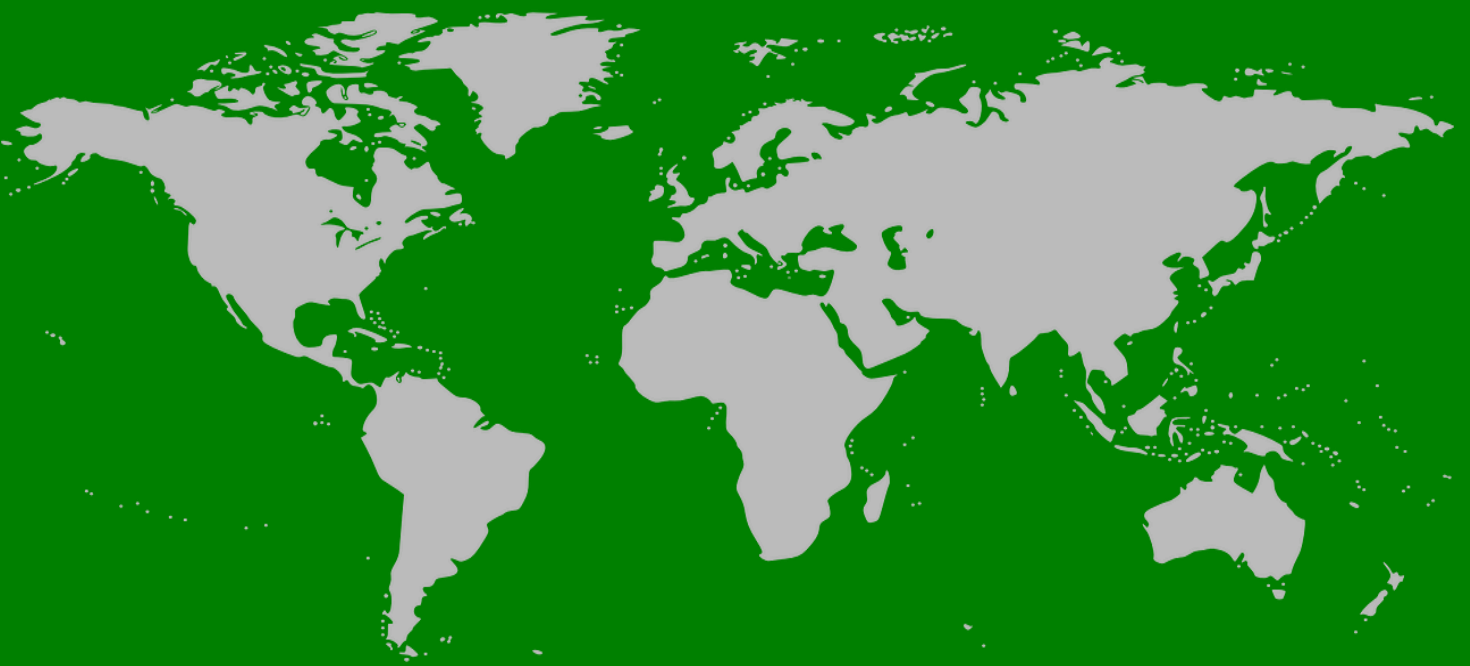


*“Discovering international relations
and contemporary global issues”*

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Content



- 1 Escalating violence during the anti-G20 protests
- 2 Brexit negotiations continuing
- 3 Belgium's veil ban supported by European Court
- 4 Ukraine seeks rout to the NATO
- 6 Qatar-Gulf states crisis continues
- 7 President Joseph Kabila's refusal to hold new elections
- 8 Presidential election in Kenya brings fears
- 9 China's first overseas military base
- 10 North Korea missile tests - ICBM could reach US
- 11 New martial court law extension for the Marawi siege
- 12 Tensions in the India-China-Bhutan triangle
- 14 Venezuela crisis deepens
- 15 News in brief

Escalating violence during the anti-G20 protests in Hamburg

Lisa Maria Kuke ■

■ The G20 summit of 2017, attended by 20 major economies from around the globe, caused an uprising of demonstrations in its host city Hamburg between 7-9 July. Different streams of protests had already started the previous week, each with different agendas and outlines.

