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&

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Bid adieu to Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Retd B.S. Malik



The Indian Pugwash Society deeply mourns the passing away of Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Retd B.S. Malik, one of our highly active Executive Council (EC) members and a decorated army veteran. He passed away on March 1, 2019. General Malik, was a graduate of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, the Royal College of Defence Studies, UK and Madras University. He commanded a Brigade during the Sino-Indian confrontation at Sumdo Rong - Wangdung in 1987-89, and in 1990 received the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM) for his service. He was also the Director Military Operations at the Army Headquarters and served as the Military Adviser in the UK from 1991 to 1994. He was a member of the Governing Council of Netaji Subhash Institute of Management Sciences (NIMS), the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) London and a life member of the IDSA and the United Service Institution (USI). He also served on the EC of the IDSA. General Malik was President of the Centre for Studies in International Relations and Development (CSIRD) and Control Arms Foundation of India. His death is a significant loss to the Indian Pugwash Society as well as the strategic community.



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A. India

Factbox: India and Pakistan - nuclear arsenals and strategies, Reuters Zeba

Siddiqi, Reuters, March 01, 2019

This week's conflict between India and Pakistan, which involved air strikes in each other's territories for the first time by the two nuclear-armed nations, has sparked fears of a nuclear confrontation.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-kashmir-pakistan-nuclear-factbo/factbox-india-and-pakistan-nuclear-arsenals-and-strategies-idUSKCN1QI4O5>

Lockheed Martin, maker of F-16 jet, denies Pakistan's claim about suing India *Indian Express, March 02, 2019*

American defence major Lockheed Martin, the manufacturer of the F-16 fighter jet, Saturday rejected a Pakistani official's remark that it was going to sue India for "wrongly claiming" that one of its planes was shot down by MiG-21 Bison during an aerial fight in Jammu and Kashmir.

The clarification came after several Pakistani media outlets, including civil officials, shared the information about the lawsuit. The Pakistan media's claim was also tweeted by Pakistan censor board chairman Danyal Gilani, who deleted the tweet after Lockheed Martin's clarification.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/lockheed-martin-maker-of-f-16-jet-denies-pakistans-claim-about-suing-india-5608007/lite/>

Cold Start: India's answer to Pakistan's nuclear bullying *Economic Times, March 04, 2019*

A nuclear strike is always the threat Pakistan holds out against any possible Indian attack. Recently, after India declared it would avenge the Pulwama attack, Pakistan Rail Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad again threatened of a nuclear strike after which "neither the birds would chirp nor the bells would ring in temples".

But India has an answer to this threat – a Cold Start. It is a war doctrine aimed at

punishing Pakistan without a full-blown nuclear clash.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/cold-start-indias-answer-to-pakistans-nuclear-bullying/articleshow/68254953.cms>

Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba cautions against terrorist attacks from sea *Rahul Singh, Hindustan Times, March 05, 2019*

Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba on Tuesday cautioned against possible terror attacks from sea even as authorities dismissed as "false propaganda" Pakistan's claim it had thwarted an Indian submarine's attempt to enter the country's waters.

This "brand of terror", he said, could become a global problem and the Indian security establishment is working to address the menace. He urged the global community to come together to eliminate all forms of terrorism while reminding an international audience of the "horrific scale" of the Pulwama suicide bombing on February 14 that killed 40 troops.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/navy-chief-cautions-against-terrorist-attacks-from-sea/story-YpKK5zEf7fiLhxLF69QYDK.html>

Pakistan Navy claims it thwarted Indian submarine from entering its waters *Hindustan Times, March 05, 2019*

The Pakistan Navy Tuesday claimed it had thwarted an attempt by an Indian submarine to enter the country's territorial waters. The report comes after tensions flared up between the two nuclear-armed neighbours following a terror attack claimed by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) in which 40 Central Reserve Police Force personnel were killed in Kashmir's Pulwama district on February 14.

The Pakistan Navy also shared a footage with the media, which it said was "actual". The image showed that the footage was

made at 2035 hours on March 4."The Pakistan Navy used its specialised skills to ward off the submarine, successfully keeping it from entering Pakistani waters," a spokesperson said in a statement.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/pakistan-navy-claims-it-thwarted-indian-submarine-from-entering-its-waters/story-Bh2jiJolHkHK8dnPthmj6O.html>

Pakistan won't hesitate to nuke India if faced with defeat: CM Amarinder Singh *Hindustan Times*

March 05, 2019

Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh on Monday said a desperate Pakistan would not hesitate from using its nuclear arsenal against India if faced with an imminent defeat in a conventional war.

Speaking to mediapersons at the Durgiana Temple in Amritsar where he performed KarSewa, Amarinder said both the two countries are nuclear powers and cannot afford a full-scale war. "It's not in either country's interest to use the weapons of destruction. But Islamabad could indulge in such a misadventure if faced with defeat," he said.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/chandigarh/pakistan-won-t-hesitate-to-nuke-india-if-faced-with-defeat-cm-amarinder-singh/story-rd0Z5OVDHKBp8mTbaeKwHN.html>

Press Statement *PIB Delhi,*

March 05, 2019

In the morning of 27 Feb 19, our Air Defence system was on full alert. Build up of PAF aircraft on their side of LoC was noticed in time and additional aircraft were scrambled to tackle the adversary. In their attempt to attack our ground targets, PAF aircraft were engaged effectively. From IAF side, Mirage-2000, Su-30 and MiG-21 Bison aircraft were involved in the engagement. PAF aircraft were forced to withdraw in a hurry, which is also evident from large missed distances of the weapons dropped by them. During combat, use of F-16 by PAF and multiple launches of AMRAAM were conclusively observed. Prompt and correct tactical action

by Su-30 aircraft, in response to AMRAAM launch, defeated the missile. Parts of the missile fell in area East of Rajouri in J&K, injuring a civilian on ground. Detailed report in this regard has already been released by IAF. All the Su-30 aircraft engaged in combat landed back safely. False claim by Pakistan of shooting down a Su-30, appears to be a cover up for loss of its own aircraft.

<http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1567576>

Press Statement *PIB Delhi,* *March 06, 2019*

Misinformation on the shooting of Pakistan Air Force F-16 by MiG-21 Bison are being spread on various social media sites. IAF during the press statement on 28 Feb 19 had clarified that one F-16 of Pakistan Air Force was shot by MiG-21 Bison and it fell across the LoC. Additionally fake accounts of Wing Commander V Abhinandan have been created in the last one week. IAF has informed on 06 March 19 that Wing Commander V Abhinandan does not have any official social media account on Twitter and Instagram and have advised all not to follow these accounts as they may contain malware.

<http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1567693>

Press Statement *PIB Delhi,* *March 07, 2019*

The Indian Air Force is in a high state of preparedness, to proactively engage any perceived threat in the present security scenario. A strict vigil in the skies to detect and thwart any act of aggression from Pakistan Air Force is being maintained. As per NOTAM No. A0234/19 issued by CAA Pakistan, it has opened their airspace with Oman, Iran, Afghanistan and China only. The eleven Entry/Exit points located along Indo-Pak airspace boundary are still closed.

<http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1567900>

Press Statement *PIB Delhi,*

March 08, 2019

On the official visit to India, General Raymond Thomas, Commander US Special Operations Command, US Army, called on the Army Chief General BipinRawat. Both the Generals deliberated on the developing regional security environment, issue of global terrorism and Pakistan's continued support to terrorism was also discussed. Acknowledging India's role in peace and stability in the region, Gen Raymond emphasised on the need for further military cooperation in the field of technology and military to military exchanges between the two countries.

[http://pib.nic.in/
PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1568239](http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1568239)

India-Russia sign \$3.3 billion nuclear sub lease deal, *Kalyan Ray, Deccan Herald, March 08, 2019*

India on Thursday signed a \$ 3.3 billion deal with Russia to take an Akula-class nuclear-powered submarine on lease for 10 years. The submarine is expected to join the Indian Navy by 2025. An inter-governmental agreement on the leasing of the submarine is expected to join the Indian Navy by 2025. An inter-governmental agreement on the leasing of the submarine, to be named Chakra-III, was inked between the two countries at a closely guarded event here.

Chakra-III would be one of the several incomplete Soviet-era Akula hulls that mothballed at the Zvezdochka shipyard in Severodvinsk. The hull would undergo a deep refit and fitted with Indian sensors, operation room electronics, and communication equipment before being delivered to India.

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/india-russia-sign-33-billion-722136.html>

Press Statement *PIB Delhi,*

March 09, 2019

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General BipinRawat today visited Western Command Headquarters and reviewed the

operational preparedness along our western borders. During his visit, the Western Army Commander, Lieutenant General Surender Singh briefed and updated the Army Chief on the current operational situation, prevailing security environment and preparedness of the formations, specially in Amritsar and Samba Sectors.

The COAS interacted with officers of the Command Headquarters and complimented them for maintaining highest standards of training, operational readiness and exemplary synergy with the Indian Air Force.

The Army Chief directed the formations to ensure continued state of vigilance and alertness and be prepared to decisively deal with emerging challenges that may develop.

[http://pib.nic.in/
PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1568401](http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1568401)

Twin Success for Guided PINAKA *PIB Delhi, 11 March 2019*

Defence Research and Defence Organisation (DRDO) today successfully test fired the Guided PINAKA from Pokhran ranges. The weapon system is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance kit comprising of an advanced navigation and control system. In both the missions, the weapon systems impacted the intended targets with high precision and achieved desired accuracies. Telemetry Systems tracked and monitored the vehicle all through the flight path. All the mission objectives have been met.

The indigenously developed Guided Pinaka by DRDO will significantly boost the capability of the artillery to make precision hits.

[http://pib.nic.in/
PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1568552](http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1568552)

India called Pakistan's nuclear power bluff with Balakot strike, asserts Defence Minister at AajTak National Security Summit *Abhishek*

Bhalla, India Today, March 13, 2019

The Defence Minister said that the aerial strike on Balakot terror camp has called Pakistan's nuclear power bluff. "Pakistan would always use the nuclear power thing to create some kind of fear, thinking that India won't act or hit back. This strike has changed that," she said.

This is the first time that the government of India has put on record that Pakistan lost a pilot who was flying the F-16 fighter jet which went down. "Pakistan never accepts when their soldiers are killed. The F-16 was knocked down by us. The pilot was beaten up by local villagers and probably later died in hospital," she said, explaining the sequence of events when Wing Commander Abhinandan brought down the Pakistan Air Force fighter jet.

<https://www.indiatoday.in/mail-today/story/india-called-pakistan-s-nuclear-power-bluff-with-balakot-strike-asserts-defence-minister-at-aajtak-national-security-summit-1476706-2019-03-13>

Six U.S. nuclear power plants to be set up in India *The Hindu March 14, 2019*

New Delhi and Washington have agreed on a proposal to build six nuclear power plants in India. This was stated in a joint statement issued on March 13 at the conclusion of the 9th round of India-U.S. Strategic Security Dialogue in Washington, co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Andrea Thompson.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/india-us-agree-to-build-six-nuclear-power-plants-in-india/article26529257.ece>

B. China

Chinese FM urges common ground on NK sanctions relief *Yang Sheng and Zhao Juecheng Global Times, March 01, 2019*

China on Friday urged that the relief of sanctions is an important part of the

dialogue process. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang said at a routine press conference on Friday that there needs to be common ground on sanctions relief and the two sides should be able to reach this through dialogue. Relieving sanctions and denuclearization should be pushed based on synchronous and equal principles, Lu noted. "China always urges the UN Security Council to start discussions on reversible provisions [of the sanctions]," Lu said.

Lu's remarks came after the US and North Korea contradicted each other over the reason for the hasty conclusion to their bilateral talks. North Korea took the unprecedented step of calling a press conference early Friday morning.

"What we proposed was not the removal of all sanctions, but their partial removal," North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yongho said, adding that North Korea only asked for those sanctions impeding the livelihood of its people to be removed first. If the US had agreed to the proposal, North Korea "will permanently and completely dismantle all the nuclear production facilities in Yongbyon area, including plutonium and uranium in the presence of US experts and by the joint work of technicians of both countries," Ri said.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1140622.shtml>

Rising China provides EU opportunities *Chen Weihua, China Daily, March 01, 2019*

Europe should further seize the opportunities of a rising China to boost its economic growth in a fast-changing world, according to a report by a group of leading European economists. The report by the European Economic Advisory Group warned of the internal struggle among European Union member states over the growing divergence in both economic performance and support of common governance structure, such as the Brexit and rising populism.

The two major developments in the global environment are the shift in US economic policy toward protectionism and against NATO and the rise of China, the report said. The annual report by seven economists said the United States has become an unreliable trading partner and strategic ally, citing US President Donald Trump's snub of NATO, US withdrawal from the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal, and the imposition and threat of tariffs on steel, aluminum and automobiles.

"The growth in the Chinese economy has generated new markets for European exports and sources of imports. China is presenting itself as a defender of multilateralism and a rules-based international order, while the United States is retreating into mercantilism, bilateral deals, and tariff wars," the report said.

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201903/01/WS5c789076a3106c65c34ec21a.html>

Nation to complete new artificial sun device this year *Global Times* *March 04, 2019*

China plans to complete the construction of the HL-2M Tokamak device, the artificial sun, this year, achieving an ion temperature of 100 million degrees, an official at the China National Nuclear Corporation said on Sunday. Duan Xuru, also a member of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), made the remarks on the sidelines of the top political advisory body's annual session that started on Sunday.

The Tokamak device is designed to replicate the nuclear fusion process that occurs naturally in the sun and stars to provide almost infinite clean energy through controlled nuclear fusion, which is often dubbed as the "artificial sun." Achieving an ion temperature above 100 million C is one of the three challenges to reach the goal of harnessing the nuclear fusion, and the core of the sun is widely believed to be 15 million C, meaning that the ion at the device's core will be seven times higher than that of the Sun. The other two challenges are containing

the fusion within a limited space in the long term, and providing a sufficiently high density profile, Science and Technology Daily reported.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1140916.shtml>

India-Pakistan clash may affect China's South Asia policy *By Fu Xiaoqiang, Global Times, March 04, 2019*

Bilateral hostility has not only threatened regional peace and security in South Asia, but also affected the international community. The Kashmir dispute is intertwined with complex ethnic and religious issues. If the crisis continues to worsen, the flow of international extremist forces and armed support for Kashmir militants may rise. The current crisis may influence China's policy on South Asia.

Both neighboring powers are China's important partners. As a pivot of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, Pakistan has all-round friendly relations with China. In particular, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a key project playing an essential role in pioneering new approaches to exchange and cooperation between the two sides.

As a newly emerging power, India has an important impact on the international order and globalization. China and India, two significant strategic partners, are involved in various international organizations including the G20, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS. New Delhi is an indispensable part of Beijing's great-power politics. Therefore, it is tough for China to take sides. In general, Beijing will adhere to the mediation policy. In the long run, if tensions continue to rise, China may face a greater impact; but despite that China is facing difficulties in mediating between the two neighbors, in the current scenario, the influence on China is limited.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1140827.shtml>

Nuclear production leads to clean, safe and massive hydrogen output in the future: CPPCC member *Global Times March 06, 2019*

Global Times March 06, 2019

Nuclear hydrogen production is the future direction of energy production technology reform, said Qian Tianlin, a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and director of Technology and Information Department of the China National Nuclear Corporation.

Hydrogen energy has been seen as the clean energy that has the most potential in the 21st century, and is the future direction of strategic energy development for humankind. Since the 1990s, many countries have promulgated a series of support policies to promote the development of hydrogen energy, *thepaper.cn* reported Wednesday.

Nowadays, the world relies heavily on reforming fossil fuel to produce hydrogen, which is unable to produce hydrogen effectively, in large quantities and without carbon emissions in the future, Qian said. On the contrary, nuclear energy, as a clean primary energy, uses water as the raw material, which is safe and can produce in large quantities while producing no greenhouse gases. It will be a vital plan to massively produce hydrogen in the future, according to Qian.

Given the important effects and position of nuclear energy and hydrogen energy in future energy system, Qian proposed that hydrogen production technology using nuclear reactors should be included in national major science and technology projects. He noted that the high temperature gas-cooled reactor independently developed by China is widely recognized as the most suitable reactor to produce hydrogen. He said that the country should carry out a 60-megawatt high temperature gas-cooled reactor nuclear project as soon as possible. The country has already built and put into use a 10-megawatt high temperature gas-cooled reactor, and is estimated to establish a 200,000-kilowatt HTGR power station in 2020, according to Qian.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1141203.shtml>

Column: Chinese, local drones reflect changing Middle East *Peter Apps, Reuters, March 07, 2019*

Peter Apps, Reuters, March 07, 2019

Ever since 9/11, drones have been amongst the most visible, and often controversial, signs of American power in the Middle East and beyond. But as regional powers look to chart their own course, a new generation of cheaper unmanned aerial vehicles - Chinese or locally built, with far fewer restrictions on their use - are taking to the skies. The last five years have seen a dramatic rise in their use. Forbidden to purchase

Weapons-carrying U.S. drones due to export restrictions, several countries - particularly Iraq, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia - have bought armed Chinese models and use them extensively in action. Turkey - increasingly isolated from other Middle East powers and with its own spats with Washington and Beijing - has invested heavily in building its own, its latest model carrying out its first combat strike in January. So has Iran (Link here), lifting technical secrets from captured U.S. and Israeli drones and providing UAVs to non-state groups, including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria, and the Houthis in Yemen. The latter have used them to target government bases (Link here), and claimed July and August 2018 attacks on major UAE airports in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Independent observers (Link here) doubt the latter drone attacks really happened, an indication of just how opaque this unmanned warfare can become.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/apps-drones/column-chinese-local-drones-reflect-changing-middle-east-idINKCN1QO0FT>

China praises Pakistan's "restraint" over Kashmir tensions

Reuters March 07, 2019

China has praised Pakistan's "restraint" and willingness to talk with India to ease tensions between the two countries after a deadly bombing in Indian-controlled Kashmir last month.

