

# Nuclear, Missile & Space Digest

Volume 11, Number 07

A Fortnightly Newsletter from the Indian Pugwash Society

April 15, 2019

**Convener (Interim)**

**&**

**Editor**

**Dr. Rajiv Nayan**

**Executive Council**

**Prof Amitav Mallik**

**Prof Rajesh Rajagopalan**

**Shri M V Rappai**

**Prof Varun Sahni**

## Contents

### A. India

#### A-SAT

- India's submarine deal with Russia raised by some US Congress members with FS: Sources
- Naval Commanders at Kochi for OP Discussions
- India, Pakistan threatened to unleash missiles at each other: sources
- India-Pakistan STANDOFF: India deploys nuclear submarines amid soaring regional tensions
- Admiral Sunil Lanba commissions Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Training Facility - ABHEDYA, at INS Shivaji, Lonavala
- Indian Navy nuclear, biological, chemical training facility launched
- India's A-SAT programme born in response to China's growing space capabilities: Understanding Mission Shakti
- Mission Shakti: India's space-military-industrial success
- India Shot Down a Satellite, Modi Says, Shifting Balance of Power in Asia,
- With Fire From Missile & Space Program, India Tests Anti-Satellite Weapon
- Mission Shakti: A long-desired capability tested
- What are anti-satellite weapons?
- Modi hails India as military space power after anti-satellite missile test
- India Shot Down a Satellite, Modi Says, Shifting Balance of Power in Asia
- India is waking up from nuclear energy dream
- Former NSA Shivshankar Menon Says DRDO Head Never Sought Permission for ASAT Test
- Iran seeks improved trade ties with India amid sanctions

### B. China

- Forget the Mexico border, the new US military budget is focused on 'China, China, China', Associated Press
- Chinese delegation to visit Argentina to discuss stalled nuclear deal - government source
- China posts rising power generation
- Xi's visit to boost EU ties
- Nuclear shares soar after China plans to invest US\$12 billion in new reactors for first time since 2016



**Indian Pugwash Society**

No.1, Development Enclave,  
Rao Tula Ram Marg, Near USI, Delhi-110010  
Email: indianpugwashsociety@gmail.com

Tel. No (91-11) 2671-7983

Fax No. (91-11)2615-4192

- China firmly opposes proliferation of WMDs: envoy
- CNNC plans to build nation's first floating nuclear plant this year
- Chinese ambassador issues veiled warning to Britain against engaging in 'gunboat diplomacy'
- China completes testing on self-developed CF3 nuclear fuel assembly
- Xi's France visit set to boost cooperation
- Xi's visit conveys peaceful intent
- December construction start for Chinese SMR, World Nuclear News
- China, France sign US\$45 billion of deals including Airbus order, South China Morning Post
- Cold war is back: Steve Bannon helps revive US committee to target 'aggressive totalitarian foe' China
- Xi's visit sets tone for China-EU relations
- China launches widespread safety probe after deadly chemical blast

### C. Pakistan

- Pakistan's Long, Controversial Love Affair with the F-16 Fighting Falcon
- What Message Does the Latest India-Pakistan Crisis Send to Militants in Kashmir?
- US threatened by Pakistani nuclear program proliferation
- Pakistan sees nuclear weapons only as deterrence tool to prevent actual wars
- ASAT launch: Pakistan urges no militarization of space
- Nuclear proliferation a top national security concern for US: State Department
- PM Imran performs ground breaking of Quetta-Zhob Road, Balochistan Health Complex
- Deterrence and South Asia

### D. USA

- U.S. and Brazil may partner on small nuclear reactors
- The US is losing the nuclear energy export race to China and Russia. Here's the Trump team's plan to turn the tide
- US sanctions Iran's nuclear research unit, urges Tehran to negotiate
- U.S. nuclear generation peaked in 2018, says EIA
- Trump decides against more North Korea sanctions at this time: source
- U.S. warns it can act against people helping Iran evade energy sanctions
- Perry: Vogtle project is 'critically important'
- U.S finalizes \$3.7 billion loan for Vogtle nuclear power plant
- South Korean officials to press for Iran sanctions waiver in United States
- Green New Deal dies in Senate and Democrats helped kill it
- U.S. sanctions firms accused of helping fund Iran's Revolutionary Guards
- U.S. Intelligence: Russia's Nuclear-Capable 'Poseidon' Underwater Drone Ready for Service by 2027
- Perry defends plan for Nevada nuclear-waste storage site
- U.S. approves secret nuclear power work for Saudi Arabia
- Action needed to keep US nuclear competitive - Korsnick
- U.S. energy secretary unsure if Saudi nuclear approvals came after Khashoggi killing
- Bill Gates 'thrilled' by legislative boost for nuclear

## E. Russia

- Russia & China sign agreement on construction of 2 power units at Tianwan nuclear power plant
- Russia decides to deploy nuclear-capable strategic bombers to Crimea: RIA
- Russia deploys nuclear bombers to Crimea after US rolls out missile defence systems on Putin's doorstep
- Russian strategic Akula-class subs can be rearmed to carry Kalibr cruise missiles - expert
- Russian nuclear-powered container ship sets off for 1st voyage with Arctic LNG cargo
- Making Nuclear Weapons Menacing Again
- Russian air force planes land in Venezuela carrying troops: reports
- Novovoronezh II-2 nears physical start-up
- Russia's nuclear-armed underwater drone may be ready for war in eight years
- US says it won't rule out nuclear first strike, because allies wouldn't trust it otherwise,
- World War 3 THREAT: US deploy nuclear bombers after WARNING Russia over Venezuela troops
- Russia and China Forced America's Hand on the INF Treaty

## WEST ASIA

### F. Iran

- Iran's mechanism for INSTEX to be set up soon: CBI governor
- Moscow says Iran rigorously adhering to JCPOA
- Iran to unveil 112 new nuclear achievements in April
- President: Iran to Take Legal Action Against U.S.
- Officials Outline Problems With FATF, INSTEX
- Mogherini: EU resolute to implement Iran deal
- European nations eager to join INSTEX: Belgian official
- Sanctions on Iran have negative effects on energy markets: Novak
- Iran's missile program destabilizing Middle East: US
- Ayatollah Khamenei: I know no country worse than Saudi kingdom
- US imposes new sanctions on Iran over weapons programs
- France bans Iran's Mahan Air for flying arms, troops to Syria, elsewhere
- Iran welcomes Luxembourg court decision on U.S. seizure of Iranian assets
- Oil minister to leave Tehran for Moscow on Monday

### G. Saudi Arabia

- Qatar: UAE nuclear plant threat to Gulf stability, environment
- US approves secret nuclear power work for Saudi Arabia
- U.S. energy secretary unsure if Saudi nuclear approvals came after Khashoggi killing
- Energy chief Perry OKs deal to share nuke tech with Saudis

### H. Israel

- Netanyahu Claims Iranian Regime Openly Supports Gantz
- The Unspoken Reason Israel Is a Military Superpower: Nuclear Weapons
- Construction of two new Iranian nuclear plants going well, atomic chief says
- U.S.-backed forces capture Syria suspects tied to American deaths: sources

- Russia allots 25 nuclear education places to Turkey
- Netanyahu welcomes new US sanctions on Iran, congratulates Trump
- Trump Formally Recognizes Israeli Sovereignty Over Golan Heights
- UAE regulator in final stages of issuing license for nuclear plant
- Apocalypse Now: Why Israel Would Start a Nuclear War
- Netanyahu's Timely Help From Trump
- Israel In The Crosshairs Of 2020 Us Presidential Election
- Iran Likely Still Developing Nuclear Weapons - Survey
- Two Syrians remanded for smuggling radioactive element
- Iran cuts Syria militia funds as US economic sanctions tighten
- New bill would block F-35 transfers to Turkey
- New program brings Turkish scientists home
- Global survey: Arabs want closer ties with Israel, world losing interest in Palestinians

## **I. North Korea**

- No significant activity at N. Korea's nuclear complex, test site: 38 North
- Former German FM says to visit N. Korea
- N. Korea, Russia agree to bolster 'high-level contact,' cooperation in various areas
- US and N. Korea will not return to past days of conflict and confrontation: Seoul official
- Seoul seeks to break deadlock in nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang
- Sanctions hinder humanitarian efforts in North Korea
- Minister: US seeks 'big picture' master plan to handle NK's nuclear, missile programs
- North Korea seeks sanctions relief
- Minor quake reported near N. Korea's nuke test site: KMA
- North Korea quits liaison office in setback for South after new U.S. sanctions
- Trump cancels new sanctions on NK
- Kim Jong-un 'was shocked' by new US list of undisclosed nuclear facilities at Hanoi summit
- North Korea says Trump was open to easing sanctions with 'snapback' clause: South Korean media
- North Korea nuclear, missile activity 'inconsistent' with denuclearization: U.S. general
- S. Korean leader to meet with Trump in US on nuke diplomacy
- North Korea calls raid on its embassy in Spain 'terrorist attack'
- Half of S. Koreans expect US, N. Korea won't reach agreement on denuclearization: poll

## **J Japan**

- Peace advocates will hand flame from A-bomb to Pope Francis
- Tohoku Electric says donation not a payoff for idle nuclear plant
- U.S. film tells story of Japanese boat exposed to 1954 nuclear test
- Early Abe-Trump meeting planned to discuss North Korea policies
- Ministry eyes subsidy plan for nuclear energy generation
- Team of robots to search for fuel in Fukushima reactor vessel
- KEPCO to ship MOX nuclear fuel assemblies from France in 2020

## K. South and Southeast Asia

- Power sector appears hallmark of Dhaka-Delhi cooperation
- Energy Transition Index: Bangladesh 90th among 115 nations
- SE Asia should be aware of Iran's tactics to evade oil sanctions: U.S
- Brazilian nuclear plant uranium convoy attacked by armed men - police

## L. Op-ed and Editorial

### INDIA

- A necessary evil
  - What has changed post-Balakot?
  - India - China Face Off New Frontiers,
  - What Will Be the Strategic Ripple Effects of Balakot?
  - Geo-Politically, India is at a Crucial Juncture
  - Digital India: Technology to transform a connected nation, McKinsey
  - US Dollar: A Potent American Weapon System
  - Netanyahu way or Helsinki?
  - Opinion | A weapon that could change the game if India plays tough
  - Swaraj's Maldives visit lends economic direction to political ties
- ### A-SAT
- With A-SAT test, India takes leap in space defence: Mission Shakti can nullify Chinese cyber attacks at time of war
  - Pakistan Day 2019: Fault lines over jingoism
  - Mission Shakti in the global space defence race
  - India's ASAT test: Further steps
  - A-SAT tech gives India diplomatic bargaining power
  - Mission Shakti: Technology demonstrator or new weapon in the arsenal?
  - No global heat on India's ASAT missile test

### CHINA

- Chinese children take to coding amid country's lofty goals in AI, other hi-tech initiatives
- What military hardware will go on show for China's 70th anniversary parade?
- How China's growing PLA Navy could close a perception gap in the South China Sea
- 'Peaceful space' meet opens
- Europe should treat China as a partner
- Mass production of clone monkeys disease models, future drug tests possible: scientists
- US playing a dangerous zero-sum game with China

### EAST ASIA

- Complete discontinuance of war games needed
- Are we destined to have a space war?
- Swimming against stream

### PAKISTAN

- The hypocritical US stance
- Pakistanis and Indians deserve better
- The deepening of Karachi's fault lines

**USA**

- How I learned to start worrying and fear the bomb
- Trump's Iran Policy Is 'Untethered to History'
- The Foreign Policy Fiasco That Wasn't

**RUSSIA**

- Neither Israel nor Iran Trust Russia. But Only Putin Can Prevent War Between Them
- Opponents Of Trade Relief For Uranium Mining Have Unconvincing Case, Thomas
- Future nuclear weapons technology: which states are developing nukes?
- 335 Million Dead: If America Launched A Massive Nuclear War on Russia and China,
- Russia's Typhoon Submarines are the Biggest Ever (Now Armed with 200 Cruise Missiles?)

**WEST ASIA**

- Iran And The Hanoi Debacle: The Threat To Israel
- Pompeo tells Lebanon to choose Hezbollah or independence,
- Why did Bush go to war in Iraq?
- Khamenei Decides Iran Likely Sticking With Nuke Deal Until End Despite Sanctions-Analysis,
- Hezbollah a risk to Middle East stability: Pompeo
- Spectre of Chernobyl hangs over Middle East's nuclear ambitions
- Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh share common views on regional issues
- Saturation of Air Defences: Observations on Failure of Air Defence Systems in Syria,
- Global energy demand rose by 2.3 per cent in 2018: IEA
- Constraining Iran's missile capabilities
- Defiant Khamenei emphasizes Iranian regime's aggressive policies

## ***A India***

### **A-SAT**

#### **India's submarine deal with Russia raised by some US Congress members with FS: Sources** *Economic Times, March 16, 2019*

A number of members of the US Congress raised with Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale the issue of India signing a deal with Russia for a nuclear submarine last week, official sources said Saturday.

Gokhale clarified that India finalised the deal for leasing of a nuclear-powered attack submarine from Russia and it was not an acquisition or a purchase, they said.

Some members of the Congress raised the issue as they have some mis-perception about it, the sources said, adding Gokhale also explained to them that the submarine will only have conventional weapons.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/indias-submarine-deal-with-russia-raised-by-some-us-congress-members-with-fs-sources/articleshow/68439738.cms>

#### **Naval Commanders at Kochi for OP Discussions** *PIB India, March 17 2019*

Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff will be in Kochi tomorrow ( on 18 Mar) to preside over the debrief of largest War Game of the Indian Navy - the Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX 19). The exercise had commenced 07 Jan 19 and was planned to be terminated by 10 Mar 19. However, the JEM sponsored terrorist attack on the CRPF convoy in Pulwama on 14 Feb 19 led to the rapid redeployment of the Indian Navy for Operations in North Arabian sea.

The major combat units of the Indian Navy including the Carrier Battle Group with INS Vikramaditya, nuclear submarines and scores of other ships, submarines and aircraft swiftly transited from exercise to operational deployment mode as tensions between India and Pakistan escalated. A clear and resolute message regarding the

operational posture of the Indian Navy to prevent, deter and defeat any misadventure by Pakistan in the maritime domain was also issued during the tri-services press conference conducted on 28 Feb 19.

<http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1568942>

#### **India, Pakistan threatened to unleash missiles at each other: sources** *Sanjeev Miglani, Drazen Jorgic, Reuters, March 18, 2019*

The sparring between India and Pakistan last month threatened to spiral out of control and only interventions by U.S. officials, including National Security Advisor John Bolton, headed off a bigger conflict, five sources familiar with the events said.

At one stage, India threatened to fire at least six missiles at Pakistan, and Islamabad said it would respond with its own missile strikes "three times over", according to Western diplomats and government sources in New Delhi, Islamabad and Washington.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/india-kashmir-crisis-page/india-pakistan-threatened-to-unleash-missiles-at-each-other-sources-idINKCN1QZ0F1>

#### **India-Pakistan STANDOFF: India deploys nuclear submarines amid soaring regional tensions** *Brian McGleenon, Express UK, March 19, 2019*

The naval force consisted of nuclear submarines, a carrier group centered around INS Vikramaditya, India's flagship aircraft carrier. The deployment was allegedly to deter "misadventures" by Pakistan, but analysts now believe it is a message to China, not Pakistan. Military analysts have told Russia Today China is using Pakistan as a tool to contain India.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1102036/india-pakistan-news-world-war-3-latest-china-beijing-nuclear-war-tension-kashmir>

## **Admiral Sunil Lanba commissions Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Training Facility - ABHEDYA, at INS Shivaji, Lonavala** *PIB India, March 26, 2019*

Admiral Sunil Lanba, PVSM AVSM ADC, Chief of the Naval Staff commissioned a state of the art “Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Training Facility - ABHEDYA”, at INS Shivaji, Lonavla today. The ceremony was attended by a host of dignitaries including VAdm AK Chawla, FOC-in-C Southern Naval Command, VAdm GS Pabby, Chief of Materiel & Cmde BB Nagpal CMD, GSL.

Cmde BB Nagpal CMD GSL stated “The timely completion of this Project is a reflection of the superior technical design and execution abilities of the Indian Navy and Goa Shipyard Limited. This unique facility will assist Indian Navy in providing realistic simulation of Nuclear, Chemical & Biological warfare to its personnel during their NBC damage control training, which till now was limited to theoretical training largely.”

<http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1569459>

## **Indian Navy nuclear, biological, chemical training facility launched**

*The Economic Times, March 26, 2019*

The Indian Navy’s Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Training Facility (NBCTF) was Monday inaugurated at INS Shivaji in Lonavala by Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba.

The NBCTF, christened “Abhedya”, Sanskrit for impenetrable, will help train personnel of naval ships fitted with nuclear, biological and chemical detection and protection systems. INS Shivaji is celebrating its platinum jubilee year in 2019-20 and Admiral Lanba, along with his wife Reena, was on a two-day visit to the facility.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/indian-navy-nuclear-biological-chemical-training-facility-launched/articleshow/68573881.cms>

## **India’s A-SAT programme born in response to China’s growing space capabilities: Understanding Mission Shakti** *Praveen Swami, Firstpost, March 27, 2019*

For decades now, it’s been clear the next war between the great powers – should such an apocalypse ever dawn – will be fought not only on land, sea and air. Last year’s Worldwide Threat Assessment, released by the United States’ Director of National Intelligence, assessed that if “a future conflict were to occur involving Russia or China, either country would justify attacks against US and allied satellites as necessary to offset any perceived US military advantage derived from military, civil or commercial space systems”.

New Delhi’s A-SAT programme was born in response to China’s growing capabilities – in turn, driven by that country’s efforts to counter the United States’ supremacy in space. In essence, China sought to show it could cripple the satellite networks on which the United States’ military command-and-control capabilities rest.

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/indias-a-sat-programme-born-in-response-to-chinas-growing-space-capabilities-understanding-mission-shakti-6336661.html>

## **Mission Shakti: India’s space-military-industrial success** *Chaitanya*

*Giri, Gateway House, March 27, 2019*

India’s Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO) has long maintained that it possesses all the necessary building blocks for an anti-satellite missile. Like the nuclear tests of 1998, an anti-satellite test needed political will and geostrategic prudence. India has been using its satellites in military operations, most recently in Balakot. The time was right for an anti-satellite demonstration. Mission Shakti is therefore a milestone and dramatically strengthens India’s defence preparedness for space-based warfare. It also puts our space deterrence on a par with our nuclear

deterrence – especially significant given that satellite technology is now indispensable to the nation’s future.

India is now part of a rarefied club of global space powers – U.S. Russia, China – which have demonstrated capability for missile-based anti-satellite weapons.

<https://www.gatewayhouse.in/space-military-industrial/?fbclid=IwAR2iVVMcZQkT1-E56yHnA2k2w7z26jmsDuwTMS7q7cPPMDLZZPnyuVgDk8>

### **India Shot Down a Satellite, Modi Says, Shifting Balance of Power in Asia**, Jeffrey Gettleman and Hari Kumar, *The New York Times*, March 27, 2019

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Wednesday that India had test-fired a rocket that shot down one of its own satellites, escalating the country’s rivalry with China and Pakistan, and demonstrating a strategic capability in space that few countries possess.

