

Nuclear, Missile & Space Digest

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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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- Putin: will 'take into account' NATO's nuclear capability

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A. India

India's stand on West hypocrisy vindicated; Russia's nuclear fuel sales to EU soar to record high

Hindustan Times, February 17, 2023

Russia's nuclear fuel sales have exposed the West's double standards on sanctions. Russian nuclear fuel and technology sales soared last year as imports by EU countries climbed to the highest in three years, according to a Bloomberg report. Figures sourced from Russia's customs records show that 2022 exports of nuclear fuel surged by over 20%, as the West shied away from sanctions on the nuclear sector. The Russian nuclear industry, which has so far gone unsanctioned despite Kyiv's pleas, is essential for the operation of many power plants in Europe. Even as they lecture the world on Russia, the latest report has left the West red-faced.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/videos/news/indias-stand-on-west-hypocrisy-vindicated-russia-s-nuclear-fuel-sales-to-eu-soar-to-record-high-101676635224494.html>

North India's first Nuclear Plant is coming up in Haryana in the town of Gorakhpur, which is about 150 km north of the national capital of New Delh, says Dr. Jitendra Singh

PIB, February 18, 2023

North India's first Nuclear Plant is coming up in Haryana in the town of Gorakhpur, which is about 150 km north of the national capital of New Delhi. Disclosing this here today, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said that during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's regime, one of the major achievements would be the installation of Nuclear/ Atomic Energy plants in other parts of the country, which were earlier confined mostly to the South Indian States like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh or in the west in Maharashtra. Dr. Jitendra Singh said that this is keeping in line with the priority to increase India's nuclear capacity, a number of path breaking

decisions were taken in last over 8 years. He added that a bulk approval of installation of 10 nuclear reactors has been given a nod by the Modi Government.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1900358>

Arighat, India's Second Nuclear Submarine, To Enter Service 'Latest' By 2024

Swarajya, February 20, 2023

Arighat, India's second ballistic missile submarine (nuclear-powered submarines armed with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles or SSBN), could enter service by 2024, a new report says. A report in the *Hindustan Times* has revealed that the indigenously-built boat is "expected to be commissioned latest by 2024". The submarine is an upgraded variant of the only in-service SSBN INS Arihant. With a displacement of around 6,000 tonnes, the boat will be capable of carrying 12 K-15 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) or four K-4 SLMBs, apart from conventional torpedoes and mines. While the K-15 has a range of 750 kilometres, the K-4 is capable of hitting targets as far as 3,500 kilometres away. Given its long range, the addition of K-4 missile to India's nukes delivery arsenal will allow India's SSBNs in the northern Bay of Bengal to target some parts of China.

<https://swarajyamag.com/news-brief/arighat-indias-second-nuclear-submarine-to-enter-service-latest-by-2024>

Keel Laying of Second Ship (By 524, Malwan) and Third Ship (By 525, Mangrol), at M/S CSL, Kochi, on 21 Feb 23

PIB, February 21, 2023

Keel laying of Second ship (BY 524, Malwan) and third ship (BY 525, Mangrol) of Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC) (CSL) project was presided by R Adm Sandeep Mehta, ACWP&A and R Adm I B Uthaiyah, DG WDB, respectively on 21 Feb

23, in presence of Shri Madhu S Nair, CMD, CSL and other senior officials of Indian Navy and CSL at M/s CSL, Kochi. With all major and auxiliary equipment/systems sourced from indigenous manufacturers, these ships are the proud flag bearer of "Make in India" initiative of Ministry of Defence. Contract for construction of eight ASW SWC vessels was concluded with M/s CSL, Kochi, in consonance with "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" initiatives of the Government of India. These ships are being built with a service life of 25 years. The availability of these vessels will provide sub-surface surveillance in coastal areas with the purpose of detecting and neutralizing underwater threats.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1901133>

India, US making fresh efforts for practical cooperation in civil nuclear energy sector

Economic Times, February 21, 2023

In the face of growing global concerns over energy security triggered by the Ukraine conflict, India and the US are giving a fresh look at exploring practical cooperation in the civil nuclear energy sector after failing to move forward since inking a historic agreement over 14 years back for partnership in the area. Ways for possible cooperation in nuclear commerce under the framework of the India-US nuclear agreement of 2008 figured prominently in the talks US Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources Geoffrey R Pyatt had with his Indian interlocutors in Delhi on February 16 and 17. In an exclusive interview to PTI, Pyatt described India as a "very crucial" partner for the US in ensuring global energy security in view of serious disruptions in supplies of fossil fuel resulting from Russia's "brutal" invasion of Ukraine.

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/power/india-us-making-fresh-efforts-for-practical-cooperation-in-civil-nuclear-energy-sector/98121960>

Raksha Mantri holds telephonic conversation with UK Secretary of State for Defence; Discusses ways to enhance defence industrial cooperation

PIB, February 21, 2023

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh held a telephonic conversation with UK Secretary of State for Defence Mr Ben Wallace on February 21, 2023. The conversation was cordial, positive and focused on future growth of the bilateral defence relationship. Both Ministers discussed a wide range of defence and security issues, including regional developments and the Indo-Pacific. The Ministers briefly reviewed their ongoing defence cooperation and expressed satisfaction at their bilateral military-to-military engagements. They also discussed ways to enhance defence industrial cooperation and identified a few potential areas of cooperation. The Raksha Mantri suggested that UK companies should become part of India's growth story and participate in co-development and co-production in India.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1901163>

German submarine pitch to India provides hope for joint deal

Naval Technology, February 24, 2023

Germany is reportedly set to pursue the bidding process for six P-75I submarines, with work to be carried out in India for the Indian Navy (IN) under a project worth \$5.2bn, as New Delhi explores possible alternatives to Russian military hardware. India has agreed to start talks with Germany over the acquisition of six submarines to bolster its maritime defence capabilities, with New Delhi possibly moving away from its dependence on Russia for naval hardware. The submarines will be constructed in India in partnership with foreign defence manufacturers. GlobalData's "India's

Defense Market 2022-2027, Import Market Dynamics” reports, “Although the market share held by Russian suppliers has declined significantly due to increased competition from western suppliers, they continue to account for 46.1% share in the Indian defence market”.

<https://www.naval-technology.com/news/german-submarine-pitch-to-india-provides-hope-for-joint-deal/>

Launch of First MCA Barge Yard 75 (LSAM 7) at M/S Secon, Visakhapatnam

PIB, February 24, 2023

Missile Cum Ammunition (MCA) Barge, Yard 75 (LSAM 7) was launched by RAdm Sandeep Mehta, ACWP&A on 24 Feb 23 at Guttene Devi, launch site of M/s SECON, Visakhapatnam. With all major and auxiliary equipment / systems sourced from indigenous manufacturers, this Barge is proud flag bearer of “Make in India” initiative of Ministry of Defence. Contract for construction of 08 x MCA Barge was concluded with M/s SECON, Visakhapatnam, a MSME, in consonance with “Aatmanirbhar Bharat” initiatives of the Government of India. This Barge is being built with a service life of 30 years. The availability of MCA Barges will provide impetus to Operational commitments of IN by facilitating Transportation, Embarkation and Disembarkation of articles / ammunition to IN Ships both alongside jetties and at outer harbours.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1902092>

India, China may have averted nuclear war in Ukraine by influencing Russia: US

Mint, February 26, 2023

As the Ukraine-Russia war continues, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said recently that India and China may have helped persuade Moscow to avoid using nuclear weapons. The remarks came as the war marked its first anniversary and

concerns grow about a Russian spring offensive. “...other countries that might have a little bit more influence with Russia these days, like China, but also other countries, like India, to engage him directly about their absolute opposition to any use of nuclear weapons. And we know that they conveyed those messages. And I think that had some effect,” Blinken told The Atlantic during an interview published on Friday. He also touched upon the longstanding diplomatic ties between India and Russia, noting that it was ‘challenging to break off in one fell sweep’. However, according to Blinken things had indeed changed in recent years.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/world/india-china-may-have-influenced-russia-prevented-nuclear-war-in-ukraine-us-11677322391450.html>

Very valuable that Modi, Xi opposed nuclear weapons: CIA chief

Hindustan Times, February 28, 2023

CIA chief’s comments, in the context of persuading Russia to refrain from the use of nukes, come two days after US secretary of state Antony Blinken said he had asked India and China to speak to Russia to express their opposition to nuclear weapons. It has been “very valuable” that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China’s president Xi Jinping have made clear their opposition to nuclear weapons, Central Intelligence Agency chief Bill Burns has said. His comments, in the context of persuading Russia to refrain from the use of nukes, come two days after US secretary of state Antony Blinken said he had asked India and China to speak to Russia to express their opposition to nuclear weapons. In an interview with CBS News on Sunday, when asked about his meeting with Russian foreign intelligence chief Sergei Naryshkin in Turkey last year, Burns said the conversation was “dispiriting”.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/very-valuable-that-modi-xi-opposed-nuclear-weapons-cia-chief-101677528855340.html>

India made significant efforts to detect, disrupt terror outfits: US report

The Week, February 28, 2023

A report published by the US government's Bureau of Counterterrorism has said that the Indian government made significant efforts to detect, disrupt, and degrade the operations of terrorist organisations. The Country Reports on Terrorism 2021: India (CRT) published by the State Department on Monday cite Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Hizbul Mujahideen, ISIS, al-Qa'ida, Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh as terror outfits active in India. "In 2021, terrorism affected the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the northeastern states, and parts of central India," the report said. It added that the terrorist tactics showed a shift toward attacks on civilians and greater reliance on IEDs, including an explosives attack using drones on an air force base.

