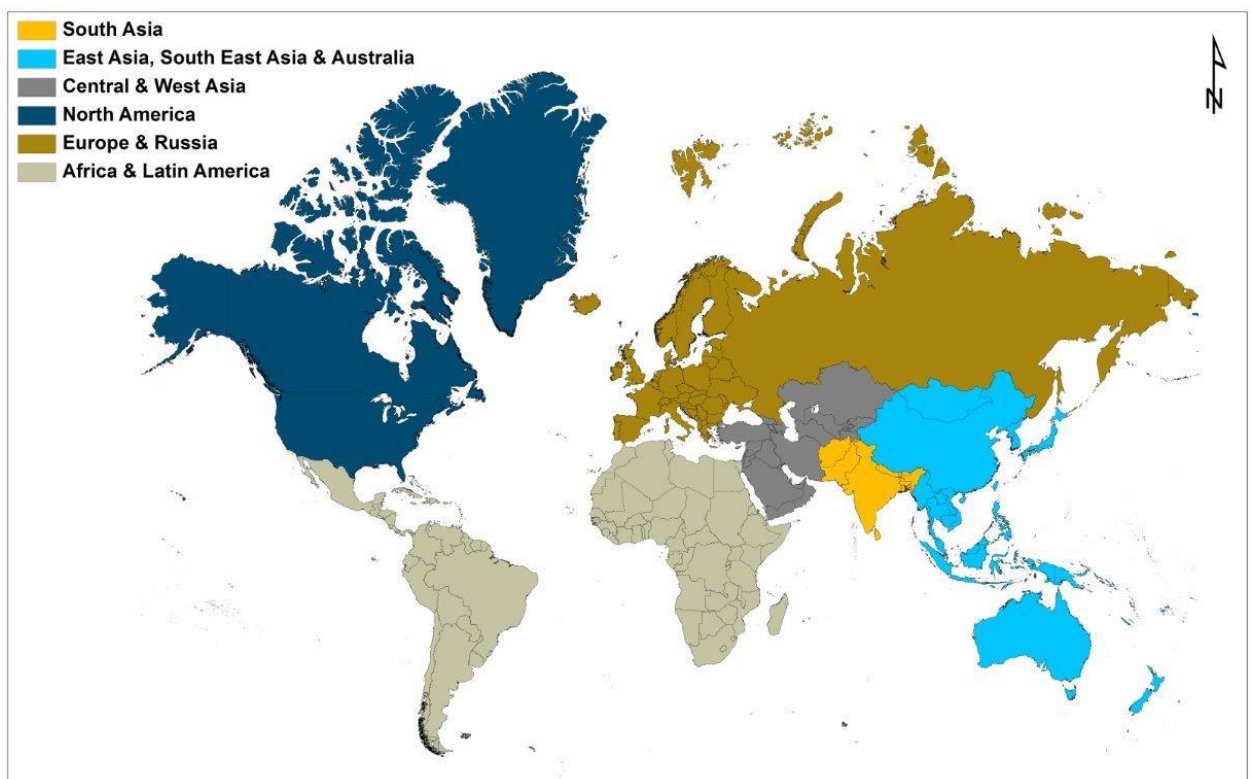




Delhi Policy Group

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

Volume 3, Issue 51

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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Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Angana Guha Roy at angana@dpg.org.in.

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Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor,
India Habitat Centre,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003.
www.delhipolicygroup.org

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South Asia

India

[India Notifies Citizenship Amendment Act 2019](#)

December 12, 2019, The Gazette of India

Text of the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 as notified in the Gazette of India

[Recent exclusionary steps can only bring India's international image down](#)

December 16, 2019, The Indian Express

The implications are so profound that one should pause to take a larger comparative and historical look. India's strengths and weaknesses are often better understood that way.

[Citizenship law India's internal matter, Pak PM habitually abusing global fora: MEA](#)

December 17, 2019, The India Express

Hours after Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan criticised the new citizenship law passed by India at the Global Forum on Refugees platform, the MEA Tuesday termed Khan's statement as 'gratuitous' and 'unwarranted'. Clarifying that it is an internal matter of India, the MEA also rejected Pakistan's resolution adopted on Monday against the Citizenship Amendment Act.

[Raja Mandala: Looking beyond the diaspora](#)

December 17, 2019, The India Express

India must avoid making Pakistan a preoccupation in its relationship with UK. It must take advantage of the shift in Britain's international orientation.

[Take "Immediate, Irreversible Action" Against Terrorists: India, US tell Pakistan](#)

December 20, 2019, NDTV

India and the US asked Pakistan to take "immediate and irreversible action" to ensure that no territory under its control is used for terrorism against other countries.

[External Affairs Minister Jaishankar shares India's perspective on citizenship law, in the U.S.](#)

December 19, 2019, The Hindu

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had shared India's perspective on Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, with the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee on the sidelines of Wednesday's India-U.S. "2+2" ministerial meeting in the United States.

[Jaishankar cancels meeting with Congressional leaders on Kashmir](#)

December 20, 2019, The Hindu

Questions about Kashmir cast a shadow as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar ended his visit to the United States where he participated in the '2+2' dialogue with top U.S. officials.

[US, France block China's attempt to rake up Kashmir issue in UNSC: Report](#)

December 18, 2019, Money control

United States, which holds UNSC's presidency for December, did not yield to China's request. French diplomatic sources said the issue needs to be discussed bilaterally.

[India must negotiate growing Chinese presence in Indo-Pacific region](#)

December 17, 2019, The Indian Express

India will have to manage its relations with China, no matter the challenges, in the Indo-Pacific Region.

[US Gives India "Narrow Exemption" From Chabahar Sanctions For Afghan Aid](#)

December 19, 2019, NDTV

The US has provided a rare exemption to India from sanctions on the Chabahar port in Iran as it recognises that the strategic project is a lifeline for war-torn Afghanistan to get humanitarian supplies from India.

[Modi-Abe meeting: India, Japan explore summit schedule](#)

December 16, 2019, The Economic Ties

India and Japan are exploring holding their next annual summit either in January or April-May, after PM Shinzo Abe postponed his visit to Guwahati following massive protests over Citizenship Amendment Bill.

