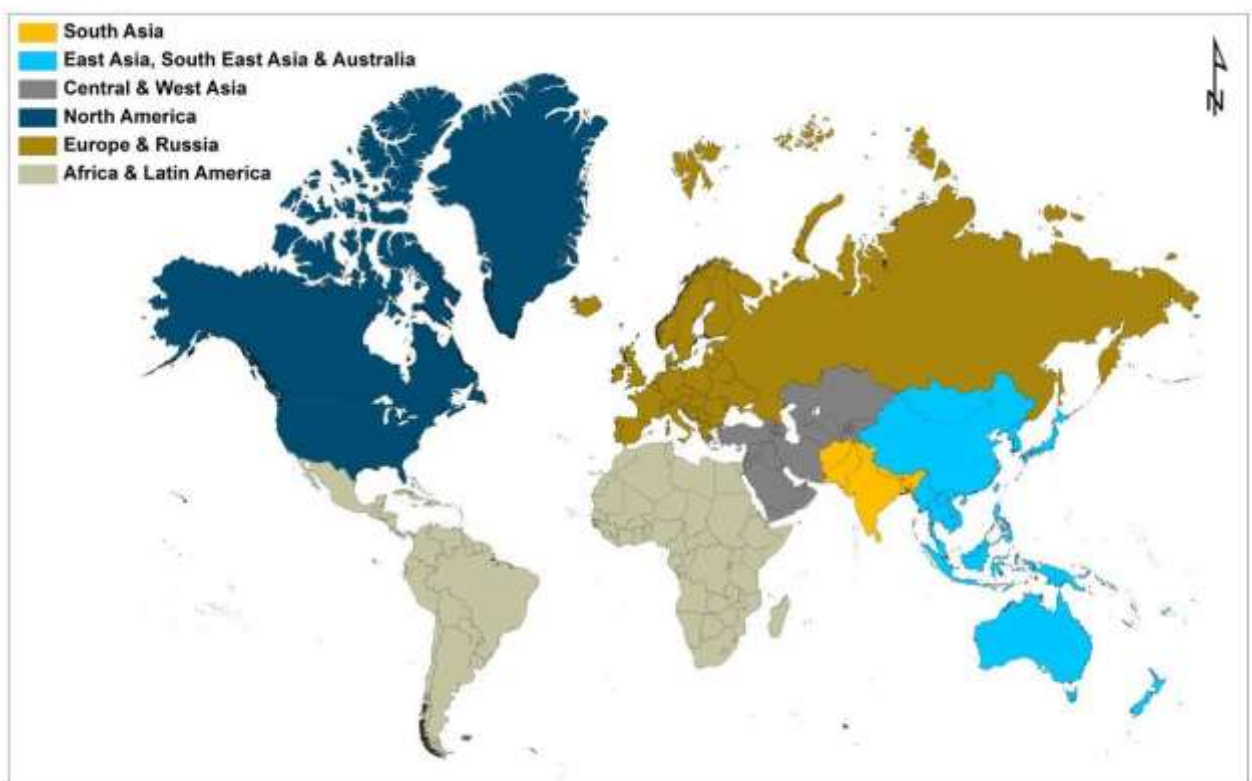




Delhi Policy Group

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

Volume 3, Issue 1

ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group is among India's oldest independent think tanks with its primary focus on international and strategic issues of critical national interest. Over the past decades, the Delhi Policy Group has established itself in both domestic and international circles, particularly in the area of national security.

In keeping with India's increasing global profile as a leading power and the accompanying dynamism of India's foreign and security policy, the Delhi Policy Group has expanded its focus areas to include India's broader regional and global role; India's initiatives to strengthen its strategic periphery; India's political, security and connectivity challenges and policies across the Indo-Pacific; and the strategic partnerships that advance India's rise. To support these goals, the DPG undertakes research, publishes policy reports and organises conferences on strategic and geo-political, geo-economic, and defence and security issues.

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South Asia

India

['India First' principle guiding our foreign policy, says PM Modi; promises to bring back black money](#)

Jan 2, 2019, Times of India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that 'India First' was the simple mantra guiding his government's foreign policy as it went about setting the global narrative on several issues.

[Key foreign policy challenges India faces in 2019](#)

Jan 1, 2019, New Indian Express

One of the key foreign policy challenges that India faces in the year ahead is juggling its relationship with the US and the west on one hand and Russia and China on the other.

[Raja Mandala: Integrating the island](#)

Jan 2, 2019, The Indian Express

PM's visit to the Andamans should be an occasion for India to realise the geopolitical significance of the islands, given China's presence in Indian Ocean.

[Positives for India in its backyard but China's leverage unmatched](#)

Jan 1, 2019, The Economic Times

India's immediate neighbourhood has become a zone of contestation with China's profile expanding. The continuing and undiminished turmoil in the Gulf and West Asia put at risk India's energy security and the welfare of its more than six million citizens living and working in the region. Given these trends, how did India fare in the year gone by?

