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A Fortnightly Newsletter from the Indian Pugwash Society

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- South Korea's Yoon pushes for strong resolve against North's nuclear ambitions at NATO summit
- China urges ASEAN regional forum to oppose Fukushima water release
- 'Undisguised nuclear blackmail': Pyongyang on US sub entering South Korean port
- Indonesia warns nuclear weapons put Southeast Asia a 'miscalculation away' from a catastrophe
- North Korea technologically capable of launching nuclear strike on Japan, Tokyo warns
- Kim vows to boost North Korea's nuclear capability after observing new long-range missile launch
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un lauds new test-launch of Hwasong-18 ICBM
- Japan, South Korea displaying interest in acquiring nuclear arms – top Russian diplomat
- Lavrov allows for option of Russia signing protocol on nuclear-free zone treaty in SE Asia
- Japan calls on China to approach Fukushima water release in 'scientific manner'
- In rare UN appearance, North Korea defends missile launch

A. India

India-UK Electric Propulsion Technical Workshop held in New Delhi

PIB, July 3, 2023

An India-UK Electric Propulsion Technical Workshop to foster collaboration, exchange knowledge, and explore the exciting possibilities in the field of electric propulsion was organized in New Delhi on 3 July 2023. The day-long workshop was co-chaired by Shri Rajeev Prakash, Joint Secretary (Naval Systems) from the Indian side, and Commodore John Voyce, Naval Base Commander Portsmouth from the UK side. The workshop served as a crucial platform for experts, researchers, and industry professionals from both countries to come together, share insights, and engage in meaningful discussions on the development of electric propulsion for ships. The interaction and discussions provided a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, paving the way for collaboration and the exchange of ideas.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1937051>

With over 140 Space StartUps within a short span of time, India has gained sound footing and the entire world has begun to acknowledge that, says Dr Jitendra Singh:

PIB, July 6, 2023

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, MoS PMO, Department of Atomic Energy Dr Jitendra Singh said here today that with over 140 Space StartUps within a short span of time, India has gained sound footing and the entire world has begun to acknowledge India's capabilities and her potential in Space Technology.

Addressing the inaugural session of the G20 4th edition of Space Economy Leaders Meeting (SELM) here today, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the credit goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi who opened up India's

Space Sector to private players which has enabled a quantum jump in the last few years. Even though India began its Space journey several years later compared to some other countries, yet it is India today which is offering vital clues and inputs for the benefit of world's leading Space agencies, he said.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1937689>

Aatmanirbhar Bharat: MoD & HAL sign Rs 458 crore contract for two upgraded Dornier Aircraft for Indian Coast Guard

PIB, July 7, 2023

Ministry of Defence signed, in New Delhi on July 07, 2023, a contract with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for procurement of two Dornier Aircraft for Indian Coast Guard (ICG) along with associated Engineering Support package at an overall cost of Rs 458.87 crore. The aircraft will be procured under the Buy (Indian) Category.

The aircraft will be fitted with a number of advanced equipment viz., Glass Cockpit, Maritime Patrol Radar, Electro Optic Infra-Red device, Mission Management System etc. The addition will further bolster the aerial surveillance capability of maritime areas of responsibilities of the ICG.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1937926>

Chandrayaan-3 will open up new moon vistas for the world, says Dr Jitendra Singh

PIB, July 11, 2023

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, MoS PMO, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space and MoS Personnel Dr Jitendra Singh today said that Chandrayaan-3 will open up new Moon vistas for the world. In an exclusive interview with ET (Economic Times) Governance, Dr Jitendra Singh said that

India's earlier mission, Chandrayaan-1 had thrown up new light on various aspects of the moon as it was Chandrayaan-1 which brought before the world for the first time the evidence of the presence of water on the surface of the moon. Now, the whole world looks up to Chandrayaan 3 with great anticipation, expectation and hope, and at the same time waits for it to uncover many more new features and mysteries of the Moon and the universe, he said.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1938745>

More submarines, jets for Indian navy on cards as Modi visits France

Reuters, July 12, 2023

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi heads to France on Thursday to deepen ties with New Delhi's oldest strategic partner in the West, with a slew of high-profile defence deals expected and a new joint plan to ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Modi has been invited as the guest of honour at the Bastille Day celebrations by French President Emmanuel Macron. Units from India's army, navy and air force will also participate in the parade, including two of the 36 Rafale fighter jets India bought in 2015 for nearly \$9 billion. The visit will "provide an opportunity to chart the course of the partnership for the future across diverse sectors such as strategic, cultural, scientific, academic and economic cooperation," the Indian government said in a statement on Wednesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/more-submarines-jets-indian-navy-cards-modi-visits-france-2023-07-12/>

Sealmatic India shines bright with surging share prices, nuclear accreditation and an eye on global expansion

Mint, July 13, 2023

Sealmatic shares have seen a sharp uptick since they were listed on the BSE on March 1 at a price of ₹ 236.25. The price has since soared to ₹ 421.70 in just under 4 months

delivering nearly 74% to its investors. Sealmatic India hit a new 52-week high on Thursday as it secured nuclear accreditation.

Sealmatic India Limited has obtained accreditation for ISO 19443 for Nuclear Applications, making it the sole mechanical seal company in India and globally to have this certification. ISO 19443 is a nuclear-specific quality management standard that aims to enhance safety and quality in the nuclear supply chain.

