. India's relationship with the U.S. remains essential, particularly in defence, technology, and trade; however, BRICS provides India with a platform to engage with other emerging economies without being anchored to Western-dominated institutions like the G7.

Regarding China, India's role within BRICS is more nuanced. While India and China share a seat in BRICS, India has consistently worked to ensure that the group is not dominated by Chinese economic and geopolitical ambitions. BRICS

INDIA'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS

Africa has become an important arena for influence, with both China and India competing for economic and political leverage on the continent. China's Belt and Road Initiative has made significant inroads into African infrastructure, but India has countered this influence by promoting more transparent, sustainable development partnerships.

India's strategy within BRICS emphasizes capacity-building, education, and sustainable development in Africa. At BRICS summits, India has continually advocated for development programs that avoid debt dependency, contrasting with China's loan-driven model. India's approach strengthens its diplomatic ties with African nations, enabling it to challenge China's growing presence in the region while presenting itself as a more responsible and transparent partner.

India has consistently opposed Pakistan's inclusion in

BRICS, citing its involvement in terrorism and destabilising actions in the region. Despite China's efforts to include Pakistan, India has consistently blocked such attempts, ensuring that BRICS remains focused on economic development rather than becoming a platform for geopolitical rivalries. India's opposition to Pakistan's inclusion aligns with its broader diplomatic strategy of isolating Pakistan on the global stage, particularly in counterterrorism forums. By ensuring exclusion from BRICS, India sends a clear message: it will not compromise its national security concerns on multilateral platforms.

Similarly, India's opposition to

Turkey's inclusion in BRICS+ is rooted in a combination of geopolitical, strategic, and diplomatic concerns. Turkey's close ties with Pakistan, particularly regarding the Kashmir issue, have led to tensions, as Turkey often supports Pakistan's stance, which India views as interference in its internal affairs. Additionally, as a NATO member, Turkey has strong Western alliances, occasionally clashing with BRICS' efforts to create a non-Western balance in global affairs. Turkey's assertive foreign policy in regions like the Middle East and Central Asia sometimes conflicts with the interests of BRICS members, particularly India.

Moreover, India and other BRICS nations are cautious about

expanding the bloc too rapidly, as they fear it could dilute their cohesion and shared goals; Turkey's entry, with its active foreign policy stance, could complicate BRICS' strategic direction. For India, BRICS remains primarily a platform for economic cooperation and multipolar balance rather than direct opposition to Western alliances. Turkey's inclusion could shift this balance, potentially making BRICS more politically confrontational, which does not align with India's vision for the bloc.

of Western dominance and highlight the need for a more inclusive and equitable global order. It also reflects a strong voice of the Global South led by India.

India's strategy within BRICS reflects its broader commitment to multilateralism and strategic autonomy. By leveraging platforms like BRICS and BRICS+, India asserts itself as a leading voice in shaping the global financial and geopolitical landscape. Through initiatives like the International

India stands firm on its central point of maintaining the BRICS platform of economic cooperation and balanced multilateralism from turning into a geopolitical rivalry by opposing Pakistan and Turkey's entry into BRICS.



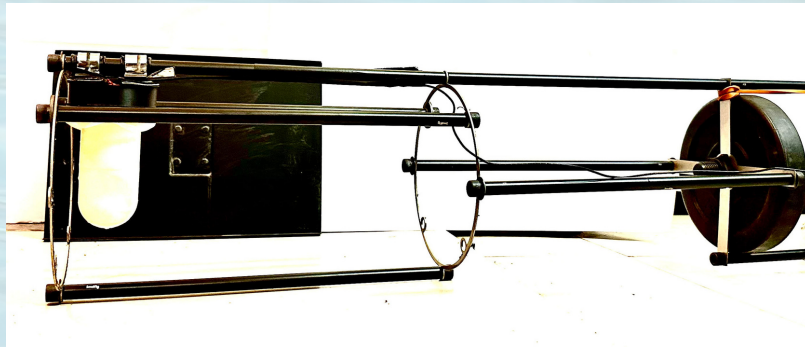
CHALLENGES ON THE HORIZON

Despite its growing influence, BRICS+ faces several challenges. Economic disparities among member states, geopolitical tensions (such as between India and China or Iran and Saudi Arabia), and strong economic linkages with the West could impede the bloc's ability to present a united front.

