

The question of Russia

According to Global Firepower Russia manages to sustain 3794 military aircraft, 20,216 tanks and 63 submarines on the same level of defence spending as the UK. The UK has according to the same source 856 planes, 249 tanks and 11 submarines. The UK economy is twice the size of the Russian one at current exchange rates. Russian wages are lower and a lot of military output comes from state factories which may well subsidise production costs.

These figures reveal why the West takes Russia seriously. It may lack state of the art technology in a lot of its military hardware, and may have problems getting it all operational, but no-one can deny that Russia has a serious military capability able to operate a long way from home if it needs to. It does also have some smart weapons. Russia has allies throughout the Middle East and is seeking to improve relations with China. NATO led by the USA has plenty of firepower of its own to protect its people and member states. The West has recently shown some resolve following the attempted murders in Salisbury. For her part Russia should understand and accept that NATO is a defensive alliance with no wish to extend territory by force of arms.

When intervening in conflict zones in the Middle East Russia and her allies proceed with less concern for collateral damage, less worry about killing non combatants in the anti ISIS war. Russia has taken over as the main outsider defeating Isis, with the West carefully keeping in touch to avoid mistakes in crowded skies over Syria. Russia also has substantial cyber capability, and uses the world media to pursue its policy aims.

Europe continues to welcome large quantities of Russian gas and to carry on trading, despite the obvious political disagreements. I would be interested to hear your thoughts on what NATO as a whole and the UK in particular should be saying and doing about Russian policy.

Lt Gen Harpal Singh takes Charge as Director General Border Roads

Lt Gen Harpal Singh an alumni of National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla is appointed as Director General Border Roads (DGBR) today. He was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers on 24 December 1982. He later commanded a Border Roads Task Force in Jammu & Kashmir valley.

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Cabinet approves continuation of the Credit Guarantee Fund for Education Loans Scheme and continuation and modification of Central Sector Interest Subsidy Scheme

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for continuation of Credit Guarantee Fund for Education Loans Scheme and continuation and modification of Central Sector Interest Subsidy Scheme with a financial outlay of Rs. 6,600 crore for period from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

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Cabinet approves Export of all edible oils in bulk (except mustard oil)

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal of Ministry of Commerce & Industry for removal of prohibition on export of all varieties of edible oils except mustard oil. Mustard oil will continue to be exported only in consumer packs upto 5 Kgs and with a minimum export price of US \$ 900 per tonne.

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