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A Fortnightly Newsletter from the Indian Pugwash Society

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A. India

Key Device Made In India For Global Project To Study Nuclear Fusion

NDTV, July 1, 2020

Engineering and construction giant Larsen & Toubro said it has achieved a major milestone under 'Make in India' initiative by building a cryostat for the USD 20 billion global fusion project. The final assembly or top lid sectors of the cryostat, a key part of the world's largest nuclear fusion reactor being built in France, were dispatched on Tuesday from the company's Hazira manufacturing complex in Surat district in Gujarat.

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) in 2012 chosen by ITER-India to manufacture and install cryostat - a vacuum pressure vessel made of 3,850 tonnes of stainless steel. L&T Group Chairman AM Naik termed it a "moment of pride for India and Larsen & Toubro." "The heavy engineering arm of L&T, India's leading engineering, construction, technology, manufacturing and financial services conglomerate, has flagged-off the most complex and final assembly of cryostat, the largest stainless-steel, high-vacuum pressure chamber in the world."

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/worlds-largest-cryostat-made-in-india-sent-for-global-nuclear-fusion-project-2255190>

China Has Become India's Number One Security Threat: Former Chief Of Army Staff

Business World, July 2, 2020

General V P Malik, Former Chief of Army Staff, says that it is time for India to reset and recalibrate relations with China. "For too long, India has hesitated to impose cost on China. Time has come to dispel China's assumption that its aggression will bring us to the negotiating table and concede something for the sake of peace," he said during the LeaderSpeak programme organized by All India Management Association (AIMA). "China has become India's number one security threat," he

declared. General Malik was speaking on the future of India's security in an online interaction with India's business leaders. The interaction was moderated by Mr Sanjay Kirloskar, President, AIMA and Chairman & Managing Director, Kirloskar Brothers. Miss Rekha Sethi, Director General, AIMA anchored the session.

Mr Kirloskar pointed out that China was showing great confidence by taking on all its neighbours on all sides at the same time. General Malik said that India needed to have good relations with its neighbours and keep an eye on their relationship with China. "We cannot give them total freedom. We need to remind them of our national interest," he said. He also advised working with other countries to isolate China internationally. Talking about the anxiety about China's military strength, General Malik said that though Chinese forces were superior in technology, India had better men behind the gun. "Indian troops are more committed and experienced in mountain warfare," he said.

<http://www.businessworld.in/article/China-Has-Become-India-s-Number-One-Security-Threat-Former-Chief-of-Army-Staff/02-07-2020-293484/>

India plans to halt \$2.8 billion import of power equipment from China

Rajesh Kumar Singh

The Print, July 3, 2020

India will stop power equipment imports from China, power minister Raj Kumar Singh said, amid simmering border tensions between the two neighbors. The South Asian nation has the capability to manufacture all kinds of electricity equipment, Singh said at a meeting with energy officials of states, encouraging them to promote local procurement. China accounted for 210 billion rupees (\$2.8 billion) of the total 710 billion rupees of equipment for non-renewable power projects imported in the year ended March 2019, according to Singh. Shares of state-run Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd., the

country's largest power-equipment maker, surged as much as 5.3% after Singh's comments.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi is asking companies to look for Indian suppliers to spur economic recovery and create jobs after restrictions to contain the coronavirus halted businesses and disrupted global supply chains. The border tensions with China, India's biggest source of imports, have accelerated those efforts. "You have a country which transgresses into our territory, which kills our soldiers and yet we create jobs in that country and not in our country," Singh said, in reference to deadly border skirmishes between the two countries last month. "This can't happen." To check imports of renewable power equipment, the country plans tariff barriers instead of a complete ban on any country, Singh said. China accounts for about 80% of India's solar module supplies.

<https://theprint.in/india/india-plans-to-halt-2-8-billion-import-of-power-equipment-from-china/454030/>

India develops indigenous attack, defence systems

Dibyendu Mondal

Sunday Guardian live, July 4, 2020

India in the recent past has developed several indigenous missiles, attack and defence systems to counter threats from China, Pakistan and other such countries. India's indigenously developed surface-to-air missile Akash is one of the most marvellous missiles in India's attack and defence system. The missile developed by DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) is capable of targeting aircraft up to 30 km away and at an altitude of 18,000 metres and neutralise aerial targets like fighter jets, cruise missiles, air-to-surface missiles and even ballistic missiles. At the heart of the missile is the Indian Rajendra PESA radar system which is used for 3D target detection, multi-target tracking and to launch multiple guided missiles even in extremely hostile environments. Akash can fly at twice the speed of sound and can maintain the speed at all altitudes. The missile system is

designed in such a way that it can be manoeuvred at all altitudes and speeds.

Another feather in the Indian defence artillery section is the indigenously developed Indian Ballistic Missile Defence System. This has been primarily developed by India to intercept and thwart a ballistic missile threat from China and Pakistan. The Ballistic Missile Defence System is a double-tiered system—one being Prithvi Air Defence Missile, which helps India to intercept any airborne missile from as far as 5,000 km away, while the second Advance Air Defence is a lower altitude interceptor missile which can intercept an incoming missile from as low as 30 km and destroy it. India is part of the elite club that has the missile guarding system and apart from India, only the United States, Russia and Israel has such a system in place.

<https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/news/india-develops-indigenous-attack-defence-systems>

India to Invite Australia for Naval Drill, Risking Beijing's Ire Sudhi

Ranjan Sen and Archana Chaudhary

Bloomberg Quint, July 10, 2020

India plans to invite Australia to join the annual Malabar naval exercise that has so far included just Japan and the U.S., in a move that could risk China's ire. The decision to include Australia in the drills – the first time all members of the regional grouping known as the Quad will be engaged at a military level – comes as Beijing and New Delhi are caught up in their worst border tensions in four decades. The exercise will bring together the navies of India, Japan, Australia and the U.S. in the Bay of Bengal at the end of the year, according to senior Indian officials who asked not to be identified, citing rules.

New Delhi is expected to clear the way next week for a formal invitation to Australia following final government clearance and consultations with the U.S. and Japan, the officials said. "The timing of India potentially letting Australia into

Malabar would be especially significant at this juncture,” said Derek Grossman, researcher at the Washington-based RAND Corporation who worked in the U.S. intelligence community for more than a decade. “It would send a significant message to China that the Quad – U.S., Australia, Japan, and India – are de facto conducting joint naval exercises, even if not technically conducted under the auspices of a Quad event.”

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/politics/india-to-invite-australia-for-naval-drill-risking-beijing-s-ire>

India, EU sign civil nuclear cooperation agreement on eve of Summit

Rezaul H Laskar

Hindustan Times, July 14, 2020

India and the European Union (EU) on Tuesday signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement on the eve of a virtual summit, while Europol and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) are negotiating a working arrangement to combat organised crime and terrorism. The agreement between the European Atomic Energy Community or Euratom and Indian authorities will focus on cooperation between EU’s research programmes on new ways of using nuclear energy and similar activities on the Indian side, EU officials said during a briefing for journalists.

“The agreement is on research and development cooperation for peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which was negotiated for 13 years and finally can be cemented by the summit,” said one of the EU officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The India-EU Summit, to be co-chaired on Wednesday by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, is expected to focus on strengthening multilateralism and global institutions in the face of the rise of an increasingly assertive China.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-eu-sign-civil-nuclear-cooperation-agree->

[ment-on-eve-of-summit/story-EpPnbxaN92LTkYClIFqnTM.html](https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-eu-sign-civil-nuclear-cooperation-agreement-on-eve-of-summit/story-EpPnbxaN92LTkYClIFqnTM.html)

B. China

Chinese diplomat slams US accusation at disarmament conference

Global Times, July 1, 2020

China to join Arms Trade Treaty, supports multilateralism. Chinese diplomat expressed strong opposition to the US at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on Tuesday, saying its accusations against China regarding epidemic control and arms control policy were complete nonsense, and called for the US to abandon its Cold War mentality. The vicious attack by the US on China over the epidemic is complete nonsense and is an attempt to shirk its domestic and international anti-epidemic responsibility, and their clumsy trick of trying to dump responsibility has long been known to the world, said Chinese Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for Disarmament Affairs Li Song. Speaking at the conference via video link, US disarmament ambassador to the UN Robert Wood made attacks on the Chinese government, accusing China of concealing the epidemic and harming the world. Wood also unreasonably criticized China’s nuclear arms control policy and military building, arguing that China poses a major threat to world peace and security.

The deep-rooted Cold War mentality cannot make the US stronger again, nor can it bring security to the world, Li said. It’s crystal clear to the world which country poses the greatest and most realistic threat to world peace and security. Whether it’s from the perspective of nuclear strategic policies or the scale of its nuclear arsenals, China and the US are totally incomparable, Li stressed. In his address at the conference, which had been postponed for three months due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Li said that China will firmly support

multilateralism and promote the advancement of international arms control and non-proliferation. Li said that China will officially join the Arms Trade Treaty.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1193163.shtml>

China's helicopter carrier expands capability with drone

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, July 2, 2020

China's Type 075 amphibious assault ships, the largest warships second only to aircraft carriers, are receiving drone helicopters that can significantly expand their combat capability by providing strong situational awareness, reports suggest, after a full-scale model for an unknown type of drone helicopter was recently spotted on a Type 075 in Shanghai. According to a photo circulating on a social media platform, the drone helicopter model is seen parked on the flight deck of a Type 075, which is undergoing outfitting work. Weihtang, a program on military affairs affiliated with China Central Television (CCTV), reported on Thursday.

Compared with the model of a Z-8 or Z-18 helicopter right next to the drone helicopter in the photo, it is about half the size, making it approximately 10 meters long and three meters tall, a relatively large drone helicopter. The exact type of the drone helicopter model remains undetermined, but analysts speculate it could be an AR500C, China's first high-altitude unmanned helicopter that made its maiden flight in May, the Weihtang report said. Putting models on a warship's flight deck is a usual approach in outfitting and sea trials to test the compatibility between the aircraft and the ship, finding the best way to arrange the layout, a military expert who asked not to be named told the Global Times on Thursday. The US Navy also has similar drone helicopters, namely the MQ-8 Fire Scout, on its warships. Drone helicopters can conduct reconnaissance, aerial fire support and precision targeting support missions. Since drones are much smaller than manned

helicopters, a warship can carry more of them, the expert said.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1193369.shtml>

China delivers armed drones, missiles to Serbia, first deal to Europe

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, July 6, 2020

Serbia has reportedly taken delivery of a batch of CH-92A armed reconnaissance drones plus missiles recently, the first time China has exported military-use aviation equipment to a European country and a milestone for Chinese arms firms in the European market, analysts said on Monday. The drones are expected to become some of the most advanced weapons in the Serbian arsenal, as the cost-efficient unmanned aircraft can conduct tactical reconnaissance, precision targeting, ground attack and patrol missions, experts said. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic inspected the drones on Saturday local time, according to Serbia's Ministry of Defense. A total of nine CH-92A drones plus 18 FT-8C air-to-ground missiles were included in the delivery. Fifteen more drones are expected in future procurements, reports said. Developed by the state-owned China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC), the CH-92A drone has a combat radius of more than 250 kilometers, a ceiling of 5,000 meters, and a maximum speed of 200 kilometers an hour, and it can carry two missiles, including the FT-8C air-to-ground missile that can reach targets 9 kilometers away, according to publicly available information.

Chinese military observers pointed out that while the monetary worth of the deal is not high, this is the first time China has exported military-use aviation equipment to a European country, which will have great significance in Chinese arms firms' position in the European market. Wei said that other European countries that run on a tight military budget can now take a

closer look at Chinese drones, such as the CH series and Wing Loong series. Chinese arms firms have been active providers of military-use drones in the international market, as CH series and Wing Loong series drones can often be seen in the Middle East and Africa. As of December 2018, 100 Wing Loong drones had been delivered to foreign clients. Chinese weapons and equipment are well known on the international market not only because of their high efficiency and low cost, but also good after-sales services and logistics support, observers said, noting that China does not attach political conditions to arms sales, unlike some countries such as the US.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1193700.shtml>

China sends a new commercial communication satellite into space

Global Times, July 9, 2020

China sent a new commercial communication satellite code-named Apstar-6D into planned orbit via a Long March-3B carrier rocket on July 9, 2020.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1194079.shtml>

China reiterates it will not join so-called China-U.S.-Russia arms control negotiations

China Military Online, July 9, 2020

China on Wednesday stressed that it has no plans to join the U.S. and Russia in their talks to renew a nuclear arms control treaty. Recently, U.S. officials have been making a lot of noises about China joining the U.S.-Russia negotiation on nuclear arms. They even went so far as to tweet a staged photo. Washington and Moscow began talks last month to try to extend the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), which they signed in 2010.

It will expire next year. Given the huge gap between the nuclear arsenal of China and those of U.S. and Russia, it is unrealistic to expect China to join the two countries in a negotiation aimed at nuclear arms reduction,

Fu said. "We urge the US to respond positively to the call of the Russian Federation to extend the New START Treaty, and on that basis further reduce its huge nuclear arsenal, which stands at about 5800 nuclear warheads, and which is almost 20 times that of China's number of nuclear warheads, according to the figures given by the renowned international think tanks, such as the Federation of American Scientists and SIPRI," he added.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-07/09/content_9849731.htm

Department of Arms Control and Disarmament Holds Briefing for International Arms

Control and Disarmament Issues

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 9, 2020

On June 8th, 2020, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a press briefing for Chinese and international media outlets. Mr. FU Cong, Director General of the Department of Arms Control and Disarmament, elaborated China's position on current international arms control and disarmament issues, including China's accession to the Arms Trade Treaty, the so-called China-US-Russia trilateral arms control negotiation, and the Compliance Report on arms control agreements issued by the US State Department. On China's accession to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Mr. FU said, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress adopted a decision to ratify the treaty on June 20. On the same day, Foreign Minister Wang Yi signed the instrument of accession, thus completing the internal legislative procedure for China's accession to the Treaty.

On July 6, the instrument of accession was deposited with the UN Secretary General by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations. China's accession to this important arms control treaty is another testimony to China's determination to combat illicit arms trafficking and its commitment to multilateralism and the international arms

control regime, and also constitutes another concrete step to implement the grand vision of President Xi to build a community of shared future for all mankind. On the so-called trilateral arms control negotiation among US, Russia and China. Mr. FU said, US officials have recently been making a lot of noises about China joining the US-Russia negotiation on nuclear arms reduction. They even went so far as to tweeting a staged photo. China has made its position known on numerous occasions. Mr. FU reiterated that China has no interest in joining Russia and the US in their bilateral negotiations. Given the huge gap between the nuclear arsenal of

http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2020-07/09/content_4867803.htm

Fuel loading completed at fifth Tianwan unit

World Nuclear News, July 13, 2020

Loading of nuclear fuel into unit 5 of the Tianwan nuclear power plant in China's Jiangsu province was completed on 9 July, China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) announced the following day. Fuel loading at Tianwan 5 "laid the foundation for subsequent grid-connected power generation," it added. Units 5 and 6 at Tianwan - Tianwan Phase III - are domestically-designed ACPR1000 pressurised water reactors (PWRs) that will produce 1080 MWe each when commissioned. First safety-related concrete was poured for unit 5 on 27 December 2015, with that for unit 6 poured on 7 September 2016. CNNC plans to put both units 5 and 6 into commercial operation by the end of 2021.

The first four units at the Tianwan site are Gidropress VVER units supplied by Russia, as will be the seventh and eighth. 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. Tianwan Phase II - units 3 and 4 - are similar to the first stage of the Tianwan plant, comprising

two Russian-designed 1060 MWe VVER-1000 PWRs. First concrete for unit 3 was poured in December 2012, while construction of the fourth unit began in September 2013. Unit 3 entered commercial operation in February 2018, with unit 4 following in December.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Fuel-loading-completed-at-fifth-Tianwan-unit>

C. Pakistan

PAEC nuclear power plants expected to connect to grid by end of 2021

Fawad Yousafzai

The Nation, July 2, 2020

Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) Karachi Nuclear Power Plants (KANUPP)-2 and 3 are expected to connect to the national grid by the end of 2021 and will add 2200 megawatts to the country's energy mix. Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) Wednesday announced that its Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit-4 has made a new record in Pakistan's history by running for a year continuously, becoming the first electricity generation plant of the country to achieve this milestone. Previously, Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit-2 (Chashma-2), held the record of running for continuous 302 days.

Member Power of PAEC Saeed-ur-Rahman, while making the announcement, said, "This unique record of efficient and safe operations of Chashma-4 bespoke the acumen and hard work of PAEC's teams of technicians, scientists and engineers." PAEC operates four nuclear power plants at Chashma, near Mianwali, that collectively generate about 1330 megawatts of electricity. Currently Chashma Power Plants (C-1 to C-4) are producing electricity at an average tariff of Rs. 11.16/kWh, while operating at above 95% of capacity factor.

<https://nation.com.pk/02-Jul-2020/paec-nuclear-power-plants-expected-to-connect-to-grid-by-end-of-2021>

A pariah state's pariah national carrier

Qudssia Akhlaque

Pakistan Today, July 8, 2020

For years we knew it was coming. That our national flag carrier was going downhill but successive governments conveniently looked the other way, making matters worse. The last nail in PIA's coffin was virtually hammered in by our Aviation Minister's sweeping declaration about 'dubious' and 'fake' pilot licenses that has had disastrous ramifications.

After the 9/11 terror attacks in the USA, Pakistan was reduced to a pariah state and faced diplomatic isolation. For long we suffered international clamour about Pakistan being 'a safe haven' for terrorists and 'epicentre' of terrorism. Discovery of the 'most wanted' Al-Qaeda leaders in Pakistan, including Osama Bin Laden, weakened our case on the global stage besides causing huge embarrassment. There were endless reports in international media (often planted and leaked) questioning Pakistan's credentials as a responsible nuclear state. The fear that our nuclear weapons could 'fall in the wrong hands' was a constant refrain in the international security and foreign policy circles. Pakistan feverishly fought on the diplomatic front to undo this perception by building a counter-narrative. To establish Pakistan's credibility as a responsible nuclear state has been a major foreign policy challenge for almost two decades.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2020/07/08/a-pariah-states-pariah-national-carrier/>

D. USA

U.S. says leaking nuclear waste dome is safe; Marshall Islands leaders don't believe it

Susanne Rust

Los Angeles Times, July 1, 2020

In response to a directive from Congress, the Department of Energy released a report this week assessing the risks of a 50-year-old cracking and crumbling concrete nuclear

waste repository in the Marshall Islands, but the findings did little to ease the concerns of Marshallese leaders in the Central Pacific. The DOE report found that Runit Dome, a repository for atomic waste the United States produced during Cold War weapons testing, is sound and that radioactive leakage into the nearby lagoon is not significant.