['Why isn't India there': Trump signals military presence in Afghanistan](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Hindustan Times

The US president's remarks that India should be in Afghanistan fighting that war instead, along with other neighbours, would, if it is the policy indeed, mark a significant departure from his administration's stated policy for Afghanistan.

[Donald Trump signs law to step up India defence ties, call out China](#)

Jan 2, 2019, The Indian Express

Asia Reassurance Initiative Act was passed by the US Senate on December 4 and approved by the US Congress on December 12. It was one of the 13 Bills signed into law by President Trump on the last day of 2018.

[2018 - a landmark year for India-US strategic relationship](#)

Dec 31, 2018, The Economic Times

Notwithstanding irritants on trade issues, India and the US made "landmark" progress in 2018 to bolster their strategic and defence ties – from holding the maiden trilateral meeting with Japan to the first-ever 2+2 dialogue during which they signed the long-pending COMCASA agreement that would open the way for sales of more sensitive US military equipment to India.

[Indian govt lists \\$3 billion projects as Donald Trump mocks India's Afghanistan aid](#)

Jan 4, 2019, The Economic Times

India has asserted that its projects worth \$3b in Afghanistan speaks for itself and has regretted the ignorance of American officials after President Donald Trump mocked PM Narendra Modi over the utility of Delhi sponsored "library" in the landlocked country.

[President Trump's jibe at PM Modi was uncalled for](#)

Jan 4, 2019, The Times of India

US President Donald Trump's latest jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, trivialising India's contribution to Afghanistan and asking India to shoulder greater responsibility, was uncalled for.

[Striking US-Russia balance a key challenge for India this year](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Hindustan Times

Adroitly navigating an increasingly polarised world order and finalising key regional trade agreements with ASEAN and its partners, the European Union (EU) will be among key foreign policy challenges for India this year.

[India's border trade: Nepal tops the list, Bangladesh second, Pakistan even behind Bhutan](#)

Jan 2, 2019, Financial Express

The latest official data about India's border trade with her neighbours provides some interesting insight. It reveals that it is highly skewed in India's favour, and

also tells that bilateral relations matter more than the trade potential and connectivity.

[India to induct Russian S-400 missile systems from Oct 2020](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Times of India

India will induct the first squadron of the advanced S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missile systems from Oct. 2020 onwards.

Pakistan

[Four key steps that defined Pakistan's foreign policy in 2018](#)

Dec 31, 2018, ARY News

The country's relations with BJP's India are at a historic low whereas, in the west, the ties with Afghanistan are also marred by formidable challenges due to the neighbouring country's internal security situation. Relations with Iran, too, are not as good as they were in the past.

[Pakistan tells India 'any misadventure to meet a befitting response'](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The News

Pakistan, strongly condemning the Indian violations of sending spy drones across the Line of Control, saying any misadventure by India would be responded in a befitting manner.

[Imran Khan meets delegation of Turkey-Pakistan Business Council in Ankara](#)

Jan 4, 2019, DAWN

Prime Minister met with a delegation of the Turkey-Pakistan Business Council of the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey. While addressing the delegation, the premier said that Pakistan in the 1970s "went wrong because we had a socialist mindset which became a deterrent to wealth creation."

[Prime Minister Imran Khan invites Turkish investors to join CPEC](#)

Jan 4, 2019, The News

Prime Minister Imran Khan, who is on his first official two-day visit to Turkey, on Thursday said that it's time for Islamabad and Ankara to take their bilateral trade to a higher level, citing Pakistan's ideal geo-strategic location and its huge potential for investment in infrastructure and tourism.

[Pakistan hails Trump's desire for 'great ties'](#)

Jan 4, 2019, DAWN

The Foreign Office on Thursday welcomed US President Donald Trump's remarks on ties with Pakistan and said the government was keenly waiting for the engagement at the highest level.

[Trump-Imran summit on the cards amid Pakistan-US thaw](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Express Tribune

Pakistan and the United States are discussing a proposal about arranging the maiden meeting between Prime Minister Imran Khan and President Donald Trump, officials said on Thursday, hours after Trump said he was looking forward to meeting the Pakistani leadership.

[\\$2bn loan: China says will continue to help Pakistan](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The News

A Chinese foreign ministry's spokesperson Wednesday said China, through trade, investment, and all-round practical cooperation, would continue to provide assistance for the economic and social development of Pakistan.

[China building 'most advanced' naval warships for Pakistan: Report](#)

Jan 2, 2019, The News

China is building an export version of one of its 'advanced warships' and will deliver it to Pakistan as part of a major arms deal

[War on Terror: Pakistan only success story in world, says DG ISPR](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The News

DG Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Major General Asif Ghafoor has said that Pakistan is the only success story in the world in the war against terrorism.

Afghanistan

[UN statement on the new presidential election date in Afghanistan](#)

Jan 2, 2019, The Kabul Times

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) notes the announcement by Afghan electoral authorities for the presidential election to be held in July 2019 and welcomes the clarity in the electoral calendar.

[Afghanistan won't attend Jeddah conference unless granted 'strong guarantee'](#)

Jan 2, 2019, Afghanistan Times

The government says it will not attend the upcoming Jeddah conference in Saudi Arabia, demanding a "strong guarantee".

