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The Regional and Global Implications of Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan's Talks with Iran

On October 26, 2026, representatives from Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan visited Iran and held talks with Iranian officials. During the meeting, regional peace and security were discussed, while tensions between the United States, Israel, and Iran, as well as the conflicts in Yemen, were among the main topics on the agenda. The ongoing tensions between the United States, Israel, and Iran have created serious security concerns across the region while negatively affecting international trade. Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have caused difficulties for countries that depend on oil supplies from the region. In addition, Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia have increased concerns about global energy supplies and contributed to uncertainty in oil markets. These developments highlight the importance of diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and establish regional stability, not only for the countries involved but also for the international economy. For Türkiye, regional stability is essential to maintaining its influence in the Middle East. The ongoing conflicts in the region make it more difficult for Türkiye to achieve its goal of becoming a major regional power. At the same time, the economic consequences of these conflicts are a major concern for Türkiye, which is already struggling with high inflation. Rising oil prices increase economic pressure, while disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz threaten international trade and energy supplies. Furthermore, Türkiye's geographical position between the Black Sea and the Middle East makes regional stability particularly important for its national security. Conflicts in both regions create additional security risks. Since Iran shares a border with Türkiye, further escalation could increase concerns about border security and a new wave of migration. A wider conflict involving ground operations in Iran could force many people to seek refuge in neighbouring countries, including Türkiye. Therefore, diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and achieve a peaceful settlement are important for Türkiye's regional influence, economic interests, border security, and national security. For Saudi Arabia, these talks are important because the country has faced increasing security threats from the Iran-backed Houthi movement in Yemen. Diplomatic efforts to reduce regional tensions could help address these security concerns and promote greater stability. As one of the world's leading oil exporters, Saudi Arabia also depends on the

security of energy infrastructure and shipping routes. Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz and the ongoing conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran threaten its economic interests. Therefore, finding a peaceful solution is important for Saudi Arabia's national security, oil exports, and economic stability. For Pakistan, maintaining regional stability is important because of its close relations with Türkiye and Saudi Arabia, as well as its diplomatic engagement with Iran. Amid ongoing security tensions with Afghanistan and concerns about cross-border militancy, further instability in the Middle East could create additional challenges for Pakistan. Therefore, preventing conflict among its regional partners and encouraging peaceful cooperation are important for Pakistan's security and diplomatic interests. Its involvement in these talks also highlights its efforts to contribute to a peaceful resolution of regional conflicts. These talks are important for Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan because regional peace and security would serve the interests of all three countries. Reducing tensions could help protect their security, strengthen economic relations, and maintain international trade. A peaceful solution to the conflict involving Iran, the United States, and Israel could also contribute to greater stability in the Middle East and the global economy, particularly because of the region's importance to global oil supplies.



European Defense Funding and Support for Ukraine

On October 29, the European Commission invited European Union (EU) member states to apply for €21.3 billion ($23.7 billion) in available funding under the second round of the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) initiative to strengthen their defense capabilities and support Ukraine. The statement recommended prioritizing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), air and missile defense systems, anti-drone systems, and ammunition in line with the urgent needs of both Ukraine and EU armed forces. While discussions and debates continue regarding the EU's upcoming budget, austerity measures and cuts remain a possibility. Meanwhile, the Institute of International Finance (IIF) reported that the total debt of 32 European countries surged past $95 trillion in the first half of the year, reaching a new record. The IIF noted that rising borrowing costs and political uncertainties make it increasingly difficult to stabilize debt levels. Despite these economic hurdles, the objective remains to increase assistance to

Ukraine. On October 26, 2026, the defense ministers of France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and the United Kingdom gathered in Paris, pledging to scale up political, military, and financial support for Kyiv. While localized ceasefires occasionally occur in Ukraine, United States (US) President Donald Trump has taken on the mission of ending the war, holding discussions with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Conversely, the EU remains committed to supporting Ukraine under all circumstances. Having provided billions of euros in financial and military aid both collectively and bilaterally since the war began in February 2022, EU member states are now attempting to mobilize the remaining €21.3 billion from the SAFE defense fund. Enacted on May 29, 2025, SAFE is a core component of the EU's "2030 Defense Targets," shaped by the perceived threat from Russia, the ongoing war in Ukraine, and pressure from the Trump administration in the US. Turkey, while maintaining its vital role within NATO, has not participated in this specific EU program. In conclusion, as the Russia-Ukraine war fluctuates between regional ceasefires and active combat, a strategic divergence is emerging between the US pursuit of a ceasefire and Europe's ongoing military capacity building. The EU's determination to utilize the SAFE fund for ammunition and defense systems, despite economic constraints, highlights its dual objective of achieving European strategic autonomy and ensuring that Ukraine remains in a strong position at any potential negotiating table.



