

Nuclear, Missile & Space Digest

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A Fortnightly Newsletter from the Indian Pugwash Society

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M. North Korea

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- DPRK threatens US, South Korea with nuclear weapons in response to 'military provocations'
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- Joint Press Statement for the 22nd Korea-U.S. Integrated Defense Dialogue

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- How Australia helped the US keep tabs on its nuclear rivals through a secret balloon program
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P. Miscellaneous

- IAEA Reviews Progress of Kazakhstan's Nuclear Infrastructure Development

A. India

Aatmanirbharta on the rise: Defence exports reach an all-time high of approx. Rs 16,000 crore in Financial Year 2022-23; Over 10-times increase since 2016-17; India exporting to over 85 countries

PIB, April 1, 2023

Through consistent policy initiatives of the Government and tremendous contribution of the defence industry, India has achieved a remarkable milestone in defence exports in Financial Year 2022-23. The exports have reached an all-time high of approx. Rs 16,000 crore, almost Rs 3,000 crore more than the previous financial year. It a rise of over 10 times since 2016-17. India is now exporting to over 85 countries. Indian industry has shown its capability of design and development to the world, with 100 firms exporting defence products at present. The rising defence exports and participation of 104 countries in Aero India 2023 are proof of India's growing defence manufacturing capabilities.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1912885>

Dr. Jitendra Singh informs that during 2021-22, nuclear power reactors generated 47,112 Million Units of electricity, which comprises about 3.15% of the total electricity generated in the country

PIB, April 5, 2023

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today informed that During 2021-22 nuclear power reactors generated 47112 Million Units of electricity, which comprises about 3.15% of the total electricity generated in the country. In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha today, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the present installed nuclear power capacity is set to increase

from 6780 MW to 22480 MW by 2031 on progressive completion of projects under construction and accorded sanction. The Government has also accorded 'in principle' approval for new sites to set up nuclear reactors in future.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1913892>

The Government today informed that it has given bulk approval for the installation of ten nuclear reactors.

PIB, April 5, 2023

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today informed the Rajya Sabha that National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) have jointly manufactured an earth science satellite named, NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar). The Government today informed that it has given bulk approval for the installation of ten nuclear reactors. In a statement laid on the floor of the floor of the Lok Sabha, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today said, the Government has roped in PSUs for the installation of the nuclear reactors or the exercise would be done exclusively by the specialized Government agencies.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1913854>

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh says, presently FDI in space sector is allowed up to 100% in the area of Satellites-Establishment and Operations through Government route only

PIB, April 6, 2023

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public

Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh said, presently FDI in space sector is allowed up to 100% in the area of Satellites-Establishment and Operations through Government route only. In a statement laid on the table of the Rajya Sabha, Dr Jitendra Singh said, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) being the regulatory and promotional body for space activities was involved in revision of FDI policy which is presently under consideration of the Government.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1914226>

Major findings of research Institutes under DAE

PIB, April 6, 2023

Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and its R&D units have multi-disciplinary Nuclear Research Centres with excellent infrastructure for advanced Research and Development with expertise covering the entire spectrum of Nuclear Science, Engineering and related areas. A large amount of work involves design, development and deployment of various advanced technologies, operation and maintenance of nuclear facilities resulting in tangible benefits for common man and the nation. The areas of Research and development include Physical sciences, Chemical sciences, Bio- sciences, Agriculture, Food Preservation, Water Desalination and Water Purification, Nuclear Reactor Technologies, Reprocessing and Waste Management, etc.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1914303>

Mining of Rare Earth Elements

PIB, April 6, 2023

The Rare Earth (RE) resources in India are reported to be the fifth largest in the world. Indian resource is significantly lean w.r.t. grade and it is tied with radioactivity making the extraction long, complex and expensive. Further, Indian resource contain Light Rare Earth Elements (LREE) while

Heavy Rare Earth Elements (HREE) are not available in extractable quantities. In case of rare earths, a long drawn ecosystem in value chain is required to move from reserves to finished product comprising of large number of processes/plants. This includes obtaining statutory clearances, mining, mineral beneficiation, RE extraction, separation, refining in oxides, metal extraction, alloy making.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1914305>

China's Sri Lanka radar plan likely to threaten India's strategic assets

Economic Times, April 7, 2023

China is considering setting up a radar base in Sri Lanka to monitor India's presence in the Indian Ocean Region and the activities of the Indian Navy, besides strategic assets in the Southern part of the country, including Kudankulam and Kalpakkam nuclear power plants. The proposed radar will also be able to track US military activities in Diego Garcia. The Aerospace Information Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences could be involved in this project in the jungles near Dondra Bay of Sri Lanka, ET has learnt.

<https://m.economictimes.com/news/defence/chinas-sri-lanka-radar-plan-likely-to-threaten-indias-strategic-assets/articleshow/99305829.cms>

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh says, nearly 9% share of electricity likely to be contributed from India's nuclear sources by the year 2047

PIB, April 9, 2023

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today said that nearly 9% share of electricity is likely to be contributed from India's nuclear sources by the year 2047 when India celebrates 100 years of independence and that this would help in getting closer with the commitment of

achieving net zero target by 2070. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh made these remarks after holding a review meeting with a group of senior scientists from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Department of Atomic Energy, at Mumbai.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1915070>

Important to have India on board: Ukraine's First Deputy Foreign Minister

Economic Times, April 10, 2023

Ukraine's First Deputy Foreign Minister Emine Dzhaparova has invited India to join President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's peace initiative and grain programme. Describing India as a leader and participant in global challenges, she asked that India be involved in economic, energy, and nuclear challenges as a leader of the G20 presidency. She did not try to influence India's energy ties with Russia.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/important-to-have-india-on-board-ukraines-first-deputy-foreign-minister/articleshow/99386442.cms>

US' B-1B bombers coming to India for joint exercise

Economic Times, April 10, 2023

US nuclear capable heavy bombers, including two B-1Bs, are heading to India to participate in the Cope India exercise. The drill will include four to six American F-15E fighter jets and will focus on air mobility. Indian forces will be providing Su 30MKI fighter jets, the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) and a number of transport aircraft and helicopters. In a first, American nuclear capable heavy bombers are arriving in India for an exercise to enhance interoperability and jointness, even as New Delhi's relations with China remain tense, both on the diplomatic and military fronts. A senior US Air Force officer said two of the B-1B heavy bombers are taking part in Cope India – a large-scale Air Force drill that will also include four to six American F-15E fighter jets. The exercise has already kicked off in

Kalaikunda with transport aircraft and the bombers and fighters are expected to arrive by this week-end.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/two-b1-heavy-bomber-jets-of-us-to-join-exercise-in-india-for-first-time/articleshow/99386977.cms?from=mdr>

B. Russia

China calls for non-deployment of nuclear weapons beyond national borders - diplomat

TASS, April 1, 2023

China calls upon the nuclear powers not to deploy nuclear weapons abroad and urges them to withdraw their nuclear weapons already stationed in foreign countries, China's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geng Shuang, said on Friday at a UN Security Council session. "We also stand for the cancellation of the nuclear sharing agreements (on US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe - TASS). We stand for the non-deployment of nuclear weapons abroad by any nuclear power whatsoever," the diplomat said. "In addition, we stand for the withdrawal of nuclear weapons stationed in other countries." According to Geng, certain assurances are necessary to maintain global stability.

<https://tass.com/world/1597941>

Situation in Energodar 'quiet and calm' after IAEA chief Grossi's visit, says politician

TASS, April 1, 2023

The Ukrainian military is not shelling Energodar and after the second visit of IAEA (the International Atomic Energy Agency) Director General Rafael Grossi the situation is quiet and calm, Vladimir Rogov, chairman of the We Are Together With Russia civil society group, told TASS. "The situation has not changed, thank God, quiet and calm," Rogov said in response to a question about the situation in Energodar following Grossi's visit.

According to him, over the past week the shelling was registered in the vicinities of populated areas of Tokmak, Molchansk, Vesyoly and Melitopol. "The intensity is medium, the shelling continues," Rogov added.

