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Contents

CONTENTS

India

- **Pakistan achieved nuclear capability 'within seven years' of India's first test in 1974: President Arif Alvi**

China

- **China's space-tracking ship Yuanwang-3 completes new monitoring missions**
- **Rocket engine prototype gives super boost to China's space ambitions**
- **China needs to increase nuclear capacity to maintain minimum deterrence against rising US coercion**

Pakistan

- **Pakistan successfully test-fires nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile**
- **Pakistan celebrates 75th Independence Day with patriotic zeal and fervour**

USA

- **US will not accept nuclear N. Korea despite N. Korean ambitions: US official**
- **Diplomats of the U.S. and S. Korea discuss resumption of dialogue with N. Korea**
- **Biden govt. likely to seek incremental sanctions relief for N. Korea: CRS report**

Europe

- **Poland's nuclear high-wire act at East-West crossroads**
- **UK and Iran in war of words over 'outrageous' oil tanker attack**
- **UK's Enrique Mora holds talks with Araqchi in Tehran**
- **German-Iranian ties face scrutiny as hard-liner Raisi takes office**
- **British submarine arrives in Busan ahead of aircraft carrier's port call**

West Asia

Iran

- **Iran: JCPOA is not over**
- **Iran to publish book on U.S. non-compliance with JCPOA: Zarif**
- **Raisi and JCPOA: Lifting sanctions is top priority**
- **Zarif publishes six-volume book on JCPOA**
- **'Don't test us:' Iran responds to Israeli threat of military action**
- **Iran bashes U.S. on anniversary of Hiroshima nuclear bombing**
- **The key to mending Tehran-Riyadh ties is in Saudi hands: former ambassador**
- **Iran charts out new foreign policy course**

- **Senior analyst says Raisi government should adopt new strategy in face of problems**

East Asia

North Korea

**N. Korea blames US again for anti-govt. rallies in Cuba
N Korea vows stronger attack capabilities over allied drills**

South Korea

- **Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, Japan hold phone talks on cooperation for peninsula peace**
- **DP chief says reopening Kaesong complex will help build trust among 2 Koreas, US**
- **Vice FM Choi holds talks with Iranian counterpart on frozen Tehran assets, JCPOA**
- **Top court confirms dismissal of request to cancel construction permit of two unfinished nuclear reactors**

Japan

- **Japan's Suga calls for nuke-free world on Hiroshima anniversary**
- **Japan: Nagasaki commemorates 76th anniversary of atomic bomb attack**
- **Japan FM plans to visit Iran**

World/misc

- **Biden Continues Trump Nuclear Funding**

India

Pakistan achieved nuclear capability 'within seven years' of India's first test in 1974: President Arif Alvi

The New Indian Express, August 14, 2021

Achieving nuclear capability "within seven years" of India carrying out its first nuclear test in 1974 was among Pakistan's big achievements since it became independent, President Arif Alvi said on Saturday, indicating that the country became a nuclear power much before its official announcement in 1998. Addressing the flag hoisting ceremony held at the President House to celebrate Pakistan's 75th Independence Day, Alvi said over the past 74 years, "three wars were forced upon us", however, the nation kept moving on despite the challenges.

Recounting Pakistan's accomplishments, the president said the country performed many great deeds since Independence and among the big achievements was to gain nuclear capability. "When India in 1974 carried out its nuclear test, Pakistan managed to create a nuclear deterrent within just seven years after that through its intelligence and hard work and it joined those nations which were developed and were equipped with nuclear weapons for their defence," Alvi said.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2021/aug/14/pakistanachieved-nuclear-capability-within-seven-years-of-indias-first-test-in-1974-president-a-2344670.html>

China

China's space-tracking ship Yuanwang-3 completes new monitoring missions Xinhua, August 01, 2021

China's space-tracking ship Yuanwang-3 returned to its homeport in east China's Jiangsu Province Sunday after completing a new round of maritime monitoring missions. During the missions, Yuanwang-3 ensured Fengyun-3E meteorological satellite's entry into planned orbit. Commissioned on May 18, 1995, Yuanwang-3 is a second-generation Chinese space tracking ship. It has undertaken more than 90 maritime tracking and monitoring tasks for spacecraft, including the Shenzhou spaceships, Chang'e lunar probes and BeiDou satellites.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-08/01/c_1310100970.htm

Rocket engine prototype gives super boost to China's space ambitions Liu Zhen
South China Morning Post, August 05, 2021

China's space programme has moved a step closer to crewed lunar and interplanetary missions with the completion of a prototype super heavy-lift rocket engine, according to state media. The 220-tonne engine is intended to power the next generation Long March 9 (CZ-9) carrier rocket, expected to enter service before 2030. The CZ-9 will be a three-stage rocket with boosters, with the new engine forming its core and second stage, according to China Space News. "It is one of the most important symbols of a nation becoming a space power," the report said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3143935/rocket-engine-prototype-gives-super-boost-chinas-space-ambitions>

China needs to increase nuclear capacity to maintain minimum deterrence against rising US coercion

