



Delhi Policy Group

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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.

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

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South Asia

India

[High Representative of EU for Foreign Affairs meets EAM Jaishankar](#)

January 17, 2020, DNA India

High Representative of the European Union, Josep Borrell Fontelles, here on Friday met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. The two leaders met on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogues which is taking place in the national capital. Borell arrived here on Thursday to give a valedictory speech at the conference.

[‘Not India’s way to be a disruptionist power’: Foreign minister S Jaishankar at Raisina Dialogue](#)

January 15, 2020, Hindustan Times

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said that India should become a stabilising power in the world. “I think it is not India’s way to be a disruptionist power internationally, I think we should be a stabilising power. There are already enough forces of disruption in the world. Somebody needs to make up a bit,” Jaishankar said at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi.

[India to invite Imran Khan for SCO summit](#)

January 17, 2020, Pune Mirror

The Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday announced that India will extend an invitation to all eight member states including Pakistan and four observers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation for the summit scheduled to be hosted by New Delhi later this year. If Imran Khan does accept the invitation, it will be the first time that a Pakistani PM will visit India since Nawaz Sharif came to New Delhi for PM Modi's swearing-in ceremony in May 2014.

[India should be permanent member of UN Security Council, Russian minister extends support](#)

January 15, 2020, India Today

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov has made a strong pitch for India's longstanding demand of becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Speaking at an event in Delhi, Sergey Lavrov said, "We believe India should be permanent member of UN Security Council. We are convinced that the overriding trend of the global development is the objective process of the

formation of new centres of economic might, financial power and political influence and India is obviously one them."

[India aiming at USD 250 billion maritime economy by 2024: Defence Secretary](#)

January 12, 2020, Economic Times

India is looking at a USD 250 billion maritime economy by 2024, which the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has the responsibility to safeguard, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar said at Kolkata. Commissioning the two ICG fast patrol vessels designed and manufactured by the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE), Kumar said India is increasingly becoming self-reliant in the science of shipbuilding.

[India, Finland ink MoU to enhance defence cooperation](#)

January 15, 2020, Defence Aviation Post

Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar and the Finnish Defence Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Jukka Juusti signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the field of production, procurement, research and development of defence-related equipment and industrial cooperation on the sidelines of Raisina Dialogue 2020. Under the broad ambit of the MoU, cooperation between Finnish companies and Indian defence public sector undertakings could be explored.

[Chinese Navy in Indian Ocean: There have been instances when we had to tell them to go back, says Indian Navy Chief](#)

January 16, 2020, Economic Times

The Chinese Navy's presence is rapidly increasing in the Indian Ocean region and the Indian Navy is keeping a watch on the developments through "mission-based" deployments, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh said on Wednesday. Speaking at a panel discussion at the Raisina Dialogue, he also said that there have been instances when PLA ships have entered India's exclusive economic zones and the Navy has told them that it impinges on Indian interests.

[Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flags off 51st K9 VAJRA-T gun from L&T complex in Gujarat](#)

January 16, 2020, India Today

Addressing a gathering on the occasion, Rajnath Singh called for an active participation of the private sector in defence manufacturing, reaffirming the government's commitment to make India an arms manufacturing hub and net defence exporter. While the Minister acknowledged the increasing participation

of the private industry in defence production, he stressed that a lot still needs to be done to make India a global defence manufacturing hub.

[India to acquire 200 fighter jets for Indian Air Force: Defence secretary](#)

January 13, 2020, Economic Times

The government is in the process of acquiring around 200 aircraft to cope with the depleting aerial inventories of the Indian Air Force, defence secretary Ajay Kumar said on Sunday. The contract for Hindustan Aeronautics Limited-manufactured 83 LCA Tejas Mark 1 A advanced fighter jets are in the final stages, he said. Apart from these, Expression of Interest (EOI) has been floated for another 110 aircraft, based on which Request for Proposal (RFP) will be floated.

[India, China agree to set up Military Hotline](#)

January 12, 2020, Defence Aviation Post

In an effort to keep peace and tranquillity along the borders, India and China have agreed to set up a military hotline between Indian Army's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) and Western Theatre Command (WTC) of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, said Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane.

[LCA naval version lands on-board Vikramaditya aircraft carrier](#)

January 13, 2020, Naval Technology

The naval version of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) has completed its maiden arrested landing on the INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier. The development comes after the LCA Navy completed extensive trials on the Shore Based Test Facility (SBTF).

[India gears up for Trump's maiden visit next month](#)

January 14, 2020, Economic Times

India and the US are preparing for President Donald Trump's maiden visit to India in the last week of February, as the two sides look to seal a trade deal with limited scope ahead of US presidential polls. A trade deal with India and China can boost Trump's prospects as he seeks re-election.

[More oil from the US? India's energy security to be top priority when Trump-Modi meet](#)

January 16, 2020, Financial Express

Energy is an important component in the Indo-US trade mix, and currently, India imports around \$4 billion worth of oil and gas from the United States of America. The ongoing US-Iran imbroglio has affected India's energy supplies. This will have a cascading effect on India's strategic oil reserves and is expected to affect the country's refining capacity as it is a critical source of export earnings and has strategic implications.

[Iran expects India to source its oil, devise new barter trade: Iranian minister](#)

January 16, 2020, Live Mint

Amid mounting tensions between the US and Iran, Iranian foreign affairs minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday said India will not find a stable and reliable energy partner other than Iran. He said losing Iran as a reliable source of energy will not make Indian economy more reliable.

