

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The G7 leader's Annual Summit meeting was held at Hiroshima, Japan between May 19 and 21, 2023. Clearly, Ukraine was the subject of initial focus. Russia was condemned unequivocally. The need to strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation was reiterated, more so after the 'N' word got repeatedly used since the beginning of the Ukraine conflict. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) must remain the cornerstone and the foundation for nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This became all the more relevant as the meeting was being held in Hiroshima, the first of the only two cities to have been attacked by an atomic bomb.

Clearly in context of China, without naming, it was stated that all members were determined to support a free and open the Indo-Pacific and oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion. The commitment to strengthen the regional partners, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was reaffirmed. Greater engagement with Pacific Island countries was a priority. The need to strengthen partnerships with African countries was another highlight of the discussions. Promoting universal human rights, gender equality and human dignity were emphasised. Invitee non-members like India, among others, were especially welcomed. Prime Minister Modi emphasised the need to reform the United Nations Organisation based on current global realities, and to strengthen and make it more effective.

Disruption of energy supply chains and need to strengthen alternatives to sourcing from autocratic regimes was discussed. Also, the need to promote renewable clean energy needs to be evolved. Support of the International Energy Association's (IEA) "Voluntary

Critical Mineral Security Program” was also discussed. Building economic resilience and economic security and need for deeper partnership within the like-minded democratic group and decoupling from some others was emphasised. A committee was set up to suggest actions to manage global debt. Cooperation for transition to clean energy and food security were some of the other issues discussed. Using new digital technologies for strengthening societies, economies, and the international governance was discussed. Prime Minister Modi highlighted the success of India’s Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Universal Payment Interface (UPI), and suggested that others may wish to adopt similar approaches for the welfare of the people.

It was also decided to mobilise and earmark \$600 billion for financing quality infrastructure under the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII). Global warming and climate change mitigation measures were discussed and risk to coastal areas and Island nations highlighted. The need for determined action was emphasised. G7 reiterated their commitment to promoting the safe and sustainable use of outer space.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Modi made a very successful visit to Papua New Guinea, where he also participated in 3rd Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit. He had attended the first one in Fiji in 2014. The second was held in India. PM Modi announced a 12-point new development initiatives for Pacific Island nations. India would set up a super-speciality cardiology hospital at Fiji, among other infrastructure projects in various Island nations. India has been pursuing the Act East Policy. The need to engage the Pacific Island nations has become even more important after China made aggressive forays to induce them with financial support to get them in its fold.

India’s presidency of G20 and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) continued with major events across different parts of the country. The G20 events that began in September 2022 will culminate with the summit on September 9-10, 2023. An important event was the third G20 Tourism Working Group meeting, from May 22 to 24, 2023 in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). This group works on five interconnected priority areas, such as green tourism, digitalisation,

skill development, MSMEs, and destinations. It was the first major international meet in J&K after revocation of Article 370 in August 2019. The events were a great success and the state has once again come on the international tourist circuit.

The meeting of the SCO Foreign Ministers Council took place on May 4 and 5, 2023, in Panaji, Goa. An important task of the event was preparing the political agenda for the upcoming SCO Summit in New Delhi. They were to evolve the drafts of the New Delhi Declaration and other important statements. It was also decided to deepen cooperation on security matters, increase efforts to fight terrorism, drug trafficking, and cybercrime, among others. How to stabilise Afghanistan and rebuild the country was also discussed. Expanding cooperation in transport, energy, finance, investment, free trade, digital economy, and increasing cultural exchanges was discussed. Protecting the environment and countering climate change was part of the agenda.

The war in Ukraine continues. Ground movement is slow. It took a few months of fighting for Russia to capture and consolidate in the city of Bakhmut. The West continues to arm Ukraine mostly with defensive weapons but also to prepare for a counteroffensive to retake its territory under Russian control. President Biden has cleared supply of F-16s to Ukraine. The training of crew will begin soon. The proviso is that the aircraft will not be used to attack Russian territory. This will also set into motion the process of change over of Ukrainian military equipment from hitherto Russian origin to Western origin weapons and platforms. President Putin has warned against possible use of Western military hardware against Russia. He also made it clear that it was premature to talk about a peaceful settlement. Putin's press secretary, Dmitry Peskov said that the preconditions for an end to the conflict did not exist yet, and that the operation will continue.

This issue of *Defence and Diplomacy* covers many geopolitical issues currently facing the world. An author looks at the level of maturity of the Indo-Pacific concept. What are the lessons for India from Iran's Security Structure? Iran's Nuclear Dilemma and energy goals. As SCO geopolitics evolve in Central Asian Region, we look at implications for India. We have an analysis of Indian military's unique Jointness model. There is an article on induction of emerging

technologies and their challenges for warfare. We look at the impact of social media intelligence (SOCMINT) on Counterterrorism. And lastly, at friendshoring supply chain, and emerging unilateralism. There is content on a wide spread of topics.

Happy Reading

Jai Hind!

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