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Lockheed offers to make F-16 fighter jets in India

Lockheed Martin is closing in on an international deal for F-16 fighter planes, and has offered to eventually build all the jets at a proposed plant in India if it wins a bigger order to supply the Indian Air Force, a top executive said. The U.S. defence giant and Sweden's Saab are in a two horse-race to equip the Indian military with at least 100 single-engine jets that have to be produced locally under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Make-in-India' plan. Randall L.

Howard, who leads F-16 business development, said Lockheed is offering to make India the sole F-16 production centre, so eventually it will make the planes not just for India, but also for other countries. Lockheed is closing its F-16 production line at Forth Worth, Texas and will supply new orders from a new facility at Greenville, South Carolina.

But the plan was to eventually build the planes in India, Howard told Reuters. "Our next customer, which we believe to be very soon ... we will produce those aircraft out of that (Greenville) facility," he said. "As you look beyond that, the opportunity for India is to then move all of that into India and that's what's being proposed ... to have a single production line in India that would service the new production requirements of global demand, the global market." India's government is set to issue a formal request to Lockheed and Saab over the next few days to provide information about their plans to design, develop and produce combat jets in India, a government official said.

The planes will be produced under a new 'strategic partnership' policy under which the foreign aircraft maker will collaborate with an Indian firm to develop a world-class indigenous aeronautical base that India has struggled to build for decades. Lockheed has picked Tata Advanced Systems as its local partner, while Saab has not yet announced its Indian collaborator to produce the Gripen E aircraft that it has offered to the air force. Howard said the plan to relocate the F-16 plant to India enjoyed the support of the U.S. government after initial concerns it would conflict with President Donald Trump's 'America First' campaign under which he has pressed for companies to invest in the United States and create jobs. Howard said winning the Indian contract worth billions of dollars will protect thousands of jobs.



Only Indian phones for defence officials?

By Yuthika Bhargava

Plan to secure communication systems

The Centre is considering the creation of a secure communications ecosystem for its officials, especially those working in the defence sector.

One of the proposals is mandating the use of mobile phones manufactured by Indian companies for official communication. The government will also be providing a secure email service to its officials.

"The view is that communications for vital departments of the government need to be secured... a lot of the companies store user data on a server in a foreign country, including China," a senior official, who requested anonymity, told *The Hindu*.

Data protection law - The suggestion on mobiles came up at a meeting called by Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad with senior officials in the department, including representatives of Cert-In, earlier this month. The Army now uses secure landline phones to communicate.

“We are already working on a data protection law. The Minister wants us to also look at ways to secure communication between the vital government departments, such as defence,” the official said.

The official said the recent move to seek details of security and safety processes followed by various handset manufacturers selling smartphones in the country is the first step in this exercise. While further details are to be worked out, there is a possibility that the firm supplying mobile phones to government departments will be asked to customise certain features and adhere to certain specifications. On the email policy of the government, the official said, “It will be the largest service of its kind for the government with a user base of 5 million... an email id will be assigned to all officials at the Centre and State level through National Informatics Centre.” A pilot of this service has already been done and is running for a select user base, including some senior officials. “The primary trigger behind the policy is control of data which resides on servers outside India and on servers beyond the control of the Government of India,” the official said.

The email will offer enhanced security authentication mechanisms such as geo-fencing and device mapping. “A centralised email architecture across the government will help in securing Government data,” the official explained. While currently the primary domain name used is ‘@gov.in’, the government plans to introduce local languages and *sarkar.bharat* domain.



Wed, 30 Aug, 2017

Lanba lauds strategy of 'silence'

Chinese media campaigns were shrill in their comments, says the Navy Chief

India's media campaign of maintaining silence during the Doklam standoff with China has worked for us, said Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba on Tuesday.

"They [Chinese] have used a media campaign where they have been shrill in their comments. We have used it in a different way, where we kept quiet. It has worked for us," Adm Lanba said in response to questions from the media on the sidelines of a seminar on "social media and the armed forces" organised by the Centre for Joint Warfare Studies.