[Pakistan's FM in Qatar, disusing Afghan peace talks](#)

Dec 31, 2018, Afghanistan Times

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Sunday arrived in Qatar following his 4-nation visits, where he would discuss Afghan reconciliation process and other regional issues.

[Trump hasn't ordered Afghan troop withdrawal, says White House](#)

Dec 30, 2018, Afghanistan Times

Donald Trump hasn't ordered the Pentagon to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, a White House spokesman said, contradicting reports last week that he's directed the military to pull 7,000 soldiers out of a conflict he's long criticized.

[Germany may withdraw troops in Afghanistan if American leaves](#)

Dec 30, 2018, Afghanistan Times

Former German Defense Chief General Harald Kujat warned that a probable American military withdrawal from Afghanistan may jeopardize German troops and force them to leave.

[Economic Development & Security Should Top Afghan Government Agenda for the Year 2019](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Daily Outlook Afghanistan

Few days ago, in Abu Dhabi peace talks, the Taliban group refused to attend the negotiation table with representatives of the Afghan government. When the Security Council adviser returned from Dubai, he took a tougher stance against Taliban and its international supporters.

[Lack of Offensive War Strategy as the Main Cause of Taliban Advance](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Daily Outlook Afghanistan

According to a commentary published on the International Crisis Group on 28 December 2018, the world will witness 10 major conflicts.

Bangladesh

[Sheikh Hasina's fourth term](#)

Jan 4, 2019, The Daily Star

Bangladesh's opposition has rejected the "farcical" results of national elections won by the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, in a landslide victory that handed her ruling coalition 96% of the vote.

[Four takeaways from the 2018 election](#)

Jan 4, 2019, The Daily Star

The 11th parliamentary election of Bangladesh will go down in history as the election of simultaneously many firsts and many contrasts. Billed as the country's first "participatory" election in a decade, it gave the incumbent Awami League a landslide victory—and reduced its arch-rival BNP, once again, to irrelevance.

[JP decides to act as opposition in parliament: Ershad](#)

Jan 4, 2019, The Daily Star

Jatiya Party (JP) today decided that it would act as the main opposition party in the parliament with 22 lawmakers elected in the December 30 national election.

[Japanese firm to invest \\$10m in Meghna economic zone](#)

Jan 4, 2019, The Daily Star

Japanese Sakata Inx is set to invest \$10 million to establish a liquid ink manufacturing plant in the Meghna Industrial Economic Zone (MIEZ), a development that can reduce the country's import dependency of the product.

[EIU: Bangladesh to be second best performing economy in 2019](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Dhaka Tribune

Earlier in a country report on Bangladesh, published on December 4, the EIU stated that Bangladesh's growth from the fiscal year 2018-19 to 2022-23 will be driven mainly by strong increases in private consumption and gross fixed investment.

[The biggest security threats in 2019](#)

Jan3, 2019, Dhaka Tribune

With an ongoing trade war between the United States and China, Russian military posturing in Eastern Europe at its greatest since the Cold War and the most unpredictable US administration in living memory, 2019 may offer no shortage of strategic surprises. Here are some of the key areas to watch in the coming 12 months.

[What Bangladesh Pm Hasina's Victory Means For The India-China Power Play In South Asia](#)

Dec 31, 2018, South China Morning Post

The Awami League party led by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina predictably won the national election held on Sunday, giving the incumbent leader a record fourth term – and her third consecutive victory.

Nepal

[Indian lawmakers inquire about Nepal's decision to ban Indian bank notes](#)

Jan 4, 2019, Ekantipur

Lawmakers at Upper House of Indian parliament, Rajya Sabha, have expressed interests about the recent decision of Nepal government to ban the use of high denomination Indian currency notes in Nepal.

[Why it's difficult to call Prime Minister Oli's foreign policy "balanced"](#)

Dec 30, 2018, The Kathmandu Post

There is an unintended paradox in Nepal's basic position of equidistant foreign policy. Whatever Kathmandu's position on its relationships with our two neighbours, the interactions of those who live on our borders will remain constant.

[Prime Minister Oli promised to revise Nepal's foreign policy. But it's been more of the same.](#)

Dec 30, 2018, Kathmandu Post

Oli's rhetoric had been bombastic, promising a revision of Nepal's relations with its immediate neighbours India and China, along with the countries that receive Nepali labour and other important actors like the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union.

[Nepal, China witness significant development in ties](#)

Jan 1, 2019, Xinhua Net

Nepal and China have seen significant development in their age-old friendly cooperation in wide-ranging areas during the past year.

[China's BRI boosts Nepal's shift from land-locked to world-linked](#)

Jan 2, 2019, ECNS

At the first China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai in November, flocks of visitors and investors were intrigued by the exotic products showcased

in the Nepali pavilions, such as metal crafts, pashmina, ceramics and Buddhist statues.

Bhutan

[India to provide low-interest loans to Bhutan](#)

Dec 28, 2018, NHK

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced his country will provide more than 640 million dollars in low-interest loans to Bhutan over a five-year period.