Hu Xijin

Global Times, August 07, 2021

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed his "deep concern" about the "rapid growth" of China's nuclear arsenal with Southeast Asian foreign ministers. He accused Beijing of "sharply deviating from its decades-old nuclear strategy based on minimum deterrence." This is the US' official response from the highest level after various US think tanks over the past few months have claimed that China is building a great number of "new missile silos" in Yumen of Northwest China's Gansu Province and in the Hami region in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Washington is in no moral position to accuse China of this. China has only a fraction of the number of nuclear warheads that the US has. China is also the only nuclear power that has pledged not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. The US has never indicated that it would consider making the same

commitment. There is no information from Beijing on whether it is strengthening its nuclear buildup in the face of a realistic threat from Washington. But even if we were doing that, it would have nothing to do with Southeast Asian countries, or even with Japan and Australia, because China's nuclear policy also includes another firm commitment of not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear weapon state.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202108/1230817.shtml>

Pakistan

Pakistan successfully test-fires nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile

The Hindu, August 12, 2021

Pakistan on Thursday successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile which can strike targets up to 290 kilometres, the army said. The successful training launch of ballistic missile 'Ghaznavi' was aimed at ensuring operational readiness of Army Strategic Forces Command, besides re-validating technical parameters of the weapon system, the army said in a statement.

The training launch was witnessed by Lt. Gen Muhammad Ali, Commander Army Strategic Forces Command, senior officers from Strategic Plans Division, Army Strategic Forces Command, Scientists and Engineers of the strategic organizations, it said. As per the military's media wing, missile Ghaznavi is capable of delivering multiple types of warheads up to a range of 290 kilometres. Commander Army Strategic Forces Command appreciated the excellent standard of training, handling of the weapon system and execution of launch mission in the field by troops, the statement said. President Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Imran Khan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and the Service Chiefs have congratulated all ranks of Army Strategic Forces Command, the scientists and engineers on successful conduct of today's launch, the army said.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/pakistan-successfully-test-fires-nuclear-capable-surface-to-surface-ballistic-missile/article35876138.ece>

Pakistan celebrates 75th Independence Day with patriotic zeal and fervour

Dawn, August 14, 2021

Pakistanis are celebrating today (Saturday) the country's 75th year of Independence with traditional zeal and fervour, with commemorative ceremonies held in cities across the country. The celebrations began with change of guard ceremonies held at Mazaar-i-Quaid and Mazaar-i-Iqbal in Karachi and Lahore, respectively, and a 31-gun salute in the capital, followed by 21-gun salutes in all four provincial capitals, reported Radio Pakistan.

The president said that over the past 74 years, "three wars were forced upon us". "There is an ongoing race for weapons in the region and Pakistan has been [deliberately] trapped," he said, adding that despite this challenge, Pakistan, which was essentially an agricultural country, managed to meet its food requirements and was now on the way to becoming an industrial country. He said the country was also making advancements in the area of information technology. Recounting Pakistan's accomplishments of the past years, he said when India conducted a nuclear explosion in 1974, Pakistan managed to create a nuclear deterrent within just seven years after that.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1640596>

USA

US will not accept nuclear N. Korea despite N. Korean ambitions: US official

Yonhap

Korea Herald, August 4, 2021

The United States will never accept a nuclear-armed North Korea despite the latter's apparent ambition to become a nuclear state, a ranking US intelligence official said Tuesday. Sydney Seiler, national intelligence officer for North Korea at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, argued the North's true intention, at least for the time being, may be to be accepted as a nuclear state. "We have made clear in all of our negotiations -- what it is we expect from the North ... and what benefits would accrue to the DPRK," he said in a webinar hosted by the Washington Times Foundation, referring to North Korea by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"But until now, the regime just has simply not wanted to take these exit ramps," he added. Seiler said the North has had many opportunities to denuclearize in exchange for incentives that it is said to seek, such as improved relations with the United States, as well as a security guarantee. Pyongyang, however, has "simply squandered away an opportunity to move forward with it, with the United States in a better relationship," he said, offering the 2019 summit between former US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Hanoi as an example.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210804000129&ACE_SEARCH=1

Diplomats of the U.S. and S. Korea discuss resumption of dialogue with N. Korea

Yonhap

Korea Herald, August 5, 2021

Diplomats of South Korea and the United States have held talks in Washington to discuss joint efforts to resume dialogue with North Korea, the foreign ministry said Thursday. Wednesday's talks between Rim Kap-soo, director general at the ministry's peninsula peace regime bureau, and Jung Pak, the deputy U.S. special representative for North Korea, came as last week's restoration of inter-Korean communication lines fueled hopes for the resumption of nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang. "The two sides reaffirmed that to achieve substantive progress in the Korean Peninsula peace process, the swift resumption of dialogue between the South and the North and between the North and the United States is essential," the ministry said in a press release. "They had concrete, in-depth consultations on ways for the early resumption of talks between the North and the U.S. as well as for progress in inter-Korean relations," it added.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210805001033&ACE_SEARCH=1

Biden govt. likely to seek incremental sanctions relief for N. Korea: CRS report

Yonhap

Korea Herald, August 6, 2021

The US government appears to envision offering partial sanctions relief in exchange for North Korea taking denuclearization steps but such "incremental" sanctions relief would be difficult to move forward without congressional support, a congressional report showed Friday. That is because the sanctions on the North are targeting not just the country's weapons development but also a host of other issues, such as human rights abuses, money laundering, international terrorism and cyber operations, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) report said.

