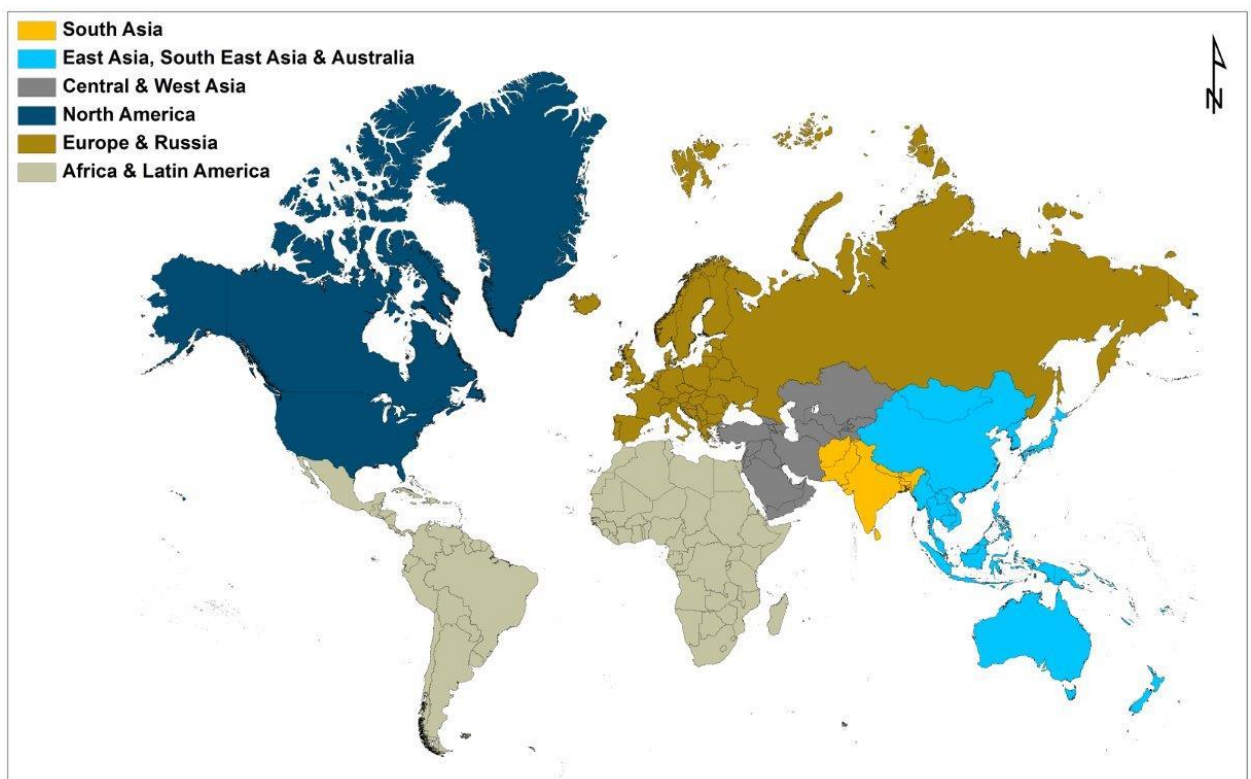




Delhi Policy Group

# DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume IV, Issue 22 | May 29, 2020



# DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

## Volume 4, Issue 22

### 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

DPG Weekly World Watch is based on analysis of open source information. To subscribe please [click here](#).

Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Angana Guha Roy at [angana@dpg.org.in](mailto:angana@dpg.org.in).

© 2020 by the Delhi Policy Group

**Delhi Policy Group**  
Core 5A, 1st Floor,  
India Habitat Centre,  
Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003.  
[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)

## Contents

South Asia.....	1
East & South East Asia.....	8
Central & West Asia.....	16
United States.....	20
Europe & Russia.....	21
Africa & Latin America .....	24

## South Asia

### India

#### [India, Australia bilateral virtual summit on June 4](#)

May 28, 2020, The Economic Times

The two sides at the meet are expected to conclude agreements to develop reliable supply chains in key strategic sectors, including medical goods, technology and critical minerals, besides a mutual logistics support pact for the two navies, ET has learnt. A new education partnership is also on the agenda to help overcome Australian universities' dependence on Chinese students.

#### [Why India and China Are Sparring](#)

May 28, 2020, Foreign Policy

The two nuclear powers have long had their differences. But the pandemic has led to some frayed nerves—and revealed longer-term ambitions.

#### [LAC standoff | Working with China to resolve border issue peacefully, says India](#)

May 28, 2020, The Hindu

Indian and Chinese sides remain "engaged" through diplomatic and military channels in Delhi and Beijing and at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in order to resolve the situation along the boundaries in Ladakh and Sikkim, the government said on Thursday.

#### [Jaishankar discusses post-Covid-19 economic recovery with EU foreign policy chief](#)

May 28, 2020, The Times of India

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday held discussions with European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on initiatives to promote post-Corona economic recovery and preparations for the 15th EU-India Summit.