Pakistan is facing pressure from global powers to act against groups carrying out attacks in India, including Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), which claimed responsibility for the Feb. 14 attack that killed at least 40 paramilitary police. The incident led to the most serious conflict in years between the nuclear-armed neighbours, with cross-border air strikes and a dogfight over the skies of Kashmir. The crisis eased after Pakistan returned a downed Indian pilot on Friday.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/india-kashmir-pakistan-china/china-praises-pakistans-restraint-over-kashmir-tensions-idINKCN1QO0D1>

China's Korean Peninsula role 'irreplaceable': Foreign Minister

Zhou Jin, China Daily, March 08 2019

China is committed to denuclearization and the peaceful settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue – its role is irreplaceable, State Councilor and Foreign minister Wang Yi said on Friday.

Leaders from both countries overcame obstacles and exchanged views face-to-face in a candid way, which is positive progress and should be applauded, he said.

The international community should encourage both sides to remain patient and move forward to denuclearization and establish a peace mechanism on the peninsula. As long as they continue dialogue and stay the course, denuclearization will be realized, he said. The nuclear issue on the peninsula is complicated and cannot be solved overnight, he said, adding that all parties should have reasonable expectations, and not set the bar too high or make unrealistic demands. Wang said that China will continue to make contributions to a resolution.

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201903/08/WS5c81e39ca3106c65c34ed879.html>

China will not pick sides in India-Pakistan disputes *Li Qingqing, Global Times, March 10, 2019*

We believe that political consultation must be the only channel to resolve the disputes.

This is China's consistent policy, and nothing will change China's firm stand in promoting peaceful negotiations between India and Pakistan. However, some Indians doubt China's efforts. Some Indian experts blamed China for "continued protection" of terrorists who were allegedly based in Pakistan and launched the Pulwama terror attack in February. And many Indian analysts regard China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a geopolitical threat.

Such irresponsible statements are not supported by the facts. Foreign ministers of China, Russia and India held the 16th trilateral meeting on February 27. During the meeting, they vowed to eradicate breeding grounds of terrorism and extremism. In fact, China, Pakistan and India share common interests in combating terrorism. It is time for India to stop the groundless accusations.

And India should also understand this: Although China supported Pakistan in alleviating poverty and wiping out terrorism, Beijing is not an enemy of New Delhi. Just the opposite: China proposed and launched the BRI, which not only meets India's needs for infrastructure construction, but also helps ease India-Pakistan tensions. India should overcome its prejudices against the BRI as the initiative will boost cooperation and help bring stability to the region.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1141569.shtml>

China Shipbuilding Industry Corp., State Power Investment Corp. strike strategic cooperation deal *Xinhua March 11, 2019*

The China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC) and the State Power Investment Corporation (SPIC) have signed a strategic cooperation deal, said the state assets supervising authority. They have vowed to accelerate high-quality growth through cooperation under China's strategy of deepening reform and opening-up and advancing innovation-driven development.

Cooperation plans will be implemented in the spheres of the energy industry, civil-military integration, industrial finance and international cooperation. The CSIC is a leading state-owned business and one of China's largest shipbuilders established in 1999, while the SPIC, established in 2015 through a merger of the China Power Investment Corporation and the State Nuclear Power Technology Corporation, is a top Chinese power generator, according to their official websites.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/11/c_137885914.htm

General contract signed for Tianwan Phase IV *WNN, March 12, 2019*

The contracts were signed in Beijing on 7 March by AtomStroyExport, the engineering division of Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom, and China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC). Rosatom said the contracts had been prepared in accordance with the strategic package of agreements signed during a visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to China last June. This package defines cooperation between Russia and China in the nuclear industry in the coming decades, it added.

Those agreements included the construction of two VVER-1200 reactors as units 7 and 8 of the Tianwan plant, as well as two VVER-1200 units to be built at the new Xudabao site. Contracts for Tianwan 7 and 8 were signed between CNNC and Rosatom in early November marking the implementation of the framework contracts. Tianwan Phase I - units 1 and 2 - was constructed under a 1992 cooperation agreement between China and Russia. First concrete was poured in October 1999, and the units were commissioned in June 2007 and September 2007, respectively.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/General-contract-signed-for-Tianwan-Phase-IV?feed=feed>

China's nuclear reactor building spree *Asia Times, March 13, 2019*

China needs eight new reactors per year until 2030, when 10% of its electricity will be nuclear

Chinese officials say the humming economy means that no fewer than eight nuclear reactors of the million-kilowatt class must enter service each year to help keep the nation's electricity supply in pace with demand, while not adding more pollutants to the already fragile environment.

China Nuclear Power Engineering Co Ltd general manager Liu Wei told reporters that China would see its total power consumption reach 10.5 trillion kilowatts by 2030, of which the share of clean energy must be no less than 45%, according to the national imperative.

Beijing's drive to phase out filthy coal-burning power generation heralds a nuclear bonanza, and Liu said China would need to launch eight high-capacity power units annually over the next decade to bring the share of nuclear generation in the total energy mix to 10%, a level in line with the global average. Some observers, nonetheless, are worried that hastened safety and rushed environmental assessments, trials of domestically developed technologies - some of which are premature - as well as China's obsessive state control of information in the event of an incident, all mean that danger could be lurking beneath the big domes of the nation's rapidly expanding array of powerful reactors.

<https://www.asiatimes.com/2019/03/article/chinas-nuclear-reactor-building-sprees/>

China steel mill makes world's largest seamless forging piece *Xinhua, March 13, 2019*

A Chinese steel mill on Tuesday rolled off the world's largest seamless ring forging piece, which was developed especially as the key part of a nuclear power unit. The loop-shape stainless steel piece, produced by the Shandong Iraeta Heavy Industry Co. Ltd. based in east China's Shandong Province, weighs 150 tonnes and is 15.6 meters in diameter, breaking both the world records of its kind.

The product was developed by the Institute of Metal Research under the

Chinese Academy of Sciences and ordered by the China National Nuclear Corporation. It is expected to play the supporting function in a nuclear reactor vessel to withstand pressure up to 7,000 tonnes. The giant steel structure used to be forged by segmented welding assembly. However, the welding joints are vulnerable to high pressure, which poses safety concerns in nuclear power generation. Large seamless steel forging pieces are in high demand in China's hydro-power, wind-power and nuclear-power generation industry.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/13/c_137891506.htm

US media report calling Huawei a threat to US nuclear missiles

'absurd', *Zhao Yusheng and Liu Xuanzun, Global Times, March 13, 2019*

Chinese experts slammed a recent US media report that claimed Huawei's telecommunication hardware used by US rural wireless carriers poses threats to its nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), calling the accusation "totally absurd."

Citing US experts, CNN reported on Tuesday that China could "interfere with ICBM command and control," by taking control of rural US cell phone towers that use Huawei technologies. The CNN report noted some of the cell towers using Huawei gear in Montana are located close to a missile silo equipped with more than 100 Minuteman III ICBMs, which are capable of delivering nuclear warheads to targets 10,000 kilometers away. "It is ridiculous to think Chinese technology could penetrate the physical barriers of a nuclear weapon facility which has been purpose-built to be isolated from the outside," Xiang Ligang, a Chinese telecoms industry analyst, told the Global Times.

Besides, every telecommunication device has a different frequency, so accusing a Chinese company of launching a potential attack against a nuclear facility via some nearby communication stations (without evidence related to frequencies) is groundless, Xiang

said, noting that the US wireless carriers will be in full control of the operation of these devices. Xiang slammed these remarks by saying they are the "latest version of the 'China threat theory.'"

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1141936.shtml>

Record-setting ring forged for China's nuclear power unit *Global Times, March 13, 2019*

A non-welded stainless steel ring, the world's largest of its kind, is unveiled by the Institute of Metal Research at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, March 12, 2019. The ring, made by the institute using its own technologies, has a diameter of 15.6 meters and weighs 150 tons, setting a world record. It will be used in China's fourth-generation nuclear power reactor.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1141930.shtml>

Huawei pleads not guilty to U.S. charges in New York court *Karen*

Freifeld, Brendan Pierson, Reuters, March 14, 2019

China's Huawei Technologies Co Ltd on Thursday pleaded not guilty to a 13-count indictment filed in a New York federal court against the company, as tensions have ratcheted up between the U.S. and Beijing.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/usa-china-huawei/huawei-pleads-not-guilty-to-u-s-charges-in-new-york-court-idINKCN1QV2AU>

C. Pakistan

The trailer of Cold Start Doctrine, *Muhammad Ali Baig, The Express Tribune, March 08, 2019*

Why did Pakistan not or perhaps could not shoot down Indian air force intruders on the night of February 26, 2019? I am among those scholars and strategists who are constantly warning about the dangers emanating from Indian conventional military power and the manifestation of

that capability i.e. Cold Start Doctrine – especially relating to Pakistan. I also published a detailed research paper entitled “A Comparative Study of Blitzkrieg and Cold Start Doctrine: Lessons and Countermeasures for Pakistan” (IPRI Journal, 2018) to highlight my views on the matter, since, Cold Start is a punitive military instrument that is still relevant – even in the presence of nuclear weapons.

The history of military operations in the post Second World War and post-Cold War makes one thing clear that the true theatre of war is the conventional realm which provides flexibility and a wide choice of weapon employment against a variety of targets. The operations conducted by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Warsaw Pact during the Cold War and their respective military doctrines also reflected this very basic thing.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/03/08/the-trailer-of-cold-start-doctrine/>

Threat of nuclear war can't be ruled out until Kashmir issue is solved:

NYT *Dawn*, March 08, 2019

Prime Minister Imran Khan has urged New Delhi to hold dialogue over the Kashmir conflict more than once since he assumed power last year and has warned that continued suppression of Kashmiris by the Indian forces will result in grim consequences.

Pakistani authorities have also launched a crackdown against extremist outfits and more than 40 suspected militants have been taken under “preventive custody”. Multiple seminaries and mosques said to be linked to groups such as JeM and JamaatudDawa have also been taken over by government authorities.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1468360>

Saudi Arabia's chief diplomat assures Pakistan of Kingdom's support amid regional crisis

Arab News, March 08, 2019

Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir visited Islamabad for

talks on Thursday, following last week's standoff between India and Pakistan. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi welcomed Al-Jubeir, and expressed gratitude for the Kingdom's “steadfast support,” and the offer from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to “help resolve” the crisis when the two nuclear-armed nations had appeared to be on the brink of war.

Prime Minister Imran Khan also thanked the crown prince after Saudi Arabia released 2,107 Pakistani prisoners, and increased its annual Hajj quota to 200,000 pilgrims, stating he had “won the hearts of Pakistani people with his generous offer.” Al-Jubeir noted Khan's overtures to India to de-escalate tensions along the Kashmiri border, and expressed “deep appreciation” for Pakistan's show of restraint in the face of a grave military situation.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1463331/saudi-arabia>

Pak-India tensions, nuclear threat alarm world community

Anwar Iqbal Dawn, March 09, 2019

As the American media warn that the Kashmir dispute could lead to a nuclear conflict in South Asia, a senior US general says terrorists continue to stoke tensions between India and Pakistan.

Pakistan too in a meeting with Senator Mitt Romney told the senior lawmaker, who now heads the Senate's Subcommittee on South Asia, that peace in the region would remain elusive if the Kashmir dispute was not resolved, but General Joseph Votel, who leads the US Central Command (CENTCOM), underscored the need to fight militancy for restoring peace in the region.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1468503>

Hamza urges parties to jointly decide economic priorities

Dawn March 11, 2019

Opposition Leader in the Punjab Assembly Hamza Shahbaz has invited all

parliamentary parties to sit together and set national economic priorities for making the country an economic power. He said the nation must remember its benefactors if it wanted to make progress. He said late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had initiated Pakistan's nuclear programme, while Nawaz Sharif made it a declared nuclear state by conducting tests and this deterred the neighbouring India from declaring an all-out war against the country in the wake of Pulwama attack.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1468860/namza-urges-parties-to-jointly-decide-economic-priorities>

Pakistan military eyes key role developing giant copper and gold mine *Drazen Jorgic, Reuters, March 12 2019*

Pakistan's military is taking a key role in the development of one of the world's biggest untapped copper and gold deposits, which is currently stalled by a multi-billion dollar legal wrangle with foreign mining firms, multiple sources familiar with the situation said.

The Reko Diq mine has become a test case for Prime Minister Imran Khan's ability to attract serious foreign investment to Pakistan as it struggles to stave off an economic crisis that has forced it to seek an International Monetary Fund bailout. Ten current and former provincial and federal government officials and mining sources familiar with the project in the Baluchistan region say the military has become the most important voice on the future of Reko Diq, which it sees as a strategic national asset.

The military will not only be in a position to decide which investors develop the deposit, but an army-controlled engineering firm, Frontier Works Organization (FWO), is positioning itself to be a member of any consortium involved, these people said. "This has been taken over by GHQ," said a senior Baluchistan government official, referring to the Pakistan army's General Headquarters in the garrison city of Rawalpindi. In a statement in response to Reuters' questions about its role in Reko Diq, the military spokesman's office said: "(The

military) may only participate in government's plan of development of Reko Diq, as per national requirements."

But it acknowledged that FWO, best known for building roads through Pakistan's rugged and lawless border regions, has developed "substantial" mining capability in recent years and would be interested in taking a role in the project. "If an opportunity arises of participating in developing Reko Diq, FWO may work at par with other competitors (or) companies provided the project is financially viable (or) suitable," the statement said. When asked, a spokesman declined to elaborate on the statement. Pakistan's Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said civilian authorities in the insurgency-hit southwestern province of Baluchistan were in charge of Reko Diq and, along with Khan, would take a decision, but added that the military "and all other stakeholders are obviously important players".

<https://in.reuters.com/article/pakistan-mine-military-insight/pakistan-military-eyes-key-role-developing-giant-copper-and-gold-mine-idINKBN1QT0XZ>

D. US & Europe

A Child Explains Why He Built a Nuclear Reactor in His Playroom

Rob Dozier, Motherboard, March 01, 2019

Jackson Oswald is a pretty normal eighth grader in most regards. He plays tennis and runs cross country. He likes school and hanging out with his friends. He even plays Fortnite now and again. But in addition to all that, the 14-year-old also enjoys fiddling with a nuclear reactor that he keeps in his home—one that he built when he was 12.

First he had to get a primer on nuclear fusion, a process in which atoms are smashed together in order to produce energy. It's a much safer alternative to the fission process, which involves splitting atoms apart, because unlike in fission—which is used in nuclear power plants to produce energy—there's no risk of

meltdowns and it produces far less radioactive waste.

https://motherboard.vice.com/amp/en_us/article/3kgjvn/jackson-oswalt-explains-why-he-built-a-nuclear-reactor-in-his-playroom

USA must take action on nuclear policy, says IEA's Birol *World Nuclear News, March 01, 2019*

Addressing the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on prospects for global energy markets, Birol said the USA had been a leader in nuclear power technology for 60 years alongside France, Japan and Russia, but was set to be overtaken by China unless US policies change. Birol has testified in front of the committee for the last three years.

"China has rapidly developed nuclear power over the past two decades, increasing from just three operating reactors in 2000 to 46 at the end of last year," Birol said. "Nuclear capacity in China is set to overtake that of the United States within ten years."

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Birol-tells-US-take-action-on-nuclear>

U.S. lawmakers press for oversight of any Saudi nuclear deal *Timothy Gardner, Reuters, March 01, 2019*

A bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers introduced legislation on Thursday to ensure congressional oversight of any civilian nuclear cooperation agreement between the United States and Saudi Arabia. Democratic lawmakers alleged in a report that top White House aides ignored warnings they could be breaking the law as they worked with former U.S. officials and a friend of President Donald Trump, in a group called IP3 International, to advance a multibillion-dollar plan to build nuclear reactors in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia.

Under the Saudi Nuclear Proliferation Act, Congress would be required to approve any pacts authorizing U.S. companies to sell nuclear power technologies to the kingdom. The bill was introduced by Senators Edward Markey, a Democrat, and Republican Marco

Rubio. A similar bill was introduced in the House by Representative Brad Sherman, a Democrat, and Ted Yoho, a Republican.

"A government that cannot be trusted with a bone saw, should not be trusted with a nuclear weapon," said Sherman. He was referring to the instrument investigators said was used to cut up the body of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, after he was killed in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-saudi-nuclear-congress/u-s-lawmakers-press-for-oversight-of-any-saudi-nuclear-deal-idUSKCN1QH2XQ>

USA launches test reactor project *World Nuclear News, March 04, 2019*

The DOE said fast neutron testing capability would help the country meet its goal for advanced nuclear reactor technology development. These facilities are currently available in only a few locations worldwide and the USA has not operated one in over 20 years. This means US developers have not had the ability to carry out accelerated irradiation testing needed for the development of non-light water advanced reactor concepts. The VTR would provide a reactor-based source of the fast neutrons needed to test advanced reactor technology, fuels and related materials.

The Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act, which became law last September, directed the DOE to develop a reactor-based fast neutron source for the testing of advanced reactor fuels and materials, and to execute a programme for enhancing the capability to develop new reactor technologies through high-performance computer modelling and simulation techniques. The launch of the VTR was announced on 28 February by US Energy Secretary Rick Perry, during a joint press conference with International Atomic Energy Agency Executive Director Fatih Birol.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/US-launches-test-reactor-project>

Ukrainian head of state stresses role of nuclear power *World Nuclear News, March 05, 2019*

Ukraine has 15 nuclear units in commercial operation at four sites - Khmelnytsky, Rovno, South Ukraine and Zaporozhe - which are all operated by state-owned Energoatom. Total electricity production in 2016 amounted to 165 terawatt hours (TWh), with 4 TWh net exports to Europe. In 2016, 81 TWh (49%) was from nuclear, 61 TWh (37%) from coal, 10 TWh from gas, and 9 TWh from hydro. In 2017, nuclear generated 55% of the country's electricity.

"I think that the role currently played by nuclear power engineering, especially in the last four to five years, when we increased the share of nuclear energy to 60-61% in the balance of energy consumption and energy generation, means a huge contribution of nuclear power plants to energy security of the state and diversification of energy supply," Poroshenko said, according to a statement issued by his office. He added: "I want to thank the nuclear scientists for energy security and energy diversification. Good work." The government considers the construction of additional power units, in particular at the Tashlyk PSP and the Dniester hydroelectric station a priority, he said, adding, "This will further increase the share of nuclear energy and make Ukraine's economy more competitive."

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Ukrainian-head-of-state-stresses-role-of-nuclear-p?feed=feed>

Local support rises for construction of Polish plant *World Nuclear News, March 07, 2019*

A total of 1217 residents in Choczewo, Gniewino and Krokowa were surveyed between November and December 2018 by marketing and social research company PBS Sp zoo. The survey was commissioned by PGE EJ1 - the subsidiary of Polish state-owned energy group Polska Grupa Energetyczna set up to build and run Poland's first nuclear power plant. When asked if they supported the construction of a nuclear power plant in Poland, 69% of

respondents said they did. This compares with 67% of respondents in the previous survey carried out in 2017. Support was highest in Choczewo, where 73% of residents were in favour.

Two-thirds (66%) of those questioned supported the construction of a nuclear power plant in the vicinity of their homes, down slightly from 67% in 2017. Support was again highest in Choczewo, with 74% of respondents in favour, with 68% in support in Gniewino and 62% in Krokowa. The latest survey showed that support for a plant in the vicinity has not changed since the last survey was conducted. However, the attitude of residents towards such an investment close to their homes has improved as the number of strong opponents has declined from 17% to 9%.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Local-support-for-construction-of-Polish-plant?feed=feed>

Finland grants operating license to Olkiluoto 3 nuclear reactor *Reuters, March 07, 2019*

The Finnish government granted an operating permit to the long-delayed Olkiluoto 3 nuclear reactor, allowing it to start up production in 2020, the country's Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment said. The ministry's permit is a key milestone for Olkiluoto 3, a much-delayed 1.6 gigawatt reactor that net power-importer Finland expects will feed its growing industry with energy and reduce its electricity dependency from Russia and Sweden.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/finland-nuclear/finland-grants-operating-license-to-olkiluoto-3-nuclear-reactor-idINL5N20U3H1>

US regulator issues annual plant assessments *World Nuclear News, March 08, 2019*

All of the USA's 98 operating commercial reactors were in the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) two highest performance categories for 2018. Entergy's Pilgrim plant, which had been

under enhanced regulatory oversight, has returned to the highest operating level.

Ninety-three reactors fully met all safety and security performance objectives and were inspected by the NRC using its normal 'baseline' inspection programme. Four reactors - Grand Gulf, Peach Bottom units 2 and 3, and Watts Bar 2 - were assessed as needing to resolve one or two items of low safety significance, requiring additional inspection and follow-up of corrective actions. Watts Bar 2 has resolved its issues since the reporting period ended and has transitioned to the highest performing.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/US-NRC-issues-annual-plant-assessments>

World War 3 news: US military's mobile nuclear reactor 'a COLOSSAL mistake' *Tom Fish, Express UK, March 09, 2019*

The US military is fighting wars on at least 11 fronts, from the middle East to Africa. And all that cutting-edge equipment and military personnel can consume vast amounts of energy. But the US Defence Department's announced intention of building an array of mobile nuclear reactors to power its way to victory has been slammed as incredibly dangerous - and could even trigger another nuclear war. The US army is keen to end its dependence on fossil fuel deliveries to forward operating bases, situated close to conflict zones.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1097564/world-war-3-mobile-battlefield-nuclear-reactor-us-military-nuclear-war>

A top US diplomat just laid out the new approach to North Korea. It's doomed *Alex Ward, Vox, March 11, 2019*

The top US diplomat tasked with negotiating with North Korea just laid out a denuclearization plan that's destined to fail. In his first public comments since President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met in Vietnam last month, Stephen Biegun, the US special representative for North Korea, told a Washington audience Monday that

the administration wants Pyongyang to give up all of its weapons of mass destruction before anything else.

<https://www.vox.com/world/2019/3/11/18260024/north-korea-stephen-biegun-nuclear-trump-kim-bolton>

IAEA Mission Says Estonia Has Strengthened its Regulatory Framework, Sees Areas for Further Enhancement *IAEA, March 11, 2019*

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team of experts said Estonia has strengthened its regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety since 2016. The team also noted areas for potential further enhancement. The Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) team on 9 March concluded a six-day follow-up mission to review Estonia's implementation of recommendations and suggestions made during an initial IRRS mission in 2016. The follow-up mission was conducted at the request of the Government of Estonia and hosted by the Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Board.

While Estonia has no nuclear power plants, it utilizes radioactive sources in medical, industrial and research applications. The country maintains an interim storage facility for radioactive waste and the Government is in the process of selecting a site for a planned permanent waste disposal facility. "Estonia has effectively addressed the findings of the initial mission in 2016 and made significant progress in enhancing its regulatory framework," said team leader Stavroula Vogiatzi, Senior Regulator, Licensing and Inspection Department of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission. "While the country needs to further enhance the regulatory framework, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Social Affairs have already shown a commitment to continuous improvement."

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-mission-says-estonia-has-strengthened-its-regulatory-framework-sees-areas-for-further-enhancement>

US begins work on new cruise missile after pulling out of cold war treaty, *Julian Borger, The Guardian,*

March 11, 2019

The US has begun building parts for a new ground-launched cruise missile in anticipation of the end of a cold war treaty that banned them, the Pentagon has confirmed.

The Trump administration declared on 1 February it was no longer bound by the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty and would withdraw completely in August, pointing to the deployment of a new Russian missile which the US has complained for more than six years was a violation of the agreement.

[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/11/us-cruise-missile-development-russia-inf-treaty-](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/11/us-cruise-missile-development-russia-inf-treaty)

Pennsylvania State Lawmaker Offers Bill to Save Nuclear Power Plants *U.S. News, March 11, 2019*

Pennsylvania state Representative Tom Mehaffie introduced legislation on Monday that would compensate the state's nuclear reactors for the zero-carbon energy they produce, in an effort to provide the plants with enough revenue to stay open.

Nuclear power plants in Pennsylvania generate 42 percent of the state's electricity and provide 93 percent of its zero-carbon electricity. But they were not among the 16 forms of energy projects included in the state's Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards (AEPS) program, which requires energy suppliers to buy credits that help fund wind, solar and other projects.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2019-03-11/pennsylvania-state-lawmaker-offers-bill-to-save-nuclear-power-plants>

DOE announces funds for overseas fusion research *World Nuclear News, March 11, 2019*

Nuclear News, March 11, 2019

Research will be conducted by US scientists using existing facilities in the European Union, South Korea and other countries that

have existing bilateral agreements with the USA, the DOE said. The awards will support both multiple- and single-institution research teams to conduct bilateral research on facilities with capabilities not available domestically. Such collaborations will take advantage of the "unique capabilities" of the most advanced international research facilities and allow the US fusion programme to gain the knowledge needed to operate long duration plasma discharges in ITER and other fusion facilities, according to the funding opportunity announcement.

James Van Dam, DOE acting associate director of science for fusion energy sciences, said research on tokamaks in the European Union and Asia would enable the US fusion programme to gain the knowledge needed to operate long-duration plasma discharges in future fusion energy devices. "US scientists and engineers are working closely with research laboratories overseas to make optimal use of fusion facilities that can take decades to design, construct, and commission," he said.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/DOE-announces-funds-for-overseas-fusion-research?feed=feed>

Bulgaria invites investment in Belene project *World Nuclear News, March 12, 2019*

The announcement, published on the website of the Bulgarian Ministry of Energy, follows orders by the National Assembly of 7 June 2018 and of the Council of Ministers of 29 June 2018. According to a statement accompanying the invitation, the purpose of the call is "to provide certain information to the applicants wishing to participate in the procedure".

The Bulgarian side will participate in the project company operating Belene nuclear power plant with an in-kind contribution of the assets, including the licensed site, the available equipment, the issued decisions, permits, licences and other documents related to the project. A number of conditions are laid down in the

procedure with the aim of “maximising the protection of the property interest” of the Bulgarian side.

The Bulgarian state, through NEK, reserves the right of a blocking quota when deciding on certain issues within the competence of the shareholders’ general assembly in the project company, according to the statement. The construction of the plant is envisaged to be carried out according to market principles and without the conclusion of long-term power purchase agreements with the state or provision of any sovereign guarantees, it added. The deadline for receipt of applications is the 90th day as of the date on which the call is published - 11 March - in the *Official Journal* of the European Union. The indicative deadline for completion of the procedure will be 12 months from the date of publication of this invitation in the *Official Journal*.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Bulgaria-invites-investment-interest-in-Belene-pro?feed=feed>

US still discussing nuclear technology sales with Saudi Arabia *Ed Crooks, Financial Times, March 12, 2019*

The US is still in talks with Saudi Arabia about a possible deal to sell it civil nuclear technology, as part of a strategy to boost US exports while helping to curb greenhouse gas emissions, energy secretary Rick Perry has said. Speaking at the CERAWEEK energy conference in Houston, Mr Perry told the *Financial Times* that the talks were making progress “closer to one mile an hour than to Mach 1.2”, but said the US was working on a deal to support the kingdom’s plan to develop a nuclear power industry.

<https://www.ft.com/content/1b68ec2e-44c3-11e9-b168-96a37d002cd3>

Greenpeace Co-Founder Patrick Moore Calls Out His Former Group For Rewriting History *Michael*

Bastasch, The Daily Caller, March 13, 2019

Greenpeace co-founder Patrick Moore fired back at the environmental group he spent

years leading over attempts to rewrite the history of their founding” This is a case of historical revisionism,” Moore told The Daily Caller News Foundation in an interview.

Greenpeace renewed their years-long feud with Moore, tweeting in response to President Donald Trump’s touting of Moore’s comments on Fox News that the ecologist “was not a co-founder” of the group and called him a “paid lobbyist, not an independent source.”

However, Greenpeace’s website listed Moore among its “founders and first members” before quietly removing it around 2007. Moore is only listed as a member of the group’s 1971 maiden voyage to oppose nuclear testing. Greenpeace’s revised history also claims that Phil Cotes founded the group in 1970 with Irving Stowe and Jim Bohlen.

<https://dailycaller.com/2019/03/13/greenpeace-patrick-moore-rewriting-history/>

JEEP-II research reactor faces uncertain future *World Nuclear News, March 13, 2019*

The only neutron scattering facility in the Nordic countries, JEEP-II is part of the national Norwegian research infrastructure NcNeutron for fundamental research in physics and materials technology. The partners in NcNeutron include the University of Oslo, the University of Stavanger, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and independent research organisation SINTEF. JEEP-II is also part of Norway’s contribution to the development and construction of the European Spallation Source research centre in Lund, Sweden, which is scheduled to be completed in 2023.

“This is a grave situation regarding continued operation,” said IFE President Nils Morten Huseby. “The findings require extensive repairs and improvements before restarting operations. We are still carrying out the planned inspections, but

we recognise that repair is an expensive and time-consuming process. Safety always comes first at IFE, and we have concluded that it is not an option to restart the reactor without extensive improvements.”

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Uncertain-future-for-JEEP-II-research-reactor?feed=feed>

North Korea may suspend talks with ‘gangster-like’ U.S., rethink nuclear test freeze *Joyce Lee, David Brunnstrom, Reuters, March 14, 2019*

North Korea is considering suspending talks with the United States and may rethink a freeze on missile and nuclear tests unless Washington makes concessions, a senior diplomat said on Friday, according to news reports from the North’s capital.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the United States wished to continue talks with North Korea and had “every expectation” that its leader, Kim Jong Un, would stick to pledges not to resume nuclear and missile testing.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa/north-korea-considering-suspending-nuclear-talks-with-u-s-tass-idUSKCN1QW0C9>

Why the Trump-Kim Nuclear Show Is Set for Act III *Jon Herskovitz and Youkyung Lee, Bloomberg Quint, March 14, 2019*

Two historic summits between the U.S. and North Korea resulted in no concrete plans to end Pyongyang’s atomic ambitions. President Donald Trump and leader Kim Jong Un have toned down hostile rhetoric, shook hands in Singapore in June and were on cordial terms even after their second summit broke down in Hanoi in February. All the while, North Korea’s nuclear program quietly advanced and U.S.- backed sanctions continued to choke its moribund economy. The two countries can’t agree on what the denuclearization of North Korea means and what rewards should be given, if any, in response to Pyongyang’s moves toward disarmament. Kim has vowed to

meet Trump again, but that’s also up in the air.

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/quicktakes/why-the-trump-kim-nuclear-show-is-set-for-act-iii-quicktake#gs.19rwwk>

US send nuclear BOMBERS to South China Sea as tensions erupt - ‘They’re STIRRING trouble’ *Clive Hammond, Express UK, March 15, 2019*

The ongoing row between the US and China has centred around disputes about who controls the South China Sea. The move by US officials to send two B-52H Stratofortress bombers from a base in Guam to the seas has angered Beijing. A Pacific Air Force statement published by the South China Morning Post that the vessels had been “conducting routine training in the vicinity of the South China Sea” before they returned back to base.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1100394/south-china-sea-latest-news-US-nuclear-bombers-china-world-war-3-trump-xi-jinping>

US senators seek probe of Trump admin nuclear energy talks with Saudi Arabia *Middle East Monitor March 15, 2019*

A Democratic US senator and his Republican counterpart on Friday asked Congress’ investigative arm to probe Trump administration talks with Saudi Arabia over sharing nuclear power technology, Reuters reports.

In the latest effort by lawmakers to shed light on the potential deal, Democratic Senator Bob Menendez and Republican Senator Marco Rubio asked the Government Accountability Office, or GAO, to investigate the talks as soon as possible. They also asked the GAO to review executive branch negotiations with Saudi Arabia on nuclear energy since 2009, when Democrat Barack Obama was president.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190315-us-senators-seek-probe-of-trump-admin-nuclear-energy-talks-with-saudi-arabia/>

French, US regulators expand cooperation *World Nuclear News, March 15, 2019*

ean Christophe Niel, director general of IRSN, and Brian Holian, director of the NRC Accident and Emergency Response Department, signed the memorandum of cooperation on 13 March at the NRC's offices in Rockville, Maryland, where the annual *Regulatory Information Conference (RIC 2019)* took place.

The agreement calls for IRSN and the NRC to intensify cooperation and exchanges for emergency preparedness. In particular, cross-participations are planned as observers during exercises in France and in the USA. The two organisations will compare the methods of analysis and diagnosis/prognosis, as well as the calculation codes used in a crisis situation.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/French,-US-regulators-expand-cooperatiion?feed=feed>

E. Russia

Turkey Rejects US Patriot Offer Amid Row Over Russian S-400 – Reports *Sputnik March 05, 2019*

The United States has been pressing Turkey, its NATO ally, to reject a plan to purchase Russia's cutting-edge S-400 missile systems, which Turkey estimates to be three times cheaper than a \$3.5 billion order for US anti-aircraft weapons.

Turkey has rejected the offer by the United States on the sale of US long-range surface-to-air Patriot missile systems until the end of 2019 providing that Ankara refuses to purchase Russia's S-400 air defence system, Bloomberg reported citing official Turkish sources.

The statement comes after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on 16 February that Ankara was not satisfied with the United States' reluctance to give Turkey a loan needed to buy Patriot air defence systems or organise joint production of the weapon.

<https://sputniknews.com/amp/military/201903021072893556-turkey-us-missiles-russia/>

PM Medvedev says infrastructure for US nuclear weapons in Europe should be eliminated *TASS News Agency March 05, 2019*

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has said that it would be right to eliminate the infrastructure for US nuclear weapons in Europe.

"Everyone will feel more at ease when all US nuclear weapons return to US territory, and infrastructure in Europe which allows to store, service and deploy those weapons, will be eliminated," Medvedev told the LuxemburgerWort newspaper ahead of his visit to Luxembourg.

<http://tass.com/politics/1047430>

Russia suspends INF Treaty with US – Kremlin *Russian Times March 05, 2019*

President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree enacting Russia's suspension of the INF Treaty, a move that was announced after a similar decision by the US. The weapons control agreement was set to expire in less than six months. Russia is putting on ice the Cold War-era agreement, which resulted in significant demilitarization of the European continent. The US will be formally notified about the decision.

The INF Treaty may be revived if the US "eliminates its earlier violations of its obligations" under the deal, according to the decree published by the Kremlin on Monday. Otherwise it will simply expire and cease to exist.

<https://www.rt.com/news/452982-russia-suspends-inf-treaty/>

'Reshaping space market': Russia mulls building rocket plane with nuclear engine *Russian Times, March 06, 2019*

Russian space agency Roscosmos is considering building a spaceplane powered by a nuclear reactor, according to a memo obtained by a Russian news

agency. The move could “reshape” the market for space launches, the document says. A rocket plane is an aircraft powered by rocket engines. Conventional jets proved better for atmosphere-only flight, but this type of vehicle found its niche application as a reusable spacecraft – most notably as the Space Shuttle program.