This technological leap, which was confirmed by the Pentagon, puts India in an exclusive club of nations, along with the United States, Russia and China, that have proved their ability to destroy targets in space.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/27/world/asia/india-weather-satellite-missile.html>

### **With Fire From Missile & Space Program, India Tests Anti-Satellite Weapon** Shiv Aroor, March 27, 2019

Nearly a decade after Indian military scientists first declared that an anti-satellite weapon capability was within reach, India today conducted the first test of the weapon system, under the aegis of a project codenamed Mission Shakti. While official specifics of the weapon haven’t been revealed so far, Livefist learns that the weapon was a derivative of the Prithvi Defence Vehicle (PDV) missile interceptor developed for the country’s ballistic missile defence (BMD) program. The test was conducted this morning from the Integrated Test Range off India’s eastern seaboard.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a televised announcement just weeks before the country’s national election, said that the missile had destroyed a low earth orbit (LEO) satellite at an altitude of 300 km. In a statement, India’s Ministry of External Affairs said, “This was a technological mission carried out by DRDO. The satellite used in the mission was one of India’s existing satellites operating in lower orbit. The test was fully successful and achieved all parameters as per plans. The test required an extremely high degree of precision and technical capability. The significance of the test is that India has tested and successfully demonstrated its capability to interdict and intercept a satellite in outer space based on complete indigenous technology. With this test, India joins an exclusive group of space faring nations consisting of USA, Russia and China.”

<https://www.livefistdefence.com/2019/03/with-fire-from-missile-space-program-india-tests-anti-satellite-weapon.html>

### **Mission Shakti: A long-desired capability tested** Chethan Kumar, *Times of India*, March 27, 2019

Prime Minister on Wednesday in an address to the nation claimed that India successfully tested its anti-satellite (ASAT) missile system in a classified exercise code-named ‘Mission Shakti’. India’s success comes a good 12 years after China tested a similar and India has become only the fourth country to have such a technology.

[https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com//articleshow/68595320.cms?utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=TOIMobile](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com//articleshow/68595320.cms?utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=TOIMobile)

### **What are anti-satellite weapons?** Aljazeera, March 27, 2019

India tested an anti-satellite weapon on Wednesday, saying the locally produced interceptor was used to destroy an object in orbit.

Such a weapon allows for attacks on enemy satellites - blinding them or

disrupting communications - as well as providing a technology base for intercepting ballistic missiles.

India, whose space programme has developed launchers, satellites and probes to the Moon and Mars, created the interceptor used in Wednesday's test domestically, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a broadcast on television.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/anti-satellite-weapons-190327092138702.html>

**Modi hails India as military space power after anti-satellite missile test** *Sanjeev Miglani, Krishna N. Das, Reuter, March 27, 2019*

India shot down one of its own satellites in low-Earth orbit with a ground-to-space missile on Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, hailing his country's first test of such weaponry as a breakthrough establishing it as a military space power.

India would be the fourth country to have used such an anti-satellite weapon after the United States, Russia and China, according to Modi, who heads into general elections next month.

"Our scientists shot down a live satellite 300 kilometers away in space, in low-Earth orbit," Modi said in a television broadcast.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-india-satellite/modi-hails-india-as-military-space-power-after-anti-satellite-missile-test-idINKCN1R80IA>

**India Shot Down a Satellite, Modi Says, Shifting Balance of Power in Asia** *Jeffrey Gettleman and Hari Kumar, The New York Times, March 27, 2019*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Wednesday that India had test-fired a rocket that shot down one of its own satellites, escalating the country's rivalry with China and Pakistan, and demonstrating a strategic capability in space that few countries possess.

This technological leap, which was confirmed by the Pentagon, puts India in an

exclusive club of nations, along with the United States, Russia and China, that have proved their ability to destroy targets in space.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/27/world/asia/india-weather-satellite-missile.html>

**India is waking up from nuclear energy dream** *Manoj Joshi, Firstpost, March 29, 2019*

The report that the US will help build six nuclear power plants in India should be taken with the proverbial pinch of salt. When it comes to the US, inter-governmental declarations are not how business gets done. It requires working through a labyrinth of terms and conditions with companies and financial institutions. And, the nuclear-reactor business is not too healthy in the US.

Nuclear energy received the bulk of the government's research and development (R&D) funding during the 1950-1970 period. While Isro achieved world-class launch and satellite capability, despite embargoes, the department of atomic energy found it hard to even scale up the 220 MWe Canadian reactor it had got in the 1960s to 700 MWe. We have just about managed to get one going in Andhra Pradesh's Kakrapar in 2018. The world norm for power reactors is 1,000-1,500 MWe.

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/india-is-waking-up-from-nuclear-energy-dream-6350851.html>

**Former NSA Shivshankar Menon Says DRDO Head Never Sought Permission for ASAT Test** *Siddharth Varadarajan, The Wire, March 29, 2019*

Refuting reports that the Manmohan Singh government refused to allow the Defence and Research Development Organisation (DRDO) to conduct a test of its anti-satellite capabilities, former national security adviser Shivshankar Menon told The Wire, "This is the first I have ever heard of it. Saraswat never asked me for permission for an ASAT test."

In the wake of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement that India had successfully destroyed a satellite in low Earth orbit on Wednesday, a former head of DRDO, V.K. Saraswat, has implied that the earlier government got cold feet and refused to sanction a live test.

<https://thewire.in/security/former-nsa-shivshankar-menon-says-drdo-head-never-sought-permission-for-asat-test>

### **Iran seeks improved trade ties with India amid sanctions** Piyush Pandey,

*The Hindu, March 30, 2019*

Amid U.S. sanctions, Iran is exploring ways to increase its bilateral trade with India, including expanding banking channels. "Only one bank (UCO Bank) has business relationship with Iran. We need to expand that," said Hamid Reza Fouladgar, head of the seven-member Parliamentary delegation from Iran that is visiting India to improve bilateral ties.

"The IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] had inspected our facilities 14 times and agreed that Iran had fulfilled all its commitments towards the nuclear deal but the U.S. is now putting pressure on Iran in the name of human rights violations."

<https://www.thehindu.com/business/iran-seeks-improved-bilateral-ties-with-india-amid-sanctions/article26689314.ece>

## **B. China**

### **Forget the Mexico border, the new US military budget is focused on 'China, China, China', Associated Press** South

*China Morning Post, March 16, 2019*

Acting Pentagon chief named hypersonic missiles, space operations, technology theft and militarising land in the South China Sea as threats posed by China. China 'seeks Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and displacement of the United States', warned Patrick Shanahan. Chinese bombers. Chinese hypersonic missiles. Chinese cyber attacks. Chinese anti-satellite weapons. To a remarkable degree, the 2020

Pentagon budget proposal is shaped by national security threats that acting defence secretary Patrick Shanahan summarised in three words: "China, China, China."

The US is still fighting small wars against Islamic extremists, and Russia is considered a serious concern, but Shanahan wants to shift the military's main focus to what he considers the more pressing security problem of a rapidly growing Chinese military. This theme, which Shanahan outlined on Thursday in presenting the administration's proposed 2020 defence budget to the Senate Armed Services Committee, is competing for attention with more immediate problems like President Donald Trump's effort to use the military to build a border wall.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/united-states-canada/article/3001982/forget-mexico-border-new-us-military-budget-focused>

### **Chinese delegation to visit Argentina to discuss stalled nuclear deal - government source** Cassandra

*Garrison, Reuters, March 16, 2019*

A delegation from China will visit Argentina this month to discuss the construction of a nuclear power plant, signalling potential progress in a deal that could increase Beijing's deepening influence in the South American nation. An Argentine government source told Reuters this week the "technical team" from China would meet with local suppliers about the long-stalled nuclear power plant project, reportedly worth up to \$8 billion.

Argentina had hoped to announce an agreement on China-financed construction of Atucha III, as it has been referred to in the past, during a state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping after November's G20 summit in Buenos Aires.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/argentina-china-nuclear/chinese-delegation-to-visit-argentina-to-discuss-stalled-nuclear-deal-government-source-idINKCN1QW2OI>

## China posts rising power generation

*Xinhua, March 17, 2019*

China's power generation rose 2.9 percent year on year to hit 1.09 trillion kwh in the first two months of the year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The expansion was 3.4 percentage points lower than that for December. NBS attributed the slowing growth to a high comparative base from the same period last year and the warm weather this year.

In February alone, the power generation climbed 6.8 percent from the previous year, much faster than the growth in January. In breakdown, generation of hydroelectricity posted faster growth in Jan.-Feb. period, rising 6.6 percent year on year, compared with a 0.9-percent decrease last December, while solar power production saw a 3.8-percent increase. Electricity generated by thermal, nuclear and wind power facilities expanded at a slower pace, the NBS data showed.

[http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/17/c\\_137901945.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/17/c_137901945.htm)

## Xi's visit to boost EU ties *Yang Sheng, Global Times, March 18, 2019*

Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit Italy, Monaco and France from March 21 to 26, as the US puts pressure on its EU allies to help contain China, with experts saying European countries should make pragmatic and independent decisions when dealing with China to achieve win-win cooperation.

China and France are maintaining close communication on issues such as safeguarding multilateralism, improving global governance, and dealing with climate change. Safeguarding multilateralism is a common goal for China and the EU because when the US embraces unilateralism by withdrawing from a series of international organizations and agreements, China and the EU are victims, as well as other members. China and France are also responsible for and capable of balancing the negative impact brought by US unilateralism, Chinese analysts noted. On matters like climate change, the Iranian nuclear deal and

WTO reforms, China and France share a lot in common, they said. The EU also has concerns on China. The European Commission released its "EU-China: Strategic Outlook" on March 12, saying China is "an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance." The EU's changing attitude toward China is mainly due to its internal pressure.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1142563.shtml>

## Nuclear shares soar after China plans to invest US\$12 billion in new reactors for first time since 2016 *Laura He, South China Morning Post, March 19, 2019*

The plan will end a three-year hiatus in China's nuclear reactor construction and boost the country's nuclear export ambitions. China did not approve any new reactor from 2016 to 2018, partly due to the slow progress in the use of advanced and safer third-generation reactors. CGN Mining, a unit of state-owned China General Nuclear Power Group (CGN) that trades in uranium fuel, jumped 15 per cent to 38 Hong Kong cents in Hong Kong. CGN Power, a nuclear power station operator under CGN, also climbed 3.2 per cent to HK\$2.27, extending a four-day winning streak. Nuclear power equipment maker Lanzhou LS Heavy Equipment soared by the maximum-allowed 10 per cent to close at 6.33 yuan in Shanghai.

<https://www.scmp.com/business/companies/article/3002379/nuclear-shares-soar-after-china-plans-invest-us12-billion-new>

## China firmly opposes proliferation of WMDs: envoy *Xinhua, March 20, 2019*

"China has consistently and strictly implemented its international non-proliferation obligations and committed to the political settlement of non-proliferation hotspot issues, and has made positive contribution to this end," Wu Haitao, the charge d'affaires of China's Permanent

Mission to the United Nations, told a UN Security Council meeting on non-proliferation of WMDs. However, the global security landscape “remains complex and grave, In a globalizing world with technological advances, the risk for non-state actors, particularly terrorists, to gain access to WMDs and related materials and technologies still exists.” Under the new circumstances, the international community should continue to “deepen cooperation and further strengthen global governance in the area of non-proliferation,”. The envoy then put forward a four-point proposal by placing first the need to uphold multilateralism.

“First, there is a need to uphold multilateralism and foster an enabling security environment,” he said. All countries need to embrace “the concept of common, comprehensive, collaborative and sustainable security...and eliminate the threat of proliferation from its root,” he said. “Second, the international community should uphold international rules and consolidate the international non-proliferation regime,” he continued. “All parties and countries should effectively maintain the authority, universality, and effectiveness of the international non-proliferation regime, effectively avoid non-state actors, especially terrorists, from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and related materials and technologies,” said the envoy.

“Thirdly, we must strengthen state responsibility and promote pragmatic cooperation,” he said, noting that the primary responsibility for non-proliferation “should be borne by governments.” “All countries should deepen non-proliferation and pragmatic cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual respect, focus on meeting the international system requirements of developing countries in the field of non-proliferation, and help developing countries strengthen their capacity building,” Wu added. “Fourth, the committee should adhere to the principle of consensus and ensure the primacy of member states in non-proliferation efforts,” he noted.

[http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/20/c\\_137908176.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/20/c_137908176.htm)

## **CNNC plans to build nation’s first floating nuclear plant this year**

*Leng Shumei, Global Times, March 20, 2019*

China will start the construction of its first floating nuclear power plant within this year, Luo Qi, head of the Nuclear Power Institute (NPI) of China confirmed with Global Times on Wednesday. A floating nuclear power plant is a marine platform equipped with scaled-down nuclear reactors, which can provide electricity and heat to areas with difficult access, such as remote areas, islands and offshore oil and gas platforms, according to Luo. Luo noted that the floating nuclear platform does not take up a lot of space, will not be affected by earthquakes and will create no pollution. The NPI is affiliated with the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC).

Gu Jun, the general manager of CNNC, previously told the Global Times that the corporation is in preparation for a floating nuclear power plant off the coast of East China’s Shandong Province. Gu did not reveal further details of the project, saying that information including the volume of investment is still unknown. The Qilu Evening News based in Jinan, Shandong, reported in November 2018 that the first floating nuclear power platform of a CNNC project will cost 14 billion yuan (\$2.1 billion), and will be put into use in 2021.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1142865.shtml>

## **Chinese ambassador issues veiled warning to Britain against engaging in ‘gunboat diplomacy’**

*Kinling Lo, South China Morning Post, March 22, 2019*

An article written by China’s ambassador to Britain about Western nations’ use of “gunboat diplomacy” should serve as a warning to London regarding its diplomatic strategy towards Beijing as it prepares to leave the European Union, analysts said. Titled “‘Gunboat diplomacy’ does not promote peace”, the commentary by Liu Xiaoming was published on Wednesday by The Daily Telegraph and

came after British Defence Minister Gavin Williamson said last month that Britain planned to send its new aircraft carrier to the Pacific once it had been commissioned.

“Asserting their nation’s right to freedom of navigation has long been an excuse for certain Western politicians to flex their military muscle by sending naval vessels to the South China Sea,” Liu said in the article, without naming any specific countries. “These moves flagrantly infringe upon China’s sovereignty and maritime rights, deliberately drive a wedge between China and its neighbours, and exacerbate regional tensions,” he said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3002932/chinese-ambassador-issues-veiled-warning-britain-against>

### **China completes testing on self-developed CF3 nuclear fuel assembly** *Global Times, March 24, 2019*

The CF3 nuclear fuel assembly, developed by a Chinese enterprise for the use of heat supplies, marks significant technological progress in the sector, industry analysts told the Global Times.

China has completed the testing of its domestically developed CF3 nuclear fuel assembly, whose performance met international standards for fuel of similar types, according to a statement from China National Nuclear Corp (CNNC), the developer, on Thursday. The CF3 nuclear fuel assembly, designed for use in pressurized water reactors, passed long-cycle irradiation tests in unit 2 of the Qinshan nuclear power station, located in East China’s Zhejiang Province, according to the statement.

CNNC has been expanding nuclear industry cooperation with overseas countries in recent years. In 2016, the company was discussing nuclear power cooperation and nuclear industrial chain cooperation with up to 20 countries including Britain, France and Brazil, according to a report by cnr.cn in January 2016. China is building two Hualong One reactors in Pakistan and making “smooth progress,” reported ce.cn

on March 4, citing Wang Shoujun, former chairman of CNNC.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1143250.shtml>

### **Xi’s France visit set to boost cooperation** *Louise Ho, Global Times, March 25, 2019*

When Macron met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in January at Élysée, he announced that he wanted to make use of the opportunity provided by the 55th anniversary to bolster cooperation with China in areas related to trade and investment, nuclear energy, and aviation.

Media has already reported that during Xi’s visit, China could sign up to purchase more airliners from Airbus, a major competitor of Boeing.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1143335.shtml>

### **Xi’s visit conveys peaceful intent** *Cao Siqi in Paris and Zhang Han, Global Times, March 25, 2019*

Chinese analysts said Xi’s visit to France highlights the stability and continuity of bilateral relations and shows China’s efforts to convey to the European Union its peaceful intent that China’s economic and political policies are based on its domestic situation and that China is willing to conduct sincere negotiations and dialogue on divergences between China and Europe.

Xi noted that France is the first major Western country to establish official diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China. France, he added, is also the first country to form a strategic partnership and conduct strategic dialogue with China and the first to carry out civilian nuclear energy cooperation with China.

Xi called on the two countries to constantly explore new fields of cooperation, nurture new growth areas for cooperation, and speed up the implementation of the Belt

and Road Initiative and third-party cooperation projects that have been agreed on, Xinhua reported. Analysts noted that China and France have the potential for future cooperation in nuclear energy and aerospace. China-France Oceanography Satellite, known as the CFOSat, took off on October 29, 2018 and gathered a large amount of marine environmental data.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1143413.shtml>

### **December construction start for Chinese SMR, *World Nuclear News*, March 25, 2019**

According to Chinese publication Nuclear World, first concrete is to be poured on 31 December. Construction is expected to take 65 months, with the 125 MWe unit expected to start up by 31 May 2025, subject to relevant governmental approvals.

The ACP100 was identified as a 'key project' in China's 12th Five-Year Plan, and is developed from the larger ACP1000 pressurised water reactor (PWR). The design, which has 57 fuel assemblies and integral steam generators, incorporates passive safety features and will be installed underground. China in 2016 announced plans to build a demonstration floating nuclear power plant based on the ACP100S variant of the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) design.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/December-construction-start-for-Chinese-SMR?feed=feed>

### **China, France sign US\$45 billion of deals including Airbus order, *South China Morning Post* Shi Jiangtao, *South China Morning Post*, March 26, 2019**

French President Emmanuel Macron calls for a 'strong Europe-China partnership' despite his criticism of Italy endorsing the belt and road scheme. Chinese leader Xi Jinping describes bilateral ties as 'sound and stable' and oversaw with Macron the signing of 15 business deals totalling about •40 billion (US\$45 billion), including an order for 300 Airbus planes.

The larger-than-expected aircraft deal, estimated at •30 billion at catalogue prices, matched an order for 300 Boeing planes when US President Donald Trump visited Beijing in November 2017.

Other deals ranged from the renewable energy sector to shipping and banking as well as Beijing's agreement to lift an embargo on French poultry.

A letter of intent on space collaboration was also signed, allowing Paris to send French scientific instruments to China's lunar mission Chang'e 6 scheduled for around 2023, according to the French space agency CNES.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3003384/china-france-sign-us45-billion-deals-including-airbus-order>

### **Cold war is back: Steve Bannon helps revive US committee to target 'aggressive totalitarian foe' China *Wendy Wu, South China Morning Post*, March 26, 2019**

Former White House strategist among founders of a new version of group whose past incarnations focused on the Soviet Union. Members say China poses 'existential and ideological threat to the United States and the idea of freedom. A group of Washington policy advisers and former US government officials including Steve Bannon have revived a cold war-era advocacy organisation to take aim at China, which it called "an aggressive totalitarian foe". The Committee on the Present Danger: China, or CPDC, will be launched to facilitate "public education and advocacy against the full array of conventional and non-conventional dangers" posed by the ruling Chinese Communist Party, the group said in an announcement on Monday.

"China's arsenal for global supremacy includes economic, informational, political and military warfare," read a statement by James Fanell, a former US Navy intelligence official focusing on Pacific security affairs. The US "has witnessed

already China's expansion into the vacuum of a diminishing US presence in East Asia", he said. Fanell argued that Washington needed to regain a military deterrence position in the Indo-Pacific. "We already have slipped," he said. "If we fall any further, we may not recover." Sasha Gong, also a member of the new CPD, said China was "waging an ideological war" against the US, which was "losing ground" and should consider it "as urgent as military defence". "We are disarming ourselves; meanwhile Chinese are taking our ground, broadcasting here, taking our people and winning hearts and minds," said Gong, adding that the US' response to China's aggression was "very inadequate".

