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- Beijing publishes AI ethical standards, calls for int'l cooperation
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- China's new cybersecurity rule indicates possible retaliation against US
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- China bridles at rare meeting between Taiwan and U.S. security officials
- Global cutting-edge technologies shine at Big Data Expo 2019 in Guiyang
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- Namibia says China can buy Rio's uranium stake if it respects laws
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- AI forum opens in Zhongguancun

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- Pakistan says it has test-fired nuclear-capable missile
- Pakistan conducted successful training launch of surface to surface ballistic missile Shaheen-II.
- Pakistan stresses need of upholding int'l agreement on Iran's nuclear programme JCPOA
- Pakistan PM warns against war in region amid Iran tensions with U.S., Saudi
- 'Pakistan needs to enhance N-capabilities for peaceful purposes'
- Youm-e-Takbir: Pakistan marks anniversary of nuclear tests
- I made Pakistan a nuclear state, says Nawaz
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- The Effects of Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons on Balochistan
- Credit Goes To Whole Nation For Making Pakistan 'a Nuclear State': MNA
- Asif, Murad spar in NA over nuclear programme
- 1st Islamic nuclear power: Pakistan celebrates Youm-e-Takbeer
- General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) endorsed punishment to two Army and one civil officer on the charges of espionage/leakage of sensitive information to foreign agencies prejudice to the national security
- Pakistan, China agree that arms control, non-proliferation issues to be addressed through dialogue
- Pakistan, China Hold Bilateral Consultations On Arms Control, Non-proliferation
- For selling N-secrets, Pakistan jails Lt Gen for life, will hang Brigadier, scientist

D. USA

- Stung by U.S. sanction threats, EU seeks ways to boost the euro
- New US uranium production and resource data released
- US needs new approach to advanced reactor demonstration, report says
- Trump: U.S. will respond with 'great force' if Iran attacks interests
- U.S. officials seek to tamp down Trump rhetoric on Iran
- North Korea says 'biggest issue' in U.S. ties is impounded ship
- Pentagon mulling military request to send 5,000 troops to Middle East: officials
- U.S. State Department misses deadline to explain Iran arms control report-aide
- U.S. defence bill takes aim at China's growing influence
- Defying Congress, Trump sets \$8 billion-plus in weapons sales to Saudi Arabia, UAE
- Ohio House committee passes bill to save nuclear power plants
- Trump approves \$8bn Saudi weapons sale over Iran tensions
- Pompeo to meet with Merkel next week at start of Europe visit
- Trump says Iran nuclear deal achievable as sanctions sting
- Trump's three-month ultimatum to two controversial cabinet members

- U.S. may suspend training of Turkish pilots for F-35 jets over Russia missile deal
- Top U.S. security adviser: Iranian mines likely caused UAE tanker blasts
- Trump will decide whether to extend START treaty 'next year' - official
- In Asia, Pentagon seeks to separate China military talks from trade war
- U.S. says all North Korea's weapons of mass destruction violate U.N. resolutions
- US rules out sanction to countries from Iran oil import
- Russia Has Restarted Low-Yield Nuclear Tests, U.S. Believes
- Lightbridge fuel development gains DOE funding
- The U.S. Expects China Will Quickly Double Its Nuclear Stockpile
- Pompeo to press Germany on military spending, Huawei, Nordstream on delayed visit
- Trump's sanctions hit OPEC oil output despite Saudi boost - survey

E. EUROPE

- German, Dutch military suspend training operations in Iraq amid U.S.-Iran tensions
- Putin, Merkel and Macron discuss nuclear deal, cooperation with Iran
- France says signs of Syria chemical attack, but still checking
- EU calls on Russia, Turkey, Iran to protect civilians in Idlib

F. RUSSIA

- US' allegations on aggressiveness of Russian nuclear policy groundless, Zakharova says
- Russia Mulls Processing Germany's Used Nuclear Fuel - Rosatom
- Russia calls U.S. policy against Iran 'very dangerous'
- Russia's High-Tech Nuclear Submarine Delayed By Design Flaws
- Russia, eyeing Arctic future, launches nuclear icebreaker
- Russia floats third in class of nuclear icebreakers set to guide ships through Arctic
- Argentina, Russia work on nuclear power plant construction project - official
- Russia says U.S. nuclear accusation is an attack on global arms control
- IAEA notes improved safety at Leningrad plant
- Russia calls U.S. nuclear accusation 'smear'
- Lavrov slams US allegations about nuclear tests in Russia as absurd

WEST ASIA

G. IRAN

- Russia, China should take practical measures to save JCPOA: Zarif
- Ex-envoy predicts EU's JCPOA inaction will continue
- Europe unwilling to pay the price to save JCPOA: MP
- Barham Salih says Iraq will stand beside Iranians in difficult times
- Iran starts to increase stockpile of 3.67 enriched uranium by four times
- Iran testing cyber defense shield
- General: Any aggression against Iran would face 'crushing response'
- Zarif warns Trump 'never threaten an Iranian', advises him that only 'respect works'
- Policy of 'maximum pressure' on Iran has failed: MP
- Iran says its commitment to JCPOA will be commensurate to France's

- Iran tells German envoy its patience is over: Fars
- Iran says it will not surrender even if it is bombed
- AEOI to build 50 blood centrifuges
- Iran Condemns France for Extradition of Iranian Engineer to US
- 'EGFI to sign co-op MOUs with foreign partners soon'
- Iran to scale back JCPOA commitments 'step by step'
- Ryabkov to visit Iran to discuss nuclear deal
- Trump says not pursuing regime change in Iran
- Tehran, Moscow discuss nuclear deal
- IRGC produces advanced armors protecting against tandem-charge warheads
- Rouhani says deal of century will turn into 'failure of century'

H. ISRAEL

- Iran builds firewall against Stuxnet computer virus: minister
- Israel won't join US-Iran war unless attacked
- US national security adviser: Iran seeking nuclear arms
- Mossad wins top defense prize for Iran nuclear heist
- Israel and Syria exchange fire amid soaring regional tensions
- Israel responded to a cyberattack with armed forces – but how should states be dealing with this threat?
- Houthi leader says drone attacks a response to spurned Yemen peace moves

I. SAUDI ARABIA

- Saudis, other Arab states okay U.S. troop deployment in Persian Gulf: report
- Rights group tries to block new Saudi ship from leaving France with arms
- Saudi Arabia says firm stand needed to deter Iran, Iraq demurs

J. TURKEY

- Turkey sends weapons to Syrian rebels facing Russian-backed assault: Syrian sources
- How U.S. sanctions over a Russian weapon could rattle Turkey
- Turkey says no delay in delivery of S-400s from Russia
- Concern deepens in Turkey over U.S. sanctions for Russia missile system

EAST ASIA

K. JAPAN

- PM Abe says Japan wants to develop ties with Iran
- Japan PM Abe mulling visit to Iran as early as mid-June: NHK
- Hiroshima and Nagasaki slam U.S. subcritical nuclear test
- Abe, Trump don't see eye to eye over N. Korean missile launch
- Russia's Putin, Japan's Abe to hold summit meet on June 29

L. NORTH KOREA

- North Korea shoots off missiles
- Pro-NK media presses US to drop demand for Pyongyang to forgo nukes first

- 'US should accept incremental approach to North Korea nuclear issue'
- North Korea calls Biden 'fool of low IQ' over Kim criticism
- North Korean missile test violated U.N. resolution, says Bolton
- N. Korea slams Bolton as 'security-destroying advisor,' 'human defect'
- North Korea officials, diplomats purged

M. SOUTH KOREA

- Korean general to lead joint drills to test Seoul's readiness for wartime OPCON transfer
- Nuke envoys of S. Korea, US, Japan discuss N. Korea in Singapore

N. CENTRAL, SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

- Russia and Uzbekistan agree to start survey of new plant site
- Mauritanian Cleric Muhammad Al-Hassan Ould Al-Dadou Al-Shanqiti Says Muslims Must Strive To Obtain Nuclear Weapons, Agrees They Should Achieve 'Balance Of Terror'

O. MISC

- Risk of nuclear war now highest since WW2, U.N. arms research chief says
- Canadian pre-licensing review starts for BWRX-300
- IEA rings alarm bell on phasing out nuclear energy
- Nuclear Power - Where's The Uranium Coming From?
- IEA presses need for pro-nuclear policies

P. OP-ED

INDIA

- This Might Be Where the Very First Total Nuclear War Starts

China

- Healthy AI competition makes us all better off
- Top planner warns of misusing rare earths

PAKISTAN

- Deterrence, hybrid warfare and Pakistan
- The story of Pakistan's going nuclear
- 21 Years Of Nuclearization Of South Asia: Current Doctrinal Trends

USA

- Nuclear Weapons Are Getting Less Predictable, and More Dangerous
- Time to Pull US Nuclear Weapons Out of Turkey
- A war with Iran would be the mother of all quagmires
- U.S. should end New START nuclear arms treaty with Russia, expert says
- Half of American adults expect war with Iran 'within next few years' - Reuters/Ipsos poll
- Nuclear Power - Where's The Uranium Coming From?
- Beware The Decline of U.S. Influence in South Asia
- New START Must Be Extended, With or Without China
- Trump Is Driving Iran into Russia's Arms
- Why Trump's Iran face-off may be more dangerous than North Korea: Peter Apps

RUSSIA

- Russia warns US of symmetrical response on nuclear move
- Putin's Arctic Plans Are a Climate Change Bet
- Russia's Massive Nuclear Weapons Arsenal Is a Threat
- Russia's New Submarine Has Big Problems: "Design Flaws Were Discovered."
- If HBO's 'Chernobyl' Was Made by Russians

WEST ASIA

- Why Turkey's President Erdogan Wants Those Russian Missiles

ISRAEL

- Israel vs. Russia: The Middle East War That Could Become a Nuclear Train Wreck
- Israel Destroyed Syria's Nuclear Potential. What Would The World Look Like Now If They Hadn't?
- How to maneuver in the Middle East
- Right From Wrong: Electing to Defend Israel from Iran

EAST ASIA

- Nuclear powers should lead world toward a mood for disarmament
- It's John Bolton's world; Trump is just living in it
- Trump vs. Thanos
- Nuclear-armed North Korea hampers regional security
- Abe failed to sway Trump on NK

Q. THINK TANKS

- IAEA Concludes Long Term Operational Safety Review at China's Qinshan 1 Nuclear Power Plant
- The U.S. and Iran: Beyond the Rhetoric
- Director General Amano Commends Latin American Countries for Peaceful Use of Nuclear Technology
- IAEA Safety Mission Sees Significant Progress at France's Golfech Nuclear Power Plant, Encourages Continued Improvement
- Using Nuclear Science to Better Understand Drought
- Door to Diplomacy Remains Open Despite Missile Tests | North Korea Denuclearization Digest, May 2019
- U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control Watch, May 2019
- Let's not spend \$1.7 trillion on our nukes, a group of N.J. professors say. Let's get rid of them, and the threat of a catastrophic war.
- Repackaging Nuclear Science for Policy Makers: Scientists and Communicators Team Up
- IAEA Safety Mission Sees Strengthened Operational Safety at Russia's Leningrad Nuclear Power Plant, Encourages Continued Improvement

R. STATEMENTS, PRESS RELEASES

- Statement by the Press Secretary Regarding the Trilateral Meeting of the National Security Advisors from the United States, Israel, and Russia

A. India

PSLV-C46 successfully launches RISAT-2B

PIB India, May 22, 2019

India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C46) today successfully launched the RISAT-2B satellite from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. This was the 72nd launch vehicle mission from SDSC SHAR, Sriharikota and 36th launch from the First Launch pad.

PSLV-C46 lifted-off at 05:30 Hrs (IST) from the First Launch Pad and injected RISAT-2B into a orbit of 556 km, about 15 minutes and 25 seconds after lift-off. After separation, solar arrays of RISAT-2B were deployed automatically and ISRO Telemetry Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) at Bengaluru assumed control of the satellite. In the coming days, the satellite will be brought to its final operational configuration.

<http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1572359>

DRDO Successfully Flight-Tested Guided Bomb

PIB India, May 24, 2019

Defence Research and Defence Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight tested a 500 kg class Inertial Guided Bomb today from Su-30 MKI Aircraft from the Pokhran test range in Rajasthan. The guided bomb achieved the desired range and hit the target with high precision.

All the mission objectives have been met. The weapon system is capable of carrying different warheads.

<http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1572551>

DRDO successfully test fires AKASH - MK -1S

PIB India, May 27, 2019

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test

fired AKASH-MK-1S missile from ITR, Chandipur, Odhisa on 25 and 27 May 2019. Akash Mk1S is an upgrade of existing AKASH missile with indigenous Seeker. AKASH Mk1S is a surface to air missile which can neutralize advanced aerial targets. The Akash weapon system has combination of both command guidance and active terminal seeker guidance. Seeker and guidance performance have been consistently established in both the missions. All the mission objectives have been met.

<http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1572701>

Treaty Under Cloud, Nuclear Test Ban Agency Asks India To Turn "Observer"

Sukirti Dwivedi, NDTV, May 15, 2019

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) has invited India to become an "Observer" with access to International Monitoring System data, so it can take an informed decision on ratifying a much-debated nuclear disarmament treaty.

The CTBT is a global treaty that aims to ban all nuclear explosions across the world. In 1996, it was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and opened for signature. Between 1945 and 1996, over 2,000 nuclear tests were carried out all over the world. Ten nuclear tests have been conducted ever since the CTBT opened for signature in 1996. Although 184 countries have signed the treaty so far, it is yet to come into force because eight countries with nuclear capabilities - including India - are yet to sign and ratify it.

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/treaty-under-cloud-nuclear-test-ban-agency-asks-india-to-turn-observer-2038176>

Nuclear electricity has potential to meet India's increasing

Business Standard, May 16, 2019

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu Thursday said nuclear electricity could significantly reduce greenhouse gas

emissions and has the potential to meet the increasing energy demand in the country.

Addressing scientists and staff of Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) here on the occasion of 70 years of exploration and research by the organisation, he said climate change was one of the foremost environmental concerns today.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/nuclear-electricity-has-potential-to-meet-india-s-increasing-119051600434_1.html

Kakrapar unit restarts after modernisation

World Nuclear News, May 21, 2019

Unit 1 at Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd's (NPCIL) Kakrapar plant has restarted after the completion of work to replace all of the pressurised heavy water reactor's (PHWR) coolant channel and feeder tubes.

The 200 MWe unit, which is in the Surat district of Gujarat, attained criticality on 19 May, NPCIL said. It will be synchronised to the grid later this week. The work, which was due to be completed in August, was completed over three months ahead of schedule. Other safety upgrades were also carried out during the renovation and modernisation programme instigated by NPCIL at both Kakrapar units following issues with their coolant systems. Unit 2 was taken off line in 2015 following a coolant channel leak, and restarted in September 2018. Kakrapar 1 was taken off line after a coolant leak caused the reactor to automatically shut down in March 2016.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Kakrapar-restarts-after-modernisation?feed=feed>

IAF successfully test fires aerial version of BrahMos

Kalyan Ray, Deccan Herald, May 22, 2019

Indian Air Force is set to pack more punch in its striking power as decks have been cleared to integrate Brahmos cruise missile with its Su-30MKI fighter jets. On Wednesday a Su-30 MKI took-off from a base in southern India and accurately hit a

land-based target after flying its full range of 300 km, setting the ball rolling to operationalise the air force version of the missile developed through a joint venture between India and Russia

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/north-and-central/iaf-successfully-test-fires-aerial-version-of-brahmos-735314.html>

Russian nuclear powered icebreaker could facilitate India's round year entry to Arctic

Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, Economic Times, May 27, 2019

With the ceremonial launch of the nuclear-powered arctic icebreaker 'Ural' last weekend, Russia's Rosatom Atomic Energy Corporation has completed another step towards ensuring all-year round navigability of the Northern Sea Route (NSR). The development opens up an opportunity for India to access resource rich Arctic via NSR through the year.

The 173 metre-long 'Ural' is equipped with two highly efficient and compact RITM-200 nuclear reactors on board, capable of generating up to 350MW combined, allowing the ship to break through ice as thick as three meters. The cutting edge RITM-200 type reactor makes its world debut on the 'Ural' as well as on its sister vessels from the 22220 project, the 'Arktik' and the 'Sibir', before Rosatom deploys it in floating nuclear power plants.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/russian-nuclear-powered-ice-breaker-could-facilitate-indias-round-year-entry-to-arctic/articleshow/69515753.cms>

India seeking to resume oil imports from Iran

Tehran Times, May 29, 2019

India is planning to resume oil imports from Iran and the new government is going to hold talks with Iran in order to discuss ways of getting around U.S. sanctions like paying in national currencies. "The Modi government will immediately initiate talks with Iran to discuss steps that will allow it to resume

oil imports," India digital news portal The Print reported on Tuesday quoting government sources. According to the sources, Iran's Pasargad Bank and India's Reserve Bank could be used to arrange the payments "Payments can be deposited in the Iranian bank and then Iranian authorities can decide how to utilize the money," a senior government official who didn't wish to be identified said.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436455/India-seeking-to-resume-oil-imports-from-Iran>

B. China

China home to 140+ commercial space companies

Zhang Jie, China Daily, May 15, 2019

By the end of 2018 China was home to 141 commercial space companies, 123 (87.2 percent) of which are private, news outlet The Paper reported Tuesday. Of the 141 companies, 36 are commercial satellite manufacturing makers, 22 are launching firms, and 44 are satellite application firms, while 61 (43.3 percent) have been founded within the last three years. Most of the companies are based in Beijing and Shaanxi province, with more than half in Beijing. Investment and financing in the space last year reached 3.57 billion yuan, focused primarily on satellite applications and launching areas, which drew 1.97 billion yuan and 1.15 billion yuan, said The Paper, quoting a research institution. At least 36 investing and financing deals were agreed in 2018, with one third of the deals involving angel and seed-round interments.

Among the 36 deals, 29 were in Beijing and three were in Hubei province, with the remainder coming in Hunan, Sichuan, Shaanxi and Guangdong provinces. China in 2018 recorded 39 orbital launches involving 105 spacecraft, 13 of which were commercial ventures with 36 combined satellites. China has launched more than 20 satellite constellation plans, 14 of which were initiated by private firms. According to public data, China will send 3,100 commercial satellites to space by 2025, and the commercial satellite market will reach 13.6 billion yuan, while the commercial

launching market is expected to reach 17 billion yuan.

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201905/15/WS5cdbd1f0a3104842260bbc7.html>

Chinese lunar rover's "lucky" find could unlock secrets of moon & earth

Xinhua, May 16, 2019

China's Yutu-2, the first rover on the far side of the moon, has found materials from deep inside the moon that could help unravel the mystery of the lunar mantle composition and the formation and evolution of the moon and the earth. Using data obtained by the visible and near infrared spectrometer installed on Yutu-2, a research team led by Li Chunlai, of the National Astronomical Observatories of China under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, found that the lunar soil in the landing area of the Chang'e-4 probe contains olivine and pyroxene which came from the lunar mantle deep inside the moon. After Chang'e-4 successfully landed on the Von Karman Crater in the South Pole-Aitken Basin on Jan. 3 this year, the Yutu-2 rover obtained good quality spectral data at two sites.

"The data, unlike that obtained by Yutu on the near side of the moon, gave us a pleasant surprise," said Li. Analysis showed the lunar soil in the landing area contains a large amount of olivine, low-calcium pyroxene and a small amount of high-calcium pyroxene, which are very likely from the lunar mantle, Li said. The first important scientific discovery of the Chang'e-4 probe since it made the first-ever soft landing on the far side of the moon was published online in the latest issue of the academic journal Nature.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/16/c_138062813.htm

Nuclear deterrence targeting non-nuclear states a sign of hegemonism: Chinese ambassador

Xinhua, May 16, 2019

Nuclear deterrence targeted against non-nuclear-weapon states is a manifestation

of hegemonism and power politics, said Chinese Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs Li Song at the ongoing Conference on Disarmament here in Geneva. He made the remarks on Tuesday during the second part of the 2019 session of the Conference on Disarmament, when discussions were held in an informal setting on the question of nuclear deterrence. The session will conclude on June 28.

According to the Chinese ambassador, during the time when it has possessed nuclear weapons, China has unwaveringly upheld its unconditional commitments of “non-first-use of nuclear weapons” and “no use or threat to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones,” and these commitments will not change in the future. China has been actively committed to promoting dialogue among the five nuclear-weapon States on nuclear doctrines and policies, and believes that all parties should have an objective assessment of each other’s strategic intentions, respect each other’s security concerns, exercise proper management of differences, prevent accidents and crises resulting from strategic miscalculation, and avoid major power competition becoming self-fulfilling prophecy.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/16/c_138061422.htm

China will not engage in any trilateral talks on nuclear reduction

Li Jiayao, CGTN, May 17, 2019

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang has reaffirmed that China will not participate in any trilateral talks about a deal on nuclear arms reduction, and reiterated the defensive nature of China’s military policy. He made the comments during a regular press briefing on Thursday, reacting to a question concerning U.S. State Department Undersecretary Andrea Thompson’s recent remarks about bringing China into a negotiation with Russia and the U.S. about a treaty that would restrict the three parties’ development of nuclear weapons. Thompson also told lawmakers

on Wednesday that China is rapidly modernizing and expanding its nuclear arsenal. In response to the accusation, Lu said China is determined to follow a path of peaceful development and enshrines a defensive military policy.

China’s expenditure on its defense is moderate and reasonable, Lu noted, adding that its nuclear power has always been maintained at a minimum level for national security, which is not on par with the level of the U.S. or Russia. He also emphasized that China is committed to moving forward dialogues on nuclear strategies and policies, which he said was a consensus reached at the conference for the five nuclear-weapon states that was held in January this year in Beijing.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-05/17/content_9505392.htm

China hopes Iran nuclear deal “fully implemented”: FM

Xinhua, May 18, 2019

China hopes to work with the Iranian side to eliminate complicated disturbing factors and make efforts for the full implementation of the Iran nuclear deal, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Friday. Wang made the remarks when meeting with visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

“China firmly opposes unilateral sanctions and the so-called ‘long-arm jurisdiction’ imposed by the United States on Iran,” Wang said, pledging to maintain the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran nuclear deal, and safeguard the authority of the United Nations and basic norms governing international relations. China welcomes Iran to actively take part in the joint building of the Belt and Road and hopes to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation, Wang said. Zarif praised China for its important role in defending the Iran nuclear deal and vowed to strengthen bilateral and multilateral coordination so as to safeguard

multilateralism and common interests of the two countries.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/18/c_138067522.htm

China launches new BeiDou navigation satellite

Xinhua, May 18, 2019

China sent a new satellite of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) into space from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan Province at 11:48 p.m. Friday. Launched on a Long March-3C carrier rocket, it is the fourth BDS-2 backup satellite and the 45th satellite of the BDS satellite family. After being sent to the geostationary earth orbit and in-orbit tests, it will be connected to the BDS to provide users with more reliable services and enhance the stability of the constellation.

