



# CUTS International *Global Affairs*

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## **Between Paris, Beijing, Islamabad, New Delhi and Madrid** ***A Fragmenting Order Searches for Balance, Business, Peace & Hope!***

As May unfolds, the global order appears caught between rivalry and coordination. The sequence of high-level engagements reflects this tension. On May 14–15, 2026, Xi Jinping and Donald Trump are expected to meet in Beijing, a summit likely to shape market sentiment and strategic signalling. On the same date, BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting is also scheduled in New Delhi. Days later, on May 17–18, 2026, the G7 Finance Ministers' Meeting in Paris will address slowing growth, debt pressures, supply-chain risks, and the geopolitics of trade and technology.

The China-US dialogue is no longer about resetting ties, but managing competition. Tariffs, semiconductors, AI governance, and maritime security now define a relationship centred on coexistence with limits. For countries like India, the challenge is to deepen ties with Washington while preserving strategic autonomy in an economy still linked to China.

Meanwhile, Islamabad's role as a venue for talks linked to West Asian tensions and US-Iran engagement highlights the growing relevance of middle powers. Diplomatic utility, geography, and connectivity are becoming new sources of influence. At stake is not just regional mediation, but energy stability and secure passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

In Europe, NATO's strategic expansion is exposing internal strains. Spain and other members face scrutiny over defence spending and burden-sharing as the alliance responds to Russia, Middle East instability, and China's wider reach. NATO's challenge is no longer only deterrence, but sustaining internal cohesion.

Together, these developments show that 2026 is defined by fragmented multipolarity. Global governance is no longer centred on a single table, but dispersed across competing forums and selective coalitions.

The coming weeks may not produce grand bargains, but they will test whether major powers can still manage competition without destabilising the wider system.

P.S.: As IAFS-IV approaches, can India convert its goodwill in Africa into a stronger strategic and economic partnership?

Editor

## Message for our Readers

This is the 105th edition of the monthly news wrap from the Centre, which carries select published news or comments on a relevant issue. There are equally important issues that may have been overlooked to keep the news wrap short and easy to read.

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## Commonwealth Secretary-General's Keynote at Trade Summit 2026

At the Commonwealth Trade and Investment Summit 2026, Shirley Botchwey outlined key themes centred on strengthening trade and investment amid global fragmentation, shifting supply chains, and declining trust in multilateral systems.

Emphasising the “Commonwealth Advantage” of reduced trade costs and a 2.7 billion strong market, she advocated building resilient, inclusive, and investable economies. The address highlighted priorities, such as reducing non-tariff barriers, advancing digital and infrastructure investment, and enhancing private sector participation, alongside expanding inclusive trade opportunities, developing investable pipelines, and positioning the Commonwealth within emerging sectors such as clean energy and digital services.



[New Zealand PM Christopher Luxon Calls India-New Zealand FTA a Once in a Generation Opportunity](#) | Akashvani News

[Baku hosts second day of Caspian-Central Asia oil trade and logistics forum](#) | Azer News

[Global Trade Update \(April 2026\): Global trade growth continues, but fragility rises](#) | UNCTAD



### Russia-India Military Pact: Implications and Concerns

The operationalisation of the Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Support (RELOS) agreement between India and Russia marks a significant deepening of bilateral defence cooperation. The pact permits reciprocal access to military bases, enabling limited troop deployment and logistical support across territories.

For the first time, India allows a temporary foreign military presence on its soil. Strategically, the agreement enhances operational reach, granting Russia access to the Indian Ocean while facilitating India's entry into northern sea routes. It also strengthens military interoperability, sustains defence ties amid global tensions, and expands Russia's strategic mobility under sanctions pressures.



- [The Counter-Cartel Summit, Iran, and Latin America's Strategic Crossroads](#) | Small Wars Journal
- [Kazakhstan echoes India's call for urgent UN reforms](#) | Economic Times
- [Africa Faces Mounting Risks Just as Growth Gains Take Hold](#) | IMF
- [Saudi Arabia Didn't Bail Pakistan Out for Nothing This Time](#) | EESTI



## RES2026 Calls for Climate Justice, Stronger Regional Governance

At the Regional Ecological Summit 2026 in Astana, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev called for fair, implementation-oriented climate cooperation, framing environmental protection as a strategic priority for global stability. Central Asian leaders, including Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Emomali Rahmon, emphasised regional integration linking climate, water, and ecological security.