Especially the anti-capitalist “Welcome to Hell” demonstration on 6 July, gathered around 12,000 protestors against the “Group of Twenty”. Among the peaceful protestors, approximately 1,000 radical left-winged activists joined the event, eventually leading to an escalation of the demonstration. According to official police statements and news reports, the “Welcome to Hell” protest march was suspended due to masked protestors of the radical “black block”. As those refused to continue the march unmasked, while the police encircled to crowd, the situation collapsed. Eventually, the activist spread across the city, setting in total approximately 20 cars on fire and demolishing several stores and streets during the night. The police forces reacted by the usage of water cannons and teargas, while attempting to regain control over the situation with helicopters, armoured vehicles, and the deploy-

ment of about 21,000 policemen. The violent events continued until the morning of 7 July, and restarted in the evening of the same day.

In the aftermath, mutual accusations from the police and protestors about the starting point of the escalating violence were expressed. While the more radical protestors continued to use violence in apparently random places across the city, the police is being accused for risking the life of dozens by using water cannons to remove protestors and spectators from bridges and walls at the harbour sides of Hamburg. In total, around 230 police officers were reportedly injured during the mass protests in Germany’s second biggest city, while the number of injured protestors remains unknown. After and during the events, approximately 150 participants of the demonstrations were kept in custody, with more announced to be arrested.

Besides the escalating situation around the “Welcome to Hell” demonstration, several other protest marches remained peaceful, as the “G20 Not Welcome”, “Lieber tanz’ ich als G20” (I rather dance than G20 [sic]), and the performance art show “1000 Gestalten” (“1000 statures”).



Brexit negotiations continuing

Boglárka Judit Rusz ■

■ Almost, a year after a Brexit referendum the official exit talks (four days in each month) started on 19 June 2017. The legal process has begun with the United Kingdom's notification about its intention to leave the European Union, in accordance with Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union. As well as the partners and their chief negotiators, Michael Barnier for EU side and David Davis for UK side hoped for a smooth and successful Brexit process.

The results of the first phase of negotiations testified that the divorce of UK and EU becomes bitterer in the reality than in the minds. The first part of negotiations covered firstly the introduction, the schedule part (June) and secondly the rights of the EU and British citizens, financial settlement and Northern Ireland border issues (July). The second round talks could not show any constituent forward momentum for the optimistic outcomes related to the topics.

Mr Davis admits and accepts the financial obligations to the EU although refused the methodology of European calculation which would lead to a net payment to Brussels from London and he does not want to agree about the amount until the provision of legal justification for the demand.

According to the EU diplomats, the Brexit divorce bill should be between €65-100 billion

(or more with liabilities), based on the UK's share of the EU's common budget.

Besides the dissent in the financial settlement topic, there is a risk of conflict regarding to the rights of EU and British citizens. The biggest opposition at the highest level can be found in the questions of the administrative procedures, the role of European Court of Justice, the voting and the further movement rights while at the micro level there is a lack of support for the proposal of the British government which contains the idea of new "settled status."

The Brexit process could not go further until the agreements on these problems because there is a European demand to settle the financial obligations and mentioned issues before the negotiations on the future trading relationship can begin (probably in January). So in case the EU 27 do not agree with the sufficiency of the negotiation progress on financial issues, rights and separation, the UK could not make agreement about its future relationship with its largest commercial partner.

We cannot forget that until the negotiations continue, there will be an open door for the UK to change its mind. But once the door closes (probably on 29 March 2019) there will not be option to revoke its divorce letter. Thus the new talks would be started all over again.



Belgium's veil ban supported by European Court

Aysun Yıldız ■

■ The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) approved the decision in Belgium in July 2017, which prohibits Belgium from wearing a full-face veil (nikab) in public space.



Courtroom of the European Court of Human Rights. Photo: Adrian Grycuk [Wikimedia Commons]

The Court considers unanimously that the two Muslim women living in Belgium, Samia Belcacemi and Yamina Oussar, are unanimous after the lawsuit, while the 8th article of the European Convention on Human Rights (the right to respect for family life and private life) (Freedom of thought) and Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination). In Belgium, in 2011, the law prohibited the wearing of veils covering all or part of the face in the public arena.

However, the court stated that the ban was implemented in order to “guarantee the social harmony by protecting the rights and freedoms of the others necessary for a democratic society.”

By law, people wearing clothes that make it impossible to recognize by partially or completely closing the face in open areas of the public are charged a penalty of 137.5 euros and up to 7 days in prison.

In Belgium, 270 women of North African origin are thought to be wearing veils in their majority. The European country that first forbid the veil was France. In its decision on April 11th, 2014, the ECHR rejected the complaints that the applicants, who had filed a lawsuit against the French for the ban, were denied religious freedom. Belgium and Bulgaria followed, with partial or regional prohibitions now in place in Italy, Spain, Denmark and Switzerland. The German, Austrian and Dutch parliaments have voted in support of a partial ban on full-face Islamic veils, but no laws have yet come into force.