<https://www.theweek.in/news/world/2023/02/28/india-made-significant-efforts-to-detect-disrupt-terror-outfits-us-report.html>

B. Russia

Russia, China to expand strategic partnership 'having each other's back' – envoy

TASS, February 17, 2023

In 2023, Russia and China will continue strategic interaction and good-neighborly cooperation "having each other's back," Chinese ambassador to Russia Zhang Hanhui said in an interview with TASS. "In the new year, China and Russia will continue to expand their 'back to back' strategic interaction, will continue to promote good-neighborly friendly cooperation," he said. The envoy added that Russia and China will continue joint work to ensure the well-being and prosperity of both countries. According to him, comprehensive cooperation between Beijing and Moscow "will enter a new phase of great development," while the goal to bring the trade turnover between the two countries

to \$200 bln may be achieved ahead of schedule.

<https://tass.com/politics/1577711>

Russia's second Tu-160M strategic bomber sent to flight tests – source

TASS, February 18, 2023

Russia's second Tu-160M strategic bomber has been sent to a flight test facility, while the third one is currently being built, a source in Russia's defense industry has told TASS. "The first plane [of this series] has already performed several flights. The second aircraft has been sent to a flight test facility, while the third Tu-160M is being assembled," the source told TASS on the sidelines of the Aero India 2023 exhibition in Bangalore, India. In late 2022, the first Tupolev Tu-160M strategic missile-carrying bomber built anew completed factory tests. During its test flight, the strategic bomber conducted maneuvers to check the aircraft's stability and control in the air, the working capacity of its airborne systems and engines, and the onboard radio-electronic equipment.

<https://tass.com/russia/1578231>

Russia's military should be ready for nuclear tests, says Putin

TASS, February 21, 2023

Russia's Defense Ministry and the civilian nuclear power corporation Rosatom should prepare for nuclear tests if need be but Moscow won't be the first to carry them out, President Vladimir Putin said in his annual address to the Federal Assembly on Tuesday. The Russian side has "in-depth knowledge" about the United States and knows that the warranty periods of certain types of nuclear weapons are expiring. In this context, "some officials in Washington" are already contemplating "full-scale nuclear weapon tests as the United States is developing new types of nuclear warheads. There is such information," Putin said.

<https://tass.com/russian-president-vladimir-putins-address-to-the-federal-assembly/1579663>

Putin says new ground-based systems were put on combat duty

TASS, February 21, 2023

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that he had signed a week ago a decree on putting new ground-based strategic missile systems on combat duty. “The United States and NATO are directly saying that their goal is to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia. Are they going to inspect our defense facilities, including the newest ones, as if nothing had happened? A week ago, for example, I signed a decree on putting new ground-based strategic missile systems on combat duty,” he said in his State of the Nation Address to the Federal Assembly on Tuesday. “They’re going to stick their nose in there, too,” the president continued, “Do they really think we’re easily going to let them in there just like that?” According to Putin, NATO representatives are now giving Russia an ultimatum to comply with the New START (Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms).

<https://tass.com/politics/1579697>

Blinken says US ready to discuss arms limitations with Russia

TASS, February 21, 2023

The US is still ready to discuss with Russia the issue of strategic arms limitation at any time, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Tuesday. “[The US is] ready to talk about strategic arms limitations at any time with Russia, irrespective of anything else going on in the world or in our relationship,” he told reporters accompanying him on a visit to Athens, according to the New York Times. Blinken said that Russia’s announcement that it was suspending its participation in the Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START) was “deeply unfortunate,” and slammed the decision “irresponsible.” According to Blinken, Washington will be “watching carefully to see what Russia actually does,” ready to ensure the safety of the US and its allies.

<https://tass.com/politics/1579739>

Russia suspends New START to make sure nuclear parity is observed – Kremlin spokesman

TASS, February 21, 2023

Russia has suspended its participation in the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) to make sure that nuclear parity is still observed, Russian presidential press secretary Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday. He stressed that Russia is not withdrawing from the treaty but suspends its participation in it. “It is very important because what the United States and other countries insisted on in terms of inspections is unrealizable amid the current confrontation,” he told the RT television channel. “The key goal of our country’s president is to make sure that this nuclear parity continues to be ensured.” In his State of the Nation Address delivered earlier on Tuesday, Putin announced that Russia is suspending its participation in the New START treaty but is not withdrawing from it.

<https://tass.com/politics/1579973>

Russia to continue to comply with restrictions under New START as long as it is in force

TASS, February 21, 2023

Russia will continue to be committed to the restrictions on strategic offensive weapons under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) as long as it is in force, the Russian foreign ministry said on Tuesday. “In order to maintain a sufficient degree of predictability and stability in the nuclear missile sphere, Russia will stick to the responsible approach and will continue to comply with the quantitative restrictions on strategic offensive weapons as long as the treaty is in force,” it said. The ministry stressed that Russia will continue to exchange notifications with the United States about ballistic missile launches. “The Russian side will continue to exchange notifications with the American side about launches of ICBMs (intercontinental ballistic missiles) and SLBMs (submarine-launched ballistic

missiles) on the basis of the corresponding agreement between the former Soviet Union and the United States of 1998," it said.

<https://tass.com/politics/1579977>

US been violating New START key provisions for years – Russian foreign ministry

TASS, February 22, 2023

The United States have been flagrantly violating key provisions of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) for a long time, the Russian foreign ministry said on Tuesday after Moscow suspended its participation in the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). "The most important thing from the point of view of assessing the situation with the implementation of the New START treaty is the fact that Washington has been grossly violating the treaty's central provisions on qualitative restrictions on the parties' corresponding arms for a long time. It is linked with the illegitimate unilateral refusal to take into account more than 100 strategic offensive weapons, which were renamed by Washington so that they don't fall under the treaty or said to be reequipped. However, Russia was denied a possibility to reliably make sure that the results of such reequipment are in conformity with the New START, i.e. to implement the procedure directly envisaged by the treaty. We have repeatedly pointed to this flagrant violation," it said.

<https://tass.com/politics/1580003>

Decision on resuming Russia's participation in New START to be made by president – draft

TASS, February 22, 2023

The decision on resuming Russia's participation in the treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START) will be made by the president, according to a draft bill submitted by Russian President Vladimir Putin to the Russian parliament's lower chamber on Tuesday. "The decision on resuming Russia's participation in the

treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms is to be made by the president of the Russian Federation," reads the document, uploaded to the State Duma's electronic database on Tuesday. The federal law will come into force after being officially published.

<https://tass.com/politics/1579999>

Russia plans no contact with Western powers on nuclear issues, says senior diplomat

TASS, February 22, 2023

Moscow plans no contact with Washington, London and Paris on nuclear issues, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said on Wednesday. "No communication is planned," the high-ranking Russian diplomat told reporters, replying to a corresponding question. Russian President Vladimir Putin said in his annual address to the Federal Assembly on February 21 that Russia was suspending its participation in the Strategic Offensive Arms Reduction and Limitation Treaty (New START) but was not withdrawing from it. The head of state stressed that before returning to the discussion of the issue of continuing work under the treaty, the Russian side should understand how the New START would take account of the arsenals of not only the United States but also those of other nuclear powers from among NATO members, such as Great Britain and France.

<https://tass.com/politics/1580183>

Russia ready to defend itself with any weapon, including nuclear – Medvedev

TASS, February 22, 2023

The world faces a global conflict if Washington's goal is to defeat Moscow. Russia will defend itself by any means, including with nuclear weapons, Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman

Dmitry Medvedev said. "It is obvious to all the powers that be that if the US wants to defeat Russia, we are heading for a conflict on a global scale. If the US wants to defeat Russia, we have the right to defend ourselves with any weapon, including of the nuclear kind," he wrote on his Telegram channel on Wednesday. Medvedev recalled that the day before, President Vladimir Putin gave his State of the Nation Address to the Federal Assembly which announced, among other things, the suspension of Russia's participation in the Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START, New START). "This decision was long overdue, I pointed to it last year," the politician said.

<https://tass.com/defense/1580211>

Russia to remain compliant with New START to maintain strategic stability – MFA

TASS, February 22, 2023

Moscow will remain compliant with the key quantitative restrictions under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) and the ballistic missile launch notification agreement, which is enough to maintain strategic stability at this point, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov told reporters on Wednesday. "Russia will remain compliant with the key quantitative restrictions under the treaty. This is what the Russian Foreign Ministry announced yesterday. We will also comply with the 1988 Russian-US agreement on mutual notifications of ballistic missile launches. At this point, we believe that this is enough to ensure predictability and maintain strategic stability," he noted.

<https://tass.com/politics/1580221>

Russia's State Duma unanimously passes law suspending participation in New START

TASS, February 22, 2023

Russia's State Duma (the lower house of parliament) has unanimously passed a law suspending the country's participation in the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New

START). According to the document, which was submitted to the State Duma by President Vladimir Putin, Russia suspends its participation in the treaty and the president will make a decision on its resumption. The law will enter into force on the day of its official publication. Putin announced in his State of the Nation Address to the Federal Assembly on Tuesday that Russia was suspending its participation in the New START treaty but was not withdrawing from it.

