ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is among India’s oldest think tanks with its primary focus on strategic and international issues of critical national interest. DPG is a non-partisan institution and is independently funded by a non-profit Trust. Over past decades, DPG has established itself in both domestic and international circles and is widely recognised today among the top security think tanks of India and of Asia’s major powers.

Since 2016, in keeping with India’s increasing global profile, DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India’s regional and global role and its policies in the Indo-Pacific. In a realist environment, DPG remains mindful of the need to align India’s ambitions with matching strategies and capabilities, from diplomatic initiatives to security policy and military modernisation.

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South Asia

India

Indian Navy’s New ALH Mk-III Helicopters Ready For Anti-Submarine Warfare With Indigenous Technology – Reports

May 11, 2021, The Eurasian Times

Some of the Indian Navy’s advanced light helicopters (ALH) Mk-III will be equipped with an indigenous low-frequency dunking sonar, capable of conducting anti-submarine warfare, reports suggest.

India’s real foreign policy crisis is domestic

May 11, 2021, Hindustan Times

From January to March, “Vaccine Maitri”. In late-April, an appeal to the world for help as India struggles to manage its most serious crisis since Independence. New Delhi’s international position may have never turned more dramatically. But here is the key question — what is the larger impact of the unfolding disaster on foreign policy?

Exclusive: After hiking prices, China now sending sub-standard oxygen concentrators to India

May 14, 2021, India Today

It is a matter of life and death, but China is choosing to make profits at the cost of people’s lives. Not only have Chinese companies indulged in surge pricing with an increase in demand, they are now sending sub-standard Covid-19 related critical equipment to India.

Can India and the EU operationalise their natural partnership?

May 2, 2021, Hindustan Times

It has been a long road from the first European Union (EU)-India Summit in 2000 to the virtual India-EU leaders meeting in 2021, which saw Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi interacting with the 27 EU leaders as well as presidents of the European Council and the European Commission last week. The optics could not have been better. This was a special privilege accorded to the Indian PM to underline a new sense of urgency in the EU to get its India policy right. From New Delhi’s perspective, this is also an inflection point in the way it is thinking about its foreign policy priorities; a renewed momentum in India-EU ties is the need of the hour.

Pakistan

Pakistan exports to US increase 29pc to $4.1bln in July-April

May 12, 2021, The News

Pakistan’s exports to the US increased 29 percent to $4.1 billion in the first 10 months of the current fiscal year. Europe is still the biggest export destination for Pakistan. The country
exported $519 million of goods and services to Eastern Europe, $1.98 billion to Northern Europe, $1.4 billion to Southern Europe, and $2.81 billion to Western Europe in the July-March period, according to the central bank’s latest data.

**Tarbela 5th extension work to start in July**

May 12, 2021, The News

The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) will start work on 1,530MW Tarbela 5th Extension project from July 2021, as mobilisation of the contractor is being ensured in a phased manner.

**First shipment from Uzbekistan reaches Pakistan**

May 13, 2021, The News

The first-ever shipment from Uzbekistan under the convention on the international transport of goods for traffic-in-transit across the border has reached Pakistan. On May 11, a cargo vehicle with Uzbek licence plates crossed the Afghan transit route in two days and reached the Torkham checkpoint in Peshawar, according to the ministry of commerce.

**Pakistan to get Rs75.5 bn from Saudi Development Fund**

May 9, 2021, The News

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has committed to provide $500 million (Rs 75.50 billion) to Pakistan from the Saudi Development Fund for development of infrastructure, water resources and hydropower projects in Pakistan. During the Prime Minister Imran Khan’s visit to Riyadh both sides also announced the establishment of Saudi-Pakistan Supreme Coordination Council, which includes areas of political/security, economic and cultural/social.

**Pakistan, S Arabia to bolster strategic ties**

May 8, 2021, The Express Tribune

Prime Minister Imran Khan and Crown Prince His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman have affirmed their commitment to fortify the 'upward trajectory' in Pakistan - Saudi Arabia bilateral relations, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in a statement issued on May 8. The prime minister met the crown prince in Jeddah and held wide-ranging talks on bilateral, regional and international issues. "The talks were marked by exceptional cordiality and a commitment to fortify the upward trajectory in the bilateral relationship." The two sides also agreed upon further deepening cooperation in all fields.