[India To Contribute Rs. 4,500 Crore to Bhutan For 12th Five-year Plan](#)

Dec 28, 2018, Republic

Stating that India will always play the role of a trusted friend and partner, the Prime Minister said that the contribution will conform to the needs and priorities of Bhutan

Sri Lanka

[Draft of new constitution to be presented to Constitutional Assembly next week](#)

Jan 4, 2019, Daily Mirror

The draft of the new constitution is to be presented to the Constitutional Assembly headed by Speaker Karu Jayasuriya next week, top government sources said.

[JICA to provide US\\$ 1850 million loan to construct Light Rail Transit system in Sri Lanka](#)

Jan 4, 2019, Sunday Times

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will provide Sri Lanka a US\$ 1850 million loan to construct a Light Rail Transit (LRT) system which is expected to be constructed this year.

[The concept of Governance in Sri Lankan context](#)

Jan 4, 2019, Daily News

Defining the term and principles of Good Governance is controversial. The term Good Governance or Yahapalanaya in Sinhala primarily emerged into Sri Lankan political arena following the 2010 Presidential Election. The term Good Governance was then used to condemn the undemocratic practices of the former regime. The opposition parties and civil society organisations urged the

government to ensure Good Governance for the betterment of the country and its citizens.

[A balancing act: Can Sri Lanka overcome regional income inequalities?](#)

Jan 4, 2019, Daily News

Although Sri Lanka has managed to reduce income poverty from 26.1 per cent in 1990/91 to 4.1 percent by 2016, income inequality has remained unchanged for more than four decades. The richest 20 per cent enjoy more than half the total household income of the country, while the poorest 20 per cent get only 5 per cent.

[Anchoring Sri Lanka in the world](#)

Jan 1, 2019, Daily News

Sri Lanka, the pearl of the Indian Ocean, situated midway between East and West has a strategic significance which far outweighs its small size.

[Were Local Politics or Geopolitical Rivalries Behind Sri Lanka's Recent Coup Crisis?](#)

Dec 28, 2018, WPR

Sri Lanka recently emerged from a dangerous political crisis with its democracy and constitution miraculously intact. President Maithripala Sirisena's attempted coup, in which he violated the constitution by replacing Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe with his bitter rival and presidential predecessor, Mahinda Rajapaksa, was overturned thanks to Sri Lanka's defiant Parliament, steadfast judiciary, a vigilant international community and a resilient civil society.

Maldives

[India, Maldives look to put ties back on track](#)

Dec 28, 2018, Maldives Times

Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's recent visit to India, his first foreign tour after assuming power, was aimed at giving a new lease of life to bilateral ties, which had nosedived during the reign of his China-backed predecessor, Abdulla Yameen. The development augurs well for the stalled India-funded projects in the tropical nation.

[Maldives begins re-operating India-gifted helicopters](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Raaje.mv

Maldives new government has begun reusing the two helicopters gifted by the Indian government, after a long hiatus during the former administration.

[Interview: New Maldivian gov't to strengthen ties with China: Maldivian FM](#)

Dec 27, 2018, Xinhua Net

The Maldives' new government is looking forward to strengthening ties with China, Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid told Xinhua on Thursday.

[New Ambassador of Japan pays courtesy call on Foreign Minister](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Edition

The new Ambassador of Japan to Maldives, Keiko Yanai, paid a courtesy call on Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulla Shahid. During the meeting, which took place shortly after Yanai presented her credentials to President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, Foreign Minister Shahid assured the full support of the administration in discharging the new ambassador's duties.

East & South East Asia

China

[Chinese president's special envoy attends inauguration of Brazilian president](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Global Times

Chinese President Xi Jinping's special envoy Ji Bingxuan attended the inauguration ceremony of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro here Tuesday.

[Next 3 years crucial to assure S.China Sea no longer a sea of troubles](#)

Jan 2, 2019, Global Times

The year of 2019 will be a crucial time for China and ASEAN members to work out a foundation to deliver tangible results for negotiations on the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea so that the hard-won tranquility will stay for good in the region and there will be more ecological and economic cooperation.

[China opposes new US act promoting high-level Taiwan exchange](#)

Jan 2, 2019, Global Times

Lu Kang, spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made the remarks at a routine press conference on Wednesday, following the signing into law of the US "Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018."

[China Focus: 40 years on, cooperation remains pillar of Sino-US relations](#)

Jan 1, 2019, Global Times

Forty years ago this month, 3,000 cases of Coca-Cola arrived in Beijing and Guangzhou from Hong Kong by train, marking a long-awaited return of the iconic US beverage to the Chinese mainland.

[Nepal-China economic ties reach new height under Belt and Road Initiative in 2018](#)

Jan 1, 2019, Global Times

The economic and trade relations between Nepal and China have seen continued growth in 2018 as China remained as the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI), second largest source of the tourists and trading partner.