"The (Joe) Biden approach... appears to envision offering partial sanctions relief in exchange for partial steps toward denuclearization," the report said. "Incremental sanctions relief could be difficult to accomplish without congressional support." "The possibility of sanctions relief is complicated by, among other factors, US legal requirements ... US sanctions on North Korea target not just weapons development but also human rights abuses, money laundering, weapons trade, international terrorism and cyber operations," it added. The report said should talks between the North and the US restart, members of congress could debate "the merits of the Biden administration's apparent aim to push in the near term for incremental dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear program in step with gradual sanctions relief." The report also noted they will look into whether and how to push the administration "to more effectively shield humanitarian aid from the impact of sanctions."

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210806000245&ACE_SEARCH=1

Europe

Poland's nuclear high-wire act at East-West crossroads

DW, August 2, 2021

Two of the richest Poles want to develop nuclear power: one with small reactors from the US, and another with large reactors from Russia. Geopolitics will play a part in which project succeeds — if either do. It's unclear yet what role nuclear power will play in Poland's future energy mix. Polish billionaire Zygmunt Solorz-Zak is considering investing in a Russian nuclear project in Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave between two European Union neighbors, Poland and Lithuania. This followed an announcement by Polish chemical firm Synthos — which is owned by another billionaire, Michal Solowow — on the development of four small nuclear reactors. Beyond this, the Polish government also has its own nuclear power plans.

Synthos' plans would not appear until the 2030s at the earliest, while the Baltic Nuclear Power Plant in Kaliningrad (BEJ) could be built by the turn of 2028 and 2029, reported the newspaper Rzeczpospolita. The cost of erecting the four Polish units with a capacity of 4 gigawatt is estimated at 105 billion zlotys (\$28 billion, €23 billion), while the cost of BEJ would be approximately 30 billion zlotys.

<https://www.dw.com/en/polands-nuclear-high-wire-act-at-east-west-crossroads/a-58704388>

UK and Iran in war of words over 'outrageous' oil tanker attack

DW, August 2, 2021

Iran and the UK have clashed over a suspected drone attack on an oil tanker that killed two people. The US secretary of state has promised a coordinated response. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Iran will have to "face the consequences" of its "unacceptable" drone attack on an Israeli-managed oil tanker off the Oman coast that killed two people.

Later on Monday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said there would be "a collective response" to the "direct threat to freedom of navigation and commerce," The Iranian foreign ministry, that had earlier denied it was behind the attack, warning it would "respond promptly to any possible adventurous actions."

<https://www.dw.com/en/uk-and-iran-in-war-of-words-over-%EA%9E%8C-courageous%EA%9E%8C-oil-tanker-attack/a-58734902>

U's Enrique Mora holds talks with Araqchi in Tehran

Tehran Times, August 4, 2021

European External Action Service (EEAS) Deputy Secretary General Enrique Mora, who has visited Tehran to attend the inauguration of Ebrahim Raisi as the new Iranian president, held talks on Wednesday with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, who led the Iranian team in six rounds of nuclear talks in Vienna. Mora has been leading the nuclear talks in Vienna between Iran, the European Union, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and the United States with the aim of reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA. The talks have been held within the Joint Commission of the JCPOA.

Negotiators from the U.S. has been participating in the talks indirectly because Iran has said it will not talk directly with the U.S. until Washington decides to return the JCPOA and lift sanctions. According to the media office of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Mora and Araqchi exchanged views about the most important regional and international issues, especially developments in Afghanistan. Relations and mutual cooperation between Iran and the EU in different areas also featured in the talks, the Foreign Ministry said. The ministry said the last issues surrounding the JCPOA and continuation of talks were also discussed between the two sides.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463735/EU-s-Enrique-Mora-holds-talks-with-Araqchi-in-Tehran>

German-Iranian ties face scrutiny as hard-liner Raisi takes office

DW, August 5, 2021

In view of Raisi's bloody past, German foreign policy experts have urged an about-face in relations with Iran. "If a judge with blood on his hands is president of the country, we must put the issue of human rights at the top of the agenda," Omid Nouripour, the foreign policy spokesman for the Green party, told DW. Human rights played a minor role at best during the presidency of Raisi's predecessor, Hassan Rouhani. Even when Iranian security forces brutally suppressed demonstrations against rising gasoline prices in 2019, the German government did not come out with a clear condemnation of the government in Tehran. "This pussyfooting must stop," Nouripour said.