**China reluctant to approve $6b ML-I loan**

May 8, 2021, The Express Tribune

Expressing concern over Pakistan’s growing debt, China has shown reluctance to approve $6 billion loan for the Mainline-I (ML-I) railway track -- the single largest project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The construction of ML-I project in three phases had been approved by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) in its meeting held in August last year. The actual cost of the project was $9bn initially, including equity amount of the government of Pakistan. But later, it was reduced gradually to $6.8bn.
Pakistan Navy participates in exercises with US, Canada

May 10, 2021, Dawn

A Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) Saif participated in the focused operation Chinook Archer along with ships and aircraft of the United States and Canada in Arabian Sea. Under the realm of the focused operation, PNS Saif participated in the passage exercise with the US naval ship USS Laboon and Canadian ship HMCS Calgary.

Afghanistan

Pakistan: No More Military Bases for US Afghan Mission

May 11, 2021, VOA

Pakistan ruled out the possibility of again providing its military bases to the United States for future counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan after U.S. troops leave the conflict-torn neighbor by September 11. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi made the remarks to reporters in Islamabad, explaining that his government has adopted a policy that allows it to become "only partners in peace" and not join any future U.S. war.

Afghans mark Eid as ceasefire pauses deadly violence

May 12, 2021, Mail Online

A three-day ceasefire agreed by the warring Taliban and Afghan government came into force on May 13 as the country celebrated Eid al-Fitr after weeks of deadly violence. Proposed by the militants and matched by President Ashraf Ghani, the truce offered respite for Afghans as they mark the Muslim festival with friends and family.

US, UK working on Pakistan-Afghanistan security agreement: Khalilzad

May 13, 2021, Daily Times

US Special Representative for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad says the United States and the United Kingdom are making efforts for "improving security cooperation" between Pakistan and Afghanistan that could lead to signing of an agreement.

As US pulls out of Afghanistan, China sees opportunities -- and potential for chaos

May 14, 2021, CNN

China is conflicted about Afghanistan. Speaking at a forum of Central Asian leaders this week, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Beijing supports the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and stands ready to play a role in promoting future "stability and development." Days earlier, however, a spokeswoman for China's foreign ministry had criticized the "recent abrupt US announcement of complete withdrawal of forces," saying this had "led to a succession of explosive attacks throughout the country, worsening the security situation and threatening peace and stability as well as people's life and safety."

Bombing Outside Afghan School Kills at Least 50, With Girls as Targets

Powerful explosions outside a high school in Afghanistan’s capital on May 8 killed at least 50 people and wounded scores more, many of them teenage girls leaving class, in a gruesome attack that underscored fears about the nation’s future after the impending American troop withdrawal.

Bangladesh

China may have warned Bangladesh against joining Quad, but nobody has invited Dhaka yet

May 12, 2021, The Print

China may be against Bangladesh joining the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, popularly known as the Quad, but none of the countries that are part of the grouping — India, the US, Japan and Australia — have invited Dhaka to join it so far.

US Took Note of China’s Warning To Bangladesh Against Quad: Official

May 12, 2021, NDTV

The US has taken note of a Chinese diplomat’s statement warning Bangladesh against joining the Quad, the informal grouping of Australia, India, Japan and America to coordinate in the Indo-Pacific region, a top State Department official has said.

Bangladesh surprised over Chinese envoy's comments on Quad

May 11, 2021, The Economic Times

Bangladesh is surprised and shocked over Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming remarks that Bangladesh should not join the "Quad" and that Bangladesh's relations with China will "substantially be damaged" if it joins it.

Bhutan

China setting up villages in Bhutan to gain military advantage over India: Report

May 10, 2021, Money Control

As part of a major construction drive by Chinese President Xi Jinping since 2017, Beijing has been creating multilevel construction in the territory internationally and historically understood as Bhutanese since 2015.

Nepal

Explained: What next for K P Oli and Nepal

May 12, 2021, The Indian Express

Nepal Prime Minister K P Oli lost a vote of confidence in Parliament, leaving the country’s politics in uncertainty.
Oli sworn in as prime minister

May 15, 2021, The Himalayan Times

President Bidhya Devi Bhandari administered the oath of office and secrecy to KP Sharma Oli for his third term as prime minister. On May 14, President Bhandari had appointed Oli as the new prime minister as per Article 76 (3) of the constitution that provisions formation of a government by the largest party in the Parliament.

China senses opportunity in Nepal's devastating COVID-19 wave

May 12, 2021, WION

Nepal has sent out an SOS call. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has appealed for help through a newspaper writeup as his country witnesses a surge in COVID-19 cases. The prime minister wrote an opinion piece for a British daily and said that Nepal is being overwhelmed by Covid.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka’s foreign policy: From non-alignment to non-directional

May 8, 2021, Daily FT

Sri Lanka’s foreign policy has traditionally been one of “learn and adapt,” having never inherited a fully-functioning Foreign Office at the time of Independence. Sri Lanka (or Ceylon as it was then known) was reliant on the British and the Commonwealth for exposure to foreign states. This is in stark contrast for the island nation who had a long history of playing an integral role in the trade route between China (and Asia) and the Middle East and Europe.
**East & South East Asia**

**China**

*Trade between China and Russia returns to positive growth: MOFCOM*

May 13, 2021, Global Times

Bilateral trade between China and Russia has returned to positive growth, Gao Feng, spokesperson of Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said.