<https://www.rt.com/russia/453132-rocket-plane-nuclear-power/>

Russia, China sign general contract on construction of two units of Tianwan NPP *TASS News Agency*
March 11, 2019

Russia and China have signed general contract on construction of the seventh and eighth power units of Tianwan nuclear power plant (TNPP) and the contract on basic design of the third and fourth units of Xudabao nuclear power plant (NPP), Russia’s state-run nuclear corporation Rosatom said in a statement on Monday. Respective contracts were signed in Beijing by Rosatom’s engineering division and enterprises of CNNC corporation.

<http://tass.com/economy/1048152>

Russia won’t be the first to deploy new missiles to Europe, senior MP says *TASS News Agency, March 11, 2019*

Russia is not planning to be the first to deploy intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles to the regions not hosting similar US weapons, including to Europe, Russian State Duma (lower house of parliament) Defense Committee Chairman Vladimir Shamanov told a briefing for military attaches on Monday.

Russia reserves the right to respond in kind in terms of development, production and deployment of intermediate-range and shorter-range ground-based missiles and Russian President Vladimir Putin had signed a decree on suspending Russia’s participation in the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, Shamanov recalled.

<http://tass.com/politics/1048087>

Russian Navy to get seven new warships this year *TASS News Agency*
March 12, 2019

Shipbuilders are planning to hand over seven new warships, including four submarines, and seven repaired vessels to the Russian Navy in 2019, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Tuesday.

“In 2019, the shipbuilding program of enterprises integrated into the United Shipbuilding Corporation (USC) stipulates the construction of seven combat ships, including three nuclear-powered submarines and one diesel-electric sub, and the completion of the repairs of seven warships and vessels,” the defense chief said at a meeting with shipbuilders in Severodvinsk.

<http://tass.com/defense/1048284>

Russia shows off upgraded world’s most powerful rocket engine meant for Soyuz-5 *Russian Times, March 12, 2019*

A Russian rocket engine producer has offered a sneak peek of its latest creation, the RD-171MV, which is slated to be part of Russia’s next workhorse launch vehicle and, later, a super heavy-lift rocket.

The RD-170 family is the legacy of the Buran/Energia program, which remains the world’s most-powerful multi-combustion chambered rocket engine. Its producer, NPO Energomash, has adapted it to several launch vehicles over the years, from the two-chamber RD-180 variant for the US Atlas V rocket to the modified RD-171M for the Russian-Ukrainian Zenit-2 launches.

<https://www.rt.com/russia/453617-new-russian-rocket-engine/>

Russia says it’s going to arm a secretive submarine with 6 nuclear ‘doomsday’ devices *Alex Lockie, Business Insider, March 12, 2019*

Russia will deploy what’s been described as the deadliest nuclear weapon ever

aboard mysterious submarines by 2020, state media has announced, citing a Russian defense-industry source.

The Russian "Poseidon" nuclear-powered torpedo - reputed to carry a 100 megaton to 200 megaton nuclear warhead and meant to erupt underwater for maximum effect - will reportedly deploy aboard the Project 09852 sub Belgorod, which is a converted nuclear-powered cruise-missile sub expected to go on combat duty in 2020.

<https://www.businessinsider.in/Russia-says-its-going-to-arm-a-secretive-submarine-with-6-nuclear-doomsday-devices/articleshow/68380759.cms>

NUCLEAR FEARS: Russia accuses US of hiding nuclear weapons as it warns of SERIOUS problem *Clive*

Hammond, Express UK, March 14, 2019

The Russian Foreign Ministry argue the US is "juggling figures" in order to grow its weapons numbers. In a statement, the ministry added that it was "a serious problem, which must be settled". The US is only allowed to have a limited stockpile of weapons due to a treaty signed between the two nations in 2009. The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) is aimed at reducing the number of nuclear weapons held by both countries.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1099883/russia-us-world-war-3-cold-war-nuclear-weapon-START-tension-donald-trump-putin-latest>

Two Nuclear Submarines to Join Russian Fleet in 2019 (PHOTO, VIDEO) *Sputnik March 14, 2019*

Both submarines are improvements over their original projects, and many more are expected to enter service by 2021. Two nuclear-powered submarines — Kazan and Knyaz (Prince) Vladimir — will join Russian Navy before the end of the year, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Tuesday. Russian Embassy in the United States posted a video showing the upcoming ships in its Twitter account.

Speaking at a meeting in Severodvinsk, Shoigu said that the new submarines will

"define the future image of [Russian] submarine navy; allow to increase the defensive potential and strengthen Russia's positions in the World Ocean."

<https://sputniknews.com/russia/201903141073216966-nuclear-submarines-russian-navy/>

Kremlin points to US missile-testing plans as proof Washington sought INF breakdown *TASS News*

Agency March 14, 2019

Washington's plans to test missiles banned by the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty are a "logical continuation" of its stance, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday.

"We [Russia] categorically disagree with any reproaches against us to the effect that we have not kept our word on this accord [the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty]. On the contrary, we demonstrated to all, using arguments and proof, that it is precisely the United States that became the source of dismantling this document since it in fact made breaches [of this treaty]," the Kremlin spokesman said.

<http://tass.com/politics/1048594>

Press review: Russia slams US for junking arms control and Yemen's fate hinges on Saudis *TASS News*

Agency March 15, 2019

Russia's Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov at a meeting with his CIS counterparts accused the US of ripping up nuclear arms control agreements. This primarily concerns the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) that will expire in 2021, RossiyskayaGazetawrites.

According to him, the Americans may refuse to extend the New START, citing alleged Russian violations. Murakhovsky supposed that Washington had suspended all contacts concerning the treaty because the US was actively working on the Prompt Global Strike system

<http://tass.com/pressreview/1048770>

EAST ASIA

F. Japan

NRA eyes seabed watch of caldera near Kagoshima nuclear plant,

*Chikako Kawahara, The Asahi Shimbun
March 03, 2019*

The nightmare scenario of a volcanic crater erupting and spewing a pyroclastic flow that engulfs a nuclear plant, causing catastrophic levels of radiation to leak into the atmosphere, doesn't appear on the horizon ... just yet. But the nation's nuclear watchdog is taking no chances. It plans to install seabed sensors to monitor potential crustal deformations on the Aira Caldera, located just 40 kilometers from the Sendai nuclear power plant in Kagoshima Prefecture. Little is known of processes that lead to giant eruptions of calderas, or ground depressions formed by volcanic activity, due to a lack of observation data. Such eruptions are extremely rare and occurs every 10,000 years in Japan. The Aira Caldera, in Kagoshima Bay, was the site of a giant eruption around 30,000 years ago. The Nuclear Regulation Authority has so far relied on land-based seismic and other sensors to indirectly monitor magma activity and other changes beneath the seabed.

Starting in the new fiscal year from April, the NRA will set up seismic sensors and water-pressure gauges on the seafloor for additional monitoring. The NRA said it will study the correlation between both sets of data to develop more reliable observation methods. Current regulation standards, introduced in the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear disaster of 2011, made it obligatory for electric utilities to take into account the impact of volcanoes that lie within 160 km of a given nuclear facility.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903030001.html>

Japan LNG imports fall as nuclear plants restart *World Nuclear News, March 05, 2019*

Prior to 2011, nuclear power provided about 30% of Japan's electricity generation.

However, following the Fukushima accident all of the country's nuclear reactors were taken out of service for mandatory safety inspections and upgrades. Reactors entering scheduled maintenance and refuelling outages remained offline, meaning Japan had no nuclear generation at all between September 2013 and August 2015. Much of the shortfall has in the meantime been met with increased use of natural gas generation.

Five Japanese reactors - Genkai 3 and 4, Ohi 3 and 4, and Ikata 3 - returned to service during 2018, bringing to nine the total number of units in operation and with a total capacity of 8.7 GWe, the EIA said.

"As the five nuclear reactors were gradually restarted in 2018, they began to offset natural gas-fired generation and, as a result, LNG imports decreased as the reactors reached full operation," the Administration said.

In 2019 - which will be their first full year of operation - the EIA estimates the restarted nuclear reactors will further displace Japan's LNG imports by about 5 million tonnes, equivalent to 10% of Japan's power sector natural gas consumption and 6% of its LNG imports in 2018.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Japan-LNG-imports-fall-as-nuclear-plants-restart?feed=feed>

Japan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Meeting *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan March 06, 2019*

On Wednesday, March 6, commencing at 16:10 Mr. Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan held a telephone talk with H.E. Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The overview of the talk is as follows.

At the beginning, regarding the recent situation in Kashmir, Minister Kono welcomed that Pakistan released the

Indian Air Force pilot and requested both of Pakistan and India to self-restraint and stabilize the situation through dialogue.

In response, Minister Qureshi explained about Pakistan's efforts to combat terrorism and the call for dialogue with India. Both Ministers shared the view on the importance of counter-measures against terrorism.

https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_002360.html

The First Meeting of the Japan-India Space Dialogue *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan, March 07, 2019*

1. The First Meeting of the Japan-India Space Dialogue will be held in Delhi on March 8, 2019. This Dialogue will be held following the decision (PDF) [Open a New Window](#) at the Japan-India Summit Meeting in October last year to launch an annual space dialogue for enhancing bilateral cooperation in outer space.
2. Japanese delegation will be led by Mr. Kansuke Nagaoka, Ambassador in charge of Policy Planning & International Security Policy and Mr. Shuzo Takada, Director General, National Space Policy Secretariat, Cabinet Office, while Indian Delegation will be led by Mr. Indra Mani Pandey, Additional Secretary, Disarmament and International Security Affairs Division, Ministry of External Affairs.
3. The dialogue will bring together outer space related ministries and agencies in two countries and provide an opportunity to exchange information on the space policy of each country and to hold discussions on the wide range of topics relating to the outer space.

https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_002362.html

U.K., Japan scientists study radioactive Fukushima particles

Reuters March 09, 2019

The Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) is currently collaborating with British

researchers to learn more about the state of the radioactive particles created by the meltdown. Dr Yukihiro Satou from the JAEA oversaw the transportation of particles collected from within the restricted zone, very close to the disaster site, to Britain."The particles were fundamentally extracted from those attached to soil, dust and debris," Satou told Reuters. Encased in protective tape, the samples were brought to the Diamond Light Source, Britain's national synchrotron, or cyclic particle accelerator, near Oxford.

Here electrons are accelerated to near light speeds until they emit light 10 billion times brighter than the sun, then directed into laboratories in 'beamlines' which allow scientists to study minute specimens in extreme detail. Researchers have created a 3D map of a radioactive sample using the synchrotron, allowing them to see the distribution of elements within the sample. Understanding the current state of these particles and how they behave in the environment could ultimately determine if and when the area could be declared safe for people to return.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903090019.html>

Think tank puts cost to address nuke disaster up to 81 trillion yen

Atsushi Komor, The Asahi Shimbun, March 10, 2019

In a startling disparity, a private think tank puts the cost of addressing the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster between 35 trillion yen and 81 trillion yen (\$315 billion and \$728 billion), compared with the government estimate of 22 trillion yen. The calculation, by the Tokyo-based Japan Center for Economic Research, showed that the total could soar to at least 60 percent more and up to 3.7 times more than the 2016 estimate by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. In releasing the latest estimates on March 7, the center said it is time for serious debate over the role nuclear energy should play in the nation's mid- and long-term energy policy.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903100044.html>

Keidanren chief wary about debate over nuclear energy *Hironori Kato, The Asahi Shimbun, March 12, 2019*

The chairman of Japan's most powerful business lobby and top executive of a leading nuclear power plant maker signaled reluctance about a national debate over nuclear energy, reversing his previous stance. "It's pointless to have a debate with people who emotionally oppose nuclear energy," said Hiroaki Nakanishi, chairman of Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), at a news conference on March 11. "I don't have the power to persuade people who say they are absolutely against it."

Nakanishi also serves as chairman of Hitachi Ltd., a key player in Japan's nuclear industry.

His comment came when reporters pointed out that the public's perception of nuclear energy has changed since the triple meltdown at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant in March 2011. However, Nakanishi defended Hitachi's push toward a restart of nuclear power plants in Japan, citing potential problems in the spread of renewable energy.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903120051.html>

Japan backs off criticism of North Korea at United Nations *Tamiyuki Kihara, The Asahi Shimbun, March 13, 2019*

For the first time in 11 years, Japan will not sponsor a U.N. resolution criticizing Pyongyang's human rights record, a change that reflects Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's desire for a summit with North Korea. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said at his March 13 news conference that the decision was made "after comprehensively considering the result of the (February) summit between the United States and North Korea as well as various circumstances surrounding the abduction issue."

Suga said the decision does not represent a change in the government's position of

working closely with the international community to resolve issues related to North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs as well as the country's abductions of Japanese in the 1970s and 1980s. Abe said he wanted to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un after the first summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Kim last year. However, there has been no momentum toward an Abe-Kim summit. "North Korea dislikes criticism from the international community about its human rights," a government source said. "There is value in trying a different approach to change North Korea's attitude."

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903130043.html>

Former abductee Hasuike doubts N. Korea eyes more nuke tests *Takuya Suzuki, The Asahi Shimbun, March 13, 2019*

Excerpts from the interview follow:

QUESTION: The second U.S.-North Korea summit meeting ended without any agreement. What's your take on that?

ANSWER: It was unexpected. I think North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's level of demand was too high. Also, U.S. President Donald Trump had frustration over issues involving Russia and other matters. Kim seemed to think that if he proposed scrapping the nuclear facilities in Yongbyon, it would effectively lead to the complete removal of economic sanctions. But Trump caught him off-guard by raising the issue of another nuclear facility. I think that threw Kim.

Q: Do you think there is any chance that North Korea will resume ballistic missile launches or nuclear tests?

A: I don't think so. In April 2018, Kim said that North Korea had achieved the goal of "byungjin" (parallel development) that pursued both nuclear development and economic reconstruction. He declared its termination and changed his policy to one

that devoted all of his country's energies to economic development. The resumption of missile launches or nuclear tests would mean a return to the byungjin line that Kim has already stated was won. Kim wouldn't be able to maintain trust (in his leadership) if he was inconsistent like that. That's not how it works in North Korea.

Q: How do you foresee the future of U.S.-North Korea negotiations?

A: Immediately after the (second) U.S.-North Korea summit meeting, North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho stated without batting an eyelid that the United States sought (the demolition of) "another" nuclear facility, in addition to the complex in Yongbyon. If he was going to deny the existence of nuclear facilities other than those in Yongbyon, he would not have said that.

He apparently realized that North Korea cannot avoid holding talks (on another facility) in the future. This shows that the summit meeting was not a failure, but one in which the two leaders were unable to reach agreement. I think that U.S.-North Korea negotiations will continue.

But time will be needed to rethink the strategy for negotiations. So, I suspect they will be stalled for the time being. During this time, I think it is likely that North Korea will explore the U.S. strategy while stirring things up by resuming activities at its nuclear- or missile-related facilities that are under the surveillance of U.S. satellites.

Q: Do you think it is possible that North Korea will move to strengthen its relations with South Korea?

A: In a speech he gave on March 1, South Korean President Moon Jae-in showed his receptiveness with talking to the United States about resuming tourism at Mount Kumgang in North Korea and business activity in the country's Kaesong industrial region. Kim Jong Un probably thinks he can leave economic cooperation between the two Koreas to South Korea. That's because South Korea will seek to persuade the United States

from the standpoint of North Korea. But, in the current circumstances, it will be difficult for Kim to visit South Korea.

Q: What policies should Japan take in its talks with North Korea?

A: Japan should convey a strong message that the normalization of diplomatic relations and economic cooperation will not be realized unless the abduction issue is resolved. North Korea wants to improve its economy, but does not want to depend on China further. It does not want to be absorbed and unified by South Korea. The thought is incorporated into the recent slogan, "My country, first."

Because of that, North Korea will hope for Japan's economic cooperation to keep a balance. It is important to make North Korea think that it will prove more beneficial to return abductees (to Japan) by talking about settling past issues, which offers economic cooperation funds to North Korea, and resolving the abduction issue simultaneously.

To make North Korea return abductees, Japan needs to understand issues that North Korea regards as a burden. Japan should promise that it will neither ask the abductees about North Korea's secrets, nor reveal them. By doing so, it will make it easier for North Korea to return the abductees.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903130078.html>

Japan to seek global rules on autonomous 'killer' *Ryo Kiyomiya The Asahi Shimbun, March 14, 2019*

Japan will call for international rules on lethal weapons equipped with artificial intelligence (AI) to prevent autonomous machines from starting wars, causing fatal accidents and "deciding" who gets to live or die, sources said.

Tokyo will submit a written proposal to the conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) scheduled from March 25 to 29 in Geneva,

they said. The Japanese government wants to assume a leadership role in discussions on regulating “lethal autonomous weapons systems” (LAWS), the sources said. These weapons, with built-in AI, could be able to capture or attack a target without human control. Deadly force could be deployed based on the “intention” of the AI installed. Japan will stress that it is essential for humans to be in control of LAWS. “Just as gunpowder and nuclear weapons changed the way wars were conducted in the past, artificial intelligence could fundamentally alter the course of future wars,” Foreign Minister Taro Kono said at a Diet session on Jan. 28. The United States, Russia and China are believed to be developing LAWS, although the weapons have not been put into practical use.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903140039.html>

TEPCO takes risk over soaring costs at Tokai nuclear plant *The Asahi*

Shimbun March 15, 2019

Japan Atomic Power Co. intends to resume operations of the one reactor at the Tokai No. 2 nuclear plant in Ibaraki Prefecture in January 2023, but 300 billion yen—nearly double the initial estimate—is reportedly needed to ensure its safety. TEPCO, which will be provided with electricity from the Tokai plant, will offer 190 billion yen, or two-thirds of the total cost. Tohoku Electric Power Co., Chubu Electric Power Co., Kansai Electric Power Co. and Hokuriku Electric Power Co. will also offer financial support.

