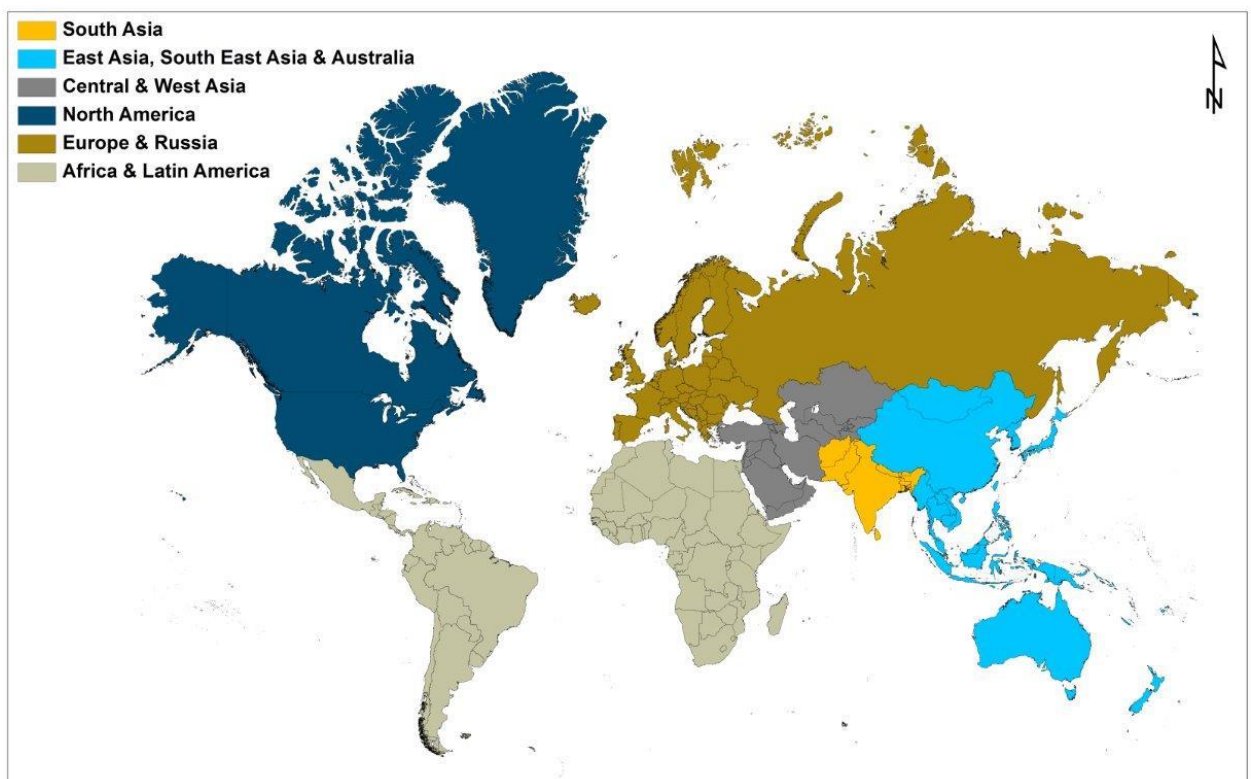




Delhi Policy Group

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



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DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

Volume 3, Issue 52

ABOUT US

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

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

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South Asia

India

[1st sign of upgrade for India in ties with US](#)

December 23, 2019, The Asian Age

The second round of the “2 plus 2” dialogue between India and the United States – involving the foreign and defence ministers of the two countries – which concluded in Washington last week – appears to give us a new paradigm, that in India-US relations two plus two is on a trajectory to becoming six.

[India needs to remove growing negative perceptions of its domestic policies in the Muslim world](#)

December 24, 2019, The Indian Express

The Islamic summit in Kuala Lumpur last week raised many familiar questions about the role of religion in promoting solidarity between nations; it also reminded us of the well-known answer that national interest often tends to trump shared faith. The gathering in Kuala Lumpur did bring some key Islamic nations together, but it also revealed the deepening schisms in the Muslim world today that are of considerable importance for the Subcontinent.

['Russia and India will further develop military dialogue and counter terror cooperation in 2020'](#)

December 23, 2019, Economic Times

The Russian envoy Nikolay Kudashev said that Russia and India will further develop next year a military dialogue and deepen counter terrorism cooperation bilaterally and in the frameworks of BRICS, SCO and RIC-like formats. Talking to reporters, Kudashev also said that Russia hopes the Free Trade Agreement between Eurasian Economic Union and India comes to an early conclusion.

[Uzbekistan keen to connect India via Afghanistan & Iran](#)

December 22, 2019, Economic Times

Uzbekistan President shavkatmirziyoyev is keen that India joins a railway project in Afghanistan that will help in stabilising the landlocked country and connect it to Eurasia and Iran. The railway, almost 650 km in length, which will connect Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat cities and will later be extended to Kabul.

[India, Japan vow to deepen maritime ties](#)

December 26, 2019, UNI

India and Japan have reiterated the importance of the India-Japan Maritime Affairs Dialogue as an important mechanism between the two countries for consultations on issues of mutual interest in maritime affairs. Indra Mani Pandey, Additional Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs), MEA, led the Indian delegation while the Japanese delegation was led by Ambassador Yamanaka A Osamu, Deputy Assistant Minister, Deputy Director-General in the Foreign Policy Bureau.

[India-China military ties 'improving', thanks to Modi, Xi efforts: PLA](#)

December 26, 2019, Times of India

China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) has said that its ties with the Indian military are "improving" with the strategic dialogue, practical cooperation and exchanges, "thanks" to the efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping. Defence spokesperson Col.Wu Qian said that after the just concluded joint counterterrorism drills, the two militaries have plans to conduct various exchanges and celebration activities.

[India now in the midst of major economic slowdown, urgent actions needed: IMF](#)

December 24, 2019, India Today

IMF in its annual review said declining consumption and investment accompanied by falling tax revenue have arrested India's GDP growth, which was one of the fastest in the world just a year ago.

[Indian envoy to United States Harsh vardhanshringla will be the next Foreign Secretary](#)

December 23, 2019, Economic Times

Indian envoy to United States Harsh vardhanshringla will take over as India's next Foreign Secretary after incumbent Vijay Gokhale's term ends next month. During his stint in Beijing as Ambassador of India to China, his role in Doklam crisis ensured that the crisis which had all the characteristics of blowing up into a major disaster was resolved amicably.