['Korean firms keen on investing in Tamil Nadu'](#)

December 20, 2019, The Hindu

Small and medium industries from Korea are exploring possibilities of setting up operations in Tamil Nadu, said, Hyung Tae Kim, Consul General of Republic of Korea in Chennai.

[India pushes for a regional approach to stabilise Afghanistan at Tehran security chiefs meet](#)

December 19, 2019, The Economic Times

Deputy national security adviser (NSA) Rajinder Khanna participated in a meet of NSAs from Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan held in Tehran on Wednesday as part of India's efforts towards a regional approach to bring stability in the war-ravaged nation.

[US hopeful of bagging IAF, Navy orders for fighter jets](#)

December 19, 2019, The Economic Times

The US hopes to win the deals for supplying fighter aircraft to the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy by selling its F21 and F/A18 Super Hornets respectively. Joel Starr, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs in the US Department of State, said that the IAF and Navy fighter competitions are once in a generation opportunity to more closely ally US and India.

[Defence Ministry, Indian Air Force bring down 83 LCA deal cost by over Rs 10,000 crore](#)

December 19, 2019, The Economic Times

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the Defence Ministry's highest decision-making body on procurement, had, in November 2016, approved purchase of 83 Tejas Mark-1A by the IAF at a cost of Rs 50,025 crore. The draft contract of the deal has been readied by the HAL and the cost of the deal has now come down to around Rs 40,000 crore. This is Rs 10,000 crore less than the Acceptance of Necessity given by the Defence Ministry in 2016.

[Lieutenant General Manoj Mukund Naravane to be the next Army chief](#)

December 16, 2019, The Economic Times

Lt Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane is set to become the next chief of the Indian Army, official sources said. Lt Gen Naravane is currently serving as Vice Chief of the Army. Army Chief Gen Bipin Rawat is due to retire on December 31.

[Rajnath Singh visits US naval air station, reflects on strong defence ties](#)

December 19, 2019, The Economic Times

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited Naval Air Station Norfolk, Virginia in the US during which he observed a static display and a Boeing fighter jet demonstration as the two sides reflected on the "strong defence ties."

[Strategic Interest of US Aligns With India: American Defence Secretary](#)

December 14, 2019, NDTV

There is an alignment of America's strategic interest with India, US Defence Secretary Mark Esper said on Friday as he identified China, followed by Russia, as Pentagon's top two challenges in the coming years.

[India, US sign defence tech transfer pact, pledge to boost strategic ties at 2+2](#)

December 19, 2019, Economic Times

India and the US have signed an agreement to facilitate transfer of defence technology during a 2+2 meeting of the top foreign affairs and defence leaders on growing strategic relations between India and the United States. The agreement known as Industrial Security Annex, would "enable smooth transfer of classified technology and information between private entities of USA and India" as per the Indian Defence Minister.

[IMF likely to significantly cut India's growth estimates: Gita Gopinath](#)

December 18, 2019, Economic Times

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will revise estimates for India's economic growth in January, which will be a significant downward cut over the previous estimate, its chief economist Gita Gopinath said. "India is one of the emerging markets where growth has surprised on the downside," she said at Times Networks' India Economic Conclave.

[2 versions of BrahMos missile successfully test-fired](#)

December 17, 2019, Economic Times

India successfully conducted separate trials of two variants of supersonic cruise missile BrahMos to check its capability to hit targets with precision and accuracy. A land-attack version of the missile was test-launched from a mobile autonomous launcher of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur.

[India rejects Pakistan national assembly's resolution on amended citizenship law](#)

December 17, 2019, Economic Times

India on Tuesday strongly rejected a resolution adopted by Pakistan national assembly on the amended citizenship law, calling it a poorly disguised effort to divert attention from Islamabad's "appalling treatment" and "persecution" of its religious minorities.

Pakistan

[US reprimands Pakistan for misusing F-16 fighter jets](#)

December 12, 2019, The Times of India

The US reprimanded the Pakistan Air Force chief in August for misusing F-16 fighter jets by undermining their shared security platforms and infrastructures, months after the IAF shot down an F-16 jet of Pakistan Air Force during an aerial combat over Kashmir.

[ZalmayKhalilzad meets FM Qureshi, General QamarBajwa](#)

December 14, 2019, The News

The US envoy on Afghanistan's peace process ZalmayKhalilzad met Foreign Minister Shah MehmoodQureshi and Chief of Army Staff General QamarJavedBajwa.Khalilzad, Gen Bajwa, and the United States' ambassador to Pakistan, Paul Wayne Jones, discussed regional security and exchanged thoughts on the Afghan peace process.

[Army chief extension: Supreme Court verdict has legal flaws, says FawadChaudhry](#)

December 14, 2019, The News

Federal Minister for Science and Technology FawadChaudhry has said the Supreme Court decision on extension of Army Chief General QamarJavedBajwa has legal flaws.

[World Bank to provide \\$406.6m loan to Pakistan for KPEC project](#)

December 14, 2019, The News

Pakistan and World Bank on Friday signed loan agreement of \$406.6 million for Khyber Pass Economic Corridor (KPEC) Project.In another separate agreement, Pakistan and Germany signed a grant agreement for Hydropower and Renewable Energy Phase-II worth Rs2145.29 million.

[Pakistan to ask Saudi Arabia, UAE: Convert \\$5 bn deposits into loans](#)

December 16, 2019, The News

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE have granted rollover of \$5 billion deposits for one year period in order to help Islamabad overcome its economic crisis.Now after getting the rollover of \$5 billion deposits from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, Pakistani authorities are mulling over options to make fresh request to both the countries for converting deposits into government borrowed loans.

[CASA-1000: Pakistan initiates talks for electricity export to Central Asia](#)

December 16, 2019, The News

Pakistan has initiated talks for export of electricity to Central Asian States such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan by using open access clause, which is already part of Master Agreement under the CASA-1000 project.

