

Turkey's quiet expansion across Africa

President Erdoğan seeks to create a powerful arc of influence

Although attention has recently focused on **Turkey's** expanding role in **Libya**, Turkey has been quietly deepening its [influence throughout the rest of Africa](#). President **Erdoğan** has visited 28 African countries during his combined time as Prime Minister and President. Turkey's exports to Africa have risen nearly six-fold in the last 15 years to US\$14.4 billion. More recently, Turkey has sought to strengthen its diplomatic ties across West Africa and the Sahel. In a diplomatic visit in July, Turkey signed an agreement with **Niger** to widen bilateral military cooperation and increase Turkish investment in infrastructure. Turkey has provided **Somalia, Togo, Niger** and **Chad** with COVID-19 medical equipment.

Most significant is Turkey's military expansion in the region. Erdoğan has sought to market a variety of Turkish-made equipment including drones, warships, helicopters and tanks. He appears to be seeking to capitalise on the high terrorism risk to export Turkish military hardware and training expertise. Since 2016 Turkey's military exports to Africa have been concentrated in the terrorism-prone Sahel. The [United Nations Register of Global Reported Arms Trade](#) has reported 13,198 individual shipments of small semi-automatic arms and 301 major arms and armoured vehicles deliveries from Turkey. This register relies on voluntary reporting. Turkey has military agreements with Chad, **Burkina Faso, Mali** and **Mauritania**. Turkey has already established its largest overseas military base in the horn of Africa in Mogadishu – and there are reports that Turkey is seeking to build another base somewhere in West Africa. Turkey's ambitious military and diplomatic program signals its determination to project its influence across Africa – especially as it challenges past friendships elsewhere.

Australia, India and Japan announce efforts to diversify supply chains

All three countries increasingly share reservations about China's recent assertiveness

In an online meeting on Tuesday, ministers from **India, Japan** and **Australia** agreed to launch a trilateral initiative aimed at creating more resilient supply chains in the Indo-Pacific. Concrete details of the initiative are yet to be worked out – although it is [understood](#) that Japan has proposed the digitalisation of trade procedures and more support for capital expenditure in the region. There are few doubts that the initiative is squarely aimed at diversifying supply chains away from **China**. Japan has been particularly active in this space. In April, Tokyo set aside US\$2.2 billion to entice Japanese companies to leave China. Japan has also been in discussions with **ASEAN** about supply chain diversification and is expected to try and combine the trilateral and ASEAN initiatives.

In the immediate term, it is uncertain what impact the trilateral partnership will have. Previous free trade agreements have failed to materially shift trade flows away from China. Nonetheless, the initiative may be able to achieve modest results in strategic sectors where at least one of the three countries has a competitive advantage – i.e. pharmaceuticals and [increasingly](#), electronics in India, and rare earths in Australia. At the very least, the trilateral initiative is politically important and emblematic of the region's desire to push back against China.

Beijing seeks to thwart the growth of anti-China coalition

There are no guarantees that the approach will work

As the **US-China** relationship has frayed, Washington has been increasingly open about its [desire](#) to build an anti-China coalition. Beijing is now squarely focused on stopping the

expansion of this incipient effort. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi recently completed a tour of **Italy, Netherlands, Norway, France and Germany**. Wang was followed by top diplomat and Politburo member, Yang Jiechi, who visited **Greece and Spain** earlier this week. The Chinese charm-offensive is not limited to Europe. Paramount leader **Xi Jinping** – who appears to be preparing to [launch another purge](#) – will shortly visit **South Korea** in an effort to shore up Sino-Korean ties. Beijing has sought to reiterate the importance of commercial ties with **Japan** – [recently allowing](#) Daiwa Securities – Japan's second largest securities brokerage – to set up a majority-owned joint venture on the mainland. China will also be keen to use the recent retirement of Prime Minister **Shinzō Abe** as a chance to rebuild ties – especially if Abe's former rival and more China-friendly candidate [Shigeru Ishiba](#) lands the top job.

Europe has deep concerns about China's investment in strategic European sectors, perceived attempts to divide Western and Eastern Europe, non-market practices and lack of trade reciprocity. Germany's new Indo-Pacific strategy – [released](#) just after the conclusion of the visits – suggests that Berlin may be leaning towards the US and Five Eyes' position. Japan and South Korea have their own trade issues with China – and territorial disputes to boot. Ultimately, the biggest obstacle to Chinese efforts may be a US that is willing to use its many sources of leverage while also closely engaging with allies.

India-China tensions show no signs of abating

A rapprochement becoming increasingly difficult to imagine

India and China's Himalayan border dispute saw renewed signs of activity last weekend after the Indian army [accused](#) Chinese forces of carrying out “provocative military movements” around the Pangong Tso Lake. One Indian soldier of Tibetan origin is believed to have been killed. The latest skirmish suggests that talks between the two militaries – which have been underway in various iterations since early May – are yet to bear any fruit. There are signs that the dispute is widening beyond India's banning of Tik Tok and its de-facto ban on Huawei. Indian intelligence and officials in New Delhi have [accused](#) Beijing of funding the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) – which seeks independence for the Indian state of Assam. According to the reports, Beijing has for some time allowed the ULFA's leader to live in southern China's Yunnan province and operate training camps along the **Myanmar-China** border. In recent months, the ULFA is also understood to have produced pro-China propaganda videos. Separatism in Assam – which sits below the Chinese-claimed Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh – is a considerable source of anxiety in New Delhi. Aiding separatist movements is a dangerous game. The Dalai Lama resides in India and there are [growing calls](#) for India to play the ‘Tibet card’ – which would likely entail New Delhi giving independence advocates a greater platform. Ultimately, both sides have a lot to lose from any further supporting of separatist movements.

Terrorist groups big winners from Yemen's persistent instability

AQAP and ISIS-Yemen flourish and prove resilient and adaptable

Yemen's political vacuum has [enabled](#) al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS-Yemen (IS-Y) to embed themselves in the country. AQAP has been active in Yemen since the 1990s. It has gained support from local tribes by improving local infrastructure and providing security. ISIS first emerged in Yemen in 2014 and initially focused on targeting Yemen's al-Qaeda branch. In the first six months of 2019, 86 percent of IS-Y's attacks targeted al-Qaeda. However, AQAP's popularity amongst local communities has prevented ISIS from garnering significant support.

The UN believes that IS-Y is loosely aligned with the Houthis. However, in the first six months of 2020, 94 percent of IS-Y's attacks targeted the Houthi as the de facto government

of al-Jawf province. In [August](#), the Houthis announced they had killed IS-Y's senior leader **Abu Al-Walid Al-Adani** – although the Saudi-led coalition denied this claim. For IS-Y, if they are successful in pushing the Houthi's back, they may gain followers and traction with local tribes who have sought to defend al-Bayda from Houthi encroachment. In this way, the group could be seen to be aligned with local grievances and ambitions. The longer-term concern is that ISIS-Y may gain a strategic foothold in Yemen. This would pose a risk for the entire region.