[Malaysia talks to India over palm curbs as wider trade spat looms](#)

January 16, 2020, Times of India

Malaysia is talking to the Indian government and trade officials in a bid to resolve concerns over New Delhi's new palm oil import restrictions, a minister in Kuala Lumpur said amid a trade spat between the countries.

[India, Iran discuss future of JCPOA](#)

January 17, 2020, Economic Times

Dr S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister and Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran held a bilateral meeting today on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi. Both leaders recalled positive outcomes of Jaishankar's recent visit to Tehran for the 19th Joint Commission Meeting, especially for strengthening bilateral trade and promoting connectivity initiative through Chabahar port. Both sides have also agreed to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the bilateral Treaty of Friendship in 2020.

[After Russia's criticism, US, India say Indo-Pacific not aimed at excluding any country](#)

January 16, 2020, Times of India

A day after Russia claimed that the Indo-Pacific initiative was targeted at containing China's influence in the region, the US and India said the concept was not aimed at excluding any country and was a "principled vision".

[How India is resetting its trade ties with the world](#)

January 14, 2020, Live Mint

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi dramatically announced India's exit from the China-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) deal at the Bangkok summit on 4 November, trade minister Piyush Goyal addressed a packed house of journalists in the National Media Centre, reflecting on the lessons learnt from the prolonged trade negotiations where India was always a reluctant participant.

[Will have to deal with terror like US did after 9/11 attacks: CDS Bipin Rawat](#)

January 16, 2020, The Indian Express

Stressing that terrorism will continue as long as there are states to sponsor it, CDS Rawat said diplomatic isolation and blacklisting by Financial Action Task Force (FATF) can be good measures to deal with terror.

[Angered by Kashmir criticism, India to cut imports from Turkey](#)

January 15, 2020, Ahval

India is planning to cut some imports from Turkey and widen curbs on palm oil from Malaysia as a response to two countries' criticism against India's Kashmir policy, Reuters reported, citing two Indian government officials.

[SCO summit invite plan: India opens window to bilateral space with Pakistan](#)

January 17, 2020, The Indian Express

In a move that is likely to open up the bilateral space, India Thursday said New Delhi will invite the heads of government of all member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) when it hosts the summit later this year.

Pakistan

[Allies start ditching govt for not fulfilling promises](#)

January 13, 2020, The News

Ruling party PTI's worst fears have started coming true as its allies in the federal government have started withdrawing their support after getting fed up for not getting powers and fulfilment of what was promised.

[MQM-P gives PTI-led govt a jolt](#)

January 13, 2020, The News

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) gave the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government in the Centre a jolt as Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui announced his decision to leave the federal cabinet over "unfulfilled promises".

[Malaysian minister vows to promote bilateral trade](#)

January 12, 2020, The News

Malaysian Minister for Primary Industries Teresa Kok Suh Sim has assured the Pakistani business community, of all possible cooperation for promotion of bilateral trade and investment.

[15 martyred in Quetta mosque suicide hit](#)

January 11, 2020, The News

At least 15 people were martyred and 20 were injured after a suicide bomber struck a mosque located in the Ghousabad area of Quetta city. According to police, DSP Amanullah was among those who were martyred in the blast that took place during the Maghrib prayers.

[German minister of state calls on COAS](#)

January 14, 2020, The News

Niels Annen, Minister of State of the Federal Foreign Office Germany, called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at the General Headquarters (GHQ) on January 13. During the meeting, issues of mutual interest, regional security and measures to enhance bilateral cooperation in various fields were discussed.

[FM Qureshi arrives in Saudi Arabia after Iran visit](#)

January 14, 2020, The News

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi visited Tehran and Riyadh as diplomatic efforts to achieve regional peace. The minister held talks with his Iranian and Saudi counterpart to discuss multi-dimensional issues, including regional peace situation.

[Death for Pervez Musharraf overturned](#)

January 14, 2020, The News

The Lahore High Court (LHC) declared the formation of a special court, which tried the former dictator Pervez Musharraf on charges of high treason and handed him death penalty, as unconstitutional, resulting in annulment of his capital punishment.

[Chinese navy, PN end joint exercise](#)

January 15, 2020, Dawn

The sixth Exercise Sea Guardians 2020 between Pakistan Navy and China's People's Liberation Army (Navy) ended on January 14. During the exercise, Pakistan Navy and PLA (Navy) Flotilla comprising naval platforms and assets along with Marines Corps Detachments carried out advance level joint drills and naval manoeuvres in North Arabian Sea.

[Major-General Babar Iftikhar appointed as new DG ISPR](#)

January 16, 2020, The Express Tribune

The Pakistan Army announced the posting of the service's new spokesperson. Major-General Babar Iftikhar has been posted as the new director-general of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) and replaces incumbent Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor.

Afghanistan

[Govt rejects alleged Taliban offer of reduction in violence](#)

January 16, 2020, Tolo News

Following reports that the Taliban's senior leadership had agreed to a 7-day reduction of violence in Afghanistan, Salam Rahimi, the state minister for peace affairs, rejected the alleged Taliban position, calling it "unacceptable" for the

Afghan government, and insisted that the insurgent group must agree to a ceasefire before engaging in intra-Afghan talks.

[US Officials Routinely 'Lied' Over Afghan Progress: Sopko](#)

January 16, 2020, Tolo News

John Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), told US Congress that US officials routinely lied to the public during the 18-year war by exaggerating progress reports. Sopko was summoned to speak in response to the Washington Post's recent release of formerly classified documents, known as the Afghanistan Papers.