#### [Australia-India Naval Cooperation And The Islands Of The Indo-Pacific](#)

May 27, 2020, War on the Rocks

As India and Australia prepare for a virtual summit next month between prime ministers amid the novel coronavirus pandemic, a possible strategic initiative could involve the cooperative use of their respective island territories in the Indian Ocean for strategic purposes. India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands and

Australia's Cocos (Keeling) Islands are well positioned to offer significant advantages for both countries.

[China believes India wants Aksai Chin back. PLA has likely secured 40-60 sq km in Ladakh](#)

May 28, 2020, The Print

Something unusual has been happening on the Line of Actual Control, the de facto border between India and Tibet, for the past four weeks. On 10 May, the Indian media broke the news about scuffles between Indian and Chinese soldiers on the north bank of Pangong Tso on the night of 5-6 May and at Naku La in north Sikkim on 9 May.

[Face-off along LAC in Ladakh: Chinese build-up will be matched, says NSAB member](#)

May 29, 2020, The Indian Express

Any build-up from the Chinese side will be matched by build up of Indian troops as well, and New Delhi will continue with infrastructure development in eastern Ladakh, where Indian and Chinese troops have been involved in a face-for over three weeks, Lt General S L Narasimhan, member of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), said.

[As it ponders talks with Taliban, Delhi should focus on complex geopolitics of the Pashtun lands](#)

May 26, 2020, The Indian Express

Those calling for direct engagement with the Taliban say that Delhi can't ignore such an important force in Afghan politics. Opponents say there is no reason for Delhi to join the international stampede to embrace the Taliban.

## **Pakistan**

[World Bank approves \\$500mln loan to Pakistan](#)

May 23, 2020, The News

World Bank approved \$500 million in a loan program to boost Pakistan's pandemic emergency response and protect human capital investments in the country. The program would help the country improve access to quality healthcare and education, support economic opportunities for women, and strengthen social safety nets as it braces to limit the impact of the COVID-19.

### [97 dead as no more crash survivor found](#)

May 24, 2020, Dawn

Except two survivors, all 97 passengers and crewmembers of the Pakistan International Airlines plane that crashed into a densely-populated area near Karachi airport on May 22 were confirmed dead after their bodies were recovered during an operation.

### [Govt considers resuming lockdown amid SOPs violations](#)

May 27, 2020, Dawn

With the number of coronavirus cases and deaths increasing and people having severely violated standard operating procedures for Covid-19 during the Eid holidays, Pakistan Government is considering resuming the lockdown across the country.

### [Pakistan needs to import up to 200,000tns wheat every month](#)

May 28, 2020, The News

Pakistan needs to import 100,000 to 200,000 tons of wheat every month till April next year to check price hike in the domestic market as local production is not sufficient to stabilise grain supplies. An estimate says wheat production runs short of about one million tons and may be around 25.7 to 26 million tons this year. There is about 0.7 to 1.0 million tons less output in Punjab alone if compared with the provincial output target.

## **Afghanistan**

### [Afghanistan's Mass Release of Taliban Prisoners Revives Peace Process, But Seen As 'Big Gamble'](#)

May 27, 2020, RFERL

Afghanistan's flagging peace process was on the verge of collapse following weeks of devastating militant attacks, mounting public anger, and the halt of a major prisoner swap. But a brief cease-fire between the government and the Taliban has breathed new life into efforts to negotiate an end to the nearly 19-year war. The May 24-26 truce, which coincided with the Eid al-Fitr Islamic holiday, largely held across the country. In what it said was a "goodwill" gesture, the government freed 1,000 Taliban prisoners -- 900 of them in a single day -- the largest group so far. The developments have raised prospects of an extended cessation of hostilities

and the long-delayed launch of direct talks between the government and militants over a permanent cease-fire and a future power-sharing agreement.

#### [Taliban Team in Kabul to Discuss Prisoner Release](#)

May 28, 2020, Tolo News

A five-member delegation from the Taliban arrived in Kabul to discuss the issue of the Taliban's prisoners. According to the Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen, the Taliban's technical team will certify the identity of the prisoners. Shaheen said that the group released 80 members of Afghan forces in Baghlan and Kunduz provinces on Thursday. The Afghan government has stated they will work together with the Taliban's team about the swap.

#### [US, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan Agree to Expand Cooperation](#)

May 28, 2020, Tolo News

Senior officials from Afghanistan, the United States and Uzbekistan on May 27 held a virtual meeting on the situation in Afghanistan, and the three pledged to work together and address mutual issues of concern including political ties, security and economic and human development matters. The meeting was co-chaired by American Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale, Afghanistan's acting Foreign Minister Mohammed Haneef Atmar, and Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov. Later on, the three countries issued a joint statement in which the three nations pledged to further expand their cooperation.

#### [UNSC will not lift sanctions from Taliban: Russian envoy](#)

May 29, 2020, Anadolu Agency

On May 29, the UN Security Council had been expected to vote on lifting sanctions from the Taliban in accordance with an agreement signed between the movement and the US in Doha on Feb. 29. But the issue will not be raised because some conditions stipulated by the deal have yet to be met, said Russia's presidential envoy for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov. "This was supposed to be done by May 29 on condition that the inter-Afghan talks had to start by March 10, but they have not yet been launched," he said.