[Distorted narrative being put out on S Jaishankar's cancelled meet: Sources](#)

December 22, 2019, India Today

Jaishankar cancelled a meeting with the US House of Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) after it refused to exclude Indian-origin Congresswoman pramilajayapal,

a vocal critic of India's policy on Kashmir. Sources said a meeting with Jayapal was not sought as she is not a member of the Congressional panel, adding it was the HFAC which insisted on unilaterally bringing in a non-member for the meeting.

[China, India agree to enhance mutual political trust to properly handle border issues](#)

December 21, 2019, Xinhua

China and India agreed here Saturday to enhance mutual political trust so as to properly handle border issues and jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity in the border areas. At the 22nd meeting between Chinese and Indian special representatives on boundary issues, visiting Chinese special representative, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the annual meeting serves as a main channel for the two countries to discuss border issues, and it is also an important platform for the two sides to carry out strategic communication.

[Indian Air Force to decommission last mig-27 squadron on December 27](#)

December 26, 2019, Live Mint

After series of crashes, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has decided to finally decommission its mig-27s with the sole remaining squadron in Rajasthan's Jodhpur flying its last sortie this week. The squadron of the seven mig-27 fighters will have its last sortie from Jodhpur Air Base on December 27 and all the planes will thereafter be decommissioned. It will be history as no other country operates mig-27 now.

[Cabinet Committee on Security clears Chief of Defence Staff post: Here are all the details](#)

December 24, 2019, Economic Times

Union Cabinet Committee on Security approved the creation of the post of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) – a four star position being created as part of a defence management overhaul. CDS will be the single-point military adviser to the government as suggested by the Kargil Review Committee in 1999. CDS will head the department of military affairs with salary equivalent to Service Chiefs.

Pakistan

[Japan inks memorandum with Pakistan on import of skilled labor](#)

December 24, 2019, The Japan Times

Japan and Pakistan signed a memorandum of cooperation on Monday aimed at paving the way for skilled Pakistani workers to work in Japan, the Japanese Embassy said.

[US resuming military training for Pakistan to improve ties](#)

December 21, 2019, Dawn

The Trump administration has approved the resumption of military training facilities for Pakistan to "improve bilateral cooperation on shared priorities. The State Department administers the Military Education and Training (IMET) programme, which enables Pakistan and other countries to send their officers to US institutions.

[Riyadh forced Islamabad to skip Malaysia moot: Erdogan](#)

December 21, 2019, Dawn

Pakistan cited reasons for keeping itself away from the Kuala Lumpur Summit after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's allegation that Islamabad skipped the moot because of pressure from Saudi Arabia. "Pakistan did not participate in the KL summit as time and efforts were needed to address the concerns of major Muslim countries regarding possible division in the Ummah," said Pakistan FO spokesperson Aisha Farooqui in a statement.

[US retains Pakistan on religious watch list](#)

December 21, 2019, Dawn

The United States has retained Pakistan among the countries that tolerate religious discrimination. The determination, made on Dec 18, includes Myanmar, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan among the states that have been re-designated as "Countries of Particular Concern (CPC)".

[Economic reforms on track: IMF](#)

December 21, 2019, Dawn

According to IMF Pakistan's economic reform is on track but faster progress is needed to improve the anti-money laundering and combating financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) framework.

[Multan lecturer sentenced to death on blasphemy charge](#)

December 22, 2019, Dawn

A district and sessions court on Saturday sentenced a former university lecturer to death on blasphemy charges. Junaid Hafeez — a visiting lecturer at the Department of English Literature of the Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Multan — was booked on a blasphemy charge on March 13, 2013.

[FATF response to Pakistan progress report received](#)

December 22, 2019, Dawn

Responding to the Pakistan progress report, a regional affiliate of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has forwarded 150 comments and clarifications in all sectors, but mostly related to the action taken by the country against banned groups and proscribed persons. Pakistan had submitted the initial progress report to the Asia Pacific Group (APG) of the FATF on December 3 regarding implementation of the action plan, which related to shortcomings pointed out at the previous review.

[Gas crisis worsens across country](#)

December 24, 2019, The News

Pakistan's current gas crisis is worsening day by day due to cold weather. The government has notified a ban on the import of furnace oil, and is looking to move the generation of electricity to LNG and coal in the future.

[Pakistan needs \\$27 bn for financing requirements of external front: IMF](#)

December 26, 2019, The News

The IMF has estimated that Pakistan's gross financing requirements of external front stood at \$27.332 billion during the current fiscal year 2019-20. The IMF's staff review report has given its projection for five years and stated that this gross financing requirements would be estimated at \$26.696 billion in next fiscal year 2020-21, \$28.119 in financial year 2021-22, \$26.684 billion in 2022-23 and \$28.685 billion in fiscal year 2023-24.

[High treason: Musharraf challenges special court's verdict](#)

December 27, 2019, The Express Tribune

Former military dictator General (retd) Pervez Musharraf moved the Lahore High Court against special court's verdict convicting him of high treason and sentencing him to death.

Afghanistan

[Ghani tops preliminary election results: IEC](#)

December 22, 2019, Tolo News

President Ashraf Ghani earned 923,868 votes and 50.64% , to lead the preliminary results of the 2019 presidential election, according to the Independent Election Commission. Abdullah Abdullah followed with 720,990 votes and 39.52%.

[Taliban's top leaders meet in Quetta: Sources](#)

December 25, 2019, Tolo News

Members of the Taliban's leadership are meeting the group's top leader Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada in the Pakistani city of Quetta and they are discussing a potential ceasefire with the US.

[US service member killed in Afghanistan – Taliban claims responsibility](#)

December 23, 2019, American Military News

A U.S. service member was killed in combat in Afghanistan on December 23 and the Taliban has claimed responsibility for the attack. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told the New York Times that the Taliban planted the explosives to target U.S. and Afghan forces.

[ISI-ISIS sponsored suicide bombings will target Indian missions in Afghanistan](#)

December 25, 2019, Khaama Press

An Intelligence Bureau report has said that there is a plot that has been hatched to bomb the Indian missions in Afghanistan. ISI has tasked the Lashkar-e-Tayiba and the Islamic State in Afghanistan to carry out the bombings. The ISIS in Afghanistan has a large number of Indians. Most of the Indians who are part of the ISIS Khorasan in Afghanistan are from Kerala.