[Gwadar Port begins handling of Afghanistan's transit cargo](#)

January 16, 2020, Gulf Today

Pakistan's southwestern Gwadar seaport has begun handling transit cargo headed to and from landlocked Afghanistan, marking a significant outcome of Islamabad's multi-billion-dollar collaboration with China. The containers will be loaded onto trucks for transport to Afghanistan through the Pakistani border town of Chaman.

[Seven Afghans arrested in India for smuggling Heroin](#)

January 13, 2020, Tolo News

At least seven Afghan nationals were detained at India's Indira Gandhi International Airport for smuggling heroin. As many as 177 capsules of heroin, which the seven "couriers" had ingested to smuggle them into the country, have been recovered by the Narcotics Control Bureau.

[Pentagon IDs two soldiers killed in Afghanistan](#)

January 12, 2020, The Hill

The Department of Defense identified two U.S. soldiers on that were killed in a roadside bombing attack in Afghanistan that was claimed by the Taliban on January 12.

Bangladesh

[Bangladesh says once-submerged island ready for Rohingya](#)

January 17, 2020, AP News

A Bangladeshi island regularly submerged by monsoon rains is ready to house 100,000 Rohingya refugees, but no date has been announced to relocate people

from the crowded and squalid camps where they've lived for years, officials said. The island is built to accommodate 100,000 people, just a fraction of the million Rohingya Muslims who have fled waves of violent persecution in their native Myanmar.

[Bangladesh dismisses reports on MoS Foreign Affairs skipping India's key dialogue](#)

January 12, 2020, Economic Times

Bangladesh has taken exception to media reports about its Minister of State for External Affairs skipping Raisina Dialogue, India's premier foreign policy event. "Ministry of Foreign Affairs has noticed few misleading news items published in different media regarding the supposed visit of State Minister for Foreign Affairs to participate in Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi organized by Observer Research Foundation (ORF)," according to Bangladesh Foreign Affairs Ministry statement.

[Bangladeshi UN envoy elected as president of UNICEF Executive Board](#)

January 15, 2020, Xinhua

Ambassador Rabab Fatima, Bangladesh's permanent representative to the United Nations, has been unanimously elected as the president of the UNICEF Executive Board, Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry. The elections were held at the UN Headquarters in New York.

[China to build stronger ties with Bangladesh keeping 'Mujib Year' in mind](#)

January 16, 2020, UNB

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming on Thursday said they are ready to join hands with the Bangladesh government and people to build a stronger Bangladesh-China community with a shared future keeping the 'Mujib Year' in their mind. He said they are ready to embark on a new journey and take the China-Bangladesh strategic cooperative partnership to new heights taking the 45th anniversary as a great opportunity.

Nepal

[Nepal seeks cooperation from Bangladesh in establishing Defence University](#)

January 12, 2020, UNB

Nepal has sought co-operation from Bangladesh in establishing National Defence University of Nepal. Chief of Nepalese Army General Purna Chandra Thapa

sought the cooperation when he paid a courtesy call on President Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban in the evening.

[Kathmandu says no to NGOs that 'harm' interests of China and India](#)

January 13, 2020, AsiaNews

The Social Welfare Council is examining a new political strategy in foreign policy on balancing relations with neighboring powers. On the border with India there are several Islamic madrassas funded by Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. China fears the movements of the Tibetans.

Sri Lanka

[Russia agrees to continue providing arms to Sri Lanka for defense](#)

January 14, 2020, Colombo Page

Russia will continue to provide all necessary arms and ammunition to the Sri Lankan Army for Sri Lanka's security Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, said at a press conference in Colombo. The Russian Foreign Minister is on a two-day official visit to Colombo with 42-member delegation, held a joint press conference after meeting with his Sri Lankan counterpart Minister Dinesh Gunawardena at the Ministry of Foreign relations.

[Russia and Sri Lanka to increase bilateral trade](#)

January 14, 2020, Prensa Latina

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his Sri Lankan counterpart, Dinesh Gunawardena, reiterated today that both countries will redouble their efforts to increase bilateral trade and reach the target of 700 million dollars. In 2018, bilateral trade between Sri Lanka and Russia amounted to 389 million dollars. The parties agreed to increase cooperation in agriculture, food economy, fishing, water resources, education, trade and investment, tourism, security and defense, science and technology, renewable energy and oil exploration.

[China to reinforce support for Sri Lanka during FM's visit](#)

January 14, 2020, Daily FT

State Councillor and top diplomat in the global arena Wang is scheduled to meet President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and Foreign Affairs Minister Dinesh Gunawardena. His visit is the highest level interaction so far after Sri Lanka elected its new President and Government. The Chinese Embassy has said that bilateral relations including highest level exchange visits,

economic cooperation under Belt and Road Initiative, Education, Security etc. are among issues that Wang and Sri Lankan leaders will discuss.

[China offers to make Sri Lanka economically independent](#)

January 14, 2020, Colombo Gazette

China has offered to help Sri Lanka become economically independent and continue to stand by Sri Lanka's interests. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa told visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that Sri Lanka is geographically placed in a most strategic location and as a result, the country has to face many political challenges. He said that the only way to overcome them is to be economically strong and that economic independence will ensure political independence. Minister Yi, in his response said that China, as it did in the past, would be Sri Lanka's longtime partner in prosperity and growth. He noted that China's policy towards Sri Lanka had always been consistent and China would continue to be Sri Lanka's reliable friend.

[US – Sri Lanka talks on Indo-Pacific strategy, economic defence ties](#)

January 15, 2020, Economy Next

Visiting US Assistant Secretary of State Alice Wells and Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena had discussions on economic, defence, maritime affairs and the US Indo Pacific Strategy, the ministry of foreign affairs said. "While articulating the US strategic vision of the region, Ambassador Wells, conveyed the keen desire of the United States to build a stronger relationship with Sri Lanka and underscored the importance the US places on the bilateral engagement," the statement said.

