



Western Europe & The United States

Washington (US). The United States and Russia held their [second meeting](#) within a framework that is aimed at easing tensions between the two countries. The 'strategic stability dialogue' aims to bring delegations together and focus on principles and objectives for future arms control. Diplomats are calling the process successful, with major benefits achieved for understanding the strategic priorities of both sides.

Canberra (Australia). On 15 September, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States signed [a trilateral security pact](#) for the Indo-Pacific region. The agreement aims to safeguard Australia's cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and undersea capabilities, and is part of a broader aim to confront China. As part of the deal, the UK and the US will help Australia build nuclear-powered submarines. The project will make Australia only the seventh country in the world to have submarines propelled by nuclear reactors. The deal has come at the expense of French-Australian relations, with Australia [cancelling](#) a 90 billion Australian dollar (US \$66 billion) contract for French submarines.

Russia & South-Eastern Europe

Kiev (Ukraine). Ukraine [publicly accused](#) the Russian energy giant, Gazprom of suspending the transit of gas to Hungary. Moscow has been looking at ways to bypass Kiev in the past few years after its annexation of Crimea. Several deals have been struck with Germany, Greece, and the latest with Hungary, to bypass Ukrainian territory. Kiev has claimed that these deals violate EU Energy Law, and has called on Brussels to investigate the cases further.

Mitrovica (Kosovo). Serbia and Kosovo [have reached an agreement](#) on crisis de-escalation between their common shared borders. The recent tensions between the two countries have been the worst in a decade, with Serbian military planes [flying near the border](#) in an apparent show of force. The European Union mediated the agreement with NATO-led peacekeepers from the KFOR mission set to patrol the border for two weeks.



Middle East

Cairo (Egypt). Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry [met his Syrian counterpart](#), Faisal Mekdad to discuss ways to end the Syrian crisis and for Damascus to regain its position as an active party in the Arab world. Syria has been mired in a vicious civil war since early 2011 when the Assad regime cracked down on pro-democracy protesters with brutal force.

Amman (Jordan). The Jaber border crossing with Syria will reopen for trade and tourism. Jordan has closed its border with Syria a few times since the onset of the Syrian civil war in 2011. The reopening followed the visit of a Syrian delegation to Jordan last week to discuss the border situation. Jordan originally supported Syrian rebel forces in the Syrian civil war; however, the Hashemite Kingdom later changed tact, instead opening up contacts with the Assad regime.

