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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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Is the Middle East Heading Towards an All-out War?

Nuzhat Tabassum



Israel and Iran have been engaged in a shadow war for decades and only now they have confronted each other directly. Israel has attacked Isfahan, a province in Iran in response to Iran's direct attack on Israeli soil which was a retaliation for the bombing of an Iranian consulate in Damascus on April 1 which killed two top Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) advisers.

According to Israel, the consulate was a military building of the Quds forces disguised as a civilian building. But Iran regarded it as an attack on Iranian soil and on 14th April made its counter-attack on Israel. Iran's attacks were directed toward military infrastructures and was designed to minimize casualty but maximize spectacle. Similarly, Israel's attack on Iran was limited and was designed so that the conflict would go no further. Isfahan is an important province in Iran. The attack carried the meaning that Israel could attack the beating heart of Iran at any time. Even though Iran has said they will retaliate more intensely if Israel decides to attack; so far, Iranian officials are downplaying the significance of the attack and has indicated that it has no plan to retaliate.

Israel made a mistake by attacking the Iranian consulate in Syria. Since the start of the war in Gaza in October, the international community has vehemently criticized the actions of Israel. Recently, the US abstained from vetoing a UNSC resolution that called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, hinting that the US is frustrated with Israel's action. President Netanyahu's promise to bring back the hostages that Hamas took on October 7 has not been fulfilled yet. Even Israelis are tired of Netanyahu's actions with no result and are demanding a new election to remove Netanyahu's government. He will not be able to sustain himself for a long time due to international and domestic pressure. By attacking Iran's consulate, Israel is trying to divert the attention from the war in Gaza and domestic problems to a regional one. It will also bring the US to rally behind Israel to diminish Iran's Islamic government for good. A broader conflict will be beneficial for him and will support the claim that the October attack was not only a terrorist attack but rather a bigger confrontation and campaign.

Israel gained more from the recent events. There were already talks of a strained relationship between Israel and the US. Iran's attack on Israel has changed the situation and now everyone is talking about their strong friendship. Israel has attracted Western sympathy to rally behind itself. Iran's attack also diverted the attention of the UNSC. Instead of discussing a ceasefire in Gaza, the UN will discuss Iran's threat and Israel's right to defend itself. Also, Iran has put itself in front of Arab attention to rediscuss on stopping Iran's nuclear program. Experts have also said that the attack has inaugurated a regional defense coalition against Iran. It is a strategic win for Israel. Additionally, it will pressure the Republican Party to proceed swiftly on an Israel aid bill. On the other hand, the position of Iran is not good. Its economy is not in good shape due to sanctions and growing discontent inside the country for its repressive policies. Iran's attack allowed Israel to go after its nuclear establishments. Israel is trying to impose sanctions on Iran's missile projects and declare IRGC a terrorist group.

It is now on Iran if they want to respond to Israel's attack. But for both Israel and Iran, the war will be costly. But a war now is destructive for the Middle East as a region. It could destabilize a volatile region even further. The material and humanitarian costs will haunt the region for generations. Rather, the focus should be on the ceasefire to stop the war in Gaza and ensure the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza as soon as possible.

Shifting Sands: US-Israel Rift Amidst Gaza's Conflict

Shurat Rana Rushmi



In the midst of the continued conflict in Gaza, tensions have risen between the United States and Israel following Hamas attacks on October 7. A series of events have led to this tension. To start, the US chose not to use its veto power in a UN Security Council vote regarding a Gaza ceasefire and the release of hostages held by Hamas. The US has expressed concerns about human rights violations by Israel and is considering imposing sanctions on an Israeli military unit for alleged misconduct.

Contrary to Israel's preference for a veto, the United States took an unconventional step by abstaining from a resolution advocating for an immediate Gaza ceasefire on March 25. This created further tension between the long-time allies. As a deviation from their usual strong support for Israel, Netanyahu in reaction criticized the US abstention. The US clarified its position by noting that the resolution was not legally binding despite differing opinions within the UN Security Council. The abstention highlighted the complexity of the US-Israel relationship while symbolic. It's worth noting that this was not the first time the US abstained from a significant UN Security Council vote regarding Israel.