[Millennium Challenge Agreement with Sri Lanka will be renegotiated - U.S. official](#)

January 15, 2020, Colombo Page

The Millennium Challenge Corporation agreement with Sri Lanka will be renegotiated after the commission appointed by President Gotabhaya Rajapaksa to study the agreement concludes its study, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells said. Addressing the reporters before her departure, Ms. Wells said she also delivered a letter from US President Donald Trump to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The letter underscored the commitment and interests by the US to further its partnership with Sri Lanka.

[Sri Lanka calls for sharing of UK military intelligence to tackle Tamil diaspora](#)

January 16, 2020, Tamil Guardian

Sri Lanka's defence secretary called on the British government to share military intelligence and technology to combat "terrorism", as he slammed the Tamil diaspora in a meeting with Britain's High Commissioner.

Maldives

[Maldivian Minister meets Jaishankar, calls for united actions on climate change](#)

January 15, 2020, UNI

The visiting Foreign Minister of Maldives, Abdulla Shahid met his Indian counterpart, Dr. S. Jaishankar in India and both leaders held important discussions on ongoing projects between Indian and Maldives.

East & South East Asia

China

[Phase-one deal marks important step toward reshaping China-U.S. economic, trade ties](#)

January 16, 2020, Xinhua

China and the United States have taken an important step in the right direction by formally signing their phase-one economic and trade agreement in Washington Wednesday.

[China-U.S. phase-one trade deal considerably addresses concerns of both sides, says vice premier](#)

January 16, 2020, Xinhua

The China-U.S. phase-one economic and trade agreement has considerably addressed the concerns of both sides, Chinese Vice Premier Liu He said here Wednesday.

[Trade pact 'good for China, US, world'](#)

January 17, 2020, China Daily

Top priority is to ensure efficient implementation, specialists say

The signing of the China-US phase-one trade pact, which has both economic and political significance, will bolster the world economy, while the top priority is ensuring its efficient implementation, officials and analysts said.

[US faces pressure to increase exports](#)

January 16, 2020, Global Times

China promised a \$200 billion increase in purchases of US goods and services over two years. China's trade surplus with the US is indeed too large. Much of China's foreign currency has been spent on purchasing US treasury bonds. This is not an ideal trade-financial structure in the long run. Moving toward a trade balance is a healthier direction for China-US economic cooperation.

[China increases military recruitment frequency, aims to keep high vigilance](#)

January 16, 2020, Global Times

China will increase the frequency of its military recruitment and retirement to twice a year, up from once, starting 2020, to maintain a smooth flow of troops, the military's high vigilance and to better train new recruits.

[Chinese, Vietnamese leaders agree to further promote bilateral ties](#)

January 16, 2020, Global Times

Chinese President Xi Jinping spoke over phone with Vietnamese President Nguyen Phu Trong on Thursday, and the two leaders agreed to make joint efforts to cement bilateral relations.

[Chinese FM's Djibouti visit to foster already blossoming bilateral ties: expert](#)

January 16, 2020, Xinhua

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi's recent visit to Djibouti has injected crucial impetus that would further spur the already blossoming Sino-Djibouti strategic ties, an expert said on Thursday.

[India's deficit with China accounts for 60% of total bilateral trade](#)

January 14, 2020, Global Times

India's trade deficit with China was 391.7 billion yuan (\$56.8 billion) in 2019, an official from China's General Administration of Customs (GAC) said at a press briefing on Tuesday, adding it is significant that the two countries strengthen cooperation. The deficit accounted for about 60 percent of India's total bilateral trade.

[China-Myanmar ties attest to vitality of win-win cooperation](#)

January 12, 2020, Global Times

When China or the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) it proposed is mentioned together with the names of China's neighboring countries in Western media reports, there are always words concerning China's rise and those countries' destinies.

[CPC leadership highlights key role of Party building, inspections](#)

January 17, 2020, China Daily

The importance of enhancing Party building and opposing formalism and bureaucracy were highlighted at a key meeting attended by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, on Thursday.

[China's GDP grows 6.1% in 2019: NBS](#)

January 17, 2020, China Daily

Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics, answers questions at a news conference in Beijing on Jan 17, 2020. [Photo by Zhou Lanxu/chinadaily.com.cn]

China's year-on-year GDP growth reached 6.1 percent in 2019, compared with 6.6 percent in 2018, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Friday.

Japan

[Japan and India hold joint coast guard drill](#)

January 16, 2020, The Japan Times

The Japanese and Indian coast guards on Thursday conducted a joint drill in waters off Chennai, southern India.

[Toward an Indo-Pacific concert of democracies](#)

January 14, 2020, The Japan Times

In his second term, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sought to initiate a new practice on New Year's Day: To discuss a shared vision of peace and prosperity in India's subregion, Modi on Jan. 1 telephoned leaders of all neighboring nations other than his country's two adversaries, China and Pakistan.

[Documents show concerns from Okinawa on U.S. base presence](#)

January 13, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Newly released government documents show how Okinawa became home to so many U.S. military bases after its reversion to Japan in 1972 despite concerns from a local leader of the heavy U.S. presence. The diplomatic records disclosed by the Foreign Ministry on Dec. 25 reveal the detailed discussions between Tokyo and Okinawa over the 1969 Japan-U.S. joint statement concerning the southern island's return to Japanese sovereignty.

[Japan says Mideast mission in self-interest as crude importer](#)

January 15, 2020, The Asahi Shimbun

Defense Minister Taro Kono on Tuesday defended Tokyo's decision to send forces to the Middle East to help ensure the safety of merchant ships, saying it was in the Japanese people's interest, despite a new poll showing significant opposition to the mission.