They highlighted the disproportionate impacts on low-emitting states, urging equitable climate finance and technology access. Leaders warned of glacier melt, water scarcity, and biodiversity loss, advocating coordinated, depoliticised action grounded in multilateralism, shared responsibility, and practical outcomes for sustainable regional stability.

- [India hits milestone: Renewable energy ramps - 5 years ahead of 2030 Paris Agreement target](#) | Gulf News
- [India's imports of Russian oil doubled, likely to remain high](#) | UNN
- [Canada will use energy sector as leverage in CUSMA talks, minister says](#) | Global News
- [Europe continues as fastest-warming region, says State of the Climate 2025 report](#) | WMO



## Exercise Balikatan 2026 Underway

Exercise Balikatan 2026, the 41<sup>st</sup> iteration of the largest annual bilateral drill between the Philippines and the US, is underway from April 20-May 08, with participation from Australia, Japan, France, Canada, and New Zealand.

Involving over 16,000 personnel, the exercise enhances interoperability, command systems, and operational readiness across domains including maritime security, cyber defence, and humanitarian response. It reinforces the Mutual Defense Treaty (1951), supporting regional stability and adherence to international law in the Indo-Pacific.



- [US and Iran hold talks in Islamabad as Pakistan seeks to broker peace deal](#) | The Guardian
- [As the AI race heats up, nations must join hands to restrain the five horsemen of an AI apocalypse](#) | The Mint
- [Afghanistan hosts first “Central Asia -Afghanistan” Consultative Dialogue to strengthen regional cooperation](#) | dunyo
- [India Africa Forum Summit and Africa’s Strategic Opportunity](#) | Modern Ghana



## Abu Dhabi's OPEC Exit Exposes Shifting Oil Orderng

The UAE's withdrawal from OPEC in April 2026 reflects a long-term erosion of Gulf collective solidarity, akin to Ibn Khaldun's concept of declining *asabiyya*. Rather than a sudden rupture, the move culminates a decade of independent strategic behaviour diverging from Saudi Arabia.

Despite short-term constraints such as Hormuz disruptions, Abu Dhabi is positioning for post-crisis autonomy in oil markets. Riyadh's response may involve restructuring regional frameworks, with broader implications for Gulf cohesion and the future viability of collective energy governance.



- [India's Semiconductor Moment](#) | Institute of Geoeconomics
- [ASEAN survey finds growing doubts over US on trade and security](#) | Nikkei Asia
- [Slow Growth in Latin America and the Caribbean amid Global Uncertainty and Weak Investment](#) | World Bank
- [EU cracks down on Chinese goods bypassing tariffs via Belt and Road Initiative](#) | Euro News



Leaders Meet in Reykjavik for Wellbeing Forum 2026

The fourth Wellbeing Economy Forum, held in Reykjavík on April 16–17, convenes policymakers, academics, and business leaders to critically reassess prevailing economic paradigms.

Organised by the Directorate of Health (Iceland) with support from the European Union, the forum advances a wellbeing-centred framework that moves beyond GDP to incorporate health, equity, sustainability, and quality of life.

Under the patronage of Halla Tómasdóttir, it fosters policy innovation and international collaboration to promote inclusive and sustainable development.



- [New Zealand PM defends his Govt's targeted cost-of-living support amid soaring fuel prices | News on Air](#)
- [The Crisis of NATO | GPF](#)

## CUTS EVETS

1. CUTS and CRF Roundtable Discussion on WTO MC14 Outcomes and the Future of the Multilateral Trading System, Wednesday, April 29, 2026
2. [Global Strategies in the Age of Geoeconomics \(G-SAGE\) CUTS International Geoeconomic Monograph Series 2nd Webinar](#)