The latest Country Reports on Human Rights Practices from the United States have highlighted human rights violations in Gaza by Israel. It is worth mentioning that the report highlights a shared responsibility between the two countries for these abuses during the conflict. Attributing the deterioration of human rights in the region to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has expressed serious concerns about the situation. The report's 103-page section on Israel documents credible reports of various human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detention, sexual violence, the punishment of family members for alleged offenses, and unlawful killings by both Hamas and the Israeli government.

Due to alleged human rights violations in the West Bank, there is a discussion in the United States about potentially imposing sanctions on the "Netzah Yehuda" battalion of the Israel Defense Forces. These sanctions would prevent the transfer of the US military equipment or any other aid to the battalion. This would mark the first time the US has directly targeted an IDF unit enacted. Prime Minister Netanyahu criticized the potential move as absurd and morally reprehensible, particularly as Israeli soldiers are engaged in combat against terrorist entities. However, Israel's Walla website reported that the US would not impose sanctions on the Netzah Yehuda unit following Israel's adoption of measures to address the concerns.

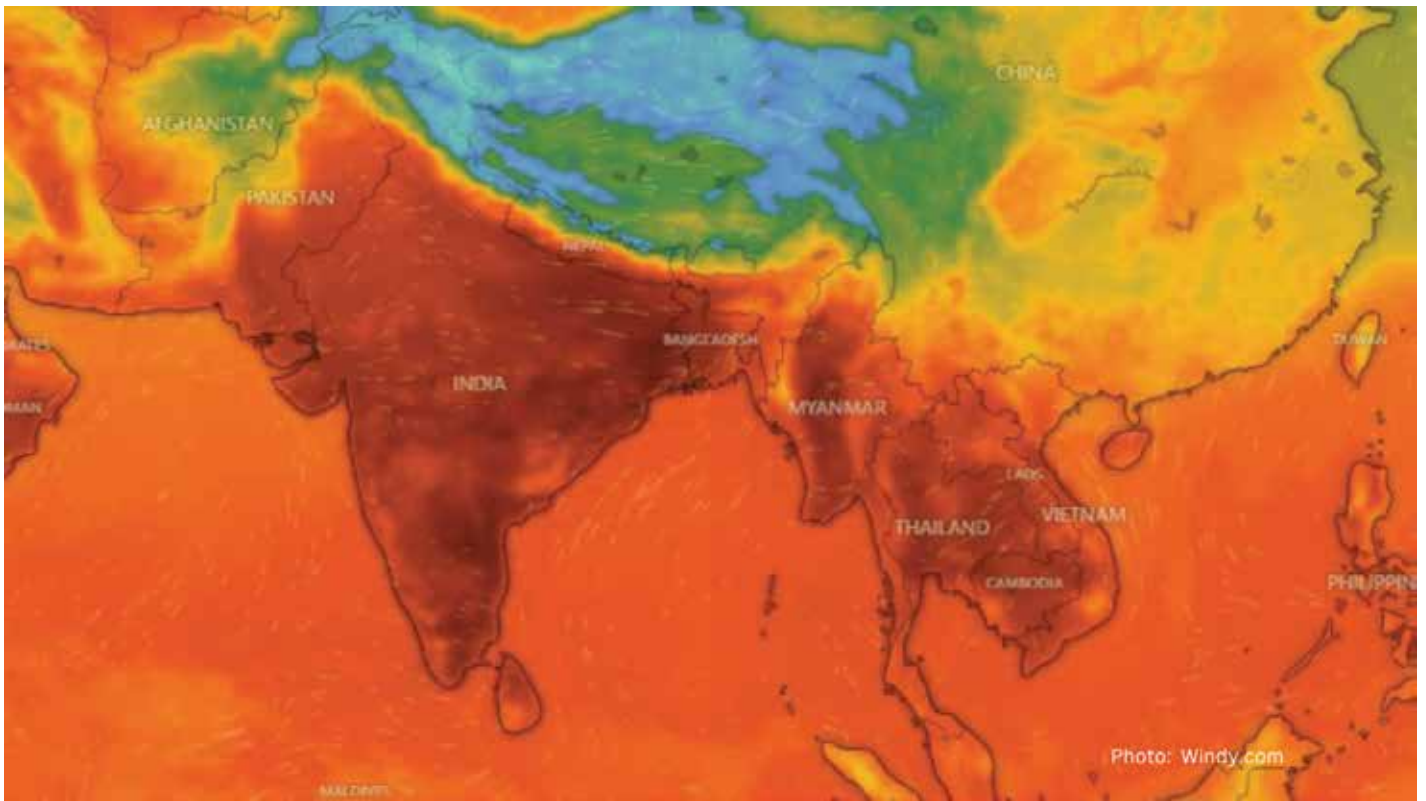
It appears premature to suggest a significant shift in US-Israel relations given the substantial financial and military backing that Israel receives from the US. Pro-Palestinian voices may be gaining attention recently, but the influence of pro-Israeli interests in the universities of US has long been dominant, overshadowing support for Palestine. Even while attaining deterrence and security is difficult, the ultimate goal still stands in spite of recent events like the attack on October 7, which had a significant impact on Israel. There might be a concern within the US government about potential escalation involving Israel, Hezbollah, and Iran going forward. Should Israel lose international support regarding Gaza, it could potentially leave them vulnerable in such a situation. As a result, Israel's allies, notably the US, play a critical role in navigating these intricate geopolitical challenges.