[Taiwan's pro-Japan young people back Tsai's re-election](#)

January 12, 2020, Japan Today

In Taiwan's presidential election on Saturday, young people, who are favorably disposed toward Japan, may have been one of the major contributors to the re-election of incumbent Tsai Ing-wen.

[Abe meets Saudi king amid tensions in Middle East](#)

January 13, 2020, Japan Today

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was in Saudi Arabia for talks with King Salman on Sunday as part of a tour of oil-producing Gulf Arab states aimed at promoting peace amid a spike in tensions between the U.S. and Iran.

[Abe warns conflict with Iran impacts entire world](#)

January 13, Japan Today

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has warned that military confrontation with Iran will impact global peace and stability, as he visits the Middle East hoping to ease tensions spiked by the U.S. killing of a top Iranian general.

[China calls for 'appropriate preparations' for Xi's visit to Japan](#)

January 17, 2020, Japan Today

The Chinese government said Thursday that Foreign Minister Wang Yi has told a Japanese senior diplomat that the two countries should "make appropriate preparations" for President Xi Jinping's planned state visit to Japan in the spring.

United States

[U.S., Japan, EU seek new global rules limiting subsidies](#)

January 15, 2020, Japan Today

Washington, Tokyo and Brussels on Tuesday joined forces in calling for stronger global rules against government subsidies that distort trade, a practice China has long been accused of exploiting.

[Pompeo meets Japanese, S Korean foreign ministers as new sanctions hit N Korea](#)

January 15, 2020, Japan Today

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met Tuesday with his Japanese and South Korean counterparts to discuss stalled nuclear talks with North Korea and stress the importance of America's relationship with both countries.

Korea

[Pompeo, Esper issue joint appeal to South Korea to pay more for US troop presence](#)

January 17, 2020, The Korea Herald

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper have made an emphatic call for South Korea to pay more for the upkeep of 28,500 American troops stationed in the country.

[S. Korea says inter-Korean policy matter of sovereignty](#)

January 17, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea's policy on North Korea is a matter of sovereignty, the unification ministry said Friday, after US Ambassador Harry Harris called for Seoul to make sure to consult closely with Washington about its engagement plans with the North.

[US sends nuke-detecting plane to air base in Japan](#)

January 17, 2020, The Korea Herald

The United States has deployed a WC-135W radiation detection plane to one of its air bases in Japan, an aviation tracker said Thursday, a move seen as aimed at beefing up surveillance of North Korea.

[S. Korea, US agree to closely coordinate on inter-Korean projects: nuclear envoy](#)

January 17, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea and the United States agreed Thursday to coordinate closely on possible inter-Korean projects amid stalled nuclear talks between Washington and Pyongyang, Seoul's chief nuclear envoy said.

[Pentagon claims shared defense costs benefit S. Korean economy](#)

January 17, 2020, The Korea Herald

The Pentagon claimed Thursday that much of the costs shared between South Korea and the United States to station American troops on the peninsula directly benefits the South Korean economy.

[S. Korea, China hold working-level defense talks over peninsula](#)

January 16, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea and China held working-level defense talks in Seoul on Thursday on ways to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula and enhance bilateral cooperation, Seoul's defense ministry said.

[Seoul seeks to revive tours to NK](#)

January 16, 2020, The Korea Herald

Seoul is moving to pursue inter-Korean projects -- such as allowing individual South Korean tourists to travel to North Korea -- and seeking ways to work around international sanctions on Pyongyang.

Southeast Asia

[7 of 10 ASEAN members favor China over US: survey](#)

January 16, 2020, Nikkei Asian Review

As the rivalry between the U.S. and China continues to heat up, Southeast Asians are split between the two superpowers, according to a Singaporean think tank, posing a challenge for a region that has sought unity to speed economic growth.

[Japan may be ASEAN's best friend amid US-China rivalry: Survey](#)

January 16, 2020, Today

Japan could be the unlikely political power that Asean countries turn to at a time when confidence in the United States as a strategic partner is waning and China's regional influence is increasingly side-eyed.

[Southeast Asia unsure of the value of ASEAN, poll by Singapore think tank shows](#)

January 16, 2020, SCMP

A survey by the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak institute shows 75 per cent of respondents do not feel tangible benefits from the regional bloc .Political instability and climate change issues were major concerns, along with fears of being caught up in the power struggle between the US and China.

[China's growing influence rattles Southeast Asia as US retreats: Survey](#)

January 16, 2020, CNA

China's rising economic and political clout in Southeast Asia is a growing source of concern as US influence wanes under President Donald Trump, according to a survey of officials, academics and other professionals published on Thursday (Jan 16).

[In challenging waters, Vietnam to steer ASEAN](#)

January 16, 2020, Bangkok Post

Mention "ASEAN" these days and public opinion in Vietnam tends to think of the South China Sea disputes. But the country sees its role as ASEAN Chair in 2020 as one that entails a much wider responsibility -- that of being a bridge among ASEAN's members, as well as between with Asean and external powers, in uncertain times.

[S. China Sea, Rohingya issues on agenda of ASEAN ministerial talks](#)

January 17, 2020, The Mainichi

Foreign ministers of Association of Southeast Asian nations began a two-day meeting in Vietnam on Thursday, in which South China Sea tensions and the repatriation of Rohingya Muslims to Myanmar are on the agenda for discussion.