For BRICS+ to succeed in creating a multipolar financial future, member nations must overcome these challenges and build trust among themselves. While the group is not a direct rival to the U.S.-led system, its success would signal the limits

Solar Alliance, green diplomacy, and sustainable development, India positions itself as a responsible global leader in an increasingly multipolar world. The future of BRICS and India's role within it will be instrumental in determining the contours of global governance for decades to come.

(Lt Gen A B Shivane (Retd), Former DG Mechanised Forces Indian Army. TEDx Speaker, Strategic Defence Consultant, Analyst & Corporate Mentor. The views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The News Analytics Journal.)



HYDRO-ACOUSTIC VECTOR SENSOR

Applications:-

- AVS Arrays for Sonar systems (conventional systems employ hydrophones that measure only pressure)
- Detection of submarine, torpedo or ships against the background underwater noise.
- Towed arrays for submarine and surface ships and for sonobuoys
- Towed and onboard fitted detection system for AUVs, UUVs, wavegliders
- Harbour and port defence
- Detection and tracking of marine aquatic life, ocean noise measurements



ALFAA - AI BASED LOW FREQUENCY ANALYSIS APPLICATION

Using this specialized software, at one single point the input data can be automatically processed to obtain the data analysis results (Frequency Spectrum and the Spectrogram)



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GLOBAL EVENTS



Education Conference (I/ITSEC) is the world's largest modeling, simulation and training event. It will be held in Orlando, Florida, USA from 2-6 December 24, I/ITSEC consists of peer-reviewed paper presentations, tutorials, special events, professional workshops, a commercial exhibit hall, a serious games competition, and STEM events for teachers and secondary students. I/ITSEC is organized and sponsored by the National Training & Simulation Association (NTSA), which promotes international and interdisciplinary cooperation within the fields of modeling and simulation (M&S), training, education, analysis, and related disciplines at this annual meeting

AOC Annual Convention : The Association of Old Crows (AOC) is a global non-profit dedicated to educating, connecting, and advocating for members in the electromagnetic warfare (EW) and spectrum operations fields. As a leading association, AOC unites individuals, organizations, and stakeholders from government, defense, industry, and academia across all domains—air, land, sea, space, and cyber. It promotes an international exchange of ideas and expertise, celebrating major advancements and contributions within these critical sectors. AOC remains committed to recognizing the dedication and achievements of its members, fostering growth and innovation in EW and spectrum operations worldwide.



Future Indirect Fires Summit : The 2025 summit will be held at Texas USA from 14-15 January 25. It will bring together leaders from the indirect fire community to discuss the latest innovations in indirect fire systems, support systems, munitions, and challenges presented by the current conflict in Ukraine. Our discussions will focus on achieving enhanced lethality, survivability, precision, and range. Thought leaders will provide insights into modern warfare. The summit will examine current US DoD programs.

AHEAD



AISSE'25 : From 20th to 22nd January 2025, the international who's who of the security sector will gather at Putrajaya International Convention Centre in Malaysia. Comprising law enforcement and public security decision-makers, government officials, technical experts and professionals, they will be participating in the Asia International Security Summit & Expo 2025 (AISSE'25). Hosted by the Ministry of Home Affairs Malaysia and the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP), and organised by Alpine Integrated Solution (AIS) and Koperasi Polis DiRaja Malaysia Berhad (Royal Malaysia Police Cooperative), AISSE'25 is set to be the region's most prominent security event.

CS4CA|MENA : The event will be held in Dubai, UAE from 21-22 January 25. The globally acclaimed Cyber Security for Critical Assets summit returns to Dubai for its seventh edition in 2025 with its co-located partner, the MENA Cyber Summit, also returning for its second edition. These aim to help cyber security leaders from both IT & OT security environments to strengthen their organisations defences against malicious actors.



APEX : Apex is built to support the requirements and challenge areas of US and Allied forces, whilst improving information and insight sharing between military, government, and industry. //The event across April 23 - 24, 2025 provides a platform for U.S. and Allied forces to collaborate with industry experts and thought leaders, focusing on sharing insights, testing new technologies, and solving operational challenges. With stages for expert discussions, technology showcases, and targeted briefings, Apex aims to advance defense readiness, drive innovation, and enhance joint warfighting capabilities.