The nuclear agreement has dominated German-Iranian relations for the past eight years, said Cornelius Adebahr, associate fellow at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP). But there are other problems, too, he told DW, including domestic politics, human rights and the regional issue. "Germany has taken little action on these issues," he said. Hassan Rouhani's outwardly moderate stance made it easier to look the other way on such matters. "It is now becoming more difficult for Germany and Europe to publicly defend the continuation of a policy of authoritarian stability," Ali Fathollah-Nejad, a German-Iranian political scientist, told DW. Raisi's past is overshadowed by human rights violations in Iran — as have been the days and weeks leading up to his inauguration. In the southwestern province of Khuzestan, pro-government militias brutally crushed protests against the prevailing water shortage. Amnesty International has reported at least eight deaths.

<https://www.dw.com/en/german-iranian-ties-face-scrutiny-as-hard-liner-raisi-takes-office/a-58734089>

British submarine arrives in Busan ahead of aircraft carrier's port call

Yonhap
Korea Herald, Aug 12, 2021

A British nuclear-powered submarine accompanying the HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier has arrived in the southern port city of Busan, the South Korean Navy said Thursday. The HMS Arful submarine docked at the port of the Naval Operations Command in Busan early Wednesday ahead of the aircraft carrier's port call later this month, naval officials said. The submarine plans to examine its equipment and load munitions. Its crew members are taking COVID-19 tests, they said.

He also said South Korea and Britain are coordinating details of the HMS Queen Elizabeth's planned port call. The 64,000-ton Queen Elizabeth and its strike group embarked on a seven-month world tour in May. As part of Britain's efforts to boost its involvement in the Asia-Pacific region, the fleet has conducted joint exercises with India and Singapore and made a port call to the Pacific island of Guam. After visiting Busan, the aircraft carrier is scheduled to travel to Japan in September. Britain also plans to permanently assign two offshore patrol vessels to the region later this year. North Korea last week slammed the carrier group's deployment as a provocation that would escalate tensions in the Asia-Pacific.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210812000702&ACE_SEARCH=1

West Asia

Iran

Iran: JCPOA is not over

Tehran Times, August 1, 2021

At his press briefing which was held online, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman presented a timeline of the ministry's activities and developments in the field of foreign policy over the past two weeks. Saeed Khatibzadeh then answered questions from domestic and foreign journalists. Khatibzadeh responded to some statements made inside the United States that Washington should not allow the new Iranian president and his entourage to attend the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

"The U.S. government must take into account that it has definitive hosting responsibilities for the United Nations headquarters in New York, and regardless of its differences with countries, it has specific hosting responsibilities and must act within that framework," he stated. Stating that such efforts and raising such issues are not strange, he said that the Zionist regime's lobby in the United States uses every opportunity to accuse the Islamic Republic of Iran. He continued about the latest situation of prisoner exchanges between Iran, the United States and Britain, saying that these were two different issues.

"The American side violated its obligations, and if it had fulfilled these obligations, our Iranians would have been freed today," he elaborated. "These are the reasons why we did not have any dialogue with the Americans from the first day until today, and we have more and more reasons every day that all the talks, even those that are indirect should be pushed forward with utmost distrust of the American side because they have shown how untrustworthy they are," Khatibzadeh highlighted.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463616/Iran-JCPOA-is-not-over>

Iran to publish book on U.S. non-compliance with JCPOA: Zarif

Tehran Times, August 1, 2021 -

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has announced that the recent letter he sent to the UN secretary-general about the United States' non-adherence to its commitments under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal will soon be published as a book. On July 20, 2021, Zarif wrote his last and long letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres which was released for the first time by the Iranian Foreign Ministry on July 30.

The letter was published in both Persian and English with an introduction by Foreign Minister Zarif, along with the documents of six years of Western non-implementation of the JCPOA written by him on various occasions. The collection written by Zarif has been prepared in four pages by the Institute for Political and International Studies, the digital version of which is now available to the public. The printed version of the books will also be available in the publishing market next week, according to the Institute for Political and International Studies.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463605/Iran-to-publish-book-on-U-S-non-compliance-with-JCPOA-Zarif>

Raisi and JCPOA: Lifting sanctions is top priority

Tehran Times, August 3, 2021 -

After being endorsed by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution as president on Tuesday, Ebrahim Raisi said he “will certainly seek to lift the sanctions” on Iran. The statement comes amid a report that European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Enrique Mora is on his way to Iran to participate in the inauguration ceremony of Raisi on Thursday.

“We will certainly seek to lift the oppressive sanctions, but we will certainly not condition the people’s livelihood, and we will not tie it to the will of foreigners. I thank all the government officials of the twelfth government, but there is still a lot of work that needs to be done by the incoming administration. We have identified an immediate and short-term transformation plan to address the issues ahead. We will deal with them quickly,” Raisi said in his endorsement ceremony in the presence of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and several high-ranking officials. These remarks caught the attention of several foreign media outlets and analysts as on Monday night it was reported that the EU is sending Iran talks coordinator Mora to attend the Raisi inauguration on Thursday.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463689/Raisi-and-JCPOA-Lifting-sanctions-is-top-priority>

Zarif publishes six-volume book on JCPOA

Tehran Times, August 4, 2021

A six-volume book titled "Sealed Secret" written by Mohammad Javad Zarif, Ali Akbar Salehi, Seyed Abbas Araghchi and Majid Takht Ravanchi has been published. In the introduction of the book, which was published by the Information Institute Publications, it is stated the "Sealed Secret" collection is a descriptive and documented report on the process of one of the most important files in the Iranian history that tries to cast lights on Iran’s important moments in contemporary history.