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3003283/cold-war-back-steve-bannon-helps-revive-us-committee-target>

### **Xi's visit sets tone for China-EU relations** *Liu Caiyu and Yang Sheng,*

*Global Times, March 27, 2019*

Chinese President Xi Jinping returned to Beijing on Wednesday after his visit to Europe, bringing a fruitful outcome and the visit assures the cooperative trend of China-EU relations, analysts noted. The outcome of Xi's visit to Europe is "beyond expectations" and extremely "practical" in terms of deepening China-Europe relations. The visit sets the tone for the future of the relations, Chinese analysts noted on Wednesday.

At the conclusion of Xi's visit, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi told reporters in Paris that through the visit, the Chinese president has shown Europe and the world that China is standing on the right side of history, and will continue to promote China-EU relations, safeguard multilateralism and guide the reform of global governance, the Xinhua News Agency reported on Wednesday.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1143692.shtml>

### **China launches widespread safety probe after deadly chemical blast**

*David Stanway, Reuters, March 28, 2019*

China will launch a month-long, nationwide inspection campaign into

hazardous chemicals, mines, transportation and fire safety, the country's safety watchdog said, following a deadly pesticide plant blast that killed 78 people last week. The Ministry of Emergency Management said in a notice late on Wednesday authorities needed to "deeply absorb" the lessons of the explosion at the chemical park in the city of Yancheng in eastern China's Jiangsu province.

The blast a week ago occurred at a plant owned by the Tianjiayi Chemical Co, which produces more than 30 organic chemical compounds. State media said the company had a history of safety violations and had been punished repeatedly.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-blast-safety/china-launches-widespread-safety-probe-after-deadly-chemical-blast-idUSKCN1R82QM>

## **C. Pakistan**

### **Pakistan's Long, Controversial Love Affair with the F-16 Fighting Falcon** *Sebastien Roblin, National Interest, March 16, 2019*

During an aerial skirmish on February 27, 2019, an Indian Air Force MiG-21 Bison was shot down by a radar-guided missile. The Pakistani Air Force (PAF) claims the kill was scored by a JF-17 Thunder, a domestically-built fighter built with Chinese assistance.

However, India subsequently revealed fragments of an AIM-120C-5 missile—a U.S.-built weapon only compatible with the American-built F-16s in PAF service. Pakistan has incentives to deny the use of F-16s, as secret end-user agreements may restrict the aircraft's use against India—despite that being an obvious application of the venerable fourth-generation jet. India, meanwhile, claims the MiG-21's pilot managed to shoot down an F-16.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/pakistan%E2%80%99s-long-controversial-love-affair-f-16-fighting-falcon-47682>

### **What Message Does the Latest India-Pakistan Crisis Send to Militants in Kashmir?** *Basharat Ali, The Diplomat, March 19, 2019*

On February 14, a 20-year-old Kashmiri militant, Adil Ahmad Dar, rammed an SUV full of explosives into an Indian paramilitary convoy truck in Pulwama, Kashmir, killing himself and more than 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel. The attack in Pulwama was the deadliest against Indian forces in the three decades of armed conflict in Kashmir. In an immediate response to the suicide attack, the Indian government accused Pakistan of supporting Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), the group that had taken responsibility for the attack. Soon thereafter, India carried out aerial strikes across the international border inside Pakistani territory, the details of which are still unclear and contested.

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/what-message-does-the-latest-india-pakistan-crisis-send-to-militants-in-kashmir/>

### **US threatened by Pakistani nuclear program proliferation** *Daily Times, March 19, 2019*

Washington: According US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo the proliferation Pakistan's nuclear program is among the five major threats that the US perceives today

Mike Pompeo while giving an interview on a radio program elaborated on these threats, he said, "It's the threat that we've talked about today from China, the nuclear proliferation risk that extends from Pakistan, through all those folks who have these weapon systems places like North Korea where they can sell these weapons. I think I'm at five already but I could give you a whole list of threats that I think we can effect change on in a way that will really make a difference for the security of the American people."

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/367070/us-threatened-by-pakistani-nuclear-program-proliferation/>

### **Pakistan sees nuclear weapons only as deterrence tool to prevent actual wars** *Daily Pakistan, March 25, 2019*

Pakistan has ruled out the possibility of using its nuclear weapons and sees them as more of deterrence tool to prevent actual wars, the head of Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in an interview yesterday. The remarks come after tensions escalated between Pakistan and India over the past weeks arousing concerns that the two nuclear powers may in fact be on the brink of war.

"Since we have gone overtly nuclear, as India also, in 1998, our stance is that this capability eliminates the possibility of conventional war between the two states. So that is to say, this is a weapon of deterrence and a political choice.

<https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/headline/pakistan-sees-nuclear-weapons-only-as-deterrence-tool-to-prevent-actual-wars/>

### **ASAT launch: Pakistan urges no militarization of space** *Economic Times, March 27, 2019*

Pakistan issued a call against military threats in outer space on Wednesday, hours after India said it had shot down one of its own satellites in a demonstration of its growing power in space. "Space is the common heritage of mankind and every nation has the responsibility to avoid actions which can lead to the militarization of this arena," Pakistan's foreign ministry said in a statement.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/asat-launch-pakistan-urges-no-militarization-of-space/videoshow/68602436.cms>

### **Nuclear proliferation a top national security concern for US: State Department** *Anwar Iqbal, Dawn, March 27, 2019*

The US State Department on Tuesday said that nuclear proliferation is a top national security concern for Washington, days after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

allegedly said that Pakistan's nuclear programme is among the five biggest threats to America's national security.

Asked to comment on the secretary's statement at a Tuesday afternoon news briefing, the State Department's Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino said: "Nuclear proliferation is one of the very first national security concerns articulated in our National Security Strategy. It's at the very top of the list."

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1472195>

**PM Imran performs ground breaking of Quetta-Zhob Road, Balochistan Health Complex** *The News International, March 29, 2019*

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday performed ground breaking of joint venture of Pakistan Army and Govt of Balochistan mega projects including state of the art Cardiac Centre and Quetta - Zhob Road (N-50 Motorway). Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa and Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Jam Kamal accompanied PM during earth breaking ceremony.

Pakistan Army in collaboration with Government of Balochistan has planned construction of a state of art Balochistan Health Complex at Quetta as part of Khushal Balochistan Programme for providing best medical facility for local population under UPAP projects sponsored by United Arab Emirates.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/450559-pm-imran-performs-ground-breaking-of-quetta-zhob-road-balochistan-health-complex>

**Deterrence and South Asia** *Munawar Mahar, The News International, March 31, 2019*

Adil Ahmed Dar triggered an unintended and unprecedented chain reaction in the history of the two nuclear-armed states in South Asia. The Indian air raid deep into Pakistani territory and the reaction by the latter resulted in the first-ever direct air skirmish between the two nuclear states since the advent of the nuclear age in the last century.

It is definitely an unprecedented and alarming development. Arguably, the recent military adventurism between the two arch-rivals has fundamentally challenged the conventional logic of nuclear deterrence. The much-trumpeted deterrence value of nukes stands greatly discredited in the context of Pakistan and India whose direct air clash dangerously defied the cardinal principles of nuclear deterrence.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/451129-deterrence-and-south-asia>

**D. USA**

**U.S. and Brazil may partner on small nuclear reactors** *Lisandra Paraguassu, Reuters, March 16, 2019*

Brazil and the United States could work together to build small nuclear reactors, Brazil's mines and energy minister told Reuters on Friday, adding that the South American nation is also ready to open uranium mining to foreigners.

Brazil is preparing legislation that would clear the way for both private and foreign investment in prospecting and mining for uranium in the country, Minister Bento Albuquerque said in an interview. There is a draft of the legislation, but a final version must be negotiated with Congress, he said.

"We have to resolve internally the issue of uranium exploration that today is a monopoly of the state and is in the hands of Nuclear Industries of Brazil," Albuquerque said, referring to the state firm running the country's uranium mines.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-brazil-energy/us-and-brazil-may-partner-on-small-nuclear-reactors-idUSKCN1QW2MI>

**The US is losing the nuclear energy export race to China and Russia. Here's the Trump team's plan to turn the tide** *Tom Di Christopher, CNBC, March 21, 2019*

The Trump administration is preparing a new push to help American companies compete in the race to build the next

generation of nuclear power plants around the world – a competition the U.S. is currently losing.

In doing so, the administration also aims to push back on the growing dominance of Russia and China in the space, preventing them from expanding their international influence by forging long-lasting nuclear ties with foreign powers.

The State Department plans to expand cooperation with countries pursuing atomic energy long before those nations ever purchase a nuclear reactor. By facilitating early stage talks, the U.S. intends to put American companies first in line to build tomorrow's fleet of nuclear power plants overseas.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/21/trump-aims-to-beat-china-and-russia-in-nuclear-energy-export-race.html>

**US sanctions Iran's nuclear research unit, urges Tehran to negotiate** *Lesley Wroughton, David Brunnstrom, Reuters, March 22, 2019*

The United States on Friday imposed sanctions on 14 people and 17 entities connected to an Iranian research organization it said had played a central role in the country's past nuclear weapons effort and which remains active.

Among those designated for sanctions was the Shahid Karimi group, which works on missile and explosive-related projects for Iran's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research, and four associated individuals, the U.S. Treasury Department said in a Statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-usa/us-sanctions-irans-nuclear-research-unit-urges-tehran-to-negotiate-idUSKCN1R31QP>

**U.S. nuclear generation peaked in 2018, says EIA** *World Nuclear News, March 22, 2019*

US nuclear power plants achieved their highest level of generation ever in 2018, despite the closure of several plants since the previous peak, according to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA).

Only one new plant - the Tennessee Valley Authority's 1.2 GWe Watts Bar 2 - has come online in the USA since 2010, the EIA said. It recorded 2.0 GW of thermal uprates to nuclear power plants between 2010 and 2018, which it described as "nearly the equivalent" of adding two new reactors similar to Watts Bar 2. Seven plants with a combined capacity of 5.3 GWe have retired since 2013. A total of 98 reactors at 60 plants were in operation at the beginning of 2018.

Georgia Power's Vogtle 3 and 4 - due to come online in 2021 and 2022 - will add 2.2 GWe of additional power, but this will not offset the capacity that is expected to retire over the next seven years based on announced retirements, the EIA said. Two plants - Pilgrim in Massachusetts and Three Mile Island - are expected to retire this year, and the closure of a total of twelve reactors by 2025 will see US nuclear capacity fall by 10.5 GWe.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/US-nuclear-generation-peaked-in-2018-EIA>

**Trump decides against more North Korea sanctions at this time:**

**source** *Roberta Rampton, Reuters, March 22, 2019*

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday said he has decided against imposing new large-scale sanctions on North Korea in a confusing tweet that seemed to imply he was reversing measures against two Chinese shipping companies, a U.S. administration source familiar with the matter said.

But there were no new U.S. sanctions on North Korea announced on Friday, leading news organizations, lawmakers and experts to believe Trump was referring to the Treasury's blacklisting on Thursday of two Chinese shipping companies that it said helped North Korea evade sanctions over its nuclear weapons program.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-sanctions/trump-reverses-first-north-korea-sanctions-since-failed-summit-after-one-day-idUSKCN1R32AF>

## U.S. warns it can act against people helping Iran evade energy sanctions

*Reuters, March 22, 2019*

The United States reserves the right to take action against any person helping Iran evade U.S. sanctions on energy shipments, a State Department official said on Friday.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, was responding to a request for comment on a Reuters report this week that at least two tankers have sent Iranian fuel oil to Asia in recent months despite U.S. sanctions against such shipments.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-usa-oil/us-warns-it-can-act-against-people-helping-iran-evade-energy-sanctions-idUSKCN1R321P>

## Perry: Vogtle project is 'critically important'

*World Nuclear News, March 22, 2019*

The US Department of Energy (DOE) has finalised further federal loan guarantees of USD3.7 billion for the continued construction of Vogtle units 3 and 4, Energy Secretary Rick Perry announced today during a visit to the construction site near Waynesboro, Georgia.

The loan guarantees issued by the DOE are: up to USD1.67 billion for Georgia Power, which owns 45.7% of the units; up to USD1.6 billion to Oglethorpe Power Corporation, which owns 30%; and up to USD415 million to three subsidiaries of the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG Power), which owns 22.7%. The department had previously announced conditional commitments for the additional loan guarantees in September 2017. The DOE will now guarantee a total of up to USD12 billion in loans for the project, including existing guarantees of up to USD8.3 billion in loans to GPC, OPC, and the MEAG Power subsidiaries provided in 2014 and 2015.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Perry-Vogtle-project-is-critically-important>

## U.S finalizes \$3.7 billion loan for Vogtle nuclear power plant

*Timothy Gardner, Reuters, March 22, 2019*

The U.S. Energy Department on Friday finalized up to \$3.7 billion in loan guarantees to finance the construction of two reactors at the delayed Vogtle nuclear power plant in Georgia, tapping a program zeroed out in President Donald Trump's latest budget.

The financing for Vogtle, the first new nuclear power plant to be licensed and begin construction in the United States in more than three decades, was first announced in 2017. The decision brings the federal government's total in loan guarantees for Vogtle to \$12 billion, some of which was provided in 2014 and 2015, during the administration of President Barack Obama.

Trump's budgets, including the one submitted earlier this month to Congress, have called for axing the Department of Energy's loan guarantee program that has supported numerous renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. But the previous requests never became law and this one has less of a chance with the takeover of the House of Representatives by Democrats in last year's elections.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-nuclearpower-vogtle/u-s-finalizes-3-7-billion-loan-for-vogtle-nuclear-power-plant-idUSKCN1R31X9>

## South Korean officials to press for Iran sanctions waiver in United States

*Reuters, March 25, 2019*

South Korean government officials are expected to press for extending a sanctions waiver on Iran's petroleum exports that expires in May on a visit to Washington this week.

South Korea's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs Yoon Kang-hyun and other leaders will meet with U.S. State Department officials on Wednesday and Thursday to discuss the waiver issued in November to keep buying Iranian oil in exchange for having reduced such

purchases, the Seoul government said in a news release on Monday.

The Trump administration has unilaterally reimposed sanctions on Iran's oil exports, the lifeblood of its economy, as it seeks to curb Tehran's nuclear and missile ambitions and its influence Syria and other countries in the Middle East.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-usa-southkorea/south-korean-officials-to-press-for-iran-sanction-waiver-in-u-s-idUSKCN1R61Z0>

### **Green New Deal dies in Senate and Democrats helped kill it** *USA Today, March 26, 2019*

The Green New Deal, Democrats' aspirational proposal to confront climate change and address social justice, died Tuesday in the Senate.

Congressional Democrats viewed the effort by Republicans – who ridicule the plan as socialist fantasy – to bring the ambitious plan to the floor as little more than a political ploy to divide Democrats rather than a serious effort to confront an impending planetary crisis.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/03/26/green-new-deal-mitch-mcconnell-may-hold-vote-early-week/3269302002/>

### **U.S. sanctions firms accused of helping fund Iran's Revolutionary Guards** *Lesley Wroughton, Reuters, March 26, 2019*

The United States on Tuesday imposed fresh sanctions on a network of companies and people in Iran, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates it said was helping to raise billions of dollars to fund the operations of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards.

The U.S. Treasury blacklisted 25 people and organizations, including a clutch of front companies based in the three countries, that were working on behalf of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and Iran's defense ministry to raise money for their activities.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-iran-sanctions/u-s-sanctions-firms-accused-of-helping-fund-irans-revolutionary-guards-idINKCN1R71RL>

### **U.S. Intelligence: Russia's Nuclear-Capable 'Poseidon' Underwater Drone Ready for Service by 2027** *Franz-Stefan Gady, The Diplomat, March 26, 2019*

The nuclear-capable underwater drone "Poseidon," alternatively referred to as an unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV), autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV), or simply an intercontinental-range, nuclear autonomous torpedo, is expected to enter service with the Russian Navy by 2027, sources familiar with a U.S. intelligence assessment told CNBC this month.

Additionally, the U.S. intelligence assessment reportedly notes that the 11<sup>th</sup> and last-known test of the Poseidon underwater drone was carried out in November 2018. U.S. intelligence also posits that the Poseidon's nuclear propulsion system has not been tested to date, contradicting Russian statements that sea trials of the new weapon system, including tests of the propulsion system, are currently ongoing.

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/us-intelligence-russias-nuclear-capable-poseidon-underwater-drone-ready-for-service-by-2027/>

### **Perry defends plan for Nevada nuclear-waste storage site** *Ellen Knickmeyer, AP News, March 27, 2019*

Energy Secretary Rick Perry on Tuesday defended the Trump administration's plans to collect and store nuclear waste from around the country in a site northwest of Las Vegas, saying the current system of scattered storage sites in dozens of states was unacceptable.

Perry held up a map at a budget hearing before a House Appropriations subcommittee, showing lawmakers what he said were the more than three dozen states currently housing disposal sites for spent nuclear fuel.

<https://www.apnews.com/7702c190230e42c295807817537311e8>

## U.S. approves secret nuclear power work for Saudi Arabia

*Al Jazeera, March 28, 2019*

The US administration has reportedly authorized US companies to sell nuclear power technology to Saudi Arabia. US Energy Secretary Rick Perry has approved six secret authorisations for companies to sell nuclear power technology and assistance to Saudi Arabia, according to a copy of a document seen by the Reuters news agency.

The Trump administration has quietly pursued a wider deal on sharing US nuclear power technology with Saudi Arabia, which aims to build at least two nuclear power plants.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/ap-proves-secret-nuclear-power-work-saudi-arabia-190328053752802.html>

## Action needed to keep US nuclear competitive - Korsnick

*World Nuclear News, March 28, 2019*

US nuclear plants are performing better than ever before - but now is the time to act to ensure the benefits that nuclear energy provides are protected, Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) president and CEO Maria Korsnick said in her 2019 State of the Industry address.

Nuclear is the largest source of clean energy in the USA, and the nation's nuclear plants are working more efficiently than ever, Korsnick said, adding they are "economic engines" for the communities they serve. In addition to new projects, such as the Vogtle units under construction in Georgia, she highlighted the application of developments such as digital technology, 3D printers, big-data analytics, and artificial intelligence to upgrade existing plants for extended operation.

<http://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Action-needed-to-keep-US-nuclear-competitive-Korsn>

## U.S. energy secretary unsure if Saudi nuclear approvals came after Khashoggi killing

*Timothy Gardner, Reuters, March 29, 2019*

U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry told lawmakers on Thursday he did not know whether any of the approvals he authorized

for U.S. companies to sell nuclear power technology to Saudi Arabia were made after the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October last year.

The Department of Energy issued a statement later on Thursday clarifying that it had issued seven such approvals for companies wishing to participate in Saudi Arabia's civilian nuclear power program, but pointed out that they do not permit the transfer of "nuclear material, equipment or components."

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-saudi-nuclearpower-perry/u-s-energy-secretary-unsure-if-saudi-nuclear-approvals-came-after-khashoggi-killing-idINKCN1R92LH?il=0>

## Bill Gates 'thrilled' by legislative boost for nuclear

*World Nuclear News, March 29, 2019*

The Nuclear Energy Leadership Act (NELA), bipartisan draft legislation which aims to accelerate the development of advanced nuclear technologies and re-establish US leadership in nuclear energy has been re-introduced to the US Senate.

