

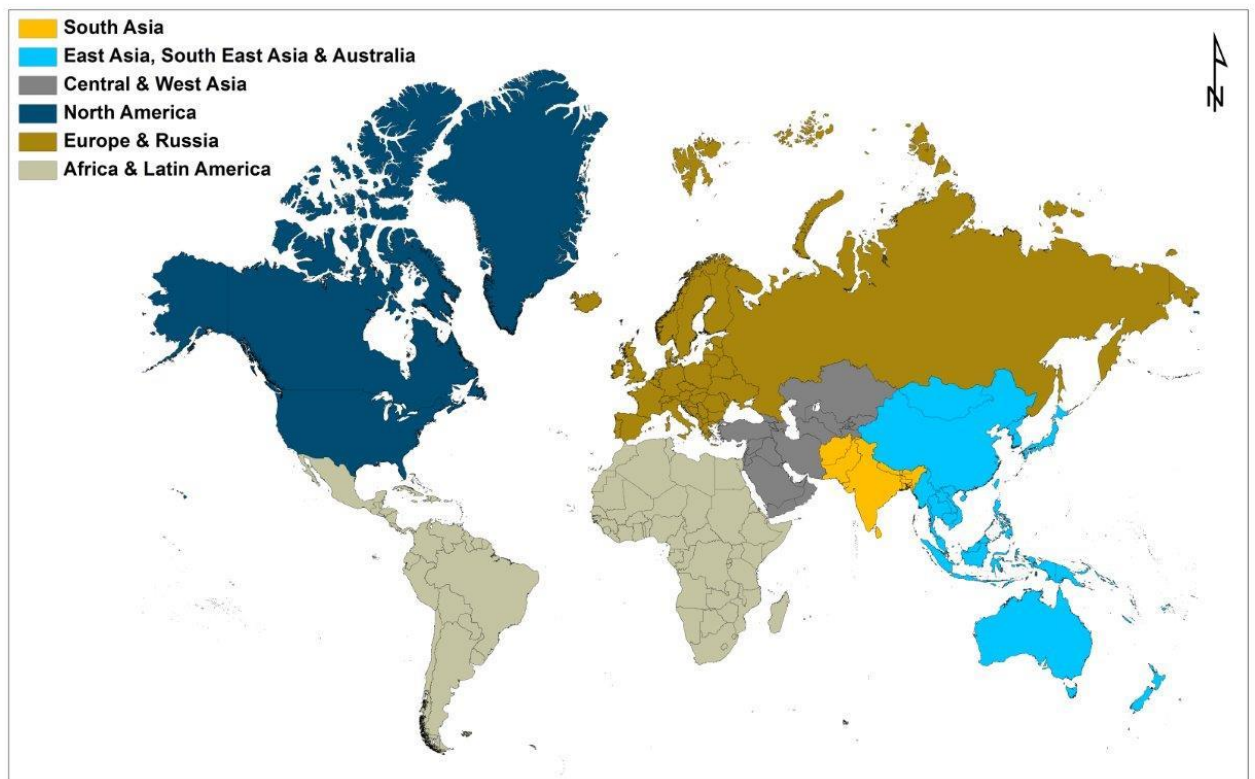


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH



Volume V, Issue 3 | January 15, 2021

Delhi Policy Group

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

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ABOUT US

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

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

At a time of disruptive change in the global order, DPG aims to deliver research based, relevant, reliable and realist policy perspectives to an actively engaged public, both at home and abroad. DPG is deeply committed to the growth of India's national power and purpose, the security and prosperity of the people of India and India's contributions to the global public good. We remain firmly anchored within these foundational principles which have defined DPG since its inception.

DPG WEEKLY WORLD WATCH

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South Asia

India

[Indian Navy, Coast Guard part of action at mega coastal defence war games](#)

January 14, 2021, India Today

More than 100 assets of Indian Navy Coast Guard were pressed into action along India's coastline along with other agencies to test India's maritime security against infiltration from the waters as part of exercise 'Sea Vigil'.

[India clears deal to manufacture LCA Mk1A 'Tejas' fighter jets for the air force](#)

January 14, 2021, The Economic Times

India has cleared a deal to manufacture 83 of the home developed Light Combat Aircraft (LCA Mk1A) for the air force, in a big boost to the domestic aviation industry, with hundreds of vendors expected to get orders under the Make in India program.

[Indian Army signs a pact to procure high-altitude drones from ideaForge for \\$20 million](#)

January 14, 2021, The Economic Times

Indian Army has signed a contract to buy undisclosed quantities of high-altitude drones from ideaForge for \$20 million, said the company.