The BDS-2 system has provided stable and reliable service since it went into operation, and its positioning accuracy has improved from 10 meters to six meters. The BDS-2 system and BDS-3 system will jointly provide services before October 2020, and after that the BDS-3 system will be the main force. China began to construct its BDS navigation system, named after the Chinese term for the Big Dipper constellation, in the 1990s. It started serving China with its BDS-1 system in 2000 and started serving the Asia-Pacific region with its BDS-2 system in 2012. China will complete the BDS global network by 2020. The launch was the 304th flight mission for the Long March series of carrier rockets

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/18/c_138067566.htm

Nuclear data conference opens in Beijing

Liu Zhihua and Zheng Xin, China Daily, May 20, 2019

The 2019 International Conference on Nuclear Data for Science and Technology, or ND2019, kicked off in Beijing on Monday and will end Friday. Since it was first held in Harwell, Oxfordshire, England in 1978,

the conference, one of the most influential international conferences in the nuclear data community, is usually held every three years.

Under the auspices of the Nuclear Energy Agency, organized in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, supported by the Chinese Nuclear Society, this year's conference is organized by China Nuclear Data Center and China Institute of Atomic Energy, a research arm of the China National Nuclear Corporation. This is the first time the conference is being held in China. About 500 representatives of 80 organizations from about 45 countries and regions are attending the conference this year, discussing topics concerning nuclear data and its applications in scientific research and technical applications.

<http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201905/20/WS5ce2afd2a3104842260bcb80.html>

Chinese hail nation's nuclear safety history

Lu Wenao and Leng Shumei, Global Times, May 21, 2019

The HBO TV miniseries, Chernobyl, which depicts the 1986 nuclear disaster, has shed light on the safety of nuclear energy, with Chinese netizens saying China has a history of nuclear safety. The historical drama, which depicts the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the former Soviet Union in April 1986 and the cleanup efforts, has received 9.7/10 points from Chinese film and TV review aggregator Douban.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1150951.shtml>

Risk of nuclear war now highest since WW2, UN arms research chief says

Tom Miles, Reuters, May 21, 2019

The risk of nuclear weapons being used is at its highest since World War Two, a senior U.N. security expert said on Tuesday, calling it an "urgent" issue that the world should take more

seriously. Renata Dwan, director of the U.N. Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), said all states with nuclear weapons have nuclear modernization programs underway and the arms control landscape is changing, partly due to strategic competition between China and the United States. Traditional arms control arrangements are also being eroded by the emergence of new types of war, with increasing prevalence of armed groups and private sector forces and new technologies that blurred the line between offense and defense, she told reporters in Geneva.

With disarmament talks stalemated for the past two decades, 122 countries have signed a treaty to ban nuclear weapons, partly out of frustration and partly out of a recognition of the risks, she said. "I think that it's genuinely a call to recognize - and this has been somewhat missing in the media coverage of the issues - that the risks of nuclear war are particularly high now, and the risks of the use of nuclear weapons, for some of the factors I pointed out, are higher now than at any time since World War Two." The nuclear ban treaty, officially called the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, was backed by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-nuclear/risk-of-nuclear-war-now-highest-since-ww2-un-arms-research-chief-says-idUSKCN1SR24H>

Nation's nuclear power safe with tech breakthrough

By Liu Caiyu, Global Times, May 22, 2019

The completion of the domestically developed CAP1400 nuclear technology will make China's nuclear power safe and break foreign restrictions on the this arena, analysts said. CAP1400 - China's self-developed updated version of third-generation nuclear technology - has been roughly completed, and over 85 percent of the accessories of its trial project were domestically made, Qian Zhimin, the head of the State Power Investment Corporation, announced at a conference in Beijing on

Tuesday, Science and Technology Daily reported.

The development of the CAP1400 nuclear technology enriches China's domestically produced nuclear power equipment and guarantees China's nuclear power safety, Lu Daogang, a research fellow at the School of Nuclear Science and Engineering of North China Electric Power University, told the Global Times on Wednesday. Most of China's core nuclear power equipment, from the initial design to the equipment production, are developed domestically, Lu said, noting that foreign restrictions are having minor impact on the country's nuclear power capabilities.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1151108.shtml>

China to send 6-8 BeiDou-3 navigation satellites by year-end: official

Deng Xiaoci, Global Times, May 22, 2019

China will continue promoting the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in education to facilitate teaching and learning a variety of subjects, said Minister of Education Chen Baosheng at the ongoing International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Education. China has issued several plans to promote the integrated development of AI and education and support the modernization of education with information technologies, Chen said at a ministerial forum held during the conference.

"We will work on fostering multi-layered talent for AI and smart education, provide more space for the application of AI in education, train high-caliber teachers for AI education, and provide scientific and research innovations on the topic," he said. China will also establish mechanisms for the linkage and dialogue between education and the AI industry to offer increased and improved infrastructure for AI education, he noted.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/17/c_138066799.htm

Satellite system to track planes in real time

Zhao Lei, China Daily, May 23, 2019

Chinese researchers are developing a satellite-based monitoring system capable of tracking and reporting the location of airliners in flight in nearly real time, according to project leaders. Sky Mirror, designed by China Electronics Technology Group Corp's 54th Research Institute in Shijia-zhuang, capital of Hebei province, will enable air traffic controllers to avoid another tragedy similar to that involving Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 in which ground control lost the tracking of the jetliner due to suspected human factors, and will also help rescuers quickly and accurately locate airliners in distress.

Currently, air traffic controllers mainly rely on ground surveillance radar to track flights, but this approach is subject to many restrictions such as the radars' detection range and the absence of such equipment on the sea. The improved method, involving the use of a satellite-enabled device called automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast, or ADS-B, in which a plane obtains its position via satellite navigation and periodically broadcasts the information to ground control, also requires a certain number of ground facilities along the flight route.

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201905/23/WS5ce59b94a3104842260bd344.html>

Nuclear transparency "hypocritical" without mutual trust: Chinese diplomat

Xinhua, May 23, 2019

A senior Chinese diplomat said here on Wednesday that without sufficient mutual trust and respect for each other's security concerns, and without a commitment to common security, nuclear transparency could be "hypocritical and meaningless", or a tool for the strong to bully the weak. Li Song, Chinese ambassador for disarmament affairs, told a session of the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament on Wednesday that transparency is not an end in and of itself but a way to enhance trust, avoid

misjudgments and relieve tensions. "Transparency is not a standalone concept, it has everything to do with the international security environment and national security policies," he said.

He stressed that China is committed to peaceful development and pursues a nuclear strategy of self-defense. It unconditionally commits itself never to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and never to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states or nuclear weapon-free zones. "We have no hidden strategic agenda and no country will be threatened by China's nuclear weapons," he told the conference.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/23/c_138081140.htm

Chinese drone company eyes expansion in national market

Wang Ying in Shanghai, China Daily, May 23, 2019

Chinese drone manufacturer DJI is looking to expand its presence in the camera market with its new sports camera aimed at millennials, said a company spokesman. As the world's largest commercial drone manufacturer

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201905/23/WS5ce68846a3104842260bd726.html>

China's satellite navigation industry scale to exceed 400 billion yuan in 2020

Xinhua, May 23, 2019

The output value of China's satellite navigation industry is expected to surpass 400 billion yuan (about 57.9 billion US dollars) in 2020, according to the ongoing 10th China Satellite Navigation Conference on Thursday. "Currently, we have built the complete industry chain which is made up of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) basic products, application terminals and systems, and operation services," said Ran Chengqi, director of the China Satellite Navigation Office. The output value of

China's satellite navigation industry was more than 300 billion yuan in 2018, said Ran.

The BDS, independently constructed and operated by China, aims to provide high precision positioning, navigation and timing services for global users. The BDS system has been widely used in transportation, public security, industries of agriculture, fishing and forestry, hydrological monitoring, weather forecasting, communication system, power dispatching, and disaster prevention and alleviation. China will send six to eight new BDS-3 satellites into space this year, and the BDS-3 system is expected to be completed by the end of 2020. China started building the BDS-3 system in 2009. The country is also planning to finish building a high precision national comprehensive positioning, navigation and timing system on the basis of the BDS by 2035.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/23/c_138083380.htm

China to launch international journal on satellite navigation

Xinhua, May 24, 2019

China will launch an international English journal called "Satellite Navigation," according to the China Science Daily. The journal is coordinated by the Aerospace Information Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Springer Nature. The journal is open to submission and is expected to be published officially in October. The journal will be published in an open-access format and can be obtained free of charge once published.

The journal will focus on the latest theoretical development and technical applications in the field of satellite navigation. It will publish original papers and reviews on areas including satellite navigation signal processing, anti-jamming methods, satellite orbit determination and geoscience. Satellite navigation is an interdisciplinary technology that involves engineering, aviation, and geodesy. It is vital to establish a scientific research and communication platform that can bring together researchers from various fields.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/23/c_138083083.htm

SenseTime ramps up AI commercialization

Ma Si, China Daily, May 24, 2019

Chinese artificial intelligence pioneer SenseTime is stepping up efforts to commercialize its cutting-edge technology with new solutions for retail, education, security, and other sectors. Xu Li, CEO of SenseTime, said in the past, the general public's understanding of AI was restricted to hearing from news or other sources. But as the company launches efforts to apply its technologies in different sectors, people will get the real experience of AI. "We hope to join hands with our partners to promote the application of AI, thus bringing life changes and value to ordinary people," Xu said. The company has unveiled a one-stop solution that ranges from terminal, edge computing to cloud for smart city projects. It also unveiled a new facial recognition solution that can support an offline database of 20,000 faces, and recognize a specific individual within 0.3 seconds. At a recent conference held in Beijing, SenseTime also upgraded its SenseAR platform. The platform, known as China's first locally developed augmented reality platform, is designed to promote the application of AI in entertainment, smartphone and more industries.

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201905/24/WS5ce7adefa3104842260bda5a.html>

Shanghai launches nation's 2nd pilot zone for AI

Xinhua, May 25, 2019

Shanghai officially launched efforts to build a pilot zone for the new-generation innovation and development of artificial intelligence (AI) Saturday, the second in China after Beijing. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the Shanghai Municipal Government jointly made the announcement on Saturday. Gan Pin, deputy director of the Shanghai Science and Technology Commission. "As we apply AI in the three fields, the result will be tremendous changes to people's lives, which will help

us contribute to the nationwide development of AI," Gan said. In building the pilot zone, Shanghai will raise the level of originality, develop industrial use, build an environment for innovation, and establish legal, regulatory and ethical standards for AI, he said.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/25/c_138088573.htm

China to promote enterprises' science, technology innovation

Xinhua, May 25, 2019

China will improve and implement current policies of promoting enterprises' science and technology innovation, an official with department of research commercialization and regional innovation of Ministry of Science and Technology said at a press conference held at the State Council Information Office on Friday. In recent years, technical innovation consciousness and ability of Chinese enterprises became stronger with remarkable effects, said Yang Xianwu, deputy head of the department. And the technical innovation system with the enterprises as the main body has been improved.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/25/c_138088373.htm

WWII ammunition of Japanese forces found in southwest China

Xinhua, May 25, 2019

Around 1,500 rifle bullets used by Japanese forces during WWII were found in southwest China's Yunnan Province, local authorities said Saturday. The bullets were dug up by Yang Huixian, a resident of Longling County under Baoshan City when he was working on his vegetable plot. "After digging down more than 30 centimeters, I found the bullets," Yang said.

He subsequently handed over the ammunition to the local cultural relics management institute. The 6.5-mm-caliber bullets were from the Type 38 Rifle of the Japanese forces during WWII, and the place where they were found used to be a

battlefield "After testing, we found that the ammunition is basically intact, but invalid," Qiu said. "We intend to put them on display in the Anti-Japanese War memorial hall to remind the general public to cherish peace."

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/26/c_138091300.htm

Beijing publishes AI ethical standards, calls for int'l cooperation

Xinhua, May 26, 2019

A group of leading institutes and companies have published a set of ethical standards for AI research and called for cross-border cooperation amid vigorous development of the industry. The Beijing AI Principles was jointly unveiled Saturday by the Beijing Academy of Artificial Intelligence (BAAI), Peking University, Tsinghua University, Institute of Automation and Institute of Computing Technology in Chinese Academy of Sciences, and an AI industrial league involving firms like Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent. "The development of AI is a common challenge for all humanity. Only through coordination on a global scale can we build AI that is beneficial to both humanity and nature," said BAAI director Zeng Yi. "The Beijing Principles reflect our position, vision and our willingness to create a dialogue with the international society," Zeng said.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/26/c_138091724.htm

Type 055 destroyer 'pillar' of North China Sea fleet: report

Liu Xuanzun, Global Times, May 26, 2019

China's first 10,000-ton-class Type 055 destroyer Nanchang is reportedly joining the North China Sea Fleet of the People's Liberation Army Navy, a move that Chinese military experts hailed as crucial to the fleet's combat capability. They also predicted that other Type 055s will also be commissioned into the East China Sea and South China Sea fleets. Nanchang made a brief appearance in an

introduction video released by the North China Sea Fleet on Thursday afternoon.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1151680.shtml>

China's new cybersecurity rule indicates possible retaliation against US

Wang Cong Source, Global Times, May 26, 2019

A new draft regulation on cybersecurity could set the stage for Chinese regulators to take necessary action against US technology companies if their products and services are found to pose a threat to China's national security, an industry analyst said on Sunday. The draft regulation, issued by the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), comes at a delicate time when US officials have waged a trade and technology war against China by slapping tariffs on Chinese goods and cracking down on Chinese technology companies by citing unsubstantiated national security threats. Under the draft regulation, which was released on Friday for public comment, companies involved in key information infrastructure would face cybersecurity reviews by regulators, if they acquired internet products and services. Nearly a dozen government agencies, including the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Commerce, will set up a mechanism for cybersecurity reviews and the CAC will set up an office to coordinate the efforts.

If acquisitions of products and services could cause disruption to key information infrastructure, or major losses of personal information and important data, or pose other security risks, they must be reported to the CAC's cybersecurity review office. "This is a very major move for China to step up its efforts in protecting its cyberspace security," Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Beijing-based Information Consumption Alliance, told the Global Times on Sunday. "Establishing an effective cybersecurity review mechanism is very important for the country," he said. In 2016, China adopted a cybersecurity law that paid great attention to protection of national security and privacy

and offered great leeway for security officials and regulators to conduct oversight of the country's massive internet sector. The latest draft regulations are aimed at improving enforcement of those laws, Xiang said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-tiananmen-censorship/chinas-robot-censors-crank-up-as-tiananmen-anniversary-nears-idUSKCN1SW03Y>

Chinese scientists develop transistors about the width of a human DNA strand

Stephen Chen, South China Morning Post, 27 May 2019

Beijing team believes it has solved problem of powering tens of billions of nanometre-sized transistors without burning out the chip. Chinese scientists say they have created a transistor that will increase the performance of microchips exponentially and dramatically reduce their energy use. The most advanced computer chips on the market today use seven-nanometre transistors. Professor Yin Huaxiang said his team had developed 3nm transistors – about the width of a human DNA strand – and that tens of billions of them could fit on a fingernail-size chip.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3011697/small-wonders-chinese-scientists-develop-transistors-about-width>

China bridles at rare meeting between Taiwan and U.S. security officials

Reuters, May 27, 2019

China responded angrily on Monday as Taiwan confirmed the first meeting in more than four decades between senior U.S. and Taiwanese security officials. The official Central News Agency said the meeting was the first since the island and the United States ended formal diplomatic ties in 1979. China considers Taiwan a wayward province, to be reclaimed by force if necessary, and the meeting angered Beijing which is already locked in a bitter trade war with Washington. "China is extremely dissatisfied and resolutely

opposed to this," Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a daily news briefing, adding China was against any form of official exchanges between the United States and Taiwan. The diplomatic ties between Beijing and Washington have become increasingly strained in recent weeks due to an escalating trade war, U.S. support for Taiwan and China's muscular military posture in the South China Sea, where the United States also conducts freedom-of-navigation patrols.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-taiwan/taiwan-and-u-s-security-officials-hold-rare-meeting-amid-china-tension-idUSKCN1SX077>

Global cutting-edge technologies shine at Big Data Expo 2019 in Guiyang

People's Daily Online, May 27, 2019

A host of global achievements in frontier technologies, including cute interactive robots, artificial intelligence (AI)-based Chinese shadow puppetry, a driverless car, a virtual studio, an augmented reality (AR)-driven museum, and smart vending machines wowed visitors at the China International Big Data Industry Expo 2019 which kicked off on May 26 in Guiyang, capital of southwest China's Guizhou Province.

The Big Data Expo 2019, the fifth of its kind, is comprised of 162 events in total, including high-level dialogues, forums, exhibitions, contexts, and release of achievements in the big data industry. Attracting nearly 25,000 visitors from 55 countries and regions around the world and 156 foreign exhibitors from 25 countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia, Israel and India, this year's Big Data Expo gathers together the latest scientific and technological achievements and will witness the release of 49 cutting-edge technologies and products.

<http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0527/c90000-9581828.html>

China's Chang'e-4 probe resumes work for sixth lunar day

Xinhua, May 29, 2019

The lander and the rover of the Chang'e-4 probe have resumed work for the sixth lunar day on the far side of the moon after "sleeping" during the extremely cold night. The lander woke up at 6 p.m. Tuesday, and the rover, Yutu-2 (Jade Rabbit-2), awoke at 2:16 a.m. Tuesday, according to the Lunar Exploration and Space Program Center of the China National Space Administration. For the sixth lunar day, the lander's neutron radiation detector and low-frequency radio detector will be restarted to conduct scientific tasks including particle radiation observation and low-frequency radio astronomical observation. The rover's panoramic camera, detection radar, infrared imaging spectrometer and neutral atom detector will be restarted during the sixth lunar day.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-05/29/c_138099697.htm

Namibia says China can buy Rio's uranium stake if it respects laws

Nyasha Nyaungwa, Reuters, May 29, 2019

Namibia's mines and energy minister said he has no objection to Rio Tinto's sale of its uranium mine stake to China provided it respects the African nation's laws. A logo showing an entrance to the Rio Tinto owned Rossing Uranium Mine in the Namib Desert near Arandis, Namibia, February 23, 2017. REUTERS/Siphiwe Sibek. Rio, which is seeking to divest less profitable assets, said last November that it was selling its 69% stake in the world's longest-running open pit uranium mine to China for up to \$106.5 million and expected the deal to be completed in the first half of 2019. Asked whether the sale would be cleared, Mines and Energy Minister Tom Alweendo told Reuters: "We have no objection to the sale provided that the buyer abides by what's expected of him by our laws. China already owns stakes in Namibian uranium production, which, along with diamonds, is the mainstay of the Namibian economy."

The sale agreement comprises an initial cash payment of \$6.5 million, payable at completion, and a contingent payment of up to \$100 million following completion. The contingent payment is linked to uranium spot prices and Roofing's net income during the next seven years. While China is a big source of uranium demand, the market has languished as Western countries turn away from the energy source and trade tensions between the United States and China are generally disrupting commodities trade. A spokesman for Rio Tinto declined to comment.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-rio-tinto-namibia-china/namibia-says-china-can-buy-rios-uranium-stake-if-it-respects-laws-idUSKCN1SZ0UR>

China's defense diplomacy at Shangri-La Dialogue since 2007

China Military Online, May 31, 2019

For the first time in eight years and the second time in history, China has sent its defense minister to take part in the annual Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD) in Singapore, officially known as the Asia Security Summit. Wei Fenghe, Chinese state councilor and defense minister, will deliver a speech on China and International Security Cooperation and meet with the heads of delegations of a number of countries during the three-day event, which opens on Friday, according to Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Wu Qian.

Launched by British think tank International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) and the Singaporean government in 2002, the SLD is a major defense forum in Asia attended by representatives from around the world. "China attaches great importance to taking part in the multilateral security dialogue," Wu said at a regular press briefing on Thursday, adding that Wei will elaborate on China's stance and proposals on international security cooperation.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-05/31/content_9519879.htm

AI forum opens in Zhongguancun

China Daily, May 31, 2019

Zhongguancun Artificial Intelligence Application and Development Forum was launched in Zhongguancun, Beijing's Haidian district, on May 29. Jointly held by the Zhongguancun Administrative Committee, Beijing Haidian District People's Government, Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform, Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology and Beijing Municipal Science & Technology Commission. the forum discussed international and high-end development and application of AI under the theme of "Integrate intelligence to create a promising future".

innovation center with global influence. Jin Hui, the specially-invited expert of Haidian District Government, delivered a speech on AI development of Haidian district. The guests exchanged the experience in artificial intelligence application, and discussed innovative ideas and industrial development trends of artificial intelligence.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/m/beijing/zhongguancun/2019-05/31/content_37476366.htm

C. Pakistan

Pakistan says it has test-fired nuclear-capable missile

TRT World, May 23, 2019

Shaheen-II has a range of 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) and is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. Islamabad's announcement comes as election results from neighbouring rival India point to another right-wing win. A statement from the military says the surface-to-surface Shaheen-II missile, which has a range of 1,500 kilometres, or 932 miles, was launched on Thursday and ended in the Arabian Sea.

<https://www.trtworld.com/asia/pakistan-says-it-has-test-fired-nuclear-capable-missile-26895>

Pakistan conducted successful training launch of surface to surface ballistic missile Shaheen-II.

ISPR, Rawalpindi - May 23, 2019

Pakistan conducted successful training launch of surface to surface ballistic missile Shaheen-II. The training launch was aimed at ensuring operational readiness of Army Strategic Forces Command. Shaheen-II Missile is capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads upto a range of 1,500 kilometers. Shaheen-II is a highly capable missile which meets Pakistan's strategic needs towards maintenance of desired deterrence stability in the region. Today's training launch, having its impact point in the Arabian Sea, was witnessed by Director General Strategic Plans Division, Commander Army Strategic Forces Command, Chairman NESCOM, senior officers from the Army Strategic Forces Command, Scientists and Engineers of the strategic organizations.