#### [NATO Meets with Donors Supporting Afghanistan](#)

May 29, 2020, Tolo News

NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoană attended a teleconference meeting of international donors on Afghanistan, chaired by Hartwig Schafer, the

World Bank's Vice President for the South Asia Region, and all sides discussed ways to support Afghanistan.

## Bangladesh

### [Bangladesh Threatens To Ban These UK Brands, Escalating Battle To Get Factories Paid](#)

May 27, 2020, Forbes

After a months-long battle to get factories paid for canceled orders, Bangladesh's apparel export associations are threatening an embargo against a major Western clothing conglomerate that they say owes them millions for clothing made prior to the coronavirus pandemic.

### [Bangladesh Govt Decides Not to Extend COVID-19 Shutdown](#)

May 29, 2020, India.com

Offices and other workplaces will be allowed to operate on a limited scale until June 15, subject to their compliance with several health and hygiene directives, bdnews24 quoted State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain.

### [235 Indians stranded in Bangladesh return via three land border posts in NE](#)

May 28, 2020, Hindustan Times

A total of 235 Indian nationals, who were stranded in Bangladesh for over two months, due to the nationwide ongoing lockdown restrictions, which were imposed on March 25 to control the spread of the raging coronavirus disease (Covid-19) outbreak, returned to the country on Thursday via three land border posts in the north-east region.

### [Bangladesh capable of meeting global needs: FM](#)

May 28, 2020, UNB

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen says Bangladesh has demonstrated its ability to meet global needs amid coronavirus pandemic by exporting PPE to USA though some had mocked the prospect when he spoke about such opportunities two months ago.



## Nepal

### [Nepal pushes for talks, India says need to create trust first](#)

May 29, 2020, The Times of India

With Nepal insisting on foreign secretary level talks to address the Kalapani border issue, even while simultaneously pushing through a constitutional amendment to validate its new map, India said it was important to create an environment of trust and confidence for dialogue.

### [For a reset in India-Nepal relations](#)

May 29, 2020, The Hindu

Once again, relations between India and Nepal have taken a turn for the worse. The immediate provocation is the long-standing territorial issue surrounding Kalapani, a patch of land near the India-Nepal border, close to the Lipulekh Pass on the India-China border, which is one of the approved points for border trade and the route for the Kailash-Mansarovar yatra in Tibet.

### [In huge setback to PM Oli, Nepal's new political map hits a roadblock](#)

May 27, 2020, Hindustan Times

A constitutional amendment pushed hard by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to alter Nepal's map has been put on hold, people familiar with the development told Hindustan Times on Wednesday.

### [Amid border row, India hopes for better ties as Nepal defers map update](#)

May 27, 2020, Hindustan Times

The Indian government believes the debate in Nepal over a constitutional amendment to give legal backing to a new map, which depicts Kalapani and Lipulekh as part of Nepalese territory, reflects the importance attached to improving bilateral ties, people familiar with developments said.

### [India-Nepal Row: Years Of Goodwill Unlikely to be Undone By China](#)

May 28, 2020, The Quint

"There is a rumour that there is a short supply of essential medicines. People are advising us to get extra gas cylinders refilled. This on the top of the coronavirus-induced lockdown which has created its own sets of problems.

## Sri Lanka

### [Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy is Non-aligned, Both India and China are Valued Friends: PM Mahinda Rajapaksa](#)

May 28, 2020, News18

Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa gave an exclusive interview as he completed 50 years in active politics .

### [With debt crunch looming, Sri Lanka needs help from its friends](#)

May 27, 2020, Reuters

Sri Lanka's finances were fragile long before the coronavirus delivered its blow, but unless the country can secure aid from allies like China, economists say it may have to make a fresh appeal to the IMF or default on its debt.

### [Sri Lanka to reimpose selective lockdown after virus cases spike](#)

May 28, 2020, The Times of India

Sri Lanka will reimpose selective lockdown restrictions to restrict large gatherings after recording its biggest daily surge in coronavirus cases.

### [Sri Lanka President calls for unconditional debt relief from global creditors](#)

May 29, 2020, Economy Next

Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has called for unconditional support from bilateral and multilateral lenders for developing countries especially as they have not defaulted on their debt in the past an international virtual meeting on post-Covid-19 financing.

### [Covid-19: PM Modi says India stands ready to extend support to Sri Lanka](#)

May 27, 2020, Hindustan Times

Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had sought the currency swap facility from India, in addition to \$400 million that Colombo had sought under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) framework, during a telephone conversation with PM Modi on May 23.

## East & South East Asia

### China

[Premier Li's press conference mirrors China's confidence: Global Times editorial](#)

May 29, 2020, Global Times

At Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's press conference after the conclusion of the third session of the 13th National People's Congress on Thursday, the economy and people's livelihood were the most prominent topics.

[China, India don't need US help on their frictions](#)

May 28, 2020, Global Times

While Indian and Chinese forces have been engaging in a border standoff after India illegally constructed defense facilities across the border into Chinese territory in the Galwan Valley region, which is reminiscent of the 2017 Doklam stalemate, US President Donald Trump can't sit still. He turned to Twitter, saying that his country is "ready, willing and able to mediate or arbitrate their now raging border dispute."