[India & China continue to maintain close communication: MEA on Ladakh standoff](#)

January 14, 2021, The Economic Times

India and China continue to maintain close communication through diplomatic and military channels with the objective of ensuring complete disengagement at all friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, the Ministry of External Affairs(MEA) said.

[Memo: India key to US plan in Indo-Pacific, counter to China](#)

January 14, 2021, The Indian Express

A newly declassified internal document of the outgoing Trump administration – rare for an incumbent to declassify at least two decades before its time – highlights how India figures as a key player in the US strategy on Indo-Pacific.

[Our solidiers are capable of giving befitting reply if any superpower hurts country's pride: Rajnath Singh](#)

January 14, 2021, India Today

Amid the eight-month-old border standoff with China, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has said, India does not want a war but its soldiers are capable of giving befitting reply if any 'superpower' hurts the country's pride.

[India again asks WHO to remove incorrect maps of J&K, Ladakh regions, seeks urgent intervention](#)

January 14, 2021, India Today

India has written to the World Health Organisation (WHO) expressing "deep displeasure" over the incorrect depiction of Indian maps and the territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

[Trust With China "Profoundly Disturbed", US Ties On Upswing: S Jaishankar](#)

January 12, 2021, NDTV

Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said that trust with China had been deeply impaired after last summer's border clash which resulted in the first combat deaths in 45 years. Ties with the United States, on the other hand, were converging and were likely to expand under the new administration in Washington, he said.

[India-Japan-Russia grouping in the works](#)

January 13, 2021, The Economic Times

A new trilateral format is taking shape in the Indo-Pacific region, with India, Japan and Russia planning to hold a joint meeting in the near future as part of their emerging partnership.

Pakistan

[PDM drive against govt termed 'jihad'](#)

January 12, 2021, Dawn

Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has declared the opposition's struggle against the government a jihad, claiming that the nation is ready to offer any sacrifice for this cause. He pledged that the jihad would continue till "rulers stopped oppressing the poor".

[PML-N to take part in Senate polls, by-elections](#)

January 10, 2021, Dawn

One of the main opposition parties, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), announced that it would take part in the Senate polls and any option of resignations from assemblies would be "weighed" after that. The PML-N also said that the opposition parties in the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) would jointly contest the Senate elections and by-polls.

[Outage plunges country into darkness](#)

January 10, 2021, Dawn

Almost the entire country plunged into darkness late on January 9 after a major breakdown in the national grid shut down a number of hydel and thermal power stations one by one in stunning fashion. The breakdown was so severe that the country's entire power transmission, dispatch and distribution system of over 22,000MW tripped, leaving cities and towns in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in darkness.

[FATF asks Pakistan to 'swiftly' complete action plan by Feb](#)

January 13, 2021, The News

Noting efforts already made on various items, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has asked Pakistan to swiftly complete its full action plan by next month. "As all action plan deadlines have expired, the FATF strongly urges Pakistan to swiftly complete its full action plan by February 2021," the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog said on its website.

[US defence delegation meets senior Pak army official](#)

January 9, 2021, The News

A US delegation led by David Helvey, Assistant Secretary of Defence for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, visited General Headquarters to hold formal consultations on Pakistan-US Strategic Level Defence Dialogue.

[Pakistan assures Azerbaijan of help in developing Nagorno-Karabakh region](#)

January 14, 2021, The Express Tribune

Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov, who arrived in Islamabad on two-day official visit, called on Prime Minister Imran in Islamabad. "During the meeting, views were exchanged on matters relating to bilateral relations and regional and international issues," a statement issued by the PM Office said.

Afghanistan

[NSA Doval meets Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Kabul, discusses counter-terrorism efforts](#)

January 13, 2021, The Print

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, visited Kabul on January 13-14 where he met the top Afghan leadership and discussed issues of strategic mutual interest as well as on synchronising efforts to combat terrorism and build the peace process. Doval, who is leading a high-level delegation, called on Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at the Presidential Palace.

[Progress stalls in Afghan peace talks as sides await Biden](#)

January 13, 2021, Reuters

Afghan peace talks that resumed on January 5 are effectively on hold, as negotiators wait for President-elect Joe Biden to signal whether he will stick to Donald Trump's aggressive schedule to pull out troops.

[US Envoy Discussed Interim Govt with Afghan Politicians: Sources](#)

January 12, 2021, Tolo News

The US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad discussed the prospect of an interim government in Afghanistan as a result of the peace process, said sources close to the Afghan politicians who recently met Khalilzad.

