From the Institute Director

Articles Published 24 November - 1 December:

**Strategic Analysis Paper**

**South Africa – Political Challenges:**

In this paper, FDI Indian Ocean Research Programme Manager Leighton Luke examines the political challenges facing South Africa. He finds that the African National Congress has now become the establishment and is seen as the party to be overthrown by newcomers like the populist Economic Freedom Fighters will gain support from disillusioned ANC voters, thus forcing it to move further to the left of politics. He further notes that while the performance of the ANC will increasingly be criticised from inside the party, as well as outside it, the main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance will not win government at the next general election, in 2019, but will be looking towards doing so in 2024.

**Strategic Weekly Analysis**

- Is a major corruption crackdown on the way in Indonesia?
- China: The Implications of Bottling Tibet’s Water
- Tensions Rise between Turkey and Northern Cyprus as Water Pipeline Temporarily Shuts
- The Afghan Re-Turn to India and China-Pakistan Ties

Articles to be Published 2 - 9 December:

- **Strategic Analysis Paper:**
  - The Indus River and Agriculture in Pakistan
Indonesia: Dealing with Extremism

While there is a need for effective counter-propaganda, it is likely that the Indonesian government will focus on a tougher stance.

Background

Jakarta has recently increased security across Indonesia after a video was posted on social media by a group affiliated to the Islamic State (IS). The nine-minute video titled ‘The Call of Commander Abu Wardah Asy-Syarqi’ is believed to have been released by Abu Wardah Santoso, leader of the East Indonesia Mujahideen (MIT) and features a man delivering a speech standing next to a black IS flag. The video directed a warning to the Indonesian government, ‘We are the troops of Islamic State, warning you. Whether you believe it or not, like it or not, willing or not, by God’s consent this black flag will wave on top of the presidential palace and we will destroy the Jakarta police headquarters’.

Comment

In response to the video, Police Commissioner Mohamad Iqbal, Security Coordinating Minister Luhut Pandjaitan, and Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi have made statements acknowledging the threat IS poses to Indonesia. As well as the video, concern has also been raised regarding the issue of radicalised fighters. According to figures supplied to Asia Sentinel, around three people have left Indonesia for the Middle East and an additional hundred have been prevented from leaving or have been intercepted and deported by foreign countries. At the moment, however, the actual threat of a larger-scale co-ordinated attack remains low. According to Sidney Jones of the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict,
the capacity of MIT is low and the risk of increasing violence comes from a small, isolated base.

There have been mixed reactions on how to respond to the threat of violent attacks from radical groups. In speaking at a news conference, Luhut Pandjaitan advocated an approach focussed on de-radicalisation to tackle the issue, adding, ‘Because, to date, the Western method is a hard approach. Now we are going to look at it with a soft approach, since the hard approach is unsuccessful’. Inspector General Tito Karnavia of the Jakarta Police, on the other hand, suggested a stronger detention system against members of radical groups adding that ‘efforts to overcome radicalism via the internet are, if not a big zero, only ten on a scale of one to 100’. This needs to be improved in the government’s response to radicalisation.

There has been a worrying trend of extremist groups turning to online propaganda and the use of social media to influence and get in touch with potential recruits. The rise of IS has seen the group turn to Twitter to post execution videos, speeches and propaganda pieces as well as use Facebook to get into contact with individuals and arrange to recruit them into IS. In addition to this, IS is becoming increasingly competent technically, using encrypted messaging platforms as well as virtual private networks to remain anonymous and much more difficult to track down. It is likely that the use of such methods will be adopted by other terrorist networks including those within Indonesia.

There seems to be little that the Indonesian authorities can do to counter this. Government efforts to block websites it believed were spreading extremist ideals faced protests and backlash from human rights groups concerned over broader attempts to control the internet. Such attempts to block radical web pages are also ineffective. As Sidney Jones notes, blocked websites can easily be accessed through proxy free sites and can return under altered URL addresses. Rather than trying to block radical propaganda, there should be a focus on generating effective counter-propaganda. Such an approach has already been recommended by numerous experts in counter-terrorism. There is, however, no “one size fits all” approach in tackling this issue. Rather, a multifaceted approach is needed.

It is difficult to predict how the Indonesian government will approach the issue of radicalisation. Given its preference for a tougher stance on drugs as a method of deterrence, however, it is possible that a similar method will be pursued in dealing with radicalised individuals.

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Nepalese Agricultural Policy and the Implications of Emigration

The effects of climate change and poor policy in Nepal has seen significantly slow growth in the agricultural industry, with increasing numbers of Nepalese farmers forced to seek work abroad.

Background

The Nepalese agricultural sector is in crisis due to a combination of poor government policy and a series of natural disasters. Combined with the devastating effects of the 2015 earthquake, urban expansion has reduced the total area available for farming. The government has failed to develop adequate irrigation facilities and erratic weather events caused by climate change have worsened conditions for Nepalese farmers. As many as three million Nepalese men are migrating to India each year in search of an income that they cannot generate from agriculture in Nepal.