[China, US can avoid 'another Cold War'](#)

Jan 1, 2019, Global Times

The China-US relationship, though it is impossible to go back to what it was 40 years ago due to the drastic change in overall strengths between the two, can still progress and avoid worsening into a "modern Cold War," Chinese experts said on

Tuesday, which marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of China-US diplomatic relations.

[China-Africa cooperation to accelerate with FM's new year visit](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Global Times

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is in Africa on a visit on Jan. 2-6, continuing a 29-year tradition of making Africa the first international trip by him and his predecessors in a new year.

[Sharing opportunities, enhancing cooperation top on China's 2019 diplomatic agenda](#)

Jan 2, 2019, Global Times

Sharing development opportunities and deepening cooperation in a bid to enhance global stability and governance are expected to feature in China's diplomatic agenda in the year to come.

[Japan-China ties to usher in new era in 2019: Japanese PM](#)

Jan 2, 2019, Xinhua

Japan will ushering in a new era in its ties with China in the new year among others, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said in his New Year speech on Tuesday.

[Xi, Trump exchange congratulations over 40th anniversary of China-U.S. diplomatic ties](#)

Jan 1, 2019, Xinhua

Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday exchanged congratulations on the 40th anniversary of the establishment of China-U.S. diplomatic relations.

[Highlights of "Xiplomacy" in 2018](#)

Dec 31, 2018, Xinhua

Over the past year, China's diplomacy has opened new prospects and achieved new progress under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core. Here are some of the highlights of "Xiplomacy" in 2018.

[Xi, Trump have telephone conversation, agree to implement consensus in Argentina meeting](#)

Dec 30, 2018, Xinhua

Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday held a telephone conversation, expressing their willingness to push for implementation of their agreements reached during the G-20 summit in Argentina.

Japan

[Eyeing China, U.S. to hold missile drill in Okinawa: report](#)

Jan 2, 2019, The Japan Times

The U.S. military will conduct this year its first ever missile drill around Okinawa, according to a report Thursday, as Washington seeks to counter an increasingly assertive China.

[2019 to test Abe and Japanese diplomats over efforts to secure return of Russian-held isles](#)

Jan 2, 2019, The Japan Times

2019 will be a big year for Japanese diplomats and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, with a number of major events that will be attended by hundreds of top leaders and VIPs from across the globe.

[In New Year's statement, Abe vows to step up peace treaty talks with Russia in 2019](#)

Jan 2, 2019, The Japan Times

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Tuesday pledged to step up talks with Russia to conclude a postwar peace treaty, among other major diplomatic challenges this year.

[New era name to be revealed April 1, month before enthronement](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Asahi Shimbun

Putting convenience over tradition, the government plans to announce the new "gengo," or era name, on April 1, a month before the enthronement of the new emperor.

[S. Korean plaintiffs seek Nippon Steel asset seizure in wartime labor case](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Yomiuri Shimbun

Lawyers for South Korean plaintiffs in a wartime requisitioned labor case said Wednesday that they had initiated procedures to seize assets of Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corp. held in South Korea.

[Seoul wants apology for low flight in radar incident](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Yomiuri Shimbun

The South Korean National Defense Ministry demanded Wednesday that Japan apologize for what it claims was a flight at a threateningly low altitude by a Japanese patrol plane around a South Korean warship last month.

[Mattis leaves Pentagon with message to 'keep faith'](#)

Jan 2, 2019, The Yomiuri Shimbun

Jim Mattis ended one of history's more turbulent tenures as U.S. defense secretary on Monday by reemphasizing a key difference with President Donald Trump and encouraging Pentagon employees, civilian and military, to "hold fast" in safeguarding the nation.

[Tokyo-Seoul ties worsen 3 years after agreement](#)

Dec 29, 2018, The Yomiuri Shimbun

Relations between Japan and South Korea are worsening, rather than improving, three years after the two governments reached a milestone agreement to resolve their dispute over wartime comfort women.

[Fewer in U.S. see need for security treaty with Japan](#)

Dec 29, 2018, The Yomiuri Shimbun

A survey by the Foreign Ministry showed Friday that 68 percent of Americans thought that the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty should be maintained, down drastically from the previous year's 82 percent.

South Korea

[Korea, Japan urged to form foundation for slave workers](#)

Dec 29, 2018, The Korea Times

South Korean and Japanese experts urged the two countries' governments and firms to form a joint foundation that could resolve legal disputes over the compensation of South Korean citizens who were victims of forced labor during the 1910-45 Japanese occupation. Diplomatic tensions between the two countries are escalating surrounding the matter with no signs of improvement.

[Korea continues to demand Japan's apology over radar row](#)

Jan 2, 2019, The Korea Herald

Seoul's defense ministry on Wednesday continued to express regrets over Tokyo's claim that a South Korean naval destroyer targeted a Japanese warplane with fire-

control radar last month, and urged Japan to make an apology for making threatening moves against the vessel.

[NK leader talks of denuclearization, economic development in New Year address](#)

Jan 2, 2019, The Korea Herald

The North Korean leader on Tuesday reiterated his determination to achieve complete denuclearization and also called for economic development in his annual New Year's address, stressing the need to strengthen the North's defense.

