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Chinese Embassy Says Australia 'Misread' Offending Social Media Post

China's embassy in Australia said politicians there had "misread" a tweet showing a digitally-altered image of an Australian soldier holding a bloodied knife to the throat of an Afghan child, and were trying to stoke nationalism, according to Reuters.

Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Monday called the tweet posted by China's foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, "truly repugnant", and called for an apology.

On Tuesday the tweet was pinned to the top of Zhao's social media account, and China's Global Times newspaper, known for nationalistic views, interviewed the Chinese artist who created the image.

"The rage and roar of some Australian politicians and media is nothing but misreading of and overreaction to Mr Zhao's tweet," the Chinese embassy in Canberra said in a statement on Tuesday.



Afghan, UAE Foreign Ministers Discuss Boosting Relations

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Mohammad Haneef Atmar, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, reviewed the prospects of fostering relations between the two nations across various fronts.

This came as the top UAE diplomat welcomed the Afghan minister on Monday and discussed growing cooperation in the fields of logistics and food security in addition to exchanging views over a number of regional and international issues of interest.

The meeting touched on the global fight against the Covid-19 pandemic and the efforts being made to confront its fallout. Sheikh Abdullah reaffirmed the UAE's determination to reinforce relations with Afghanistan across various domains.

The Afghan minister congratulated Sheikh Abdullah on the 49th UAE National Day, commending the developmental achievements and the prestigious stature boasted by the UAE regionally and internationally.

We are Preparing for Difficult decision on Afghanistan: NATO



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Monday that the military alliance faces a difficult dilemma over its future in Afghanistan. "Whether to leave, and risk that Afghanistan becomes once again a safe haven for international terrorists. Or stay, and risk a longer mission, with renewed violence," Stoltenberg said. "Whatever path we choose, it is important that we do so together, in

a coordinated and deliberate way," he said. He said: "First of all, I think we have to understand that NATO has adjusted and changed the number of troops in Afghanistan over many, many years. Not so many years ago, we had more than 100,000 troops in a big combat operation. Then we, after that, we have gradually reduced our presence and now we are, well, let me say,

roughly 11,000, but this varies a bit. But roughly 11,000 troops in a Train, Assist and Advise mission. More than half are non-US troops coming from European NATO Allies and partner nations."

He said it has been a gradual reduction, which has been possible because NATO has invested so much in training the Afghans.

"We have enabled Afghans to protect

their own country. And I strongly believe that the best way to stabilize Afghanistan is to train, assist, advise the Afghan security forces so they can be in charge, be responsible for their own country," he said.

NATO has not only trained Afghan forces but also funds them, he said, and Allies have committed to provide funding through 2024.

He believes that the main issue is that in the US-Taliban agreement, it is stated that all international troops, also NATO troops, should be out of Afghanistan by May 1.

"That's the reason why we are now faced with a very clear decision, a very difficult choice to be made, which actually represents a dilemma for all of us. And that is either to stay, because we assess that Taliban is not living up to their part of the agreement, not delivering on their promises, but then, of course, risk continued fighting, long-term continued military involvement in Afghanistan; or to leave, but then risk jeopardizing the gains we have made in fighting international terrorism and preventing Afghanistan from being a platform for launching attacks against our countries."

He also mentioned that in his phone call with President-elect Joe Biden, he underlined the ...

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Pashtun movement protests against border-crossing shooting

The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) on Monday held a demonstration in protest against the shooting incident on Sunday in Chaman-Spin Boldak on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

According to Pakistan media reports, Pakistan security forces opened fire on unarmed Pashtuns near the border gate area after a clash between Pashtun traders and border officials broke out.

The protest Monday was held in front of the Balochistan provincial assembly in Quetta. ...



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161,000 Uruzgan children deprived of polio vaccination

Public health officials in central Uruzgan province on Monday said 66 suspected and four confirmed positive polio cases were registered in the provincial capital, Tirinkot, and districts this ongoing year.

Local officials say this time too children in areas under government's control would be vaccinated only against the crippling disease.

Public health director Dr. Ghafar Watanwal says this time again out of 186,000 children, only 45,000 children living in secure areas would be given polio vaccines.

He said the polio vaccination campaign could not be launched in Gezab and Dehrawud districts as well due to recent increase in insecurity there where more than 40,000 children would miss the vital vaccine.

The public health director said they registered 66 suspected and four positive polio cases in the



province this year and hurdles to the vaccination remained, the number of cases could surge.