[India, Iran agree to accelerate Chabahar Project](#)

December 23, 2019, Tolo News

India and Iran on Sunday agreed to accelerate work on the Chabahar port, which is jointly being developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan. The decision was made after India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met with his Iranian counterpart, Javad Zarif in Tehran.

Bangladesh

[Dhaka, Beijing discuss ways for early repatriation of Rohingyas](#)

December 26, 2019, The Daily Star

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming met Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and discussed the early repatriation of the displaced Rohingyas and for an early date of return to their homeland, apart from other issues of mutual interests.

[2nd Bangladesh bank to issue China's unionpay cards](#)

December 23, 2019, Xinhua

Bangladesh Eastern Bank Limited (EBL) has become the second commercial bank in Bangladesh to issue China's unionpay card. Unionpay is one of the most widely accepted payment network around the world, with card acceptance in over 174 countries and regions, he said.

[India, Pakistan enmity main reason why SAARC is not prospering: Bangladesh FM](#)

December 24, 2019, Indian Express

Enmity between India and Pakistan is one of the main reasons why SAARC is not prospering, Bangladesh Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen has said, while expressing optimism about other regional initiatives such as the BIMSTEC and the BBIN. His remarks comes following India and Pakistan blaming each other over the lack of cooperation and coordination among the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member states earlier this month.

[Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina Re-Elected As Awami League Party President](#)

December 21, 2019, NDTV

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been re-elected as the president of the ruling Awami League while the country's transport minister obaidulquader will continue to be the party's general secretary. Ms Hasina was re-elected to the post for a ninth term, while Mr Quader has been re-elected for a second term.

Nepal

[Nepal: Oli-led government loses two-third majority, Socialist Party withdraws support](#)

December 25, 2019, WION

A day after the chairman of the Socialist Party, Upendra Yadav, resigned from the post of deputy prime minister, withdrew its support from -led government

dragging it down to a simple majority government from a two-third majority in the Parliament. The angst Socialist Party-Nepal decided to withdraw its support accusing Prime Minister Oli of failing to keep the pre-alliance agreement of the constitution amendment.

[Nepal detains 122 Chinese for suspected cybercrime and bank fraud](#)

December 24, 2019, Reuters

Police in Nepal have detained 122 Chinese men and women in its biggest crackdown on crime by foreigners entering the country on tourist visas. The Chinese are suspected of cybercrime and hacking into bank cash machines.

Sri Lanka

[Russian foreign minister to visit Sri Lanka, India on January 14-15](#)

December 27, 2019, TASS

On January 14, Sergei Lavrov will meet with Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, also planning to hold talks with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena.

[Indian Chief of Naval Staff successfully concludes Sri Lanka tour](#)

December 23, 2019, Adaderana Lk

During his visit to Sri Lanka, the Indian CNS Admiral Karambir Singh met the Prime Minister, the Secretary Defence, the Chief of Defence Staff, the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy, the Commander of the Sri Lanka Army and the Commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force. Admiral Singh who graced the Commissioning ceremony of the Midshipmen as the chief guest at the Naval and Maritime Academy on 22nd December left the same day after meeting Commander of the Navy Vice Admiral Piyal De Silva.

[Sri Lankan President says he will not renegotiate the Hambantota Agreement with China](#)

December 24, 2019, Industry Global News

Speaking to Colombo-based foreign correspondents, President Rajapaksa said that he would not renegotiate the project's commercial agreement as it had already been signed. He added that the government would go ahead with it if additional provisions are required to convince the security agreement.

Maldives

[MNDF strengthens security, raises alert status in Maldives](#)

December, 24, 2019, The Edition

Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) raised the alert status across the country and strengthened security measures. According to a press release by MNDF, the alert status was raised to 'Yellow two'. Yellow alerts are issued when there is an increased or predictable threat to the security and sovereignty of the country. This alert comes at a time when government institutions are taking notable measures against the increasing extremism within society.

East & South East Asia

China

[No need to fear joint military exercise](#)

December 26, 2019, Global Times

A joint Iran-Russia-China military exercise kicked off in the Gulf of Oman on Friday, to which Western media has been paying close attention. Their commentaries mostly focus on tensions between Iran and the US, Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as ties among Iran, China and Russia, all identified as competitors by the US as the three powers showcase their unity.

[Hukou relaxation can unleash growth potential](#)

December 26, 2019, Global Times

The General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and State Council of China Wednesday issued a policy guidance that calls for the cancellation of hukou, or household registration, restrictions on Chinese mainland cities with fewer than 3 million permanent residents. The document also proposes relaxing restrictions in cities with 3-5 million permanent residents.

[US policy on China won't change](#)

December 26, 2019, Global Times

With deep seated problems apparent throughout the world, and increasing instability and uncertainties, will there be a change in fundamental US policy toward China? We have very good news that China and the US have reached a conclusion on a phase one trade deal, which is excellent. But I suppose the answer is "No." The US won't change its fundamental policy, whether Trump is reelected or not.

[Why not to be pessimistic about China-US ties](#)

December 26, 2019, Global Times

I have been trying hard to stay optimistic lately. Trying hard because this year has been so depressing. In the US, people holding different political views, family and friends included, are either hurling insults or have stopped talking to one another. The outside world is also plagued by conflict, with the fight between China and the US part of it.

[Why was Huawei able to stand up to US pressure in 2019?](#)

December 26, 2019, Global Times

While attacks from the world's most powerful country turned 2019 into the toughest year ever for Huawei, the Chinese telecom giant is still standing, and doing well.

[Neighbors need to walk their talk: China Daily editorial](#)

December 26, 2019, China Daily

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Osaka was a tentative move toward improving the strained China-Japan relationship, the latter's just-concluded visit to China to attend the China-Japan-Republic of Korea leaders' meeting, ahead of which he again met with Xi, indicates greater shared interest in reorienting the two countries' sometimes volatile ties.