Comment

The Nepalese farming sector has been affected by weak agricultural policy. Despite farming in Nepal contributing to 80 per cent of the country’s GDP, only 3.8 per cent of Nepal’s annual budget in recent years has been allocated to agriculture. Government funds are used to subsidise consumption rather than to encourage production and innovation in the sector. The country’s agricultural sector requires a ten per cent investment to cater to Nepal’s growing population, but investment has remained below two per cent since the end of the decade-long civil war in 2006.

Water scarcity in Nepal has added to the number of Nepalese workers seeking an income. Frequent droughts, crop failure and water scarcity as a result of climate change has had adverse effects on the ability of Nepalese farmers to generate an income. While improvements in water transportation have brought piped-water to some remote villages, the irrigation systems are still not sufficiently developed to secure water for all rural communities. Combined with global warming, the government’s failure to supply water and develop the irrigation infrastructure has contributed to the large-scale emigration of farmers to India.

The majority of Nepalese migrants in India are employed in unskilled, low-paid labour. Incomes generated abroad are seldom enough to alleviate poverty and any extra income is often spent on the increasing cost of living in Nepal, rather than being invested into farming technologies to boost production. The absence of increasing numbers of men has resulted in women taking over the operation of many farms. While this trend has seen a shift in the role of women in Nepal, it is also creating a huge work burden and increased stress for families. Despite being left to operate family farms, the status of women in Nepal prevents them from having total control over farming resources.

An economic blockade placed on Nepal by India is set to cause further strain on Nepal’s economic capacity for agricultural production. Thousands have been forced to seek work in
India, the Gulf States and Malaysia. The blockade has also disrupted Nepal’s tourist season, construction and social services. Such impediments to the economy further affect not only the resources available for farming, but also the cash flow in the economy to create demand for agricultural products. This slowdown in the Nepalese economy has implications for the growth of the agricultural industry and has further contributed to the emigration of Nepalese men.

The world’s food production needs to increase by 60 per cent if it is to meet the needs of a growing population by 2050. Given this high demand, Nepal can no longer afford to continue with inadequate agricultural policy and funding. The current mass migration is not improving the living standards of Nepalese families. Instead, it contributes to the continuation of the cycle of rural poverty. Unless Nepal begins to invest and promote growth in its agricultural sector, increasing rates of emigration will continue to have significant implications for the country. Addressing the causal factors of migration by developing agricultural technology and responding to the effects of climate change will eventually create productivity and growth within the farming sector.

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Experts Call For Reduction in Meat Consumption Ahead of Paris Climate Change Talks

With livestock accounting for 15% of global greenhouse gas emissions, curtailing global meat consumption has been suggested as a practical and immediate solution to climate change, but experts still disagree on how to achieve this.

Background

The United Nations Paris Climate Summit (COP21) is underway, with Australia expected to pledge at least one billion dollars in foreign aid to combat climate change. In order to reach the UN’s goal of keeping global temperature rise below two degrees, many countries are drastically trying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The emissions from global livestock production are often not thought about. Accounting for more greenhouse gas emissions than those produced by the world’s road vehicles, trains, ships and planes combined, agriculture is a major contributor to climate change. Exacerbating this is the changing diets and unprecedented growth of the middle class in newly industrialised countries. Countries such as India, Indonesia and China are seeing a massive shift from largely grain-based diets to meat-based diets as median incomes increase. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) predicts that the consumption of meat will rise by 76 per cent by 2050. This would be a fairly modest claim if not for the global warming potential of methane emissions from
livestock. Methane (largely produced by animal waste) has a global warming potential 20 times greater than carbon dioxide.

**Comment**

The link between livestock and global warming is often not explained and the public remains generally unaware of it. Environmental organisations, such as Green Peace and the World Wildlife Foundation, moreover, do not acknowledge the fact that the production of meat is a factor in the production of greenhouse gases. This provides an indication of the strong hold the meat industry has over the media, as was made evident by the backlash from the meat industry when the World Health Organisation recently classed red meat as carcinogenic.

Public awareness about the link between livestock and climate change remains poor. A meat tax has been suggested as a means of indicating to the market that meat consumption is unsustainable. Advocates of the meat tax suggest that any potential public backlash will only be short-lived as people will quickly understand the policy rationale for such a decision. Without a meat tax there is insufficient incentive for the meat industry to reduce supply. This meat tax has been met with much criticism as many believe that this will only price out low income families from the meat market, thus encouraging greater imports from global companies. This could potentially work for countries with recent increases in meat consumption but experts doubt that the meat tax is an effective means of reducing meat consumption in countries with well-established meat-based diets.

