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ASSESSING THE ISRAELI FAILURES

One of the most obvious questions that emerged from Hamas' devastating attack on Israel on 7th October was (and will remain): how? How did Israel miss Hamas' preparations for the attack? What were the intelligence failures that made the attack possible? And what were the policy failures that created the context in which such a breakdown of security could occur? The Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies has collected [expert views](#) from senior scholars and former defence and intelligence officials; they point to issues such as the failure to effectively disrupt Hamas' finances, the misreading of Hamas' intentions, Israel's over-reliance on technology and the ultimately incoherent political approach pursued by successive Israeli governments.

THE REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE WAR

In the immediate aftermath of Hamas' attack, analysts speculated whether one of its objectives had been to scupper talks between Israel and Saudi Arabia over normalising relations. While it is important to stress that the attack and the Israel-Hamas war that has followed are primarily about and part of the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the regional dimension is very important. Tobias Borck at RUSI has written two articles outlining the [war's implications for the region](#) and arguing that regional powers may be best placed to at least [geographically contain the conflict](#). Elsewhere, Julien Barnes-Dacey, Cinzia Bianco and Hugh Lovatt at the European Council on Foreign Relations succinctly trace [how the conflict could escalate further](#) and become a regional conflagration.

AN AMERICAN BEAR HUG FOR ISRAEL?

The US response to the Hamas attack has been swift and unequivocal. Washington has wrapped its arms around Israel, pledging full support and deploying military assets to the Mediterranean. In the three weeks following the attack the US had sent more firepower to the Middle East region (including two aircraft carrier groups) than at any time over the past two decades. Joe Biden visited Israel on 18th October, but also appeared to alienate Arab leaders by being too effusive in his backing for Israel. Lesli Vinjamuri's [expert comment](#) for Chatham House succinctly summarises the challenges for US diplomacy in the Middle East today. RUSI has published a [video commentary](#) with former US Ambassador Jonathan Cohen (most recently served as Ambassador to Egypt) offering his assessment of Washington's attempts to reassure Israel and prevent the war from escalating further. Writing for IISS, Nick Childs [argues](#) that the massive US military deployments since the beginning of the crisis underline America's enduring relevance in the Middle East.

THE WAR IN GAZA: IMPACTS IN THE US AND UK

Far from being just a conflict in the Middle East, the latest flare up in violence in Israel and Gaza has mobilised millions of people into political action. Questions around the health of democracy and the limits of free speech in society have followed, with the conflict polarising opinions and leading to sharp rises in antisemitism and Islamophobia across Western nations. The Brookings Institute has undertaken [research into how the war has shifted US public opinions](#), while [this piece](#) by the Associated Press argues that Biden's catastrophic loss of support among Arab-Americans may well mean that Michigan is lost in the upcoming Presidential race. In the UK, police forces are under significant pressure as protests place a strain on existing resources and drive political polarisation. In this piece, [Sky News assesses what options the police have to keep the peace](#) and concludes that there are no good means available to calm public anger.

RUSSIA'S MILITARY PERFORMANCE IN UKRAINE – AS SEEN BY THE RUSSIAN ARMY

The French Institute of International Relations has produced a [report](#) – written by Dimitri Minic – outlining how the Russian army is assessing its performance in the war in Ukraine, and the war itself. Minic argues that Russia's military leadership is clear-eyed about the army's failures and weaknesses. In particular, they have concluded that there was a profound lack of preparation, not just for the initial invasion, but also for the war that is now unfolding. The report represents a stark warning that the Russian military is adapting and learning lessons.

RUSSIA TURNS TO NORTH KOREA

In September, North Korea's dictator Kim Jong Un visited Russia for an unprecedented meeting with Vladimir Putin. One outcome of the trip is that North Korea will provide Russia with artillery shells and other military supplies for the latter's ongoing war against Ukraine. Bruce Bennet, writing for RAND, looks at the [bigger picture](#); he argues that Russia, North Korea and China are forming an increasingly important and strategically relevant trilateral partnership.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES EMERGING FROM RUSSIA'S WAR ON UKRAINE

Some aspects of the war in Ukraine have been compared to World War One, but both sides have also turned to cutting-edge technologies to gain an advantage. In a [new report](#) for the European Council on Foreign Relations, Ulrike Franke and Jenny Soederstroem provide a useful overview of the different types of technologies that have emerged as integral to both Russia and Ukraine's way of fighting – from drones and cyberwarfare to the use of artificial intelligence and space-based innovations. They identify a number of lessons European militaries must draw on to increase their own preparedness for 21st century warfighting. However, the authors also note that, despite all the technological advances, the quality of weapons – including relatively low-tech armour and artillery – still matters.





NEWS STORIES TO WATCH OUT FOR

As the wars in Ukraine and Israel/Gaza and their multi-dimensional repercussions continue to dominate headlines, here are some other topics to keep an eye on:

China continues to make inroads in South America, including by [upgrading diplomatic ties](#) with close US security partner Colombia.

[Unrest has broken out in Bangladesh](#), leading to multiple arrests and deaths, as rival political parties protest ahead of planned elections.

In Brazil, [criminal gangs are flexing their muscles](#) after a prominent crime boss was killed in mid-October.

Despite the recent coup in Niger, the US Senate has [rejected withdrawing American troops](#) from the country.

Suspected Islamist militants have [killed at least 26 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#), highlighting the growing threat from Islamist terrorism in the region.

Australia and the UK are still [waiting for the US Congress to pass](#) the needed legislation to facilitate the trilateral security agreement AUKUS.

After a recent dust-up between China and the Philippines, [Beijing has warned Washington](#) not to get involved.