[Chengdu meeting puts focus on larger regional picture: China Daily editorial](#)

December 24, 2019, China Daily

In their leaders' meeting in the Chinese city of Chengdu on Tuesday, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Republic of Korea President Moon Jae-in adopted a series of documents signaling the three countries' shared intent to strengthen economic integration, including an outlook on trilateral cooperation in the next decade and a list of early harvest projects under the model of "China- Japan-ROK plus X".

[US should honor Singapore consensus: China Daily editorial](#)

December 24, 2019, China Daily

China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, speaking to Chinese media on Monday, said that the renewed tensions between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are mainly due to Washington failing to address the legitimate and reasonable concerns of Pyongyang and not effectively implementing the consensus reached in Singapore.

[Tripartite leaders' meeting can synergize efforts for regional peace and prosperity: China Daily editorial](#)

December 24, 2019, China Daily

Expectations are high as Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Republic of Korea President Moon Jae-in meet in Chengdu, China, on Tuesday for the eighth leaders' meeting of China, Japan and the ROK.

[Trilateral meeting can ensure year ends on a positive note: China Daily editorial](#)

December 24, 2019, China Daily

Premier Li Keqiang will host Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in in China's southwestern city of Chengdu on Tuesday for the eighth China-Japan-ROK leaders' meeting.

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

December 19, 2019, China Daily

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

[Chinese military spokesperson urges U.S. not to implement negative fiscal clauses](#)

December 26, 2019, Xinhua

A Chinese military spokesperson Thursday urged the United States not to implement the China-related negative clauses in a newly signed act. Responding to a question related to the signing of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, which contains negative elements regarding China's Taiwan, Hong Kong and Xinjiang, Wu Qian, a spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense, said the Chinese armed forces firmly oppose the move.

[As China expands presence, India seeks to catch up in western Indian Ocean](#)

December 27, 2019, The Times of India

Looking to consolidate its presence in the western Indian Ocean, a region where China continues to expand its presence both economically and militarily, India this week appointed a defence attache for its mission in Madagascar, the island nation off the coast of East Africa.

[India-China military ties 'improving', thanks to Modi, Xi efforts: PLA](#)

December 26, 2019, The Times of India

China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) said on Thursday that its ties with the Indian military are "improving" with the strategic dialogue, practical cooperation and exchanges, "thanks" to the efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping.

[South China Sea standoff: Can Quad check China's encroachment?](#)

December 26, 2019, Wion News

The Quad has repeatedly been subjected to varying perceptions regarding its role, viability and prospects. Quad by nomenclature is a security dialogue forum and

not a military alliance, hence the expectations from Quad have to be appropriately restricted for the time being.

Japan

[Japan's Cabinet adopts plan to dispatch defense forces to Middle East amid rising Iran tensions](#)

December 27, 2019, The Japan Times

The Cabinet formally adopted a plan to deploy a Self-Defense Forces unit for an intelligence-gathering mission in the sea off Yemen and Oman, dispatching a helicopter-carrying destroyer in February amid strained tensions over Iran's controversial nuclear program.

[Amid bribery and cherry party scandals, Abe unlikely to call a snap Japan election](#)

December 27, 2019, The Japan Times

Ruling party members now believe that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is even less likely to call a general election in the near future after the arrest of a former state minister for alleged bribery.

[Abe discusses Iran, N Korea in call with Trump](#)

December 22, 2019, The Japan Times

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Saturday discussed events in Iran and North Korea with U.S. President Donald Trump in a lengthy phone call.

[Japan extends construction period for U.S. base in Okinawa to 10 years](#)

December 23, 2019, Japan Today

Japan has decided to extend the construction period for a facility to transfer a key U.S. military base within Okinawa to about 10 years from its initial plan of five years, government officials said.

[Work on U.S. base at Henoko in Okinawa to cost nearly triple initial estimate](#)

December 26, 2019, The Japan Times

Building the replacement facility for the relocation of a U.S. military base in Okinawa Prefecture is now expected to cost ¥930 billion, far exceeding its initial ¥350 billion estimate, and be delayed several years, the Defense Ministry said.

[Abe asks Johnson to minimize Brexit impact on Japanese firms](#)

December 22, 2019, Japan Today

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe spoke by phone on Saturday with his British counterpart Boris Johnson, asking him to realize the United Kingdom's exit from

the European Union by minimizing the impact on business activities of Japanese companies and the global economy, the Foreign Ministry said.

[Leaders of Japan, China, S Korea to promote N Korea-U.S. dialogue](#)

December 24, 2019, Japan Today

Japan, China and South Korea have agreed to work together to promote dialogue between the United States and North Korea, South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Tuesday following a summit between the three countries in China.

[Abe urges China to exercise self-restraint on Hong Kong](#)

December 24, 2019, Japan Today

Hong Kong should "continue to be free and open", Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the Chinese president on Monday, as the city is rocked by months of pro-democracy protests.

[Abe eager to invite Xi as state guest to Japan despite some opposition](#)

December 25, 2019, Japan Today

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Tuesday voiced his eagerness to prepare for a state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping, although some conservative lawmakers oppose the plan due largely to the lingering political unrest in Hong Kong.

[Abe, Li agree on need to open new era for Japan, China](#)

December 26, 2019, Japan Today

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang agreed Wednesday on the need to create a new era for the two countries as they step up preparations for Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Japan next spring.

[Route to 'new era' of Japan-China ties unclear, despite leaders' claims of momentum](#)

December 25, 2019, The Japan Times

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang agreed Wednesday on the need to create a new era for the two countries as they step up preparations for President Xi Jinping's state visit to Japan next spring.

[Abe asks Moon to act on dispute at first meeting for 15 months](#)

December 25, 2019, Japan Today

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe asked South Korea's president on Tuesday to take steps to resolve a bitter dispute at their first bilateral talks in 15 months, a sign that while the mood is improving, knotty problems between the U.S. allies remain.

[Japan and South Korea leaders vow to keep talking, but no progress made on wartime labor](#)

December 24, 2019, The Japan Times

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Moon Jae-in held talks in China on Tuesday, ending a 15-month hiatus in formal dialogue and marking a fresh sign of a nascent thaw in relations strained over wartime labor and trade issues.

[Japanese official kept lid on info about 2 men living in N Korea](#)

December 27, 2019, Japan Today

Japan's government got word in 2014 that two men who disappeared in the late 1970s were alive in North Korea, but a senior official decided not to release the information due to fears that the public would react negatively, sources with knowledge of the matter said.