But it remains unclear whether municipalities around the plant will approve the plan to restart the reactor. If Japan Atomic Power fails to win consent from the local governments and is forced to scrap the Tokai No. 2 plant, TEPCO and other power distributors could suffer big financial losses.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903150001.html>

The Fourth Meeting of the Japan-EU Space Dialogue Ministry of Foreign

Affairs Japan March 15, 2019

1. The Fourth Meeting of the Japan-EU Space Dialogue was held in Tokyo on March 15, 2019.

2. Japanese delegation was led by Mr. Kansuke Nagaoka, Ambassador in charge of Policy Planning & International Security Policy and Mr. Shuzo Takada, Director General, National Space Policy Secretariat, Cabinet Office, while EU Delegation was led by Mr. Pierre Delsaux, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission and Ms. Carine Claeys, Acting Special Envoy for Space - Head of the Space Task Force, European External Action Service.

3. The dialogue provided an opportunity to exchange information on the latest space policy of each side and to hold discussions on norms and the possibility of cooperation in civil uses such as global navigation satellite system, earth observation and industrial cooperation.

4. Both sides decided to hold this dialogue to enhance bilateral cooperation.

https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_002376.html

Court absolves government of blame in nuclear disaster *The Asahi*

Shimbun March 15, 2019

A district court here on March 14 absolved the central government of responsibility but ordered the operator of the crippled Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant to pay compensation to nine of 19 plaintiffs who evacuated to Chiba.

The Chiba District Court ordered Tokyo Electric Power Co. to pay a total of about 5.1 million yen (\$45,630) to nine plaintiffs who evacuated out of radiation fears following the nuclear accident triggered

by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in March 2011.

The 19 plaintiffs were from six households who voluntarily evacuated from Fukushima to Chiba Prefecture. The plaintiffs sought a total of 247 million yen from TEPCO and the central government. While the presiding judge ordered TEPCO to pay compensation to nine plaintiffs from four households, it denied the central government's responsibility. "We can't say that it is illegal that the central government didn't force TEPCO to take preventive measures against a tsunami," the judge said.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903150041.html>

TEPCO takes risk over soaring costs at Tokai nuclear plant *The Asahi*

Shimbun, March 15, 2019

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<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903150001.html>

Court absolves government of blame in nuclear disaster *The Asahi Shimbun* **March 15, 2019**

A district court here on March 14 absolved the central government of responsibility but

ordered the operator of the crippled Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant to pay compensation to nine of 19 plaintiffs who evacuated to Chiba.

The Chiba District Court ordered Tokyo Electric Power Co. to pay a total of about 5.1 million yen (\$45,630) to nine plaintiffs who evacuated out of radiation fears following the nuclear accident triggered by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in March 2011.

The 19 plaintiffs were from six households who voluntarily evacuated from Fukushima to Chiba Prefecture. The plaintiffs sought a total of 247 million yen from TEPCO and the central government. While the presiding judge ordered TEPCO to pay compensation to nine plaintiffs from four households, it denied the central government's responsibility. "We can't say that it is illegal that the central government didn't force TEPCO to take preventive measures against a tsunami," the judge said.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201903150041.html>

G. Korea

N. Korea forced to rethink nuclear talks with U.S.: top official *Yonhap, Korea Herald* **March 01, 2019**

A senior North Korean diplomat on Friday questioned the need to continue denuclearization talks with the United States, saying leader Kim Jong-un appears to be changing his mind as well.

In an interview with Yonhap News Agency and a few other South Korean news outlets here, Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui claimed that her country should be rewarded adequately for more than a year of halts to nuclear and long-range missile testing: with the lifting of at least some U.N. sanctions.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190301000110&ACE_SEARCH=1

Where is NK's covert uranium enrichment site? Park Han-na, Korea Herald Mar 5, 2019

Speculation is running rampant as to the locations of the additional weapons-grade uranium-producing sites in North Korea that US President Donald Trump demanded be dismantled, met with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's refusal, during their second summit in Vietnam last week.

In Hanoi, Pyongyang offered to destroy its Yongbyon facilities that produce the two key materials used in making nuclear weapons – plutonium and highly enriched uranium – but Washington demanded an additional step beyond the dismantlement of the important nuclear site.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190305000726&ACE_SEARCH=1

North Korea rebuilds part of missile site as Bolton warns of more sanctions David Brunnstrom, Lisa Lambert Reuters March 05, 2019

North Korea has restored part of a rocket test site it began to dismantle after pledging to do so in a first summit with U.S. President Donald Trump last year, while Trump's national security advisor warned that new sanctions could be introduced if Pyongyang did not scrap its nuclear weapons program.

South Korea's Yonhap News Agency and two U.S. think tanks reported on Tuesday that work was underway at the Sohae Satellite Launching Station at Tongchang-ri, even as Trump met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at a second summit in Hanoi last week.

That summit broke down over differences on how far North Korea was willing to limit its nuclear program and the degree of U.S. willingness to ease sanctions.

Trump's national security adviser, John Bolton, told Fox Business Network on Tuesday that following the Hanoi summit,

Washington would see whether Pyongyang was committed to giving up its "nuclear weapons program and everything associated with it."

<https://in.reuters.com/article/northkorea-usa-nuclear/north-korea-rebuilds-part-of-missile-site-as-bolton-warns-of-more-sanctions-idINKCN1QM29W>

NK apparently running uranium enrichment facilities normally at Yongbyon: Seoul spy agency Yonhap Korea Herald, March 07, 2019

North Korea seems to be operating uranium enrichment facilities normally at the Yongbyon nuclear complex, South Korea's spy agency was quoted as saying by lawmakers. "(North Korea's) uranium enrichment facilities have been in normal operation, even before the recent summit between the United States and North Korea," the National Intelligence Service was quoted as telling lawmakers at the closed-door briefing Tuesday. The spy agency said that North Korea stopped the operation of its 5-megawatt reactor at its sprawling nuclear complex in Yongbyon late last year with no signs of reprocessing activities.

At a press briefing Tuesday, lawmakers said the North has been keeping the nuclear reactor dormant, but they did not make public the NIS's briefing on the North's uranium enrichment activities at Yongbyon. The Yongbyon complex includes the 5-megawatt reactor, spent fuel reprocessing facilities and research and uranium enrichment buildings. Its uranium enrichment facilities came under the international spotlight in November 2010 when US nuclear scientist Siegfried Hecker was invited to see 2,000 centrifuges capable of producing up to 40 kg of highly enriched uranium.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190307000152&ACE_SEARCH=1

Outcome of Meeting between ROK and US Top Negotiators on North Korean Nuclear Issue, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Korea*
March 07, 2019

1. Amb. Lee Do-hoon, Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs, met with United States Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun in Washington, the US, on March 6.

- In the meeting, the US side provided more details to the ROK side on the results of the second US-Democratic People's Republic of Korea summit. The ROK and US sides exchanged their assessments of the summit, and discussed possible next steps.
- The two sides especially shared the view that following the US-North Korea summit, this is a very sensitive moment in making progress in the US-North Korea dialogue, and agreed to continue close coordination in working together on North Korea.
- The two sides took note that cooperation between the ROK and the US at each level, including the Presidents, foreign ministers and top negotiators of the two countries, had been closer than ever, and agreed to continue communications and consultations between the two countries.

2. After their meeting, Special Representative Lee Do-hoon and Special Representative Biegun had a working luncheon with Director-General of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kenji Kanasugi, who was on a visit to the US.

http://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5475/view.do?seq=319720&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&company_cd=&company_nm=&page=1&titleNm=

South Korea's Moon names new point man on North Korea after Hanoi summit breakdown *Hyonhee Shin Reuters, March 08, 2019*

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has replaced his unification minister who played a major role in detente with North Korea over the past year, his office said on Friday, and named a longtime confidant to lead a drive for "a new Korean peninsula. Kim Yeon-chul, a pro-engagement scholar who heads the state-run Korea Institute for National Unification, will replace Cho Myoung-gyon pending a confirmation hearing.

The Ministry of Unification handles relations with North Korea.

"He's the right man who can actively embody the president's vision for a new Korean peninsula, a new peace and cooperation community, by carrying out the unification ministry's main policy tasks without a hitch and implementing inter-Korean agreements in a speedy manner," Moon's spokesman told a news briefing. la".

<https://in.reuters.com/article/southkorea-politics-reshuffle/south-koreas-moon-names-new-point-man-on-north-korea-after-hanoi-summit-breakdown-idINKCN1QP08F>

China calls US-North Korea summit an 'important step', *Christopher Bodeen AP News, March 08, 2019*

The U.S.-North Korea summit in Vietnam last week was an "important step" toward denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, China's foreign minister said Friday, despite criticism that the meeting ended early without leading to an agreement.

The Hanoi talks between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un were "worthy of full recognition," Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at a news conference on the sidelines of the annual meeting of China's ceremonial legislature.

"We feel like this meeting was an important step in finding a political resolution to the (Korean) Peninsula issue," Wang said. That the two "leaders overcame obstacles to meet again in a candid face-to-face discussion itself represents a positive development that must be applauded." He encouraged the two countries to "remain patient," and noted that many issues concerning the peninsula "cannot be solved overnight." Wang said China would continue efforts to reach an agreement with the 10 countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to avoid conflicts over the South China Sea, which China claims virtually in its entirety. He declined to say whether China would require the code of conduct that it hopes to sign by 2021 be legally binding.

And he said China's diplomats would continue to defend the country's reputation and its citizens following recent disputes with Canada, the U.S. and Sweden that saw Beijing making unusually harsh accusations.

"China will stand up for its rights, but will not seek hegemony," Wang said.

<https://www.apnews.com/8ee19ecf28c04080b0271230aad73f86>

US will ask N. Korea for clarification on missile site reassembly: official, *Yonhap Korea Herald, March 08, 2019*

The United States is seeking clarification on the purposes of North Korea's reassembly of a key missile facility, a senior US official said Thursday as President Donald Trump expressed repeated disappointment over the activity.

North Korea began to rebuild parts of the missile engine testing site in Dongchang-ri in the runup to Trump's second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Hanoi, Vietnam, on Feb. 27-28, according to two US think tanks earlier this week.

By Wednesday, commercial satellite imagery showed that the facility may have been

restored to normal operational status following its partial dismantlement last year, they said. Trump said Wednesday he would be "very, very disappointed" with Kim if the reports were true, and on Thursday added he was "a little disappointed" by Kim and the reported activity.

"So we're watching in real time, as you are, developments at Sohae and we will definitely be seeking clarification on the purposes of that," the State Department official told reporters on background.

Sohae Satellite Launching Station is the facility's formal name. "The intent of the North Koreans in this matter is known only to them at this point. We don't know why they're taking these steps. We don't know what they intend to do with it," he said. "But suffice it to say we're watching closely and we expect them to abide by the commitments that they've made to the president of the United States."

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190308000111&ACE_SEARCH=1

US positive on N. Korea denuclearization despite 'operational' rocket site *Korea Herald March 08, 2019*

The US still believes the "fully verified denuclearization" of North Korea is possible by the end of President Donald Trump's "first term," a senior official said Thursday, despite warnings a key rocket launch site appears to have resumed operations.

The specialized website 38 North and the Center for Strategic and International Studies used commercial satellite imagery to track construction at the site — which they said began before last week's aborted summit in Hanoi between Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190308000127&ACE_SEARCH=1

NK media stress commitment to 'complete denuclearization' Kim So-hyun *Korea Herald, March 12, 2019*

North Korean media stated their commitment to "complete denuclearization" nearly two weeks after the US-North Korea summit in Hanoi faltered.

A propaganda website called Uriminzokkiri said in an article on Tuesday that it is Pyongyang's firm stance to establish new relations with Washington, build a lasting and solid "peace regime" on the Korean Peninsula, and move toward complete denuclearization. It did not mention that the summit fell apart without a deal.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190312000601&ACE_SEARCH=1

U.S. missile defense budget cut as North Korea pushes ahead *Mike Stone Reuters, March 13, 2019*

Just when it looks like North Korean leader Kim Jong Un may restart his ballistic missile testing program, U.S. President Donald Trump has proposed trimming the missile defense budget, as one set of deterrents is delayed by two years. The U.S. Missile Defense Agency - charged with developing, testing and fielding a ballistic missile defense system - will delay the expansion of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system by two years because of a delay in the redesign of the Raytheon Co-made "kill vehicle" the system uses. A "kill vehicle" pops off the top of the defending missile above the Earth's atmosphere and seeks out and destroys the attacking missile's warhead.

The GMD is a network of radars, anti-ballistic missiles based in Alaska and California, and other equipment designed to protect the United States from intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs. The expansion of the field of interceptors in Alaska from 44 ground-based interceptors, or GBIs, to 64 had been slated for completion in 2023. But the delay, due to technical issues and not connected to the cut in the agency's budget, now means that the placement of

the additional 20 interceptors will not be operational until 2025, the MDA said on Tuesday. "The important thing is to get it right, and if we're going to build more GBIs, we want to put the best kill vehicle on the top of it," said Tom Karako, a missile defense expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-budget-missile-defense/u-s-missile-defense-budget-cut-as-north-korea-pushes-ahead-idUSKBN1QT2VD>

N. Korean media call for phased denuclearization, urge fight against sanctions scheme *Yonhap Korea Herald, March 14, 2019*

A North Korean media outlet urged the United States on Thursday to accept Pyongyang's offer to dismantle its Yongbyon nuclear facilities in exchange for partial sanctions relief, insisting it is the best-possible proposal at this point.

The North put forward the proposal at last month's second summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump, but the US turned it down, saying Pyongyang demanded the lifting of all key sanctions while offering to denuclearize Yongbyon only. The Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the North's ruling party, called on people to raise their guards against outside forces' attempt to undermine the country's foundation and focus on self-reliance and modernization to render their sanctions scheme "fruitless."

"Imperialists' machination is reaching an extreme point," the paper said. "We should nip in the bud the imperialists' ideology and culture that hamper our nation's existence and development before they take root."

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190314000155&ACE_SEARCH=1

WEST ASIA

H. Iran

INSTEX will not have much benefits for Iran: ex-diplomat *Tehran Times*

March 01, 2019

Europeans are killing time, because they have not shown commitment to their obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Mehr news agency quoted him as saying on Friday. He added that Europe is moving within the framework of the U.S. policies. Asefi, who served as Iran's ambassador to France and Foreign Ministry spokesman, noted that Iran should rely on domestic capabilities to develop its economy and make advances.

After months of delay on January 31, France, Germany and Britain finally announced the creation of INSTEX, a special purpose vehicle aimed at facilitating legitimate trade between European economic operators and Iran. The European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt has said INSTEX will support legitimate European trade with Iran.

Speaking at the Munich Security Conference on Feb. 16, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence urged European powers Germany, France, and Britain to follow Washington in withdrawing from the deal and to "stop undermining U.S. sanctions."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/433537/INSTEX-will-not-have-much-benefits-for-Iran-ex-diplomat>

General Soleimani says 'JCPOA2' would undermine Iran *Tehran Times*,

March 01, 2019

Addressing a congress in the city of Kerman, Soleimani said, "From the very beginning the enemy saw the JCPOA as a three-pronged objective, not just one, and the other two were more important than the first". "Obama wanted to reach the other two

goals slowly, but Trump wants to traverse this road quickly and this road will lead to JCPOA3". The commander did not give any further explanation about JCPOA 2 and 3.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Soleimani said during 40 years, the Islamic Republic "gained nothing but victory" despite damages that it has suffered on the surface. He also stressed that in all decision makings, "the interests of Iran" should be pursued. In another part of his speech, Soleimani called Europe and Saudi Arabia the "political dwarves" of U.S. President Donald Trump.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/433556/General-Soleimani-says-JCPOA2-would-undermine-Iran>

Washington Post: Iran deal a model of 'clarity' and 'specificity'

Washington Post, March 01, 2019

The one actual document signed by Kim and Trump — a short declaration following the Singapore summit — makes the Iran deal "look like a model of clarity and specificity," noted Joshua Stanton, a veteran commentator on North Korea. "For all its flaws, [the Iran deal] undeniably gained us something. It got Iran to surrender a big stockpile of enriched uranium and make some useful concessions that would slow (but not stop) its path to a nuclear bomb."

The Iran deal's opponents, including Trump, argue that the agreement did nothing to rein in Tehran's other destabilizing behavior in the Middle East. But the Trump administration has hardly yoked North Korea's own problematic actions abroad — from targeted assassinations to the sale of chemical weapons material to countries in the Middle East and Africa, outlined in a leaked confidential U.N. report — to the diplomatic process. The double standard irks former Obama administration officials. "We all agree that in an ideal world, we would have addressed not just the nuclear threat, but all the threats," said

Susan E. Rice, who served as a national security adviser in the Obama White House, at a Wednesday event hosted by Georgetown University. But that, she added, was “not the aim” of the negotiations with Tehran.

Instead, the United States and its allies managed “to take a very proximate, specific and, some would say, existential threat off the table,” Rice said. Even after the Trump administration has scrapped Washington’s end of the bargain with Iran, Rice noted that “we are not getting any more traction on the other threats now than before.” And a hypothetical future interim agreement with North Korea, Rice said, wouldn’t deliver “a fraction of what we got with the Iranians.” The irony of the moment, said Robert Litwak of the Woodrow Wilson Center to the New York Times, “is that the best possible outcome for North Korea would look something like the Iran deal.”

