

As US Military Effectiveness and Diplomatic Efforts Fade into Irrelevance Many Countries Start Ignoring Washington

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Diplomatic work continues in some of the areas with the highest geopolitical tensions in the world. In recent days there have been high-level meetings and contacts between Turkey, Iran and Russia over the situation in Syria; meetings between Modi and Xi Jinping to ease tensions between India and China; and finally, the historic meeting between Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong-un. The common component in all these meetings is the absence of the United States, which may explain the excellent progress that has been seen.

The last seven days have brought a note of optimism to international relations. The meeting between Modi and Xi Jinping in China offered a regional example, confirmed by the [words](#) of Wang Yi, member of the State Counsel of the People's Republic of China:

"Our [India and China] common interests outweigh our differences. The summit will go a long way towards deepening the mutual trust between the two great neighbors. We will make sure that the informal summit will be a complete success and a new milestone in the history of China-India relations".

Given the tensions in August 2017 in the Himalayan border area between the two countries, the progress achieved in the last nine months bodes well for a further increase in cooperation between the two nations. Bilateral trade stands at around \$85 billion a year, with China as India's largest trading partner. The meeting between Modi and Xi also serves to deepen the already existing framework between the two countries in international organizations like BRICS, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), in which they are integral participants. It is imaginable that negotiations on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will be in full swing, with Beijing keen to involve New Delhi more in the project. Such a prospect is particularly helped by three very powerful investment vehicles put in place by Beijing, namely, the New Development Bank (formerly the BRICS Development Bank), the AIIB, and the Silk Road Fund.

Image on the right: Indian PM Modi and Chinese President Jinping



Xi Jinping will be seeking to progressively entice India closer to the BRI project through attractive and mutually beneficial commercial arrangements. However, this objective remains complicated and difficult to implement. Beijing is aware of this and has already expressed its intention not to impose the BRI on the neighboring country. With much of the future global and regional architecture depending on these two countries, the good understanding shown between Xi Jinping and Modi bodes well, especially given the commonly aligned objectives represented by the multitude of international organizations and frameworks on which China and India sit side by side.

Another bit of important news for the Asian region has been the [meeting](#) between Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong-un, which was recently examined in an [article](#) published in *Strategic Culture Foundation*. As discussed in that article, the intention of the two leaders is to reunite the two Koreas, to denuclearize the peninsula, and to sign a peace treaty between the North and South, whose unprecedented implications entail such questions as whether there is a future role for the United States on the peninsula. As stated before, the rapprochement between the two Koreas does not play into Washington's favor, which relies on the South as a strategic foothold to [contain](#) China, justifying its presence on the purported need to confront North Korea. With an all-encompassing peace agreement, this justification would cease to exist. It seems that the goal for US policy-makers will be to find an opportunity to sabotage the North-South agreement and blame Kim Jong-un for its failure. Without engaging in a diplomatic tiff with its South Korean ally, the deep state in Washington does not intend to surrender one inch of its military presence on the peninsula, and would even look favorably on the negotiations failing to further damage Trump and his administration.

This is an [internal deep-state war](#) that has been going on for years. Obama wanted to abandon the Middle East in order to focus on containing China, altering the military's structure accordingly to return to a more Cold War stance. This explains the agreement with Iran in order to free the US from its Middle East involvement so as to be able to focus mainly on Asia and to promote it as the most important region for the United States. This strategic intention has met with enormous [opposition](#) from two of the most influential lobbies in the American political system, the Israeli and Saudi Arabian. Without the United States, these two countries would be unable to stop Iran's peaceful but impressive ascent in the region.

Listening to four-star generals like [Robert Neller](#) (Commandant of the Marine Corps) and [others](#) less distinguished, one comes to appreciate the extent to which the US military is in strategic chaos. The military has been the victim of epochal changes with each presidency. Pentagon planners would like to simultaneously confront countries like Russia, China and Iran, but in the process only decrease effectiveness due to [imperial overstretch](#). Other politicians, especially from the neocon area, argue for the need to transform the US armed forces from a force suitable for fighting small countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria),

Middle Eastern insurgencies, or terrorist groups (a pretext originating from the 1990's and the first Gulf War), to a military able to face its peer competitors with all weapons available. Such a realignment does not occur over a short period of time and requires an enormous amount of money to reorganize the armed forces.