Governments are hesitant to implement such interventionist approaches, such as a meat tax, in light of low public awareness. There is currently no pressure from the public to reduce meat consumption. Soft interventions to raise awareness among consumers should be a top priority for the Paris talks. Those in the developed world on average already consume twice as much meat as deemed healthy by experts. For this reason campaigns such as Paul McCartney’s Meat Free Mondays have been established to educate the public on this important issue. The long term implications of such programmes are yet to be established but these campaigns are essential in increasing awareness. Other potential avenues for addressing the problem include changing the diets of livestock to reduce methane emissions.

The Paris climate talks are the perfect place to have these discussions. With representatives from over 150 nations in attendance, world leaders are being called upon to commit to viable solutions to climate change. A recent study by UK-based think-tank Chatham House has shown that worldwide adoption of a “healthy diet” (one that minimises the risk of diet-related health problems) would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 25 per cent by 2050. Those people who are privileged enough to be able to change their meat consumption should do so. Reducing meat consumption is a viable means of mitigating climate change and could play a large part in tackling this global issue. For now, these changes are merely life-style based and intervening measures, such as a meat tax, are simply not viable if the majority of the public continues to be unaware of the problem.

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Indian Ocean Conditions Affect Climate on Other Side of the World

The atmospheric-oceanic phenomenon known as the Indian Ocean Dipole is a significant contributor to weather patterns around the globe, including El Niño.

Background

Far from being largely passive in a climatic sense, as was previously thought, sea surface temperature and atmospheric variations in the Indian Ocean have far-reaching effects. The Indian Ocean Dipole temperature fluctuation, which has just ended, is thought to set the scene for a strong El Niño event over the Pacific Ocean and that is also responsible for drier conditions as far afield as the Caribbean Sea.

Comment

The Indian Ocean Dipole is the name given to the fluctuation of sea surface temperatures and atmospheric conditions in the north-eastern and north-western waters of the Indian Ocean. Simply put, a positive Indian Ocean Dipole occurs when higher than normal sea surface temperatures and rainfall occur off the coast of eastern Africa, centred on the Seychelles. It results in a corresponding cooling of the waters adjacent to Indonesia and Australia, with drier conditions on land in those areas, particularly in northern and south-eastern Australia. In a negative phase, the reverse occurs, with a neutral phase in between. The Indian Ocean Dipole does not occur every year and when it has occurred, it has mostly been in the positive phase. It is a reasonably short-lived phenomenon, generally only lasting around six months, usually beginning in May or June and ending, or breaking down, rapidly in November. According to the Bureau of Meteorology, a positive Indian Ocean Dipole has occurred eleven times since 1958, not including 2015. Negative events have occurred on ten occasions.
The effects of a positive Indian Ocean Dipole become more far-reaching when its link with the El Niño phenomenon is considered. Although research is still continuing, scientists have postulated that a positive Indian Ocean Dipole effectively — but not invariably — sets the scene for a strong El Niño event by exacerbating the effects of the latter as cooler water from the eastern Indian Ocean moves into an already cooling western Pacific via the Indonesian Throughflow.

After a positive Indian Ocean Dipole and a strong El Niño event, the effects of the latter then reach beyond the Pacific into the tropical zones of the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, as it produces cooler westerly winds that inhibit the development and range of the air flows, known as tropical waves, that emanate from northern Africa and which evolve into storm systems as they move west over the tropical Atlantic. They also reduce the amount of moisture carried by those systems that do form. In this way, conditions in the Indian Ocean can result in drier than normal conditions in the Caribbean.

Consequently, much of the Caribbean and Central America have experienced record droughts this season. Crop losses have been widespread but the worst conditions were perhaps experienced in Puerto Rico. Water levels in the territory’s reservoirs were so depleted that mandatory water rationing was introduced between July and September, with some areas only receiving supplies every third day.

As far away as the Dominican Republic, the weak hurricane season that emanated from this year’s positive Indian Ocean Dipole and strong El Niño, came to a dramatic conclusion on 30 November when a by-now rare trough of low pressure brought a day of torrential downpours across much of the country. The capital, Santo Domingo, recorded 125.6 millimetres of rainfall in just 24 hours, surface flooding affected large parts of the city and flood warnings were put in place by the government Emergency Operations Centre.

Dry conditions returned the following day but, in having become relatively atypical this year, the heavy rains served to highlight the far-reaching effect that conditions in the western Indian Ocean can have.

Although the Indian Ocean Dipole has just broken down, the indications are that the El Niño phenomenon that it contributes to is shaping up to be as strong as those of 1982-83 and 1997-98 and will continue to be felt far and wide over well into 2016.

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What’s Next?

- Chinese President Xi Jinping will travel to Zimbabwe and South Africa from 1 – 5 December.
- Japan’s Liberal Democratic Party Secretary-General Sadakazu Tanigaki and New Komeito Party member Yoshihisa Inoue will visit China from 2 – 5 December.
- South Africa will host the Second Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) in Johannesburg on 4-5 December.
- The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries will hold its 168th meeting in Vienna on 4 December.
- The Greek Parliament will vote on the country’s 2016 budget on 5 December.
- South Africa will host the China-Africa Cooperation Forum from 4 – 5 December.
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