<https://tass.com/politics/1580295>

Russia not hindering rotation of IAEA experts at Zaporozhye nuke plant – MFA

TASS, February 22, 2023

Russia is not creating any obstacles for the rotation of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts at the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in a statement on Wednesday. "There are and can be no obstacles created by Russia. The continuation of the IAEA mission is fully in line with the interests of Russia, the agency and the entire international community," the statement reads. Zakharova pointed out that between February 7 and 18, the United Nations Department for Safety and Security had on three separate occasions sabotaged the rotation of IAEA experts at the Zaporozhye facility without providing any clear explanations, despite Russia's readiness to ensure the safe movement of IAEA employees.

<https://tass.com/politics/1580311>

Arms production grows for swift supplies to troops – Putin

TASS, February 23, 2023

Troops will receive cutting-edge equipment with the industry swiftly increasing production of the entire range of armaments, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a video address published on the Kremlin website on the occasion of Defender of the Fatherland Day. "We will

continue to supply our troops with the most advanced equipment," Putin said, explaining that this involves new strike systems, reconnaissance and communication means, drones and artillery systems. The Russian leader added that a special emphasis would be made on boosting the country's nuclear potential. He noted that the country's defensive ability would be bolstered based on acquired combat experience.

<https://tass.com/defense/1580709>

Dialogue on New START and Ukraine talks formula: what senior US diplomat told TASS

TASS, February 24, 2023

The United States is prepared for talks on New START with Russia 'tomorrow,' ready for talks on Ukraine only on the basis of formula proposed by Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky and concerned about China's possible military assistance to Russia, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland told TASS Deputy Chief Editor Yulia Sharifulina. During the conversation, held via a video linkup, Nuland was asked to comment on the most pressing issues on the bilateral and international agenda, including Russia's suspension of the New START treaty, the sabotage of Nord Stream pipelines and ways to settle the crisis in Ukraine.

<https://tass.com/world/1581105>

US sees no change in readiness of Russian nuclear forces - White House

TASS, February 24, 2023

The United States sees no change in the readiness of Russian nuclear forces and has made no changes in the readiness of its own forces, US national security adviser Jake Sullivan told CNN in an interview. "We do not see any change in Russia's nuclear posture and we've made no changes in our nuclear posture," Sullivan said when asked if he thought that Russia could use nuclear weapons. "So we are constantly vigilant and

we also maintain regular channels [of communication] to the Russian government to be able to talk to them about the risk of this escalation and also communicate the severity of the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons," Sullivan continued.

<https://tass.com/world/1581107>

US has plan that will remove Russia's concerns under New START - Department of State

TASS, February 28, 2023

The US Administration claims it has developed a technical solution, which will make it possible to remove at least some of Russia's complaint regarding the repurposing of US heavy bombers and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers. "I will say that we had worked out a transparency and confidence building measure with the Russians that only needs an inspection of the SLBM launchers to allow them to confirm that it addresses their concerns," Mallory Stewart, US Assistant Secretary at the Department of State's Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance said during an event at Washington's Brookings Institution, dedicated to Moscow's decision to suspend the New START Treaty.

<https://tass.com/world/1582289>

Kremlin not to revive New START discussions unless Washington takes heed of its concerns

TASS, February 28, 2023

The West should reconsider its attitude to Russia's security concerns for Moscow to resume its participation in New START, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. When asked whether Russia could restore its participation in New START, he said, "Certainly, the conditions should somehow change, and the US-led collective West should somehow change the concept of how they take Russia's concerns over its own security, or how they

understand its idea of integrity.” “That is, the security of one country cannot be provided at the expense of the security of another country,” the Kremlin spokesman told Izvestia in an interview on Tuesday.

<https://tass.com/politics/1582423>

C. Pakistan

Pakistan and IAEA Accelerate Nuclear Cooperation to Address Climate, Food and Health

IAEA, February 16, 2023

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the IAEA will increase collaboration in peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, particularly in agriculture and medicine, to the benefit of the country and its neighbours. That was the outcome of Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi’s two-day trip to Pakistan this week, during which he met with the country’s leadership – including its Prime and Foreign Ministers – and visited numerous nuclear facilities across the country, some of which he inaugurated. Mr Grossi began his visit by meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The two spoke about the worsening effects of climate change on Pakistan and how nuclear science and IAEA support is helping the country. For decades Pakistan has been ranked as one of the 10 most vulnerable countries to climate change, and last summer, was inundated with climate-change linked flooding which caused mass displacement of people and economic damages to the tune of USD 40 billion.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/pakistan-and-iaea-accelerate-nuclear-cooperation-to-address-climate-food-and-health>

IAEA chief sees promising prospects for nuclear energy in Pakistan

Dawn, February 17, 2023

Speaking at a seminar hosted by the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS), Islamabad, on Thursday, the IAEA director

general noted the political will in Pakistan and the country’s technical capacity and nuclear safety record as the reasons for his optimism about the prospects for the expansion of nuclear energy. “There is strong political support for new nuclear power plants in Pakistan,” said Mr Grossi. He observed that Pakistan has a world-class and impeccable nuclear safety record. Moreover, he said, the country has technical and engineering capacity for new nuclear power plants, including small modular reactors (SMRs), which indicated a promising future for nuclear energy and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1737575>

Pakistan, Polish entities ink MoU for supply of defence equipment to Ukraine

The Economic Times, February 17, 2023

Pakistan is in the process of exporting a consignment of Anza Mark-II Man Portable Air Defence Systems to Poland for transporting to Ukraine, ET has learnt. In return, Ukraine promised Pakistan assistance to upgrade its Mi-17 helicopters. Poland is going beyond just being a transit state for transfer of Pakistani arms to Ukraine, with a Polish entity signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with a Pakistani company for supply of defence equipment to Kyiv. Some other Pakistani and Polish companies are also involved in transfer of the equipment, while a Canadian firm is acting as an intermediary.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pakistan-polish-entities-ink-mou-for-supply-of-defence-equipment-to-ukraine/articleshow/97996207.cms>

Putin’s warning forces Pak to clarify Ukraine stance; ‘We’re not helping Kyiv with arms’

Hindustan Times, February 17, 2023

Pakistan has reacted to reports that it is supplying weapons to Ukraine to fight off

Russian aggression. Pak Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in her weekly press briefing that “the reporting about the supply of defence items by Pakistan to Ukraine is not accurate, and Pakistan maintains a policy of non-interference in military conflicts.” Watch this video to know more. #pakistan #ukrainerussiawar #shehbazsharif #reports #weapons #pakforeignoffice #mumtazzahrabaloch #noninterference #militaryconflict #clarification Hindustan Times Videos bring you news, views and explainers about current issues in India and across the globe. We’re always excited to report the news as quickly as possible, use new technological tools to reach you better and tell stories with a 360 degree view to give you a better understanding of the world around you.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/videos/world-news/putins-warning-forces-pak-to-clarify-ukraine-stance-we-re-not-helping-kyiv-with-arms-101676628402025.html>

D. Europe

Belarus does not need strategic nuclear weapons – Lukashenko

TASS, February 16, 2023

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has said that his country does not need strategic nuclear weapons, since it is not going to attack the US or other countries, the BelTA news agency reports. “We do not need strategic weapons absolutely. We are not going to kill Americans or launch strategic nuclear missiles from the territory of Belarus,” Lukashenko told the media on Thursday. He stressed that Belarus was not going to “deal a strike on the US or the European countries.” “As for tactical nuclear weapons on the agenda, it is about reconfiguring aircraft to enable them to carry tactical nuclear weapons (earlier, Lukashenko said some planes of the national air force had been converted to carry nuclear weapons - TASS),” Lukashenko noted. He recalled that when he took over as Belarusian leader, nuclear weapons were withdrawn

from his country in accordance with the United States’ request.

<https://tass.com/world/1577277>

European Joint Research Centre opens its laboratories for training academia and entrepreneurs

EU Neighbours East, February 16, 2023

The European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) is opening its research laboratories and facilities to training and capacity building for people working in academia and research organisations, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the public and private sector in general. The JRC is offering access to its non-nuclear facilities to researchers and scientists from EU Member States and countries associated with the Horizon Europe programme, including Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. For nuclear facilities, the JRC is open to EU Member States and to countries associated with the Euratom Research Programme, including Ukraine. After following a training and capacity building course at the JRC, scientists are more familiar with the JRC laboratories which can improve the suitability of their proposals for the Open Access to Research Infrastructures programme.

<https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/latest-news/european-joint-research-centre-opens-its-laboratories-for-training-academia-and-entrepreneurs/>

EU Commission scratches Russia nuclear sanctions plans

Politico, February 16, 2023

The European Commission has abandoned plans to sanction Russia’s nuclear sector or its representatives in its next sanctions package, three diplomats told POLITICO on Thursday. The EU executive initially told EU countries that it would try to draw up sanctions targeting Russia’s civil nuclear sector. And, ahead of a meeting of EU leaders last week,

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged the bloc at least to issue sanctions against Russian nuclear energy company Rosatom. But that plan has failed, the three diplomats said, pointing to the latest sanctions drafts.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/rosatom-russia-ukraine-volodymyr-zelenskyy-vladimir-putin-eu-executive-scratches-russia-nuclear-sanctions-plans/>

Siemens ready to partake in Paks-2 project, awaiting permit from German authorities

TASS, February 16, 2023

Siemens Energy confirms its contractual obligations to supply technologies and equipment for the Paks-2 nuclear power plant in Hungary and is still awaiting permission from the German authorities to participate in this project. Oliver Sachgau, spokesman for Siemens Energy, announced this as quoted by the Magyar Nemzet newspaper. Sachgau made this statement following reports that the German government is trying to prevent the company from participating in the construction of a new nuclear power plant in Paks. "We are fully committed to the implementation of the contracts that have been in place since 2019 and have submitted an application to the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control for obtaining export licenses necessary to fulfill our obligations under the Paks-2 project," Sachgau said.