Ukraine seeks rout to the NATO

Boglárka Judit Ruzs ■

■ On 10 July 2017 the Ukrainian president, Petro Poroshenko and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Distinctive partnership with the beginning of a new era in the relationship of the former Soviet state and the intergovernmental military alliance.

The Ukraine's rapprochement with NATO started in the early nineties, when Ukraine joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and the Partnership for Peace Programme and continued in 1997 with the Distinctive Partnership and the establishment of the NATO-Ukraine Commission.



*Ukraine – NATO Commission chaired by Petro Poroshenko.
Photo: The Presidential Administration of Ukraine [Wikimedia Commons]*

After two decades of the DP, the new era impelled into another period of intense activity, nevertheless this activity will not be the same that we had already seen in 2008 – In this year the country applied to join the NATO Membership Action Plan and after two years the recently elected, Russian-oriented president, Viktor Yanukovich shelved the plans. The assurance for this is that political and public opinion shift which was triggered by the Russian military interventions and result of the Ukrainian parliamentary election in the last years.

Thus the closer and closer overture from the Ukrainian side and the continuing practical and political support for Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity from the NATO side is not surprising.

Now, the direction of the new path for the country is undisputed after the Ukrainian president, Petro Poroshenko's words: "Ukraine has clearly defined its political future and its future in the sphere of security ... Today we clearly stated that we would begin a discussion about a membership action plan and our proposals for such a discussion were accepted with pleasure."



This announcement came as fuel to the flame for Moscow because the Russian Federation deeply opposes to enlargement of NATO towards its borders. Accordingly Dmitry Peskov, Kremlin spokesman stated that the eastwards spread of the Allies threatens the Russian security and the balance of forces in the Eurasian region. Naturally, the Russian side will take all measures needed to rebalance the situation and ensure its own security. He also added that Ukraine's rapprochement with NATO “will not contribute to the strengthening of stability and security on the European continent.”



*Ukraine – NATO Commission chaired by Petro Poroshenko.
Photo: The Presidential Administration of Ukraine [Wikimedia Commons]*

All the same Poroshenko said Ukraine would seek to meet the alliance’s membership criteria by 2020 and in the last month, June Ukraine’s parliament revoked a law on a non-aligned status and declared joining NATO a long-term foreign policy goal. The written statements and action should be interpreted in a wider sense because this strategic partnership with the NATO is an integral, can say a complementary part of the European integration. However, after the years of conflict with Russia (annexation of Crimea, Donbas conflict), the desire to join the alliance is entirely understandable and there is no need to explain the reasons.

Naturally, the meetings of NATO-Ukraine Commission and their cooperation do not mean that the Ukraine will be a member of the organization in the foreseeable future as Poroshenko himself said that his announcement “does not mean that we will soon be applying for membership and as for the acceptance, the NATO requires peaceful solution of the international disputes.” So this means that the war in east Ukraine and dispute over Crimea should be resolved peacefully with Russia who is the biggest opponent of the accession.

“Ukraine has clearly defined its political future and its future in the sphere of security”



Qatar-Gulf states crisis continues

Nicole Gefvenberg ■

■ The stakes are higher than ever in the Qatar Diplomatic Crisis, which escalated further after Qatar opted to reject the list of 13 demands from its fellow Gulf and Arab states.

Although tensions have always been pertinent between the Gulf States for regional dominance, the complete blockade of Qatar by several Arab and Gulf states is a previously unseen breakdown of relations. The severing of diplomatic relations became effective in the morning of June 5th following an alleged cyber attack and false news leak from the Qatar run and funded news channel Al-Jazeera. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE and Bahrain were the first to sever relations and impose a land, sea and air blockade, and accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism and interfering in the Gulf Cooperation Council through its support of the Muslim Brotherhood, among other things.

As the ten day deadline of the ultimatum list expired on July 5th, Qatar now faces sanctions and potential expulsion from the GCC. The demands included closing down Al-Jazeera, scaling down relations with Iran, expelling Turkish troops and aligning Qatar politically and economically with the other Gulf countries, all the while journalists in Qatar say that demands to close Al-Jazeera infringes on the freedom of the press.

Doha has categorically denied any accusations of supporting terrorism, and maintains it will not

negotiate on demands which infringe on its sovereignty, although Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani called for talks to be held.