[Wang Yi voices support for progress in inter-Korean ties, calls](#)

Dec 30, 2018, The Korea Herald

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has expressed his support for the recent progress in inter-Korean relations, and urged North Korea and the United States to swiftly enforce the agreement reached at the June summit.

[US suggests one-year defense cost-sharing agreement with S. Korea](#)

Dec 30, 2018, The Korea Herald

Defense cost-sharing negotiations between Seoul and Washington appear likely to remain tense following an unexpected suggestion from the US that the two sides sign a one-year agreement.

[2018 opened era of detente on Korean Peninsula](#)

Dec 31, 2018, The Korea Herald

The year 2018 marked the beginning of a detente and peace-building on the Korean Peninsula, with the two Koreas seeking to improve ties and North Korea engaging the US in negotiating away its nuclear weapons program.

Southeast Asia

[China envoy hails Mahathir's comments on reviving East Coast Rail Link project](#)

Jan 4, 2019, The Straits Times

China remains optimistic about the revival of the shelved East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project and is hoping for a win-win situation that will benefit both sides, the country's envoy said.

[Mahathir: I am not pro-Japan and anti-China, I am China's good friend](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Straits Times

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has been labelled as "pro-Japan, anti-China" after several mega projects with China were either cancelled or reviewed when PakatanHarapan (PH) took over as the ruling government.

[Tough talks ahead on South China Sea code of conduct as Vietnam seeks to curb China's actions](#)

Dec 31, 2018, The Straits Times

Tough negotiations lie ahead over a new pact between China and South-east Asian nations aimed at easing tensions in the South China Sea, as Vietnam pushes for provisions likely to prove unpalatable to Beijing, documents reviewed by Reuters suggest.

[Future of Malaysia's China-backed East Coast Rail Link hinges on elusive report](#)

Jan 3, 2019, South China Morning Post

Beijing and Kuala Lumpur on Thursday sought to depoliticise the debate over a stalled China-backed megaproject in Malaysia, saying that negotiations on how to move forward would be left to contractors from both sides.

[For China, Asean is far more important than a mere 'talking shop'](#)

Jan 3, 2019, South China Morning Post

Back in 2016, the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Asean-China dialogue relations was so low key that it barely featured in either side's media. In 2018, upon the 15th anniversary of the Asean-China strategic partnership, their joint announcement of a 2030 partnership vision showed how keen diplomatic establishments on both sides were to inject new momentum.

[New year, new repression: Vietnam imposes draconian 'China-like' cybersecurity law](#)

Jan 1, 2019, South China Morning Post

A law requiring internet companies in Vietnam to remove content communist authorities dislike came into effect on Tuesday, in a move critics called "a totalitarian model of information control".

[South China Sea stand-off: Vietnam takes hard line while negotiating code of conduct but will Beijing listen?](#)

Dec 31, 2018, South China Morning Post

Tough negotiations lie ahead over a new pact between China and Southeast Asian nations aimed at easing tensions in the South China Sea, as Vietnam pushes for provisions likely to prove unpalatable to Beijing, according to draft documents for a new code of conduct.

Central & West Asia

[India and the Evolving Geopolitics of the Middle East](#)

Dec 31, 2018, The Diplomat

India's "Link West" policy has seen both continuity and change.

[Iran, India talk over banking mechanism for future deals](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Azer News

The governor of the Iran's Central Bank (CBI) and the Indian Ambassador to Iran, in an assessment of the latest state of banking and trade relations between the two countries, announced the preparation of a financial mechanism between the two countries.

[Integration without liberation in Central Asia](#)

Dec 29, 2018, East Asia Forum

Twenty-seven years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the prospects for Central Asian integration finally look brighter. This development comes amid political and economic liberalisation in Uzbekistan, hardening authoritarianism elsewhere in the region, widespread economic distress and China's growing influence – the five major trends that marked Central Asia in 2018.

[Kazakhstan: Foreign Ministry will coordinate investment attraction, export promotion](#)

Dec 31, 2018, Times of Central Asia

The newly-appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Beibut Atamkulov commented on new functions of his ministry with regard to attraction of foreign investment and promotion of products of Kazakhstani enterprises in foreign markets in accordance with the instructions of the head of state regarding the economization of the foreign policy of Kazakhstan, the Foreign Ministry reported on its website.

[Uzbekistan diplomats tasked to attract foreign investment, promote export, lure tourists](#)

Dec 28, 2018, Times of Central Asia

The head of state needs to pay great attention to the effectiveness of foreign economic work of Uzbek diplomatic missions abroad.

[Turkish FM pays 76 diplomatic visits in 2018](#)

Jan 1, 2019, Anadolu Agency

Turkey has continued to support trilateral coordination mechanisms established to increase confidence among regional countries such as Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan, Turkey-Bosnia-Herzegovina-Serbia, Turkey-Bosnia-Herzegovina-Croatia, Turkey-Azerbaijan-Iran, Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia, Turkey-Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan and Turkey-Azerbaijan-Pakistan.