[TAPI gas line: Turkmenistan to provide insurance for gas passing through Afghanistan](#)

December 16, 2019, The News

With a view to accommodating the demand of Pakistan, Turkmenistan will, under the multi-billion dollar TAPI gas line project, provide insurance for the volume of gas to be piped through Afghanistan. In case of gas transit loss because of any subversive activity in Afghanistan, the damage will be paid through insurance cover.

[PM Imran Khan cancels Malaysia trip after Saudi Arabia visit](#)

December 17, 2019, The News

Prime Minister Imran Khan has cancelled his scheduled visit to Malaysia and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi will represent Pakistan in his place at the Kuala Lumpur Summit scheduled for December 18-20.

[Govt to stand by Musharraf, resolves PTI](#)

December 19, 2019, Dawn

Prime Minister Imran Khan decided to stand by self-exiled former military ruler retired Gen Pervez Musharraf, who was handed death sentence for high treason, and explained he had skipped the Kuala Lumpur summit of Muslim states because of "national interest".

[Pakistan Bar Council disapproves DG ISPR criticism of Musharraf Verdict](#)

December 20, 2019, The Express Tribune

The apex body of Pakistani lawyers has strongly disapproved a statement by DG ISPR in which he has "criticized" the detailed judgment of the special court against former army chief Gen (retd) Pervez Musharraf in the treason case.

[Briefing sought by China from UNMOGIP postponed](#)

December 19, 2019, Dawn

A briefing sought by China from the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) at the Security Council had to be postponed after UN officials said that they were not ready for it.

[Army dismayed as Musharraf gets death for high treason](#)

December 18, 2019, Dawn

As a special court awarded death sentence to former military dictator Pervez Musharraf in absentia for suspending the Constitution on Nov 3, 2007, the counsel for the convict and the armed forces media wing in separate statements strongly criticised the decision that they said was taken 'in haste'.

[Pakistan skips Malaysia meet to 'avert division in Ummah'](#)

December 18, 2019, Dawn

Ending uncertainty over Pakistan's participation in the upcoming Kuala Lumpur Summit, the government announced that it would not attend the event at any level. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said there would be no representation from Pakistan government at the summit being held in Kuala Lumpur.

[IMF approves \\$452.5m second tranche of \\$6b package](#)

December 20, 2019, The Express Tribune

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Thursday approved the second tranche of \$452.5 million of the \$6 billion package after Islamabad managed to meet all targets set for the first review of the programme.

[US to resume military training programme for Pakistan: State Dept](#)

December 20, 2019, The Express Tribune

The Trump administration has approved resumption of Pakistan's participation in a coveted US military training and educational programme more than a year after it was suspended.

Afghanistan

[Pompeo hopes reduced violence will lead to ceasefire](#)

December 20, 2019, Tolo News

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said during a joint news conference in Washington with India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar that he hopes that a reduction of violence in Afghanistan will lead to a ceasefire.

[U.S. Envoy meets Afghan President in push to 'finalise deal with Taliban'](#)

December 18, 2019, RFERL

U.S. special peace envoy ZalmayKhalilzad has met in Kabul with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to discuss "efforts to finalise a deal with the Taliban" militants fighting the central government and U.S. and NATO troops.

[US senator supports proposed '8,600' US troops in Afghanistan](#)

December 16, 2019, Tolo News

US Senator Lindsey Graham spoke of a possible troop reduction in the next year and offered a suitable remaining force level of "8,600" troops.He explained that this number is in accordance with General Miller's assessment of a force that could maintain a counter-terrorist mission while also shifting more responsibility to Afghan forces.

Bangladesh

[CAB, NRC threaten to undo strides that Bangladesh, India took in recent past](#)

December 16, 2019, The Indian Express

It is unclear why any nation – where its political leadership has the right mindset – will risk jeopardising an international bilateral partnership that is rooted in both historic sanctity and strategic value. Yet, the actions and the political philosophy of the ruling NDA government in India – manifested in the recently passed Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) – are increasingly threatening the country's friendship with Bangladesh that emerged out of troubled waters.

[In a first, Indian Army takes part in Bangladesh's 'Victory Day' parade](#)

December 16, 2019, Business Standard

Bangladesh celebrated its 49th 'Victory Day' on December 16, marking its liberation from Pakistan. For the first time, a band contingent of the Indian Army also took part in the parade watched by Bangladesh President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as well as ministers, diplomats and other dignitaries.

[India, Bangladesh gives impetus to cross-border energy corridor](#)

December 19, 2019, Economic Times

The 2nd Project Review Monitoring Committee (PRMC) meeting for the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline project was successfully held between both countries in what can be viewed as a concrete step in the cross border

connectivity corridor. The Rs. 346 crore, 130-kilometre India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline Project is a landmark project being undertaken under the grant assistance from India to Bangladesh.

[Bangladesh ready to accept its citizens living in India illegally, asks India for list](#)

December 17, 2019, Sentinel Assam

Foreign Minister to Bangladesh AK Abdul Momensaid in a recent statement that the Government of Bangladesh is ready to allow Bangladeshi citizens living in India to return to Bangladesh.

[Bangladesh to allow transshipment of Indian goods from January sans custom duties, transit fees](#)

December 19, 2019, Economic Times

Bangladesh will allow transshipment of Indian goods via Chittagong and Monglasea ports from January without charging customs duties and transit fees. The decision, considered a new phase in connectivity between the two countries, was agreed upon when Bangladesh shipping secretary Md. AbdusSamad met his Indian counterpart Gopal Krishna at the shipping secretary-level talks in Dhaka. The move will give further push to India's Act East policy by connecting north-eastern states with SE Asia.

Nepal

[Nepal seeks review of Gurkha recruitment deal with Britain](#)

December 14, 2019, CNA

An agreement between New Delhi, London and Kathmandu following India's independence from colonial rule in 1947 allowed India and Britain to share and recruit Gurkhas. Nepal now wants the 72-year-old tripartite deal renegotiated since that accord does not allow Kathmandu to play any role in the recruitment process, the country's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali has said in an interview.