[The great power game in the Pacific: What Japan can do](#)

December 24, 2019, The Japan Times

The Pacific island states have never been at the center of geopolitical discussion. The names of the 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) — nations such as Fiji, Kiribati, Palau and Samoa — may evoke a romanticized image of a remote paradise in the Pacific, but certainly not as a point of strategic importance.

Korea

[Constitutional Court to rule on 2015 Seoul-Tokyo deal on wartime sex slaves](#)

December 27, 2019, The Korea Times

South Korea's Constitutional Court plans to deliver a decision Friday afternoon on whether the government's controversial deal with Japan in 2015 on Tokyo's World War II sexual enslavement of Korean women is constitutional after nearly four years of deliberations.

[US withdrawing \\$5 billion demand for defense cost-sharing 'win-win' for allies](#)

December 26, 2019, The Korea Times

The United States has withdrawn its \$5 billion (about 6 trillion won) demand for defense cost-sharing with South Korea, according to media reports citing diplomatic sources. The reports said the two allies are likely to reach an agreement for a 10 percent to 20 percent increase to Seoul's contribution for next year's defense cost-sharing.

[Korea urged not to provoke China over US Indo-Pacific Strategy](#)

December 26, 2019, The Korea Times

South Korea should be cautious about joining the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy because it could provoke China and possibly result in further economic retaliation, according to experts.

[South Korea rejects China's version of President Moon's Hong Kong remarks](#)

December 26, 2019, The Korea Times

Seoul has contradicted an attempt by Beijing to back South Korea into China's official stance on Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

[Moon to tackle THAAD retaliation, export curbs](#)

December 25, 2019, The Korea Times

President Moon Jae-in is expected to push harder for resolving pending diplomatic issues surrounding the Korean Peninsula including China's protests over the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) and Japan's export controls, amid the three countries' efforts to take united action toward denuclearization and peace in the region.

[NSC reviews Moon's China trip, vows push for closer ties with Beijing, Tokyo](#)

December 27, 2019, The Korea Herald

During the weekly session of the National Security Council standing committee, its members agreed to strengthen cooperation with Japan and China so that the latest summit diplomacy can lead to "concrete fruits," Cheong Wa Dae said. It was presided over by Chung Eui-yong, director of the presidential national security office.

[Between China, Japan](#)

December 26, 2019, The Korea Times

The recently ended trilateral and bilateral summit talks among the leaders of South Korea, China and Japan showed the plight of Seoul walking a tightrope amid troubled relations with its two powerful neighbors.

[Unification minister calls for interim deal in US-NK nuclear talks](#)

December 27, 2019, The Korea Times

Unification Minister Kim Yeon-chul has called on the United States and North Korea to reach a tentative deal in their nuclear negotiations to keep the momentum for dialogue alive amid concern Pyongyang could return to a provocative tack next year.

[S.Korea, U.S. Special Forces Practice Capturing N.Korean Leaders](#)

December 23, 2019, The Chosun Ilbo

The U.S. Special Operations Command Korea conducted a joint drill with South Korea's Special Warfare Command forces at Gunsan Air Base in November to practice infiltrating North Korea and capturing its leaders in an emergency.

[US flies surveillance aircraft over peninsula amid concerns over NK provocations](#)

December 27, 2019, The Korea Herald

A US maritime patrol plane has made a late-night flight over the Korean Peninsula, an aviation tracker said Friday, amid concerns that North Korea could launch provocations in protest over stalled nuclear talks with the United States.

[N.Korea Vows to Bolster Nuclear Arsenal](#)

December 23, 2019, The Chosun Ilbo

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has told top brass to bolster the country's nuclear arsenal, state media reported Sunday. Kim told 80 top generals in a meeting to bolster the isolated country's "military capability for self-defense," which is the usual code for nuclear weapons.

Southeast Asia

[Southeast Asia tames wage hikes to keep manufacturing thriving](#)

December 27, 2019, Nikkei Asian Review

Southeast Asian countries plan to raise minimum wages more slowly in 2020 as they seek to maintain competitive labor markets against China and weather the fallout from the trade war.

[China's ambitious bid for Southeast Asia hegemony](#)

December 24, 2019, Deutsche Welle

Concerns about China's hegemonic ambitions, mostly over the Belt and Road Initiative, are rising across Southeast Asia. While some countries in the region have succumbed to Chinese pressure, the rest are resisting it.

[Viewpoint: US crude flows to southeast Asia to grow](#)

December 27, 2019, Argus Media

Light sweet US crude volumes heading to southeast Asia are poised to increase in the coming year amid growing appetite for the grades from smaller refiners in the region, partly to comply with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) 2020 regulations cutting sulphur in marine fuels.

[Japanese Ambassador Voices Support For Myanmar on Genocide Charges](#)

December 26, 2019, Radio Free Asia

Japan believes that Myanmar did not commit state-sponsored genocide against Rohingya Muslims during a 2017 military-led crackdown that left thousands dead and drove more than 740,000 out of the country, Japan's ambassador to Myanmar said Monday, despite legal action being taken on such charges in international courts.

[China-Myanmar railway line may pose challenge for India](#)

December 26, 2019, The Economic Times

A proposed railway line from Kunming in China to two ports in Myanmar — close to the India-funded Sittwe port — is being closely watched by India amid the Centre's plans to connect corridors in the Bay of Bengal region as part of its Indo-Pacific strategy.

[Indonesia, Thailand Remember 15th Anniversary of Indian Ocean Tsunami](#)

December 26, 2019, Time

Thousands of people knelt in prayer in Indonesia's Aceh province at ceremonies Thursday marking the 15th anniversary of the Indian Ocean tsunami, one of modern history's worst natural disasters.

[Pirates Attack 5 Ships in 4 Days in the Singapore Strait](#)

December 25, 2019, Time

The ships in question in Monday's attacks were 105,000 dead weight ton crude oil tanker Bamzi and dry bulk carrier Trust Star. Bamzi loaded from Basrah in Iraq in November and is headed for Qingdao in China, according to Bloomberg tanker tracking data. Trust Star sailed from Gothenburg in Sweden in November and is headed for Huanghua in China, according to the data.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[Uzbekistan keen to connect India via Afghanistan & Iran](#)

December 22, 2019, The Economic Times

Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev is keen that India joins a railway project in Afghanistan that will help in stabilising the landlocked country and connect it to Eurasia and Iran.

