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## Experts: Iran Eyes Reuniting Its 'Axis of Resistance'

**January 28, 2021** voanews.com reported: "Ongoing talks about restoring ties between the Syrian government and the Palestinian militant group Hamas are part of a new attempt by Iran to revitalize a regional alliance, some experts say. Iran and its proxy militia groups in the Middle East refer to their alliance as the 'Axis of Resistance.'"

In a recent interview with the pro-Iranian television channel al-Mayadeen, Hassan Nasrallah, leader of the Iran-backed Lebanese Hezbollah, praised Tehran's ongoing efforts to maintain relations with all its allies. Nasrallah said in the interview he met the Hamas politburo chief, Ismail Haniyeh, several times during the latter's visit to Lebanon last September. Haniyeh traveled to Lebanon to attend the Palestinian faction's secretaries-general meeting.

Hamas is an Islamic militant group that controls the Gaza Strip. Despite its Sunni ideology, it has maintained a close relationship with Iran, a regional Shiite power..."

## China tells Taiwan that independence 'means war': report

**January 28, 2021** foxnews.com reported: "China on Thursday intensified its rhetoric directed towards Taiwan and said its independence would result in war. Reuters reported that Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Wu Qian was holding his monthly press conference when the subject turned to regional tensions.



Taipei accused Beijing of flying a dozen military jets in its airspace on Sunday in an act of intimidation. U.S. observers said China was intent on testing President Joe Biden, who had been sworn in just days before.

Wu said the 'military activities' in the Taiwan Straits 'are necessary actions to address the current security situation' there and then he warned, 'Those who play with fire will burn themselves, and 'Taiwan independence' means war.'..."

## Russia backs PA proposal for international peace conference

**January 27, 2021** Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Tuesday backed a Palestinian Authority proposal for a Middle East peace conference.

'We propose holding an international, ministerial-level meeting in spring-summer 2021,' Lavrov told a videoconference UN Security Council meeting about the Middle East, according to *AFP*.

Participants in such a conference would include Israel, Palestinian Arabs, the four members of the so-called Middle East diplomatic quartet (Russia, the United Nations, the United States and the European Union), along with four Arab states — Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, Lavrov said.

'It would also be important to invite Saudi Arabia, which is behind the Arab peace initiative,' he added..."

## China flexes muscles to US in South China Sea after promising to 'open fire'

**January 27, 2021** news.com.au reported: "Two formations of missile-carrying bombers and fighters surged into Taiwan's airspace at the weekend. Their 'target', the USS Theodore Roosevelt and her escort, were captured by satellite as they faced off against the dummy attack run.

Just days after President Joe Biden took up office in the White House, Beijing is ramping up the pressure. On Friday, it announced its coast guard and warships were authorized to 'open fire' on 'intruders' within the East and South China Seas. On Saturday, it sent a 'strike package' of powerful bombers within launch range of an approaching US carrier battle group. On Sunday, a flight of strike fighters followed up with another 'dress rehearsal' assault.

The *USS Theodore Roosevelt* was photographed from space crossing through the narrow strait between Taiwan and the Philippines. Along with her escort of cruisers and destroyers, her mission was to emphasize the freedom of passage applied by international law to the contested waters..."

## India, China suffer new casualties in border flare-up

**January 26, 2021** spacewar.com reported: "Indian and Chinese troops clashed anew on their contested Himalayan border, resulting in injuries on both sides, officials said Monday, highlighting the fraught state of relations between the giant nuclear-armed neighbors.

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The fighting on January 20 came six months after a pitched battle which left at least 20 Indian troops dead as well as an unknown number of Chinese casualties.

The world's two most populous nations have since become embroiled in a diplomatic showdown over their geographical and political differences.

India's military played down the latest skirmish as a 'minor face-off' at Naku La pass, which connects Sikkim state with Tibet on the Chinese side..."

### **China's Xi warns Davos World Economic Forum against 'new Cold War'**

*January 25, 2021* france24.com reported: "Chinese President Xi Jinping warned global leaders at an all-virtual Davos forum Monday against starting a "new Cold War", and urged global unity in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

Having largely curbed the spread of the pandemic within its borders, Xi wants to position China as a key player in a new multilateral world order as the US remains crippled by the pandemic.



"To build small cliques or start a new Cold War, to reject, threaten or intimidate others... will only push the world into division," said Xi in a likely veiled attack on US President Joe Biden's plans to revitalize global alliances to counter China's growing influence.

In a swipe at moves targeting China launched by the previous US administration under President Donald Trump, Xi said confrontation "will always end up harming every nation's interests and sacrificing people's welfare".

The Chinese leader also reaffirmed Beijing's ambitious climate pledges to slash carbon emissions by 65 per cent by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 -- both significant commitments as China emits a quarter of the world's greenhouse gases.

"Meeting these targets will require tremendous hard work from China. But we believe that when the interests of the entire humanity are at stake, China must step forward, take action and get the job done," he said.

Xi also called for stronger global governance via multilateral organizations, the removal of barriers to international trade, investment and tech exchanges, as well as stronger representation on the world stage for developing countries.

He stressed the importance of strengthening macroeconomic policies to combat the pandemic-induced global economic downturn.

"We must build an open world economy, firmly safeguard the multilateral trade system, and refrain from making discriminatory and exclusive standards, rules and systems, as well as high walls that separate trade, investment, and technology," he said.

China saw its GDP increase 2.3 percent last year, according to official data -- the lowest growth rate since 1976 -- but it is nonetheless expected to be the only major economy to have expanded in the pandemic-ravaged year.

Its economy is also forecast to grow by 7.9 per cent in 2021, according to the International Monetary Fund -- trimmed down from initial predictions by a harsh geopolitical climate, global economic downturn and risks from a messy technological decoupling from the US.

It also overtook the US as the world's biggest recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2020, according to a UN report released Sunday.

Bolstered by confidence in his country's management of the pandemic, Xi has made ambitious climate pledges and vowed to uphold multilateralism as US-China relations entered their worst phase in decades under the Trump administration.

But the Chinese government has been accused of mishandling the initial Covid-19 outbreak and covering up information, while a World Health Organisation expert team is currently conducting a long-delayed probe into the origins of the virus.

How Biden decides to handle the mounting tensions posed by China's rise will be one of the biggest strategic challenges he faces." ..."

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