[Nepal, India conclude joint military exercise](#)

December 17, 2019, Economic Times

Joint military exercise 'SURYA KIRAN – XIV' between India and Nepal was conducted at Salijhandi inRupendehi district of Nepal from December 3-16. During the training programme, Nepalese and Indian Army personnel exchanged theoretical, practical and special experiences with each other.

[First time: Nepal to help India in checking 'third country' suspects, terror operatives](#)

December 16, 2019, Financial Express

In a major boost to India's efforts in tackling terror activities from across the border, the Nepalese national paramilitary force has assured cooperation in checking doubtful "third country" operatives on its soil. The "landmark" decision was inked during the fourth India-Nepal coordination meeting held between Indian border guarding force SSB and its Nepalese counterpart APF at Pokhara, Nepal during November 20-22.

Sri Lanka

['Revitalized Africa Policy' to Guide Sri Lanka's Engagement with Africa](#)

December 19, 2019, Africa News

Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary RavinathaAryasinha has said that the operationalization of the recently developed 'RevitalisedAfrica Policy', seeks to enhance Sri Lanka's cooperation in the political, economic and cultural spheres across Africa. Among the envisaged measures for closer engagement are the expansion of Sri Lanka's diplomatic presence in Africa, stronger and mutually productive economic collaboration, revitalization of the historic people to people links and close cooperation in multilateral fora and regional organizations. T

[Sri Lanka will not re-negotiate commercial terms of Hambantota deal, only security: President](#)

December 19, 2019, Economy Next

Sri Lanka is not looking to change commercial terms in an agreement with China over a port in Hambantota, but is only concerned about security and border control, President GotabayaRajapaksa said. "I am looking at what the security aspects of it is. We want to see whether border control is with the sovereign government, like the Colombo Port."

[Indian Chief of Naval Staff visits Sri Lanka Naval HQ](#)

December 19, 2019, Adaderanalk

The Chief of Naval Staff of the Indian Navy, Admiral Karambir Singh paid a visit to the Sri Lanka Naval Headquarters as part of his four-day visit and met Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy Vice Admiral Piyal De Silva.

[India-Sri Lanka joint Military & Army Exercise 'Mitra Shakti' concludes in Pune](#)

December 15, 2019, Indus Dictum

The seventh edition of the joint training exercise between the Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army, Exercise Mitra Shakti 2019, concluded on 14 December at Aundh Military Station, Pune. Contingents comprising of 120 personnel each from the Sri Lankan and Indian Armies participated in the exercise.

[Russian experts brief Sri Lanka on operations against ISIS](#)

December 14, 2019, Colombo Gazette

Russian experts who were in Sri Lanka have briefed the military on Air Defence Operations and Combat Engineer Operations conducted by the Russian Army during the fight against ISIS in Syria. The visiting military delegation presented comprehensive lectures on Air Defence Operations and Combat Engineer Operations conducted by the Russian Army during the fight against ISIS in Syria.

Maldives

[Japan to provide equipment to strengthen Maldives' aviation security](#)

December 19, 2019, The Edition

Japan on Thursday presented the list of equipment to be provided to Maldives under the Exchange of Notes signed between the two governments last October.

[Chinese Ambassador fires back at Nasheed's remarks](#)

December 14, 2019, The Edition

During an interview given to India's 'Lok Sabha TV' on his visit to India, Former President Nasheed heavily criticised China and former President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, stating that the latter tried to strengthen Maldives-China relations but failed, subjecting the island nation into a debt trap that it can never recover from. The Chinese Ambassador tweeted in response that those were baseless remarks.

East & South East Asia

China

[Impeachment shows hypocrisy of partisan politics](#)

December 19, 2019, Global Times

The US House of Representatives voted for two articles of impeachment against President Trump. The outside world was strongly impressed by the fact that, the votes were largely split along party lines, with only three Democrats joining Republicans to vote against impeachment and, the fact that the impeachment has negligible chances of being approved in the Republican-controlled Senate.

[Banning Huawei will cost US opportunity in 5G era](#)

December 19, 2019, Global Times

Chinese tech giant Huawei is leading the world in the race for 5G with more than 3,300 patent applications filed, and over 1,300 of them granted. In the meantime, according to a ranking compiled by IPlytics in November, US 5G leader Qualcomm ranks only seventh among top patent owners.

[How CPEC hurdles can be overcome](#)

December 19, 2019, Global Times

China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners. The two countries are forging a community with a shared future in which China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will play a major role. The CPEC is a major pilot project of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

[China is honoring trade deal; it's the US' turn](#)

December 19, 2019, Global Times

Beijing on Thursday released a new list of US goods that will be exempted from China's first round of additional tariffs on US products. The Chinese side has taken a practical stance on ending the trade war. The US should make a positive response.

[Macao downgrade reveals Western bias](#)

December 12, 2019, Global Times

International credit rating agency Fitch Ratings has reportedly downgraded the Macao Special Administrative Region from "stable" to "negative," citing growing economic, financial, and political ties it shares with the Chinese mainland. Criticizing Macao as it celebrates the 20th anniversary of its return to China is a

reflection of Western-style prejudice against the Chinese model that has created nation-wide prosperity.

[Impeachment exposes democracy's true nature](#)

December 12, 2019, Global Times

The US House of Representatives will vote Wednesday to impeach President Trump. Regardless of the result, the case has already shown the world what democracy is like in the US.

[2nd aircraft carrier boosts China's defense ability](#)

December 17, 2019, Global Times

The Shandong, China's second aircraft carrier and its first domestically built one, was commissioned into the People's Liberation Army Navy in Sanya, South China's Hainan Province.

[Macao's integration with mainland lends credibility to 'one country, two systems'](#)

December 18, 2019, Global Times

Macao once had a frail economy, with negative GDP growth for four consecutive years from 1996 to 1999. The Chinese central government has spared no effort in supporting the city's development. Twenty years after China resumed exercise of sovereignty over Macao, its economy has reportedly been growing at an annual average rate of more than 10 percent, with a per capita income now ranking among the highest in the world.