EUROPA CLIPPER MISSION: UNRAVELING JUPITER'S MYSTERIOUS MOON

ECO SYSTEM

The icy surface of Jupiter's moon Europa is cracked, indicating an active subsurface ocean that could support life. Scientists believe this ocean, with liquid water, energy, and chemical ingredients, may harbour microbial ecosystems similar to those around Earth's deep-sea vents. Europa Clipper's mission aims to gather detailed data on this moon's habitability. Using advanced instruments, it will conduct flybys, passing within 25 kilometers of the surface to analyse Europa's ice shell, ocean and geologic activity for signs of life.

TNJ TECHNOLOGY DESK

The Europa Clipper mission is a pioneering space exploration project led by NASA, aimed at investigating one of the most intriguing moons in our solar system: Europa, one of Jupiter's four Galilean moons. This mission marks a critical step in humanity's quest to explore potential habitats beyond Earth. Europa, with its icy surface and the possibility of a subsurface ocean, holds the potential for harbouring life in environments far beyond Earth's boundaries. The Europa Clipper mission, launched on 14th Oct 2024, will play a crucial role in understanding whether Europa could support microbial life, the moon's geologic history, and its capacity for future exploration.

THE SCIENCE

Europa, about 628 million kilometers from Earth, is one of the most scientifically compelling objects in the solar system. With a diameter of around 3,100 kilometers, Europa is slightly smaller than Earth's moon, but its surface features suggest an active, evolving world. Beneath its thick ice crust lies an ocean of liquid water, possibly more abundant than all of Earth's oceans combined. This subsurface ocean, heated by tidal forces from Jupiter's immense gravity, makes Europa a key target for astrobiology research.

Europa's surface is covered by a thick layer of ice, which is



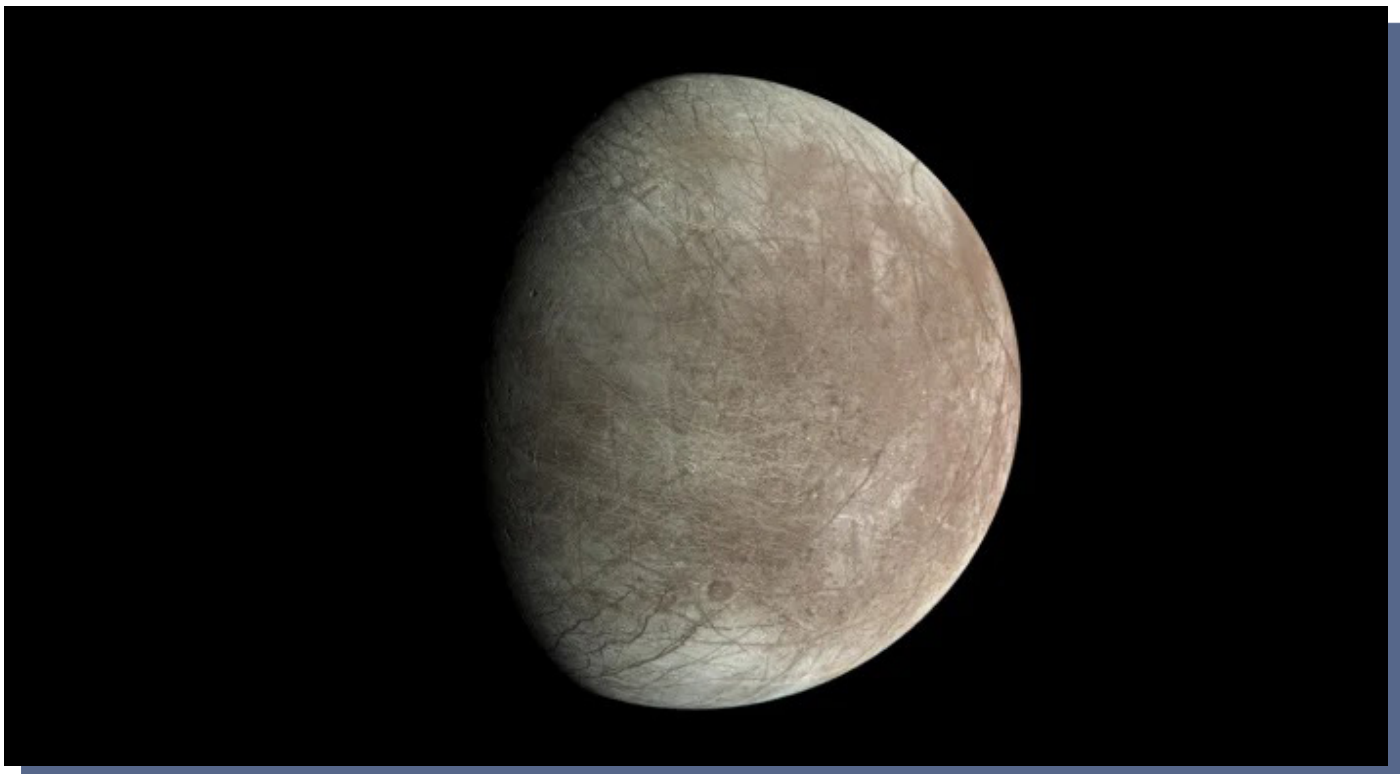
cracked and fractured, suggesting that beneath it, an active, dynamic ocean exists. Scientists believe that the ocean could harbour the conditions necessary for life, possibly supporting microbial ecosystems similar to those found around deep-sea hydrothermal vents on Earth. With liquid water, an energy source and a variety of chemical ingredients available, Europa may offer the potential for life.