<https://tass.com/world/1577445>

Russia to lengthen submarine patrols, says Norwegian intel report

Defense News, February 16, 2023

Russia this year will likely step up its presence in the Barents Sea and the Atlantic Ocean while lengthening its submarine deployments, according to a new Norwegian intelligence report. The Norwegian Intelligence Service released its annual report on Feb. 13, in which it noted that Russia is increasingly turning to its Northern Fleet to provide regional deterrence. "The Northern Fleet's naval

forces will continue to carry out routine fleet exercises, longer submarine patrols in the Barents Sea and submarine operations in the Atlantic Ocean. The supply of new silent multi-role submarines increase the fleet's capacity in the Norwegian Sea and the Atlantic Ocean," the report stated.

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2023/02/16/russia-to-lengthen-submarine-patrols-says-norwegian-intel-report/>

Italy will 'probably' help Ukraine amid risk of Russian nuclear threat

Euractive, February 17, 2023

Italy, while struggling to meet NATO spending requirements, will probably help Kyiv against the risk of Russian nuclear threat as a ceasefire appears very unlikely for now, Defence Minister Guido Crosetto told lawmakers during a hearing Thursday. During a hearing before the Defence and Foreign Affairs Committees of the House and Senate, Crosetto (FDI/ECR) outlined his ministry's policy lines and expressed strong misgivings about the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Ukraine in the short term. "I hope for a ceasefire, which does not mean the war's end. Only after that can reasoning begin," said the minister, who, for now, does not see the necessary conditions to discuss negotiations. "Look at the attacks that are being launched daily by Russia (...) At every meeting, Kyiv asks for reinforcements because, every day, bombs are falling, and there are troops trying to occupy the cities. Every day a siren sounds telling us to go to the shelters," said Crosetto.

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/italy-will-probably-help-ukraine-amid-risk-of-russian-nuclear-threat/>

France mounts 'aggressive' nuclear push with eye on EU industrial plan

Politico, February 17, 2023

With its atomic industry at a crossroads, France is mounting a lobbying blitz to put

nuclear energy on par with renewables in EU climate legislation – and unlock benefits from the bloc’s upcoming plans to boost green industries. Paris argues that if the ultimate goal of the EU’s climate targets is to decarbonize the bloc, that should mean nuclear plants, with their negligible CO2 emissions, have a key role to play alongside renewables. But that push – and attempt to reposition nuclear as a green technology – is also a strategy to strengthen Paris’ hand down the line in accessing cash from the bloc’s upcoming mammoth industrial strategy, six diplomats told POLITICO.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/france-aggressive-nuclear-energy-push-eu-industrial-plan-renewables/>

EDF: French energy giant posts worst-ever results

BBC, February 17, 2023

Energy prices may have jumped to unprecedented highs, but for France’s state-controlled power company EDF 2022 was a miserable year with record annual losses of •17.9bn (£16bn). A price cap on energy for French consumers hit EDF profits hard but so did the enforced closure of many of its of nuclear power stations for repairs. The losses are the third biggest in French corporate history and the worst for more than 20 years. EDF’s debts have spiralled to •64.5bn. On an underlying basis, EDF’s losses came in at •4.99bn. The figure was in marked contrast to EDF’s UK-based business, which made an underlying profit of £1.12bn (•1.26bn) supplying electricity and gas to five million households.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64674131>

Russian nuclear power exports soared to record levels as imports by EU countries climbed in last three years

Firstpost, February 17, 2023

Russian nuclear fuel and technology sales soared last year as imports by EU countries

climbed to the highest in three years, Bloomberg reported on Tuesday, citing data compiled by the UK’s Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). Russia’s customs records show that in 2022 exports of nuclear fuel and technology in the country’s strategic industry surged by over 20 per cent, RT quoted figures sourced from Russia’s customs as saying. Russia’s state nuclear firm Rosatom provides about one-fifth of the enriched uranium needed for the 92 reactors in the US. In Europe, utilities that generate power for 100 million people rely on the company, the record shows. According to the World Nuclear Industry Status Report, of the 53 reactors under construction globally as of mid-2022, 20 were being built by Rosatom, 17 of which are outside Russia. Europe has long been Russia’s largest customer of most energy commodities, especially natural gas.

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/russian-nuclear-power-exports-soared-to-record-levels-as-imports-by-eu-countries-climbed-in-last-three-years-12168872.html>

Russia accuses Kyiv of planning to stage nuclear incident

Reuters, February 19, 2023

Russia said on Sunday that Ukraine was planning to stage a nuclear incident on its territory to pin the blame on Moscow ahead of a United Nations meeting, without providing evidence for the accusation. Since the start of its invasion of Ukraine nearly a year ago, Russia has repeatedly accused Kyiv of planning “false flag” operations with non-conventional weapons, using biological or radioactive materials. No such attack has materialised. Russia’s defence ministry said in a statement that radioactive substances had been transported to Ukraine from a European country and Kyiv was preparing a large-scale “provocation”.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-accuses-kyiv-planning-stage-nuclear-incident-2023-02-19/>

South Korea's ruling party leader hints at need for nuclear weapons

Financial Times, February 20, 2023

The leader of South Korea's ruling party has warned that the country may have to "seriously consider" developing its own nuclear weapons as a deterrent to its northern neighbour in the wake of Pyongyang's latest barrage of missile tests.

Chung Jin Suk, a lawmaker and head of the conservative People Power party, told a party meeting on Monday that South Korea needed to reinforce its ability to deter hostilities from Pyongyang, including by strengthening its "kill chain" pre-emptive strike strategy. "We need to seriously consider developing our own nuclear capabilities if such a response is insufficient," Chung said, according to South Korean state news agency Yonhap. South Korea has grown increasingly anxious about the unrelenting progress of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme.

<https://www.ft.com/content/ef4d3f20-72db-4e0e-82b6-eb36ecfc4c84>

Cost of EDF's new UK nuclear project soars to \$40bln

Zawya, February 20, 2023

EDF's new nuclear plant in southwest England is likely to cost almost 30% more than its last budget estimate as inflation propels the price tag to almost 33 billion pounds (\$40 billion), EDF documents show. Britain plans to build new nuclear plants to boost its energy security and help meet a target for net zero emissions by 2050. EDF warned in a results presentation on Friday the cost of the Hinkley Point C project, Britain's first new nuclear plant in more than two decades, "could reach 32.7 billion pounds" based on inflation indexes as of June 30, 2022. Its previously published cost estimate of 25-26 billion pounds was based on 2015 prices. EDF is building the plant with China's CGN, which has a 33.5% stake in the project.

<https://www.zawya.com/en/world/uk-and-europe/cost-of-edfs-new-uk-nuclear-project-soars-to-40bln-r8a5uxqc>

EU reiterates call on Iran to cooperate with IAEA

Anadolu Agency, February 20, 2023

The European Union has once again urged Iran to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the bloc's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Sunday. Borrell made the appeal during a phone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. "I underlined again the EU's position on Iran's behavior: stop human rights violations, stop support to Russia's war of aggression, and stop unjustified detention of EU citizens," Josep Borrell said on Twitter. Amir-Abdollahian said on Twitter that they discussed Iran-EU ties, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran nuclear deal, Iran-IAEA cooperation, and developments in Ukraine. He added that he "emphasized" that Iran "relies upon its people, and this was proven once again on Feb. 11th this year," referring to the nationwide rallies to mark the 44th anniversary of the 1979 revolution.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/eu-reiterates-call-on-iran-to-cooperate-with-iaea/2825011>

EU climate diplomacy deal on hold as nuclear dispute deepens

Reuters, February 21, 2023

European Union countries failed to adopt conclusions on climate diplomacy that had been planned for Monday, owing to a deepening spat over the role of nuclear energy in the green transition, EU officials said. The upset is the latest development in a dispute between France and other countries who want more EU policies to promote nuclear energy's contribution to cutting CO2 emissions, and those like Germany and Spain who warn this risks distracting from efforts to massively expand renewable energy.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-climate-diplomacy-deal-hold-nuclear-dispute-deepens-2023-02-20/>

Biden Meets East European NATO Allies After Putin's Nuclear Warning

Haaretz, February 22, 2023

U.S. President Joe Biden met leaders of NATO's eastern flank on Wednesday to show support for their security after Moscow suspended a landmark nuclear arms control treaty, which he called a "big mistake". Biden arrived in the Polish capital Warsaw late on Monday after a surprise visit to Kyiv just days ahead of the anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. Amid the highest tension between Russia and the West since the Cold War over three decades ago, Biden addressed thousands in downtown Warsaw on Tuesday and said "autocrats" like Russian President Vladimir Putin must be opposed.