[Macao's development lesson for Hong Kong](#)

December 17, 2019, 2019, Global Times

As the 20th anniversary of Macao's return to China approaches, the city, which is low key compared to neighboring Hong Kong, has recently been in the spotlight of world public opinion. In contrast to Hong Kong, Macao has shown a totally different scene under the "one country, two systems" principle. There is constant economic growth rather than political turmoil in the city. Macao' GDP in 2018 was eight times what it was 20 years ago, with its per capita GDP ranking second-highest in the world.

[Upcoming China-Japan-ROK leaders' meeting to chart course for future cooperation](#)

December 19, 2019, Xinhua

The upcoming China-Japan-ROK leaders' meeting to be held in China next week will chart the course for future cooperation and nurture more growth areas, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister LuoZhaohui said.

[China opposes U.S. abuse of export control measures: spokesperson](#)

December 18, 2019, Xinhua

China opposes the United States' abuse of the concept of national security and export control to interfere in and restrict normal exchanges and cooperation between enterprises, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

[New draft resolution "good attempt" to break U.S.-DPRK dialogue deadlock: Chinese envoy](#)

December 18, 2019, Xinhua

The draft resolution jointly proposed by China and Russian in the UN Security Council represents "a good attempt to break the current deadlock" of the dialogue between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), a Chinese envoy said.

[Space force shows that US is still obsessed with military superiority: China Daily editorial](#)

December 18, 2019, China Daily

After the United States House of Representatives passed it last week, the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act received Senate approval.

[India's act puts West's hypocrisy in spotlight: China Daily editorial](#)

December 18, 2019, China Daily

Protests have erupted nationwide in India as people express their opposition to a new citizenship law that critics fear could disenfranchise millions of Muslims in the country. Police fired tear gas at protesters in New Delhi on Tuesday, and in the northeastern state of Assam, the epicenter of the demonstrations, at least six people have reportedly died and more than 100 people have been injured in clashes.

Japan

[On first China visit by Japan defense chief in 10 years, ministers agree to boost mutual trust](#)

December 19, 2019, The Japan Times

Defense Minister Taro Kono and his Chinese counterpart, Gen. Wei Fengzhe, agreed to work to boost mutual trust and strengthen communication amid growing Japanese concerns over Beijing's increasing military assertiveness.

[Criticism of Japan's coal policy raising climate awareness at home: Koizumi](#)

December 20, 2019, Japan Today

Japanese Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said on Thursday criticism heaped on the Asian nation for its coal policies at this month's U.N. climate talks had helped raise his countrymen's awareness of fossil fuels and climate change.

[RCEP without India isn't to Japan's liking](#)

December 17, 2019, The Japan Times

India's pullout from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), like the earlier U.S. withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, has created a dilemma for Japan. But whereas Japan took the lead to establish the TPP without the United States, Tokyo does not desire a RCEP without India because it would create a China-led trading bloc.

[Japan, a kingmaker for Indo-Pacific trade deals](#)

December 18, 2019, The Japan Times

India's recent withdrawal from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiations is a setback for economic integration in the Indo-Pacific.

[Looking back on Japan's security in 2019](#)

December 19, 2019, The Japan Times

2019 is coming to a close, offering observers a chance to take stock of what the year has meant for Japan's security.

[Japan, China defense heads meet with sights on cooperation](#)

December 19, 2019, The Asahi Shimbun

Defense Minister Taro Kono held talks with his Chinese counterpart, Wei Fenghe, here on Dec. 18, as the two countries look for a path forward in long-stalled security cooperation.

[Japan, S. Korea find 'common ground' in trade dispute talks, agree to meet again](#)

December 17, 2019, The Asahi Shimbun

The first meeting between senior Japanese and South Korean trade officials since Japan imposed controls on exports of high-technology materials to its neighbour ended hours later than scheduled on Monday, with the two saying they had reached "common ground" and agreeing to talk again.

Korea

[Moon, Xi to hold summit in Beijing on Dec. 23](#)

December 19, 2019, The Korea Times

President Moon Jae-in and Chinese President Xi Jinping will hold a summit meeting in Beijing on Dec. 23, according to Cheong WaDae.

[US 'not focused on' initial \\$5 billion demand for USFK](#)

December 19, 2019, The Korea Time

The top U.S. negotiator in defense cost-sharing talks with South Korea said Wednesday that his team is "not focused on" its initial demand for a five-fold increase to \$5 billion in Seoul's financial contributions to the upkeep of American troops here.

[Seoul says it will not pay for upkeep of US troops outside of Korea](#)

December 19, 2019, The Korea Herald

South Korea's top negotiator for the defense cost-sharing deal with the United States said Thursday that Seoul has made clear it cannot pay for the cost of maintaining US troops stationed outside the country, a concession that Washington is seeking.

[Military struggles to adapt for conscientious objector](#)

December 17, 2019, The Korea Times

South Korean military is struggling to prepare for alternative service for conscientious objectors. The National Assembly National Defense Committee recently approved bills to implement alternative military service system for those who do not wish to serve in the military on mostly religious grounds.

[US Forces Korea ends night curfew for troops after 9 years](#)

December 17, 2019, The Korea Times

U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) said Tuesday it had lifted a curfew for all of its troops, effective immediately. The curfew, set for between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m., was imposed in 2011 amid public outcry over allegations of sexual violence and other crimes by USFK troops.

[Majority of South Koreans support alliance with US, negative on defense cost demands: poll](#)

December 17, 2019, The Korea Times

A new survey of South Koreans shows that the majority of the population supports the country's alliance with the United States, but rejects U.S. demands for a sharp increase in its contribution to shared defense costs, the pollster said.

[N.Korean Regime Extorts Money from Criminals](#)

December 19, 2019, The ChosunIlbo

North Koreans who are nabbed for crimes are reportedly offered clemency or shorter prison terms if they cough up for a loyalty fund.

Southeast Asia

[Strengthening cyber security in ASEAN](#)

December 18, 2019, The ASEAN Post

Terrorism in Southeast Asia has long been a threat. Previously, the spectre of terrorism haunted the region via threats of physical violence, from bombings to kidnappings.