[Pentagon presses ahead with Afghanistan troop drawdown despite law barring it](#)

January 12, 2021, Reuters

The U.S. military has not halted a U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, despite a new law prohibiting further reductions without the Pentagon sending Congress an assessment of the risks. The Pentagon's action will likely anger Republican and Democratic lawmakers opposed to further troop cuts and renew concerns about the outgoing Trump administration's disdain for Congress, even in its waning days.

[Nimroz Airstrike Kills 18 Civilians: Local Council Head](#)

January 10, 2021, Tolo News

An airstrike in the western province of Nimroz left 18 people dead, all members of one family. The airstrike took place in Munazari village in Khashrod district. Local officials refrained from providing details on the incident, but the ANA 215th Corps in a statement said the reports of civilian casualties in Nimroz will be investigated.

Bangladesh

[Rohingya repatriation: Bangladesh-Myanmar-China tripartite meeting on January 19](#)

January 14, 2021, Northeast Now

Bangladesh has turned to China to facilitate an early start of repatriation of the Rohingya refugees to Myanmar. A secretary-level meeting between Bangladesh and Myanmar, mediated by China, will be held on January 19 in Dhaka.

[Connectivity Gaining Greater Currency in India-Bangladesh Relations](#)

January 14, 2021, The Diplomat

Bangladesh has expressed interest in the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway, despite slow progress made to date.

[2021 will be historic for India-Bangladesh bilateral ties: India](#)

India said that the year 2021 will be a historic year for India- Bangladesh bilateral relations as both countries will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Liberation War of 1971, which led to the creation of Bangladesh.

[122 Bangladesh armed force personnel to join India's R Day Parade](#)

January 14, 2021, Business Standard

Bangladesh Armed Forces, which fought and bled together with their Indian counterparts 50 years ago, will participate in the Republic Day Parade in New Delhi on January 26, at Rajpath, a statement said.

[India-Bangladesh agree to enhance fight against global terrorist groups](#)

January 12, 2021, The New Indian Express

India and Bangladesh agreed to enhance fight against terrorist entities, including global terrorist groups as well as other fugitives, wherever they are present and active.

[Lockdown aided more drug seizures on India-Bangladesh border](#)

January 12, 2021, The Hindu

The COVID-19 lockdown apparently did not make much of a difference for cattle smugglers and drug traffickers along the India-Bangladesh border.

Nepal

[Nepal foreign minister on India trip, to meet Jaishankar](#)

January 15, 2021, The Indian Express

Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali will meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for their first face-to-face meeting since the border row led to a slide in ties.

[Border talks with Nepal only under appropriate mechanism: India](#)

January 15, 2021, The Times of India

Ahead of the foreign minister-level Joint Commission Meeting (JCM), India ruled out any substantive dialogue with Nepal on the Kalapani border dispute saying there was a separate mechanism to address the issue.

Sri Lanka

[Sri Lanka Revives Port Deal With India, Japan](#)

January 13, 2021, NDTV

Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa announced the revival of an Indian and Japanese investment project to develop a deep-sea terminal in Colombo harbour, next to a controversial \$500-million Chinese-run container jetty.

[India Asks Sri Lanka's Rajapaksa Government to Ensure Power Devolution](#)

January 12, 2021, The Diplomat

New Delhi has significant stakes in making sure the island nation's ethnic Tamil minority is not further marginalized.

[Navy brings ashore distressed fishing trawler and stranded fishermen](#)

January 14, 2021, Colombo Page

Jan 14, Colombo: Sri Lanka Navy, in cooperation with Indian High Commission in Colombo, brought ashore a fishing trawler drifted to the Indian waters along with 02 fishermen aboard, on 13th January 2021.

East & South East Asia

China

[China firmly opposes any official exchanges between U.S., Taiwan](#)

January 14, 2021, Xinhua Net

China firmly opposes any form of official exchanges between the United States and Taiwan, a foreign ministry spokesperson said, adding that some U.S. politicians would pay a heavy price for their wrongdoings concerning China's Taiwan region.

[Trump admin bans 9 firms with Chinese military ties, China calls move political](#)

January 15, 2021, Mint

In a final push to ratchet up pressure on Beijing before President-elect Joe Biden takes office, Trump admin blacklisted nine other Chinese companies that have alleged connections with the Chinese military. China says the move is political.

[Politicizing WHO research harmful to anti-pandemic fight: China Daily editorial](#)

January 14, 2021, China Daily

A World Health Organization-led team of scientists from different countries arrived in Wuhan, Hubei province, hoping to trace back the origin of the outbreak of the novel coronavirus from the city.

['Forced labor' accusation against Xinjinag is 'lie of the century': Chinese FM](#)

January 14, 2021, Global Times

The accusation of "forced labor" against Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is the "lie of the century" made by the US and some Western countries, while the US itself is the country that has problems of forced labor, with people's health and security going unprotected, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said.

