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India

Kalpakkam Nuclear Power Complex in Tamil Nadu Geared to Meet Cyclone Nivar

News 18, November 24, 2020

The atomic power complex in Kalpakkam about 70 km from here is geared up to meet Cyclone Nivar that is expected to cross the coast near Mamallapuram and Karaikal in Puducherry on Wednesday evening, said the top official of the Disaster Management Committee.

He also said the atomic power reactor of Madras Atomic Power Station (MAPS) belonging to Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) will generate power if everything pertaining to the grid is normal. "We had a review meeting. We are all geared up to meet Nivar. All our diesel gensets are ready to kick in when needed and there are sufficient diesel reserves," Arun Kumar Bhaduri, Director, Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR) and also the Chairman, Disaster Management Committee, Kalpakkam complex.

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/kalpakkam-nuclear-power-complex-in-tamil-nadu-geared-to-meet-cyclone-nivar-3111995.html>

India, USA extend nuclear cooperation partnership

World Nuclear News, November 25, 2020

The GCNEP, near Bahadurgarh in Haryana state, aims to strengthen India's cooperation with the international community. It houses five schools to conduct research into advanced nuclear energy systems, nuclear security, radiological safety, as well as applications for radioisotopes and radiation technologies. Training facilities include virtual reality laboratories and a radiation monitoring, calibration and accreditation laboratory. The GCNEP is used for research by Indian and visiting international scientists; training of Indian and international participants; international seminars and group discussions by experts on topical issues; and, development and conduct of courses in association with interested countries and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The extension of the MoU was agreed during the 3rd US-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue held in New Delhi on 27 October. The meeting was between US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, US Secretary of Defence Mark Esper, Indian Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Indian Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh. In a joint statement, dated 24 November, the Indian and US governments said the MoU - originally signed on 7 November 2010 - had been extended in recognition and appreciation of "the strength of the enduring partnership between the two countries on matters of security and reaffirming the important contributions of the US-India nuclear and radiological security cooperation for the benefit of their citizens and the world".

<https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/India-USA-extend-nuclear-cooperation-partnership>

Indian regulator gives go-ahead for first concrete at Gorkakhpur

World Nuclear News, November 27, 2020

The units are similar in design to the lead 700 MWe PHWRs that are being built as units 3 and 4 of the Kakrapar power plant in Gujarat state, AERB said. Kakrapar 3 reached first criticality in June of this year. Two further 700 MWe PHWRs are planned at GHAVP, and in total 12 - including the four GHAVP units - are currently planned for construction in India, according to the World Nuclear Association. NPCIL has carried out detailed geotechnical investigations and seismo-tectonic studies at the GHAVP site because of the soft alluvial soil there, and ground improvement works have been completed, it added.

AERB issued siting consent for the four GHAVP units in 2015, and approved the start of excavation work for the first two units in January 2018. AERB said it has completed an in-depth safety review to verify conformance with safety codes ahead of pouring the first concrete. This safety review focused on civil engineering aspects and changes in the design and layout of GHAVP units 1 and 2 with respect to nuclear and radiological safety aspects, it said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Indian-regulator-gives-go-ahead-for-first-concrete>

China

China now has the nuclear strength to hit back at a first strike, former PLA colonel says

Liu Zhen

South China Morning Post, November 17, 2020

The military has built an ‘underground Great Wall’ of tunnels to hide and move its arsenal of ballistic missiles, Wang Xiangsui tells Moganshan forum. The defences add up to a credible ability to mount a second strike, resulting in a deterrent effect, he says. China has spent the last two decades building defences for its nuclear armoury on land and at sea, ensuring that the military can hit back at a nuclear attack and deter others from launching one, according to a former Chinese senior colonel. Wang Xiangsui, now a professor at Beihang University in Beijing, said these defences – which included a vast network of tunnels to transport and protect missiles – meant China’s security was guaranteed even in the worst scenario. “Launching nuclear strikes on China has always been a military option for the US,” Wang told a closed-door meeting last month. “But for this option they are facing increasing uncertainties due to our adjustment and changes in the past 20 years.”

He delivered the assessment at the four-day Moganshan forum to discuss domestic and international issues and China’s new five-year plan, but the transcript of his remarks was only made public. Without specifying the source, Wang said some US assessments claimed that only one Chinese nuclear warhead would be able to survive a US first strike and reach American soil in a counter-attack. He dismissed the claims as “clearly nonsense”. He said China had taken a series of measures over the years to establish a credible “second-strike” capability to respond to a nuclear attack. In addition to intercontinental ballistic missile tunnels, China had developed advanced missiles and expanded “bastion waters” in the South China and Yellow seas in which its ballistic missile submarines could operate safely. “These have drawn a bottom line for China-US confrontation – that the confrontation is unlikely to become a massive invasion, which is an important basis [of calculation for both sides],” he said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3110091/china-now-has-nuclear-strength-hit-back-first-strike-former-pla>

China gets rocket ready to launch ambitious mission to the moon

South China Morning Post, November 17, 2020

China moved a massive rocket into place in preparation for launching a mission to bring back materials from the moon for the first time in four decades. The Long March-5 was transported by tractor from its hangar to the nearby launch site at the space base in Wenchang along the coast of the southern island province of Hainan. The Chang'e-5 mission it will carry is scheduled to launch early next week, placing a lander on the moon that will drill 2 metres (almost 7 feet) beneath the surface and scoop up rocks and other debris to be brought to Earth. That would allow scientists to study newly obtained lunar materials for the first time since the American and Russian missions of the 1960s and 1970s.

The mission, named for the Chinese moon goddess, is among China's most ambitious as its space programme continues to build steam since it first put a man in space in 2003, becoming only the third nation to do so after the US and Russia.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3110200/china-gets-rocket-ready-launch-ambitious-mission-moon>

China bolsters its ambitious space programme with the high-powered vision of a new antenna array

Laura Zhou

South China Morning Post, November 19, 2020

Three new radio telescopes added to Kashgar station to create a deep-space tracking facility for Chinese lunar and interplanetary missions. System is up and running two months after China denied contract extension for use of space tracking station in Western Australia. China has begun using a deep-space antenna array system from a ground station in Xinjiang, which it hopes will enhance its ability to navigate and explore space amid stiff competition from the United States. Based in Kashgar, the westernmost corner of China, the system comprises four 35-metre (115-foot) diameter radio telescopes – three of them newly built – that form an array capable of recording signals equivalent to a single 66-metre radio telescope, China News Service reported. The system has enhanced data-receiving sensitivity and can “provide powerful support to different kinds of deep-space explorations”, the report said.

The array system was established two months after the Swedish Space Corporation said it would not renew a contract with the China Satellite Launch and Tracking Control General, which also runs the Kashgar station, to use a space tracking station in Western Australia, a move widely believed to undermine Beijing's expanding space exploration and navigational capacity in the Pacific region. While it is unclear when the lease runs out, the Swedish state-owned company said in September the decision was based on the “complexity of the Chinese market, brought about by the overall geopolitical situation”, adding that it would not seek new business with China, according to Reuters.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3110387/china-bolsters-its-ambitious-space-programme-high-powered>

China launches 1st lunar sample return mission, aims for multiple breakthroughs in aerospace history

Deng Xiaoci and Fan Anqi

Global Times, November 24, 2020

The Long March-5 Y5, China's state-of-the-art carrier rocket and strongest member of the Long March launch vehicle family, blasted off early Tuesday morning from the Wenchang Space Launch Center located in South China's Hainan Province, successfully sending the Chang'e-5 lunar probe into planned orbit. About 2,200 seconds after lift-off, the Chang'e-5 lunar probe separated from the rocket and entered the Earth-Moon transfer orbit with the perigee at 200 km and the apogee at about 410,000 km. Despite the difficulties brought by the COVID-19 epidemic, China's aerospace sector has been able to launch not only the country's first-ever Tianwen-1 Mars probe, but also the latest lunar sample return mission, showcasing the country's resilience and increasingly mature capabilities in the space sphere, according to observers. Dubbed one of the most complicated and challenging space exploration projects ever attempted, Chang'e-5 will carry out the third stage of China's current lunar programs, which involves three phases—orbiting, landing and return. The first two phases have been completed successfully.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1207822.shtml>

US general describes 'China threat' in space as Chang'e-5 lunar mission heats up rivalry

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, November 26, 2020

Rivalry between China and the United States in space exploration has reached new heights, with a US general saying China was a threat that could block American access to space.

Just days after the launch of Beijing's first lunar mission to bring samples back to Earth, US Space Force General John Raymond said the United States had to strengthen ties with its allies to handle the "threat" from China and Russia over space. Raymond's comments came as the head of the Chinese space administration said the nation would launch more lunar probes and invite other countries to join China on its missions. The China-US space rivalry intensified after a Long March-5 rocket carrying the Chang'e-5 lunar spacecraft blasted off from Wenchang, Hainan province

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3111454/us-general-describes-china-threat-space-change-5-lunar-mission>

First nuclear unit with Hualong One reactor connected to grid

Xinhua, November 27, 2020

China's first nuclear power unit using Hualong One technology, a domestically developed third-generation reactor design, was connected to the grid on early Friday morning. The No.5 nuclear power unit in the city of Fuqing, east China's Fujian Province, was connected to the power network at 0:41 a.m. Friday and started to generate electricity, according to the China National Nuclear Corporation.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-11/27/c_139546194.htm

Pakistan

World's first Hualong One unit connects to grid

World Nuclear News, November 27, 2020

Scheduled to begin commercial operation by the end of this year, unit 5 will be the world's first Hualong One reactor to be commissioned. Unit 6 is to follow by the end of next year. The milestone means that China has "broken the monopoly of foreign nuclear power technology and officially entered the ranks

of advanced countries in nuclear power", CNNC said. This "further enhances the confidence of countries in China's Belt and Road Initiative: Awakening the Dragon", it added.

Sama Bilbao y León, director general of the World Nuclear Association said: "Fuqing 5 is now providing clean, reliable and cost-effective electricity supplies to millions of customers. This first Hualong One reactor adds another design to the portfolio of advanced reactors that have started up around the world in recent years."

<https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/World-first-Hualong-One-unit-connects-to-grid>

USA

Trump Sought Options for Attacking Iran to Stop Its Growing Nuclear Program

Eric Schmitt, Maggie Haberman, David E. Sanger, Helene Cooper and Lara Jakes
The New York Times, November 16, 2020

President Trump asked senior advisers in an Oval Office meeting on Thursday whether he had options to take action against Iran's main nuclear site in the coming weeks. The meeting occurred a day after international inspectors reported a significant increase in the country's stockpile of nuclear material, four current and former U.S. officials said on Monday.

A range of senior advisers dissuaded the president from moving ahead with a military strike. The advisers — including Vice President Mike Pence; Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; Christopher C. Miller, the acting defense secretary; and Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — warned that a strike against Iran's facilities could easily escalate into a broader conflict in the last weeks of Mr. Trump's presidency.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/politics/trump-iran-nuclear.html>

U.S. nuclear power industry group sees reprocessing as potential waste fix

Timothy Gardner
Reuters, November 17, 2020

The head of the top U.S. nuclear power group said that reprocessing of nuclear waste, a technique that has not been practiced in the United States for decades because of proliferation and cost concerns, could help address a growing problem building up at nuclear plants across the country.

"Reprocessing is a very interesting part of the solution set," Maria Korsnick, the head of the Nuclear Energy Institute, said during an interview last week that will be part of Reuters Events Energy Transition North America here on Friday. The technology "would be really closing the fuel cycle in a very useful way" because it squeezes more energy from the waste that cannot be used when it is disposed permanently.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-nuclearpower-waste-idUSKBN27W30U>

U.S. imposes sweeping sanctions on Iran, targets Khamenei-linked foundation

Daphne Psaledakis, Humeyra Pamuk
Reuters, November 18, 2020

The sanctions announced by the U.S. Treasury Department, which also targeted Iran's intelligence minister, are the latest action to reinforce the "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran pursued by President Donald Trump's administration. They come little more than two months before Trump is due to hand over power to Joe Biden after losing a Nov. 3 election.

The department imposed sanctions on what it described as a key patronage network for Khamenei. It said it blacklisted the Bonyad Mostazafan, or the Foundation of the Oppressed, which is controlled by Khamenei, in a move also targeting 10 individuals and 50 subsidiaries of the foundation in sectors including energy, mining and financial services. The sanctions freeze any U.S. assets of those targeted and generally bar Americans from doing business with them. Anyone who engages in certain transactions with these individuals and entities runs the risk of being hit with U.S. sanctions.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-iran-sanctions-int-idUSKBN27Y262>

MIT study explores reasons behind new-build cost overruns

World Nuclear News, November 20, 2020

The findings of the study have been published in the journal *Joule* in a paper titled Sources of Cost Overrun in Nuclear Power Plant Construction Call for a New Approach to Engineering Design. The paper is authored by MIT professors Jessika Trancik and Jacopo Buongiorno, along with Philip Eash-Gates, Magdalena Klemun, Goksin Kavlak and James McNerney. Nuclear plant costs in the USA have repeatedly exceeded projections, according to the paper. The authors have used 50 years of data and "bottom-up" cost modelling to identify the mechanisms behind this. "We observe that nth-of-a-kind plants have been more, not less, expensive than first-of-a-kind plants," they said.