[Vietnam proposes 14 initiatives for ASEAN 2020](#)

January 16, 2020, Vietnam News

To implement the priorities of ASEAN in 2020, Vietnam proposed 14 initiatives, priorities and co-operation plans for discussion, consultation and consensus with member states in the first meeting of the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials for the 51st ASEAN Economic Minister' Meeting (SEOM 1/51), which took place in Hanoi from January 12-14.

Central & West Asia

West Asia

[Egypt launches largest military base in Middle East](#)

January 16, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi yesterday inaugurated Bernice military base, the largest in the region of the red sea, official media has reported.

[Eleven U.S. troops injured in Jan. 8 Iran missile attack in Iraq](#)

January 17, 2020, Reuters

The United States treated 11 of its troops for symptoms of concussion after an Iranian missile attack on an Iraqi base where U.S. forces were stationed, the U.S. military said on Thursday, after initially saying no service members were hurt.

[Iran expects India to source its oil, devise new barter trade: Iranian minister](#)

January 16, 2020, Livemint

Amid mounting tensions between the US and Iran, Iranian foreign affairs minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday said India will not find a stable and reliable energy partner other than Iran.

[Iran Says India Can Help Reduce Tension In Persian Gulf](#)

January 16, 2020, Caspian News

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif hopes that India can help reduce tensions in the Persian Gulf, referring to the recent situation between the Islamic Republic and the United States.

[Rouhani says Iran wants dialogue, working daily to 'prevent war'](#)

January 17, 2020, Times of Israel

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Thursday he wants to avoid war after Tehran and Washington appeared on the brink of direct military confrontation in early January for the second time in less than a year.

[Philippines imposes total ban on sending workers to Kuwait](#)

January 16, 2020, Arab News

The Philippines has announced a total ban on sending Filipino workers to Kuwait. The development comes two weeks after the death of Filipino national Jeanelyn Villavende in the Gulf state.

[Crisis-hit Lebanon on brink of forming new government](#)

January 16, 2020, Reuters

Lebanon is on the brink of forming a new government, caretaker finance minister Ali Hassan Khalil said on Thursday, as pressure mounts to put forward an economic rescue plan to pull the country out of a deep financial crisis.

[Saudi Arabia has paid \\$500M toward the cost of US troops in country](#)

January 17, 2020, CNN International

Saudi Arabia has paid the US approximately \$500 million to begin to cover the cost of US troops operating in the country, according to a US official.

[Turkey considering 'mission accomplished' in Syria - experts](#)

January 17, 2020, The Jerusalem Post

A meeting between the Turkish and Syrian intelligence chiefs in Russia is a sign that Ankara is moving closer to handing back lands in northern Syria to President Bashar al-Assad.

[Yemen resilient and 'unscathed' in face of latest Gulf crisis](#)

January 16, 2020, UN News

Despite the threat posed by recent tensions in the Gulf, Yemen was able to weather the crisis thanks in part to restraint exercised by its political leaders, the UN Special Envoy for the country said on Thursday.

Central Asia

[Kyrgyz Protesters Demand Better Security Along Tajik Border](#)

January 15, 2020, RFE/RL

Protesters demanded Kyrgyzstan deploy more guards along a volatile stretch of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border after more violent clashes between villagers on both sides. In a bid to ease border tensions, Kyrgyz and Tajik officials signed a land-swap deal.

[Lavrov Visits Uzbekistan, Holds Talks With Top Officials](#)

January 16, 2020, RFE/RL

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on January 16 held talks with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoev and Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Komilov in Tashkent. The Uzbek presidential press service says Lavrov and Mirziyoev discussed bilateral ties and cooperation between Tashkent and Moscow.

[Kyrgyzstan ex-president's trial to close one chapter of political turbulence](#)

January 16, 2020, Eurasianet

On January 10, the Interior Ministry gave notice that it had wrapped up its investigation into the bloody unrest that ensued last summer, when former President Atambayev forcefully resisted being taken away from his country residence for police questioning. The trial is to begin soon, and will likely be held behind closed doors.

[Kazakhstan mulls expanding President's powers in defence planning](#)

January 15, 2020, New Europe

The Ministry of Defense of Kazakhstan has created a bill to expand the powers of the country's president in case of martial law, with the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan adding that the new bill is necessary to adequately respond to the country's defense capabilities to modern challenges and threats.

[Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan see increase in joint economic projects](#)

January 16, 2020, Azernews

Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan bilateral relations lately display an increase of trade turnover, as well as increase of interesting economic projects between countries, Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Kazakhstan Rashad Mammadov said. According to the State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan, trade turnover between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan amounted to \$229.6 million in 2019.

[Heads of security agencies of Tajikistan, Afghanistan hold talks in Dushanbe](#)

January 16, 2020, AKI Press

Afghan National Security Directorate Head Ahmad Zia Saraj made a 2-day visit to Tajikistan. During his visit, he met with Chairman of the State National Security Committee of Tajikistan Saimumin Yatimov. Expansion of bilateral security cooperation, fight against international terrorism, border protection, foiling drug trafficking were discussed during the talks.

[Turkmenistan considers entry to WTO](#)

January 14, 2020, Trend News Agency

Turkmenistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov met with Regional Coordinator for Central Asia of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Dmitry Godunov in Ashgabat

to discuss the issue of the stages of the country's entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

[Uzbekistan receives Mi-35M helos](#)

January 15, 2020, Jane's

Uzbekistan has received into service at least two Mil Mi-35M 'Hind-E' assault helicopters that were ordered from Russia in early 2018. Footage aired on the news on January 14 showed the two helicopters at Karshi Khanabad air base in the south of the Central-Asian republic.

