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GLOBAL UP-TO-DATE

A  Publication

The world around us is changing rapidly. Wars, new turn in global politics, human rights issues are occurring every day, posing new challenges and concerns. Global Up-to-Date is an initiative by Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) which will work as a hub for explaining the contemporary global issues.

The regular briefs will focus and explain the issues related to International Politics, Economy, Security, Human Rights, and Development. There will be a monthly printed version newsletter containing briefs of all the contemporary global important issues. The online version contains regular updates of the pressing issues along with the PDF version of the newsletter.

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Leadership Decapitation: Israel's Precision Strikes

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The peace talks that were in the process between Israel and Hamas over the Gaza war have again been destroyed with the assassination of political leader Ismail Haniyeh on 31 July, one of the most senior Hamas leaders in Iran who was in Tehran for the inauguration of Iran's new president. He was killed by an explosive device which was smuggled covertly into the Tehran guesthouse where he was staying. Iran is blaming Israel for the attack and its supreme leader has vowed to take revenge on Israel. However, on the other hand, Israel has not mentioned anything about it yet. Not only did Israel kill Ismail Haniyeh but also Hezbollah's top commander Fouad Shukur, the previous day (30 July), in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, flaming tensions between Israel and Hezbollah. Israel's constant attack on leaders who have close ties with Iran is taking the region to a wider war that should worry us all. Israel claimed that the attack in Beirut was in retaliation for a missile strike it said was launched by Hezbollah and killed twelve children in the town of Majdal Shams in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The accusation has been sharply refuted by Hezbollah.

Joel Rubin, former deputy assistant secretary of state for House Affairs during the Obama administration has stated that this will jeopardize the ceasefire talks as well as the hostage exchange deal. Iran is looking for retaliation where they can produce enough impact to deter future attacks as well as be cautious of igniting a regional war. In Israel, it is widely believed that Netanyahu must keep the war going to keep the domestic problems at bay. The situation in the Middle East has deteriorated to the point that the US could get involved in the regional war even if they do not want to. This is exactly what Netanyahu wants. It depends on Iran's response whether the US and the West will get involved. President Biden thinks that Iran will not carry out a retaliatory attack if a deal is reached to end the war in Gaza. But by sending \$20 billion worth of weapons to Israel which is also the largest deal after the onset of the Gaza war; Biden is not exactly helping to stop the risk of a wider war. A war right now in the Middle East will be a loss for Iran, Israel, and the US as well.

Three steps might bring peace to the region. The first is an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Currently, the US is the only one who has the leverage to push Israel for a ceasefire if the US wants to keep itself away from any war in the region. Iran, on the other hand, should focus on how to hold Israel accountable rather than retaliation against Israel. Its reaction to Haniyeh's murder might bolster support from throughout the world for a free Palestine and an early cease-fire in this way. Secondly, the US should welcome the newly elected president of Iran who is committed to ending forty years of hostility with the US. Cooperation between the two countries is necessary to bring peace between Israel and Iran, bring back the Iran nuclear deal, and put an end to decades of risky regional conflicts. Lastly, getting the UN Security Council to set up a platform for communication and collaboration between Iran and its Arab neighbors surrounding the Persian Gulf would be a crucial first step.

However, the US and Iran's response regarding the current situation is only going to jeopardize the thin line of stability that the Middle Eastern region has been holding on to for the past few months. The United States has deployed a naval carrier strike group to the Eastern Mediterranean in response to concerns that an Iranian or allied strike on Israel could trigger a regional war. This deployment is intended to deter Iran from initiating or retaliating against Israel, rather than to escalate tensions in the region. Iran has, on the other hand, called for restraint after these recent assassinations which have angered Hamas, Hezbollah, and other groups, causing a significant rift between Iran and its allies. The recent developments in the Middle East have triggered the fear of an all-out war in the Middle East yet again.

The Strategic Implications of China-Belarus Military Exercises Near NATO's Border

Roman Uddin



The recent joint military exercises between China and Belarus near the Polish border mark a significant moment in global geopolitics, underscoring the increasingly assertive posture of authoritarian regimes in challenging the Western-led international order. These drills, held just as NATO was convening its summit in Washington, are far from coincidental. They symbolize a growing alignment between China and Russia, with Belarus serving as a crucial conduit for this strategic partnership. This development is not merely a regional concern but a potential harbinger of a broader, more complex geopolitical confrontation.

China's participation in military exercises on European soil, particularly so close to NATO's borders, is unprecedented and signals Beijing's willingness to project power far beyond its traditional spheres of influence in Asia. This move can be interpreted as a direct response to NATO's increasing engagement with the Asia-Pacific region, where the alliance has been deepening ties with democracies like Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Beijing's actions suggest a strategic calculus aimed at countering NATO's influence both in Europe and Asia, thereby complicating the security dynamics across two critical theaters.

Belarus, under President Alexander Lukashenko, has become increasingly isolated from the West due to its authoritarian governance and close ties with Moscow. The country's recent accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a security bloc dominated by China and Russia, further cements its role as a front-line state in the emerging Eurasian alliance. For Lukashenko, allowing Chinese troops to operate so close to NATO territory serves multiple purposes: it reinforces his regime's security through external alliances, signals his defiance against Western sanctions, and strengthens his bargaining position with Moscow by demonstrating his capacity for independent foreign policy maneuvers.

However, this exercise is not merely a show of force; it carries deeper strategic implications. The presence of Chinese forces in Belarus could pave the way for more permanent military cooperation between the two countries, including the possibility of Chinese military bases or facilities on Belarusian soil. Such developments would significantly alter the security landscape in Eastern Europe, potentially drawing China into the already tense standoff between NATO and Russia. Moreover, this exercise may serve as a testing ground for integrating Chinese and Russian military doctrines, particularly if future drills involve trilateral cooperation with Moscow.

