

**Geopolitical, International, and Security collected stories, week of 17
December**

[Syria, Internal Conflict, Palestinian Refugees] [*Syrian rebels fight Palestinian pro-Assad group*](#) – Associated Press. (A U.N. report also documents the role of [foreign fighters](#), including Hezbollah, in the increasingly sectarian conflict, as reported by Reuters.)

[Egypt, Internal Politics, Civil Unrest, Sectarian Conflict] [*Egypt's Alexandria Gripped by Feud Over Future*](#) – Associated Press. (Another report from the Associated Press discusses [reports of the Egyptian Christian community being harassed and impeded from voting by Islamist groups.](#))

[Pakistan, Public Health, Terrorism, Blowback] [*Pakistan reports 9th death in polio team attacks*](#) – Associated Press.

[Philippines, China, Strategy] [*Why Philippines Stands Up to China*](#) – The Diplomat.

[Israel, Palestine, Disputed Territories, Settler Movement] [*Israel presses on with plan for 6,000 new settler homes*](#) – Reuters. (The U.S. responded by [criticizing the construction plans](#) but discouraged a European initiative at the U.N. to formally do so.)

[Central African Republic, Internal Conflict] [*Rebels in C. African Republic take 2 more towns*](#) – Associated Press. (A later Associated Press report stated that [2,000 troops from Chad](#) will join the government's fight to take back rebel-held towns.)

[Iraq, Government Figures, Internal Politics] [*Iraqi President Talabani suffers a stroke*](#) – Associated Press.

[ICC, Democratic Republic of Congo, Legal] [*UN Court Acquits Congo Rebel Leader of War Crimes*](#) – Associated Press.

[China, Cults, Police Operations] [*China details 500-plus people for doomsday rumors*](#) – Associated Press.

[Vietnam, Disputed Territories, China, Protests] [*Vietnam breaks up anti-China protests*](#) – BBC News.

[China, PLAAF, Military Exercises, Taiwan] [China Stages Massive Air Exercises](#) – Offiziere.ch.

[China, Fighter Aircraft, Engineering, Lulz] [China upset at being called out for reverse engineering Su-33](#) – Flight Global, The DEW Line blog.

[Thailand, Internal Conflict, Education, Terrorism] [Rights Group Denounces Thai Teachers' Slayings](#) – Associated Press.

[Afghanistan, Banking, Money Laundering] [An Afghan Mystery: Why Are Large Shipments of Gold Leaving the Country?](#) – New York Times.

[China, Censorship, Internet, Business] [China reinforces its 'Great Firewall' to prevent encryption](#) – CNET News. (Meanwhile, [a tool called Mongol](#) was released on github that allows the user to identify locations and numbers of routers serving the Great Firewall. The author was taking questions about the tool in [a Reddit thread](#).)

[Canada, Crime, Maple Syrup, Lulz] [Police make arrest in massive Quebec maple syrup heist](#) – The Globe and Mail.

[U.S., Sanctions, M23 Rebels, DRC] [US Treasury imposes sanctions against 2 Congo rebel leaders behind fighting in country's east](#) – Associated Press.

[Bangladesh, Pakistan, Hacking] [Bangladeshi hackers deface 5 government and 5 education sites from Pakistan](#) – Softpedia.

[Venezuela, Elections] [Chavez allies sweep Venezuela gubernatorial vote](#) – Associated Press.

[Philippines, Internal Politics, Reproductive Health] [Philippines OKs divisive contraceptive bill](#) – Associated Press.

[Argentina, Ghana, U.N., Sovereign Debt] [UN tribunal orders Ghana to release Argentine navy ship seized in debt dispute with hedge fund](#) – Associated Press.

[Japan, Elections] [Opposition party wins Japanese parliamentary vote](#) – Washington Post. (The New York Times also reported on the prospect that Japan would [take a tougher line with China](#). Reuters also had an article on what changes in [economic policy](#) might accompany the new LDP government.)

[South Africa, Terrorism] [South Africa police foil ANC meeting bomb plot](#) – Reuters.

[U.S., Turkey, Missile Defense, Syria] [Pentagon to send missiles, 400 troops to Turkey](#) – Associated Press.

[**Cybercrime, Illicit Markets**] [World of botnet cybercrime paying pretty well these days](#) – Network World.

[**France, Afghanistan, Diplomacy**] [France Hosts Rare Inter-Afghan Meeting](#) – Associated Press.

[**U.S., Mexico, Sinaloa Cartel, Borders**] [Daughter of accused drug lord deported to Mexico](#) – CNN.

[**Taiwan, China, Disputed Territories, Passports**] [In passport kerfuffle, Taiwan is stickin' it to China](#) – Christian Science Monitor, Global News blog.

[**U.S., Cybersecurity, Legal**] [DOJ Plans To Indict State-Sponsored Cyber Attackers](#) – DefenseNews.

[**Nigeria, Piracy**] [Pirates attack tanker off Nigeria, kidnap five: ship manager](#) – Reuters.

[**South Korea, Elections**] [Park Geun-hye claims South Korea presidential victory](#) – CNN.

[**Bangladesh, Public Safety**] [Bangladesh Tazreen factory fire was sabotage – inquiry](#) – BBC News.

[**Sri Lanka, Judiciary, Legal, Internal Politics**] [Sri Lanka chief justice wants verdict annulled](#) – Associated Press.