[SuuKyι denies genocide charges against Myanmar](#)

December 19, 2019, Eleven Myanmar

Myanmar did not commit genocide although there may be violations of human rights in armed conflicts said State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyι.

[Aung San SuuKyι Says Genocide Trial Against Myanmar Neglects Key Facts](#)

December 18, 2019, Bloomberg

Myanmar's defacto leader Aung San Suu Kyι, who led the nation's team to the International Court of Justice to address a case alleging genocide against her country's Rohingya Muslim minority, delivered her first public speech since the hearings.

[Bangladesh: Rohingya Remain 'Hopeless' following Myanmar Meetings](#)

December 19, 2019, RFA

A week after Myanmar defended itself before an international court over allegations of genocide against Rohingya, a delegation from Naypyidaw tried to persuade refugees in Bangladesh to repatriate, but rejected demands for citizenship and international monitoring, officials and reports said.

[OIC criticises Malaysia's Muslim summit](#)

December 19, 2019, Malay Mail

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) yesterday mounted a veiled attack on a Muslim summit in Malaysia shunned by Saudi Arabia, saying such gatherings would weaken Islam.

[Progress of non-Muslims 'left us in lurch', Malaysia tells Islamic summit](#)

December 19, 2019, Reuters

Muslim nations need to do more business among themselves, trade in each other's currencies and keep up with non-Islamic countries to stop being left at their mercy, their leaders said on Thursday at a summit boycotted by Saudi Arabia.

[Philippines massacre: masterminds of country's worst political attack jailed](#)

December 19, 2019, The Guardian

Members of one of the Philippines' most powerful political clans have been found guilty of a massacre that left 57 people dead in the country's worst case of election violence.

[China inks high-tech train deal with the Philippines](#)

December 20, 2019, Asia Times

China and the Philippines signed a deal on the procurement of trains, as the Philippines will import Chinese-made trains for the first time.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[Questions over Uzbekistan's new era of 'openness'](#)

December 20, 2019, BBC News

The Central Asian nation is famous for systematic human rights abuses. But since President ShavkatMirziyoyev came to power following the death of the former leader Islam Karimov in 2016, Uzbekistan has been experiencing some rather unexpected changes.

[Uzbekistan holds first legislative polls under pro-reform leader](#)

December 20, 2019, France 24

Uzbekistan is slated to vote in the former Soviet republic's first parliamentary elections since a new leader ushered in an era of reform after years of isolation and stagnation, yet voters' choices remain highly restricted.

[Japan to provide loans to Uzbekistan](#)

December 20, 2019, NHK World- Japan

Japan has pledged about 1.7 billion dollars' worth of yen loans to Uzbekistan to help the central Asian country's energy and agricultural sectors.

[Same Interests, New Climate: Assessing the US-Uzbekistan Relationship](#)

December 19, 2019, The Diplomat

American interests in Uzbekistan have remained stable across administrations, but opportunities for cooperation have grown.

[Kazakh president reshuffles gov't after pro-democracy protests](#)

December 19, 2019, A Jazeera

Kassym-JomartTokayev, the president of Kazakhstan namedKanatBozumbayev as a presidential aide, moving him from the key position of energy minister in a reshuffle, which comes days after large protests calling for greater democracy.

[Dozens detained in rare Kazakhstan Independence Day protests](#)

December 16, 2019, Reuters

Police detained dozens of people in Kazakhstan's two main cities on Monday following rare protests demanding political reform and the sidelining of the family of former President NursultanNazarbayev.

[Kazakhstan's parliament approves spaceport cooperation with Russia](#)

December 19, 2019, Xinhua

The lower house of the Kazakh parliament approved the amendments to a Kazakh-Russian agreement on building the Baiterek space rocket complex at BaikonurCosmodrome, state news agency Kazinform reported.

[Tajikistan warns about possible establishment of a terrorist government in northern Afghanistan](#)

December 18,2019, Tehran Times

Mohammad Ali Watanzadeh, the secretary of Tajikistan national security council, who was addressing the second Regional Security Dialogue conference in Tehran, said, "Presence of terrorist groups in northern Afghanistan is a serious growing threat."

[China increases influence in Central Asia through Belt and Road Initiative](#)

December 20, 2019, CNA

Central Asia is growing in strategic significance as it builds partnerships through China's Belt and Road initiative. With Russia's role in the region receding, China has stepped in, working with countries like Uzbekistan on infrastructure projects linking east to west.

West Asia

[U.S. State Department plans to reduce staffing levels in Iraq](#)

December 18, 2019, CNN International

The State Department plans to dramatically downsize the number of American personnel in Iraq, according to a memo sent to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

[Hamas plans attacks against Israel from Turkey - report](#)

December 18, 2019, The Jerusalem Post

Hamas operatives are being allowed to plan attacks against Israel from Turkey, according to an eye-opening report in The Telegraph. Turkish President RecepTayyipErdoğan warmly greeted Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Istanbul on Saturday, but the relationship between the two is deeper and closer than with Turkey's surrounding nations.

[KL Summit shaken by Imran's absence, Saudi ire](#)

December 19, 2019, Asia Times

The Kuala Lumpur Summit being hosted by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur this week was originally conceived as a landmark event in the politics of the Muslim world. It still is, albeit on shakier ground after being abandoned by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan at the last minute.

[Libyan government activates cooperation accord with Turkey](#)

December 20, 2019, The Guardian

The UN-recognised Libyan government has agreed to activate a military cooperation agreement with Turkey, bringing closer the possible dispatch of Turkish advisory troops to help defend the capital, Tripoli, from an attack by forces supported by the United Arab Emirates and Russia.

[Head of Iran's Quds Force in Yemen Who's Behind Saudi Oil Attack 'Identified'](#)

December 18, 2019, Haaretz

Western intelligence sources cited by the French newsletter Intelligence Online say Gen. Reza Shahi has 400 fighters behind him. He's just one card in the hands of the Tehran regime, as a CIA veteran tells Haaretz.

[Anti-Israel stalwarts blame Zionists and Jews for Corbyn's defeat in UK election](#)

December 18, 2019, Times of Israel

More anti-Israel stalwarts across Europe are coming forward to blame the Jewish state and Zionism for the defeat of Britain's Labour Party in last week's elections.