Europa Clipper's mission objectives are centered on gathering detailed data to assess the moon's habitability. Equipped with cutting-edge scientific instruments, Europa Clipper will perform detailed reconnaissance of Europa's ice shell, subsurface ocean and geologic activity. It will conduct flybys, passing within 25 kilometers of Europa's surface, allowing the spacecraft to obtain detailed observations that could provide vital clues about the moon's composition and the likelihood of life.

Europa's entire surface, including high-resolution pictures of regions that have not been previously observed in such detail.

Ice-penetrating Radar (Radar for Europa's Ice and Subsurface - REASON): This radar system will penetrate Europa's icy shell to assess the thickness of the ice and explore the subsurface ocean. By sending signals through the ice, the radar will help scientists identify the structure of the ice shell, look for cracks and ridges, and map the ocean's depth and composition.

Mass Spectrometer (Europa Clipper Mass Spectrometer): This instrument will measure the composition of Europa's surface and its thin atmosphere, which consists mainly of oxygen. It will also analyse plumes of water vapour that are believed to periodically erupt from cracks in the ice, providing important information about the moon's internal ocean.



TECHNOLOGY ON BOARD

The Europa Clipper spacecraft is carrying a suite of sophisticated scientific instruments designed to answer key questions about the moon's surface and subsurface environment.

The Europa Clipper mission uses flybys to gather data while avoiding radiation risks. Launched on a SpaceX Falcon Heavy on October 14, 2024, it will reach Jupiter in 2030.

Imaging System (Europa Imaging System - EIS): The EIS will provide high-resolution images of Europa's surface, allowing scientists to study its ice shell, surface features, and geological processes in detail. It will capture images of

Dust Analyser (Europa Dust Analyser - EDA): This tool will examine the dust particles that surround Europa, which can help researchers understand the composition of Europa's surface and any interactions between Europa and Jupiter's magnetosphere.

Plasma Instrument (Europa Plasma Instrument - EPI): The EPI will investigate the magnetosphere and plasma environment around Europa. This data will be critical for understanding how Jupiter's powerful magnetic field interacts with the moon, potentially influencing the subsurface ocean's chemistry and the surface's evolution.

Thermal Emission Imaging System (E-THEMIS): This infrared system will study the heat signatures of Europa's surface, detecting thermal anomalies that could be linked to

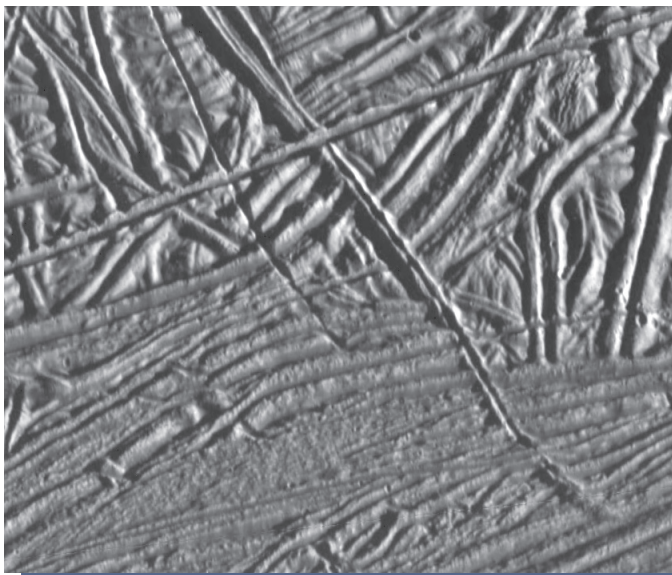
geologic activity, such as geysers or active cracks in the ice shell.