<https://ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=5308>

Pakistan stresses need of upholding int'l agreement on Iran's nuclear programme JCPOA

Radio Pakistan, May 23, 2019

Foreign Office has said Pakistan has offered its services on many occasions for dialogue between the US and Iran to reduce the current tension in their relations.

At the weekly news briefing in Islamabad today, Foreign Office Spokesperson Dr Muhammad Faisal stressed the need that the international agreement on Iran must be upheld and misgivings should be removed through negotiations. The Spokesperson confirmed that Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif is arriving in Islamabad today for talks with Pakistani leadership.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/23-05-2019/pakistan-offers-services-for-dialogue-bw-us-iran-to-reduce-current-tension-in-their-relations>

Pakistan PM warns against war in region amid Iran tensions with U.S., Saudi

Drazen Jorgic, Reuters, May 25, 2019

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan warned against the risk of conflict in the region, following a visit to Islamabad by Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif as tensions between Washington and Tehran escalated. Strains have increased between Iran and the United States, which is a firm backer of Tehran's regional rival Saudi Arabia, in the wake of this month's attack on oil tankers in the Gulf region that Washington has blamed on Iran.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-iran/pakistan-pm-warns-against-war-in-region-amid-iran-tensions-with-u-s-saudi-idUSKCN1SV06L>

'Pakistan needs to enhance N-capabilities for peaceful purposes'

The Express Tribune, May 28, 2019

Pakistan needs to enhance its nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes, Human Rights Minister Dr Shireen Mazari said on Monday. "Pakistan has achieved substantial gains in developing and utilising nuclear technology for peaceful purposes," she said at a workshop organised by the Strategic Studies Institute Islamabad to commemorate Youm-e-Takbeer. In her keynote address at the workshop titled Nuclear Pakistan: Exploiting Nuclear Technology for Peaceful Purposes, Mazari called for exploring cooperation with other countries, including its neighbours.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1981701/1-pakistan-needs-enhance-n-capabilities-peaceful-purposes/>

Youm-e-Takbir: Pakistan marks anniversary of nuclear tests

The News International, May 28, 2019

On May 28, Pakistan carried out five nuclear tests in Chagai, Balochistan followed by another test on May 30 in Kharan. Pakistan had carried out the tests

in response to India's test of nuclear weapons in Pokhran an area in state of Rajasthan.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/477517-youm-e-takbir-pakistan-marks-anniversary-of-nuclear-tests>

I made Pakistan a nuclear state, says Nawaz

Dawn, May 28, 2019

Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif said on Monday that he was punished for making Pakistan's defence insurmountable. In a statement issued in connection with Yaum-e-Takbir anniversary (May 28 when Pakistan conducted nuclear tests), Mr Sharif said it was a day of integrity and national character for which he faced prison and exile which he wore as a pride for this service for national pride and insurmountable defence. Mr Sharif is currently in the KotLakhpat jail serving a seven-year term in the Al Azizia Steel Mills corruption reference.

Mr Sharif said on May 28 Pakistan emerged on the world map as a nuclear power, a day that celebrated the valour and matchless resilience of Pakistanis and that of alarm and annihilation of the enemies of Pakistan who dare dream of aggression against the motherland.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1485011/i-made-pakistan-a-nuclear-state-says-nawaz>

All Political Leaderships Offered Sacrifices To Make Pakistan Nuclear Power: ZafarulHaq

Muhammad Irfan, Urdu Point, May 28, 2019

Leader of the opposition in Senate Raja ZafarulHaq Tuesday said Youm-e-Takbeer was a day of national honor and to achieve this goal all political leaderships had offered countless sacrifices. Speaking at the Youm-e-Takbeer ceremony organized by Islamabad bar council here, he said on May 11, 1998, India with its nuclear tests had disturbed the balance of power in the South Asian region.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/all-political-leaderships-offered-sacrifices-632582.html>

The Effects of Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons on Balochistan

Qaazi Baloch, Balochwarna News, May 28, 2019

Every nation or State, in the world, tries to sustain its sovereignty and guarantees the security of its residents. In the name of this security, most of the states either make or import different kinds of weapons by increasing their military capability. History has witnessed several calamitous wars between states in the name of their security and sovereignty. These circumstances compelled them to build their strategic position. Consequently, conventional weapons became famous in the wars.

During both wars, World War first and World War Second, heavy weapons were used. Not only this, the world became shocked when the United States used nuclear weapons for the first time in the history of the world by attacking Hiroshima and Nagasaki, two cities of Japan. The nuclear airstrikes killed millions of people, destroyed a number of areas, and wounded several others. Keeping this in the view, this article discusses the effects of Nuclear Weapons over human societies.

<http://balochwarna.com/2019/05/28/the-effects-of-pakistans-nuclear-weapons-on-balochistan/>

Credit Goes To Whole Nation For Making Pakistan 'a Nuclear State': MNA

Mohammad Ali, Urdu Point, May 29, 2019

Member National Assembly (MNA) of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) Ali Muhammad Khan on Tuesday appreciating the people belonging to all segment of society said that credit went to whole nation for making Pakistan 'a nuclear state'. Talking to a private news channel programme, he said, "it was the collective efforts and support of political parties, armed forces, civilian, and atomic scientists due to which Pakistan became an atomic power state." The entire Muslim Ummah had been feeling proud for declaring Pakistan 'a nuclear power state', he said.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/credit-goes-to-whole-nation-for-making-pakistan-632831.html>

Asif, Murad spar in NA over nuclear programme

Muhammad Anis, The News International, May 29, 2019

Parliamentary Leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khawaja Asif and Minister for Communication Murad Saeed again came face to face in the National Assembly on Tuesday as the minister asked the opposition not to observe Youm-e-Takbeer to hide anybody's corruption. Speaking on a point of order in the National Assembly, Khawaja Asif said that Youm-e-Takbeer is the day to remember Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/477894-asif-murad-spar-in-na-over-nuclear-programme>

1st Islamic nuclear power: Pakistan celebrates Youm-e-Takbeer

The News international, May 29, 2019

Nation observed Youm-e-Takbeer Tuesday to celebrate Pakistan's historic nuclear tests at Chagai hills that ranked Pakistan as 7th atomic power in the world and first ever in the Islamic world. Pakistan's decision to test its nuclear weapons was in response to India, who conducted a series of five nuclear bomb test explosions at the Pokhran in May, 1998. Pakistanis in the country and across the globe observed Youm-e-Takbeer as an opportunity to showcase resolve and solidarity with the country. Special prayers were offered in the morning for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan, supremacy of the Constitution and eradication of terrorism.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/477931-1st-islamic-nuclear-power-pakistan-celebrates-youm-e-takbeer>

General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) endorsed punishment to two Army and one civil officer on the charges of espionage/ leakage of sensitive information to foreign agencies prejudice to the national security

ISPR Pakistan, May 30, 2019

General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) endorsed punishment to two

Army and one civil officer on the charges of espionage/ leakage of sensitive information to foreign agencies prejudice to the national security. The officers were tried under Pakistan Army Act (PAA) and Official Secret Act by separate Field General Court Martial (FGCM) for separate cases. Punishment awarded include:-

1. Lieutenant General Javed Iqbal (Retired) - Awarded 14 years rigorous imprisonment.
2. Brigadier Raja Rizwan (Retired) - Awarded Death Sentence.
3. Doctor Wasim Akram (Employed at Sensitive Organization) - Awarded Death Sentence.

<https://www.ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=5320>

Pakistan, China agree that arms control, non-proliferation issues to be addressed through dialogue

Radio Pakistan, May 31, 2019

Pakistan and China have agreed that arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament issues should be addressed through dialogue and diplomacy. The understanding was expressed during 6th Round of Pakistan-China Bilateral Consultations on Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in Islamabad. Both sides stressed the need for reinvigorating the multilateral arms control and disarmament forums to enable them to make meaningful progress towards the objective of global and regional peace and stability.

<http://www.radio.gov.pk/31-05-2019/pakistan-china-agree-that-arms-control-non-proliferation-issues-to-be-addressed-through-dialogue>

Pakistan, China Hold Bilateral Consultations On Arms Control, Non-proliferation

Mohammad Ali, Urdu Point, May 31, 2019

The sixth Round of Pakistan-China Bilateral Consultations on Arms Control

and Non-Proliferation was held here Thursday wherein the two sides discussed a broad range of issues in which the two sides shared a commonality of perspectives. At the consultation held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Pakistan side was led by Director General (Arms Control and Disarmament) Mohammad Kamran Akhtar. The Chinese delegation was led by Ambassador Fu Cong, Director General of the Arms Control Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, a Foreign Office statement said.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/pakistan-china-hold-bilateral-consultations-634783.html>

For selling N-secrets, Pakistan jails Lt Gen for life, will hang Brigadier, scientist

Nirupama Subramanian, The Indian Express, May 31, 2019

While the more senior officer, Lieutenant General Javed Iqbal (retired), was awarded 14 years' rigorous imprisonment, Brigadier Raja Rizwan (retired) and Dr Wasim Akram, who the ISPR described as an employee of a "sensitive organisation" were handed the death sentence. The unprecedented death sentence in Pakistan to a retired Army Brigadier and a scientist, as well as a 14-year prison term to a lieutenant general – which has been "endorsed" by Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa – came after their conviction on charges of selling Pakistan's nuclear secrets abroad, The Indian Express has learnt.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/pakistan-nuclear-secret-selling-retired-army-chief-jailed-for-life-5759405/>

D. USA

Stung by U.S. sanction threats, EU seeks ways to boost the euro

Francesco Guarascio, Reuters, May 16, 2019

The European Union is seeking new ways to widen use of the euro and counter the dollar's global dominance, top EU officials said on Thursday, as the bloc tries to salvage Iran's nuclear deal by helping companies bypass U.S. sanctions. Fears they will be hit

with sanctions have pushed European corporations to suspend their dealings with Iran after Washington pulled out of the nuclear accord last year. The EU has tried to defend the pact signed with world powers in 2015 by offering firms alternative ways to trade with oil-rich Iran.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-iran-europe/stung-by-u-s-sanction-threats-eu-seeks-ways-to-boost-the-euro-idINKCN1SM298>

U.S. urges Latvia to step up reform after money-laundering scandal

Gederts Gelzis, Reuters, May 16, 2019

Latvia came under renewed pressure to accelerate financial reforms as a senior U.S. official, at a meeting with its prime minister, underscored the urgent need for stricter controls after a money laundering scandal. His remarks come more than a year after the United States acted to shut down ABLV, a Latvian bank it said was linked to North Korea's nuclear weapons program, to money laundering and Russian corruption.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-moneylaundrying-latvia-usa/u-s-urges-latvia-to-step-up-reform-after-money-laundering-scandal-idINKCN1SM1H0>

Trump denies friction with top aides over Iran policy

Steve Holland, Reuters, May 18, 2019

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday denied friction with his hawkish foreign policy advisers on Iran, specifically giving statements of support to White House national security adviser John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-iran-trump/trump-denies-friction-with-top-aides-over-iran-policy-idINKCN1SN2KD>

New US uranium production and resource data released

World Nuclear News, May 20, 2019

The USA produced 33% less uranium in 2018 than 2017, according to the US Energy Information Administration's (EIA) 2018 Domestic Uranium Production

Report. Meanwhile, Uranium One has published NI 43-101 technical reports including resource figures for five uranium exploration and development properties in Wyoming.

A total of 1.6 million pounds U₃O₈ (615 tU) was produced from seven facilities, according to the report which was published on 16 May. These were the White Mesa uranium mill in Utah, plus six in-situ leach operations: Crow Butte in Nebraska, and Lost Creek, Nichols Ranch, Ross, Smith Ranch-Highland and Willow Creek, all in Wyoming. Ross is part of the Lance project. Total mine production, at 0.7 million pounds, was 37% less than the previous year. Total production reflects the amount of ore fed to mills in the year, including stockpiled ore mined in previous years, and is therefore higher than mine production.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/New-US-uranium-production-and-resource-data-releas>

US needs new approach to advanced reactor demonstration, report says

World Nuclear News, May 21, 2019

The US Department of Energy (DOE) should learn from the legacy of the NASA commercial orbital transportation services (COTS) programme to return the USA to a leadership role in nuclear energy, the Nuclear Innovation Alliance (NIA) says in a report issued today. The report, *Enabling Nuclear Innovation: In Search of a SpaceX for Nuclear Energy*, reviews key features of the COTS programme, presents the results of a survey of advanced nuclear energy companies, and recommends policy priorities that can support the demonstration of transformative nuclear energy technologies.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/US-needs-new-approach-to-advanced-reactor-demonstr>

Trump: U.S. will respond with 'great force' if Iran attacks interests

Mark Hosenball, Reuters, May 21, 2019

President Donald Trump warned on Monday Iran would be met with "great force" if it attacked U.S. interests in the Middle East, and government sources said

Washington strongly suspects Shi'ite militias with ties to Tehran were behind a rocket attack in Baghdad's Green Zone. "I think Iran would be making a very big mistake if they did anything," Trump told reporters as he left the White House on Monday evening for an event in Pennsylvania. "If they do something, it will be met with great force but we have no indication that they will."

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-iran/trump-u-s-will-respond-with-great-force-if-iran-attacks-interests-idINKCN1SQ2BQ>

U.S. officials seek to tamp down Trump rhetoric on Iran

Patricia Zengerle, Reuters, May 22, 2019

U.S. officials who briefed Congress about Iran on Tuesday sought to convince lawmakers that President Donald Trump's administration wants to deter Tehran's aggression, not attack the Islamic republic, members of Congress said. U.S. officials who briefed Congress about Iran on Tuesday sought to convince lawmakers that President Donald Trump's administration wants to deter Tehran's aggression, not attack the Islamic republic, members of Congress said.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-iran-congress/u-s-officials-seek-to-tamp-down-trump-rhetoric-on-iran-idINKCN1SR2DJ>

North Korea says 'biggest issue' in U.S. ties is impounded ship

Stephanie Nebehay, Reuters, May 22, 2019

The U.S. seizure of a North Korean cargo ship is the biggest stumbling block to improving bilateral relations, a senior North Korean official said on Wednesday, warning Washington against using the "logic of strength" against Pyongyang.

The Trump administration must make a "big decision" on lifting sanctions before stalled nuclear negotiations can resume, Han Tae Song, North Korea's ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva, added in an interview.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/northkorea-usa-un/north-korea-says-biggest-issue-in-u-s-ties-is-impounded-ship-idINKCN1SS1YW>

Pentagon mulling military request to send 5,000 troops to Middle East: officials

Idrees Ali, Phil Stewart, Reuters, May 23, 2019

The U.S. Department of Defense is considering a U.S. military request to send about 5,000 additional troops to the Middle East amid increasing tensions with Iran, two U.S. officials told Reuters on Wednesday. Tehran and Washington have this month been escalating rhetoric against each other, following U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to try to cut Iran's oil exports to zero and beef up the U.S. military presence in the Gulf in response to what he said were Iranian threats.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-iran-pentagon/pentagon-mulling-military-request-to-send-5000-troops-to-middle-east-officials-idUSKCN1SS2XT>

U.S. State Department misses deadline to explain Iran arms control report – aide

Arshad Mohammed, Jonathan Landay, Reuters, May 24, 2019

The U.S. State Department failed to meet a deadline on Thursday to provide information to three congressional committee chairmen looking into whether an annual arms control report slanted and politicized assessments about Iran, a congressional aide said. In a May 16 letter, the Democratic chairmen of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs, Armed Services and Intelligence committees asked Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to provide a State Department briefing and documents no later than Thursday.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-iran-armscontrol/u-s-state-department-misses-deadline-to-explain-iran-arms-control-report-aide-idINKCN1SU00Z>

U.S. defence bill takes aim at China's growing influence

Mike Stone, Patricia Zengerle, Reuters, May 24, 2019

The Senate Armed Services Committee unveiled a draft bill on Thursday that targets China on several fronts, from stemming the

erosion of the U.S. military advantage against Beijing to countering the growing Chinese influence around the world. The Senate Armed Services Committee unveiled a draft bill on Thursday that targets China on several fronts, from stemming the erosion of the U.S. military advantage against Beijing to countering the growing Chinese influence around the world.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-defense-spending/u-s-defence-bill-takes-aim-at-chinas-growing-influence-idINKCN1ST2JP>

Defying Congress, Trump sets \$8 billion-plus in weapons sales to Saudi Arabia, UAE

Patricia Zengerle, Reuters, May 24, 2019

U.S. President Donald Trump, declaring a national emergency because of tensions with Iran, swept aside objections from Congress on Friday to complete the sale of over \$8 billion worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan. The Trump administration informed congressional committees that it will go ahead with 22 military sales to the Saudis, United Arab Emirates and Jordan, infuriating lawmakers by circumventing a long-standing precedent for congressional review of major weapons sales.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-saudi-arms/defying-congress-trump-sets-8-billion-plus-in-weapons-sales-to-saudi-arabia-uae-idUSKCN1SU25R>

Ohio House committee passes bill to save nuclear power plants

Reuters, May 24, 2019

A committee in Ohio's House of Representatives voted along party lines to approve a bill to save the state's two nuclear power reactors from retirement and provide some financial support for a couple of ailing coal plants. Republicans in the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved the bill on Thursday after changing it earlier in the week to provide credit payments to nuclear plants only instead of all zero-

carbon emission resources, like wind and solar plants.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-ohio-nuclear/ohio-house-committee-passes-bill-to-save-nuclear-power-plants-idINKCN1SU1X1>

Trump approves \$8bn Saudi weapons sale over Iran tensions

Mehdi Sepahvand, Tehran Times, May 25, 2019

U.S. President Donald Trump is approving the sale of billions of dollars' worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia, citing Iranian threats to its arch rival to reap the sweet fruit of his weeks-long fierce anti-Iran propaganda where he has claimed increasing threat from Iran to the interests of America and allies in the Middle East. As the Republican Party presidential candidate, Donald Trump had in 2015 described the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a "milk cow".

Trump had also said that he was "definitely not a big fan" of Saudi Arabia, and that America had paid too much to back the House of Saud. Trump has now invoked a rarely used aspect of federal law to push through the \$8bn (£6bn) deal - bypassing Congress. He did so by declaring that ongoing tensions with Iran amounted to a national emergency.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436345/Trump-approves-8bn-Saudi-weapons-sale-over-Iran-tensions>

Pompeo to meet with Merkel next week at start of Europe visit

Reuters, May 25, 2019

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will visit Berlin next week at the start of a trip to Europe and will hold talks with Chancellor Angela Merkel that had been scheduled earlier this month, but were called off at the last minute as tensions rose over Iran. A German government spokeswoman said Pompeo would meet with Merkel on May 31, and the German leader will stress that tensions with Iran over its nuclear program and role in the Middle East must be resolved peacefully.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/germany-usa-pompeo-merkel/pompeo-to-meet-with-merkel-next-week-at-start-of-europe-visit-idINKCN1SU27P>

Trump says Iran nuclear deal achievable as sanctions sting

Jeff Mason, Malcolm Foster, Reuters, May 27, 2019

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday a deal with Iran on its nuclear programme was possible, crediting economic sanctions for curbing activities Washington has said are behind a spate of attacks in the Middle East. In Tehran, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Iran was not seeking nuclear weapons, which its supreme leader had banned in an edict, adding on Twitter that U.S. policies were hurting the Iranian people and causing regional tensions.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/japan-usa-iran/trump-says-iran-nuclear-deal-achievable-as-sanctions-sting-idINKCN1SX0XD>

Trump's three-month ultimatum to two controversial cabinet members

Tehran Times, May 28, 2019

Sources in the United States have revealed that President Donald Trump while expressing dissatisfaction over the U.S. foreign policy, has set a three-month deadline for the survival of John Bolton and Mike Pompeo. Noornews, a news website close to the secretariat of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council, has reported that the decline in Trump's popularity in opinion polls in critical states such as Pennsylvania and Florida coupled with an increase in domestic criticism of the White House over intensified rhetoric against Iran have led to an anger by Trump vis-a-vis his secretary of state and national security adviser.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436399/Trump-s-three-month-ultimatum-to-two-controversial-cabinet-members>

U.S. may suspend training of Turkish pilots for F-35 jets over Russia missile deal

Humeyra Pamuk, Phil Stewart, Reuters, May 29, 2019

The United States is seriously considering

suspending training for Turkish pilots on advanced F-35 fighter jets as Ankara moves ahead with plans to purchase a Russian missile defense system despite objections from Washington, sources told Reuters on Tuesday. The two NATO allies have argued for months over Turkey's order for the Russian S-400 defenses, which Washington says are incompatible with the Western alliance's defense network and would pose a threat to American F-35 stealth fighters which Turkey also plans to buy.