NELA was submitted on 27 March by a group of 15 senators led by Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. It was previously introduced to the Senate in September 2018 and was one of several bipartisan bills supporting advanced nuclear innovation to be considered by the 115th US Congress, which ended on 2 January. One of those bills - the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernisation Act, which modernises US nuclear regulation and supports the establishment of a licensing framework for next-generation advanced reactors - became law on 14 January.

<http://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Bill-Gates-thrilled-by-legislative-boost-for-nucle>

## E. Russia

## Russia & China sign agreement on construction of 2 power units at Tianwan nuclear power plant

*Russian Times, March 17, 2019*

Russian and Chinese state nuclear corporations have signed a general

contract on construction of the seventh and eighth power units at the Tianwan Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), the biggest joint NPP project between the two countries.

The document was signed by the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) and Russian Rosatom's engineering division in Beijing earlier this month. Apart from the construction of two power units at the nuclear plant in China's Jiangsu province, the parties also agreed on the basic design of the third and fourth units of Xudabao NPP in Liaoning province, the Russian state-run corporation announced in a statement on March 11.

<https://www.rt.com/business/454053-russia-china-nuclear-plant-units/>

### **Russia decides to deploy nuclear-capable strategic bombers to Crimea: RIA** *Reuters, March 18, 2019*

Russia has decided to deploy nuclear-capable Tupolev Tu-22M3 strategic bombers to the Crimean peninsula in response to the U.S. rolling out missile defense systems in Romania, the RIA news agency cited a senior Russian lawmaker as saying on Monday.

Russia plans to station the bombers at the Gvardeyskoye air base in Crimea, Viktor Bondarev, head of the upper house of parliament's defense and security committee, was quoted as saying.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-crimea-bombers/russia-decides-to-deploy-nuclear-capable-strategic-bombers-to-crimea-ria-idUSKCN1QZ1WV>

### **Russia deploys nuclear bombers to Crimea after US rolls out missile defence systems on Putin's doorstep**

*Jon Lockett, The Sun, March 20, 2019*

The Kremlin is to station Tu-22M3 bombers at Gvardeyskoye air base - within a hour's striking distance of the US-run NATO base in Romania

Moscow's defence ministry had earlier asked President Trump to destroy his MK-41 missile defence systems to comply with a

historic nuclear pact.

However the US-led NATO alliance, who took control of the system in 2016, insists it is needed to defend against rogue states and terror groups.

But the scheme has angered Russia, incensed by the show of force by its former Cold War rival in what was once communist Eastern Europe

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8678345/russia-nuclear-bombers-crimea-donald-trump-putin/>

### **Russian strategic Akula-class subs can be rearmed to carry Kalibr cruise missiles – expert** *TASS News Agency, March 20, 2019*

The world's largest Project 941 'Akula' strategic nuclear-powered submarines can be rearmed to carry at least 200 Kalibr cruise missiles each, former First Deputy Chief of the Russian Navy's Main Staff Vice-Admiral Oleg Burtsev told TASS on Wednesday.

Today two Akula-class submarines, the Arkhangelsk and the Severstal, both of which carried ballistic missiles, have been withdrawn from the Navy's structure and are staying in the dock of the Zvyozdochka Ship Repair Center in Severodvinsk slated for their subsequent disposal.

<http://tass.com/defense/1049551>

### **Russian nuclear-powered container ship sets off for 1st voyage with Arctic LNG cargo**

*TASS News Agency, March 21, 2019*

The nuclear-powered container ship Sevmorput has departed from the port of Arkhangelsk in north Russia to embark on its first voyage to deliver cargo for the Arctic LNG-2 (Liquefied Natural Gas-2) project, the press office of the Rosatomflot nuclear-powered fleet operator said on Thursday.

"On March 21, the nuclear-powered container ship Sevmorput left the sea port

of Arkhangelsk towards the Gydan Peninsula. There are over 25,000 freight items of heterogeneous general cargo for the Arctic LNG-2 project,”

<http://tass.com/economy/1049846>

### **Making Nuclear Weapons Menacing Again** *Michael T. Klare, The Nation, March 21, 2019*

There is no higher priority for national defense,” the Pentagon declared last year, than for the United States to “replace its strategic nuclear triad and sustain the warheads it carries.” In plain English, this means spending an estimated \$1.7 trillion to rebuild every component of the US nuclear arsenal: the entire three-legged strategic “triad” of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and long-range bombers. Military officials claim the existing force has become obsolete and inflexible, and thus unable to deter potential adversaries. In order to eliminate any doubt that America has the will and the capacity to wreak catastrophic retribution, they argue, we need to replace our current atomic weapons with even more terrifying ones. “To remain effective [as a deterrent force],” explained then-Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis in February 2018, “we must recapitalize our Cold War legacy nuclear forces.”

<https://www.thenation.com/article/us-nuclear-arsenal-triad/>

### **Russian air force planes land in Venezuela carrying troops: reports**

*Reuters, March 24, 2019*

Two Russian air force planes landed at Venezuela’s main airport on Saturday carrying a Russian defense official and nearly 100 troops, according to media reports, amid strengthening ties between Caracas and Moscow.

A flight-tracking website showed that two planes left from a Russian military airport bound for Caracas on Friday, and another flight-tracking site showed that one plane left Caracas on Sunday.

That comes three months after the two nations held military exercises on Venezuelan soil that President Nicolas Maduro called a sign of strengthening relations, but which Washington criticized as Russian encroachment in the region.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics/russian-air-force-planes-land-in-venezuela-carrying-troops-report-idUSKCN1R50NB>

### **Novovoronezh II-2 nears physical start-up** *World Nuclear News, March 25, 2019*

Unit 2 of the Novovoronezh II nuclear power plant in southwest Russia has been brought to minimum controlled power level, Rosenergoatom, the operator subsidiary of state nuclear corporation Rosatom, announced today. The milestone, which was completed on 22 March, marks the final stage in the physical start-up of the VVER-1200 reactor.

Novovoronezh II-2 will be the third VVER-1200 to be commissioned, following Novovoronezh II-1 and Leningrad II-1, which were launched in 2016 and 2017, respectively. The minimum controlled power level is reached when neutron flux is recorded in a reactor working at a level sufficient to sustain a fission chain reaction.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Novovoronezh-II-2-completes-physical-start-up>

### **Russia’s nuclear-armed underwater drone may be ready for war in eight years** *Amanda Macias, CNBC, March 25, 2019*

*Macias, CNBC, March 25, 2019*

An underwater drone armed with a nuclear warhead is slated to join Russia’s arsenal no earlier than 2027, people familiar with a U.S. intelligence assessment told CNBC. In November, the Kremlin carried out the 11<sup>th</sup> and last-known test of the nuclear-powered weapon, dubbed “Poseidon,” which can navigate autonomously and travel continuously after launching from a submarine. While

the strategic nuclear weapon is expected to join the Kremlin's arsenal as early as eight years from now, the Russians have yet to successfully test the system's nuclear propulsion heart, which guarantees the device's everlasting power.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/25/russias-nuclear-armed-underwater-drone-may-be-ready-for-war-in-2027.html>

### **US says it won't rule out nuclear first strike, because allies wouldn't trust it otherwise,** *Russian Times,*

*March 29, 2019*

A Pentagon official has said that the US will retain the right to carry out a nuclear strike in response to a conventional attack. A 'no-first-use' policy would erode US allies' belief that they are protected, he said.

Washington has no plans to reverse its policy of "no first use" of nukes, which means it can bomb its adversaries with nuclear weapons under "extreme circumstances," Deputy Undersecretary of Defense David Trachtenberg said in his prepared remarks to the Senate Armed Service Committee hearing on Thursday.

Trachtenberg claimed that if the US changes its take on the issue, which he described as "constructive ambiguity," it "would undermine US extended deterrence and damage the health of our alliances because it would call into question the assurance that the United States would come to the defense of allies in extreme circumstances." This uncertainty might prompt these countries to arm themselves with nuclear weapons.

<https://www.rt.com/news/455022-strike-preemptive-nuclear-pentagon/>

### **World War 3 THREAT: US deploy nuclear bombers after WARNING Russia over Venezuela troops** *Oli*

*Smith, The Express, March 30, 2019*

There is a growing fear of military conflict between Russia and the US, after US National Security Advisor John Bolton attacked Russia's continued military presence in Venezuela as a "direct threat"

to international peace. The hawkish advisor to US President Donald Trump criticised the Russia after the rival superpower admitted that it had sent "specialists" to Venezuela under a military cooperation deal. Mr Bolton warned nations "external to the Western Hemisphere" against deploying military assets to Venezuela, less than a week after Russian troops and planes landed at an airport near Caracas.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1107574/World-War-3-threat-Russia-US-Trump-Putin-Venezuela>

### **Russia and China Forced America's Hand on the INF Treaty**

*Ramon Marks, National Interest,*

*March 31, 2019*

In 2017, the Chinese People's Liberation Army ("PLA") announced plans to bring down its 2.3 million strong forces below 1 million with the Army's share falling below 50 percent. Then last year the PLA slashed three-hundred-thousand ground troops from its rolls and announced that more than half of all noncombat positions had been eliminated. On top of that, it claims to have reduced its officer rolls by thirty percent.

China is not disarming. Instead, the PLA has pursued an ambitious program to be able to fight future, not past wars. Instead, it has organized cyber and missile commands and is significantly modernizing and strengthening its Air Force and Navy.

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/russia-and-china-forced-americas-hand-inf-treaty-49577>

## **WEST ASIA**

### ***F. Iran***

### **Iran's mechanism for INSTEX to be set up soon: CBI governor** *Tehran*

*Times, March 16, 2019*

The official also stressed that establishment of this mechanism and related company does not at all mean that Iran will wait for Europe to implement INSTEX, saying, "We will continue our strategy of finance

and trade through the special methods that we have already planned to conduct trade under the sanctions, especially with our neighbors and other trade partners." Tasnim news agency reported.

Hemmati went on to say, "My colleagues had some negotiations with the representatives of three European countries and also the director of INSTEX at the place of CBI last week and explained the Iranian mechanism completely for them; now we are expecting the practical approach to be adopted by the European side.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/434145/Iran-s-mechanism-for-INSTEX-to-be-set-up-soon-CBI-governor>

### **Moscow says Iran rigorously adhering to JCPOA** *Tehran Times*, March 16, 2019

Speaking during a press briefing in Moscow, Zakharova said, "Iran strictly complies with all relevant requirements (under the JCPOA) and this is regularly confirmed by the IAEA." "Nuclear activities in this country are under the constant control of the agency and are an example of transparency," she added, Tasnim reported.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/434163/Moscow-says-Iran-rigorously-adhering-to-JCPOA>

### **Iran to unveil 112 new nuclear achievements in April** *Tehran Times*, March 18, 2019

Speaking at a press conference in Tehran on Saturday, Behrouz Kamalvandi described the achievements as "very important" that would cover various fields such as exploration, extraction, fuel cycle, power plants, science and technology as well as laser. The achievements would be unveiled on April 9 which Iran celebrates as National Nuclear Technology Day.

"The unveiling of these achievements under the country's current circumstances will convey this message to enemies that the Iranian nation has resisted economic sanctions and has turned threats into opportunities," Kamalvandi said. He said the

U.S. has waged a "full economic war" against Iran and currently resorts to every ploy to pressure Tehran. "In this war, America puts pressure on all of its allies and non-allies to stop their economic relations with Iran. However, the Iranian nation will strongly pass this phase as well," Kamalvandi said optimistically. He said Iran should make utmost use of its capabilities to counter the economic war.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/434183/Iran-to-unveil-112-new-nuclear-achievements-in-April>

### **President: Iran to Take Legal Action Against U.S.** *Kayhan*, March 18, 2019

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that the government would file a legal case in Iran against U.S. officials who imposed sanctions on the country as a precursor to action in international courts. Rouhani said in a speech broadcast live on state television that U.S. sanctions had created difficulties including a weaker rial currency that has fed into higher inflation. The United States reimposed sanctions on Tehran after U.S. President Donald Trump chose last May to abandon Iran's 2015 nuclear accord, negotiated with five other world powers.

Rouhani said he had ordered the ministries of foreign affairs and justice "to file a legal case in Iranian courts against those in America who designed and imposed sanctions on Iran". "These sanctions are crime against humanity," he added. If the Iranian court finds against the U.S. officials, Iran will pursue the case in international courts of justice, the president said. Iranian complaints about sanctions in the international courts have already succeeded. In October, judges at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered the United States to ensure sanctions do not affect humanitarian aid or civil aviation safety.

"The Americans have only one goal: they want to come back to Iran and rule the nation again," Rouhani said, reiterating Tehran's view that U.S. sanctions are

aimed at overthrowing the government and ushering in one more aligned with U.S. policies.

<http://kayhan.ir/en/news/64418/president-iran-to-take-legal-action-against-us>

### **Officials Outline Problems With FATF, INSTEX** *Kayhan, March 18, 2019*

Secretary of Iran's Expediency Council Mohsen Rezaei says the EU needs to guarantee oil purchases from Iran if it wants the Islamic Republic to ratify the bills required by the FATF, the Financial Action Task Force. Two of the four bills that would join Iran to international conventions against money laundering and funding terrorism and ensure transparency of the Islamic Republic's international financial transactions are stuck at the council, which is the arbiter between the Iranian Parliament and the constitutional oversight Guardian Council. The Expediency Council says it might reach a final decision on the bills by April.

Rezaei, one of the council members who opposes the ratification of the bills, said during a visit to Qom that "Europeans did everything to have the FATF bills ratified by Iran, but they failed to understand the council's logical demand for a guarantee" that would ensure the purchase of Iran's oil by Europe.

Rezaei said Europe has refrained from purchasing Iran's oil. "This enemy does not understand the language of diplomacy. It does not respect any commitment. Chairman of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh also said INSTEX does not meet all of Iran's expectations. "Many European countries have still not joined INSTEX. Only Germany, France and UK are following the implementation of INSTEX," he told Mehr news agency. Even those three countries, he said, have shown during the nuclear negotiations with Iran that they maintain "special relations with America."

<http://kayhan.ir/en/news/64413/officials-outline-problems-with-fatf-instex>

### **Mogherini: EU resolute to implement Iran deal** *Tehran Times, March 18, 2019*

"We continue to work hand-in-hand together to ensure the continued implementation of the nuclear agreement with Iran that we together negotiated for long nights and days," Mogherini said at a press conference following the EU-China Strategic Dialogue. She also said the European Union is committed to strengthening cooperation with China, pointing to the nuclear deal as one of the global issues on which "we clearly have cooperated and continue to cooperate."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/434233/Mogherini-EU-resolute-to-implement-Iran-deal>

### **European nations eager to join INSTEX: Belgian official** *Tehran Times, March 18, 2019*

European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are eagerly waiting for the implementation of the INSTEX and the determination of its operational framework. The business adviser, stressed the interest of Belgian companies in maintaining trade ties with Iran, saying, "Currently, a part of the Belgian trade with Iran is being carried out through third parties, but we are looking for the right solutions in the current situation for expansion and development of our bilateral economic relations."

Karbasi, for his part, criticized the delays in the implementation of INSTEX and called for clearance in the mechanism's details. "In the current situation, it is necessary that EU determines the operational details and framework of INSTEX as soon as possible," Karbasi said.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/434222/European-nations-eager-to-join-INSTEX-Belgian-official>

### **Sanctions on Iran have negative effects on energy markets: Novak** *Tehran Times, March 18, 2019*

The official noted that the sanctions volatility is hindering long-term planning

in the market and confusing investment decisions, Reuters reported. Novak said planning even a few months ahead is tough due to possible sanctions-related volatility, adding that the country imposing sanctions – an apparent reference to the United States – was doing so in order to promote its own goods.

In November 2018, The Trump administration reimposed the sanctions which were lifted under the nuclear deal, reached under former President Obama. The sanctions targeted Iran's oil sector, financial transactions and banks, as well as shipping and ship-building industries in order to cut off the country's revenue sources.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/434221/Sanctions-on-Iran-have-negative-effects-on-energy-markets-Novak>

### **Iran's missile program destabilizing Middle East: US** *Saudi Gazette, March 19, 2019*

A senior US arms control official said on Tuesday that Iran's missile program is destabilizing the Middle East and raising the risk of a "regional arms race" through the provision of such weapons to armed groups in Lebanon and Yemen. "Iran's missile program is a key contributor to increased tensions and destabilization in the region, increasing the risk of a regional arms race," Yleem Poblete, Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, said in a speech to the UN-sponsored Conference on Disarmament.

"Iran must immediately cease activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, and halt the proliferation of missiles and missile technology to terror groups and other non-state actors," she said, denouncing Iran's support to the Houthi movement in Yemen and to Hezbollah in Lebanon. She said Iran had provided ballistic missiles to the Houthis that were fired into Saudi Arabia and unmanned aerial systems to Houthi groups that enable strikes against land-based targets in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

"We are committed to aggressively countering Iran's regional proliferation of ballistic missiles and its unlawful arms transfers," she added.

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/article/561570/World/Mena/Irans-missile-program-destabilizing-Middle-East-US>

### **Ayatollah Khamenei: I know no country worse than Saudi kingdom** *Tehran Times, March 21, 2019*

"I do not know any country worse than the Saudi government," the Leader said. "The Saudi government is corrupt, despotic and also oppressive." Saudi Arabia has been leading an atrocious war against Yemen since March 2015. The United Nations has announced that the war on Yemen has caused the greatest human disaster in the modern history.

The Leader also pointed to Congressional revelations that the administration of President Donald Trump is transferring nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia, saying he is not personally worried about this issue because "in the not-too-distant future" Saudi Arabia will fall into the hands of Mujahideen.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/434254/Ayatollah-Khamenei-I-know-no-country-worse-than-Saudi-kingdom>

### **US imposes new sanctions on Iran over weapons programs** *Arab News, March 22, 2019*

United States said on Friday it was imposing sanctions on 14 people and 17 entities connected to Iran's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND), a body it said had played a central role in Iran's past nuclear weapons effort. Among those designated for sanctions was the Shahid Karimi group, which works on missile and explosive-related projects for the SPND, and four associated individuals, the US Treasury Department said in a Statement.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Thursday that Tehran

was determined to boost its defense capabilities despite mounting pressure from the United States and its allies to curb its ballistic missile program.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1470806/middle-east>

### **France bans Iran's Mahan Air for flying arms, troops to Syria, elsewhere** *Arab News, March 25, 2019*

France has banned flights in and out of the country by Iran's Mahan Air, accusing it of transporting military equipment and personnel to Syria and other Middle East war zones, diplomats said on Monday, after heavy US pressure on Paris to act. The decision to revoke Mahan's license to operate in France was made after Germany banned the airline in January. Paris had considered revoking its license more than two years ago under the presidency of Francois Hollande, but had backed down because it feared it could harm relations just after a nuclear deal between Iran and world powers was signed in 2015.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1472256/world>

### **Iran welcomes Luxembourg court decision on U.S. seizure of Iranian assets** *Reuters, March 28, 2019*

Iran welcomed on Thursday a Luxembourg court's decision to refuse to reinforce a U.S. ruling that would have helped families of victims of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks claim Iranian assets held by a Luxembourg-based clearing house. The court ruled on Wednesday that there were no grounds in international law to uphold in Luxembourg a 2012 U.S. court decision to strip Iran of sovereign immunity.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi said the decision showed the world still had courts that adopt independent decisions. "The era of totalitarian and bullying behaviour of America toward other countries is over and it can no longer raise such groundless accusations," Qasemi was quoted as saying by state news agency IRNA. The governor of Central Bank of Iran,

Abdolnasser Hemmati, called the decision "an important legal victory for Iran".