United States

United States

[India not to be directly affected by US-China deal as it gained little from the fight](#)

January 16, 2020, The Hindu Businessline

India is unlikely to be directly affected by the US-China trade deal signed on Wednesday as the country gained little from the almost two-year old trade war between the two trading giants.

[India, U.S. In Advance-Stage Talks To Resolve Trade Issues, Says Piyush Goyal](#)

January 16, 2020, Bloomberg

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said India and the U.S. are in an "advance stage" of dialogue to resolve some of the pressing trade issues.

[India to cut duty on over 40 US products including high-end mobiles, smartwatches](#)

January 17, 2020, The New Indian Express

India and the US have thrashed out the contours of a trade pact to be signed during the proposed visit of US President Donald Trump next month, which will see India agreeing to cut duties on more than 40 US product categories ranging from apples, almonds, up-end mobiles, smartwatches and electronic gadgets, in return for the US allowing Indian manufacturers duty-free trade facilities withdrawn last year.

[U.S. And Iraq Reportedly Restart ISIS Counterterrorism Efforts](#)

January 16, 2020, Forbes

The U.S. and Iraq have reportedly resumed their counterterrorism partnership against ISIS, after operations were suspended following Qassem Soleimani's killing—even though Iraq's parliament voted to expel U.S. troops from the country just two weeks ago.

[India, US in contact over Donald Trump's visit: MEA](#)

January 16, 2020, Live Mint

The Indian invitation to Trump was reiterated last month by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. Raveesh Kumar's remarks come amid reports that Trump is likely to make a state visit to India towards the end of February.

[Trump impeachment: US House sends historic case to Senate](#)

January 17, 2020, India Today

The US House of Representatives passed a resolution and submitted the articles of impeachment against Donald Trump to the Senate for a historic trial to remove him from office, a move described by the unfazed President as "another con job" by the Opposition Democrats.

[Pentagon to soon resume Saudi training halted after base shooting](#)

January 16, 2020, Al Jazeera

US training for more than 800 Saudi Arabian military students could be restarted "in the coming days," the Pentagon said Thursday, nearly six weeks after a shooting by one Saudi trainee killed three sailors at a Florida base.

[US Senate passes USMCA, the new North American trade deal](#)

January 16, 2020, Al Jazeera

The United States Senate on Thursday approved a revamp of the 26-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that includes tougher rules on labour and automotive content but leaves \$1.2 trillion in annual US-Mexico-Canada trade flows largely unchanged.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[European Union urges Iran to 'preserve' nuclear deal](#)

January 16, 2020, N World

The European Union's top diplomat met Iran's foreign minister to press Tehran to "preserve" the increasingly fragile nuclear deal. In his talks in India on Thursday with Javad Zarif, Josep Borrell warned that the deal was "more important than ever" given rising tensions in the Middle East, the statement said.

[Five Challenges for the European Union](#)

January 11, 2020, The National Interest

The European Union finds itself in the most perilous quandary since the immediate post-World War II period. The risk is a split between the Central European and Eastern European member states and the majority of the others over a diverging interest. The changing U.S. world outlook, in particular, its European policy, may play a decisive role. To weather the storm five major challenges, calling for determined leadership, clear visions and statecraft must be overcome.

[Brexit relationship: EU reveals clues ahead of talks with UK](#)

January 17, 2020, BBC News

The EU negotiating team is gearing up for talks with the UK about the post-Brexit relationship by holding a series of seminars for diplomats from the 27 member states. The presentations are being published online. Stuffed with jargon and seriously lacking in inspirational content, they provide important clues about how things might play out.

[EU chief vows 'day and night' talks on post-Brexit trade deal](#)

January 15, 2020, The New York Times

The European Union's top official has said the bloc was ready to work "day and night" to reach a post-Brexit trade deal with Britain by the year-end deadline. Speaking during her first official visit to Dublin, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said that formal talks would begin at the end of February or early March and simultaneously cover a range of issues.

[Germany confirms Trump made trade threat to Europe over Iran policy](#)

January 16, 2020, The Guardian

The US threatened to impose 25% tariffs on cars to push Europeans to initiate proceedings against Iran for violating the nuclear deal, the German defence

minister has confirmed. "This threat exists," said the German defence minister, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, at a press conference in London.

[Europe's one trillion climate finance plan](#)

January 16, 2020, EU News

Turning the EU into a climate neutral economy by 2050 will require massive investment in clean energy technologies. Only achieving an interim greenhouse gases reduction target of 40% by 2030 would require €260 billion of additional investment a year, according to the Commission's estimates.

[Europe threatens legal challenge to U.S.-China trade deal at WTO](#)

January 17, 2020, Bloomberg

The European Union said the preliminary U.S.-China trade agreement could violate World Trade Organization rules and held out the prospect of a legal challenge. EU Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan said his team will scrutinize whether China's pledge to increase purchases of U.S. goods and services by at least US\$200 billion over the next two years is WTO-compatible. The commitment is included in a first-phase accord signed with fanfare on Wednesday by the U.S. and China.

Russia

[Russia's government resigns as Putin offers spot on Security Council to Medvedev](#)

January 15, 2020, Meduza

Following Vladimir Putin's annual state-of-the-nation speech on Wednesday, where the president called for major constitutional reform, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has announced that Russia's entire ministerial cabinet, commonly referred to as "the government," will formally resign.

[Who Is Russia's New Prime Minister?](#)

January 16, 2020, Foreign Policy

It is unclear whether Mishustin is a temporary placeholder or could be groomed as a potential successor down the line. A largely anonymous figure, Mishustin enjoys a reputation in Russia's business circles as one of the country's most effective technocrats and earned rave reviews as the head of Russia's Federal Tax Service. During his tenure, he helped modernize Russia's notoriously inefficient and corrupt tax system, earning him the moniker "the taxman of the future" in a 2019 Financial Times profile.