The two sources, who are familiar with Turkey's role in the F-35 program and who spoke on condition of anonymity, said a final decision had not yet been made. The deliberation follows signs that Turkey is moving ahead with the S-400 purchase. Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said on May 22 that Turkish military personnel were receiving training in Russia to use the S-400, and said Russian personnel may come to Turkey. Turkish pilots have also been training at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona. It was unclear whether a decision to suspend their training would mean they would have to leave the country, or would be allowed to remain at the base until a final decision is made about Turkey's future in the F-35 program. The United States has said plainly that Turkey cannot have the S-400 and be part of the F-35 program. The F-35 is made by Lockheed Martin Corp. If Turkey was removed from the program, it would be one of the most significant ruptures in recent history in the relationship between the two allies, experts say.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-military/u-s-may-suspend-training-of-turkish-pilots-for-f-35-jets-over-russia-missile-deal-idUSKCN1SY2GI>

Top U.S. security adviser: Iranian mines likely caused UAE tanker blasts

Lisa Barrington, Marwa Rashad, Reuters, May 29, 2019

U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton said on Wednesday that naval mines "almost certainly from Iran" were used to attack oil tankers off the United Arab

Emirates this month, and warned Tehran against conducting new operations. Bolton said the "prudent and responsible" approach taken by the United States, which has beefed up its military presence in the region, had made it clear to Iran and its proxies that such actions risked a "very strong" U.S. response.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-emirates-bolton/top-u-s-security-adviser-iranian-mines-likely-caused-uae-tanker-blasts-idINKCN1SZ0J6>

Trump will decide whether to extend START treaty 'next year' – official

Reuters, May 29, 2019

U.S. President Donald Trump will not decide until next year whether he will extend a nuclear treaty with Russia, a White House aide said on Wednesday. Extending the New START treaty is under discussion within the administration "and a decision the president will make next year," Tim Morrison, a director at the National Security Council, said at an arms control forum hosted by the Hudson Institute. Trump has criticized the treaty, which sets limits on the number of nuclear weapons Russia and the United States can have. But supporters of the accord say it is important because it created a monitoring regime to verify compliance.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-russia-start/trump-will-decide-whether-to-extend-start-treaty-next-year-official-idINKCN1SZ1TX>

In Asia, Pentagon seeks to separate China military talks from trade war

Idrees Ali, Reuters, May 29, 2019

Acting U.S. Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan said on Wednesday that tense trade negotiations between China and the United States should be treated separately from military talks between the two countries. Tensions between China and the United States have intensified in the past year over an ongoing trade war, the disputed South China Sea and U.S.

support for self-ruled Taiwan, which China claims as its own. In a week-long trip that will take Shanahan to a number of Asian countries, his talks are likely to be dominated by China, with questions from allies about increasing tensions with Iran and stalled talks with North Korea.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/asia-security-usa-china/in-asia-pentagon-seeks-to-separate-china-military-talks-from-trade-war-idINKCN1SZ1WW>

U.S. says all North Korea's weapons of mass destruction violate U.N. resolutions

David Brunnstrom, Reuters, May 29, 2019

North Korea's entire weapons of mass destruction program violates U.N. Security Council resolutions, the U.S. State Department spokeswoman said on Tuesday, when asked about recent missile launches by Pyongyang. "I think the entire North Korean WMD program, it's in conflict with the U.N. Security Council resolutions. But what the U.S. is focused on here ... is in trying to negotiate a peaceful end to the North Korean WMD program," State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus told reporters.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/northkorea-missiles-usa/us-says-all-north-koreas-weapons-of-mass-destruction-violate-u-n-resolutions-idINKCN1SY24R>

US rules out sanction to countries from Iran oil import

PTI, Deccan Herald, May 29, 2019

The US has ruled out giving any exemption from its punitive sanctions to countries, including India, for buying oil from Iran, saying America's maximum pressure campaign was working and the Trump administration remains "unwavering" in its tough policy in Tehran. The US on Tuesday reiterated its position at a news conference here after media reports from New Delhi, quoting unnamed government officials, said that India was looking at ways to resume oil imports from Iran despite the US sanctions.

<https://www.deccanherald.com/international/us-rules-out-sanction-to-countries-from-iran-oil-import-736811.html>

Russia Has Restarted Low-Yield Nuclear Tests, U.S. Believes

Julian E. Barnes and William J. Broad, The New York Times, May 29, 2019

The Trump administration believes Russia has restarted very low-yield nuclear tests, officials said on Wednesday in a finding that could be used to renew in earnest the arms race between Moscow and Washington. But the significance of the statements by the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and a senior National Security Council official was immediately debated by nuclear weapons experts.

Some experts said claims of low-yield tests would be nothing new. Intelligence officials and nuclear analysts in Washington have long raised the possibility of such violations going back nearly two decades, to when Russia ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 2000.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/us/politics/russia-nuclear-tests.html>

Lightbridge fuel development gains DOE funding

World Nuclear News, May 30, 2019

Framatome has received a voucher through the US Department of Energy's (DOE's) Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear (GAIN) programme to support development of Lightbridge Fuel in collaboration with Idaho National Laboratory (INL). Lightbridge Fuel uses a helically-twisted shape and unique metallic composition which the company says can significantly reduce fuel operating temperatures, improve the fuel's structural integrity and enhance its response to abnormal events. Enfission - a joint venture of Lightbridge Corporation and Framatome - was set up in January 2018 to commercialise nuclear fuel assemblies based on this technology.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Lightbridge-fuel-development-gains-DOE-funding>

The U.S. Expects China Will Quickly Double Its Nuclear Stockpile

W.J. Hennigan And John Walcott, Time, May 30, 2019

China is expected to increase its nuclear weapons stockpile by twofold in the coming decade, according to a new U.S. military intelligence assessment, part of a sweeping build-up of Beijing's strategic arsenal. "Over the next decade, China is likely to at least double the size of its nuclear stockpile in the course of implementing the most rapid expansion and diversification of its nuclear arsenal in China's history," Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley, the director of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency said during a speech on Wednesday.

<http://time.com/5597955/china-nuclear-weapons-intelligence/>

Pompeo to press Germany on military spending, Huawei, Nordstream on delayed visit

David Brunnstrom, Reuters, May 31, 2019

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo began a five-day European trip on Friday with a delayed visit to Berlin, where he was expected to press Germany to boost its military spending, avoid dealings with China's Huawei Technologies Co Ltd and reconsider a pipeline project with Russia. Pompeo said he would also discuss Iran, an issue on which the Trump administration has split with Germany and other European allies by withdrawing from a 2015 international nuclear deal.

A senior German diplomat was in Tehran last week for meetings to try to preserve the nuclear deal and a German government spokeswoman said Merkel would stress to Pompeo that tensions with Iran must be resolved peacefully.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-germany/pompeo-to-press-germany-on-military-spending-huawei-nordstream-on-delayed-visit-idINKCN1T10H9>

Trump's sanctions hit OPEC oil output despite Saudi boost – survey

Alex Lawler, Reuters, May 31, 2019

Top oil exporter Saudi Arabia has raised production in May, a Reuters survey found, but not by enough to compensate for lower Iranian exports which collapsed after the United States tightened the screw on Tehran. The 14-member Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries pumped 30.17 million barrels per day (bpd) in May, the survey showed, down 60,000 bpd from April and the lowest OPEC total since 2015, the Reuters survey showed.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/oil-opece-survey/trumps-sanctions-hit-opece-oil-output-despite-saudi-boost-survey-idINKCN1T02Q5>

E. Europe

German, Dutch military suspend training operations in Iraq amid U.S.-Iran tensions

Reuters, May 15, 2019

Germany and the Netherlands said on Wednesday they were suspending military training operations in Iraq as the United States warned of increased threats from Iran-backed forces amid an escalation of tensions between Washington and Tehran.

A German defence ministry spokesman said Berlin had no indications of its own of any impending attacks on Western interests by Iran and said the training programmes could resume in the coming days. Germany has 160 soldiers involved in training Iraqi forces trying to contain Islamic State militants. The Netherlands has 169 military and civilian personnel in Iraq, including about 50 in Erbil, where they are helping to train Kurdish troops. Dutch news agency ANP said Dutch forces had been ordered to remain indoors since Sunday.

U.S. State Department ordered the pullout of some employees from both its embassy

in Baghdad and its consulate in Erbil. The order came as tensions build up between the United States and Iran. Washington has applied new sanctions pressure on Tehran and sent additional forces to the Middle East, saying there is an increased threat from Iran to U.S. interests there

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-gulf-security-germany/german-dutch-military-suspend-training-operations-in-iraq-amid-u-s-iran-tensions-idUSKCN1SL1DR>

Putin, Merkel and Macron discuss nuclear deal, cooperation with Iran

Tehran Times, May 22, 2019

Russian President Vladimir Putin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron held a phone conversation on Tuesday discussing ways to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal and continuing economic and trade cooperation with Iran. "Discussing developments related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program, the leaders noted the importance of preserving this agreement that is a key factor in maintaining international stability and security. They confirmed the commitment of Russia, France and Germany to continuing mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation with Iran," Kremlin said in a statement.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436217/Putin-Merkel-and-Macron-discuss-nuclear-deal-cooperation-with>

France says signs of Syria chemical attack, but still checking

Reuters, May 29, 2019

France's foreign minister said on Tuesday there were signs that chemicals had been used in attacks by Syrian government forces on rebels in northwest Syria, but they still needed to be verified. The United States said on May 23 it had received numerous reports that appeared consistent with chemical exposure after forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad launched an offensive on the rebel stronghold. "We have a sign of the use of chemical weapons in the Idlib area but for now there isn't verification," Jean-Yves Le Drian told the

French parliament's foreign affairs committee. "We are cautious because we think that the use of chemical weapons must be confirmed and lethal before we react," he said. Syria's government denies using chemical weapons.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-france-chemicalweapons/france-says-signs-of-syria-chemical-attack-but-still-checking-idUSKCN1SY29L>

EU calls on Russia, Turkey, Iran to protect civilians in Idlib

Reuters, May 29, 2019

The European Union called on Wednesday for a ceasefire in Syria's Idlib province and said Russia, Turkey, Iran and the Syrian government must protect civilians under siege. At least 180,000 people have fled an surge in violence in the province in northwest Syria, the last major stronghold of rebels who have fought against President Bashar al-Assad's government since 2011. Government bombing has killed dozens in the past three weeks. The Syrian government says it is responding to attacks by al Qaeda-linked militants.

"We expect the Syrian regime and the Astana guarantors to fulfill immediately their responsibilities and commitments, and ensure the immediate protection of civilians," the EU's top diplomat Federica Mogherini and its humanitarian aid chief Christos Stylianides said a statement, referring to Russia, Turkey and Iran's peace efforts. "Indiscriminate attacks on women and children and other civilians, their displacement, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure cannot be justified under any circumstances." The region, home to an estimated 3 million people, including many who fled other parts of Syria as government forces advanced in recent years, has been partly shielded by a truce agreement since last year, brokered by Russia and Turkey. Much of the recent fighting has hit a buffer zone agreed under that deal.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-eu/eu-calls-on-russia-turkey-iran-to-protect-civilians-in-idlib-idUSKCN1SZ2CH>

F. Russia

US' allegations on aggressiveness of Russian nuclear policy groundless, Zakharova says

TASS News Agency, May 23, 2019

The United States' allegations that Russia's military doctrine has an aggressive nature are absolutely groundless, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Thursday commenting on the pronouncements by Joseph Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the United States' highest-ranking military officer, that Russia is allegedly looking at using non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe. "Allegations about Russia's nuclear policy are absolutely groundless and are oriented to those in the habit of taking highly-likely-style fake news for granted. Such news are now characteristic of Washington-led coalitions, information campaigns and so on," she said.

"Objectively-minded specialists clearly see the falsity of the West's allegations about the Russian military doctrine that is geared to prevent nuclear conflicts, like any other military conflicts," she stressed, adding that the United States and some of the NATO countries have been sticking to the initially false position that Russia's military doctrine envisages local use of nuclear weapons as part of some offensive operations to have them completed to its own benefit.

<http://tass.com/politics/1059811>

Russia Mulls Processing Germany's Used Nuclear Fuel – Rosatom

Sputnik News, May 24, 2019

Moscow and Berlin have agreed to look into conditions for future processing of spent nuclear fuel from German research reactors in Russia, according to the Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom's procurement website. German company Pflueger International, commissioned by Rosatom's subsidiary, TENEX, is now required to provide the nuclear corporation with the results of a legal analysis of conditions for the possible processing of spent fuel from

German research reactors in Russia and also the treatment of processed products.

<https://sputniknews.com/russia/201905241075286896-russia-germany-rosatom-used-nuclear-fuel/>

Russia calls U.S. policy against Iran 'very dangerous'

Tehran Times, May 24, 2019

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said on Thursday that the U.S. seeks to provoke the Iranians, hoping to pressure them into retaliation that would provide a casus belli for a military strike and called Washington's policy "very dangerous". "This is a very dangerous policy. Not only is it destroying the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program, but also can result in broader destabilization across the whole Middle Eastern Region," she told reporters, according to Newsweek.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436291/Russia-calls-U-S-policy-against-Iran-very-dangerous>

Russia's High-Tech Nuclear Submarine Delayed By Design Flaws

The Moscow Times, May 24, 2019

The delivery of Russia's most expensive and technically advanced nuclear submarine to the Russian Navy is being delayed by design flaws, Russian media have reported.

"Kazan" (K-561) is the first modernized multipurpose submarine of the Yasen-M class after "Severodvinsk" was handed over to the Northern Fleet in 2013. There are considerable changes in the auxiliary systems on "Kazan" compared with "Severodvinsk." While construction on "Severodvinsk" started just after the breakup of the U.S.S.R. in 1993, "Kazan" was laid down 16 years later, in 2009.

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/05/24/russias-high-tech-nuclear-submarine-delayed-by-design-flaws-a65739>

Russia, eyeing Arctic future, launches nuclear icebreaker

Reuters, May 25, 2019

Russia launched a nuclear-powered icebreaker on Saturday, part of an ambitious programme to renew and expand its fleet of the vessels in order to improve its ability to tap the Arctic's commercial potential. The ship, dubbed the Ural and which was floated out from a dockyard in St Petersburg, is one of a trio that when completed will be the largest and most powerful icebreakers in the world.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/russia-arctic-icebreaker/russia-eyeing-arctic-future-launches-nuclear-icebreaker-idINKCN1SV0FZ>

Russia floats third in class of nuclear icebreakers set to guide ships through Arctic

Russian Times, May 26, 2019

Russia has floated its third next-gen nuclear icebreaker – the Ural – designed to lead ships through the thickest ice sheets in the Arctic. When completed these type of vessels will become the world's largest and most powerful. The Ural is the third ship of Project 22220, set to become the most powerful and biggest nuclear icebreakers in the world. The icebreakers of this type are expected to be able to crush through an ice sheet of up to three meters thick. The colossal ships are measured over 170 meters long – like a full-scale athletics stadium – and are as tall as a five-story building in its superstructure section.

<https://www.rt.com/news/460276-russia-arctic-nuclear-icebreaker/>

Argentina, Russia work on nuclear power plant construction project – official

TASS News Agency, May 29, 2019

Argentina and Russia have set up a working group tasked with specifying the project on the construction of a nuclear power plant (NPP) in the Latin American country, head

of the Russian agricultural watchdog Rosselkhoznadzor and chairman of the Russian-Argentine inter-governmental commission Sergey Dankvert said on Tuesday.

<http://tass.com/economy/1060556>

Russia says U.S. nuclear accusation is an attack on global arms control

Reuters, May 30, 2019

Russia's ambassador to the United States on Thursday said a U.S. allegation that Moscow may be conducting banned nuclear tests was a calculated attempt to undermine nuclear arms control, Russian state television reported. The head of the U.S.'s Defense Intelligence Agency said on Wednesday that Russia may be conducting low-level nuclear testing that flouts the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which was negotiated in the 1990s.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-defense-russia/russia-says-u-s-nuclear-accusation-is-an-attack-on-global-arms-control-idINKCN1T00Q6>

IAEA notes improved safety at Leningrad plant

World Nuclear News, May 30, 2019

Rosenergoatom, the operator of Russia's Leningrad nuclear power plant, has strengthened operational safety in response to the findings of an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) review in 2017, a follow-up mission has concluded. The team encouraged the operator to pursue continuous improvement. OSART missions aim to improve operational safety by objectively assessing safety performance using the IAEA's Safety Standards and proposing recommendations for improvement where appropriate. The follow-up missions are standard components of the OSART programme.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/IAEA-notes-improved-safety-at-Leningrad-plant>

Russia calls U.S. nuclear accusation 'smear'

Reuters, May 30, 2019

Russia rebuffed as a baseless smear on Thursday a U.S. allegation that Moscow may be conducting low-level nuclear tests in violation of a moratorium. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Russia was in full compliance with the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which Moscow ratified in 2000. The head of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) said on Wednesday that Russia was probably not adhering to its nuclear testing moratorium in line with the "zero-yield" limit set by the CTBT.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-defense-russia-ministry/russia-calls-u-s-nuclear-accusation-crude-provocation-idUSKCN1T01LY>

Lavrov slams US allegations about nuclear tests in Russia as absurd

TASS News Agency, May 31, 2019

The United States' allegations that Russia is conducting nuclear tests are just absurd speculations that the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization has proved as baseless, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said following a meeting with his Japanese counterpart Taro Kono on Friday.

<http://tass.com/politics/1061069>

WEST ASIA

G. Iran

Russia, China should take practical measures to save JCPOA: Zarif

Tehran Times, May 17, 2019

Zarif made the remarks upon arriving in Beijing on Friday, according to ISNA. "China is an important partner of the Islamic Republic of Iran," he said. "China is one of the remaining members to Barjam (JCPOA) and it is important to hold consultations with the Chinese side, especially with regard to the recent developments and Iran's decision to pursue its rights under Barjam."

He further emphasized that the international community has not taken practical measures in order to salvage the JCPOA. The top Iranian diplomat travelled to China for political negotiations on Tehran-Beijing ties and the latest regional and international developments, including the U.S. government's destabilizing activities. The Iranian foreign minister paid visits to Russia, Turkmenistan, India, and Japan before travelling to Beijing. Zarif ruled out any prospect of talks with the United States, calling the Washington regime a "bully" trying to force all others into acting illegally. The U.S. has been deploying a policy of "maximum pressure" against Iran under President Donald Trump. Employing the policy, Washington left a multilateral nuclear deal, reached between Iran and the six major powers – the U.S., UK, France, Russia, China, and Germany, last year.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/435982/Russia-China-should-take-practical-measures-to-save-JCPOA-Zarif>

Ex-envoy predicts EU's JCPOA inaction will continue

Tehran Times, May 18, 2019

I believe that whatever has happened so far will also happen in the next two months ... We really should not expect something special from Europe," said Abolfazl Zohrehvand, who served as Iran's ambassador to Italy. Zohrehvand pointed out that some European countries have pinned hope on the post-Trump era, but at the same time they have been compliant with the United States' policies and will remain so in the future. He also said that while inflicting a great cost on the country, the experience of "negotiating with the West in recent years was very valuable, because it exposed the true face of the West for those who had hoped for a Western-oriented approach."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436041/Ex-envoy-predicts-EU-s-JCPOA-inaction-will-continue>

Europe unwilling to pay the price to save JCPOA: MP

Tehran Times, May 19, 2019

The top lawmaker maintained that European payment mechanism, known as INSTEX, should be able to facilitate Iran's economic transactions with all countries in the world, not just with the Europeans. He said it is against the JCPOA that INSTEX be just restricted to providing humanitarian aid such as medicine. Zonour said humanitarian aid is for a country which has started a war against a country and then suffered a defeat, citing Iraq as an example that was allowed to sell oil to import food and medicine under the supervision of the United Nations during the Saddam Hussein regime in the 1990s and early 2000s. The parliament "will definitely reject this restriction, and our diplomats should beware of Europeans' empty promises and deceptions."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436089/Europe-unwilling-to-pay-the-price-to-save-JCPOA-MP>

Barham Salih says Iraq will stand beside Iranians in difficult times

Tehran Times, May 19, 2019

"We will stand beside the Iranian government and people in difficult times as the Islamic Republic of Iran stood beside the Iraqi government and people in difficult times of fighting the terrorist groups," he said during a meeting with Iraj Masjedi, the Iranian ambassador to Baghdad. Salih said that the Iraqis will never forget Iran's support in fighting terrorism. In an article published by the Iran newspaper in March, Masjedi said that Iran-Iraq relations can serve as a role model for cooperation between countries in the Middle East region. He also described President Hassan Rouhani's three-day visit to Iraq in March as a turning point in relations. Masjedi said that the U.S. withdrew Washington from the 2015 nuclear deal - the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - and put pressure on other countries, including Iraq, to cut economic interaction with Iran, however, the Iraqi

officials have repeatedly refused to comply with the U.S.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436101/Barham-Salih-says-Iraq-will-stand-beside-Iranians-in-difficult>

Iran starts to increase stockpile of 3.67 enriched uranium by four times

Tehran Times, May 20, 2019

Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), announced on Monday that from today, May 30, Iran is starting to increase its stockpile of nuclear fuel enriched to 3.67 percent by four times at the Natanz nuclear plant. He said the decision is based on the Articles 26 and 36 of JCPOA, the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal. He said the decision for increase of the stockpile followed after Iran gave an ultimatum to the European side on May 8 that it is taking these steps in response to an inaction by Europe to compensate for the reimposition of sanctions effect on Iran by the United States. Kamalvandi said the decision to increase the stockpile of enriched uranium has already been announced to the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Talking to reporters at the Natanz nuclear site, Kamalvandi said this move by Iran is an "opportunity" for the other sides to change their policies and "return the JCPOA to its original place".

Kamalvandi, who also acts the deputy chairman of the AEOI, said Iran waited for one year that the remaining parties to the JCPOA to offset sanctions but they did nothing and now nobody in the world can criticize Iran for such a move. "The Islamic Republic waited long enough and the step that it is taking is based on its rights." He reiterated the position by the Islamic Republic that Tehran has no intention to violate the JCPOA or quit it. The nuclear official added the next step will be based on the JCPOA.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436158/Iran-starts-to-increase-stockpile-of-3-67-enriched-uranium-by>

Iran testing cyber defense shield

Tehran Times, May 20, 2019

“The country’s young scientists have successfully tested a cyber-defense shield for the country’s automated industrial systems,” Information and Communications Technology Minister Azari Jahromi said, Entekhab reported on Sunday. According to the minister, the shield “can practically stop industrial sabotage malware such as Stuxnet in systems including Iran’s power grid.” In late 2007 or early 2008, the U.S. and Israel reportedly launched a sophisticated digital weapon called Stuxnet against control systems in Iran, sabotaging centrifuges at a uranium enrichment plant. The two countries are suspected of deploying the Stuxnet malware, uncovered in 2010, that sabotaged components of Iran’s nuclear program.

That event put cyber security on the top of the priority list for Tehran, considering that the Stuxnet computer virus destroyed thousands of centrifuges involved in Iran’s nuclear program. Iran’s civil defense chief Gholamreza Jalali said in 2018 that up to 50,000 cyber-attacks target computers in Iran every year. More recently, Jahromi said his ministry has developed initiatives to counter the U.S. government’s acts of cyber terrorism and hostile measures, such as removing Iranian mobile phone applications from Apple iPhones.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436157/Iran-testing-cyber-defense-shield>

General: Any aggression against Iran would face ‘crushing response’

Tehran Times, May 20, 2019

Iran has not invaded any country and will not do so “but we will give a crushing response to (any) aggression by enemies,” General Ali Hajilou said on Monday, Tasnim reported. Hajilou described Washington’s anti-Iran rhetoric as “media warfare”, reiterating that Iran does not seek war but is fully prepared to counter the enemy’s threats. Since enemies are incapable of carrying out operations against Iran they have resorted to media warfare instead, he remarked. The remarks came amid

increasing tensions between Iran and the U.S., with Washington imposing new harsh economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic. However, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif predicted on Saturday that there would be no war between the U.S. and Iran.