<https://tass.com/politics/1597971>

Submarine force armed with Poseidon torpedoes to come into operation in Kamchatka in 2025

TASS, April 3, 2023

A division of special-purpose submarines armed with Poseidon nuclear-capable torpedoes is due to come into operation in the Russian Pacific Fleet by early 2025, a source close to the Defense Ministry told TASS on Monday. "The decision on setting up a division of nuclear-powered submarines in Kamchatka has been made. This will take place in December 2024 or in the first half of 2025," the source said.

TASS has no official confirmation of this information yet. TASS earlier reported that the construction of coastal infrastructure facilities for a new naval base to accommodate the Belgorod and Khabarovsk special-purpose nuclear-powered submarines carrying Poseidon nuclear-capable super-torpedoes would be completed early next year.

<https://tass.com/defense/1598329>

Russian forces down kamikaze drone near Zaporozhye NPP – politician

TASS, April 5, 2023

Russian forces downed a Ukrainian kamikaze drone aiming at a target somewhere on the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant territory, Vladimir Rogov, the chairman of the We Are Together with Russia movement, reported.

"A Polish-made Warmate kamikaze drone belonging to [Ukrainian President Vladimir] Zelensky was downed in Energodar with the help of electronic warfare means. According to preliminary information, its

target was a Zaporozhye NPP facility. The drone, which was on its way to Europe's largest nuclear power plant, fell several meters from the nuclear facility," he said on his Telegram channel.

<https://tass.com/defense/1599583>

North Korea may test fire new solid-fuel IBM in response to US drills, expert warns

TASS, April 5, 2023

North Korea is ready to test fire its new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile, Shunji Hiraiwa, professor at Nanzan University and one of Japan's leading experts on North Korea, told TASS.

"As for a solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile, I think that preparations for its test launch are completed," he said, adding that Pyongyang might conduct such a test in response to joint military drills conducted by the US and South Korea.

According to the expert, there are no serious obstacles that could prevent this kind of missile test because China and Russia keep blocking the United Nations Security Council's sanctions against Pyongyang.

<https://tass.com/defense/1599689>

Russia creating anti-satellite systems based on MiG-31D, Il-76 aircraft – defense journal

TASS, April 7, 2023

Russia continues developing anti-satellite systems based on the MiG-31D fighter with a Kontakt anti-satellite missile and the Il-76 aircraft outfitted with the Peresvet laser, according to an article published in the Defense Ministry's Military Thought journal on Friday.

The article was co-authored by President of the St. Petersburg branch of the Tsiolkovsky Cosmonautics Academy, former Chief of the Mozhaisky Military Space Academy, Doctor of Technical

Sciences, retired Lieutenant-General Alexander Kovalyov.

“Russian anti-satellite weapons being created on the basis of re-deployable and mobile carriers include the PKO Kontakt system based on the MiG-31 heavy fighter-interceptor, the A-60 Sokol-Echelon combat laser system based on the Il-76 transport plane and the Peresvet combat laser system,” the article says.

<https://tass.com/defense/1601013>

Russian nukes deployment in Belarus won't require nuclear doctrine revision, says Kremlin

TASS, April 7, 2023

The plans of deploying Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus won't require revising Russia's nuclear doctrine, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday. “No, this won't require it,” the Russian presidential spokesman said, responding to a question about whether the document needed to be updated, considering these plans. Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier said that at the request of the Belarusian side, Russia would deploy its tactical nuclear weapons in the republic, pointing out that the United States had long been using this practice on the territory of its allies. The Russian leader said that the construction of a storage facility for tactical nuclear weapons would be completed on Belarusian soil by July 1.

<https://tass.com/defense/1601143>

US Department of Energy involved in military biological activities – Russian military

TASS, April 7, 2023

The US Department of Energy organizes military and biological activities along with the Pentagon, Chief of Russia's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection Troops Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov said on Friday.

“The Russian Defense Ministry believes that the US Department of Energy organizes and

directly participates in military biological activities on par with the Pentagon,” he pointed out at a briefing on the analysis of documents pertaining to Washington's military biological activities.

According to Kirillov, in 2023, the US Department of Energy officially allocated \$105 mln for work within the Bio-preparedness Research Virtual Environment initiative aimed at studying the epidemic spread of diseases.

<https://tass.com/defense/1601379>

Russia says contract to create nuclear science center in Vietnam to be inked in June

TASS, April 7, 2023

The contract for the creation of a Center of nuclear science and technology in the Vietnamese province of Dong Nai may be signed by Russia's state corporation Rosatom and Vietnam Atomic Energy Institute (VINATOM) in June 2023, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko said at a meeting with the management of VINATOM on Friday.

“We are considering the institute as a prospective partner <...> to create a Center of nuclear science and technology on the basis of a cutting-edge research reactor in the province of Dong Nai jointly with the Rosatom state corporation,” he said.

<https://tass.com/russia/1601539>

FACTBOX: Everything on Pentagon's biolabs outside US

TASS, April 11, 2023

The Russian State Duma approved on April 11, 2023 the parliamentary commission's final report on US biolabs in Ukraine. According to Russia, the United States has stationed a network of biological laboratories in a number of Russia's neighboring states, where dangerous viruses and other pathogens are being worked on under the auspices of the US Defense Department. The US side insists that the labs serve the security interests of

Washington and its allies, and refutes the idea that biological weapons may have been developed in these facilities.

<https://tass.com/defense/1602607>

Snap inspection in Pacific Fleet a common practice, Kremlin Spokesman says

TASS, April 14, 2023

The snap inspection that began in Russia's Pacific Fleet Friday is a routing process, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"This is routine, the practice of snap inspections continues. It is a common practice, which has been carried out constantly in the recent years, and it continues in order to keep our armed forces' combat readiness at the required level," the spokesman said.

He noted that the inspection is not connected to NATO's plans to increase its presence in the Asia Pacific.

"No, it is not connected. It is a common routine training of the army, development of our armed forces and inspection of their readiness," Peskov explained.

<https://tass.com/politics/1604449>

Roscosmos plans to use nuclear-powered tug to clean up orbits

TASS, April 14, 2023

Roscosmos is considering the possibility of using the Zevs (Zeus) nuclear tug for cleaning up orbits crammed with space debris, the corporation's CEO Yuri Borisov said at the Tsiolkovsky International Space Films and Programs Festival in Kaluga on Thursday.

"We are considering various ways of cleaning up orbits. We have a program for building a nuclear-powered tug, Zevs. By 2030, we hope to have this product ready. With its powerful energy resource it will be able to change orbits. There is an idea to use this tug to clean up at least the geostationary highly elliptical orbits," Borisov said, adding

that this function would complement the research tasks.

<https://tass.com/science/1604519>

Belarus says will deploy strategic nukes if West keeps threatening it – top brass

TASS, April 14, 2023

Belarus may deploy strategic nuclear weapons on its soil, if aggressive rhetoric continues to come out of the West, Belarusian Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin said on Friday.

"If the hostile rhetoric continues, this (the deployment of strategic nuclear weapons - TASS) will be our next step. We will use force against force, for they don't understand any other" language, Belarus' top brass quoted him as saying.

Earlier, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that at the request of the Belarusian side Russia would station its tactical nuclear weapons in that country, precisely the way the United States has long kept its own nuclear warheads on the territories of its allies. Russia will not be transferring control to Belarus, Putin emphasized. According to him, the finishing touches will be put on a storage facility for tactical nuclear weapons on Belarusian by July 1.

<https://tass.com/world/1604533>

Minsk prepares sites for potential strategic nuclear weapons deployment – Defense Ministry

TASS, April 14, 2023

Minsk prepares existing sites for potential deployment of strategic nuclear weapons, Belarusian Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin said Friday.

"Should it be necessary, we will have strategic nuclear weapons as well. And we already work on preparation of existing sites," he said, according to the Belarusian Defense Ministry.

In late March, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said, that should

treats to Belarus continue to escalate, strategic nuclear weapons may be deployed in the republic. He said that he ordered “the military to immediately restore sites” where Topol strategic missile systems “with nuclear warheads” were deployed. Lukashenko noted that, back in the 1990s, when nuclear weapons were transported from the republic, he ordered to preserve most sites where strategic nuclear missiles were deployed.