After Congress grew concerned last year about the leaking dome, it ordered the DOE to produce a report on the dome's structural integrity amid climate change and rising sea levels. The report noted that while sea level rise could increase storm surge, swells, and "lead to wave-induced over-wash of lower sections of the dome," there is not enough definitive data to determine "how these events might impact on the environment."

<https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2020-07-01/us-says-nuclear-waste-safe-marshall-islands-runit-dome>

Nuclear's role recognised in US decarbonisation plan

World Nuclear News, July 2, 2020

The US House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis has released a report establishing a goal of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions economy-wide in the USA by no later than 2050. The Climate Crisis Action Plan includes support to keep existing nuclear plants operating and calls for Congressional support for the development of advanced nuclear technologies.

In January 2019, House Resolution 6 created the bipartisan Select Committee on the Climate Crisis to "develop recommendations on policies, strategies, and innovations to achieve substantial and permanent reductions in pollution and other activities that contribute to the climate crisis." The resolution directed the Select Committee to deliver science-based policy recommendations to the standing legislative committees of jurisdiction for their consideration and action.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/>

Nuclears-role-recognised-in-US-decarbonisation-plan

BWXT wins contract to expand TRISO production

World Nuclear News, July 2, 2020

Idaho National Laboratory has awarded BWX Technologies Inc a USD26 million, 20-month contract to expand and upgrade its manufacturing line for TRISO nuclear fuel. The award, to BWXT Nuclear Operations Group, Inc, (BWXT NOG), will expand its capacity for the manufacture of TRISO fuel compacts and also upgrade existing systems for delivering production-scale quantities of the fuel, BWXT said. BWXT in October 2019 announced plans to restart and expand its TRISO fuel production line because of strong market signals. "Since that time, we have made significant technical progress on our ongoing restart activities, including releasing the solution preparation, kernel forming, and sintering furnace systems for production use," BWXT NOG President Joel Duling said.

TRISO - tristructural isotropic - fuel particles contain a spherical kernel of enriched uranium oxycarbide surrounded by layers of carbon and silicon carbide. The fuel particles are very small - described by the US Department of Energy as being about the size of a poppy seed - and robust. They can be fabricated into cylindrical pellets or spheres for use in either high temperature gas or molten salt-cooled reactors.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/BWXT-wins-contract-to-expand-TRISO-production>

Senate undoes proposed power shift in nuclear arms budgeting

John M. Donnelly

Roll Call, July 2, 2020

The Senate voted quietly Thursday to undo a proposal in its fiscal 2021 defense authorization bill that would have given the Pentagon extraordinary new power to shape the Energy Department's future nuclear weapons budgets. CQ Roll Call reported this week on behind-the-scenes

opposition to provisions in the Senate Armed Services Committee's version of the NDAA that would have given certain Defense Department officials new clout to set the amount and the content of the budget the Energy Department prepares for its National Nuclear Security Administration every year.

Critics had raised alarms that the move to give the Pentagon this power would lessen civilian control of the nuclear weapons enterprise and could jeopardize Energy Department priorities such as cleaning up nuclear sites, supporting clean energy or combating nuclear proliferation. Now the effort to change the balance of budgeting power in the executive branch appears dead, after the Senate adopted an amendment by Washington Democrat Maria Cantwell and West Virginia Democrat Joe Manchin III – senior members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee – that dramatically changes the bill's NNSA budget provision. Alaska Republican Lisa Murkowski, the committee's chairwoman, also has opposed the defense bill's proposed shift in budget power.

<https://www.rollcall.com/2020/07/02/senate-undoes-proposed-power-shift-in-nuclear-arms-budgeting/>

U.S. envoy to visit South Korea to discuss stalled North Korea nuclear talks

Hyonhee Shin and Josh Smith

The U.S. point man for North Korea is due to visit South Korea next week as it pushes for a resumption of talks with the North ahead of the U.S. election and despite few signs of any progress. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun, who led working-level negotiations with the North Koreans, will be among several State Department officials holding talks with South Korean counterparts on Tuesday, a government official told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity as the trip has not been announced.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has said U.S. President Donald Trump and

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un should meet again before the U.S. election in November, and on Thursday, South Korea's foreign minister said Seoul is pushing for a resumption of U.S.-North Korea talks. Biegun has said there is time for both sides to re-engage and "make substantial progress", but the coronavirus pandemic would make an in-person summit difficult before the November election.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-northkorea-southkorea/u-s-envoy-to-visit-south-korea-to-discuss-stalled-north-korea-nuclear-talks-idUSKBN2440BG>

US analysts say fire at Iran nuclear site hit new centrifuge production plant

Jon Gambrell

USA Today, July 4, 2020

A fire and an explosion struck a building above Iran's underground Natanz nuclear enrichment facility early on Thursday, a site that U.S.-based analysts identified as a new centrifuge production plant. The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran sought to downplay the fire, calling it an "incident" that only affected an under-construction "industrial shed," spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi said. However, both Kamalvandi and Iranian nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi rushed after the fire to Natanz, which has been targeted in sabotage campaigns in the past.

Kamalvandi did not identify what damaged the building, though Natanz governor Ramazanali Ferdowsi said a "fire" had struck the site, according to a report by the semiofficial Tasnim news agency. Authorities offered no cause for the blaze, though Iran's state-run IRNA news agency published a commentary addressing the possibility of sabotage by enemy nations such as Israel and the U.S. following other recent explosions in the country.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2020/07/02/iran-nuclear-site-fire-analysts-say-hit-centrifuge-facility/5365482002/>

US news falsely reports that North Korea threatened to nuke US

Joshua Cho

Nation of Change, Jul 6, 2020

In order to eliminate the nuclear threats from the U.S., the DPRK government has made all possible efforts, either through dialogue or in resort to the international law, but all ended in a vain effort.... The only option left was to counter nuke with nuke. Does this statement made by the North Korean government sound like a threat to launch a nuclear strike on the U.S.?

When one reads this brief snippet taken from a 5,500 word report carefully, it's obvious that this is not a threat to launch a nuclear strike, but an explanation of the rationale behind North Korea's nuclear weapons program. It's hard to interpret "counter[ing] nuke with nuke" as a declaration of an intent to launch a nuclear strike, considering that the U.S. hasn't nuked North Korea yet—and because the country would not be around to launch such a response if the U.S. had followed through on previous threats to nuke North Korea. The use of the past tense informs us that this is not an announcement of a future action, but of an action already taken by North Korea. Since we're all still here, this means that North Korea has not decided to nuke us.

<https://www.nationofchange.org/2020/07/06/us-news-falsely-reports-that-north-korea-threatened-to-nuke-us/>

The Cybersecurity 202: Hacking tensions with Iran are surging again after nuclear site fire

Joseph Marks

The Washington Post, July 6, 2020

A fire at an Iranian nuclear plant is threatening to spark a major hacking conflict that could embroil U.S. industry. Three Iranian officials have anonymously blamed a foreign cyberattack for the fire, which caused significant damage and

threatens to slow the nation's development of advanced centrifuges by months, Reuters reports. Other officials blamed the attack on a powerful bomb, the New York Times reports.

It's not clear if the fire itself was caused by a cyberattack, though some Iranian officials have suggested such attacks could have been launched by the United States or Israel. Regardless, Iran may respond in cyberspace where it faces a comparatively level playing field compared to conventional military conflict. Iran's top civil defense official has vowed to retaliate if cyberattacks are confirmed. "Responding to cyberattacks is part of the country's defense," Gholamreza Jalali told state television. "If it is proven that our country has been targeted by a cyberattack, we will respond."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-cybersecurity-202/2020/07/06/the-cybersecurity-202-hacking-tensions-with-iran-are-surging-again-after-nuclear-site-fire/5f0232eb88e0fa7b44f6defd/>

US awards multiple decommissioning contracts for legacy sites

World Nuclear News, Jul 7, 2020

The US Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management has awarded multiple contracts to provide nationwide deactivation, decommissioning and removal (DD&R) services at "excess" facilities across the EM complex. The so-called indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts will use firm-fixed price and cost reimbursement task orders to conduct DD&R at facilities. These services may be performed at locations across the USA in support of EM, the National Nuclear Security Administration, the Office of Naval Reactors and the Office of Science, as well as other DOE offices or federal agencies that may request EM assistance in meeting their DD&R requirements.

This multiple award IDIQ contract has a 10-year ordering period, and a maximum ordering value (ceiling) of USD3 billion, EM said. The procurement was carried out through an open competition. Awardees

include: Aptim Federal Services, LLC; Atkins Nuclear Secured, LLC; BWXT Field Services, LLC; D2R Services, LLC; Fluor Federal, Inc; Jacobs Technology, Inc; Nationwide Remediation Partners, LLC; Orano Federal Services, LLC; and Westinghouse Government Services, LLC.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/US-awards-multiple-decommissioning-contracts-for-l>

'Nuclear-like weapon': US mulls striking Hong Kong dollar peg

Nick Wadhams, Jenny Leonard, Jennifer Jacobs and Saleha Mohsin

Al Jazeera, July 8, 2020

Some top advisers to President Donald Trump want the U.S. to undermine the Hong Kong dollar's peg to the U.S. dollar as the administration considers options to punish China for recent moves to chip away at the former British colony's political freedoms, according to people familiar with the matter. The idea of striking against the Hong Kong dollar peg – perhaps by limiting the ability of Hong Kong banks to buy U.S. dollars – has been raised as part of broader discussions among advisers to Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and hasn't been elevated to the senior levels of the White House, suggesting that it hasn't gained serious traction yet, according to people who discussed the matter on condition of anonymity.

The proposal faces strong opposition from others in the administration who worry such a move would only hurt Hong Kong banks and the U.S., not China, they said. Another person cautioned that the idea of attacking the dollar peg is lower on the list of possible options now under discussion. Those ideas include canceling a U.S.-Hong Kong extradition treaty and ending cooperation with Hong Kong's police, the person said. The State Department declined to comment when asked about the issue on Tuesday, as did the Treasury Department. Hong Kong's financial secretary, Paul Chan, referred queries to the Hong Kong Monetary

Authority, which didn't immediately reply to a request for comment. The People's Bank of China in Beijing also didn't immediately reply to queries.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/nuclear-weapon-mulls-striking-hong-kong-dollar-peg-200708014143641.html>

U.S. Carriers Send a Message to Beijing Over South China Sea

Jack Detsch

Foreign Policy, July 9, 2020

Faced with increasingly brazen Chinese efforts to exercise control over the entirety of the South China Sea, the U.S. military is using a series of big aircraft carrier operations to show allies that the United States isn't about to turn its back on the hotly contested region. Over the weekend, the USS Ronald Reagan and the USS Nimitz sailed into the South China Sea, another challenge to China's claims of maritime sovereignty in the area that have been consistently challenged by American allies. More than a routine passage of the type meant to assert the right to free navigation, the exercise reportedly included the use of jets, reconnaissance planes, and helicopters, while Chinese sailors held competing drills near the Paracel Islands, which are also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan.

Current and former defense officials worry that China has seized on the coronavirus pandemic to ramp up its efforts to militarize the so-called nine-dashed line, Beijing's sweeping claim to sovereignty over the vast majority of the South China Sea, a conduit for trillions of dollars in annual trade and a potential motherlode of oil and natural gas. Since earlier this year, while the United States and other countries were grappling with the spread of the pandemic, China has systematically stepped up its efforts to turn the South China Sea into a Chinese lake, installing floating and land-based monitoring systems on and around artificial islands, browbeating neighbors such as Vietnam and Malaysia that sought to drill for oil, and crossing sabers with Philippine warships. China has also redoubled its administrative reach in the South China Sea,

which could give it greater ability to turn atolls and islets into an extension of the mainland.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/09/us-carriers-south-china-sea-sending-message-ronald-reagan-nimitz/>

New satellite imagery shows activity at suspected North Korean nuclear facility

Zachary Cohen

CNN Politics, July 9, 2020

New satellite images obtained by CNN show recent activity at a previously undeclared North Korean facility that researchers suspect is being used to build nuclear warheads. The imagery, captured by Planet Labs and analyzed by experts at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, indicates that the facility, which is in the village of Wollo-ri near the country's capital city of Pyongyang and has not been previously disclosed to the public, is believed to be linked to North Korea's nuclear program and remains active.

"It has all the signatures of a North Korean nuclear facility — security perimeter, on-site housing, monuments to unpublicized leadership visits, and an underground facility. And it sits right next to a bottled water factory that has none of those characteristics," Jeffrey Lewis, a professor at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, which specializes in open-source intelligence, told CNN prior to publishing his own report.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/08/politics/north-korea-nuclear-facility-wollo-ri-satellite-images/index.html>

China should meet with U.S. on arms control, State Department says

Reuters, July 9, 2020

The U.S. State Department on Thursday said the United States welcomed China's commitment to arms control negotiations and that "prudent next steps" should

include face-to-face meetings between U.S. and Chinese officials. State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus issued the statement a day after a top Chinese diplomat said China would “be happy to” hold arms control talks with the United States and Russia, but only if Washington was willing to cut its nuclear arsenal to China’s level, which is about 20 times smaller.

“But actually, we know that’s not going to happen,” added Fu Cong, the head of the arms control department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. Still, Fu’s comments appeared to represent a slight shift after months of Beijing rejecting outright a proposal by U.S. President Donald Trump that it join Washington and Moscow in negotiating a trilateral arms control treaty.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-armscontrol/china-should-meet-with-united-states-on-arms-control-state-department-says-idUSKBN24A27U>

Innovation is key to clean energy future, says Brouillette

World Nuclear News, July 10, 2020

US Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette yesterday called for the world to take a dynamic, rather than static, approach to energy policy to facilitate the innovation necessary to secure a clean energy future. Speaking at the International Energy Agency’s Clean Energy Transitions Summit 2020, he cautioned against “static” policies that could stifle innovation and limit fuel choices. The rise and spread of COVID 19 has had a dramatic impact on the world economy and has left an undeniable mark on the world energy landscape, Brouillette told the virtual meeting, which the Paris-based IEA described as the year’s largest global gathering on energy and climate. The world has risen to these challenges in very powerful ways, Brouillette said, but this “brings us back to the question of how we can produce energy in a way that improves our environment and keeps our economy growing”.

There are two different approaches to this issue: a top-down, government-driven approach, and a bottom-up, competition-

based alternative, Brouillette said. The bottom-up approach supports free markets, funds scientific research and honours the choices of producers and consumers alike, he said. In contrast, the top-down approach “lets governments do the choosing”, which can lead to more taxes and regulation, and also means that governments can steer energy choices to the extent of banning any fuel source that produces emissions. “Some would even ban zero-emissions nuclear energy, compelling us to rely on renewable energy alone,” he said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Innovation-is-key-to-clean-energy-future,-says-Bro>

US benchmarking analysis shows growing momentum for decarbonisation

World Nuclear News, Jul 13, 2020

The US power sector made significant progress in the transition away from coal in 2019, driving substantial reductions in pollution from the power sector, according to a newly released benchmarking study of the country’s 100 largest power producers. Nuclear made up 55% of the USA’s zero-carbon resources. The Benchmarking Air Emissions analysis is a collaborative effort between Ceres; Bank of America; power producers Entergy, Exelon, and Tenaska; and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). The current issue is the 16th in a series that began in 1997, using publicly reported data to compare the emissions performance of US power producers. It examines and compares emissions of key air pollutants, highlighting environmental performance and progress across the sector.

Power sector CO2 emissions fell by 8% from 2018 to 2019 - ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic while GDP rose by 2.3%. Over the period 2000-2019, GDP grew by 45%, CO2 emissions fell by 28% and generation from renewables doubled. This, said the report’s authors, shows that “with the right generation mix, reduced emissions and economic growth can go

hand-in-hand". The drop in emissions, coupled with a rise in economic activity, can be attributed to the continued decline of generation from coal and the transition to lower and zero-emissions power sources, the analysis found. In 2018-2019, zero-carbon resources generated 36% of US electricity. Of those zero-carbon resources, nuclear made up 55%, renewables 26% and hydro 19%.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/US-benchmarking-analysis-shows-growing-momentum-fo>

Costs key to commercialisation of advanced reactors, says LucidCatalyst

World Nuclear News, July 14, 2020

Advanced reactors that have a capital cost of less than USD3000 per kilowatt will be attractive investments and create the most value for plant owners, a study by international consultancy LucidCatalyst has concluded. The report found flexible advanced reactors complement wind and solar in markets with high penetrations of renewables. The report was produced as part of the ARPA-E MEITNER (Modelling-Enhanced Innovations Trailblazing Nuclear Energy Reinvigoration) Programme, which aims to identify and develop innovative technologies that can enable designs for lower cost, more flexible advanced nuclear reactors.

The study examines two future scenarios in 2034 - when advanced reactors are expected to be commercially available - across four of the principal power markets in the USA: ISO-New England (ISO-NE); Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland Power Pool (PJM); Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO); and California ISO (CAISO). The scenarios are: a 'low renewables' baseline scenario, assuming continuation of existing renewables policy, and current renewables build rates; and, a 'high renewables' scenario based on the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's Regional Energy Deployment System low renewables costs and low natural gas costs scenario. Three additional scenarios and potential market

conditions were examined in PJM in order to determine the effects of a CO2 price, fleet deployment, and increased operating and maintenance costs and fuel costs.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Costs-key-to-commercialisation-of-advanced-reactor>

E. Europe

Source of low-level European release remains unknown

World Nuclear News, July 3, 2020

The recent detection of slightly elevated levels of radioisotopes in northern Europe is likely related to a nuclear reactor that is either operating or undergoing maintenance, when very low radioactive releases can occur, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said yesterday. The geographical origin of the release has not yet been determined.