“I am sure, as Leader of the Islamic Revolution has said, there will be no war, because neither we seek a war nor anyone can imagine any confrontation with Iran in the region. However, it is essential to clarify the U.S. dangerous moves for the people of this country,” he told IRNA. He added, “The reality is that Trump has said and reiterated recently that he does not seek war. However, there are people around him who push him towards war under the pretext that they want to make the U.S. powerful.” Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has ruled out the possibility of war between the U.S. and Iran despite heightened tensions between the two sides. Speaking at a large gathering of officials last week, the Leader said Washington knows that engaging in such a conflict would not be in its interest.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436138/General-Any-aggression-against-Iran-would-face-crushing-response>

Zarif warns Trump ‘never threaten an Iranian’, advises him that only ‘respect works’

Tehran Times, May 20, 2019

Responding via Twitter, Zarif also said, “Iranians have stood tall for millennia while aggressors all gone.” The Trump administration has introduced the harshest ever sanctions against Tehran in line with the policy of “maximum pressure” on Iran, a policy that Iran has called “economic war”. Zarif said “economic terrorism” and threat of genocide won’t “end” Iran. “Never threaten an Iranian. Try respect—it works,” he added. The tweets come amid rising fears over a potential military confrontation between the two countries. Earlier on Sunday, chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said the Islamic Republic is not looking for war

with any country but is ready to counter any threat posed by the enemies. "We are not looking for war and yet we are not afraid of it either, but on the other hand, our enemies lack the will to wage a war and are afraid of fighting," Major General Hossein Salami said.

In an interview with Fox News aired Sunday evening, Trump took a seemingly more subdued tone toward Iran. "I just don't want them to have nuclear weapons, and they can't be threatening us. And with all of everything that's going on, and I'm not one that believes - you know, I'm not somebody that wants to go into war, because war hurts economies, war kills people most importantly - by far most importantly," Trump said. "I don't want to fight. But you do have situations like Iran, you can't let them have nuclear weapons - you just can't let that happen," he added. Recently, Zarif ruled out prospect of talks with the United States, calling Washington a "bully" who is trying to force all others into acting illegally. In early May, the U.S. deployed warships and warplanes to the Middle East.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436136/Zarif-warns-Trump-never-threaten-an-Iranian-advises-him-that>

Policy of 'maximum pressure' on Iran has failed: MP

Tehran Times, May 21, 2019

"One year after Trump's withdrawal from Barjam (the Persian name for the international nuclear deal), not only the policy of pressure on Iran has failed to bear fruit, but also they failed to bring Iran to the negotiating table to get concessions," he explained. The MP maintained that the Americans can neither move forward nor go back, adding that the U.S. is looking for a way to interact with Iran. However, he continued, in the eyes of the Islamic Republic they are not "trustworthy" for talks.

Also on Tuesday, another member of the parliamentary committee said lack of coordination is easily noticeable in the Trump administration "because Trump is not the only decision-maker and this has confused him." Speaking with ISNA,

Mohammad Javad Jamali said Trump is an inexperienced person, who has surrounded himself with hardliners such as John Bolton. "Trump is a person who sees all diplomatic affairs, statecraft and international relations based on money," Jamali said. "Hence, Saudi, Emirati and Bahraini money is tempting for him because he wants to boost the U.S. economy with that money, create jobs and finally win the next elections."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436192/Policy-of-maximum-pressure-on-Iran-has-failed-MP>

Iran says its commitment to JCPOA will be commensurate to France's

Tehran Times, May 22, 2019

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi said on Tuesday that Iran is ready to implement the 2015 nuclear deal commensurate to what France and its European partners have been doing. His comments came as a response to remarks by his French counterpart's statement which urged Iran to continue implementing all of its obligations under the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). "We strongly urge Iran to continue to implement all of its obligations under the JCPOA, as it has done thus far, and to refrain from any measures that would put it in violation of its commitments," French Foreign Ministry's spokesman said in a daily briefing.

Mousavi said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to support and implement the JCPOA just as France and its European partners have done in the past year." On May 8, Iran officially announced that its "strategic patience" has come to an end as the remaining parties to the JCPOA have failed to compensate for the U.S. exit from the deal and reimposing sanctions on the country.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436218/Iran-says-its-commitment-to-JCPOA-will-be-commensurate-to-France-s>

Iran tells German envoy its patience is over: Fars

Sabine Siebold, Reuters, May 23, 2019

Iran told a German envoy seeking to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal that its patience was over and urged the treaty's remaining signatories to fulfill their commitments after the United States pulled out, the Fars news agency reported on Thursday. Jens Ploetner, a political director in the German Foreign Ministry, met Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. A German diplomatic source told Reuters that talks with other Iranian officials were also planned. The semi-official Fars news agency said Araghchi had relayed Iran's impatience during the talks.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-iran-germany/iran-tells-german-envoy-its-patience-is-over-fars-idUSKCN1ST16F>

Iran says it will not surrender even if it is bombed

Reuters, May 23, 2019

Iran will not surrender to U.S. pressure and will not abandon its goals even if it is bombed, President Hassan Rouhani said on Thursday, stepping up the war of words between the Islamic Republic and the United States. Iran's top military chief said the standoff between Tehran and Washington was a "clash of wills", warning that any enemy "adventurism" would meet a crushing response, the semi-official Fars news agency reported.

Tensions are festering between the two countries after Washington sent more military forces to the Middle East in a show of force against what U.S. officials say are Iranian threats to its troops and interests in the region. Acting U.S. Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan on Thursday confirmed that the Pentagon was considering sending yet further U.S. troops to the Middle East as one of the ways to bolster protection for American forces there. After pulling out of Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, U.S. President Donald Trump restored U.S. sanctions on Iran last year and tightened them this month, ordering all countries to

halt imports of Iranian oil or face sanctions of their own.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-iran-commander/iran-says-it-will-not-surrender-even-if-it-is-bombed-idUSKCN1ST13X>

AEOI to build 50 blood centrifuges

Tehran Times, May 24, 2019

AEOI signed a memorandum of understanding with Iran Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) to build the centrifuges. IBTO needs blood centrifuges for fractionating the whole blood that is donated to the organization. Blood fractionation separates the whole blood into its component parts such as red blood cells, platelets and blood plasma. According to the agreement, AEOI will build the centrifuges by using local knowledge and homegrown equipment. Currently, IBTO buys its required centrifuges from foreign companies. In April, AEOI announced that it has begun installing 20 advanced IR6 centrifuges at a nuclear enrichment facility. AEOI Chief Ali Akbar Salehi said that Iran has made headways in the nuclear industry, which has also contributed to progress in other industrial and medical sectors.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436281/AEOI-to-build-50-blood-centrifuges>

Iran Condemns France for Extradition of Iranian Engineer to US

Tehran Times, May 25, 2019

The non-governmental Center for Civilian Drones along with a number of knowledge-based firms working in the field of aerospace have unanimously condemned the French court's verdict as politically-motivated, a report by Iran newspaper said. Iranian NGOs believe that Tehran should retaliate if France extradites Iranian national to U.S and they added that the action by the Iranian national has been legal. The NGOs also have suggested that if the order is approved by the French prime minister, Iran should take reciprocal measures.

In a joint statement, the Iranian aerospace firms said high-power industrial microwave systems are new non-military technologies used for detecting UAVs flying in sensitive sites like airports. "So the technologies have no military use. They are also not under the US sanctions," the statement said, adding that it is among the basic rights of any country to use such technologies within the regulations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to protect airspaces and provide security for sensitive sites like civilian airports. The Iranian firms also directly addressed the French government saying the extradition is politically-motivated and stand against the principles of the Iran nuclear deal as well as other international rules.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436351/Iran-Condemns-France-for-Extradition-of-Iranian-Engineer-to-US>

'EGFI to sign co-op MOUs with foreign partners soon'

Tehran Times, May 27, 2019

"To facilitate economic relations between Iran and Europe, MOUs will be signed soon between the Export Guarantee Fund of Iran and some European countries," Afrouz Bahrami tweeted in Farsi. The official noted that considering the implementation of the Europe's trade mechanism with Iran (known as INSTEX) in the upcoming weeks, signing of these memoranda can create new capacities for the trade between Iran and Europe within the framework of INSTEX. "Exchanging credit information between Iranian and European companies, cooperation in collecting dues, joint venture insurance, and technical and educational cooperation are among the subjects of the mentioned MOUs," Bahrami said. After the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear deal with Iran, the Islamic Republic announced that it will stay in the deal with its European signees.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436366/EGFI-to-sign-co-op-MOUs-with-foreign-partners-soon>

Iran to scale back JCPOA commitments 'step by step'

Tehran Times, May 28, 2019

Kayvan Khosravi, the spokesperson for the Supreme National Security Council, said the move will continue as it has already been announced. "As the respected president announced, consecutive and phase-by-phase steps will continue to scale down obligations in accordance with the Supreme National Security Council's statement until the status of Iran's oil sales and banking transactions return to the situation before Washington's withdrawal from BARJAM," the spokesperson said in a short memo to the ILNA news agency.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436442/Iran-to-scale-back-JCPOA-commitments-step-by-step>

Ryabkov to visit Iran to discuss nuclear deal

Tehran Times, May 28, 2019

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov is scheduled to visit Iran on May 29 to discuss the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

On May 8, Iran announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the pact, saying that the country would no longer adhere to some of the limits on its nuclear activities. It also threatened to step up uranium enrichment if it was not shielded from the sanctions' effects within 60 days.

Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to put caps on its nuclear work in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions. However, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled Washington out of the nuclear deal in May 2018 and ordered reimposition of sanctions against Iran. The first round of sanctions went into force on August 6 and the second round, which targets Iran's oil exports and banks, were snapped back on November 4.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436434/Ryabkov-to-visit-Iran-to-discuss-nuclear-deal>

Trump says not pursuing regime change in Iran

Tehran Times, May 28, 2019

U.S. President Donald Trump has explicitly stated that his administration is not seeking a regime change in Iran and does not want to see any terrible thing happen in the region.

During at a joint press conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on Monday, Trump said that his main goal is to ensure that Tehran will not be developing what he called nuclear weapons, Al Jazeera reported.

That is while Iran has repeatedly said that Tehran is not seeking to produce nuclear weapons and that its nuclear activities are being closely watched by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Moreover, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has stressed that production, stockpiling and use of weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons is forbidden and the Islamic Republic considers the pursuit and possession of nuclear weapons as a grave sin.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436398/Trump-says-not-pursuing-regime-change-in-Iran>

Tehran, Moscow discuss nuclear deal

Tehran Times, May 29, 2019

Russian Deputy Foreign Ministers Sergey Ryabkov held talks with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araghchi in Tehran on Wednesday, discussing the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Jens Ploetner, the political director at the German Foreign Ministry, met on Thursday with Araghchi, during which he said his country will "remain committed" to the JCPOA. He also said, "European countries will keep up their efforts and consultations aimed at meeting Iran's demands and preserving the JCPOA." On May 8, Iran announced a partial withdrawal from some aspects of the pact, saying that the country would no longer adhere to some of the limits on its nuclear activities. It also

threatened to step up uranium enrichment if it was not shielded from the sanctions' effects within 60 days. Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to put caps on its nuclear work in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

Moscow has repeatedly expressed support for preserving the JCPOA. Russian President Vladimir Putin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron held a phone conversation on May 21, discussing ways to preserve the nuclear deal and continuing economic and trade cooperation with Iran. "Discussing developments related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program, the leaders noted the importance of preserving this agreement that is a key factor in maintaining international stability and security. They confirmed the commitment of Russia, France and Germany to continuing mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation with Iran," the Kremlin said in a statement.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436460/Tehran-Moscow-discuss-nuclear-deal>

IRGC produces advanced armors protecting against tandem-charge warheads

Tehran Times, May 29, 2019

Speaking to Tasnim in an interview published on Wednesday, General Khosro Kouhmarei, commander of the IRGC Ground Force's Faculty of Armored Vehicles, highlighted the country's defense preparedness and said the faculty is today manufacturing tanks by employing modern technology. They include tanks like "Karar" whose industrial production has begun and the IRGC experts have also tested the tank, he stated. "We have (also) created necessary protection against anti-armor missiles," he said, adding, "We designed and produced reactive armor." Reactive armor is a type of vehicle armor that reacts in some way to the impact of a weapon to reduce the damage done to the vehicle being protected.

Through conducting massive research, the faculty has been able to produce armors capable of protecting against missiles with tandem-charge warheads, the commander noted. Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made great headways in manufacturing a broad range of equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in the arms sphere. Officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations. Tehran has always assured other nations that its military might poses no threat to regional countries, saying that the Islamic Republic's defense doctrine is entirely based on deterrence.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436479/IRGC-produces-advanced-armors-protecting-against-tandem-charge>

Rouhani says deal of century will turn into 'failure of century'

Tehran Times, May 30, 2019

Rouhani also criticized the secretive and controversial U.S.-devised deal for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Washington has kept the plan, which President Donald Trump has hailed as "the deal of century," under wraps. Leaked information, however, indicate that it features serious violations of the Palestinian's age-old demands. Rouhani lambasted the plan as "the failure of the century," warning, "Today, a plot is in the works against not only Palestine but the entire region."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436491/Rouhani-says-deal-of-century-will-turn-into-failure-of-century>

H. Israel

Iran builds firewall against Stuxnet computer virus: minister

Reuters, May 16, 2019

Iran has developed software to protect its industry against the Stuxnet computer virus, the Iranian communications minister said on Thursday, after accusing Israel in November of a cyber attack on Tehran's telecommunications facilities.

Stuxnet, which is widely believed to have been developed by the United States and Israel, was discovered in 2010 after it was used to attack a uranium enrichment facility at Iran's Natanz nuclear site. It was the first publicly known example of a virus being used to attack industrial machinery.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-iran-israel-stuxnet/iran-builds-firewall-against-stuxnet-computer-virus-minister-idINKCN1SM116>

Israel won't join US-Iran war unless attacked

Arutz Sheva, May 19, 2019

Israel will not join a war against Iran unless attacked by Iran or its regional proxies, Israel Hayom reported. The site quoted an Independent Arabia report noting that Israeli security officials met with their US counterparts to discuss the recent tensions between the US and Iran and to share sensitive intelligence, including on Iran's nuclear weapons program.

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/263396>

US national security adviser: Iran seeking nuclear arms

Times of Israel, May 22, 2019

US President Donald Trump's national security adviser said Wednesday there was "no reason" for Iran to back out of its nuclear deal with world powers other than to seek atomic weapons, a year after the US president unilaterally withdrew America from the accord.

Speaking in Abu Dhabi, the Emirati capital, John Bolton said that without more nuclear power plants, it made no sense for Iran to stockpile more low-enriched uranium as it now plans to do. But the US also earlier cut off Iran's ability to sell its uranium to Russia in exchange for unprocessed yellow-cake uranium.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-national-security-adviser-iran-seeking-nuclear-arms/>

Mossad wins top defense prize for Iran nuclear heist

Times of Israel, May 26, 2019

The 2019 Israel Security Prize will be awarded to the Mossad staff who broke into a warehouse holding Iran's nuclear files and spirited the material out of the country, officials said Sunday.

In the clandestine operation inside Iran last year, Mossad agents stole Iranian nuclear archives in the Islamic Republic's capital of Tehran and smuggled the thousands of documents to Israel. The content of the files showed that Iran had in the past worked to develop nuclear weapons.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/mossad-wins-top-defense-prize-for-iran-nuclear-heist/>

Israel and Syria exchange fire amid soaring regional tensions

Aljazeera, May 28, 2019

Israel has carried out a rocket attack in Syria's Golan Heights region, according to Syrian state news and the Israeli military. "An Israeli missile targeted Tel al-Shaar in Quneitra," the Syrian news agency SANA said, adding that a "military vehicle was targeted and there are wounded." Israel's military confirmed the attack in a statement posted on social media on Monday, saying it had been in retaliation for anti-aircraft fire at an Israeli fighter jet earlier on Monday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/israel-syria-exchange-fire-soaring-regional-tensions-190527190543256.html>

Israel responded to a cyberattack with armed forces – but how should states be dealing with this threat?

Independent, May 31, 2019

Governments are becoming ever more reliant on digital technology, making them more vulnerable to cyberattacks. In 2007, Estonia was attacked by pro-Russian hackers who crippled government servers, causing havoc. Cyberattacks in Ukraine targeted the country's electricity grid, while Iran's nuclear power plants were infected

by malware that could have led to a nuclear meltdown.

Politically motivated cyberattacks are becoming increasingly commonplace but unlike traditional warfare between two or more states, cyberwarfare can be launched by groups of individuals. On occasion, the state is actually caught in the crosshairs of competing hacking groups.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/israel-cyber-attacks-security-hacking-russia-ukraine-us-uk-intelligence-agencies-a8928921.html>

Houthi leader says drone attacks a response to spurned Yemen peace moves

Aziz El Yaakoubi, Reuters, May 26, 2019

A leader of Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi movement said on Sunday it had resumed drone strikes deep inside Saudi Arabia this month in response to what he called the Saudi-led coalition's spurning of "peace initiatives" by his group.

Mohammed Ali al-Houthi dismissed Saudi accusations that the attacks had been carried out on the orders on Iran - at a time of growing tension between Tehran and Riyadh alongside its Western and regional allies.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-houthis/houthi-leader-says-drone-attacks-a-response-to-spurned-yemen-peace-moves-idUSKCN1SW0S1>

I. Saudi Arabia

Saudis, other Arab states okay U.S. troop deployment in Persian Gulf: report

Tehran Times, May 19, 2019

The announcement came Wednesday through the Asharq al-Awsat newspaper, citing unnamed senior diplomatic sources. The deployment of its aircraft carrier strike group was agreed "on the basis of bilateral deals between the U.S. and Arab countries of the Persian Gulf," it read. Earlier in the day, several unnamed senior U.S. officials

were cited as saying that President Donald Trump was not seeking a military clash with the Iran. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has called for an emergency meeting of [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council ([P]GCC) member states amid escalation of pressure against Iran by the United States.

The reports came after it was claimed the White House planned to send more than 120,000 troops to the Middle East for a potential war with Iran, an allegation later denied by the U.S. president. Trump has been at odds with the U.S. European allies but supported by the Saudis and Israelis ever since he pulled out last year of an international agreement on Iran's nuclear energy. The U.S. president has reportedly ordered his administration to avoid a military confrontation with Iran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/436106/Saudis-other-Arab-states-okay-U-S-troop-deployment-in-Persian>

Rights group tries to block new Saudi ship from leaving France with arms

Jean-Francois Rosnoblet, John Irish, Reuters, May 28, 2019

A French rights group sought on Tuesday to block the loading of what it said were munitions onto a Saudi Arabian ship docked in southern France, as pressure mounts on Paris to stop military sales to the kingdom. ACAT said in a statement it had filed a legal challenge to prevent the vessel from taking delivery of its cargo. "The Bahri Tabuk is due to load French weapons for Saudi Arabia, one of the main belligerents in the Yemeni conflict. ACAT is mobilizing and calling on civil society and local networks to prevent these munitions from going to Saudi Arabia," it said.

Another Saudi ship left France's northern coast two weeks ago without a cargo of weapons after dockers threatened to block its arrival in the port of Le Havre. ACAT had also filed a legal challenge to stop that

consignment being loaded, arguing that it contravened a U.N. treaty because the arms might be used against civilians in the Yemeni conflict. The Bahri Tabuk, which is owned by the same company as the previous Saudi vessel, docked on Tuesday afternoon and was due to load its cargo on Wednesday, dock workers union official Laurent Pastor told Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-france/rights-group-tries-to-block-new-saudi-ship-from-leaving-france-with-arms-idUSKCN1SY1QT>

Saudi Arabia says firm stand needed to deter Iran, Iraq demurs

Marwa Rashad, Aziz El Yaakoub, Reuters, May 30, 2019

Saudi Arabia's King Salman told an emergency Arab summit on Friday that decisive action was needed to stop Iranian "escalations" following attacks on Gulf oil assets, as U.S. officials said a military deployment had deterred Tehran. The right of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to defend their interests after the attacks on oil pumping stations in the kingdom and tankers off the UAE were supported in a Gulf Arab statement and a separate communique issued after the wider summit.

Tehran denies any involvement in the attacks and in a sign of regional tensions, Iraq, which has good ties with neighboring Iran and Washington, said it objected to the Arab communique, which stated that any cooperation with Tehran should be based on "non-interference in other countries". "The absence of a firm deterrent stance against Iranian behavior is what led to the escalation we see today," King Salman told the two consecutive meetings late on Thursday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-summit/saudi-arabia-says-firm-stand-needed-to-deter-iran-iraq-demurs-idUSKCN1T00OC>

J. Turkey

Turkey sends weapons to Syrian rebels facing Russian-backed assault: Syrian sources

Suleiman Al-Khalidi, Reuters, May 25, 2019

Turkey has equipped an array of mainstream Syrian rebels it backs with fresh supplies of weaponry to help them try to repel a major Russian-backed assault, senior opposition officials and rebel sources said on Saturday. Russia is backing the Syrian army's large aerial and ground assault as it seeks to gain control of the last big stretch of rebel-held territory in the northwest of the country. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad launched the assault last month, saying rebels had breached an existing ceasefire, triggering a civilian exodus by bombarding Idlib and adjacent areas. It has been the biggest escalation since last summer between Assad and his enemies in Idlib province and a belt of territory around it.