<https://tass.com/defense/1604551>

Russian naval ships deploy to designated areas in sweeping Pacific drills

TASS, April 14, 2023

The Pacific Fleet’s combat ships and support vessels have deployed to the designated areas in the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Okhotsk and the Bering Sea to accomplish the objectives of a surprise combat readiness inspection, Russia’s Defense Ministry reported on Friday.

“The Pacific Fleet’s combat ships, support vessels and boats have departed from their permanent bases and commenced their transit and operational deployment to the designated areas in the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Okhotsk and the Bering Sea to accomplish their objectives as part of strike, anti-submarine warfare and minesweeper forces, and also groups of amphibious assault ships during a surprise combat readiness inspection,” the ministry said in a statement.

<https://tass.com/defense/1604569>

C. Pakistan

While India’s UAV Programme Falts, Pakistan Air Force Inducts Yet Another Turkish Drone

Swarajya, April 3, 2023

In a significant move aimed at enhancing its strategic capabilities, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has recently taken delivery of the cutting-edge Akinci unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs).

Despite the economic turmoil currently being experienced by the Pakistani economy,

characterized by its imminent risk of default and the stalled discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) regarding a \$7 billion bailout package, Pakistan has taken delivery of Akinci UCAVs.

The precise quantity of drones included in the aforementioned package remains undisclosed. Developed by Turkey’s Baykar Defense, these advanced drones will bolster the PAF’s aerial reconnaissance and strike capacities.

<https://swarajyamag.com/defence/while-indias-uav-programme-falters-pakistan-air-force-inducts-yet-another-turkish-drone>

Amid economic crisis, Pakistan goes ahead with USD 7 billion Turkish Combat Drone

The New Indian Express, April 6, 2023

Amidst the economic crisis in Pakistan, Turkey has delivered the first batch of cutting-edge Baykar Akinci unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) to the Pakistani Air Force. The Baykar Akinci unmanned combat aerial vehicle comes under the high-altitude long endurance (HALE) drone category and can be equipped with ammunition. The initial assessment is that around six to seven drones are part of the delivery package. As per the reports, this drone can fire cruise missile systems at any altitude.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2023/apr/05/amideconomic-crisis-pakistan-goes-ahead-withusd-7-billion-turkish-combat-drone-2562747.html>

Pakistan Tries To Buy IMF Bailout With 230 Containers Worth Of Weapons To Ukraine

Swarajya, April 11, 2023

Pakistan plans to ship 230 containers of weapons to Ukraine via the Karachi Port later this month, in a move that may help the country secure a \$7.5 billion bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The weapons, which include tanks and rockets, will be transported from

the Karachi Port via two vessels, MV Bokram and MV Kherson. Reportedly, ships carrying Pakistani weapons to Ukraine are using US and European flags, and will then be offloaded in ports in Poland and Germany. Last year, reports came out that the United Kingdom created an air bridge to transfer weapons from Pakistan to Ukraine via Romania.

<https://swarajyamag.com/defence/pakistan-tries-to-buy-imf-bailout-with-230-containers-worth-of-weapons-to-ukraine>

D. Europe

Czechia replaces Russian nuclear fuel imports with US imports

Euractiv, April 4, 2023

The US company Westinghouse will supply both Czech nuclear plants with fuel, so the country can quit importing Russian nuclear fuel until the end of 2023.

The Czech nuclear plant in Dukovany has used fuel from the Russian company TVEL, which is part of the Russian state holding Rosatom since the plant began operation almost 40 years ago. However, after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Czech energy company ÈEZ which operates the nuclear plant decided to replace the supplier for safety reasons.

“Securing a Western supplier of fuel assemblies for Dukovany is a significant step not only for the Czech power industry but also for the entire Czech Republic. It is another significant strengthening of energy security,” said Daniel Beneš, the CEO of ÈEZ Group.

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/czechia-replaces-russian-nuclear-fuel-imports-with-us-imports/>

Slovenian used fuel storage facility commissioned

World Nuclear News, April 6, 2023

The first HI-STORM FW cask has been placed into the used fuel dry storage facility at the Krško nuclear power plant in Slovenia, officially marking the facility’s

commissioning, Holtec International announced. The dry storage building is 50 metres by 70 metres by 20 metres, with a reinforced concrete base of 1.75 metres and, plant operator Nuklearna Elektrarna Krško (NEK) explained, “including the perimeter walls, provides protection against flooding and enables the anchoring of storage containers”, with equipment installed to allow monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Slovenian-used-fuel-storage-facility-commissioned>

Russia’s continuing stranglehold on emerging Europe’s nuclear sector

Emerging Europe, April 10, 2023

European states will have to detach themselves from Russian nuclear supplies in the long-term if they wish to free their energy supply from all Russian influence.

The European Union has imposed a wide range of sanctions on Russia since its invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022, and has managed to almost entirely decouple itself from Russia’s gas and oil imports. There is one part of the energy sector which has remained virtually untouched, however – nuclear. Rosatom, Russia’s state-owned nuclear energy company, is one of the few Russian companies still operating in the EU. This is despite the fact that in January 2023, news broke that Ukrainian intelligence had uncovered documents proving Rosatom had planned to export sanctioned goods to the Russian military.

<https://emerging-europe.com/news/russias-continuing-stranglehold-on-emerging-europes-nuclear-sector/>

Germany bids farewell to its last nuclear plants, eyes hydrogen future

AP News, April 14, 2023

For 35 years, the Emsland nuclear power plant in northwestern Germany has

reliably provided millions of homes with electricity and many with well-paid jobs in what was once an agricultural backwater.

Now, it and the country's two other remaining nuclear plants are being shut down. Germany long ago decided to phase out both fossil fuels and nuclear power over concerns that neither is a sustainable source of energy.

The final countdown Saturday – delayed for several months over feared energy shortages because of the Ukraine war – is seen with relief by Germans who have campaigned against nuclear power.

<https://apnews.com/article/germany-nuclear-power-shutdown-merkel-climate-7cec2956fa05896edaa503b648ed06a1>

E. International Atomic Energy Agency

IAEA Releases Annual Data on Illicit Trafficking of Nuclear and other Radioactive Material

IAEA, April 4, 2023

A total of 146 incidents of illegal or unauthorized activities involving nuclear and other radioactive material were reported in 2022, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said today in an annual fact sheet summarizing data from the IAEA Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB). The numbers, which include some incidents connected to illicit trafficking or malicious use, remained at around the same levels as in recent years. The ITDB aims to foster global information exchange about events that involve nuclear and other radioactive material falling out of regulatory control because they were lost, stolen, improperly disposed of, or otherwise neglected. The ITDB's detailed data is confidential, and only participating States and relevant international organizations, such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), can access it.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-releases-annual-data-on-illicit-trafficking-of-nuclear-and-other-radioactive-material>

Crop Seeds Return from Space in IAEA/FAO Project to Help Feed a Warming World

IAEA, April 15, 2023

Seeds sent into space last year returned to Earth today in a new milestone for joint efforts by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to develop resilient crops that can help provide sufficient food as the planet heats up.

Plants naturally evolve to thrive in their surroundings, but crops have been struggling to keep up with the current pace of climate change. The world is warmer and the global population is increasing, causing farmers around the world to struggle to meet food demand. To support these farmers and improve global food security, the IAEA and FAO, through their Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, sent seeds into space to explore the effects of cosmic radiation on speeding up natural, genetic adaptation of much needed crops. Their return to Earth paves the way for scientists to start analysing the results.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/crop-seeds-return-from-space-in-iaea-fao-project-to-help-feed-a-warming-world>

F. Belarus

Belarusian crews depart for training on Iskander-M system in Russia

TASS, April 4, 2023

Crews from the Belarusian Missile Forces have departed for Russia to undergo practical training on the Iskander-M missile system, the Belarusian Defense Ministry reported on Tuesday.

“The Belarusian servicemen will undergo training at a Russian Armed Forces testing ground. The program will concentrate on further improving their practical skills for preparing the missile system for use while training for its deployment and

conducting combat training launches,” the Belarusian top brass said. The crews’ training will include in-depth study of the maintenance and use of tactical nuclear weapons for the Iskander-M missile system, the Belarusian Defense Ministry added.