<https://in.reuters.com/article/iran-luxembourg-reactions/iran-welcomes-luxembourg-court-decision-on-us-seizure-of-iranian-assets-idINKCN1R90BS>

### **Oil minister to leave Tehran for Moscow on Monday** *Tehran Times, March 30, 2019*

As reported, the minister's visit to Russia is aimed at negotiating energy cooperation issues with the Russian side. After implementation of Iran's nuclear deal (known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA) with the world's powers in January 2016, Iran and Russia have signed the highest number of memorandums of understanding on development of oil fields in Iran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/434289/Oil-minister-to-leave-Tehran-for-Moscow-on-Monday>

## **G. Saudi Arabia**

### **Qatar: UAE nuclear plant threat to Gulf stability, environment** *Anchal Vohra, Aljazeera, March 21, 2019*

In a letter to the IAEA, Qatar urges the Vienna-based organisation to create a framework for regional nuclear security. A seven-minute media address by United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Friday was dominated by his country's preoccupation with Hezbollah and, in effect, its patron Iran. Pompeo read out his statement during his visit to Beirut as his Lebanese counterpart Gebran Bassil watched with an unwavering gaze.

The top US diplomat minced no words while declaring the intentions of President Donald Trump's administration to take on Hezbollah for its "criminal activities and terrorist network" albeit by "peaceful means"

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/qatar-uae-nuclear-plant-threat-gulf-stability-environment-190320184348584.html>

## US approves secret nuclear power work for Saudi Arabia *Aljazeera*, March 28, 2019

The US administration has reportedly authorized US companies to sell nuclear power technology to Saudi Arabia. US Energy Secretary Rick Perry has approved six secret authorisations for companies to sell nuclear power technology and assistance to Saudi Arabia, according to a copy of a document seen by the Reuters news agency. The Trump administration has quietly pursued a wider deal on sharing US nuclear power technology with Saudi Arabia, which aims to build at least two nuclear power plants.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/ap-proves-secret-nuclear-power-work-saudi-arabia-190328053752802.html>

## U.S. energy secretary unsure if Saudi nuclear approvals came after Khashoggi killing *Timothy Gardner*, Reuters, March 29 2019

U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry told lawmakers on Thursday he did not know whether any of the approvals he authorized for U.S. companies to sell nuclear power technology to Saudi Arabia were made after the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October last year. The Department of Energy issued a statement later on Thursday clarifying that it had issued seven such approvals for companies wishing to participate in Saudi Arabia's civilian nuclear power program, but pointed out that they do not permit the transfer of "nuclear material, equipment or components." U.S. companies commonly win such approvals, known as Part 810 authorizations, for selling nuclear power know-how abroad and the documents are often kept for the public to access in a room at Energy Department headquarters.

But the ones that Perry approved for Saudi Arabia, which has been in quiet talks with the Trump administration on a wider nuclear power deal, were not made public. Perry said they contained proprietary

information for the companies, the names of which have not been released.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-saudi-nuclearpower-perry/us-energy-secretary-unsure-if-saudi-nuclear-approvals-came-after-khashoggi-killing-idUSKCN1R92K4>

## Energy chief Perry OKs deal to share nuke tech with Saudis

*Matthew Daly, AP News, March 29, 2019*

The Trump administration has approved seven applications for U.S. companies to sell nuclear power technology and assistance to Saudi Arabia, the Energy Department said Thursday.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Energy Department has approved 37 nuclear applications since January 2017, including nine in the Middle East. Besides the seven to Saudi Arabia, two were approved for Jordan. Perry said in his testimony that six applications were approved to Saudi Arabia, but a spokeswoman later said he misspoke.

<https://www.apnews.com/4c56a4f572964e9ab98b4ebf270268d8>

## H. Israel

## Netanyahu Claims Iranian Regime Openly Supports Gantz *Haaretz*, March 17, 2019

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed in on Saturday that the Iranian regime openly supports Benny Gantz and Yair Lapid, his rivals in the upcoming election who co-chair the political alliance Kahol Lavan.

"Lies by Yair Lapid, half-runner for prime minister, will not help. The Shin Bet confirmed that the prime minister knew nothing of the hacking, and senior journalists say the same," the video said. "This is an attempt by Gantz and Lapid to distort the fact that the Iranian regime openly supports them and that they backed the Iran nuclear deal while

Netanyahu fought against it.”

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/elections/netanyahu-claims-iranian-regime-openly-supports-gantz-and-lapid-1.7023728>

### **The Unspoken Reason Israel Is a Military Superpower: Nuclear Weapons**

*Daniel R. De Petris, National Interest, March 18, 2019*

The Iranian nuclear nonproliferation agreement has been the top foreign policy issue throughout Washington for the past two months. Approving or disapproving the deal was the first order of business for the U.S. Congress until the very last day of congressional action under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (September 17). Hours of debate have been conducted on the floors of the House and Senate, both chambers have held roll call votes, and Senate Democrats bonded together to filibuster a motion of disapproval — a resolution that would have prevented President Obama from providing the Iranians sanctions relief.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/unspoken-reason-israel-military-superpower-nuclear-weapons-48002>

### **Construction of two new Iranian nuclear plants going well, atomic chief says**

*Times of Israel, March 19, 2019*

Ali Akbar Salehi, head of Islamic Republic’s Atomic Energy Organization, says work on \$8.5-billion power station project ‘moving ahead in an excellent manner’. Construction of two new nuclear plants in the southern Iranian city of Bushehr, home to the country’s only current working nuclear power station, is on schedule and going to plan, the Islamic Republic’s atomic chief said on Monday.

The project, which will cost more than \$8.5 billion and is being built with Russian assistance, is expected to go online by 2026.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/construction-of-new-iranian-nuclear-plants-going-well-atomic-chief-says/>

### **U.S.-backed forces capture Syria suspects tied to American deaths:**

**sources** *Phil Stewart, Reuters, March 19, 2019*

U.S.-backed forces have captured Islamic State fighters tied to a January suicide bombing in Syria that killed four Americans, U.S. officials say, generating concrete leads for Washington about the deadliest attack to date there against U.S. personnel.

A report by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that Islamic State has transformed into a covert network, but is still a threat with centralized leadership, up to \$300 million at its disposal and thousands of fighters.

It said the group was interested in attacking aviation and using chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials and that there were up to 18,000 Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria, including up to 3,000 foreign fighters.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa/us-backed-forces-capture-syria-suspects-tied-to-american-deaths-sources-idUSKCN1R01AV>

### **Russia allots 25 nuclear education places to Turkey**

*Firdevs Yüksel, Anadolu Agency, March 22, 2019*

The Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom allocated a quota for 25 Turkish students to complete a Master’s degree in nuclear energy in St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, the Russian company announced on Friday.

The allocation is part of the staff training program for Turkey’s first Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) Akkuyu covering thermal and electrical power, in which all study expenses will be borne by Russia.

The students will be provided with accommodation and will receive a monthly scholarship of 32,000 rubles or \$500, according to the company’s statement.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/economy/russia-allots-25-nuclear-education-places-to-turkey/1425997>

## Netanyahu welcomes new US sanctions on Iran, congratulates Trump

*The Times of Israel, March 23, 2019*

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu welcomed on Saturday the imposition by Washington of new sanctions on Iran, announced a day prior.

In a press statement, Netanyahu congratulated US President Donald Trump, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Adviser John Bolton on the move, which imposes punitive measures on the heads of Iran's military nuclear program. US officials said the decision to move ahead with the sanctions was in part based on Israel's recovery of what it and the US call a "secret archive" of documents from Tehran, which they said shows that Iran deliberately preserved and stored its early nuclear weapons work, known as the "Amad plan," with the intent to someday resume development of a bomb.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-welcomes-new-us-sanctions-on-iran-congratulates-trump/>

## Trump Formally Recognizes Israeli Sovereignty Over Golan Heights

*National Public Radio, March 25, 2019*

President Trump signed a proclamation Monday that recognizes Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, formalizing the Middle East policy shift he announced over Twitter last week.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was with Trump at the White House as he signed the presidential proclamation. Prior to the signing, Netanyahu made remarks lavishing praise onto Trump that drew comparisons between the president and the Persian emperor Cyrus as heroic defenders of the Jewish people.

"Israel has never had a better friend than you," Netanyahu said, enumerating several instances in which the administration has delivered on campaign promises favoring the Israeli leader, including U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran, restoration of sanctions on that country and the

recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital leading to the relocation of American embassy there.

<https://www.npr.org/2019/03/25/706588932/trump-formally-recognizes-israeli-sovereignty-over-golan-heights>

## UAE regulator in final stages of issuing license for nuclear plant

*Reuters, March 27, 2019*

The United Arab Emirates' regulator is in the final stages of issuing a license to the operator of the Barakah nuclear power plant now being built but cannot yet give a date for when it will be granted, a senior official said on Wednesday.

Operator Nawah Energy Company said in May that Barakah should start up between the end of 2019 and early 2020. It will be the UAE's first nuclear plant and the world's largest when complete, with four reactors and 5,600 megawatts (MW) capacity.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-emirates-nuclear-energy/uae-regulator-in-final-stages-of-issuing-license-for-nuclear-plant-idUSKCN1R80NK>

## Apocalypse Now: Why Israel Would Start a Nuclear War

*Robert Farley, National Interest, March 27, 2019*

The most obvious scenario for Israel to use nuclear weapons would be in response to a foreign nuclear attack. Israel's missile defenses, air defenses, and delivery systems are far too sophisticated to imagine a scenario in which any country other than one of the major nuclear powers could manage a disarming first strike. Consequently, any attacker is certain to endure massive retaliation, in short order. Israel's goals would be to destroy the military capacity of the enemy (let's say Iran, for sake of discussion) and also send a message that any nuclear attack against Israel would be met with catastrophic, unimaginable retaliation.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/apocalypse-now-why-israel-would-start-nuclear-war-49292>

### **Netanyahu's Timely Help From Trump** *Paul D. Shinkman, USA Today, March 28, 2019*

Embattled Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is in the home stretch of a tough re-election bid on April 9 after leaving Washington this week with a series of coups delivered by the Trump administration. However, many experts doubt the extent to which any element of American foreign policy will make a difference among Israeli voters.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2019-03-28/netanyahu-enters-homestretch-of-re-election-campaign-with-help-from-trump>

### **Israel In The Crosshairs Of 2020 US Presidential Election** *Eric. R. Mande, Jerusalem Post, March 28, 2019*

Just as the upcoming Israeli election has shined a spotlight on the growing rift between segments of American and Israeli Jewry, the 2020 US Presidential election has highlighted the profound differences between some progressive and many mainstream Democratic members, especially those who see the Middle East as an essential American interest, and the security of Israel as a primary concern.

If you thought the divisive battle between Republicans and Democrats over the JCPOA (Iran nuclear agreement) was over, think again. Democrats and Republicans are about to go at it again over Obama's foreign policy legacy, concluded in 2015, and withdrawn by Trump three years later.

<https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Israel-in-the-crosshairs-of-2020-US-presidential-election-585001>

### **Iran Likely Still Developing Nuclear Weapons - Survey** *Jerusalem Post, March 29, 2019*

Nearly half of Middle Eastern respondents say they are skeptical that Iran has stopped working to achieve nuclear weapons, according to a poll taken by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and reported by the Hebrew daily Israel Hayom.

The latest survey conducted by professional pollsters on behalf of the ministry found that 43% of Middle Easterners say Iran did not stop its nuclear program. The number of North American respondents who believe similarly is also high at one-third or 33%.

<https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Iran-likely-still-developing-nuclear-weapons-survey-585111>

### **Two Syrians remanded for smuggling radioactive element** *Hurriyet Daily, March 29, 2019*

A Turkish court remanded two suspects in custody for smuggling radioactive element in the central Niğde province, security sources said on March 28.

Smuggling and organized crime police arrested two Syrian nationals in the act when they attempted to sell some 14 grams (0.50 oz) of radioactive element, considered to be californium, for \$5 million. A local court ordered the suspects to be put behind bars. The contraband radioactive element was sent to Turkey's Atomic Energy Authority for examination. Californium is a radioactive chemical element first synthesized at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory of California University in 1950. It is considered to be highly hazardous and is used in nuclear reactors as well as oil wells.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/two-syrians-remanded-for-smuggling-radioactive-element-142261>

### **Iran cuts Syria militia funds as US economic sanctions tighten** *Middle East Monitor, March 29, 2019*

Iran has cut funding to militia groups in Syria as its economy continues to suffer from the renewed imposition of US sanctions, after the Trump Administration withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal.

Washington withdrew from the landmark 2015 nuclear deal signed under then President Barack Obama last May, despite

protests from the cosignatories Russia, China, Germany, France and the UK. But earlier this week, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo hailed the pressure on Iran, affirming during a trip to Lebanon that “it’s aimed at cutting off the funding for terrorists, and it’s working.”

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190329-iran-cuts-syria-militia-funds-as-us-economic-sanctions-tighten/>

**New bill would block F-35 transfers to Turkey** *David Brown, Politico, March 29, 2019*

LOW-YIELD ON SUBS: “If the U.S. opts to develop low-yield nuclear missiles, expect the Navy to deploy these weapons as part of the nation’s undersea nuclear deterrent, the commander of U.S. Strategic Command told lawmakers Thursday,” USNI News reports.

QUESTIONS OVER NUKE TECHNOLOGY: “Energy Secretary Rick Perry told lawmakers on Thursday he did not know whether any of the approvals he authorized for U.S. companies to sell nuclear power technology to Saudi Arabia were made after the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October last year,” according to Reuters.

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-defense/2019/03/29/new-bill-would-block-f-35-transfers-to-turkey-418290>

**New program brings Turkish scientists home** *Daily Sabah, March 30, 2019*

The International Leader Researchers Program launched by Turkey in December, saw an influx of applications from scientists working abroad, thanks to a set of incentives. The Ministry of Industry and Technology announced on Friday that more than 200 people from more than 30 countries applied for the program, whose application deadline was on Friday. Minister Mustafa Varank said he was “proud” to announce that both Turkish scientists working abroad and foreign researchers applied to the program. “There are researchers, professors

among applicants and some are from prestigious universities like Harvard, Stanford, Oxford, Cambridge and Yale. We have applicants from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, from Imperial College. A professor who was in Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize is among the applicants. We have people from companies like Intel, Amazon, Siemens and the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).”

<https://www.dailysabah.com/education/2019/03/30/new-program-brings-turkish-scientists-home>

**Global survey: Arabs want closer ties with Israel, world losing interest in Palestinians** *David Isaac, World Israel News, March 31, 2019*

A global survey commissioned by Israel’s Foreign Ministry to discern attitudes throughout the world about the Jewish State have revealed surprising results where Muslim countries are concerned – that in many cases the populations want closer ties with Israel, even in Iran.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry highlighted in particular the results from Muslim countries, which found that large segments of the general population wanted better relations with Israel.

<https://worldisraelnews.com/global-survey-arabs-want-closer-ties-with-israel-losing-interest-in-palestinian-struggle/>

## I. North Korea

**No significant activity at N. Korea’s nuclear complex, test site: 38 North** *Korea Herald, March 16, 2019*

Little to no activity is spotted at North Korea’s main nuclear facility in Yongbyon and its nuclear testing site in Punggye-ri, a US monitor said Friday. The 5-megawatt reactor and the experimental light water reactor at Yongbyon showed no clear signs of operations, 38 North said on its website, comparing commercial satellite imagery from Feb. 21, March 7 and March 12. The monitor observed dredging operations at

the complex, along with what appeared to be a white tanker trailer, a vehicle and a "cylindrical metal object" at the uranium enrichment plant.

"The purpose of these vehicles and equipment is unclear," it said. "Little activity is seen elsewhere around Yongbyon. Overall the site continues to be well maintained and vehicles continue to move around near the reactors." At Punggye-ri, there was no activity around the tunnel portal areas that were demolished by the North in May. "There are no signs of site restoration or vehicles tracking in the snow," 38 North said, showing March 7 commercial satellite imagery.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190316000021&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190316000021&ACE_SEARCH=1)

### **Former German FM says to visit N. Korea** *Korea Herald, March 17, 2019*

Former German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel has announced on Twitter that he will visit North Korea this month amid a standoff over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. Gabriel posted in the early hours of Friday morning that he would like to get an impression of North Korea, although he did not provide any specific time frame for his visit.

The announcement came as North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui said Pyongyang is rethinking whether it will continue nuclear talks with the United States and maintain a moratorium on missile and nuclear tests. On Friday, Choe said in an urgent meeting with diplomats and foreign media in Pyongyang that North Korea had no interest in engaging in "negotiations of this kind" and rejected US demands at the Hanoi summit, according to Russia's TASS news agency.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190317000072&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190317000072&ACE_SEARCH=1)

### **N. Korea, Russia agree to bolster 'high-level contact,' cooperation in various areas** *Korea Herald, March 17, 2019*

"Both sides agreed to boost high-level contact and exchange in the political field,

actively promote cooperation in the fields of economy and humanitarianism, bolster up mutual support and collaboration in tackling the issue of the Korean peninsula and on the international arena," the KCNA said.

"A 2019-2020 plan of exchange between the two Foreign Ministries was signed following the negotiations," it added. Observers speculate that "high-level contact" could mean a possible trip to Moscow by North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for his first summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Pyongyang has been stepping up its diplomacy with Russia since the collapse of the summit between Kim and U.S. President Donald Trump last month. Experts see it as an attempt to solidify relations with its neighboring countries for future nuclear talks with Washington, while at the same time possibly securing economic assistance.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190317000209&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190317000209&ACE_SEARCH=1)

### **US and N. Korea will not return to past days of conflict and confrontation: Seoul official** *Korea Herald, March 17, 2019*

The United States and North Korea have made too much progress over the past year in their nuclear talks to return to where they were before negotiations started, a high-ranking official of the presidential office said Sunday. His outlook comes amid growing uncertainty after North Korea threatened to quit nuclear talks with Washington following the breakdown of the summit between their leaders last month in Hanoi.

"North Korea and the US never want to go back to the days of conflict and confrontation seen before 2017," the Cheong Wa Dae official told reporters on condition of anonymity. "Both sides have moved forward too much to return to the past."

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190317000210&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190317000210&ACE_SEARCH=1)

## Seoul seeks to break deadlock in nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang

*Park Chan-kyong, South China Morning Post, March 18, 2019*

A statement issued by Seoul's presidential Blue House on Monday said the time was now right for the two Koreas to hold further talks - building upon President Moon Jae-in's policy of rapprochement which saw him meet Kim three times last year. "We're in a deep agony over how to take advantage of this baton that has been handed over to us," said the statement, attributed to a high-ranking official. "We agree with the view that no deal is better than a bad deal ... However, in reality, it is difficult to achieve complete denuclearisation at one stroke. I think we need to reconsider the so-called all or nothing strategy."

After last month's summit in Hanoi was cut short by several hours, Trump told reporters that Pyongyang had wanted "sanctions lifted in their entirety, but we couldn't do that ... we had to walk away from it". North Korea contradicted this claim, with the country's Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho later saying Pyongyang had made "realistic" proposals in return for a "partial lifting of sanctions". In the days and weeks since, the North has threatened to suspend all channels of communication with Washington and even restart its missile tests.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/east-asia/article/3002206/seoul-seeks-break-deadlock-nuclear-negotiations-between>

## Sanctions hinder humanitarian efforts in North Korea

*Park Han-na, Korea Herald, March 18, 2019*

Legislator claims Seoul's plan to give \$8 million to World Food Program, UNICEF impeded by US, citing US envoy to Seoul. Humanitarian activities for millions of hungry and sick people in North Korea are at risk of being scaled back due to economic sanctions and donor fatigue amid nuclear talks between Washington and Pyongyang that struggle to make tangible progress.