As such the ball was back in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain's court, whose foreign ministers met on July 5th, where Saudi Arabian foreign minister Adel al-Jubeir in a hard-line stance ruled that the blockade was to continue until Qatar changed its policies. However, the arguably demanding 13 requirements were dropped in favour of six broad principles including commitment to combat terrorism and radicalism, ending provocation in internal Gulf States matters and adhering to the Riyadh agreement of 2013, which forbids supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and Yemeni rebels.

Despite this apparent progress, the 13 demands were reinstated on July 30th, bringing the crisis back to square one as the rift is turning into a chasm while there is no easy solution in sight. US Secretary of state Rex Tillerson, who has tried to mediate in the crisis, says he thought Qatar had "indicated a willingness" to negotiate, and that the four states should lift the blockade as a sign of good faith to make the talks happen. Meanwhile, the Qatari economy is feeling the strain, although officials have said the country has large enough financial reserves for its banks to take any hit. Airline traffic has been similarly disturbed, but Qatar has been able to reroute supply inflows to avoid collapse.



DRC President Joseph Kabila's refusal to hold new elections

Lisa Maria Kuke ■

■ The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) currently faces a political loophole as president Joseph Kabila refuses to quit his mandate. Kabila, who is in office since 2001, was supposed to end his term in December 2016, but continuously dismisses holding new elections ever since. The president reasons that the DRC would lack the financial capabilities to initiate and conduct the electoral process, which would cost about \$1.8 billion according to the electoral commission.

Kabila came into office 16 years ago after his father, the former president Laurent-Désiré Kabila, was assassinated in 2001. Due to the electoral postponement and the internal upheavals in the country, Kabila's popularity ratings dropped to 7.8% according to a US-American research study called "All the President's Wealth". The president also attracted some negative attention within the last years due to his private business activities in the DRC. Kabila and several of his family members implemented business ties within multiple sectors across the country's economy since 2003, as in mining, farming, real estates, and the food industry.

Although business activities of active politicians are in line with the country's constitution and

law, it is suspected that the Kabila's grew their prosperous network under illegitimate circumstances, e.g. by gaining more mining permits than allowed and through several, non-transparent subcontracts outside the DRC. Especially Joseph Kabila's siblings contributed to the family's wealth with their widespread business connections and participation in approximately 80 Congolese and foreign companies.

The president's wealth is in stark contrast to the country's current economy, which fails to maintain the basic living standards of its Congolese citizens. The DRC receives funds worth \$16.8 for humanitarian aid, food provisions, and the supply of drinkable water. Besides the volatile economic situation, the DRC currently faces violent acts against journalists and citizens, allegedly performed by the Mai Mai militia groups that are active in the country since the 1990s.

How the DRC deals with its internal structural instabilities, due to political and economic downhill developments, remains to be seen within the next months. President Kabila will probably stay in the centre of tumult while his approval ratings keep dropping and elections are continued to be postponed.



Presidential election in Kenya brings fears

Mustafa Yenal ■

■ Kenyans will be heading to the polls on August 8 for elections that have been closely followed not just in the Horn of Africa country but across the world and this will be the sixth elections since the country embraced a democratic system in 1992. Registered voters number is 19 million for now.

Fears of electoral violence in Kenya rose on Monday after colleagues of a senior Kenyan election official who was found dead said he had been tortured and murdered. The body of Chris Msando, the head of information, communication and technology at the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the main body overseeing the polls, was found on the outskirts of Nairobi on Saturday but news of his death was released 48 hours later.

Recent murders come nine days before voters in the east African state will choose a new president, as well as lawmakers and local representatives. Local media reported Chris Msando told police he had received death threats before going missing last week.

The 8 August poll, which pits the incumbent, Uhuru Kenyatta, 55, against veteran challenger Raila Odinga, 72, has turned out to be

unexpectedly close. Kenyatta, who leads the Jubilee Alliance, is seeking a second and final five-year term.

The importance of Kenya presidential election 2017 is the young democracy and regional economic powerhouse plays a key role in regional security and political order. Kenya is home to several UN and humanitarian agencies that oversee relief efforts in the region and sent more than 3,600 soldiers into Somalia to fight the armed group al-Shabaab as part of an African Union peacekeeping mission in the country. The country is also home to the world's largest refugee camp. Dadaab refugee camp in the country's north-eastern part is home to more than half a million refugees, mostly from neighbouring Somalia. Kakuma camp houses more than 160,000 refugees, mostly from war-torn South Sudan, according to the UN.

These are the key reasons why presidential elections in Kenya August 8 matters not only for Kenyans but also for the world. "The election result matters greatly to Kenyans," said Ndemo, the economist. "But also for the region and the wider world. What happens here will be felt in other places."