*Japan’s China policy needs to update with the times*

May 13, 2021, Global Times

Japan has recently changed course. Regardless of the fact that China-Japan relations had entered a phase of normalization and there was a momentum for the two countries to jointly promote regional cooperation in Northeast Asia into a new level, Tokyo has continuously hyped the "China threat" theory along with the US and some other Western countries.

*Can US sustain hegemony in Western Pacific?*

May 13, 2021, Global Times

Recently, two renowned strategists sounded the alarm bell about the US strategy toward China. Retired US diplomat Chas W. Freeman, Jr. wrote in the East Asia Forum that "Washington is playing a losing game with China." He believes US policies toward China, including launching a trade war, trying to crippling China with an escalating campaign of "maximum pressure," and "seeking to contain it" militarily will prove self-defeating.

*Nepali import of medical equipment from China surges amid COVID-19*

May 14, 2021, Xinhua

Driven by the COVID-19 epidemic, Nepal's import of medical equipment from China more than doubled during the first three quarters of the current 2020-21 fiscal year ending mid-July on a year-on-year basis, showed data released by the country's central bank.

*Xi convenes symposium on follow-up development of China's mega water diversion project*

May 14, 2021, Xinhua

President Xi Jinping conveyed a symposium on advancing the high-quality follow-up development of China's mega water diversion project.

*US goods exports to China rebound*

May 14, 2021, China Daily

US goods exports to China rebounded strongly in 2020 — growing by nearly 18 percent — propelled by the Asian country's market openings, tariff exclusions and early recovery from the
pandemic, the US-China Business Council said.

FDI set to expand at a strong pace

May 14, 2021, China Daily

Foreign direct investment in China is expected to grow at a strong pace this year, thanks to the country's moves to further expand its domestic market and the robust growth of its services sector, said officials and business leaders.

The Long Arm of the Strongman

May 12, 2021, Foreign Affairs

Democracies have struggled and autocracies have grown in strength in the past decade and a half. During this period, dictatorships have intensified and modernized their systems of repression. Governments in virtually every region, many ostensible democracies among them, have become more illiberal or authoritarian. Two major powers in particular, China and Russia, have led the way in tightening control domestically, adapting their techniques for the digital era, and exerting greater influence abroad with the aim of making the world safer for autocracy.

Xi Jinping’s Achilles Heel


Though the population grew a little last year—to 1.412 billion in 2020 from 1.4 billion—the more salient fact is that its population continues to gray as Chinese women are having fewer babies. The proportion of people 60 or older increased to 18.7% of the population (from 13.3% in 2010), even as it recorded the lowest number of annual births (12 million) since 1961.

Mosques disappear as China strives to ‘build a beautiful Xinjiang’

May 14, 2021, Reuters

The Jiaman mosque in the city of Qira, in the far western Chinese region of Xinjiang, is hidden behind high walls and Communist Party propaganda signs, leaving passersby with no indication that it is home to a religious site.

Japan

Japan, UNDP Join Hands To Boost Oxygen Supply In Northeast India

May 11, 2021, OMMCOMM news

As the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to spread virulently in India, the government of Japan and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) have partnered to provide oxygen generation plants to northeastern states of India.

Japanese PM Suga Talks Maritime Security With Vietnam’s President

May 12, 2021, The Diplomat
The conversation once again hints at the overlapping strategic and economic interests between the two nations.

Japan to ban re-entry of foreign residents who visit India, Nepal and Pakistan

May 13, 2021, The Japan Times

The government will ban foreign nationals, including those who are Japan residents, from re-entering the country starting if they have recently spent time in India, Nepal or Pakistan — where a new variant of the coronavirus is rampant — although some foreign nationals who left prior to the ban will be able to return.

Japan military drills with US, France are 'waste of fuel': China

May 13, 2021, ANI

China has described the military exercises in Southern Japan involving troops and hardware from France, Japan, the US and Australia as a waste of fuel, adding that the drill had “no impact” on the country.

S Korean fishermen sue Japanese government over Fukushima water

May 14, 2021, Japan Today

South Korean fisheries associations filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government at a local court, seeking compensation for the planned release of contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant, the Yonhap news agency reported.

Korea

Outgoing USFK Chief Calls for More Joint Training

May 14, 2021, The Chosun Ilbo

Outgoing U.S. Forces Korea Commander Robert Abrams called for more joint training of South Korean and American forces during a farewell ceremony.