Tough sanctions slapped on the country by a number of countries and international bodies are believed to be deepening the economic recession as they ban its key exports and imports, including fuel and machinery that could be used for enhancing the communist nation's nuclear capability. Such international restrictions adversely affect humanitarian programs, especially the pre-operational procedures as approvals for traveling to North Korea are often delayed. They also hamper the delivery of life-saving assistance as related materials are subject to sanctions waivers that take time to process.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190318000589&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190318000589&ACE_SEARCH=1)

## Minister: US seeks 'big picture' master plan to handle NK's nuclear, missile programs

*Korea Herald, March 18, 2019*

South Korea's top diplomat said Monday the United States wants a deal with North Korea on a "big picture" roadmap to get rid of its nuclear and missile programs. On the other hand, in the Hanoi talks held in late February, Pyongyang limited its immediate denuclearization steps to the Yongbyon nuclear complex, according to Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha. She was talking about why the two sides failed to reach an agreement in their second summit.

"Both the US and South Korea think that a comprehensive roadmap is necessary," she said at a National Assembly session on her ministry's affairs. "It appears that the US took part in the summit with that position." Asked to elaborate, the minister said it means starting the full-fledged denuclearization process with a "big picture" to deal with all elements related to North Korea's nuclear and missile facilities and capabilities. The US maintains the stance that it will be able to lift sanctions on Pyongyang if complete denuclearization is achieved, she said. "Clearly, the time to discuss such a lifting of sanctions will come some day,"

she added. "For that, it's necessary to pull off slightly bolder denuclearization measures."

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190318000801&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190318000801&ACE_SEARCH=1)

### North Korea seeks sanctions relief

*Reuters, March 19, 2019*

North Korea said on Tuesday that there was "no justification" for maintaining full sanctions on Pyongyang given that it has halted nuclear and missile testing for the past 15 months.

Ju Yong Chol, a North Korean diplomat responding to a speech by a senior U.S. arms control official at the U.N.-sponsored Conference on Disarmament, said that issues between the two countries should be addressed one-by-one so as to build trust.

Instead, at the Hanoi summit last month between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump, the United States "came up with the preposterous argument that sanction relief is impossible prior to denuclearisation", Ju said.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/northkorea-usa-nuclear-sanctions/north-korea-seeks-sanctions-relief-idINKCN1R01EH>

### Minor quake reported near N. Korea's nuke test site: KMA

*Korea Herald, March 21, 2019*

North Korea was hit by a minor earthquake Thursday that jolted a region close to its Punggyeri nuclear test site in the northeast, South Korea's weather agency said. The tremor measuring 2.8 magnitude occurred 45 kilometers northwest of Kilju, North Hamgyong Province, at 4:41 a.m., the Korea Meteorological Administration said. The epicenter of the quake was located 41.31 degrees north latitude and 129.08 degrees east longitude, and is about 1 kilometer away from the site of North Korea's sixth nuclear test site in Punggyeri, the KMA said, estimating its depth at 10 km.

But the agency said the tremor was presumed to be a natural and induced quake, noting the presumption was reached

through a joint analysis with the state-run Korea Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources. An induced earthquake is a type of natural earthquake that is caused by a deformation of the crust over time due to human activity.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190321000281&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190321000281&ACE_SEARCH=1)

### North Korea quits liaison office in setback for South after new U.S. sanctions

*Hyonhee Shin, David Brunnstrom, Reuters, March 22, 2019*

North Korea on Friday pulled out of a liaison office with the South, in a major setback for Seoul, just hours after the United States imposed the first new sanctions on the North since the second U.S.-North Korea summit broke down last month.

It was the first such step since a second meeting between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Hanoi broke down over conflicting demands by the North for relief from sanctions and from the United States for Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons.

The U.S. Treasury Department identified two Chinese firms for new sanctions - Dalian Haibo International Freight Co Ltd and Liaoning Danxing International Forwarding Co Ltd - which had helped the North evade U.S. and international sanctions, it said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-northkorea-usa/north-korea-quits-liason-office-in-setback-for-south-after-new-u-s-sanctions-idUKKCN1R30ZS>

### Trump cancels new sanctions on NK

*Korea Herald, March 23, 2019*

US President Donald Trump said Friday he has ordered the withdrawal of new sanctions on North Korea, possibly signaling an intention to continue denuclearization negotiations with the regime. Trump was apparently referring to sanctions the US Department of the Treasury imposed on two Chinese banks

on Thursday for allegedly helping North Korea evade sanctions.

“It was announced today by the US Treasury that additional large scale Sanctions would be added to those already existing Sanctions on North Korea,” Trump tweeted, although there was no announcement of new sanctions on North Korea on Friday. “I have today ordered the withdrawal of those additional sanctions!” he said. The announcement came as negotiations to dismantle North Korea’s nuclear weapons program have hit an impasse following the collapse of last month’s summit between Trump and the North’s leader, Kim Jong-un.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190323000002&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190323000002&ACE_SEARCH=1)

**Kim Jong-un ‘was shocked’ by new US list of undisclosed nuclear facilities at Hanoi summit** *Guo Rui, South China Morning Post, March 26, 2019*

North Korean affairs expert Zhang Liangui tells forum the talks broke down because Washington changed its negotiating position at the last minute. Pyongyang ‘felt its expectations would not be met’, he says. The Central Party School trains Communist Party cadres and is a think tank for top Chinese leaders. Zhang said the new list meant the US required Pyongyang to dismantle all of its underground nuclear arms facilities. That was in addition to what had previously been discussed – destroying the plutonium and uranium-enrichment plants housed at the Yongbyon nuclear complex.

Kim was “shocked” at the talks in February when the US presented him with a new list of nuclear facilities that had not been disclosed by Pyongyang. The Central Party School trains Communist Party cadres and is a think tank for top Chinese leaders. Zhang said the new list meant the US required Pyongyang to dismantle all of its underground nuclear arms facilities. That was in addition to what had previously been discussed – destroying the plutonium and uranium-enrichment plants housed at the Yongbyon nuclear complex.

“When the US side pulled out its ‘hidden’ list of undisclosed facilities, Kim Jong-un was shocked not because the US knew about its underground facilities – those sites have been reported by a number of US think tanks before – but because the North felt that its expectations of the talks would not be met,” said Zhang, who was speaking at a forum on North Korea in Beijing on Sunday organised by Dunjiao Media.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3003227/kim-jong-un-was-shocked-new-us-list-undisclosed-nuclear>

**North Korea says Trump was open to easing sanctions with ‘snapback’ clause: South Korean media** *Reuters, March 26, 2019*

U.S. President Donald Trump was open to easing sanctions on North Korea provided there was a ‘snapback’ clause if the North restarted nuclear activities, according to South Korean media reports of a North Korean statement.

The new statement from a March 15 news conference by North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said Trump had a “flexible position” on the issue during his summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last month. The new statement also says Kim “faced much opposition and challenges” from within North Korea in order to make the second summit happen. “... our people, especially our military and munitions industry, are saying we must never give up nuclear capabilities”, it said, according to Yonhap.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa/north-korea-says-trump-was-open-to-easing-sanctions-with-snapback-clause-south-korean-media-idUSKCN1R700D>

**North Korea nuclear, missile activity ‘inconsistent’ with denuclearization: U.S. general** *Idrees Ali, March 27, 2019*

North Korea’s activity on nuclear weapons and missiles is inconsistent with its pledge to denuclearize, the commander of U.S.

forces in South Korea said on Wednesday. "Their activity that we have observed is inconsistent with denuclearization," U.S. Army General Robert Abrams said during a House Armed Services Committee hearing. Abrams did not provide further details.

He had been asked if the United States had seen a change in North Korea's production of nuclear weapons, material and missiles. Abrams said that while he had enough intelligence and surveillance resources to deal with the current situation, that might not be the case if relations were to worsen on the Korean peninsula.

"If they change negatively, then our stance and our posture is not adequate to provide us an unblinking eye to give us early warning and indicators," he said. In a separate hearing on Wednesday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo acknowledged that North Korea had not yet taken the kind of "big step" toward complete denuclearization the administration had hoped for as it began direct talks with Kim. "I'm hopeful that we can engage and negotiate with them," he said. There has been no sign of direct contact between Washington and Pyongyang since the collapse of the summit, although Trump has stressed his good personal relationship with Kim.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-northkorea-military/north-korea-nuclear-missile-activity-inconsistent-with-denuclearization-u-s-general-idUSKCN1R81RJ>

### **S. Korean leader to meet with Trump in US on nuke diplomacy**

*Hyung-jin Kim, AP News, March 29, 2019*

South Korean President Moon Jae-in will travel to the United States in two weeks for a summit with President Donald Trump on stalemated North Korean nuclear diplomacy. It would be their first meeting since Trump's second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Hanoi last month collapsed due to disputes on U.S.-led sanctions. Moon's office said Moon will visit the United States on April 10-11 to discuss how to strengthen their countries' alliance and achieve North Korea's complete

denuclearization and peace on the Korean Peninsula. Earlier this month, North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui threatened to pull out of the nuclear negotiations with the United States citing a lack of its corresponding steps to match some disarmament measures North Korea took last year. She said Kim would soon decide whether to continue the talks and his moratorium on nuclear and missile tests.

The lawmaker also cited the National Intelligence Service as saying the North's uranium-enrichment facility at its main nuclear complex remains operational. The NIS said it doesn't comment on intelligence assessments provided to lawmakers. Citing analyses of commercial satellite imagery, many civilian experts in the U.S. have previously given similar assessments on the North's Tongchang-ri launch facility and the Yongbyon nuclear complex. But there have been no reports that North Korea is preparing for a long-range rocket launch or a nuclear test anytime soon. Moon's push to expand ties with North Korea and resume dormant inter-Korean economic projects is in doubt as U.S. officials maintain that sanctions on North Korea would stay in place unless the country takes significant denuclearization steps.

<https://www.apnews.com/800a5e814a464e759ea1912f06642235>

### **North Korea calls raid on its embassy in Spain 'terrorist attack'**

*BBC, March 31, 2019*

Pyongyang says it is closely following rumours of FBI involvement after 10 armed men broke into North Korean embassy. In its first official comment, the government demanded an investigation and said it was closely watching rumours that the FBI had played a role. On Wednesday a group committed to ousting North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, the Cheollima Civil Defense, said it carried out the raid.

The group took computers and data and said it gave its evidence to the FBI. At least two international arrest warrants have

been issued for the main suspects. "A grave terrorist attack occurred on February 22, where an armed group assaulted the DPRK Embassy in Spain," a spokesman for the North's foreign ministry said in a statement.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47764093>

**Half of S. Koreans expect US, N. Korea won't reach agreement on denuclearization: poll** *Korea Herald, March 31, 2019*

Half of South Koreans believe that the United States and North Korea will not reach an agreement on the issues of denuclearization and the lifting of economic sanctions, a poll released Sunday showed. According to the Korea Society Opinion Institute poll of 1,008 adults nationwide, 50 percent said that the U.S. and North Korea will not reach an understanding on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the lifting of sanctions on Pyongyang since they have considerable differences on the issue. The negative public views on the U.S.-North Korea negotiations increased 12.3 percentage points from the previous month.

And 45.6 percent answered that the two sides will reach a deal through negotiations, which was down 17 percentage points from the survey in February. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, with a confidence level of 95 percent.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190331000207&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190331000207&ACE_SEARCH=1)

## J. Japan

**Peace advocates will hand flame from A-bomb to Pope Francis** *Toko Tanaka, The Asahi Shimbun, March 18, 2019*

*Tanaka, The Asahi Shimbun, March 18, 2019*

Atomic bomb survivor Setsuko Thurlow, 87, who jointly received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017 as a leading member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), will be part of the contingent. The members plan to convey their desire to abolish nuclear weapons during a general audience with the pope at the Vatican.

The flame has been kept alive as a "flame of peace" in the Hoshinomura district in Yame, Fukuoka Prefecture, since the late Tatsuo Yamamoto brought the embers back from a fire-ravaged site. He had traveled to Hiroshima after the detonation of the bomb on Aug. 6, 1945, to search for his uncle, who had perished in the blast, but could not locate his body. Yamamoto instead brought the flame back in lieu of his uncle's ashes, which has been kept ablaze ever since. The audience with the pope was organized by Earth Caravan, a Kyoto-based nonprofit organization, which has delivered the flame of peace in and outside of Japan. The organization hopes to be blessed with the pope's globally influential voice for promoting peace as the pontiff has a strong interest in the abolition of nuclear weapons.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903180044.html>

**Tohoku Electric says donation not a payoff for idle nuclear plant** *The Asahi Shimbun, March 20, 2019*

Tohoku Electric Power Co. plans to give an estimated 400 million yen (\$3.58 million) to a village that hosts one of its nuclear power plants, but denies it is compensation for losses stemming from the facility's suspension since the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster. The utility said March 19 it will make a donation to Higashidori, Aomori Prefecture, where its Higashidori nuclear power plant is located, through a corporate version of the "furusato nozei" (hometown tax payment) system. The company did not disclose the amount, but only said it wants to donate "about half" the maximum amount that the village is allowed to receive under this system. The ceiling for the village is about 800 million yen.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903200054.html>

**U.S. film tells story of Japanese boat exposed to 1954 nuclear test**

*Miya Tanaka, Japan Times, March 20 2019*

For many Americans, the story of the Japanese fishing crew that was exposed

to a U.S. hydrogen bomb test in the Pacific Ocean 65 years ago may be a footnote in history easy to overlook. But Keith Reimink, a 40-year-old American documentary filmmaker, reacted differently when, in 2014, he came across a tiny paragraph mentioning the incident in a nearly 500-page book criticizing the U.S. management of nuclear weapons. The film opens by noting that most people believe that Japan's experience of nuclear weapons ended with the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

But another tragedy occurred on March 1, 1954, when the United States conducted its largest-ever nuclear weapons test, code-named Castle Bravo, at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The explosion created higher levels of fallout than predicted, contaminating the islands and boats in the vicinity.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/culture/2019/03/20/films/u-s-film-tells-story-japanese-boat-exposed-1954-nuclear-test/#.XKRaorc07g>

### **Early Abe-Trump meeting planned to discuss North Korea policies** *The Asahi Shimbun, March 21, 2019*

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is expected to meet U.S. President Donald Trump in late April to discuss policies concerning Pyongyang following the collapse of the U.S.-North Korea summit in February, government sources said. Tokyo and Washington are now arranging Abe's trip to the United States, the sources said. If the visit is realized, it would be the first of three Japan-U.S. summits in as many months. Trump will visit Japan on May 26-28 as a state guest and return for a Group of 20 summit in Osaka on June 28-29.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903210040.html>

### **Ministry eyes subsidy plan for nuclear energy generation** *Tsuneo Sasa, Asahi Shimbun, March 23, 2019*

The economy ministry is weighing the introduction of a subsidy system paid to electricity producers who use nuclear plants to offset massive costs to meet tougher safety

standards after the 2011 disaster. Officials said that those expenses have cut into the cost competitiveness of nuclear energy to such an extent that a subsidy system may have to be utilized, despite its longtime contention that nuclear energy is the most economical form of electricity generation.

Given that the subsidies will end up being padded onto the electricity bills of households and businesses, it remains to be seen if the public will go along with shouldering the additional burden. The ministry plans to establish the subsidy system by the end of fiscal 2020 in line with the scheduled review of the "feed-in tariff" system that set prices for purchasing electricity generated by solar and other renewable sources.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903230039.html>

### **Team of robots to search for fuel in Fukushima reactor vessel** *Chikako Kawahara, Asahi Shimbun, March 29, 2019*

The remote-controlled submersible robot, which is about 1 meter long, is expected to start surveying the interior of the damaged No. 1 reactor with five other such devices as early as summer, according to Hitachi-GE Nuclear Energy Ltd. and other entities. Maneuvered by workers, the lead robot will place ring-shaped objects at eight locations on the wall inside the reactor vessel to indicate the route for the others. The large size of five of the robots allows them to carry more powerful devices, such as cameras, ultrasonic scanners and dosimeters, for collecting more accurate data in an effort to locate melted fuel during the approximate six-month mission.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903290051.html>

### **KEPCO to ship MOX nuclear fuel assemblies from France in 2020** *Yusuke Ogawa, Asahi Shimbun, March 31, 2019*

Kansai Electric Power Co. (KEPCO) plans to transport 32 plutonium-uranium mixed oxide (MOX) fuel assemblies from France

to Japan in 2020 at the earliest to help reduce its stockpile overseas. KEPCO plans to use the MOX fuel in the No. 3 and the No. 4 reactors of its Takahama nuclear power plant in Fukui Prefecture, which would reduce its plutonium overseas by about one ton from the current 11 tons. The MOX fuel was produced in France using plutonium extracted from spent nuclear fuel generated in Japanese nuclear power plants.

KEPCO, based in Osaka, had asked French nuclear fuel company Orano (formerly Areva) to reprocess the spent nuclear fuel and extract plutonium from it.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903310031.html>

### **K. South and Southeast Asia**

#### **Power sector appears hallmark of Dhaka-Delhi cooperation** *Daily Industry, March 20, 2019*

*Industry, March 20, 2019*

Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Syed Muazzem Ali yesterday said power sector appeared to be the hallmark of Dhaka-Delhi cooperation as he joined a regional energy conference.

“There is a positive momentum in cooperation between our two countries in the power sector and the achievements so far have been highly encouraging,” he told the conference titled “India’s Energy Security: Inter-regional Cooperation to Energy Security Society”.

Muazzem added: “We are happy that Bangladesh and India are experiencing very substantive cooperation in the energy sector” while Bangladesh currently imports 1,160 MW power from the neighbouring country.

<http://www.dailyindustry.news/power-sector-appears-hallmark-dhaka-delhi-cooperation/>

#### **Energy Transition Index: Bangladesh 90th among 115 nations**

*Mohammad Al-Masum Molla, The Daily Star, March 28, 2019*

Bangladesh has ranked 90th on the global Energy Transition Index (ETI), which has benchmarked 115 countries on how well

they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability. Last year, Bangladesh ranked the same position but that time 114 countries were included in the index. The report titled “Fostering Effective Energy Transition” published by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF) on Monday contains the ETI which compares the energy sectors of 115 countries and analyses their readiness for energy transition.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/energy-transition-index-bangladesh-90th-among-115-nations-1721380>

#### **SE Asia should be aware of Iran’s tactics to evade oil sanctions: U.S**

*Reuters, March 29, 2019*

The United States is keen to see that Malaysia, Singapore and others are fully aware of illicit Iranian oil shipments and the tactics Iran uses to evade sanctions, a top U.S. sanctions official said on Friday.

Sigal Mandelker, under-secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, told reporters in Singapore the United States had placed additional “intense pressure” on Iran this week.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-iran/se-asia-should-be-aware-of-irans-tactics-to-evade-oil-sanctions-us-idINKCN1RA0B2>

#### **Brazilian nuclear plant uranium convoy attacked by armed men - police** *Reuters, March 20, 2019*

Armed men shot at members of a convoy transporting uranium to one of Brazil’s two working nuclear power plants on a coastal road in Rio de Janeiro state on Tuesday, police and the company managing the plant said. They said the truck carrying the nuclear fuel and its police escort came under attack when it was passing by the town of Frade, about 30 km (19 miles) from Angra dos Reis, where the reactor is located.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/brazil-uranium-violence/brazilian-nuclear-plant-uranium-convoy-attacked-by-armed-men-police-idINKCN1R02VD>

## L. Op-Eds

### INDIA

**A necessary evil** *Prafull Goradia, The Statesman, March 18, 2019*

So far, members of the nuclear club have accepted that such weapons are a symbol of international status as well as defence against nuclear blackmail but not a weapon of utility. An American writer has described the possession of nuclear arsenals as achieving mutual balance of terror. In short, possession of such arms has become an invaluable defence so long as a country doesn't use it.