China's first overseas military base

Aysun Yıldız ■

■ It was reported that the first military base established by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) abroad started operation.

China's first overseas military base, established in Djibouti, began service on August 1, 2017, the 90th anniversary of the PLA, according to the Global Times, the official publication of the Chinese Communist Party.

The opening ceremony was attended by Djibouti Defence Minister Ali Hasan Behdun, Chief of General Staff Zekeriya Sheikh Ibrahim, Chinese Naval Commander Tien Cong and military officials of the two countries.



Port of Dolareh, adjacent to the Chinese naval base. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

The delegation in Djibouti stated that the Chinese navy would provide strategic maritime safety by organising patrol, protection, humanitarian aid, joint drills and training activities with the United Nations (UN) Peacekeepers and other interested parties in the Aden Corridor and Somalia waters.

The African country, Djibouti, is still home to the US main operation base in the region. A small but strategically important location at the junction of the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, Djibouti also has military presence in other countries, including England, France and Japan.

China is already Africa's largest-trading partner and in 2015, the government said it would invest \$60 billion on infrastructure projects on the continent.

The Chinese troop deployment to Djibouti is likely to be closely watched by the US, which maintains its largest permanent military base in Africa, Camp Lemonnier, in the country. Some 4,000 US troops are stationed in the country. They will now have Chinese company.



North Korea missile tests - ICBM could reach US

Mustafa Yenal ■

■ The North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un has challenged the US President Donald Trump, by conducting a second ballistic missile test-launch which experts said placed US cities in range of potential attack. The ICBM, which aimed for “maximum distance”, flew for 47 minutes and 12 seconds while travelling 998km (620 miles) and reaching a maximum altitude of 3,724.9 meters (12,220ft), the North Korea said.

Kim Jong-un said the launch sent a “serious warning” to the US, which has been “meaninglessly blowing its trumpet” with threats of war and stronger sanctions, the news agency said. The launch on 28 July 2017, from Chagang came less than a month after Pyongyang claimed to have tested its first ICBM. According to US officials report, the missile had flown 1,000 km and had landed to Japan’s exclusive economic zone. “We assess that this missile was an intercontinental ballistic missile, as had been expected,” Pentagon spokesman Jeff Davis said in a statement.

Melissa Hanham, an expert in North Korea’s missile program from the James Martin Centre for Non-proliferation Studies, said the test showed that “Alaska was in range” and a 45-minute test flight suggested it could reach New York City. Jeffrey Lewis of the California-based Middlebury Institute of International Studies also said the launch showed Los Angeles was within range of a North Korean missile, but that Chicago, New York City and Washington DC remained just out of reach.

Japan’s prime minister, Shinzo Abe, said “This clearly shows the threat to our nation’s safety is severe and real”. “We cannot accept these repeated provocations by North Korea,” Japan’s chief cabinet secretary, Yoshihide Suga, told reporters.

Experts believe that the US should form a “big marriage” with China, so that world’s top two economics could overcome this threat together with Beijing putting economic pressure on its ally.



New martial court law extension for the Marawi siege

Nicole Gefvenberg ■

■ The Marawi siege entered its third month on July 23rd, as Congress recently approved the martial law extension to five months, although the original estimate was 60 days. The siege, or the Battle of Marawi, is a continuing conflict between Philippine government security forces and ISIS affiliated militant groups from the Maute and Abu Sayyaf Salafi groups, which began on May 23d this year when a Philippine strike team raided a building in Marawi to root out Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon.

President Rodrigo Duterte himself visited the front lines to boost morale late July. By the end of July the death tolls had risen to 40 civilians, around a 100 government forces and some 400 terrorists. At this stage the fighting is not over, with the Philippine military clearing dozens of buildings every day, although the last stage of the battle may be the most brutal as the advance slows due to snipers and booby traps. The military also warns that the civilian casualty rate may go up significantly as the terrorist occupied parts of the city are freed, where civilians may have been trapped and executed.

More than 400,000 internally displaced people are still waiting for the fighting to end, while several civilians are still in Marawi. The Philippine military has been struggling with the

Abu Sayyaf group since the 1990s when it was funded on al-Qaida support, but this siege is an escalation from its normal business of ransom kidnappings, and has undoubtedly turned the militancy into a regional security threat.

This means that what first looked like a small security operation and later turned into a battle for a city may be approaching a situation more like a war of attrition. The regional think tank the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict recently issued a report warning that the Marawi Siege may be heralding a wave of extremism and militancy in Southeast Asia.