Estonia, Finland and Sweden last week measured levels of ruthenium and caesium isotopes which were higher than usual. They also reported the detection of some other artificial radionuclides. The three countries said there had been no events on their territories that could explain the presence of the radionuclides, as did more than 40 other countries that voluntarily provided information to the IAEA. Seeking to help identify their possible origin, the IAEA on 27 June contacted its counterparts in the European region and requested information on whether the particles were detected in their countries, and if any event there may have been associated with the atmospheric release.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Source-of-low-level-European-release-remains-unsol>

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Seeking to help identify their possible origin, the IAEA on 27 June contacted its counterparts in the European region and requested information on whether the particles were detected in their countries, and if any event there may have been associated with the atmospheric release. By yesterday afternoon, 37 Member States in the European region (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the UK) had voluntarily reported to the IAEA that there were no events on their territories that explained the release. They also provided information about their own measurements and results. In addition, 10 countries which were not asked for such information - Algeria, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, Tajikistan, the UAE and the USA - also voluntarily reported to the IAEA.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Source-of-low-level-European-release-remains-unsol>

European power contracts fall on French nuclear output

Argus, July 3, 2020

Forward power contracts across most of western Europe have posted steep declines today as French state-controlled EDF's

upward revision to its nuclear output have weighed on expectations of a tight supply-demand balance in the winter.

EDF now expects nuclear generation to be 315-325TWh this year, compared with the 20-year low of 300TWh set on 16 April. The revision reflects adjustments to planned outages and takes into account "conditions observed on sites for resuming activities", the utility said. French power contracts for winter delivery fell faster than elsewhere in the region but have maintained a wide premium. The French fourth-quarter base load last traded at •54/MWh for financial delivery today whereas the physical contract for the same period last changed hands at •54.50/MWh. Argus assessed the physical fourth-quarter base load contract at •62.40/MWh at yesterday's close.

French physical contracts for winter delivery previously extended a wide premium to their derivative equivalent on concerns of potential supply shortfalls during winter. The last fourth quarter trade seen in the over-the-counter market yesterday went through at a premium of •1.45/MWh to the equivalent financial derivative contract on European energy exchange. The derivative fourth-quarter contract for peak load delivery has posted sharper losses, with the latest deal seen at •81/MWh. The same contract was assessed by Argus at •99.30/MWh for physical delivery at yesterday's close. The peak contract might have fallen faster as French thermal plants, with considerably higher generation costs than nuclear reactors, may not set the marginal price in the spot market during peak hours this winter as often as previously expected.

<https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news/2120220-european-power-contracts-fall-on-french-nuclear-output>

Germany first major economy to phase out coal and nuclear

9 News, July 4, 2020

German lawmakers have finalise the country's long-awaited phase-out of coal as an energy source, backing a plan that

environmental groups say isn't ambitious enough and free marketeers criticise as a waste of taxpayers' money. Bills approved by both houses of parliament today envision shutting down the last coal-fired power plant by 2038 and spending some 40 billion euros (\$65 billion) to help affected regions cope with the transition.

The plan is part of Germany's 'energy transition' – an effort to wean Europe's biggest economy off planet-warming fossil fuels and generate all of the country's considerable energy needs from renewable sources. Achieving that goal is made harder than in comparable countries such as France and Britain because of Germany's existing commitment to also phase out nuclear power by the end of 2022.

<https://www.9news.com.au/world/germany-news-nation-first-major-economy-to-phase-out-coal-nuclear/40c6e3a0-71aa-48f7-8dcc-a350bab2a62b>

EU says Iran has triggered nuclear deal dispute mechanism

Eline Schaart

Politico, July 4, 2020

Tehran has triggered a dispute resolution mechanism in the Iran nuclear deal, citing concerns over the implementation of the deal, according to the EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. "I have received today a letter from the Foreign Minister of Iran [Mohammad Javad Zarif] referring Iran's concerns regarding implementation issues by France, Germany and the United Kingdom," Borrell said in a statement Friday evening.

The deal – known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and signed by Iran, the United States, U.K., Germany, France, China and Russia in 2015 – has been unraveling since U.S. President Donald Trump's unilateral decision to pull out in 2018. Tehran has since discarded key components of the nuclear deal, including a limit on centrifuges.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/04/eu-says-iran-has-triggered-nuclear-deal-dispute-mechanism-348680>

Viewpoint: Combining the RAB and alliance models for new nuclear in the UK

World Nuclear News, July 7, 2020

Using the regulated asset base (RAB) model has the potential for cost-override that can be somewhat addressed through the 'alliance' model, that is, a model based on one unified agreement under which all parties share the benefits and risks, write Vincent Zabielski and Elina Teplinsky, respectively, special counsel and partner at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP. "In July 2019, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) issued its request for public consultation on the RAB model for financing development of new nuclear plants in the United Kingdom. In the Consultation, BEIS noted that the RAB model "has the potential to reduce the cost of raising private finance for new nuclear projects, thereby reducing consumer bills and maximising value for money for consumers and taxpayers". In a nutshell, the RAB is a construct whereby a government entity acting as an 'economic regulator' grants a licence to a company to charge a regulated price to users of the infrastructure. Under the RAB model, the costs of the project are passed directly to the end-users of the infrastructure.

The RAB model is different from the Contract for Difference (CfD) model used for Hinkley Point C because, unlike CfD which guarantees a minimum off-take price but doesn't address the issue of cash flow during construction, RAB allows project developers and investors to recoup their costs during the construction period and pass some of the cost risk to electricity consumers. Because repayment of project costs is virtually guaranteed under the RAB model, the model can lower the interest rate on the project's debt and increase its return on equity.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Viewpoint-Combining-the-RAB-and-alliance-models-fo>

UK sees no transboundary issues with Sizewell C

World Nuclear News, July 8, 2020

Alok Sharma, British secretary of state for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is “of the view” that the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power plant project is not likely to have significant effects in any other states outside of the UK, the UK’s Planning Inspectorate said yesterday. Sharma’s conclusion followed a screening assessment of likely significant effects on the environment in other states from the project in accordance with Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. EDF Energy applied to the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to build the plant on the Suffolk coast of England in May.

The application followed four rounds of public consultation that began in 2012. In its statement yesterday, the Planning Inspectorate provided information about possible transboundary environmental impacts according to international conventions as part of its review of the DCO application for Sizewell C.

“Taking into account the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context (the Espoo Convention) and the UNECE Convention on access to information on environmental matters (the Aarhus Convention), the UK government has chosen to inform all signatory states and their public of the Proposed Development and invite their participation in the decision making process,” the Planning Inspectorate said. “The public in any other state who may be interested in this Proposed Development can provide their representation(s) to the examination of any application by registering as an ‘interested party’,” it added.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/UK-sees-no-transboundary-issues-with-Sizewell-C>

EU green strategies pay ‘insufficient attention’ to nuclear, says Foratom

World Nuclear News, July 8, 2020

Foratom says it “remains concerned” that the European Commission is paying “insufficient attention” to low-carbon, non-fossil fuel sources of hydrogen, such as nuclear. The EU nuclear trade association was responding to two strategies the Commission released on 8 July for energy sector integration and hydrogen. Foratom said it welcomed the addition of a ‘low-carbon hydrogen’ category but said its usage should not be limited to the short and medium term.

To become climate-neutral by 2050, Europe needs to transform its energy system, which accounts for 75% of the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions. The EU strategies for energy system integration and hydrogen aim to pave the way towards a more efficient and interconnected energy sector, driven by the twin goals of a cleaner planet and a stronger economy. EU Strategy for Energy System Integration and EU Hydrogen Strategy present a new clean energy investment agenda, in line with the Commission’s Next Generation EU recovery package and the European Green Deal.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/EU-green-strategies-pay-insufficient-attention-t>

IEA conference hears plea for fact-based energy choices

World Nuclear News, July 9, 2020

High-level speakers from government, industry and international organisations at an International Energy Agency (IEA) summit today underlined the need for nuclear energy to play a role in the post-COVID economic recovery at the same time as meeting the climate challenge. The

Paris-based agency billed its Clean Energy Transitions Summit 2020 as the year's largest global gathering on energy and climate, welcoming 40 ministerial participants from around the world with the livestreamed event watched by an audience of more than 500,000.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in a special address to the conference that countries are making far-reaching decisions as they channel trillions of dollars of public money into recovery strategies in response to the pandemic. "As we design these recovery plans, we can make a choice. We can go back to where we were - or we can invest in a better, more sustainable future," he said. He urged all leaders to choose the "clean energy" route for reasons of health, science and economics.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/IEA-conference-hears-plea-for-fact-based-energy-c>

U.S. has gained no benefit by quitting nuclear deal: ex-British diplomat

Tehran Times, July 11, 2020

Peter Jenkins, a former British ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, has said that the United States has gained no benefit by withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA. Jenkins told IRNA in an interview published on Saturday that the U.S. lost its soft power after pullout from the JCPOA. He also noted that the U.S. may return to the JCPOA if Trump fails to be reelected president in the November elections.

The former diplomat added Iran has gained no economic benefits from the nuclear deal. Donald Trump unilaterally quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions in history on Iran as part of his administration's "maximum pressure" strategy against Iran. 'U.S. cannot expect extension of arms embargo on Iran' Jenkins also said the United States cannot expect the UN Security Council to extend arms embargo on Iran within the framework of UN Security Council

Resolution 2231, which endorses the JCPOA.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449883/U-S-has-gained-no-benefit-by-quitting-nuclear-deal-ex-British>

Hossein Dehghani: The collapse of the Iran Nuclear Deal 5 years on would be a failure of EU values

G.Hossein Dehghani

Euronews, July 14, 2020

July 14 marks the fifth anniversary of the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), or the Iran Nuclear Deal. It takes place against a gloomy and bleak backdrop. Years from now, when historians recount what happened in this era, they will presumably note the incipient end of the JCPOA as the beginning of the decline of multilateralism and a serious blow to an integrated European foreign policy. Through the JCPOA, the EU achieved what would have been deemed unthinkable for a union whose credibility as a foreign policy actor was - and is - doubted by many, even within the European camp. In this sense, the JCPOA created remarkable momentum for multilateralism in general, and, from a European standpoint, a crucial turning point in non-proliferation diplomacy specifically with the EU leading the way. On July 14, 2015, the EU well deserved a clap on the shoulder for navigating a tortuous path through negotiations. The conclusion of the JCPOA, however, was the beginning of another equally daunting job: its successful implementation, with the Europeans fulfilling the roles of coordinators and participants.

Safeguarding the JCPOA for Europe is tantamount to upholding its core foreign policy values as enshrined in its founding treaties, and as reflected in EU security and non-proliferation strategies. On the fifth anniversary of the conclusion of the JCPOA, and probably its last, it is time to revisit how Europe (or rather the EU 3)

played their roles in the nuclear agreement and how it will unfold if they tread the current path.

<https://www.euronews.com/2020/07/14/hosseindehghani-the-collapse-of-the-iran-nuclear-deal-5-years-on-would-be-a-failure-of-eu>

Europe Continues to Brush Off the U.S. Maximum Pressure Campaign Against Iran

Darya Dolzikova and Aniseh Bassiri Tabrizi

Lawfare, July 15, 2020

On June 19, the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) passed a resolution expressing “serious concern” over Iran’s refusal to provide the agency with access to two facilities suspected of possibly having hosted undeclared nuclear materials and activities. The resolution came two years after the U.S. pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal (also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA) and reimposed sanctions on Iran. It was drafted and tabled by France, Germany and the United Kingdom (known as the E3), leading to speculations that Europe might have finally decided to join the U.S. maximum pressure campaign against the Islamic Republic. However, despite the optics of the resolution, this does not appear to be the case.

The resolution follows discovery by the IAEA in January 2019 of uranium particles that appear to have resulted from human activity at an undeclared location in Iran. The agency suspects that, between 2002 and 2003, Iran may have carried out nuclear-related activities—including nuclear fuel cycle research and development, and conventional explosive testing—at three different facilities inside Iran. Since summer 2019, the agency has requested access to and information about these facilities as part of its verification activities relating to Iran’s Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) and the related Additional Protocol (AP), which are both linked to Iran’s obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The AP,

in particular, grants the IAEA the right to request access to suspected undeclared nuclear facilities.

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/europe-continues-brush-us-maximum-pressure-campaign-against-iran>

Borrell says there is no alternative to nuclear deal

Tehran Times, July 15, 2020

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has said that it is urgent to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, because there is no effective alternative to the agreement. “Today, the JCPOA is under great pressure on multiple fronts. I am convinced that action to preserve it is not just necessary but urgent, for at least two reasons. First, it took more than 12 years for the international community and Iran to bridge their differences and conclude a deal. If the JCPOA is lost, no other comprehensive or effective alternative will be waiting around the corner,” he wrote in an article published by Project Syndicate on Tuesday.

Following is an excerpt of the article: The deal would have not been possible without diplomatic persistence. It required the full buy-in not just of the United States, but also of Russia, China, and of course Iran. The final agreement was solid. At more than 100 pages, and with several annexes, it set out all of the details for a clear quid pro quo: Iran would abide by strict limitations on its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of nuclear-related economic and financial sanctions. The JCPOA is enshrined in international law through UNSC Resolution 2231 (which needs to be fully implemented). It stands as a prime example of what European diplomacy and effective multilateralism can achieve within the rules-based international order. But the process leading up to it was lengthy and difficult, all but ruling out another chance at a deal.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/450051/Borrell-says-there-is-no-alternative-to-nuclear-deal>

F. Russia

Paks II construction licence application submitted

World Nuclear News, July 1, 2020

The construction licence application for two VVER-1200 reactors at the existing Paks site was submitted to the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority (HAEA) yesterday by Paks II Limited. The regulator said it has 12 months in which to make a decision on the application, but this period can be extended by three months if required.

The existing Paks plant, which is 100 km south of Budapest, comprises four Russian-supplied VVER-440 pressurised water reactors, which started up between 1982 and 1987. Russia and Hungary signed an inter-governmental agreement in early 2014 for Russian enterprises and their international sub-contractors to supply two VVER-1200 reactors at Paks, including a Russian state loan of up to EUR10.0 billion (USD11.2 billion) to finance 80% of the project, which is known as Paks II. The electronic submission of the 283,000-page application was announced by János Süli, the minister responsible for the design, construction and commissioning of two new reactors at Paks, and the management of Paks II Limited at a meeting attended by regional mayors and politicians.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Paks-II-construction-licence-application-submitted>

Russia And China Face-Off For Nuclear Dominance In Africa

Haley Zaremba

Oil Price, July 1, 2020

Russian nuclear power is one continent closer to taking over the world. This week the Rwandan parliament approved a plan for the Russian state-owned nuclear conglomerate Rosatom to build a brand new nuclear research facility, along with a nuclear reactor, in the Central African nation's capital city of Kigali. This hard-won development comes as the latest step in a

decades-long aggressive lobbying effort on the part of the Russian government and more specifically Rosatom to woo African nations into making deals with Russia, ostensibly for profit as well as influence on the African continent. German media company DW News reported earlier this week about the Kigali nuclear center, "The Center of Nuclear Science and Technologies, planned for completion by 2024, will include nuclear research labs as well as a small research reactor with up to 10 MW capacity." And the Rwandan plant is just the beginning. "Ethiopia, Nigeria and Zambia have signed similar deals with Rosatom, while countries such as Ghana, Uganda, Sudan and DRC have less expansive cooperation agreements."

Russia's assertive move into Africa intensified considerably on the heels of the introduction of Western Sanctions in 2014. After Canada, the European Union, and the United States all imposed sanctions on Russia in response to what they saw to be the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula in Ukraine, Moscow has had to look from friends and trading partners in other corners of the globe.

<https://oilprice.com/Geopolitics/Africa/Russia-And-China-Face-Off-For-Nuclear-Dominance-In-Africa.html>

Russia's New Super Weapons May Be Cause Of Radiation Leak

H I Sutton

Forbes, July 1, 2020

A recent nuclear leak may be related to new nuclear-powered strategic weapons Russia is developing. These are part of a range of new 'super weapons' unveiled by President Putin on March 1, 2018. Russia is testing a nuclear-powered megatorpedo called Poseidon and a nuclear-powered cruise missile called Burevestnik. If either are to blame, then it would not be the first radiation spike caused by testing one of these weapons. On June 23, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) revealed that scientists in Sweden had detected higher

than usual levels of radiation. Based on analysis of the weather, the origin was projected to be in Northern Russia. Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo tweeted that they had detected “3 isotopes; Cs-134, Cs-137 & Ru-103 associated w/Nuclear fission.” He went on to say that “These isotopes are most likely from a civil source.” and that it is “outside the CTBTO’s mandate to identify the exact origin.”

Russia’s nuclear energy body has denied that the radiation originated from its two nuclear power stations in the region. However, it is not only civilian power stations that use nuclear reactors. Tom Moore, a nuclear policy expert and former senior professional staff member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, believes that these military reactors cannot be ruled out: “CTBTO radionuclide monitoring is intended to discriminate explosive events and to complement seismic monitoring. Not to effectively rule in or rule out a source of radionuclides as being civil or military reactors.”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/hisutton/2020/07/01/russias-new-super-weapons-may-be-cause-of-radiation-leak/#6aa6ff5f8c2c>

Shipbuilders to deliver nuclear-powered Akula-class sub to Russian Navy after upgrade

TASS News Agency, July 2, 2020

The Northern Fleet’s Project 971 ‘Shchuka-B’ (NATO reporting name Akula) nuclear-powered submarine Vepr has completed trials after its repairs and upgrade and is set to re-enter service with the Fleet in mid-July, a source in the defense industry told TASS on Thursday. “The certificate of the acceptance/delivery of the nuclear-powered submarine will take place at the Nerpa Ship Repair Plant in the second ten-day period of July,” the source said.

The nuclear-powered submarine fully completed the program of its trials and stayed at the Nerpa Shipyard for removing faults. It was earlier planned that the sub would be delivered to the Fleet in the third

ten-day period of June. Project 971 nuclear-powered submarines have been developed by the St. Petersburg-based Malakhit Marine Engineering Design Bureau. The sub Vepr was built at the SevmaSh Shipyard in northwestern Russia and delivered to the Russian Navy in 1995.

<https://tass.com/defense/1173901>

Extension of New START matter of political will, expert says

TASS News Agency, July 2, 2020

The extension of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) is a matter of political will, says Pyotr Topychkanov, senior researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). “The extension of the New START is a matter of political will. Since Moscow is [already] interested in the extension of the treaty, the question is whether the White House would like to keep it. Unfortunately, the American side prefers to preserve ambiguity until the very last moment,” he noted in his written comments for TASS.