Ankara stepped up supplies in recent days after failing to persuade Russia in recent meetings of a joint working group that it should end its escalation to avert a major influx of refugees pouring into Turkey, two senior opposition figures said. In doing so Turkey signaled its readiness to preserve its influence in northwestern Syria, where it has beefed up its troop presence in a dozen military bases that were set up under a de-escalation deal with Russia, a senior rebel commander said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-idlib/turkey-sends-weapons-to-syrian-rebels-facing-russian-backed-assault-syrian-sources-idUSKCN1SV0FA>

How U.S. sanctions over a Russian weapon could rattle Turkey

Jonathan Spicer, Reuters, May 30, 2019

Turkey is on the cusp of facing U.S. sanctions over its decision to buy a Russian S-400 missile defense system, leaving its already soft currency and economy vulnerable and raising questions over its position within NATO and the region. If no solution is found in coming weeks and U.S.-Turkish tensions continue to worsen, tit-for-

tat sanctions could hit trade between the allies and prolong a recession in Turkey that has already tested President Tayyip Erdogan's grip on power. Turkey also risks being rapidly cut out of the production and use of American F-35 fighter jets, which could mark a step toward a re-evaluation of its 67-year membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

"It's very complex to resolve because both U.S. and Turkish officials see this as a reflection of a larger geo-political balancing," said Galip Dalay, visiting scholar at the University of Oxford's politics and international relations department. "Sanctions would have a very consequential effect on Turkey, but probably not mark a breaking point in its U.S. relationship," he said. Ankara and Washington have squabbled for months over the Turkish plan to buy the S-400s, which the United States says is incompatible with the Western alliance's defense network and poses a threat to the F-35s that Turkey also plans to buy. Turkey says defending its territory poses no threat to allies, and stresses it has met all NATO obligations. Both sides are entrenched even while they have repeated a desire to avoid so-called CAATSA sanctions, which by U.S. law would be triggered when the Russian anti-aircraft weapon arrives on Turkish soil, possibly as soon as July.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-usa-sanctions-analysis/how-u-s-sanctions-over-a-russian-weapon-could-rattle-turkey-idUSKCN1T00VI>

Turkey says no delay in delivery of S-400s from Russia

Reuters, May 31, 2019

The delivery schedule for Russia's S-400 missile defense systems to Turkey is continuing as planned, Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said on Friday, dismissing reports that Ankara was evaluating a delay in response to U.S. concerns. Turkey's purchase of the Russian systems has strained its already tense ties with the United States, a NATO ally, which says the S-400s are not compatible with the alliance's defense network and pose a threat to F-35 stealth

fighter jets which Turkey is due to receive. Ankara has since proposed forming a working group to assess the U.S. concerns, but has yet to hear back from Washington on that proposal. The United States has warned of sanctions if Turkey presses ahead with the deal.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-usa/turkey-says-no-delay-in-delivery-of-s-400s-from-russia-idUSKCN1T11GI>

Concern deepens in Turkey over U.S. sanctions for Russia missile system

Orhan Coskun, Reuters, May 31, 2019

The looming threat of U.S. sanctions and a wider rupture with Western allies over Turkey's purchase of Russian air defenses is raising concern in Ankara, two Turkish officials said, despite public insistence the deal will go ahead as planned. With barely a month left until Turkey could take delivery of Moscow's S-400 missile defense system, triggering automatic U.S. sanctions, the Turkish government continues to say it will not be deflected from its agreement with Russia. But worries about the impact of punitive U.S. measures against Turkey's military, which could degrade its existing fleet of warplanes and block purchases of new U.S. F-35 stealth fighter jets and the Patriot missile defense system, have reached as far as President Tayyip Erdogan, the official said. "Some senior officials are opposing this delivery taking place, at least in June. A senior official conveyed this to Erdogan as well," one of the officials told Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-usa-sanctions/concern-deepens-in-turkey-over-u-s-sanctions-for-russia-missile-system-idUSKCN1T1234>

EAST ASIA

K. Japan

PM Abe says Japan wants to develop ties with Iran

Reuters, May 16, 2019

Japan would like to maintain, and develop, its traditionally friendly ties with Iran, Prime

Minister Shinzo Abe told Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Thursday. At the start of a meeting in the Japanese capital, Abe also told Zarif that he was concerned about growing tension in the Middle East. U.S. President Donald Trump has ratcheted up sanctions on Iran since the United States withdrew a year ago from a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and global powers by which Tehran curbed uranium enrichment capacity in return for sanctions relief.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-iran-zarif-abe/pm-abe-says-japan-wants-to-develop-ties-with-iran-idUSKCN1SM07D>

Japan PM Abe mulling visit to Iran as early as mid-June: NHK

Reuters, May 24, 2019

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is considering a visit to Iran as early as mid-June, NHK national television said on Friday, the first such trip in four decades, as global concern grows about rising tension between Iran and the United States. Iran said the visit was unlikely in the near future. The United States withdrew last year from a 2015 international nuclear deal with Iran, and is ratcheting up sanctions on the Middle East nation in efforts to strangle its economy by ending its international sales of crude oil. Japan was a major buyer of Iranian oil for decades before the U.S. sanctions. The report on plans for a visit by Abe comes a week after Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif visited Japan and met the prime minister and Foreign Minister Taro Kono.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-iran/japan-pm-abe-mulling-visit-to-iran-as-early-as-mid-june-nhk-idUSKCN1SU0EE>

Hiroshima and Nagasaki slam U.S. subcritical nuclear test

The Asahi Shimbun, May 27, 2019

The governors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki prefectures sent letters of protest May 26 over the latest subcritical nuclear test in the United States. Hiroshima's Hidehiko Yuzaki addressed his letter to President

Donald Trump, who is now visiting Japan. He urged Trump to visit Hiroshima, which was leveled by atomic bombing in 1945, to fully “understand the reality of total destruction caused by a nuclear weapon.” The United States conducted a subcritical nuclear test in Nevada on Feb. 13, according to a May 24 announcement by the U.S. Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Yuzaki called the test “extremely regrettable.” He said, “It destroys the hopes of Hiroshima residents who strongly wish the abolition of nuclear weapons.”

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201905270043.html>

Abe, Trump don't see eye to eye over N. Korean missile launch

The Asahi Shimbun, May 28, 2019

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed concern about the recent launch of short-range missiles by North Korea, which could threaten Japan, while visiting U.S. President Donald Trump downplayed the significance. At a joint news conference on May 27 in Tokyo following their bilateral meeting, Abe was asked his view of the missile launch earlier in May over the Sea of Japan. Abe said about North Korea's action, “It is extremely regrettable because it is a violation of the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions.” In contrast, Trump referred to some members of his administration who criticized the launch and said, “My people think it could have been a violation. I view it differently. I view it as a man, perhaps he wants to get attention and perhaps not. Who knows? It doesn't matter.”

He added, “All I know is that there have been no nuclear tests. There have been no long-range missiles going out.” Trump also said he thought North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was a “very smart man” who realizes that economic development for his nation would not be possible as long as it possessed nuclear weapons. While Abe held a different view from Trump regarding the missile launch, he also appeared to be willing to take a page out of the U.S. president's playbook and hold direct talks with Kim Jong Un. At the news conference, Abe said

Trump's new approach broke through the shell of mutual distrust and was intended to encourage North Korea to work together toward a future without nuclear weapons. Abe said, “The position of Japan and the United States is completely in synch. It is now my turn to meet directly with Kim Jong Un.”

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201905280040.html>

Russia's Putin, Japan's Abe to hold summit meet on June 29

Reuters, May 31, 2019

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will hold a summit meeting on June 29, when Putin visits Japan for a meeting of leaders of the Group of 20 nations, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday. Senior officials and political leaders from both countries have held talks frequently in recent months to discuss ways to put an end to an decades-old territorial dispute and conclude a peace treaty. “With eyes on the Russia-Japan summit meeting at the time of the G20 summit in Osaka, we made checks on the state of progress in Russia-Japan relations,” Lavrov told reporters after meeting his Japanese counterpart, Taro Kono.

Lavrov's comment, in Russian, was translated into Japanese at a joint news conference with Kono. Japan claims a string of Russia-controlled western Pacific islands, called the Northern Territories in Japan and Southern Kuriles in Russia. The territorial row over the island chain, seized by Soviet troops at the end of World War Two, has upset diplomatic relations ever since, precluding a formal peace treaty between the two countries. Lavrov also said talks with Japan on five joint economic activity projects on the disputed islands were proceeding at a good pace, without elaborating. Abe and Putin in 2016 agreed to launch talks on joint economic activities on the islands as a step toward concluding a peace treaty.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-russia/russias-putin-japans-abe-to-hold-summit-meet-on-june-29-idUSKCN1T10FJ>

L. North Korea

North Korea shoots off missiles

John J. Metzler, Korea Times, May 17, 2019

Amid a widening food shortfall affecting up to 40 percent of its population, North Korea has resumed testing short-range missiles in a risky bid for humanitarian aid and political attention. The rocket tests, which don't directly violate U.N. resolutions or prior diplomatic agreements, are nonetheless seen as a tactical step to revive Pyongyang's strategic objective of breaking tough economic sanctions and towards reaching a wide-ranging diplomatic deal with the United States. The firing of two volleys of short-range rockets appears a blunt reminder that the quaintly titled Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) patience is running short for resumed negotiations with the United States and South Korea.

Though there have been no long range ballistic missile firings nor nuclear weapons tests since the Trump Administration entered into negotiations with Kim Jong-un eighteen months ago; the looming threat from Pyongyang remains that the regime is willing to incrementally up the ante for attention, international standing, and possibly a deal. The DPRK desperately needs to break the international sanctions stranglehold on its economy stemming from Pyongyang's threatening behavior towards South Korea, Japan and the U.S. The North's nuclear tests and reckless ballistic missile firings and bombastic threats to target neighboring countries and the United States, led to a dangerous military showdown with Washington early in the Trump Administration

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2019/05/137_268992.html

Pro-NK media presses US to drop demand for Pyongyang to forgo nukes first

Yonhap, May 18, 2019

A pro-North Korea newspaper in Japan urged the United States on Saturday to retract its position that Pyongyang should

forgo nuclear arms first before rewards are given, in an apparent call for flexibility to resume nuclear talks between the two sides. The Chosun Sinbo also warned that diplomacy with Pyongyang could come to naught if the US fails to meet the year-end deadline that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has set for Washington to come up with the "right methodology" for the stalled negotiations.

The negotiations have hit a deadlock since the second summit between US President Donald Trump and Kim in Hanoi in February collapsed due to a failure to bridge gaps over the scope of Pyongyang's denuclearization and Washington's sanctions relief. "An agreement was not reached (in Hanoi) as (the US) insisted on its demand (for the North) to renounce its nuclear arms aimed at North Korea's unilateral disarmament," the newspaper said in an article. "The North's position is that it can engage in negotiations when the US stops its arrogant dialogue method in which it only makes its own demands," it added.

The newspaper also said that it can't prejudge whether the "Hanoi pledge" can be maintained should a third summit between Trump and Kim not materialize within this year, in reference to Kim's commitment to stopping nuclear and long-range missile tests. "It is clear that even if the US slaps sanctions, the North would not approach it for negotiations," the newspaper said.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190518000059&ACE_SEARCH=1

'US should accept incremental approach to North Korea nuclear issue'

Park Han-na, Korea Herald, May 21, 2019

The US should revise its strategy of pressuring North Korea to give up all its nuclear weapons before offering any sanctions relief, said a veteran diplomat, in order to avoid repeating diplomatic events that have ended in failure over the past two decades. "The US needs to take an incremental approach to resolve North

Korea's denuclearization issues. Demanding it to relinquish its entire nuclear arsenal first seems to be another repetition of the history of failure that begun (to be) attempted in the early 1990s," Cho Byung-jae, who served as chancellor of the Korea National Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until last year, said in an interview with The Korea Herald on Friday.

North Korea has faced constant pressure from sanctions and international isolation since its nuclear program came under increasing international scrutiny in the early 1990s. But the regime has survived through a three-generation lineage of leadership. "It is impetuous to think that the North will surrender its nuclear programs when tough sanctions are imposed," Cho said. The second summit between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Hanoi in February – which ended with no agreement – could have yielded results if Washington had offered conditions that took into account its security needs, Cho said.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190521000698&ACE_SEARCH=1

North Korea calls Biden 'fool of low IQ' over Kim criticism

Kim Tong-hyung, AP News, May 23, 2019

North Korea has labeled Joe Biden a "fool of low IQ" and an "imbecile bereft of elementary quality as a human being" after the U.S. presidential hopeful called North Korean leader Kim Jong Un a tyrant during a recent speech. Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency on Wednesday said the former American vice president had insulted the country's supreme leadership and committed an "intolerable and serious politically-motivated provocation" against the North. Biden during a campaign launch in Philadelphia on Saturday accused President Donald Trump of cozying up to "dictators and tyrants" like Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin. "What he uttered is just sophism of an imbecile bereft of elementary quality as a human being, let alone a politician," KCNA said.

<https://www.apnews.com/a17e2c56bcdf4e389bdc65b320e8c075>

North Korean missile test violated U.N. resolution, says Bolton

Reuters, May 25, 2019

U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton said on Saturday North Korea's recent missile launches violated a U.N. Security Council resolution and urged leader Kim Jong Un to return to denuclearization talks. It was the first time a senior U.S. official has described the tests as a violation of U.N. resolutions aimed at halting North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and came ahead of a four-day visit to Japan by U.S. President Donald Trump who arrives later in the day. "The U.N. resolution prohibits the launch of any ballistic missiles," Bolton said at a press roundtable. North Korea's test firings included short range ballistic missiles and so there was "no doubt" it was a violation, he added.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-bolton/north-korean-missile-test-violated-un-resolution-says-bolton-idUSKCN1SV01U>

N. Korea slams Bolton as 'security-destroying advisor,' 'human defect'

Yonhap, May 27, 2019

North Korea sharply criticized US National Security Advisor John Bolton on Monday, calling him "a security-destroying adviser," a "structurally defective guy" and a "human defect" that "deserves an earlier vanishing." A spokesperson for the North's foreign ministry unleashed the vituperation, bristling at Bolton's denunciation of the communist nation's recent missile launches as a violation of UN Security Council resolutions. "As for the UNSC 'resolutions' which Bolton recklessly referred to, we have neither recognized nor bound by them, because those 'resolutions' are illegal and outrageous ones that completely deny the rights to existence and development of a sovereign state, as we have already stated several times," the spokesperson was quoted as saying by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190527000734&ACE_SEARCH=1

North Korea officials, diplomats purged

Lee Min-hyung, Korea Times, May 31, 2019

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is carrying out a large-scale purge of officials and diplomats dealing with the United States, holding them responsible for the failure of his summit with U.S. President Donald Trump in Hanoi, according to a media report, Friday. Responding to the report from the conservative Chosun Ilbo, Cheong Wa Dae said it could not confirm whether it was true. "It is not proper for us to make any rash comments on the report," a presidential aide told reporters, asking not to be named. "We have nothing to say, even though we keep track of any unusual signs from the North." The unification ministry declined to comment.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2019/05/113_269835.html

M. South Korea

Korean general to lead joint drills to test Seoul's readiness for wartime OPCON transfer

Kim So-hyun, Korea Herald, May 28, 2019

A Korean four-star general is expected to lead joint military drills with the US in August to test Seoul's readiness to take over wartime operational control of its troops. The first joint exercise for assessment of initial operational capability (IOC), to be held during the combined command-post exercise in August, is likely to be led by a Korean general, according to the ROK-US Combined Forces Command (CFC) and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The wartime OPCON transfer to Korea will proceed as planned only if it passes the IOC assessment, military officials said. If the results show that the Korean armed forces are not ready, the OPCON transfer can be delayed to after around 2022.

Once the Korean military takes over OPCON, a Korean general will be the chief of CFC, and the US Forces Korea

commander, who is the current chief of the CFC, will serve as the deputy commander. US Forces Korea Commander Gen. Robert Abrams said during a US Land Forces Pacific (LANPAC) symposium in Hawaii last week that an assessment is expected to take place in August with a South Korean four-star general in charge of the CFC under the stress of simulated crisis and contingency. The South Korean and US defense ministers agreed last year to conduct an IOC verification in 2019, after which they will test Seoul's full operational and full mission capabilities. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff and the USFK Command will report the results of the IOC assessment to the ROK-US Military Committee Meeting in October.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190528000466&ACE_SEARCH=1

Nuke envoys of S. Korea, US, Japan discuss N. Korea in Singapore

Yonhap, Korea Herald, May 31, 2019

The chief nuclear envoys of South Korea, the US and Japan held trilateral talks in Singapore on Friday to explore ways to break the current impasse in negotiations on North Korea's denuclearization, officials said. The three envoys last met in Washington on March 7. They were at the 18th Asia Security Summit, also known as the Shangri-La Dialogue, which brought together defense ministers and top-level officials from major countries. It is quite unusual for the top nuclear negotiators to attend the security forum. The officials refused to answer questions from reporters. Negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang are at a stalemate following the no-deal summit in February between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Hanoi.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190531000621&ACE_SEARCH=1

N. Central, South and Southeast Asia

Russia and Uzbekistan agree to start survey of new plant site

World Nuclear News, May 17, 2019

Rosatom, the Russian state nuclear corporation, and UzAtom, Uzbekistan's nuclear development agency, have signed a contract to perform engineering surveys for the Central Asian country's first nuclear power plant.

The agreement was signed today during the Power Uzbekistan 2019 exhibition in Tashkent by Dmitry Ashanin, deputy director for prospective projects at Rosatom subsidiary Atomstroyexport, and Otabek Amanov, nuclear power plant construction director at UzAtom.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Russia-and-Uzbekistan-agree-to-start-survey-of-new>

Mauritanian Cleric Muhammad Al-Hassan Ould Al-Dadou Al-Shanqiti Says Muslims Must Strive To Obtain Nuclear Weapons, Agrees They Should Achieve 'Balance Of Terror'

The Middle-East Media Research Institute, May 28, 2019

Mauritanian cleric Muhammad Al-Hassan Ould Al-Dadou Al-Shanqiti said in an interview broadcast on Al-Aqsa TV (Hamas-Gaza) on May 22, 2019, that the Muslims have a duty to strive to obtain nuclear weapons because there is a threat that it might be used against them and it is the "only way to deter the enemies." He gave the example of Pakistan, which he said stopped being "harassed" by its neighbors once it obtained nuclear weapons. Al-Shanqiti also said that the recent "rush" to normalize relations with the Zionists is caused by a lack of faith in Allah and by the fact that the Zionists possess a nuclear weapon while the Arabs do not. He added the Muslims must not use such a weapon "unless it is used against them" and agreed with the interviewer that there should be a "balance of terror."

<https://www.memri.org/reports/mauritanian-cleric-muhammad-al-hassan-ould-al-dadou-al-shanqiti-says-muslims-must-strive>

O. World/Misc

Risk of nuclear war now highest since WW2, U.N. arms research chief says

Tom Miles, Reuters, May 21, 2019

The risk of nuclear weapons being used is at its highest since World War Two, a senior U.N. security expert said on Tuesday, calling it an "urgent" issue that the world should take more seriously.

Renata Dwan, director of the U.N. Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), said all states with nuclear weapons have nuclear modernisation programmes underway and the arms control landscape is changing, partly due to strategic competition between China and the United States.

Traditional arms control arrangements are also being eroded by the emergence of new types of war, with increasing prevalence of armed groups and private sector forces and new technologies that blurred the line between offence and defence, she told reporters in Geneva.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/un-nuclear/risk-of-nuclear-war-now-highest-since-ww2-u-n-arms-research-chief-says-idINKCN1SR25C>

Canadian pre-licensing review starts for BWRX-300

World Nuclear News, May 22, 2019

GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy (GEH) has initiated a vendor design review by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) for its BWRX-300 small modular reactor.

The CNSC's pre-licensing vendor design review is an optional service to provide an assessment of a nuclear power plant design based on a vendor's reactor technology. It is not a required part of the licensing process for a new nuclear power plant, but aims to verify the acceptability of a design with respect to Canadian nuclear regulatory requirements and expectations.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Canadian-pre-licensing-review-starts-for-BWRX-300>

IEA rings alarm bell on phasing out nuclear energy

Geert De Clercq, Reuters, May 28, 2019

A steep decline in nuclear energy capacity will threaten climate goals and power supply security unless advanced economies find a way to extend the lifespan of their reactors, the International Energy Agency said.

Nuclear is currently the world's second-largest source of low-carbon electricity, behind hydropower, and accounting for 10 percent of global electricity generation. But nuclear fleets in the United States and Europe are on average more than 35 years old and many of the world's 452 reactors are set to close as cheap gas and tighter safety requirements make it uneconomical to operate them.

"Without policy changes, advanced economies could lose 25 percent of their nuclear capacity by 2025 and as much as two-thirds of it by 2040," the IEA writes in its first major report about nuclear energy in two decades.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-nuclearpower-ia/iea-rings-alarm-bell-on-phasing-out-nuclear-energy-idINKCN1SX1XW>

Nuclear Power - Where's The Uranium Coming From?

James Conca, Forbes, May 28, 2019

Since the 1990s, mostly from other countries like Canada and Australia. This is a good thing, as the uranium ores in these countries are much higher grade than ours, and requires a lot less mining and refining to get the same amount of energy into the fuel. And, except for Russia, most of these countries are our allies.

The Uranium Committee of the Energy Minerals Division released their 2019 Annual Report last week in San Antonio at the annual meeting of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. The Uranium Committee monitors uranium industry activities, and the production of electricity from nuclear power, because these

drive uranium exploration and development in the United States and overseas.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesconca/2019/05/28/nuclear-power-where-s-the-uranium-coming-from/#26c7ef1d7b9f>

IEA presses need for pro-nuclear policies

World Nuclear News, May 28, 2019

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has made policy recommendations for the many countries that see a role for nuclear power in their energy transitions in a new report it plans to discuss today at the 10th Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM10) being held this week in Vancouver, Canada. Nuclear Power in a Clean Energy System is the Paris-based agency's first report addressing nuclear power in nearly two decades in order to "bring this important topic back into the global energy debate", it said.

World Nuclear Association concurred with the report's assertion that strong policy support is needed to secure investment in existing and new nuclear plants, stressing that the focus should be on designing electricity markets in a way that values the clean energy and energy security attributes of low-carbon technologies, including nuclear power.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/IEA-presses-need-for-pro-nuclear-policies>

Speech: Nuclear needed to decarbonise economies

World Nuclear News, May 20, 2019

The International Energy Agency's recent workshop Nuclear Power in a Clean Energy System was "extremely timely and important" because "time is of the essence if we are to successfully decarbonise our economies", Jean-Bernard Lévy, CEO of EDF, said in a special address to participants in the meeting. The following is the text of his speech on 25 February.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Speech-Nuclear-needed-to-decarbonise-economies>

P. Op-Ed

INDIA

This Might Be Where the Very First Total Nuclear War Starts

National Interest Blog, May 24, 2019

Undoubtedly, for nearly two decades the most dangerous place on Earth has been the Indian-Pakistani border in Kashmir. It's possible that a small spark from artillery and rocket exchanges across that border might – given the known military doctrines of the two nuclear-armed neighbors – lead inexorably to an all-out nuclear conflagration. In that case the result would be catastrophic. Besides causing the deaths of millions of Indians and Pakistanis, such a war might bring on “nuclear winter” on a planetary scale, leading to levels of suffering and death that would be beyond our comprehension.