Two Drafts, No Decision: Is MINURSO Being Left Without a Mandate for the First Time?

The United Nations Security Council, despite debating two competing draft resolutions tabled by the United States and Russia regarding the MINURSO mission in Western Sahara on October 30, 2026, failed to adopt either. The U.S. draft was rejected after receiving 11 votes in favor, three abstentions from China, Pakistan, and Somalia, and one veto from Russia. Russia’s alternative text fell short of the required nine-vote threshold, securing three votes in favor, one vote against from the U.S., and 11 abstentions. As of October 31, 2026, MINURSO was left without a renewed Security Council mandate. The rift between the two drafts stems from diverging views on the settlement model. Washington sought to remove the word "referendum", a vote that has remained unimplemented for nearly 35 years, transform the mission into a political structure renamed MINUSO, and

review reductions in military personnel. While preserving a reference to self-determination, the U.S. text positioned Morocco's 2007 autonomy plan as the primary framework for negotiations. Moscow, conversely, proposed a one-year technical extension preserving the mission's current name and mandate to prevent predetermining the outcome of negotiations in Morocco's favor and to keep the principle of self-determination open. While Washington prioritizes feasibility, Moscow emphasizes procedural neutrality; yet neither text generated broad consensus. The divide in the Council hinges less on a technical extension than on which options will frame Western Sahara's future negotiations. MINURSO was formed in Western Sahara, where Spain had withdrawn in 1975, through Resolution 690 in 1991, and its mandate was the monitoring of the ceasefire and the organization of a referendum through which the local population would decide whether to become independent or integrate with Morocco. Issues regarding voter lists, verification of identity, and eligibility have combined with mutual mistrust between Morocco and the Polisario Front to preclude the conduct of a referendum. While MINURSO failed to carry out its mandate of organizing a referendum, the mission has been successful in monitoring the ceasefire and containing the conflict. The retention of the term "referendum" in the mandate does not necessarily ensure the conduct of the vote, but dropping the term gives the impression that the commitment to self-determination is waning. It should be noted that the practical solution may not necessarily be the legitimate one. The expiration of the mandate does not entail an immediate withdrawal of personnel, but it could cast uncertainty over ceasefire monitoring authority, logistical operations, and political engagement. Moving forward, the legal status of UN personnel, the extent to which Morocco opens its autonomy plan to genuine negotiation, and whether the Polisario Front remains in the political process will be decisive. The stance of Algeria, which views the dossier as an unfinished decolonization issue, alongside the risk of escalating low-intensity hostilities ongoing since 2020, may also mount pressure. The Council could quickly agree on a technical extension, deferring the debate over a settlement model and limiting the mandate gap; conversely, a prolonged impasse could erode trust in the UN and weaken the mission's political function. Ultimately, the core failure over Western Sahara lies not in the inability to choose between a referendum or autonomy, but in the great powers' inability to bridge their divide even for a temporary compromise that preserves stability on the ground.