The book evaluates the narratives and reports that the "mostly American" opposing parties have published and promoted over the past two decades, trying to shape minds and report history as they wish. The Sealed Secret is a collection of the nuclear negotiations and the JCPOA.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463733/Zarif-publishes-six-volume-book-on-JCPOA>

‘Don’t test us:’ Iran responds to Israeli threat of military action

Tehran Times, August 6, 2021

Tehran on Thursday reacted to remarks by a high-ranking Israeli official who had threatened Iran with a military strike to stop its nuclear program, saying any adventurism against the country will be met with a decisive response. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh warned Israel against any “foolish move,” saying that Iran will decisively respond to any such move. “In another brazen violation of Int’l law, Israeli regime now blatantly threatens Iran with military action. Such malign behavior stems from blind Western support,” Khatibzadeh said on Twitter. “We state this clearly: ANY foolish act against Iran will be met with a DECISIVE response. Don’t test us.”

He was responding to a threat issued by Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz against Iran. Gantz said Israel is ready to take military action against Iran. The remarks came amid heightened tensions between Iran and Israel over a mysterious attack on an Israeli-operated oil tanker off the coast of Oman nearly nine days ago. The Israeli-operated ship Mercer Street was attacked off the coast of Oman on July 29 while traveling from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. The oil tanker, managed by Israeli shipping magnate Eyal Ofer’s Zodiac Maritime, was reportedly attacked by suicide drones. Zodiac Maritime said two crewmen, a British and Romanian national, died in the attack. “With profound sadness, we understand the incident onboard the M/T Mercer Street on 29 July, 2021 has resulted in the deaths of two crew members on board,” the UK-based Israeli company said in a statement on Friday afternoon, a day after the attack.

Israel, the U.S. and the UK blamed Iran for the attack without presenting any evidence to support their accusations. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett claimed that Tel Aviv knows with certainty Iran attacked the Mercer Street ship and will respond to it. “I determine, with absolute certainty – Iran carried out the attack against the ship,” Bennett stated, according to the Jerusalem Post. “The intelligence evidence for this exists and we expect the international community will make it clear to the Iranian regime that they have made a serious mistake.” He noted, “In any case, we know how to send a message to Iran in our own way.”

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463766/Don-t-test-us-Iran-responds-to-Israeli-threat-of-military>

Iran bashes U.S. on anniversary of Hiroshima nuclear bombing

Tehran Times, August 8, 2021

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has put out a statement on the 76th anniversary of the U.S. nuclear bombing of the Japanese city of Hiroshima, saying the bombing is a reminder of a grave crime against humanity by Washington. “The Hiroshima incident demonstrates that this country [the U.S.] is ready to put in every effort and take every inhuman action to achieve its illegitimate and insensible objectives,” Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

“The memory of the victims of this incident is a reminder to the world of the necessity of pursuing and seriously realizing the exalted ambition of a world free from nuclear weapons and underlines that the

dark shadow and the permanent threat of such weapons are putting the international peace and security at risk.”

The spokesman also slammed the double standards the U.S. and other nuclear powers apply to the issue of nuclear weapons. “Nuclear powers, including the U.S., have declared their clear commitment for permanent nuclear disarmament, within the framework of international agreements, especially the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In spite of that, not only no practical and serious step has been taken in this regard, so far, but also these countries, led by the U.S., are increasingly modernizing their arsenal, on the one hand, and increasingly focusing on nuclear arms in their military-security doctrines, on the other,” Khatibzadeh said.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463850/Iran-bashes-U-S-on-anniversary-of-Hiroshima-nuclear-bombing>

The key to mending Tehran-Riyadh ties is in Saudi hands: former ambassador

Tehran Times, August 14, 2021

Iran’s former ambassador to Baghdad has said the key to resolve the disputes between Iran and Saudi Arabia is in the hands of Riyadh. If the Saudis, like Iran, have the will to mend ties, Tehran is ready “but the knot should be untied by the Saudis,” Hossein Danayeefer told IRNA in an interview published on Friday. Tehran and Riyadh have been at loggerheads over the Saudi-led war on Yemen, the Saudi opposition to the 2015 nuclear deal, which was abandoned by former U.S. President Donald Trump in 2015 and imposed sanctions on Iran within his “maximum pressure” campaign against the Islamic Republic.