<https://www.livemint.com/market/sealmatic-india-shines-bright-with-surging-share-prices-nuclear-accreditation-and-an-eye-on-global-expansion-11689247575216.html>

DAC approves proposals for procurement of 26 Rafale Marine aircraft from France to boost Indian Navy's operational capabilities

PIB, July 13, 2023

A meeting of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), held under the chairmanship of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, approved three proposals on July 13, 2023. The DAC granted Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for procurement of 26 Rafale Marine aircraft along with associated ancillary equipment, weapons, simulator, spares, documentation, crew training and logistic support for the Indian Navy from the French Government based on Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA). The price and other terms of purchase will be negotiated with the French Government after taking into account all relevant aspects, including comparative procurement price of similar aircraft by other countries. Further, integration of Indian designed equipment and establishment of Maintenance, Repair & Operations (MRO) Hub for various systems will be incorporated into the contract documents after due negotiations.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1939178>

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh says the successful launch of Chandrayaan-3 is a reiteration of India's indigenous capabilities and vindication of Vikram Sarabhai's dream

PIB, July 14, 2023

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, MoS PMO, Department of Space, Department of Atomic Energy, MoS Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr Jitendra Singh today said the successful launch of Chandrayaan-3 reiterates India's indigenous capabilities and vindicates the dream that Vikram Sarabhai saw six decades ago.

Speaking at Sriharikota after the launch, Dr Jitendra Singh said it is also vindication of the dream of Vikram Sarabhai, who might have been short of resources, but not short of confidence because he had faith in himself and in India's inherent potential and inherent acumen.

"The launch is a reaffirmation of this faith in India's potential and acumen", he said.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1939567>

India and France explore partnership for next 'ambitious' submarine plans

The Print, July 15, 2023

After the Scorpene submarines, India and France are "exploring more ambitious" projects to develop the Indian submarine fleet that is currently falling behind its projected 2030 strength.

This could entail France helping India with its plan to build six nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs), ThePrint has learnt.

The SSNs are nuclear-powered, but do not carry nuclear weapons, unlike the nuclear-powered ballistic-missile-carrying vessels called the SSBNs.

<https://theprint.in/defence/india-and-france-explore-partnership-for-next-ambitious-submarine-plans/1671235/>

Nuclear energy cooperation to plastic ban – key takeaways of India-France Horizon 2047 agreement

The Print, July 15, 2023

Marking 25 years of their strategic relations, India and France outlined the trajectory of its bilateral ties till 2047, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron agreeing on 63 initiatives Friday. This came during PM Modi's two-day France visit this week.

From defence, nuclear energy & space, to eliminating single-use plastic and a five-year Schengen visa, the countries agreed to "strengthen cooperation in the sectors of the future" as a part of the 'Horizon 2047' framework.

After holding bilateral talks at France's Élysée Palace on a range of issues, PM Modi called France "a natural partner" in India's journey of becoming a developed nation. In 2047, India will celebrate 100 years of Independence as well as diplomatic relations with France and the two countries will share 50 years of strategic partnership.

<https://theprint.in/world/nuclear-energy-cooperation-to-plastic-ban-key-takeaways-of-india-france-horizon-2047-agreement/1671051/>

India-France statement announces DRDO's technical office at Indian embassy

Mint, July 15, 2023

India is setting up a technical office of the DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) at its embassy in Paris amid increasing cooperation in the defence sector between the two nations, according to the India-France joint statement on Friday.

France is one of India's most important allies in building a self-sufficient defence industrial and technological foundation, the statement informed as quoted by ANI.

"The co-development and co-production of cutting-edge defence technologies for

the benefit of third nations is a joint commitment of India and France. To this end, both countries are also working towards adopting a Roadmap on Defence Industrial Cooperation,” the statement read.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/indiafrance-statement-announces-drds-technical-office-at-indian-embassy-in-paris-11689400513948.html>

B. Russia

Special op didn't reduce Russia's military capability, NATO Military Committee chair says

TASS, July 3, 2023

The special military operation in Ukraine has not caused a radical reduction of Russia's military-technical capabilities, says Admiral Rob Bauer, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee. “We should never underestimate the Russians and their ability to bounce back, as they have shown in history a couple of times,” he said, according to the Associated Press. According to the admiral, Russia's naval or air force potential has not decreased during the special military operation. In this regard, the alliance “will continue at [Russia] as a serious threat” in the seas, in the air and in space, Bauer underscored, adding that Russian forces are still very, very capable,” in addition to Russia's nuclear capabilities.

<https://tass.com/politics/1641981>

West setting stage for false nuclear terrorism charges against Moscow – Russian official

TASS, July 4, 2023

The US-led Western countries backing Kiev are deliberately working to paint Russia as a country engaged in nuclear terrorism so as to pin the blame on Moscow for potential false flags at the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), Renat Karchaa, advisor to the CEO of Russian state nuclear power corporation Rosenergoatom, told the Rossiya-24 TV channel. On June 23, Russian Permanent Representative to the UN Vasily Nebenzya said at a UN Security Council

meeting that Moscow was highly concerned about Kiev's increasingly shrill allegations that Russia is booby-trapping the ZNPP.

<https://tass.com/defense/1642339>

SCO member states call for strict compliance with Non-Proliferation Treaty – declaration

TASS, July 4, 2023

Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states advocate strict compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, says the joint New Delhi declaration, signed after the meeting of SCO Council of Heads of States, which took place in an online format Tuesday under India's presidency.