U.S. Spy Chief Visits DMZ

May 14, 2021, The Chosun Ilbo

U. S. Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines visited the demilitarized zone, the Joint Security Area in the border truce village of Panmunjom, and the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff headquarters in Seoul.

US, Australia share commitment to UNSC resolutions on North Korea: Blinken

May 14, 2021, The Korea Times

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken reaffirmed his country's commitment to U.N. Security Council resolutions on North Korea, amid U.S. outreach for engagement with the reclusive
North.

**Korea's intelligence chief meets Japan's PM, asks for efforts to improve relations**

May 13, 2021, The Korea Times

South Korea's intelligence chief has met Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and called for efforts to improve relations between the two countries strained over a string of historical issues, a diplomatic source said.

**Petition to cancel Olympics submitted in Tokyo**

May 14, 2021, The Korea Times

A petition to cancel the Tokyo Olympics with more than 351,000 signatures was submitted to the city’s governor, with its organizer urging officials to "prioritize life."

**S. Korea, US hold talks on ASEAN cooperation**

May 13, 2021, The Korea Herald

South Korea and the United States held talks to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation with Southeast Asian countries based on Seoul’s New Southern Policy and Washington’s Indo-Pacific strategy, the foreign ministry said.

**N. Korea continues to strictly restrict religious freedom: US State Dept.**

May 13, 2021, the Korea Herald

North Korea continues to strictly limit the basic rights of its people, including religious freedom, with up to 200,000 people believed to be held in prison camps because of their beliefs, the US State Department said.

**S. Korea, US seek talks with Japan amid new NK policy**

May 14, 2021, The Korea Herald

Senior South Korean and US defence officials agreed to hold three-way minister-level talks with Japan in the coming days, potentially to discuss security issues involving the Korean Peninsula, at a two-day dialogue that ended in Washington, DC.

**Southeast Asia**

**Vietnam and ASEAN to help India cope with devastating COVID-19 surge**

Asia News

Vietnam’s deputy foreign minister and India’s ambassador met in Hanoi, pledging to renew mutual support. Shipping oxygen, medicines, drugs and equipment is under consideration. About a thousand Vietnamese nationals have been repatriated in the past few days. ASEAN and India expect bilateral trade to reach US$0 billion next year.
Vietnam Expanding Fishing Militia In South China Sea

May 12, 2021, VOA

Vietnam’s maritime militia in the South China Sea shows signs of growing over the past decade, say scholars and a research institution in China where the government disputes parts of the waterway with Hanoi.

To Counter China, Philippines Plans Bigger Base in Spratly Islands

May 13, 2021, Maritime Executive

The government of the Philippines is planning to turn an island in the Spratly archipelago into a new logistics and resupply base, giving it a new way to support its presence and law enforcement operations in the disputed area. China claims the majority of the South China Sea as its own, and its maritime militia of state-backed fishing vessels has been increasingly active in Philippine-claimed waters.

Philippines detects Indian variant as daily COVID-19 cases near 8-week low

May 11, 2021, Reuters

The Philippines has detected its first two cases of a coronavirus variant first identified in India, its health ministry said, even as confirmed daily COVID-19 infections fell to a near eight-week low.

China, Indonesia hold joint naval exercises near Jakarta

May 9, 2021, ANI

Amid tensions in the South China Sea, China and Indonesia conducted joint naval exercises near Jakarta.

Singapore extends life-line to India in oxygen crisis

May 14, 2021, Hindustan Times

India’s mission oxygen with comprehensive partner Singapore began with a three-sentence text message between external affairs minister S Jaishankar and foreign minister Vivian Balakrishnan on April 22 with the second wave of pandemic leaving afflicted Indians breathless.

Myanmar junta brands ousted lawmakers 'terrorists'

May 9, 2021, The Times of India

Myanmar’s junta has labelled a shadow government of lawmakers and politicians ousted in February coup and a people's defense force that is being set up to confront security forces as terrorist groups.
Central & West Asia

Central Asia

Russia Pledges Support For Tajikistan Amid Concern Over Afghanistan
May 08, 2021, RFE/RL

Russian President Vladimir Putin says Russia is working on strengthening its military base in Tajikistan to boost regional security as the situation escalates in Afghanistan. During a meeting with his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmon on May 8, Putin also said that Russia is helping to “strengthen Tajikistan’s armed forces.”

Uzbekistan: Citizen journalist’s prison sentence horrifies reform advocates
May 10, 2021, Eurasianet

A court in southern Uzbekistan has sentenced a citizen journalist to more than six years in prison in a ruling that one activist has described as marking the death of the country’s ambitious justice system reforms.