[Experts Warn Gulf Rift Widening as Qatar Quits OPEC](#)

Jan 2, 2019, VOA News

Qatar's official withdrawal from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) this week has renewed debate over the rift with its neighbor Saudi Arabia, with some observers saying the move could further complicate the relationship between the two Gulf countries.

[US intensifies bombing in Syria after Trump announced withdrawal](#)

Jan 4, 2019, Al Jazeera

US military escalates bombardment of ISIL-held areas in eastern Syria after President Trump announced troop pull-out.

[UAE 'reopens' Syria embassy shut in 2011](#)

Dec 28, 2018, Arab Times

The United Arab Emirates reopened its embassy in Syria's capital on Thursday for the first time in seven years, a reflection of improved relations between President Bashar Assad and some of his Arab foes as the war winds down.

[Eyeing end of war and Iran, Arab states move to reconcile with Syria](#)

Jan 01, 2019, DW

Syria enters 2019 with all signs pointing to it being reaccepted into the Arab fold. The diplomatic shift is a recognition that the war has been won and Arab states need to exert influence in a post-conflict Syria.

[Saudi King Shakes Up Cabinet, Keeping Power in Son's Hands](#)

Dec 27, 2018, New York Times

King Salman of Saudi Arabia shook up the kingdom's cabinet on Thursday, naming new ministers and security chiefs but keeping the levers of power firmly in the hands of his son and designated heir, Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

United States

[US warns travelers of China's 'coercive' use of exit bans](#)

Jan 4, 2019, CNN

The US Department of State is urging those traveling to China to "exercise increased caution," warning that US citizens could be prevented from leaving China due to its "coercive" use of exit bans.

[North Korea warns US to stop 'meddling' in its affairs with South Korea](#)

Jan 4, 2019, USA Today

North Korea sent a warning to the U.S. on Thursday to avoid "meddling" in its affairs with South Korea and criticized Washington's "unreasonable attitude" and "hostile" policies.

[Trump Administration Offers Turkey Patriot Missiles So It Won't Buy Weapons System From Russia: Reports](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Newsweek

The United States has offered to sell its NATO ally Turkey a \$3.5 billion Patriot missile defense system as an incentive for the country not to buy an anti-aircraft missile system from Russia, according to Turkish state media.

[Pakistan houses enemies: Donald Trump](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Economic Times

The US wants a "great relationship" with Pakistan but cannot do so as the country "houses enemies", President Donald Trump has said in his first comments in 2019 on America's strained ties with Islamabad, months after he stopped USD 1.3 billion in military aid to its former ally.

[US House passes Bills that would end government shutdown, without wall funds](#)

Jan 4, 2019, The Straits Times

The United States House of Representatives, where Democrats now hold a majority, approved legislation to end a partial government shutdown that began nearly two weeks ago at several federal agencies, and to fund the Department of Homeland Security through Feb 8.

[Time for a new Trump game plan: Kennedy](#)

Jan 4, 2019, Fox Business

If the President adopts a more focused and Libertarian agenda he's more likely to cobble together interesting coalitions out of the chaos. There are massive chasms

in both parties ripe for exploitation, and the President can use the big criminal justice reform win as a map for unearthing more legislative gold.

[The trade war is already over](#)

Jan 2, 2019, Politico

The Chinese and U.S. economies are likely to slow in 2019, giving President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping no choice but to declare a truce in their ferocious trade battle, according to a top Wall Street strategist.

Europe & Russia

[UK to Establish New Overseas Military Bases After Brexit – Report](#)

Dec 30, 2018, Sputnik News

Currently Britain has several overseas military bases, including bases on Cyprus, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar and the Indian Ocean, but is reportedly planning to expand its global military presence.

[Ireland to Seek Emergency Aid From EU in Case of 'No-Deal' Brexit - Reports](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Sputnik News

The Irish government will seek hundreds of millions of euros in special aid from the European Union if the United Kingdom withdraws from the block without a deal.

[Ukrainian President Signs Law Expanding Control in Black Sea After Kerch Row](#)

Dec 30, 2018, Sputnik News

The adoption of the law comes a month after a provocation by Ukrainian Navy ships in the Kerch Strait and violation of the Russian maritime border. Following the incident, Ukraine's president introduced martial law in several regions of the country and the coast of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, but was terminated earlier this week.

[European Commission Head Juncker Slams Romania as Unfit for EU Presidency](#)

Dec 29, 2018, Sputnik News

The Eastern European nation, struggling to comply with the bloc's rule of law and its standards since joining the union in 2007, is to take over the rotating EU presidency on 1 January for the next 6 months, encompassing the unprecedented Brexit and the European Parliament elections.

[Romania Lashes Out at EU Over 'Second-Rate' Treatment](#)

Jan 1, 2019, Sputnik News

Political divisions and rifts are becoming more acute as Romania prepares to take over the EU presidency.

[Italian government gets 2019 budget through parliament](#)

Dec 30, 2018, Euro News

The Italian government has obtained parliamentary approval for its 2019 budget, winning the vote handily in the afterglow of Saturday night's confidence vote win.