<https://tass.com/defense/1598971>

Iskander system capable of carrying nuclear missiles transferred to Belarus – Shoigu

TASS, April 4, 2023

The Iskander-M tactical missile system capable of carrying conventional and nuclear missiles has been transferred to the Belarusian Armed Forces, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu said on Tuesday. “In addition, the Iskander-M tactical missile system has been transferred to the Belarusian Armed Forces. It is capable of using both conventional and nuclear missiles,” Russia’s defense chief said during a conference call with top Russian military commanders.

According to Shoigu, Belarusian crews started training on the system at a Russian testing ground to protect the Union State on April 3.

<https://tass.com/defense/1599025>

Presidents to set timeframe for delivering Russian nukes to Belarus – Security Council

TASS, April 5, 2023

The timeframe for delivering Russian nuclear ordnance to Belarus will be determined jointly by the presidents of Russia and Belarus, Vladimir Putin and Alexander Lukashenko, Belarusian Security Council Secretary Alexander Volfovich said on Thursday.

“When our leaders, the supreme commander-in-chief of the Russian Federation and the commander-in-chief of the Belarusian armed forces, make the decision. It is their decision to make,” the BelTA news agency quoted him as saying.

The official added that the amount of munitions is “not important.” “What’s

important is why and how to use them properly. And we know how to use them. And whether it is necessary to use them.

<https://tass.com/defense/1600599>

Lukashenko says nuclear weapons should be ‘piled together and destroyed’

TASS, April 6, 2023

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said on Thursday that countries need to gather nuclear weapons “into one pile and destroy” them at some point. .

“I am radically-minded in this respect in general. I believe that nuclear weapons need to be piled up at some point and destroyed,” Lukashenko said on the ‘Moscow. Kremlin. Putin’ program on the Rossiya-1 TV channel, a fragment of which journalist and host Pavel Zarubin posted on his Telegram channel.

Lukashenko stressed that he agreed with what French President Emmanuel Macron said about the inadmissibility of one country placing nuclear weapons on the territory of another, but then the US should also remove them from other countries.

<https://tass.com/defense/1600685>

G. Ukraine

Update 153 - IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

IAEA, April 13, 2023

The dependence of Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) on a single still functioning power line for the external electricity it needs poses a major risk to nuclear safety and security amid signs of continued military activity in the southern region, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said today.

Underlining the crucial need for an agreement to protect Europe’s largest

nuclear power plant (NPP) during the military conflict, IAEA experts present at the site continue to regularly hear shelling in the area, the Director General said. Near the plant itself, two landmine explosions occurred outside its perimeter fence, the first on 8 April, and another four days later, he added. It was not immediately clear what caused the blasts.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/update-153-iaea-director-general-statement-on-situation-in-ukraine>

Landmine explosions ‘underline need for Zaporizhzhia protection agreement’

World Nuclear News, April 14, 2023

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi says that the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant’s reliance on a single functioning external power line, and two landmine explosions near the plant, mean it is “more important than ever to agree” safety measures for the site. The six-unit nuclear power plant, Ukraine and Europe’s largest, has been under Russian military control since the start of March 2022. It is near the frontline of Russian and Ukrainian forces and has been affected by shelling on a number of occasions over the past year, as well as having had to rely on emergency diesel generators for essential safety functions in periods when it has lost all external power.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Landmine-explosions-underline-need-for-Zaporizhzhia>

H. United States of America

Chinese spy balloon gathered intelligence from sensitive U.S. military sites, despite U.S. efforts to block it

NBC News, April 3, 2023

The Chinese spy balloon that flew across the U.S. was able to gather intelligence from several sensitive American military sites, despite the Biden administration’s efforts to

block it from doing so, according to two current senior U.S. officials and one former senior administration official.

China was able to control the balloon so it could make multiple passes over some of the sites (at times flying figure-eight formations) and transmit the information it collected back to Beijing in real time, the three officials said. The intelligence China collected was mostly from electronic signals, which can be picked up from weapons systems or include communications from base personnel, rather than images, the officials said.

The three officials said China could have gathered much more intelligence from sensitive sites if not for the administration’s efforts to move around potential targets and obscure the balloon’s ability to pick up their electronic signals by stopping them from broadcasting or emitting signals.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/china-spy-balloon-collected-intelligence-us-military-bases-rcna77155>

Grid connection for Vogtle unit 3

World Nuclear News, April 3, 2023

Vogtle unit 3 began supplying its first electricity to the grid on 1 April, Georgia Power announced. The AP1000 reactor - the first new reactor to start up in the USA since 2016 - is scheduled to enter commercial operation by mid-year. “The generator at Vogtle unit 3 has generated electricity for the first time, and the unit has successfully synchronised and connected to the electric grid,” the company said. Operators will now take the unit through a gradual power increase until it reaches its full power output. Tests to ensure all systems are operating together and to validate operating procedures will be carried out throughout the start-up process before the unit is declared to be in commercial operation.

Georgia Power currently projects an in-service date for Vogtle 3 in May or June.

<https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Grid-connection-for-Vogtle-unit-3>

US to provide Ukraine with another military aid worth \$2.6 billion

Hindustan Times, April 4, 2023

The U.S. will send Ukraine about \$500 million in ammunition and equipment and spend more than \$2 billion to buy an array of munitions, radar and other weapons for that country in the future, the White House announced Tuesday, as Ukrainian troops prepare for a spring offensive against Russian forces. Much of the ammunition will be taken from military stockpiles so they can be in the war zone quickly, including “U.S.-provided HIMARS, air defense interceptors, and artillery rounds that Ukraine is using to defend itself,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. HIMARS are multiple rocket launchers.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/us-to-provide-ukraine-with-another-military-aid-worth-2-6-billion-101680627887197.html>

US flies nuclear-capable bombers amid tensions with N. Korea

AP News, April 5, 2023

The United States flew nuclear-capable B-52 bombers to the Korean Peninsula again on Wednesday in a show of strength against North Korea amid concerns that the North might conduct a nuclear test.

The long-range bombers took part in joint aerial drills with U.S. and South Korean fighter jets over the Korean Peninsula, South Korea’s Defense Ministry said. It said it was the first deployment of U.S. B-52 bombers to the peninsula in a month.

The drills “show the strong resolve of the (South) Korea-U.S. alliance and its perfect readiness to respond to any provocation by North Korea swiftly and overwhelmingly,” Lt. Gen. Park Ha Sik, commander of the South Korean air force operation command, said in a statement.

<https://apnews.com/article/us-north-korea-b52-bombers-268769d2105cda6f9a80bf16f0b7fc73>

Leaks from Minnesota nuclear power plant raise safety fears across US

The Guardian, April 7, 2023

In December, Janica Jammes started a microgreens business in the basement of her home in Big Lake, Minnesota, just across the river from Xcel Energy’s nuclear plant in Monticello.

At least once each day, she uses water from her well to nourish the plant trays. She delivers her product to customers within a 10-mile radius and says the business has been a success.

But now she worries that her water could be contaminated by a leak of about 400,000 gallons of radioactive water that occurred in November at the plant, which is about 40 miles north-west of Minneapolis. Moreover, Jammes is upset that the company did not alert the public about the leak until March – and then detected a second leak, which the company described as smaller than the first one.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/apr/07/minnesota-nuclear-power-plant-leak-safety>

US Navy sends nuclear-powered guided-missile submarine to Middle East

Alarabiya, April 8, 2023

The US Navy has deployed a guided-missile submarine capable of carrying up to 154 Tomahawk missiles to the Middle East, a spokesman said Saturday.

The Navy rarely acknowledges the location or deployment of submarines. Cmdr. Timothy Hawkins, a spokesman for the 5th Fleet based in the Gulf nation of Bahrain, declined to comment on the submarine’s mission or what had prompted the deployment. He said the nuclear-powered submarine, based out of

Kings Bay, Georgia, passed through the Suez Canal on Friday. "It is capable of carrying up to 154 Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles and is deployed to US 5th Fleet to help ensure regional maritime security and stability," Hawkins said.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2023/04/08/US-Navy-sends-nuclear-powered-guided-missile-submarine-to-Middle-East-Statement>

Official Says US Tried to Buy Heavy Water from Iran, Touts Peaceful Use of Nuclear Tech

Tasnim News Agency, April 12, 2023

"We should know that the heavy water produced in Iran is among the best in the world and even the Americans were once trying to purchase it (from Iran) after they analyzed its properties," Kamalvandi said in a statement to IRNA on Wednesday.