According to Topychkanov, the US is aware that making this treaty trilateral, with China’s involvement, is impossible. “The issue could be formulated in various ways: whether China will join the New START talks (in the foreseeable future, it won’t), or whether it will take part in the multilateral consultations on future nuclear arms limitations (this is possible). The American side understands that making the New START trilateral is impossible, but it uses this pretext to exert pressure on China,” the expert said. “China will not take part in nuclear arms control on par with Russia and the US until the nuclear arsenals become comparable. Even the imaginary involvement of France and the UK won’t help, if the large gap in the number of warheads between them and the US and Russia remains,” he continued.

<https://tass.com/politics/1173929>

Russian radiation monitoring system registers no emergencies – Kremlin

TASS News Agency, July 3, 2020

Russian radiation monitoring system registered no emergencies, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday, commenting on reports of increased radiation levels over Northern Europe. "Russia has a rather advanced monitoring system, and no emergencies were registered," Peskov said.

He redirected the question of whether increased radiation level was registered at all to specialists. According to the spokesman, nothing happened that could cause Kremlin's concern. Peskov also recalled the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s statement that the registered level of radiation poses no threat for the population. On June 26, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization announced that, on June 23, its international monitoring system detected exceedance of cesium-134, cesium-137 and ruthenium-103 isotopes over Northeastern part of Europe. The IAEA underscored that the observed concentration of radioactive particles in the air is very low and poses no danger for human health and the environment.

<https://tass.com/society/1174449>

Russia develops VR-based system for operation at nuclear plants

TASS News Agency, July 3, 2020

Avtomatika Concern, an affiliate of the Russian state-run corporation Rostec, developed the Gipnoz (Hypnosis) robotic equipment control system to perform extreme tasks in the environment of radiation, high and low temperatures and poor visibility with the use of artificial intelligence and virtual reality (VR) technologies, Rostec said on Friday.

"The development can be used in mining, concentration, nuclear fuel production, maintenance of nuclear power plant

reactors, radiation control in irradiated nuclear fuel storages, accident response in mines without human intervention and solution of other special tasks," the corporation said. An operator remotely controls a drone using VR goggles connected to a control panel. Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies make it possible to automatically identify and highlight targets for the robot's work.

<https://tass.com/science/1174505>

Russia says Bolton's account of INF treaty talks distorted

Reuters, July 3, 2020

A senior Russian defence official accused former U.S. national security adviser John Bolton on Friday of distorting facts in his memoir about talks with the Russian authorities about the U.S. withdrawal from a Cold War-era arms control treaty. Washington last year withdrew from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), accusing Moscow of deploying cruise missiles throughout Russia in violation of the pact. Russia has denied violating the agreement.

In his book entitled "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir", Bolton wrote that Russian President Vladimir Putin had acknowledged the American position on the need to withdraw from the agreement. The pact had prevented Washington from deploying new weapons to counter a Chinese arms buildup in the Pacific. "Putin seemed to have lost interest in the INF, saying to me (through an interpreter) that he understood our arguments and logic on the decision to withdraw from the INF, which I took to be an acknowledgement of our shared view on China," Bolton wrote. Speaking to Russian media on Friday, Deputy Defence Minister Alexander Fomin said Bolton's recollection "substantially distorts real events".

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-usa-arms/russia-says-boltons-account-of-inf-treaty-talks-distorted-idUSKBN24422L>

Russia warns an extension of arms embargo on Iran will jeopardize nuclear deal

Tehran Times, July 3, 2020

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova warned on Thursday that an extension of arms embargo on Iran will jeopardize efforts to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA. The remarks by Zakharova came two days after the U.S. was rebuked by the UN Security Council including the five European countries on the council. A week earlier the U.S. introduced a draft resolution at the UN Security Council that would extend the arms embargo on Iran before it expires in October.

“The United States’ push was not only unjustified but also counterproductive in terms of the prospects of preserving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA),” Russia’s Sputnik news agency quoted Zakharova as saying. The United States has stepped up calls for the extension of a UN arms embargo on Iran since April. Under the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal. The U.S. President Donald Trump administration has threatened that it may seek to trigger a snapback of all sanctions on Iran if its attempts to extend the arms embargo fail. Zakharova said in May that Washington’s plans to introduce an indefinite arms embargo against Iran have no prospects. “The stubborn shattering of the JCPOA through new anti-Iranian ideas, which include the proposal to impose an indefinite arms embargo against Iran, simply does not honor the United States. It is clear that this course has no prospects,” Zakharova said at a briefing, Sputnik reported. Those members of the JCPOA, who have maintained a genuine full commitment to the nuclear deal, will continue to fight for its preservation and sustainable implementation, she said.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449543/Russia-warns-an-extension-of-arms-embargo-on-Iran-will-jeopardize>

Russia remains committed to nuclear test ban - Foreign Ministry

TASS News Agency, July 4, 2020

Russia remains committed to the ban on nuclear tests and continues to implement the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty despite the fact that the treaty has not come into force, the Russian Foreign Ministry’s press office said on Saturday commenting on the United States’ 2020 Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments (Compliance Report). The Foreign Ministry pointed out that “the US allegations that Russia allegedly violated the nuclear testing moratorium by conducting nuclear experiments inconsistent with the US ‘zero-yield’ standard are not expectedly substantiated by evidence.”

“Along with this, Americans admit that they know neither about the number of those experiments in 2019 nor about whether they were conducted or not. We underline that in accordance with its international commitments, Russia should not follow any ‘US standards’ in the nuclear testing field,” the ministry added. “We officially confirm that Russia remains strictly committed to the nuclear testing moratorium and continues to implement the provisions of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty with regards to the nuclear testing ban, in spite of the fact that the treaty has not come into force,” the ministry stressed.

<https://tass.com/politics/1174827>

Residents Near Secretive Russian Arctic Missile Test Site to Be Evacuated Ahead of ‘Military Work’

The Moscow Times, July 6, 2020

Local residents of Nenoksa village on the coast of the White Sea in Russia’s Far North will be given the opportunity to evacuate their homes on Tuesday ahead of planned

work at the military missile site where a deadly nuclear accident occurred last summer. On Sunday, a message appeared on the local administration's website posted saying that from 6 am on July 7 to 6 pm on July 8, Nenoksa will fall into "the danger zone" as the first scientific center of military unit 09703 will be conducting unspecified work. Officials also issued a warning to ships traveling through the White Sea. Authorities will provide residents of Nenoksa with five buses that will leave the village at 5 am on Tuesday.

In August last year, an explosion near the Nyonoksa testing site during a rocket engine test killed five Russian nuclear workers and led to a radiation spike. The Moscow Times reported that the doctors who treated victims of the nuclear rocket explosion were nuclear accident victims, leading to one of them being contaminated with radioactive cesium-137. The secrecy surrounding the accident has led outside observers to speculate that the explosion involved the Burevestnik nuclear-powered intercontinental cruise missile, dubbed the SSC-X-9 Skyfall by NATO.

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/07/06/residents-near-secretive-russian-arctic-missile-test-site-to-be-evacuated-ahead-of-military-work-a70798>

Leaders of Russia and China discuss cooperation in fuel and energy, aircraft industry

TASS News Agency, July 8, 2020

Russian President Vladimir Putin and President of China Xi Jinping discussed cooperation between the two countries based on projects in hydrocarbon supplies, nuclear industry and civil aviation, the Kremlin's press service said on Wednesday after the telephone conversation between leaders of the two countries.

"The endeavor was underscored to continue proactive buildup of economic interaction based on large-scale projects in the spheres of hydrocarbon supplies, peaceful atom and civil aviation as well as scientific-technical

and innovation cooperation," the press service said.

<https://tass.com/economy/1176143>

Russia plans first dedicated medical isotope facility

World Nuclear News, July 8, 2020

The Central Design and Technological Institute (TISC) has started work on plans to build Russia's first radiopharmaceuticals manufacturing facility. Moscow-headquartered TISC is part of Russian nuclear fuel manufacturer TVEL, which is a subsidiary of state nuclear corporation Rosatom. According to an agreement signed between TISC and Rusatom Helskea JSC - another Rosatom subsidiary, which coordinates radiation technologies for medicine and industry - TISC will develop pre-project documentation, including "investment justification", and carry out design and survey work. The plant is to be built at the site of Karpov Physical-Chemical Research Institute in Obninsk, which is in the Kaluga region. Its launch is scheduled for 2024.

Alexander Shibanov, director general of JSC Rusatom Helskea, said: "The future radiopharmaceutical plant will be the first in Russia to start producing targeted radiopharmaceuticals based on such promising isotopes as lutetium-177, actinium-225 and radium-223. These drugs are aimed at an effective, and sometimes even non-alternative solution to cancer diagnosis and treatment. "If most of the traditional methods of treatment can be compared to shooting from a cannon at sparrows, when the whole organism is exposed to powerful toxic effects, then targeted therapy using radiopharmaceuticals is like a sniper, aiming with pinpoint accuracy at the affected cells. The drug molecule 'sees' certain markers of the disease and delivers the active substance to the affected cells without affecting healthy ones," he added.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Russia-plans-first-dedicated-medical-isotope-facil>

Russia will not pressure China into joining disarmament process – ambassador to US

TASS News Agency, July 9, 2020

Russia has no plans to pressure China into joining the nuclear disarmament process, because it views UK and France's participation in them as its priority, Russia's US Ambassador Anatoly Antonov said on Wednesday.

"Russia, as you know, gives priority to involving the UK and France into the dialogue. Why? Because they are nuclear weapons' states and members of NATO, and, of course, we are very much concerned by what NATO is doing very close to Russia's territory," he said during a video conference, organized by the Washington-based Center for the National Interest. "Russia will not press on China to join our bilateral [Russian-US] talks [on further reduction of nuclear weapons]," Antonov added.

<https://tass.com/politics/1176371>

Russian Northern Fleet's ships strike enemy force in Barents Sea drills

TASS News Agency, July 9, 2020

The Northern Fleet's all-arms strike force led by the heavy nuclear-powered missile cruiser Pyotr Veliky and supported by Tu-22M3 strategic bombers of Russia's Aerospace Force delivered a missile strike against a notional enemy's ships during drills in the Barents Sea, the Fleet's press office reported on Thursday. "The naval strike group consisting of the heavy missile cruiser Pyotr Veliky and the missile cruiser Marshal Ustinov conducted practice launches of anti-ship missiles. They conducted the fire with Granit and Vulkan anti-ship cruise missiles against a composite target position that simulated a notional enemy's naval force and was located at a maximum distance of the firings," the press office said in a statement.

The Tu-22M3 long-range supersonic missile-carrying bombers also delivered a strike from

the designated area over the Barents Sea with air-to-surface cruise missiles against the same group of targets located at a distance of over 400 kilometers, the statement says. The ships and the aircraft conducted the missile firings as part of the Northern Fleet's naval exercise that kicked off in the Barents Sea and is running under the command of Fleet Commander Hero of Russia Vice-Admiral Alexander Moiseyev, the press office said.

<https://tass.com/defense/1176543>

Picturesque Russian Village Evacuated, Suggesting Nuclear-Powered Missile Test

H I Sutton

Forbes, July 9, 2020

The picturesque village of Nyonoksa on the 'Summer Coast' of the White Sea is once again in the danger zone of a Russian missile test. The village was the center of a nuclear incident in August last year when a missile engine exploded, killing five people. It is believed to have been caused by a Burevestnik nuclear-powered missile. Now another test, probably of the same missile, is planned for July 8. With each test the Russian military moves closer to fielding a weapon that could reach any target on earth. The Barents Observer reported on July 6 that residents of the village have been asked to evacuate. The shipping exclusion zone was first reported by an open-source intelligence analyst on July 1. The zone came into effect on July 6 and finishes on July 10. The danger zone extends northwards towards the Chizha range on Cape Kanin. This barren arctic peninsular is sparsely populated and has been used as an impact area for missile tests before, including submarine-launched ballistic missiles as well as cruise missiles.

The nearby test site is the State Central Navy Testing Range. Since 2015 it has been associated with the 9M730 Burevestnik nuclear-powered cruise missile. This is known to NATO by the reporting name SSC-X-9 Skyfall. Being nuclear powered it would have a virtually unlimited range. The launch platform for

the missile remains unclear. It may be land based, or possibly sea based.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/hisutton/2020/07/07/picturesque-village-evacuated-for-nuclear-powered-missile-test/#12bc87a15207>

Powerful Russian Submarine Seen Entering Baltic Sea

H I Sutton

Forbes, July 10, 2020

An Oscar-II class nuclear-powered cruise missile submarine was seen entering the Baltic early Thursday. Russia normally only deploys diesel-electric submarines to the area. While these are potent, and can carry a few long range cruise missiles, the arrival of the OSCAR-II is a massive increase in Russian Navy firepower. So when one turns up it gets noticed by NATO and the Baltic States. Its arrival was monitored by open-source intelligence analysts. As it passed under the Great Belt Bridge which spans the entrance of the Baltic, it had to do so on the surface, so it was briefly visible on the public webcams on the bridge. OSINT analysts shared the information and identified the submarine.

The submarine is believed to be Orel (K-266), which is expected to appear at the Navy Day parade in St. Petersburg on July 26. There is often more to it than just a parade, however. The submarine may participate in training exercises with other units, and is seen as a show force in the Baltic. Already the Russian Ministry of Defense has shown naval vessels practicing an amphibious operation ahead of the parade.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/hisutton/2020/07/10/powerful-russian-submarine-seen-entering-baltic-sea/#264e97ec142c>

Rusatom Service, MVM Group create European Power Services JV

World Nuclear News, July 10, 2020

Rusatom Service and MVM Group have formed a joint venture in Hungary to provide service and maintenance to nuclear industry facilities, conventional sources of power

generation, renewable energy and oil and gas in Europe, they announced yesterday. The new company, European Power Services Ltd, will start work at the Paks nuclear power plant. Rusatom Service is a subsidiary of Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom, while MVM Group is Hungary's biggest power producer, which owns several power plants including the Paks Nuclear Power Plant subsidiary.

The existing Paks plant, which is 100 km south of Budapest, comprises four Russian-supplied VVER-440 pressurised water reactors, which started up between 1982 and 1987. Russia and Hungary signed an inter-governmental agreement in early 2014 for Russian enterprises and their international sub-contractors to supply two VVER-1200 reactors at Paks, including a Russian state loan of up to EUR10.0 billion (USD11.2 billion) to finance 80% of the project, which is known as Paks II.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Rusatom-Service-MVM-Group-create-European-Power-S>

Russia warns of growing nuclear war threat

Elena Teslova

Anadolu Agency, July 10, 2020

The risk of a nuclear war has risen significantly in recent years because of the US unwillingness to reaffirm its impossibility, the Russian foreign minister said on Friday. "We are particularly concerned about the two-year-old refusal of the Americans to reassert the fundamental principle, the postulate that there can be no winners in a nuclear war, and, accordingly, it can never be unleashed," Sergey Lavrov said during his speech at the video conference of Primakov Readings Forum in Moscow. He argued that Washington is destroying the international arms control mechanism to have "hands free in choosing means of pressure, including force, at any point of the globe – don't matter what the price

is” with the ultimate goal of getting the global dominance and win “in what they call the rivalry of major powers.”

“This is particularly disturbing against the background of doctrinal shifts in the attitudes of the American political leadership, which now allow limited use of nuclear weapons,” Lavrov said. Washington takes practical steps to support the doctrinal shifts, developing and increasing the low-yield nuclear arsenal, he added. Lavrov said the US used “Russian threat” to make necessary amendments, saying Russia has a secret part of its military doctrine, which the minister denied. For Moscow’s requests to reaffirm the impossibility of a nuclear war, handed in written, Washington responds that it is still examining the document, but by their comment the Russian side perceive that it would like to weaken the categoricalness of this axiom, he said.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/russia-warns-of-growing-nuclear-war-threat/1905898>

Russia to promote idea of inadmissibility of nuclear war at UNSC P5 summit – Lavrov

TASS News Agency, July 10, 2020

Russia will uphold its stance on the inadmissibility of a nuclear war at the upcoming summit of the five UN Security Council permanent members, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Friday at an online session of the Primakov Readings international forum.

“We are particularly concerned about the Americans’ refusal to reaffirm the fundamental principle that there can be no winners in a nuclear war, and, consequently, it must never be unleashed,” he said. “Of course, we will promote this subject— the inadmissibility of a nuclear war, the impossibility to win it – in the context of the upcoming summit of the five [permanent Security Council members – TASS] as well.” Lavrov added that it was important not to go too far and not to play

into the hands of those who seek to ban nuclear weapons altogether.

<https://tass.com/politics/1176931>

Return to INF Treaty impossible after US withdrawal – Russian deputy foreign minister

TASS News Agency, July 11, 2020

The US withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has become an irreparable mistake, which makes the return to the agreement impossible, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said in an interview with the Duma TV channel on Friday. “I would like to say that several mistakes, committed by the US, entailed irreparable consequences. One of those huge mistakes, for example, is Washington’s unilateral withdrawal from the INF Treaty. It’s evident that there can be no return to this document, which served as a solid foundation for European security for decades,” the Russian diplomat said.

Speaking about Washington’s mistakes in relations with Russia, the deputy minister noted “US reluctance to deal with humanitarian issues,” in particular the refusal to cooperate on repatriating Russian citizens, convicted in the US “for contrived reasons.” “I’m also ready to admit my own mistake: apparently, I underestimated how persistent our US colleagues can be in following dogmas and cliches, which, to put it mildly, seem inadequate to us. We should have worked with more energy at various stages. We will continue this work,” Ryabkov added.

<https://tass.com/politics/1177251>

Novovoronezh II-1 switches to longer fuel cycle

World Nuclear News, July 14, 2020

Russian regulator Rostekhnadzor has issued a permit for the pilot operation of unit 1 of the Novovoronezh II plant in an

extended fuel cycle mode of 18 months. The reactor has been loaded with fresh nuclear fuel manufactured by the Novosibirsk Chemical Concentrate Plant ready for the new cycle. The VVER-1200 unit, also known as Novovoronezh 6, previously operated in a 12-month fuel cycle.