“Member states that are also parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, advocate strict compliance with the Treaty, comprehensive balanced promotion of all goals and principles enshrined in the Treaty, strengthening of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and facilitation of an equal, mutually beneficial cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy,” the declaration reads.

<https://tass.com/politics/1642447>

OSCE PA calls on Russia to support IAEA initiative on safety and security zone around ZNPP

TASS, July 5, 2023

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) welcomes the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) efforts toward stabilizing the situation around the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant and calls on Russia to support the initiative to establish a nuclear safety and security zone around it, according to a resolution adopted by the OSCE PA after its session in Canada's Vancouver from June 30 through July 4.

<https://tass.com/world/1642603>

Diplomat sees global risks in Kiev plans to conduct terror attack on Zaporozhye nuke plant

TASS, July 5, 2023

Ukraine is planning to conduct a terrorist attack on the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), with potential consequences affecting the entire globe, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Sputnik radio on Wednesday. “[Ukrainian President Vladimir] Zelensky is going to conduct a terror attack on the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant,” the diplomat said. According to Zakharova, neither the United States nor Great Britain sees this as a danger. “Meanwhile, not a single corner of the planet will be unaffected, because there are such things as the atmosphere, the world ocean and agriculture,” Zakharova emphasized.

<https://tass.com/politics/1642779>

Sabotage at ZNPP a real threat from Kiev – Kremlin

TASS, July 5, 2023

The situation around the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) is tense amid a high risk of acts of sabotage by the Kiev regime, Russian Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Wednesday. “The situation is quite tense because the risk of acts of sabotage by the Kiev regime is really high,” he pointed out. “Such acts of sabotage could have devastating consequences,” Peskov said. The Kremlin spokesman noted that Kiev “has repeatedly demonstrated its penchant for not shying away from anything.” “We saw evidence of that just recently, when the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant was blown up, which led to disastrous consequences. That is why everything is being done to counter this threat,” Peskov added.

<https://tass.com/defense/1642883>

Special op to end in days if NATO stops shipping weapons to Ukraine – Medvedev

TASS, July 5, 2023

The special military operation would end in several days if the US and its vassals stop

sending weapons to Ukraine, Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev said Wednesday, answering a question from TASS. “In NATO, primarily the US and its vassals, stop shipping weapons and munitions to Ukraine, the special military operation would end in several months; and if they stop shipping their weapons now, then the special op will end in mere days,” Medvedev said. “Actually, any war, even a world war, can stop very fast,” he continued. “Either if a peace treaty is signed or if one does what the US did in 1945, when it used its nuclear weapons and bomber to Japanese cities - Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They have, indeed, ended the war campaign back then, at a cost of lives of almost 300,000 civilians.”

<https://tass.com/politics/1642893>

Russia’s first upgraded Tu-160M strategic bomber enters state trials

TASS, July 6, 2023

Russia’s first upgraded Tupolev Tu-160M strategic bomber prototype has entered joint trials of the Defense Ministry and the United Aircraft Corporation (UAC), the press office of the state tech corporation Rostec announced on Thursday. “The first upgraded prototype of the Tu-160M strategic missile-carrying bomber developed by the Tupolev Public Company (part of the UAC within Rostec) has entered the program of state joint trials,” the press office said in a statement. The trials are being conducted by the joint crews of the Russian Defense Ministry and the design firm, it said. The Tu-160M is furnished with advanced armament and electronic warfare systems and onboard radio-electronic equipment based on state-of-the-art instrument-making technology.

<https://tass.com/defense/1643307>

Russia to respond harshly to Ukrainian attacks on ZNPP – diplomat

TASS, July 6, 2023

Russia’s response to any Kiev’s attacks on the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant will

be harsh, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said during a briefing Thursday. "Russia will continue to ensure protection of the ZNPP and will respond extremely harshly to any Ukrainian attacks on this facility," she said. "Once again, we call on the UN and IAEA management not to turn a blind eye to the situation around the ZNPP and to say it clearly who is to blame for the ongoing events and who actually poses a threat for security and functioning of this civilian facility." Ahead of the June 23 visit of IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi to Moscow, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky accused Moscow of allegedly preparing a terror attack at the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant. Without providing any proof, he notified Brazil, India, China, the US, as well as European, Middle Eastern and African countries about it.

<https://tass.com/defense/1643459>

UN not jumping to conclusions about Iran providing drones to Russia

TASS, July 7, 2023

UN Under Secretary General Rosemary DiCarlo has refrained from drawing conclusions about the origin of the drones allegedly provided to Russia by Iran. "France, Germany, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States also reiterated their request for the Secretariat to examine the debris of these UAVs in Kyiv or any other suitable location in letters to the Secretary-General and President of the Security Council and statements to the Council and media. The Permanent Representatives of Iran and the Russian Federation disputed the imagery and evidence provided by the United Kingdom and Ukraine of the UAVs, as well as the claim by France, Germany, Ukraine and the United Kingdom that Iran had transferred UAVs to the Russian Federation in a manner inconsistent with resolution 2231, noting that the accusations were not substantiated by evidence.

<https://tass.com/world/1643637>

Evidence of Iranian drone use in Ukraine laughable, says Russian envoy

TASS, July 7, 2023

All the "evidence" of the alleged use of Iranian drones in Ukraine is ridiculous, Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vasily Nebenzya said at a UN Security Council meeting on Thursday.