United States

United States

[US committee wants India, Japan and South Korea to share military & human intelligence](#)

December 15, 2019, IDRW.org

With an eye on China, and as part of its effort to maintain peace and rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region, a top Congressional committee has sought to bring three democratic countries of the region India, Japan and South Korea at par with its 'Five Eyes' for intelligence sharing. The 'Five Eyes' is an alliance comprising of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Great Britain and the US. It is an international agreement under which these five countries cooperate and share signals intelligence, military intelligence, and human intelligence.

[India and USA conclude several landmark agreements in 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue](#)

December 19, 2019, The Economic Times

India and USA have concluded several landmark agreements in both defence and Civilian sectors at the just concluded 2+2 Ministerial in Washington. The key outcomes from the meet are mentioned in the report.

[US reaffirms support to India's permanent bid at UNSC at second 2+2 mechanism](#)

December 19, 2019, Times Now

The United States reaffirmed its support to India for its permanent role in a reformed United Nations Security Council during the second annual India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in Washington. The second annual meeting undertook a comprehensive review of cross-cutting foreign policy and defence and security issues in the bilateral relationship between two countries.

[US thanks India for principled generosity in hosting Dalai Lama](#)

December 14, 2019, The Times of India

The United States on Friday thanked India for "principled generosity" in hosting the Dalai Lama as it commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Tibetan spiritual leader receiving the Nobel Prize.

[US legislators approve United States-Mexico-Canada trade deal](#)

December 20, 2019, Al Jazeera

The United States House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a new North American trade deal on Thursday that includes tougher labour and

automotive content rules but leaves \$1.2 trillion in annual US-Mexico-Canada trade flows mostly unchanged.

[Donald Trump becomes the first impeached president to run for re-election](#)

December 19, 2019, The Economist

Donald Trump joins Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton as the only presidents to be impeached. Like them, he will probably be acquitted by the Senate—but also like them, his legacy is now tarnished.

[Trump impeached, here's what happens next](#)

December 19, 2019, The Economic Times

The U.S. House of Representatives impeached President Donald Trump on charges of abuse of power and obstructing Congress, the culmination of an effort by Democrats that further inflamed partisan tensions in Washington and deepened the nation's ideological divide.

[Pentagon review finds no new threat from Saudi students](#)

December 20, 2019, Al Jazeera

The Pentagon said that it found no threat in its review of about 850 military students from Saudi Arabia studying in the United States, following a December 6 shooting by a Saudi Air Force officer who killed three people at a base in Florida.

[US slaps visa restrictions on several Iranian officials](#)

December 20, 2019, Al Jazeera

The United States said it will restrict visas for Iranian officials for their alleged roles in suppressing peaceful protests and imposed sanctions on two Iranian judges as Washington ramped up its pressure on the Islamic Republic.

[Trump administration opposes bill meant to deter Russia](#)

December 19, 2019, CNN

The Trump administration is pushing back on a wide-ranging piece of legislation meant to deter and punish Russian aggression and its interference in the 2016 election.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[PM Modi Meets Portuguese PM, Discusses Broader Roadmap For Strengthening Bilateral Relations](#)

December 19, 2019, Bloomberg

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his Portuguese counterpart Antonio Costa on Thursday and discussed a broader roadmap for strengthening bilateral relations in areas such as defence, science and technology and trade and further boosting European Union-India relationship.

[We want to be India's gateway to Europe: Portuguese PM Costa](#)

December 19, 2019, The Economic Times

Indian-origin Prime Minister of Portugal, Antonio Costa, said that independent and democratic India was built upon Mahatma Gandhi's vision of pluralism and diversity and the world still has much to learn from it.

[India, Germany ink pact for Rs 1,958 crore finance to develop energy-efficient housing programme](#)

December 16, 2019, The Economic Times

India has secured a USD 277 million (about Rs 1,900 crore) loan from Germany to establish an energy-efficient housing programme in the country.

[CAB: India's key ally France calls CAA country's internal matter](#)

December 16, 2019, Financial express

In an interaction with the media, he said that "It is not for us to comment on the internal matter of India. Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is India's internal matter and we respect it."

[EU Makes Deeper Economic Ties With China a Priority](#)

December 19, 2019, The Wall Street Journal

The European Union's new leadership team has set a priority of deepening economic ties with China while protecting its own markets, a top official said, casting 2020 as a test of whether strains in Europe's relations with Beijing can be reversed.

[Europe and China after Brexit: The 5G question](#)

December 19, 2019, ECFR

A decision looms for Britain on 5G and Huawei. London's choice will signal whether it wishes to stay close to Europe when dealing with Beijing – or to go its own way.

[Poland may have to leave EU, Supreme Court warns](#)

December 17, 2019, BBC

Poland could have to leave the EU over its judicial reform proposals, the country's Supreme Court has warned. The proposals would allow judges to be dismissed if they questioned the government's judicial reforms.

[Closing statement by the Finnish Presidency and the European Commission on behalf of the EU and its Member States at COP25](#)

December 15, 2019, Europa

The European Union and its Member States stand firm behind the Paris Agreement. We came to Madrid to wrap up the 'Katowice rulebook' and to clear the path for raising ambition in 2020 at COP26 in Glasgow.

[MPs to vote on Boris Johnson's Brexit deal](#)

December 20, 2019, BBC

MPs will vote on Friday on whether to back the prime minister's plan for the UK to leave the EU on 31 January. The EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill would also ban the government from extending the transition period - where the UK is out of the EU but follows many of its rules - past 2020.

[Government to shut Brexit department on 31 January](#)

December 19, 2019, BBC News

The Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) will be closed down on 31 January - Brexit deadline day. The government department, led by Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay, oversaw negotiations between the UK and EU on the exit and future relationship.

[France deploys armed drones in Sahel anti-jihadi fight](#)

December 20, 2019, The Japan Times

France has officially deployed its first armed drones, three American-built Reapers fitted with laser-guided missiles, in its fight against a jihadi insurrection in Africa's Sahel region, Defense Minister Florence Parly announced.