The mention or even the thought of nuclear weapons sends jitters down the spines of almost everyone. The reaction is universally one of horror and rejection. On the morrow of the Balakot raid by the IAF Mirage warplanes, half the people the writer personally heard reminded him that Pakistan has the atom bomb. The refrain was: would Pakistan's General Bajwa use it in retaliation to India's destruction of the Jaish terror factories in Balakot?

<https://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/a-necessary-evil-1502739362.html>

### What has changed post-Balakot?

*Rakesh Sood, Hindu, March 20, 2019*

The situation between India and Pakistan seems to have returned to the pre-Pulwama position. The High Commissioners, withdrawn in February for 'consultations', have returned to Islamabad and Delhi. Talks on Kartarpur are proceeding. The UN Security Council 1267 Committee failed to designate Masood Azhar as a terrorist because China faithfully put a technical hold on the proposal. It had done so in 2009 and 2017, following it up with a veto. Perhaps it is time to dispassionately assess if something has changed post-Balakot and if so, what?

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/what-has-changed-post-balakot/article26583820.ece>

### India - China Face Off New

**Frontiers**, *Sandeep Dhawan, eSamskriti, March 27, 2019*

The whole world is rife with the talks of the South-China Sea and the coming conflict there. No doubt, the South-China Sea is a hotbed of activities due to its estimated large hydrocarbon deposits and other lucrative minerals. Those are all estimates, and may vary at the actual time of excavation and extraction. However, there is another continent rich in natural resources, which geopolitical pundits often ignore. It is this continent where future 'Mexican stand-off' may take place if all involved parties do not stick to the rules of the game.

<https://www.esamskriti.com/e/National-Affairs/Foreign-Affairs/India~-China-Face-Off-New-Frontiers-1.aspx>

### What Will Be the Strategic Ripple Effects of Balakot?

*Emily Tallo, Wire, March 27, 2019*

After more than 40 Indian paramilitary forces died as a result of a suicide attack in the Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on February 14, many analysts swiftly declared Indian retaliation inevitable. Few anticipated the reach of the resulting airstrikes, which the Indian government claims targeted Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) training camps in Balakot in northern Pakistan.

Though the damage done by the Balakot strikes has been cause for debate, what cannot be denied is that Indian warplanes crossed the Line of Control (LoC) for the first time in over five decades. From there, Pakistan retaliated in a calibrated manner by entering and dropping bombs over Indian territory across the LoC, which led to a dogfight between Indian and Pakistani warplanes.

<https://thewire.in/uncategorised/india-pakistan-balakot-terrorism>



gumption to resume thermonuclear testing on the reasonable ground that the fusion device tested in the Shakti series of tests under a BJP dispensation had fizzled. Modi likely approved the testing of the anti-satellite (A-SAT) weapon, a capability former chiefs of the Defence Research and Development Organisation maintain was in suspended animation for almost a decade, as insurance against his re-election prospects trended in the wrong direction. Besides, it doesn't hurt to blow up a satellite in space with a direct missile hit to follow up on the Balakot air strike as a way to burnish the Prime Minister's tough guy image. But mark this: In each case, the decision was made or not made for extraneous reasons, and not to strategically advantage the country.

<https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/opinion-a-weapon-that-could-change-the-game-if-india-plays-tough-1553797638314.html>

### **Swaraj's Maldives visit lends economic direction to political ties**

*N Sathiya Moorthy, ORF, March 29, 2019*

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's two-day official visit to Maldives in mid-March has given more meaning and purpose to the bilateral relations between the two countries than already. Coming as it did after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's participation at the Inauguration of President Ibrahim Mohammed 'Ibu' Solih in November last, followed by the latter's State visit to New Delhi, Sushma's Male visit sought to give specific direction to the economic commitments made earlier.

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/swarajs-maldives-visit-lends-economic-direction-to-political-ties-49355/>

### **A-SAT**

### **With A-SAT test, India takes leap in space defence: Mission Shakti can nullify Chinese cyber attacks at time of war**

*Bharat Karnad, First Post, March 27, 2019*

The successful culmination of the programme to test-prove India's anti-

satellite weapon capability – Mission Shakti – was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday. He informed the nation of a “live” low earth orbit (LEO) satellite being blown in the space with a direct hit. It vaults the country into an exclusive club of now four countries boasting of such wherewithal.

This is the second but still infant step taken by India in the realm of space warfare. The first step, though still incomplete – in a plan that will eventually obtain for India a constellation of 13-15 LEO and high earth orbit (HEO) satellites, to cover the Indian landmass and the extended region bounded by the Indian Ocean, the Caspian Sea, the Central Asian Republics, Southeast Asia and China – is to provide India with its very own Global Positioning System (GPS). This will be a major capability upgrade for the country in the space warfare realm.

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/with-a-sat-test-india-takes-leap-in-space-defence-mission-shakti-can-nullify-chinese-cyber-attacks-at-time-of-war-6338251.html>

### **Pakistan Day 2019: Fault lines over jingoism**

*Jaibans Singh, Vijayvaani, March 27, 2019*

Pakistan observes its Republic Day on March 23, every year. Also known as Pakistan Day, it commemorates the Lahore Resolution that paved the way for adoption of the first Constitution of the country which gave to it an Islamic character. Technically speaking, commemoration of this day does not stand to order since the said Constitution of 1956 was abrogated in 1962 and then again in 1973. In between there were a large number of dictatorships when the Constitution was held in suspended animation. The present Constitution of 1973 has also witnessed as many as 22 amendments and more are expected in future.

Pakistan needs to engage with the problems that it is facing in order to escape being a failed state. It has to accept the fault lines in its social, economic, political and internal security framework and take

credible steps to remove the same. To remain engrossed with India is not going to help. It is time for the country's leadership to go beyond the traditional script and face the new challenges with a new outlook. Pakistan Day provided a good opportunity to the leadership to change the narrative. Sadly the opportunity was lost.

<http://vijayvaani.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?aid=4992%20>

### **Mission Shakti in the global space defence race** *Aditya Ramanathan, The Telegraph, March 28, 2019*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi accompanied his dramatic announcement on Wednesday that India has shot down a low-orbit satellite with an anti-satellite (ASAT) missile with the assurance it would "make India stronger," while bolstering "peace and harmony".

With Modi's announcement of "Mission Shakti," just two weeks before the general elections, India joins the US, Russia and China in an elite club of nations with the ability to target satellites.

[https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/mission-shakti-in-the-global-space-defence-race/cid/1687633?fidid=lvAR0gK4ZzoxV\\_xhlp8ibgZRLe7AfpKfkaJ-mOfE7Xhl7Cr2LFuldMpSSQ#.XjwofE3CO\\_Afacebook\(ASAT\)](https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/mission-shakti-in-the-global-space-defence-race/cid/1687633?fidid=lvAR0gK4ZzoxV_xhlp8ibgZRLe7AfpKfkaJ-mOfE7Xhl7Cr2LFuldMpSSQ#.XjwofE3CO_Afacebook(ASAT))

### **India's ASAT test: Further steps** *Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, ORF, March 28, 2019*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced yesterday that India has conducted an anti-satellite (ASAT) missile test, hitting a live satellite at an altitude of 300 kms. This makes India only the fourth country after the US, Russia and China to demonstrate such a capability. The only other country that is thought to have this capability is Israel, although it has not demonstrated it as yet.

India's ASAT test could raise some questions given that it is likely to be perceived as a path to weaponisation but Modi argued that this was a "defensive" move meant to secure India's own assets. He said, "Our aim is to maintain peace over war mongering. The space programme's aim is peace, India's

economic and technological progress." Highlighting the salience of space to India, Modi asserted, "Today, we are using space and satellites for all sorts of purposes, including agriculture, defence, disaster management, communication, entertainment, weather, navigation, education, medical uses, and other things. In such a situation, the security of these satellites is extremely important."

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-asat-test-further-steps-49340/>

### **A-SAT tech gives India diplomatic bargaining power** *V.K. Saraswat, Livemint, March 28, 2019*

We have reached the pinnacle of missile technology to intercept a satellite that is orbiting at about 7,000-8,000 metres per second in a lower orbit with the precision of less than one millisecond. If we can intercept a satellite, it means we can intercept any object approaching us this fast. Such objects are intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). We can engage these weapons at altitudes of 300 kilometres above ground.

<https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/opinion-a-sat-tech-gives-india-diplomatic-bargaining-power-1553710379076.html>

### **Mission Shakti: Technology demonstrator or new weapon in the arsenal?** *Sandeep Unnithan, Dailyo, March 29, 2019*

The March 27 test of an anti-satellite (ASAT) missile lofted India into an elite club of just three other countries which have demonstrated the capability to destroy orbiting satellites.

The ASAT interceptor, launched by the DRDO from APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha, successfully engaged an Indian orbiting satellite in Low Earth Orbit in a 'Hit to Kill' mode, i.e., a direct hit, rather than one using a proximity explosion to shatter it.

<https://www.dailyo.in/politics/project-shakti-lok-sabha-elections-2019-narendra-modi-asat-programme-mission-shakti-india-s-nuclear-tests-ins-arihant-china-pakistan-usa-pentagon/story/1/30109.html>

## **No global heat on India's ASAT missile test** *Hindustan Times, March 29, 2019*

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the successful test of an anti-satellite (ASAT) missile by India. With this test, India has joined a select group of nations which have demonstrated this capability. The last country to do a successful test was China in 2007. The test by China was widely censured by the international community. In contrast, life for India has been much more comfortable after Wednesday's test.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/editorials/no-global-heat-on-india-s-asat-missile-test/story-QnUVmDVxhHuwUO0UklJopL.html>

### **CHINA**

## **Chinese children take to coding amid country's lofty goals in AI, other hi-tech initiatives** *Celia Chen, South China Morning Post, March 17, 2019*

The wave of enthusiasm in China for coding education comes as the country moves to become an AI powerhouse. "Coding is a must-have skill because we are entering the age of AI [artificial intelligence], when the jobs of people without coding skills will be replaced by robots," said Li Yu, a stock trader in Beijing. Li said her four-year son, Chen Tian, is taking coding class every weekend. It is a formative education in computing that she hopes will "help him understand how the technology-enhanced world works", she said. The current wave of enthusiasm in China for coding education comes as the country moves to become an AI powerhouse, while lifting domestic hi-tech industries - from robotics, and aerospace to new materials and new energy vehicles - up the value chain to help transform the nation's economy over the next decade.

<https://www.scmp.com/tech/policy/article/3001956/chinese-children-take-coding-amid-countrys-lofty-goals-ai-other-hi-tech>

## **What military hardware will go on show for China's 70th anniversary parade?** *Minnie Chan, South China Morning Post, March 17, 2019*

China's leadership is reviewing list of weapons for 70th anniversary parade but final line-up could depend partly on relations with US, sources say. Weaponry on show will be chosen carefully to avoid ruffling feathers amid ongoing trade war. The National Day display on October 1 will be a traditional show of advanced military muscle, the weaponry on show will be chosen carefully to avoid ruffling the feathers of the United States as the two tussle over trade, according to sources close to the Chinese armed forces. One military insider said a list of dozens of weapons had been submitted to the country's leadership to consider for inclusion in the parade, and the final arrangements would depend in some part on relations with the US.

"Preparations have already begun and rehearsals for the parade have been held in several training bases on the outskirts of Beijing since January," the source said. "At the same time, a weapons list with 50 to 60 items has been drawn up and submitted to the Central Military Commission for review. "If the relationship with the US improves in the coming months, then [President Xi Jinping who heads the CMC] is likely to go for a less aggressive show of force in the parade."

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3001986/what-military-hardware-will-go-show-chinas-70th-anniversary>

## **How China's growing PLA Navy could close a perception gap in the South China Sea** *Collin Koh, South China Morning Post, 17, March 2019*

Collin Koh writes that a political solution is the way to win trust in the disputed maritime region as China's naval force grows more powerful and modern. As the PLA Navy stands poised to celebrate its 70th anniversary, there is much to be

happy about, especially where capability modernisation is concerned. The navy by 2000 had mustered a total of 57 submarines, only six of which were built in the 1990s and could have been considered modern and up-to-date. The same applied to only four of the total of 20 destroyers and frigates in the navy's fleet at the time.

According to the International Institute of Strategic Studies' 2019 assessment of global military capabilities and defence economics, 51 of China's 59 submarines are viewed as modern and up-to-date. Meanwhile, 67 of its 86 destroyers and frigates – mostly commissioned in recent years – are top-of-the-line. There is also a functional aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, which has served mainly as a training and test-bed carrier since 2012. More of these powerful major surface combat ships are coming on line – supported by an equally impressive, if not always well-publicised, growing logistics support force. The increase in fleet replenishment ships to 11 from just three back in 2000 clearly signals an expanding blue-water capability.

The “mosquito fleet” of torpedo and missile fast attack craft – once the navy's backbone, focused primarily on coastal defence and support for ground forces – has shrunk significantly over almost two decades.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3001764/how-chinas-growing-pla-navy-could-close-perception-gap-south>

**‘Peaceful space’ meet opens** *Global Times*, March 17, 2019

Talks take place against backdrop of arms race threat. On the surface, this looks like a terrible moment for the world's major military powers to negotiate a deal on preventing an arms race in space. Last month, UN chief Antonio Guterres warned that the global disarmament architecture was “collapsing,” citing various diplomatic failures, including Washington's decision to scrap a crucial nuclear weapons treaty with Russia. Meanwhile, the Pentagon has drafted plans for a new “Space Force” on orders from President Donald Trump who has declared space a “war-fighting domain.”

Despite those headwinds, experts from 25 countries - including China, Russia and the US - open a 10-day meeting in Geneva on Monday aiming to lay the groundwork for a treaty to keep space peaceful. “I hope I am not just indulging in wishful thinking here but I do see some positive initiatives against this rather dark background,” said Paul Meyer, Canada's former disarmament ambassador and an expert on space security at the Simons Foundation in Vancouver.

The closed-door Geneva talks involve a UN panel called a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE). Chaired by Brazilian Ambassador Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota to the UN Conference on Disarmament, the space GGE works on consensus and will only issue a report if all parties agree on its content. Diplomatic efforts to forge a space treaty have been deadlocked for more than a decade. Dozens of countries including developing nations now operate satellites and that list will only grow, he said. Space technology - whether related to reconnaissance, mapping or navigation - has also become an integral part of both military and civilian everyday life. Meyer said the question governments face is: Where are the best interests of the nation served?

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1142371.shtml>

**Europe should treat China as a partner** *Zhang Bei, Global Times*, March 20, 2019

President Xi Jinping's visit to Italy and France will certainly attract great attention from the US. It is widely expected that Italy and China will agree on a Belt and Road Initiative Memorandum of Understanding during Xi's state visit, making Italy the first G7 country to sign the deal and showing Rome's enthusiasm and openness for opportunities brought about by the BRI. In a move highlighting Washington's concern, the US National Security Council tweeted, “Italy is a major global economy and a great investment destination. Endorsing BRI lends legitimacy to China's

predatory approach to investment and will bring no benefits to the Italian people.”

It has become increasingly normal for the US to oppose European countries' cooperation with China. When visiting Europe, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned the European countries that using technology from Huawei could hurt their relationship with the US. When Europe hopes, either out of inertia or strategic laziness, that Trump's presidency is an anomaly and interregnum, and that the transatlantic relationship will be business as usual after Trump, it has become more realistic in dealing with the US. It cooperates with the US when interests coincide, abstains from cooperation when there is no common interest, and fights back when interests clash. Both the Iran nuclear deal and the EU's trade stance are proof of that. From a Chinese perspective, it is the same attitude that we wish to see when Europe is facing pressure from the US. Understanding the closeness between the US and Europe, China doesn't want to pull Europe away from the US. First, it is not possible. Second, it is not what China wants. China doesn't see the world as a power struggle. China's long-term policy is to seek partnerships rather than alliances.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1142801.shtml>

### **Mass production of clone monkeys disease models, future drug tests possible: scientists** *Deng Xiaoci, Global Times, March 21, 2019*

The recent success Chinese neuroscientists involving the first multiple cloned monkeys with a uniform genetic background from a gene-edited donor monkey would enable future drug tests on non-human primates, while expanding studies for a wider range of diseases, according to leading research fellows of the program on Thursday. The latest development succeeded in using fibroblasts from a young adult gene-edited donor monkey with particular disease phenotypes, while the first two cloned monkeys, Zhong Zhong and Hua Hua, born in China at the end of 2017, were generated by using fibroblasts from an aborted fetus.

“Such a new approach enables researchers to conduct comparative studies on monkeys from two generations,” Muming Poo, the director of the Shanghai-based Institute of Neuroscience of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, told the Global Times. More importantly, it affirmed the feasibility of using somatic cell nuclear transfers to clone monkeys with disease phenotypes, proving the effectiveness of using clone monkeys as disease models, Poo noted.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1143052.shtml>

### **US playing a dangerous zero-sum game with China** *Li Qingqing, Global Times, March 27, 2019*

A group of experts on China, national security practitioners, human rights and religious freedom activists and others launched the so-called Committee on the Present Danger: China (CPDC) on Monday. PresentDangerChina.org said that “Communist China represents an existential and ideological threat.” It is wrong for the US to regard China as a major enemy. The US is unconsciously getting lost in its strategic maze.

The Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) was first formed in 1950 during the Cold War era to counter “the aggressive designs of the Soviet Union.” In 2004, the CPD turned to address the US war on terrorism. Now, US policy advisers again revived it to target China, its so-called “aggressive totalitarian foe.” Has the US never abandoned its Cold War mentality? As the US' current imaginary enemy, China is completely different from the previous two - the Soviet Union and terrorism. The Soviet Union was trapped in a vicious cycle of an arms race with the US. The situation involved a confrontation between two military groups and a balance in nuclear deterrence. China, however, focuses on its own path of development and has never declared it wanted to defeat the US.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1143674.shtml>

## EAST ASIA

### Complete discontinuance of war games needed *Om Ryong, Pyongyang Times, March 17, 2019*

The US and south Korea advertise that the drill aims to back up the diplomatic efforts for easing tension on the Korean peninsula and achieve complete denuclearization, as they describe it as “defensive one” for consolidating the alliance between them and defending regional stability and assert that they have drastically reduced the number of participating troops and period as compared to the Key Resolve. They can never cover up the aggressive and confrontational nature of the war game no matter how cunningly they play a trick, while reducing its scale and period.

Given that the DPRK and the US and the north and south of Korea committed themselves to trust building and improved relationship, all sorts of north-targeted war exercises, the tinderbox and root cause of confrontation and war, should completely be suspended, rather than temporary suspended or reduced.

<http://www.pyongyangtimes.com.kp/>

### Are we destined to have a space war? *South China Morning Post, Agence France-Presse, March 17, 2019*

On the surface, this looks like a terrible moment for the world’s major military powers to negotiate a deal on preventing an arms race in space. Last month, UN chief Antonio Guterres warned that the global disarmament architecture was “collapsing,” citing various diplomatic failures, including Washington’s decision to scrap a crucial nuclear weapons treaty with Russia.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has drafted plans for a new “Space Force” on orders from US President Donald Trump who has declared space a “war-fighting domain”. Despite those headwinds, experts from 25 countries – including China, Russia and the US – open a 10-day meeting in Geneva Monday aiming to lay the groundwork for a treaty to keep space peaceful. Even against the grim diplomatic backdrop, experts say there may

be reasons for optimism. “I hope I am not just indulging in wishful thinking here but I do see some positive initiatives against this rather dark background,” said Paul Meyer, Canada’s former disarmament ambassador and an expert on space security at The Simons Foundation in Vancouver.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/3002027/are-we-destined-have-space-war>

### Swimming against stream *Choe Yong Nam, Pyongyang Times, March 24, 2019*

Many nations are voicing their opinion that the anti-DPRK sanctions should be lifted as there is no rationale left for them. China and Russia are asserting that the sanctions should be ended in response to the DPRK’s measures for regional détente. And the international community acknowledges that the situation in the Korean peninsula and the region is turning towards peace and stability thanks to the DPRK’s proactive, leading efforts.