[China to commission first 10,000 ton-class maritime patrol ship in mid-2021](#)

January 14, 2021, Global Times

China will commission its first maritime patrol ship with a displacement of more than 10,000 tons in mid-2021, and the vessel is expected to be used in the South China Sea for missions including patrol and emergency support, an official announced.

[Xi calls on Starbucks to help promote China-US ties](#)

January 15, 2021 China Daily

President Xi Jinping has encouraged the United States company Starbucks to play a positive role in promoting China-US economic and trade cooperation and bilateral ties.

[Washington urged to end import ban on Xinjiang](#)

January 15, 2021, China Daily

China urged the United States to immediately withdraw its wrong decision to put an import ban on all cotton and tomato products from the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and stop interfering in China's internal affairs under the pretext of Xinjiang-related issues.

[U.S. bans imports of all cotton, tomato products from China's Xinjiang region](#)

January 13, 2021, Reuters

The Trump administration announced an import ban on all cotton and tomato products from western China's Xinjiang region over allegations that they are made with forced labor from detained Uighur Muslims. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said the order applies to raw fibres, apparel and textiles made from Xinjiang-grown cotton, as well as canned tomatoes, sauces, seeds and other tomato products from the region, even if processed or manufactured in third countries.

[Keep tariffs on China, says outgoing US trade chief](#)

January 12, 2021, Channel News Asia

Outgoing US President Donald Trump's trade chief urged President-elect Joe Biden to maintain tariffs imposed on China, arguing that they have shifted the balance of power in Washington's favour. In an interview with The Wall Street Journal, US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer defended the Trump administration's tactics of slapping tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars in Chinese goods starting in 2018. "We changed the way people think about China," said Lighthizer, architect of the tariff policy that he argues benefited American workers, even though some economists disagree.

[China's new rules amp up pressure on US businesses](#)

January 10, 2021, Live Mint

Beijing's new rules, released, also allow Chinese companies to sue in Chinese courts those who comply with the foreign laws. The rules come after the U.S. imposed various restrictions against Chinese companies. Those include blocking some Chinese companies like Huawei Technologies Co. from obtaining certain components made by U.S. or foreign suppliers, or accessing

U.S. technology. While the rules didn't name any specific foreign laws or sanctions, they amp up pressure against U.S. and other foreign companies with a footprint in China, possibly forcing them to choose between American or Chinese regulations, according to people in the foreign business community.

Japan

[Kono calls U.S. Capitol riot shocking; yearns for 'good old days'](#)

January 15, 2021, Japan Today

A high-profile Japanese cabinet minister said he was shocked at last week's assault on the U.S. Capitol, urging Washington to resume its global role as a "champion of democratic values" and the rule of law.

[Japan welcomes Britain's plan to send aircraft carrier group to Asia](#)

January 15, 2021, Japan Today

Japanese Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi welcomed Britain's plan to dispatch an aircraft carrier strike group to waters in the western Pacific amid China's growing maritime assertiveness.

[Japan considers various options against S Korea 'comfort women' ruling](#)

January 14, 2021, Japan Today

Japan is contemplating "various options" and will act resolutely in response to a recent South Korean court ruling ordering the Japanese government to pay damages to former "comfort women," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

[Japan's entry ban now covers world; anti-virus rules tightened](#)

January 14, 2021, The Asahi Shimbun

After back pedaling, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced that Japan's entry ban would cover all non resident foreign nationals from Jan. 14 to Feb. 7, as the nation struggles to contain the novel coronavirus.

[Japan must embrace international cooperation in the age of COVID-19](#)

January 15, 2021, The Japan Times

Since the onset of winter, the rampaging coronavirus has seemed unstoppable. Yet, compared to the Spanish flu of 100 years ago, the number of COVID-19 victims is small. More than 50 million people died from the Spanish flu out of a world population of about 2 billion at that time — that's 2.5% of the total. In contrast, the current world population is about 8 billion. The percentage of deaths is only 0.02%. The gap between the two figures is immense.

[U.S. rescinds 'Taiwan Guidelines': What are the implications?](#)

January 13, 2021, The Japan Times

On Jan. 9, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the United States had lifted a set of self-imposed restrictions on contacts with Taiwan. While these "Taiwan Guidelines" were barely known to the general public, they had developed a life of their own in U.S. diplomacy. What are the implications of this move?