North Korea's Ballistic Missile Launches: Deterrence, Alliance Politics and Security in East Asia

North Korea launched approximately ten short-range ballistic missiles from an area near Wonsan toward the sea off its eastern coast, according to South Korea's military. The missiles reportedly travelled approximately 250 kilometres, while Japanese authorities indicated that the projectile did not appear to have landed within Japan's exclusive economic zone. South Korea strengthened its surveillance activities, maintained military readiness and shared information with the United States and Japan. Seoul also condemned the launches as violations of United Nations Security Council resolutions restricting North Korea's ballistic missile activities. The incident occurred amid heightened tensions along the inter-Korean border, following earlier mine explosions that injured South Korean soldiers and disagreements over military activities in the Demilitarised Zone. The launch was reported as North Korea's third missile launch that month, highlighting the persistence of military competition on the Korean Peninsula. The background to this development lies in the unresolved conflict between North and South Korea. Although the Korean War ended with an armistice in 1953, a comprehensive peace treaty has never replaced it. The two countries have consequently maintained opposing political systems, competing security objectives and substantial military deployments along their shared border. North Korea regards its military capabilities, including ballistic missiles and its nuclear programme, as essential instruments for deterring external threats and preserving regime security. South Korea, meanwhile, relies on its conventional military capabilities and its alliance with the United States to deter potential aggression. Japan is also directly concerned because North Korean missile development creates risks for its national security and the wider stability of Northeast Asia. From Pyongyang's perspective, missile tests can serve several purposes simultaneously. They allow the military to test weapons systems, demonstrate technological progress and communicate strategic resolve to regional and international audiences. They may also be intended to increase the perceived costs of military pressure against North Korea. However, these activities can produce the opposite effect from the one Pyongyang might desire: neighbouring states may respond by strengthening their military cooperation, improving intelligence sharing

and expanding their deterrence capabilities. The October 29 launch therefore needs to be understood not merely as an isolated weapons test but as part of a broader cycle of military signalling and reciprocal security measures. The incident can be analysed through the realist concept of the security dilemma. States take measures to protect themselves, but those measures may be interpreted by other states as threatening, prompting countermeasures that make everyone feel less secure. North Korea presents its missile programme as defensive, yet South Korea and Japan perceive it as a direct security challenge. Their cooperation with the United States is intended to deter further escalation, but Pyongyang may interpret closer trilateral coordination as evidence of hostile intentions. This interaction can generate a cycle in which military preparations by one side reinforce insecurity on the other, even when neither side necessarily seeks an immediate full-scale conflict. The role of alliances is particularly important in this context. The United States' security commitment to South Korea and its cooperation with Japan form a central component of the regional balance of power. Intelligence sharing and coordinated military readiness allow the three countries to respond more quickly to missile launches and improve their understanding of North Korea's capabilities. Nevertheless, alliance cooperation also carries risks. If military demonstrations become increasingly frequent, misunderstandings or miscalculations could lead to unintended escalation. Effective deterrence must therefore be accompanied by crisis communication, clear signalling and diplomatic channels that reduce the possibility of accidental conflict. International law provides another important dimension. United Nations Security Council resolutions restrict North Korea's ballistic missile activities as part of the international response to its nuclear and missile programmes. The launches therefore raise questions about compliance with international obligations and the effectiveness of the UN sanctions framework. However, the continued development of North Korean missile capabilities demonstrates that international restrictions have not eliminated Pyongyang's ability or willingness to conduct tests. This does not mean that sanctions and diplomatic pressure are necessarily ineffective, but it does suggest that coercive measures alone have not resolved the underlying security conflict. For Türkiye, developments on the Korean Peninsula are relevant because they illustrate the relationship between deterrence, alliances and diplomatic crisis management. As a NATO member, Türkiye participates in a security framework that similarly emphasises collective defence, military preparedness and the prevention of aggression. At the same time, Türkiye's broader foreign policy experience demonstrates the importance of maintaining diplomatic engagement even when serious

security disagreements persist. The Korean Peninsula offers a useful case study for examining how military capabilities can deter aggression while also creating escalation risks when communication between adversaries is limited. The economic dimension should not be overlooked. East Asia is a major centre of global manufacturing, technology and maritime trade. A serious military crisis involving North Korea, South Korea, Japan and the United States could disrupt supply chains, financial markets and regional shipping. Even without a direct armed conflict, repeated missile tests and heightened military alert levels can increase uncertainty for investors and governments. Regional stability is therefore not only a security concern for Northeast Asian states but also a matter of broader international economic importance. Ultimately, North Korea's October 29 missile launches demonstrate the limitations of deterrence when it operates without sufficient diplomatic engagement. Military readiness and alliance coordination remain important for preventing aggression, but they cannot independently resolve the political divisions that sustain the conflict. A more durable approach would combine credible deterrence with communication mechanisms, risk-reduction measures and renewed efforts to address the underlying security concerns of the parties involved. The central challenge for regional diplomacy is to prevent military signalling from becoming a self-reinforcing cycle that increases the likelihood of miscalculation and conflict.