Uruzgan governor Omar Sherzad said not allowing polio workers to administer polio drops to children by Taliban militants in areas under their control was a matter of great concern.

The governor urged tribal elders,

influential figures and religious scholars to help extend polio vaccination campaign to insecure areas.

The Taliban have been opposing the door-to-door polio vaccination campaigns in Uruzgan province over the past three years, with more than 100,000 children missing the vaccine each time.

Pashtun...

"PTM is protesting in front of the provincial assembly in Quetta against state atrocities in Chaman. This is not the first time the Pakistan Frontier Corps (FC) has killed civilians in Chaman. We demand the killers to be arrested and prosecuted. We demand justice," PTM leader Mohsin Dawar tweeted.

Gilgit-Baltistan activist Senge Hasnan Sering also condemned the incident and said: "Pakistan rulers who shed crocodile tears over Kashmir use Baloch and Pashtun for target practice." "Pakistani soldiers shot and killed these two children near Pak-Afghan border in Chaman, Balochistan. Pashtun genocide is real," he said in a tweet adding "why does UNHCR have different standards for Pashtuns/Baloch?"

According to ANI news outlet, one man was killed and six others, including two children, were wounded in the incident.

ANI stated an argument broke out between border officials and Pashtun traders, who wanted to cross the border on foot with their goods were stopped from doing so.

Dawn news reported the traders then gathered at the border gate and called for the crossing to be opened. When border officials refused to do so, the traders started pelting the border guards with stones and set fire to tyres near the gate.

ANI reported the situation turned violent when a protesting trader opened fire on security personnel who then returned fire.

By BRIAN GLYN WILLIAMS & JAVED REZAYEE

The Perils of a U.S. troop Drawdown to the Afghan Army and Tribes

Before his ouster as Secretary of Defense on Nov. 9, Mark Esper sent a memo to President Trump stating that the "unanimous" recommendation of the chain of command for the war in Afghanistan is that conditions are not ready for a U.S. troop withdrawal. The generals charged with prosecuting the war in Afghanistan saw Trump's recent troop drawdown order as counter-strategic folly, driven by the president's desire to proclaim that he ended "endless wars."

According to the Pentagon, none of the conditions required for withdrawal — including the Taliban's ongoing relationship with al Qaeda and negotiating with our Afghan government allies — has been met. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) warned that troop withdrawal would "would hurt our allies and delight — delight — the people who wish us harm. The consequences of a premature American exit would likely be even worse than President Obama's withdrawal from Iraq back in 2011."

But what is less obvious to domestically focused Americans is the impact this withdrawal likely will have on Afghans who rely upon the American military presence to keep the Taliban at bay. There are two aspects to this important Afghan perspective on the president's decision: the Afghan National Army, which has suffered horrific losses in its battle to stave off a Taliban conquest, and the Afghan tribes, which the military considers to be the "center of gravity" in this tribal land.

The Afghan Army

We both can attest from personal experiences, the Afghan army does not lack bravery or willingness to make sacrifices to defend their country. But Afghan soldiers lack much of the essential training, equipment and resources that American support troops provide. When Afghan forces go on

missions, American airmen transport them in Black Hawk or Chinook helicopters. When Afghan allied troops engage in combat, American Special Forces embedded with them fly hand-launched Raven drones that provide overwatch and call in strikes from HIMARs (small satellite-guided artillery) or air strikes from assets such as Apache helicopters, AC-130 Specter gunships and A-10 Warthogs. This ground and air artillery support gives the Afghans a fighting chance against a dedicated, fanatical enemy.

The much-appreciated Americans also provide their Afghan allies with logistical support and, in the psychological sense, let their hard-fighting partners know that a superpower has their back. The small number of American "force multiplier" troops, contrary to misconceptions conveyed by the Trump administration, do not lead the fight from the front, but every one of them is the equivalent of a thousand Afghan troops. From a combat and logistical support perspective, withdrawing these troops from the already small and thinly stretched U.S. contingent would, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, "potentially cripple" Afghan army operations.

From a morale perspective, it would be devastating to the fighting spirit of an allied fighting force that is barely holding the line against never-ending waves of Taliban offensives.

Afghan tribes

Few Americans from a post-modern, melting pot society truly grasp the importance of tribes in this ancient land that is more of a jostling, blood feud-ridden battleground than a modern, homogeneous nation state. Winning the support of tribes, especially among the warlike Pashtun tribes in the country's southeast, is key to staving off defeat. These people live in an unstable, dangerous land and their tribal leaders



constantly have their fingers to the wind trying to gauge which warring side has the strongest gales at its back.