A large part of the insurgency fighters are foreign fighters returning from fighting in the Middle East or seeking refugee, suggesting South Asia may be turning into a new hotspot for ISIS affiliated extremism. Priest Robert Reyes said in Iligan City, close to Marawi, that the crisis may on a larger scale not be solvable by military power at all because even if the current fighters are killed they have relatives and more fighters coming in. He also addressed how distrust and intolerance between Christian and Muslim communities in the Philippines may worsen the outlook, saying “there is a culture of suspicion” that can and needs to be solved by dialogue.



Tensions in the India-China-Bhutan triangle

Aysun Yıldız ■

■ The tensions that began at the end of June 2017 between China and India, the two most populous countries in the world, has climbed with both country's authorities' harsh explanations of war invitations and the military assets they constantly consume in the region. So much, so that the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), which is preparing to celebrate its 90th anniversary on 1 August, could lead to a widespread attack on the Indian troops in violation of the Chinese borders. There is a "regional" issue behind the tensions. China and the India deploys army at a distance of 150 meters to each other.

The development that once again brought the two countries to the brink of war, is closely related to the event in 1962 that prompted countries to fight each other. As a matter of fact, although the region causing tension is located within the territory of China, certain parts are considered as controversial; Donglan Plateau is located in the southern part of Tibet province of China and on the edge of the Himalayas. This plateau, which is bordered by Bhutan, where Tibetans live, which is known as a small kingdom of India's ally, and which does not even have diplomatic relations with China, and China's

Tibet province also form the route they use for "pilgrimages" that Bhutanese perform in Tibet. Bhutan does not even have diplomatic relationship with China. However, China has begun a large-scale road construction work on the Donglan Plateau in the past month, and has shut down the Bhutanese pilgrimage routes. Seeing this as a hostile attempt, Bhutan immediately asked for help from India. As an instant reaction India deployed troops to the region in significant numbers, and has even attempted to prevent road construction work by violating the Chinese border.



Chinese photograph of Indian troops at Doklam standoff. Photo: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

However, Bhutan is not the only reason why India has such an aggressive and uncompromising attitude; there are many



disagreements and debates on the 3,500 km boundary line with China. Arunachal Pradesh, one of India's northeastern states neighboring South Tibet, is claiming a significant part of the province, causing the two nations to enter into a battle in 1962. The Sikkim province of India is a neighboring province of Tibet, which is also a problem in the bilateral relations. Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and the Assam States are home to special forces of the Indian Army and border forces created for the region. India, on the other hand, claims the Aksai Plateau, a part of Kashmir, which was given to China by Pakistan and some neighbouring territories. Hence, borderline and territorial disputes have been decisive in the context of the relations of the two countries since years, as well as the tensions that are experienced occasionally as armed conflicts.

The border dispute between China and India caused global worries. For this reason, even if the problem is calmed down without an armed conflict, the competition between the two countries is too big to fit into the shadow of the Himalayas.



Sketch Map of the site of the Indian troops' trespass" – Translated map published by the Chinese Foreign Ministry. Map: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

“India deployed troops to the region in significant numbers, and has even attempted to prevent road construction work by violating the Chinese border”



Venezuela crisis deepens

Aysun Yıldız ■

■ In Venezuela, anti-government protests continued throughout the country after the Supreme Court took the Congress's authority. A 14-years-old child and 36-years-old person, who were involved in the protests in Barquisimeto, were shot dead on 12 April 2017.

Alfonso Marquina, an opposition MP, said the 14-years-old was shot dead during protests. Local authorities blamed the government's armed supporters for the death.

As Venezuela's crisis deepened, Colombian airline Avianca cancelled its operations in the country and the US State Department announced that it was ordering family members of US employees at its embassy in Caracas to leave the country.

The US State Department also authorised the volunteers at its embassy in Caracas to leave. President Donald Trump has warned that his administration could impose economic sanctions on Venezuela if Maduro goes ahead with the vote to create a legislative super body known as the Constituent Assembly.

Previously, on April 7, 2017, a protestant university student in Carrizal was shot dead by Jairo Ortiz, 19, and Daniel Quliz, 20, in the protest on April 11, 2017 in Valencia. The anti-government protests, which began two weeks ago in the hands of the Congressional authorities, flared up after opposition leader Henrique Capriles was sentenced last week to 15 years for not participating in presidential elections. 17 people were injured in the protest.