Diplomatic parleys - However, Adm Lanba declined to comment on the standoff that had just ended and referred to the statement by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

On Monday, India and China announced disengagement from the standoff site, ending the 73-day standoff at Doklam near the India-Bhutan-China trijunction after diplomatic parleys. The move came a week before the BRICS summit in China where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to attend.



Wed, 30 Aug, 2017

ET By Invite - When Restraint Defeated War

By Tarun Vijay

Doklam logjam had a Chinese domestic aspect tagged to it; Xi is acting fast and strongly on corruption; last month, more than 600 communist party leaders & officials were jailed

There is a Chinese proverb, 'When brothers live together, they can solve the most difficult of problems', that I used in my keynote address at the BRICS seminar on governance in Quanzhou, China, recently. This week, the bhai-bhai managed to solve a problem by stepping back from the brink. The resolution of Doklam will look clearer once we look back at the message from June this year from the Kazhak capital Astana, where Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping had agreed on not allowing differences to grow into disputes.

If this is true, then the question arises: Why did Doklam occur in the first place?

Did China misread India? Did China really believe that India would ignore Chinese road construction at a trijunction that's so crucial to our security?

One collateral error was to stop the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage, a sensitive issue for India. After the 1962 war, it was the Kailash Yatra that was considered to provide the healing touch for millions of Indians, not any economic treaty . Again, the opening of the Nathu La route for the Kailash Yatra was a symbol of Modi-Xi chemistry . We have too much at stake to let any move destroy the trust so assiduously built over the years by Indian and Chinese leaders. India's biggest strength is its democracy and a transparent, honest record to maintain peace with all. We have lost territories to others, but never attacked to gain an inch of alien land.

There is power in Buddha's message of being compassionate with all. Which is why despite many Indians thinking China hasn't cooperated with India in tackling terrorism, has created obstacles to our entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), and is silent on Pakistan's terror acts against India, that we have not taking all this to heart. Despite all this, no one stopped the Indian cricket team from wearing a Chinese company's colours on their jerseys and from accepting it as a sponsor. Deepika Padukone was not trolled for appearing on ads selling a Chinese product.

Some 22,000 Chinese are working in a single company in India. And from solar panels to smart cities, the Chinese are getting the lucrative contracts. That's the confidence a democratic India has in a neighbour that didn't hesitate to abuse us.

The Chinese media was creating war clouds, giving a ludicrous version of a manufactured lie that 'India has invaded Chinese territory'. The legacy of those great men who built bridges between the two civilisations - from Chinese monk-scholar Kumarajiva, and Indian physician Dwarkanath S Kotnis, to monk-scholar Xuanzang and poet-writer Rabindranath Tagore -they all represent a a shared past and worked for a shared future.

Indian diplomacy , while standing firm on its position on national security , represented that spirit of togetherness. And finally , its restrain and resilience engulfed the clouds of war.

The Dokalam logjam had a Chinese domestic aspect tagged to it. Xi is acting fast and strongly on corruption. Last month, more than 600 communist party leaders and officials were jailed and served harsh punishments on charges of corruption. The October Party Congress grows nearer, and although Xi's re-election is certain, its criticality is obvious. Domestic pressures sometimes reflect elsewhere too.

For India, this is also a lesson to learn: there is no alternative to a strong economy and defence, and a well-prepared diplomatic response.. Our secured borders and domestic political stability , clubbed with a robust economy , alone guarantees a long, friendly walk with the neighbours. Nobody wants to walk the talk with a weakling.

Modi has proved he can create a long-term anthem of togetherness with Xi from a point of strength. The future belongs to India and China. And to our mutual understanding of each other.

(The writer is President, India-China Parliamentary Group, CII)



Wed, 30 Aug, 2017

North Korea fires missile over Japan in aggressive test

The launch was North Korea's 13th ballistic missile launch this year, said Roh Jae-cheon, spokesman of Seoul's JCS.

North Korea fired a ballistic missile from its capital Pyongyang that flew over Japan before plunging into the northern Pacific Ocean, officials said on Tuesday, an aggressive test-flight over the territory of a close U.S. ally that sends a clear message of defiance as Washington and Seoul conduct war games nearby.