[Meng ruling makes Ottawa new front line between Washington and Beijing](#)

May 28, 2020, Global Times

The Supreme Court of British Columbia, Canada, on Wednesday (Canadian local time) argued that the case against Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer of China's high-tech giant Huawei, meets a standard called "double criminality." It ruled that extradition proceedings against Meng should proceed.

[Era of US intimidating China over: Global Times editorial](#)

May 27, 2020, Global Times

US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday the US is working on a strong response to China's planned national security legislation for Hong Kong and would announce it before the end of the week. US media revealed that the measures would include imposing controls on transactions and freezing assets of Chinese officials and businesses for implementing the law, and visa restrictions for Chinese officials. When asked whether the US would revoke Hong Kong's separate customs territory status, a White House spokesperson said she had nothing to announce.

### [US' sanction threat over China no bigger than bluffing](#)

May 26, 2020, Global Times,

A draft decision to introduce national security legislation for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region came under deliberation at the National People's Congress during the ongoing two sessions, China's most important annual political event. White House National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said on Sunday that the US government may impose sanctions on China if the latter implements the legislation. The US State Department has also hinted it might reconsider Hong Kong's special status in US law.

### [NPC shows country is confident of fulfilling its dream of rejuvenation: China Daily editorial](#)

May 28, 2020, China Daily

As Premier Li Keqiang said in a news conference following the conclusion of the annual session of the country's top legislature on Thursday afternoon, as long as the country puts the people first, it will always be able to weather storms.

### [Security law will underpin HK's autonomy: China Daily editorial](#)

May 28, 2020, China Daily

In a move reconfirming China's unwavering determination to safeguard its national interests by making full use of its sovereign powers, the country's top legislature, the National People's Congress, on Thursday passed a decision authorizing its Standing Committee to introduce legislation to plug the national security loophole in Hong Kong.

### [It's simply a defense budget, period: China Daily editorial](#)

May 22 2020, China Daily

In stark contrast to the global perception that China is beefing up its defense budget, the country has been steadily slowing the pace of defense spending in recent years. And this year's draft budget report, issued at the opening of the top legislature's annual session on Friday, shows China has lowered the defense budget growth to 6.6 percent.

### [National security legislation a long overdue move: China Daily editorial](#)

May 22, 2020, China Daily

The draft decision of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, to enact a law to fix a national security loophole in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is a long overdue move.

### [China, Japan, ROK working together to advance FTA development: premier](#)

May 28, 2020, Xinhua

China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) are working closely together to advance their free trade agreement (FTA) development, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said Thursday.

### ["Dragon and Elephant dancing together" only right choice for China and India: Chinese envoy](#)

May 28, 2020, Xinhua

The realization of "Dragon and Elephant dancing together" is the only right choice for China and India, which serves the fundamental interests of the two countries and two peoples, Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong has said.

### [Xi's "two sessions" messages reassuring at difficult times](#)

May 29, 2020, Xinhua

Eradicating absolute poverty, upholding people-centered philosophy and seeking new opportunities from challenges, Chinese President Xi Jinping brought reassuring messages at times of uncertainty and difficulty.

## Japan

### [Pandemic hit to Japan's factory, retail sectors deeper than expected; jobless rate up to 2.6%](#)

May 29, 2020, Japan Today

Japan's April factory output fell at a much faster-than-expected pace and retail sales tumbled the most in more than two decades as a coronavirus-triggered state of emergency dealt a heavy blow to the economy.

### [As Japan reopens, coronavirus testing slowed by bureaucracy and staff shortages](#)

May 29, 2020, Japan Today

Critics say vested interests and bureaucracy inside Japan's health ministry caused bottlenecks at overworked public health centers, and officials waited too long to allow private labs to run tests.

### [The impact of compensation politics on Japan's defense](#)

May 28, 2020, The Japan Times

Despite COVID-19 dominating headlines, the decision on where to place Aegis Ashore in Japan once again made the news this month.

## Korea

### [South Korea is the pivot in the Huawei wars](#)

May 29, 2020, Asia Times

South Korea has told Washington that restrictions on semiconductor sales to Huawei and other Chinese companies are “unacceptable,” according to industry sources.

### [Korea backs Hong Kong's prosperity under 'one nation, two systems' policy](#)

May 28, 2020, The Korea Times

South Korea believes it is important that Hong Kong maintains its prosperity and development under China's "one nation, two systems" policy, the foreign ministry said Thursday, amid growing international criticism over Beijing's push for controversial security laws on the semiautonomous territory.

### [S. Korea to kick off homegrown Aegis destroyer development project in earnest](#)

May 29, 2020, The Korea Herald

South Korea is set to begin basic designing of an indigenous Aegis-equipped destroyer in a move to enhance the Navy's defense capabilities, the arms procurement agency said.

### [Seoul, Washington deliver new interceptor missiles onto THAAD base](#)

May 29, 2020, The Korea Herald

New interceptor missiles were delivered to a US military base in South Korea on Friday to replace worn-out equipment, amid lingering opposition by local residents.

### [Experts divided on Seoul's approach to inter-Korean cooperation](#)

May 28, 2020, The Korea Herald

Amid President Moon Jae-in's push for inter-Korean exchanges, security experts are divided on whether his cross-border projects will engage North Korea and bring about a breakthrough in the stalled denuclearization efforts.