Yemen's Houthis' Alleged Attack on Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura Refinery: Energy Security and Regional Tensions

The Houthis in Yemen announced that they had targeted Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura oil refinery with a ballistic missile. This is an important development because it shows that conflicts in the Middle East are not limited to military issues. In the news published on 27 October 2026, the Houthis claimed that the attack caused a fire at the refinery. However, the Saudi Arabian government did not confirm the attack at first (Reuters, 2026). This situation shows why it is important to separate the statements of the parties from information that can be independently confirmed during conflicts. One of the most important points about this event is the economic and strategic value of the refinery for Saudi Arabia. Ras Tanura has a daily processing capacity of 550,000 barrels and plays an important role in the country's oil exports. Therefore, an attack

on such a facility should not only be seen as a threat to Saudi Arabia's energy infrastructure but also as a possible risk to global oil supplies. In fact, the study by Etkind et al. (2026) points out that large refineries are important for the economy, but their size and concentration can also create security risks. Another important aspect of the news is the possibility that the attack could affect more than just the conflict between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The Yemen report by the US Congressional Research Service (2026) also highlights the importance of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait for international trade and energy transportation. For this reason, military activities in the region may affect not only oil shipments but also the security of sea trade. The Straits Times (2026) reports that the fire was brought under control. However, it is still unclear how much damage the facility suffered and whether oil loading activities were affected. In conclusion, the alleged attack on Ras Tanura shows how energy facilities can become strategic targets during regional conflicts. The real impact of this event should not be evaluated only by the physical damage. Its possible effects on oil supplies and regional security should also be considered.



Beyond Diplomacy: China–Philippines Tensions and the Limits of ASEAN Unity

The recent developments at the 13th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus in Cebu show how difficult it has become to keep security cooperation strong in the Indo-Pacific. China's choice to send an attaché instead of its Minister of National Defense is a clear sign of lower diplomatic engagement. This platform started in 2010. China's reduced participation signals a shift in its approach. The move comes at a time when tensions between Beijing and Manila are rising over their competing claims in the South China Sea. It also brings up concerns about whether ASEAN can stay united as geopolitical rivalries grow stronger. From a perspective, China's decision can be understood as a strategic response to the Philippines' increasingly assertive position on maritime disputes. Beijing's criticism of political figures, whom it accused of attempting to disrupt the meeting, further illustrates its dissatisfaction with Manila's efforts to bring territorial issues into regional discussions. China's actions suggest that it views ASEAN-led initiatives as

potential challenges to its national interests, particularly when these discussions question its maritime claims under the nine-dash line. By reducing its engagement, Beijing appears to be using diplomatic representation as a means of expressing political displeasure while prioritizing strategic interests over regional cooperation. In contrast, the Philippines, as ASEAN Chair in 2026, faces the challenge of protecting its national interests while preserving ASEAN centrality. Manila's support for inclusive dialogue and discussions on maritime security reflects its efforts to strengthen regional cooperation and uphold international legal principles, particularly those established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Nevertheless, the tensions observed in Cebu demonstrate the limitations of ASEAN's consensus-based decision-making process. When member states and external partners have conflicting strategic priorities, achieving meaningful cooperation becomes increasingly difficult. Ultimately, the developments in Cebu show how uncertain the Indo-Pacific security governance remains. China's lower diplomatic engagement may deepen mistrust between China and Manila. This situation also exposes how difficult it is for ASEAN to manage disputes that involve powers. The episode demonstrates that regional institutions stay important. Their effectiveness depends on the willingness of participating states to prioritize dialogue and cooperation over strategic competition.