“Iraq seeks to find special place in the region” The former ambassador also said Iraq sent its foreign minister to Tehran in efforts to keep Iraq safe from regional disputes and also promote the status of Iraq in the region. “Iraqi diplomats and analysts believe that one of the reasons for the current situation in Iraq is that this country is affected by peripheral tensions. This analysis is technical and precise because in the current world regional and international developments affect situation all countries,” the former Ambassador remarked.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/464041/The-key-to-mending-Tehran-Riyadh-ties-is-in-Saudi-hands-former>

Iran charts out new foreign policy course

Tehran Times, August 14, 2021

After 16 years of being on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Iran will soon acquire full membership in the international body, ushering in a new era of more balanced foreign policy that is expected to set the country on a path of development. The membership announcement was made after a phone conversation between Secretary of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani and his Russian counterpart Nikolai Patrushev. In a Twitter post on Wednesday, the head of the top Iranian security body said he held a conversation with his “friend and colleague, Mr. Patrushev” in which they examined developments in Afghanistan, Syria, and the Persian Gulf region.

Shamkhani capped off his tweet with glad tidings. “Fortunately, the political obstacles to Iran's membership in the Shanghai CO have been removed & Iran's membership will be finalized,” he said. The news came amid ongoing efforts by the new Iranian President, Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, to

put together a government expected to deal with a variety of foreign policy challenges and opportunities ranging from the tattered 2015 nuclear deal with the West to long-term partnership plans with Russia and China. Throughout his election campaign, Ayatollah Raisi introduced himself as a force for change, both in domestic politics and in foreign policy.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/464070/Iran-charts-out-new-foreign-policy-course>

Senior analyst says Raisi government should adopt new strategy in face of problems

Tehran Times, August 15, 2021

Hossein Alaei, an expert on strategic affairs, has suggested that the new administration of Ebrahim Raisi to devise new strategy for challenges facing the country. In an interview with the IRNA news agency published on Friday, Alaei said the cabinet makeup and political issues of great importance to the public and the people show high sensitivity toward it. The people want those with managerial posts in the government will be able to do reforms and resolve problems and counter challenges, he remarked. He said the governments have “come and gone” but the problems have remained unresolved.

Now that a new government has come to power it can with the help of its ministers resolve issues which have turned into “macro problems” in the areas of water, drought, environment, unemployment, etc. the expert suggested. If only the “persons” are changed, the wrong policies and the problems will persist, he remarked. The problems are clear and the ways that have been adopted to resolve them have not produced the desired results therefore it is necessary to “revise” those policies, Alaei pointed out. The expert on strategic affairs said those who have drafted the 2025 Outlook Plan should explain how they want to achieve those goals and if not, why don’t they change the policy? Alaei said why do countries near and around Iran have succeeded to resolve their problems but we have yet been able to do so.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/464086/Senior-analyst-says-Raisi-government-should-adopt-new-strategy>

East Asia

North Korea

N. Korea blames US again for anti-govt. rallies in Cuba

Yonhap

Korea Herald, August 2, 2021

North Korea on Monday denounced the United States again for meddling in internal affairs in Cuba by instigating anti-government demonstrations and unrest in the Caribbean country. "The US's intention has been laid bare outright that it seeks to instigate internal unrest by influencing anti-government elements and bolstering anti-Cuba sentiment globally," the ministry said in a posting on its website. "The US has been involved in behind-the-scene manipulation of anti-government demonstrations and causing a stir by launching new sanctions schemes against the country," it added.

This marked the fourth time since July 16 that the North has blamed the US for causing instability in Cuba, including its capital city of Havana. North Korea has been seeking to maintain closer ties with its traditional friendly countries, including Cuba, amid an impasse in nuclear negotiations with Washington. In April, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sent multiple congratulatory messages to

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, expressing hope that relations between the two countries will "grow stronger."

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210802000180&ACE_SEARCH=1

N Korea vows stronger attack capabilities over allied drills

Kim Tong-Hyung

AP News, August 10, 2021

The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ripped South Korea for proceeding with military exercises with the United States that she said are an invasion rehearsal and warned Tuesday that the North will work faster to strengthen its preemptive strike capabilities. Kim Yo Jong's statement came after South Korean media reported that the allied militaries will begin four days of preliminary training on Tuesday before holding computer-simulated drills on Aug. 16-26. Kim said she was given authority to release the statement, implying the message came directly from her brother.

Hours after her comments were published on state media, South Korea's defense and unification ministries said North Korean officials hadn't responded to their calls Tuesday afternoon over inter-Korean hotlines, which had been disconnected for a year before North Korea agreed to reopen them in late July. The Koreas then described the move as a conciliatory gesture. South Korean officials said they were closely monitoring the development, but that it wasn't immediately clear whether North Korea had cut the communication channels again. Kim Yo Jong described South Korea's decision to hold joint exercises despite earlier warnings by the North as "perfidious behavior" that will push the allies into facing a "more serious security threat."

