

Headlines:

- **US Warns China against Aggressive Moves in Contested South China Sea**
- **India, Pakistan Foreign Ministers in UAE**
- **Uncertainty Surrounds US Pullout from Afghanistan**

Details:

US Warns China against Aggressive Moves in Contested South China Sea

Last week, the United States warned China against what the Philippines and Taiwan see as increasingly aggressive moves, reminding Beijing of Washington's obligations to its partners. "An armed attack against the Philippines' armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific, including in the South China Sea, will trigger our obligations under the US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty," State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters. "We share the concerns of our Philippine allies regarding the continued reported massing of PRC maritime militia near the Whitsun Reef," Price said, referring to the People's Republic of China. More than 200 Chinese boats were first spotted on March 7 at Whitsun Reef, around 320 kilometers (200 miles) west of Palawan Island in the contested South China Sea, although many have since scattered across the Spratly Islands. China, which claims almost the entirety of the resource-rich sea, has refused weeks of appeals by the Philippines to withdraw the vessels, which Manila says unlawfully entered its exclusive economic zone. Price voiced "concern" about the Chinese moves, saying: "The United States maintains the capacity to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security or the social or economic system of the people on Taiwan." He was using language from the Taiwan Relations Act, under which the United States is obliged to provide the island with the means to defend itself against Beijing. President Joe Biden has vowed a robust defense of allies and, in a rare point of continuity with his predecessor Donald Trump, has supported strong pushback against Chinese assertiveness. [Source: France24]

America is applying pressure on China on all fronts. America is using India on China's western borders to create problems for Beijing, and is using Japan, Philippines and Taiwan to prevent China from expanding in the Asian Pacific and Atlantic Ocean.

India, Pakistan Foreign Ministers in UAE

Both Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers will be in Abu Dhabi on Sunday at the invitation of the UAE government. Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi is already in the UAE, while Indian Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar is expected to arrive on Sunday. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, will hold talks with his counterparts from India and Pakistan. "At the invitation of his counterpart, EAM Dr S Jaishankar will be visiting Abu Dhabi on 18th April 2021. His discussions will focus on economic cooperation and community welfare," Arindam Bagchi, Spokesperson, Indian Ministry of External Affairs, tweeted on Saturday. This development comes after Yousef Al Otaiba, the UAE Ambassador to the US, confirmed last Wednesday that the UAE is mediating between India and Pakistan to forge a functional relationship between the two neighbours and rivals. India and Pakistan enjoy warm

ties with the UAE built over decades of economic and people-to-people contacts. Otaiba said that while India and Pakistan might not become “best friends”, the UAE wanted the bilateral relationship between the two neighbours to be one where they speak to each other. “We don’t think they are going to become... ‘Most Favoured Nations’ with each other, but I think it is important for them to have a healthy, functional relationship, which is exactly our objective,” Al Otaiba said. [Source: Khaleej Times]

The UAE is facilitating rapprochement between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. This is part of America’s plan to force Pakistan to abandon geo-politics in favour of geo-economics.

Uncertainty Surrounds US Pullout from Afghanistan

Days after U.S. President Joe Biden announced his decision to withdraw from Afghanistan and end the United States' longest-running war, military planners, despite having had months to deliberate, are still working on how to make that happen. The Defense Department on Friday declined to share details about the impending pullout of some 2,500 to 3,500 troops from Afghanistan, saying that preliminary plans are being updated and that the final so-called tasking orders will come "very, very soon." Officials also left open the possibility that more troops could be sent in, on a temporary basis, to help ensure a safe and orderly withdrawal. "We'll know more as we get closer, but that would not be out of the realm of the possible," press secretary John Kirby told reporters Friday, in his first briefing at the Pentagon since the announcement. "I can't speak today with exactly what that would look like," Kirby added. "It's logical to assume that you may need some logistics help, maybe some engineering help. You may have to add some force protection capabilities." Biden announced Wednesday that the U.S. will begin its drawdown from Afghanistan on May 1 — the date by which the withdrawal was to be completed under the terms of a deal signed last year between the administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump and the Taliban. Under the new time frame, all U.S. troops, as well as some 7,000 NATO forces, will leave the country by September 11, the 20th anniversary of the deadly terror attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon, which were planned on Afghan soil. In a statement Wednesday, the Taliban demanded the departure of all foreign forces on the date specified in last year's Doha Agreement. Spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid further threatened to retaliate, saying on Twitter, "If the agreement is breached and foreign forces fail to exit our country on the specified date, problems will certainly be compounded and those (who) failed to comply with the agreement will be held liable." The Pentagon on Friday acknowledged the danger and responded with a warning of its own. [Source: voanews]

After twenty years of occupation, America defeated by poorly equipped Taliban fighters is set to leave the country. America has billions of dollars and has very little to show for its occupation of Afghanistan. America has failed to use Afghanistan as a launch pad to curtail the growing influence of Russia and China. Domestically, the US was unable to rollback Al Qaeda and now has agreed for the Taliban to come back to power after displacing them in 2001.