<https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2023-02-22/ty-article/biden-meets-east-european-nato-allies-after-putins-nuclear-warning/00000186-79e3-dfeb-a7e7-7fe7e3a00000>

Ukraine makes last-ditch appeal for EU sanctions to target Russia's nuclear industry

Politico, February 22, 2023

The EU's 10th round of sanctions against Russia must focus on the nuclear industry, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko told POLITICO Wednesday, as the bloc finalizes the package of sanctions that will mark the first anniversary of President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. "We really need to change the narrative on Rosatom and on [the] Russian nuclear industry," Svyrydenko said in an interview in Brussels, where she met EU diplomats putting the finishing touches on measures aimed at putting the brakes on Putin's war machine. Rosatom is a state civil nuclear power company.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/oladimir-putin-volodymyr-zelensky-russia-war-ukraine-in-last-ditch-appeal-for-eu-sanctions-to-target-nuclear-industry/>

EU urges Russia to permit US inspections of its nuclear stockpile under New START

TASS, February 22, 2023

The European Union believes that Russia should comply with its obligations under the New START treaty with the United States on the reduction of strategic offensive arms and permit US inspections envisaged by the document, the EU External Action Service said in a statement.

"The EU calls on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the Treaty by facilitating New START inspections on Russian territory, and participating in the Treaty's implementation body, the Bilateral Consultative Commission within the treaty-established timeframe," the document says.

Last fall, Russia postponed the Bilateral Consultative Commission's meeting indefinitely. Among other things, the commission sets dates for upcoming inspections.

<https://tass.com/world/1580099>

Biden reassures eastern NATO allies on security after Putin's nuclear warning

Reuters, February 23, 2023

U.S. President Joe Biden vowed on Wednesday that "we will defend every inch of NATO" to reassure allies on Europe's eastern flank and described Russia's suspension of a landmark nuclear arms control treaty as a "big mistake". Biden spoke during talks with eastern European NATO allies in the Polish capital Warsaw two days after a surprise visit to Kyiv, ahead of the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/biden-meet-eastern-nato-allies-wake-putins-nuclear-warning-2023-02-22/>

Europe's fusion energy journey

Innovation News Network, February 23, 2023

Massimo Garribba, Deputy Director-General responsible for the co-ordination of EURATOM policies and Directorate-General for Energy, European Commission, details Europe's contribution to fusion energy research and innovation. Fusion, which is the reaction that powers the Sun and all other stars, holds great potential as a future energy source. With the possibility of generating four times more energy per kilogram of fuel than fission (used in nuclear power plants) and nearly four million times more energy than burning oil or coal, fusion is a highly desirable alternative energy source to replace fossil fuels. The process of nuclear fusion also does not emit carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, which is of crucial importance in meeting decarbonisation targets.

<https://www.innovationnewsnetwork.com/europes-fusion-energy-journey/30279/>

Belarus doesn't want war, but ready to defend independence, sovereignty, says Lukashenko

TASS, February 23, 2023

Belarus advocates peaceful solutions, but is ready to defend its sovereignty and independence, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said in an interview with Chinese media on Thursday. "We stand ready to defend the sovereignty and independence of our country. We don't want war. We want peace here," said Lukashenko, as quoted by the BelTA news agency. Lukashenko stated that in recent days they had not spotted any military buildup in Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine that was significant enough to drag Belarus into the war. Lukashenko said that Minsk assessed that fact positively. In the meantime, Belarus is poised to respond to any aggression from outside.

<https://tass.com/world/1580897>

Putin Says Russia Must Take NATO's Nuclear Capability Into Account, Accuses West Of Ukraine War Participation

Radio Free Europe, February 26, 2023

President Vladimir Putin has said that Russia had no choice but to take into account the nuclear capabilities of NATO as the U.S.-led military alliance was seeking the defeat of Russia. He asked "How can we ignore their nuclear capabilities in these conditions?" Putin also accused the West of having "one goal: to disband the former Soviet Union and its fundamental part – the Russian Federation." The NATO and the West dismiss such narrative, saying their objective is to help Ukraine defend itself against an unprovoked attack. Putin also accused NATO members of taking part in the Ukraine conflict by donating arms to the country.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/putin-nato-nuclear-capability-russia-ukraine/32288679.html>

EU energy ministers call for greater cooperation on nuclear

World Nuclear News, February 28, 2023

Energy ministers from 11 EU member states have called for a strengthening of European cooperation in the field of nuclear energy. The call came during an informal Council of Energy Ministers in Stockholm, Sweden, to discuss the energy market and energy supply, focusing on preparations for next winter and beyond. During the 27-28 February meeting, the ministers and high-level representatives of 11 member states - including Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia - met with the European Commission and the Swedish Presidency to jointly reaffirm their desire to strengthen cooperation in nuclear energy.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/EU-energy-ministers-call-for-greater-cooperation-o>

UK and US Energy Secretaries meet as Shapps pledges greater energy independence for the UK

UK Government, February 28, 2023

The UK and US stand united in delivering a cleaner, cheaper and more secure energy future, Energy Security Secretary Grant Shapps and US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said today. For the UK, Grant Shapps pledged this would mean ever greater energy independence - powering Britain from Britain by switching to home-grown sources including nuclear and renewables. Meeting in London for the first time the 2 heads of the UK and US energy departments made clear they stand shoulder to shoulder with President Zelensky and the citizens of Ukraine in their fight against the Russian invasion - the cause of unprecedented global rises in energy prices.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-us-energy-secretaries-meet-as-shapps-pledges-greater-energy-independence-for-the-uk>

Germany, Israel concerned over Iran's 'nuclear escalation,' says German foreign minister

Anadolu Agency, February 28, 2023

Germany and Israel share the concern about Iran's "continued nuclear escalation," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said on Tuesday. Speaking alongside Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen in Berlin, Baerbock accused Iran of threatening stability and security in the Middle East. "We both share the concern about Iran's continued nuclear escalation and the recent reports that Iran has produced very high enriched uranium," Baerbock said. "There is no plausible civilian justification for such a high enrichment level. Iran must not acquire a nuclear bomb. That is our common position, and that is the objective of our diplomatic endeavors," she added. Bloomberg reported last week that international inspectors detected uranium particles enriched up to 84% at Iran's nuclear facilities - just short of weapons-grade levels.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/germany-israel-concerned-over-iran-s-nuclear-escalation-says-german-foreign-minister/2833670>

Contracts awarded to accelerate UK's fusion industry

World Nuclear News, February 28, 2023

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) has awarded contracts worth a total GBP3.1 million (USD3.8 million) to 18 organisations to focus on overcoming specific technical and physical challenges to make fusion energy a commercial reality. The contracts - feasibility studies from GBP50,000 up to GBP200,000 - are funded by the UKAEA's Fusion Industry Programme and awarded through the UK government platform Small Business Research Initiative. The selected projects aim to tackle specific challenges linked to the commercialisation of fusion energy, from novel fusion materials and manufacturing techniques through to innovative heating and cooling systems, all needed for future fusion power plants.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Contracts-awarded-to-accelerate-UK-s-fusion-indust>

E. United States of America

Southern Co boosts cost estimate, delays timing for nuclear reactors

Reuters, February 17, 2023

U.S. energy company Southern Co (SO.N) on Thursday delayed the timing and boosted cost estimates for its Georgia Power utility's share of two nuclear reactors being built in Georgia.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/southern-co-boosts-cost-estimate-delays-timing-nuclear-reactors-2023-02-16/>

Not a shred of Seymour Hersh's report is true: US denies involvement in Nord Stream pipeline burst

Firstpost, February 20, 2023

"Not a shred" of Seymour Hersh's report alleging the US involvement in the Nord Stream gas pipelines explosions is true, said White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby. "It's a

completely false story. There is no truth to it. Not a shred of it. It is not true. The United States, and no proxies of the United States had anything to do with that, nothing," Kirby told *Fox News Sunday* when he was asked about Pulitzer Award-winning investigative journalist and former New Yorker staff writer Seymour Hersh. In a report on 8 February, Hersh cited an anonymous source claiming that the 26 September Nord Stream pipeline bursts were carried out by US Navy divers which they claimed to be a NATO military exercise.

<https://www.firstpost.com/world/not-a-shred-of-seymour-hershs-report-is-true-us-denies-involvement-in-nord-stream-pipeline-burst-12179712.html>

Blinken Says Ball in Iran's Court Over Nuclear Programme

US News, February 21, 2023

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Tuesday it was up to Iran to engage to resolve a deadlock over its nuclear programme, and accused it of enabling Russian aggression in Ukraine. Blinken, who was visiting Athens, said the United States was committed, together with Israel, to ensuring that Tehran "never acquire a nuclear weapon". "That's not exactly news. The president (Joe Biden) has been very clear that every option is on the table to do that," Blinken told a news conference alongside his Greek counterpart, Nikos Dendias. A 2015 agreement limited Iran's uranium enrichment programme to make it harder for Tehran to develop nuclear arms, in return for international sanctions being lifted. Iran consistently denies harbouring any nuclear weapon ambitions.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2023-02-21/blinken-says-ball-in-irans-court-over-nuclear-programme>

US Navy Mideast chief says Iran has 'attention of everyone'

AP News, February 21, 2023

Iranian attacks in the waterways of the Middle East and elsewhere in the region

"have the attention of everyone" as tensions rise over Tehran's advancing nuclear program, the head of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet said Tuesday. Vice Adm. Brad Cooper also told The Associated Press that he's seen a rise in what he described as Iran's "malign activities" in the region over his two years leading the Bahrain-based 5th Fleet. While Cooper pointed to recent seizures of weapons by American and allied forces in the region as a success, he acknowledged that Iran has been able to carry out drone attacks targeting shipping in the Mideast and other assaults in the region. "We're focused on expanding our partnerships," Cooper said on the sidelines of Abu Dhabi's International Defense Exhibition and Conference. "The short answer is the Iranian actions have the attention of everyone."