Heat Waves: A Closer Look Into The Roots

Kazi Rhid

Due to the recent heatwave in South Asia there's been a swarm of posts on social media about what can be done regionally in order to combat this. Many have gone on to say that it might be the local people's fault for not planting enough trees. Is it the locals who are responsible for climate change? Bangladesh and its neighboring countries were late to industrialize unlike the western countries. If we look at the current emission data China and India are on the top tier of emitters but the finger pointing stops at the historical data of industrial emissions. Although in the current emissions USA is right up there with China but the latter has the shield of development to hide behind most of the countries in the west have already achieved.

The current heatwave has been nowhere close to what it was before. Air conditioner and electric fan sales have hit an all time high, in the capital of Bangladesh most electronics shops are selling fans and ACs at a higher profit because the demand is so high. In the past few days there has been reports of multiple people dying in heat induced illnesses. The primary education ministry had to stop schools for a week to lower the risks but you can't stop schools indefinitely because of the heat that would mean to stop schools until the end of summer. The scariest part of all of this is that it is only the start of summer, usually the peak summer heat is at June-August. We can only imagine what would happen on those days, given the current situation. A heat officer has been appointed to many cities of the world including Dhaka to tackle the overwhelming sudden increase of temperature, which has had its own slew of criticisms.



Is the [El Nino weather pattern](#) to be blamed for the extreme weather? It is true that every two to seven years a period of 9-12 months is observed where the Pacific Ocean temperatures behave a certain way along with the wind patterns that increases the likelihood of extreme weather. This phenomenon has been observed since the 1600s but that combined with climate change has not been an easy pill to swallow for countries such as Bangladesh. By the calculation of the El Nino weather pattern it should be ending by this June since that is the 12-month mark, but scientist don't think that the heat is just going to go away with El Nino, the combined effects of climate change have led the scientists to assume that the extreme weather will continue on. Every year as we move forward is going to be hotter than the last for at least the next few decades.

What is the solution for the increasing heatwave? As terrifying as it sounds there is not really a short-term solution other than to deal with it. Theoretically, we can say better urban planning, better irrigation mechanisms for agricultural fields, architectural developments, automating agricultural practices, automating labor work, better temperature control public transports are all good concepts, but they take enormous time and money. In reality there is really a short number of things we can do, as much as we would like to troll the chief heat officer, her advice of carrying a water bottle, having a hand fan, staying in shades or under an umbrella is a temporary deterrent. Alongside this it could also come down to empathy, letting people a drink of water in need can go a long way, opening up your shops and garages for people to just take a break during the peak heat of the day could help reduce the heat induced illnesses.

This region is on their own in this crisis, there are funds coming in from all across the world to solve this issue but at the end of the day the local population has to innovate and come up with the solutions for this crisis. The science has been solid, we knew [this was coming](#), could we have prevented these deaths? maybe. There is no sure way of knowing what could have happened in the past but it is important that we realize that there are somethings that are in our control. Of course we are mad at billionaires and their frequent private jet trips, the train system of USA isn't good enough that they have to use commercial airplanes so frequently, which is only increasing the carbon emissions. Why is it that the entirety of Europe and China have somehow figured out the train system better than the leader of the free world? The answers to these big questions are sometimes obvious but the implications based on those are not easy to come by but that doesn't mean that we need to stop asking these questions. At the same time although recycling and giving a gulp of water to a passerby is not a holistic solution to the climate crisis and the ongoing heatwave, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't do it anyways.