The official made the statements while highlighting the AEOI's accomplishments in using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Kamalvandi added that US officials have mentioned in various documents that the heavy water produced in Iran has a high quality. He went on to say that heavy water produced in Iran is used for peaceful purposes such as developing medicines and improving agricultural production.

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2023/04/12/2879087/official-says-us-tried-to-buy-heavy-water-from-iran-touts-peaceful-use-of-nuclear-tech>

West Asia

I. Iran

Iranian Military Adviser Martyred in Israeli Attack on Syria, IRGC Vows Tough Response

Fars News Agency, April 1, 2023

A military advisor of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Force in Syria was martyred in the latest Israeli raid on the

suburbs of Damascus, the IRGC announced in a statement on Friday. Milad Heidari was martyred on Friday morning in the Zionist regime's aerial attack on the Syrian capital, the IRGC public relations office announced in a statement. The statement also condemned the silence and inaction of the international bodies over the repeated crimes and aggressions committed by the Zionist regime and the continued violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of an independent country that is a member of the United Nations.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020112000286/Iranian-Military-Adviser-Martyred-in-Israeli-Attack-on-Syria-IRGC-Vows-Tgh>

Iranian Navy's 86th Fleet Docks at Cape Town Port in South Africa

Fars News Agency, April 1, 2023

Iranian Navy's 86th Flotilla of Warships docked in South Africa's Cape Town Port in line with the Islamic Republic's efforts to expand its naval presence in international waters. The Iranian Navy's flotilla, comprised of Dena and Makran warships, arrived at the port Friday morning and was welcomed by Iran's Ambassador to Pretoria Mehdi Aqa Jafari and local officials. Addressing the ceremony, Aqa Jafari said the flotilla's travel aims to convey the Iranian nation's message of peace and friendship to the peoples of South Africa and all the African countries. He hailed the strong presence of the Islamic Republic's strategic Naval Fleet in the Atlantic Ocean and South Africa's hosting of it, and said the flotilla's mission would certainly play an important role in promoting global peace and stability and security of maritime connecting routes.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020112000183/Iranian-Navy's-86th-Fleet-Docks-at-Cape-Town-Pr-in-Sh-Africa>

Another Iranian Military Adviser Martyred in Israeli Attack on Syria

Fars News Agency, April 3, 2023

Iranian military adviser Meqdad Mahghani Jafarabadi who was wounded in Friday's attack by the Israeli regime near Damascus has succumbed to his injuries, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced. On Sunday, the IRGC issued a statement to confirm the martyrdom of the military advisor following suffering from wounds during a heinous Friday morning attack by the Israeli regime in the suburb of the Syrian capital. Undoubtedly, the crime committed by the fake and criminal regime will not be unanswered and the Zionist regime will pay the price for the martyrdom of the IRGC military advisor, the statement added.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020113000263/Anher-Iranian-Miliary-Adviser-Maryred-in-Israeli-Aack-n-Syria>

Iranian Navy Shoos off US Spy Aircraft in Sea of Oman

Fars News Agency, April 3, 2023

The Iranian Army's Navy identified and warned off a US spy aircraft after it crossed the country's borders near the Sea of Oman.

"A US Navy EP-3E aircraft entered the borders in the vicinity of the Sea of Oman, but with the full vigilance of the Navy's forces and by sending warnings to the plane, it was prevented from entering the country's sky without authorization," the Navy's Public Relations Office reported. It said that after receiving the warning message, the aircraft left the country's air border and returned to international air routes. The EP-3E aircraft, with four turboprop engines, is made by the US military aircraft manufacturer Lockheed Martin.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020113000411/Iranian-Navy-Shs-ff-US-Spy-Aircraf-in-Sea-f-Oman>

Iran calls for an end to space arms race

Tehran Times, April 5, 2023

The First Counselor of Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations has called for an end to arms race in space and the need to avoid a serious danger to world peace and security. In a statement addressing the United Nations Disarmament Commission on Tuesday, Heidar Ali Balouji underlined that "Iran believes that outer space and other celestial bodies are humanity's common heritage and must be used only for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all countries." "Averting an arms race in space can be a starting step toward attaining this aim and averting a serious danger to world peace and security," Balouji continued.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/483390/Iran-calls-for-an-end-to-space-arms-race>

Deputy DM: Iran to Help Syria Boost Defense Power in Face of Israeli Assaults

Fars News Agency, April 5, 2023

Iranian Deputy Defense Minister for International Affairs Brigadier General Hamzeh Qalandari underlined his country's commitment to the security and stability of friendly states, including Syria, and said that Tehran is going to assist Damascus beef up its air defense systems to thwart Israeli attacks. Brig. Gen. Qalandari made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony to mark the International Mine Awareness Day and Assistance in Mine Action in Tehran on Tuesday. "We find ourselves committed to help friendly countries, like Syria, improve their air defenses and fend off aerial attacks," he stated, as he talked about the export of defense products at the event.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020116000167/Depty-DM-Iran-Help-Syria-Bs-Defense-Pwer-in-Face-f-Israeli-Assals>

Game-change in Syria: Iran to boost air defense

Tehran Times, April 5, 2023

Hamzeh Qalandari, Iran's deputy defense minister for international affairs, has reiterated Tehran's dedication to the safety of friendly nations, stating that Tehran sees it as its "obligation" to support the development of Syria's air defense capabilities in order to fend off Israeli strikes on the country. Qalandari made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony marking International Mine Awareness Day and Assistance in Mine Action in Tehran on Tuesday. Referring to the export of military equipment, he stated, "We find ourselves dedicated to help friendly nations, like Syria, enhance their air defenses and ward off aerial attacks."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/483406/Game-change-in-Syria-Iran-to-boost-air-defense>

US Deploys Guided-Missile Submarine Amid Tensions With Iran

VOA News, April 8, 2023

The U.S. Navy has deployed a guided-missile submarine capable of carrying up to 154 Tomahawk missiles to the Middle East, a spokesman said Saturday, in what appeared to be a show of force toward Iran following recent tensions. The Navy rarely acknowledges the location or deployment of submarines. Cmdr. Timothy Hawkins, a spokesman for the 5th Fleet based in the Gulf nation of Bahrain, declined to comment on the submarine's mission or what had prompted the deployment. He said the nuclear-powered submarine, based in Kings Bay in the U.S. state of Georgia, passed through the Suez Canal Friday. "It is capable of carrying up to 154 Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles and is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet to help ensure regional maritime security and stability," Hawkins said.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/us-deploys-guided-missile-submarine-amid-tensions-with-iran-/7042130.html>

AEOI Head: 20 Iranian Radiopharmaceutical Projects in Progress

Fars News Agency, April 9, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami hailed the country's great progress in nuclear medicine, and said that his country is working on 20 projects for developing new radiopharmaceuticals. Speaking during a TV program on Saturday night, Eslami said the National Nuclear Technology Day is a special day for the AEOI to take bigger steps. "We have 20 radiopharmaceutical projects in progress," he said, vowing to step up efforts to achieve more progress in the application of peaceful nuclear technologies. He added that in the previous Iranian year, Iranian scientists registered 159 scientific, technological, and industrial achievements. Registering 159 nuclear achievements, he stated, is a clear manifestation of being active and innovative.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020120000385/AEOI-Head-20-Iranian-Radiopharmaceutical-Prjecs-in-Prgress>

Iran Successfully Tests Another Suicide Drone

Fars News Agency, April 9, 2023

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force has developed a new domestically-build suicide drone which can destroy targets within a range of 450 kilometers, Head of IRGC Ground Force's Research and Self-Sufficiency Jihad Organization (RSSJO) General Ali Kouhestani said on Sunday. General Kouhestani stated that the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), dubbed Me'raj 532, with a piston engine has a one-way range of 450 kilometers. The kamikaze drone, which designed and manufactured by young Iranian experts, he added, is capable of flying up to a height of 12,000 feet for 3 hours and taking off from a vehicle.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020120000587/Iran-Sccessfly-Tess-Anher-Sicide-Drne>