Nevertheless, Japan is scheming to drag France into the surveillance of “maritime transshipping” of the DPRK. Recently, as to the involvement of the vessels and planes of the French army in the surveillance of the alleged transshipping, Japanese Defence Minister Iwaya touted that he “welcomes it as it helps ensure efficiency of the resolution of the UN Security Council” and “will go on imposing sanctions for the denuclearization” of the DPRK. Foreign media commented that the Japanese authorities are obviously struggling to get out of its political and diplomatic isolation in the Korean peninsula and the region.

Japan is now quarantined from the region for refusing to liquidate the past as it neglects the general will of the international community and seeks militaristic revival, which goes against the trend of the times. Japan should be aware that if it clings to the policy of hostility to the DPRK, it will completely be excluded from the mainstream of the regional situation.

<http://www.pyongyangtimes.com.kp/>

## PAKISTAN

**The hypocritical US stance** *Malik Muhammad Ashraf, Pakistan Today, March 27, 2019*

How the USA tries to appease India

The statement by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo last week that proliferation of the Pakistani nuclear programme was a threat to the USA, his blaming her for harbouring terrorists and the indiscreet observation that the current Indo-Pak tensions were caused by terrorist departing from Pakistan, is yet another manifestation of US hypocrisy. It has not come as a surprise to those who are familiar with the unfriendly acts of the USA towards Pakistan ever since the two countries became allies in the early 1950s.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/03/27/the-hypocritical-us-stance/>

**Pakistanis and Indians deserve better** *Talat Masood, The Express Tribune, March 27, 2019*

The threat that the conflict with India could have taken a dangerous course has been largely averted. Thanks to the timely role of major players – the US, Russia, China and Britain – in restraining India from any misadventure. Prime Minister Imran Khan's consistent emphasis on dialogue and engagement to resolve issues rather than further compound them through military action did contribute to injecting sanity. The state of alertness and professionalism of our armed forces was evident from the quality of response to Indian violation of our air space and the subsequent downing of two of its fighter aircraft.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1937839/6-pakistanis-indians-deserve-better/>

**The deepening of Karachi's fault lines** *Dr Moonis Ahmar, The Express Tribune, March 29, 2019*

As a major contributor to the national exchequer and a melting pot of the various Pakistani cultures, Karachi is often titled as the country's 'jewel in the crown'. But the

11th mega city of the world with a population of more than 20 million is the most neglected city in terms of infrastructure, utilities, law and order and environment. In August 1947, when Pakistan emerged as a new state with Karachi as its capital, the population of the city was 300,000 but its demographic complexion changed with the huge influx of refugees from India and then migration from upcountry.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1939238/6-deepening-karachis-fault-lines/>

## USA

**How I learned to start worrying and fear the bomb** *Paddy Ryan, Spectator USA, March 18, 2019*

'This is not the Cold War redux; it is even worse than the Cold War.' That's how Nicolas Roche, of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, described the current climate around nuclear weapons.

North Korea received substantial attention at the conference, while Iran and South Asia were relatively neglected. The dominant topic of conversation, and predominant reason for despair, was the US-Russia relationship.

The two superpowers (perhaps former superpower, in the case of Russia), control 90 percent of the world's supply of nuclear arms. The de-escalation of nuclear tensions has been a must for diplomats on both sides since the Cold War's climax. The traditional manner of doing this has been through arms control treaties, limiting both nuclear stockpiles, as well as the means of delivering them. But that system lies on the brink.

<https://spectator.us/worrying-fear-bomb-nuke-fest/>

**Trump's Iran Policy Is 'Untethered to History'** *Robbie Gramer, Foreign Policy, March 28, 2019*

Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger once referred to diplomacy as the

“patient accumulation of partial successes.” For over 30 years, this was the life of William Burns, a widely revered career diplomat. Burns served on the front lines of U.S. diplomacy through five presidential administrations. From his perch at the State Department he played a role in some of America’s greatest diplomatic triumphs and also some of its biggest follies, including the 2003 invasion of Iraq, in the run-up to which Burns co-authored a memo presciently raising fears of a “Perfect Storm.”

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/28/trumps-iran-policy-is-untethered-to-history/>

### **The Foreign Policy Fiasco That Wasn’t** *Bret Stephens, The New York Times, March 29, 2019*

It’s been nearly a year since Donald Trump made the decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, to loud cries that it would bring nothing but woe to the United States and our interests in the Middle East.

That much was further made clear thanks to excellent reporting this week by The Times’s Ben Hubbard. “Iran’s financial crisis, exacerbated by American sanctions,” he writes from Lebanon, “appears to be undermining its support for militant groups and political allies who bolster Iranian influence in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/29/opinion/iran-us-foreign-policy.html>

## **RUSSIA**

### **Neither Israel nor Iran Trust Russia. But Only Putin Can Prevent War Between Them** *Shimon Stein and Shlomo Brom, Haaretz, March 18, 2019*

Iran and Israel would never volunteer to place crucial national security interests in the Kremlin’s hands. But they need a third party to umpire their conflict in Syria – and there’s no other option

The 1979 revolution that transformed Iran into an Islamic republic was also a turning point in Iran’s foreign policy – and in particular, its approach to the State of Israel.

<https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium-neither-israel-nor-iran-trust-russia-but-only-putin-can-prevent-war-between-them-1.7025237>

### **Opponents Of Trade Relief For Uranium Mining Have Unconvincing Case,** *Thomas*

*Duesterberg, Forbes, March 25, 2019*

Early next month the Commerce Department will decide whether to recommend trade relief for the domestic uranium mining industry under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. The petition for relief was filed by the only active U.S. mining firm last year in the wake of a precipitous drop in the domestic production of raw uranium due to competition from abroad and weak global demand. As the decision timeline approaches, it is worthwhile to review the arguments for and against granting some relief.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasduesterberg/2019/03/25/opponents-of-section-232-relief-for-uranium-mining-relief-have-unconvincing-case/#16a5b203f8db>

### **Future nuclear weapons technology: which states are developing nukes?** *Talal Husseini, Army Technology, March 27, 2019*

Which countries are developing future nuclear weapons technology?

There were a total of 14,465 nuclear weapons owned by nine countries last year, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook. Of these, 3,750 were deployed with operational forces; and more than half of those were declared ‘in a state of high operational alert’.

While the overall number of nuclear weapons has declined from 14,935, in part due to the enactment of the 2010 New START treaty, the number of nuclear weapons with high alert status actually increased by 200 in 2018.

<https://www.army-technology.com/features/future-nuclear-weapons-technology/>

### **335 Million Dead: If America Launched A Massive Nuclear War on Russia and China,** *Kyle Mizokami,*

*National Interest, March 28, 2019*

It is no exaggeration to say that for those who grew up during the Cold War, all-out nuclear war was “the ultimate nightmare.” The prospect of an ordinary day interrupted by air-raid sirens, klaxons and the searing heat of a thermonuclear explosion was a very real, albeit remote, possibility. Television shows such as *The Day After* and *Threads* realistically portrayed both a nuclear attack and the gradual disintegration of society in the aftermath. In an all-out nuclear attack, most of the industrialized world would have been bombed back to the Stone Age, with hundreds of millions killed outright and perhaps as many as a billion or more dying of radiation, disease and famine in the postwar period.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/335-million-dead-if-america-launched-massive-nuclear-war-russia-and-china-49507>

### **Russia’s Typhoon Submarines are the Biggest Ever (Now Armed with 200 Cruise Missiles?)** *Sebastien Roblin,*

*National Interest, March 30, 2019*

The Typhoon ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), famously featured in the film *Hunt for Red October*, are by far the biggest and most expensive submarines ever built. Cruise-missile-armed Typhoons would give Russia direct analogs of the United States’ four Ohio-class cruise missile submarines (SSGNs), which had their launch tubes for nuclear-armed ballistic missiles replaced with vertical launch systems for 154 conventionally-armed Tomahawk cruise missiles.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/russias-typhoon-submarines-are-biggest-ever-now-armed-200-cruise-missiles-49727>

## **WEST ASIA**

### **Iran And The Hanoi Debacle: The Threat To Israel** *Amos Gilead, Udi*

*Evental, Jerusalem Post, March 18, 2019*

The summit in Vietnam’s capital between

President Trump and Chairman Kim in February ended in a resounding failure. The two leaders didn’t even bother to complete the summit’s program, having quickly realized that the gaps between them are too wide, and that further talks would be futile at this point.

The ayatollahs in Tehran have observed the inability of the Trump administration to dismantle nuclear weapons and missile systems that directly threaten the American homeland. This reinforces the Iranian leaders’ assumption that when they will acquire nuclear weapons, the United States won’t have the determination or the power to compel Iran to relinquish these capabilities. Thus, Iran may be emboldened to procure nuclear weapons, which it considers a guarantee to regime survivability, like Kim’s North Korea.

<https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Iran-and-the-Hanoi-debacle-The-threat-to-Israel-583853>

### **Pompeo tells Lebanon to choose Hezbollah or independence,** *Anchal Vohra, Aljazeera, March 20, 2019*

A seven-minute media address by United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Friday was dominated by his country’s preoccupation with Hezbollah and, in effect, its patron Iran. Pompeo read out his statement during his visit to Beirut as his Lebanese counterpart Gebran Bassil watched with an unwavering gaze.

The top US diplomat minced no words while declaring the intentions of President Donald Trump’s administration to take on Hezbollah for its “criminal activities and terrorist network” albeit by “peaceful means”. Referring to a recent televised speech by Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah, Pompeo claimed success of US sanctions against the group, saying “Nasrallah begged for contributions”.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/pompeo-tells-lebanon-choose-hezbollah-independence-190323063945362.html>

## Why did Bush go to war in Iraq?

*Ahsan I Butt, Aljazeera, March 20, 2019*

No, it wasn't because of WMDs, democracy or Iraqi oil. The real reason is much more sinister than that. Sixteen years after the United States invaded Iraq and left a trail of destruction and chaos in the country and the region, one aspect of the war remains criminally underexamined: why was it fought in the first place? What did the Bush administration hope to get out of the war? The official, and widely-accepted, story remains that Washington was motivated by Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programme. His nuclear capabilities, especially, were deemed sufficiently alarming to incite the war. As then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, "We do not want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."

Even Bush officials have sometimes dropped their guard. Feith confessed in 2006 that "the rationale for the war didn't hinge on the details of this intelligence even though the details of the intelligence at times became elements of the public presentation". That the administration used the fear of WMDs and terrorism to fight a war for hegemony should be acknowledged by an American political establishment eager to rehabilitate George W Bush amid the rule of Donald Trump, not least because John Bolton, Trump's national security adviser, seems eager to employ similar methods to similar ends in Iran.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/bush-war-iraq-190318150236739.html>

## Khamenei Decides Iran Likely Sticking With Nuke Deal Until End Despite Sanctions- Analysis, Yonah

*Jeremy Bob, Jerusalem Post, March 21, 2019*

In his speech kicking-off the Iranian religious new year, he signaled that the Islamic republic is likely staying in the 2015 nuclear deal until it expires despite US sanctions. Khamenei focused his speech on portraying Iran as having successfully survived US sanctions - encouraging his people to keep the economy strong by internal Iranian efforts, such as increasing production - and

refrained from threats against the EU. There were no real threats against the EU, even though England, France and Germany's much celebrated special purpose vehicle (SPV) to help Tehran circumvent Washington's sanctions has failed to deliver most of the relief that Khamenei had demanded.

<https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Iran-News/Khamenei-decides-Iran-likely-sticking-with-uke-deal-until-end-despite-sanctions-analysis-584204>

## Hezbollah a risk to Middle East stability: Pompeo

*Saudigazette, March 21, 2019*

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described Hezbollah on Wednesday as a risk to Middle East stability and conferred with Israel about the heavily armed, Iranian-backed Lebanese group ahead of a trip to Beirut. Pompeo, who has been on a regional tour to promote the Trump administration's hard tack against Iran, received a warning from Israel which worries it may again be in the sights of Hezbollah forces winding down their intervention in Syria's war.

Meeting Israeli President Reuven Rivlin in Jerusalem, Pompeo listed Hezbollah, Palestinian Hamas and Yemen's Houthis - all recipients of Iranian support - as "entities that present risks to Middle East stability and to Israel". "They are determined to wipe this country off the face of the planet and we have a moral obligation and a political one to prevent that from happening. You should know that the United States is prepared to do that," Pompeo said in public remarks at the meeting.

<http://saudigazette.com.sa/article/561673/World/Mena/Hezbollah-a-risk-to-Middle-East-stability-Pompeo>

## Spectre of Chernobyl hangs over Middle East's nuclear ambitions

*Kieran Cooke, Middle East Eye, March 22, 2019*

The Middle East is going nuclear. The United Arab Emirates is home to the

Barakah nuclear power station, the Arab world's first such facility and the biggest nuclear power plant currently under construction. Saudi Arabia has plans for two large nuclear plants to cope with national energy demands, increasing by more than eight percent annually.

Initial land-clearing work has also begun for a nuclear facility at Akkuyu, on Turkey's southern coast, while Egypt is due to start building a nuclear power plant in El Dabaa, west of Alexandria, next year. Jordan has plans for a number of smaller nuclear facilities.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/spectre-chnobyl-hangs-over-middle-east-nuclear-ambitions>

### **Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh share common views on regional issues**

*Arab News, March 25 2019*

The Kingdom is the largest and most valued destination for the Bangladeshi workforce, which contributes significantly to the national development of both countries. Remittance flows from Saudi Arabia to Bangladesh comprised almost 22 percent of the total amount, which was approximately \$34 billion, in 2018. Both countries share common views on many regional and international issues, particularly those relating to the Islamic community. These shared priorities, perspectives and fraternal relations have strengthened the collaboration within the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other international and regional forums.

It is expected that the overall relationship dynamic between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia will fundamentally change in the next few years.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1472466/saudi-arabia>

**Saturation of Air Defences: Observations on Failure of Air Defence Systems in Syria**, Col Mandeep Singh, *Indian Defence Review, March 27, 2019*

On January 21, 2019, Israel and Syria exchanged a flurry of missiles in the

unending conflict in the Middle East. What was of interest as the destruction of the latest Syrian air defence systems; the Pantsir S-1 which are short range air defence systems specially designed and developed to engage multiple targets with each mount having 12 SA-22 "Greyhound" surface-to-air missiles and a pair of 30mm cannon. Two to three SA-22 launch vehicles were destroyed in the Israeli strikes.

<http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/saturation-of-air-defences-observations-on-failure-of-air-defence-systems-in-syria/>

### **Global energy demand rose by 2.3 per cent in 2018: IEA Technical Review Middle East, March 28, 2019**

Global energy demand grew by 2.3 per cent in 2018, with natural gas accounting for 45 per cent of the rise in energy consumption, according to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) report.

The Global Energy & CO2 Status Report provides a high-level and up-to-date view of energy markets including latest available data for oil, natural gas, coal, wind, solar, nuclear power, electricity, and energy efficiency.

<http://www.technicalreviewmiddleeast.com/power-a-water/power-generation/global-energy-demand-rose-by-2-3-per-cent-in-2018-iea>

### **Constraining Iran's missile capabilities** Robert Einhorn and Vann H. Van Diepen, *Brookings Report, March 28, 2019*

For decades, the United States has sought to constrain Iran's missile program, both because it poses a conventional military threat to regional stability and because it can provide a delivery capability for nuclear weapons should Iran acquire them. But despite the efforts of the United States and others to impede Iranian procurement of missile-related materials, equipment, and technology and a succession of U.N. Security Council (UNSC) restrictions imposed largely to

prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons delivery systems, Iran has managed to acquire the largest and most diverse missile force in the Middle East.

Relying initially on missiles, components, and technology purchased mainly from North Korea and China, but increasingly making advances through indigenous efforts, Iran maintains a force of hundreds of liquid- and solid-propellant short- and medium-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs and MRBMs), now being augmented by land-attack cruise missiles. Although claiming to limit itself to ballistic missiles with a 2000 km range by order of the supreme leader and not yet launching ballistic missiles above that range, Iran pursues at least four paths that it could use to develop intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) capable of reaching the United States, including the development of space-launch vehicles (SLVs) based on technologies directly applicable to long-range ballistic missiles. While placing priority on indigenous development, Iran remains dependent on importing key components and materials. It is working on more accurate guidance systems to improve the military utility of its missiles and has fielded road-mobile missile launchers to promote their survivability against attack.

*<https://www.brookings.edu/research/constraining-irans-missile-capabilities/>*

### **Defiant Khamenei emphasizes Iranian regime's aggressive policies**

*Dr. Majid Rafizadeh, Arab News, March 31, 2019*

The comments by the most powerful man in Iran outline the path the Islamic Republic will take in the next year. Iran's lawmakers in the Majlis (parliament) and military generals view Khamenei's annual speech as direct instructions to be followed. Policymakers should also search for the important issues that Khamenei deliberately and shrewdly evades. In his most recent annual speech, which he gave on March 21, Iran's supreme leader highlighted several important issues. First of all, he went on at length to explain that the Islamic Republic

ought to maintain its core revolutionary principle of opposing Western countries.

Intriguingly, Khamenei did not make any distinction between the US and European countries in this year's speech. After the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, was reached between six world powers and the Islamic Republic, Iran's supreme leader employed a softer tone toward the European nations in his annual speeches. Khamenei made it clear in his important speech that he is determined to defy international norms and standards, continue to expand the stranglehold of his military institutions, further destabilize the region, and evade responsibility and accountability for Iran's economic crisis.

*<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1475396>*

## Contribute Articles

Indian Pugwash Society welcomes research articles from students, researchers and faculties on Space, Missile, nuclear technology, WMD proliferation, arms control, disarmament, export controls and other related issues. Articles should be crisply written and should address contemporary debates in the policy arena. Manuscripts submitted for the consideration of the Indian Pugwash Society should be original contributions and should not have been submitted for consideration anywhere else. For further assistance, please contact us at : indianpugwashsociety@gmail.com

The Indian Pugwash Society aims to promote the study, discussion, and knowledge of and to stimulate general interest in, and to diffuse knowledge in regards to problems relating on WMD proliferation, arms control, disarmament, space security, export controls, nuclear technology and other related issues. This newsletter is part of the project "Emerging Nuclear Order in Asia: Implications for India" sanctioned to us by Department of Atomic Energy-Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (DAE-BRNS).

### Disclaimer:

**Data included in this newsletter is only for educational purpose and wider dissemination. All liabilities and rights belong to respective writers & authors.**

### Prepared by :

**Ms Deepika Sharma  
Ms Diya Deep Singh  
Ms Raj Rajeshwari Singh  
Ms Rishika Chauhan**

### Indian Pugwash Society

No.1, Development Enclave,  
Rao Tula Ram Marg, Near USI, Delhi-110010  
Tel. No (91-11) 2671-7983  
Fax No. (91-11)2615-4192  
Email: indianpugwashsociety@gmail.com