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile traveled around 2,700 km (1,677 miles) and reached a maximum height of 550 km (341 miles) as it flew over the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. The launch, which appears to be the first to cross over Japan since 2009, will rattle a region worried that each new missile test puts the North a step closer toward its goal of an arsenal of nuclear missiles that can reliably target the United States. It appeared to be the North's longest-ever missile test, but South Korean officials couldn't immediately confirm.

North Korean missile launches have been happening at an unusually fast pace this year, and some analysts believe the North could have viable long-range nuclear missiles before the end of President Donald Trump's first term in early 2021.

The South Korean military said it is analyzing the launch with the United States and has strengthened its monitoring and preparation in case of further actions from North Korea. Analysts speculate the North may have tested a new intermediate-range missile that Pyongyang recently threatened to fire toward the U.S. territory of Guam, which hosts a major military base. This missile landed nowhere near Guam, which is about 2,500 km (1,550 miles) south of Tokyo, but the length of Tuesday's launch may have been designed for the North to show it could follow through on its threat. Seoul says the missile was launched from Sunan, which is where Pyongyang's international airport is, opening the possibility that North Korea launched a road-mobile missile from an airport runway.

The launch was North Korea's 13th ballistic missile launch this year, said Roh Jae-cheon, spokesman of Seoul's JCS.

North Korea will no doubt be watching the world's reaction to see if it can use Tuesday's flight over Japan as a precedent for future launches. Japanese officials said there was no damage to ships or anything else reported. Japan's NHK TV said the missile separated into three parts. "We will do our utmost to protect people's lives," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters. "This reckless act of launching a missile that flies over our country is an unprecedented, serious and important threat."

Tuesday's launch comes days after the North fired what was assessed as three short-range ballistic missiles into the sea and a month after its second flight test of an intercontinental ballistic missile, which analysts say could reach deep into the U.S. mainland when perfected.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry warned that the North will face a "strong response" from the U.S.-South Korean alliance if what it called nuclear and missile provocations continue. The ministry also urged Pyongyang to accept talks over its nuclear program and acknowledge that abandoning its nuclear ambitions is the only way to guarantee its security and economic development.

South Korea also said its air force also conducted a live-fire drill involving four F-15 fighters dropping eight MK-84 bombs that accurately hit targets at a military field near the country's eastern coast. Park Su-hyun, spokesman of South Korean President Moon Jae-in, said Mr. Moon's national security director Chung Eui-yong called President Donald Trump's national security adviser H.R. McMaster to discuss the launch.

The launch over Japan isn't a total surprise. Earlier this month, when threatening to lob four Hwasong-12s, which are new intermediate-range missiles, into the waters near Guam, North Korea specifically said they would fly over Japanese territory. North Korea in June also angrily reacted to the launch of a Japanese satellite it said was aimed at spying on the North and said Tokyo was no longer entitled to fault Pyongyang "no matter what it launches or whether that crosses the sky above Japan."

North Korea typically reacts with anger to U.S.-South Korean military drills, which are happening now, often testing weapons and threatening Seoul and Washington in its state-controlled media. But animosity is higher than usual following threats by Mr. Trump to unleash "fire and fury" on the North, and Pyongyang's stated plan to consider firing some of its missiles near Guam.

Kim Dong-yub, a former South Korean military official who is now an analyst at Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies, said the early flight data suggests the North Korean missile was likely a Hwasong-12. Other possibilities, he said, include a midrange Musudan, a missile with a potential 3,500-km (2,180-mile) range

that puts much of the Asia—Pacific region within reach, or a Pukguksong-2, a solid-fuel missile that can be fired faster and more secretly than weapons using liquid fuel.

South Korea's military didn't immediately confirm whether the North Korean missile was fired from Pyongyang's airport. Moon Seong Mook, a former South Korean military official and current analyst for the Seoul-based Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, said the airport's runways could provide the ideal space to launch a road—mobile missile like the Hwasong—12. By launching from its capital, the North might have been trying to demonstrate the ability to launch its missiles from anywhere, Mr. Moon said.

