

Global Watch Monthly Briefing: January 2026

By Kaswar Klasra

Date: February 1, 2026

The first month of 2026 has marked a definitive rupture in the post-WWII international order. As Washington pivots toward a "Global Monroe Doctrine" and aggressive territorial assertions, the world is witnessing a massive gravitational shift toward Beijing. While the U.S. contemplates parting ways with **NATO** over the **Greenland crisis**, traditional Western allies are descending upon China, signaling its emergence as the new center of global stability and commerce.

The New Global Power House: The Great Pivot to Beijing

In a stunning reversal of the "de-risking" rhetoric of 2024, the world's most powerful leaders are now seeking a strategic reset with China. January 2026 saw Beijing become the indispensable diplomatic hub for nations hedging against U.S. policy volatility.

- **The European Rush:** Following high-profile visits from the UK's **Keir Starmer** and Finland's **Petteri Orpo**, **German Chancellor Friedrich Merz** has finalized plans for a landmark state visit. Facing internal economic pressure and a potential trade war with Washington, Berlin is looking to secure long-term industrial and EV partnerships with President Xi.
- **The Commonwealth Shift:** Canadian PM **Mark Carney** led a 60-person business delegation to Beijing, securing a "Strategic Cooperation Roadmap" that effectively prioritizes Asian markets over the unstable "Donroe Doctrine" trade zone.
- **China as the Anchor:** As the U.S. employs military threats in the Arctic and Middle East, Beijing has masterfully positioned itself as the "guardian of multilateralism," offering a predictable, business-first framework that is drawing in G7 leaders at an unprecedented rate.

Transactional Diplomacy: The "Board of Peace" and Gray-Zone War

Washington's new approach to conflict is defined by the **Board of Peace**. Inaugurated at Davos, this US-led body has effectively sidelined the UN, creating a "pay-to-play" reconstruction model for Gaza. While 26 countries, including Pakistan, joined as founding members, the board represents a shift toward technocratic, non-institutional governance.

Meanwhile, in **Abu Dhabi**, a historic trilateral dialogue between the U.S., Ukraine, and Russia took place. Though no breakthrough was achieved, the fact that all three parties met at the same table in the UAE signals a move toward a negotiated settlement, even as territorial red lines in the Donbas remain frozen.

The Nuclear Tinderbox: Iran and the Brink of War

Tensions in the Middle East have reached a terminal point. A massive U.S. "armada," led by the **USS Abraham Lincoln**, is currently positioned near the Strait of Hormuz. Washington has issued a strict deadline for Tehran to enter nuclear talks or face strikes aimed at its military infrastructure. In response, Iran has inducted 1,000 "strategic combat" drones and warned of a "crushing" response, though diplomatic backchannels in Turkey keep a faint hope for nuclear negotiations alive.

Top 10 Stories of January 2026

1. **China Achieves 5% GDP Target Amid Global Uncertainty** Beijing hits its 2025 growth goal, fueled by a record trade surplus and EV dominance.
Link: [China Daily](#)
2. **Trump Unveils "Board of Peace" as Gaza Ceasefire Shifts to Reconstruction** A 26-nation coalition forms to manage Gaza, bypassing traditional UN Security Council oversight.
Link [Baker Institute](#)
3. **Greenland Crisis: Trump Rules Out Force but Maintains Annexation Goal** Transatlantic tensions ease slightly at Davos, but the U.S. continues to seek "ownership" of the island.
Link: [Wikipedia - Greenland Crisis 2026](#)
4. **Russia-Ukraine-US Trilateral Talks Open in Abu Dhabi** The first structured, direct dialogue between the three powers takes place in the UAE.
Link: [Caspian News](#)
5. **US Armada Nears Iran as Nuclear Deadline Approaches** The U.S. military buildup in the Middle East reaches its highest level in decades.
Link: [Iran International](#)
6. **German Chancellor Friedrich Merz Finalizes Beijing State Visit** Berlin pivots toward China to secure its industrial future amid shifting U.S. guarantees.
Link: [Global Times](#)
7. **UK Prime Minister Secures 30-Day Visa-Free Entry to China** PM Starmer's visit marks a major reset in UK-China relations, focusing on City of London interests.
Link: [CNBC Africa](#)
8. **NATO Identity Crisis: The End of Collective Defense?** Experts warn that U.S. actions in Greenland may have permanently fractured the Article 5 principle.
Link: [Atlantic Council](#)
9. **Venezuela: US Demands Severing of Ties with Beijing and Moscow** The Trump administration uses the capture of Maduro to force a regional realignment.
Link: [Al Jazeera](#)
10. **World Enters Era of Global Water Bankruptcy** A landmark report warns that environmental decay is now the primary driver of geopolitical fractures.
: [Global Issues](#)

Tnds