[Indian observers monitor Uzbekistan polls amid ongoing reforms by President](#)

December 22, 2019, The Economic Times

Several observers and experts from India are visiting Uzbekistan, a key partner in Central Asia, to monitor landmark Parliamentary elections on Sunday amid President Shavkat Mrziyoyev's efforts to bring in transparent and efficient governance.

[Resource rich Kazakhstan launches political reforms as Central Asia opens up](#)

December 26, 2019, The Economic Times

Political reforms are being initiated in key Central Asian states. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev recently announced a package of significant political reforms, including on sensitive issues like public assembly, during the second meeting of the National Council of Public Trust, held December 20 in the capital Nursultan or what is formerly called Astana.

[Kazakhstan energy: Drive to adopt greener, healthier sources](#)

December 25, 2019, Al Jazeera

Faced with rising pollution and falling oil prices, Kazakhstan is looking to diversify its economy. Oil and hydrocarbon exports make up nearly three-quarters of its income but reliance on fossil fuels has given residents one of the highest rates of lung disease in the region.

[Kazakhstan's leadership opens up to 'alternative opinion'](#)

December 24, 2019, Euractiv

Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev delivered a major agenda-setting speech outlining measures to improve the economy and social standards, but also introducing several democratic reforms.

[Turkmenistan targets roadshows to attract foreign oil players](#)

December 24, 2019, Upstream Online

Turkmenistan is gearing up to try to attract international players to explore and develop resources in its portion of the Caspian Sea, with a series of roadshows planned for next year.

[Turkmenistan eyes to hold oil & gas road shows in UAE, UK](#)

December 25, 2019, Azer News

Turkmenistan's Turkmengaz, Turkmennebit (Turkmenoil) state concerns and the Turkmengeologiya (Turkmen geology) state corporation plan to hold oil and gas road shows in the UAE and the UK in 2020.

[Kyrgyzstan's future lies in EAEU-President Jeenbekov](#)

December 25, 2019, Kazinform

The future of Kyrgyzstan lies in Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Kyrgyz leader Sooronbay Jeenbekov stressed.

[Uzbekistan holds parliamentary elections lacking opposition](#)

December 22, 2019, Al Jazeera

Polls have closed in Uzbekistan's parliamentary elections against a backdrop of reforms that set the country on the path towards development. Under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's rule, significant improvements in freedom of media and speech as well as in relations with the outside world were made. Mirziyoyev has also released more than 50 political prisoners. A new electoral code is in place and the changes require 30 percent of party candidates to be women. Voting restrictions for individuals with criminal proceedings and convictions have also been lifted.

West Asia

[Trump, Egypt's Sisi agree on need to end Libya conflict: White House](#)

December 27, 2019, Reuters

U.S. President Donald Trump and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi agreed in a phone call that they reject "foreign exploitation" in Libya and urged parties to the conflict to take "urgent steps" to resolve the fighting, the White House said.

[Political unrest in Iraq creates loophole for terror groups to rise again: official](#)

December 26, 2019, Middle East Monitor

As the wave of mass protests sweeps across Iraq, there have been more frequent terror attacks in multiple parts of the country, said an Iraqi official.

[China, Russia, Iran to hold joint naval drills starting Friday](#)

December 26, 2019, Middle East Monitor

China, Iran and Russia will hold joint naval drills starting on Friday in the Indian Ocean and Sea of Oman, China's Defence Ministry said on Thursday, amid heightened tensions in the region between Tehran and Washington.

['Limited Conflict With Iran is Possible,' IDF Chief Warns](#)

December 25, 2019, The Algemeiner

"Winning wars isn't enough. We have to make sure that we achieve a decisive result that ensures deterrence," Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi said on Wednesday.

[Netanyahu wins landslide in battle for Likud party leadership](#)

December 26, 2019, The Guardian

Benjamin Netanyahu has won a landslide victory in a primary election for leadership of the ruling Likud party in Israel.

[Israel considers denying entry of ICC investigators in response to war crimes probe](#)

December 24, 2019, Middle East Monitor

Israel is considering preventing the entry of officials from the International Criminal Court (ICC) in response to the chief prosecutor's decision to investigate its possible war crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories.

[Kuwaiti MPs urge help for Uighurs, Indian Muslims](#)

December 25, 2019, Middle East Monitor

Kuwaiti lawmakers have called on their government to intervene to stop persecution of Muslims in East Turkistan and India.

[Pope prays for Middle East peace](#)

December 26, 2019, Arab News

Pope Francis called on Wednesday for an end to war and conflict in the Middle East, and made a particular appeal for a return to harmony in Lebanon.

[India, Oman sign agreement on maritime transport](#)

December 26, 2019, Arab News

Oman's ambassador to India said on Wednesday that a bilateral maritime pact would have a "far-reaching impact" on stability in the Arabian Gulf. The agreement, signed on Tuesday, enables India to expand its footprint in the western Indian Ocean, the Arabian Gulf and East Africa.

[Saudi foreign minister in Pakistan on maiden trip](#)

December 26, 2019, Gulf News

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan arrived here on Thursday on a maiden visit to Pakistan. The newly-appointed minister was received by his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmoud Qureshi at the airport.

[Syrian Troops Close In on Strategic Idlib Town](#)

December 25, 2019, Voice of America

Syrian government troops, supported by Russian warplanes, have advanced on a rebel-held town in the northwestern province of Idlib, local sources said Wednesday.

[Khamenei's advisor: Sooner or later, Israel will get an answer for bombing Syria](#)

December 25, 2019, The Jerusalem Post

"Sooner or later, Israel will have to answer for its bombing attacks in Syria," an advisor to Iranian leader Ali Khamenei said Tuesday. "Israel must stop. The advisor, Ali Akbar Velayati said that "the unlawful Israeli attacks in the region cannot pass without a response."

[Erdogan: Turkey to send troops to Libya at Tripoli's request](#)

December 26, 2019, Middle East Monitor

Turkey will send troops to Libya at the request of Tripoli as soon as next month, President Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday, putting the north African country's conflict at the centre of wider regional frictions.