She said continuing the drills exposed the hypocrisy of the Biden administration's offers to resume dialogue over North Korea's nuclear weapons program. She said a stable peace won't be achieved on the Korean Peninsula unless the United States withdraws its troops and weapons from the South. Kim said North Korea will "put more spur to further increasing the deterrent of absolute capacity to cope with the ever-growing military threats from the U.S.," including its capabilities for national defense and "powerful" preemptive strikes for "rapidly countering any military actions against us." "(The drills) are the most vivid expression of the U.S. hostile policy towards (North Korea), designed to stifle our state by force, and an unwelcoming act of self-destruction for which a dear price should be paid as they threaten the safety of our people and further imperil the situation on the Korean Peninsula," Kim said. "For peace to settle on the peninsula, it is imperative for the U.S. to withdraw its aggression troops and war hardware deployed in (South) Korea. As long as the U.S. forces stay in (South) Korea, the root cause for the periodic aggravation of the situation on the Korean Peninsula will never vanish." It wasn't immediately clear whether North Korea's threat to advance its preemptive strike capabilities signaled a resumption of testing activity.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-coronavirus-pandemic-9e04fadc812e2944888d26f9cc02bcc6>

South Korea

Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, Japan hold phone talks on cooperation for peninsula peace

Yonhap

Korea Herald, August 2, 2021

South Korea's chief nuclear envoy, Noh Kyu-duk, held phone talks with his Japanese counterpart, Takehiro Funakoshi, on Monday to discuss cooperation to foster lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula,

the foreign ministry said. The talks came after last week's restoration of inter-Korean communication lines raised hopes for the resumption of nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang, though Kim Yo-jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, warned Sunday the planned summertime military drills between the South and the United States will cloud the future of cross-border relations.

"The two sides shared assessments of recent Korean Peninsula situations, including the restoration of inter-Korean communication lines," the ministry said in a press release. "They exchanged opinions on ways to cooperate between the South and Japan, and among the South, the US and Japan for substantive progress in the efforts for the complete denuclearization of the peninsula and the establishment of lasting peace," it added.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210802000995&ACE_SEARCH=1

DP chief says reopening Kaesong complex will help build trust among 2 Koreas, US

Yonhap

Korea Herald, August 4, 2021

South Korea's ruling party chairman suggested Wednesday reopening the long-shuttered inter-Korean industrial complex in North Korea's border town of Kaesong will help build trust among the two Koreas and the United States, and ease tension on the Korean Peninsula. "Reopening the Kaesong Industrial Complex is very critical to building trust between the US, South Korea and North Korea," Rep. Song Young-gil, head of the ruling Democratic Party (DP), said during a session of the Aspen Security Forum, being held online by the US-based Aspen Institute. "The Kaesong Industrial Complex has a very essential role in easing tensions between the two Koreas and is a very efficient way to change North Korea," Song said. His call for the resumption of the Kaesong complex comes amid growing hope for improved inter-Korean ties following the reopening of liaison communication hotlines between the countries last week.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210804000656&ACE_SEARCH=1

Vice FM Choi holds talks with Iranian counterpart on frozen Tehran assets, JCPOA

Yonhap

Korea Herald, August 5, 2021

First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-kun and his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi, have met in Tehran to discuss an array of issues, including Iranian assets frozen in South Korea under US sanctions, the foreign ministry said Thursday. Choi was in Tehran to attend Thursday's presidential inauguration of Ebrahim Raisi, the former chief justice who won the presidential election in June to succeed Hassan Rouhani. During Wednesday's talks with Abbas, Choi stressed South Korea has been making "exceptional" efforts to address the issue of Iran's frozen assets, based on which he said Seoul hopes to cement relations with the new administration in Tehran.

Choi also invited the new Iranian foreign minister to visit Seoul, as he voiced hope to expand high-level bilateral exchanges on the occasion of the 60th anniversary next year of the establishment of the two countries' diplomatic ties. Noting Seoul's efforts to build friendly ties with Tehran, Araghchi reiterated his government's expectation that the issue of Iran's frozen money will be swiftly resolved, the ministry said. Choi and Araghchi also discussed the negotiations over the restoration of a nuclear deal between Iran and world powers -- the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) -- and agreed to closely communicate based on the shared understanding that the deal is essential for the development of Seoul-Tehran ties, the ministry said.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210805000441&ACE_SEARCH=1

Top court confirms dismissal of request to cancel construction permit of two unfinished nuclear reactors

Yonhap

Korea Herald, August 5, 2021

The Supreme Court said Thursday it has confirmed the appellate court's ruling to dismiss a request to cancel the nuclear watchdog's permit to build nuclear power reactors in the southeastern coastal city of Ulsan. The cancellation request was filed by Greenpeace Korea and some Ulsan residents in September 2016, who claimed that the Nuclear Safety and Security Commission (NSSC) allowed the construction of Shingori No. 5 and Shingori No. 6 reactors "without considering the unique hazards of (the nuclear plants)." The NSSC had given a nod to the project three months earlier.