“The launch doubled as a threat to Washington, not only because of the U.S. military bases in Japan, but also that the North showed it has the real capability to fire missiles to waters near Guam if it chose to shoot them in that direction,” Moon said.

North Korea first fired a rocket over Japanese territory in August of 1998 when a multistage rocket that outside experts called “Taepodong-1” flew about 1,500 km (932 miles) before landing in the Pacific Ocean. The North later said it launched a satellite.

North Korea flew another rocket over Japan again in April 2009 and said that, too, was carrying a satellite. The North claimed success, but the U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command says no satellite reached orbit. The United Nations has repeatedly condemned North Korean satellite launches as covers meant to test banned long-range missile technology. Some parts of a space launch vehicle reportedly flew over Okinawa last year after separating from the rocket.

Pyongyang regularly claims the U.S.-South Korean military exercises are an invasion rehearsal, although analysts say the North's anger is partly because the impoverished country must react with its own expensive drills and weapons tests. The allies say the war games are defensive and meant to counter North Korean aggression.

North Korea's U.N. ambassador, Ja Song Nam, wrote recently that the exercises are “provocative and aggressive” at a time when the Korean Peninsula is “like a time bomb.”



Wed, 30 Aug, 2017

Japan wakes to missile warnings

A short time ago, a missile apparently passed above this area. If you find suspicious objects, please don't go near them and immediately call police or firefighters. Please take cover in secure buildings or underground.

Official Text Message

Tokyo: Millions of Japanese awoke to ominous text messages Tuesday warning them to take cover as a North Korean missile flew overhead, with one train operator bluntly explaining its halted service as “Reason: Ballistic missile launch.” Sirens blared out in northern communities that were on the flight path of the ballistic missile as it soared over Japanese territory for two minutes before crashing into the Pacific.

North Korea's launch towards neighbouring Japan marked a major escalation by Pyongyang amid tensions over its weapons ambitions. Commuters in northernmost Hokkaido were greeted by warning signs at train stations -- bringing many rail services to a halt. At one metro station in Sapporo, a major city of nearly two million, passengers were warned there would be delays.

“All lines are experiencing disruption,” said one sign. “Reason: Ballistic missile launch.”

Commuters took the government messages to heart. Others had little choice but to carry on with their usual schedule, including the crews aboard some 15 fishing vessels that had already left port off southern Hokkaido in an area under the missile's path.

Seoul warns N Korea of death, destruction

South Korea has threatened to “exterminate” North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un if he continues to risk the safety of its population, as Seoul responded to Monday morning’s ballistic missile launch over Japan. North Korea fired a ballistic missile over northern Japan Monday in the most serious escalation yet of its nuclear stand-off with the West. Within hours, South Korea had responded with “overwhelming show of force” by bombing a shooting range near its border to the North as part of a military drill, launching footage which contained a stern warning to Kim Jong-Un.

Seoul dropped eight Mark-84 bombs with four F15K fighter jets near Taebaek, Gangwon-do province, and released footage of the drill along with a video of its own ballistic missile tests conducted last week. “If North Korea threatens the security of the South Korean people and the South Korea-US alliance with their nuclear weapons and missiles, our air forces will exterminate the leadership of North Korea with our strong strike capabilities,” South Korean Colonel Lee Kuk-no warned in the video.

A statement from Seoul later on Tuesday echoed this sentiment, saying South Korea is “fully ready for any threat from the North”. “We strongly condemn the North’s yet another provocation despite a grave message sent through Resolution 2371 adopted by the international community in the wake of its repeated strategic provocations,” the government said in a statement published by Yonhap news.

“We are fully ready for any threat from the North and will make unwavering efforts to protect the lives of our people and the security of our nation,” it said. The rocket launched by North Korea Monday morning broke into three pieces off the coast of Hokkaido and landed in the Pacific Ocean, around 700 miles east of Cape Erimo, after travelling 1,700 miles in eight minutes. Japanese military did not attempt to shoot down the rocket, reportedly a mid-range ballistic missile designed to carry a nuclear payload.