"The supposed 'photo evidence' is completely ridiculous. A 'photo' of [Ukrainian President Vladimir] Zelensky in front of what was said to be a Shahed drone went viral in the media. The drone in question is three meters long and has a wingspan of two meters," Nebenzya noted. "That said, the Ukrainian president must be about two and half meters tall. Internet users have long made fun of the photo. Other pieces of physical evidence include an unclear photo of some wreckage with no indications of its Iranian origin," the Russian envoy added.

<https://tass.com/politics/1643639>

Attack on Smolensk NPP may be retaliated by strike on nuke facilities in Europe - Medvedev

TASS, July 9, 2023

Russia may hit nuclear facilities in Eastern Europe if an attempted attack on the Smolensk Nuclear Power Plant with NATO missiles is confirmed, Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council Dmitry Medvedev said on Sunday. "If an attempted attack on the Smolensk (Desnogorsk) NPP with NATO missiles is confirmed, it will be necessary to look at a scenario of Russia's simultaneous strike on the South Ukraine NPP, Rovno NPP, and Khmelnytsky NPP, and on nuclear facilities in Eastern Europe. There is nothing to be embarrassed about," he wrote on his Telegram channel. According to posts on several Telegram channel earlier on Sunday, Ukrainian troops tried to stage a missile attack on the Smolensk Nuclear Power Plant.

<https://tass.com/politics/1644445>

Ukraine attempts attack on Russian territory, all missiles destroyed

TASS, July 10, 2023

The Kiev regime made an attempt on July 9 to deliver several missile strikes on Russian territory, with all the missiles downed or deflected, no casualties and minimal damage, the Main Staff of Russia's Aerospace Forces reported. According to preliminary data, the Ukrainian military delivered strikes by Soviet-made S-200 surface-to-air missiles reequipped for attacking ground targets. Initial reports said that shells from NATO countries were used. TASS has summarized key information on the missile attacks and the reaction to these strikes.

<https://tass.com/politics/1644571>

Turkey discussing construction of two more NPPs with Russia, China, South Korea – ministry

TASS, July 10, 2023

Turkey plans to construct another two major nuclear power plants (NPP), which it is negotiating with Russia, China and South Korea, the republic's Energy Minister Alparslan Bayraktar said on Monday. "Regarding the construction of another NPP in Sinop and one more in the Thrace region we continue negotiations with Russia, China and South Korea. The construction will start on the basis of intergovernmental agreements that will be submitted for approval to the parliament, and after permits are provided. We were actively engaged in energy diplomacy previously and we will continue it," he was quoted as saying by the Haberturk TV channel.

<https://tass.com/economy/1644581>

Construction of fourth power unit of El Dabaa NPP in Egypt to start in November

TASS, July 10, 2023

The construction of the fourth power generating unit of the El Dabaa nuclear power plant (NPP) in Egypt is planned to

start in November, the Russian nuclear industry newspaper Strana Rosatom reported via its Telegram channel on Monday. "The pouring of first concrete at Block 4 of El Dabaa NPP is expected in November, according to Board Chairman of the Nuclear Power Plants Authority of Egypt (NPPA) Amged El-Wakeel," the newspaper wrote. The plan is to time the event to coincide with Nuclear Energy Day celebrated in Egypt in November 19. Russia and Egypt signed an intergovernmental agreement on the construction of Egypt's first nuclear power plant in November 2015. It will be located on the Mediterranean coast, about 300 km north westward of Cairo.

<https://tass.com/economy/1644849>

Russia, Persian Gulf countries agree to cooperate in nuclear energy

TASS, July 11, 2023

Russia and the Gulf Cooperation Council member states have agreed to cooperate in the area of nuclear energy, according to a statement released after a meeting of ministers from the countries that took place in Moscow on Monday. "The sides have agreed <...> to strengthen cooperation in the peaceful use of atomic energy, nuclear security, power industry, energy efficiency, renewable energy, production of green hydrogen, as well as technologies of low-carbon circular economy with the purpose of reducing emissions," said the statement that was published on the council's website.

<https://tass.com/politics/1644999>

Nuclear arms prohibition treaty incompatible with NATO's deterrence policy – statement

TASS, July 12, 2023

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is incompatible with NATO's deterrence policy and presents a threat to the existing security architecture, says the final communique of the NATO summit in Vilnius, published on Tuesday. "We reiterate that the Treaty on the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) stands in opposition to and is inconsistent and incompatible with the Alliance's nuclear deterrence policy, is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, risks undermining the NPT, and does not take into account the current security environment," the document says.

<https://tass.com/world/1645539>

Russia ready to assist development of peaceful atom industry in Indonesia – Lavrov

TASS, July 12, 2023

Moscow is ready to share its advanced solutions in the peaceful nuclear industry with Indonesia, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview to the country's Kompas newspaper.

"We are ready to share with you our advanced solutions in the peaceful nuclear industry, including the construction of modern NPPs of big and small capacity, the non-energy use of nuclear technology, development of nuclear infrastructure and training of personnel," the top Russian diplomat said.

<https://tass.com/politics/1645645>

Russia to view F-16 fighter jets in Ukraine as threat in nuclear sphere – Lavrov

TASS, July 13, 2023

The very fact of Ukraine exploiting F-16 fighter jets that are capable of carrying nuclear weapons will be viewed by Russia as a Western threat in the nuclear sphere, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview with Lenta.ru daily.