<https://apnews.com/article/iran-politics-israel-government-us-navy-middle-east-9280885ac038db7bd5794acc840783f3>

Biden rallies behind Kyiv as Putin freezes nuclear deal with US

Aljazeera, February 21, 2023

US President Joe Biden has rallied NATO allies in Poland, proclaiming "unwavering" support for Kyiv as his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin announces suspension of Moscow's role in a nuclear arms treaty with Washington. Fresh from his surprise visit to Ukraine, Biden used Tuesday's trip to garner support for Ukraine as the war enters its second year, with no end in sight. "One year ago, the world was bracing for the fall of Kyiv," Biden said. "I can report: Kyiv stands strong, Kyiv stands proud, it stands tall and, most important, it stands free." Biden spoke after meeting NATO ally and Polish President Andrzej Duda, a vocal proponent of stronger Western support for Kyiv.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/21/biden-rallies-behind-kyiv-as-putin-freezes-nuclear-deal-with-us>

US slams Russia's nuclear arms treaty pullout as 'irresponsible'

Hindustan Times, February 21, 2023

Russia's decision to suspend participation in a nuclear arms control treaty was irresponsible and the United States will watch carefully to see what Moscow actually does, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Tuesday. "The announcement by Russia that it's suspending participation is deeply unfortunate and irresponsible," Blinken told reporters in Athens. "We'll be watching carefully to see what Russia actually does. We'll of course make sure that in any event, we are postured appropriately for the security of our own country and that of our allies." President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday delivered a nuclear warning to the West over Ukraine, suspending a bilateral nuclear arms control treaty, announcing new strategic systems had been put on combat duty and warning that Moscow could resume nuclear tests.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/us-slams-russia-s-nuclear-arms-treaty-pullout-as-irresponsible-101676985017743.html>

Officials Outline Strategy in Nuclear Posture Review

U.S. Department of Defense, February 24, 2023

Richard C. Johnson, deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear and countering weapons of mass destruction policy, and Drew Walter, deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear matters, spoke Feb. 15 at the Nuclear Deterrence Summit, in Arlington, Virginia, about NPR topics. "This NPR recognizes that the international security environment has deteriorated, unfortunately, even since 2018," Johnson said, referring to the year when the last NPR was released. "Obviously, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a stark reminder of nuclear risks in contemporary conflict. And in the meantime, we have the PRC nuclear modernization and expansion, presenting us with new risks and new uncertainties," he

said, referring to the People's Republic of China.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3309790/officials-outline-strategy-in-nuclear-posture-review/>

Putin: will 'take into account' NATO's nuclear capability

AP News, February 27, 2023

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an interview broadcast Sunday that after Russia suspended its participation in the last arms control agreement with Washington, it would "take into account" the nuclear weapons capabilities not only of the United States but of other NATO countries such as France and Britain. Putin had said in a speech suspending Russia's role in the 2010 New START treaty earlier this week that France and Britain, not parties to the agreement, had joined the United States in targeting Russia with nuclear weapons. In an interview with Russian TV that was recorded Wednesday and broadcast Sunday, he said he took the action to "preserve our country, ensure security and strategic stability" and added:

<https://apnews.com/article/putin-nato-politics-russia-government-united-states-0bffeabd258654bed617653ee078ff35>

West Asia

F. Iran

Iran to launch unmanned Qaher warplane in future months

Tehran Times, February 19, 2023

The indigenous Qaher single-seat unmanned stealth fighter will be unveiled by the Iran Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO) in the upcoming solar year, which starts on March 21. Talking to TV, Brigadier General Afshin Khajefard revealed on Saturday that the IAIO produced the fighter jet and the concept was initially discussed in the media ten years ago. He went on to say that the Qaher project has attained

complete technological maturity, but the IAIO is creating a wider number of products. It indicates that new variants of this aircraft will be handed to the armed forces by the middle of next calendar year, he stated. In the future, the Qaher project will produce an unmanned aircraft. Khajefard further stressed that despite sanctions, Iran is able to manufacture parts and refurbish commercial airplanes on its own.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482092/Iran-to-launch-unmanned-Qaher-warplane-in-future-months>

Iran Categorically Denies Enriching Uranium to 84%

Fars News Agency, February 20, 2023

Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi dismissed a report claiming that Tehran has enriched uranium to 84 percent purity level, and underlined that his country has never enriched uranium above 60% purity. Kamalvandi made the remarks in reaction to a report by Bloomberg that claimed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is trying to clarify how "Iran accumulated uranium enriched to 84% purity". It added that the IAEA inspectors had found highly-enriched uranium particles "within the network of pipes connecting centrifuges used to separate uranium isotopes". The Iranian official told FNA on Sunday that the Bloomberg's report was aimed at distorting the realities.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011201000107/Iran-Categorically-Denies-Enriching-Uranium-to-84>

Nuclear Chief: IAEA Team in Iran for Inspection, Talks

Fars News Agency, February 22, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said on Wednesday that International Atomic Energy Agency officials have visited Tehran to hold talks and conduct inspections to resolve ambiguities caused by the incorrect interpretation of an IAEA inspector over an alleged undeclared change to uranium

enriching equipment at Fordow. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the cabinet session on Wednesday, Eslami said that the nuclear watchdog's team is currently visiting Iran's nuclear facilities and that the recent points of ambiguity with the UN nuclear body have either been or are being resolved. "Those ambiguities were caused by the misunderstanding of an IAEA inspector who had earlier visited Iran. We always avoid creating new ambiguity in our cooperation with the IAEA through interaction and coordination," he stated.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011203000729/Nuclear-Chief-IAEA-Team-in-Iran-for-Inspection-Talks>

Nuclear Chief: IAEA Left with No Excuse for Adoption of Anti-Iran Resolution

Fars News Agency, February 23, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said on Thursday that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will not have any excuse to issue another resolution against his country's peaceful nuclear program. Eslami was asked by reporters on the possibility of the adoption of an anti-Iran resolution at the upcoming quarterly meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, which will begin next Monday. "We do not give any excuse to them" to adopt an anti-Tehran resolution at the IAEA BoG, the nuclear chief said. Back in mid-November, the IAEA passed a resolution called on Iran to cooperate with an investigation into alleged traces of uranium found at three nuclear sites. The resolution criticized Tehran for what it called a lack of cooperation with the nuclear agency.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011204000370/Nuclear-Chief-IAEA-Left-with-No-Excuse-for-Adoption-of-Anti-Iran-Resolution>

Iraq defense minister in Tehran for military talks

Tehran Times, February 25, 2023

Iraqi Defense Minister Thabet Muhammad Saeed Al Abbas landed in Tehran on

Saturday afternoon for strengthening military cooperation between Baghdad and Tehran. Thabet Muhammad Saeed Al Abbasi was welcomed by his Iranian counterpart Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Gharaei Ashtiani. The visit by the Iraqi defense chief followed a few days after the Iranian foreign minister visited Baghdad for talks with the country's senior officials.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482317/Iraq-defense-minister-in-Tehran-for-military-talks>

AEOI Head: Iran Constructing 2,000 MW Nuclear Power Plant

Fars News Agency, February 25, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said that his country has started building of a nuclear power plant in Khuzestan province to generate 2,000 megawatts of electricity. Eslami said on Friday that the Karun nuclear power plant in Darkhovein District in the Shadegan County of the Southwestern province of Khuzestan will generate 300 megawatts of electricity in the preliminary phase. He added the AEOI will simultaneously follow other phases with the purpose of making utmost use of the capacity made in Darkhovein District. "Enemies tried to break our will through sanctions and did not cooperate with us regarding the construction of nuclear power plant even after many years," the nuclear chief stated. However, he noted, the organization developed the project by relying on domestic capabilities.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011206000353/AEOI-Head-Iran-Cnsrting-2-000-MW-Nclear-Pwer-Plan>

Iran to possibly provide Syria with indigenous air defense system

Tehran Times, February 25, 2023

Iranian and Syrian military authorities have agreed to deploy missile systems to Damascus in order to strengthen the Arab nation's air defenses in the face of an upsurge in Israeli airstrikes. The IRIB News said in a

report on Thursday night that Iran and Syria had agreed to the transfer of equipment for electronic and air defenses. There is no further information on the terms and conditions of the agreement. It was finalized during a recent trip to Iran by senior military figures from Syria, including Lieutenant General Ali Mahmoud Abbas, the Defense Minister. The report showed that as a result of decades of struggle with terrorism, "Syria needed to restore the infrastructure of its air defenses and also required precise bombs for its warplanes."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482320/Iran-to-possibly-provide-Syria-with-indigenous-air-defense-system>