### [Both Koreas violated armistice in DMZ exchange of gunfire: UN](#)

May 26, 2020, Al Jazeera

A United Nations investigation into a recent exchange of gunfire between North Korea and South Korea has determined that both countries violated the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

### [At Meeting, North Korea's Kim Touts 'Nuclear War Deterrent'](#)

May 26, 2020, The Diplomat

After an absence lasting a little more than three weeks, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reappeared in state media after having presided over a meeting of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea's Central Military Commission, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), North Korea's external-facing state media, said.

### [Shaping South Korea's middle-power future](#)

May 27, 2020, East Asia Forum

At the 2020 World Health Assembly, South Korean President Moon Jae-in shared his country's success fighting COVID-19 based on democratic institutions, science and technology. He has also pledged Seoul will become a world leader in human security cooperation. This reflects South Korea's national identity as a rising middle power in Asia, in stark contrast to its colonised and war-ravaged past. Middle-power goals, such as strengthening diplomatic networks that implement multilateralism, are now a yardstick for South Korea's foreign policy performance. If Seoul falls short, addressing the North Korea challenge and defending a rules-based order in Asia will be ever more difficult.

## **Southeast Asia**

### [Singapore a Bright Spot for China Relations in ASEAN](#)

May 24, 2020, VOA

Though Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has called it unhelpful for China and the U.S. to blame each other for the virus, researcher Sophie Boisseau du Rocher questions if Southeast Asia is willing to blame China, where the virus originated.

### [America's Oldest Military Ally in Asia Turns toward China](#)

May 24, 2020, Axios

When the Philippines needed resources to fight its coronavirus outbreak, it turned not to its American allies, but to China.

### [China Flips the Electoral Script in Myanmar](#)

May 25, 2020, Asia Times

An entirely new paradigm has emerged in Myanmar, one where Suu Kyi is now seen as a trusted ally of Beijing and the military as a nationalistic bulwark against

China's strong advances. That's a significant reversal, one that could have implications for stability in the lead-up to polls.

### [Chinese Military Seeks Image Makeover by Giving Medical Aid to Maritime Sovereignty Rivals](#)

May 25, 2020, VOA

China's armed forces are giving anti-COVID medical aid this month to soften their image in four countries that dispute Beijing's military-enforced control over a resource-rich sea.

### [China-Thailand Railway Agreement to be Signed in October.](#)

May 26, 2020, Khaosodenglish

The "Contract 2.3" for the Bangkok-Nakhon Ratchasima high-speed railway between Thailand and China is likely to be signed in October, said Thai Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob

### [Is China Taking Advantage of Covid-19 to Pursue South China Sea Ambitions?](#)

May 26, 2020, Deutsche Welle

With much of the world preoccupied with the coronavirus pandemic, China has continued to push its military objectives in the South China Sea. However, the US, Australia and Vietnam are not idly standing by.

### [Abu Sayyaf Targeting Kidnapping from Vessels off East Malaysia](#)

May 26, 2020, Seatrade Maritime News

Vessels have been warned of potential kidnappings by Abu Sayyaf Group militants in the waters off East Malaysia. The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre issued a warning that according to the Philippines Coast Guard group of approximately five ASG members armed with assorted firearms is planning to conduct kidnapping activities in undisclosed areas in Sabah, Malaysia

### [China's Increasing Belligerence in South China Sea Threatens International Peace and Regional Stability](#)

May 27, 2020, The Economic Times

The unilateral action by China to ban fishing in SCS and threat fisherman is bullying tactic, according to experts. The threat by China to its neighbours must be met through solidarity and unity among China's neighbours and members of the international community.



### [Another Pearl in China's String?](#)

May 27, 2020, The Interpreter

A growing wave of anti-Chinese sentiment across Cambodia has not wrested Prime Minister Hun Sen from his embrace of Beijing. His regime has instead further cosied up to China, reportedly granting it military access to a naval base in Sihanoukville, as well as the opportunity to build an airport and deep-sea port at Dara Sakor, in nearby Koh Kong province. While the latter is supposedly a civilian project, China's "civil-military fusion" frequently erases the line between the country's military and civilian sectors, expanding its global reach.

### [As Jakarta Trims Defense, Beijing Makes Waves in the South China Sea](#)

May 27, 2020, The Maritime Executive

The Covid-19 outbreak has hit hard for Southeast Asian economies. Anticipating more shocks to come, several countries have already moved to cut defence spending, seeing the military as a budget line that can be readily reduced. Indonesia, for example, has announced it will slash its defence budget this year by nearly \$588 million. Thailand has likewise reduced its defence allocation by \$555 million. Malaysia, Vietnam, and the Philippines all face similar pressure.

### [Myanmar's Unsteady Exit from China's Orbit](#)

May 27, 2020, East Asia Forum

When Myanmar's military regime began opening up the country politically and economically in 2010, one motive was to alleviate the country's overreliance on China. Ten years down the road, in the context of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the threat of new Western sanctions triggered by human rights violations against the Muslim Rohingya minority, China's influence appears hardly diminished.

### [2 Philippines Navy Ships Stranded in India on Way Home](#)

May 27, 2020, Inquirer.net

Two Philippine Navy vessels delayed in coming home from India by different reasons have already left the port of Cochin, India on Wednesday (May 27) and are on their way to the Philippines.