Protesters Detained In Almaty After Demanding Relatives Be Released In Xinjiang
May 12, 2021, RFE/RL

Police in Kazakhstan’s largest city, Almaty, have detained at least nine protesters who have been picketing the Chinese consulate for 93 days to demand the release of relatives they say are being "illegally" held in China. In recent years, many similar protests have taken place in Kazakhstan, with demonstrators demanding Kazakh authorities officially intervene in the situation faced by ethnic Kazakhs in Xinjiang.

Kyrgyzstan: Election authorities cancel votes in three cities
May 13, 2021, Eurasianet

Election officials in Kyrgyzstan have over the past two weeks canceled results of last month’s local government elections in three major cities, including the capital, over alleged irregularities. The decision means votes will have to be held once more to pick city councils in Bishkek, Osh and Tokmok. Even while those elections cannot be deemed valid, the results of a low-turnout referendum held on the same date, which gave the president sweeping new powers, will stand.

Kazakhstan: President signs into law bill banning land ownership by foreigners
May 14, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has signed into law a long-debated and sensitive bill that bans selling and leasing agricultural land to foreigners in the Central Asian state. According to the law, foreigners, stateless individuals, foreign companies, Kazakh companies with foreign ownership, international organizations, and scientific groups that have the involvement of foreign countries cannot own or lease agricultural land in Kazakhstan.
Turkmenistan slammed for 'threatening' relatives of exiled dissidents

May 14, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

Four leading human rights groups have criticized the authoritarian leadership of Turkmenistan for "threatening" the relatives of dissidents living abroad. In a joint statement on May 13, Human Rights Watch, the Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights, International Partnership for Human Rights, and Amnesty International said that in early May, Turkmen security officials questioned and threatened a 14-year-old boy in retaliation for the outspoken views of his uncle, Rozybai Jumamuradov, a former RFE/RL correspondent in Turkmenistan, currently residing in Turkey.

Cheer Up About the Middle East


Ten years after Seal Team Six put an end to Osama bin Laden’s terrorist career, most observers think of America’s 21st-century Middle East policy as a succession of ghastly failures. Certainly ambitious efforts by both Republican and Democratic presidents to transform the region fell far short of success. Yet if the Middle East is less peaceful and no more democratic than it was in 2001, the U.S. has dramatically reduced the ability of regional upheavals to provoke major crises around the world. While withdrawing entirely would be unwise, America can defend its vital interests with less risk and a more focused strategy than at any time since the end of the Cold War.

West Asia

Israel Keeps Up Pressure on Hamas with Non-stop Bombings of Gaza

May 14, 2021, The Jerusalem Post

IDF strikes against the Gaza Strip continued as the military bombed Hamas weapons depots along with other weapons and launching sites.

Saudi Arabia, UAE and Oman Reject Israeli Measures to Evacuate Palestinian Homes in Jerusalem

May 08, 2021, Arab News

Saudi Arabia denounced Israeli plans to evict Palestinian families from their homes in Jerusalem amid soaring violence in the city.

Turkey President Erdogan calls Israel a 'Terror State' over Palestinian Clashes at Al-Aqsa

May 09, 2021, Deccan Herald

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan called Israel a "terror state" after Israeli police fired rubber bullets and stun grenades towards rock-hurling Palestinian youth at Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa mosque.

Iran to Restrict IAEA Access by May 24 if No Progress Made in Vienna Talks, MP Warns
May 08, 2021, Tehran Times

The lawmaker, Mojtaba Zolnouri, who is the head of the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said the nuclear talks in Vienna have so far failed to produce any concrete result and they have become “draining.”

United States Says Fate of Nuclear Pact up to Iran as Talks Resume

May 07, 2021, The Economic Times

The Biden administration is signalling that Iran shouldn’t expect major new concessions from the United States as a new round of indirect nuclear talks is set to resume.

Iran's Leader Khamenei Calls Israel 'Not a Country, but a Terrorist Base'

May 07, 2021, Hindustan Times

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called Israel "not a country, but a terrorist base" during a speech on Al-Quds Day, an annual show of solidarity with the Palestinians.

Reliance Seeks Nod to Fly in Israeli Experts for Training and Installation of Rapid Covid-19 Identification Equipment

May 07, 2021, The Economic Times

Reliance has sought special permission to fly an Israeli team of experts to India to train and install a rapid COVID-19 identification solution it acquired from an Israeli start-up for USD 15 million.

Saudi Arabia Calls for Dialogue Between India and Pakistan to Resolve Their Issues

May 09, 2021, The Economic Times

Saudi Arabia has emphasised the importance of dialogue between Pakistan and India to resolve their outstanding matters, including the Kashmir issue.