When the Bush administration signaled a lack of commitment to the Afghan "forgotten war" and sucked all the oxygen out of this theater of action to wage war against Iraq's Saddam Hussein, the tribes sensed lack of commitment and weakness. As vital American resources were diverted from Afghanistan to Iraq, many tribes that previously had joined the victorious Americans and Afghan government defected to a resurgent Taliban in order to be on the winning side.

Afghanistan was saved by a 2009-2012 troop surge, which tripled the number of troops in the country, conveyed a message of strength to the tribes, and saved the south and east from a Taliban conquest. Since then, a tentative stalemate has reigned. The insurgents control roughly half of the country, mainly in the countryside, but cannot overrun major provincial towns or the half the government controls. Today, numerous tribes are clearly on the fence, waiting and watching for a sign of weakness from either the Taliban or the Americans. In this unstable land, where perceptions of weakness galvanize ancient tribes to switch allegiance, the first side that blinks in this war of

perceptions will be considered weak. Trump's troop withdrawal decision will be hailed by the Taliban — who endorsed the president in the recent elections — as a victory. The tribes will gravitate to the insurgents' side out of a sense of self-preservation. A recent Rand Corporation report warns that "accelerate among Afghans a crisis of confidence in the durability of their government and security forces."

No one has his finger on the pulse of the tribes better than former Afghan vice president and current marshal, Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, the focus of "The Last Warlord." This legendary counter-insurgent/insurgent and master of the art of Afghan tribal warfare has warned, "If the Americans withdraw their troops, the Taliban will smell blood. The tribes will interpret it as a retreat based on weakness, just like the British and Soviets." Conventional wisdom in Afghanistan is that the Taliban will transition to an offensive on the capital, as happened when the Soviets withdrew troops and their allied Afghan communist government forces subsequently began a retreat that eventually led to a collapse.

When factoring in these two important determinants, Trump's troop withdrawal order has the real potential to ... **P3**

By: Xinhua

Australia, the perpetrator, should truly apologize for scathing crimes

It seems that in the logic of Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, a legitimate response to a heinous war crime is not a sincere apology or heartfelt confession but to shift the topic and find fault with others.

Well, Morrison and his government should simply ask the Afghan people and see if their approach is even remotely acceptable.

The Australian government should feel ashamed. Its demand for an apology from the Chinese side is as ironic as it is absurd.

What a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman has done was no more than standing up against hellish human rights crimes that deserve unanimous condemnation from the international community, and speaking out for the truth and justice.

An investigation report recently released by the Australian Defense Forces showed that 25 Australian

special forces soldiers killed 39 Afghans including children in 23 incidents, and none of those killings occurred in "the heat of a battle."

According to the report, some junior soldiers were even forced to shoot prisoners of war to gain the experience of "first killing." Australian media described the scathing scandal as "the most disgraceful episode in Australia's military history."

Many dignitaries including Australian Governor-General David Hurley and former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd have also come forward and strongly condemned those crimes.

Instead of trying to divert public attention by blaming those who spoke out for justice and human rights, the Australian government should genuinely apologize to the Afghan people and bring to justice the soldiers who committed the horrible crimes in Afghanistan.

The Australian government should feel guilty. In the name of fighting terrorism and promoting so-called freedom and human rights, Australia, joining some other Western countries, has waged wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their reckless invasions have kicked millions of people in those countries deep into the abyss of chaos and bloodshed as well as devastation and death. A research issued last year by the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University showed that the long-running war in Afghanistan claimed the lives of more than 40,000 civilians and produced approximately 11 million refugees.

For the record, this is not the first time that such a scandal has been brought to light. Stomach-churning incidents of killing civilians or abusing prisoners in places like the notorious Guantanamo Bay have severely violated international law and the ... **P3**

By Jamil Ziaey

From Bonn to Doha: Why Is Afghanistan Still at War?



In December 2001, the city of Bonn, Germany hosted a conference on Afghanistan after the joint operation by the United States military and the Northern Alliance toppled the Taliban regime. The conference ushered in a new era for Afghanistan in which a democratic government was established that ensured elections, women and human rights, and civil and political liberties.

War was thought to be over and the reconstruction process funded by massive amounts of international aid that had poured into the country began. Nineteen years later, Doha is hosting another conference on peace for Afghanistan. Why does Afghanistan continue to find itself at war?