### [Huge Potential for Singapore Firms to Enter China Despite COVID-19 Crisis: Business Experts](#)

May 27, 2020, Xinhua Net

Despite the economic fall-out from COVID-19, enormous business opportunities lie ahead for Singapore companies to venture into China - from the food tech space, transport and logistics to medical services, said Singaporean economists and business leaders.

### [ASEAN Military Meet Focuses on Virus Cooperation](#)

May 28, 2020, Bangkok Post

The ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM) discussed cooperation in the eradication of Covid-19 in the region and the prevention of a second wave of the outbreak in a video conference.

### [ASEAN is Now a Bigger Trading Partner for China than the US](#)

May 28, 2020, Quartz

China's trade focus is pivoting. Due to its trade war with the US and the fast growing economies of its' southern neighbours, China now trades more with the Southeast Asia than the US.

## Central & West Asia

### Central Asia

#### [China Seen As Rising Military Power In Central Asia, Foreshadowing Future Friction With Russia](#)

May 28, 2020, Rferl.org

China is steadily increasing its security footprint in Central Asia and closing the gap with Russia, a trend that could see Moscow's influence "undermined in the coming decade," according to a new report.

#### [Linking Pakistan to Central Asia seen as a way to boost Afghan peace](#)

May 29, 2020, Dawn.com

At the inaugural meeting of a trilateral forum, the United States, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan reviewed projects that could bring prosperity to the entire region by linking South and Central Asia, said a joint statement issued.

#### [US, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan agree to expand cooperation in the region](#)

May 29, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

Senior officials from Afghanistan, the United States and Uzbekistan on May 27 held a virtual meeting on the situation in Afghanistan, and the three parties pledged to work together and address mutual issues of concern including political ties, security and economic and human development issues.

#### [Tajikistan Accuses Kyrgyzstan Of 'Destabilizing' Border Situation After Another Shooting](#)

May 28, 2020, Rferl.org

Tajikistan's Border Guarding Directorate has accused Kyrgyzstan of "attempting to destabilize" the situation at a disputed segment of the border between the two Central Asian nations after fresh clashes in recent days.

#### [760 new Chinese natural-gas buses to run in two Kazakhstan cities](#)

May 28, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

A total of 760 buses powered by compressed natural gas (CNG) made by Chinese bus-maker Yutong are expected to arrive in the Kazakh cities of Shymkent and Atyrau by early June.

### [OSCE promotes cross-border trade and transit in Turkmenistan](#)

May 28, 2020, The Times of Central Asia

An OSCE-organized online training on border crossing facilitation for transit goods carried by rail and road opened in Ashgabat on May 27. The training is organized within the framework of the OSCE Centre's extra-budgetary project on "Strengthening State Border Service Capacities in Turkmenistan", which places a particular focus on promoting cross-border trade and transit in the Central Asian region, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Centre in Ashgabat reported.

### **West Asia**

#### [Iraq's Military Spokesman: 'Daesh is No Longer a Threat'](#)

May 28, 2020, Middle East Monitor

Brigadier General Yahya Rasoul, military spokesman for Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kazemi, stressed that Daesh, which has already been vanquished, no longer poses a threat to Iraq.

#### [112 Missile Boats Delivered to IRGC Navy](#)

May 28, 2020, Tasnim News Agency

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy took delivery of 112 missile boats in a ceremony in the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas on Thursday (May 28) morning.

#### [Iran's Maritime Power 'Unknown' to Others: IRGC Chief](#)

May 28, 2020, Tasnim News Agency

Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Major General Hossein Salami warned enemies against any military adventurism targeting Iran, stressing that a major part of the Islamic Republic's maritime power is "unknown" to others.

#### [US Ends Waivers for Iran's Civil Nuclear Programs in Latest Maximum Pressure Campaign Move](#)

May 27, 2020, CNN International

The United States announced the end of waivers that allowed countries to cooperate with Iran on civil nuclear projects under the 2015 nuclear deal. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced Wednesday (May 27) that the waivers will end

following a 60-day wind-down period that is meant to allow businesses to cease operations.

### [Cyber Winter is Coming,' Top Israeli Official Warns After Iranian Attack on Water System](#)

May 28, 2020, The Algemeiner

The head of Israel's National Cyber Directorate Yigal Unna said Thursday (May 28) that following a recent Iranian cyber-attack on the Jewish state's water system, it was clear that "the cyber winter is coming and coming faster than even I suspected."

### [India Evacuates 115 Citizens From Israel as Part of 'Vande Bharat Mission'](#)

May 27, 2020, The Jerusalem Post

One hundred and fifteen Indian nationals boarded an Air India flight from Ben-Gurion Airport on Tuesday (May 26), returning home to their native country after being stranded in Israel for more than two months due to the coronavirus pandemic.

### [U.S. State Department Clears \\$1.4 Billion Sale of Patriot Air and Missile System to Kuwait](#)

May 29, 2020, Reuters

The U.S. State Department has approved a possible \$1.425 billion sale of Patriot air and missile defense system components and upgrades to Kuwait, the Pentagon said on Thursday (May 28) after notifying Congress of the certification.