India Ramps up Oil Imports From Saudi Arabia After Price Cut

May 07, 2021, Oilprice.com

India’s state-owned refiners are ordering their regular volumes of Saudi crude oil for June after the Kingdom reduced its prices for the world's third-largest importer.

US Navy Seizes Weapons in Arabian Sea Likely Bound for Yemen from Iran

May 09, 2021, Arab News

The US Navy announced it seized an arms shipment of thousands of assault weapons, machine guns and sniper rifles hidden aboard a ship in the Arabian Sea, apparently bound for Yemen to support the country’s Houthis rebels.
India Gets 54 Tonnes of Oxygen from Bahrain

May 05, 2021, The Economic Times

India received 54 tonnes of oxygen from Bahrain as part of Operation Samudra Setu-II launched by Indian Navy to transport oxygen and associated medical supplies from friendly foreign nations.

Iraq Says It Hosted Secret Talks Between Iran, Saudi Arabia

May 05, 2021, Daily Sabah

Iraq has recently hosted more than one round of dialogues between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the country's President Barham Salih announced.
United States

**Biden’s Not-So-Clean Energy Transition**


The International Energy Agency has entered the political debate over whether the U.S. should spend trillions of dollars to accelerate the energy transition favored by the Biden administration.

**Pentagon Backs Off Xiaomi Blacklisting After Legal Challenge**

May 12, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

The U.S. Defense Department agreed to remove Xiaomi Corp. from a blacklist banning U.S. investment in the Chinese tech giant, opting against further defending a Trump administration action that alleged ties between the smartphone maker and the Chinese military.

**U.S. Tariffs Drive Drop in Chinese Imports**

May 12, 2021, The Wall Street Journal

US tariffs have led to a sharp decline in Chinese imports and significant changes in the types of goods Americans buy from China, new data show, with purchases of telecommunications gear, furniture, apparel and other goods shifting to other countries.

**US Sanctions Chinese Official for Role in Religious Persecution**

May 13, 2021, Voice of America

The United States has sanctioned a Chinese Communist Party official for involvement “in gross violations of human rights, namely the arbitrary detention of Falun Gong practitioners for their spiritual beliefs.”

**U.S. will not leave Australia alone to face China coercion -Blinken**

May 14, 2021, Reuters

U. S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the United States would not leave Australia alone in the face of economic coercion from China, and that such behavior toward U.S. allies would hamper improvement in U.S-China relations.

**Biden assures Israel’s Netanyahu of U.S. support, urges calm as fighting kills dozens**

May 12, 2021, Politico

The United States dramatically deepened its involvement in the latest Israeli-Palestinian crisis, with President Joe Biden breaking his silence by assuring Israeli leaders of America’s support but also calling for an end to the fighting that has already killed dozens of people.
Biden Faces Russian Test Over Aid in Syria


The Biden administration is bracing for a showdown with Russia over the delivery of United Nations aid to millions of Syrians outside the control of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, a flow that Moscow is poised to block in July.

Blinken to meet Russian Foreign Minister next week

May 12, 2021, CNN

Secretary of State Tony Blinken will meet with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the Arctic Council ministerial in Iceland next week -- the first face-to-face meeting between a Biden cabinet official and their Russian counterpart.

How to Boost the United States’ Most Important Partnership

May 11, 2021, Foreign Policy

As Washington and New Delhi look to deepen collaboration, Biden’s first 100 days present important lessons for how both countries can enhance their partnership—from positive momentum on climate change to the delayed U.S. response to India’s COVID-19 crisis.

The Power of Indians Abroad

May 13, 2021, Foreign Policy

As the latest wave of COVID-19 crashes over India, the country’s large diaspora has been frantically trying to help its homeland. It is doing so both directly, through financial and material support, and indirectly, by lobbying U.S. businesses and Washington to do more.

Covid: 'Helping India in US national interest,' lawmakers write to Biden

May 13, 2021, The Times of India

More than 50 US lawmakers have written to President Joe Biden urging him to bolster American assistance to New Delhi to overcome the coronavirus surge in India, asserting that enhanced help from Washington's, which stands at a modest $100 million, is in US national interest.

Britain’s Elections Offer Tea Leaves for the U.S.


After the trauma of the presidential election and its aftermath, watching election results out of Britain can feel like a soothing exercise in escapism into a gentler and weirder world of Anglo-Saxon politics.

Strengthen Asia to Weaken Beijing

As the rest of Asia rises, Beijing’s chance at supremacy begins to shrink—and Washington’s Indo-Pacific allies will be able to bear more of the costs that keeping the peace requires...A flourishing Asia is the answer to the U.S.’s China problem. Asia’s peoples and countries want to be independent and rich. Washington’s job is to help that Asian Dream come true.