Millions of Venezuelans marching on 20 May 2017 during the We Are Millions march.
Photo: Voice of America [Wikimedia Commons]



■ News in Brief

Domestic affairs affecting international relations

Elections in Germany

■ Although political elections and referendums in the rest of the world have been just as polarised as they have been news breaking, it seems Germany is preparing for a strangely moderate campaign where Chancellor Angela Merkel may be headed for her fourth term in the September 24th elections. Even after 12 years in office, Merkel has a steady popularity rating of 60% as her party Christian Democrats (CDU) hold a firm lead over the rival Social Democrats (SDP) in what is looking to be a very unpolarised campaign, orientated around a broad status quo consensus on political issues. The CDU's coasting tactic is making a more confrontational approach risky for the SDP, leaving them with the only other option of a similarly inoffensive good-for-everyone campaign. However, with the pressure of economic performance and the question of how to distribute refugee inflows as well as larger regional questions of the Greek debt, the European power house is not without issues, and if the current campaign is skimming over these issues there is hope that the future government may use the political climate to deal with them.

March of Justice in Turkey

■ The march of justice is a civil march in Turkey that started with the participation of various names and groups, initiated under the leadership of Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the President of the Republican People's Party (CHP), the opposition party, and demanding justice from Ankara to Istanbul. After the coup attempt, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government declared a state of emergency. Since then at least 50,000 people have been arrested and another 140,000 people have been removed from their positions. Large numbers have joined the march since it began in Ankara on 15 June 2017.

Opposition and protest leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu criticised the wave of arrests and imprisonments that followed last year's failed coup. President Erdogan has accused the marchers of supporting terrorism.

Can refugees return to Syria?

■ As it is known, in the Syrian civil war alone, 6 million people have been forced to leave their places and become refugees. About 2 million of them had to take shelter in neighbouring



countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Israel. But the western world does not want to see the refugee countries, especially Syrians. Many of the EU countries see it as a solution to help countries like as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan intensively visit so that they can prevent the Syrian refugee flow from the beginning, which could lead to Europe, thus keeping them away from Europe. According to the research done in Turkey, “Are you sent to the Syrian countries?” 30.6 percent of respondents replied that “Syria should be sent, even if the war is ongoing”. 49.8 percent of the participants say that “neighbouring with the Syrians” would disturb them.

Suicide attack on NATO convoy in Afghanistan

■ Two US soldiers have been killed by a suicide bomber who targeted a convoy of foreign forces in Afghanistan’s southern province of Kandahar. They were traveling in a convoy near the airport

in the southern city of Kandahar, the US military said, in a strike claimed by the Taliban insurgency. The airport in Kandahar is home to a major military base for international troops helping Afghan security forces in their struggle to contain the Islamist Taliban insurgency.

Australian police forces prevent potential terrorist attack on airplane

■ In Sydney, four men have been arrested on suspicion of plotting a terrorist attack in an Australian airplane. Australian police authorities raided the suspect’s residence on 29 July and confiscated “suspicious devices” that indicated the construction of a bomb. While Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull announced intensified airport security measures in Australia, the details of the allegedly planned attack require further investigation.



■ News in Brief

International relations

Russia-Ukraine peace might be in danger

■ On 20 July 2017, six Ukrainian soldiers were killed by Russian-backed rebels. Three more soldiers were killed and three injured when their vehicle drove over a mine north-west of the second biggest rebel city, Lugansk, Lysenko announced. Ukraine and the West say Russia has funnelled troops and arms across the border to fan the flames of war in Europe's backyard but Moscow has denied the allegations. "The last 24 hours were considered the deadliest one-day period in 2017," said Heather Nauert, US Department of State spokeswoman. Calling for "Russia and the forces that it arms, trains and leads in the east, to immediately observe the ceasefire."

Cyber-attacks on Ukraine

■ Several networks in the country, including the computer network belonging to the prisons in Ukraine, and the Borispol International Airport in Kiev were exposed to the attacks in cyberspace on 27 June 2017. One of the most important centres affected by the attack was the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine, which experienced a nuclear disaster in 1986. In the statement made, it was said that the situation was caused by a virus called "Petya". Petya is a family of encrypting ransomware that was first discovered in 2016. The malware

targets Microsoft Windows-based systems, infecting the master boot record to execute a payload that encrypts a hard drive's file system table and prevents Windows from booting.

Conflicts with Donetsk rebels

■ After three soldiers died by mine earlier, the Ukrainian military says five of its soldiers died in heavy rebel shelling of Ukrainian army positions at Avdiivka just north of rebel-held Donetsk. The US Department of State called it "the deadliest one-day period in 2017" in the eastern Ukraine conflict. More than 10,000 people have died and more than 1.6 million people displaced since the eastern Ukraine conflict erupted in April 2014 according to the United Nations.