“The introduction of a new fuel cycle will significantly reduce the total duration of repairs at the power unit, increase the utilisation rate of its installed capacity and ensure an increase in electricity generation,” Yevgeny Golubev, head of the department of nuclear safety and reliability of the Novovoronezh NPP, said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Novovoronezh-II-1-switches-to-longer-fuel-cycle>

Russian shipbuilders to lay down four warships, two submarines on July 16

TASS News Agency, July 14, 2020

Russian shipyards will hold a single day of laying down new ships and submarines on July 16, a source in the defense industry told TASS on Tuesday. “On July 16, shipbuilders will lay down upgraded Project 22350 two frigates, Project 885M ‘Yasen-M’ two multi-purpose nuclear-powered submarines and, for the first time in the Russian Navy’s history, Project 23900 two multi-purpose amphibious assault ships,” the source specified.

The upgraded Project 22350 frigates will be built at the Severnaya Shipyard in St. Petersburg (part of the United Shipbuilding Corporation). They will be tentatively named the Admiral Yumashev and the Admiral Spiridonov. Currently, four frigates of Project 22350 and the upgraded Project 22350 are at various stages of their construction at the Shipyard. One of them, the Admiral Kasatonov, is preparing to enter service with the Russian Navy. The Severnaya Shipyard press office declined to comment on the source’s information.

<https://tass.com/defense/1178283>

Akkuyu unit 1 hydraulic tests completed

World Nuclear News, July 14, 2020

A watertight chamber, or caisson, was used for the hydraulic tests, during which a maximum pressure of 24.5 MPa was generated in the RPV 1.4 times higher than the operating pressure. Rovshan Abbasov, director of the Volgodonsk branch of AEM Technology, said preparatory work for the tests had been carried out under “difficult quarantine conditions”, but Atomash specialists had “ensured accurate and high-quality execution of all the necessary operations”. The hydraulic tests have confirmed the strength of the base metal and welded joints of the 334-tonne RPV and its readiness to operate for 60 years, he added.

The 4800 MWe plant will comprise four VVER1200 reactors and is expected to meet about 10% of Turkey’s electricity needs. Turkey aims to bring unit 1 online in 2023, the centenary of its foundation as a republic.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Akkuyu-unit-1-hydraulic-tests-completed>

West Asia

G. Iran

UNSC did not back U.S. bid to extend Iran arms embargo: envoy

Tehran Times, July 1, 2020

Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, has said the UN Security Council members did not endorse the U.S. government’s proposed resolution to extend an arms embargo on Iran. In a post on his Twitter account after a Tuesday meeting of the UN Security Council, Takht-Ravanchi wrote, “Today, UNSC members reiterated, again, their support for JCPOA and UNSCR 2231.”

“Their speeches proved that they do NOT support the US’ move to extend arms

embargo on Iran as it violates 2231," the envoy wrote. "US should withdraw its ill-fated draft immediately; before it is rebuffed yet again," he added. Washington has stepped up calls for the extension of a UN arms embargo on Iran, which will otherwise expire in October under UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449504/UNSC-did-not-back-U-S-bid-to-extend-Iran-arms-embargo-envoy>

AEOI: Natanz incident causing no work stoppage, slowdown at facility

Tehran Times, July 2, 2020

Iran's Atomic Energy Organization says an incident hitting the Natanz nuclear facility Thursday has caused no stoppage or slowdown of enrichment because the affected shed was actually under construction and not part of the enrichment process yet. Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the AEOI, made the remarks in an interview on Thursday evening regarding the incident that is currently under investigation for causing material damage to the inactive shed that is located in an open area of the Natanz site.

His remarks came hours after an informed Iranian security official told Press TV that there was no evidence to show that the incident has been an act of intentional sabotage. Kamalvandi said, "The incident took place at about 02:00 local time this morning and caused no loss of life," adding, "We have many open-space sheds at the Shahid Ahmadi Roshan enrichment complex. Our enrichment activities are mostly done underground." "Our open-space sheds do different things. This was one of those sheds, which was under construction. We have material damage, but no loss of life," he added.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449512/AEOI-Natanz-incident-causing-no-work-stoppage-slowdown-at-facility>

Iranian ambassador urges intl. community to respect 2231 resolution

Tehran Times, July 3, 2020

Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Mohammad Ali Hosseini has urged the international community, especially signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal known as the JCPOA, to respect the 2231 resolution of the UN Security Council. "Being still committed to its obligations-15 of IAEA reports vouch for it. #Iran call upon international community, especially JCPOA singers to respect Res2231 and its provisions," he tweeted on Thursday.

In another tweet, he said, "US significant non-performance to UNSC/Res2231 is a manifestation of 'threat to international peace' that needs #UNSC determination. 'Economic Terrorism' of the US that has imposed huge economic and non-economic detriments to #Iranian nation, ought to be indicted." "#US approach to #JCPOA is bold in unilateralism, bleak on improving #UNSC peace-seeking function and pure humbug in reflecting #Iran's cooperation with IAEA. Not only U.S. illegally withdraw from JCPOA, but also is punishing others for not imitating the same!" he said in a separate tweet.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449539/Iranian-ambassador-urges-intl-community-to-respect-2231-resolution>

Ghalibaf: We won't let IAEA complete espionage circle of hostile countries

Tehran Times, July 5, 2020

The Islamic Republic and its parliament will not allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to pursue completing the circle of espionage of hostile countries, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has warned. "The International Atomic Energy Agency and the Board of Governors should know that the Islamic Republic and the Majlis representatives will not allow the Agency

to be free of any restriction so that it does whatever it wants and seeks to complete the circle of espionage of hostile countries," Ghalibaf said on Sunday, according to Mehr. He said Iran expects the other sides to the nuclear agreement to fulfil their commitments under the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"We will stand up to their excessive demands, and we hope that the Foreign Ministry will be able to perform their duties well," the parliament speaker added. The 35-member IAEA board of governors passed a resolution on June 19 demanding access to two old places under the allegation that nuclear work may have been done there. France, Britain, and Germany, the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, submitted the draft resolution to the IAEA board for approval. Nine countries out of 35 members to the IAEA board did not vote for the resolution. China and Russia voted against the resolution and Thailand, Mongolia, Niger, South Africa, India, Pakistan and the Republic of Azerbaijan abstained to vote.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449620/Ghalibaf-We-won-t-let-IAEA-complete-espionage-circle-of-hostile>

Salehi says Iran is studying various scenarios over the Natanz incident

Tehran Times, July 5, 2020

Ali Akbar Salehi, director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, has said that various scenarios over the Natanz incident are being studied and the final results will be announced. Abolfazl Amouei, an MP, told ISNA on Sunday that Salehi said in a meeting of Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee that all security and intelligence aspects of the issue will be studied.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said on Thursday that the incident had caused no stoppage or slowdown of

enrichment because the affected shed was actually under construction and not part of the enrichment process yet. Iran's Civil Defense Organization chief Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali said on Thursday that Iran will respond if the incident in Natanz is proven to be a cyberattack.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449656/Salehi-says-Iran-is-studying-various-scenarios-over-the-Natanz>

Iran Admits Serious Damage to Natanz Nuclear Site, Setting Back Program

Farnaz Fassihi, Richard Pérez-Peña and Ronen Bergman

The New York Times, July 5, 2020

A fire at Iran's main nuclear fuel enrichment site caused significant damage, setting back the country's nuclear program by months, the government acknowledged on Sunday, after initially saying the destruction was minor. A Middle Eastern intelligence official with knowledge of the episode said Israel was responsible for the attack on the Natanz nuclear complex on Thursday, using a powerful bomb. A member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps who was briefed on the matter also said an explosive was used.

Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity when discussing sensitive intelligence and operational topics. Suspicion in Iran has focused on Israel and the United States, which have sabotaged the nuclear program in the past and have vowed to keep Iran from developing nuclear weapons. In the past, Israel and the United States have used cyberattacks to damage Iran's nuclear program, but that has been ruled out as a cause in this case, the Revolutionary Guards member said.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/05/world/middleeast/iran-Natanz-nuclear-damage.html>

Natanz explosion: How satellite images became key to Mideast reporting

Seth J. Frantzman

The Jerusalem Post, July 9, 2020

Satellite images are increasingly playing a role in documenting and reporting incidents across the Middle East. The relatively quick and open access that reporters and open source social media users have to this advanced technology has revolutionized how people can report about war. The recent explosion at the Natanz nuclear enrichment facilities is one example, as are the tracking of warplanes in Libya and elsewhere.

New images from Natanz posted online on July 8 illustrated the extensive damage to the facility caused by a mysterious July 2 explosion. Iranian state media had initially reported this as an accident, showing footage from the less damaged part of the building. Those who wanted to know more had to wait. Reporters these days have no access to Iran – and even if they did, the COVID-19 crisis has made most travel impossible. But eyes in the sky, with resolution getting better all the time, are a new resource.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/natanz-explosion-how-satellite-images-became-key-to-mideast-reporting-634457>

Long-Planned and Bigger Than Thought: Strike on Iran's Nuclear Program

David E. Sanger, Eric Schmitt and Ronen Bergman

The New York Times, July 10, 2020

As Iran's center for advanced nuclear centrifuges lies in charred ruins after an explosion, apparently engineered by Israel, the long-simmering conflict between the United States and Tehran appears to be escalating into a potentially dangerous phase likely to play out during the American presidential election campaign.

New satellite photographs over the stricken facility at Natanz show far more extensive

damage than was clear last week. Two intelligence officials, updated with the damage assessment for the Natanz site recently compiled by the United States and Israel, said it could take the Iranians up to two years to return their nuclear program to the place it was just before the explosion. An authoritative public study estimates it will be a year or more until Iran's centrifuge production capacity recovers.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/10/world/middleeast/iran-nuclear-trump.html>

UN arms embargo: Last chance for E3 to save Iran nuclear deal

Tehran Times, July 10, 2020

Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei has warned France, Germany, and the UK against extending the UN arms embargo on Iran, signaling that doing so could spell the end of the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). "According to UN Security Council Resolution 2231, the import or export of weapons to the Islamic Republic is subject to obtaining prior permission for a period of 5 years. This restriction should automatically end in October," Rabiei told a news conference on Tuesday. He called on the E3 to stop the policy of appeasing the U.S., which put the JCPOA and international peace "in danger".

Under the JCPOA, the UN must lift its arms embargo on Iran five years after the implementation of the nuclear deal. Despite its withdrawal from the JCPOA, the U.S. is pushing for the extension of the arms embargo on Iran, which is scheduled to expire on October 18. The U.S. has also drafted a resolution calling for the extension of the arms embargo and has circulated it in the UNSC even as some permanent members of the council with veto power, like Russia and China, have strongly opposed extending the arms embargo. The council has yet to vote on the U.S. resolution.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449804/UN-arms-embargo-Last-chance-for-E3-to-save-Iran-nuclear-deal>

Parliament prepares plan to stop Additional Protocol in Iran

Tehran Times, July 11, 2020

The Iranian parliament has prepared a plan to stop the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the NPT in Iran by the International Atomic Energy Agency, Tasnim reported on Saturday. "This plan has been prepared in the format of urgency based on which voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol will be stopped and the government is obliged to observe it," said Abbas Moghtadaei, the deputy chairman of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee. Moghtadaei said that the plan has been drawn up in response to the United States and Europe's excessive demands.

Iran's parliament issued a statement in June strongly condemning an anti-Iran resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors, asking the government to stop implementing the Additional Protocol, which allows surprise inspections of nuclear sites. "The Islamic Consultative Assembly strongly condemns resolution of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors which was proposed by three European countries of England, France, and Germany under the pressure of the ruling regime in the United States and the fake Zionist regime. It [the parliament] considers the resolution another example of structural discrimination by the international agency," the statement read.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449878/Parliament-prepares-plan-to-stop-Additional-Protocol-in-Iran>

Defying U.S., China and Iran Near Trade and Military Partnership

Farnaz Fassihi and Steven Lee Myers

The New York Times, July 11, 2020

Iran and China have quietly drafted a sweeping economic and security partnership that would clear the way for billions of dollars of Chinese investments in energy and other sectors, undercutting the Trump administration's efforts to isolate the Iranian government because of its nuclear

and military ambitions. The partnership, detailed in an 18-page proposed agreement obtained by The New York Times, would vastly expand Chinese presence in banking, telecommunications, ports, railways and dozens of other projects. In exchange, China would receive a regular – and, according to an Iranian official and an oil trader, heavily discounted – supply of Iranian oil over the next 25 years.

The document also describes deepening military cooperation, potentially giving China a foothold in a region that has been a strategic preoccupation of the United States for decades. It calls for joint training and exercises, joint research and weapons development and intelligence sharing – all to fight "the lopsided battle with terrorism, drug and human trafficking and cross-border crimes." The partnership – first proposed by China's leader, Xi Jinping, during a visit to Iran in 2016 – was approved by President Hassan Rouhani's cabinet in June, Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, said last week.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/11/world/asia/china-iran-trade-military-deal.html>

Iran mulls lawsuits and legal actions to unblock funds

Salman Parviz

Tehran Times, July 12, 2020

In his recent reaction to Seoul's blockage of Iranian assets, President Hassan Rouhani said South Korea's seizure of Iranian assets "is by no means acceptable and we expect Seoul to lift the restrictions as soon as possible." South Korea's somber consideration of this just demand should allow Iran to buy the basic humanitarian supplies to fight the Covid-19 pandemic utilizing these frozen accounts. The U.S. administration is now frugally following the step-by-step brochure on "maximum pressure" campaign. Certainly, the Iranian nation is suffering from this economic suffocation. Remember "I can't breathe". This is Trump administration's

true intention for Iran, by hook or crook to topple the regime.

The U.S. campaign to use its own financial regulations to pressure Iran and other countries with economic ties with the Islamic Republic has been a mix of implicit threats backed by explicit action. An example at hand is South Korea, once one of the main buyers of Iranian crude and one of the key trading partners of Iran. When U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018, his administration adopted a new and more aggressive “maximum pressure” strategy against Iran and every country with economic ties with Tehran. Under pressure of threats from the U.S., many countries stopped buying Iranian crude.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449888/Iran-mulls-lawsuits-and-legal-actions-to-unblock-funds>

Iran denounces Bloomberg article for promoting violence, terrorism

Tehran Times, July 12, 2020

Iran’s UN Mission has denounced a Bloomberg article for encouraging violence, terror and sabotage against Iran, saying the article promotes violence and terrorism. Alireza Miryousefi, head of media office of Iran’s Mission to the UN, on July 16 responded to a Bloomberg opinion column written by Eli Lake titled “Sabotage in Iran Is Preferable to a Deal With Iran”. In his response published in the Letter to the Editor section of the American news outlet, Miryousefi said Lake’s column is “one that against all journalistic standards encourages violence, terror and sabotage, and makes a number of factual errors and assumptions.”

“Firstly, praising the illegal assassination of nuclear scientists and encouraging sabotage in Iran’s infrastructures amounts to what are inhumane, barbaric acts that promote violence and terrorism,” he wrote. According to Miryousefi, such measures do nothing less than keeping tensions high, and could ignite a full range escalation. He said Iran has publicly announced: “If it’s concluded that a regime or a government had a hand in the incident, directly or

indirectly, the Islamic Republic will respond decisively.” Five years ago, he continued, “We reached an historic agreement, the JCPOA, or Iran Nuclear Deal, which addressed different aspects of Iran’s peaceful nuclear program. It was only after two years of intensive, difficult negotiations that all parties were satisfied that all issues had been resolved.”

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/450207/Iran-denounces-Bloomberg-article-for-promoting-violence-terrorism>

Iranian police investigate latest explosion at industrial complex

Middle East Eye, July 13, 2020

Iranian police are investigating an explosion and fire at an industrial complex in the country’s northeast, the latest in a series of incidents at infrastructure, industrial and nuclear sites across the Islamic Republic. Local fire officials told the semi-official Mehr news agency on Monday that at least six storage tanks exploded and caught fire at a liquid gas plant in the Kavian Fariman industrial zone, south of the city of Mashhad. Javid Jahandoust, the fire chief at the industrial complex, said the fire was under control and reported no casualties. He added that local police were investigating the cause of the incident.

Since late June, there have been several explosions and fires at Iranian military, nuclear and industrial facilities. Iranian officials have referred to most of the cases as incidents or accidents, although reports have said that some of the incidents involved sabotage.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iran-police-investigate-latest-fire-explosion-industrial-complex>

Iranian diplomat says there is still chance to save nuclear deal

Tehran Times, July 13, 2020

“When the agreement was signed, almost all the parties admitted that it is a win-win deal. However, after five years of

harming the JCPOA and implementing it in an unbalanced way, this characteristic of the mentioned document has been annihilated. However, there is still chance to save the JCPOA and political will and practical action of the remaining parties are required," IRNA quoted him as writing in an article on Monday. He noted that Russia and China have proved "politically" and "practically" that they are determined to preserve the JCPOA. But he slammed the Europeans for not being committed to their obligations in practice.

Jalali also noted that the European financial mechanism known as INSTEX (the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges) has not the necessary efficiency due to the U.S. pressure. INSTEX has been designed to facilitate legitimate trade with Tehran. It was introduced on January 31, 2019, by France, Germany, and Britain, the three European countries party to the nuclear deal. INSTEX was supposed to be a financial channel and a special mechanism for transferring money in spite of U.S. sanctions on Iran. Its objective was to facilitate Iran's transactions with European companies. In late November 2019, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden issued a joint statement announcing becoming shareholders of INSTEX.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449976/Iranian-diplomat-says-there-is-still-chance-to-save-nuclear-deal>

Enemies miserable over Iran-China partnership: Tehran

Tehran Times, July 13, 2020

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has announced that Iran's relations with China are entering a new stage, which has made the enemies miserable that their plots have failed. "Iran as an important country in West Asia and China as an important country in East Asia have always had good relations," Mousavi said during a press conference on Monday. He explained that President Hassan Rouhani made a trip to China five years ago, during which the two sides agreed to push bilateral relations toward strategic partnership and to sign a

comprehensive bilateral deal.