Alarming, the nuclear competition between India and Pakistan has now entered a spine-chilling phase. That danger stems from Islamabad's decision to deploy low-yield tactical nuclear arms at its forward operating military bases along its entire frontier with India to deter possible aggression by tank-led invading forces. Most ominously, the decision to fire such a nuclear-armed missile with a range of 35 to 60 miles is to rest with local commanders. This is a perilous departure from the universal practice of investing such authority in the highest official of the nation. Such a situation has no parallel in the Washington-Moscow nuclear arms race of the Cold War era.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/might-be-where-very-first-total-nuclear-war-starts-59327>

CHINA

Healthy AI competition makes us all better off

Global Times, May 28, 2019

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the major topics in the current world. Will AI replace humans and deplete employment opportunities? What should we do to stay

competitive? Where is the so-called AI war between major powers heading? Global Times (GT) reporter Li Qingqing discussed these and more with Martin Ford (Ford) at the recent 16th Eurasian Media Forum in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Ford is a futurist and founder of a Silicon Valley-based software development company and author of several bestselling books on AI.

GT: AI benefits human society, but it brings challenges and risks to our security and governance as well. As AI has had problems including opaque decision-making processes and algorithmic bias, is our future world becoming more uncertain and unreliable?

Ford: There are two sides of AI. On one side, it is going to be a huge benefit to all of us. It can be a tool that brings medical breakthroughs which make human beings healthier, or brings us scientific achievements that may help resolve climate change. On the other side, there are things we need to worry about, such as AI systems that can be hacked and thus leak our privacy. Another thing I often talk about is increasing inequality. The potential for bias rises because the data that you train the algorithm on comes from people. For example, there is a company in the US that stopped using its AI system to screen resumes for new jobs, because the system was biased against women. It happens because the data that the algorithm was trained on is also biased. People are now working on to fix the problem, and it's actually easier to fix biases in an algorithm than it is in human beings. We may not rely on algorithms totally, but hopefully in the future, an algorithm can act as a second opinion that checks us, and if we are too biased, the algorithm will find that.

Recently, an organization named OpenAI made a very powerful AI fake text generator. It can generate stories. If you give it one sentence, it will automatically generate a whole narrative. It is very coherent. Imagine that in the future, machines literally generate junk information that is meaningless, and this will make our whole system overwhelmed.

These are all real risks, and these are the areas where we really need regulations.

GT: Will major power competition be centered on AI in the future?

Ford: There will definitely be a race, because AI is incredibly powerful technology. It can be used in many sectors like business, commerce, military, and security. There will be competition between China and US businesses, between Google and Tencent, and also competition between the Chinese, Russian, and US governments.

I think China-US AI competition is inevitable and healthy. It is a good thing when you have businesses like Google, Facebook, Tencent, and Baidu competing with each other. But there is a more dystopian danger: an AI arms race. AI is not commercial technology - it is something that may be applied to the military sphere and national security. We know there is competition between the US, China, and Russia, and that could have negative effects.

GT: Some say that a country should focus on its own AI development and prevent technological leaks to other countries, while others say technology has no borders and countries should work together against AI's potential risks. Which point of view do you prefer?

Ford: In general, we should all work together, and that's kind of the way it is now. The top AI researchers in China and the US publish academic papers, and they can all read about each other's breakthroughs. It's fairly open now, and it is very important to have global conversations. Ideally, I hope countries can work together, and there will be platforms like the UN where we can talk about the application of these technologies and work together toward appropriate regulations and guidelines. But everyone knows it's hard in the real world, especially when AI technologies have national security applications or can be used for military purposes. Then the situation would be totally different.

GT: Will China and the US start a zero-sum AI war, or will the two influence and

interact with each other in the area?

Ford: Hopefully China and the US can work together, and it will be a healthy competition that makes us all better off. Competition is good, and it pushes people to innovate. You don't want to become too destructive, and you don't want a military competition in which people are building weapons.

It is true that most AI research and development is especially concentrated in the US and China right now, but AI development is also happening in many other countries. For example, Google just opened a research center in Africa. The key is, regardless of where the technology is actually developed, AI will become a utility similar to electricity. Electricity is everywhere, and you will see AI used throughout the world. Everyone could ultimately benefit from the advances that come with the technology. This is truly a global phenomenon.

GT: A Dutch peace group named PAX said that many countries are currently applying AI to warfare. PAX called it "lethal autonomous weapon" or simply "killer robots." How will an AI arms race, if it is really around the corner, affect the whole human community?

Ford: This is a scary scenario. People worry about autonomous weaponry because it might not be used only by the military but could become more generally available and may be accessible to terrorists. That would be scary. The debate over autonomous weapons is because people are uncomfortable with the idea that weapons could make a decision on its own to shoot someone, without human authorization. What's even scarier is that we are not talking about just one drone or one robot, but hundreds or thousands of them that swarm together.

The barrier of using these technologies is quite low. It is not like nuclear weapons - you have to be a country, and you need to have resources to make nuclear weapons. Bad people can buy drones on Amazon or Alibaba, then work on them such as install software and turn them into

weapons. Anyone can do this, and that's one of the reasons why people are concerned about this and want to put restrictions on them. Even if these kinds of weapons are only used by the military, it could increase the probability of war. People could see how the cost of war is lower, because the lives of soldiers wouldn't be at risk anymore. So it is important that we regulate these technologies.

GT: What do you think is the best scenario of AI in the future?

Ford: AI is going to have a huge impact on our lives in the next five, 10, 20 years, and beyond. I think it is the biggest thing that will shake the future. The best scenario is that human beings will find a way to leverage AI on behalf of everyone, so that it won't create significant inequalities and everyone can benefit from it. That's why I have covered this in my writing and through TED Talks regarding basic incomes. Maybe you will need to give everyone income and jobs to maintain social stability. This is also good for the economy because it helps drive consumer spending and avoids an economic downturn. It is a way of moderating inequality, because otherwise the wealthy will only get richer and average people might lose their income entirely. They will be left behind. If we apply such a strategy and make sure everyone benefits from AI, then the future could be very optimistic. We can then imagine technology that makes everyone wealthy, rather than people worrying about survival. This is the vision I have for the future, but there's still a lot we have to do to make that happen. We need more policies, and we must address the risks.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1152107.shtml>

Top planner warns of misusing rare earths

Xin Zhiming and Zhou Lanxu, China Daily, May 29, 2019

The National Development and Reform Commission, China's top economic planner, said on Tuesday that the country is willing to continue supplying rare-earth metals to world markets but is opposed to those who

use products made with such rare earths to "suppress and dampen China's development". It also said that the industries of China and the United States are highly complementary. Cooperation will benefit both countries while confrontation will only undermine their interests, it said. The NDRC said in the recent media interview that China will adhere to the principle of fair and free trade in its management of rare-earth exports, but "the Chinese people will be unhappy" if the country's exported rare-earth metals are used against China. Since the start of the China-US trade friction more than a year ago, Washington has taken many measures, including taking advantage of its edge in high-end chip making, to stymie Chinese high-tech firms, the NDRC said.

The NDRC added that in its latest move to dampen China's industrial development, the US government has used an executive order to effectively ban products of Chinese tech giant Huawei from being used in the US, which has been widely seen as unreasonable and unfair. Having been increasingly used in high-tech industries, rare-earth metals are critical in making products from advanced weaponry to chips and hybrid cars. China is the world's largest producer of rare earths, accounting for about 80 percent of global supply. However, the country's rare-earth industry is faced with such problems as rapidly decreasing inventory, inefficient production and environmental pollution. Analysts also said that the low prices of China's exports have failed to reflect the real value of the precious resource.

The division of labor of the global rare-earth industry should be coordinated in accordance with the principle of opening-up and sharing, the NDRC said. While the country prioritizes the domestic use of rare-earth metals, it is willing to see its exports help drive the development of global industries, it said. President Xi Jinping visited the JL MAG rare-earth Co on May 20 in Ganzhou, Jiangxi province, during a three-day inspection tour. Xi learned about the rare-earth industry's development in Ganzhou, a major producer of rare-earth resources and products in China. During

the seven trading days from May 20 to Tuesday, the A-share listed company hit the 10 percent daily upside limit six times, with its share price rising by 90 percent after closing on Tuesday

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201905/29/WS5ced7e51a3104842260be544.html>

PAKISTAN

Deterrence, hybrid warfare and Pakistan

Dr Ahmed Saeed Minhas, The Express Tribune, May 18, 2019

Contemporary security situation in Pakistan's neighbourhood point towards the employment of hybrid warfare under a nuclear overhang. It is a known fact that despite being in possession of nuclear weapons, major powers have avoided using them for fear of large-scale destruction. Japan is the only country to have suffered the devastation and destruction caused by nuclear weapons. Bernard Brodie, who saw the nuclear weapons' effect, writes in his book *The Absolute Weapon*: "Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on, its chief purpose must be to avert them."

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1975447/6-deterrence-hybrid-warfare-pakistan/>

The story of Pakistan's going nuclear

Tahir Niaz, The Nation, May 28, 2019

When mountains moved and turned pale with the intensity of the shake, Pakistan crossed the nuclear threshold to become a declared nuclear weapons state on May 28, 1998 by detonating five nuclear devices in the Ras Koh Hills in Chagai area of Balochistan province, in response to India's five tests two weeks earlier.

Pakistan therefore proudly celebrates this day as "Youm-e-Takbir", which translates as the "Day of Greatness", to commemorate the country's achievement. It was the day Pakistan became a member of the elite nuclear powers club – the seventh nation in the world and the first in the Muslim comity to publicly test nuclear weapons.

<https://nation.com.pk/28-May-2019/the-story-of-pakistan-s-going-nuclear>

21 Years Of Nuclearization Of South Asia: Current Doctrinal Trends

Haris Bilal Malik, Eurasia Review, May 29, 2019

Since the nuclearization of South-Asia in 1998, the region's security dynamics have changed considerably. This has had a profound and irreversible impact on regional and extra-regional politics, the security architecture of South Asia and the international nuclear order. India had carried out its nuclear tests between 11-13 May in 1998.

Consequently Pakistan, due to the emerging scenario also had to carry out its nuclear tests on 28th May 1998. Hence this May marks the 21st anniversary of the nuclearization of South Asia. During this period the nuclear doctrines of both countries have gone through several phases of evolution.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/29052019-21-years-of-nuclearization-of-south-asia-current-doctrinal-trends-oped/>

USA

Nuclear Weapons Are Getting Less Predictable, and More Dangerous

Patrick Tucker, Defence one, May 16, 2019

Facing steerable ICBMs and smaller warheads, the Pentagon seeks better tracking as the White House pursues an unlikely arms-control treaty.

On Tuesday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met his counterpart, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, to discuss, among many things, the prospect of a new, comprehensive nuclear-weapons treaty with Russia and China. At the same time, the Pentagon is developing a new generation of nuclear weapons to keep up with cutting-edge missiles and warheads coming out of Moscow. If the administration fails in its ambitious

renegotiation, the world is headed toward a new era of heightened nuclear tension not seen in decades.

That's because these new weapons are eroding the idea of nuclear predictability. Since the dawn of the nuclear era, the concept of the nuclear triad — bombers, submarines, and intercontinental ballistic missiles — created a shared set of expectations around what the start of a nuclear war would look like. If you were in NORAD's Cheyenne Mountain Complex in Colorado and you saw ICBMs headed toward the United States, you knew that a nuclear first strike was underway. The Soviets had a similar set of expectations, and this shared understanding created the delicate balance of deterrence — a balance that is becoming unsettled.

<https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2019/05/everyones-nuclear-weapons-are-getting-less-predictable-and-more-dangerous/157052/>

Time to Pull US Nuclear Weapons Out of Turkey

Harvey M. Sapolsky, Defence one, May 17, 2019

Storing nuclear weapons close to trouble is a bad idea, and giving Ankara a shared finger on the nuclear trigger is rapidly losing its charm.

Amid the recent self-congratulatory celebrations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's 70th anniversary, there was no mention one of its strangest policies: the nuclear sharing program that keeps American nuclear bombs in five NATO countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Turkey) and trains host air forces to use them. Thus at Incirlik Air Base in Turkey, about 100 miles from the Syrian border, the United States stores some 20 to 80 B61 nuclear weapons for delivery by Turkish or American aircraft. There is not much comfort in knowing that these weapons are under direct American control in heavily guarded bunkers and are designed to be unusable without the proper codes. It is time to bring them home.

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/05/get-us-nuclear-weapons-out-turkey/157101/>

A war with Iran would be the mother of all quagmires

Max Boot, Washington Post, May 20, 2019

During last week's war scare with Iran — as the administration leaked discussions to deploy 120,000 troops to fight Iran, and leaked intelligence claiming that Iran was placing missiles on small boats to attack U.S. warships — it sounded to a lot of people like Iraq redux. President Trump temporarily ratcheted down tensions before raising them again with a Sunday tweet: "If Iran wants to fight, that will be the official end of Iran. Never threaten the United States again!"

Unfortunately, the United States lacks a realistic ground option in Iran, which is much bigger than Iraq in both area and population. (Iran has 83 million people and 617,000 square miles; Iraq in 2003 had about 30 million people and about 170,000 square miles.) Counterinsurgency math — premised on 20 troops per 1,000 inhabitants — suggests that the United States and its allies needed some 600,000 troops in Iraq. (There were never more than 180,000.) By that math, to control Iran, you would need more than 1.6 million troops. That's more than double the active-duty end-strength (656,403) of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps combined, and few if any U.S. allies would help. You could probably topple the Iranian government with a lot fewer troops. But if you leave immediately afterward, as Bolton favored doing in Iraq, the result could be either Libya-style chaos or the emergence of a new anti-American regime.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/05/20/war-with-iran-would-be-mother-all-quagmires/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.4f6d72e2671c

U.S. should end New START nuclear arms treaty with Russia, expert says

Carlo Muñoz, The Washington Times, May 21, 2019

The Trump administration should drop plans to extend New START, the landmark

nuclear arms treaty with Russia, according to a new analysis from the conservative Heritage Foundation.

The White House has already pulled the United States out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia dealing with shorter-range “tactical” nuclear weapons, over what the U.S. says is Moscow’s continued non-compliance with the terms of the Cold War-era pact.

Now, with the deadline for extending the New START treaty looming, Washington now has the unique opportunity to recast its relationship with Russia on nuclear arms development into one more favorable to American interests, Heritage Foundation senior analyst Michaela Dodge says.

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/may/21/us-should-end-new-start-nuclear-arms-treaty-russia/>

Half of American adults expect war with Iran ‘within next few years’

Chris Kahn, Reuters, May 22, 2019

Half of all Americans believe that the United States will go to war with Iran “within the next few years,” according to a Reuters/Ipsos public opinion poll released on Tuesday amid increased tensions between the two countries.

While Americans are more concerned about Iran as a security threat to the United States now than they were last year, few would be in favour of a pre-emptive attack on the Iranian military. But if Iran attacked U.S. military forces first, four out of five believed the United States should respond militarily in a full or limited way, the May 17-20 poll showed.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-iran-poll/half-of-american-adults-expect-war-with-iran-within-next-few-years-reuters-ipsos-poll-idINKCN1SR27P>

Nuclear Power - Where’s The Uranium Coming From?

James Conca, Forbes, May 24, 2019

Since the 1990s, mostly from other countries like Canada and Australia. This is a good

thing, as the uranium ores in these countries are much higher grade than ours, and requires a lot less mining and refining to get the same amount of energy into the fuel.

The Uranium Committee of the Energy Minerals Division released their 2019 Annual Report last week in San Antonio at the annual meeting of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. The Uranium Committee monitors uranium industry activities, and the production of electricity from nuclear power, because these drive uranium exploration and development in the United States and overseas.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesconca/2019/05/28/nuclear-power-where-s-the-uranium-coming-from/#18fbbc5a7b9f>

Beware The Decline of U.S. Influence in South Asia

Minaam Shah, National Interest Blog, May 27, 2019

South Asia, for the most part of Donald Trump’s presidency, had been quiet up until earlier this year when the region’s two main protagonists, India and Pakistan, nearly entered a nuclear face-off. A suicide attack on a paramilitary convoy in Indian controlled Kashmir triggered an aerial dogfight culminating in the capture of an Indian pilot who was later released by Pakistan. The episode marked a major shift in how India responds to terrorist attacks sponsored from across the border: It was the first instance since the Indo-Pak war in 1971 that Indian warplanes had crossed the border and bombed the Pakistani mainland. Naturally, it was expected that the United States, the region’s traditional arbitrator, would help diffuse tensions. But for the first time since the early ‘90s, the United States did not play a significant role in stemming the crisis.

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/beware-decline-us-influence-south-asia-59212>

New START Must Be Extended, With or Without China

Daryl Kimball, National Interest Blog, May 27, 2019

On May 14, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo traveled to Sochi, Russia to discuss what the State Department called a “new era” in “arms control to address new and emerging threats” with Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov and President Vladimir Putin.

The trip follows reports that Donald Trump has directed his administration to seek a new arms control agreement with Russia and China that should include: “all the weapons, all the warheads, and all the missiles.”

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/new-start-must-be-extended-or-without-china-59227>

Trump Is Driving Iran into Russia's Arms

Reese Erlich, Foreign Policy, May 29, 2019

Russia is seeking to take advantage of the erratic actions of U.S. President Donald Trump's administration in the latest U.S.-Iranian crisis to expand its influence in the Middle East. For now, Russia and Iran have a close alliance, but maintaining it over the long term may prove difficult.

The Trump administration has sent contradictory signals regarding Iran in recent weeks. The crisis began when U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton announced on May 5 that Washington would send an aircraft carrier group to the Persian Gulf, and on May 10 Pentagon officials announced the deployment of Patriot missile batteries. On May 19, after a pro-Iranian militia allegedly fired a rocket that landed near the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Trump tweeted a threat: “If Iran wants to fight, that will be the official end of Iran.”

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/29/trump-is-driving-iran-into-russias-arms-nuclear-deal-putin-rouhani-sanctions/>

Why Trump's Iran face-off may be more dangerous than North Korea: Peter Apps

Peter Apps, Reuters, May 30, 2019

Maritime security experts say there was likely here less than four kilograms of explosives in the limpet mine that tore open a gash in the stern of Norwegian oil tanker “Andrea Victory” as she lay at anchor off the United Arab Emirates on May 12. As with additional attacks against three other vessels and two major oil pipeline facilities here in nearby Saudi Arabia, there was little chance of the attacks causing catastrophic damage or disrupting the world's supply of oil.

That, however, was never the purpose of the attacks – blamed by the United States and others on Iran and its allies. Instead, the attacks appeared to be a warning, a demonstration of just how much chaos Tehran and its proxies could unleash if rising tensions with Washington and its regional foes turned to outright war.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/apps-trump-column/column-why-trumps-iran-face-off-may-be-more-dangerous-than-north-korea-peter-apps-idINL8N2363A5>

RUSSIA

Russia warns US of symmetrical response on nuclear move

Elena Teslova, Anadolu Agency, May 17, 2019

Russia will “symmetrically” respond to the U.S. actions after the end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, Russian foreign minister said on Friday.

“As for the consequences of the U.S. withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, here President Putin very clearly outlined our position - we will act symmetrically,” Sergey Lavrov told reporters on the sidelines of the ministerial session of the Council of Europe in Helsinki.

Lavrov recalled that the U.S. has suspended its participation in the treaty and launched a withdrawal procedure, which takes six months and will be completed on Aug 2, after that the treaty will go out of existence.

“We will work on these developments if the U.S. does so, and they will do so. But we will not design and deploy intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles in any region where similar American systems are not deployed,” Lavrov said.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/russia-warns-us-of-symmetrical-response-on-nuclear-move/1481068>

Putin’s Arctic Plans Are a Climate Change Bet

Leonid Bershidsky, Bloomberg, May 28, 2019

Last weekend, Russia launched the last of a new crew of atomic icebreakers meant to consolidate the country’s dominance of commercial traffic in the Arctic. As much of the rest of the world recognizes climate change as an emergency, Russia is working hard to capitalize on it – and the U.S. appears to be far behind.

The icebreaker Ural, launched at the Baltic Shipyard in St. Petersburg, is the third and last ship, at least for now, of Project 22220. The other two, the Arktika and the Sibir, were launched in 2016 and 2017; the Arktika is expected to enter service this year. These powerful ships, capable of crashing through 3-meter-thick ice for clearing shipping routes, are the first nuclear-powered icebreakers designed in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union and fully built in post-Soviet times. The current nuclear icebreaker fleet is old, mostly built in the 1970s and 1980s, and much of it is no longer functional. The Russian government aims to replace it with the new giant ships in order to make what Russia calls the Northern Sea Route navigable year-round, not just a few months a year.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-05-28/putin-s-arctic-plans-are-a-climate-change-bet>

Russia’s Massive Nuclear Weapons Arsenal Is a Threat

Mark B. Schneider, National Interest Blog, May 29, 2019

The U.S. mainstream view of Russia has changed quite a bit in the last twenty years, particularly in the last five. We have moved from the fantasy that there was no threat from Russia after the demise of the Soviet Union to a recognition of a serious Russian threat to the U.S. and its allies, including a nuclear threat in the last two years of the Obama administration and the Trump administration. However, characterizing the relationship between the U.S. and Russia as “competition” as it now appears in U.S. Government documents, does not go far enough. Lockheed and Boeing compete; Russia threatens preemptive nuclear attack. It is unilaterally trying to create a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states in the classic 19th Century sense while building the largest nuclear arsenal in the world. There is no competition here but rather a serious threat from Russia.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/russias-massive-nuclear-weapons-arsenal-threat-59947>

Russia’s New Submarine Has Big Problems: “Design Flaws Were Discovered.”