"Just one example of an extremely dangerous turn of events is the United States plans to transfer F-16 fighter jets to the Kiev regime," Lavrov stated. "We have informed the nuclear powers, the United States, Britain and France, that Russia cannot ignore the ability of these aircraft to carry nuclear weapons. No amount of assurances will help here."

<https://tass.com/politics/1646161>

US indignation at Moscow-Minsk military-nuclear cooperation is hypocritical – ambassador

TASS, July 13, 2023

The US administration's indignation at the developing cooperation between Russia and Belarus in the military-nuclear sphere is hypocritical and does not stand up to criticism, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov said.

"The propensity of the United States and its allies to turn facts and logic inside out has long been no surprise to us," the Russian embassy quoted Antonov as saying on its Telegram channel. "The Administration's indignation at the strengthening of the Russia-Belarus cooperation in the military nuclear area is hypocritical and does not stand up to criticism."

<https://tass.com/politics/1646177>

No data available yet confirming whether North Korean missile landed in Russia – diplomat

TASS, July 14, 2023

Reports that a North Korean missile landed in Russia's exclusive economic zone have not been confirmed yet, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova wrote on her Telegram channel on Friday.

"Thus far, no data confirming the landing [of a missile] in our exclusive economic zone has been available," Zakharova said, commenting on a UN statement about a missile that was launched by North Korea on July 12, purportedly falling in Russia's exclusive economic zone.

<https://tass.com/defense/1646815>

C. Pakistan

China positions Pakistan as nuclear power export springboard

Nikkei Asia, July 2, 2023

China is accelerating its civil nuclear cooperation with Pakistan, as it seeks

export customers in a market dominated by Russia and the West.

A nuclear energy deal Pakistan signed with China in June, reportedly worth \$4.8 billion, might appear a curious move on Beijing's part. China has already had a bumpy ride in Pakistan's power business, where coal-operated stations have suffered from a debilitating cash crunch amid the South Asian country's foreign exchange shortage. Yet experts say the new arrangement is more about China's strategic ambitions than economics.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Energy/China-positions-Pakistan-as-nuclear-power-export-springboard2>

Ground-breaking ceremony held for Pakistan's Chashma 5

World Nuclear News, July 14, 2023

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has taken part in the ground-breaking ceremony for the 1200 MWe unit 5 of the Chashma nuclear power plant, which is being built by China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC). The event follows Pakistan's signing of a USD4.8 billion deal with China last month to build the Hualong One reactor at the plant, which is in Punjab province. That announcement by Sharif, who became prime minister last year, ended a long delay for the project which had originally been planned to start around 2021. The Chashma site - also referred to as Chasnupp - is already home to four Chinese-supplied CNP-300 pressurised water reactors, which were connected to the grid between 2000 and 2017.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Groundbreaking-ceremony-held-for-Pakistan-s-Chashm>

D. Europe

Medvedev raises specter of Poland using nuclear weapons

TASS, July 1, 2023

The potential deployment of nuclear weapons to Poland may prompt the country to use them, Russian Security Council

Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev told TASS. Commenting on Poland's ambitions to take part in NATO's Nuclear Sharing program, he said, "The only danger arising from the request to deploy nuclear weapons to Poland is that such weapons will be used." Earlier, Polish Prime Minister Morawiecki announced that Warsaw would like to join NATO's Nuclear Sharing program amid Russia's intentions to deploy tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus.

<https://tass.com/politics/1641467>

UK to breach Iran nuclear deal with refusal to lift sanctions

The Guardian, July 2, 2023

The UK and other European powers are expected to announce plans to breach the 2015 Iran nuclear deal for the first time when they confirm they are not going to lift sanctions on Tehran's use of missiles this October as required in the agreement.

Donald Trump took the US out of the nuclear deal in 2018, but Germany, France and the UK remained inside the deal, even though Iran responded to the US walkout by breaching the agreed limits on the quality and quantity of enriched uranium. Iran is closer to producing weapons-grade uranium than ever before. The decision by European powers to also breach the deal represents a risk since it is not clear how Tehran will react at a time it is already close to being able to manufacture weapons-grade enriched uranium.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/02/uk-to-breach-iran-nuclear-deal-with-refusal-to-lift-sanctions>

Poland hopes to convince NATO partners of its need to have nuclear weapons in country – PM

TASS, July 2, 2023

Poland's authorities intend to convince NATO partners over time of the need to deploy nuclear weapons in the country within the framework of the Nuclear Sharing program, Prime Minister Mateusz

Morawiecki said at a briefing. "Constant dropping wears away a stone," the prime minister said, commenting on the question that the US has not yet confirmed talks on nuclear weapons deployment with Poland. In the situation when Russia announces plans to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, Poland "also wants to have the highest security level," Morawiecki said. "We endeavor to strengthen security. Nuclear Sharing, the program of the joint use of nuclear weapons, would seriously fortify our security," he noted.

<https://tass.com/world/1641523>

Poland hopes to join NATO nuclear sharing agreement over Russian threat

The Jerusalem Post, July 2, 2023

Poland wants to join NATO's nuclear weapons sharing program, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has stated. The move comes in direct response to Russia deploying tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, which shares a border with Poland. NATO's nuclear sharing program is part of its policy of nuclear deterrence, which allows the provision of nuclear weapons to NATO member countries, partner countries, and allies that do not have their own nuclear weapons arsenal. These countries are allowed to host the nuclear weaponry of their allies in their own territory and are given the right to take part in nuclear policy decision-making. Of the three NATO countries with their own nuclear arsenal - the United States, the United Kingdom, and France - only the United States has provided nuclear weapons as part of the nuclear sharing program.

