

Event carries positive significance in bilateral military ties: expert

Chinese Defense Minister meets with French counterpart in France

By Liu Xuanzun, Guo Yuandan and Liang Rui

China's Defense Minister visited France and held talks with his French counterpart on Monday. Experts told the Global Times that the visit holds positive significance for the continued development of bilateral military relations, reflecting the evolving new perceptions, thinking and policies that European countries have developed toward China in the field of defense and security.

During his visit to France at the invitation of the French side, China's Minister of National Defense Dong Jun held talks with French Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu on Monday, according to a statement released by China's Ministry of National Defense on Tuesday.

The two sides engaged in in-depth exchanges of views on bilateral military relations, international and regional situations, and issues of mutual concern, reaching a consensus on enhancing practical exchanges and cooperation

between the two militaries, per the Chinese statement. Prior to the talks, Lecornu hosted a welcome ceremony for Dong and accompanied him in reviewing the honor guard, the Chinese Defense Ministry said.

This marks the first visit by a Chinese defense minister to a major Western country in many years. Experts told the Global Times that the visit carries major significance, signaling strengthened bilateral and military ties, and deepened practical cooperation between the two militaries amid the current complex and volatile global security landscape.

Wang Yunfei, a Chinese military affairs expert, told the Global Times on Tuesday that the meeting between the two defense ministers played a significant role in boosting trust and promote cooperation between the two militaries. It is also important for the two sides to enhance exchanges and communications to avoid misunderstanding.

Both China and France are permanent members of the UN Security

Council, so the two countries' defense exchanges are also conducive to the global and regional security situations. The two countries have common interests in safeguarding peace and stability in the world, Wang said.

Zhuo Hua, an international affairs expert at the School of International Relations and Diplomacy at Beijing Foreign Studies University, told the Global Times on Tuesday that over the recent two years, European countries, including France, have frequently engaged in military exchanges with China, with military and security ties steadily warming up. Dong's visit reflects the ongoing positive trajectory of China-Europe defense relations.

In addition to France, the UK is also part of the broader development in China-Europe military relations. In early April, Admiral Tony Radakin, Chief of the Defense Staff of the UK, visited China, marking the first visit by the UK's highest-ranking military official to China in a decade.

Duterte wins mayoral race in mid-term elections: preliminary results

By Deng Xiaoci

Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has again won the mayorship of Davao city in this year's mid-term elections, according to preliminary results on Monday evening, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

With more than 60 percent of the votes counted, Duterte had established a commanding lead, securing 405,000 votes compared to 49,000 for his closest rival, according to figures from the Commission on Elections reported by local media.

The result reflected the tenacious support for Duterte himself and his family, despite the former president being detained in The Hague, Gu Xiaosong, dean of the ASEAN Research Institute of Hainan Tropical Ocean University, told the Global Times on Tuesday.

The former president was arrested last March at Manila's international airport and was then taken to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, the Netherlands, where he is still being detained, Xinhua reported.

It is expected that, given the former president is imprisoned in the Netherlands, duties could instead be assumed by the vice-mayor, a race his son, Sebastian, was also on track to win, the Guardian said. Another Duterte son, Paolo, was re-elected as congressman. The BBC reported that the midterms, which saw 18,000 seats contested from local officials to governors and senators, became a proxy war between supporters of Sara Duterte and her former ally, current President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

The 2025 midterm election marked a resurgence for the Dutertes, the Times Magazine reported Tuesday, citing preliminary results.

The midterms, especially the contest in the Senate would decide the political fate for Sara and serve as a bellwether for her popularity ahead of a potential 2028 presidential bid, Gu said. "So far, the fierce contest between Dutertes' supporters and their rivals suggests that Marcos Jr's one-sided pro-US policy does not fully align with the Philippines' development interests, and some Philippine people strongly oppose it," he noted.

Toxic gas incident at school



An aerial photo shows Komatsugawa Junior High School, from which three students were transported to hospital after toxic hydrogen sulfide gas, or sewer gas, was generated during a science experiment, in Edo-gawa Ward, Tokyo on May 13, 2025. Photo: VCG

US President Trump kicks off three-country Middle East visit, skipping Israel

By Fan Anqi

US President Donald Trump arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, starting his four-day Middle East trip that will also see him visit Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, as the first official state visit of his second presidency.

As President Trump received a warm welcome at the Saudi royal court on Tuesday, American and Saudi business executives gathered in a nearby

conference hall beneath crystal chandeliers the size of tanks, reported New York Times. The goal of the Saudi-US Investment Forum, thrown together rapidly to coincide with Mr. Trump's visit to the kingdom, was to drum up deals worth hundreds of billions of dollars, flowing in both directions, the report said.

President Trump chose Saudi Arabia as the destination for his first major foreign trip of his second term, just as he did

in 2017, once again bypassing the traditional allies who have usually hosted presidents, NBC reported.

Liu Zhongmin, a professor from the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times on Tuesday that amid global uncertainties and setbacks in the US' tariff policy, Gulf states with substantial financial resources offer great opportunities for economic cooperation.

US President's Middle East trip, which did not include Israel, "is the latest to sow doubt in Israel about where it stands in Washington's priorities," Reuters reported on Monday. In recent weeks, the relationship between Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has become strained as the two leaders are increasingly at odds over Hamas and Iran, NBC News reported.

The White House hailed the trip as "a historic return to the

Middle East." Zhu Yongbiao, director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies at Lanzhou University, told the Global Times that the US wants to maintain hegemony over the region while reducing its own commitments, attempting to outsource the costs of its Middle East strategy to regional partners themselves.