After the collapse of the Taliban regime, Afghanistan experienced a couple of peaceful years with no war and political turmoil. As the

US redirected its military and political focus on the Iraq war, the Taliban based in their safe haven of Peshawar, Pakistan, used the opportunity to regroup and reemerge. The first question that comes to mind is how did they manage to grow as strong as they are now in the face of coalition forces and the fairly well-equipped Afghan national army?

The first response would be the fact that they have safe havens in neighboring Pakistan. Originally, they were supported by the Pakistani government and used as a proxy army to ensure Pakistan's benefits in Afghanistan. After their collapse, and especially because Pakistan's role was completely ignored at the Bonn conference, they still seemed to be of use for fulfilling Pakistan's strategic goals.

This means that they had both safe havens and the support and encouragement ... **P3**

Honey production in Herat increases

Officials from the Herat Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock said Tuesday that honey production is increasing in the province and this year about 200 tons of honey has been produced. Bashir Ahmad, Herat's director of agriculture, said there are about 590 active beekeepers across the province. He said the number of beekeepers and beehives continue to increase each year and that most of Herat's honey comes from Enjel, Center,

Guzara, Karukh, Robat Sangi, Ghorian, Adraskan, Pashtun Zarghoon, Obe, Chesht-e- Sharif, Shindand and Golran districts. According to officials, Herat gets its honey from two sources – wild mountain honey and honey from beekeeping farms. Mountain honey is of very high quality but expensive. Officials said this honey goes for between 700 and 1,000 Afghanis per kilogram on the domestic market.



From Bonn to Doha...

from Pakistan which enabled them to retreat any time they were under attack, get medical services, re-equip and re-launch their attacks wherever possible. The question why the US and the world have not held Pakistan accountable and for supporting many other terrorist groups is yet to be answered.

The second response is ethnic supremacism. New research by Civil Society of Afghanistan indicates that ethnic supremacism is one of the main roots of war in the country. This is in line with the stances of the Afghan presidents since 2001. Hamid Karzai, the former president of Afghanistan, in an interview with BBC denies calling the Taliban a terrorist group. In another interview, he even says that the Taliban have every right to control some parts of the country since they are also Afghans.

Likewise in 2015, current president, Ashraf Ghani, objected that it was unjust that 98% of the prisoners in Bagram prison were speakers of the same language while he knew that those prisoners were convicted of terrorist actions. Both presidents have repeatedly called Taliban brothers instead of terrorists or enemies of Afghanistan.

The former first vice president, Younus Qanuni, in his recent interview said that President Karzai dealt with the Taliban, after their reemergence, under the influence of ethnic emotions. That was one of the reasons why the Afghan government never drafted a clear strategy for fighting terrorism and allowed the Taliban to grow into the deadly group they are today.

In general, one can assume that a decisive determination to fight the Taliban into their collapse did not happen for different reasons. Perhaps, military use was not an ideal solution.

Now that peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government are in progress in Doha, brutal attacks in Kabul saps optimism about achieving peace and security. Recently, terrorist gunmen attacked Kabul University and killed more than 22 students, injuring at least 22 others. Although ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack, the first VP of Afghanistan, Amrullah Saleh, declared that they had found evidence indicating that the attack was performed by the Taliban.

A couple of days before that, terrorists stormed a cultural center in Kabul and killed 41 people while injuring 84 others. Again, ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack. The main question that comes to mind, thus, is if ISIL or any other terrorist groups are capable of perpetrating such deadly attack in the capital city of Afghanistan, to what degree people can be hopeful that a peace deal with Taliban will actually bring peace to their country?

We are Preparing...

importance of Afghanistan and also pointed out the "dilemma we face, that, of course, there is a price if we decide to stay, but there will also be a price if we decide to leave." The US troop withdrawal will, of course, reduce the US presence

in Afghanistan, he said, adding: "But the NATO Training Mission will continue in its current configuration, meaning that we will maintain the different bases, including the German-led base in the north, Mazar-e-Sharif, and then the Italian-led in the west, Herat."

He also said that NATO, together with the new Biden administration, next year, will make an assessment about whether conditions are in place, if the Taliban has delivered what it has promised to a degree that makes it possible for NATO to leave or stay.

Australia, the...

most basic human rights, and stoked public indignation worldwide.