North Korea’s UN ambassador has blamed the US for “driving the peninsula towards an extreme level of explosion” by joining the South for war drills in the Pacific, calling Monday’s missile test “justified”. Han Tae Song set to attend a United Nations Security Council meeting in Geneva later Monday, did not explicitly refer to his country’s latest test firing of a ballistic missile that flew over Japan into the sea earlier in the day.

“Now that the US has openly declared its hostile intention towards the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, by waging aggressive joint military exercises despite repeated warnings... my country has every reason to respond with tough counter-measures as an exercise of its right to self defence.

And the US should be wholly responsible for the catastrophic consequences it will entail,” Han told the U.N. Conference on Disarmament. Daily Mail



All options on the table: Trump

By Varghese K. George

“All options are on the table” to deal with North Korea, U.S President Donald Trump said on Tuesday after it launched a missile over Japan, escalating the tension in the region. America’s Asian allies South Korea and Japan are increasingly under threat from North Korea which is racing fast to acquire the capability to strike mainland America too.

‘Message loud and clear’ - “The world has received North Korea’s latest message loud and clear: this regime has signalled its contempt for its neighbours, for all members of the United Nations, and for minimum

standards of acceptable international behaviour,” Mr. Trump said in a statement. “Threatening and destabilising actions only increase the North Korean regime’s isolation in the region and among all nations of the world. All options are on the table,” he said.

“We’ll see, we’ll see,” Mr. Trump said, when reporters asked him what he was going to do about North Korea, while leaving the White House for flood-affected Texas on Tuesday morning.

The President also spoke to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the situation. The White House said they committed to increasing pressure on North Korea.

Four missile tests over four days by North Korea prove that American optimism about the situation expressed by Mr. Trump and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson last week was misplaced and premature. “...Kim Jong Un, I respect the fact that I believe he is starting to respect us. I respect that fact very much. And maybe, probably not, but maybe something positive can come about,” Mr. Trump had said last week.

Mr. Tillerson had said last Tuesday the brief hiatus in missile tests by Pyongyang was the signal America was looking for. He said it was “worth noting, we have had no missile launches or provocative acts” since the UN Security Council resolution sanctioning Pyongyang on August 5.

“I am pleased to see that the regime in Pyongyang has demonstrated restraint. We hope this is the signal we have been looking for... And perhaps we are seeing a pathway in the near future to having some dialogue.”

However, the Pentagon also said that diplomacy was still Washington's preferred option with North Korea.

“While all options are on the table, diplomacy is still in the lead,” Pentagon spokesman Colonel Robert Manning told Reuters.

The U.S. is technically still at war with the North because their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. Relations worsened last year when North Korea staged two nuclear bomb tests.



Wed, 30 Aug, 2017

ISRO opens up satellite making to industry

By Madhumathi D.S.

Space agency invites applications from single, combined domestic entities

The Indian Space Research Organisation has opened the door to domestic entities that can give it up to 18 spacecraft a year starting mid to late 2018.

The Bengaluru-based ISRO Satellite Centre (ISAC), which has so far produced about 90 Indian spacecraft, on Monday invited single or combined industries to apply for this opportunity.

ISAC Director M. Annadurai told *The Hindu* that the centre expected to select five or six contenders from this exercise “if they are found technically suitable.”

Three-year contract

ISAC would sign a three-year contract with the finalists, train, handhold and supervise their teams in making its range of satellites at its facility.

The Indian Space Research Organisation Surrently makes four categories of spacecraft — communication, remote sensing, navigation and scientific missions — and in three sizes of 1,000 kg to 4,000 kg.

The first lot of spacecraft from this exercise was expected in about six months from the signing of the contracts. This is also roughly the normal time taken to assemble a satellite.

Dr. Annadurai said: “The outsourcing of assembly, integration and testing [AIT] in a way covers operational spacecraft, mostly repeat types that ISRO routinely requires.

However it will be decided by an in-house committee” which he heads.