### [Qatar Denies GCC Exit Rumours](#)

May 29, 2020, The Business Times

Qatar denied on Thursday (May 28) that it plans to quit the Gulf Cooperation Council as it prepares to mark three years of isolation led by the regional bloc's heavyweight Saudi Arabia.

### [Pentagon Confirms its 'long-term' Commitment with Saudi Arabia](#)

May 28, 2020, Arab News

The United States remains committed to long-term defense contracts with Saudi Arabia, Pentagon spokesman Sean Robertson told Arab News sister newspaper Asharq al-Awsat in a statement.

### [Trump Administration Considering New Weapons Sale to Saudi Arabia](#)

May 27, 2020, CNN International

Senate Foreign Relations Committee member Bob Menendez said he discovered that the administration is pursuing a previously undisclosed arms sale to Saudi Arabia, which includes "thousands more precision-guided bombs to the President's 'friend,' Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman."

### [Covid-19 Impact: Get Ready for a 15-20% Cut in Salary offers in UAE](#)

May 29, 2020, Gulf Today

There aren't that many job vacancies right now – but be prepared for a 15-20 per cent cut in salary expectations even for those positions that are still open. Businesses in the UAE are definitely not in a generous mood when it comes to hiring, with salary cuts now part of the new normal.

### [UN Urges \\$2.4 Billion in Aid for War-torn Yemen](#)

May 29, 2020, ABC News

The UN humanitarian chief is urgently appealing for \$2.4 billion to help millions in war-torn Yemen cope with the conflict and COVID-19, saying programs are already being cut and the situation is "alarming."

## United States

### United States

#### [U.S. and China fight at United Nations over Hong Kong](#)

May 28, 2020, Reuters

The United States and China clashed over Hong Kong at the United Nations on Wednesday after Beijing opposed a request by Washington for the Security Council to meet over China's plan to impose new national security legislation on the territory.

#### [Hong Kong government warns removing U.S. special status is 'double-edged sword'](#)

May 29, 2020, Reuters

Hong Kong told the United States to keep out of the internal debate over new national security laws being imposed by China, and warned that withdrawal of the financial hub's special status under U.S. law could backfire on the U.S. economy.

#### [Trump move could scrap or weaken law that protects social media companies](#)

May 28, 2020, Reuters

President Donald Trump said he will introduce legislation that may scrap or weaken a law that has protected internet companies, including Twitter and Facebook, in an extraordinary attempt to regulate social media platforms where he has been criticized.

#### [Civil unrest rages in Minneapolis over racially charged killing by police](#)

May 28, 2020, Reuters

Peaceful rallies gave way to a third night of arson, looting and vandalism in Minneapolis on Thursday as protesters vented their rage over the death of a black man.

## Europe & Russia

### Europe

#### [A €750 Billion Virus Recovery Plan Thrusts Europe Into a New Frontier](#)

May 27, 2020, The New York Times

Adopting the proposal would make history for the bloc, vesting authority in Brussels in ways that more closely resembled a central government.

#### [EU green recovery package sets a marker for the world](#)

May 28, 2020, The Guardian

The European commission has put down a marker for the world with its green recovery package. It sets a high standard for other nations, using the rebuilding of coronavirus-ravaged economies to tackle the even greater threat of the climate emergency, in principle at least.

#### [U.K. May Have Given Up on Brexit Deal, EU's Trade Chief Says](#)

May 28, 2020, Bloomberg

The U.K. may have already given up on the prospect of getting a trade agreement with the European Union, one of the bloc's most senior officials said, adding to signs of increasing friction in the negotiations.

#### [EU Borders May Stay Shut After June 15 Due to Covid-19](#)

May 28, 2020, Forbes

Europe's external borders are "sure" to stay closed to travel after June 15 against the Covid threat, according to the French minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian.

#### [EU not in mood to follow Donald Trump into China conflict over Hong Kong national security law](#)

May 29, 2020, South China Morning Post

European leaders are in no mood to follow the United States in threatening trade sanctions against China as it moves to tighten its grip on Hong Kong, although foreign ministers will meet on Friday to try to hack out a common position.



### [Germany Wants E.U. to Sanction Head of Russian Military Intelligence](#)

May 28, 2020, New York Times

Germany wants to impose a European travel ban and asset freeze on the head of Russia's military intelligence agency and several of its spies in response to a 2015 cyberattack on the German Parliament that was traced back to Moscow earlier this month.

### [Germany chides China over new Hong Kong security law](#)

May 29, 2020, Deutsche Welle

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on Thursday criticized China's plan to impose a new security law in Hong Kong, saying that "freedom of expression and assembly" as well as democratic debate "must continue to be respected in the future."

### [EU extends sanctions against Assad regime](#)

May 28, 2020, Anadolu Agency

EU foreign ministers on Thursday decided to extend sanctions for one more year against the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria and its supporters.

### [UK could offer 'path to citizenship' for Hong Kong's British passport holders](#)

May 29, 2020, BBC

The UK could offer British National (Overseas) passport holders in Hong Kong a path to UK citizenship if China does not suspend plans for a security law in the territory, UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab says.