IRGC unveils new long-range missile, warns Europe

Tehran Times, February 25, 2023

A senior Iranian official said Saturday that the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has added a new long-range cruise missile to its missile arsenal. IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said the new cruise missile, dubbed Paveh, has a range of 1,650 kilometers, according to a Tasnim report. General Hajizadeh also issued a warning to Europe about the range of Iranian missiles. He said Iran has missiles whose range is 2,000 km. "We can hit American warships within a range of 2,000 km and we kept this range out of respect for Europe, which we hope will avoid disrespecting [Iran]," he said. Paveh, which has gone into operation recently, is named in remembrance of the Iranian forces martyred in Kurdistan province, he stated. The commander noted that all of Iran's missiles are now manufactured with pinpoint accuracy, adding that all American bases in the region are within reach of the Iranian missiles.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482328/IRGC-unveils-new-long-range-missile-warns-Europe>

AEOI Chief: Iran Exporting Nuclear Products, Radiopharmaceuticals

Fars News Agency, February 26, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami hailed the country's astonishing progress in nuclear medicine technologies, and said various types of high-tech products are exported to other states, including radiopharmaceuticals. Eslami made the remarks at the 29th Iranian Nuclear Conference in Tehran on Sunday, noting that exporting nuclear products manufactured by Iranian experts is quite possible. "Some objectives and programs have been prepared in the nuclear industry," the official stated, urging universities to coordinate with the AEOI in a bid to pave the way for the development of the field and the promotion of technology.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011207000544/AEOI-Chief-Iran-Exporting-Nuclear-Prdcs-Radiopharmaceutics>

Iran ready to help Iraq to become self-sufficient in defense industry

Tehran Times, February 26, 2023

Iranian Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Gharaei Ashtiani said on Sunday that the Islamic Republic is ready to share its experiences with Iraq in achieving self-sufficiency in military industry.

Brigadier General Ashtiani made the remarks during a meeting with Iraqi Defense Minister Thabet Muhammad Saeed Al Abbas at the Iranian Defense Ministry building. Ashtiani added, "The Ministry of Defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran is on your side with all its might." It is the first visit by the Iraqi defense minister to Iran after the formation of the new government in Baghdad. He visited Iran late on Saturday. The Iranian defense minister said friendship between Iran and Iraq are backed by affinities that exists between the two nations.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482363/Iran-ready-to-help-Iraq-to-become-self-sufficient-in-defense>

Army, IRGC launch joint aerial drills

Tehran Times, February 26, 2023

The Iranian Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) held a joint aerial drill all over Iran. According to the Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base - the main office of Iran's Air Defense - the Army's Air Defense and the IRGC troops participated in the wargame that got underway on Saturday night. The exercises serve as a warning to the Islamic Republic's adversaries against any possible assault. The purpose of the exercise was to evaluate the performance and readiness of the armed forces' air defense systems. The Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base added the drill was conducted in collaboration with Iran's integrated air defense network and took place at night in several regions in the country. In October 2021, the Army's and the IRGC's air defense divisions participated in a massive exercise known as "Modafean Aseman Velayat 1400" (Guardians of "Velayat" Sky 1400), which involved air defense units and domestically built military weaponry.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482357/Army-IRGC-launch-joint-aerial-drills>

AEOI Spokesman: IAEA Chief to Visit Iran within Days

Fars News Agency, February 27, 2023

Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi said that his country and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have agreed on a visit to Tehran by IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi, and expressed hope that both sides would be able to reach an understanding to resolve technical issues. Kamalvandi stated on Monday that Grossi would travel to Iran "in the coming days" following an official invitation from AEOI Head Mohammad Eslami. "In recent days, we have had constructive and promising discussions" with the IAEA delegation, led by IAEA

Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Safeguards Massimo Aparo, the spokesperson added.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011208000877/AEOI-Spkesman-IAEA-Chief-Visi-Iran-wihin-Days>

G. Israel

How Israel's HevenDrones latest hydrogen-powered drone can help UAE

Al-Monitor, February 16, 2023

Israeli technology company HevenDrones announced that it will unveil its hydrogen-powered drone for defense and commercial use at the upcoming International Defense Exhibition and Conference (IDEX) next week in Abu Dhabi. The new H2D55 model is said to be five times more energy efficient than traditional lithium battery-powered drones, and fly for 100 minutes carrying seven kilograms, according to a press release on Tuesday. The company says the net-zero-emission lightweight drone does not need regular battery replacements, eliminating the environmental impact of mining lithium, and also reducing ownership costs for companies planning to use it at scale.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/02/how-israels-hevendrones-latest-hydrogen-powered-drone-can-help-uae>

IAI & Bharat Electronics Limited to enhance India Defense Forces products

Israel Defense, February 16, 2023

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a leading manufacturer of defence electronic products and systems for India's defense sector, have concluded the agreements to form a joint venture that will extend product support services for India's Defence Forces. The announcement was made by Honourable Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri. Ajay Bhat during the Aero India 2023 being held at Bengaluru. An agreement was signed by BEL and IAI in this regard on

February 14 in Aero India in Bengaluru, India .

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57285>

Steadicopter, BIRD Aerosystems reveal new capability for the Black Eagle 50H

Israel Defense, February 19, 2023

Rotary Unmanned Aerial Systems (RUAS) developer Steadicopter, and BIRD Aerosystems, a global provider of innovative defense technology, are unveiling the BlackEagle 50H (BE50H) – an advanced hybrid unmanned helicopter, featuring a miniature airborne radar with advanced proprietary technology, for use in maritime intelligence missions, at IDEX 2023. Advanced capabilities for long endurance of up to five hours, together with BIRD Aerosystems' μMPR capabilities for the detection and tracking of maritime vessels, enable the BE50H to carry out accurate mapping of all vessels within a radius of 200 km within a few hours, in harsh environmental conditions, day or night.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57298>

Iran in discussions to sell advanced weapons to at least 50 countries, says Israeli DM

Israel Defense, February 19, 2023

"Iran is no longer a 'local supplier,' serving proxies in the Middle East. It is a 'multinational corporation,' a global exporter of advanced weapons," said Israeli Minister of Defense, Yoav Gallant, who spoke on Friday at the annual Munich Security Conference. "From Belarus in Eastern Europe, to Venezuela in South America – we have seen Iran delivering UAVs with a range of up to 1000 kilometers. In fact, Iran is currently holding discussions to sell advanced weapons, including UAVs and PGMs, to no less than 50 different countries."

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57301>

US, Israeli governments issue joint call for innovative homeland security technology

Israel Defense, February 20, 2023

The Israel-U.S. Binational Industrial Research and Development (BIRD) Foundation has issued a Call for Proposals to U.S. and Israeli entities in the Homeland Security sector, to submit joint proposals for the development of advanced Homeland Security technologies. An approved project can receive up to \$1 million in grants, covering up to 50% of its budget. The BIRD HLS program is co-funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) and the Israel Ministry of National Security (IMNS). The program is managed by the BIRD Foundation and focuses on innovative technology solutions to support first responder and homeland security needs shared by both countries.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57316>

Israel, UAE jointly present new marine system

Israel Defense, February 21, 2023

Israel and the United Arab Emirates participated in a joint unmanned maritime demonstration where they performed a range of military and commercial missions. EDGE, ADSB and IAI held the joint demonstration at NAVDEX exhibition in Abu Dhabi. The jointly-produced autonomous vessel is fitted with sensors, sonar, and imaging systems integrated into a partially or entirely remotely-operated unified command & control system, which does not require human intervention. The new system is being presented a year after a commercial cooperation agreement was signed between the companies, under which EDGE, and ADSB (Abu Dhabi Ship Building) the region's leading shipyard, would use their capabilities in design, production, maintenance, adaptation, and conversion of commercial and other vessels.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57329>

IDEX: BIRD Aerosystems to present airborne mission protection systems

Israel Defense, February 21, 2023

BIRD Aerosystems, a provider of defense technology and solutions that protect fleets, armored vehicles, and ground assets of governments and related agencies, will present its AMPS airborne missile protection systems at the IDEX International Defense Exhibition in Abu Dhabi. Operationally deployed in dangerous conflict areas worldwide, BIRD's AMPS Airborne Missile Protection System provides the most enhanced protection for military and civilian aircraft against the growing threat of ground-to-air missiles (MANPADS). The system is designed to automatically detect, verify, and foil SAM attacks through the effective use of Directional Infrared Countermeasures (DIRCM) that jam the missile's IR seeker and protect the aircraft.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57330>

NASA to launch Israel's first space telescope mission

Israel Defense, February 22, 2023

NASA will launch Israel's first space telescope - the Ultraviolet Transient Astronomy Satellite, or ULTRASAT - into high-Earth orbit in early 2026, as part of a newly signed partnership between United States' NASA and Israel's Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology.