<https://www.jpost.com/international/article-748554>

German chancellor calls for ensuring ZNPP's security regardless of conflict in Ukraine

TASS, July 2, 2023

The Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant's (ZNPP) security must be ensured regardless of the combat operations in Ukraine,

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Sunday. "It was very important that first I and Chinese President Xi Jinping and them G20 countries in general stated very clearly that nuclear weapons must not be used. This [the destruction of the ZNPP] must not be allowed. The plant's security must be ensured regardless of the war. The International Atomic Energy Agency says this and all states of the global community have been stressing this," he said in an interview with the ARD television channel.

<https://tass.com/world/1641609>

Bulgarian opposition against sale of Russian reactors from Belene NPP to Kiev

TASS, July 5, 2023

Lawmakers from Bulgaria's opposition Revival and Socialist parties oppose holding an emergency meeting of the parliamentary energy committee in order to discuss the sale of Russian-made reactors from the Belene Nuclear Power Plant to Ukraine. "You sell Russian reactors to Ukraine. Are you mocking these people? You want the [Ukrainian] President to come here today and see how boorishly the Bulgarian parliament, the Bulgarian state is treating the suffering people of Ukraine, and then you expect Russian engineers to go there, install them and commission them. Come to your senses, people," says Socialist lawmaker Georgi Svilenski. "What is the urgency of [convening] this committee, considering that the draft [deal] was presented yesterday? There is not even a single opinion on it right now.

<https://tass.com/world/1642973>

French general forecasts failure of Ukrainian counteroffensive

TASS, July 5, 2023

Ukraine's counteroffensive is doomed to fail as the Russian military has the edge over its adversary in all respects, Jean-Bernard Pinatel, a retired French general, the former chief of SIPRA (Department of

Information and Public Relations of the Armed Forces) and an expert on Russia and the Middle East, said in a video interview provided to TASS. "I absolutely do not believe in the success of the Ukrainian counteroffensive. The Russians have a significant air superiority. But they also have an advantage on the ground. Even the Ukrainians themselves admit that they fire 4,000 shells a day, while Russia fires 20,000," said Pinatel, who specializes in Russia and the Middle East. The general also said that the ratio of losses in equipment and personnel is 5 to 1 in favor of Russia. According to Pinatel, the Kiev regime is severely hampered by its lack of human resources.

<https://tass.com/world/1642979>

Press review: Poland's shot at NATO nuke sharing and Kiev rings alleged nuke threat alarms

TASS, July 6, 2023

Experts assess Poland's prospects for joining NATO's Nuclear Sharing program; Kiev may seek to claim it prevented alleged nuclear disaster at Vilnius summit; and Switzerland looking to take part in Europe's Sky Shield defense initiative. These stories topped Thursday's newspaper headlines across Russia. NATO is not ruling out the potential inclusion of Poland in the bloc's Nuclear Sharing program, in which case nuclear weapons could be deployed to the Eastern European country. A spokesperson for the North Atlantic Alliance told Izvestia that member states are continuously readjusting their planning and strategy.

<https://tass.com/pressreview/1643173>

European consortium focuses on VVER fuel

World Nuclear News, July 7, 2023

The Accelerated Program for Implementation of Secure VVER Fuel Supply (APIS) is co-funded by the European Union, with EUR10 million (USD10.9 million) from its Euratom

programme. It started in January and has a three-year expected duration.

The APIS project has 12 partners from eight countries, including five nuclear power plant operators: EEZ from the Czech Republic; Energoatom from Ukraine; Fortum from Finland; Paks NPP from Hungary and Slovenske Elektrarne from Slovakia. There are also five fuel engineering and research organisations: Joint Research Centre-European Commission in Belgium; Ukraine's State Scientific and Technical Centre for Nuclear and Radiation Safety; ÚJV Řež from the Czech Republic; Uppsala University of Sweden and VUJE of Slovakia.

<https://world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/European-consortium-focuses-on-VVER-fuel>

Pro-nuclear energy EU states ask for 'level playing field' with renewables

Reuters, July 11, 2023

A group of pro-nuclear EU countries led by France will present a paper to the European Commission on Tuesday asking for a "level playing field" for nuclear energy in the bloc's fight against climate change, a draft of the paper seen by Reuters showed. In the draft dated July 3, the countries ask the Commission to promote Europe's nuclear industry in its efforts to decarbonise energy supplies and reach the 27-member bloc's Net Zero emissions by a 2050 target. The meeting, hosted by France's energy minister, will take place alongside an informal meeting of the EU's environment and energy ministers in Valladolid, Spain.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/pro-nuclear-energy-eu-states-ask-level-playing-field-with-renewables-2023-07-10/>

UK delays 'Great British Nuclear' launch

Politico, July 12, 2023

The U.K. government has delayed the official launch of a major arms-length body

intended to support the country's nuclear industry.

Energy Secretary Grant Shapps had been due to give a heavily-trailed speech at London's Science Museum on Thursday, setting out his plans for Great British Nuclear and its role helping the U.K. hit its net zero goals.