AEOI Spokesman: High Quality of Iran's Heavy Water Acknowledged by US

Fars News Agency, April 12, 2023

Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi praised the high quality of the heavy water produced in his country, and further said that Washington was once seeking to buy heavy water from Tehran. Kamalvandi made the remarks while elaborating on AEOI's accomplishments in using the nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, including for the development of highly-needed medicines and in agricultural production processes. The official stated that the United States was once trying to buy heavy water from Iran because of the high quality of isotope which is a byproduct of the nuclear enrichment process.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020123000240/AEOI-Spokesman-High-Qaliy-f-Iran's-Heavy-Waer-Acknowledged-by-US>

Iranian Army unveils jammer drone

Tehran Times, April 12, 2023

The Iranian Army on Tuesday unveiled its first locally-built jammer drone, called Mahajer 6. It has been designed to disrupt communication between hostile unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and their controllers. Equipped with a high-tech system capable of transmitting interfering radio signals, it was inaugurated at a ceremony in presence of Army chief Abdolrahim Mousavi and a number of senior ground force commanders. The jammer drone is the Army's first UAV with the capability to operate and support electronic warfare and electronic offense against the enemy's communication networks, Press TV reported.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/483597/Iranian-Army-unveils-jammer-drone>

Senior Commander: Iran Equips Helicopters with New Precision Missiles

Fars News Agency, April 12, 2023

Iranian Army Ground Force Commander Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari said

that a homemade precision-guided missile has been handed over to the Airborne Division of the Iranian Army's Ground Force. The homegrown missile, dubbed "Shafagh", has a range of 20 kilometers, Brig. Gen. Heidari told reporters on Tuesday. "The Iranian helicopters are capable of filming, bombing and missile evasion," the top commander stated, adding that by installing night vision systems, they can carry out night combat operations in a remarkable way. Back in early July, Brig. Gen. Heidari said his forces have been supplied with different types of precision-striking and smart weapons to defend the country's peace and stability.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020123000124/Senir-Cmmmander-Iran-Eips-Helicpers-wih-New-Precisin-Missiles>

Iran Successfully Tests New Top Attack Missile Capable of Overcoming Tanks' APS

Fars News Agency, April 15, 2023

The missile, dubbed Sadid-365, is a guided anti-armor missile with a range of 8 kilometers and is capable of demolishing various types of armored equipment.

The optically guided missile is highly accurate in hitting the target and can also pass through the barrier of the active defense systems of tanks and smash them thanks to the ability to attack from above. Head of the Research and Self-Sufficiency Jihad Organization of the IRGC Ground Force General Ali Kouhestani said the missile has retractable wings and a fire-control system.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020126000544/Iran-Sccessflly-Tess-New-Tp-Aack-Missile-Capable-f-Overcmng-Tanks>

J. Israel

Saab to deliver anti-tank systems to NATO

Israel Defense, April 2, 2023

Swedish Saab announced that it has signed framework agreements with

NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) for the Carl-Gustaf M4 weapon system and the AT4 anti-armour weapon with a total value of approximately \$33.5 million. Last month, Saab announced it will sell weapon systems (multi-purpose shoulder launched weapons, short-range air defense systems and radars) to a western country, in a deal worth over \$761 million.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57759>

Israeli Navy features Sa'ar 6- class corvette in int'l "Noble Dina" exercise for first time

Israel Defense, April 3, 2023

The international naval exercise "Noble Dina 2023," lead by the Israeli Navy, wrapped up after two weeks on Thursday. The IDF communicated that this represents another step forward in strengthening international and regional cooperation in order to guarantee maritime freedom and defense. This is an annual exercise, which takes place in the Mediterranean and includes both maritime and aerial drills. This year, it included forces from Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, France and the US. Israeli forces included two Sa'ar 4.5- class missile boats, a Sa'ar 5- class corvette, and a Sa'ar 6- class corvette - which made its debut appearance at Noble Dina. Other Israeli forces included a Dolphin-class submarine and Israeli Air Force fighter jets and helicopters.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57767>

Elbit to supply precision munitions, defense electronics systems in \$280 deal

Israel Defense, April 4, 2023

Elbit Systems announced today that it was awarded a contract to supply, among others, precision munitions, radio and defense electronics systems as well as maintenance services to a European Country, with a cumulative value of approximately \$280 million. The contract will be performed over a period of three years. Bezahel (Butzi) Machlis, President and CEO of Elbit Systems: "These contract extensions demonstrate our

customers' continued trust in our customized products and services, as well as the sustained demand for our market leading solutions from customers across Europe."

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57789>

Israel to help Finland, NATO's newest member, with aerial defense

Israel Defense, April 9, 2023

The Ministry of Defense has authorized the Finnish Defense Forces to procure the David's Sling system as the next long-range air defense system of Finland. Israel's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems will deliver the system. The value of the procurement without value added tax is approximately 316 million euros. The David's Sling system is a long-range air defense system jointly developed by Israel and the United States. The sale of the system to Finland will require a sales release by the United States Government. The system will extend the operational range of Finland's ground-based air defense capabilities significantly. The minimum flight altitude requirement of the system was set at 15 000 meters in the request for quotation.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57815>

Greece signs \$400m contract with Israel for anti-tank missiles

The Jerusalem Post, April 10, 2023

Israel signed a NIS 1.44 billion (\$400 million) deal to sell Spike anti-tank missiles to Greece, Israel's Defense Ministry said on Monday, just days after reaching a similar-sized deal to provide air defenses to newly-inducted NATO member Finland. The Spike is a guided anti-tank missile used by many EU and NATO countries produced by Israeli state-owned defense contractor Rafael. "The Spike missiles will strengthen the Greek army's portfolio of operational tools and we expect further expansion through strategic collaborations in the near future," said Rafael CEO Yoav Har-Even. Israel's

defense minister said the agreement reinforces ties between the countries.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-738853>

Switzerland goes for Rafael's SPIKE anti-tank missiles

Israel Defense, April 10, 2023

Armasuisse, Switzerland's Federal Office for Defense Procurement, has selected the model for a new anti-tank missile system with SPIKE LR2 from Eurospike. It is planned to propose procurement of the weapons systems to Parliament in the 2024 Armed Forces Dispatch. The official press release of the Federal Council said that Armsuisse carried out a market analysis and subsequently requested information on anti-tank guided missiles from various European and American manufacturers. The information on which these requests focused included, for example, the function, the effect, technical data on the operations system, the potential integration in the existing infrastructure, and the commercial framework conditions.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57831>

Israeli Light weapons in Cypriot Special forces

Israel Defense, April 13, 2023

A tweet on Twitter reveals the inventory of the personal light weapons in a Cypriot Special forces squad and it is all Israeli.