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/03/01/trumps-failure-vietnam-is-reminder-merits-iran-deal/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.ee86ae18500a

Zarif to Trump: Flip-flops don’t make for serious diplomacy *Tehran Times, March 02, 2019*

Times, March 02, 2019

“President Trump should’ve now realized that pageantries, photo-ops & flip-flops don’t make for serious diplomacy,” Zarif tweeted. Trump withdrew from the multilateral 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May last year and illegally ordered sanctions against Iran. He had claimed it was “one of the most incompetently drawn deals I’ve ever seen”. Zarif said, “It took 10 years of posturing plus two years—literally thousands of hours—of negotiations to hammer out every word of the 150 page JCPOA. The chief diplomat reminded Trump that he will “never get a better deal”.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/433563/Zarif-to-Trump-Flip-flops-don-t-make-for-serious-diplomacy>

Bushehr nuclear power plant being overhauled *Tehran Times March 03, 2019*

Hossein Ghaffari, talking to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting on Sunday, said the power plant is undergoing periodic maintenance and fuel reloading, and will be reconnected to the national grid in a couple of weeks. He specified that the plant will resume supplying electricity to the national grid in late April or early May. The official noted that a third of the plant’s fuel packs will be replaced during the outage period and the periodic repair and maintenance operations and safety measures will be carried out.

Ghaffari had announced in January that the Bushehr nuclear plant had supplied around 5.5 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity to the national grid over the previous eight months. He said the plant generated a record amount of 7.4 billion kWh of electricity in the previous Iranian year (March 2017-March 2018), more than 90 percent of which was supplied to the national grid.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/433646/Bushehr-nuclear-power-plant-being-overhauled>

Diplomat: Backing anti-Iran sanctions will harm Islamic world solidarity *Tehran Times March 03, 2019*

Gholam-Hossein Dehqani, deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs, said the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was initially established to promote solidarity among Islamic countries. The Iranian diplomat also stressed the central role of the Palestinian issue, saying it should be a priority of the OIC. Dehqani said the organization should not let any new development distract the attention of the Islamic world from its most important and enduring issue which is Palestine.

According to ISNA, Dehqani also described the relocation of U.S. embassy from Tel-Aviv to al-Quds as part of U.S. conspiracy under the title of “Deal of the Century”.

On December 6, 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered relocation of the U.S. diplomatic mission from Tel Aviv to al-Quds. Dehqani regretted that certain OIC member states spared no effort to distract the organization's attention from the rights of the Palestinian people to other irrelevant issues. He also said that terrorism and extremism have been defeated in many cases, noting that Iran was proud of its role in achieving this goal.

However, he warned, the anti-human Takfiri ideology is still alive and is busy poisoning youths' minds all over the Islamic world. Dehqani also regretted that some member states are using the OIC as an instrument to serve their own foreign policy, rather than treating it as an independent international body. Such acts will result in undermining the OIC's credibility, Dehqani underlined.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/433635/Diplomat-Backing-anti-Iran-sanctions-will-harm-Islamic-world>

Leader told Rouhani government in July not to 'condition' people to European package *Tehran Times*

March 04, 2019

Ayatollah Khamenei said the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), did not resolve economic problems. "Don't wait for this or that," the Leader suggested. He said, "One day the resolution of economic problems was tied to BARJAM, (but) BARJAM could not resolve any of the country's economic problems and the result was that the people became conditioned to BARJAM, we have become conditional. We have conditioned the people. This time it's the European package. Don't make people conditional to the European package." BARJAM is the Persian acronym for the JCPOA. The U.S. imposed new sanctions on the Islamic Republic after President Donald Trump abandoned the JCPOA in May 2018.

The Europeans said they would not follow suit, trying to keep Iran in the agreement by

promising incentives. After spending months discussing possible mechanisms to guarantee continued trade with Tehran, the Europeans last month unveiled the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) with strings attached. "But of course the Europeans have to. May they go blind! They should tell how they will be able to defend our interests, for which the name is the package. But do not make that a fundamental issue of the country. The European package may make it or not. We have jobs to do in the country," Ayatollah Khamenei said. He added, "They (Europeans) are bad. They are really bad. I have a breastful of things to say about the Europeans, not because of their current policies, but their mischievous nature in the last few centuries." Senior Iranian officials have objected to Europe's preconditions, which require Iran to join the FATF (the Financial Action Task Force) before INSTEX enters into force.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/433651/Leader-told-Rouhani-government-in-July-not-to-condition-people>

Iran's Khamenei doubted Europe could help Tehran against US sanctions *Arab News* *March 05, 2019*

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei advised the government last July not to rely on a European package to protect Tehran against US sanctions, after US President Donald Trump withdrew from a nuclear deal and reimposed penalties. The release of the speech shows while President Hassan Rouhani was trying to save the nuclear deal with European powers, who remained committed despite the US exit in 2018, Khamenei was not optimistic about the efforts. The Europeans would naturally say they are protecting Iranian interests with their package "but (the Iranian government) should not make this a main issue," Khamenei was quoted as saying by his official website.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1461061/middle-east>

Iran to set up its part of nuclear deal mechanism 'this month' *Arab News*

March 06, 2019

Iran hopes to have its part of a new payments vehicle – devised to bypass US sanctions – ready within a fortnight, its Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Wednesday. “We hope it will be before the end of the Iranian calendar year,” Araghchi told reporters in Vienna, referring to March 20 when the Iranian year ends. Araghchi was in the Austrian capital for a “joint commission” with representatives from China, Russia, Britain and France – all signatories of the international deal on Iran’s nuclear program.

Araghchi said there was “very strong support” for the deal from all participants at the meeting. He said the director of INSTEX was due to visit Tehran “very soon in order to have closed discussions” with his Iranian counterparts. “An Iranian mirror structure is going to be established very soon and these two structures will work with each other,” he added.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1462511/world>

US urges UN to restore tough missile restrictions on Iran after tests *Michelle Nichols Reuters, March 08, 2019*

The United States accused Iran on Thursday of defying a UN Security Council resolution with one ballistic missile test and two satellite launches since December and urged the council to “bring back tougher international restrictions” on Tehran. A 2015 UN resolution “called upon” Iran to refrain for up to eight years from work on ballistic missiles designed to deliver nuclear weapons following an agreement with six world powers. Some states argue that the language does not make it obligatory.

“Iran has carried out these three launches in defiance of the expressed will of the UN Security Council, and such provocations continue to destabilize the entire Middle East region,” Cohen wrote. Asked for a response to the letter, spokesman Alireza Miryousefi for the Iranian mission to the United Nations said Iran does not have any ballistic missiles

designed to carry nuclear weapons “therefore none of the ballistic missile launches of Iran are covered by that resolution.”

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-un-idUSKCN1QO2JB>

Iran’s Rouhani signs trade pacts in Iraq to help offset U.S. sanctions

Ahmed Rasheed, Reuters, March 11, 2019

Iraq and Iran signed several preliminary trade deals on Monday, Iraqi officials said, as Iranian President Hassan Rouhani began his first visit seeking to bolster Tehran’s influence and expand commercial ties to help offset renewed U.S. sanctions. The deals, among them a plan to build a railway linking the neighbours, emerged soon after the start of Rouhani’s visit, meant to underline that Tehran still plays a dominant role in Iraq despite U.S. efforts to isolate the Islamic Republic.

Iran and Iraq fought a devastating 1980-88 war but the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq that ousted Saddam Hussein prompted a long Sunni Islamist insurgency during which Iran’s regional sway rose at the expense of the United States. Rouhani and Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Mahdi signed several memorandums of understanding, Abdul Mahdi’s office said in a statement. They included agreements on oil, trade, health, and a railway linking the southern Iraqi oil city of Basra and the Iranian border town of Shalamcheh. They had also agreed on measures to make it easier for businessmen and investors to obtain visas, Abdul Mahdi’s office said. The Iranian state news agency IRNA said it was agreed that travel visas would now be free of charge.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/iran-iraq-visit/irans-rouhani-signs-trade-pacts-in-iraq-to-help-offset-u-s-sanctions-idINKBN1QS0FG>

Iran to launch new development phases of South Pars gas field

Reuters, March 12, 2019

Iran is to launch four new phases at South Pars, the world’s largest gas field, with a

production capacity of up to 110 million cubic meters per day, the oil ministry said on Twitter. No additional information was provided on when the four phases would be launched. Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh told state TV last month that Iran's gas production at South Pars had hit 610 million cubic meters per day. The offshore field is shared between Iran and Qatar, which calls it North Field. Iran's daily gas production from the field now exceeds that of Qatar, Zanganeh said last month.

The oil ministry's news agency SHANA quoted a project manager in South Pars phase 13 as saying on Tuesday that a gas refinery in the field was fully operational and ready to be inaugurated by President Hassan Rouhani. "The refinery of the phase is fully operational ... The first shipping of gas condensate from phase 13 was delivered on March 11 for export," said Payam Motamed, operator of the South Pars phase 13 project, adding that the refinery had the capacity to process 56.6 million cubic meters of gas a day.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-oil-south-pars/iran-to-launch-new-development-phases-of-south-pars-gas-field-idUSKBN1QT0TS>

Iran threatens defence overhaul to counter "suspicious nuclear projects", Reuters, March 13, 2019

A senior Iranian security official on Wednesday accused regional powers of spending money on "suspicious nuclear projects", and warned that such threats would force Tehran to revise its defence strategy. Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, did not name the countries - but a proposed transfer of U.S. nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia has raised concerns in Tehran. The United States, Israel and other allies say Iran's own nuclear programme is a threat to global security. Iran insists its atomic work is entirely peaceful, and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has issued a religious decree against the development of nuclear weapons.

"Some countries in the region are spending their petro-dollars on suspicious nuclear

projects that can endanger the security of the region and the world," Shamkhani was quoted as saying by Fars news agency. "New threats like this will force us to revise our strategy based on the nature and geography of new threats, and predict the requirements of our country and armed forces," he added.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/iran-politics-nuclear/iran-threatens-defence-overhaul-to-counter-suspicious-nuclear-projects-idINKBN1QU0UP>

US says Iran has lost \$10bn in oil revenue due to sanctions Arab News, March 13, 2019

US envoy on Iran, Brian Hook, said Washington the United States is accelerating its plan of bringing Iranian crude exports to zero. Washington wants to ensure a stable and well-supplied oil market, Iran has lost \$10 billion in revenue since US sanctions in November have removed about 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) of Iranian crude from global markets, a US State Department official said on Wednesday. Brian Hook, the State Department's special representative on Iran, said in remarks at the CERAWEEK energy conference that due to a global oil surplus - in part due to record US production - the United States is accelerating its plan of bringing Iranian crude exports to zero.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1466286/business-economy>

Iran's oil tanker fleet being squeezed as sanctions bite Jonathan Saul, Parisa Hafezi, Reuters, March 13, 2019

Iran is running short of options to replace its ageing fleet of tankers and keep oil exports flowing because renewed U.S. sanctions are making potential sellers and flag registries wary of doing business with Tehran, Western and Iranian sources said. Since U.S. President Donald Trump reimposed sanctions in November, exploratory talks with South Korea for up to 10 new supertankers have stalled and Panama has also removed at least 21

Iranian tankers from its registry forcing Tehran to put the vessels under its own flag, the sources said. Washington has put restrictions on Iran's port, energy and shipping sectors but it has given temporary waivers to the country's eight biggest oil customers, which include China, India and Japan, so they can keep buying Iranian crude. With oil exports accounting for an estimated 70 percent of Iran's revenues, maintaining a fleet of enough tankers to store and move that oil is crucial for Tehran.

But potential sellers of vessels are more wary under the new round of sanctions after a Greek network that helped Iran buy tankers under previous restrictions was blacklisted. "Iran has been looking for ships, but this time round it is going to be harder - there is so much more scrutiny now. It is going to take them longer," one shipping source said. Western insurers are steering clear of Iranian vessels and Iran's attempts to export crude to the U.S.-approved buyers is further complicated by having to put its tankers under its own flag, rather than a third country such as Panama.

If Iran runs into difficulties exporting its oil it could have a significant impact. Besides the importance of oil for its budget, Iran is estimated to produce about 2.8 million barrels a day, more than 9 percent of OPEC's output. "Whatever sector you look at, companies will keep in mind being cut off from the U.S. financial system when deciding whether to trade with Iran," said Mehdi Varzi, an independent oil consultant who has previously worked at the state-run National Iranian Oil Co.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/uk-iran-sanctions-tankers-insight/irans-oil-tanker-fleet-being-squeezed-as-sanctions-bite-idINKBN1QU0LO>

Iraq's top Shi'ite cleric tells Rouhani ties must respect sovereignty, Reuters, March 13, 2019

Iraq's top Shi'ite cleric told Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday that Iraqi sovereignty must be respected and weapons kept in state hands, a veiled reference to increasingly influential Iran-backed militias. It was the first meeting between an

Iranian president and the 88-year-old Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who rarely weighs in on politics but exerts wide influence over Iraqi public opinion.

Sistani welcomed "any steps to strengthen Iraq's relations with its neighbours ... based on respect for the sovereignty of the countries and no interference in domestic affairs", a statement from his office said. "The most important challenges facing Iraq are fighting corruption, improving services and keeping weapons in the hands of the state and its security services," it added. The meeting came on the third day of a visit by Rouhani to Iraq which aimed to project Iran's political and economic dominance in Baghdad and expand commercial ties to help offset renewed U.S. sanctions meant to isolate and weaken Tehran.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/iraq-iran-rouhani/iraqs-top-shiite-cleric-tells-rouhani-ties-must-respect-sovereignty-idINKBN1QU22S>

The Fordow Enrichment Plant, aka Al Ghadir: Iran's Nuclear Archive Reveals Site Originally Purposed to Produce Weapon-Grade Uranium for 1-2 Nuclear Weapons per Year,

David Albright, Frank Pabian and Andrea Stricker, ISIS Report, March 13, 2019

A surprise in the Iranian "Nuclear Archive" seized in early 2018 by Israel in Tehran was a picture showing support facilities for a gas centrifuge enrichment plant. The plant later became known as the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP), located near Qom (Figure 1). Geospatial information and analysis show that this image from the archive, also called the "Atomic Archive," can be dated to 2004 or earlier. The archive information shows that construction started on this once-secret plant as early as 2002, and that it was being built to produce weapon-grade uranium as part of Iran's nuclear weapons program, a program the Iranians codenamed the Amad Super organizational Plan. Documents in the archive show that this facility was designed to make weapon-grade uranium

starting with low enriched uranium (LEU), and not natural uranium, making the program dependent on uranium enrichment plants being built by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) or the procurement of an unsafeguarded supply of LEU from abroad. Based on a document in the archive, the military enrichment plant was expected to produce enough weapon-grade uranium, using LEU feedstock, for at least one or two nuclear weapons per year.

The true spirit and meaning of Islam for the Shia exists in the event of Ghadir. 2 That a project to make weapon-grade uranium for nuclear weapons is called Al Ghadir appears contrary to the widely repeated Supreme Leader fatwas that state that the production, stockpiling, and use of nuclear weapons are forbidden under Islam and that the Islamic Republic of Iran shall never acquire these weapons. 3 Of course, many military and civilian products are also called Ghadir, but reserving this name for what is by all accounts the "long pole" in the tent of any nuclear weapons program is worth noting.

<http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/the-fordow-enrichment-plant-aka-al-ghadir>

Iran warns of firm response if Israel acts against its oil shipments *Reuters, March 13, 2019*

Iran will respond firmly to any Israeli naval action against its oil shipments, Iran's defence minister said on Wednesday, in comments that came a week after Israel's prime minister said its navy could act against Iranian oil "smuggling" to enforce U.S. sanctions.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told naval officers last week that Iran was still resorting to clandestine measures to ship fuel. Iran's Minister of Defense Amir Hatami was quoted as saying by the state news agency IRNA that Tehran had the military capabilities to confront any Israeli intervention, and said the international community would also not accept such action. Hatami said such confrontation would be considered as "piracy" and warned that "if it happens, we will firmly

respond." "The Iranian armed forces have certainly the capabilities to protect the country's shipping lines in the best way against any possible threat," Hatami said.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/iran-israel-oil/iran-warns-of-firm-response-if-israel-acts-against-its-oil-shipments-idINKBN1QU018>

Iran-Iraq deals to help 'bypass' US sanctions *Pan Mengqi, China Daily, March 13, 2019*

A package of deals signed between Iran and Iraq during Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's "historic" visit to the neighboring country will help Iran bypass United States sanctions and improve its economic ties abroad, according to analysts. Teheran and Baghdad signed several preliminary trade deals on Monday, as Rouhani began his first visit to Iraq amid efforts to bolster Teheran's influence and expand its commercial links to help offset sanctions imposed by the US.

The memorandums of understanding signed between the two countries covered areas including oil, trade, health and transport, according to a statement from the media office of Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi. Railways will be built between Iraq's southern city of Basra and the Shalamjah border crossing with Iran, the statement said. Measures to make it easier for businesspeople to obtain visas were also covered, it said. Travel visas between the two countries will now be free of charge, according to Iranian state news agency IRNA.

At a joint press conference, Abdul-Mahdi hailed Rouhani's "historic" visit as one that will "move forward the relations between Iraq and Iran for the better". For his part, Rouhani expressed Iran's willingness to develop relations with Iraq, especially in the fight against terrorism. "From the beginning, we stood by Iraq and provided assistance to Iraq in its war on terror," the Iranian president said. Rouhani arrived in Baghdad on a three-day official visit on Monday, heading a delegation of officials and businessmen to

discuss the promotion of bilateral relations and regional developments.

<http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201903/13/WS5c885ea7a3106c65c34ee4f8.html>

Iran's top leader urges resistance against "hostile" pressures *Xinhua*

March 14, 2019

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Thursday urged the Iranian authorities for maximal resistance against the "enemies' hostile pressures." In the face of the U.S. and Israel's "full-fledged hostile campaign against the country, Iran should mobilize its capacities in full force," Khamenei said according to the leader's official website.