But in an email to attendees, seen by POLITICO, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) confirmed the event was being rescheduled "due to unforeseen circumstances."

Shapps was expected to use his speech to outline the next phase of a planned competition for manufacturing firms – including Rolls Royce and GE Hitachi – vying to develop small modular reactors (SMRs).

<https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-delays-great-british-nuclear-launch/>

France's nuclear power stations to limit energy output due to high river temperatures

Euronews, July 13, 2023

High temperatures could halve nuclear power production at plants along France's Rhone River this week.

Output restrictions are expected at two nuclear plants in eastern France due to high temperature forecasts, nuclear operator EDF said. It comes several days ahead of a similar warning that was made last year but will affect fewer plants.

The hot weather is likely to halve the available power supply from the 3.6 GW Bugey plant from 13 July and the 2.6 GW Saint Alban plant from 16 July, the operator said.

However, production will be at least 1.8 GW at Bugey and 1.3 GW at Saint Alban to meet grid requirements, and may change according to grid needs, the operator said.

<https://www.euronews.com/green/2023/07/13/frances-nuclear-power-stations-to-limit-energy-output-due-to-high-river-temperatures>

E. Ukraine

West eyeing Zaporozhye nuke incident as pretext for NATO entering Ukraine fight – official

TASS, July 3, 2023

The Western countries backing Kiev see the current tense situation around the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) as potentially providing a pretext for getting directly involved in the Ukraine conflict, Renat Karchaa, adviser to the CEO of Russian state nuclear power corporation Rosenergoatom, told TASS on Monday. On June 23, Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Vasily Nebenzya, said at a session of the UN Security Council that Moscow was alarmed over Kiev's recent pointed allegations that Russia had mined the ZNPP. Nebenzya pointed out that a visiting monitoring group from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had found no evidence at that time backing up Kiev's absurd statements about Russia allegedly planting mines at the ZNPP.

<https://tass.com/defense/1641749>

Update 169 - IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

IAEA, July 3, 2023

Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) has been reconnected to its only available back-up power line four months after it was lost, but the site's power situation remains extremely fragile during the ongoing military conflict and is not sustainable, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said today.

The ZNPP's connection to the single remaining 330 kilovolt (kV) power line – out of six such back-up lines before the conflict – was cut on 1 March due to damage sustained on the other side of the Dnipro River and restored in the evening of 1 July. Work to reconnect the power line

had been hampered by the difficult security situation in the southern region.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/update-169-iaea-director-general-statement-on-situation-in-ukraine-0>

ZNPP's security not guaranteed as long as Ukraine uses MLRS with impunity – official

TASS, July 3, 2023

The security of the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) can not be guaranteed until restrictions on the use of multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) are imposed on Ukraine, Rosenergoatom CEO's Advisor Renat Karchaa said on Russian TV Monday, adding that beefing up Russia's military presence is the world's only hope for preventing a "nuclear incident" in this situation. "Rockets [or shells] of the M777 howitzer, the HIMARS [MLRS] or the Storm Shadow missile – these are the things that pose the greatest threat today. Any talk about nuclear security is pointless in a situation when no restrictions are imposed on Ukraine, no responsibility is stipulated for use of military force at the ZNPP, use of MLRS in particular," Karchaa said.

<https://tass.com/defense/1641959>

Update 170 – IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

IAEA, July 4, 2023

Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) lost the connection to its main external power line early this morning, forcing it to rely on recently restored back-up power supplies for the electricity it needs for essential nuclear safety and security functions, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said.

The ZNPP's sole remaining 750 kilovolt (kV) power line – out of four available before the conflict – was disconnected at 01:21am local time today. It was not immediately known what had prompted the power cut or how long it would last.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/update-170-iaea-director-general-statement-on-situation-in-ukraine>

Ukraine cut off power line that feeds Zaporozhye NPP – official

TASS, July 4, 2023

Ukraine cut off the Dneprovskaya power line that feeds the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant, said Renat Karchaa, an advisor to the director general of Rosenergoatom. "At 01:07 am Moscow time today <...> they (Ukraine – TASS) cut off Dneprovskaya Line 750," he said on Rossiya-24 television.

The Zaporozhye NPP said that after the line was disconnected, the plant switched to using standby transformers. "No violations of the limits and conditions of safe operation have been recorded. Radiation background on the territory of the Zaporozhye NPP, in the sanitary protection zone and observation zone is normal and consistent with the natural background," the plant said on Telegram.

<https://tass.com/defense/1642271>

Zaporozhye NPP power supply restored

TASS, July 4, 2023

The power supply to the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) has been restored after a disruption Tuesday, according to the ZNPP Telegram channel.

"Operations on engagement of the 'Dneprovskaya' 750-kV power line have been completed by 14:00. The power plant operates as usual," ZNPP Director Yuri Chernichuk said in a statement. Last night, Ukraine shut down the Dneprovskaya power line that supplies power to the nuclear power plant. After the power line was shut down, the power plant switched to reserve transformers.

<https://tass.com/economy/1642411>

Update 171 – IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

IAEA, July 5, 2023

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts present at Ukraine's

Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) have in recent days and weeks inspected parts of the facility – including some sections of the perimeter of the large cooling pond – and have also conducted regular walkdowns across the site, so far without observing any visible indications of mines or explosives, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said today.