The Australian government should be penitent. Besides an official apology to the Afghan people, the Australian government should make a solemn promise to the international community that such atrocities will never happen again, as Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying urged at a regular press briefing on Monday. Canberra should also revisit

its double standard practice on human rights protection, and abandon its ideological prejudice and arrogance towards countries like China.

For a period of time, the Australian government has done a slew of provocative things to interfere with China's internal affairs concerning China's core interests. As a result, bilateral ties have been seriously damaged.

The international community should also do some serious soul-searching over the tragedy in Afghanistan. In the face

of some hegemonic power's impulse to pursue pure self-interests, international justice can be pitifully fragile while human conscience can be so easily abandoned.

To safeguard fairness, justice and truth globally, and to promote the overall fundamental interests of ordinary people worldwide, countries around the world should be brave enough to stand on the right side of both history and humanity. For Australia, making the right choice starts with admitting its own crimes.

The Perils of...

militarily, morally and logistically weaken and seriously destabilize an allied democratic government that has been sustained by a small, but highly effective, U.S. force commitment of just 4,500 support troops. Most alarmingly, a premature disengagement has the potential to strengthen and revitalize a fanatical enemy that has shown no interest in breaking its ties with al Qaeda or respecting the democracy the U.S. has established with such great sacrifice in a land that was the launching pad for

9/11.

Mission interminable?

Many war-weary Americans question how long U.S. troops must remain in the Central Asian "Graveyard of Empires," and how much blood and treasure is worth stabilizing Afghanistan. The answer is, for all of America's tremendous successes — such as building a rudimentary Afghan Air Force, training an effective Special Forces branch, and standing up an Afghan army of 180,000 — the Afghans' war enterprise remains problem-plagued and dependent upon the

Pentagon's vital support. The small contingent of U.S. troops that has gradually decreased in size will need to remain in the country for decades to come, to prevent a collapse of the Afghan government and conquest by the Taliban-al Qaeda alliance. Fortunately for Americans, we can keep Afghanistan from becoming another international base for holy war for the planning of terrorist attacks with a relatively low cost in American lives. Thus far in 2020, there have been 10 U.S. KIA (killed in action) in the Afghan theater of operations.

Pandemic pushes...

But he said the gap between needs and funding is growing and the U.N. is looking to "new players" coming on the scene in 2021, including U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's new administration. The U.N. aims to reach about two-thirds of those in need, with the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations trying to meet the rest, Lowcock explained.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said humanitarian aid budgets are now facing dire shortfalls as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to worsen, and said extreme poverty has risen for the first time in more than a generation. "The lives of people in every nation and corner of the world have been upended by the

impact of the pandemic," he said. "Those already living on a knife's edge are being hit disproportionately hard by rising food prices, falling incomes, interrupted vaccination programs and school closures."

The overview, which is billed as one of the most comprehensive looks of the world's humanitarian needs, has put together nearly three dozen individual response plans for a total of 56 "vulnerable" countries.

Lowcock said the biggest problem is in Yemen where there is a danger of "a large-scale famine" now, saying a prime reason is lack of funding from Gulf countries that were major donors in the past which has led to cuts in aid and the closing of

clinics. He said the biggest financial request is for the Syrian crisis and its spillover to neighboring countries where millions of Syrians have fled to escape the more than nine-year conflict. OCHA said other countries in need include Afghanistan, Congo, Haiti, Nigeria, South Sudan, Ukraine and Venezuela. Newcomers to this year's list are Mozambique, where terrorist activity has increased in the north, Pakistan and Zimbabwe. Lowcock said it's not the pandemic, but its economic impact that's having the greatest effect on humanitarian needs. "These all hit the poorest people in the poorest countries hardest of all," he said. "For the poorest, the hangover from the pandemic will be long and hard."

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Dehbori Crossroads in
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waygalprinting.co@gmail.com

Heart of Asia

Chief Editor: M. Hamid Hamdard

Reporters: Safiullah Nasary, Shafiq Amirzay,

Jawad Temori & Hameedullah Hamidi

Graphic & Design: Arman

Phone: +93-202502100 - +93-777989696

Website: www.heartofasia.af

Email: heartofasiadaily@gmail.com

Address: Behind Rahman Baba High School

- Opposite to 3rd District,

Kabul - Afghanistan

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Pandemic pushes global aid needs to record \$35B for 2021: UN

The U.N. humanitarian office says needs for assistance have ballooned to unprecedented levels this year because of COVID-19, projecting that a staggering 235 million people will require help in 2021.