**Colonial Pipeline ramps up as U.S. seeks to emerge from fuel crunch**

May 14, 2021, Reuters

Colonial Pipeline ramped up deliveries to fuel-starved markets up and down the East Coast following a nearly week-long outage caused by hackers, as Washington sought to reassure motorists that supplies would return to normal soon.
**Europe & Russia**

**Europe**

**UK Labour leader reshuffles team after poor local election results**

May 10, 2021, Reuters

The leader of Britain's opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer, has reshuffled his team after disappointing results in local elections that further strengthened Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson's grip on power.

**Deputy Secretary General discusses NATO-EU cooperation at military mobility symposium**

May 7, 2021, NATO

NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoană stressed the importance of strong NATO-EU cooperation on military mobility in order to maintain preparedness and preserve collective security.

**Can India and the EU operationalise their natural partnership?**

May 12, 2021, The Hindustan Times

With the EU being India’s largest trading partner and the second-largest export destination, the economic logic of strong India-EU economic relations is self-evident. The two sides have also agreed to commence talks for a standalone investment protection pact and an accord on geographical indications.

**PM Modi expected to join G7 summit in UK virtually**

May 13, 2021, The Times of India

Narendra Modi is expected to join the UK-hosted G7 summit in Cornwall next month virtually, the British government said after India’s Ministry of External Affairs announced that the prime minister would not be attending the meeting in person.

**EU countries urged to halt non-essential travel from India**

May 13, 2021, Reuters

The European Union’s executive called on countries of the bloc to temporarily halt non-essential travel from India, to limit the spread of a COVID-19 variant.

**EU economy forecast to rebound faster thanks to Covid vaccine**

May 12, 2021, The Guardian

The economy of the EU will bounce back more quickly than expected, owing in part to the quickening pace of its vaccination programme after a “slow start”, the European Commission has forecast.
From friend to foe: EU prepares sanctions on Lebanon for first time

May 12, 2021, Reuters

The European Union is drawing up sanctions on politicians in Lebanon seen as blocking the formation of a government, readying the bloc's first penalties on its Middle Eastern ally in frustration at the ruling elite's mismanagement, diplomats said.

'Broader conflict' must be averted in Israeli-Palestinian violence: EU

May 12, 2021, The Hindustan Times

Israelis and Palestinians must immediately halt their violence "to prevent a broader conflict" impacting civilian populations, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned.

EU's Borell says Iran nuclear talks moving to crucial stage

May 10, 2021, Reuters

Negotiations in Vienna between world powers and Iran are moving into a crucial stage and the next few weeks will be critical to saving their 2015 nuclear deal, the European Union's top diplomat said.

Russia

Russia Rolls Out Military Might For Victory Day Amid Tensions With West

May 09, 2021, RFE/RL

Russia showed off its military might with parades across the country on May 9 to commemorate the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. President Vladimir Putin reviewed the main Victory Day parade on Moscow's Red Square, featuring some 12,000 troops, nearly 200 pieces of military hardware, and aircraft and helicopter flyovers. Putin watched the display with Soviet war veterans from a review platform.

Russian Su-27 fighter intercepts three French military planes over Black Sea

May 12, 2021, TASS News Agency

On May 12, Russian airspace control systems detected three aerial targets over the neutral waters of the Black Sea approaching Russia's state border, the National Defense Control Center said. A Russian Su-27 fighter jet was scrambled to intercept two Mirage 2000 tactical combat planes and a C-135 aerial refueling tanker of the French Air Force over the Black Sea.

Moscow Carefully Examines US Proposals on Putin-Biden Summit

May 12, 2021, Sputnik News

Moscow is carefully examining the US proposals on a summit between the Russian and American presidents, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said. Ryabkov told reporters
that Moscow is always open to dialogue and believes that such a meeting is crucial both politically and diplomatically.

**Former Russian Lawmaker Jailed Over Posts on Pro-Navalny Rally**

May 12, 2021, RFE/RL

Russian opposition politician and former mayor of the Urals city of Yekaterinburg Yevgeny Roizman has been sentenced to nine days in jail for his online posts about a January 31 rally to support jailed opposition politician Aleksei Navalny.

**Majority of Russians Still Not Ready to Get Sputnik Vaccine – Poll**

May 12, 2021, The Moscow Times

The majority of Russians (62%) are still not ready to be vaccinated with their country’s Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, according to a poll by the independent Levada Center. The results are the latest sign that Russians are largely still skeptical of the domestically-produced vaccine amid Russia’s attempts to boost its slower-than-hoped vaccination campaign.