Mark Episkopos, National Interest Blog, May 29, 2019

Russia inherited a vast, if not bloated, catalog of Soviet submarines built in the decades following the Cuban Missile Crisis. Many of these fell into disrepair over the 1990’s due to insufficient maintenance. Others were simply not needed in the context of Russia’s new geostrategic goals, at least not the massive quantities typical to Soviet submarine production.

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<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/russias-new-submarine-has-big-problems-design-flaws-were-discovered-59972>

Intel: Why Russia dispatched top diplomat to Tehran

Al-Monitor, May 30, 2019

Russia dispatched one of its leading diplomats to Tehran this week to urge the Iranians to back off their threat to resume certain nuclear activities in retaliation for the US "maximum pressure" campaign.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov sat down for "a square talk" with his counterpart Abbas Araghchi, the Russian foreign minister said in a statement after the meeting. The Russian envoy sought to dissuade the Iranians from leaving the Non-Proliferation Treaty or following the Donald Trump administration in exiting the 2015 nuclear deal.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/05/intel-russia-sergey-ryabkov-tehran-iran-nuclear-deal.html>

If HBO's 'Chernobyl' Was Made by Russians

Leonid Bershidsky, Bloomberg, May 31, 2019

"Chernobyl," the HBO mini-series that ends Monday in the U.S., isn't easy to watch as someone who lived in the Soviet Union in 1986 and who has since visited the Chernobyl exclusion zone. But, like many of my compatriots, I'm watching it — and thinking it should have been made in Russia, Ukraine or Belarus, not by an American entertainment channel.

There are two reasons for this. One is authenticity — despite a valiant attempt at it, the series falls short. But the other, more important reason is that this kind of harsh sermon on the importance of listening to

experts and running a government for the people, not for its own sake, should have come from one of the affected countries. Those countries, apparently, haven't learned the lessons well enough to make a movie like this.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-05-31/hbo-s-chernobyl-is-good-but-a-russian-version-would-be-better>

WEST ASIA

Why Turkey's President Erdogan Wants Those Russian Missiles

Melik Kaylan, Forbes, May 30, 2019

The US ultimatum gave Turkey very few days in which to choose between Nato and Russia. Either Ankara dropped the deal with the Ruskies to adopt their S-400 missile system or US punitive actions followed by the first week of June. The newly announced temporary band-aid of a joint US-Turkey study group will only postpone the reckoning. It will not resolve the fundamental issue of why Turkey's President Erdogan wants Moscow's missiles. He wants them badly. Considering what that means for Turkey's economy and defense capability, President Erdogan's obstinacy might seem baffling. The Turks would lose participation in the F-35 fighter jet program and ultimately all the privileges of integration with the Western alliance, infrastructure investments, bond underwriting, debt-service guarantees and much else. Turkish banks could ultimately face exclusion from the Swift system. Not the whole package at first but the very threat of increasing pressure would deflate the economy and devalue the currency sharply. The dark era of 1970s post-Cyprus-invasion misery could recur — blackouts, shortages, insurgency, bunker economics.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/melikkaylan/2019/05/30/why-turkeys-president-erdogan-wants-those-russian-missiles/#2ae12c579fab>

ISRAEL

Israel vs. Russia: The Middle East War That Could Become a Nuclear Train Wreck

Michael Peck, National Interest Blog May 19, 2019

As always with the Arab-Israeli (or Iranian-Israeli) conflict, the real danger isn't the regional conflict, but how it might escalate. In the 1973 war, the Soviets threatened to send troops to Egypt unless Israel agreed to a cease-fire. The United States responded by going on nuclear alert.

Israel remains determined to continue pounding Iranian forces in Syria in a bid to keep Tehran's forces away from Israel's northern border. At the same time, Russia has thousands of troops in Syria that could be caught in the crossfire—or even become belligerents if Moscow tires of its Syrian ally being pummeled.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/israel-vs-russia-middle-east-war-could-become-nuclear-train-wreck-58482>

Israel Destroyed Syria's Nuclear Potential. What Would The World Look Like Now If They Hadn't?

Yaakov Katz, Newsweek, May 26, 2019

In the middle of April 2007, a short, bald and burly man with a limp and a cane walked into the West Wing of the White House. He carried a small briefcase with folders chaotically jutting out.

The man showed his diplomatic passport. He was under the impression that he would be brought directly to the Oval Office for a private meeting with the president, but instead the guards were under orders to keep his name off the official visitor logs and clandestinely escort him to the office of national security adviser Stephen Hadley. Inside, two additional men were waiting: Hadley's deputy, Elliott Abrams, and a surprise, Vice President Dick Cheney.

<https://www.newsweek.com/2019/06/07/israel-destroyed-syria-nuclear-reactor-1433940.html>

How to maneuver in the Middle East

Ariel Kahana, Israel Hayom, May 26, 2019

Defense and Security experts from the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security sit down with Israel Hayom and explain that while Hamas isn't worth a ground offensive, Israel must contain Hezbollah. And Iran? Iran is the biggest threat.

Only a few hours have passed since the article went online, and former Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman was on the phone. He called the author, Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror, and asked for an English version of the new piece, which explained Iran's dangerous activity in Syria.

<https://www.israelhayom.com/2019/05/26/how-to-maneuver-in-the-middle-east/>

Right From Wrong: Electing to Defend Israel from Iran

Ruthie Blum, The Jerusalem Post, May 31, 2019

The last-ditch efforts of Prime Minister Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu to form a coalition, culminating Wednesday night in the dispersal of the newly instated 21st Knesset, overshadowed crucial events that help to explain why the ruling Likud Party has been and should remain at the helm.

A committee headed by Netanyahu – who has been serving as defense minister since Avigdor Liberman resigned the post in November and spurred the election that he just caused to go down the drain – announced its decision to award the 2019 Israel Defense Prize to the Mossad agents who bravely broke into a warehouse in Tehran and retrieved thousands of documents related to Iran's nuclear program.

<https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Right-from-Wrong-Electing-to-defend-Israel-from-Iran-591197>

EAST ASIA

Nuclear powers should lead world toward a mood for disarmament*The Asahi Shimbun, May 16, 2019*

The world's efforts to build a future without nuclear weapons are now at a critical juncture. Strong countervailing winds are blowing against the long-established international framework for promoting nuclear arms reductions through international treaties. The core of this framework is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a landmark international treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear arms. A meeting was recently held at the United Nations headquarters to prepare for the 2020 review conference of the treaty, which will mark the 50th anniversary of its enforcement.

But the meeting failed to work out a draft text to be used in discussions for the review conference as the rift between the nuclear powers and countries without nuclear arms remains as wide as ever. The leaders of the United States and Russia, which together account for more than 90 percent of all the nuclear arms on Earth, have even shown their ambitions to beef up their countries' nuclear arsenals.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201905160028.html>

It's John Bolton's world; Trump is just living in it*Colin H. Kahl and Jon B. Wolfsthal, Korea Times, May 17, 2019*

John Bolton, President Donald Trump's national security adviser, is leading the United States in a dangerous direction. In February, it was Bolton who reportedly pressed Trump to take an uncompromising line on denuclearization with North Korea's Kim Jung-un, leading to a fruitless summit and an escalation of tensions. More recently, Bolton has taunted the Iranian regime, including issuing a dire warning last week of impending U.S. military action. And, closer to home, he has become the point person for the administration's efforts to oust Nicolas Maduro's government in

Venezuela.

While these may seem like disconnected responses to pressing global events, they are not. Rather, they reflect Bolton's long-standing grudges against North Korea, Iran and Cuba (Maduro's patron), and his deeply held beliefs regarding the futility of diplomacy, the benefits of regime change, and the wisdom of military action. Bolton – an unrepentant champion of the disastrous Iraq war – has never met a rogue state he didn't want to isolate, topple and attack – and North Korea has long been at the top of his hit list.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2019/05/137_269034.html

Trump vs. Thanos*Oh Young-jin, Korea Times, May 17, 2019*

Giving is one thing, taking is another. By that definition, I guess there are many takers out there who pretend that nothing is taken. Now the chance is that the Russo brothers didn't bother or conspire to make a subliminal connection between one comic book figure transposed on screen and a real person who emerged from a reality show. The two are close enough to each other, for they work in fiction. The directing brothers just wanted to have their movie live up to the comic spirit – making the Avengers plot as simple as possible despite all distracting trappings – that good always prevails over evil.

Thanos from "Avengers: Endgame" But one question remains: A billion people have seen the movie but few have ventured to join the dots to compare Thanos and Trump to see who is the nastier. I bet there are many "comparers" who are staying in the closet, stuck in a state of numbness caused by the movie's three-hour running time. The Thanos-Trump similarity is unmistakable. Elusive is the fact that both pursue change of the status quo. Thanos collected Infinity stones for his gauntlet and used the power to destroy half the world with a finger snap. In his view, the world needed one inevitable act of constructive destruction for a fresh start. Trump believes that his country has been

ripped off and conned by allies and foes alike, so it is high time to give it a second chance. His slogan – make America great again – captures the spirit. For that, the destruction of the current order is necessary and inevitable.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2019/05/137_269023.html

Nuclear-armed North Korea hampers regional security

Mahmood Elahi, Korea Times, May 23, 2019

Today, with 300 million guns in private hands, armed citizens have become a threat to each other. You don't know who will turn up at schools, churches and synagogues and turn their guns on fellow Americans. And you cannot do anything to prevent this. The good news is that such mass shooters are few and far between and 40,000 yearly shooting victims are a tiny fraction of 350 million of the U.S. population. So, despite the shock and terror associated with regular mass shootings, most Americans have come to live with them.

Similarly, when North Korean dictator, Kim Jong-un, detonated a nuclear device and tested long-range missiles capable of reaching the continental United States, he must have thought that this would provide him the security vis a vis the United States which he considers as his principal enemy. In his mind, Kim saw the nuclear arsenal as an effective deterrent against any U.S. desire for regime change. With nuclear weapons and long-range missiles, North Korea can now deliver a devastating counterstrike if the United States and its South Korean ally dare to invade North Korea.

So he must have thought by acquiring nuclear capability, he has achieved the ultimate security. He can now threaten the United States without fearing any retaliation. But he might have missed the big picture. By threatening the United States, he has become a threat to America. It is no longer a question of how to prevent the United States from attacking North Korea, it is now a question of how to prevent (in the eye of most American strategists) North Korea from attacking the United States.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2019/05/137_268953.html

Abe failed to sway Trump on NK

James Stavridis, Korea Herald, May 30, 2019

In assessing North Korea's recent launch of several short-range ballistic missiles, Trump simply waved them off, saying it "disturbed some of my people" but he wasn't worried. Those "people" include his own intelligence community and national security advisor, John Bolton, who earlier that day called the launches as significant violations of UN sanctions. Trump's blase attitude also ran contrary to the views of his Japanese hosts, who are directly threatened by Kim's shorter-range missiles. This mistake on the president's part will have unfortunate knock-on effects.

First and most worrisome is the potential effect on the US-Japanese alliance. Tokyo wants help on a range of geopolitical, economic and trade fronts. These include support in its lingering territorial dispute with China over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, which is threatening to heat up; buying more advanced military hardware; continued ability to sell in US markets, especially automobiles; more pressure on Kim to return Japanese citizens abducted by his regime; and – above all – solidarity on stopping Kim's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190530000308&ACE_SEARCH=1

Q. Think Tanks

IAEA Concludes Long Term Operational Safety Review at China's Qinshan 1 Nuclear Power Plant

Haiyan, China, International Atomic Energy Agency, May 16, 2019

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team of experts completed a review of long term operational safety at the Qinshan Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) Unit 1 in China on 10 May. The SALTO

(Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation) follow-up review mission was requested by the plant's operator, Nuclear Power Operations Management Co (CNNO), a unit of China National Nuclear Power Co. The Qinshan NPP Unit 1 went into operation in 1991 and CNNO has submitted a request to China's National Nuclear Safety Administration (NNSA) to renew the plant's operating license for a period of 20 years after its current license expires in 2021.

The SALTO team, which began its work on 7 May, reviewed CNNO's response to recommendations and suggestions made during an initial SALTO mission in 2017.

The team—comprising five experts from Argentina, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United States and the IAEA - said the plant had:

- improved coordination among current plant operational programmes and ageing management programmes;
- implemented ageing management programmes for electrical, instrumentation and control components; and
- improved competence and knowledge management processes.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-concludes-long-term-operational-safety-review-at-chinas-qinshan-1-nuclear-power-plant>

The U.S. and Iran: Beyond the Rhetoric

Ariane M. Tabatabai, Rand Corporation, May 17, 2019

President Donald Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal with Iran a year ago. Since, tensions between the two countries have increased steadily, as the United States has dialed up pressure on Iran in the hopes of either bringing it back to the negotiating table or ushering in the regime's collapse. In Iran, a vigorous debate is taking place about U.S. intentions, the impact of the American "maximum pressure" campaign, and the best course of action. The tensions within the U.S. administration on the desired direction of U.S. foreign policy in general

and Iran policy in particular are well documented. President Trump campaigned on dialing down U.S. interventions abroad and has shown reluctance to implicate America in military confrontations. But some members of the administration have a track record of advocating for a more interventionist American foreign policy. Similar tensions are providing the backdrop against which the Iranian regime has responded to the U.S. efforts to isolate Iran. Since President Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal on May 8, 2018, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani had been under fire to retaliate. Rouhani announced on May 8, 2019 that his country would begin to take steps to decrease its adherence to some provisions of the deal.

<https://www.rand.org/blog/2019/05/the-us-and-iran-beyond-the-rhetoric.html>

Director General Amano Commends Latin American Countries for Peaceful Use of Nuclear Technology

Laura Gil, IAEA Office of Public Information and Communication

International Atomic Energy Agency, May 20, 2019

Latin America has made significant progress in using nuclear techniques for development over the last 35 years, and the Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARCAL) has contributed to this achievement, Director General Yukiya Amano said in Varadero, Cuba, today.

"It has been fascinating to observe the steady progress being made by countries of this region in using nuclear science and technology to improve the health and prosperity of their people," Mr Amano said at an event marking ARCAL's 35th anniversary. "ARCAL played a key role in this process. Its work has also led to a significant strengthening of what is often called 'south-south cooperation,' with more advanced users of nuclear technology sharing their expertise with

their neighbours.” Cuba is taking over the two-year presidency of ARCAL from Mexico today and will focus on further strengthening ties in cooperation in the region, said Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Environment Fidel Santana at the meeting.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/director-general-amano-commends-latin-american-countries-for-peaceful-use-of-nuclear-technology>

IAEA Safety Mission Sees Significant Progress at France’s Golfech Nuclear Power Plant, Encourages Continued Improvement

Golfech, France, International Atomic Energy Agency, May 21, 2019

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team of experts said the operator of Golfech Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in France had strengthened operational safety by addressing the findings of an initial IAEA review in 2016. The team also encouraged a focus on continued improvement.

The Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) concluded a five-day follow-up mission to Golfech NPP on 17 May. The plant, operated by Électricité de France S.A. (EDF), has two 1300 megawatt pressurized water reactors that were connected to the grid in 1990 and 1993. Nuclear power plants produce about three quarters of France’s total electricity output. OSART missions aim to improve operational safety by objectively assessing safety performance using the IAEA’s safety standards and proposing recommendations and suggestions for improvement where appropriate. The follow-up missions are standard components of the OSART programme.

“We observed that the plant has shown a strong commitment and made noticeable progress since the initial OSART mission three years ago,” said team leader Yury Martynenko, a Senior Nuclear Safety Officer at the IAEA. “The OSART team encourages the plant to complete all the remaining improvement actions as planned and to build on this momentum to improve its safety

performance further.” The five-member team comprised experts from Brazil and the Russian Federation as well as three IAEA officials.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-safety-mission-sees-significant-progress-at-frances-golfech-nuclear-power-plant-encourages-continued-improvement>

Using Nuclear Science to Better Understand Drought

Alejandra Silva, video: Martin Klingenböck, International Atomic Energy Agency, May 21, 2019

In 2018, Cape Town was close to becoming the first major city in the world to run out of water. South African experts are using isotopic techniques to understand water resources and try to avoid another drought.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/multimedia/videos/using-nuclear-science-to-better-understand-drought>

Door to Diplomacy Remains Open Despite Missile Tests | North Korea Denuclearization Digest, May 2019

Alicia Sanders-Zakre and Kelsey Davenport, Arms Control Association, 21 May, 2019

The next steps for U.S. diplomacy with North Korea remain unclear after Pyongyang tested several short-range ballistic missiles in early May. Despite the missile tests, South Korea and the United States urged a resumption of dialogue. North Korea, however, has said little about returning to talks since Chairman Kim Jong Un declared in April that he would give the Trump administration until the end of the year to change its approach to negotiations or face a “bleak and very dangerous” situation. North Korea tested a salvo of rockets May 4 (North Korea time), including a new type of solid-fueled short-range ballistic missile that has not been launched before. This was North Korea’s first ballistic missile test since November 2017.

On May 9, North Korea conducted another drill that included two short-range ballistic missiles, likely the same missile tested May 4. The Department of Defense confirmed that it tracked the missiles and estimated the range at about 300-400 kilometers. Analysts observed that the new short-range system resembles the Russian Iskander missile, which has a range of about 280 kilometers and can evade missile defense systems, in part due to its in-flight maneuverability.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/blog/2019-05-21/door-diplomacy-remains-open-despite-missile-tests-north-korea-denuclearization>

U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control Watch, May 2019

Kingston Reif and Shervin Taheran, Arms Control Association, May 24, 2019

Following a May 14 meeting in Sochi, Russia with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters that the two countries “agreed that ... we will gather together teams that will begin to work not only on [the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty] New START and its potential extension but on a broader range of arms control issues that each of our two nations have.”

But it remains unclear when such talks will begin, who will lead the U.S. negotiating team, what the Trump administration would be willing to put on the table in return for bigger concessions from Russia and China as part of broader arms control talks, and whether New START would be extended in the absence of progress on a more comprehensive deal. Last month, a senior administration official told reporters that President Donald Trump had directed his administration to seek a new arms control agreement with Russia and China. The official told CNN that the agreement should include “all the weapons, all the warheads, and all the missiles.” The official criticized New START for only limiting U.S. and Russian deployed strategic nuclear weapons. At a May 15 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on the future of nuclear arms control, Andrea Thompson, undersecretary of state for arms control and

international security, said that the Trump administration “has not made any decision on a potential extension of New START.” An interagency review of the treaty and whether to extend it has been ongoing for about a year.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/blog/2019-05-24/us-russian-nuclear-arms-control-watch-may-2019>

Let’s not spend \$1.7 trillion on our nukes, a group of N.J. professors say. Let’s get rid of them, and the threat of a catastrophic war.

Zia Mian, Alan Robock, and Sharon Weine, Arms Control Association, May 26, 2019

On May 23rd, the New Jersey General Assembly approved Resolution 230, urging the federal government to pursue a broad range of measures to reduce the danger of nuclear war and to join the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. California and some American cities have already adopted similar resolutions to call for action in Washington on nuclear weapons. Here’s why. It has been understood since the U.S. destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II that the explosion of a single nuclear weapon can destroy an entire city. One modern U.S. warhead exploding over a large city would on average kill half a million people.

The U.S. has about 4,000 warheads in its operational stockpile, including about 1,000 ready to launch within minutes. Plans include options to use these nuclear weapons first in a conflict. President Barack Obama wanted to declare a no-first-use policy but was told that it was a bad time. Scientific work has shown that, beyond the already catastrophic scale of death and destruction from blast, fire and radiation at the target, the environmental effects from the soot produced by cities set ablaze by nuclear attack could have global effects lasting for more than a decade. These include destruction of the ozone layer and growing seasons shortened by late and early frosts. Large-scale nuclear war could destroy modern civilization and

condemn billions to starvation and death.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/blog/2019-05-26/let%E2%80%99s-not-spend-17-trillion-our-nukes-group-nj-professors-say-let%E2%80%99s-get-rid-them>

Repackaging Nuclear Science for Policy Makers: Scientists and Communicators Team Up

Laura Gil, IAEA Office of Public Information and Communication, International Atomic Energy Agency, May 29, 2019

Santa Marta, Colombia – Policymakers may not have the time to sift through scientific papers or 30 000 data samples on the ocean’s health. That’s why marine scientists using nuclear-derived techniques and communication experts from Latin America and the Caribbean teamed up earlier this month to repackage scientific findings for policymakers. The aim, with the support of the IAEA, was to raise awareness of threats to the ocean and help decision makers in the region take evidence-based policy action.

In the workshop, held in Santa Marta, Colombia, more than 20 marine scientists and communication experts worked side by side to create five easy-to-digest advocacy products that explain the role of nuclear science in monitoring the marine environment. Together they form REMARCO, a network in science and communication that connects 14 countries in the region.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/repackaging-nuclear-science-for-policy-makers-scientists-and-communicators-team-up>

IAEA Safety Mission Sees Strengthened Operational Safety at Russia’s Leningrad Nuclear Power Plant, Encourages Continued Improvement

Sosnovyy Bor, Russian Federation, International Atomic Energy Agency, May 30, 2019

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team of experts said the operator of

Russia’s Leningrad Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) has strengthened operational safety in response to the findings of an IAEA review in 2017. The team also encouraged the operator to pursue continuous improvement.

The Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) concluded a five-day follow-up mission on 24 May to Unit 4 of Leningrad NPP. Connected to the grid in 1981, Unit 4 is one of four light water-cooled graphite-moderated reactors (RBMK-1000) located at the site 100 km west of St Petersburg. The plant operator is Rosenergoatom.

OSART missions aim to improve operational safety by objectively assessing safety performance using the IAEA’s safety standards and proposing recommendations and suggestions for improvement where appropriate. The follow-up missions are standard components of the OSART programme and are typically conducted within two years of the initial mission.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-safety-mission-sees-strengthened-operational-safety-at-russias-leningrad-nuclear-power-plant-encourages-continued-improvement>

R. Statements, Press Releases

Statement by the Press Secretary Regarding the Trilateral Meeting of the National Security Advisors from the United States, Israel, and Russia

White House, May 29, 2019

In June, United States National Security Advisor Ambassador John Bolton, Israeli National Security Advisor Meir Ben-Shabbat, and Russian Secretary of the Security Council Nikolay Patrushev will meet in Jerusalem, Israel, to discuss regional security issues.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-press-secretary-regarding-trilateral-meeting-national-security-advisors-united-states-israel-russia/>

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).

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