"Since that time, several task forces worked on this issue, which eventually led to a draft that is paving the way for the final round of talks," he explained. According to Mousavi, some other countries are miserable that the partnership plan thwarted their tricks. "All these attacks have roots abroad," he said, pointing to the strong criticisms leveled at the Iran-China partnership plan. Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on June 23 that Iran and China have drafted a 25-year plan for a comprehensive partnership that proves the failure of the plots to isolate the Islamic Republic. "This plan proves the failure of the United States' policies to isolate Iran, sever Iran's relations with the international community and also to harm Iran's will to expand relations with other countries," Rabiei said during a press conference. He said that the plan is based on a win-win approach which "heralds long term cooperation". "Recognizing cultural commonalities, encouraging multilateralism, supporting equal rights of the nations, and insisting on domestic development are parts of this plan," the government spokesman explained.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449970/Enemies-miserable-over-Iran-China-partnership-Tehran>

IAEA resolution against Iran 'only makes things more complicated': Ulyanov

Mohammad Mazhari

Tehran Times, July 14, 2020

On June 19, the IAEA Board of Governors passed a resolution critical of Iran, a move that Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, says "only makes things more complicated". Russian and China voted against the resolution. Some other countries like South Africa, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Niger, Niger and Mongolia abstained to vote.

“Russia voted against (IAEA resolution). The bottom line is that the mere fact of adopting any kind of resolution on Iran would not have provided a positive result. On the contrary, it only makes things more complicated,” Ulyanov tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview. The resolution was submitted to the board by the European troika (the United Kingdom, France, and Germany). It calls on Tehran to provide IAEA inspectors access to two sites in Iran in order to verify possible traces of unauthorized and undeclared nuclear material and nuclear activity.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449991/IAEA-resolution-against-Iran-only-makes-things-more-complicated>

H. Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia urges international community take firm stand against Iran

Arab News, July 8, 2020

Saudi Arabia called on the international community to take a firm stand against Iran and that appropriate measures be taken to continue an arms embargo against the regime. Saudi Arabia also urged the Iranian nuclear and ballistic programs be taken seriously.

In a session on Tuesday, the cabinet reviewed the Security Council’s discussion of the UN Secretary-General’s report on Iran’s involvement in the missile attacks that targeted the Kingdom last year. Ministers reiterated the Kingdom’s commitment to the stability of the region and that Saudi Arabia will not under any circumstances allow any transgression of its borders.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1701526/saudi-arabia>

I. Israel

Israel says ‘not necessarily’ behind all Iran nuclear site incidents

Reuters, July 5, 2020

Israel’s defence minister said on Sunday it is not “necessarily” behind every mysterious

incident in Iran, after a fire at the Natanz nuclear site prompted some Iranian officials to say it was the result of cyber sabotage. Israel, widely believed to be the region’s only nuclear power, has pledged never to allow Iran to obtain atomic weapons, saying Tehran advocates its destruction. Iran denies ever seeking nuclear arms and says its atomic programme is peaceful.

The underground Natanz site, where a one-storey building was partly burned on Thursday, is the centrepiece of Iran’s uranium enrichment programme and monitored by inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear watchdog. Asked whether Israel had anything to do with “mysterious explosions” at Iranian nuclear sites, Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz said: “Not every incident that transpires in Iran necessarily has something to do with us.”

<https://in.reuters.com/article/iran-nuclear-natanz-israel/israel-says-not-necessarily-behind-all-iran-nuclear-site-incidents-idINKBN246087>

Israel, US developing shared strategy to counter Iran nuclear program, US officials reveal

Middle East Monitor, July 13, 2020

Israel and the United States are developing a shared strategy aimed at taking out senior Iranian military figures and slowing down Iran’s nuclear program, US officials have revealed to the New York Times. Following the explosion at the Iranian city of Natanz on 2 July, in which a nuclear facility was severely damaged, as well as a series of other explosions within that same week, it was revealed by the NYT that Israel was behind the attacks.

Iran then denied, however, that Israel’s cyberattack was the cause of the explosion, despite the former Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman having accused the chief of Israeli intelligence agency Mossad of leaking the details of its attack. That was then followed by another explosion

in an area of the capital Tehran, which Iran also denied had taken place, leading many to speculate on the explosions, the truth behind them and the extent of Israel's involvement.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200713-israel-us-developing-shared-strategy-to-counter-iran-nuclear-program-us-officials-reveal/>

J. Turkey

Containment building of first Akkuyu unit takes shape

World Nuclear News, July 2, 2020

The installation of the second tier of the reactor building's internal containment has been completed at unit 1 of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant under construction in Mersin province, southern Turkey. The inner containment is one of the critical components of unit's safety systems, which prevent the release of radioactive materials to the environment, said JSC Akkuyu Nuklear.

The height of the reactor building has now increased by 12 metres, from the level of 4.95 metres to 16.95 metres. The total weight of the installed structure is 411 tonnes and its diameter exceeds 20 metres, JSC Akkuyu Nuklear said. The internal containment will comprise three tiers and a dome. Once the installation of the internal containment is completed, it will undergo a pressurised leakage test. The unit will also feature an external containment structure that will protect the reactor, steam generators and other equipment from extreme external hazards.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Containment-building-of-first-Akkuyu-unit-takes-sh>

Turkey to open 1st domestic solar panel factory in Aug

Anadolu Agency, July 5, 2020

Turkey in August will open its very first indigenous integrated solar panel factory as part of its efforts to strengthen the nation's power grid, the country's president said on Sunday. "We ensured over \$100 billion has

been invested in energy by the public and private sectors over the past 18 years," since the ruling party came to power, Recep Tayyip Erdogan told a mass launching ceremony of hydroelectric power plants in the northern province of Tokat, speaking via video link from Istanbul. In the first five months of 2020, he stressed, Turkey boosted its electricity production from domestic and renewable sources to 66%, adding that last year Turkey was second place in Europe in the production of electrical energy based on renewable resources.

"It is not possible for a country without energy to talk about being civilized," he said. At a time when the world closed into itself, Turkey has shown that it is not surrendering to the pandemic but is instead supporting investment, production, and employment, he said. Erdogan said he believes power plants make Turkey stronger, as they are symbols of development, advancement, and growth. "Continuing investing in all areas alongside healthcare services during the outbreak showed Turkey's determination to achieve its goals for the year 2023," the nation's centennial, he said. He underlined that in 2002, Turkey had 31,000 megawatts of installed power capacity, while in 2020 it boasted nearly three times that number, 91,000 megawatts. Erdogan reiterated that Akkuyu, Turkey's first nuclear power plant, will start operating in 2023.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/economy/turkey-to-open-1st-domestic-solar-panel-factory-in-aug/1900492>

Turkey may go nuclear, defying predictions, non-proliferation fellow says

Ahval, July 8, 2020

Turkey is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and has ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. It also already has 50 American B61 nuclear bombs at a joint U.S.-Turkish airbase. However, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's

has suggested he would like Turkey to acquire its own nuclear weapons, which he said were an enormous source of power for Israel. He has also said it is unfair to deny Turkey such weapons, and told ruling Justice and Development Party members that “some countries have missiles with nuclear warheads, not one or two. But [they tell us] we can’t have them. This, I cannot accept”.

Spacapan also said Ankara’s case for nuclear power at its under-construction Akkuyu power plant doesn’t add up as Russia will own and operate the plant, and Turkey has more economically-viable options in terms of renewables and hydrocarbon exploration to meet its energy needs. “What’s worrisome is Turkey could exploit nuclear power as a cover to procure bomb-related technology and hardware,” he said.

<https://ahvalnews.com/nuclear-weapons/turkey-may-go-nuclear-defying-predictions-non-proliferation-fellow-says>

Akkuyu unit 1 hydraulic tests completed

World Nuclear News, July 14, 2020

A watertight chamber, or caisson, was used for the hydraulic tests, during which a maximum pressure of 24.5 MPa was generated in the RPV 1.4 times higher than the operating pressure. Rovshan Abbasov, director of the Volgodonsk branch of AEM Technology, said preparatory work for the tests had been carried out under “difficult quarantine conditions”, but Atomash specialists had “ensured accurate and high-quality execution of all the necessary operations”. The hydraulic tests have confirmed the strength of the base metal and welded joints of the 334-tonne RPV and its readiness to operate for 60 years, he added.

The 4800 MWe plant will comprise four VVER1200 reactors and is expected to meet about 10% of Turkey’s electricity needs. Turkey aims to bring unit 1 online in 2023, the centenary of its foundation as a republic.

<https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Akkuyu-unit-1-hydraulic-tests-completed>

East Asia

K. Japan

Japan to shut or mothball 100 ageing coal-fired power plants - Yomiuri

Reuters, July 2, 2020

Japan is looking to suspend or close as many as 100 older, inefficient coal-fired power plants by about 2030, the Yomiuri daily newspaper reported on Thursday. Closures on that scale would mark a major shift in the government’s strong support for coal in the world’s third-biggest economy. Japan is the only Group of Seven nation to be rolling out plans for new coal power stations, a major contributor to carbon and other emissions that stoke global warming.

Without citing sources, the Yomiuri said industry minister Hiroshi Kajiyama is set to announce soon that nearly 90% - about 100 - of 114 power plants built before the mid-1990s and deemed inefficient by the government will be closed or mothballed. Contacted by Reuters, an official at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) confirmed the government views 114 of Japan’s 140 coal-fired plants as inefficient. The official said Japan has set out plans to phase out inefficient coal power plants by 2030.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-japan-powerstation-coal/japan-to-shut-or-mothball-100-ageing-coal-fired-power-plants-yomiuri-idUKKBN24306U>

Japan, U.S. vow cooperation on North Korea as nuclear talks snubbed

Kyodo News, July 11, 2020

Japan and the United States on Friday confirmed their cooperation on North Korea as the reclusive state rebuffs calls to resume denuclearization negotiations, while Washington conveyed its continued readiness for dialogue with Pyongyang. In a meeting in Tokyo, Foreign Minister

Toshimitsu Motegi stressed to visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun the need to strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance in an ever-changing security environment.

“It is crucial that Japan and the United States work together to maintain and bolster a free and open Indo-Pacific region,” Motegi said. Biegun, who was on a two-day visit to Tokyo after making a stop in Seoul to speak with South Korean officials, replied, “As we face new challenges in this era, it is ever more important for us to work closely together.” In separate meetings with Motegi and Defense Minister Taro Kono among other Japanese officials, Biegun “emphasized continued U.S. readiness to engage in dialogue with the DPRK,” the State Department said, referring to the acronym for Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, North Korea’s official name.

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/07/e75d4b6b195a-update3-japan-us-vow-cooperation-on-n-korea.html>

8 cases of inappropriately stored nuclear waste found at northern Japan reprocessing plant

The Mainichi, July 15, 2020

Japan Nuclear Fuel Ltd. (JNFL) had been inappropriately storing nuclear waste at a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in Rokkasho, Aomori Prefecture, in northern Japan, including keeping waste in undesignated areas, the country’s nuclear regulatory body has revealed. The Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) had instructed JNFL to make improvements in its practices in 2017, but the company had left some of its nuclear waste in places where they were not supposed to be. There has been no confirmation that any of the radioactive substances leaked. There have been a series of shoddy practices uncovered at JNFL, which is likely to call into question the company’s attitude.

At the fuel reprocessing plant, uranium and plutonium are extracted from spent nuclear fuel for reuse in nuclear reactors. Highly radioactive waste liquid that is generated in

the process becomes nuclear waste when it is solidified in glass. According to the NRA and others, JNFL had been keeping nuclear waste in a building different from the one the waste is meant to be stored in. As for the approximately 160 kilograms of shards of radioactive waste liquid solidified in glass, an appropriate storage method had not been stipulated. There were eight cases of inappropriate storage, some of them spanning the past 19 years.

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20200715/p2a/00m/0na/002000c>

Japan’s 2020 defense white paper says N. Korea has “capability to attack Japan”

Hankyoreh, July 15, 2020

Japan’s defense white paper for 2020 states that North Korea “is assessed to have already miniaturized nuclear weapons to fit ballistic missile warheads.” While Japan’s characterizations of North Korea’s nuclear weapon capabilities have become more strongly worded over past years, this year marks the first mention of it “possessing the capability to attack Japan.”

The 2020 white paper, titled “Defense of Japan,” was adopted by the Japanese government at a July 14 Cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. One notable aspect of the white paper is its emphasis on North Korea’s nuclear and missile capabilities posing a direct threat to Japan. In past white papers, the Japanese Ministry of Defense (MOD) stated that North Korea “appears to have arrived at the stage of miniaturizing nuclear weapons and developing warheads.” The latest white paper characterizes the threat as much more substantive. As recently as 2018, the white paper stated that “it may be seen as possible that [North Korea] has arrived at the stage of nuclear weapon miniaturization and warhead development.”

http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/953802.html

L. North Korea

North Korean leader's sister says another summit unlikely but "a surprise thing may still happen"

Sangmi Cha and Josh Smith

Reuters, July 10, 2020

Kim Yo Jong, the sister of North Korea's leader, said another summit with the United States would only be useful for Washington at this point, adding her country had no intention of "threatening the U.S.," according to state media. Kim said in her personal opinion, there is unlikely to be another summit between leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump this year but "a surprise thing may still happen," news agency KCNA reported on Friday.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Thursday he was "very hopeful" about resuming talks with North Korea about denuclearisation and appeared to leave open the possibility of another summit between the countries' leaders. Kim Yo Jong's comments came a day after the U.S. point man for North Korea, Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun, wrapped up a three-day visit to Seoul where he rejected speculation he was seeking to meet North Korean officials during his trip, but said the United States was open to talks.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa/north-korean-leaders-sister-says-another-summit-unlikely-but-a-surprise-thing-may-still-happen-idUSKBN24A3CB>

M. South Korea

South Korea's Moon calls for U.S.-North Korea summit before U.S. election

Hyonhee Shin

Reuters, July 1, 2020

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has said U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un should meet again before the U.S. presidential election in November, a Seoul official told reporters on Wednesday. Moon's remarks

were made during a video conference with European Council President Charles Michel on Tuesday, during which he said another summit between Trump and Kim would help resume stalled nuclear negotiations.

"I believe there's a need for North Korea and the United States to try dialogue one more time before the U.S. presidential election," a presidential official quoted Moon as saying. "The issues of nuclear programmes and sanctions will ultimately have to be resolved through North Korea-U.S. talks." Moon's office had conveyed such views to Washington and the officials there are making efforts to resume the talks, the South Korean official said. Trump and Kim met for the first time in 2018 in Singapore, raising hopes of an agreement to get Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons programme. But their second summit, in early 2019 in Vietnam, fell apart.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-southkorea/south-koreas-moon-calls-for-u-s-north-korea-leaders-summit-before-u-s-election-idUSKBN2424IG>

S. Korea's top nuke envoy holds talks with Chinese, Russian ambassadors

Yonhap News, July 3, 2020

South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator Lee Do-hoon met separately with the top Chinese and Russian envoys to Seoul on Friday and discussed the situation on the Korean Peninsula. The meetings took place as Lee reported to work for the first time since his release from mandatory two-week self-isolation after returning from a trip to Washington, where he held talks with his counterpart, Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun. Lee first met with Chinese Ambassador Xing Haiming, who was seen arriving at the foreign ministry in the afternoon. When approached by reporters with a question on what he would be discussing with Lee, he said he came to discuss "the situation on the Korean Peninsula."

A couple of hours later, Russian Ambassador Andrey Kulik was spotted entering the ministry. "I'll discuss the Korean Peninsula issue with Special Representative Lee," he told reporters. "The security issue in this region is very important for us too." Tensions between the two Koreas spiked sharply last month, as the North cut off cross-border communication lines, blew up an inter-Korean liaison office and threatened to take military action in anger over anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets.

<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200703007851325>

Uncertainty Looms Large Over South Korea's Bid to Revive Nuclear Diplomacy

Eunjung Cho

VOA, July 6, 2020

South Korean President Moon Jae-in is gearing up to facilitate another summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. The effort, however, faces an uncertain future, analysts say. Moon recently tapped new national security chiefs who have extensive experience in high-level contacts with North Korea. The move comes days after Moon said he wants another summit between Trump and Kim before the November presidential election in the United States.

"This lineup I think is clearly geared towards keeping the North Koreans engaged, finding out what the North Koreans would want at a summit and then trying to convince Washington that having another summit with the North Koreans is a good idea," Evans Revere, who served as the acting assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in the George W. Bush administration, told VOA.

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/uncertainty-looms-large-over-south-koreas-bid-revive-nuclear-diplomacy>

South Korea faces hurdles with space projects

Jung Da-min

Korea Times, July 8, 2020

South Korea's recent announcement of a deal on new missile guidelines with the United States lifted a decades-long restriction on South Korea's use of solid fuels for its space launch vehicles. Expectations have since risen that South Korea will be able to launch its own low-Earth orbit military spy satellites atop rockets produced by domestic manufacturers. The presidential office said the lift of the ban would help advance the South Korean military's intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities by enabling launch of low-Earth orbit satellites atop solid propellants. It said such satellites would provide around-the-clock military surveillance, dubbed the "unblinking eye."

Cheong Wa Dae said the lifting of the ban would also help businesses and individuals in the country's private sector, especially talented young experts, to actively jump into space projects, as it secures an institutional foundation that supports construction of space industry infrastructure. Such a rosy picture for South Korea's space industry, however, is not likely to be realized in the near future as there are many hurdles ahead for South Korea to develop its own rockets and establish them in the market, according to defense industry watchers.

https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/08/356_293970.html

N. Misc

NEA study sets scene for reducing nuclear costs

World Nuclear News, July 3, 2020

Building new nuclear capacity does not need to be risky or expensive, a new report from the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) has found. The organisation has called for government action to support a

rapid reduction in the costs of new nuclear capacity by creating policy frameworks that capture and apply the lessons learned and capabilities developed over recent years.

Nuclear energy can play a very important role in the near term - as part of the recovery from the COVID crisis - and in the longer term to meet environmental and energy security targets, but the cost of building large new plants has presented a major barrier, NEA Director General William Magwood said yesterday at the webinar launch of Unlocking Reductions in the Construction Costs of Nuclear: A Practical Guide for Stakeholders. In some cases, costs and overruns have even led to project failures, he said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/NEA-study-sets-scene-for-reducing-nuclear-costs>

Indian firm completes ITER cryostat manufacture

World Nuclear News, July 7, 2020

Indian company Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Heavy Engineering Ltd has completed the final segment of the ITER cryostat, bringing to an end an eight-year work programme. Work on the cryostat will now continue at the ITER site in southern France where the sections will be assembled, sited and welded over the next four years. The cryostat will completely surround the vacuum vessel and superconducting magnets of the ITER fusion machine, insulating the magnetic system at an ultra-cold temperature. The 3800-tonne cryostat will be the world's largest steel vacuum chamber, with a volume of 16,000 cubic metres. It has been built in 54 segments at L&T's Hazira facility under a contract awarded to the company in 2012 by the Indian Domestic Agency. The segments are shipped to ITER for assembly into four manoeuvrable sections in a dedicated on-site workshop.