In this struggle between components of the deep state, Trump lumbers into a policy that [stems](#) from his electoral campaign rather than a considered strategy. Trump showed himself in his campaign to be strongly pro-Israel and strongly pro-armed forces, which has had the practical result of increasing military spending. Tens of billions of dollars worth of agreements have been realized with the richest country in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, for arms purchases, and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is viewed negatively. Trump's interventions in Syria confirm that he is [under the strong influence](#) of that part of the deep state that is adamant that the United States should always be present in the Middle East, should openly oppose Iran, and, above all, should prevent the [Shiite arc](#) from extending its influence to cover Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

The reasoning employed by Trump and his administration confirms this direction in Washington's strategy, involving greater cooperation with Beijing to solve the Korean issue; less of an effort to decrease Moscow's influence in Syria and in the Middle East in general; and greater belligerence towards Iran, with a general shift away from Asia and towards the Middle East, backtracking away from Obama's pivot to Asia.

Trump seems to give the impression of wanting to face China from an unprecedented direction, with a [trade war](#) that would inevitably end up damaging all sides.

In this ad hoc strategy, the European allies play an important role in Washington's intention to cancel or modify the Iranian nuclear agreement. Following the meetings in Washington between Trump and [Macron](#), and then with [Merkel](#), both European leaders seem more or [less](#) open to a modification of the JCPOA, provided that Trump backs away from placing tariffs on European countries, an appeal to which the English premier Theresa May [adds](#) her name. It seems a desperate tactic, given that one of the issues Trump is pinning his 2020 campaign on is being able to [fix the trade imbalances](#) between the US and the EU, without which he will be unable to claim to have kept his promises.

The United States has many cards to play, but none is [decisive](#). In Korea, the peace process depends very little on Trump's intentions and more on the willingness of the two key parties to reach a historic agreement to improve the lives of all citizens of the peninsula. I predict the deep state will try to blame the DPRK for a failure of the negotiations, thereby bringing to Asia the chaos in international relations that the US has successfully brought to other parts of the world. The People's Republic of China will therefore try to replace the United States in negotiations in order to bring the two negotiating parties closer together.

In the same way, an attempt to sabotage the JCPOA will only drive Russia, China and Iran into a strategic triangle, about which I was [writing](#) more than a year ago. A unilateral exit from the nuclear agreement will help delegitimize Washington's international role, together with the sabotage by the deep state of the peace agreement in Korea. It will be a pincer effect resulting from the chaos and the internal struggle of North American and European elites.



Success in the negotiations in Korea could pave the way for a protection umbrella for the DPRK guaranteed by China and Russia, in the same way the two could grant Iran all the diplomatic support necessary to resist the American and European pressure to cancel the JCPOA. Ultimately, the [rapprochement](#) between India and China, in view of important agreements on the BRI, could seal comity and cooperation between the two giants, leading the Eurasian area under the definitive influence of India, China, Russia and Iran, and guaranteeing a future of peaceful economic development to the most important area of the globe.

The United States finds itself divided by a war within the elite, where Trump's presidency is continually attacked and de-legitimized, while the [coordinated assault](#) on the dollar continues apace through [gold](#), the [petroyuan](#), and [blockchain](#) technology. US military power is showing itself to be a paper tiger unable to change the course of events on the ground, as seen recently in Syria. The loss of diplomatic credibility resulting from the sabotage of the JCPOA, and Washington's inability to sit down and sincerely negotiate with the DPRK, will deliver the final coup de grace to a country that is struggling to even remain friendship with her European allies (sanctions imposed on Russia, sanctions on European companies participating in the North Stream 2, and tariffs in a new trade war).

The US deep state remains on this path of self-destruction, perennially torn between opposing strategies, which only accelerates Washington's unipolar decline and the emergence in its place of a multipolar world order, with New Delhi, Moscow, Beijing and Tehran as new poles over an immense area comprising the Middle east and all of Eurasia.

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