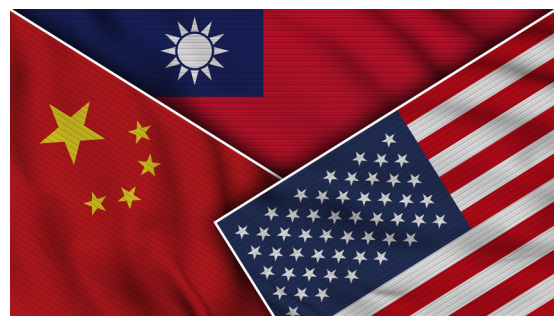
[India has signalled its reluctance](#) to make major climate-related commitments at the upcoming COP28 in the UAE.

In Poland, pro-European parties are [working to turn their election success](#) into a coalition government.

[Tensions between Kosovo and Serbia](#) remain very high after further attacks in northern Kosovo raise fears of renewed escalation.

US ARMING TAIWAN TO THE TEETH

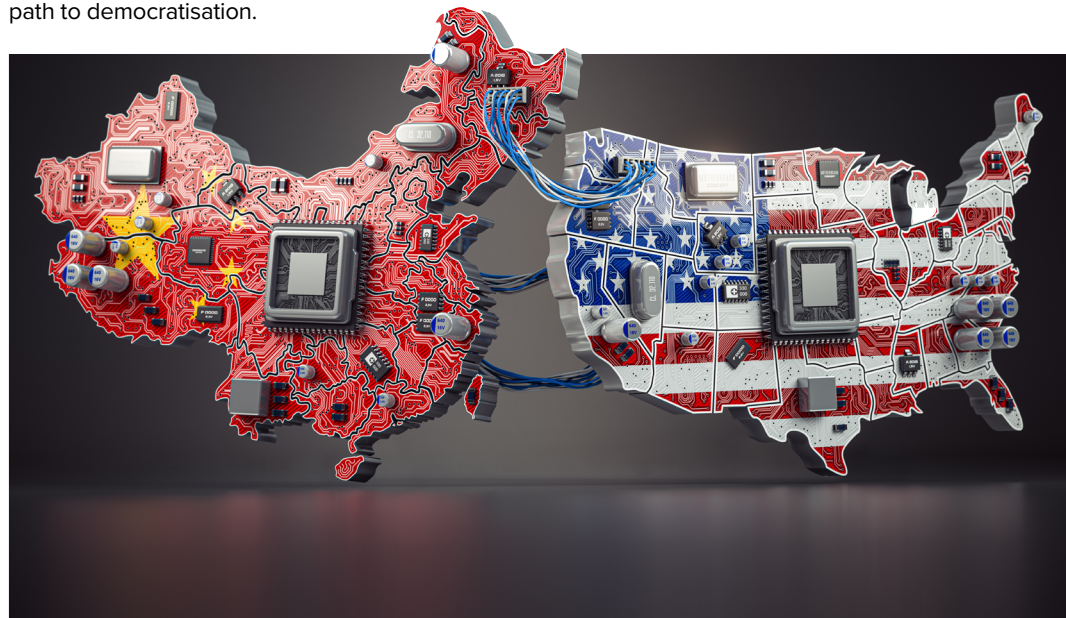
Although the United States has largely been focused on ensuring both Ukraine and Israel remain armed and prepared in their respective conflicts, Washington is also quietly bolstering allies further afield. This [long-read from the BBC](#) outlines how the US is slowly building up support for Taiwan, a country it does not officially recognise, through its Foreign Military Finance programme. There are potentially \$10 billion in armaments coming down the track for Taipei (which receives far more bi-partisan support than



Kyiv) as part of a response to China's growing military dominance. The question, however, is whether Taiwan's military build up deters or provokes Beijing, leading to even greater insecurity.

NAGORNO-KARABAKH AFTER THE TAKEOVER BY AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan has effectively taken over the disputed area of Nagorno-Karabakh, forcibly displacing more than 100,000 Karabakh Armenians. In a policy brief for the German Council on Foreign Relations, Stefan Meister and Laure Delcour [argue](#) that European states must play a more assertive role in stabilising the region and facilitating a lasting peace. They suggest that Europe can bring significant leverage to bear on Azerbaijan, while also working with Armenia to prevent it from backsliding on its path to democratisation.



IS CHINA COOPERATING WITH THE WEST ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

The UK-hosted artificial intelligence safety summit was the first step towards building a larger global consensus and appeared to show a level of goodwill and cooperation, particularly between the US and China. This [piece in Time magazine](#) explores the importance of the two leading powers coordinating on legislation especially given that both Washington and Beijing have legitimate concerns about AI technology becoming too powerful. China's participation at the London summit marks an important moment for international cooperation – in contrast to the West, Beijing has rarely admitted to its concerns about the technology. This opens the door for mutual cooperation, although mutual understanding on AI safety is far from guaranteed.

DIVERGING TRAJECTORIES

The Qatar-based Middle East Council on Global Affairs has published two interesting reports that, although not explicitly related, provide an insight into the changing dynamics of external powers' engagement in the Middle East region. Galip Dalay examines [Russia's changing role](#) in the Middle East and argues that, while Russia remains a strategically important actor in the region, its grip seems to be loosening as it struggles to achieve its objectives in Ukraine. Meanwhile, Adel Abdel Ghaffar outlines [South Korea's increasingly diverse and multi-faceted engagement](#) in the Middle East. Although not directly comparable with Russia's more long-standing relationships, Seoul is becoming an increasingly important partner for the Gulf Arab monarchies in particular – both as a buyer of hydrocarbons and as a provider of technology (including in the defence and security space).