Most of the rise in cost is due to indirect expenses, which are largely 'soft' costs related to changes to the environment in which the construction is happening such as the need to make last-minute design changes based on particular conditions at the construction site or other local circumstances. Changes in safety regulations account for some cost increases but are only one of numerous factors, the authors said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/MIT-study-focuses-on-reasons-behind-new-build-cost>

Biden faces a race against the clock for U.S. to rejoin Iran nuclear deal

Dan De Luce, Ken Dilanian, Saphora Smith and Ali Arouzi

NBC News, November 21, 2020

President-elect Joe Biden has promised to rejoin the Iran nuclear agreement if Iran abides by the deal, but both sides will have to race against the clock and navigate a political minefield to reach that goal. With Iran due to hold elections in June, any diplomatic effort will have to move swiftly during Biden's first few months in office, say former U.S. officials, European diplomats and regional experts.

Iran's current president, Hassan Rouhani, threw his weight behind the 2015 agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and there's no guarantee the next Iranian president will be as open to cutting a deal. Biden and Rouhani also have to contend with fierce opponents to the agreement in Washington and Tehran, as well as in the region, and they will need to show that any concessions are met with reciprocal actions by the other side, former U.S. officials said.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/biden-faces-race-against-clock-u-s-rejoin-iran-nuclear-n1248356>

BWXT announces advances in 3D printing of reactor components

World Nuclear News, November 24, 2020

Advanced reactors are designed to operate at very high temperatures, and the ability to additively manufacture parts from these alloys and metals can further speed their development, BWXT said. Amongst the first selections under the DOE's Office of Nuclear Energy's US Industry Opportunities for Advanced Nuclear Technology Development funding opportunity announcement, BWXT was awarded USD5.4 million in cost-sharing funds in April 2018. In cooperation with ORNL, BWXT was to develop the ability to implement additive materials manufacturing to the fabrication process for nuclear components and sub-components that will yield acceptable material structure and strength that can be accepted by the national code organisations and the regulator.

BWXT says it has now demonstrated the ability to additively manufacture nickel-based super alloys and refractory-metal-based alloys for use in nuclear components. The company says it also accomplished component-level qualification, leading to a more efficient certification of nuclear materials configured in complex geometries. Additive manufacturing technologies will be transformational for the nuclear industry because they enable the creation of shapes not possible with conventional manufacturing techniques, BWXT said. Additionally, verifying the ability to additively manufacture high-temperature super alloys and refractory metals enables designs that possess improved thermal energy management, increased safety margins and accident-tolerant characteristics.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/BWXT-announces-advances-in-3D-printing-of-reactor>

NRC approves Indian Point licence transfer

World Nuclear News, November 25, 2020

The NRC order approving the licence transfer is effective immediately, but it will not be finalised until after unit 3's permanent shutdown and the completion of the transaction between Entergy, Holtec and HDI, the regulator said. The licence transfer also includes the plant's dry cask used fuel storage installation. Entergy Corp agreed in April 2019 to sell the Indian Point Energy Center to Holtec for expedited decommissioning and dismantling of the plant after the closure of the last operating unit at the site, which is in New York State. Unit 2 permanently closed in April this year after more than 45 years of operation; unit 1 operated from 1962 until 1974.

The NRC concluded that Holtec and HDI met the regulatory, legal, technical and financial requirements necessary to qualify as licensees after considering their technical and financial qualifications, the adequacy of the Indian Point decommissioning trust funds to complete the radiological decommissioning of the plant, and the adequacy of plans to manage the onsite storage of used nuclear fuel until it can be removed for storage or disposal elsewhere. The regulator has previously approved the transfers of two shutdown plants - Oyster Creek in New Jersey and Pilgrim in Massachusetts - to Holtec for expedited decommissioning. Holtec said it believed those two ongoing projects provided the NRC with "stout evidence" in support of its application. The company plans to begin the decommissioning process promptly upon taking ownership of the New York plant, providing job opportunities for about 300 of Indian Point's current employees. This is a larger number than would have remained at the site under the previously planned deferred decommissioning approach, it said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/NRC-approves-Indian-Point-licence-transfer>

Biden urged to extend U.S.-Russia arms treaty for full 5 years without conditions

Jonathan Landay and Arshad Mohammed
Reuters, November 26, 2020

Arms control advocates are urging Joe Biden to extend the last U.S.-Russian treaty limiting deployed strategic nuclear arms for five years, but some experts argue the U.S. president-elect should go for a shorter period to maintain leverage over Moscow. Arms control advocates are urging Joe Biden to extend the last U.S.-Russian treaty limiting deployed strategic nuclear arms for five years, but some experts argue the U.S. president-elect should go for a shorter period to maintain leverage over Moscow.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-biden-armscontrol-idUSKBN2852Y0>

U.S. aircraft carrier deploys to Gulf, Navy says unrelated to 'specific threats'

Reuters, November 28, 2020

U.S. aircraft carrier USS Nimitz was deployed to the Gulf this week, days before the killing of Iran's top nuclear scientist, although the U.S. Navy said on Saturday the deployment was not related to any specific threat. "There were no specific threats that triggered the return of the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group," Commander Rebecca Rebarich, spokeswoman for the U.S. Navy's Bahrain-based Fifth Fleet, said in an emailed statement after the carrier deployed on Wednesday.

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the Iranian scientist suspected by the West of masterminding a secret nuclear bomb programme, was killed in an ambush near Tehran on Friday, threatening to provoke a new confrontation between Iran and its foes in the last weeks of Donald Trump's presidency. Rebarich said the redeployment was related to a U.S. drawdown in Iraq and Afghanistan.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-scientist-usa-navy-idUSKBN2880DH>

Europe

EU reiterates support for JCPoA, expresses concern

World Nuclear News, November 18, 2020

The European Union has expressed its "resolute commitment to and continued support for" the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) in a statement to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors. It expressed concern about Iran's continued accumulation of low enriched uranium in excess of JCPoA thresholds. "We are determined to continue working with the international community to preserve the JCPoA.

The strategic importance of the agreement remains and its full implementation is essential. It is a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture and it is crucial for regional, European and international security," the EU said. It called on all countries to "to refrain from undermining implementation of commitments" under it. The EU continues to "deeply regret" the USA's withdrawal from the JCPoA and its re-imposed sanctions."Alongside the verified full implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments, the lifting of nuclear-related sanctions is an essential part of the agreement. The EU has fully upheld its JCPoA commitments, including sanctions lifting as foreseen under the JCPoA," the EU said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/EU-reiterates-support-for-JCPoA,-expresses-concern>

UK includes new nuclear in 'green industrial revolution'

World Nuclear News, November 18, 2020

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has unveiled a 10-point plan that he says can be "a global template" for delivering net-zero emissions. Point 3 of the plan is the government's commitment to develop new nuclear power, from large-scale to small and advanced modular reactors. This includes investment of GBP525 million (USD696 million) for "the next generation of small and advanced reactors". The inclusion of nuclear power reflects advice that the Nuclear Innovation Research and Advisory Board (Nirab) gave in a recent report for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Nirab said there that it would be prudent to plan for nuclear energy to provide at least half of the firm low-carbon electricity not provided by renewables.

The plan announced today also includes a previously announced pledge to quadruple offshore wind power capacity by 2030, to 40GW, and "to turn water into energy" with up to GBP500 million of investment in hydrogen. It also includes investment of more than GBP2.8 billion in electric vehicles and establishing a new world-leading industry in carbon capture and storage, backed by GBP1 billion of government investment for clusters across the North, Wales and Scotland. The government's GBP1 billion energy innovation fund will help commercialise new low-carbon technologies, Johnson said, such as the world's first liquid air battery, and the City of London will become the global centre for green finance through the sovereign bond, carbon offset markets and disclosure requirements. Writing in the Financial Times today, Johnson said the 10-point plan "will turn the UK into the world's number one centre for green technology and finance, creating the foundations for decades of economic growth".

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/UK-includes-new-nuclear-in-green-revolution-policy>

S&P sees limited role for nuclear in EU energy transition

World Nuclear News, November 18, 2020

The European Union's clean energy transition "leaves a number of legacy technologies on the side" with an approach that is "more political economy than market economy", an analyst from S&P Global Ratings' Infrastructure and Utilities practice said this week. Speaking to reporters on 16 November, ahead of the rating agency's annual Infrastructure & Utilities Conference, Pierre Georges, senior director of EMEA Utilities, said the share of nuclear power capacity in the bloc's energy mix is expected to decline by 32 GW by 2030 compared with the 2018 level. This is S&P's net figure for the EU plus the UK that includes new plant commissioning. Germany, Spain and Belgium - which all have nuclear phaseout plans - represented, respectively, 9.5 GW, 7.1 GW and 5.8 GW of nuclear capacity at the end of 2018.

The 32 GW figure is a slightly faster decline in capacity than that projected in the Lower Scenario of World Nuclear Association's Nuclear Fuel Report. Asked about the future of new nuclear build in Europe, Georges told World Nuclear News: "Aside from developments in new technologies, question marks have been hanging over the prospects for the nuclear sector in Europe since before the pandemic and these persist." The ageing reactor fleet across Europe is reaching its 40th year in many countries, he said, and decommissioning of these plants is "inevitable". New build projects in the UK, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland will not bring new capacity online before 2030, he added.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/S-P-sees-limited-role-for-nuclear-in-EU-energy-tra>

UK's Hinkley Point B to be retired by July 2022

World Nuclear News, November 19, 2020

EDF announced today its "proactive decision" to move the Hinkley Point B nuclear power plant into the defuelling phase, no later than 15 July 2022. The plant, which is in Somerset, England has been in operation for 45 years. Hinkley Point B started generating low-carbon electricity in 1976 and since then has safely produced more than 300 TWh of power - enough to meet the electricity requirements of every home in the UK for three years.

Peter Evans, the plant's director, said: "This station has delivered more low-carbon energy during its lifetime than any other UK nuclear station. This is an outstanding achievement and a testament to the dedication of all those who have worked here over the decades. When work started on this generation of nuclear reactors in the 1960s, few could have anticipated how important it has become to generate our power with little or no emissions. Over its life, this station has helped the UK avoid millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide going into the atmosphere and provided rewarding jobs for thousands of people and supply chain partners across Britain."

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/UKs-Hinkley-Point-B-to-be-retired-by-July-2022>

E3 responds to latest IAEA verification of Iran

World Nuclear News, November 19, 2020

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has verified that Iran is feeding uranium hexafluoride (UF6) into a recently installed cascade of 174 IR-2M centrifuges at the Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) in Natanz. France, Germany and the UK - the E3 - warned yesterday that Iran's further violations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) were "hollowing out" core non-proliferation benefits of the 2015 nuclear deal.

The E3 was responding to the IAEA Board of Governors following the agency's latest update to governments on its verification and monitoring of Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments. The IAEA's three latest Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) reports have today been derestricted. According to the IAEA reports, Iran has continued the enrichment of UF6 at the FEP and the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant (PFEP) at Natanz, and at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP) at Fordow. As of 2 November, Iran's total enriched uranium stockpile, comprising enriched uranium produced at FEP, PFEP and FFEP stood at 2442.9 kg. Under the JCPoA, Iran's stockpile should not exceed 300 kg of UF6, which corresponds to 202.8 kg of uranium. The IAEA said Iran has since July 2019 enriched uranium to 4.5%, which is above the 3.67% enrichment limit set by the JCPoA.

The E3 described Iran's decision to change the location of its research R&D activities and increasing the overall number of centrifuges installed at the FEP as "a matter of deep concern". The FEP has space for thousands of additional centrifuges, and moving advanced centrifuges to such a space "raises serious concerns about Iranian intent," it said. "We urge Iran not to proceed with the installation of advanced centrifuges at the Fuel Enrichment Plant, and its plans to move its R&D facility to the FEP," the E3 said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/E3-responds-to-latest-IAEA-Iran-verification>

Electrabel calls for clarity on Belgian phase-out

World Nuclear News, November 20, 2020

Electrabel - the Belgian subsidiary of French utility Engie - says it will not make any further investments at Doel unit 4 and Tihange unit 3 unless it is clearer whether the reactors will or will not be allowed to operate beyond 2025. A report due out at the end of next year may lead to the reactors being allowed to continue operating to ensure Belgium's energy security. Belgium's new coalition federal government, led by Alexander De Croo, signed an agreement on 30 September reaffirming its policy to phase out nuclear power in the country by 2025. Under the plan, Doel 3 and Tihange 2 will be shut down in 2022 and 2023, respectively. The newer Doel 4 and Tihange 3 will be shut down by 2025.