The Seoul Administrative Court rejected the call-off request in 2019, saying that while the nuclear watchdog's permission was partially unlawful, the potential damage from killing the project far outweighed the illegality, considering the project's financial and social costs. An appellate court also ruled in favor of the nuclear watchdog, citing public welfare and interest. The government launched a special commission in July 2017 to collect public opinions on the Shingori project in order to determine its fate, after President Moon Jae-in proposed to scrap the project in line with his election campaign pledges earlier that year. After months of deliberation, the commission recommended the resumption of the construction in October that year. Construction of Shingori No. 5 and Shingori No. 6 reactors is reportedly planned to be completed next year.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210805000730&ACE_SEARCH=1

Japan

Japan's Suga calls for nuke-free world on Hiroshima anniversary

DW, August 6, 2021

In a speech, Hiroshima's Mayor Kazumi Matsui urged global leaders to put an end to the use of nuclear weapons. "Nuclear weapons, developed to win wars, are a threat of total annihilation that we can certainly end, if all nations work together. No sustainable society is possible with these weapons continually poised for indiscriminate slaughter," he said. Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, who was also in Hiroshima, said the city has grown into a symbol of peace. "We have vowed to do our utmost to realize a world free of nuclear weapons," Suga tweeted. However, media reports said Suga had accidentally skipped over a page of his speech on the occasion. Kyodo news agency reported the skipped part included comments about how Japan was the only nation to have suffered an atomic bombing, and wished to see a world free of nuclear weapons.

<https://www.dw.com/en/japans-suga-calls-for-nuke-free-world-on-hiroshima-anniversary/a-58776052>

Japan: Nagasaki commemorates 76th anniversary of atomic bomb attack

DW, August 9, 2021

The Japanese city of Nagasaki on Monday commemorated the victims of the atomic bomb attack 76 years ago during World War II, with Mayor Tomihisa Taue urging the global community to abolish

nuclear weapons. While speaking at the memorial ceremony, Taue talked about the growing risk of a new nuclear arms race. "World leaders must commit to nuclear arms reductions and build trust through dialogue, and civil society must push them in this direction," Taue said. A moment of silence was observed during the ceremony at 11:02 a.m. local time, marking the exact time on August 9, 1945, when the "Fat Man" atomic bomb dropped by a US Air Force plane exploded over Nagasaki.

<https://www.dw.com/en/japan-nagasaki-commemorates-76th-anniversary-of-atomic-bomb-attack/a-58805136>

Japan FM plans to visit Iran

Tehran Times, August 10, 2021

Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi plans to pay an official visit to Iran in the coming weeks, Turkey and other countries in the West Asia region from Sunday onwards. Regional security and response to the COVID-19 pandemic will be on the agenda of Motegi's talks. Motegi said he will tour Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, and Qatar from August 15-24.

"The peace and stability of the Middle East (West Asia) region are extremely important for the international community including Japan," he told a news conference in the capital Tokyo broadcast online. "During this visit, I will once again underscore Japan's commitment to the Middle East (West Asia) by our long years of contribution to peace and prosperity of the region and by forging robust relations." Japan's chief diplomat said he will have a "frank exchange" of opinions on the regional situation and "work closely with" regional countries "to promote the stability of the region."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463947/Japan-FM-plans-to-visit-Iran>

World/misc

Biden Continues Trump Nuclear Funding

Kingston Reif

Arms Control Today, July/August 2021

As the Biden administration prepares to initiate a review of U.S. nuclear weapons policy, its first budget request would continue the expensive and controversial nuclear weapons sustainment and modernization efforts it inherited from the Trump administration. The submission has prompted mixed reactions in Congress. Republicans have generally expressed support, but some Democrats said it is inconsistent with the concerns President Joe Biden raised on the campaign trail about the ambition and price tag of the modernization plans, which grew significantly over the past four years.

The administration is requesting \$43.2 billion in 2022 for the Defense and Energy departments to sustain and modernize U.S. nuclear delivery systems and warheads and their supporting infrastructure. That includes \$27.7 billion for the Pentagon and \$15.5 billion for the Energy Department's semiautonomous National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). The proposed spending on nuclear weapons constitutes about 5.7 percent of the total national defense request of \$753 billion. A direct comparison of the Biden submission to what President Donald Trump requested and Congress largely supported in fiscal year 2021 (\$44.5 billion) and what Trump projected to request for 2022 (\$45.9 billion) is difficult because the Biden proposal appears to reclassify how spending on nuclear command, control, and communications programs is counted, leading to a lower requested amount. "The nuclear triad remains the bedrock of our national defense and strategic deterrence," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told the Senate Armed Services Committee on June 10. The 2022 budget

“invests in nuclear modernization efforts, and the department will always seek to balance the best capability with the most cost-effective solution,” he added.

The budget request would notably continue the controversial Trump proposals to expand U.S. nuclear capabilities. It includes \$15 million to begin development of a new low-yield nuclear sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM), nearly \$134 million for a new high-yield submarine-launched ballistic missile warhead (the W93) and associated aeroshell, \$98.5 million for indefinite sustainment of the megaton-class B83-1 gravity bomb, and nearly \$1.9 billion to build the capability to expand the production of plutonium pits, or cores, for nuclear warheads to 80 per year. As with most new administrations, the Biden administration only had time for a quick reexamination of the fiscal year 2022 budget plans bequeathed by its predecessor. But the Pentagon did review some nuclear weapons programs, notably the Trump plans for a new low-yield submarine-launched ballistic missile warhead variant, known as the W76-2, and the new nuclear-armed SLCM.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-07/news/biden-continues-trump-nuclear-funding>

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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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