For NATO, these developments are deeply concerning. The alliance has long been focused on countering Russian aggression, particularly since the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the ongoing war in Ukraine. The introduction of Chinese military power into this volatile mix raises the stakes considerably. NATO now faces the prospect of a coordinated Sino-Russian-Belarusian front on its eastern flank, which could stretch its resources and complicate its strategic planning. This situation also underscores the growing global nature of security threats, where actions in one region can have far-reaching implications for another.

China's involvement in Belarus is also a clear signal that Beijing is willing to engage in power projection in areas far removed from its immediate neighborhood. This shift reflects China's broader ambitions to be recognized as a global superpower capable of influencing outcomes in multiple regions simultaneously. By participating in these exercises, China is not only supporting Russia and Belarus but also testing the resolve of NATO and its member states. It challenges the Western alliance to respond to this new reality, where the traditional lines of confrontation are increasingly blurred.

The Western response to these developments will be crucial in shaping the future of global security. NATO must now consider how to address the dual challenges posed by Russian and Chinese military cooperation, particularly in regions that are vital to its collective defense. Strengthening ties with non-NATO allies in the Asia-Pacific, enhancing military readiness on the eastern flank, and increasing intelligence-sharing are all potential steps that the alliance could take. Additionally, there may be a need for a broader strategic dialogue with China to address these concerns and prevent further escalation.

The joint military exercises between China and Belarus represent a significant escalation in the ongoing geopolitical competition between authoritarian regimes and the Western-led international order. This development not only challenges NATO's security posture in Europe but also signals China's growing ambition to play a more assertive role on the global stage. As these dynamics continue to evolve, the international community must remain vigilant and adaptable, recognizing that the security challenges of the 21st century are increasingly interconnected and global in scope. The actions taken today will have profound implications for the future of international peace and stability.

Will Boeing Plead Guilty?

Aong Cha Ching Marma

World's one of the largest airplane manufacturers, Boeing (BA.N) is set to face criminal charges for violating the 2021 agreement involving the 737 MAX jet's two fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019. US Justice Department (DOJ) plans to seek a guilty plea from Boeing. However, attorneys for the victim's family member blasted the potential agreement as a "sweetheart deal". The plea agreement offered by the DOJ contained a monetary fine of around \$247 million and the appointment of an impartial monitor to oversee the business's safety and compliance procedures for three years. The current trouble faced by Boeing is the consequence of several incidents tied to the failed quality and miscreants over the past several years, some resulting in heart-wrecking events for the victim and their families.



The trailblazer in the airline industry, Boeing started its journey back in 1916 by the hand of William E. Boeing. The company has consistently innovated over the years, producing legendary airplanes such as the 707, 747, 777, and 787 Dreamliner. Due to the reliability and performance of its jets, the saying "If it's not Boeing, I am not going" went on to gain immense popularity in the 20th century among airplane passengers. However, according to the critics, things started to loom due to its focus on cost over quality after the company's 1997 merger with another American aircraft maker, McDonnell Douglas. When financial executives from McDonnell Douglas began taking on leadership positions at Boeing, the emphasis switched from engineering, quality, and safety to cost reduction, efficiency, and eventually profitability. Additionally, Boeing started to regard itself less as a maker of all the parts for aircraft and more as an aircraft designer and assembler. Boeing started spinning off its "non-core" operations groups, possibly because it made financial sense to stop some operations. For instance, Spirit Aero Systems, a major supplier to Boeing and the former subsidiary of Boeing located in Wichita, Kansas, was spun off in 2005. Spirit Aero Systems produces fuselages among other parts.

All these being changed inside the organization, Boeing launched the 737 MAX family—a rival to the Airbus A320 family and a successor to the older 737 aircraft—quickly gained a lot of popularity. Boeing landed thousands of 737 MAX aircraft, but shortly after the aircraft went into service in May 2017, the aircraft's promise became problematic for both Boeing and the aviation industry as a whole. Nearly a year later, all 189 individuals on board a Lion Air 737 MAX died in an October 2018 crash in Indonesia. After that, 157 people on board an Ethiopian Airlines 737 MAX perished in an accident in March 2019, which prompted regulators worldwide to stop MAX aircraft. A defect in a new technology that forced the aircraft's nose down to prevent stalling was the cause of the crashes. Even when there was no threat to the aircraft, the nose was forced downward due to faulty sensor data. Boeing was accused of hiding important details about the system from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that would have necessitated further pilot training. Boeing consented to pay fines totaling \$2.5 billion. The 737 MAX was cleared by the FAA in November 2020 and by the Aviation Safety Agency of the EU in January 2021, following months of investigations, corrections, and testing.

After a couple of years of regaining trust, the January 2024 incident of Alaska Airlines in which the MAX jet's panel blew out mid-air fueled the issue. It forced the US lawmakers to reconsider the 2021 agreement. US legislators questioned Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun in June about the company's dismal safety record. Attorneys for the relatives of the victims have pushed the Justice Department to bring charges against the plane maker and levy a punishment of up to \$24.78 billion, citing criticism from Capitol Hill.

Justice Department representatives will provide Boeing until July 7 to react to the plea deal, which they will declare to be non-negotiable. Prosecutors indicated they would try Boeing to trial if the firm refused to enter a guilty plea. Whether Boeing accepts the plea deal or not, the impact on the airline industry due to the unfavorable incidents brought up by the company is unignorable. The challenge is immense for Boeing even though the plea deal does not seem to pose too much harm to the operations of the company. However, the current occurrences will make a great lesson for any airline company for the years to come.