Korea

[Diplomats of S. Korea, Japan hold video talks amid tensions on wartime sexual slavery ruling](#)

January 15, 2021, The Korea Herald

Diplomats of South Korea and Japan held video talks to discuss a recent Seoul court ruling ordering Tokyo to compensate victims of its wartime sexual slavery and other pending issues, the foreign ministry said.

[President Moon calls for 'future-oriented' relations with Japan](#)

January 14, 2021, The Korea Herald

President Moon Jae-in urged Japan to swiftly work toward "future-oriented" bilateral relations, after a Seoul court ordered Tokyo to compensate South Korea.

[Time to shift focus on arms control with North Korea: experts](#)

January 14, 2021, The Korea Times

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's pledge to boost his country's nuclear arsenal during its latest party congress is leaving little room for compromise on Pyongyang's complete denuclearization.

[Possibility of 2021 Moon-Kim summit drawing attention](#)

January 13, 2021, The Korea Times

The possibility of another summit between President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un this year is gaining attention thanks to moves by the Democratic Party of Korea (DPK).

[N.Korea Stages Nighttime Military Parade in Subzero Weather](#)

January 12, 2021, The Chosun Ilbo

North Korea staged a military parade in the middle of a freezing cold night during a weeklong Workers Party congress."North Korea staged a military

parade at dead of night in Kim Il-sung Square in Pyongyang," the Joint Chiefs of Staff here said in a press release.

[Korea to Conduct Underwater Test of Submarine-Launched Missile](#)

January 14, 2021, The Chosun Ilbo

South Korea completed dry tests of the country's first submarine-launched ballistic missile late last year and is now planning to conduct underwater tests.

Southeast Asia

[China's Goals for Wang Yi's Southeast Asian Tour](#)

January 15, 2021, The Diplomat

The foreign minister's trip was about much more than COVID-19 vaccines.

[China, Brunei vow to push bilateral cooperation to new high](#)

January 15, 2021, Global Times

Brunei's Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah met with visiting Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi here, and both sides pledged to carry on joint fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and promote bilateral cooperation in all areas to new high.

[Indonesia stresses peace in South China Sea](#)

January 14, 2021, Andolou Agency

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi stressed that all countries must comply with international laws in order to maintain peace in the South China Sea.

[Questions over Chinese vaccine](#)

January 14, 2021, Bangkok Post

The Ministry of Public Health has requested further information about the vaccine it has ordered from China following a report it might not be as effective as first thought.

[China, Indonesia sign MoU on internet security amid Washington pressure on Beijing's 5G technology](#)

January 13, 2021, Global Times

China and Indonesia have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on developing capacity building of internet security and tech cooperation, marking the first-of-its-kind internet security agreement China signed with a foreign country which observers said represents the latest series of "strategic

counterattacks" Beijing has launched to shatter Washington's anti-China clean network program and break the US-led blockade.

[India and Indonesia Push Ahead with Defence Relationship](#)

January 13, 2021, The Diplomat

Despite deepening strategic relations, the two countries have latent differences in the maritime domain.

[Senior Chinese diplomat Wang Yi visits Myanmar, promises vaccines](#)

January 12, 2021, Hindustan Times

Wang and Myanmar officials discussed border security, regional cooperation and China's roles in brokering peace in Myanmar and in the potential repatriation of Rohingya refugees, Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) said.

[Beijing's New Toys in Myanmar](#)

January 11, 2021, The Diplomat

Infrastructure is high on China's agenda in Myanmar, but it is also making headway in other important sectors.

Central & West Asia

Central Asia

[Here's looking at EAEU: The year of integration](#)

January 14, 2021, Eurasianet

Talk of creating a common gas market inside the Eurasian Economic Union invariably loses momentum once favorable bilateral deals are struck.

[Afghanistan and Turkmenistan open 'important' railway](#)

January 14, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

The Aqina-Andkhoy railway connecting the northern Afghan province of Faryab and Turkmenistan was officially opened on January 14.

[Uzbekistan to reform its automotive industry to boost production](#)

January 14, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has tasked the government to reform the country's automotive industry to boost production and develop competition, the president's press service said on January 13,

[Uzbekistan imports electricity amid winter shortages, to re-export power to Afghanistan](#)

January 13, 2021, The Times of Central Asia

Uzbekistan has been importing electricity from neighboring countries to meet domestic demand amid winter power shortages, Xinhua news agency reported citing the Uzbek Energy Ministry.

[Will Biden take on neglected Caucasus and Central Asia?](#)

January 13, 2021, Eurasianet

Following Trump's erratic approach, Biden's team of experienced professionals are expected to try to reengage the region. Will they be able to?

[Slow Anti-Americanism in Central Asia](#)

January 12, 2021, The Diplomat

"U.S. power can inadvertently shift politics even in regions like Central Asia where the United States is remote."

