

Highlights from the region

12th June, 2023 | Volume - 02 - 01/06

All eyes were in Singapore last week as it hosted Defence Ministers of USA and China as part of the Shangri la Dialogue with an aim to facilitate a bilateral meeting. Amid existing sharp divisions, the two only shook hands and delivered sharply worded statements. China's defence minister, Li Shangfu, has said a cold war mentality is resurgent in the Asia-Pacific region, but Beijing seeks dialogue over confrontation. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has warned that a war over Taiwan would be "devastating" and affect the global economy "in ways we cannot imagine". India was represented at the Dialogue by its Deputy NSA Vikram Misri who in an indirect message to Chinese actions in the South China Sea region, pointed out that respect for "foundational principles and regimes" like UNCLOS "is essential for the credibility of the global order". The Deputy NSA, however, ruled out any military alliances to safeguard India's interests rather emphasized on partnerships. Meanwhile, Singapore may have Tharman Shanmugaratnam, a veteran politician of Indian origin as its next President. Indonesia on the other hand will witness visit by Japan's emperor, his maiden standalone visit abroad as the emperor.

[Li Shangfu: China's defence minister at Shangri-La Dialogue warns of 'cold war mentality' in digs at US](#)

The Guardian | 4th June 2023

China's defence minister, Li Shangfu, has said a cold war mentality is resurgent in the Asia-Pacific region, but Beijing seeks dialogue over confrontation. The remarks came after Li [refused to formally meet the US defence secretary, Lloyd Austin](#), at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. Speaking at the dialogue, Asia's top security summit, on Sunday, Li took thinly veiled digs at the US, repeating familiar grievances and accusing "some countries" of intensifying an arms race and interfering in the internal affairs of others.

[Taiwan war would be 'devastating,' warns US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin as he criticizes China at Shangri-La security summit](#)

CNN | 3rd June 2023

A war over Taiwan would be “devastating” and affect the global economy “in ways we cannot imagine,” US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has warned, as he underlined US support for the island democracy. “Conflict is neither imminent nor inevitable. Deterrence is strong today – and it’s our job to keep it that way,” Austin said in remarks at the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit on Saturday, which is being attended by representatives from dozens of countries including China.

[India's message to China: Violation of UNCLOS damages trust immensely](#)

The Economic Times | 4th June 2023

In an indirect message to Chinese actions in the South China Sea region, India on Saturday pointed out that respect for “foundational principles and regimes” like UNCLOS “is essential for the credibility of the global order” as violation leads to immense damage to trust. “Important as these substantive elements of cooperation are, they need the underpinning of a normative framework. That is why we regard the preservation of peace and security and the possibilities of development as being indivisible from the need of adhering to law, observing norms and respecting rules, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas, and refraining from unilateral measures to change the status quo,” India’s Deputy NSA Vikram Misri said in his address at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore. “Respect for such foundational principles and regimes is essential for the credibility of the global order, because when nations disregard their legal obligations or violate long-standing agreements, the damage to trust and confidence is immense,” Misri said in the presence of Chinese defence minister at the dialogue.

[India is not part of any military alliance: Deputy NSA shuts door on Chinese doubts on ties with US](#)

MSN | 6th June 2023

India and the United States have made it clear that both countries are not in a military alliance. Taking part in a special session of the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue 2023 in Singapore recently, India's Deputy National Security Advisor Vikram Misri and US Indo-Pacific Command Commander Admiral John Aquilino responded to a query from a Chinese military representative who expressed concerns about India accelerating and reinforcing collaboration with the United States in the Indian Ocean. Responding to the Chinese representative's query on how India looked at the US’s role in Indian regional security and whether it sees itself as a leader or is it an equal participant in the Indian Ocean security, Misri said, 'A lot of this question was focused on engagement and relations between India and the United States and there were certain characterisations in the question that I don’t necessarily agree with. But first of all, let me say that India and the United States enjoy a strong and robust defence and military relationship. We cooperate in a wide variety of fields from training to exercises to obtaining platforms and exchanging strategic views and assessments on areas of common concern. We are a partner of the United States and I think in concluding various agreements with the United States, which is a normal feature of such relationships, which you characterised as intelligence communications.'

[Australia Urges US, China to Avoid Cold War-Style 'Misadventure or...Miscalculation'](#)

Voice of America | 6th June 2023

Australia has warned that protections are not in place to prevent a Cold war-style “misadventure or...miscalculation” between the United States and China. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has

said that “the guard rails aren't in place” to prevent confrontation between the major powers. After returning from a trip to Singapore and Vietnam, where regional security was discussed, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, in a wide-ranging interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corp. Monday, said the two major powers needed ‘guardrails’ - or safeguards - that would help to avert potential conflict or confrontation. He added that “nation to nation” communication was the best way to avoid potentially “disastrous consequences”.

[President must be above the political fray: Tharman hopes to be unifying figure if elected](#)

The Strait Times | 9th June 2023

Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam said he hopes to be a unifying figure for Singaporeans amid fundamental changes in the country and across the world, as he put himself forward on Thursday [as a candidate in the upcoming presidential election](#). Mr Tharman said he felt that the time was right for him to serve in the role, should he be elected, and to keep the social compact strong. “The president has to be a unifying figure at a time that people have more varied preferences and even more varied politics,” he said.

[Japan's Emperor Naruhito, Empress Masako to visit Indonesia](#)

Nikkei Asia | 9th June 2023

Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako will visit Indonesia from June 17, the government confirmed at a cabinet meeting on Friday. This will be Naruhito's first visit to a foreign country since his accession to the throne in 2019, with the exception of a trip to the U.K. for Queen Elizabeth II's funeral last September.

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