However, the agreement also calls for a report on Belgium's security of electricity supply and the impact on electricity prices of the nuclear phase-out and the planned implementation of a capacity market. If the report - to be completed by November 2021 - shows potential supply problems, the government would review plans to allow for the retention of 2 GWe of nuclear generation capacity. This could pave the way for a lifetime extension of Doel 4 and Tihange 3. "Being a responsible operator, Electrabel works in strict compliance with the law," the company said. "Electrabel staff are therefore preparing the shutdown and dismantling of Doel 3 and Tihange 2. Electrabel's Chief Nuclear Officer Thierry Saegeman reportedly informed staff at the Doel and Tihange plants earlier this week that the company will make no further investments for the extended operation of Doel-4 and Tihange-3.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Electrabel-calls-for-clarity-on-Belgian-phase-out>

Hungary's Paks II project receives construction approval

World Nuclear News, November 23, 2020

The Hungarian Energy and Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (MEKH) has approved Atomerőmű Zrt's plan to construct two VVER-1200 reactors at the existing Paks nuclear power plant site. A construction licence for the Paks II project is required from the nuclear regulator, the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority (HAEA), before building work can start.

After examining the contents of the application to ensure that it complies with the relevant legislation, MEKH on 20 November announced its decision to issue a construction permit for the Paks II plant. MEKH said in making its decision it had taken into consideration security of supply to the electricity network. It noted that procedures related to the safety of nuclear technology are conducted by the HAEA. The last construction permit for an investment in a new power plant bigger than 50 MWe was issued by MEKH in 2007, the regulator said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Energy-regulator-issues-construction-permit-for-Pa>

Head of EDF calls for Europe to include nuclear in Green Deal

World Nuclear News, November 25, 2020

The European Commission should include nuclear among the clean energy technologies that will be financed under the Green Deal low-carbon policy, EDF chairman and CEO Jean-Bernard Lévy said today in an online chat with International Energy Agency (IEA) Executive Director Fatih Birol. Several European countries, he noted, are relying on nuclear generation to help them meet their energy and climate goals. Talking to Birol in the latest IEA Big Ideas speaker series chats, Lévy discussed the role of low-carbon electricity in reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Birol noted that he recently talked with Frans Timmermans, executive vice-president of the European Commission, in the same series of interviews. During that chat Timmermans had stressed that the Commission “would not stand in the way” of EU Member States that support nuclear power. Birol stated that Timmermans said the EC was agnostic and “whatever technology brings emissions down we are happy, it is up to governments and companies to make the investments.”

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Head-of-EDF-calls-for-Europe-to-include-nuclear-in>

IAEA highlights role of nuclear power in Finland

World Nuclear News, November 26, 2020

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi and Finnish President Sauli Niinistö yesterday discussed the use of nuclear energy in support of climate change goals, nuclear verification and possibilities for cooperation in nuclear safety projects in the Arctic. They also discussed strengthening cooperation between Finland and the IAEA, the upcoming Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and nuclear verification in Iran, including the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plans of Action. Grossi is on a two-day official visit to Finland, during which he also plans to visit Onkalo, the first ever deep geological repository for spent nuclear fuel under construction in Olkiluoto.

“Finland and the IAEA have a common interest in nuclear safety and security [...] both globally and in the Arctic region,” Niinistö tweeted yesterday. Grossi also met Minister of Foreign Affairs Pekka Haavisto, Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Ville Skinnari, Minister of Economic Affairs Mika Lintilä, Director General of the Energy Department at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment Riku Huttunen and Director General of Finland’s Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK), Petteri Tiippana. Discussion topics included nuclear safety and security, safeguards implementation, Finland’s energy strategy, the Agency’s initiative on Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC Plastic), the modernisation of the IAEA’s laboratories in Seibersdorf (ReNuAL), the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in countering climate change, gender parity and the IAEA’s Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellowship Programme. One-third of Finland’s electricity comes from nuclear power, and it is expected to rise to over 40% by 2022, once Olkiluoto 3 comes into operation, the IAEA said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/IAEA-highlights-role-of-nuclear-power-in-Finland>

UK Treasury underscores value of new nuclear

World Nuclear News, November 26, 2020

The UK Treasury said yesterday it is important to consider large-scale nuclear projects in addition to Hinkley Point C (HPC) if the country is to meet its net-zero by 2050 target. This assessment rejects the advice of the National Infrastructure Commission two years ago that the government should not agree support for more than one nuclear power station beyond HPC, before 2025. The Treasury outlined its position towards new nuclear in two documents - Response to the National Infrastructure Assessment and National Infrastructure Strategy Fairer, faster, greener. These followed the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution the government unveiled last week and which includes nuclear power.

According to the Ten Point Plan, the government will provide up to GBP525 million (USD700 million) to bring forward large-scale nuclear and invest in the development of advanced nuclear research and development, including up to GBP385 million in an Advanced Nuclear Fund for small modular reactors and advanced modular reactors. This is alongside GBP220 million for nuclear fusion.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/UK-Treasury-underscores-value-of-new-nuclear>

Grossi impressed by Finnish used fuel repository

World Nuclear News, November 27, 2020

"Onkalo is a game changer for the long-term sustainability of nuclear energy," International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said yesterday, referring to the world's first-ever deep geological repository for used nuclear fuel that is under construction in Olkiluoto, Finland. Up to about 450 metres below ground level, used fuel from all of Finland's nuclear power reactors will be isolated in Onkalo for thousands of years. The repository is based on the KBS-3 disposal concept developed by the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company (SKB), in close cooperation with Posiva Oy, the Finnish company responsible for the disposal of used nuclear fuel.

"Waste management has always been at the centre of many debates about nuclear energy and the sustainability of nuclear activity around the world. Everybody knew of the idea of a geological repository for high-level radioactive nuclear waste, but Finland did it," Grossi said. "In Finland, the state's energy policy, the will of the owners and skilled personnel are all in the same package," said Janne Mokka, president and CEO of Posiva Oy. "This kind of project is great to lead. Our expertise is also available to industry players around the world."

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Grossi-impressed-by-Finnish-used-fuel-repository>

Russia

Rooppur-1 RPV arrives at construction site

World Nuclear News, November 16, 2020

The equipment arrived by Daisy cargo ship at the Bangladesh seaport of Mongla on 20 October, from where it was loaded by river barge before being taken along the Padma River to a newly built river terminal in the immediate vicinity of the construction site. The total journey time between Russia and Bangladesh covered 14,000 km and took almost 2.5 months.

The equipment, which was manufactured by Rosatom subsidiary Atommash at its site in Volgodonsk, Russia, from where it was transported by truck to the pier of the Tsimlyansk reservoir in Volgodonsk, and from there by water to Novorossiysk. From the port of Novorossiysk it was shipped to Bangladesh across the Black Sea and the Suez Canal. Atommash is itself a subsidiary of Atomenergomash, which is the supplier of all reactor equipment for the Rooppur plant, which is under construction on the eastern bank of the river Ganges and which will consist of two 1200 MWe power units.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Rooppur-1-RPV-arrives-at-construction-site>

Putin, extending Russian footprint, approves new naval facility in Sudan

Andrew Osborn

Reuters, November 16, 2020

President Vladimir Putin on Monday approved the creation of a Russian naval facility in Sudan capable of mooring nuclear-powered surface vessels, clearing the way for Moscow's first substantial military foothold in Africa since the Soviet fall. The new facility, earmarked to be built in the vicinity of Port

Sudan, will be capable of accommodating up to 300 military and civilian personnel and improve Russia's ability to operate in the Indian Ocean, expanding its influence in Africa.

Putin presided over a flagship Russia-Africa summit last year, an event designed to increase Russian sway on the continent, and two nuclear-capable Russian bombers landed in South Africa at the same time in a show of intent. Putin, in a decree published on Monday, said he had approved a Russian government proposal to set up a naval logistics hub in Sudan and ordered the defence ministry to sign an agreement to make it happen.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-sudan-navy-idUSKBN27W29A>

Arktika icebreaker embarks on first mission

World Nuclear News, November 17, 2020

"The first working voyage is a special event for the ship's crew and our entire enterprise," said Leonid Irlitsa, first deputy general director and director of shipping at Atomflot, adding that the first leg of its journey will take three weeks. "The process of ice formation is actively under way in the Arctic so now we have the opportunity to test the icebreaker," he said. After the completion of the voyage, *Arktika* will return to the port of Murmansk to replenish supplies and at the end of December it will return to the Northern Sea Route. It will carry out winter-spring navigation in the Arctic.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Arktika-icebreaker-embarks-on-first-mission>

First assemblies loaded into new Chernobyl used fuel store

World Nuclear News, November 19, 2020

More than 21,000 used fuel assemblies accumulated at the Chernobyl site between 1977 and 2000 when its four RBMK reactors were generating electricity. There are currently held in the wet-type ISF-1. This facility is not designed for long-term storage of fuel and its service life is limited, so all used fuel assemblies are to be moved to the newly-built dry-type ISF-2 intermediate storage facility. Each of the fuel assemblies will be disassembled into three parts - two fuel bundles and an activated connecting rod - in a purpose-built 'hot cell', packaged in double-walled transportable canisters and placed into ISF-2.

The first loaded double-walled canister, containing a total of 93 used fuel assemblies from Chernobyl's ageing storage facility, has now been placed in a concrete storage module within ISF-2. The operation was carried out by Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant (ChNPP) personnel under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine and Holtec International of the USA.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/First-assemblies-loaded-into-new-Chernobyl-used-fu>

Siberian Chemical Combine reports milestone with new fuel production

World Nuclear News, November 23, 2020

Experimental fuel elements and fuel assemblies are being tested in the BN-600 fast reactor at the Beloyarsk nuclear power plant to obtain the most complete experimental data on the properties and behaviour of pellet-form MNUP fuel in steel cladding. The data will serve to validate the fuel element design, which will be used for the manufacture of fuel rods for the BREST-OD-300 lead-cooled fast neutron reactor. BREST-OD-300 is part of the pilot energy complex (ODEK) in Seversk. Irradiation

of experimental fuel assemblies began in the spring of 2014. They were used in the reactor until the autumn of 2016 and their use for research has now been completed. All the fuel rods retained their original shape during irradiation and no structural element defects were identified, SCC said.

In the spring of this year, new batches of experimental fuel assemblies were loaded into the reactor and each one contained 61 fuel rods. "Tests of the innovative MNUP fuel are continuing successfully. More than 21 experimental assemblies were irradiated directly in the BN-600 reactor and the serviceability of this fuel has been proven," Yuri Mochalov, chief technologist of the Breakthrough project, said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Siberian-Chemical-Combine-reports-milestone-with-n>

Arktika icebreaker completes first mission

World Nuclear News, November 24, 2020

The achievement "demonstrated the efficiency of the vessel's operation in a sea lane," Leonid Irlitsa, first deputy general director of Atomflot, said. "The excellent manoeuvrability and draft of the nuclear-powered ship allow it to guarantee safe icebreaker escorts on one of the most intense navigable sections of the Northern Sea Route," he added. Arktika had left the port of Murmansk on 14 November for its first pilotage and will return there in mid-December, before starting its next mission to the Northern Sea Route, Rosatom said.

Arktika is the first of three LK-60 icebreakers, which are dual-draught (8.55 or 10.5m) wide-beam (34m) ships of 25,450 dwt or 33,540 dwt with ballast, able to handle 3m of ice. They each have two RITM-200 reactors of 175 MWt each, delivering 60 MWe at the propellers via twin turbine-generators and three motors. Sibir is expected to enter operation in 2021 and Ural in 2022.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Arktika-icebreaker-completes-first-mission>

Reactor lid completed for Akkuyu unit 1

World Nuclear News, November 30, 2020

AEM Technology, a subsidiary of Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom, said reactor lid manufacturing is a lengthy process and takes up to one-and-a-half years. The work includes hydraulic tests to confirm the strength and density of the base metal and welded joints of the reactor head. To confirm the alignment of the elements, the reactor lid undergoes a control assembly as part of the upper block. The main stages of manufacturing took place under the supervision of the Turkish Nuclear Regulatory Agency.