Missing unity in the EU's reaction to the US sanctions on Russia

■ After announcing sanctions on European companies contributing and engaging in Russian pipeline projects in Europe, European states are divided in their reaction to the US Congress' decision. As the current US policy inhibits the development of emerging, commercial projects, as the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline between Russia and Germany, French and German officials expressed their disapproval, and questioned the legality of the act. However, the Baltic states and several Central European



countries, that are negatively affected by the Russian pipeline projects, expressed their support for the limitations by the US government.

Turkey and EU disagreements on membership requirements

■ On July 25, 2017, Federica Mogherini, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs, told reporters that it is important to keep dialogues with Turkey and she also said "Clearly Turkey is and stays a candidate country." Whilst EU says Turkey should change its energy, antiterrorism, migration, trade and foreign policy, Mevlüt Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, "We should see real journalists as apart from pseudo journalists, who help terrorist activities and terrorists," told reporters. The EU's biggest concern about negotiations is jailed journalists, writers, academics, lawyers and human rights defenders. The EU Parliament also mentioned that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's recent call to bring back the death penalty would lead to complete suspension of membership talks.

Turkey is closing the doors of Incirlik base to Germany

■ A spokesman for the German defence ministry said on 21 June 2017, Turkey is blocking the plans of a senior German defence official to visit Incirlik air base in July. Germany has approximately 250 soldiers stationed at Incirlik

base which is located at Southern Turkey. "Turkish officials do not currently approve of the travel plans," a ministry spokesman said, confirming a report published by the website of the German magazine Spiegel.

Joint Moscow-Beijing naval exercise in the Baltic Sea alarms Nordic countries

■ The joint Moscow-Beijing naval exercise into the Baltic Sea scheduled to take place July 24th to 28th has caused widespread alarm in Nordic nations. Not only triggering Nordic concerns of Russian aggressions, this exercise is also the first time in history the Chinese navy enters the Baltic. The Chinese envoy, which sent a clear signal by sending its most advanced military equipment, was greeted and escorted by Danish and Norwegian warships on its way to Baltiysk in the Kaliningrad Region, where it is to drop anchor. However, although the Nordic states are worried by this Russo-Chinese venture, it is still fairly limited compared to the NATO exercise in the Baltic Sea this June, which included about 100 ships and aircraft in total.

EU declines to send observation missions to Angola elections

■ The EU scrapped its plan to send an electoral observation mission to the elections in Angola after the country refused to sign a condition package memorandum sent by the EU. Among other things, full access to polling stations across the entire country was requested. The august



23rd elections are of great importance for the oil-rich yet impoverished country's future political landscape, as they are seeing President Eduardo Jose Dos Santos, in power since 1979, step down. However, the decline to full access for the EU and the march of thousands in demand of free elections this June in the capital Luanda suggest little may change, as Dos Santos' party MPLA seems set to stay in power, with current defence minister Joao Lourenco to take over leadership. Transparency International places Angola in the top 15 most corrupt nations in the world.

Saudi coalition shoots down Yemen rebel missile near Mecca

■ Saudi Arabian forces confirmed having intercepted a Yemen rebel ballistic missile 69 kilometres south of Mecca, a month before the yearly Hajj pilgrimage to the city. As one of the five pillars of Islam, it attracts more than two million pilgrims each year. This is not the first time Yemeni Houthi rebels have fired ballistic missiles or short range rockets at their southern neighbour, who lead an intervention coalition in the still ongoing Yemeni Civil War in support of

President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. The Saudi coalition argues that the Houthi rebel's strike capability proves that the weak port controls at Hodeida in Yemen make the continued arms trafficking for the rebels possible. Although the UN has rejected the idea, the coalition used the missile strike to further its argument to place the port under its own or UN authority, as Hodeida also is the crucial main shipping point for humanitarian assistance to the north of Yemen.

Trump addressing terrorism and Russian relations in speech in Poland

■ On 6 July 2017, US president Donald Trump held a speech in Warsaw on the Three Seas Initiative summit meeting emphasizing the importance of US-Polish relations within the NATO, and Poland's strong role throughout European history. Furthermore, the US president highlighted their joint fight against Islamic terrorism and extremism, while criticising Russia's contribution to the destabilisation of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Although Trump underlined the importance of shared values, as freedom and sovereignty, criticism of his speech was expressed afterwards for not addressing the current power shifts in Poland's legislative system.





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