## **Russia**

### [Russia Slams 'Dangerous' U.S. Foreign Policy Moves](#)

May 28, 2020, The Moscow Times

Russia said the United States was acting in a dangerous and unpredictable way, after Washington withdrew from a key military treaty and moved to ramp up pressure on Iran.

### [Putin and the 'Distinct Russian Civilization'](#)

May 25, 2020, The Moscow Times

In the closing days of May 2020, at the peak of the coronacrisis and political uncertainty, state-controlled TV decided for reasons known only to itself to air an interview with Vladimir Putin that was filmed back in September 2019. In Russian

political jargon, this is known as “canned goods” or “preserves” and it has become a familiar part of Russia’s postmodern political landscape: no one knows exactly when the footage of Putin that appears on the evening news was actually filmed – that day, that week or that month.

### [Wildfires Threaten Arctic Russia, Scientists Warn](#)

May 29, 2020, The Moscow Times

Early wildfires caused by a historically warm and snowless winter have ignited concerns of “zombie” fires re-emerging across the Russian Arctic, scientists and activists have said.

### [Deep Trouble: Russia Finally Moves To Raise Radioactive Debris From Arctic Waters](#)

May 29, 2020, Rferl.org

The nuclear-powered submarine, built four decades earlier for the Soviet Northern Fleet, was being towed to a Murmansk shipyard to be dismantled when it was hit by a summer storm. The sub sank, killing nine sailors and sending around 800 kilograms of radioactive fuel to the sea bottom.

### [Shipbuilders deliver latest Borei-A nuclear-powered sub to Russian Navy](#)

May 28, 2020, TASS

The improved Project 955A (Borei-A) strategic nuclear-powered lead submarine Knyaz Vladimir has been handed over to the Russian Navy, the press office of the United Shipbuilding Corporation reported

### [Russia developing new reconnaissance armored vehicle](#)

May 27, 2020, TASS

Russia is developing the latest Mars-2000 reconnaissance combat vehicle based on the BTR-82 armored personnel carrier, CEO of Military Industrial Company (the producer of the BTR-82 and vehicles on its basis) Alexander Krasovitsky said.

### [Foreign nations ramp up recon activity at Russian maritime borders – Border Control head](#)

Ma 28, 2020, Tass

Besides, foreign scientific organization ramp up their aspiration to access the resource potential of the seas that are under Russian jurisdiction, especially in the Arctic region.

## Africa & Latin America

### Latin America

#### [MOFA thanks Brazil congressman for leaking China ploy](#)

May 29, 2020, Taipei Times

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) yesterday extended its appreciation to Brazilian Deputy Paulo Eduardo Martins, who disclosed a letter from the Chinese embassy in Sao Paulo to local lawmakers demanding that they not congratulate President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) on her inauguration on Wednesday last week.

#### [Wielding Sanctions, U.S. Disrupts Iranian Fuel Shipments to Venezuela](#)

May 28, 2020, The Wall Street Journal

Washington has disrupted planned Iranian fuel deliveries to Venezuela by threatening sanctions against shippers, U.S. officials said Wednesday, temporarily thwarting a burgeoning economic alliance between two of America's biggest rivals.

#### [Venezuela reaches deal with U.N. to buy food, medicine with gold - central bank](#)

May 28, 2020, Reuters

Venezuela has reached a deal with the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) to destine part of its gold in Bank of England accounts toward the purchase of food and medicine during the coronavirus pandemic, its central bank governor said.

#### [Latin America is now the 'epicenter of the outbreak,' says health official](#)

May 26, 2020, CNN

Latin America has surpassed Europe and the United States in the daily number of reported Covid-19 infections, the director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said Tuesday, putting the region at the center of the global outbreak.

#### [China Securing Brazilian Soy With U.S. Trade Tensions Rising](#)

May 28, 2020, Yahoo Finance

China is buying Brazilian soybeans in a sign the Asian nation may be looking to secure supplies as trade tensions with the U.S. rise.

## Africa

### [Covid-19 pandemic may create opportunities to deepen India's engagement with Africa](#)

May 29, 2020, The Indian Express

India could also create a new fund for Africa and adapt its grant-in-aid assistance to reflect the current priorities. This could include support for new investment projects by Indian entrepreneurs especially in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors in Africa.

### [Al-Shabaab terrorists kidnap, kill 9 doctors in southern Somalia](#)

May 29, 2020, Times Now

Terrorists from al-Shabaab group, which is affiliated with al-Qaeda, have kidnapped and killed nine doctors in southern Somalia, media reported.

### [Sudanese army, Ethiopian militias clash near border](#)

May 25, 2020, Andolou Agency

Clashes between Sudan's military and Ethiopian militias have taken place near the border with Ethiopia over the past three days, a spokesman for the Sudanese army said.

### [Ethiopia pours water on Egypt's Nile rights claim ahead of crunch dam talks](#)

May 28, 2020, Arab News

Ethiopia has opened the floodgates to further controversy over a giant dam scheme by rejecting Egypt's historic claims to the waters of the Nile.

### [Trump courts Africa to counter coronavirus – and China](#)

May 29, 2020, Politico

The Trump administration has set its sights on Africa as an important front in the fight against the coronavirus – and against China.



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

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)