"Other Western states and the Europeans somehow show enmity against Iran," he said. The Iranian leader mentioned the "toughest ever" sanctions imposed by Washington against Tehran, saying "they have launched a maximum offensive against Iran, but if we mobilize all our resources and capabilities, we will inflict the biggest-ever defeat on the United States in its history." He said that Iran has extensive experience to tackle the U.S. sanction pressures.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/14/c_137895192.htm

Israel suspects Iran of hacking election frontrunner Gantz's phone - TV, *Reuters March 15, 2019*

Israel's Shin Bet security service suspects Iran of hacking the mobile phone of Benny Gantz, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's toughest rival in the April 9 election, an Israeli television station reported on Thursday. Gantz, a former chief of Israel's armed forces, was informed of the hack five weeks ago, Channel 12 said, adding that the Shin Bet believed Iranian state intelligence had accessed the ex-general's personal information and correspondences. The Shin Bet declined comment.

Gantz's centrist Blue and White party, which has outpaced Netanyahu's

conservative Likud in pre-election polls, played down any prospect of a national security breach and suggested the story had been deliberately leaked. "It should be emphasised that the incident in question happened some four years after Gantz finished his term as (military) chief of staff and the current timing of its publication raises many questions," Blue and White said in a statement.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/israel-election-iran/israel-suspects-iran-of-hacking-election-frontrunner-gantz-s-phone-to-idINKCN1QV2SO>

I. Saudi Arabia

King Salman receives Russian foreign minister *Arab News*, *March 06, 2019*

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called on King Salman at his palace in Riyadh on Tuesday and conveyed the greetings of Russian President Vladimir Putin to the king. During the meeting, they reviewed bilateral relations and discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries. At a joint press conference with Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir in Riyadh on Monday, Lavrov said Moscow hoped to contribute to the Saudi civilian nuclear energy program. "We have pointed out that there is a Saudi nuclear program for peaceful uses," he said. "We hope that Russian experience and its level of expertise and the level of security provided during the construction of power stations in different parts of the world will interest Saudi Arabia." Al-Jubeir said the Kingdom would use atomic power to produce "peaceful energy," and had for years been working with other nations to develop the latest technologies and safest production methods for generating nuclear energy at competitive prices. The king and the Russian foreign minister also discussed the latest regional and international developments.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1462026/saudi-arabia>

Spain, UAE plan cooperation in fuel services *World Nuclear News, March 13, 2019*

ENEC said the memorandum - which was signed at ENEC's headquarters in Abu Dhabi, by Mohamed Al Hammadi, CEO of ENEC, and José Vicente Berlanga, president of Enusa - met its strategy of working with international companies based in countries with established nuclear energy programmes.

Al Hammadi said: "ENEC is committed to developing the UAE Peaceful Nuclear Energy Program in line with the highest international standards of quality, safety, and security and working with various global organisations enables us to share insights and expertise. Such collaboration is important for the future development of the nuclear energy sector within the UAE and internationally."

Berlanga added that the agreement had strategic significance because ENUSA also "represents the interests of the Spanish Administration", according to the ENEC statement. ENEC, a wholly owned government corporation, is building four Korean-designed APR1400 reactors at Barakah, in the Al Dhafra Region of Abu Dhabi.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Spain,-UAE-plan-cooperation-in-fuel-services?feed=feed>

Saudi rights official dismisses Khashoggi inquiry as foreign interference *Reuters, March 14, 2019*

The head of the state-backed Saudi human rights commission dismissed an international investigation into the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi as interference on Thursday, and said everyone accused was already facing justice in the kingdom. Bandar bin Mohammed al-Aiban made the comments as Turkey's Justice Ministry said Interpol had issued red notices - asking police worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition - for 20 people regarding Khashoggi's death. Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist and critic of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Salman, was killed in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on Oct. 2, provoking an international outcry.

In his remarks, the first substantive comments on the case by Saudi Arabia at a meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Council, Aiban said those on trial for what he described both as an "unfortunate accident" and a "heinous crime" had attended three hearings so far with their lawyers present. He gave no names or other details. Three dozen Western countries, including all 28 European Union members, called on the kingdom last week to cooperate with a U.N.-led investigation. But Aiban said Saudi Arabia would not accept what he termed as foreign interference in its domestic affairs and judicial system. "Justice in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia operates pursuant to international law and it does so in all transparency," Aiban told the Geneva forum during a review of Saudi Arabia's rights record.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/saudi-khashoggi-un/saudi-rights-official-dismisses-khashoggi-inquiry-as-foreign-interference-idINKCN1QV11G>

Saudi Aramco shifts strategy in China to boost oil sales *Rania El*

Gamal, Chen Aizhu, Min Zhang, Reuters, March 14, 2019

Rising Russian and U.S. competition has pushed Saudi Aramco to find new buyers for its oil in China, encouraging a shift toward independent refiners and newcomers to the business. It reflects a new strategy for the Saudi Arabian oil giant after years of dealing almost exclusively with major state-owned Chinese energy firms, industry sources say.

But the change in tack may not offer the same returns. Aramco's new partners lack the scale and marketing reach of PetroChina and Sinopec Corp, the state-run firms that dominate China's refining, petrochemical and retail fuel business, analysts say. Aramco had been talking to PetroChina for years about a refining venture in Yunnan province in the southwest, but industry sources said the

plans had been effectively shelved due to poor economics and disagreement over marketing rights. Aramco, which did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment for this report, has instead turned to new and independent players in China's refining and petrochemical industry.

In February, it agreed to form a venture with Chinese defense conglomerate Norinco to develop a \$10 billion refining and petrochemicals complex in the city of Panjin, in the northeast province of Liaoning. It also signed memorandums of understanding to expand its activities in Zhejiang province in the east. The plans include buying 9 percent of Zhejiang Petrochemical to secure a stake in a 800,000 barrel per day (bpd) refinery and petrochemicals complex in the city of Zhoushan, south of Shanghai. The deals are part of a strategy shift to court new buyers, including smaller, independently run refiners, known as "teapots", industry sources say.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-aramco-china-oil/saudi-aramco-shifts-strategy-in-china-to-boost-oil-sales-idINKCN1QV1JC>

Secret Mossad Files Show Underground Iran Nuke Facility Older Than Admitted *Yonah Jeremy*

Bob, Jerusalem Post, March 14, 2019

New evidence disclosed in Iran's secret nuclear files taken by the Mossad show that its underground Fordow nuclear facility is older than it has admitted, according to a think-tank report.

This discovery could be significant, says the Institute for Science and International Security, because it shows that Iran is still lying to the international community about a nuclear facility that has no reasonable use other than military.

<https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Secret-Mossad-files-show-underground-Iran-uke-facility-older-than-admitted-583442>

US general doubles down on sale of F-35 jets to Turkey *YeniSafak March 14, 2019*

While Turkey is an important NATO ally, Washington should not supply Ankara with

F-35 fighter jets if it accepts Russia's S-400 missile defense system, the top U.S. commander in Europe said Wednesday.

U.S. European Command (EUCOM) Commander Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti, who is also NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, made the remarks while testifying at a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee alongside Kathryn Wheelbarger, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

<https://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/us-general-doubles-down-on-sale-of-f-35-jets-to-turkey-3476623>

Basemat of Turkey's Akkuyu 1 completed, *World Nuclear News March 14, 2019*

Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom has announced completion of the basemat for the nuclear island buildings of unit 1 of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant in Turkey. Meanwhile the European Parliament has voted to suspend European Union accession negotiations with Turkey and has reportedly called for cancellation of the Akkuyu project.

The project is based on an inter-governmental agreement signed between Russia and Turkey in May 2010. In April 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan attended a ceremony to mark the pouring of first safety-related concrete for unit 1.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Basemat-of-Turkeys-Akkuyu-1-completed>

European Parliament votes against Turkey's upcoming nuclear power plant *TRT World, March 14, 2019*

The European Parliament (EP) debated over the construction of Turkey's first nuclear energy reactor, Akkuyu, and voted to call on the Turkish government to halt its building on Wednesday.

Prior to discussing the nuclear reactor the EP's Committee on Foreign Affairs had prepared a report, in which Turkey was accused of acting against the Convention

on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, also known as the Espoo Convention, signed in Espoo, Finland, in 1991, and implemented in 1997.

The countries that have recognised Espoo are obliged to make an environmental impact assessment before building a nuclear power reactor.

<https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/european-parliament-votes-against-turkey-s-upcoming-nuclear-power-plant-24915>

Foundation for Akkuyu nuclear plant's 1st reactor laid *Daily Sabah* *March 15, 2019*

The laying of the foundation for the first reactor of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant (NPP) was completed on March 8, Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom said Thursday.

The achievement of laying more than 17,000 cubic meters of self-compacting concrete caste for the foundation slab marks a milestone for the Akkuyu NPP's construction, according to Rosatom's statement.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/energy/2019/03/15/foundation-for-akkuyu-nuclear-plants-1st-reactor-laid>

J. Central and South Asia

Dhaka, Moscow satisfied with progress of Rooppur Nuclear Power plant, *Dhaka Tribune, March 10, 2019*

Both Dhaka and Moscow have expressed their satisfaction over the progress of construction work of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant (RNPP), said a statement on Saturday issued by Rosatom, the Russian contractor in-charge of project.

It mentioned that the satisfaction from both Dhaka and Moscow was expressed in the 4th meeting of the Joint Coordinating Committee (JÑÑ) of the Russia and Bangladesh on construction of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/event/2019/03/10/dhaka-moscow-satisfied-with-progress-of-rooppur-nuclear-power-plant>

Uzbekistan Parliament Approves New Nuclear Energy Law *Kazakh TV, March 15, 2019*

Former Soviet Union country, Uzbekistan is turning to nuclear energy to power its economy as the landlocked country has an abundance of uranium and big economic ambitions. As the energy demand and population of the country continue to rise, a nuclear energy law has been approved recently by the members of the Lower House of Uzbek Parliament in order to develop unified state policy on the establishment and peaceful use of nuclear energy. Member of OliyMajlis of the Uzbek Parliament, ZhamshidPirmatov said the energy law is the first of its kind in the history of Uzbekistan.

https://kazakh-tv.kz/en/view/central_asia/page_201789_uzbekistan-parliament-approves-new-nuclear-energy-law

K. World/Misc

Codelco's lithium push fades in favour of copper *Dave Sherwood, Fabian Cambero, Reuters, March 05, 2019*

With the global race to secure lithium heating up in 2016, Chile's president Michelle Bachelet wanted to be sure her country seized the moment. Home to half the world's lithium reserves, Chile tapping its state-run miner Codelco to ramp up production seemed a sure bet. Chile's most trusted public enterprise, she said, could hunt for private partners to help it mine its own lithium for the good of all Chileans, and take part in the global boom for the battery metal used to power electric vehicles. A review of regulatory filings, court documents and interviews with Codelco officials shows the strategy was deeply troubled from the start. Dwindling support inside Codelco to prioritise lithium projects over copper, company insiders said, was compounded by legal and regulatory hurdles that stalled development of the company's two flagship salt flats known as Pedernales and Maricunga.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/uk-chile-lithium-codelco-insight/codelcos-lithium-push-fades-in-favour-of-copper-idINKCN1QM0IV>

IAEA Installs New Radiotherapy Equipment to Help Countries Fight Cancer *IAEA, March 06, 2019*

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has received a new medical linear accelerator and the equipment used for radiotherapy is being installed at its Seibersdorf laboratories. It will greatly enhance the Agency's capacity to support the application of this technology to the benefit of cancer patients around the world. The new linear accelerator, linac for short, has been provided to the IAEA under a partnership with Varian Medical Systems. Under the partnership agreement, the manufacturer is making the linear accelerator available to the IAEA at no cost for a period of 10 years. The United States Department of Energy has provided a USD 1,250,000 grant to cover maintenance costs for the first five years.

"We look forward to beginning operations in the coming months, significantly expanding the services we offer to Member States," IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano said at the opening of the Agency's Board of Governors meeting this week, adding that installation of the linear accelerator started last month. The equipment is worth around Euro 2.8 million, and the loan from the manufacturer represents the largest IAEA partnership with the private sector to date.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-installs-new-radiotherapy-equipment-to-help-countries-fight-cancer>

All the world a stage - Rising U.S. oil clout on show in Houston *Ron*

Bouso, David Gaffen, Reuters, March 15, 2019

A glance at the attendee list at one of the world's largest energy industry events in Houston this week left little question about the growing influence of the United States over global oil politics. As the United States weans itself off foreign oil imports - thanks to booming domestic production - the complex web of politics and business interests that have shaped decades of Washington's energy diplomacy in the Middle East and beyond is changing.

That shift was unmistakable in Houston this week. In his keynote address, Pompeo spoke of exploiting the power the United States is accruing through rising energy supply in "punishing bad actors"; he laid out a vision of working with energy firms to isolate Iran and Venezuela; and he emphasized the need to protect oil supplies by countering China's moves to control the South China Sea.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/uk-ceraweek-energy-opec-insight/all-the-world-a-stage-rising-u-s-oil-clout-on-show-in-houston-idINKCN1QW28Z>

IAEA Concludes Long Term Operational Safety Review at Mexico's Laguna Verde Nuclear Power Plant *IAEA, March 15, 2019*

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team of experts today completed a review of long term operational safety at the Laguna Verde Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in Mexico. The SALTO (Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation) review mission was requested by CFE (Comision Federal de Electricidad), a state owned public utility, which operates the two unit NPP.

The SALTO team, whose review began on 5 March, focused on aspects essential to the safe Long Term Operation (LTO) of Units 1 and 2 at Laguna Verde, which respectively went into commercial operation in 1990 and 1995. The operator has prepared and submitted a license renewal application to the National Commission for Nuclear Safety and Safeguards (CNSNS), Mexico's nuclear regulator. In the application, CFE requested a 30-year lifetime extension of the two units beyond the current 30-year license.

The SALTO team reviewed preparedness, organization and programmes related to LTO. SALTO reviews are based on IAEA safety standards. The team observed that CFE has a good basis to effectively manage LTO. The operator demonstrated that it is implementing preparations for safe LTO in a timely manner. The team said ageing

management and LTO activities already meet many recommendations of IAEA safety standards. The team found staff to be professional, open and receptive to suggestions for improvement.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-concludes-long-term-operational-safety-review-at-mexicos-laguna-verde-nuclear-power-plant>

L. Op-ed and editorial

Test Results: Have Nuclear Weapons Secured Pakistan? Pakistan's Nuclear Evolution: A Primer, Moeed Yusuf, Dawn Herald

Exactly two decades ago this day, Pakistan tested nuclear weapons following India's lead, becoming the seventh country to declare its nuclear capability to the world. As the street erupted in jubilation, Pakistani officials talked up the benefits of the country's newly earned status.

Nuclear weapons were to: (i) neutralise India's conventional military superiority and deter Indian aggression; (ii) prompt India to consider settling outstanding disputes with Pakistan in the absence of a military advantage; (iii) offer greater strategic independence and enhance Pakistan's ability to ward off undesirable external pressures; (iv) take away the need to continue spending money exorbitantly to match India's conventional military might; and (v) offer a psychological boost that would act as an additional uniting factor for the nation.

<https://herald.dawn.com/news/1398558>

Is the Air Force Killing the F-22 Raptor? Michael Peck, The National Interest, March 01, 2019

Poor U.S. Air Force organization and management have contributed to problems with the F-22 Raptor fighter, according to a new Government Accountability Office audit.

F-22 availability, already diminished by maintenance problems endemic to the

complex and finicky stealth fighter, has been further reduced by the small size of F-22 squadrons and the practice of deploying small detachments from individual squadrons overseas. The combined effect has been to reduce F-22 availability to the point where there are neither enough planes to meet mission requirements nor to provide pilots with sufficient training for air-to-air combat, which is the Raptor's primary role.

"The small size of F-22 squadrons and wings has contributed to low aircraft availability rates," according to GAO. "Further, the Air Force practice of deploying a small portion of a squadron makes it difficult for F-22 squadrons, as currently organized, to make aircraft available for their missions at home station. The Air Force would also face difficulties generating aircraft to support DOD's concepts for using distributed operations in high threat environments with its current F-22 squadron organization."

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/air-force-killing-f-22-raptor-45947>

Advancing ties between China and Arabs, Ali Obaid Al Dhaheeri, China Daily, March 01 2019

Bilateral relations with the Arab nations have been stepped up by China over the past seven years under Xi. In 2016, a strategy blueprint was released titled "China's Arab Policy Paper", aimed at building economic and financial relations with the Middle East. This blueprint is built upon a three-level cooperation framework. With energy cooperation as the core, this is bolstered by the construction of infrastructure and the facilitation of trade and investment. In addition are breakthroughs in high and new tech fields of nuclear energy, space satellite and new energy that China intends to achieve in the Middle East.

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201903/01/WS5c78829ba3106c65c34ec170.html>

India-Pakistan crisis: Modi is gambling with nuclear stakes, *Ajai Shukla, South China Morning Post*
March 02, 2019

The face-off between New Delhi and Islamabad may appear to be winding down, but domestic rhetoric in India is only rising. On Thursday, after Pakistan announced the release of a captured Indian pilot, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a crude pun to an audience of scientists in Delhi: "This was just a pilot project. We were just practising. Now we will carry out the real thing."