[India-Turkmenistan Foreign Office Consultations](#)

January 13, 2021, MEA

The 4th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Turkmenistan was held on 13 January, 2021 through virtual mode. The

Consultations provided an opportunity to comprehensively review the various aspects of bilateral relations, including political, economic, commercial, defence, scientific, cultural, education and consular cooperation.

West Asia

[Pompeo Says Iran is New Base for Al Qaeda, but Offers Little Proof](#)

January 12, 2021, The New York Times

Al Qaeda's new base of operations is in Iran, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, using his last days in office to tie together two of what he called the world's greatest terrorism threats but offering no underlying intelligence as evidence.

[Children Suffering in Yemen Should Move Conscience of the World, Says India at UNSC](#)

January 15, 2021, WION

India's envoy to the United Nations, TS Tirumurti said, "The plight of millions of Yemenis facing, inter alia, severe food insecurity, as well as children suffering malnourishment, are immediate needs which should move the conscience of the world community."

[UNHRC Presidency 2021, in Fiji vs Bahrain contest, India Set for a Key Role](#)

January 13, 2021, Moneycontrol

The 2021 presidency of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is expected to be decided by a vote, as the Fijian candidate, Nazhat Shameem Khan, has met with opposition from Russia and China, and India is poised to play a key role.

[Iran Unveils Its Largest Military Vessel During Missile Drill](#)

January 13, 2021, AL Jazeera

Iran's navy has officially inducted the country's largest military vessel into its fleet during a maritime missile drill at a time of heightened tensions with the United States over its nuclear programme. The indigenously-made forward base ship IRIS Makran, which is said to be able to carry up to five helicopters, joined the fleet with another ship that is capable of firing missiles.

[Deadliest Israeli Air-strikes on Syria in Years Kill 57, Say Observers](#)

January 13, 2021, The Guardian

Israeli airstrikes on east Syria killed 57 regime forces and allied Iran-backed fighters in the deadliest such strikes since the start of the conflict, a war monitoring group said.

[Strategic Dialogue: India & Oman to Pursue Slew of Pacts for Future-oriented Partnership](#)

January 14, 2021, The Economic Times

India and its oldest strategic partner in West Asia Oman decided to pursue pacts in political, energy, trade, investment, defence, security, space, mining, S&T, culture and consular fields for a future-oriented partnership.

[India to Boost Cooperation with UAE on Tsunami Warning, Climate Information](#)

January 13, 2021, Mint

The Union Cabinet approved a memorandum of understanding to boost cooperation with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on tsunami warning in the Oman Sea and Arabian Sea, and the larger climate information and earth sciences space.

[Saudi Arabia Welcomes US Designation of Yemen's Houthis as Terrorists](#)

January 11, 2021, Daily Sabah

Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry welcomed the United States' move to designate Yemen's Houthi group as a foreign terrorist organization.

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January 11, 2021, Daily Sabah

Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry welcomed the United States' move to designate Yemen's Houthi group as a foreign terrorist organization.

Europe & Russia

Europe

[NATO secretary general: Our alliance must remain strong militarily and politically across the globe](#)

January 12, 2021, Defense News

To keep NATO militarily strong, our nations need to continue investing in defence so that we have the best militaries with the right capabilities, says NATO Secretary General.

[EU court opinion leaves Facebook more exposed over privacy](#)

January 14, 2021, Associated Press

Any EU country can take legal action against companies like Facebook over cross-border violations of data privacy rules, not just the main regulator in charge of the company, a top court adviser said.

[Italy political crisis erupts over EU COVID spending](#)

January 14, 2021, BBC

The coalition government of centrist Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte is in chaos after ex-PM Matteo Renzi withdrew his tiny party from it.

[China acts quickly to stymie Biden trade alliance with Europe](#)

January 13, 2021, The Sydney Morning Herald

Within the past fortnight, China has taken two steps that undermine the ability of the incoming Biden administration to build a western alliance to contain China's growing and increasingly aggressive global assertiveness.

[Germany's Merkel: Trump's Twitter eviction 'problematic'](#)

January 11, 2021, Associated Press

German Chancellor Angela Merkel considers U.S. President Donald Trump's eviction from Twitter by the company "problematic," her spokesman said.

[Britain's immediate economic prospects are grim](#)

January 16, 2021, The Economist

Britain's transition out of the EU, completed on December 31, did not end with a bang. The real damage from Brexit will take time to make itself felt.

[Britain introduces new policies to end supply-chain links to Xinjiang](#)

January 13, 2021, South China Morning Post

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announces moves to cut off business with suppliers where there is sufficient evidence of human rights violations.