The reactor head, like the reactor pressure vessel (RPV), belongs to the items of equipment of the first category of seismic resistance, AEM Technology said. The service life of the reactor head is 60 years, with the possibility of extending this by another 20 years, it added. The RPV for Akkuyu unit 1 was delivered to the site in Mersin province on 10 November.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Reactor-lid-completed-for-Akkuyu-unit-1>

West Asia Iran

Iran urges Saudi Arabia to avoid slipping into deeper isolation

Tehran Times, November 16, 2020

Tehran has slammed Riyadh for “baseless allegations and hate-mongering”, urging Saudi Arabia to change course to avoid becoming further isolated. “As long as Saudi rulers do not change course and fix their wrong approach, there will be no prospects for improvement of Saudi Arabia’s isolation even in the Persian Gulf region,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said at a press conference on Monday. The remarks came after Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud urged the world to take a “decisive stance” to address Iran’s efforts to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

“The kingdom stresses the dangers of Iran’s regional project, its interference in other countries, its fostering of terrorism, its fanning the flames of sectarianism and calls for a decisive stance from the international community against Iran that guarantees a drastic handling of its efforts to obtain weapons of mass destruction and develop its ballistic missiles program,” the king said in an annual address to a government advisory body, according to Al Jazeera.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454724/Iran-urges-Saudi-Arabia-to-avoid-slipping-into-deeper-isolation>

Parliament to review ‘strategic bill to lift sanctions’ at first opportunity

Tehran Times, November 16, 2020

The Iranian Parliament’s strategic bill to lift the United States sanctions on Iran will be submitted to the Parliament’s presiding board at the earliest opportunity, a senior lawmaker sitting on the Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA). “The strategic bill to lift the sanctions will be submitted to the presiding board as soon as possible after approval by the National Security Committee,” said Abbas Moqtadaee, the deputy head of the parliamentary committee.

Moqtadaee was referring to the recent bill put forward by Iranian lawmakers in early November that aims to make the U.S. lift sanctions on Iran by doubling down on nuclear activities. According to the 9-article bill, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) will be required to produce and store at least 120 kilograms of enriched uranium with 20 percent purity level at the Fordow nuclear facility every year, and to fulfill the country’s peaceful industrial demands with uranium enriched above 20%, Tasnim news reported on November 2, adding that once ratified, the bill will oblige the AEOI to increase the monthly output of enriched uranium for various peaceful purposes with different purity levels by at least 500 kg.

The news agency also said that the bill entails uranium enrichment activities with at least 1,000 IR-2M centrifuge machines at Natanz within three months after the ratification of the law, and compels the AEOI to launch uranium enrichment as well as research and development activities at the Fordow nuclear site with at least 164 IR-6 centrifuges and increase the number of centrifuge machines to 1,000 by March 2021. The new bill also necessitates the inauguration of a metallic uranium factory in Isfahan within 5 months and restoration of a 40-Megawatts heavy water reactor in Arak, which was supposed to be re-designed and optimized under the JCPOA. The bill requires the Iranian government to prevent any foreign access and monitoring beyond the Additional Protocol.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454741/Parliament-to-review-strategic-bill-to-lift-sanctions-at-first>

Iranian, British foreign ministers discuss JCPOA

Tehran Times, November 17, 2020

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has talked with his British counterpart, Dominic Raab, to discuss bilateral cooperation within the framework of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). In a phone call, Zarif and Raab also conferred on other issues of mutual interest, including bilateral relations and certain humanitarian issues, the Foreign Ministry website reported. The JCPOA, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, was reached on July 14, 2015 between Iran and six world powers, including the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany.

However, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled his country out of the JCPOA in May 2018 and re-instated the sanctions that had been lifted under the pact. He also imposed secondary sanctions on third parties that sought to do business with Iran, effectively targeting the European parties to the agreement. Verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran remained fully compliant with the JCPOA for an entire year, waiting for the co-signatories to honor their commitments and offset the impacts of the U.S. withdrawal. But, as the European parties continued to renege on their obligations, the Islamic Republic moved to scale down its commitment to the JCPOA in a gradual format and based on the provisions of the accord itself that addressed a party's legal rights in case of non-performance by other sides.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454783/Iranian-British-foreign-ministers-discuss-JCPOA>

Envoy urges IAEA to guarantee implementation of nuclear-related co-op

Tehran Times, November 17, 2020

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has stressed that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should guarantee effective implementation of nuclear-related technical cooperation programs. During a meeting of the Agency's Cooperation and Technical Assistance Committee, which was held via video conference on Monday, Gharibabadi said the efforts by the IAEA chief to ensure the effective implementation of technical cooperation programs are very important and their realization requires high solidarity and cooperation at all levels in the world. "It must be guaranteed that today's challenging situation does not have a detrimental effect on the implementation of the Agency's technical cooperation programs, and most importantly, that these projects have sufficiently guaranteed resources," he stated.

Last month, Gharibabadi criticized the head of the IAEA for using irrelevant terms in his remarks on Iran's nuclear program, saying such terms have no place in the IAEA's documents. "Drawing self-made criteria such as 'breakout' and 'significant quantity' for countries which are enriching uranium under the IAEA's surveillance is non-relevant and has no status in the IAEA legal documents," he said. The remarks came after IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said Iran is not in possession of enough enriched uranium to develop nuclear weapons.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454784/Envoy-urges-IAEA-to-guarantee-implementation-of-nuclear-related>

Iran should boost domestic capabilities to change U.S. behavior: Ghalibaf

Tehran Times, November 18, 2020

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf says Iran should improve its domestic capabilities to force the U.S. to change its approach toward the country. "Rest assured that the U.S.'s approach toward

Iran will not change with the changing of that country's president," Ghalibaf said on Wednesday, according to IRNA. "Therefore, in order to change the U.S. approach, we should improve our domestic capabilities," he said. "Today, there is this capacity in the country, and definitely, without producing power and progressing in the field of economy as the top priority, this change is not possible."

He labeled the U.S. as Iran's main enemy, citing Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who has said that the only path to resist the U.S. pressure is working hard. "Therefore, we should work hard for the country's progress and development," added Ghalibaf.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454810/Iran-should-boost-domestic-capabilities-to-change-U-S-behavior>

FM Zarif outlines give-and-take approach to revive JCPOA

Tehran Times, November 18, 2020

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has introduced a give-and-take approach to help ease tensions over a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, conditioning Iran's return to the deal on the U.S. compliance with it. "The U.S. is definitely in no position to set out conditions for us. As a UN member and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the U.S. is duty-bound to implement Resolution 2231. If the resolution is implemented, the sanctions will be removed. Iran has announced that in that case, it will resume honoring its commitments under the JCPOA," the chief Iranian diplomat said. "Thus, first, if the U.S. meets its commitments under Resolution 2231, we will fulfill ours under the JCPOA. Second, if the U.S. seeks to join the JCPOA again, we are ready to negotiate the terms and conditions of Washington's membership in the deal."

Zarif made the remarks in an interview with the official Iran newspaper that was published on Wednesday. He also said that the U.S. has no other option but to return to a nuclear deal that Trump withdrew the U.S. from on May 8, 2018. The deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), put limits on Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the termination of sanctions. Following Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA, Iran initiated a process of gradually reducing its commitments under the nuclear deal in five steps. Now, Iran says if the U.S. returns to the deal, it will also reverse these five steps and resume full compliance with the JCPOA. "The U.S. has no other option but to return to the JCPOA and fulfill its commitments, as Iranians' resistance doomed the "maximum pressure" campaign to failure. Although we have suffered costs in this period, our people told the U.S. that the continuation of such a policy will earn it nothing," Zarif noted.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454836/FM-Zarif-outlines-give-and-take-approach-to-revive-JCPOA>

Russian, UK diplomats discuss Iran nuclear program

Tehran Times, November 18, 2020

Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov and visiting Minister for European Neighborhood and the Americas at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Wendy Morton discussed issues related to Iran, according to the Russian TASS news agency. Citing a Russian Foreign Ministry statement, the news agency said the two diplomats discussed a variety of issues related to Iran and other regional developments. "The sides exchanged views on the current international problems and discussed issues of the Ukrainian settlement, stabilization of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Iranian nuclear program, as well as other topics which the two countries can consolidate their efforts on," TASS quoted the Russian Foreign Ministry as saying.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454834/Russian-UK-diplomats-discuss-Iran-nuclear-program>

Tehran says ready to return to full compliance with JCPOA if next U.S. admin honors the deal
Tehran Times, November 18, 2020

Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has voiced Iran's readiness to return to full compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) if the next U.S. administration honors the deal. "Iran is definitely ready if the other side is ready to get back to full implementation of the JCPOA," Saeed Khatibzadeh said in an interview with Press TV. Trump's withdrawal came while Iran was in full compliance with the treaty. All other parties to the deal have repeatedly criticized the Trump administration's policy toward Iran. Khatibzadeh said the United States' maximum pressure campaign has evolved into a "maximum failure" for that country. Foreign Ministry spokesman Khatibzadeh says the United States' maximum pressure campaign has evolved into a "maximum failure" for that country.

Asked if Iran would "trust" the U.S. if President-elect Joe Biden was to take over the White House, the spokesman said the U.S. had shown everyone that it was not trustworthy. "The issue is not trust. Actually, the nuclear agreement was negotiated based on mutual mistrust. So, this matters most. And we're just looking at the behavior of who is going to run the White House," he said, adding that it was too soon to tell what was going to happen in the future. Khatibzadeh, meanwhile, addressed the lame-duck Trump administration's claim that it was going to build a "wall of sanctions" that, some officials have said, no U.S. administration would be able to break down to return to the JCPOA and lift the economic restrictions. "In their own words... 'there's nothing left to be sanctioned,'" he said, citing U.S. officials' admissions concerning the extent of Washington's sanctioning spree against Iran. "These are part of psychological war against Iranians," he said, adding, "There's nothing more they can do other than to continue this psychological warfare against the Iranian nation." Khatibzadeh said the outgoing U.S. officials were making such claims out of frustration and in order to convince the world that their maximum pressure policy was still alive. "Everybody knows to what extent they've not been able to reach any goals of their policy."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454800/Tehran-says-ready-to-return-to-full-compliance-with-JCPOA-if>

Tehran confirms feeding UF6 gas into IR-2m centrifuges
Tehran Times, November 18, 2020

Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations confirmed on Wednesday that Iran has started feeding UF6 gas into the advanced IR-2m uranium-enriching centrifuges. "The Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released a half-page report yesterday, announcing that on 14 November 2020, IAEA inspectors have verified that Iran began feeding UF6 into the cascade of 174 IR-2m centrifuges at the Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) in Natanz," Kazem Gharibabadi wrote in a tweet on Wednesday.

Earlier, Reuters quoted the IAEA as saying that Iran has begun feeding UF6 into the advanced IR-2m centrifuges installed at Natanz. "On 14 November 2020, the Agency verified that Iran began feeding UF6 into the recently installed cascade of 174 IR-2m centrifuges at the Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) in Natanz," the IAEA report to member states, dated Tuesday, said, according to Reuters.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454816/Tehran-confirms-feeding-UF6-gas-into-IR-2m-centrifuges>

Tehran denies contact between Araghchi, Biden team

Tehran Times, November 20, 2020

Iran has denied a New York Times claim that the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has tried to contact with the team of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden, saying such rumors have become a norm in the mainstream media. Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Friday that the Times report was completely made-up. He added that no direct or indirect contact has been made between Tehran and the Biden camp.

The New York Times reported on November 17 that Araghchi has tried to pass on to Biden's advisers through intermediaries Tehran's insistence that the United States return to the Iran deal unconditionally before any talks resume. Earlier this month, Khatibzadeh had dismissed speculations that Tehran was in contact with the Biden team before or after the U.S. presidential election, saying Iran will not be in contact with anyone outside of issues completely related to the nuclear pact. Iran awaits the formation of the new administration in the U.S. to see what will happen, the spokesman said on November 9. "We should see where the measures of the U.S. will lead to," he said. "It is measures that matter not words, analyses, and speculations."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454864/Tehran-denies-contact-between-Araghchi-Biden-team>

Missile program is not negotiable: MP

Tehran Times, November 22, 2020

Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on Saturday that Iran's missile capability is not negotiable. "Iran's missile and defense capability are not negotiable at all," Abbaszadeh Meshkini told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA). The lawmaker added that Tehran will never allow new issues to be included in the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Abbaszadeh Meshkini was responding to Elliott Abrams, the U.S. special representative for Iran, who recently said that Washington's European allies are willing to go beyond the JCPOA and address Iran's missile program as well as its regional influence. Abrams has told Asharq Al-Awsat that Washington's European allies may want the United States to return to the JCPOA, but they themselves want to go beyond this deal. He claimed that it is clear that the Europeans want to address Iran's missile program and its regional influence, and they also want to extend the JCPOA's sunset clauses for more years.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454959/Missile-program-is-not-negotiable-MP>

One wonders why S. Arabia is so envious of Iran

Tehran Times, November 22, 2020

Tribal leaders in Riyadh have gone to the extreme in their envy of Iran. Their resentment of Iran is entering a new stage as their highly favored president, Donald Trump, will leave the White House in two months. For example, the Saudi minister of state for foreign affairs, Adel al-Jubeir, has said the kingdom reserves the right to arm itself with nuclear weapons if Iran cannot be stopped from building atomic arms. "It's definitely an option," al-Jubeir told the DPA news agency in a recent interview. Jubeir, who is pretending as a fool, talked in a way as if Iran is on the path to build nuclear weapons.

Obviously, he is quite aware of the nature of Iran's nuclear program. He knows that Iran's nuclear activities are subject to the most intrusive inspections in the history of the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency. Al-Jubeir is making such remarks just because he and certain other officials in the region are unsettled that President-elect Joe Biden has said he plans to return to the 2015 nuclear deal – JCPOA - that Trump illegally abrogated and imposed the harshest ever sanctions in history against Iran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454939/One-wonders-why-S-Arabia-is-so-enviuous-of-Iran>

No one tried to aggravate IAEA board meeting, says Russian envoy

Tehran Times, November 21, 2020

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has said the discussion of verification in Iran at the November session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s Board of Governors was relatively quiet, without anyone trying to aggravate the situation. "The discussion of verification in #Iran at November session of #IAEA BoG was relatively quiet. Many expressed concerns about deviations of Tehran from ^#JCPOA requirements, but nobody tried to aggravate the situation," Ulyanov wrote in a tweet on Saturday. "Looks like states want to see how events will develop in 2021," the Russian diplomat noted. A meeting of the 35-nation Board of Governors was held on Friday.

During the meeting, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, said the IAEA director general's new report on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) illustrates the body's ability to verify Iran's commitments under the deal and its utmost level of cooperation with the Agency. "The Reports on this agenda item during the past five years have an identical paragraph which, regardless of the differences among the JCPOA participants on the level of implementation of the reciprocal commitments, is a good testament of the level of cooperation between Iran and the Agency," Gharibabadi said.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454910/No-one-tried-to-aggravate-IAEA-board-meeting-says-Russian-envoy>

Riyadh thinks Iran will gain power if JCPOA survives: analyst

Tehran Times, November 23, 2020

A senior political analyst has said Saudi Arabia believes that a U.S. return to the 2015 nuclear deal will strengthen Iran and will boost Tehran's influence in the region. The Persian Gulf's Arab states led by Saudi Arabia regarded the nuclear deal as an agreement that could reduce Iran's tensions with the West and that's why they attempted to destroy the deal, Davoud Hermidas Bavand said in an interview with IRNA published. "Although Biden's intention is not to return to the same nuclear deal which was signed in 2015, but countries such as Saudi Arabia, the (United Arab) Emirates and Israel disagree with any agreement," Bavand added.

Since Trump assumed office in January 2017, Israel, Saudi Arabia and certain other Arab countries have pushed for a harsher U.S. foreign policy against Iran. They supported Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal – which was clinched under Barack Obama – and cheered the U.S. president for his subsequent sanctions on Tehran that caused more than two hundred billions of dollars in losses.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455002/Riyadh-thinks-Iran-will-gain-power-if-JCPOA-survives-analyst>

Iran has the most transparent nuclear program in the world, says envoy

Tehran Times, November 23, 2020

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, says Iran has the most transparent nuclear program in the world. "Iran is the most transparent country in terms of its nuclear activities. We have had more than a fifth of the world's total inspections by the [International Atomic Energy] Agency (IAEA)," Gharibabadi said in an interview with Khabar Online published on Sunday. "It's because of this level of cooperation and transparency that we do not consider the remarks of some countries as sincere," he added.

He said Iran's latest nuclear move was the injection of uranium hexafluoride, or UF₆, into the IR-2m centrifuges, which was dealt with at a quarterly meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors. However, the envoy continued, after that the European troika (France, Britain and Germany) issued another statement against Iran and accused it of violating the nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The Iranian ambassador criticized European parties to the deal for paying lip service to the illegal U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, while continuing to express concern about Iran for reducing its commitments in a tit-for-tat measure.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455001/Iran-has-the-most-transparent-nuclear-program-in-the-world-says>

Iran Parliament moves to raise uranium enrichment level to 20%

Tehran Times, November 24, 2020

The Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee discussed on Tuesday a plan to significantly increase Iran's nuclear activities, including uranium enrichment level. The plan is part of a broader strategy that aims to lift the United States sanctions on Iran. Iranian lawmakers had put forward a "strategic bill to lift sanctions" in early November that aims to force the U.S. into lifting sanctions on Iran through doubling down on nuclear activities. The Tuesday meeting came on the heels of another meeting on Monday during which the lawmakers approved some of the bill's articles requiring the government to raise uranium enrichment levels to 20%. Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the parliamentary committee, said the committee discussed the bill on Monday and approved three articles of it.

"Despite Corona restrictions in Majlis (Parliament), the meeting was attended by two-thirds of the members. Discussing articles of the Strategic Action Plan for the lifting of sanctions was on the agenda. In today's meeting, three articles of this plan were reviewed and the opinions of the representatives were obtained and amendments were made to the clauses. Representatives from the Foreign Ministry, the Central Bank, and the Parliamentary Research Center also attended the meeting," Amouei told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA) on Monday. According to Amouei, the three articles that were discussed on Monday include measures that, if adopted, would significantly increase Iran's nuclear activities. The spokesman said the first article of the bill is about obliging the government to raise the uranium enrichment level to 20%. The second article is about increasing Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium. And the third article stipulates that the government and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) must use IR-2M and IR-6 advanced centrifuges. These three articles were all approved by the lawmakers, according to Amouei.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455052/Iran-Parliament-moves-to-raise-uranium-enrichment-level-to-20>

Senior MP rejects Saudi ‘JCPOA++’ offer

Tehran Times, November 24, 2020

Mojtaba Zolnouri, the head of the Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has rejected a Saudi offer to be a partner on any future nuclear deal with Iran. Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud told CNBC that President Donald Trump’s “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran has set the groundwork for a new agreement with Iran and that Saudi Arabia should be a part of any potential negotiations between the incoming U.S. administration and Iran on a new nuclear deal. The chief Saudi diplomat said Saudi Arabia seeks to partner with the U.S. administration on a potential new agreement, which would not only limit Iran’s nuclear activities but also seek to address what he called its “regional malign activity.”

Such an accord could be labeled the “JCPOA++,” he added. The JCPOA, or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is a 2015 agreement between Iran and world powers that limited the country’s nuclear ambitions in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. The original agreement was signed by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — China, France, Russia, the U.K., and the U.S. – Germany and the European Union.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455053/Senior-MP-rejects-Saudi-JCPOA-offer>

Zarif, Lavrov discuss Syria, Karabakh, JCPOA

Tehran Times, November 24, 2020

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has discussed the situations in Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh in a phone call with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. Zarif and Lavrov also discussed Tehran and Moscow’s commitment to ensuring the prompt return of all participants to fully observing obligations laid out in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Reuters reported on Tuesday, citing Russia’s Foreign Ministry.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455045/Zarif-Lavrov-discuss-Syria-Karabakh-JCPOA>

Ayatollah Khamenei outlines strategy to nullify sanctions through internal capabilities

Tehran Times, November 25, 2020

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, on Tuesday suggested plans to counteract the United States sanctions on Iran through boosting internal economic capabilities while also ruling out any prospect of broader negotiations with the West. The Leader addressed in detail the economic sanctions of the U.S. on Iran and their impact, calling these sanctions “a crime against the Iranian people that has been intensified in the past three years.” He said the economy is the main issue of the country right now and the livelihood of people has been really under pressure.

Ayatollah Khamenei called the sanctions “a bitter reality and a crime by America and its European partners against the Iranian nation.” In an effort to introduce a strategy to mitigate the economic impact of the sanctions, the Leader said there are two ways to deal with sanctions: removing sanctions and nullifying or overcoming them. The Leader pointed out that Iran has used the first way – i.e. lifting sanctions – but to no avail. “There are two ways to tackle sanctions: 1) removing sanctions 2) nullifying and overcoming them. We tried the first option, removing sanctions, by negotiating for a few years, but to no use. The second option may have difficulties in the beginning but will have a favorable end,” the Leader pointed out. “If succeed, through hard work and innovation, in overcoming the sanctions

and the other side witnesses how sanctions were nullified, it will abandon sanctions gradually.” He added that Iran has a lot of capacities and capabilities to nullify sanctions.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455058/Ayatollah-Khamenei-outlines-strategy-to-nullify-sanctions-through>

Iran says won't negotiate terms of nuclear pact

Tehran Times, November 25, 2020

Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi has said the nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which was signed in July 2015, is not open to new rounds of negotiations. There will be no new negotiations for the JCPOA because negotiations concerning the deal were held in the past and led to the deal, Vaezi told reporters after Wednesday's cabinet meeting. According to Mehr, Vaezi also said while Iran has welcomed U.S. President Donald Trump's defeat, it is not optimistic about any of the U.S. administrations unless they act differently.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455085/Iran-says-won-t-negotiate-terms-of-nuclear-pact>

Iranian nuclear expert assassinated in terrorist attack

Tehran Times, November 27, 2020

A senior Iranian expert specialized in nuclear technology was assassinated in a terrorist attack on Friday afternoon. The assassination against Mohsen Fakhrizadeh took place in the Abe-Sard region of Damavand County, about 40 kilometers northeast of Tehran. The Fars news agency said the expert was assassinated by terrorists in his car. The terrorists blasted a pickup - a Nissan sedan - laden with explosives on the way of the car carrying Fakhrizadeh and then started shooting at his car and security guards. Zarif says “serious indications of Israeli role” seen in terror. Iran holds Israel responsible for the terrorist act. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif urged the international community, especially the European Union, to condemn this heinous crime and stop exercising “shameful double standards”.

“Terrorists murdered an eminent Iranian scientist today. This cowardice—with serious indications of Israeli role—shows desperate warmongering of perpetrators,” Zarif tweeted. “Iran calls on int'l community—and especially EU—to end their shameful double standards & condemn this act of state terror,” the foreign minister asserted. Fars also reported that three to four terrorists were killed in the armed clash. Fakhrizadeh was the only scientist whose name had been mentioned by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Israeli media had announced that the plan for the assassination had failed last year. They also claimed that the name of Fakhrizadeh had been released to Israeli spy agency Mossad by the United Nations. The details of the incident are yet to be clear.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455124/Iranian-nuclear-expert-assassinated-in-terrorist-attack>

‘Majlis focusing on 20% uranium, expelling IAEA inspectors, leaving JCPOA’

Tehran Times, November 29, 2020

A senior Iranian lawmaker has vowed to significantly raise uranium enrichment level and cease Iran's cooperation with the United Nations' nuclear watchdog in response to the assassination of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, 59, was killed on Friday in a terrorist attack involving at least one explosion and small fire by a number of assailants in Absard city of Damavand

County, Tehran Province. Several Iranian officials called for an end to Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Fereydoun Abbasidavani, the head of the Parliament Energy Committee, said in a tweet that the martyrdom of Fakhrizadeh will change the Parliament's approach toward the nuclear issue. Abbasidavani, who was chief of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) from February 2011 to August 2013, narrowly survived an assassination attempt in northern Tehran in November 2010. He holds PhD in nuclear physics. "Right now, the Majlis will focus on four issues, which I will personally pursue: 1- starting 20-percent [uranium] enrichment, 2- expelling all Agency's inspectors, 3- ending cooperation with the Agency, 4- withdrawing from the JCPOA," the senior lawmaker said, referring to an acronym for the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. The Parliament has been reviewing a plan called "strategic action to lift sanctions" since at least early November. The plan is part of a broader strategy that aims to lift the United States sanctions on Iran. Iranian lawmakers had put forward a "strategic bill to lift sanctions" in early November that aims to force the U.S. into lifting sanctions on Iran through doubling down on nuclear activities. The Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee held two meetings last week to discuss the bill. During the meetings, the lawmakers approved some of the bill's articles requiring the government to raise uranium enrichment levels to 20%.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455236/Majlis-focusing-on-20-uranium-expelling-IAEA-inspectors-leaving>

There will be no JCPOA 2: lawmaker

Tehran Times, November 29, 2020

Fada Hossein Maleki, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, responded on Sunday to recent remarks by Saudi Arabia's top diplomat, saying Riyadh is not in a position to call for another nuclear deal on Iran's nuclear program. Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud has recently called for a new nuclear deal with Iran to replace the existing one, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Riyadh is not in a position to address international issues especially the JCPOA," Maleki told the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA) on Sunday. According to the lawmaker, the outcome of the United States presidential election has dealt a severe blow to the Saudis. "In fact, Trump was feeding on various countries such as Saudi Arabia and has pursued the warmongering policies of Riyadh in the region," he added.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455237/There-will-be-no-JCPOA-2-lawmaker>

MPs pass plan to nullify sanctions, boost nuclear capabilities

Tehran Times, November 29, 2020

Iranian lawmakers on Sunday passed the double-urgency of a strategic action plan aimed at lifting of the sanctions on Iran and reinforcing the country's nuclear capabilities. Of the 246 MPs present in Sunday's session, 232 voted in favor of the plan, Mehr reported. It came two days after Iran's top nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, was assassinated near Tehran, in what appeared to be a plot by the U.S. and Israeli regimes. After the plan was approved, lawmakers shouted "Down with America" and "Down with Israel".

"The plan will in fact strengthen the capabilities of the country's nuclear industry," Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said. "God willing, this plan will be mulled in the next session of the

Majlis in order to strengthen the country in terms of the facilities of the nuclear industry as well as to prevent the nonsensical words and terrorist acts of the enemies,” Ghalibaf added. Iranian lawmakers have angrily and strongly condemned the assassination of Fakhrizadeh. Chairman of the Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Mojtaba Zonnour said the Islamic Republic will definitely take revenge from the criminal Zionists. “The cowardly assassination of martyr Fakhrizadeh will not go unanswered,” Zonnour said in a tweet on Saturday. Abbas Moghtadaie, who is the deputy chairman of the committee, said, “Now the entire Iran says tough revenge for terror. Tough revenge will be taken. Do not doubt it.” Homayoun Sameyah Najafabadi, who represents the Jewish community in Iran, said Iran’s scientific progress cannot be thwarted with the assassination of individuals. “The enemy thinks that science and knowledge in the Islamic Republic of Iran depend on the individual and they can stop the progress of science and knowledge in Iran by assassinating individuals,” Sameyah Najafabadi told Fars news agency on Saturday. Meanwhile, MP Nasrollah Pezhmanfar has said the Parliament seeks to mandate the government to end the inspections of Iranian nuclear and military installations by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455213/MPs-pass-plan-to-nullify-sanctions-boost-nuclear-capabilities>

Iran denies meeting between martyr Fakhrizadeh, IAEA officials

Tehran Times, November 30, 2020

Behrooz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), has denied any meeting between nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and the officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). “Martyr Fakhrizadeh had not had any meetings or conversations with the former director general of Agency, inspectors or officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency and allegations made in this regard are baseless,” Kamalvandi said on Monday, according to Mehr.

He explained that the IAEA’s inspections are performed on the basis of legal principles accepted in the agreements inked between Iran and the IAEA, and just rules of safeguards or protocols are carried out and there is nothing beyond that. No unusual inspections have happened nor will happen, Kamalvandi said. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, 59, was assassinated on Friday in a terrorist attack involving at least one explosion and small fire by a number of assailants in Absard city of Damavand County, Tehran Province. Iranian officials were quick to point the finger at Israel, which has carried out assassination operations against Iranian nuclear scientists over the past decade.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/455256/Iran-denies-meeting-between-martyr-Fakhrizadeh-IAEA-officials>

Turkey

Turkey grants construction permit for Akkuyu unit 3

World Nuclear News, November 19, 2020

The licence, which was granted on 13 November, follows the regulator's review of the application it received on 28 March 2019. Work can now start on building all the reactor and turbine buildings for the unit, as on the installation of systems and equipment related to nuclear safety. A limited building permit for the unit was awarded on 23 July. Alexey Frolov, managing director for government relations and international cooperation at JSC Akkuyu Nuclear, said that, within the framework of the previously obtained limited permit, the concrete preparation of the foundation slabs of the reactor building and

the turbine building are being completed at the construction site. The foundation slabs will be reinforced and then, thanks to receipt of the full construction licence, the company can proceed to concreting the foundation.

Permits issued for the project also include: a positive conclusion on the environmental impact assessment report; a licence for electricity generation; licences for the construction of units 1, 2 and 3; and temporary permission to operate the Vostochny cargo terminal. The NDK is now considering the company's application for a construction licence for unit 4, which it submitted to the regulator on 12 May, Frolov said, according to a statement from Rosatom yesterday.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Turkey-grants-construction-permit-for-Akkuyu-unit>

Saudi Arabia

UAE, Saudi nuclear regulators strengthen cooperation

World Nuclear News, November 16, 2020

The UAE's Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR) and Saudi Arabia's Nuclear and Radiological Regulatory Commission (NRRC) have agreed to cooperate in nuclear and radiation regulatory matters, and to form topical working groups. The agreement follows the signing of a bilateral accord on cooperation in nuclear energy between the two countries in 2019. NRRC presented the status of Saudi Arabia's nuclear programme and regulatory framework, while FANR gave updates on the UAE's nuclear energy programme, including the recent start-up of unit 1 at its Barakah nuclear power plant. FANR also discussed its regulatory framework in terms of the nuclear and radiological sectors in the UAE, and efforts to protect the public, workers and the environment from radiation risks. FANR and NRRC agreed to hold topical workshops and form working groups to exchange information and knowledge related to regulatory framework, radiation protection, nuclear safety and security, as well as nuclear non-proliferation and emergency preparedness. They also agreed to discuss smart licensing systems and public communications.

Under a USD20 billion deal announced in December 2009, four Korean-designed APR1400 reactors are being built at Barakah in the UAE by a consortium led by the Korea Electric Power Corporation. Unit 1 was grid connected in mid-August and is scheduled to enter full commercial operation later this year. Saudi Arabia plans to construct two large nuclear power reactors and also small reactors for desalination. The King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (KA-CARE) in 2017 announced it was soliciting proposals for 2.9 GWe nuclear capacity, and in November 2018 awarded a contract to Worley Parsons to provide consultancy services for the Saudi National Atomic Energy Project. This covers project governance, resource management, project services, training and compliance across the full scope of large plants, small modular reactors and the nuclear fuel cycle. KA-CARE has contracted French engineering group Assystem to conduct site characterisation and impact studies for the country's first nuclear power plant. South Korean companies Kepco Engineering & Construction and Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power in December 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly develop a project to construct a plant based on their SMART (System-integrated Modular Advanced Reactor) in Saudi Arabia.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/UAE-Saudi-nuclear-regulators-strengthen-cooperatio>

Israel

Netanyahu urges no return to Iran nuclear deal

Reuters, November 22, 2020

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in an apparent message to U.S. President-elect Joe Biden, said on Sunday there should be no return to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal abandoned by President Donald Trump. Biden, who takes office on Jan. 20, has said he would rejoin the accord if Tehran first resumed strict compliance, and would work with allies "to strengthen and extend it, while more effectively pushing back against Iran's other destabilising activities".

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-iran-nuclear-israel-usa/netanyahu-urges-no-return-to-iran-nuclear-deal-idUKKBN2820N6>

East Asia North Korea

N. Korea poses major threats to 'vital interests' of US: think tank

Yonhap

Korea Herald, November 18, 2020

North Korea poses major threats to "vital interests" of the United States as it continues to advance its missile and nuclear capabilities, a Washington-based think tank report showed. According to the "2021 Index of US Military Strength," an annual report published by the Heritage Foundation, North Korea was ranked as "high" in terms of threat level, the second highest out of its five-tier threat assessment scale. It came in the same category with Russia, Iran and China. The North's threat level, however, was unchanged from a year earlier.

In terms of threat capability, North Korea was ranked as "gathering," a step shy of the top "formidable" level, the report showed. Iran was categorized in the same level with the North. "US and allied intelligence agencies assess that Pyongyang has already achieved nuclear warhead miniaturization, the ability to place nuclear weapons on its medium-range missiles, and an ability to reach the continental United States with a missile," it added.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201118000264&ACE_SEARCH=1

China's policy on NK denuclearization consistent regardless of US leadership change: Amb. Xing

Yonhap

Korea Herald, November 18, 2020

China's commitment to peace and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula will remain consistent regardless of the leadership change in the United States, Chinese Ambassador Xing Haiming said. Xing also said during a forum hosted by his embassy that Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit South Korea first ahead of any other country once the coronavirus pandemic situation stabilizes. "That remains unchanged," he said. Asked about the prospects of Beijing's cooperation with Washington under the incoming administration of President-elect Joe Biden, Xing stressed that China is "consistent in its position about pursuing peace, dialogue, development and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

"Regardless of whom, or what other countries say, we will keep pushing toward that direction. This is in the mutual interests of both China and Korea, this region and beyond, as well as for world peace,"

the ambassador said. China has called for resolving the denuclearization issue with Pyongyang through dialogue, supporting the North's demand for a step-by-step process in which sanctions relief and security guarantees come in parallel with its denuclearization steps.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201118000682&ACE_SEARCH=1

More verification needed over NK ICBM's reentry capability: defense ministry

Yonhap

Korea Herald, November 19, 2020

More verification is necessary to determine whether North Korea has atmospheric reentry technology for its intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), the defense ministry said Thursday, following a US think tank report suggesting Pyongyang has already mastered the technology. In the 2021 Index of US Military Strength report, the Heritage Foundation said Pyongyang's ICBM reentry vehicles "would likely perform adequately if flown to a normal trajectory to continental US targets," citing US intelligence authorities.

Asked to comment on the assessment, South Korea's deputy defense ministry spokesperson, Col. Moon Hong-sik, pointed out that North Korea has not conducted a real-range ICBM test necessary to prove its reentry capabilities. "It is our consistent stance that additional verification is necessary to tell whether they have secured the technology," he said during a regular press briefing. In the report, the Heritage Foundation said North Korea poses major threats to vital interests of the United States as it continues to advance its missile and nuclear capabilities. Last month, North Korea held a massive military parade in Pyongyang and showed off a new ICBM, along with other weapons, with leader Kim Jong-un vowing to continue strengthening the country's self-defense "war deterrent."

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201119000812&ACE_SEARCH=1

North Korea's Kim stresses economic policies at a politburo meeting - KCNA

Sangmi Cha

Reuters, November 30, 2020

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un stressed the need to carry out economic policies with responsibility, as he presided over a meeting of the politburo of the ruling Workers Party, state news agency KCNA reported. The meeting comes during a tough year for North Korea as the coronavirus pandemic has put more pressure on an economy already battered by international sanctions aimed at stopping its nuclear program.

The politburo harshly criticized the economic guidance organs for failing to provide scientific guidance for economic tasks ahead of a congress next year, KCNA reported. "It stressed the need to put the operation and command for carrying out the Party's economic policies on a scientific basis and display great dedication and responsibility," said KCNA.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-northkorea-politics/north-koreas-kim-stresses-economic-policies-at-a-politburo-meeting-kcna-idUKKBN2890Z3>

South Korea

Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power vies for Czech nuclear plant deal

Kim Byung-wook
Korea Herald, November 17, 2020

The competition to win Dukovany nuclear power plant deal in Czech has been narrowed down to five candidates including Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power after France-Japan consortium ATMEA dropped out of the race. According to industry sources Tuesday, Czech power utility CEZ held the second round of talks at the turn of October with five candidates willing to become suppliers for the construction of the Dukovany nuclear power plant.

The five candidates include KHNP, China's CGN, France's EDF, Russia's Rosatom and Westinghouse of the US. According to CEZ spokesman Ladislav Kriz, the talks focused on the model of the nuclear power plant so that the candidates could start preparing for the tender.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201117000809&ACE_SEARCH=1

Minister discusses NK's denuclearization with former US Defense Secretary Perry

Ahn Sung-mi
Korea Herald, November 18, 2020

Unification Minister Lee In-young held a videoconference with former US Defense Secretary William Perry on Wednesday to discuss ways to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea under the future administration of US President-elect Joe Biden. Jeong Se-hyun, a former unification minister and current executive vice chairperson of the presidential National Unification Advisory Council, also attended the hourlong session.

During the three-way meeting, Perry said using a "diplomatic solution" to achieve denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula would still be effective despite the changes in the situation since he served under the Bill Clinton administration from 1994-1997, such as the North having acquired nuclear capabilities. He also stressed that Washington and Seoul need to create a more advanced version of a denuclearization and peace process, according to the Unification Ministry. Lee vowed to strengthen cooperation with Washington to restart the Korean Peninsula peace process, taking a lesson from the "Perry Process," which was based on coordination and cooperation between then-South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and then-US President Clinton. Perry, one of few senior US officials to have negotiated directly with North Koreans, is best known for drawing up a three-stage proposal in 1999 to end the North's missile and nuclear programs. The step-by-step approach called for North Korea to freeze its missile tests and nuclear development in return for the lifting of sanctions and normalized relations with the US.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201118000859&ACE_SEARCH=1

Scrapping NK nukes should not be prerequisite for peacebuilding: Yun

Ahn Sung-mi
Korea Herald, November 19, 2020

Acknowledging that the US policy of "maximum pressure" and its focus on North Korea's denuclearization have failed to change the reclusive regime, Joseph Yun, former US special representative for North Korea policy, said the incoming Joe Biden administration should steer both denuclearization and peace building in tandem in dealing with the North. Yun, who served as Washington's point man on North Korea during the early Trump administration, stressed that Biden

needs to take the reality of the North Korea situation into account when devising policy on Pyongyang: North Korea will not denuclearize anytime soon, and “maximum pressure” does not work.

“I think this is where the US has to accept that policy of pressure has failed. It cannot be all pressure. Also a policy of emphasizing only denuclearization has failed,” Yun said at a forum organized by the state-run think tank the Korea Institute for National Unification on Thursday. “We need to make denuclearization a goal but also peace building an equal goal. ... These two goals must be equal in status and move in tandem.” He stressed that this two-goal policy is a “very long-term project,” as it requires peace and denuclearization to make equal progress together “hand in hand.” But this approach will appeal to both Koreas as well as China, he added.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201119000917&ACE_SEARCH=1

Suhyup chief demands Japan cancel plan to release radioactive water

Yonhap

Korea Herald, November 19, 2020

The head of South Korea's National Federation of Fisheries Cooperatives on Thursday demanded that Tokyo withdraw its plan to discharge radioactive water from its crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant. Im Joon-taek, chairman of the federation, also known as Suhyup, met with Masato Nagai, a councilor from the Japanese embassy, at the organization's headquarters in eastern Seoul and expressed his opposition to Tokyo's plan to release the contaminated water, according to Suhyup.

According to Suhyup, the meeting was arranged at the request of the Japanese embassy. Nagai reportedly told Im that Japan's processing and handling of the radioactive water was deemed scientifically safe and asked for understanding from the South Korean fishing industry.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201119001106&ACE_SEARCH=1

Biden's N. Korea policy will be different from Obama's: S. Korean lawmakers

Yonhap

Korea Herald, November 20, 2020

US President-elect Joe Biden's approach toward North Korea will be different from that of former US President Barack Obama, a group of South Korea's ruling party lawmakers said. The South Korean delegation, led by Rep. Song Young-gil of the Democratic Party, said that the Biden administration's North Korea policy will not resemble that of the Obama administration, which is often described as “strategic patience.”

“Personally, I believe the biggest difference is that (Obama's policy) was when (South Korea's) Lee Myung-bak administration sought to pressure North Korea. The biggest difference now is that we now have the Moon Jae-in administration that is pushing for the Korean Peninsula peace process,” Rep. Yun Kun-young told a press conference. The three-member delegation, including Rep. Kim Hang-jung, arrived here Sunday for talks with their US counterparts and officials from the government and think tanks here.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201120000180&ACE_SEARCH=1

Over 70% of S. Koreans support Seoul's role as 'facilitator' in nuclear talks in Biden administration

Yonhap

Korea Herald, November 27, 2020

A majority of South Koreans agree that Seoul should play the role of a "facilitator" to push the stalled nuclear negotiations forward between the United States and North Korea, a survey showed Friday. According to the Nov. 20-21 survey of 1,000 adults by the National Unification Advisory Council, 73.9 percent said South Korea should serve as a "facilitator" in nuclear talks between Washington and Pyongyang after US President-elect Joe Biden takes office. Among them, 35.3 percent said they "very much" support Seoul's role as a facilitator, while 38.6 percent replied they "mostly" support such a move, the survey showed.

The poll had a margin of error of 3.1 points and a 95 percent confidence level. In the same survey, 73.9 percent said the Biden administration should maintain efforts to improve ties with the North as agreed by President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and keep their policy toward denuclearization and peace on the Korean Peninsula.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20201127000287&ACE_SEARCH=1

Japan

Initial stage starts to bury nuclear waste in Hokkaido

The Asahi Shimbun, November 18, 2020

Economy ministry officials have finally started the long, multistage process toward building a final storage facility for highly radioactive nuclear waste, but they could face obstacles down the road from the Hokkaido governor. Hiroshi Kajiyama, the economy minister, on Nov. 17 approved plans to begin the first stage of selecting two small Hokkaido municipalities—Suttsu town and Kamoenai village--as final storage sites for the waste from nuclear power plants. In the first stage, government officials will examine documents and maps of seismic activity for about two years. It is the first time the government has reached this stage.

The actual selection process will be handled by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization of Japan (NUMO), which on Nov. 17 released plans for the first stage involving the two local governments. NUMO in 2002 began asking municipalities around Japan to apply for consideration as final nuclear waste storage sites. The town of Toyo in Kochi Prefecture in 2007 became the first local government to apply. However, the town mayor made the decision without first consulting the Toyo assembly.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13941302>

Sendai nuclear plant resumes with anti-terror upgrades

Yasuyuki Onaya

The Asahi Shimbun, November 19, 2020

The Sendai nuclear plant's No. 1 reactor is expected to resume generating power late in the evening of Nov. 19 as the first reactor in Japan outfitted with an anti-terrorism facility. And a second reactor is soon planned to follow suit. The No. 1 reactor has been idled since March because the plant operator, Kyushu Electric Power Co., failed to meet the deadline for upgrading the facility under the more stringent reactor safety regulations set after the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Operators are now required to outfit the plants under an anti-terrorism regulatory “backfit” provision so they can continue to control the reactors remotely even in the event of aircraft crashing into the plant. In addition, they are obliged to complete the facility upgrades within five years, once their detailed project designs for safeguarding the reactor are approved by the government’s Nuclear Regulation Authority. The Sendai nuclear plant’s No. 1 reactor became the nation’s first where an operator was forced to halt a reactor due to its failure to meet the latest standards under the retrofit provision.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13944771>

Takahama town assembly gives nod to restart of aging reactor

The Asahi Shimbun, November 25, 2020

The town assembly here Nov. 25 approved the first restart of a nuclear power plant already past its initial 40-year shelf life. The No. 1 and No. 2 reactors at Kansai Electric Power Co.’s Takahama plant went offline in 2011 following the triple meltdown at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant operated by Tokyo Electric Power Co. Under revisions to the nuclear reactor regulation law that took effect in July 2013, reactors can in principle only operate for 40 years, with a single extension of 20 years in exceptional cases.

A majority vote by the Takahama town assembly approved a resumption of operations. It is the first regarding a plant in operation for more than 40 years. Kansai Electric is seeking to resume operating the No. 1 reactor in March 2021 and the No. 2 reactor the following May. Next up in the approval process is Yutaka Nose, the Takahama mayor who is expected to announce his decision in December. After that the Fukui prefectural assembly and Fukui Governor Tatsuji Sugimoto will be required to give their respective approvals. The two Takahama reactors are among only four in operation for more than 40 years that have passed safety screenings mandated by the Nuclear Regulation Authority. The other two are the No. 3 reactor at Kansai Electric’s Mihama plant and the Tokai No. 2 plant in Ibaraki Prefecture operated by Japan Atomic Power Co.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13940818>

Misc/ World

Feeling the Energy: Can Nuclear and Solar Energy Partner Together in the 2020s?

Ed Kennedy

Solar Magazine, November 20, 2020

Solar and nuclear energy have long been viewed as the “energy sources of tomorrow”. When it comes to widespread adoption, nuclear has enjoyed the advantage of a headstart in terms of mass uptake. The Obninsk Nuclear Power Plant southwest of Moscow in the former USSR is credited with being the world’s first nuclear power plant, coming online 66 years ago on the 26th June 1954. But for a variety of reasons, since then nuclear’s progress has often stalled and stagnated in many nations.

The gap between nuclear’s potential use and its practical implementation remains stark. Solar by contrast has been slower to achieve recognition and sustained growth, once again for a number of reasons. Yet the past decade has indeed seen solar achieve explosive growth globally. By all accounts, solar’s momentum is set to continue.

<https://solarmagazine.com/can-nuclear-and-solar-energy-partner-together-in-the-2020s/>

Regulator opens South African nuclear proposals for comment

World Nuclear News, November 24, 2020

This follows a "determination" by Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy Gwede Mantashe to begin the process to procure the new capacity, as set out in the Integrated Resource Plan for Electricity 2019 to 2030 (IRP 2019) which was published in October 2019.

According to the determination, which was received by NERSA in August, the generator of the nuclear power produced from the new capacity will be Eskom Holdings (SOC) Limited, or another "organ of state", possibly in partnership with another party. The buyer of the electricity will be Eskom "or any entity determined through Eskom's unbundling process as the future buyer of electricity". The nuclear new build programme will be procured by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, or another organ of state, and the procurer will be responsible for determining the procurement process, which will be established through a "fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective" tendering procedure.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Regulator-opens-South-African-nuclear-proposals-fo>

Op-ed USA

The New Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty Will Be an Early Trial for Biden

Miles A. Pomper

World Politics Review, November 18, 2020

With support from nearly half the world's nations, a new United Nations treaty banning the possession and use of nuclear weapons will take effect early next year. The U.N. confirmed last month that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, or TPNW, had been ratified by the required 50 countries. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called it "a tribute to the survivors of nuclear explosions and tests, many of whom advocated for this treaty."

Many non-nuclear-armed states, as well as pro-disarmament activists and organizations like the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, have celebrated the agreement, which they see as a milestone in global efforts to prevent nuclear war. However, it has drawn strong opposition from nuclear-armed states, especially the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council: Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Trump administration has called on the treaty's 84 signatories to back out of it. Its entry into force on Jan. 22, 2021, will pose a thorny diplomatic challenge for the incoming Biden administration.

<https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29225/the-new-nuclear-weapons-ban-treaty-will-be-an-early-trial-for-biden>

I Helped Negotiate the Iran Nuclear Deal. Here's How Joe Biden Could Revive It

Catherine Ashton

Time, November 23, 2020

common expression we used during the negotiations over the Iran nuclear deal of 2015 was cautious optimism. It aptly sums up what will be felt in Brussels, Paris, London and Berlin on reports that President-elect Biden plans to re-join the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as it is formally called.

It won't be easy for a Biden administration to get back to the deal that President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from in 2018, despite huge amounts of good will from Europe. For starters, many members of Congress never warmed to the idea of an agreement with Iran. Even at the moment we reached an interim agreement in 2013, some wanted to put new sanctions on Iran. This would have killed the deal before it began. Nearly all the Republican candidates for President in 2016 said they would either toughen the JCPOA or scrap it altogether.

<https://time.com/5914237/joe-biden-iran-nuclear-deal/>

West Asia

Back off!

Tehran Times, November 18, 2020

U.S. President Donald Trump has reportedly asked his aides to provide him with options for attacking Iran's nuclear program, a move that, if made, will certainly be met with an Iranian response, according to an expert on West Asia. President Trump asked senior advisers in an Oval Office meeting on Thursday whether he had options to take action against Iran's main nuclear site in the coming weeks, The New York Times reported on Monday, saying the meeting occurred a day after international inspectors reported a significant increase in the country's stockpile of nuclear material.

Citing four current and former U.S. officials, The New York Times claimed a range of senior advisers dissuaded the president from moving ahead with a military strike, saying the advisers — including Vice President Mike Pence; Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; Christopher C. Miller, the acting defense secretary; and Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — warned that a strike against Iran's facilities could easily escalate into a broader conflict in the last weeks of Trump's presidency. "First of all, these advisers warned Trump that if he attacks Iran, he will put all U.S. interests in danger throughout the region. Second, they told him that all U.S. military bases in the region will be within the range of Iran's missiles. Third, they told him that America's friends in the region — Persian Gulf's southern littoral Arab countries — will incur serious damages. Furthermore, they warned about the scope of the war and the spillover effect of it. They warned about a possible crisis in the Strait of Hormuz and an oil crisis," Seyed Hadi Seyed Afghahi, an expert on West Asia, told the Tehran Times. Pompeo and General Milley have warned about military action against Iran, according to The Times, adding that After Pompeo and General Milley described the potential risks of military escalation, officials left the meeting believing a missile attack inside Iran was off the table.

However, the publication raised the possibility that Trump might still be looking at ways to strike Iranian assets and allies, including groups in Iraq. In what appeared to be a steady process of putting the spotlight on Iran, the American publication also claimed that a smaller group of national security aides had met late Wednesday to discuss Iran, the day before the meeting with the president. Reuters also confirmed the account of the meeting in The New York Times, citing a U.S. official on Monday. The news agency reported that Trump, with two months left in office, last week asked for options on attacking Iran's main nuclear site, but ultimately decided against taking the dramatic step.