ULTRASAT, a premier project of the Israel Space Agency in the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology and the Weizmann Institute of Science, is expected to revolutionize scientists' ability to detect and analyze transient events in the universe, such as neutron star mergers and supernova explosions.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57350>

Israeli Air Force strikes Hamas military compound following rocket fire from Gaza

Israel Defense, February 23, 2023

Six rockets were fired overnight, around 04:00 AM, from the Gaza Strip to Israeli territory. In response, IAF fighter jets struck both a weapons manufacturing site and military compound belonging to the Hamas Terrorist Organization, located in central and northern Gaza. The compound is located adjacent to a mosque, medical clinic, hotel, police station and school. In a statement, the IDF said that “this serves as further evidence as to how the Hamas Terrorist Organization exploits the civilian population of Gaza by deliberately placing its weaponry in the center of civilian area.” Out of the six rockets fired, five were intercepted by the IDF Aerial Defense Array, and one rocket fell in an open area.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57361>

Israel steps up military planning against Iran’s nuclear program

Al-Monitor, February 24, 2023

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant agreed on Wednesday night on a multiyear defense budget, a large portion of which will be dedicated to preparations for a potential strike against Iran’s nuclear program. Indeed, reports confirm that Israel is stepping up its preparations to attack Iran’s military nuclear infrastructure. Since Netanyahu returned to power in late December, this possibility is being discussed on a practical level, reflecting the coveted goal of his career. As things look now, the question is not really whether Israel will attack Iran, but when it will do so and whether it will go it alone or with US logistical, political and perhaps even “kinetic” backing.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/02/israel-steps-military-planning-against-irans-nuclear-program>

Poland to procure hundreds of Rafael’s Spike anti-tank guided missiles systems

Israel Defense, February 28, 2023

Poland plans to order more than a thousand Borsuk infantry fighting vehicles from domestic tank builder Hutê Stalowa Wola (HSW) in the near future, equipped with Israeli Rafael’s Spike LR anti-tank guided missiles. Experts estimate that the procurement volume will exceed ten billion euros. Series production could begin at the turn of the year 2023/2024. German website Soldat & Technik reports that after eight years of development, the New Infantry Amphibious Fighting Vehicle (NBWP) Borsuk is currently undergoing final qualification tests in the armed forces, which are expected to be completed later this year.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57395>

H. East Asia

South Korea and U.S. to hold nuclear drills amid growing threats from North

The Japan Times, February 17, 2023

South Korea and the United States will stage tabletop exercises in Washington next week to improve operations of American nuclear assets as part of efforts to better counter North Korea’s threats, Seoul’s defense ministry said on Friday. Nuclear-armed North Korea fired an unprecedented number of missiles last year, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that could strike anywhere in the United States, while resuming preparations for its first nuclear test since 2017. The drills, called the Deterrence Strategy Committee Tabletop Exercise, are scheduled for Feb. 22 at the Pentagon and will involve senior defense policymakers from both sides, the ministry said. It would be their first such exercises since the two countries agreed last year to hold them annually, as Seoul seeks to bolster confidence in American extended

deterrence — its military capability, especially nuclear forces, to deter attacks on its allies.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/02/17/asia-pacific/us-south-korea-nuclear-drills/>

North Korea fires unspecified ballistic missile, lands in Japan's exclusive economic zone

South China Morning Post, February 18, 2023

North Korea fired at least one unspecified ballistic missile on Saturday, South Korea's military said, Pyongyang's first test since the start of the year that comes days before Seoul and Washington are due to start joint tabletop exercises. The suspected ballistic missile is believed to have landed within Japan's exclusive economic zone, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said. "It appears the ballistic missile fired by North Korea landed within Japan's EEZ, west of Hokkaido," Kishida told reporters, after a Japanese defence official said the missile was expected to land around 200 kilometres (125 miles) west of Oshima island in northern Japan's Hokkaido. "North Korea fired an unidentified ballistic missile into [the] East Sea," South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said earlier.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/east-asia/article/3210698/n-korea-fires-unspecified-ballistic-missile-seoul-says>

North Korea fires missile as US, S. Korea prepare for drills

ABC News, February 18, 2023

North Korea on Saturday fired a long-range missile from its capital into the sea off Japan, according to its neighbors, a day after it threatened to take strong measures against South Korea and the U.S. over their joint military exercises. According to the South Korean and Japanese militaries, the missile was fired on a high angle, apparently to avoid reaching the neighbors' territories, and traveled about 900 kilometers (560 miles) at a maximum altitude of 5,700 kilometers (3,500 miles) during an hourlong flight. The details were

similar to North Korea's Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile test flight in November, which experts said demonstrated potential to reach the U.S. mainland if fired on a normal trajectory. Japanese government spokesperson Hirokazu Matsuno said no damage was reported from the missile, which landed within Japan's exclusive economic zone, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) west of Oshima island. Oshima lies off the western coast of the northernmost main island of Hokkaido.

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/south-korea-north-korea-fired-missile-sea-97305430>

Tensions simmer on peninsula after North Korean missile launch, allies' drills

Asia News Network, February 20, 2023

South Korea and the US staged combined air drills Sunday, a day after North Korea aggravated inter-Korean tensions by firing an intercontinental ballistic missile that South Korea believes could reach anywhere in the continental United States. The launch came ahead of the first Seoul-Washington nuclear drills scheduled for this week and their annual field exercises for next month — both of which are intended to help deal with Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. The Hwasong-15 launch, the first ICBM firing since November last year when the North's most advanced Hwasong-17 was revealed, demonstrated a "fatal nuclear counterattack" amid "relentless efforts" for a bigger nuclear arsenal, the official Korean Central News Agency said.

<https://asianews.network/tensions-simmer-on-peninsula-after-north-korean-missile-launch-allies-drills/>

North Korea Launches More Missiles, Calls Pacific 'Our Firing Range'

VOA, February 20, 2023

North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles Monday morning in what it

quickly made clear was retaliation for the United States' joint aerial drills with South Korea involving a pair of B-1B strategic bombers and F-35 stealth fighters less than a day before. A markedly speedy statement on the official Korean Central News Agency said a multiple rocket launching drill from the western front had aimed two 600-millimeter rockets at targets 395 kilometers and 337 kilometers to the east. The statement boasted that just four rounds of the rockets, which it characterized as able to deliver a tactical nuclear weapon, could devastate an airfield. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected two short-range ballistic missiles fired between 7 a.m. and 7:11 a.m. from North Korea's Sukchon area, north of the capital Pyongyang, into waters east of the Korean Peninsula.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/north-korea-fires-more-ballistic-missiles/6970219.html>

North Korea's nuclear programme 'could be radiating tens of thousands through groundwater'

Independent, February 21, 2023

South Korea, Japan, and China have been urged to conduct radiation exposure tests to hundreds of North Korean escapees or defectors who had lived near the regime's nuclear research facility. Tests conducted on 40 people in 2017 and 2018 found at least nine of them had abnormalities that could indicate high radiation exposure, but Seoul's Unification Ministry said a conclusive link to Pyongyang's nuclear activity could not be established and other factors were possible, such as age, smoking habits or other types of chemical exposure.

A damning report published on Tuesday by the Transitional Justice Working Group, a Seoul-based human rights organisation, said six nuclear detonations in the regime's Punggye-ri facility could have spread radioactive materials by water within 24.8 miles. Tens of thousands of people in North Korea, South Korea, Japan and China could be exposed to radioactive materials spread through groundwater, it said.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/east-asia/north-korea-nuclear-test-radioactive-radiations-china-b2286364.html>

Nuclear submarine plan shows

fragility of nascent China-Australia reset

The Japan Times, February 21, 2023

Ties between Australia and China have improved faster than many expected since Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese took power last year. Beijing's reaction to Canberra's plans for a new submarine may show whether that goodwill can last. Albanese is expected to travel to Washington in mid-March to unveil the design for a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines to be built with help from the U.S. and U.K. The joint announcement with U.S. President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak would represent a key milestone in the 18-month-old AUKUS partnership, intended to counter growing Chinese naval might in the Asia-Pacific region.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/02/21/world/politics-diplomacy-world/nuclear-submarine-china-australia-reset/>

North Korea test-fires cruise missiles to demonstrate nuclear counter-attack ability

The Straits Times, February 24, 2023

North Korea test-fired four strategic cruise missiles during a drill designed to demonstrate its ability to conduct a nuclear counter-attack against hostile forces, its state media said on Friday. The exercise on Thursday involved an apparently operational strategic cruise missile unit of the Korean People's Army, which fired the four Hwasal-2 missiles in the area of Kim Chaek City, North Hamgyong province, towards the sea off the east coast of the Korean peninsula, state news agency KCNA said. Other units conducted firepower training at hardened sites without live firing, it added. The four strategic cruise missiles hit a preset target after travelling the "2000km-long elliptical and eight-shaped flight orbits for 10,208 seconds to 10,224 seconds", the report said.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/north-korea-test-fires-four-strategic-cruise-missiles-state-media>

8th U.S.-ROK Deterrence Strategy Committee Table-Top Exercise - Joint Press Release

U.S. Department of Defense, February 23, 2023

The United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) conducted the 8th U.S-ROK Deterrence Strategy Committee Table-Top Exercise (DSC TTX), February 22, 2023 at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Following the TTX, the ROK and U.S. delegations visited the Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in Georgia, February 23, 2023. During the 54th U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting, November 3, 2022, the ROK Minister of National Defense and the U.S. Secretary of Defense pledged to conduct a DSC TTX annually. This TTX is the first to be conducted during the administration of ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol. Heo Taekeun, ROK Deputy Minister of Defense Policy, headed the ROK delegation and Dr. Siddharth Mohandas, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia, and Richard C. Johnson, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Policy, headed the U.S. delegation as co-chairs.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3308356/8th-us-rok-deterrence-strategy-committee-table-top-exercise-joint-press-release/>

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 :

Mr. Kushal Agrawal

Mr. Niranjana Oak

Mr. Aasi Ansari

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