Russia

[India-Russia joint tri-service exercise 'Indra 2019' concludes](#)

December 19, 2019, WION

Indra 2019 will culminate on 19 December with an Integrated Fire Power demonstration and the Closing Ceremony.

[Putin calls Japan-U.S. security alliance a threat](#)

December 20, 2019, Japan Today

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday Japan's security alliance with the United States continues to pose a threat, suggesting it remains a stumbling block to the signing of a postwar peace treaty between Tokyo and Moscow.

[Intensified drills on Russia's doorstep indicate NATO is gearing up for major conflict – Moscow's top general](#)

December 17, 2019, RT

MiG-31K fighter jets armed with the new Kinzhal air-launched ballistic missile based at Kola, Franz Josef Land and Novaya Zemlya could in practice pose a threat it is not possible to defend against in the European Arctic, northern Scandinavia and North-Atlantic.

[Russia and Ukraine agree to gas transit deal](#)

December 19, 2019, Deutsche Welle

Russian and Ukrainian representatives have met in Berlin for "very intense negotiations" on the current 10-year gas agreement due to expire in two weeks. However, the terms of the deal are not yet clear.

[Russia confirms appeal against Wada four-year doping ban](#)

December 19, 2019, The Guardian

Russia's anti-doping agency, Rusada, said on Thursday that it would appeal against the four-year doping sanctions barring the country from competing under its flag at top international sporting events. The Rusada board voted to file an arbitration case with the court of arbitration for sport (CAS) in Switzerland.

[Russia Seeks to Build Local Force in Northeast Syria](#)

December 19, 2019, VOA

Russia has been working to establish a new military force in the Kurdish-majority, northeastern part of Syria with the aim to deploy those troops and hardware to areas along the Syria-Turkey border.

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[Costa Rica: India's Launchpad for greater ties in Latin America](#)

December 18, 2019, Financial Express

Costa Rica is the most peaceful and prosperous country in Central America. This small country with a population of 5 million has a total GDP of \$ 60 billion, with a PPP of \$ 16,100, making it an upper-middle-income country. This combination along with steady growth, political and social stability makes Costa Rica one of the least poor countries in Latin America and the Caribbean region. Its business-friendly environment, close proximity to the USA, and a large bilingual population make it a 'business-friendly' country.

[Can US-China trade truce help calm social unrest in Chile?](#)

December 19, 2019, Al Jazeera

The United States-China trade truce will allow Chile to spend more on social programs by supporting the price of its top export, copper, bolstering the Latin American country's drive to address social unrest, its economy minister said.

[Warrant for arrest of Evo Morales issued in Bolivia](#)

December 18, 2019, The Guardian

Prosecutors in Bolivia's capital have issued an arrest warrant against the former president Evo Morales, accusing him of sedition and terrorism. The interior minister, Arturo Murillo, recently brought charges against Morales, alleging he promoted violent clashes that led to 35 deaths during disturbances before and after he left office.

[Violence in Mexico: President makes fighting crime top priority](#)

December 18, 2019, Al Jazeera

Mexico's president says addressing violent crime remains his top priority. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador made the remarks as the government outlined the latest statistics on violence.

[As Trump hails cooperation, 5 migrant families sent to Guatemala](#)

December 18, 2019, Al Jazeera

As President Donald Trump welcomed his Guatemalan counterpart to the White House on Tuesday and praised the two countries' cooperation to get "rid of the most dangerous people", five Honduran and Salvadoran families were sent from the US to Guatemala under a new controversial asylum agreement.

[Cuba-U.S. relations: A five-year chronology of the "thaw"](#)

December 18, 2019, Cuba News

This five-year period, which began with the historic announcement of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations and the visit of President Barack Obama to Cuba, ends with a 180-degree turn in U.S. policy towards the island, new presidents in both countries and relations at a critical point.

[Mexico cites lopsided support for Yucatan Peninsula train](#)

December 16, 2019, The Public's Radio

Mexico President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has claimed a mandate to move ahead with the Mayan Train project in the country's Yucatan Peninsula. A weekend referendum in 84 municipalities produced lopsided results in favor of the project.

[After the Argentina debacle, the IMF endorses weakening capital controls in Ecuador](#)

December 18, 2019, Open Democracy

Over the past year, a rebranded IMF returned to Latin America with promises of loan agreements that would be different than the dreaded "structural adjustment programmes" of the past.

[Colombia seeks US role in Venezuela crisis talks](#)

December 19, 2019, France 24

Colombia's new foreign minister met with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as Bogota called for Washington to back talks to resolve Venezuela's long political crisis.

Africa

[NATO and African Union exchange views on furthering Counter-Terrorism Cooperation](#)

December 19, 2019, NATO

The first dialogue on counter-terrorism cooperation between NATO and the African Union was held at NATO Headquarters in Brussels (Belgium) on 18 and 19 December 2019.

[A year of political upheaval in Sudan](#)

December 19, 2019, Reuters

Officials declare a state of emergency in the city of Atbara protests against price rises and the local headquarters of President Bashir's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) is set ablaze.

[Algeria swears in new president as opposition debates response](#)

December 19, 2019, Al Jazeera

Abdelmadjid Tebboune, former prime minister who casts himself as a reformer, was elected last week in a vote.

[Gambia stands up for the Rohingya](#)

December 18, 2019, African Arguments

Gambia has been hailed for standing up for Myanmar's Rohingya, a Muslim minority, many of whom fled to Bangladesh due to persecution.

[14 months after stroke, Gabon's Bongo opens regional summit](#)

December 19, 2019, Al Jazeera

Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba has opened a central African summit, marking a return to the international scene nearly 14 months after suffering a stroke.

[Boko Haram launches deadly attack on Chad fishing village](#)

December 19, 2019, Alaraby.co.uk

Boko Haram launched a deadly attack on a Chad fishing village, a government official said, as the extremist group extended its activities outside Nigeria.



Delhi Policy Group
Core 5A, 1st Floor,
India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road
New Delhi - 110003
India

www.delhipolicygroup.org