Three of the four cryostat sections have already been completed and shipped by L&T, and the first completed section - the cryostat base - was installed in ITER's Tokamak pit in May. The next two sections

- the lower and upper cylinders - are currently in storage on site, with preparations for the lowering of the lower section into the Tokamak pit due to begin in August.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/India-completes-ITER-cryostat-manufacture>

Nuclear power to 2030: key countries

Nuclear Engineering, July 8, 2020

The growing demand for electricity across the globe and the necessity of developing and using safe, reliable and economical sources of electricity are pushing countries to build new nuclear reactors. Globally, there are more than 400 active nuclear reactors that are currently in operation and 54 nuclear reactors are under construction in 17 different countries.

There are around 475 nuclear reactors that have not started construction yet, but have been announced or have started acquiring permits and finances. There are several types of reactors, but the pressurised water reactor (PWR) is the most popular one with around 70% of all active reactors being of this type. Other reactor types that are currently active are – pressurised heavy water reactor (PHWR), boiling water reactor (BWR), light water graphite reactor (LWGR), gas cooled reactor (GCR) and fast breeder reactor (FBR).

<https://www.neimagazine.com/features/featurenuclear-power-to-2030-key-countries-8017370/>

Post-Pandemic Energy Shift to Nuclear Power

Hananah Zarrar

Modern Diplomacy, July 15, 2020

The age of clean energy is already here while ongoing pandemic has severely affected global economy and energy markets. Fossil fuel industry and coal-based generation that holds more than 80% share in global energy supplies and

electricity generation, suffers to operate at low capacity with decreased energy demand. Global restrictions on travel caused the biggest drop in oil demand in last 25 years while drop in coal demands is estimated to be 8-10% compared with last year that shows largest decline since second world war. The plunge in energy demands and collapsing prices are becoming a major hurdle for global economic recovery in coming years. This scenario promotes the reliance on renewable and clean energy resources for coming decades. It has also underlined the importance of electricity reliability and resilience during major disruptions. While governments are overwhelmed to secure long-term energy availability and market requirements, the post-pandemic sustainable energy systems have become the immediate need.

The energy industry that would emerge out of this crisis would certainly be distinct than the one existed before the pandemic. The fossil fuel industry is exposed to have been lagging two-dimensionally i.e. first, not being an environment friendly way of producing energy and second, unable to sustain such crisis scenarios where the demand drops and market collapses. Besides many renewable energy resources, nuclear energy stands as the most environment friendly and cost-effective energy resource. European countries are among top nuclear power dependent countries for their energy mix. Belgium, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, Germany, South Korea are among the countries having more than 20% of nuclear power role in their total electricity production. Thus, there energy markets seem to be able to withstand the ongoing energy and economic recession. France, having the largest nuclear fleet that produces 74.8% of total electricity, is one of the most Covid-19 affected countries yet one of the biggest reasons of its continual sustenance is its largely nuclear dependent energy sector.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/07/15/post-pandemic-energy-shift-to-nuclear-power/>

O. Op-Ed

India

In stand-off, keeping an eye on the nuclear ball

Harsh V. Pant and Kartik Bommakanti

The Hindu, July 8, 2020

In the conventional escalation along the LAC, India cannot afford to ignore China's expanding nuclear arsenal

Despite domestic and external challenges, there is now growing evidence that the People's Republic of China (PRC) continues to expand its nuclear arsenal, which is worrisome but at the same time, not be surprising. China is pursuing a planned modernisation of its nuclear arsenal because it fears the multi-layered missile defence capabilities of the United States.

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/in-stand-off-keeping-an-eye-on-the-nuclear-ball/article32016062.ece>

Indian Nuclear Mainstreaming: Diplomatic Solution Or Destabilizing Mistake?

Rabia Javed

Eurasia Review, July 9, 2020

It is a known fact that nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the threat of nuclear terrorism are among the most critical challenges facing the world today. New Delhi's integration into global non-proliferation architecture – where it is not a member of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), can go against the non-proliferation regime, thereby, helping India in developing and modernizing weapon technologies. Over the past few years, the Indian government has time and again veered off into murk of nuclear power politics and rejigged its export control guidelines to fulfill its hegemonic ambitions. In contravention of nuclear non-proliferation rules, India's case for integrating it in nuclear non-proliferation regime which otherwise is denied to other countries not party to the

NPT, is setting a dangerous precedent for South Asia when region is already facing several challenges.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/09072020-indian-nuclear-mainstreaming-diplomatic-solution-or-destabilizing-mistake-oped/>

China

Huge gap between Chinese and US nuclear arsenals causes concerns

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, July 8, 2020

US officials have been making a lot of noises about China joining the US-Russia negotiation on nuclear arms reduction, but China has no interest in joining, given the huge gap between the nuclear arsenal of China and those of the US and Russia, and China has the need to improve its military capabilities, a senior Chinese diplomat said on Wednesday. The US is developing weapons in space, has withdrawn from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and has made it explicitly clear that it is planning to deploy land-based intermediate-range missiles in China's neighborhood and on its doorstep, Fu pointed out, noting that all these pose strategic threats to China's security, and people should not be surprised that China sees the need to improve its military capabilities. At the same time, the Chinese policy of maintaining the minimum deterrent capability and no-first-use policy will not change, but that does not mean China should not modernize its nuclear weapons to defend its national security, Fu said. The US has a huge nuclear arsenal, with about 5,800 warheads, about 20 times that of China's number, according to international think tanks such as the Federation of American Scientists and SIPRI. It is also planning on increasing this huge gap by investing about \$494 billion in the next 10 years and \$1.2 trillion in the next 30 years to upgrade its nuclear arsenal, both the warheads and their delivery systems.

The US is fully aware of the huge gap between the Chinese and US nuclear arsenals, both in terms of quantity and sophistication, Fu said "For them, hyping up

the China factor is nothing but a ploy to divert world attention, and to create a pretext under which they can walk away from the New START [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty], as they have done with so many other arms control treaties. The real purpose is to get rid of all possible restrictions and have a free hand in seeking overwhelming military superiority over any adversary, real or imagined," he said. If the US says it is ready to come down to the Chinese level in terms of its nuclear arsenal, China will be happy to participate, according to Fu.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1193892.shtml>

China's Role in Nuclear Non-Proliferation – An Issue For India To Ponder

The Taiwan Times, July 9, 2020

China signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1992; an international treaty aimed at discouraging the proliferation of nuclear technology and making of nuclear arms and dealing in technology transfer to non member-states, but in the decades since has remained involved in a clandestine manner in illegal proliferation. Beijing has always deemed the USA and India as impediments on its way to achieving the status of super power, so instead of confronting both nations directly it has propped-up two other countries to keep both the US, and India engaged, and distracted, and at the same time reducing the focus on China proper.

These two nations are North Korea and our own neighbor Pakistan. North Korea and China have the same governing structure under Kim Jung-Un and XI Jinping making them natural allies of a sort. They have signed a Mutual Aid and Cooperation Treaty, and now we see North Korea often threatening South Korea and the USA by way of its nuclear ambitions. Another interesting ally of China is Pakistan.

<https://thetaitwantimes.com/chinas-role-in-nuclear-non-proliferation-an-issue-for-india-to-ponder/3497>

USA

Japan to scrap aging coal power plants by FY 2030: minister

The Mianichi, July 3, 2020

Japan will begin discussions this month on concrete steps to reduce its dependence on coal and shift toward renewable energy sources to cut down on carbon emissions, industry minister Hiroshi Kajiyama said Friday. The announcement came a day after reports that Japan will shut down 100 or so of its 140 existing coal-fired generators by fiscal 2030 amid international criticism that it is not doing enough to fight global warming.

"We will look for ways to usher out low-efficiency coal while ensuring there is enough capacity to maintain a stable energy supply," Kajiyama told a press conference, adding that placing new restrictions on electric utilities could be an option. Japan currently depends on coal to generate 32 percent of its electricity, compared with just 17 percent generated by renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power.

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20200703/p2g/00m/0na/059000c>

American Foreign Policy and Nuclear War: Existential Crisis Management In A Time Of Plague

Prof. Louis René Beres

Modern Diplomacy, July 13, 2020

For the moment, Americans devote scant attention to any apparent risks of a nuclear war, but whatever residual attention remains centered on such risks focus on North Korea and Iran. Though concurrent hazards from Russia and China are potentially more existential and longer-term, the seeming plausibility of suffering a major conflict with another superpower or superpowers is presumptively lower. Moreover, regarding North Korea and Iran, there never was any appropriate reason for Washington to expect Pyongyang's "denuclearization or Tehran's "slowing-down" of active nuclearization.

Going forward, to best secure itself from increasingly complex and force-multiplying military threats, the United States will require (1) an improved assessment of risks from a still-growing assortment of recalcitrant state enemies; and (2) a corresponding willingness to link this doctrine-based assessment to more consistently refined conceptualizations, theories and scenarios. In the final analysis, all capable formulations of coherent US nuclear strategy will insistently demand a tangible American triumph of "mind over mind." This means, *inter alia*, a conspicuous elevation of analytic "preparation" over belligerent rhetoric; that is, over a manifestly contrived "attitude." To achieve such antecedent victory at a time of "plague" – by definition, a dissembling and bewildering time – the US president and his counselors will need to consciously factor in the impacts of viral pandemic upon (3) adversarial decision-making processes and (4) identifiable synergies obtaining between these consequential impacts and American national security processes.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/07/13/american-foreign-policy-and-nuclear-war-existential-crisis-management-in-a-time-of-plague/>

A restart of nuclear testing offers little scientific value to the US and would benefit other countries

Ferenc Dalnoki-Veress and Miles A. Pomper

The Conversation, July 14, 2020

Seventy five years ago, on August 6, 1945, a U.S. plane dropped a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. This happened only a few short weeks after scientists in the U.S. conducted the world's first successful nuclear test. The Trinity Test, in New Mexico's Jornada del Muerto desert, proved that the design of the bomb worked and started the nuclear era. The U.S. tested nuclear bombs for decades after World War II. But at the end of the Cold War in 1992, the U.S. government imposed a moratorium on U.S. testing. This was strengthened by the Clinton

administration's decision to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Although the Senate never ratified the treaty and it never entered into force, all 184 countries that signed the test ban, including the U.S., have followed its rules. But in recent weeks, the Trump administration and Congress have begun debating whether to restart active testing of nuclear weapons on U.S. soil.

Some conservative Republicans have long expressed concerns over the reliability of aging U.S. warheads and believe that testing is a way to address this problem. Additionally, the U.S., Russia and China are producing novel types of nuclear missiles or other delivery systems and replacing existing nuclear weapons – some of which date to the Cold War – with updated ones. Some politicians in the U.S. are concerned about the reliability of these untested modern weapons as well. We are two nuclear weapons researchers – a physicist and an arms control expert – and we believe that there is no value, from either the scientific nor diplomatic perspective, to be gained from resuming testing. In fact, all the evidence suggests that such a move would threaten U.S. national security.

<https://theconversation.com/a-restart-of-nuclear-testing-offers-little-scientific-value-to-the-us-and-would-benefit-other-countries-141168>

'Now I Am Become Death': The Legacy of the First Nuclear Bomb Test

Maria Cramer

The New York Times, July 15, 2020

It was 1 a.m. on July 16, 1945, when J. Robert Oppenheimer met with an Army lieutenant general, Leslie Groves, in the parched landscape of Jornada del Muerto – Dead Man's Journey – a remote desert in New Mexico. A group of engineers and physicists was about to detonate an atomic device packed with 13 pounds of plutonium, a nuclear weapon that the government hoped would bring an end to World War II.

Some scientists on the project worried that they were about to light the entire world on

fire, according to researchers. Others worried that the test would be “a complete dud.” Mr. Oppenheimer, who was tasked with designing an atomic bomb for the Manhattan Project, had not slept.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/15/us/trinity-test-anniversary.html>

West Asia

Iran

Why is Tehran not going to a settlement with Trump?

Mohammad Mazhari

Tehran Times, July 4, 2020

It seems that the time is not proper for settlement talks between Tehran and Washington as the nuclear deal is heading for a total failure. The current U.S. administration has shown that there is no point in talking to Washington as the results of any negotiations or agreements cannot be relied upon. Trump has a freaky desire and insistence on taking photos to just increase his chances of reelection without any coherent plan to conclude a real agreement. Almost the whole world has become quite convinced that any deal signed with the U.S. would be broken at Washington's will, so no one should bet on this administration.

“The rest of the world can no longer take it for granted that the U.S. still aspires to be a global leader and needs to readjust its priorities accordingly,” German Chancellor Angela Merkel warned three days ago. On the other hand, Iran's foreign policy is announced by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, who emphasized “no war, no negotiations with Trump”. It means that there will be neither escalation nor concessions while Tehran showed its readiness to respond to any American misadventure at the same level, as it fired more than a dozen ballistic missiles at the Assad airbase in Iraq, where American troops are stationed. The base was targeted in retaliation for a drone strike by the United States that martyred Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani in early January. There

is also increasing pressure on the American side by resistance groups to expel its forces from the Iraqi territory.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449568/Why-is-Tehran-not-going-to-a-settlement-with-Trump>

'Future of nuclear deal depends on determination to keep it'

Marc Otte

Tehran Times, July 5, 2020

All sides' good intention and trust-building actions are only ways to settle the crisis created by the Trump administration, he told ILNA in an interview published on Sunday. He also said that the United States seeks to weaken Iran's international position. Otte said that the U.S. is making efforts to reach its objective through policy of maximum pressure on Iran. U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions in history on Iran as part of his administration's "maximum pressure" strategy against Iran.

Many analysts and think tanks believe that the maximum pressure policy has failed. U.S. Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff said in May that the Trump administration's policy of maximum pressure against Iran is a "failed policy". President Hassan Rouhani said in December 2019 that the White House has no way other than putting an end to its policy of "maximum pressure" on the Islamic Republic. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in September 2019 that Washington's policy of sanction and pressure against Iran has not worked. "The United States is running out of options. It is desperate. The policy of maximum pressure has not worked," he told CGTN in an interview. Former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has called policy of "maximum pressure" on Tehran bankrupt. "We have been pressuring them. Maximum pressure... we're seeing the unfolding of really a bankruptcy of approach," Kerry told CBS News.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449652/Future-of-nuclear-deal-depends-on-determination-to-keep-it>

'China, Russia to counter extension of arms embargo on Iran'

David Schultz

Tehran times, July 8, 2020

The two countries will use their veto right at the UN Security Council to abort the plan, Schultz predicted. In an interview with ILNA published on Wednesday, he said that U.S. President Donald Trump seeks to weaken Iran. The professor also predicted that Washington's policy of pressure on Iran will reach nowhere. The United States has stepped up calls for an extension of UN arms embargo on Iran since April. The arms embargo on Iran is set to expire in October. Under the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, arms embargo against Iran expires in October.

On June 30, the U.S. was rebuked at the UN Security Council meeting, including by the five European countries on the council. Russia's Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia slammed the U.S. for pursuing a "maximum suffocation" foreign policy against Iran, saying Washington's goal was to "achieve regime change or create a situation where Iran literally wouldn't be able to breathe". "This is like putting a knee to one's neck," said Nebenzia, in a veiled reference to the death of black man George Floyd in Minneapolis after a white police officer knelt on his neck. China also voiced opposition to the anti-Iran move, urging Washington "to stop its illegal unilateral sanctions" on Iran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449796/China-Russia-to-counter-extension-of-arms-embargo-on-Iran>

U.S. policies destabilize West Asia: Russian envoy

Tehran Times, July 13, 2020

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has questioned Washington's attempts to extend to UN arms embargo on Iran while

at the same time sending enormous arms supplies to West Asia. “The #US attempts to make arms #embargo against #Iran indefinite and comprehensive look extremely questionable in the light of US enormous arms supplies to the region,” Ulyanov tweeted on Monday. “Whose policy in fact does lead to destabilisation of the situation in the Middle East?” he asked. The United States has stepped up calls for an extension of UN arms embargo on Iran since April.

Under the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, the arms embargo against Iran expires in October. In a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the Security Council circulated on June 8, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused the Trump administration of unleashing a politically motivated campaign against Iran and called for “universal condemnation” of the U.S. attempts. The Russian foreign minister said the United States withdrew from the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and six major powers and now has no legal right to try to use the UN resolution endorsing the deal to indefinitely continue the arms embargo. Last week, Ulyanov criticized a tweet by the U.S. State Department on Iran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449973/U-S-policies-destabilize-West-Asia-Russian-envoy>

JCPOA anniversary: JCPOA was product of Iran’s openness to engagement

Tehran Times, July 13, 2020

Five years after the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) about Iran’s nuclear program was signed, the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Monday said the JCPOA was the product of Tehran’s openness to engagement. The JCPOA, commonly referred to as the 2015 nuclear deal, was signed in Vienna on July 14, 2015, between Iran, the European Union, and the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany).

“The track record of dialogues on critical issues demonstrates Iran’s seriousness,

pragmatism on bringing peace & stability to Earth globe europe-africa. #JCPOA is the product of Iran’s openness to engagement, but US reckless exit from the Deal has wreaked havoc on this multilateral accomplishment,” the Foreign Ministry tweeted. In another tweet, the ministry noted that Iran remains committed to diplomatic engagement. “Despite the setback, Iran remains committed to diplomatic engagement, as it’s been & will be a trusted partner to its neighbors & beyond. Iran has long proposed several inclusive peace plans in MidEast; the latest one is #HOPE. Always believe in dialogue,” the Foreign Ministry said.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/449979/JCPOA-anniversary-JCPOA-was-product-of-Iran-s-openness-to-engagement>

Could U.S.-Iran ties get even tenser after spate of explosions?

Matthew Rusling

Xinhua Net, July 14, 2020

Some U.S. media has reported that the United States and Israel are involved in a joint strategy to conduct clandestine strikes on Iran’s nukes sites and carry out hits on certain generals. It remains unclear if this assertion from a recent New York Times report is accurate. But if it is, that could lead to increased ire between Washington and Tehran — at a time when tensions are already running high. Iranian Foreign Ministry’s spokesman Abbas Mousavi on Monday said during a press conference that Iran would “react decisively” if it is found that any government was involved in the recent explosion at the country’s Natanz nuclear facility.