These instruments will work together to provide a comprehensive, multi-faceted view of Europa, revealing critical insights into the moon's composition, surface and potential for supporting life.

MISSION DESIGN AND TIMELINE

The Europa Clipper mission is designed to maximise scientific output while minimising risk. To achieve this, the spacecraft will perform multiple flybys of Europa, rather than orbiting the moon. This approach allows Europa Clipper to gather a wealth of data while avoiding the challenges and risks associated with orbiting a body that is exposed to Jupiter's intense radiation.

The Europa Clipper spacecraft was launched on a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida on October 14, 2024. The spacecraft has embarked on a multi-year journey to reach Jupiter, with an expected arrival in 2030. After entering Jupiter's orbit, Europa Clipper will perform a series of flybys of Europa, each providing valuable data that will be transmitted back to Earth.



Europa Clipper's data may shape future space exploration, aiding the search for life on exoplanets in the habitable zone by refining our understanding of life-supporting conditions.

Over the course of its mission, Europa Clipper will perform dozens of flybys of Europa, each one getting closer to the surface, allowing for detailed mapping and data collection. The mission is expected to last about 3.5 years, during which it will complete 45 flybys of Europa, covering a wide variety of regions on Jupiter's moon surface. The spacecraft will operate in the harsh environment of the Jovian system, where radiation levels are extremely high, requiring special shielding and careful planning to ensure the spacecraft's longevity.

THE SEARCH FOR LIFE

Europa's potential for supporting life is one of the driving forces behind the Europa Clipper mission. The existence of a subsurface ocean beneath Europa's icy shell is one of the most exciting aspects of the moon. The ocean may harbour the right conditions for microbial life, and studying its composition and activity could reveal whether such life forms exist, or could have existed in the past. Europa Clipper will gather crucial data that will help scientists determine the moon's habitability, providing a clearer understanding of whether life might be possible elsewhere in our solar system.

The data collected by Europa Clipper will also help scientists assess the moon's geologic activity. Evidence of active geologic processes, such as tectonic activity or plumes of water vapor erupting from cracks in the ice, suggests that Europa may be geologically active, with a dynamic interior that could support life. By studying these features, Europa Clipper could provide insights into the broader processes that shape moons and planets in the solar system.

THE BROADER IMPACT

The Europa Clipper mission is not only an important step in the search for extraterrestrial life but also a significant milestone in the broader field of planetary exploration. It builds on previous missions to Jupiter and its moons, such as the Galileo spacecraft and the Juno mission and complements upcoming missions like NASA's James Webb Space Telescope and ESA's Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer (JUICE).

The data gathered by Europa Clipper could have far-reaching implications for the future of space exploration. The exploration of Europa and other icy moons in the solar system could inform the search for life on exoplanets, especially those located in the "habitable zone" where liquid water could exist. By studying Europa's ice, ocean and geology, scientists can refine their understanding of the conditions necessary for life to thrive in the vast universe.

The Europa Clipper mission represents an exciting new chapter in humanity's exploration of the solar system. With its advanced instruments and ambitious scientific goals, it promises

to provide groundbreaking insights into one of the most promising locations for life beyond Earth. As Europa continues to captivate the imagination of scientists and the public alike, the mission's findings could reshape our understanding of the universe and our place in it. Through Europa Clipper, we are not only exploring a distant moon but also moving closer to answering one of the most profound questions in science: are we alone in the universe?



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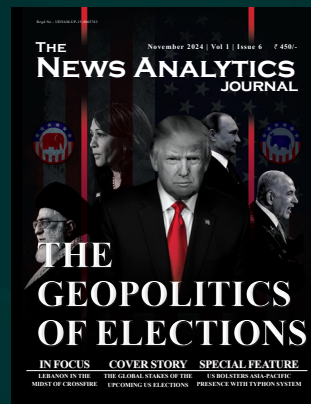


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