[Russia's New Prime Minister Is a Bureaucratic Superman](#)

January 16, 2020, The Moscow Times

After a blitz of constitutional reform proposals aimed at keeping him in power after his presidential term ends in 2024, Russia's President Vladimir Putin named his new prime minister — a tech-obsessed tax administrator with no interest in politics. The appointment highlights the Putin system's fundamental paradox: It is an antiquated, Byzantine, nepotistic, deeply corrupt governance model that nevertheless values and rewards technocratic brilliance.

[Russia to use UN and G20 potential to avoid arms race, Lavrov says](#)

January 17, 2020, TASS

Moscow aims to use the potential of international organizations such as the UN and the G20 to avoid an arms race, Acting Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Friday during a news conference on the outcomes of Russian diplomacy in 2019.

[US and Russia discuss possibility of moving beyond bilateral format on arms control](#)

January 17, 2020, TASS

The US Department of State said that at consultations in Vienna, the Russian and US delegations "decided to continue the Strategic Security Dialogue and also to begin expert-level engagement on particular topics in the near future".

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[Evo Morales retracts call for 'armed militias' in Bolivia](#)

January 17, 2020, Al Jazeera

Former Bolivian President Evo Morales on Thursday retracted his call for the organisation of militias in his home country after the comments sparked an outcry from its interim government.

[US sends asylum seekers to Guatemala as new caravan heads north](#)

January 17, 2020, Al Jazeera

More than 2,000 Honduran migrants and asylum seekers entered Guatemala on Thursday as part of the latest caravan to leave for the United States, despite new asylum agreements across the region and vows to stop their advance.

[Guatemala breaks off diplomatic relations with Venezuela](#)

January 17, 2020, Al Jazeera

Guatemala's new president announced on Thursday that his government was breaking off diplomatic relations with Venezuela. Two days after his inauguration, President Alejandro Giammattei said he had ordered Guatemala's foreign secretary to recall the last person remaining in the country's embassy in Venezuela's capital and close the building.

[Bolivia pressures Argentina over Morales call for 'armed militias'](#)

January 15, 2020, Reuters

Bolivia's Foreign Ministry has asked Argentina's government to disavow comments by Bolivian former President Evo Morales, currently living in exile in Buenos Aires, that called for the organization of armed militias in his home country.

[Venezuela: Oil Output Stabilizes as Government Eyes Foreign Investment](#)

January 15, 2020, Venezuelanalysis.com

Venezuela's oil production remained steady in December after two straight months on the rise. The latest monthly report of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) placed the South American country's oil output at 714,000 barrels per day (bpd) in December, according to secondary sources. This represents a very small decrease compared to 717,000 bpd in November. Venezuela's oil production averaged 792,000 bpd through 2019.

[Brazilian 5G: The Next Battleground in the U.S.-China Standoff](#)

January 16, 2020, Americas Quarterly

Geopolitics is going online. While observers in Brazil focus on the ongoing trade war between the United States and China, an incipient tech war is poised to have far broader consequences for the future of the global order and Latin America's place in it.

[U.S. backs Brazil for OECD membership ahead of Argentina](#)

January 15, 2020, Reuters

The United States' change of stance to support Brazil's bid to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ahead of Argentina was welcomed by the Brazilian government.

[Brazil looks to India as trade ties with Argentina deteriorate](#)

January 16, 2020, Live Mint

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro is set to visit India next week, aiming to boost trade with a rapidly growing market as ties with neighboring Argentina deteriorate.

Africa

[A currency swap deal with China could backfire on Zimbabwe's hope to build forex reserves](#)

January 16, 2020, Quartz

Zimbabwe and China this week signed a currency swap deal aimed at strengthening trade between the two nations. The swap arrangement will enable an investor in China to pay a Chinese business in Zimbabwe which is looking for foreign exchange. The Chinese-owned business in Zimbabwe would release the Zimbabwe dollar equivalent of the US dollar to a local bank account of the payer in China.

[Sudan peace talks on Darfur, Two Areas continuing](#)

January 16, 2020, Dabanga Sudan

The Sudanese peace talks taking place in the South Sudanese capital of Juba, focussed on Darfur and on the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile state). A government team headed by member of the Sovereign Council Mohamed El Taayshi held direct negotiations with representatives of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) rebel alliance on the Darfur track.

[Sudan's intelligence chief resigns after Khartoum mutiny](#)

January 16, 2020 , The East African

Sudan's spy chief Abu Bakr Mustafa has stepped down two days after a revolt in the capital Khartoum. "The director of intelligence has resigned. He called us by telephone and we asked him to submit a written resignation, so we are now considering it," General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the head of Sudan's sovereign council, told state television.

[Shabab militants from Somalia may have received help from Kenyans for deadly Manda Bay attack](#)

January 2020, Military Times

U.S. Africa Command officials believe that al-Shabab militants from Somalia crossed the border into Kenya to conduct an attack on U.S. and Kenyan forces earlier this month in Manda Bay – with the assistance of facilitators within Kenya.

[Pentagon to decide soon on possible troop cut in West Africa](#)

January 17, 2020, ABC News

A Pentagon decision that could lead to a reduction in the number of U.S. troops in West Africa could come within four to eight weeks, according to Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

[AfDB allocates grant to help African nations boost mining revenues](#)

January 17, 2020, Mining Weekly

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has allocated a €1.2-million grant to provide training to help resource-rich countries improve their mining revenues.



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