

## Headlines:

- **US Challenges China**
- **Britain Announced New Base in Oman**
- **Taliban overrun Afghan Town, Again**

## Details:

### US Challenges China

Taiwanese Defense Minister Yen Teh-fa told legislators on 5th November 2018 that his government would consider allowing the U.S. Navy access to Taiping Island. Over the past few months, US warships have twice passed through the Taiwan Strait in an attempt to standardize patrols and even pave the way for an aircraft carrier group to transit through. In October, a US Navy research ship docked in Taiwan's southern port city of Kaohsiung for refuelling. Access to Taiping would give the US greater mobility in the South China Sea, as well as provide ammunition for rivals such as Vietnam or the Philippines to undermine Beijing's territorial claims. The US is ratcheting up its presence in the South China Sea, an area China has long argued are its territorial waters. For the moment China has failed to act upon such claims, but it will soon need to put its money where its mouth is.

### Britain Announced New Base in Oman

British Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has announced that the UK will open a military base in Oman. Oman much like the other Gulf States was a product of the British Empire where it backed different tribes in order to weaken the Ottomans and eventually give them their own land as a reward. Oman remains important to Britain even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as is the country facilitates the political plans of other nations in the region. It has mediated in the two state solution and has deepened its security relations with the US.

### Taliban overrun Afghan Town, Again

Once again, Taliban forces attacked and overran a key security post around the outskirts of the Afghan city of Ghazni. The city has been contested in the past, and is one of several posts which aimed to encircle the city and keep the Taliban from raiding. The Taliban took the post, killing 13 Afghan troops and wounding 13 others. The Taliban's statement claimed 18 were killed, and that they had seized a large quantity of weapons stored at the post. It's unclear if taking the post is meant to be a prelude to a new Taliban incursion into the city of Ghazni, or simply an attempt to force security forces to commit more defenses, making other parts of the country vulnerable. Afghan officials say that they inflicted heavy casualties on the Taliban in the fight as well. The Taliban controls several areas around Ghazni Province, and has been making gains in areas across Afghanistan, forcing the military onto the defensive. After 17 years of war, the US weaker then ever and the Taliban is stronger then ever.