For Modi, the personal political stakes could not be higher. As India and Pakistan edged closer to full-blown conflict, 21 opposition parties came together to publicly criticise the "blatant politicisation of the sacrifices made by our armed forces by [the] leader of the ruling party". Political gamesmanship could still force the situation to spiral into full-scale hostilities.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/geopolitics/article/2188317/india-pakistan-crisis-modi-gambling-nuclear-stakes>

Cold War was preferable to hotheads with a nuclear trigger, *Cornelia Meyer, Arab News, March 03, 2019*

During the Cold War both US and Soviet leaders understood the risk of "mutually assured destruction" – the acronym was MAD for a reason. Both blocs were run by calculated and calculating realists who knew that emotions had no place in dealing with nuclear warfare. The world today has many more "hothead" leaders with a finger on the trigger. Globally, however, we should be concerned by the dismantling of multilateral frameworks. Russia and the West talk at cross purposes, and the US realises China's military stance and potential throughout the Eurasian continent, as well as at sea – particularly in the South China Sea. The rhetoric has turned markedly more bellicose and the countries with access to nuclear weapons have multiplied compared with the Cold War period.

There is one more difference: During the Cold War both US and Soviet leaders

understood the risk of "mutually assured destruction" – the acronym was MAD for a reason. Both blocs were run by calculated and calculating realists who knew that emotions had no place in dealing with nuclear warfare. The world today has many more "hothead" leaders with a finger on the trigger. All in all, we should probably worry.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1460426>

Viewpoint: Why we need nuclear power *Borislav Boev, World Nuclear News, March 04, 2019*

For the past two decades we've seen many plans but few results. Trillions of dollars have been invested into 'clean energy' sources (mainly renewables) but global CO2 emissions are on the rise. Many governments unreasonably and unfairly have forgotten about nuclear energy as a reliable option to address the issue of carbon emissions, which reached a new high in 2018. According to a report released by the Global Carbon Project, global CO2 emissions from burning fossil fuels have increased by about 2.7%.

From an ecological standpoint, nuclear energy has one of the best emissions profiles of all energy sources. CO2 emissions coming from a modern nuclear power plant are so low that they are virtually non-existent, especially when compared to baseload sources like coal plants. A lot of countries have been ignoring this great advantage of nuclear energy.

<http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Viewpoint-Why-we-need-nuclear-power>

World embraces Xi's vision for development *Cao Desheng, China Daily, March 05 2019*

Despite profound changes in the international landscape, the goal of China's foreign policy remains the promotion of peace and global development, said Zhang, a member of the CPPCC National Committee. China has also participated constructively in the resolution of hot

topics such as the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, the Iranian nuclear issue and peace talks in the Middle East, she said, adding that the country remains the top contributor of peacekeeping forces among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201903/05/WS5c7dc9efa3106c65c34eche2.html>

SK not mauled by failure of Hanoi summit *Wang Peng, Global Times, March 05, 2019*

South Korean President Moon Jae-in had been eyeing major diplomatic achievements from the summit. But the Moon administration, observers say, was disappointed. It is undeniable that in the past year, South Korea did a lot to improve relations with North Korea and to bring Washington and Pyongyang closer. Seoul was optimistic before the second Kim-Trump summit. It had hoped that the two countries would sign a declaration to end the war on the Korean Peninsula. Seoul also expected the international community to lift sanctions on North Korea and South Korea could play a dominant role in building a new system of economic development and mutual prosperity on the Peninsula.

South Korea was all ready to start constructive measures on the Peninsula after the summit. For example, the Moon government has started discussions to reopen the Kaesong Industrial Complex and to rebuild railways and roads that link the two Koreas.

Considering South Korea's expectations from the Hanoi summit, many people would regard the country as the biggest loser. It was also conjectured that Seoul's efforts would go down the drain if the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue wasn't resolved. Those who thought so ignored basic facts and fundamental rules of international relations.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1140994.shtml>

US-Russia arms race pushes world closer to potential disaster *Arab News, March 05, 2019*

The decision by Russia and the US to abandon the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty is one of them. Both sides accuse the other of violating the agreement, or at least the spirit of it. When it was signed in 1987, the INF Treaty for the first time eliminated an entire class of missiles that during the Cold War were perceived as undermining stability in Europe, whose proximity to the Soviet Union made the latter a grave and immediate threat. Not surprising then that the withdrawal from the treaty by the two main nuclear protagonists, amid mutual recriminations and at a low point in the relationship between Washington and Moscow, has left European capitals once again feeling caught in a brewing conflict that they have a great stake in, but very limited influence over.

It has to be said that there is much in the Trump administration's charge that Moscow has breached the INF Treaty by deploying a ground-launched cruise missile, the 9M729 or SSC-8. It puts Russia ahead in the race to redeploy a previously banned category of weapon. According to some reports, Russia has already fielded about 100 of these missiles, while President Vladimir Putin is suggesting further development of a ground-launched version of the naval intermediate-range nuclear missile, which, like the air-launched version, is not prohibited.

In a recent security report published ahead of last month's Munich Security Conference (MSC), which attracted leaders from across the globe, the unsurprising conclusion was that the period of post-Cold War optimism is truly over. The sense of living in a secure world in which poverty, instability and uncertainty are things of the past, has been replaced by the recognition that we now live in a new world of interregnum, with competing orders and not necessarily peaceful times ahead.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1461751>

Nothing untoward about China's military budget *China Daily March 06, 2019*

By announcing that the country's defense budget is projected to grow by 7.5 percent this year, China has maintained a single digit growth in its military spending for four consecutive years. Such a growth pace is compatible with the country's comprehensive national strength and underscores its commitment to safeguarding both its national security and world peace.

Lower than last year's 8.1 percent, the growth in military spending revealed by a draft budget report to be submitted to the annual session of the country's top legislature that opened on Tuesday marks a reasonable and moderate rise. It reflects China's voluntary choice to slow the pace of its military spending after five years' double-digit growth between 2011 and 2015. Any country with the sheer size of China and a growing demand to defend its expanding interests overseas would opt to open up the State coffers to cultivate stronger military capabilities suitable to the times. It is high time those who seek to gauge China's strategic intentions through the rise and fall of its defense budget spending stopped making wild speculations and viewed it in an unbiased way. Instead of posing a threat to others, China is a responsible force contributing to world peace and stability.

<http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201903/05/W55c7e7050a3106c65c34ecf05.html>

Nation hails a pioneer of the nuclear industry, *Cheng Si, China Daily, March 06, 2019*

The technology mastered by Qiao and his team has been recognized as filling a technical blank in nuclear fuel cluster maintenance for commercial power stations. The team has successfully completed more than 140 missions to replace fuel rods at 22 power stations across the country. Its safety record is unblemished.

In January, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and China Central Television

named Qiao as one of 10 winners of the 2018 China Craftsmen award in recognition of his endurance and enterprising spirit.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/global/2019-03/06/content_37444412.htm

This Is Where a Nuclear Exchange Is Most Likely. (It's Not North Korea.) *New York Times March 07, 2019*

The current crisis dates to Feb. 14, when a Kashmiri suicide bomber killed at least 40 Indian paramilitary officers in the deadliest attack in three decades in the divided region that both nations have claimed since partition in 1947. The militant group Jaish-e-Muhammad, which seeks independence for Kashmir or its merger with Pakistan, took responsibility. While it is on America's list of terrorist organizations and is formally banned in Pakistan, the group has been protected and armed by the Pakistani intelligence service.

Last week, India sent warplanes into Pakistan for the first time in five decades. Indian officials said they had struck Jaish-e-Muhammad's "biggest training camp" and killed a "very large number" of militants, although those claims have been called into doubt. Pakistan counterattacked, leading to a dogfight in which at least one Indian jet was shot down and a pilot was captured by the Pakistanis.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/07/opinion/kashmir-india-pakistan-nuclear.html>

Explained: how India and Pakistan became nuclear states *Meaghan Tobin, South China Morning Post, March 07, 2019*

India and Pakistan announced their arrivals as nuclear powers with a flurry of weapons testing in 1998. The two countries have since refrained from testing their nukes but have nevertheless been generally accepted as de facto nuclear states and continued to invest heavily in their respective nuclear capacities.

Neither is party to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the arms control agreement signed by 189 other nations. In exchange for access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, such as power generation, the NPT requires states to abandon any present or future plans to build nuclear weapons.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/explained/article/2188958/explained-how-india-and-pakistan-became-nuclear-states>

Feature: Albert Einstein's documents revealed on his 140th birthday, Keren

Setton, Xinhua, March 07, 2019

"For historians of science, it is very important to have manuscripts because then one sees how he actually worked," said Hanoch Gutfreund, the academic advisor to the archives. "Many of these papers, we still don't know what they relate to and it will still require significant research."

"These papers show how Einstein's creative brain worked, what bothered him and in which order he wrote down his thoughts and conclusions," Gutfreund added. Most of the collection consists of papers with tiny hand-written mathematical calculations. A piece of page was also found describing the basic principle of the atomic bomb and the nuclear reactor.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/07/c_137873984.htm

Explained: how India and Pakistan became nuclear states

South China Morning Post March 07, 2019

India and Pakistan are among the world's nine nuclear weapons states, alongside China, France, Israel, North Korea, Russia, the United Kingdom and the US. India and Pakistan announced their arrivals as nuclear powers with a flurry of weapons testing in 1998. The two countries have since refrained from testing their nukes but have nevertheless been generally accepted as de facto nuclear states and continued to invest heavily in their respective nuclear capacities.

Neither is party to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the

arms control agreement signed by 189 other nations. In exchange for access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, such as power generation, the NPT requires states to abandon any present or future plans to build nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan have fairly comparable arsenals but the danger of non-state actors gaining control of nuclear weapons is more acute in Pakistan, where militant groups have in the past attacked military facilities.

North Korea has cited India and Pakistan as model nuclear nations, which have not been isolated from the international community despite possessing nuclear weapons. They gained this acceptance by de-escalating following their initial burst of nuclear tests. "They've made their point. India and Pakistan both stopped after the sixth nuclear test, but that doesn't make either a non-nuclear power," Lee said.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/explained/article/2188958/explained-how-india-and-pakistan-became-nuclear-states>

FM shows China's clear-cut, confident diplomacy

Global Times March 08, 2019

China-US relations in the past few months have seen ups and downs. But China has maintained its strategic focus, steadily advanced marathon negotiations with the US and is closer to reaching a trade agreement. China has long supported the peaceful resolution of conflicts, be it the South China Sea disputes, the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, or the India-Pakistan confrontation. All these are thorny issues. But China has been able to manage differences with other South China Sea claimants and has played a crucial role in the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue. China is also playing a constructive role in promoting talks between India and Pakistan.

China-Japan relations have returned to the right track. With our pragmatic diplomacy and insistence on the principle of mutual benefits, no matter how the West tries to drive a wedge, China-Africa cooperation has flourished and is unshaken. As the

Venezuela situation intensifies, Wang stressed that the sovereignty and independence of Latin American countries should be respected and their right to develop normal relations with China should be respected.

Wang responded to many sensitive questions. He focused on increasing international understanding on Chinese foreign policies and showed Chinese goodwill and sincerity. The world is undergoing great changes. Instead of being a troublemaker, China is a builder of peace and development. With radical geopolitical thinking and populism prevailing in the West and some other regions, China is facing more challenges to play a constructive role. As shown in Wang's remarks, China is embracing its responsibilities.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1141437.shtml>

Why the Pakistan-terrorist nexus persists *Brahma Chellaney, Asian Times, March 10, 2019*

Once again, an attack on India by a Pakistan-based terrorist group has raised the specter of a major confrontation on the South Asian subcontinent – and fueled international pressure for Pakistan to take concrete action against the 22 United Nations-designated terrorist entities it hosts. But this time, the pressure is compounded by fury over attacks by Pakistan-based terrorists on the country's other key neighbors, Iran and Afghanistan. Will Pakistan finally respond convincingly?

Over the years, the footprints of many terrorist attacks in the West have been traced to Pakistan. The United States found al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden ensconced in the high-security garrison town of Abbottabad, in the shadow of the Pakistan Military Academy. Other terrorist leaders captured since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the US – including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, al-Qaeda's third in command, and Abu Zubaydah, the network's operations chief – were also found living in Pakistan's heartland.

<https://www.asiatimes.com/2019/03/opinion/why-the-pakistan-terrorist-nexus-persists/>

Why Israel is pushing for Pakistan and India to go to war, *Darius Shahtahmasebi, The Express Tribune(Blog) March 10, 2019*

On February 27th, Israeli news publication Haaretz reported that India's Air Force had used Israeli-made bombs in its recent Line of Control (LoC) violation against Pakistan, citing local news websites which had been briefed by Indian security sources.

The reports allege that 'five Mirage jets armed with Israeli-made Spice 2000 smart missiles attacked what New Delhi says was a terrorist training camp' in Pakistan. While quietly hidden by the mainstream media, it actually transpires that Israel is a key weapons supplier to the Indian Army, with its current relationship estimated at approximately a billion dollars each year. In fact, India has become the largest weapons market for Israel's bombing arms trade, spending hundreds of millions of dollars on Israeli air defence, radar systems and ammunition.

<https://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/79752/why-israel-is-pushing-for-pakistan-and-india-to-go-to-war/>

Want to Stop Climate Change? Then It's Time to Fall Back in Love With Nuclear Energy *Hans Blix, Time, March 11, 2019*

Exactly eight years ago, an earthquake off the east coast of Japan set a massive tsunami on a collision course with the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The wall of water overwhelmed the reactors' cooling mechanisms and over the next four days the plant suffered three nuclear meltdowns. It became the world's worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl. In response, Germany, Switzerland and some others around the world accelerated their plans to ditch nuclear power as an energy source.

Nuclear power is virtually free of emissions. By contrast, we burn coal and gas at industrial scale to make electricity, pumping carbon dioxide and other

noxious chemicals into our atmosphere. As a result, our oceans are warming and extreme climate events are becoming more common.

<http://time.com/5547063/hans-blix-nuclear-energy-environment/>

A case for aggressive diplomacy: on India-Pakistan relations Amit Baruah, *The Hindu*, March 12, 2019

Pakistan and India are strange nations. Just as the conflict after India's bombing of the Balakot terror camp was winding down, Pakistan alleged on March 5 that it had thwarted the entry of an Indian submarine into its waters. India responded that Pakistan was indulging in false propaganda. On the same evening, the Pakistani Foreign Ministry issued a statement that its High Commissioner to India, Sohail Mahmood, would be returning to Delhi and talks with India on the Kartarpur Corridor would go ahead. It was a signal that tensions were officially being defused. India confirmed the talks on Kartarpur and also sent back Indian High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria to Islamabad.

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-case-for-aggressive-diplomacy/article26502524.ece>

India and Pakistan take note: the 'Madman Theory' of using tactical nuclear weapons lives up to its name Will Saetren and Geoff Wilson, *South China Morning Post*, 13 March, 2019

Last month, when much of the world was distracted by the US-North Korea summit in Hanoi, one of the most dangerous crises in the post-cold-war era quietly unfolded.

When Indian warplanes conducted air strikes against a terrorist training camp in Pakistan on February 26, it marked the first time in history that a nuclear-weapons state has conducted air strikes against another.

The stand-off quickly spiralled out of control. Pakistan responded to India's air-assault with heavy artillery strikes and air strikes of its own. Both sides lost aircraft, with Pakistan claiming to have shot down two Indian jets

and captured one of the pilots, while India claimed to have downed a Pakistani jet. Fortunately, the capture of the Indian pilot proved to be a positive turn in the crisis, which allowed Pakistan to leverage his release as a "peace gesture" that helped defuse tensions.

<https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/united-states/article/3001305/nuclear-weapons-are-dangerous-never-tactical>

Defusing Pakistan-India tensions, Talat Masood, *The Express Tribune*, March 13, 2019

There are many facets of the recent brief but a dangerous confrontation between Pakistan and India. One of the most striking features of the conflict was that it raised the profile of the Kashmir issue internationally and boosted the morale of those demanding independence or association with Pakistan. Kashmir has been on the global backburner and the world had continued to ignore it. In the last few weeks, it has brought into sharp focus the weakness of India's Kashmir policy before the international community and its own people.

Undoubtedly, there is now a better realisation that freedom struggle in Kashmir could flare up into a Pakistan-India war. The possibility that two nuclear powers could actually engage in war is a terrifying prospect that could no more be ignored and rang alarm bells globally.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1928071/6-defusing-pakistan-india-tensions/>

Pulwama's aftermath *The Express Tribune*, March 14, 2019

The recent Pulwama attack on an India military convoy, followed by Indian aggression, brought the two nuclear-armed states to the brink of war.

The Indian leadership and media have made a habit of blaming Pakistan for any attack in India, without due investigation. Despite Prime Minister Imran Khan's assurances of Pakistan's cooperation upon presenting an evidence of Pakistani

territory being used by terrorist groups, India kept violating the LoC and sent their air force in Balakot and Jabba. As per the DG ISPR, the PAF had to engage the fighter jet in Jabba, which resulted in the capture of Indian pilot Abhinandan. As a peace gesture, PM Khan announced the release of Abhinandan, which was ironically followed by continued Indian aggression along the LoC, resulting in civilian and military casualties.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1928746/6-pulwamas-aftermath/>

'Deadly embrace' *Touqir Hussain,*
Dawn, March 15, 2019

The US and the Afghan Taliban may be walking together but they have different destinations. The Americans are looking for an exit from the war, and the Taliban want the withdrawal of US forces so that they can win the war. If they do get a deal, it might just be half a deal. The war we know may end but the conflict will continue.

Afghanistan's fundamental problems go beyond any US-Taliban deal. The Taliban are a problem, not the solution. Pakistan may yet again be saddled with an abandoned war whose complexity it cannot resolve. As Henry Kissinger warned in his book *Diplomacy*, America has the habit of solving one crisis by creating another.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1469766>

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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