Speculation is rife over who masterminded the strike, and whether the United States or Israel were involved. The New York Times reported Friday that some officials said a “joint American-Israeli strategy was evolving — some might argue regressing — to a series of short-of-war clandestine strikes, aimed at taking out the most

prominent generals of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and setting back Iran's nuclear facilities." A fire broke out at a petrochemical complex in southwestern Iran city of Mahshahr on Sunday, according to the ISNA news agency. Local officials said the fire was caused by an oil leak and did not lead to casualties and damage. One day before the blaze, a gas explosion shook a residential building in Tehran, leaving one person injured, the ISNA quoted the city's fire department as saying.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-07/14/c_139212085.htm

Back to square one, as the JCPOA turns five

Adnan Tabatabai

The New Arab, July 15, 2020

On July 14, 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was finalised in Vienna between Iran, the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany, and the European Union as the arbiter of the negotiations. Iran's foreign minister Javad Zarif tweeted about the deal being "not a ceiling but a solid foundation" to build on. Three months earlier - after the political agreement of the nuclear talks was reached in Lausanne - Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei had characterised this process as an "experience" which "if the opposite side gives up its misconduct" can be continued on "other issues."

This "experience" could not have ended up worse. Seeing a deal fall apart despite having fully abided by it makes it almost impossible in Iran's domestic scene to make the case for any renewed engagement. Only less than two weeks ago, Zarif had to defend his diplomatic conduit in an extremely heated parliamentary session. Since May 2019, a year after President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the JCPOA, and with lost hopes about Europe being capable of safeguarding the deal, Iran has started to gradually reduce its nuclear commitments, of which only the International Atomic Energy Agency inspections remain in place.

<https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2020/7/15/back-to-square-one-as-the-jcpoa-turns-five>

Israel

Israel's attacks on Iran's nuclear sites signal a new phase of conflict

Richard Silverstein

Middle East Eye, July 8, 2020

Over the past week, mysterious explosions and fires have wracked key infrastructure connected to Iran's nuclear programme at Natanz and Parchin, key facilities engaged in uranium enrichment and the production of rocket fuel for ballistic missiles. The US and Israel have accused Iran of violating UN resolutions and the nuclear deal in testing new ballistic-missile technology. Although Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has repeatedly denied any intent to create nuclear weapons, even going so far as to issue a fatwa against it, Iran's enemies are convinced it plans to "go nuclear".

The recent attacks appear to be an attempt by a hostile state to degrade that programme and delay Iran's ability to potentially send such weapons to targets outside of Iran. Tehran has said that a cyberattack could be behind the explosion at Natanz, which destroyed a building that allegedly housed an advanced centrifuge system that could increase the speed of enrichment by up to 50 times.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/israel-behind-attacks-irans-nuclear-facilities>

East Asia

Japan

Editorial: Japan's halt of 100 coal-fired generators no victory for decarbonization

The Mainichi, July 4, 2020

The Japanese government announced that it would shut down 90% of its old-style coal-fired power plants that emit large

volumes of carbon dioxide by fiscal 2030. This means that around 100 generators are expected to be phased out. The plan is to compensate for the decrease in power supply with renewable energy and nuclear power. Meanwhile, the government is planning to maintain or expand 26 of a new type of coal-fired generator, and will continue to export them as well.

After the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, tsunami and ensuing nuclear disaster, Japan's reliance on coal grew as it became difficult to restart its nuclear reactors. Coal-based energy now accounts for over 30% of Japan's total energy production. In contrast, the move to abandon carbon accelerated worldwide after the Paris Agreement to stop global warming went into effect in 2016. In Europe, country after country revealed they were completely phasing out coal-generated power. Western funds and banks have stopped investing in and loaning to businesses tied to coal-generated power.

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20200704/p2a/00m/0na/005000c>

Does Japan Support Nuclear Disarmament?

Gregory Kulacki

All Things Nuclear, July 7, 2020

Japanese opinion polls consistently show strong opposition to nuclear weapons. This opposition is rooted in the pacifist national identity that emerged after the Second World War. That identity is codified in Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, which renounces the sovereign right to resort to war, or the threat of the use of force, to resolve international disputes. The United States imposed Article 9 on Japan's post-war government and, ironically, has been trying to change it ever since. But the Japanese people embraced their pacifist constitution and continue to defend it against the predations of overbearing US officials and nationalist politicians, like their current prime minister.

Popular opposition to nuclear weapons is also enshrined in Japan's Three Non-Nuclear Principles: a legislative resolution

that prohibits Japan from manufacturing and possessing nuclear weapons as well as prohibiting the entry of foreign nuclear weapons. Japanese leaders, under tremendous US pressure, violated the last principle repeatedly. Fear of public opposition forced them to lie about it for more than 50 years. That's a pretty successful record of public intervention to curtail the role of nuclear weapons in Japan's national security policy. The people responsible for it, led by the survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, deserve our gratitude and support as the 75th anniversaries of the bombings approach.

<https://allthingsnuclear.org/gkulacki/does-japan-support-nuclear-disarmament>

Fukushima nuclear waste decision also a human rights issue

Baskut Tunca

Kyodo News, July 8, 2020

In a matter of weeks, the government of Japan will have the opportunity to demonstrate to the world how much it values protecting human rights and the environment and to meet its international obligations. In the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, myself and other U.N. special rapporteurs consistently raised concerns about the approaches taken by the government of Japan. We have been concerned that raising of "acceptable limits" of radiation exposure to urge resettlement violated the government's human rights obligations to children.

We have been concerned of the possible exploitation of migrants and the poor for radioactive decontamination work. Our most recent concern is how the government used the COVID-19 crisis to dramatically accelerate its timeline for deciding whether to dump radioactive wastewater accumulating at Fukushima Daiichi in the ocean. Setting aside the duties incumbent on Japan to consult and protect under international law, it saddens me to think that a country that has suffered the horrors of being the only

country on which not one but two nuclear bombs were dropped during war, would continue on a such a path in dealing with the radioactive aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi disaster.

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/07/1145e5b3970f-opinion-fukushima-nuclear-waste-decision-also-a-human-rights-issue.html>

South Korea

Ending the Korean War Won't Be Easy As Long as North Korea Exists

Chung Min Lee

National Interest Blog, July 5, 2020

With South Korea and the United States marking the seventieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, which began on June 25, 1950, it's time to consider the conditions for a lasting and just peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Korean conflict was instrumental in solidifying the Cold War at both ends of the Eurasian continent. While vestiges of the Cold War have disappeared from Europe, the Cold War remains very much alive on the Korean Peninsula. Formally ending it will serve as a major catalyst in implementing a more stable security structure in and around the Korean Peninsula. But a declaration of an end to the war based on political expediency and naïve conceptions of peace between the two Koreas isn't going to result in real peace. The reason why a Cold War persists on the peninsula is because of the continuing threat emanating from North Korea – the world's only communist dynasty. Armed with nuclear weapons since 2006 and with accelerating nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, North Korea under Kim Jong-un has hardly relaxed tensions with South Korea.

Leaving aside recent antics such as blowing up the South-North liaison office, Kim has given absolutely no indication that he is willing to negotiate away his nuclear weapons. President Donald Trump's attempts to brush the North Korean nuclear threat under successive Tweets have failed dismally. His comical attempts to convince

Kim to denuclearize such as asking Secretary of State Michael Pompeo to deliver Elton John's "Rocket Man" CD as a sign of Trump's friendship isn't funny but outright dangerous. Under Trump's watch, North Korea's nuclear weapons program has accelerated. Trump's chaotic, ill-prepared, and, yes, even childish attempts to reach a "deal of the century" with the head of the world's most totalitarian regime has dialed back the clock for genuine peace on the Korean Peninsula.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/korea-watch/ending-korean-war-won%E2%80%99t-be-easy-long-north-korea-exists-164137>

Why It Takes Both Koreas, America, and China for There to Be Peace in Korea

Se Young Jang

National Interest Blog, July 13, 2020

The Korean War has never officially ended. The so-called "Forgotten War" was only temporarily halted by the armistice agreement signed on July 27, 1953, between the United States, China, and North Korea (the DPRK). It was never followed by a peace treaty, and thus the two Koreas are technically still at war. Despite the on-and-off escalation of military tensions on the Korean Peninsula, Seoul and Pyongyang have fortunately avoided initiating or being dragged down into another large-scale military conflict up to this point. However, it does not mean that the Korean people currently live in peace. The unresolved war constantly poses a potential threat to the security and well-being of ordinary people on the peninsula, restraining their ability and intention to go beyond the Cold War that still defines the geopolitics of their region.

On the way to the Hanoi Summit in February 2019, there were expectations that progress in the U.S.-DPRK nuclear negotiations might lead to an end-of-war or peace declaration. However, the abrupt end to the summit without any achievement, followed by a worsening of

the situation, has frustrated anyone who aspires to establish a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and has made any optimistic future unlikely to be realized for the time being. The 70th anniversary of the Korean War this year is further tainted by the growing aggression from Pyongyang lately, reinforcing the reality that the two Koreas are still divided and hostile to each other.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/korea-watch/why-it-takes-both-koreas-america-and-china-there-be-peace-korea-164702>

P. Reports/Interviews

Interview: The importance of long-term operation

World Nuclear News, July 1, 2020

To coincide with the publication of the World Nuclear Association's technical position paper *The Enduring Value of Nuclear Energy Assets*, World Nuclear News interviewed the co-chairs of the Long-term Operation Task Force, Michael Baron and Abdou Al Mazouzi. They are incredible milestones for nuclear energy and the engineering and science that drive safety and innovation. As the world moves towards zero-carbon goals, power providers must adjust to meet new demands, while considering safety, reliability and environmental energy sources. Continuing to have reliable 24/7 baseload power to build a new tomorrow is key. Wind and solar are intermittent, coal does not help the environment in emitting significant amounts of carbon dioxide. Natural gas emits carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases, is not available in some areas and requires long-distance transmission and transportation.

In its 50 years of operation, nuclear power has proved that it can be operated safely, reliably and efficiently at high capacity factors. Nuclear power is pivotal for maintaining needed capacity for sustained reliability and future global growth meeting zero-carbon goals. Extending the operating lives of nuclear power plants to 80 years by utilising operational experience, lessons learned and innovation, and accounting for

all the technical aspects of plant ageing, shows how the industry is managed safely by performing rigorous reviews of systems, equipment, welds and piping, concrete, electrical cables and reactor pressure vessels.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Interview-The-importance-of-long-term-operation>

Mysterious Fire and Explosion in the New Natanz Advanced Centrifuge Assembly Facility

David Albright, Sarah Burkhard, and Frank Pabian

Institute for Science and International Security, July 3, 2020

Following closely on the heels of two unexplained incidents in Iran involving explosions and fires that in one case reportedly killed 19 people,¹ media reported early on July 2, 2020 that a fire and apparent explosion had occurred at the Natanz Enrichment Site, which houses large underground enrichment halls and several above-ground workshops, the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant (PFEP), and support buildings.² The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) stated that "one of the sheds under construction in the open area of the Natanz site suffered damage this morning" and published a photo of a damaged building.³ Correlation of the information from the ground photo with commercial satellite imagery allowed for the geolocation of the building using Google Earth. The satellite imagery revealed that describing the damaged site as a "shed" is a vast understatement. The fire occurred at a centrifuge assembly workshop, first identified by the Institute in 2017,⁴ which only operated for a maximum of two years after taking at least six years to be completed (see Figures 1 and 2). Construction started in 2012, and when it was near operation in June 2018, a promotional video of the workshop followed a press announcement by AEOI-head Ali Akbar Salehi.^{5, 6} A photo with many people standing in front of the

entrance appeared in the media in the spring of 2019, likely from an inauguration ceremony or similar celebration of the new facility.⁷ The name of the facility is written in English above the entrance: Iran Centrifuge Assembly Center (ICAC).

Based on the post-fire and explosion photo published by the AEOL, the incident appears to have caused significant structural damage to the building, visible as cracks in the walls, and doors unhinged, along with destroyed roof panels. A freeze frame from another video shows the eastern wall damage in more detail with the area cordoned off with yellow tape (see Figures 3 and 4). The area of the most severe damage is visible in the northeast corner of the building where there are twin vent stacks on the roof, suggesting that the section under the stacks was the center of the fire and explosion (see Figures 5 and 6). Our assessment is that the area likely contained twin auxiliary diesel generators for electric back-up power and some onsite fuel storage. While that section might be described as a “shed,” it was clearly not the only part that suffered damage, and it was an integral part of the ICAC building. The workshop was built by the Iranian Centrifuge Technology Company (TESA). It is dedicated to assembling, on a production-scale, advanced centrifuge rotors, bellows, end caps, and other key subcomponents, the final product being the highly delicate advanced centrifuge rotor assembly. The centrifuge rotor assembly is the central part of a gas centrifuge, being the part that spins at high velocity, requiring high-specification parts, careful balancing, and assembly. After assembly, the rotor assembly would be transported to one of Iran’s enrichment plants and placed inside the centrifuge outer casing. Designed and outfitted to assemble advanced centrifuges on a mass scale, the ICAC is key to Iran’s plan to deploy thousands of advanced centrifuges in the underground enrichment plant at Natanz and at the deeply buried Fordow uranium enrichment plant.

<https://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/fire-and-explosion-in-the-new-natanz-centrifuge-assembly>

Japan’s coal closure plan a historic milestone, but what’s next?

Eric Johnston

Japan Times, July 10, 2020

On July 3, the government announced it would shut down about 100 coal-fired power plants by fiscal 2030. It was the first time the government had given a figure and a deadline for shutting down coal plants, which have long been an integral part of the nation’s industrial history and development. Here’s a look at that history and what the announcement could mean for Japan’s future energy policies.

How long has Japan used coal as an energy source?

Historical records show that the small-scale burning of coal goes back to at least the 16th century for household use. Large deposits of the fuel were later identified in what is now Hokkaido, around Kushiro and Ishikari, as well as in modern southern Fukushima and northern Miyagi prefectures. There was also coal in Ube, Yamaguchi Prefecture, and the Kyushu region, including what are now Fukuoka, Saga and Kumamoto prefectures, had large deposits.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/07/10/business/japans-coal-closures-whats-next/#.Xy0LEcgzblU>

Q. Think tanks

Unattainable conditions for New START extension?

Steven Pifer

Brookings, July 1, 2020

President Donald Trump’s chief arms control envoy last week acknowledged the possibility that the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) could be extended, but he added, “only under select circumstances.” He then put down conditions that, if adhered to, will ensure the Trump administration does not extend the treaty.

New START limits the United States and Russia each to no more than 700 deployed strategic missiles and bombers and no more than 1,550 deployed strategic warheads. It expires by its terms on February 5, 2021 but can be extended for up to five years. The Trump administration has adamantly refused to do that. From the perspective of U.S. national security interests, extending New START is a no-brainer. As confirmed by the State Department's annual report, Russia is complying with the treaty's limits. Extension would keep Russian strategic forces constrained until 2026. It would also ensure the continued flow of information about those forces produced by the treaty's data exchanges, notifications, on-site inspections and other verification measures.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/07/01/unattainable-conditions-for-new-start-extension/>

Low Levels of Radioisotopes Detected in Europe Likely Linked to a Nuclear Reactor – IAEA

International Atomic Energy Agency, July 2, 2020

The recent detection of slightly elevated levels of radioisotopes in northern Europe is likely related to a nuclear reactor that is either operating or undergoing maintenance, when very low radioactive releases can occur, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said today. The geographical origin of the release has not yet been determined. Basing its technical assessment on data reported by its Member States, the IAEA reiterated that the observed air concentrations of the particles were very low and posed no risk to human health and the environment.

Estonia, Finland and Sweden last week measured levels of Ruthenium and Caesium isotopes which were higher than usual. They also reported the detection of some other artificial radionuclides. The three countries said there had been no events on their territories that could explain the presence of the radionuclides, as did more than 40 other countries that voluntarily provided information to the IAEA. Seeking to help

identify their possible origin, the IAEA on Saturday contacted its counterparts in the European region and requested information on whether the particles were detected in their countries, and if any event there may have been associated with the atmospheric release.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/low-levels-of-radioisotopes-detected-in-europe-likely-linked-to-a-nuclear-reactor-iaea>

Conventional wisdom says Turkey won't go nuclear. That might be wrong.

John Spacapan

Bulletin of Atomic Energy, July 7, 2020

Ask 10 experts on Turkish politics whether the United States should worry about Ankara's nuclear weapons ambitions and you'll likely hear 10 denials. Get beyond the Washington Beltway and you'll get something different. The Israelis worry Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is getting all too close to a nuclear-armed Pakistan that likes to share nuclear technology. Turkish environmentalists spotlight that Erdogan's uneconomic and unnecessary nuclear power program may pose proliferation risks. The Greeks whisper about Erdogan's nuclear bomb posturing. Any sound US approach to Turkey demands that American officials listen to these foreign voices. There are popular reasons to think Turkey won't acquire nuclear weapons. It's in NATO and already has 50 American B61 nuclear bombs at a joint US-Turkish airbase. It also forswore acquiring its own nuclear weapons, is party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and has ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. So, what suggests Turkey may want to go nuclear in the not too distant future? Three things.

First, President Erdogan says he wants the bomb. Last fall, he complained before the UN General Assembly that the NPT bars states like Turkey from developing nuclear weapons but ignores that other states have them. Earlier, he told members of his

Justice and Development Party that “some countries have missiles with nuclear warheads, not one or two. But [they tell us] we can’t have them. This, I cannot accept.” He then said nuclear weapons are an enormous source of power for Israel. Second, Erdogan is often bombastic, but on nuclear energy he’s taking action. Along Turkey’s Mediterranean coastline, the Russians are building four large civilian nuclear power reactors at the Akkuyu Nuclear Facility. Erdogan hopes the Russians will complete the first reactor by 2023, in time for the centenary celebrations of the founding of modern Turkey. Ankara says it needs nuclear energy to decrease its dependence on natural gas imports from unreliable partners – Russia and Iran – and to meet electricity demand. This demand has grown at the highest rate of all OECD countries since 2005.

<https://thebulletin.org/2020/07/conventional-wisdom-says-turkey-wont-go-nuclear-that-might-be-wrong/>

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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