Algeria's Military Deployment to Niger: A Change in Sahel Security Policy

On 25 October 2026, Algeria's parliament approved the deployment of army units to northern Niger, near the Libyan border. The mission is expected to focus on the Madama area and protect Algerian energy and economic interests. If the deployment takes place, it will be Algeria's first foreign ground troop deployment since the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. The exact number of troops and the deployment date have not yet been announced. This decision is important because Algeria has traditionally been careful about sending its army outside its borders. For many years, Algerian security policy focused mainly on protecting its own territory and avoiding direct military involvement in neighbouring countries. The new decision therefore shows a more active approach. Algeria is not only watching security developments in the Sahel but is also becoming more willing to use its military outside the country when its interests are directly affected. Energy security is one of

the main reasons behind this decision. Algeria's state energy company Sonatrach has projects in Niger, and Algeria is also involved in the planned Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline, which would connect Nigerian gas to Algeria through Niger. This route could become important for exporting African gas to international markets, especially Europe. Because of this, instability in northern Niger is not only a local security problem for Algeria. It can also threaten important energy projects and future economic interests. However, the security situation in Niger also plays a major role. Niger continues to face armed groups linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. These groups have created serious security problems across the central Sahel for many years. Algeria also shares long and difficult-to-control borders with countries such as Niger, Mali and Libya. Instability in these areas can increase the risk of militant movement, arms trafficking and cross-border crime. For this reason, Algeria may see stronger military cooperation with Niger as a way to create more security beyond its own borders before threats reach Algerian territory. At the same time, the deployment could signal a wider change in Algeria's role in the Sahel. Algeria has traditionally preferred diplomacy, mediation and limited security cooperation instead of direct troop deployments. Now, protecting energy interests and responding to regional instability seem to be pushing Algeria toward a more active military role. The main security issue is therefore not only the protection of oil facilities in Niger, but whether Algeria is beginning to change its traditional military doctrine and take a more direct role in Sahel security. This does not mean that Algeria is starting a large military intervention in Niger. The planned mission appears to be limited and focused on protecting specific interests. Still, the fact that Algerian ground forces may operate abroad for the first time in more than fifty years makes the decision strategically important. It shows how terrorism, border insecurity and energy interests are becoming more connected in the Sahel.



A New Era in Japan–Bangladesh Relations: Economic Cooperation and the Strategic Importance of the Bay of Bengal

Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman visited Japan from October 26 to 29, 2026. During his meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on October 27, the two leaders reached agreements aimed at expanding economic and strategic cooperation between the two countries. Discussions focused on the Japanese private sector investing 1

trillion yen—approximately $6.3 billion—in Bangladesh over the next five years, which is expected to create approximately 200,000 jobs. Both countries agreed to expand the existing Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B) initiative into a broader framework, transforming it into the "BIG-B for Shared Prosperity" model, which encompasses energy, deep-sea ports, industrial infrastructure, technology, and regional connectivity. One of the objectives here is to establish Bangladesh as a stronger trade and manufacturing hub between South and Southeast Asia. Investment is expected to spread across sectors such as energy, infrastructure, ICT, manufacturing, and trade. Japan is a key partner for Bangladesh's industrialization and integration into global supply chains. Furthermore, considering that the Economic Partnership Agreement between the two countries was signed in February 2026, it can be said that this latest visit has further advanced this economic cooperation. BIG-B is not just an economic project. Energy, ports, and regional connections make the Bay of Bengal a strategic area. From Japan's perspective, Bangladesh could serve as a logistical bridge between South Asia and Southeast Asia. From Bangladesh's perspective, Japanese investments could create an opportunity to diversify its external economic relations. The growing Japan–Bangladesh partnership can be viewed not merely as an investment relationship, but as a broader strategic partnership developing through supply chains, energy security, and regional connectivity. Japan's official statement lists connectivity, preparedness for geopolitical risks, public-private partnerships, and stability as the four key elements of BIG-B's new framework. Furthermore, Japan views the Bay of Bengal as crucial for its supply chains and freedom of navigation. Bangladesh has long maintained strong economic and defense ties with China. Growing economic and security cooperation with Japan, however, could offer Bangladesh more options in its foreign relations. Japan is providing patrol vessels to Bangladesh, and in February 2026, the two countries also signed an agreement on the transfer of defense equipment and technology. These developments indicate that the relationship between the two countries has also developed a security dimension beyond economic cooperation.