Russia

[Azerbaijan, Armenia Agree To Restore Transport Communications In Moscow-Mediated Meeting](#)

January 13, 2021, Caspian News

The presidents of Azerbaijan and Russia, along with the prime minister of Armenia, met in Moscow to discuss priorities related to the post-war issues in the region. The meeting concluded with the signing of a next tripartite statement concerning the unlocking of the regional transport communications.

[Putin says Russia to start mass Covid-19 vaccinations next week](#)

January 13, 2021, Mint

Russian President Vladimir Putin tasked officials with launching mass coronavirus vaccinations from next week, touting Russia's homemade jab as the world's best.

[Russia, US top brass hold phone conversation, discuss security](#)

January 12, 2021, TASS

Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley held a phone conversation with Russia's Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov, Joint Staff Spokesperson Col. Dave Butler said in a statement.

[State Dept. never replied substantially to Russia's notes about reporter rights – Russia](#)

January 12, 2021, TASS

The Foreign Ministry spokesperson recalled that American human rights activists recorded around 1,000 journalist rights abuses in 2020 in the country, with Russian media workers targeted on a number of occasions.

[Nord Stream 2 construction in Danish waters to restart on January 15](#)

January 14, 2021, TASS

Construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline segment in Danish territorial waters will resume from January 15, the press service of Nord Stream 2 AG, the project operator said.

[Russia disappointed with lack of EU response to Kiev's human rights violations](#)

January 14, 2021, TASS

Russia's Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe Ivan Soltanovsky recalled that after Crimea's reunification with Russia in 2014 the Ukrainian authorities fully cut it off from the North Crimean Canal, the key source of drinking water for the peninsula's 2 million population.

[New START: Expiring Arms Accord Between Cold War Rivals](#)

January 15, 2021, The Moscow Times

Russia and the United States have until Feb. 5 to prolong a key agreement to curb their nuclear arsenals, the last remaining arms reduction pact between the former Cold War rivals.

Africa & Latin America

Latin America

[Secretary of State Pompeo re-designates Cuba as a "state sponsor of terrorism"](#)

January 12, 2021, Merco Press

The outgoing president Donald Trump administration has re-designated Cuba as a "state sponsor of terrorism" in a move that hits the Castro dynasty island with new sanctions shortly before President-elect Joe Biden takes office.

[Cuba's Foreign Minister denounces US terrorism against his nation](#)

January 14, 2021, Prensa Latina

Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez reiterated that his nation is a victim of terrorism arranged, financed and perpetrated by the US government.

[Portugal wants quick ratification of EU/Mercosur deal, but there are many objections](#)

January 11, 2021, Merco Press

Portugal which last week took the rotating presidency of the European Union for six months as of January 1st, said that it will try to conclude the bloc's free trade agreement with Mercosur, agreed in 2019 after two decades of negotiations that have not yet been finalized.

[Ocean Freight Rates More Than Quadruple on China-Brazil Route](#)

January 11, 2021, Rio Times

Ocean freight on the China-Brazil route has soared and reached an unprecedented US\$10,000 per TEU container, according to importers and shipping companies operating in the port of Santos.

[US assesses potential losses in agricultural exports to EU if the Mercosur deal is finally ratifies](#)

January 11, 2021, Merco Press

Analysis by the United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS / USDA) point out that the country has US\$ 4 billion in agricultural exports that may be affected to some extent by the trade agreement between the European Union and Mercosur. The agreement has yet to be ratified by national parliaments.

[Guyana, US Sign New Pact](#)

January 13, 2021, News Americas

It comes following a decree issued by embattled Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, unilaterally laying claim to Guyana's Essequibo territory. The Guyana Defence Force (GDF) Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Godfrey Bess and US Admiral Craig S Faller entered into an agreement with the United States (US) Department of Defence that can see Guyana benefitting from logistic support from the US, as well as supplies and equipment that will include military vehicles and ammunition.

[Anticipating a year of social instability, Chile plans to boost foreign reserves](#)

January 14, 2021, Merco Press

Chile's peso tumbled, starting the year in a volatile fashion as many had forecast. The currency dropped 2.1% to 741.66 against the dollar, bringing its decline this year to 4%.

[Uruguay to reprocess seismic in Punta del Este and Pelotas basins](#)

January 13, 2021, Oil And Gas Journal

Uruguay's state oil company (ANCAP) signed an agreement with PGS to reprocess over 11,000 km of existing 2D lines of various vintages in Punta del Este and Pelotas basins. The reprocessing will provide new 2D seismic that will tie with existing 15,600 sq km multi-client 3D survey.