[UAE marching towards becoming a \\$500b economy](#)

December 27, 2019, Khaleej Times

Rapid economic diversification underpinned by a string of bold reforms and a series of government stimulus measures are set to drive UAE growth at a steady pace as its gross domestic product (GDP) remains on track to surpass the \$500 billion mark over the next few years.

[Saudi Arabia blamed for Christmas eve market attack in Yemen that kills 17](#)

December 26, 2019, Middle East Eye

Saudi Arabia has been accused by Yemen's Houthi rebels of carrying out a deadly attack on a busy market which killed 17 civilians, including 12 Ethiopians. Houthi spokesperson Mohamed Abdelsalam blamed the kingdom for the "heinous crime," the third such attack to target the same location in northern Yemen in just over a month.

United States

United States

[2019 in review: United States](#)

December 20, 2019, The Economist

Another year of political drama ends with a cliff-hanger—an impeached president awaiting trial in the Senate

[China Commerce Ministry Says in Close Touch With U.S. on Signing Trade Deal](#)

December 26, 2019, The New York Times

China is in close touch with the United States on signing a Phase 1 trade deal, the country's commerce ministry said on Thursday, adding that both sides are still going through necessary procedures before the signing.

[Battle over Trump's impeachment continues past Christmas](#)

December 27, 2019, CNN

The holiday vacation President Donald Trump once viewed as the raring precursor to a vindictive Senate trial has instead turned into a deadlocked interlude as he battles Democrats over the time and place for his symbolic day in court.

[With U.S. Help No Longer Assured, Saudis Try a New Strategy: Talks](#)

December 26, 2019, New York Times

In the months since a missile and drone attack widely seen as the work of Iran left two Saudi oil facilities smouldering, the Saudi crown prince has taken an uncharacteristic turn to diplomacy to cool tensions with his regional enemies.

[Exclusive: Pentagon to stockpile rare earth magnets for missiles, fighter jets](#)

December 20, 2019, Reuters

The U.S. military plans to stockpile rare earth magnets used in Javelin missiles and F-35 fighter jets, according to a government document seen by Reuters, a step that critics say does little to help create a domestic industry to build specialized magnets now made almost exclusively in Asia.

[US ambassador recalled after dispute with Zambian government over gay rights and corruption](#)

December 25, 2019, CNN

In an extraordinary move, the State Department is pulling the US ambassador to Zambia after the president there objected to his harsh criticism of the government's record on corruption and gay rights.

[Christmas Day passes with no sign of 'gift' that North Korea warned of](#)

December 26, 2019, NBC

Earlier this month, Pyongyang set a year-end deadline for the United States to make new concessions in talks over the country's nuclear arsenal.

[Democrats seek high-profile trial for Trump in Senate](#)

December 20, 2019, Reuters

U.S. Democrats on Thursday pressed the Republican-controlled Senate to call Donald Trump's top lieutenants to testify in its trial of the impeached president, as they sought to focus attention on the trial ahead of the 2020 presidential election.

[Trump signs spending package to avert shutdown: White House spokesman](#)

December 21, 2019, Reuters

U.S. President Donald Trump signed a \$1.4 trillion budget package for the fiscal year 2020 into law on Friday to avert a government shutdown, White House spokesman Judd Deere told journalists traveling with the president on Air Force One.

[At each end of Pacific, scepticism over China farm purchases](#)

December 26, 2019, Associated Press

From Beijing to America's farm belt, sceptics are questioning just how much China has actually committed to buy – and whether U.S. farmers would be able anytime soon to export goods there in the outsize quantity that Trump has promised.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[EU wants a separate investment protection pact with India](#)

December 25, 2019, Business Line

The European Union (EU) has expressed interest in exploring a bilateral investment protection agreement (BIPA) with India that would be delinked from the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) where ongoing negotiations are in a state of limbo.

[European Council President calls PM Modi, talks India-EU ties](#)

December 22, 2019, The Hindu

President of the European Council Charles Michel telephoned Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday and they decided to hold the next India-EU summit in early 2020.

[Brexit: MPs back Boris Johnson's plan to leave EU on 31 January](#)

December 20, 2019, BBC

MPs have backed Prime Minister Boris Johnson's plan for the UK to leave the EU on 31 January. They voted 358 to 234 - a majority of 124 - in favour of the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, which now goes on to further scrutiny in Parliament.

[Brussels threat to block City trade unless UK agrees to Europe's rules](#)

December 26, 2019, The Times

Brussels will threaten to block the City of London's access to European markets in an opening salvo of post-Brexit trade talks in the new year.

[Brexit: Timmermans 'love letter' says UK always welcome back in EU](#)

December 26, 2019, BBC

European Commission Vice-President Frans Timmermans penned a love letter to Britain, expressing his "deep hurt" over Brexit and concluding: "You will always be welcome to come back."

[EU invests €45m in Port of Trieste for better links to European hubs](#)

December 26, 2019, Luxembourg Times

The European Union is set to hand out a €45 million funding to develop the Port of Trieste in Italy which is connected by rail to industrial areas across Europe, including Luxembourg and Germany.

[In 'Strongest' Climate Ruling Yet, Dutch Court Orders Leaders to Take Action](#)

December 20, 2019, The New York Times

The Supreme Court of the Netherlands on Friday ordered the government to cut the nation's greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent from 1990 levels by the end of 2020. It was the first time a nation has been required by its courts to take action against climate change.

Russia

[Putin discusses Libyan regulation with Italian PM](#)

December 26, 2019, TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin has discussed peaceful resolution of the Libyan crisis with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte during a phone call.

[By prolonging sanctions EU missed chance to better relations with Russia, Zakharova says](#)

December 26, 2019, TASS

The diplomat added that the European countries' losses from the sanctions against Russia have already reached hundreds of billions of euros.

[Putin decrees to hold year of mutual exchange between Russia and South Korea in 2020](#)

December 26, 2019, TASS

The Russian government has been tasked with holding an opening and closing ceremony in Russia and with providing the necessary support to the organizing committee.

[Russia seeks good ties with UK, but sees no London's steps in this direction – Kremlin](#)

December 26, 2019, TASS

Russia is always ready for dialogue and seeks good relations with the United Kingdom, but does not see any London's steps in this direction, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

[Putin slams European Parliament resolution on WWII outbreak as 'complete nonsense'](#)

December 24, 2019, TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin has described the resolution recently adopted by the European Parliament alleging that the Soviet Union bears responsibility for the Second World War outbreak as "complete nonsense."