**Putin hands down instructions to tighten requirements for civilian gun ownership**

May 13, 2021, TASS News Agency

Requirements for civilian gun ownership need to be tightened, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a meeting with cabinet members on May 13. He was confident that the Investigative Committee would thoroughly investigate the circumstances of a tragic incident in the city of Kazan, where nine people were killed and 23 suffered wounds in a school shooting.

**Lavrov, Blinken discuss Russia-US summit, agree to meet in Reykjavik**

May 13, 2021, TASS News Agency

Russian Foreign Minister and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed the timeline of bilateral Russia-US contacts by phone on May 12, including the proposed highest-level Russia-US summit, and agreed to hold a separate meeting during the Arctic Council ministerial session in Reykjavik.

**Myths and misconceptions in the debate on Russia**

May 2021, Chatham House

This report deconstructs 16 of the most prevalent myths and misconceptions that shape contemporary Western thinking on Russia. It explains their detrimental impact on the design and execution of policy, and in each case outlines how Western positions need critical re-examination to ensure more rational and effective responses to Russian actions. Underpinning our analysis is the essential argument that, contrary to wishful thinking on the part of many Euro-Atlantic politicians and policymakers, there is little prospect of Russia becoming a more constructive and cooperative partner for Western governments in the foreseeable future.
Argentina's inflation for the year 2021 forecast at 47.3%

8 May 2021, MercoPress

Argentina's monthly inflation for April 2021 is expected to be around 3.8%, according to consulting firms surveyed by the Central Bank. If these projections hold, inflation for 2021 would be around 47.3%. All the other South American countries, except Venezuela, can measure their yearly inflation in one digit.

Chinese delegation in Argentina to offer the Air Force, the supersonic aircraft JF-17

8 May 2021, MercoPress

A top-ranking delegation from China's National Aero-Technology import-export corporation, CATIC, is currently in Argentina to discuss defense cooperation and with the proposal to offer the Argentine Air Force supersonic capable aircraft, according to InfoDefensa.ar, an Argentine site which specializes in defense industry issues.

US investors withdrawing from Latin America's three largest economies as populist rulers spark concern

10 May 2021, MercoPress

According to a recent report from the Department of the Treasury, investors from the United States are rapidly fleeing the once most promising and three largest countries of Latin America (Brazil, Mexico and Argentina). A total of US $ 16,393 million of US investments pulled out of Brazil, US $ 11,531 million left Mexico and US $ 6,106 have departed Argentina in February 2021, compared to the same month of 2020.

Argentine President Fernández vows strategic agreement with Spain to be built

12 May 2021, MercoPress

Argentina’s President Alberto Fernández said in Madrid after separate meetings with King Felipe VI and Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez that “we are going to consolidate a strategic agreement and we can relaunch it with your visit and deepen it as much as necessary.”

French President Macron supports Argentina regarding IMF, Paris Club talks

13 May 2021, MercoPress

Argentine President Alberto Fernández expressed his gratitude to his French colleague Emmanuel Macron for the latter's support with regards to debt renegotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Paris Club.
Africa

US/China/France: Africa’s security woes complicated by foreign boots
10 May 2021, The Africa Report

As the coronavirus pandemic triggers Africa’s worst economic downturn for three decades, the continent needs a heroic upturn in investment in public goods such as education and health, and tens of millions of new jobs. Yet investment in the continent is slowing in almost all areas, except for the military.

Ethiopia/Egypt: GERD fight sucks in global actors
10 May 2021, The Africa Report

The failure of the latest round of negotiations between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam could have dramatic repercussions for the region and the world, potentially setting off a new migrant crisis, a military intervention and chaos in shipping.

Coronavirus explosion in India complicates Africa vaccine roll out
11 May 2021, The Africa Report

Although the number of Covid-19 infections was high at the time, it seemed no cause for alarm given the number of people living in the subcontinent. The situation also appeared to be under control. A month later, however, the figures are staggering: 4,000 deaths and 400,000 new cases are reported daily. Furthermore, the whole world has seen horrifying images of hundreds of funeral pyres burning continuously across the country. There are concerns as to whether the continent will experience an ‘Indian-style scenario’ in the weeks or months to come.

Zimbabwe’s plan to outlaw ‘unpatriotic acts’
12 May 2021, BBC News Africa

Zimbabwe is planning to introduce a law to punish people who are deemed "unpatriotic" because they criticise the country when abroad - and it has left activists feeling nervous.

Hundreds in South Africa protest for Palestine
13 May 2021, Anadolu Agency

Hundreds of South Africans have protested Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip and the ongoing crackdown at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem. Nelson Mandela's grandson demands South Africa 'shutdown' embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel