

Nuclear, Missile & Space Digest

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A Fortnightly Newsletter from the Indian Pugwash Society

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Convenor

Amb. Sujan R. Chinoy

Executive Council

Cdr. (Dr.) Probal K. Ghosh

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Dr. Rajesh Rajagopalan

Shri Dinesh Kumar
Yadvendra

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Indian Pugwash Society

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

Tel. No (91-11) 2671-7983

Fax No. (91-11)2615-4192

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A. India

India debuts largest nuclear reactor with more planned

Hindustan Times, January 19, 2021

India's success in connecting its largest domestically-built nuclear reactor to the grid is a boost for plans to deploy the technology to help the world's third-biggest polluter limit emissions, according to the official overseeing the plans. The 700-megawatt pressurized heavy water reactor of the Kakrapar Atomic Power Station, located in the western state of Gujarat, is the first of 16 planned units that will help balance the grid against growing intermittent renewable generation, according to K.N. Vyas, India's atomic energy secretary.

"Renewables are less capital intensive and can be implemented much more quickly. Yet, they need to be balanced with more stable power," Vyas said in a phone interview. "Nuclear provides clean base load power and that makes it an important element of our climate strategy."

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-debuts-largest-nuclear-reactor-with-more-planned-101611044513338.html>

India's view on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

MEA Press Release, January 22, 2021

As far as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is concerned, India did not participate in the negotiations on the TPNW and has consistently made it clear that it will not become a party to the Treaty. India does not support the Treaty, and shall not be bound by any of the obligations that may arise from it. India believes that this Treaty does not constitute or contribute to the development of customary international law; nor does it set any new standards or norms.

India reiterates its commitment to the goal of a nuclear weapon free world. India believes that this goal can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed

global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework, as outlined in India's Working Paper titled "Nuclear Disarmament", submitted to the UN General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament. In this regard, India supports the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention in the Conference on Disarmament, which is the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum working on the basis of consensus. India stands ready to work with all UN Member States towards the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

<https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/33409/Indias+view+on+the+Treaty+on+the+Prohibition+of+Nuclear+Weapons>

India and IEA enhance cooperation

World Nuclear News, January 27, 2021

The agreement was signed during a virtual ceremony by Secretary Sanjiv Nandan Sahai of India's Ministry of Power and IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol, who described the development as "historic" for the IEA and for international energy governance. "We are taking our relationship with India - one of the world's largest economic powerhouses, to a new higher level," he said. India is centre stage in the global energy sector, and its importance will be reflected in a forthcoming IEA India Energy Outlook which is to be published in a few weeks' time, he added.

The IEA is an autonomous inter-governmental organisation within the OECD framework with a mission to work with governments and industry to shape a secure and sustainable energy future for all. Founded in 1974 - initially to help coordinate a collective response to major disruptions in oil supplies - the agency says it takes an all-fuels, all-technology approach to recommend policies that enhance the reliability, affordability and sustainability of energy.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/India-and-IEA-move-relationship-forwards>

B. China

China and EU hold video consultation on arms control and non-proliferation

China Military Online, January 14, 2021

On January 13, 2021, Director-General of the Department of Arms Control of the Foreign Ministry Fu Cong and EU Special Envoy for Non-proliferation and Disarmament Marjolijn Van Deelen co-held via videolink a new round of China-Europe consultation on arms control and non-proliferation. Both sides exchanged views on topics of common interest covering nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, biochemistry, outer space, export control, and conventional arms control.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-01/14/content_9967607.htm

China rolls out management regulation on Chang'e-5 lunar samples to boost global cooperation

Deng Xiaoci

Global Times, January 18, 2021

China released its Regulations on the Management of Lunar Samples Monday, a milestone event that demonstrates the country's open attitude to practical international cooperation and exchanges in this field. Global Times learned from China's National Space Administration (CNSA) on Monday that the document drafted by the administration contains nine articles and 37 clauses, covering topics including the storage, management, and use of lunar samples that were brought back to Earth by the country's Chang'e-5 moon probe mission.

In the international cooperation sphere, the document states that management and use of the samples' will be in line with international treaties that China has signed or participated in. The CNSA encourages researchers from home and abroad to carry out joint space scientific studies on the lunar samples, and is calling for their findings to be shared with each other.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202101/1213156.shtml>

China's space tracking ship completes satellite launch monitoring

Xinhua, January 20, 2021

China's space tracking ship Yuanwang-5 completed its mission in the Pacific Ocean to monitor and ensure the launch of the Tiantong 1-03 satellite on Wednesday. China successfully launched the mobile telecommunication satellite at 12:25 a.m. (Beijing Time) on Wednesday. The satellite entered its planned orbit. As the only maritime monitoring site for the launch, Yuanwang-5 was responsible for the rocket measurement and satellite monitoring. It also conducted the data calculation and space-ground information exchange. The operation of the shipborne measurement and control system remained stable in rough seas, ensuring the smooth execution of key stages of the launch. China's Yuanwang fleet will conduct intensive and challenging missions in 2021. Yuanwang-5 alone will conduct around 10 maritime missions with more than 200 days of offshore operations.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-01/20/content_9971324.htm

China's space tracking ship completes satellite launch monitoring

Xinhua, January 20, 2021

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http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-01/20/content_9971324.htm

The JL-3: the new missile 'raising the cost' of a US fight with China

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, January 25, 2021

The submarine-launched weapon has a much greater range than previous versions and could put the PLA within striking distance of the continental USA, a report says. The missiles are an essential element in the Chinese military's ability to respond to an attack, analyst says

It has already been tested three times but so far China is saying nothing. The JL-3, the country's most advanced submarine-launched long-range missile, is projected to be fully integrated with the PLA's next generation of submarines in 2025, but China has not officially confirmed that it is even under development. Nevertheless, it is still a threat and one of a number of missiles that could put the People's Liberation Army within striking distance of the continental United States, according to an American military report.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3118960/jl-3-new-missile-raising-cost-us-fight-china>

Chinese military deploys ballistic missile's launchers for training

Minnie Chan

South China Morning Post, January 26, 2021

China has deployed a large number of launchers for its new advanced intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) to the country's eastern and western areas for intensive training, as it and the United States continue their posturing over the

disputed South China Sea. Satellite images by Maxar Technologies showed the Chinese military had deployed many DF-26 IRMB launchers to a training site in Shandong province in the east, according to a report by the Washington-based Federation of American Scientists (FAS) on Thursday, adding it was the first time it had seen the DF-26 operating in the area. Last week, Andrei Chang, editor-in-chief of the Canada-based Kanwa Defence Review, said in a YouTube video that China's Rocket Force had deployed about 16 launchers for the DF-26 IRBM to its Qingzhou base in Shandong and another in Korla, in the far-western Xinjiang region.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3119203/south-china-sea-chinese-military-deploys-ballistic-missiles>

C. Pakistan

Pakistan today conducted successful flight test of Shaheen-III surface to surface ballistic missile, having a range of 2750 kilometers.

Press Release No PR-12/2021-ISPR, January 20, 2021

Pakistan today conducted successful flight test of Shaheen-III surface to surface ballistic missile, having a range of 2750 kilometers. The test flight was aimed at re-validating various design and technical parameters of the weapon system.

The successful flight test, with its impact point in the Arabian Sea, was witnessed by General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Lieutenant General Nadeem Zaki Manj, Director General Strategic Plans Division, Lieutenant General Muhammad Ali, Commander Army Strategic Forces Command, Dr Raza Samar, Chairman NESCOM and the scientists and engineers.

<https://ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=6019>

Cotton in Pakistan: How Nuclear Techniques are Helping the Textile Industry

Carley Willis

*International Atomic Energy Agency,
January 22, 2021*

The collaboration between the NIAB, the IAEA and FAO includes a long-term technology transfer and capacity-building programme. Having this focus, the partnership has included trainings, workshops and fellowships – training Pakistani scientists in plant breeding techniques focused on developing cotton varieties tolerant to drought and high temperatures. “Building capacity in plant breeding at the national level has become a main focus and we are continually working towards this through training courses and workshops,” said Hussain. “There are millions of people involved in the cotton industry in Pakistan – adapting to the weather patterns is necessary and through new cotton varieties suited for the changing climatic scenario in the country, this is possible.”

Using nuclear techniques, the first cotton variety was released in Pakistan in 1983; since then, a total of 16 cotton varieties have been developed. The four latest varieties to be released are expected to make up 56 per cent of seeds planted throughout the country in the coming months.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/cotton-in-pakistan-how-nuclear-techniques-are-helping-the-textile-industry>

Pakistan not bound by treaty for prohibition of nuclear weapons: FO

Naveed Siddiqui

Dawn, January 29, 2021

Pakistan does not consider itself bound by any of the obligations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the agreement does not constitute a part of conventional international law, the Foreign Office said on Friday. In a statement, the FO said the treaty, which was adopted in July 2017, was negotiated “outside the

established UN disarmament negotiating forums”.

The FO noted that the United Nations General Assembly, at its first special session devoted to nuclear disarmament in 1978, had agreed by consensus that in the adoption of disarmament measures, “the right of each state to security should be kept in mind, and at each stage of the disarmament process the objective would be undiminished security for all states at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces”.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1604317/pakistan-not-bound-by-treaty-for-prohibition-of-nuclear-weapons-fo>

D. USA

Shearwater Energy and NuScale plan UK hybrid wind-SMR energy project

Nuclear Engineering, January 19, 2021

UK-based clean energy company Shearwater Energy Ltd is developing a wind-SMR (small modular reactor) and hydrogen production hybrid energy project in North Wales. Shearwater has selected US SMR technology being developed by NuScale Power to provide base load and load-following energy for the proposed hybrid energy project.

Shearwater said the project is also expected to produce over 3 million kilograms of green hydrogen per year for use by the UK’s transport sector, ensuring full utilisation of the energy produced. Shearwater has also submitted an outline proposal to the UK Government and the devolved governments of Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Shearwater has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with NuScale Power to further collaborate in advancing the project.

Under the MOU, Shearwater and NuScale will generally explore opportunities for the combined generation of nuclear power based on NuScale’s technology, offshore wind energy and hydrogen production at

sites in the UK, with a flagship opportunity being explored at Wylfa on Anglesey.

<https://www.neimagazine.com/news/newsshearwater-energy-and-nuscale-plan-uk-hybrid-wind-smr-energy-project-8458752>

US government approves GLE restructure

World Nuclear News, January 19, 2020

GLE has exclusive rights to commercially develop the SILEX laser isotope separation process technology under an agreement reached between GE (now GE-Hitachi) and Silex in early 2006. Cameco joined the project in mid-2008. GE-Hitachi in 2016 announced its decision to leave the venture, leading to GLE's restructure. Silex and Cameco in December 2019 agreed to jointly purchase GE-Hitachi Nuclear Energy's 76% interest for a total of USD20 million, and the three parties executed a binding Membership Interest Purchase Agreement (MIPA) for the restructure of GLE.

Silex yesterday said the US Department of the Treasury Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) has approved the transaction under the terms of Section 721 of the Defense Production Act of 1950, after concluding that there are no unresolved national security concerns arising from the transaction. GLE earlier this month received notice from the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) that it will be granted a stand-alone Facility Clearance, which will enable GLE to continue to operate under new ownership as a foreign owned entity, pursuant to closing of the MIPA.

Silex and GLE have jointly continued work to commercialise the technology at a test loop facility in Wilmington, North Carolina, with plans to enrich depleted uranium tails to natural-grade uranium at a SILEX plant to be built at Paducah, Kentucky. This is underpinned by a 2016 agreement with the US Department of Energy to sell depleted uranium tails from its inventory to GLE for re-enrichment at the Paducah commercial plant project.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/US-government-approves-GLE-restructure>

U.S. is some ways from decision on resuming Iran nuclear deal: Blinken

*Arshad Mohammed, Humeyra Pamuk
Reuters, January 20, 2021*

The United States does not face a quick decision on whether to rejoin the Iran nuclear deal abandoned by U.S. President Donald Trump, two of President-elect Joe Biden's top national security nominees said on Tuesday.

Biden, who takes office on Wednesday, has said that if Tehran resumed strict compliance with the 2015 agreement - under which Iran restrained its nuclear program in return for relief from economic sanctions - Washington would too.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biden-state-iran-idUSKBN29O2HD>

Biden seeks five-year extension of New START arms treaty with Russia

Reuters, January 21, 2021

U.S. President Joe Biden will seek a five-year extension to the New START arms control treaty with Russia, the White House said on Thursday, in one of the first major foreign policy decisions of the new administration ahead of the treaty's expiration in early February.

"The President has long been clear that the New START treaty is in the national security interests of the United States. And this extension makes even more sense when the relationship with Russia is adversarial as it is at this time," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said in a briefing.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-nuclear-idUSKBN29Q214>

Westinghouse doped fuel pellets move towards commercialisation

World Nuclear News, January 22, 2021

Topical Report WCAP-18482-P/WCAP-18482-NP, Revision 0 was originally

submitted to the NRC in May 2020, and a draft safety evaluation is expected early in the summer of this year, Westinghouse has said. ADOPT fuel pellets have been designed to improve fuel cycle economics and accident tolerance. The fuel pellets are doped with small amounts of chromia and alumina, enabling them to achieve greater uranium efficiency and a 50% lower oxidation rate compared to conventional uranium oxide pellets. The pellets are suitable for use in all Westinghouse and Combustion Engineering pressurised water reactor and boiling water reactor designs and are compatible with all zirconium-based cladding materials and fuel enrichments. So far, they have been delivered to more than 25 regions worldwide, according to Westinghouse.

“ADOPT fuel offers significant enhancements to a plant’s current fuel performance, as well as increased flexibility for long-term operations,” Westinghouse vice president of Americas Fuel Delivery Jeff Bradfute said. “We’re excited to continue to make advancements towards offering this solution to our US customers and supporting their near- and long-term operational goals.”

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Westinghouse-doped-fuel-pellets-move-towards-comme>

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Enters into Force

Voice of America, January 22, 2021

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement welcomed the entry into force Friday of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the first nuclear disarmament instrument in more than two decades. The treaty, endorsed by 51 states, mandates assistance, such as medical care, rehabilitation and psychological support to all victims under their jurisdiction. It also obliges them to clear areas known to be contaminated by nuclear use or testing.

“The survivors of nuclear explosions and nuclear tests offered tragic testimonies and were a moral force behind the treaty,” Stéphane Dujarric, spokesperson for Guterres, said in a statement. Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority of the U.N., the statement said, adding that countries around the world must take urgent action for the elimination of such weapons and prevent the human and environmental catastrophes the use of them would cause.

<https://www.voanews.com/usa/treaty-prohibition-nuclear-weapons-enters-force>

All change at US DOE

Nuclear Engineering, January 25, 2021

The election of Joe Biden as US President is already being reflected in policy and staff changes at the Department of Energy (DOE). Biden has reportedly selected former Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm as Energy Secretary to replace Dan Brouillette. Granholm has indicated that she will divest of any assets she holds related to energy companies and leave the board of an electric bus company, giving up millions in stock options, if she is confirmed by the US Senate. Until that appointment is confirmed, the acting Secretary of Energy is David Huizenga, associate principal deputy administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration’s (NNSA).

DOE announced a senior leadership team on 21 January, saying it will carry out President Biden’s “vision for bold action on the climate crisis”. The team includes two new jobs: a deputy director for energy justice and a director of energy jobs. Tarak Shah, who was chief of staff to the undersecretary for science and energy at DOE from 2014 to 2017, will serve as DOE chief of staff - the first person of colour, Indian-American and LGBTQ person to serve in that position.

<https://www.neimagazine.com/news/newsall-change-at-us-doe-8472293>

CNL completes HEU target residue material repatriation to USA

World Nuclear News, January 26, 2021

HEU TRM is one of the by-products of Molybdenum-99, a medical isotope that was previously produced at the Chalk River Laboratories, which are located about 180 km north-west of Ottawa. At its peak, more than 20 million diagnostic procedures around the world were carried out every year using Mo-99 isotopes produced at the site. The TRM Repatriation Project, which was completed as part of a multi-year agreement between Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and the US Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration, reduces Canada's nuclear liability with the elimination of a significant quantity of HEU, CNL said.

Along with CNL's HEU Fuel Repatriation Project, which was completed in 2019, the completion of the TRM Repatriation Project officially meets Canada's commitments under the US-Origin Foreign Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel Acceptance Program. The completion of the project demonstrates the "ingenuity, resourcefulness and hard work" of our Fuel Program and Projects team, who had to "overcome extensive technical and logistical challenges" to safely carry out this work, said CNL President and CEO Joe McBrearty said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/CNL-completes-HEU-target-residue-material-repatria>

Biden pick to head Energy Dept faces Senate confirmation hearing

Timothy Gardner

Reuters, January 27, 2021

President Joe Biden's nominee for energy secretary, Jennifer Granholm, is expected to face questions on the administration's push to compete with China on electric vehicles at her Senate confirmation hearing later on Wednesday. While governor of auto-manufacturing Michigan from 2003 to 2011, Granholm led a charge to secure \$1.35

billion in federal funding for companies to produce electric vehicles (EVs) and batteries in the state.

Granholm, 61, who is expected to be confirmed by the Senate in days after the hearing, wants to steer the department to help the United States compete with China on EVs and green technologies like advanced batteries and solar and wind power.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-biden-granholm-idUSL1N2K02OJ>

Biden priority is dealing with Iran's growing fissile material stockpile - Sullivan

Reuters, January 29, 2021

A critical early priority for the Biden administration is to deal with an escalating crisis with Iran as Tehran gets closer to having enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said on Friday.

"From our perspective, a critical early priority has to be to deal with what is an escalating nuclear crisis as they (Iran) move closer and closer to having enough fissile material for a weapon," Sullivan told an online program sponsored by the U.S. Institute of Peace.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29Y2GP>

U.S. Iran envoy spoke with Britain, France, Germany to assess situation - source

Reuters, January 29, 2021

New U.S. Iran envoy Robert Malley spoke with senior officials from Britain, France and Germany on Thursday to see what the European parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal think about the current situation, a European diplomatic source said on Friday.

"It was to take stock of the dossier and to assess what our state of mind is," the source said of Malley's conversation with

the British, French and German political directors.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-iran-idUSLAN2K44YH>

New U.S. envoy spoke with Europeans on Iran nuclear deal: sources

John Irish and Arshad Mohammed

Reuters, January 29, 2021

The new U.S. Iran envoy spoke with British, French and German officials on Thursday as the United States explores how to revive the 2015 nuclear deal former U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned, two sources familiar with the matter said on Friday. "It was to take stock of the dossier and to assess what our state of mind is," a European diplomatic source said of U.S. special envoy Rob Malley's conversation with the British, French and German foreign ministry political directors.

A second source confirmed that the discussion took place but offered no details. The State Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was struck by Iran and six major powers and committed Iran to restricting its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief from the United States and others. Malley was a member of the U.S. team that negotiated the deal during the Obama administration.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-iran-idUSKBN29Y2HF>

Biden nominee confirms opposition to Yucca Mountain

World Nuclear News, January 29, 2021

The former governor of Michigan told the committee that, as energy secretary, she would focus on three missions: the security of America through the National Nuclear Security Administration and clean-up of its Cold War legacy; supporting the "amazing" scientific work being done at the Department of Energy's national laboratories and other

facilities across the country, including on climate change and emissions reductions; and taking that research to scale and deployment.

In a broadcast hearing lasting almost three hours Granholm faced questions from senators on a diverse range of issues related to the Department of Energy's (DOE) remit, including the cleanup mission at Hanford and the US mining of critical minerals including uranium, as well as her thoughts on Biden's decarbonisation goals. "I want to push on carbon management solutions to get to the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050," Granholm said. "There is a series of technologies that the Department of Energy is working on to reduce and manage carbon emissions and I think that is an important piece of the energy mix to make us energy secure and to have us reach the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050."

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Biden-nominee-confirms-opposition-to-Yucca-Mountain>

U.S. Defense Bill Drops Nuclear Testing

Arms Control Association, January/February 2021

U.S. lawmakers agreed in December to drop dueling House and Senate defense bill provisions on nuclear test explosions prompted by reports last spring that the Trump administration had discussed a resumption of such testing.

The Democratic-led House in July adopted in its version of the fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) an amendment offered by Rep. Ben McAdams (D-Utah) to prohibit any fiscal year 2021 or prior-year funding "to conduct or make preparations for any explosive nuclear weapons test that produces any yield." (See ACT, September 2020.) The House version of the defense and energy and water appropriations bills included a similar prohibition.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-01/news/us-defense-bill-drops-nuclear-testing>

E. Europe

Major European powers rebuke Iran over uranium metal plans

Reuters, January 16, 2021

Three European powers on Saturday warned Iran against starting work on uranium metal-based fuel for a research reactor, saying it contravened the 2015 nuclear deal and had serious military implications. The U.N. nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, and Tehran said on Wednesday that Iran had started the work, the latest breach of its agreement with six major powers as it presses for a lifting of U.S. sanctions.

“We strongly encourage Iran to end this activity, and return to full compliance with its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action without delay, if it is serious about preserving this agreement,” France, Britain and Germany said in a joint statement. Iran has been accelerating its breaches in the past two months. Some of those steps were triggered by a law passed in response to the killing of its top nuclear scientist in November, which Tehran has blamed on its arch-foe Israel.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29L0H4>

France says Iran is building nuclear weapons capacity, urgent to revive 2015 deal

John Irish

Reuters, January 17, 2021

Iran is in the process of building up its nuclear weapons capacity and it is urgent that Tehran and Washington return to a 2015 nuclear agreement, France’s foreign minister was quoted as saying in an interview published on Saturday. Iran has been accelerating its breaches of the nuclear deal and earlier this month started pressing ahead with plans to enrich uranium to 20% fissile strength at its underground Fordow nuclear plant. That is the level Tehran achieved before striking the deal with world powers to contain its disputed nuclear ambitions.

The Islamic Republic’s breaches of the nuclear agreement since President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from it in 2018 and subsequently imposed sanctions on Tehran may complicate efforts by President-elect Joe Biden, who takes office on Jan. 20, to rejoin the pact.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29L0SR>

French nuclear, hydro output cut by strikes over reform plan

Reuters, January 19, 2021

Strikes by workers protesting against a French nuclear reform plan cut nuclear power generation by about 2.3 gigawatts (GW) by 1322 GMT Tuesday and by 380 megawatts at hydropower stations, EDF data showed. That represented around 3.2% of available production capacity as of Tuesday afternoon, data from RTE and EDF showed.

EDF had said that around 23.8% of workers participated in Tuesday’s action, compared with 28.6% in a previous stoppage last month. The reform plan that has provoked the strikes involves splitting EDF between its nuclear and renewable energy activities, which unions fear would pave the way for the group to be dismantled and privatised.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL1N2JU0XH>

Pope urges more nations to join U.N. treaty banning nuclear weapons

Reuters, January 20, 2021

Pope Francis on Wednesday urged more nations to join a U.N. treaty banning nuclear weapons, saying their prohibition is badly needed to promote peace today. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons goes into effect on Friday and has been signed by 86 states, according to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017. “I strongly encourage all states and all people to work with

determination to promote the conditions necessary for a world without nuclear weapons, thus contributing to the advancement of peace and multilateral cooperation, which humanity needs so very much today," Francis said, mentioning the treaty during his weekly general audience.

The United States, Britain, France and other nuclear powers have not signed the treaty and boycotted talks that led to it. During a visit in 2019 to Nagasaki, one of the only two cities hit by atomic bombs in history, Francis said the mere possession of nuclear weapons, even for the purpose of deterrence, was "perverse" and indefensible.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29P14V>

Talks with EU on EDF restructuring are difficult -French minister

Reuters, January 22, 2021

Talks between the French government and the European Union on a restructuring of French state-controlled power group EDF are difficult, said French environment minister Barbara Pompili, although she hoped to reach a deal as soon as possible. The French government is working on a project, called "Hercules", to ringfence EDF's nuclear arm from the rest of the power giant. Talks with the European Union have been going on for months but no agreement has been announced so far. French trade unions have asked President Emmanuel Macron to drop the project, fearing it could result in job cuts.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSFWN2JX0SB>

Nuclear reactor shutdown activated at Bulgaria's Kozloduy

Reuters, January 22, 2021

The Kozloduy nuclear power plant in Bulgaria has shut down one of its two 1,000 megawatt units after a protection system was activated at its Unit 5 following a routine technical operation, a senior Bulgarian official said. "During a technical operation the automatic defences activated

at 0117 a.m. local time. All systems have been checked and there is no reason for concerns in the public," Ramadan Atalai, a member of the parliamentary energy commission told the national BNT channel. A press officer at the Kozloduy plant confirmed the unit was automatically shut and said that there was no radioactive contamination.

Work at the plant, situated on the Danube River in northwestern Bulgaria, is being done to reconnect Unit 5 to the national grid by the end of the day, the plant's operator said in a statement. Its other reactor, Unit 6, is working at full capacity. The Kozloduy plant is the Balkan country's only nuclear energy facility and operates two Russian reactors whose lifespans have been extended to 2047 and 2051, respectively.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL1N2JX0DP>

German minister expects Europe-U.S. talks on Iran soon

Andreas Rinke

Reuters, January 27, 2021

The nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was struck by Iran and six major powers in 2015 and committed Iran to restricting its nuclear programme in return for sanctions relief from the United States and others. Former U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the deal in 2018 and re-imposed U.S. sanctions, leading Iran to begin violating its terms. "U.S. President Biden has shown himself open to a U.S. return to the nuclear agreement," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said in an interview for publication. Maas expected Germany, France and Britain would "enter into talks very quickly" with the United States on the issue. "What is clear, however, is that Iran must honour its commitments and end the current violations of the agreement," Maas said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29X29Q>

France's Macron says any new nuclear talks with Iran to be 'strict' - Arabiya TV

Reuters, January 29, 2021

French President Emmanuel Macron said any new negotiations on world powers' 2015 nuclear deal with Iran would be very "strict" and should include Saudi Arabia, Al Arabiya television reported. It said Macron told a media briefing which included the Saudi-owned channel that a very short time remained to prevent Iran from having a nuclear weapon. Al Arabiya reported Macron's comments in Arabic.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29Y2BT>

F. Russia

Nikolai Antoshkin, Who Helped Halt Chernobyl Disaster, Dies at 78

Andrew E. Kramer

The New York Times, January 17, 2021

Gen. Nikolai T. Antoshkin, the commander of a perilous helicopter firefighting operation in which he and other pilots braved radiation exposure to contain the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, died on Sunday. He was 78.

He died after a "difficult illness," according to a statement by Vyacheslav Volodin, the speaker of Russia's Parliament, where General Antoshkin had been a deputy for the ruling party, United Russia, since 2014. Sergei Neverov, the head of the party's faction in Parliament, said the general had been hospitalized with Covid-19.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/17/world/europe/russia-antoshkin-chernobyl-obituary.html>

Leningrad II-2 achieves 1 TWh milestone

World Nuclear News, January 19, 2021

"To date, the power unit has successfully operated for 85 days at different power levels," said Alexander Belyaev, chief engineer of Leningrad Nuclear Power Plant II. "During that time, a series of tests and

inspections for 40%, 50%, 75% and 90% of the capacity have confirmed the reliable, efficient and - most importantly - safe operation of the unit in different operating conditions," he added.

Testing at 100% power capacity and almost 75% of thermal energy are now being conducted at the unit. "The first billion kilowatt hours is, of course, an important, but a normal event for us in that it shows the unit is at the finish line and is fully ready to fulfill its main task - the production of electric and thermal energy, which will enable the continued implementation of a number of large regional investment projects requiring significant energy consumption in Northwest Russia," Belyaev said.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Leningrad-II-2-achieves-1-TWh-milestone>

Russian envoy upbeat about reports of US plans to extend New START

TASS News Agency, January 22, 2021

The extension of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) will give Russia and the US time to consider additional measures to enhance strategic stability, Russian Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Mikhail Ulyanov wrote on Twitter, commenting on reports that the administration of US President Joe Biden plans to extend New START.

"An encouraging step. The extension will give the two sides more time to consider possible additional measures aimed at strengthening strategic stability and global security," the tweet reads.

<https://tass.com/politics/1247793>

Russia, U.S. security chiefs discuss extending New START arms treaty: reports

Reuters, January 25, 2021

The secretary of Russia's Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, discussed extending the New Start arms treaty in a phone call with

new U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, Russian news agencies reported on Monday. The arms control treaty, which is due to expire on Feb. 5, limits the United States and Russia to deploying no more than 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads each.

A spokeswoman for the Russian Foreign Ministry said earlier on Monday that experts from Russia and the United States had started “practical” work on the treaty extension. The White House said last week that U.S. President Joe Biden would seek a five-year extension to the treaty, in one of the first major foreign policy decisions of his new administration.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-usa-security-idUSKBN29U1XV>

Russia will welcome US return to Iran nuclear deal, Lavrov says

TASS News Agency, January 26, 2021

Moscow has heard US statements about returning to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran’s nuclear program and will welcome the move, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif on Tuesday.

“We have heard many statements from Joe Biden’s team, which concern his foreign policy plans. These statements particularly mentioned plans to return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. If it happens, we will certainly welcome it,” Lavrov pointed out.

<https://tass.com/politics/1248977>

Russia opposes attempts to link Iran nuclear deal to situation in Persian Gulf

TASS News Agency, January 26, 2021

Moscow does not support attempts to link progress in ensuring security in the Persian Gulf region to the preservation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran’s nuclear program, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a joint press

conference with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif on Tuesday.

“Some countries are tempted to link progress in regional security to the restoration of the JCPOA. We are not one of these countries. On the contrary, we are confident that the JCPOA should be restored in full without preconditions,” the Russian top diplomat emphasized.

<https://tass.com/politics/1249029>

Russia Opposed to Widening Scope of Iran Nuclear Deal

The Moscow Times, January 27, 2021

Russia does not support expanding the Iran nuclear deal to other issues like Tehran’s regional influence should the United States decide to rejoin, Moscow’s deputy envoy to the UN said Wednesday. Known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the deal was agreed between Iran, the United States, China, Russian, Britain, France and Germany in 2015.

It offered sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on Tehran’s nuclear ambitions and guarantees that it would not seek an atomic bomb. It fell apart when former U.S. president Donald Trump withdrew from the accord and imposed unilateral sanctions on Tehran, but new President Joe Biden could rejoin the agreement.

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/01/27/russia-opposed-to-widening-scope-of-iran-nuclear-deal-a72758>

China sidelined for Czech nuclear tender, Russia still in play

Robert Muller

Reuters, January 27, 2021

Czech political parties have agreed Chinese companies should not take part in a tender to build a new nuclear power plant, but the situation on Russian participation has not been resolved, Industry and Trade Minister Karel Havlicek told Reuters. The government is finalising conditions for a tender to build

a 1,200 megawatt (MW) unit at the Dukovany plant to replace older nuclear units nearing the end of their lifespan as well as coal-fired plants that will shut under Europe's climate targets.

The EU and NATO member country's security services have recommended that Russia - expected to be a strong contestant - and China are excluded on national security grounds. "We have come closer on one issue, we nearly all agree that China at this point is not realistic, now the discussion is whether to allow Russia in some form or not," Havlicek said after a meeting of party leaders on Wednesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/czech-nuclear-idUSL1N2K21DK>

Russia greenlights extending New START and US seeks to reset ties with Iran

TASS News Agency, January 28, 2021

Both houses of Russia's parliament unanimously ratified the extension of New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) on Wednesday, in a fast-track move just ten days before it was due to expire. The key nuclear arms reduction treaty was extended in the form that Moscow had insisted - for five years, until February 5, 2026 - without any preconditions. According to US experts, with 16 days left between Joe Biden's inauguration and the treaty's expiration date, the US administration made the right choice to endorse New START's extension in this form, Izvestia writes. New START is the last remaining treaty that limits Russian and US nuclear arsenals and without it the two countries, which possess 90% of the world's entire nuclear weapons, for the first time in the past 50 years, would have been stripped of a chance to monitor each other's nuclear weapons, an expert at the Arms Control Association Shannon Bagos told the newspaper.

As for the future agreements, Russia's proposals in the framework of the so-called "security equation," as officials said, are of interest and there are certain issues to discuss," said Dmitry Stefanovich, a

researcher at the International Security Center with the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of World Economy and International Relations. To get things started, the parties should declare priorities for such talks and New START's extension is an excellent moment for such statements, the expert noted.

<https://tass.com/pressreview/1249837>

Drills involving 3,500 servicemen kick off in six regions of Russia

TASS News Agency, January 28, 2021

Over 3,500 Western Military District servicemen participate in military exercise that began across Voronezh, Belgorod, Bryansk, Smolensk, Kursk and Moscow regions, the District press service told journalists Thursday.

"The exercise involves Army control structures, communications brigades, tank, infantry, artillery, missile, air defense units; nuclear, chemical and biological protection troops; reconnaissance and supply units. The headquarters commission checks the quality of combat preparation measures, movement concealment, organization of a single control system, deployment of field communication nodes, performance on guard and defense actions," the press service said.

<https://tass.com/defense/1249827>

Russia completes development of newest nuclear, biological and chemical recon vehicle

TASS News Agency, January 29, 2021

The Tula Plant (a subsidiary of Rostec's Roskhimzaschita) completed the development of the newest RKhM-9 nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) reconnaissance vehicle, Russian Deputy Defense Minister Alexey Krivoruchko announced Friday.

"The Tula plant completed the development of the Bogomaz project, creating the newest RKhM-9 NBC

reconnaissance vehicle, equipped with brand new instrument set," Krivoruchko said. He also disclosed that Uralvagonzavod (UVZ) shipped the first batch of Terminator tank support vehicles, built on the T-90A tank chassis.

<https://tass.com/defense/1250465>

Putin signs bill on extending New START into law

TASS News Agency, January 30, 2021

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed into a law a bill extending the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) until February 5, 2026, the Kremlin press service said in a statement published on its website.

"The federal law ratifies the agreement on extending the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States, dated April 8, 2010, which Russia and the US made on January 26, 2021, through an exchange of notes," the statement reads. According to the Kremlin press service, the federal law enters into force on the day of its official publication.

<https://tass.com/politics/1250613>

West Asia

G. Iran

Iran fires long-range missiles into Indian Ocean in military drill - media

Reuters, January 16, 2021

Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Saturday fired long-range ballistic missiles into the Indian Ocean on the second day of a military exercise, state media reported. The drill, which comes in the waning days of high tensions with the U.S. President Donald Trump's administration was conducted in the country's central desert region. It followed Friday's testing of surface-to-surface ballistic missiles and locally manufactured new drones in the same area. "One of our most important defence policy goals is to use long-range ballistic missiles

against enemy warships, including aircraft carriers and warships," state media quoted Guards commander Major General Hossein Salami as saying.

With these missiles, which have a range of 1,800 kilometres, he said, "we can now strike moving targets in the ocean," instead of the usual low-speed cruise missiles. Saturday's drill targets were in the Gulf of Oman and the northern Indian Ocean. Chief of Staff General Mohammad Baqeri said while Iran had "no offensive intentions", it would now be able to "respond to any hostile and malicious act in the shortest time".

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29L0CQ>

Iran's Zarif tells France: Avoid 'absurd nonsense' about Tehran's nuclear work

Reuters, January 17, 2021

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Sunday dismissed a claim by France that Tehran was in the process of building up its nuclear weapons, calling it "absurd nonsense". French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, in an interview with the Journal du Dimanche published on Saturday, said Iran was building up its nuclear weapons' capacity and it was urgent that Tehran and Washington return to a 2015 nuclear agreement. "Dear colleague: You kick-started your cabinet career with arms sales to Saudi war criminals. Avoid absurd nonsense about Iran," Zarif said in a Twitter post, in which he tagged his French counterpart @JY_LeDrian.

French President Emmanuel Macron's government has drawn criticism from some countries and rights groups over its support of Saudi Arabia's actions and allowing weapons it has sold to Riyadh potentially to be used in its Yemen operations. "Reality check: YOU are destabilising OUR region. Stop protecting criminals who chainsaw their critics and use YOUR arms to slaughter children in

Yemen,” Zarif tweeted, referring to Le Drian’s previous post as French defence minister.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29MOCZ>

Iran blacklists Trump, U.S. officials as his term nears end

Reuters, January 19, 2021

Iran blacklisted U.S. President Donald Trump and several current and former senior U.S. officials on Tuesday over what it called “terrorist and anti-human rights” acts, a move widely regarded as symbolic. Tehran’s move, announced on the last full day of the Trump administration, allows the seizure of any assets in Iran of sanctioned individuals. There have been no reports of any such assets, so the move is unlikely to have financial impact on the outgoing U.S. president or officials.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29O24F>

Iran army commandos start drills near mouth of Gulf

Reuters, January 19, 2021

Iranian army commandos and paratroopers started exercises near the mouth of the Gulf on Tuesday, the last full day of U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration. State television showed paratroopers landing behind mock enemy lines near the port of Jask on the Gulf of Oman and preparing attacks with missile launchers. “The recent war games show to enemies the Iranian nation’s will to defend its independence and territorial integrity,” Revolutionary Guards commander General Hossein Salami told state TV. “Our fingers are on the trigger on behalf of the nation.”

The Revolutionary Guards fired long-range ballistic missiles at mock enemy warships in the Indian Ocean and tested domestically manufactured drones in Iran’s central desert region. Last Wednesday, Iran tested short-range naval missiles in the Gulf, and

exercises earlier this month featured a wide array of domestically produced drones. Iran has one of the biggest missile programmes in the Middle East, regarding them as a deterrent and retaliatory force against the United States and other adversaries in the event of war.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29O157>

Iran, Turkey block rivals from joining U.N. disarmament talks

Emma Farge

Reuters, January 19, 2021

Talks aimed at overcoming a years-long deadlock over disarmament at the United Nations began in acrimony on Tuesday with two countries blocking rivals from taking part in widely criticised manoeuvres that sparked concern about the forum’s future. Iran blocked Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates from joining as observers, lashing out at the former’s military record, while Turkey blocked Cyprus in a trend that marks a significant departure from normal U.N. protocol and might set a precedent for other bodies that operate on a consensus basis. Iran’s delegate said that Saudi Arabia had used the forum as a platform for a “distraction and disinformation campaign” and called Riyadh “the largest military offender in the region”.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE, a close ally, intervened in Yemen’s war in 2015 to fight the Iran-backed Houthi movement, while Turkey and Cyprus have long been at odds over the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state in the island’s north. Saudi Arabia’s mission in Geneva did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Cyprus expressed “deep regret” at Turkey’s decision.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29O1U7>

Iran's Rouhani says "ball in U.S. court" over nuclear dispute

Parisa Hafezi

Reuters, January 20, 2021

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani urged the incoming U.S. administration on Wednesday to return to a 2015 nuclear agreement and lift sanctions on Tehran, while welcoming the end of "tyrant" President Donald Trump's era. U.S. President-elect Joe Biden, who takes office on Wednesday, has said the United States will rejoin the pact, which includes restrictions on Iran's nuclear work, if Tehran resumes strict compliance. "The ball is in the U.S. court now. If Washington returns to Iran's 2015 nuclear deal, we will also fully respect our commitments under the pact," Rouhani said in a televised cabinet meeting. "Today, we expect the incoming U.S. administration to return to the rule of law and commit themselves, and if they can, in the next four years, to remove all the black spots of the previous four years," he said.

Tensions have grown between Tehran and Washington since 2018, when Trump quit the deal between Iran and six world powers that sought to limit Tehran's nuclear programme and to prevent it developing atomic weapons. Washington reimposed sanctions that have badly hit Iran's economy. Iran, which denies ever seeking nuclear arms, retaliated to Trump's "maximum pressure" policy by gradually breaching the accord. Tehran has repeatedly said it can quickly reverse those violations if U.S. sanctions are removed. Antony Blinken, Biden's choice for secretary of state, said on Tuesday the United States would not take a quick decision on whether to rejoin the pact. "Tyrant Trump's political career and his ominous reign are over today and his 'maximum pressure' policy on Iran has completely failed," Rouhani said. "Trump is dead but the nuclear deal is still alive." Biden appears to see a return to the deal as a prelude to wider talks on Iran's nuclear work, its ballistic missiles and regional activities. But Tehran has ruled out halting its missile programme or changing its regional policy.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29P0NK>

Iran a threat to U.S. allies, forces in Middle East: Biden's Pentagon nominee

Reuters, January 20, 2021

Retired Army General Lloyd Austin, President-elect Joe Biden's pick to lead the Pentagon, said on Tuesday that Iran posed a threat to American allies in the region and forces stationed there. "Iran continues to be a destabilizing element in the region. ... It does present a threat to our partners in the region and those forces that we have stationed in the region," Austin said during his confirmation hearing. "If Iran were ever to get a nuclear capability, most every problem we deal with in the region would be tougher to deal with because of that," he added.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29O2OO>

Top Iran leader posts Trump-like image with drone, vows revenge

Reuters, January 22, 2021

The website of Iran's Supreme Leader on Friday carried the image of a golfer resembling former President Donald Trump apparently being targeted by a drone alongside a threat of revenge over last year's killing of a top Iranian general in a U.S. drone attack. The image first appeared on a Persian-language Twitter feed that carried a link to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's website. Twitter took down that feed on Friday, saying it was fake.

Underneath the website picture were remarks by Khamenei in December ahead of the first anniversary this month of the killing of military commander General Qassem Soleimani in Iraq, which was ordered by Trump. "Both the murderers and those who ordered it should know that revenge may come at any time," said the comments on top of the image, which showed the shadow of a drone looming over the lone golfer. Trump, who regularly plays golf, was not named.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29R1YU>

Iran's oil exports rise 'significantly' despite sanctions, minister says

Reuters, January 22, 2021

Iran's oil exports have climbed in recent months and its sales of petroleum products to foreign buyers reached record highs despite U.S. sanctions, the oil minister said. Bijan Zanganeh did not give figures but said exports of crude had recently risen "significantly" despite tough sanctions that were imposed since 2018, when the administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from a nuclear pact. "We set the highest record of exports of refined products in the history of the oil industry during the embargo period," the minister said, according to his ministry's news agency SHANA. Under sanctions, Iran has tended not to release official data on oil or product exports, a mainstay of its economy.

Iranian oil exports were as high as 2.8 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2018 but fell to 300,000 bpd in 2020, assessments based on tanker tracking show. Iran has called on the new U.S. administration of President Joe Biden to return to the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and world powers, saying Tehran will resume full adherence to the pact that limits its nuclear work if Washington lifts sanctions. Officials in Biden's administration have said Washington would not take a quick decision on rejoining.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29R0WJ>

Iran's Zarif open to oil, Gulf security contacts with U.S., not on Israel

Reuters, January 23, 2021

Iran may cooperate with the United States on oil and security in the Gulf, but not on Israel, the Iranian foreign minister said in remarks published. Ties between Tehran and Washington worsened under the administration of former President Donald Trump, who in 2018 withdrew from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers and reimposed sanctions that have crippled its economy. Iran called for action and "not just

words" shortly after Joe Biden was sworn in as president on Wednesday. Biden has said Washington will rejoin the nuclear deal if Iran resumes strict compliance.

"In my personal opinion, we should define our relationship with the United States: To tell the U.S. that 'we will not cooperate with you on the issue of Israel and we will disagree with you,'" Mohammad Javad Zarif said in an interview with the reformist Etmad newspaper. Iran, he said, "will not allow you to interfere in its internal affairs, but we have no problem working with you on the question of oil. We have no problem with ensuring the security of the Persian Gulf, though we believe that foreign presence in the Persian Gulf causes insecurity and you should not be there."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29S0D8>

Iran will take steps next month to curb short-notice IAEA inspections: official

Reuters, January 26, 2021

Iran threatened on Tuesday to block short-notice inspections of its nuclear facilities, demanding Washington reverse economic sanctions before it returns to compliance with a nuclear deal that President Joe Biden aims to restore. Biden, who took office last week, aims to reverse a decision by his predecessor Donald Trump to pull out of the 2015 agreement between Iran and world powers. The agreement lifted sanctions on Iran in return for curbs to Iran's nuclear programme, but after Trump quit and reimposed sanctions, Iran violated its conditions. Biden says Tehran should return to compliance before sanctions are lifted; Iran wants the sanctions lifted first.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif reiterated that possibility at a news conference in Moscow on Tuesday. "If favorable actions are taken before that time...Iran will not interfere with the admission of (IAEA) inspectors under the additional protocol," he said. In a later tweet, Zarif repeated that it was up to

Washington to make the first move: “Why on earth should Iran — a country that stood firm & defeated 4 years of a brutal US economic terrorism imposed in violation of JCPOA & UNSC (United Nations Security Council) Resolution — show goodwill gesture first?” “It was the US that broke the deal—for no reason. It must remedy its wrong; then Iran will respond.” Iran this month resumed enriching uranium to 20% fissile strength at a nuclear plant, a level Tehran achieved before striking the deal. A French presidential official said Iran must end its provocations and return to the terms of the deal if it expects the United States to rejoin it.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29V21V>

Iran says it will not reverse nuclear steps before U.S. sanctions are lifted

Reuters, January 27, 2021

Tehran will not accept U.S. demands that it reverse an acceleration of its nuclear programme before Washington lifts sanctions, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Friday. The demand “is not practical and will not happen”, he said at a joint news conference in Istanbul with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu. The new administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has said Tehran must resume compliance with curbs on its nuclear activity under the world powers’ 2015 deal before it can rejoin the pact. Iran breached the terms of the accord in a step-by-step response to the decision by Biden’s predecessor Donald Trump to abandon the deal in 2018 and reimpose sanctions on Tehran.

Earlier this month, Iran resumed enriching uranium to 20% at its underground Fordow nuclear plant - a level it achieved before the accord. However, Iran has said it can quickly reverse those violations if U.S. sanctions are removed. “If the United States fulfils its obligations, we will fulfil our obligations in full,” he said. Iran’s parliament, dominated by hardliners, passed legislation last month that forces the government to harden its nuclear stance if

U.S. sanctions are not eased within two months.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29Y0Z4>

Iran advises Macron to avoid taking indiscreet, hasty positions

Tehran Times, January 30, 2021

Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, on Saturday asked French President Emmanuel Macron to avoid taking “indiscreet and hasty” positions regarding the JCPOA, the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal. Speaking to reporters in Paris on Friday, Macron said, “Dialogue with Iran will be rigorous, and they will need to include our allies in the region for a nuclear deal, and this includes Saudi Arabia,” Al Arabiya reported. Khatibzadeh said, “The JCPOA is a multilateral international agreement ratified by Security Council Resolution 2231” and it “is non-negotiable and its parties are clear and unchangeable.”

The Foreign Ministry spokesman added, “The U.S. has pulled out of this agreement and Europe has been unable to maintain it, and if there is a desire to revive and maintain the deal, the solution is simple, all the sanctions imposed by Trump must be lifted.” Saudi Arabia is one of the main suppliers of arms to the Persian Gulf Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Analysts are of the opinion that such remarks by the French leader shows that France is seeking to strengthen its stronghold in the region. “French weapons, along with other Western weapons, are not only the cause of the massacre of thousands of Yemenis but also the main cause of instability in the Persian Gulf region,” Khatibzadeh regretted. He highlighted the importance of stability in the region and said, “Without averting exports of weapons from France, Britain, the United States, and other countries, one cannot expect stability and tranquility in this sensitive region.”

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457562/Iran-advises-Macron-to-avoid-taking-indiscreet-hasty-positions>

Iran rejects new participants, any talks on nuclear deal

Reuters, January 30, 2021

Iran's foreign ministry on Saturday rejected any new negotiations or changes to the participants of Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers, after French President Emmanuel Macron said any new talks should include Saudi Arabia. "The nuclear accord is a multilateral international agreement ratified by U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231, which is non-negotiable and parties to it are clear and unchangeable," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh was quoted by state media as saying.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29Z0KU>

H. Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia expects 'excellent relations' with Biden administration

Reuters, January 23, 2021

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said on Saturday the kingdom was optimistic that it would have "excellent relations" with the new U.S. administration of President Joe Biden and that it would continue to talk with Washington regarding the Iran nuclear deal. "I am optimistic. Saudi Arabia has built solid, historical relations where it worked with different administrations. We will continue to do that as well with President Biden," Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said in an interview with Arabiya TV. Biden pledged on the election campaign trail to reassess ties with Saudi Arabia, a state he described as a "pariah" in 2019. Biden has said he will take a firmer stand on Saudi's human rights record and the devastating Yemen war.

Prince Faisal said that Riyadh will continue to consult with Washington with regards to the Iran nuclear deal. The United States pulled out in 2018 of the 2015 deal between major powers and Iran, under which Iran restrained its nuclear program in return for relief from economic sanctions. "I believe basically the consultations will be around

reaching a solid and strong agreement that takes into account Iran's failure to comply. ..with strong monitoring factors to ensure the implementation of the agreement," Prince Faisal said. Biden has said that if Tehran resumed strict compliance with the agreement Washington would too.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29S0DY>

I. Turkey

Turkey 'hopes' US returns to Iran nuclear deal

Burak Bir

Anadolu Agency, January 29, 2021

Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Friday that he hopes the Biden administration would return to the nuclear deal and lift sanctions on Iran. Speaking at a joint news conference with his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif in Istanbul, Cavusoglu said that Turkey has always supported the nuclear deal that was reached by the US, EU, and Iran. "I hope the Biden administration will return to the agreement and so the sanctions on brotherly Iran will be lifted."

Touching on the Karabakh deal, he said that they want a permanent cease-fire. In this regard, we are planning to establish a mechanism with Azerbaijan, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, and Iran, he said.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-hopes-us-returns-to-iran-nuclear-deal/2127135>

J. Israel

Israel warns 'nothing to discuss' with Biden if returns to Iran deal as is

TOI Staff and Jacob Magid

Times of Israel, January 20, 2021

Israeli television on Wednesday reported that Jerusalem is warning an American return to the former terms of the nuclear deal with Iran under President Joe Biden could lead the countries to a crisis in relations. Channel 12 news cited "a very senior Israeli official" as saying: "If Biden

adopts Obama's plan, we will have nothing to talk about with him." The official was referencing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action signed by former president Barack Obama in 2015.

The comments came just a day after Biden's nominee for secretary of state Antony Blinken pledged to senators at his confirmation hearing that he would engage with Israel and its Arab allies before reentering the JCPOA. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ambassador to the US Ron Dermer had called on Biden to do just that several weeks earlier.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/to-israel-warns-nothing-to-discuss-with-biden-if-returns-to-iran-deal-as-is/>

TV: Mossad chief to meet Biden, set out terms for overhaul of Iran nuclear deal

Times of Israel, January 23, 2021

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to dispatch Mossad chief Yossi Cohen to Washington in the coming weeks to lay out Israel's demands of the Biden administration for any new version of the Iran nuclear deal, Channel 12 news reported Saturday night.

The network said Cohen, one of Netanyahu's most trusted colleagues, is to travel to the US within the next month and will be the first senior Israeli official to meet US President Joe Biden. He is also expected to meet with the head of the CIA.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/tv-mossad-chief-to-meet-biden-set-out-terms-for-overhaul-of-iran-nuclear-deal/>

East Asia

K. North Korea

North Korea sees talks as way to advance nuclear program, says U.S. intel official

David Brunnstrom

Reuters, January 23, 2021

The top U.S. intelligence officer for North Korea warned the country sees diplomacy

only as a means to advance its nuclear weapons development, even as the new Biden administration says it will look for ways to bring Pyongyang back to talks. President Joe Biden's nominee for secretary of state, Antony Blinken, said the new administration planned a full review of the U.S. approach to North Korea to look at ways to increase pressure on it to return to the negotiating table. White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki reiterated this, saying North Korea's nuclear weapons were a serious threat to peace and Washington had a vital interest in deterring Pyongyang. Sydney Seiler, the U.S. national intelligence officer for North Korea, told the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank earlier that Pyongyang's weapons development had been a consistent policy for 30 years.

"Every engagement in diplomacy has been designed to further the nuclear program, not to find a way out... I just urge people not to let the tactical ambiguity obstruct the strategic clarity about North Korea that we have," he said. "So we should not be overly encouraged if suddenly (North Korea leader Kim Jong Un) proposes dialogue tomorrow, nor should we be overly surprised, or discouraged, if there's an ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) launch by Sunday." Seiler also said humanitarian aid - which Blinken said the United States should look at providing to North Korea if needed - was not something of interest to Pyongyang. The force North Korea seeks to develop, while part aspirational and part years away, was far more than that needed by a country that simply wanted to be left alone, Seiler said, adding: "That is where the real risk of inaction comes in." Blinken had spoken of the review plan in response to a question by Democratic Senator Ed Markey, who asked whether Blinken would, with the ultimate aim of North Korea denuclearizing, support a "phased agreement" that offered tailored sanctions relief to Pyongyang in return for a freeze in its weapons programs. Biden's top Asia official, Kurt Campbell, has said the administration must decide its approach quickly and not repeat an Obama-era

delay that led to “provocative” steps by Pyongyang that prevented engagement.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29R2FZ>

Google says North Korea-backed hackers sought cyber research

Kim Tong-hyung

AP News, January 27, 2021

Google says it believes hackers backed by the North Korean government have been posing as computer security bloggers and using fake accounts on social media while attempting to steal information from researchers in the field. Google didn't specify how successful the hackers were or what kind of information could have been compromised. Experts say the attacks reflect North Korean efforts to improve its cyber skills and be able to breach widely used computer products, such as Google's Chrome internet browser and Microsoft's Windows 10 operating system. While the country has denied involvement, North Korea has been linked to major cyberattacks, including a 2013 campaign that paralyzed the servers of South Korean financial institutions, the 2014 hacking of Sony Pictures, and the WannaCry malware attack of 2017.

The U.N. Security Council in 2019 estimated North Korea earned as much as \$2 billion over several years through illicit cyber operations targeting cryptocurrency exchanges and other financial transactions, generating income that is harder to trace and offsets capital lost to U.S.-led economic sanctions over its nuclear weapons program. Adam Weidemann, a researcher from Google's Threat Analysis Group, said in the online report published late Monday that hackers supposedly backed by North Korea created a fake research blog and multiple Twitter profiles to build credibility and interact with the security researchers they targeted. After connecting with researchers, the hackers would ask them if they wanted to collaborate on cyber-vulnerability research and share a tool that contained a code designed to install malicious software on the targets' computers, which would

then allow the hackers to take control of the device and steal information from it.

<https://apnews.com/article/malware-media-north-korea-social-media-south-korea-7dc8a5a9a3576005a615524d1ba439aa>

L. South Korea

South Korea's Moon urges Biden admin to follow up on Kim, Trump summit

Hyonhee Shin

Reuters, January 18, 2021

South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Monday that U.S. President-elect Joe Biden should hold talks with North Korea to build on progress that President Donald Trump had made with leader Kim Jong Un. Biden takes office amid a prolonged stalemate in negotiations aimed at dismantling North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes in exchange for U.S. sanctions relief. Moon, who had offered to be a mediator between Pyongyang and Washington, said he will seek an early chance to promote North Korea as Biden's foreign policy priority so that he will follow through on an agreement reached by Trump and Kim at their first summit in Singapore.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29N08Q>

South Korea's Moon taps ex-adviser as foreign minister in bid to revive N.Korea talks

Hyonhee Shin

Reuters, January 20, 2021

South Korea's president on Wednesday nominated a former national security adviser who was partly blamed for a failed summit between North Korea and the United States in 2019 as the country's next foreign minister. The nomination of Chung Eui-yong, 74, to replace Kang Kyung-wha as foreign minister was seen as a bid to help revive stalled denuclearisation talks with North Korea, just hours before Joe Biden takes office as

the U.S. president. Chung had sought to mediate between the two countries as President Moon Jae-in's top security adviser, making a surprise announcement on the White House lawn in March 2018 that U.S. President Donald Trump would hold a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

But Chung was accused of misleading both sides about the potential for agreement after their second summit in 2019 in Vietnam failed to produce a deal. The reshuffle came two days after Moon called for Biden to hold dialogue with North Korea to build on progress made by Kim and Trump at their first meeting in Singapore.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29P06R>

South confident of missile defense against North

Choi Si-young

Korea Herald, January 28, 2021

South Korea stands fully capable of countering the latest short-range missiles that North Korea has test-fired, South Korean Minister of National Defense Suh Wook said Wednesday. Speaking at a New Year's press conference, Suh highlighted Seoul's missile defense, saying it could bring down even some of Pyongyang's untested new missiles. The military is seeking a foolproof shield against the remaining missiles, Suh said. "Our defense is airtight and we're superior. We have better reconnaissance and strike capabilities, in terms of both quality and quantity. We have weak spots but that's being taken care of."

Suh was addressing concerns that arose after North Korea held a military parade in mid-January to coincide with the regime's key party congress, in which it revealed new ballistic missiles. Experts were split over Pyongyang's latest missile technology. A senior Defense Ministry official said North Korea was now following up on instructions that leader Kim Jong-un had delivered to party members and his Cabinet. Kim doubled down on advancing the moribund economy battered by UN sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic. North Korea is in a

wait-and-see mode, the senior official added, referring to the new US administration, which has yet to roll out its North Korea policy and engage the regime, with which Washington is still at odds over steps to denuclearization.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210128001070&ACE_SEARCH=1

North Korea, U.S. should aim for initial nuclear freeze: South Korean PM

Hyonhee Shin

Reuters, January 28, 2021

North Korea and the United States should seek an initial denuclearisation deal that includes a halt to the North's nuclear activity and a cut in its programme in exchange for some sanctions relief, South Korea's prime minister said. Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun, in his first interview with a foreign media outlet since taking office a year ago, told Reuters that "creative" thinking and mutual incentives were needed to get negotiations going again and prevent another breakdown.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and former U.S. President Donald Trump promised to build new relations and work towards the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula at their first summit in 2018, but a second summit and ensuing working-level talks fell apart. North Korea had offered to dismantle its main nuclear complex in exchange for the lifting of major U.N. sanctions but the United States said North Korea should also hand over its nuclear weapons and bomb fuel. "We can begin with a freeze in all nuclear activities and reduction of some of their programme," Chung said. "It would be best if we could get rid of all of it, once and for all, but it's not easy and we need an alternative." The new U.S. administration of President Joe Biden has not announced any new policy for North Korea. Biden said in a presidential debate in October he would meet Kim only if he agreed to "draw down" North Korea's nuclear capacity.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL1N2K30QA>

South Korea rebukes opposition over report on plans to build nuclear plant in North Korea

Hyonhee Shin

Reuters, January 29, 2021

South Korea's presidential office on Friday issued a rebuke to an opposition leader who accused it of "abetting the enemy" after a news report that Seoul had planned to build a nuclear plant in North Korea. Local broadcaster SBS unveiled a prosecution indictment listing more than a dozen documents from the energy ministry that suggested a previously unknown project to set up a nuclear plant in North Korea. The documents were among 530 files that prosecutors say the ministry had illegally deleted to conceal that it had distorted feasibility studies to shut down a reactor in South Korea, the report said.

Kim Chong-in, leader of the main opposition People Power Party, called the potential plan a "shocking and appalling act that abets the enemy". President Moon Jae-in's spokesman, Kang Min-seok, accused Kim of making "irresponsible" remarks to stoke ideological strife and "deceive people" ahead of a key by-election in April. But he declined to comment when asked about whether such plans had existed, or whether Moon's office had ordered the energy ministry to delete the documents. "Kim should take responsibility for his comment," Kang told a briefing, adding the office would pursue legal action.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29Y1LW>

South Korea says North Korea nuclear plant documents were 'just an idea'

Hyonhee Shin

Reuters, January 31, 2021

South Korea's energy ministry said on Sunday that documents about a potential plan to build a nuclear power plant in North Korea were meant to suggest an "idea" but this has never been pursued as an official

project. South Korean broadcaster SBS unveiled a prosecution indictment listing more than a dozen documents from the energy ministry that suggested a previously unknown project to set up a nuclear plant in North Korea. This raised questions over whether South Korea's President Moon Jae-in had sought any nuclear energy programme for North Korea as part of his drive to restart inter-Korean economic cooperation.

Many of the files were dated to May 2018, a month after Moon held his first summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Shin Hee-dong, spokesman of South Korea's energy ministry, said the files were "internal documents" that were discussed only among ministry officials after the summit, as an idea to consider in the future when the two Koreas can potentially reopen economic exchanges. "We've confirmed that those documents were considered internally within the ministry as an idea for inter-Korean energy cooperation," Shin told a briefing.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN2A00CG>

M. Japan

Japan nuclear reactor operations: Kansai Electric restarts Ohi No. 4 reactor

Reuters, January 19, 2021

Japan's Kansai Electric Power Co Inc has restarted the No. 4 reactor at its Ohi nuclear

plant in western Japan after completing scheduled maintenance and refuelling, a spokesman said. The utility began booting up the 1,180-megawatt (MW) reactor on Jan. 15 after having been shut for regular maintenance since Nov. 3, the spokesman said via phone. The Osaka district court in December revoked the operating permit for Ohi's No.3 and No.4 reactors, claiming they were vulnerable to major earthquakes, but the government, which had granted the permit, has filed an appeal to overturn the ruling.

The ruling by the district court does not take effect until the final ruling is made, enabling Kansai Electric to keep operating those reactors until then, according to an official at the Nuclear Regulation Authority. Kansai Electric has had no operating reactors since early November. With the restart, Japan now has four operating nuclear reactors with a total capacity of 4,140 MW. Many reactors are still going through a re-licensing process under the latest safety standards imposed after the 2011 Fukushima disaster. Nine regional power utilities and a wholesaler, Japan Atomic Power Co (Japco), now have 33 reactors available for commercial use, with a combined generating capacity of 33,083 MW. The companies had 54 reactors operating before the Fukushima disaster.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL1N2JU0AB>

Funding law for areas home to nuclear plants eyed for renewal

Noriyoshi Ohtsuki

The Asahi Shimbun, January 19, 2021

The central government plans to extend by 10 years a soon-to-sunset law that allows extra financial assistance to jurisdictions housing nuclear power plants – its first time up for renewal since the 2011 Fukushima disaster. The potentially controversial move could likely spark debate in the Diet due to widespread opposition to nuclear energy following the accident, triggered by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami. The law was originally enacted in 2000 as a temporary measure and set to expire after a decade. A group of pro-nuclear power lawmakers had sponsored it to ease the concerns of jurisdictions home to nuclear plants.

Those local governments had become increasingly wary about adding more reactors at the existing plants in their communities after a critical accident occurred in 1999 at a facility operated by JCO Co., a nuclear-fuel processing company, in Tokai, Ibaraki Prefecture. Two workers died and hundreds of residents were exposed to radiation in the accident. The law was designed to provide public funds

to local jurisdictions hosting nuclear plants so that their governments could build new roads and ports, and lure in businesses to their areas through tax breaks. The law was revised to add another decade to its lifespan right before the triple meltdown at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant in March 2011, when the Democratic Party of Japan was in power. But the law is set to expire at the end of March this year.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14119178>

Local governments growing more reliant on nuclear taxes

The Asahi Shimbun, January 20, 2021

Local governments are increasingly depending on tax revenues from the nuclear plants they host, a relationship that has deepened over the 10 years since the Fukushima nuclear disaster, an analysis by The Asahi Shimbun shows. That follows the introduction of new tax regimes that ensure a steady flow of nuclear-related tax yields – even when reactors are idle or in the process of being decommissioned. They were brought about largely through increasing existing taxes on nuclear fuels and levying new taxes on spent nuclear fuels kept at the plants.

In fiscal 2011, right after the triple meltdown at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, jurisdictions home to nuclear plants and related facilities yielded some 20.1 billion yen (\$193.7 million) in taxes. The bulk of that came from taxes on nuclear fuel; many local governments only began collecting spent fuel taxes years after the accident. But then the figure more than doubled to an estimated 46.7 billion yen in fiscal 2020, ending in March, despite the nuclear plants being offline. The Asahi Shimbun studied nuclear-related tax revenues received by host municipalities and the 13 prefectures where those municipalities are located. Local governments can impose taxes on nuclear fuel and spent nuclear fuel at plants and related facilities through approving ordinances to do so.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14121969>

Newly found Fukushima plant contamination may delay cleanup

Mari Yamaguchi

AP News, January 27, 2021

A draft investigation report into the 2011 Fukushima nuclear meltdown, adopted by Japanese nuclear regulators Wednesday, says it has detected dangerously high levels of radioactive contamination at two of the three reactors, adding to concerns about decommissioning challenges. The interim report said data collected by investigators showed that the sealing plugs sitting atop the No. 2 and 3 reactor containment vessels were as fatally contaminated as nuclear fuel debris that had melted and fell to the bottom of the reactors following the March 2011 tsunami and earthquake. The experts said the bottom of the sealed plug, a triple-layered concrete disc-shaped lid 12 meters (39 feet) in diameter sitting atop the primary containment vessel, is coated with high levels of radioactive Cesium 137.

The No. 1 reactor lid was less contaminated, presumably because the plug was slightly knocked out of place and disfigured due to the impact of the hydrogen explosion, the report said. The experts measured radiation levels at multiple locations inside the three reactor buildings, and examined how radioactive materials moved and safety equipment functioned during the accident. They also said venting attempt at Unit 2 to prevent reactor damage never worked, and that safety measures and equipment designs still need to be examined. The lid contamination does not affect the environment as the containment vessels are enclosed inside the reactor buildings. The report did not give further details about if or how the lid contamination would affect the decommissioning progress.

<https://apnews.com/article/fukushima-plant-contamination-cleanup-913aa3fde856ebb9f40cd4eb15d0fa76>

N. Taiwan

Taiwan reports large incursion by Chinese air force

Ben Blanchard

Reuters, January 23, 2021

Eight Chinese bomber planes and four fighter jets entered the southwestern corner of Taiwan's air defence identification zone on Saturday, and Taiwan's air force deployed missiles to "monitor" the incursion, the island's defence ministry said. China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory, has conducted almost daily flights over the waters between the southern part of Taiwan and the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands in the South China Sea in recent months. However, they have generally consisted of just one or two reconnaissance aircraft. The presence of so many Chinese combat aircraft on this mission - Taiwan said it was made up of eight nuclear-capable H-6K bombers and four J-16 fighter jets - was unusual.

A map provided by Taiwan's defence ministry showed that the Chinese aircraft, including a Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft, flew over the same waters where the most recent Chinese missions have been taking place near the Pratas Islands, though still well away from mainland Taiwan. Taiwan's air force warned away the Chinese aircraft and deployed missiles to monitor them, the ministry said, using standard wording for how it responds to such activities. "Airborne alert sorties had been tasked, radio warnings issued and air defence missile systems deployed to monitor the activity," it said in a brief statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29S0BK>

O. Misc

United Nations' nuclear weapons ban treaty enters into force, but US, Russia and China among those who won't support it

Abc News, January 22, 2021

The first-ever treaty to ban nuclear weapons has entered into force, hailed as a historic step to rid the world of its deadliest weapons but strongly opposed by the world's nuclear-armed nations.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is now part of international law, culminating a decades-long campaign aimed at preventing a repetition of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. But getting all nations to ratify the treaty requiring them to never own such weapons seems daunting, if not impossible, in the current global climate.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-22/un-nuclear-weapons-ban-no-support-from-usa-russia-china/13084348>

The hurdles advanced nuclear developers face

World Nuclear News, January 25, 2021

The use of advanced nuclear technologies could help the world meet increasing electricity demand whilst reducing greenhouse gas emissions. However, the deployment and commercialisation of advanced reactors faces many challenges, according to a discussion on nuclear innovation at the Atlantic Council Global Energy Forum.

"Just as the original prototypes do not resemble today's solar panels and wind turbines, tomorrow's nuclear looks very different from the plants of today," said session moderator Jackie Kempfer, senior policy advisor for Third Way's climate and energy programme and non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global Energy Center. "The next generation of nuclear power promises to be more cost-effective and safer than ever," she said.

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

Hurdles-to-advanced-nuclear-deployment-need-address

Indonesia's coast guard seizes Iranian and Panamanian tankers

Reuters, January 25, 2021

Indonesia said on Sunday its coast guard had seized the Iranian-flagged MT Horse and the Panamanian-flagged MT Freya vessels over suspected illegal fuel transfers off the country's waters. A statement from coast guard spokesman Wisnu Pramandita said the tankers, seized in waters off Kalimantan province, will be escorted to Batam island in Riau Island Province for further investigation.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN29U0MY>

Czech parties agree China should not take part in nuclear tender

Reuters, January 27, 2021

Czech political parties have agreed that Chinese companies should not take part in a planned tender to build a new nuclear power station, but there has been no agreement on Russian participation, Industry and Trade Minister Karel Havlicek told Reuters after a meeting of party leaders on Wednesday. The government is finalising conditions for a tender to build a 1,200 megawatt unit at the existing Dukovany plant.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSP7N2FD01N>

Plans For New Reactors Worldwide

World Nuclear Association, January 2021

Today there are about 440 nuclear power reactors operating in 32 countries plus Taiwan, with a combined capacity of about 400 GWe. In 2019 these provided 2657 TWh, over 10% of the world's electricity. About 50 power reactors are currently being constructed in 16 countries (see Table below), notably China, India, Russia and the United Arab Emirates.

About 100 power reactors with a total gross capacity of about 110,000 MWe are on order or planned, and over 300 more are proposed. Most reactors currently planned are in Asia, with fast-growing economies and rapidly-rising electricity demand. Many countries with existing nuclear power programmes either have plans to, or are building, new power reactors. Every country worldwide that has operating nuclear power plants, or plants under construction, has a dedicated country profile in the Information Library. About 30 countries are considering, planning or starting nuclear power programmes.

<https://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/current-and-future-generation/plans-for-new-reactors-worldwide.aspx>

NEA, IFNEC and Poland launch nuclear financing initiative

World Nuclear News, January 27, 2021

The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) has launched an initiative together with Poland's Ministry of Climate and Environment and the International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation (IFNEC) to collaborate on issues of common interest related to innovative nuclear financing. The initiative began with a technical workshop on 14-15 January, which brought together experts from the public, private and academic sectors to discuss a number of fundamental issues pertaining to the financing of nuclear new build.

"Countries such as Poland, the UK, the US, Canada; countries that have been building nuclear plants all along, such as China, Russia; and many others around the world including countries that have not built nuclear in the past, countries that are located in the Middle East, Africa, Southeast Asia - they have made the decision that nuclear is part of the future," said NEA Director-General William Magwood. "I think the question today for many countries is whether nuclear is accessible to them in

the near term because of the difficulties of financing."

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Webinar-examines-issues-in-financing-new-nuclear>

P. Op-Ed

India

'Indian Navy needs fleet of SSNs, nuclear-powered general-purpose attack submarines'

C Shivakumar

New Indian Express, January 22, 2021

In a bid to transform Indian Navy into a true blue-water force, the navy requires a fleet of SSNs, a nuclear-powered general-purpose attack submarines, to meet its great power expectations in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, in the decades to come, according to Commodore Roby Thomas.

Commodore Thomas, a Senior Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, in his paper Nuclear Attack Submarines: The Elixir for a True Blue-Water Navy published at Journal of Defence Studies, stated that notwithstanding the current Covid-19-related economic contractions, India needs to 'keep its eye on the horizon' and astutely plan its rise by facilitating the strengthening of its maritime capacities, like its SSN fleet, to meet its great power expectations in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, in the decades to come.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/jan/22/indian-navy-needs-fleet-of-ssns-nuclear-powered-general-purpose-attack-submarines-2253375.html>

What is the 'nuke ban treaty' & why India, other nuclear powers haven't signed it

Shubhangi Misra

The Print, January 28, 2021

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), or Nuke ban treaty,

came into force on 22 January 2021. It is a legally binding instrument aimed at total elimination of nuclear weapons, under the aegis of the United Nations.

The treaty, due to its very provisions, did not find much support from the P-5 countries of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) despite being party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This is since it prevents countries from participating in any nuclear weapons-related activities, including development, testing, possession, stockpile, use, or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

<https://theprint.in/theprint-essential/what-is-the-uke-ban-treaty-why-india-other-nuclear-powers-havent-signed-it/592819/>

Jaishankar yellow-cards China for violating pacts, spells out the India way

Shishir Gupta

Hindustan Times, January 29, 2021

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's address at a conference on Thursday makes it amply clear that the only way forward for the two countries is for their armies to go back to their permanent bases along the 1597-km Line of Actual Control (LAC) in East Ladakh as they existed in April 2020.

Jaishankar's speech lucidly spells out that India and China are competitors in both the Asian and global context and that New Delhi is not the regional south Asian player that Beijing wants it to be. The three mutual and eight broad propositions spelt out by the minister, who was India's longest-serving envoy to China over the past decade, are reminders to Beijing that the bilateral relationship between the two Asian powers is not a one-way street. The proposition that India and China are civilization states, something that Beijing seems so reluctant to acknowledge about New Delhi, is designed to remind the Middle Kingdom that all civilization states have their ups and downs in their history and nothing is permanent.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/jaishankar-yellow-cards-china-for-violations-of-pacts-spells-out-the-india-way->

[101611905237020.html](https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/jaishankar-yellow-cards-china-for-violations-of-pacts-spells-out-the-india-way-101611905237020.html)

China

Are hypersonic missiles a game changer? Not so fast, says new study

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, January 19, 2021

Hypersonic missiles are overrated in terms of speed and can be spotted by early warning systems, according to a report by US security experts that suggested their performance is roughly comparable to conventional ballistic missiles. China, Russia and the United States have all been exploring the potential of the missiles, which travel at low altitudes along a lower and flatter trajectory than intercontinental ballistic missiles to reduce the time it takes to travel from launch to impact.

They are able to change course once released from their rocket boosters. But computational modelling suggested that while hypersonic missiles using boost-glide systems are faster over shorter distances, they would be slower than ICBMs over long distances because of atmospheric drag forces. US researchers say computer modelling suggests the weapons do not have significant advantages over ICMBs in terms of speed or invisibility. Russia, China and the US are all working on an array of hypersonic weapons

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3118221/are-hypersonic-missiles-game-changer-not-so-fast-says-new-study>

China to field more nuclear weapons that can target the United States, says report

Gabriel Dominguez

Janes, January 20, 2021

China's missile force is expanding, with the number of nuclear warheads capable of reaching the United States on intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) potentially increasing to "well over 200"

within the next five years, according to a report by the US Air Force's National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC). Published on 11 January 2021, NASIC's '2020 Ballistic and Cruise Missile Threat' report says that China, which "continues to have the most active and diverse ballistic missile development programme in the world", has been adding the 11,000+ km-range, single warhead DF-31A (US Department of Defense designation CSS-10 Mod 2) and the 12,000+ km-range DF-5B (CSS-4 Mod 3) to the inventory of the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF), with the silo-based DF-5B being China's first ICBM with multiple independently-targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs).

Moreover, NASIC changed its designation for the DF-41 MIRV-capable, road-mobile ICBM from CSS-X-20 to CSS-20, indicating that it considers development of the weapon has been completed. The DF-41 was first displayed at a military parade held at Tiananmen Square in Beijing on 1 October 2019. NASIC provided no range estimate for the three-stage, solid-fuelled missile but the DF-41 is believed to have a comparable range to the older liquid-fuelled DF-5B ICBM. The DF-41's mobility, however, makes it less vulnerable to elimination in a first strike than the silo-based DF-5 missile.

<https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/china-to-field-more-nuclear-weapons-that-can-target-the-united-states-says-report>

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Press Conference

China Military Online, January 22, 2021

Global Times: Some reports citing sources said on January 21 that President Biden is proposing to Russia a five-year extension of the New START treaty. Do you have a comment?

Hua Chunying: Extending the New START treaty by the United States and Russia will be conducive to safeguarding global strategic stability and international peace and security. We hope the U.S. side will continue to work with Russia in the same direction to extend the treaty, and on that

basis, to further slash its nuclear arsenal, fulfill its special and primary responsibility in nuclear disarmament, and create enabling conditions for the ultimate comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament.

Associated Press of Pakistan: Also a question about vaccine. According to reports, the Chinese government has promised to provide half a million doses of coronavirus vaccines to Pakistan by the end of this month. Do you have some detail to share with us?

Hua Chunying: Pakistan is China's all-weather strategic cooperative partner. The two sides have a fine tradition of mutual support and assistance. One can always count on a ready helping hand from the other in times of need. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, China and Pakistan have been working together to overcome difficulties. In order to support our brothers and sisters in Pakistan, the Chinese government has decided to provide a batch of vaccines as aid and will actively coordinate with the relevant Chinese enterprise to speed up export of vaccines to Pakistan. State Councilor Wang Yi shared this decision of the Chinese government with Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi yesterday during their phone call. I also want to add that this year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Pakistan. As the two foreign ministers said in the phone call, our time-tested rock solid friendship has become the most valuable strategic asset to both sides. No matter how the international landscape evolves, China-Pakistan friendly cooperation will continue moving forward. China is ready to take the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties as an opportunity to further broaden, elevate and deepen strategic cooperation with Pakistan, and jointly build an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future.

NHK: The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has entered into force. China is a nuclear weapon state. Do you have any comment?

Hua Chunying: China understands the wishes and appeals of non-nuclear weapon states in advancing nuclear disarmament. From the very day China successfully tested a nuclear weapon, it has been an advocate for the comprehensive prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We are committed to not first using nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances and pledge unconditionally not to use or threat to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China's nuclear forces are always kept at the minimum level required to safeguard national security. This is the Chinese government's consistent basic policy. Regarding the ultimate goal of comprehensive and complete elimination of nuclear weapons, China's position is not inconsistent with the Treaty. Indeed, we have contributed through concrete actions to safeguarding global strategic stability and advancing the international arms control and disarmament process.

At the same time, it is China's view that nuclear disarmament cannot lose sight of the reality of the international security landscape. Progress should be sought step by step under the principle of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all. The process must be consensus-based and stay within the framework of the existing international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The Treaty runs counter to the above-mentioned principle and is detrimental to the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime with the NPT as a cornerstone. China does not recognize and has no intention to sign or ratify it. We stress that the Treaty does not reflect or constitute customary international law and has no binding force on non-signatories.

China will continue to participate in discussions of nuclear disarmament and relevant issues within such frameworks as the UNGA First Committee, Conference on Disarmament, the NPT review process, and the cooperation mechanism of the five nuclear-weapon states, strive to advance the nuclear disarmament process in a rational, practical and effective manner, and work relentlessly for a world free of nuclear

weapons. We stand ready to maintain constructive cooperation with non-nuclear weapon states over this.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1847956.shtml

China may seek to close nuclear gap after US and Russia agree to extend New START treaty

Minnie Chan

South China Morning Post, January 31, 2021

The deal between Moscow and Washington gives Beijing the chance to play catch-up, but it may face increasing pressure to join future talks on non-proliferation. One military source says the country now has around 1,000 warheads, but less than 100 of these are active. The extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) between the United States and Russia to 2026 may not only prevent an out-of-control arms race but also gives China an additional five-year buffer period.

Chinese military experts and sources said the extension, announced by the White House on Tuesday, means the gap between China and the two nuclear giants, which own 90 per cent of the world's warheads, will not widen and Beijing can spend the next five years catching up. In the 1980s, the US and former Soviet Union each possessed more than 10,000 warheads, but these stockpiles have been cut to between 5,000 to 6,500 under the New START, which aims to reduce the total to just 1,550 as the ultimate goal. China has not disclosed how many warheads it has, but an assessment by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute put the number at 320. China research finds flaws in US nuclear blast equation to protect shelters

However, a source close to the Chinese military said that its stockpile of nuclear warheads had risen to 1,000 in recent years, but less than 100 of them are active. "Both the US and Russia have competed with each other to upgrade their nuclear arms over the past few years, especially

their intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBMs], submarine-launched and airborne missiles, as well as other new weapons to upgrade their nuclear triad capability," the source, who requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the topic, said. A nuclear triad is a three-pronged structure that consists of ground-based ICBMs, plus submarine and air-launched missiles. "Since [late leader] Deng Xiaoping's era, the Beijing leadership has believed that the country doesn't need so many expensive weapons, because the exorbitant maintenance costs would drag down China's economic development," the source said.

The source said China has a strict nuclear arms control mechanism which means only the chairman of the Central Military Commission - now President Xi Jinping - has the right to decide the deployment of nuclear warheads. "Nuclear warheads would be distributed to the rocket force only when a war is likely to happen," the source said. Hong Kong-based military affairs commentator and former PLA instructor Song Zhongping said Beijing might use the five-year period to narrow the nuclear modernisation gap with the US and Russia. "Based on the fact that China currently has only about 100 nuclear warheads in active service, it is not enough to completely destroy all major cities in the US," Song said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3119913/china-may-seek-close-nuclear-gap-after-us-and-russia-agree>

USA

Biden Can't Lose Sight of the Nuclear Crisis

Katrina vanden Heuvel

Foreign Policy, January 19, 2021

At Wednesday's inauguration, President-elect Joe Biden is likely to address the "four historic crises" he has repeatedly identified as confronting our country: a global pandemic, a severe recession, climate change and systemic racism. Yet even as so many challenges compete for our attention, we can't afford to lose sight of a fifth crisis: the continued danger of nuclear annihilation. Overlooking the nuclear crisis might feel

unthinkable for Americans who came of age during the Cold War, when nuclear destruction preoccupied our collective imagination. In 1983, for instance, 100 million Americans watched *The Day After*, a made-for-TV movie that depicted a potential nuclear holocaust. As detailed in a recent documentary, its haunting images - which included a mushroom cloud erupting over the plains of Kansas and scorching bodies in its blast radius - terrified viewers, including President Ronald Reagan. And it spurred our political leaders to join millions of grassroots activists around the globe in taking action to prevent nuclear war.

<https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/biden-cant-lose-sight-of-the-nuclear-crisis/>

How to Contain Putin's Russia

Michael McFaul

Foreign Affairs, January 19, 2021

After President-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated on January 20, some elements of U.S. policy toward Russia will change immediately. No longer will the president of the United States seek to befriend Russian President Vladimir Putin, as President Donald Trump did throughout his tenure. Biden will not hesitate to criticize Putin's belligerent actions, especially those directed at the United States. The Biden administration will also incorporate liberal norms and democratic values back into the United States' Russia policy, so Putin can expect more criticism of Russian autocracy and more support for human rights. And the White House's rhetoric about the United States' transatlantic allies will shift markedly; the era of berating NATO will end this week.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2021-01-19/how-contain-putins-russia>

Column: Can Biden transform the U.S. energy system?

John Kemp

Reuters, January 21, 2021

U.S. presidential transitions have all the elements of a great news story: people,

drama, timeliness, conflict and consequences. But energy systems are mostly shaped by slower moving, impersonal, structural forces. President Joe Biden's first executive actions after his inauguration on Thursday to move quickly to tackle climate change have raised questions over the ability of administrations to transform the U.S. energy system.

The historical record, however, shows administrations leave little imprint at macro-level on the energy system, implying both the hopes and expectations of supporters, and the anxieties of opponents, are probably exaggerated. Elections matter for the choice of energy sources and their employment, but changes in prices and technology matter more.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-energy-kemp-column-idUSKBN29Q1Z9>

The effect of US sanctions on Iran was global – and a global effort must end them

Ali Vaez

The Guardian, January 22, 2021

For nearly three years, the fate of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal has hung precariously in the balance. The Trump administration withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – to use its official name – in 2018, arguing that a policy of economic coercion, dubbed “maximum pressure”, would deliver an improved agreement. But all it achieved was the hollowing out of the existing one. Europe, which has played a key role in preventing the JCPOA's total collapse, now must seize the opportunity to help revive and even strengthen it.

The JCPOA's original bargain was straightforward: limiting and monitoring what the international community viewed as the most concerning aspect of Iranian policy – the proliferation risks of its nuclear programme – and in return delivering relief from international sanctions built up over years.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/>

[2021/jan/22/effect-us-sanctions-iran-global-effort-end](https://www.reuters.com/article/2021/jan/22/effect-us-sanctions-iran-global-effort-end)

Column: Biden's net zero plan would require much deeper, faster decarbonisation

John Kemp

Reuters, January 22, 2021

Energy-related carbon dioxide emissions have already fallen more than 14% from their peak in 2007, but with almost all the reduction attributable to the substitution of gas for coal in the electric generating system. If the energy system is to contribute to economy-wide net zero emissions in less than three decades, much faster and deeper decarbonisation will be needed.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-usa-energy-kemp-idUSKBN29R2A2>

Tough tests for Joe Biden in 'new' Middle East

Lyse Doucet

BBC, January 22, 2021

Some of the toughest questions on that exam are in the Middle East. Joe Biden's team is dominated by old hands from the Obama administration returning to a region with new orders to revisit old issues.

Their biggest challenges involve policies they personally helped to shape - in places in far worse shape now. But some see openings and opportunities in that. In the top tray of the new administration's foreign files is policy towards Iran. The landmark 2015 nuclear deal by world powers is now dangling by a thread after Donald Trump discarded it and despatched waves of crushing sanctions. There is also the devastating war in Yemen, which Mr Obama initially supported, partly to assuage Saudi anger over the accord with its arch-enemy Iran.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55752102>

How Space Became the Next 'Great Power' Contest Between the U.S. and China

William J. Broad

The New York Times, January 24, 2021

Beijing's rush for antisatellite arms began 15 years ago. Now, it can threaten the orbital fleets that give the United States military its technological edge. Advanced weapons at China's military bases can fire warheads that smash satellites and can shoot laser beams that have a potential to blind arrays of delicate sensors.

And China's cyberattacks can, at least in theory, cut off the Pentagon from contact with fleets of satellites that track enemy movements, relay communications among troops and provide information for the precise targeting of smart weapons. Among the most important national security issues now facing President Biden is how to contend with the threat that China poses to the American military in space and, by extension, terrestrial forces that rely on the overhead platforms.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/24/us/politics/trump-biden-pentagon-space-missiles-satellite.html>

After the SolarWinds Hack, We Have No Idea What Cyber Dangers We Face

Sue Halpern

The New Yorker, January 25, 2021

Months before insurgents breached the Capitol and rampaged through the halls of Congress, a stealthier invader was muscling its way into the computers of government officials, stealing documents, monitoring e-mails, and setting traps for future incursions. Last March—if not before, as a report by the threat-intelligence firm ReversingLabs suggests—a hacking team, believed to be affiliated with Russian intelligence, planted malware in a routine software upgrade from a Texas-based I.T. company called SolarWinds, which provides network-management systems to more than three hundred thousand clients. An estimated eighteen thousand of them downloaded the

malware-ridden updates, which were embedded in a SolarWinds product called Orion. Once they did, the hackers were able to roam about customers' networks, undetected, for at least nine months. "This threat actor has demonstrated sophistication and complex tradecraft in these intrusions," the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) wrote, in its assessment of the breach. "CISA expects that removing the threat actor from compromised environments will be highly complex and challenging." CISA, which is part of the Department of Homeland Security, is a SolarWinds client. So is the Pentagon, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and U.S. Cyber Command.

During the SolarWinds breach, hackers infiltrated American nuclear facilities. Earlier intrusions by Russian, Iranian, and Chinese hackers breached dams and electricity-generating stations, opening a door to foreign-intelligence operatives. Are we to believe that these spies merely want to know how we secure our nuclear weapons, deliver water to municipalities, or light our homes? It's difficult to put too fine a point on it: anyone who has gained access to these networks has the ability to upend or destroy whole swaths of this country. Nonetheless, in July of 2019, General Mark Milley, at his confirmation hearing to become the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was sanguine about this possibility. "If they know that we have an incredible offensive capability," he said, it "should deter them from conducting attacks on us in cyber." For every dollar that the United States spends on cyber defense, it spends ten developing cyber weapons, which are able to do to our adversaries what they can do to us: turn off the power, cut off food supplies, sabotage military installations, shut down communications systems, and, as we saw in 2010, with Stuxnet—the cyber weapon, widely believed to have been a co-creation of the United States and Israel, which destroyed centrifuges at Iran's Natanz uranium-enrichment plant—cross over into the physical world.

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/after-the-solarwinds-hack-we-have-no-idea-what-cyber-dangers-we-face>

Should U.S. Missile Defenses Be a Part of Arms Control Negotiations With Russia?

Steven Pifer

National Interest Blog, January 26, 2021

A consensus has grown in Washington that the next nuclear arms negotiation with Moscow should aim to limit all U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons, not just deployed strategic ones. That would raise challenging issues. Moscow may insist that it would put non-strategic weapons on the table only if Washington addresses issues of concern to Russia, particularly, missile defense.

If that is the case, the Joe Biden administration should consider whether the benefits to the United States and allied security of limiting all nuclear weapons, including non-strategic nuclear arms, would justify accepting some constraints on missile defense. There are reasons to consider such a trade-off. Refusing to discuss missile defense could mean forgoing limits on non-strategic nuclear weapons and provide an impetus to others to increase their strategic offensive forces.

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/should-us-missile-defenses-be-part-arms-control-negotiations-russia-177092>

Europe

Treaty banning nuclear weapons takes effect without German signature

DW, January 22, 2021

The first-ever treaty to ban nuclear weapons entered into force. The international pact has been ratified by 51 states, though none are nuclear powers. Germany, which hosts US warheads, also hasn't signed on. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons official UN signing September 2017, New York, USA. The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was first signed in 2017. The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) prohibits its signatories from producing, stockpiling, selling and using nuclear weapons. The International Campaign to

Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017, has hailed it as a "milestone."

Leo Hoffmann-Axthelm, ICAN's representative in Brussels, told DW that from now on there would be "much more pressure on nuclear powers to finally make good on their old promises to disarm." Efforts toward nuclear disarmament have stagnated in recent years. Just a handful of powers possess the world's estimated 13,400 nuclear warheads. Some 90% are owned by the US and Russia, with the rest shared among China, France, Britain, Pakistan, India, North Korea and presumably Israel – an undeclared nuclear power. These states have invested a great deal into modernizing their nuclear arsenals to boost effectiveness. Indeed, they seem more interested in modernization than disarmament. However, many of the world's non-nuclear states are no longer willing to accept this situation. In July 2017, 122 states voted in favor of the prohibition treaty being adopted – 51 have since ratified it, which is why it can now enter into force.

So far, mainly states in Africa, Latin America and Asia have ratified the treaty. In Europe, only Ireland, Austria, Malta and Liechtenstein have joined on. The world's main nuclear powers have so far refused to ratify it, as have NATO's 30 member states which consider atomic weapons essential for reasons of deterrence. NATO has insisted that as long as nuclear weapons exist, it will remain a nuclear alliance. Currently, there are an estimated 20 US nuclear bombs stored at Büchel Air Base in southwest Germany under a NATO nuclear weapons sharing agreement. In case of emergency, German air force pilots would fly the planes that drop the bombs. The scenario is rehearsed in an annual NATO nuclear exercise named Steadfast Noon that involves personnel from several allied air forces. As a result, the German government has also refused to ratify the disarmament treaty. In October 2020, government spokesman Steffen Seibert pointed out that many countries continued to view nuclear

weapons as necessary instruments of military conflict. "As long as that is the case, Germany and Europe are at risk," he said, "It is our view that it is necessary to maintain a nuclear deterrent."

<https://www.dtw.com/en/nuclear-weapons-ban-treaty-enter-into-force/a-56294059>

Russia

No quick fix: Expert doubts renewing New START will improve soured Russian-US ties

TASS News Agency, January 27, 2021

The extension of New START (New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) is unlikely to become a cure-all for Russian-US ties, and Washington could 'get tough on' Russia in other areas, Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council Andrey Kortunov told TASS on Wednesday.

According to the expert, it's wrong to describe the treaty's extension as a chance to iron out the current crisis in Russian-US relations. "There is an illusion that the treaty could somehow overcome the current negative trends in bilateral relations. I believe that this is not going to happen and most likely, the opposite will occur - [US President Joe Biden] will try to compensate for this agreement by embarking on a 'get tough on Russia' policy in other areas," Kortunov insisted.

<https://tass.com/politics/1249369>

Russia-US ties likely to get worse despite new agreements, expert says

TASS News Agency, January 27, 2021

Political tensions in the Russian-US relations are likely to get worse in the foreseeable future despite the recent bilateral agreements, said US political expert Gary Samore, who served as White House Coordinator for Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in Barack Obama's administration in 2009-2013.

"Congratulations to Presidents Biden and Putin for agreeing to extend New START

for five years without conditions," Samore told TASS. "During the next five years, the two sides will undoubtedly engage in complex and difficult negotiations on a new bilateral treaty to strengthen strategic stability and reduce the risk of nuclear war."

<https://tass.com/world/1249297>

West Asia

Iran

Congress will likely put up barrier in the way of Biden to rejoin nuclear deal

Tehran Times, January 31, 2021

The new Biden administration may find it difficult to revive the nuclear deal endorsed by the UN Security Council in 2015 due to the likely opposition by Congress, according to Politico, an American magazine. In foreign policy area, President Joe Biden has promised to rejoin the nuclear agreement that former president Donald Trump described it as "horrible" and "the worst deal ever." Due to Trump's imposition of severe financial and economic sanctions on Iran, Biden and his aides are facing serious challenges as they are seeking a path back to the 2015 nuclear agreement.

"For now, the U.S. government employees involved in sanctions policy have been thinking through what steps to take to return to the deal, a U.S. official said. They plan to submit their ideas to Biden political appointees, including Rob Malley, a foreign affairs practitioner whom Biden has appointed as a special envoy for Iran," Politico reported. The nuclear deal left in place numerous other U.S. sanctions on Iran, such as those related to the so called, and definitely wrong, Iran's support for terrorism, its defensive missile program. Many of the U.S. sanctions are especially powerful because they apply to non-American companies who want to do business with Iran. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has indicated he is willing to keep some sanctions. "The nuclear agreement was one thing, but continuing

and even strengthening our ability to push back and to deal effectively with Iran's egregious behavior, including in the terrorism realm, was something that we needed and should do," he said on January 19, 2021.

"Those lawmakers are skeptical of the deal will likely object to many if not all of Biden's attempts to ease sanctions. They also will monitor how the administration goes about enforcing sanctions that it decides to keep", a Republican Senate aide said to the Politico. The unidentified aide emphasized "one area of concern is how the Biden administration defines what goods fall under 'humanitarian' exemptions to sanctions." "If they lift sanctions, I could see new sanctions being moved through Congress," the aide predicted. "We'll be closely watching any sort of agreements or understandings they'll reach with the Iranians."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457586/Congress-will-likely-put-up-barrier-in-the-way-of-Biden-to-rejoin>

Pakistani political scientist says only repeal of sanctions can revive JCPOA

January 30, 2021

Hassan Askari Rizvi, a Pakistani political scientist, says if President Joe Biden is serious to join the JCPOA, he needs to lift sanctions imposed on Iran as a trust building measure, according to IRNA. In an article published in the Dunya newspaper on Saturday, he said, "After unexpected ups and downs that led to the Trump administration's defeat, Biden is expected to work for improvement of the country's credibility and repair relations with allies." He underscored importance of the JCPOA for Pakistan's interest and noted, "Joe Biden could revive the nuclear deal signed between Tehran and world powers in 2015 by lifting the U.S. anti-Iran sanctions; an action that will benefit the parties of the JCPOA, the European countries and Iran's neighbors, especially Pakistan."

Praising a possible revival of the JCPOA and improvement of relations between Iran and

Pakistan, he asserted the JCPOA can "also ease tensions in the Persian Gulf region." "The Biden administration is expected to review foreign policies of the Trump administration in the next two months," he remarked. He expressed his hope regarding a lifting of sanctions on Iran and its positive impact on Pakistan's relations with Iran as well as Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457555/Pakistani-political-scientist-says-only-repeal-of-sanctions-can>

East Asia

Unmanned submarines, flying bikes, AI pilots proposed as future game changers

Korea Herald, January 21, 2021

The Agency for Defense Development (ADD) has proposed unmanned submarines, flying bikes, and artificial intelligence (AI) pilots as the future game changers. In a collaboration with the Defense Acquisition Program Administration, the ADD unveiled the Novel Weapon Systems Yearbook in booklet form for free on its website Wednesday. Introduced in the booklet, the state-of-the-art weapons systems cover a wide range of technologies in line with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, including AI, synthetic biology, hypersonic speed and unmanned self-control. One of them aims to reduce the size of the nuclear reactor and power system, which is already mounted on existing nuclear-powered submarines, the booklet says, so that it can power a long-term, multipurpose unmanned submarine.

With the capacity to dive up to 1,000 meters below the surface and move up to 60 kilometers per hour, the unmanned submarine would be equipped with a stealth system to carry out various missions, such as surveillance. The booklet also proposes the idea of developing a multipurpose hoverbike, a flying bike that can be used in operations where access is limited on the ground or missions that require high speed carriers to help

relatively slow weapons such as tanks or armored cars. Dubbed autonomous cluster weapons system, the concept of planning and executing missions with human pilots sending out orders and AI pilots handling technical flights show how battles in the future might look, the yearbook says. Besides the unmanned submarine, hoverbike and AI pilot, there are 18 more new weapons systems in the yearbook, including a portable explosives detector that can suck in mines without making direct contact and four-legged walking robot for reconnaissance missions. "The publication of the Novel Weapon Systems Yearbook will provide a way to promote the future national defense technology development project and present guidance for establishing state-of-the-art weapons systems," said Nam Se-gyu, president of the ADD.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210121001031&ACE_SEARCH=1

What would Leo Szilard make of reluctance over anti-nuke treaty?

Vox Populi

The Asahi Shimbun, January 22, 2021

There once was a Hungarian-born scientist who succeeded in persuading the United States to develop atomic bombs, but failed to stop the bombs from being dropped. Physicist Leo Szilard (1898-1964) was a Hungarian Jew who fled Nazi persecution and emigrated to the United States, where he became close friends with Albert Einstein (1879-1955). In 1939, he wrote a letter for Einstein to sign. Addressed to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the letter urged him to embark on what would become the Manhattan Project to counter the German nuclear development program. While working at the University of Chicago, Szilard became one of the physicists who successfully conducted a criticality experiment on a nuclear fission reactor.

Four years ago, author Kazue Odaira, 56, researched Szilard's life in the United States and published her findings in "Todokanakatta Tegami" (The undelivered

letter). Even though Szilard was instrumental in shaping America's nuclear weapons program, he did not see any point in dropping these new types of bombs on Japan, by which time the nation had practically lost most of its firepower, according to Odaira. "Szilard thoroughly understood the inhumanity of nuclear weapons," Odaira explained. "He asserted that dropping them (on Japan) without prior warning would be unethical." In the summer of 1945, he issued a petition, addressed to the U.S. president, Harry S. Truman, to refrain from using the bombs.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14126773>

Landmark year starts as treaty to ban nuke arms comes into force

The Asahi Shimbun, January 22, 2021

A landmark year has started for the international movement to end the era of collective stupidity when nations threaten others with nuclear weapons, as a treaty aimed at realizing a world free from this threat has become a binding legal instrument. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which prohibits nuclear weapon activities, including developing, testing, producing, possessing, using and threatening to use nuclear weapons, entered into force on Jan. 22.

That follows ratification of the treaty by more than 50 countries during the three and a half years since it was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2017. This is a historic step for the movement to eliminate nuclear arms, achieved with the strong support of international public opinion as well as "hibakusha," or survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It poses serious questions about the future course of Japan, which has yet to sign the treaty despite being the only country that has suffered the devastation of nuclear attacks.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14126796>

Q. Think Tanks

Europe is the new NAM

Amandeep Gill

Observer Research Foundation, January 16, 2021

During the hey days of the Cold War, a group of newly decolonised countries sought to distance themselves from the struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States by proclaiming 'non-alignment'. Led by Egypt's Nasser, India's Nehru, Indonesia's Sukarno and Yugoslavia's Tito, the Non-Aligned Movement or NAM claimed the moral high ground on issues ranging from apartheid to nuclear testing. This hectoring annoyed the United States in particular with Secretary of State Dulles famously terming nonalignment 'immoral' in 1956.

NAM did not age well and nor will Europe's attempt at being a neutral and independent voice of reason. Given the possibility of escalation to nuclear weapons use, the two Superpowers refrained from confronting each other directly. They took care not to tangle with member countries from the opposite side's military alliances—NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Instead, and somewhat ironically, they fought their battles on 'neutral' ground. NAM became the battleground not just for hearts and minds but also for hard spoils—military bases, energy and minerals. Multiply the hard spoils manyfold and you get the battleground of today. Europe is the biggest market for Silicon Valley's digital behemoths as well as for China's manufacturers and e-commerce companies, which are increasingly blocked from doing business in key non-European markets. As Chinese investments come under increasing scrutiny on national security grounds in countries such as the United States, India and Japan, they seek a productive outlet in Europe not only for returns on investment but also acquisition of critical technology and skills. The US for its part will fight hard to retain its post-Second World War preeminence in Europe and to fit its European Atlantic alliances into a larger canvas stretching to

the Indo-Pacific. These contradictory pulls will put European countries under tremendous strain.

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/europe-is-the-new-nam/>

New Study Says Hypersonic Missiles Slower and More Easily Detected Than Current Weapons Systems

Union of Concerned Scientists, January 16, 2021

A scientific study published today finds that hypersonic missiles will not offer the United States significant new military capabilities because they are slower and more susceptible to detection than the country's existing ballistic missile systems.

The study refutes widespread claims about the speed and detectability of hypersonic missiles. Using computational modeling, the study finds that hypersonic gliders deliver weapons more slowly than ballistic missiles during intercontinental flights due to drag effects and can be detected by space-based infrared sensors because they remain hot throughout the duration of their atmospheric flight. In addition, their ability to maneuver is more limited than typically claimed.

<https://www.ucsusa.org/about/news/study-says-hypersonic-missiles-slower-and-more-easily-detected-current-weapons-systems>

Biden's Team is Packed with Obama's Advisers

Anchal Vohra

Observer Research Foundation, January 16, 2021

President-elect Joe Biden has chosen many of Obama's leading advisers to run his security and foreign policy administrations. He has brought back men and women he trusts and who are primed to change Trump's Middle East policy 180 degrees.

Trump was obsessed with punishing Iran on behalf of his allies Saudi Arabia and Israel, both of whom saw Iran as a military threat and were unhappy with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or the US-Iran nuclear deal. They were particularly perturbed for not being included in the backchannel negotiations between Washington and Tehran.

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/bidens-team-is-packed-with-obamas-advisers/>

Under The Emerging Turkey-Pakistan Strategic Alliance, Pakistan May Provide Turkey With Nuclear Weapons Capabilities

Tufail Ahmad

Middle East Media Research Institute, January 19, 2021

This paper examines increasing concerns over the Turkish-Pakistani strategic partnership in recent years, especially regarding the likelihood that rogue elements in the Pakistani military could supply nuclear technology to Turkey. Such concerns appeared real in view of the Turkish-Pakistani military cooperation against Armenia in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. Music videos on social media celebrate the cooperation of Pakistan, Turkey, and Azerbaijan as well as Azerbaijan's victory over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The issue of Turkish-Pakistani military cooperation gained relevance after the emergence of allegations, understandably denied by the Pakistani government, that Pakistani soldiers fought against Armenian troops in the Nagorno-Karabakh war, resulting in a military victory for Azerbaijan. A trilateral conference between Turkey, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan – held in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad on January 13, 2021 – further strengthened this view that the three countries are working together at military and Islamic religious levels.

<https://www.memri.org/reports/under-emerging-turkey-pakistan-strategic-alliance-pakistan-may-provide-turkey-nuclear>

Biden's First Foreign Policy Move: Reentering International Agreements

Lindsay Maizland

Council on Foreign Relations, January 21, 2021

President Joe Biden has signaled that he will rejoin many of the various international treaties, agreements, and bodies that former President Donald J. Trump withdrew the United States from over the past four years.

Iran Nuclear Deal

Biden has promised to rejoin the Iran nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but resurrecting the deal won't be easy. After exiting the JCPOA in 2018, the Trump administration ratcheted up sanctions on Iran. Tehran responded by exceeding limitations on its nuclear program set under the agreement. Biden has said that he will reenter the deal if Iran returns to compliance, which Iranian officials have indicated they're willing to do. But he has also signaled that he wants to negotiate a successor agreement that addresses Iran's missile program and support for regional armed partners, an idea Iranian officials have rejected so far. A renegotiated agreement could require congressional approval.

<https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/bidens-first-foreign-policy-move-reentering-international-agreements>

Revitalizing nonproliferation cooperation with Russia and China

Robert Einhorn

Brookings, January 25, 2021

The United States will need partners to overcome the growing challenges that the global nuclear nonproliferation regime will face in the years ahead. In the past, Washington was able on several occasions to work cooperatively with Moscow and

Beijing in support of shared nonproliferation goals. But with the sharp deterioration of U.S. bilateral relationships with those two major powers in recent years, that cooperation no longer exists. Despite the current acrimonious state of those relationships, the Biden administration will need to find a way to revitalize cooperative efforts on key nonproliferation issues. After restoring now-abandoned bilateral channels for constructive engagement, the administration should seek common ground with Russia and China in pursuing new negotiations with Iran, curbing the North Korean nuclear and missile threat, rebuilding collaboration in securing nuclear materials and facilities, and reinforcing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including by promoting a successful NPT Review Conference, pursuing nuclear risk reduction measures, strengthening International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, and coordinating nuclear export policies.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/revitalizing-nonproliferation-cooperation-with-russia-and-china/>

Cyber Doctrines and the Risk of Nuclear Crisis Instability. Part 2: Russian and Chinese Use of Proxies

Council on Foreign Relations, January 25, 2021

U.S. contribution to strategic instability is compounded by Russia's and China's cyber strategies. Particularly risky is that both countries incorporate "cyber proxies" as central parts of their cyber doctrines. Broadly defined, cyber proxies are loosely affiliated hacking groups, often times criminal hacking groups, that are called upon by the state to conduct parts of or all of specific cyber operations.

For Russia, it has been longstanding practice for the state security service (FSB) and military intelligence (GRU) to employ cyber criminals for offensive cyber operations in return for implicit legal immunity. This has allowed the state to cheaply leverage technical expertise and, more importantly, facilitate plausible deniability on the part of

the Russian government for cyber operations.

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/cyber-doctrines-and-risk-nuclear-crisis-instability-part-2-russian-and-chinese-use-proxies>

The other 4+1: Biological, nuclear, climatic, digital, and internal dangers

Michael E. O'Hanlon

Brookings, January 25, 2021

The U.S. Department of Defense and broader national security apparatus have for decades focused on a set of threats that former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford called the "4+1": Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, and the more diffuse threat of transnational violent extremism. In the 2018 National Defense Strategy, then-Secretary of Defense James Mattis modestly altered this framing into what some in the Pentagon nicknamed the "2+3," to reflect the greater emphasis on China and Russia.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-other-41-biological-nuclear-climatic-digital-and-internal-dangers/>

The nuclear elephant in the room: To restrain or disarm?

Ethan Kessler

Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, January 29, 2021

US President Joe Biden has made clear through his national security appointments that he intends to maintain many of the same foreign policy priorities as the last Democratic president, Barack Obama. In December, US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in a live-streamed conference that Biden wants to get Iran "back into compliance" with the Iran nuclear deal, an Obama-era agreement meant to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear bomb. President Donald Trump withdrew from the deal in 2018, and Iran has since breached it by incrementally enriching uranium beyond

the deal's limits. Nuclear nonproliferation will clearly be a priority in the Biden administration.

Equally important for nuclear nonproliferation, but less noticed by the US media, were remarks made in November by Kim Chong-in, the interim leader of the opposition People Power Party in South Korea. Kim said Seoul's "conventional position on nuclear weapons" – i.e., not having them – "should be revisited" if US efforts to denuclearize North Korea continue to fail. This statement came only three years after South Korea's mainstream conservative political party demanded the return of US nuclear weapons to South Korea for the first time – a sign of South Koreans' eroding trust in Washington's existing nuclear weapons posture, which places no nuclear weapons in South Korea. Polls consistently reveal majority support in South Korea for obtaining nuclear weapons, either under US or South Korean control.

<https://thebulletin.org/2021/01/the-nuclear-elephant-in-the-room-to-restrain-or-disarm/>

R. Reports and Interviews

Gorbachev: Russia, US should extend New START, work on next treaty

TASS News Agency, January 20, 2021

What do you think, should we expect changes in Russian-US relations now that Biden moves into the White House? Is it possible to reboot them? What are the main problems that Russia and the United States are to solve on this path?

The current condition of relations between Russia and the United States is a great concern. Unfortunately, this is a hard fact. But this also means that something has to be done about it in order to normalize relations.

I recall the mid-1980s. Then, both here and overseas, many people were saying that nothing would work out in relations with the United States. But we resumed the dialogue, met at the highest level - after a

six-year break! - and adopted a joint statement. Moreover, we developed it right there at that summit and formulated our goals and objectives. We made a statement about the inadmissibility of a nuclear war, of any war between our countries, and pledged not to seek military superiority. We agreed to intensify contacts at all levels and our exchanges and cooperation. Then, a lot of difficulties arose, but in general we stayed steady on our course. And two years later, the first agreement on nuclear disarmament - the INF Treaty - was signed.

<https://tass.com/politics/1246603>

Department of Energy Announces New Senior Leaders

Department of Energy, January 21, 2021

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced new Biden-Harris Administration senior leadership appointees. These new leaders will direct policy at DOE, coordinate across the Administration, and enact President Joe Biden's vision for bold action on the climate crisis and on safeguarding the Americans most affected by it. These experienced professionals reflect President Biden's pledge to equip his Administration with a team that represents America's diversity. Tarak Shah will serve as Chief of Staff, becoming the first person of color, first Indian-American, and first openly LGBTQ person to serve in that position at DOE.

"These talented and diverse public servants will deliver on President Biden's goal to tackle the climate crisis and build an equitable clean energy future," said DOE Chief of Staff Tarak Shah. "Guided by their expertise, breadth of experience, and following the science, these Department of Energy appointees will contribute to creating a clean energy economy that produces millions of good-paying American jobs and safeguards the planet for future generations."

<https://www.energy.gov/articles/department-energy-announces-new-senior-leaders>

Nuclear weapons are illegal at last

Greenpeace, January 22, 2021

The year 2021 also marks the 50th anniversary of Greenpeace, which began life in September 1971 when a small group of activists set sail to the island of Amchitka, off the west coast of Alaska, to try and stop nuclear weapons testing from taking place. Greenpeace could not be more delighted that in the anniversary year of our founding journey, we can join the celebration to mark this historic Treaty coming into force and pay our deepest respects to advocates for this momentous achievement, led by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Greenpeace France interviewed Jean-Marie Collin of ICAN France about the challenges and prospects that arise from the Treaty's entry into force.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is entering into force. How did we get to this point?

Nuclear weapons were first used in 1945 with catastrophic outcomes. Since then, they have remained a major threat to humanity. Civil society has been campaigning against them ever since but progress has been slow. In 2010, ICAN started working with some governments to promote a process at the UN to negotiate a legally binding instrument to ban nuclear weapons. On 7 July 2017, an overwhelming majority of States (122) adopted the TPNW. By 24 October 2020, 50 countries signed and ratified it which ensured the Treaty enters into force 90 days later. So today, 22 January 2021, nuclear weapons become illegal!

The first assembly of the state parties will be held in the next 12 months, probably in Austria.

<https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/46233/nuclear-weapons-illegal-treaty/>

Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons

United Nations Office for Disarmament, January 2021

By resolution 71/258, the General Assembly decided to convene in 2017 a United Nations

conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. The Assembly encouraged all Member States to participate in the Conference, with the participation and contribution of international organizations and civil society representatives. The Conference took place from 27 to 31 March and from 15 June to 7 July in New York. The Conference was chaired by Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN Office at Geneva.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. These include undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory and the provision of assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities. States parties will be obliged to prevent and suppress any activity prohibited under the TPNW undertaken by persons or on territory under its jurisdiction or control. The Treaty also obliges States parties to provide adequate assistance to individuals affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons, as well as to take necessary and appropriate measure of environmental remediation in areas under its jurisdiction or control contaminated as a result of activities related to the testing or use of nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by the Conference (by a vote of 122 States in favour, with one vote against and one abstention) at the United Nations on 7 July 2017, and opened for signature by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 20 September 2017. Following the deposit with the Secretary-General of the 50th instrument of ratification or accession of the Treaty on 24 October 2020, it enter into force on 22 January 2021 in accordance with its article 15 (1).

[https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/#:~:text=Following%20the%20d,its%20article%2015%20\(1\)](https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/#:~:text=Following%20the%20d,its%20article%2015%20(1))

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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Prepared by :

**Ms Diya Deep Singh
Ms Raj Rajeshwari Singh**

Indian Pugwash Society

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