[Stalin, unlike Europe's leaders, did not disgrace himself by meeting with Hitler — Putin](#)

December 24, 2019, TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin has pointed to a stark contrast between Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's actions and the attitude of other European leaders towards Adolf Hitler.

[Putin says no clarity yet regarding prospects for extending New START](#)

December 24, 2019, TASS

The prospects for extending the New START Treaty are still unclear, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the Russian Defense Ministry's annual expanded board meeting. He noted that "the degradation of the arms control system gave rise to substantial concern."

[Israel Denies Entry to Thousands of Russians Amid Asylum Spike](#)

December 26, 2019, The Moscow Times

Israel has refused entry to nearly 6,000 Russians this year as it attempts to contain the increase in asylum applications from Russian travelers.

[Foreign Policy Experts Map Russia's Plans for 2020](#)

December 24, 2019, The Moscow Times

2019 has been a busy year for Russia abroad. For one, the country has continued to cultivate its ties with new partners — including the 43 African leaders who attended the first Russia-Africa forum in Sochi in October — while sparring with major powers like the U.S. (ending a historic Cold War arms treaty).

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[U.S. Won't Implement Steel, Aluminum Tariffs on Brazil Imports](#)

December 26, 2019, KTICradio

The president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro said late last week that U.S. President Trump won't implement a new tariff on Brazilian steel and aluminum imports as threatened earlier in December.

[New China-Brazil earth resource satellite sent into space](#)

December 20, 2019, Xinhua

A new satellite, jointly developed by China and Brazil, was sent into space on Friday, pushing forward the aerospace cooperation between the two countries, according to the China National Space Administration (CNSA).

[Wildfire in Chilean port city of Valparaiso leaves 700 homeless](#)

December 26, 2019, Reuters

More than 245 homes have been destroyed and 700 people left destitute after a forest fire tore through a low-income area of the Chilean seaside city of Valparaiso on Christmas Eve.

[Chile's Pinera inks law for vote on new constitution](#)

December 23, 2019, Reuters

Chile's President Sebastian Pinera signed off on a referendum to be held on a new constitution, which he vowed would generate a "solid, compassionate and legitimate framework" that would help reunify the country after nine weeks of intense protest over inequality and elitism.

[Chilean government blames k-pop for recent protests](#)

December 24, 2019, Newsweek

A report released Sunday from Chile's Ministry of the Interior has blamed Chile's ongoing protests and civil unrest on "international influences and media." This includes, but is not limited to, fans of K-Pop.

[Morales claims he was ousted in a coup sponsored by the US aimed at taking over Bolivia's lithium resources](#)

December 26, 2019, Merco Press

Former Bolivia president Evo Morales has said that he was forced from office by a United States-backed coup d'etat aimed at gaining access to the South American country's vast lithium resources.

[Half of trains in Mexico found carrying migrants](#)

December 26, 2019, Star Tribune

Mexico said it has found migrants riding on about half of trains inspected. While the largest number of migrants were detained while walking — 41,649 between June and Dec. 22 — many migrants walk along tracks hoping to hop onto a passing train.

[Bipartisan consensus on Venezuela talks](#)

December 26, 2019, The Hill

Amid a flurry of end-of-session activity, the U.S. Congress passed a little-noticed but potentially important provision on Venezuela. Venezuela policy is an issue that regularly polarizes Florida, our nation's largest swing state, but at this moment, with the passage of this provision, support for a negotiated solution to the crisis in Venezuela is an issue that enjoys bipartisan unity and interest in Congress.

[Argentina agrees on economic measures to end crisis](#)

December 24, 2019, France 24.com

Argentina's center-left government approved on Monday a package of emergency measures aimed at lifting the South American country out of its worst economic crisis in years.

Africa

[Ethiopia, Eritrea to Start Comprehensive Cooperation by 2020](#)

December 26, 2019, Ezega.com

The leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea have committed to launching a comprehensive co-operation and practical measures as of next year aiming at extricating the peoples the two neighboring states out of poverty.

[14 dead in Niger after Islamic extremists attack convoy](#)

December 26, 2019, 660 News

Islamic extremists on motorcycles killed 14 security force members who were escorting election officials in the West African nation of Niger, the first large attack there since 71 soldiers were killed in a massive ambush earlier this month, authorities said.

[Fresh killings in Burkina Faso after earlier jihadi attack](#)

December 25, 2019, Financial Times

Eleven soldiers were killed in Burkina Faso on Thursday as the country mourned the victims of attacks by suspected jihadis on Christmas Eve in which 35 civilians died, most of them women.

[Fears build that Zimbabwe has a famine in its future](#)

December 26, 2019, BD News 24. com

A combination of government dysfunction, an economic meltdown, droughts and a calamitous cyclone in March have hurtled Zimbabwe toward a hunger disaster that has become the most severe in southern Africa and among the most alarming in the world. While food is not necessarily scarce yet, it is becoming unaffordable for all but the privileged few.

['The peace train has taken off': Sudan inks peace deal with rebels](#)

December 25, 2019, The Sydney Morning Herald

Sudan's transitional authorities and a rebel faction have reached a peace deal, part of government efforts to end the country's decades-long civil wars.

[Sudan's revolution is the result of civilian-military alliance: Hamdok says](#)

December 25, 2019, Sudan Tribune

Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok stressed that the Sudanese revolution is a result of the alliance between civilians and military and called to preserve this national unity and to work together to lay the foundations for a democratic regime in the country.

[Kenya: The Next Nation to Fall Into China's Debt-Trap Diplomacy?](#)

December 25, 2019, The Trumpet

Since 2013, Kenya has accepted more than \$5 billion from China for sgr construction, making it the largest infrastructure project since the nation's independence. But in its first year of operation, the project reported losses equivalent to \$98 million, rendering Kenya's servicing of the loans unmanageable.

Critics say that since shipping by truck remains a cheaper option for most freight, the sgr is unlikely to begin turning a profit.

[Kenya, Somalia to hold border security meetings](#)

December 27, 2019, CGTN Africa

Kenya will revive the joint cross-border meetings between communities living in the country and neighbouring Somalia in a bid to combat increased cases of violent extremism.



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