Iran rejected the U.S. media saber-rattling, saying it has military options at its disposal to prevent or respond to any aggression by the U.S. Alireza Miryousefi, the spokesman for Iran's mission to the

United Nations in New York, said Iran's nuclear program is purely for peaceful purposes and civilian use and Trump's policies have not changed that. "However, Iran has proven to be capable of using its legitimate military might to prevent or respond to any melancholy adventure from any aggressor," he told Reuters. Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei also threatened the U.S. with a "crushing" response if it attacked Iran. "Any action against the Iranian nation would certainly face a crushing response," Rabiei said in remarks on Tuesday. But the spokesman said he personally doesn't think a U.S. attack on Iran is probable.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454790/Back-off>

Biden is unlikely to end military involvements, professor says

Tehran Times, November 18, 2020

Director of the Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS) at Georgetown University says that President-elect Joe Biden "is not the right person" to end the endless American wars as liberals think America has a global mandate to intervene and "spread its gospel of truth". "I don't think Biden is likely to end America's military involvement," Mehran Kamrava tells the Tehran Times, describing Biden and his team as "liberal interventionist". The following is the text of the interview:

Q: Some media outlets talk about Biden's readiness to roll back the Trump policies with a blitz of executive actions. Is it a realistic view?

A: Usually, American presidents are judged by their accomplishments in the first one hundred days in which they all have executive and legislative agendas. There won't be a blitz as such, but there would be a whole host of initiatives coming from the Biden administration in its first one hundred days. These include measures, design to contain the spread of the corona pandemic, measures to repair relations with European Union, repair trade relation with China and also other measures including probably starting to discuss options with Iran and this may not necessarily be direct with Iran and first could be through the European Union or the P5, but that would be an option. So, I don't think there would necessarily be a blitz of actions, but in the first one hundred days, we can expect measures related to the coronavirus pandemic, related to the economy, related to improving relations with the EU and entering some of the multilateral agreements that Trump administration has withdrawn from, including the Iran nuclear agreement and Paris Climate Accord, etc.

Q: Do you believe that Biden can end the endless American wars?

A: No, I don't believe Biden is the right person for that; these liberals think America has a mandate globally to intervene and spread its gospel of truth and gospel of good. So, these are liberal interventionists, and I don't think Biden is likely to end America's military involvement.

Q: With the Biden win, what will happen to relations between the U.S. and Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia, which received overt support from the Trump administration?

A: Biden has been a greater supporter of multilateralism compared to Trump's preference for bilateralism. Trump has paid far greater attention to bilateral relations between the United States and Saudi Arabia; the U.S. and the United Arab Emirates; the U.S., and Egypt at the expense of a bigger picture of the Middle East (West Asia), for example, the U.S. and the (Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council. So, this had a number of consequences for the U.S. I think the change will not necessarily be in the substance of the U.S. relations with these countries, but the style of U.S. relations may change. We might see a greater degree of tension in countries like Kuwait, especially Qatar, to some of the

other parts of the Middle East (West Asia), but we are not going to see a fundamental shift in U.S.-Israeli relations. We are likely to see even countries like Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman normalize ties with Israel under the Biden administration, probably even Saudi Arabia, and probably Biden will be more likely to engage with Iran, but whether Iran is ready to engage with the Biden administration is a different issue.

Q: Do you predict comprehensive talks between regional players in West Asia, for example between Iran and certain Arab states?

A: Iran has been advocating discussions with various Arab parties, especially Saudi Arabia, but the Saudis have not necessarily been keen on the dialog, and probably with encouragement by the Biden administration, they might be more willing to have that discussion.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454781/Biden-is-unlikely-to-end-military-involvements-professor-says>

What is behind recent psychological warfare against Iran?

Tehran Times, November 18, 2020

Recently there are some contradictory reports on possible US President Donald Trump's military action against Iran before leaving the office on Jan 20, 2021. New York Times wrote, "President Trump asked senior advisers in an Oval Office meeting on Thursday whether he had options to take action against Iran's main nuclear site in the coming weeks. A range of senior advisers dissuaded the president from moving ahead with a military strike. The advisers — including Vice President Mike Pence; Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; Christopher C. Miller, the acting defense secretary; and Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — warned that a strike against Iran's facilities could easily escalate into a broader conflict in the last weeks of Mr. Trump's presidency."

While New York Times says Trump was the initiator of this plan, some other sources say the plan was initiated by other officials of the White House but Trump was not interested in it. Regarding the psychological warfare orchestrated against Iran by some US Medias, some points and possibilities should not be neglected:- On the eve of the martyrdom of Lt. General Qasim Soleimani (Jan. 2nd) assassinated by US forces in Iraq, maybe the US administration is worried about possible Iran's revenge and actions against the US interests in the region. Therefore the recent US psychological war can be interpreted as a part of the White House's efforts to create a balance of horror to prevent Iran's possible measures against the US interests.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454831/What-is-behind-recent-psychological-warfare-against-Iran>

Near to impossible

Tehran Times, November 23, 2020

Joe Biden, who is widely projected to win the United States presidential election, has vowed to rejoin a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers that President Donald Trump vociferously quit nearly two and a half years ago, but Biden has been very tight-lipped about how he would rejoin the nuclear deal or approach Iran in general. His hitherto suspected silence about the deal could be indicative of his perception of the difficulties he would likely face in the coming months. "I will offer Tehran a credible path back to diplomacy. If Iran returns to strict compliance with the nuclear deal, the

United States would rejoin the agreement as a starting point for follow-on negotiations. With our allies, we will work to strengthen and extend the nuclear deal's provisions, while also addressing other issues of concern,” Biden said in a September op-ed for CNN.

Since then, Biden has refrained from making any remarks concerning the nuclear deal, and journalists have stopped short of asking him questions on his potential Iran policy in case he moved into the White House. In the September op-ed, Biden did not elaborate on his plan to revive the deal, a move that prompted many pundits and news media outlets to speculate over Biden’s next move in relation to Iran. NBC News has introduced a step-by-step plan that could lead to Biden and Iran resolving differences over the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – within a few months. Citing former U.S. officials and European diplomats, NBC reported on Saturday that rather than removing sanctions all at once or Iran returning immediately to full compliance, a more likely scenario could see an incremental approach over a period of three or four months. It also said that a first step could have Iran freeze its nuclear work, in return for some level of sanctions relief. Further steps could see Iran eventually return to compliance and all the nuclear-related sanctions lifted. But this step-by-step plan is easier said than done because the Trump administration has chipped away at nuclear-related sanctions in such a way that makes efforts to lift them irrelevant because most of these sanctions were reimposed under counterterrorism authority. The Trump administration did so mainly to make it difficult for a Biden administration to go soft on Iran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454790/Back-off>

Biden will return to JCPOA but won’t lift sanctions swiftly: George Washington University professor

Tehran Times, November 17, 2020

A professor of international business at the George Washington University says he thinks Joe Biden will restore the 2015 nuclear agreement (JCPOA) in order to make his former boss Barack Obama happy and strengthen ties with Europeans who feel “betrayed” by the United States. However, Professor Hossein Askari says Biden will not remove sanctions on Iran all of a sudden and he will try to build on the sanctions that Donald Trump imposed on Iran. “He will not remove the sanctions imposed by Trump in return for Iran destroying any excess enriched fuel that they have accumulated and addressing any other infraction after Trump’s withdrawal from the treaty,” Askari tells the Tehran Times. One year after the Trump administration formally pulled out of the nuclear agreement, on May 8, 2019, Iran said its “strategic patience” is over and started to gradually remove limits on its nuclear activities. Professor Askari also says Iran should not budge on its defensive missile program as the country is “surrounded by the U.S. and its allies.”

Q: As Joe Biden is poised to become the president of the United States, do you think he will move quickly to restore the nuclear agreement (JCPOA)?

A: I think Biden will want to get the agreement back and on track again for a number of reasons. This agreement was the singular success and legacy of the Obama era. Biden would bring a smile on the face of his former boss. It would also strengthen relations with U.S. allies in Europe who feel they have been betrayed by the United States. And it would show that the U.S. will honor its agreements and restore some confidence in the international system that has been shattered by Trump. “Biden will not be a panacea for Iran’s ongoing problems”

But I don’t think that Biden would say, okay let’s go back and assume that the agreement was fully in force. Namely, he will not remove the sanctions imposed by Trump in return for Iran destroying any

excess enriched fuel that they have accumulated and addressing any other infraction after Trump's withdrawal from the treaty. Biden will want more. Biden will ask for a dramatic curtailment of Iran's missile program, for Iran to cut ties with Syria, Hezbollah, Houthis, militias in Iraq, with Hamas and who knows who else and demand that Iran pulls its advisors and forces from anywhere outside of Iran's borders. He will tie all these to restoring the nuclear agreement and lifting sanctions, and even then, only step by step and not with total removal of sanctions. So don't think that Biden will be a panacea for Iran's ongoing problems. Trump has done Iran much harm. And Trump, as all U.S. presidents before him, says that he is doing this to bring freedom and human rights for the Iranian people.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/454744/Biden-will-return-to-JCPOA-but-won-t-lift-sanctions-swiftly>

East Asia

Japan's 'bridge' for a world free of nuclear arms crumbles further

The Asahi Shimbun, November 18, 2020

We cannot help worrying that Japan's presence as the only nation hit by nuclear weapons seems to be shrinking in the international community. A Japan-sponsored United Nations draft resolution, calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons, was approved earlier this month by the Disarmament and International Security Committee (The First Committee) of the U.N. General Assembly. The draft resolution garnered the support of 139 nations, down by nine from last year. There also were 33 abstentions and five votes against--up by seven and one, respectively, from the previous year.

Submitting this motion for the 27th consecutive year, Japan pledged to be a bridge that brings nations together and build a common foundation to realize "a world without nuclear weapons." But the number of supporting nations this year was the lowest in 10 years, while the abstentions were the highest. Last month, Honduras became the 50th country to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons--the minimum needed for this comprehensive nuclear ban accord to become a legally binding international law. The accord will take effect in January next year. Despite this historic development, the draft resolution made no reference whatsoever to the treaty, merely noting to the effect, "We will take note of various approaches toward a world without nuclear weapons." As for the part where it mentions "the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons," the text expressed "deep concern" until two years ago. But this was replaced last year with a terse "recognizing," and this was kept in this year's text.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13940818>

Limiting life of nuclear plants to 40 years should be continued

The Asahi Shimbun, November 26, 2020

Following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, new nuclear safety regulations were created to impose a 40-year limit on the operational lifespan of nuclear reactors in Japan. The rule was designed to ensure decommissioning of aging reactors that are more vulnerable to accidents and make Japanese society less dependent on nuclear power. But a provision that allows one extension of the legal lifespan by up to 20 years in exceptional cases, introduced in response to concerns about a power shortage, has been widely exploited to gain permission to extend operations years or even decades beyond the 40-year cap. This troubling trend should not be ignored. The original principle should be maintained.

The municipal assembly of Takahama, Fukui Prefecture, on Nov. 25 approved the restarts of the No. 1 and No. 2 reactors at Kansai Electric Power Co.'s (KEPCO) Takahama nuclear plant, which first went into service in the 1970s. The move came four years after the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA), a government agency to ensure the safety of nuclear power plants, gave the green light to plans to extend operations of these aging reactors, which went offline in 2011 following the triple meltdown at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13964250>

Think Tanks

A New U.S. Missile Defense Test May Have Increased the Risk of Nuclear War

Ankit Panda

Carnegie, November 19, 2020

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA) has confirmed that, for the first time, a Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) Block IIA interceptor successfully destroyed an intercontinental-range ballistic missile (ICBM) target in a test. With this milestone, the SM-3 Block IIA becomes only the second U.S. interceptor type to exhibit this capability. The consequences for strategic stability and future arms control are serious.

Since the late 1990s, U.S. homeland missile defense efforts have been scoped around defending the country from a “limited” ballistic missile threat from North Korea and Iran. Earlier post–Cold War efforts focused on a wider range of potential threats. Because Iran does not currently possess an ICBM capability, the nominal threat today concerns North Korea, which has conducted three ICBM tests involving two separate missile designs.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/11/19/new-u.s.-missile-defense-test-may-have-increased-risk-of-nuclear-war-pub-83273>

The looming US withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty

Steven Pifer

Brookings, November 19, 2020

The Trump administration’s antipathy toward arms control will strike again on November 22, when the United States withdraws from the Open Skies Treaty. That is a mistake. While Russia has violated the treaty, the United States has reciprocated. NATO allies support the treaty — which focuses first and foremost on enhancing European security — and wish the United States to remain a party.

Whether the treaty can continue following the American departure remains to be seen and will depend on what Russia does. When it takes office, the Biden administration should consider reentering the agreement, though that may require some creative international lawyering.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/11/19/the-looming-us-withdrawal-from-the-open-skies-treaty/>

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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