According to the photo in the tweet - which deals with the visit of the President of Cyprus to the unit - in the 8-soldier squad of the Raider Command unit, there are 2 "Negev" NG5SF light machine guns, one Micro Tavor X95FT Assault rifle with a barrel length of 419 mm that is used as a light Designated Marksman Rifle (DMR), three Micro Tavor X95FT Assault rifle with a barrel length of 330 mm as well as two 40 mm GL40 grenade launchers installed on Micro Tavor Assault rifles. All weapons are manufactured by the Israeli company IWI. The Raider unit is the Special Forces unit of the Cypriot National Guard and is stationed

in Larnaca. The unit's missions today are mountain/ border patrols, combat search and rescue, paratrooping operations, hostage rescue and Close-quarters combat.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57863>

K. Türkiye

Flagship-to-be Anadolu LHD enters Turkish Navy's inventory next week

Daily Sabah, April 6, 2023

Türkiye's largest warship, the multipurpose amphibious assault ship Anadolu, is set to be delivered to the Naval Forces Command on Monday, marking a significant milestone for the country's defense industry, the head of the top defense body said Thursday. Ismail Demir, head of the Defense Industries Presidency (SSB), spoke during a signing ceremony to construct three new frigates under the MILGEM (National Ship) project. The MILGEM project was initiated in 2000 to locally design and build a new line of multi-purpose frigates and corvettes to replace the older ones. So far, the commissioning of four corvettes and one frigate, the Istanbul frigate, has been carried out. Demir previously said that Türkiye was planning to simultaneously build the three new I-class frigates designed by Turkish engineers.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/flagship-to-be-anadolu-lhd-enters-turkish-navys-inventory-next-week>

Türkiye, Serbia developing early anti-nuke strike warning system

Daily Sabah, April 9, 2023

Professors from universities in Türkiye and Serbia are working on an early warning system to safeguard the border areas of NATO countries against nuclear attacks. Prepared by Türkiye's Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University and Serbia's University of Nis to develop an early warning system for the protection of NATO countries, the project was accepted by the military alliance. The project began around three

months ago, according to Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University. Ercan Yılmaz, a physics professor at the university, is leading the production of sensors. Meanwhile, the Serbian team will develop reader circuits and software compatible with these devices.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiye-serbia-developing-early-anti-nuke-strike-warning-system>

Israel signs \$400M deal to sell anti-tank missiles to Greece

Daily Sabah, April 10, 2023

Israel signed a 1.44 billion shekel (\$400 million) deal to sell Spike anti-tank missiles to Greece, Israel's Defense Ministry said Monday, just days after reaching a similarly sized deal to provide air defenses to newly inducted NATO member Finland. The Spike is a guided anti-tank missile used by many EU and NATO countries produced by Israeli state-owned defense contractor Rafael. "The Spike missiles will strengthen the Greek army's portfolio of operational tools and we expect further expansion through strategic collaborations in the near future," said Rafael CEO Yoav Har-Even. Israel's defense minister said the agreement reinforces ties between the countries. Last week Israel and Rafael said they would provide the advanced air-defense system David's Sling to Finland, after it officially joined NATO on April 4.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/israel-signs-400m-deal-to-sell-anti-tank-missiles-to-greece>

Türkiye commissions its largest warship, world's 1st drone carrier

Daily Sabah, April 10, 2023

In a historic milestone, Türkiye on Monday commissioned its long-anticipated largest warship, bolstering its naval capabilities and making the country one of the few nations in the world with a domestically built aircraft carrier. Set to be Türkiye's flagship, the multipurpose amphibious assault ship TCG Anadolu represents a symbol in the "Century of Türkiye," President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said, addressing the

delivery ceremony in Istanbul. More than Türkiye's first aircraft carrier, the ship will also be the world's first vessel with an air wing mainly consisting of unmanned aircraft. "The TCG Anadolu ... is the world's first warship in its field where UAVs can land and take off," Erdoğan said, stressing that the vessel would host many of Türkiye's manned and unmanned aerial vehicles.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiye-commissions-its-largest-warship-worlds-1st-drone-carrier>

Israel, Greece ink long-stalled deal for Spike missiles

Daily Sabah, April 10, 2023

Israel Monday announced a nearly \$400 million agreement to supply Greece with guided anti-tank missiles.

In a statement, the Israeli Defense Ministry said it would provide Greece Spike missiles manufactured by the state-run Rafael Advanced Defense Systems company. It added that the agreement was signed between Israeli Defense Ministry Director-General Maj. Gen. Eyal Zamir and Greece's director of defense investments and armaments, Vice Adm. Aristeidis Alexopoulos. In a separate statement, Greek Defense Ministry detailed the missiles would come in three different configurations.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/israel-greece-ink-long-stalled-deal-for-spike-missile>

East Asia

L. Japan

Underwater pictures from inside Fukushima nuclear reactor spark safety concerns

ABC News, April 5, 2023

An underwater probe has captured images of the inside of one of the three melted reactors at Japan's wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant, triggering concerns about earthquake

resistance in the case of another major disaster.

The plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), has been sending robotic probes inside the Unit 1 reactor's primary containment chamber since last year.

The new images, released on Tuesday, show the area inside the Unit 1 pedestal, a supporting structure right underneath the reactor's core, where traces of melted fuel are most likely to be found.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-06/new-pictures-from-inside-fukushima-reactor-spark-safety-con/102193676>

IAEA Issues New Report on Safety of Japan's Plan to Discharge ALPS Treated Water from Fukushima Daiichi Site

IAEA, April 5, 2023

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Task Force reviewing the safety of Japan's plan to discharge ALPS treated water from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (NPS) into the sea released a new report today.

It is the fourth Task Force report published so far in a series of such documents being issued under the IAEA's multi-year safety review of the planned ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System) treated water discharge at the Fukushima Daiichi NPS.

The new report compiles the findings from the Task Force's second safety review mission to Japan's Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), the Fukushima Daiichi NPS operator, and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) held in November 2022.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-issues-new-report-on-safety-of-japans-plan-to-discharge-alps-treated-water-from-fukushima-daiichi-site>

M. North Korea

US leaky nuclear umbrella not to help Kiev in conflict with Moscow – Kim Jong Un's sister

TASS, April 1, 2023

The Ukrainian authorities are mistaken if they believe that the nuclear umbrella of the United States, which has already been perforated, can protect them from "powerful fire" of Russia, Kim Yo Jong, sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, said on Saturday. "If the [Ukrainian President Vladimir] Zelensky authorities calculated that they can avoid the powerful fire of Russia only when they go under the US nuclear umbrella, which had already been perforated, they are going to the wrong path, the last path," the Yonhap news agency quoted her as saying, referring to the North Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

<https://tass.com/world/1598057>

DPRK threatens US, South Korea with nuclear weapons in response to 'military provocations'

TASS, April 2, 2023

North Korea considers military exercises of the US and South Korea provocations and warns Washington and Seoul that they are dealing with a nuclear power, KCNA said in a statement Sunday.

"The US and its satellites must remember that the state they are dealing with has real nuclear strike capabilities, and our people and the army do not know empty words," the commentary says. It also notes that "it is perfectly clear" how Pyongyang's nuclear weapons will be used if "deterrence forces have no effect" on the US and its allies. DPRK condemned both the military exercise of the US and South Korea that took place in March and the planned exercise with Japan's involvement.

<https://tass.com/world/1598119>

North Korea says US-South Korea drills driving tensions in Korean Peninsula to 'brink of nuclear war'

WION, April 6, 2023

North Korea Thursday accused the US of escalating the tensions in Korean Peninsula to the brink of nuclear war after Washington flew nuclear-capable B-52 bombers in a joint military drill with South Korea, as per Reuters citing local media reports. Citing Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), North Korea's state news agency, the report quoted an international security analyst Choe Ju Hyon saying the exercises are "a trigger for driving the situation on the Korean peninsula to the point of explosion."

<https://www.wionews.com/world/north-korea-says-us-south-korea-drills-driving-tensions-in-korean-peninsula-to-brink-of-nuclear-war-579606>

North Korea Tests Nuclear-Capable Underwater Drone, State Media Say

VOA News, April 7, 2023

North Korea conducted another test of a nuclear-capable underwater attack drone, state media said on Saturday, the latest in a show of force against the U.S. and South Korea.

The country tested another kind of a nuclear-capable unmanned underwater attack weapon called Haeil-2, more than a week after it disclosed a new underwater drone system dubbed Haeil-1, which translates to tsunami in Korean, designed to make sneak attacks in enemy waters.

Analysts said North Korea was displaying its diverse nuclear delivery capabilities against Washington and Seoul, though they were skeptical about whether the underwater vehicle was ready for deployment.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/north-korea-tests-nuclear-capable-underwater-drone-state-media-says-/7041529.html>

North Korean Leader Vows 'Offensive' Nuclear Expansion

VOA News, April 10, 2023

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to enhance his nuclear arsenal in more "practical and offensive" ways as he met with senior military officials to discuss the country's war preparations in the face of his rivals' "frantic" military exercises, state media said Tuesday.

The meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Military Commission on Monday came amid heightened tensions as the pace of both the North Korean weapons demonstrations and the U.S.-South Korean joint military drills have intensified in recent weeks in a cycle of tit-for-tat.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said the commission's members discussed unspecified issues related to strengthening defense capacities and perfecting war preparations to counter the threat posed by the allies' drills, which the North portrays as invasion rehearsals.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/north-korean-leader-vows-offensive-nuclear-expansion/7045064.html>

North Korea missile launch sparks confusion in Japan

BBC, April 13, 2023

A missile launch by North Korea sparked confusion in northern Japan, where an evacuation order was issued and then retracted within 30 minutes. Sirens blared across Hokkaido and residents were told to "evacuate immediately" on Thursday morning. Authorities later said the missile did not land near the island and withdrew the alert. Tensions have been growing in the region, as North Korea has already fired 27 missiles this year. The projectile flew about 1,000 km (620 miles), in what South Korea's military called a "grave

provocation". The missile is believed to be of medium or longer-range, but details on which weapon was tested on Thursday morning have not yet been made public.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-65259718>

North Korea launches new type of ballistic missile, Seoul says

Reuters, April 14, 2023

North Korea fired a new model of long-range ballistic missile on Thursday, South Korea said, triggering a scare in northern Japan where residents were told to take cover, though there turned out to be no danger.

A South Korean military official said the missile appeared to have been a new weapon displayed at recent North Korean military parades, and possibly used solid fuel. North Korea has criticised recent U.S.-South Korean joint military exercises as escalating tensions and has stepped weapons tests in recent months. It has been working to build more solid-fuel missiles which can be launched with almost no warning or preparation time.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/north-korea-fires-missile-into-sea-off-east-coast-south-korea-says-2023-04-12/>

North Korea's countermeasures intended to sow fear in enemies – leader

TASS, April 14, 2023

The North Korean government keeps working to make the enemies "experience a clearer security crisis" and create the feeling of fear and uneasiness among them until they abandon their aggressive policies, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said on Friday.

"He [Kim Jong-un] affirmed that the WPK [the Workers' Party of Korea] and the DPRK government would make the enemy, who are imperiling the environment on the Korean peninsula and harassing the Korean

people's peaceful life and struggle for socialist construction with their inveterate policy of aggression and threatening military moves, experience a clearer security crisis," North Korea's official KCNA news agency quoted the North Korean leader as saying after the first test of the country's new Hwasong-18 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

<https://tass.com/defense/1604129>

N. South Korea

UK and South Korea sign a statement of cooperation on nuclear energy

Power Technology, April 11, 2023

The UK's government has signed a statement of cooperation with South Korea for the development of nuclear energy.

UK energy security minister Grant Shapps agreed on the joint statement of cooperation with South Korea's minister of trade, industry and energy Dr Lee Chang-Yang. The two governments agreed on the development of nuclear as a "secure, clean and affordable" energy source.

Shapps said of the agreement: "I want the Republic of Korea to work ever closer with us in the UK, making the most of world-leading British expertise to move further and faster towards greater use of renewables, of opportunities in the UK to invest, and to redouble our efforts against Putin's weaponising of our global energy sources". The move comes as the UK promotes nuclear development including the construction of small modular reactors. The UK government aims to generate 25% of the country's energy from nuclear sources by 2050.

<https://www.power-technology.com/news/uk-south-korea-nuclear-power-renewables-cooperation/>

Joint Press Statement for the 22nd Korea-U.S. Integrated Defense Dialogue

U.S. Department of Defense, April 12, 2023

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) Ministry of National Defense (MND) held the 22nd Korea-U.S. Integrated Defense Dialogue (KIDD) from April 11-12, 2023 in Washington, D.C.

Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, Dr. Ely Ratner, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for East Asia, Dr. Siddharth Mohandas, led the U.S. delegation. Deputy Minister for National Defense Policy (DEPMIN), Dr. Heo Tae-keun, led the ROK delegation. Key senior U.S. and ROK defense and foreign affairs officials also participated. In addition, DASD for Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Policy, Mr. Richard Johnson, and DASD Mohandas together co-chaired the Deterrence Strategy Committee (DSC) session of the KIDD with DEPMIN Heo.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3360919/joint-press-statement-for-the-22nd-korea-us-integrated-defense-dialogue/>

O. Australia

France Joins AUKUS Submarine Program

Naval News, April 1, 2023

The French government has joined the previously trilateral AUKUS submarine program. Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States are already involved in the 368 billion dollar project. The plan is to build and deliver a new class of nuclear-powered attack submarine for the respective navies. Now the French Navy (Marine Nationale) could receive up to four submarines under the plans. Under extended plans, France will join the AUKUS submarine program. This will see advanced nuclear-powered attack submarines built for

Australia, United Kingdom and France. The United States is also providing key elements, including interim submarines for the Royal Australian Navy.

<https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2023/04/france-joins-aucus-submarine-program/>

Nothing 'more stupid' than for Australia to sign anti-nuke treaty

Sky News Australia, April 6, 2023

Former foreign minister Alexander Downer says it would be a very foolish thing for Australia to sign an anti-nuclear weapons treaty. His comments come as the government is considering whether or not to make a break from the United States and sign a treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons before the next election.

"At this time in history our government can't think of anything more stupid to do when we have the rise of China, the threat of China, the need to deter China for alliance countries to flock together," he told Sky News host Chris Kenny.

<https://www.skynews.com.au/opinion/chris-kenny/nothing-more-stupid-than-for-australia-to-sign-antinuke-treaty/video/ec4cd7f40658eee6c8d42da50c0338ff>

US Election in 2024 Won't Change Aukus Plans, Australia PM Says

Bloomberg, April 9, 2023

PM Albanese said a Trump return wouldn't alter Aukus agreement Australia will buy first US nuclear submarines in early 2030s

. Australia is confident its agreement with the US to purchase a fleet of nuclear submarines for delivery in the early 2030s will go ahead no matter who wins the 2024 election, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-04-09/us-election-in-2024-won-t-change-aucus-plans-australia-pm-says#xj4y7vzkg>

How Australia helped the US keep tabs on its nuclear rivals through a secret balloon program

ABC News, April 9, 2023

For those with a keen mind for history, the recent Chinese spy balloon controversy may have reawakened some distant memories of Australia's Cold War-era balloon program.

While it was officially "secret", everyone knew about it.

More than 60 years ago, Australia and the United States launched the Hibal (High Altitude Balloon) project as a way of keeping tabs on weapons developments in other countries.

Not by flying over them, but by testing the air at extremely high altitudes.

It was a bit like sticking your nose out of the top window of your house to smell what the people three doors down were cooking.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-09/hibal-australia-cold-war-history-us-secret-balloon-victoria/102057980>

Our enemies will consider Australia the West's 'weakest link' if nuclear confrontation erupts in the Asia-Pacific

Sky News Australia, April 15, 2023

The escalation of the war in Ukraine naturally brings with it the very real risk of nuclear confrontation, and new actors on both sides are still coming into play.

Australia, for one, is now an active participant in the geostrategic battleground that is the Indo-Pacific, where the risk of direct standoff with one or more nuclear-armed geopolitical adversary is growing every day.

<https://www.skynews.com.au/insights-and-analysis/our-enemies-will-consider-australia-the-west-weakest-link-if-nuclear-confrontation-erupts-in-the-asiapacific/news-story/5e049c048b7500a8709d1fa26ae73f77>

P. Miscellaneous

IAEA Reviews Progress of Kazakhstan's Nuclear Infrastructure Development

IAEA, April 11, 2023

Kazakhstan has made progress in implementing the recommendations of an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) nuclear infrastructure review mission, a team of IAEA and international experts said today.

Kazakhstan currently operates research reactors as well as several other nuclear installations related to the front end of the nuclear fuel cycle, including uranium mining. The central Asian country of 19 million people has the second largest uranium reserves in the world with 14% of the total. The country's BN-350 fast breeder power reactor is currently being decommissioned after 25 years of operation having been shut down in 1999.

The Kazakhstan Ministry of Energy has proposed the potential reintroduction of nuclear power to reduce the country's reliance on fossil fuels, diversify its energy mix and reduce CO₂ emissions.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-reviews-progress-of-kazakhstans-nuclear-infrastructure-development>

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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