This comes as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and global challenges including conflicts, forced migration and the impact of global warming.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA, expects a 40% increase in the number of people in need of such assistance in 2021 compared to this year – a sign that pain, suffering and torment brought by the coronavirus outbreak and other problems could get worse even if hopes of a vaccine are rising.

OCHA made the projections in its latest annual Global Humanitarian Overview on Tuesday, saying its hopes to reach 160 million of those people in need will cost \$35 billion. That's more

than twice the record \$17 billion that donors have provided for the international humanitarian response so far this year – and a target figure that is almost certain to go unmet.

“The picture we’re painting this year is the bleakest and darkest perspective on humanitarian needs we’ve ever set out, and that’s because the pandemic has reaped carnage across the most fragile and vulnerable countries on the planet,” said U.N. humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock, who heads OCHA. “For the first time since the 1990s, extreme poverty is going to increase, life expectancy will fall, the annual death toll from HIV, tuberculosis and malaria is set to double,” he said. “We fear a near doubling in the number of people facing starvation.”

Lowcock told a U.N. briefing in New York on the overview that he thinks the U.N. appeal will probably raise a record \$20 billion by the end of the year – \$2 billion more than last year. ... **P3**



A look at the world

EU and ASEAN to form strategic partnership: Germany

The European Union and the ASEAN group of southeast Asian countries have agreed to upgrade their relationship to a strategic partnership, current European Union (EU) president Germany said on Tuesday.

“As close economic partners, we will stand up for safe and open trade routes and a free and fair trade,” German Foreign



Minister Heiko Maas said after a virtual meeting with his counterparts from the EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

“Together, we represent more than a billion people and almost 25 per cent of global economic power. Together, we have a strong voice in this world,” said Maas, who gave no specific details on what the strategic partnership would entail.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. The EU has 27 member states.

Two weeks ago, the 10 ASEAN nations joined China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand to form the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) - the world’s largest free trade bloc, accounting for nearly a third of the global population and about 30 per cent of global GDP.

Saudi Arabia allows Israeli commercial planes to use its airspace



Saudi Arabia agreed to let Israeli airliners cross its airspace en route to the United Arab Emirates after talks between Saudi officials and White House senior adviser Jared Kushner, news agency Reuters and Israeli media outlets have reported.

Kushner and Middle East envoys Avi Berkowitz and Brian Hook raised the issue shortly after they arrived in Saudi Arabia for talks. “We were able to reconcile the issue,” an official from the administration of United States President Donald Trump told Reuters on Monday.

The agreement was hammered out just hours before Israel’s first commercial flight to the UAE was planned on Tuesday morning. The Israil flight was at risk of being cancelled with no overflight agreement.

The direct flights are an offshoot of normalisation deals Israel reached this year with the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan.

The UAE has already reaped benefits from normalisation, including the White House pushing forward with arms sales, including an advanced fighter jet, to the Gulf country.

“This should resolve any issues that should occur with Israeli carriers taking people from Israel to the UAE and back and to Bahrain,” the White House official told Reuters.

Kushner and his team were to meet the emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the emir of Kuwait later this week.

One goal of the trip is to try to persuade Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to end a three-year blockade of Qatar.

Qatar has been under an air, land and sea blockade imposed by GCC members Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain, and non-GCC member Egypt, since June 2017.

They cut ties with Doha after claiming it supported “terrorism”.

Over 220,000 people have been killed in Yemen

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says the war in Yemen and its aftermath has claimed lives of 223,000 people so far.

The United Nations released statistics on Tuesday on the number of victims of the Saudi-Emirati coalition’s aggression against Yemen.

This very high number is ‘unacceptable’, reads the report.

The international body also said that Yemen had reached an irreversible point and now needed a ceasefire to end the war.



In this regard, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Yemen reacted last night to the killing of 14 women and children in the western Yemeni province of Al-Hudaydah.

The office said in a statement that the attack on women and children was ‘unacceptable and unjustifiable’.

According to the statement, the attack was “horrific and a gross violation of international humanitarian law, so that the parties involved are required to take action to protect civilians.”

The Office stressed that the parties involved must find a solution to lasting peace and to prevent poverty and save the lives of the people.

According to the statement, Yemen is currently facing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world and more than 80% of its inhabitants are in need of humanitarian assistance and support.

Yemen has been grappling with UAE-Saudi aggression for the past six years, backed by the United States and Western countries. The aim of this aggression was to bring back the resigned and fugitive president of this country.



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