[Macron Told Putin Coalition to Continue Fighting Terror in Syria - Elysee Palace](#)

Jan 2, 2019, Sputnik News

French President Emmanuel Macron said in a phone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin that the fight against terrorism in Syria was not over yet and would be continued within the framework of the US-led coalition, according to the Elysee Palace.

[Russia widens ban on Ukrainian products due to 'unfriendly acts by Kiev'](#)

Dec 30, 2018, Euro News

Russia has banned chocolate, beer and nappies made in Ukraine, in its latest economic sanctions on Kiev. Ukrainian wheat, sunflower oil, bread, jam and wine were also barred, the Russian government announced.

[Russia arrests American citizen on suspicion of spying](#)

Dec 31, 2018, The Washington Post

The U.S. State Department said it has been notified by the Russian Foreign Ministry of an American citizen's detention but could not confirm the name or provide more details, citing privacy considerations.

[In holiday message, Putin says Russia 'open to dialogue' with US](#)

Dec 30, 2018, CNN

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Russia was "open to dialogue" with the US in a holiday message to President Donald Trump.

[Vladimir Putin seeks to gain influence in 2019 with new nuclear weapon, experts warn](#)

Dec 31, 2018, Associated Press (via news.com.au)

As tensions mount, Russian officials boasted that the country's new strategic weapon has rendered any missile defences useless. The Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle, Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov told Russian state television, flies 27 times faster than the speed of sound, making it impossible to intercept. The new weapon "essentially makes missile defences useless," he said.

Africa & Latin America

[China-Latin America cooperation conducive to own, common interests: spokesperson](#)

Jan 1, 2019, Xinhua Net

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang on Thursday said the cooperation between China and Latin American nations including Brazil serve not only the interests of their own but also the common interests of China and Latin America.

[Bolsonaro says open to US military base in Brazil](#)

Jan 4, 2019, France 24

Brazil's new President Jair Bolsonaro said that he would be open to the possibility of the United States operating a military base on his country's soil, a move that would form a sharp shift in direction for Brazilian foreign policy.

[Brazil wants to move embassy to Jerusalem, push reform at WTO](#)

Jan 4, 2019, Middle East Monitor

The national security adviser to Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said that the leader wants to move Brazil's embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, but that logistical considerations were standing in the way, Reuters reports.

[Venezuela Oil Exports Slump to 28-Year Low](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Rigzone

Venezuela, once Latin America's largest oil exporter, ended 2018 with a whimper as overseas sales dropped to the lowest in nearly three decades.

[Venezuela's Hyperinflation Hits 80,000% Per Year in 2018](#)

Jan 1, 2019, Forbes

An important element that mirrors the economy's collapse is Venezuela's currency, the bolivar. It is not trustworthy. Venezuela's exchange rate regime provides no discipline. It only produces instability, poverty, and the world's highest inflation rate for 2018. Indeed, Venezuela's annual inflation rate at the end of 2018 was 80,000%.

[Mexico Demands US Investigate Use of Force Against Migrants](#)

Jan 3, 2019, VOA

Mexico has formally asked the United States for an "an exhaustive investigation" into a Jan. 1 incident in which U.S. agents fired non-lethal weapons into Mexico to stop migrants from breaching the border.

[Both BRICS and MERCOSUR groupings will remain on track, says Brazilian envoy Andre Aranha Correa da Lago](#)

Jan 3, 2019, Financial Express

Since the time President Jair Bolsonaro was elected as the new President of Brazil, there have been concerns related to BRICS as well as MERCOSUR. And how important will India be in the foreign policy of that country.

[NAM reaffirms the cooperation of African Union with United Nation in Peacekeeping](#)

Jan 2, 2019, New Delhi Times

NAM Member States, which are also AU Members have stressed the need for increasing cooperation between UN and AU. These views were reiterated at the UN Security Council Meeting held on 20 November 2018.

[Sudan Seeks Foreign Help on Economy as Protests Rage](#)

Jan 2, 2019, Bloomberg

Sudan's central bank governor said the country is seeking funding from unidentified nations to ease its economic crisis, as protests continue against President Omar al-Bashir's three-decade rule.

[Burundi calls for special summit over Rwanda row](#)

Dec 30, 2018, Daily Nation

President Pierre Nkurunziza has asked the East African Community leadership to urgently convene an extraordinary summit to address the differences between Burundi and Rwanda.

[Somalia expels top UN official over 'interference with internal affairs](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Guardian

Somalia has asked the UN secretary general's special envoy to leave the country "as soon as possible" after accusing him of "interfering with the country's internal affairs".

[Egypt's Sinai crisis](#)

Jan 3, 2019, The Hindu Business Line

In a slew of attacks that have become commonplace in Egypt and increasingly daring and dastardly in their manner, just last week saw a frontal attack on the tourism industry in this nation.

[Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda currencies seen weakening next week](#)

Jan 4, 2019, Standard

The Kenyan shilling is expected to be under pressure against the dollar due to demand from oil and merchant importers as business activity resumes after the holiday season, traders said.



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