[Brazil zeroes import duties on needles, syringes](#)

January 7, 2021, ANBA

Brazil has zeroed import duties on syringes and needles. The decision by the Foreign Trade Chamber (CAMEX), published on the Official Gazette, temporarily cuts the Import Duties of syringes and needles to zero. The measure aims at serving the needs of the National COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan.

Africa

[African Union buys 270 million vaccine doses for continent](#)

January 14, 2021, Associated Press

The African Union announced that it has purchased a total of 270 million doses of coronavirus vaccines for the continent from Pfizer, AstraZeneca through the Serum Institute of India, and Johnson & Johnson.

[China will strengthen cooperation with African countries: MOFCOM](#)

January 15, 2021, Global Times

In response to reports that China is focusing more on domestic development and less on Africa, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said that this did not conform to the actual situation.

[Benin/Nigeria: Trouble continues at the border](#)

January 14, 2021, The Africa Report

Aurélien Agbénonci, Benin's foreign affairs minister, complained to his Nigerian counterpart, Geoffrey Onyeama, that goods are still being blocked at the border of the two countries, despite Abuja announcing its reopening almost a month ago.

[Egypt and Ethiopia blame Sudan for latest impasse in GERD talks](#)

January 13, 2021, The Africa Report

The latest round of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) talks wrapped up on the evening of 10 January after reaching another stalemate. But one thing that did become apparent was the changing dynamics between Sudan and Ethiopia.

[The US opens a consulate in Western Sahara](#)

January 11, 2021, The Africa Report

The US opened a consulate in Western Sahara, a move that is being disputed by Morocco and the Polisario Front independence fighters.

[UN says death of Rwanda soldier in CAR likely a 'war crime'](#)

January 14, 2021, Africa News

The United Nations has denounced attacks by a rebel group in the Central African Republic. Relative calm has been restored following an intervention by combined forces deployed in the country.

[Uganda, the 15th country in Africa to restrict social media due to elections-report](#)

January 15, 2021, Africa News

A new report shows that Uganda became the 15th country in Africa to restrict social media access due to elections since 2015.

[More than 80 killed in west Ethiopia attack](#)

January 13, 2021, Africa News

More than 80 civilians died in the latest attack in an area of western Ethiopia that has seen recurring grisly violence in recent months, the national human rights commission said.

[Ex-foreign minister among top Tigray officials killed by Ethiopian forces](#)

January 13, 2021, Africa News

Ethiopia said its forces had killed three prominent members of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), whose leaders are the target of military operations in the country's northern Tigray region.

[Amid Nile dam tensions, Egypt recalls Aswan 50 years on](#)

January 13, 2021, Africa News

Half a century since Egypt's ground-breaking Aswan dam was inaugurated with much fanfare, harnessing the Nile for hydropower and irrigation, the giant barrier is still criticised for its human and environmental toll.

[The Gulf of Guinea is a Maritime Battleground Over Oil Wealth](#)

January 12, 2021, Africa News

Maritime piracy emerged with the first armed insurgency movements against the federal government of Nigeria and oil companies in the Niger Delta – following the example of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

[France promise continued support to Burkina Faso in fight against extremism](#)

January 9, 2021, Africa News

France is "determined to continue to accompany" Burkina Faso, which has been plagued by an unprecedented increase in violence with a jihadist majority for more than five years, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said in Ouagadougou.

[Uganda elections 2021: Bobi Wine takes on Yoweri Museveni](#)

January 15, 2021, BBC

The internet is blocked and security has been stepped up in Uganda as counting gets under way after polls closed in a hotly contested election. A 38-year-old singer is challenging Yoweri Museveni, 76, in one of the world's youngest countries. Robert Kyagulanyi, known by his stage name Bobi Wine, says he represents the younger generation, while Mr Museveni says he is standing for stability. Dozens of people have been killed in the run-up to the election.

[Too many African countries are letting presidential term limits slip](#)

January 09, 2021, The Economist

The passing of time improves many things. Friendships mature and deepen with the years. Fond memories become sweeter and bitter ones mellow. Presidential terms, however, rarely get better the longer they last. Take the case of Yoweri Museveni, who has run Uganda since 1986. Not content to retire to his farm, the 76-year-old is standing for yet another term in elections scheduled for January 14th. Mr Museveni is not the longest-serving president in Africa. That dubious record is held by family dynasties such as the Gnassingbés in Togo, the Obiangs in Equatorial Guinea and the Bongos in Gabon, who have ruled their countries for more than five decades, or by men such as Paul Biya, who has held the reins in Cameroon for nearly four decades (and was prime minister before that).



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