The IAEA experts have requested additional access that is necessary to confirm the absence of mines or explosives at the site, Director General Grossi said. In particular, access to the rooftops of reactor units 3 and 4 is essential, as well as access to parts of the turbine halls and some parts of the cooling system at the plant, he added.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/update-171-iaea-director-general-statement-on-situation-in-ukraine>

Ukraine spy chief says nuclear threat at Zaporizhzhia plant subsiding

Reuters, July 6, 2023

Ukraine's military spy chief said on Thursday that the threat of a Russian attack on the vast Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant was receding, but that it could easily return as long as the facility remained under occupation by Moscow's forces.

The intelligence chief, Kyrylo Budanov, made the comment in an interview with Reuters after days of warnings by Ukrainian and Russian officials accusing each other of plotting an attack at Europe's largest nuclear plant. "The threat is decreasing", said Budanov, who is the head of Ukraine's Main Directorate of Intelligence at the Ministry of Defence, declining to say how he was able to say.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-spy-chief-says-nuclear-threat-zaporizhzhia-plant-subsiding-2023-07-06/>

Satellite images show no explosive devices on Zaporozhye NPP's roof – report

TASS, July 6, 2023

Satellite images made by the US company Planet Labs didn't show any explosive

devices on the rooftops of two reactors at the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant, Sky News reported on Wednesday. "We visually compared the satellite images taken today with older images taken in early June. There are no obvious differences on the roofs of reactors three and four but explosive devices may be small enough to not be visible on these images," said Adam Parker, an OSINT editor at Sky News. The television channel, which published the satellite images, said it was unable to verify the allegation by Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky from July 4 that Russia had placed explosive devices objects resembling explosives on the roofs of reactors at the ZNPP.

<https://tass.com/military-operation-in-ukraine/1643059>

IAEA cannot control situation at ZNPP, says Zelensky

TASS, July 6, 2023

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts cannot control the situation at the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky said on Wednesday. "There are four IAEA inspectors at the plant. What can four people control? The plant occupies a large territory. Four people, even if they are honest, can control nothing," he said during a video link with Argentinian students. The video was posted on Zelensky's Telegram channel. Renat Karchaa, an adviser to the director general of Russia's Rosenergoatom nuclear power engineering company, said earlier that Ukraine will try to attack the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) in the coming night by dropping bombs loaded with radioactive waste removed from the South Ukraine NPP on July 3.

<https://tass.com/world/1643109>

Update 172 – IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

IAEA, July 7, 2023

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts have received additional

access at the site of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), without – so far – observing any visible indications of mines or explosives, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said today.

The IAEA experts – who in recent days and weeks have inspected parts of the facility and continued to conduct regular walkdowns across the site – were yesterday also able to check a wider section of the perimeter of the ZNPP's large cooling pond than previously.

As part of this, they visited the isolation gate separating the cooling pond from what remains of the Kakhovka reservoir after the destruction of the downstream dam a month ago.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/update-172-iaea-director-general-statement-on-situation-in-ukraine>

Risks of nuclear incident at Zaporozhye NPP go down – Rosenergoatom

TASS, July 8, 2023

Risks of Kiev staging a nuclear incident at the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) have reduced considerably but sabotage attempts are not excluded, Renat Karchaa, an adviser to the director general of Russia's Rosenergoatom nuclear power engineering company, said on Friday. "The probability of this (a nuclear incident – TASS) has reduced considerably," he said in an interview with the Rossiya-24 television channel. "However, it cannot be 100% excluded. We should not relax thinking that this has become a thing of the past." According to Karchaa, Ukraine will stop at nothing to do irreparable harm to Russia.

<https://tass.com/world/1644137>

Wildfire in Chernobyl Exclusion Zone continues to rage – Ukraine's media resource

TASS, July 12, 2023

Firefighters have been unable to extinguish a wildfire in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone for the third day running, Ukraine's Vesti

news media resource said on Wednesday citing a source inside the National Police of Ukraine.

According to the resource, on July 9, emergency services were alerted by a report of a forest floor fire near the village of Ilovnitsa in the Kiev region in the territory of the Detyatkovsky woodlands. The fire has engulfed an area of five hectares. The cause of the fire is being looked into.

<https://tass.com/emergencies/1646047>

Update 173 – IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

IAEA, July 12, 2023

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts have in recent days continued to inspect parts of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) – without seeing any mines or explosives – but are still waiting to gain the necessary access to the rooftops of reactor units 3 and 4 following recent reports that explosives may have been placed there, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said, adding that the nuclear safety and security situation remains very precarious.

The five basic principles that Director General Grossi established on 30 May at the United Nations Security Council state that there should be no attack from or against the plant and that it should not be used as storage or a base for heavy weapons – multiple rocket launchers, artillery systems and munitions, and tanks.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/update-173-iaea-director-general-statement-on-situation-in-ukraine>

F. Belarus

Lukashenko confident nuclear weapons will not be used while in Belarus

TASS, July 1, 2023

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said on Friday that he is

convinced that nuclear weapons will not be used as long as they are deployed in Belarus. "The longer we live, the more clearly we see that they (nuclear weapons – TASS) should stay here, in Belarus, in a safe place. And I am sure that we will never have to use them as long as they are here and that no enemy will ever step onto our soil," the BelTA agency quoted him as saying. He said that he is criticized by Western countries as well as the Belarusian opposition, who once were against the construction of a nuclear power plant in the country, for the decision to deploy nuclear weapons. As for the nuclear plant, in his words, time has shown that it was the only right decision. Moreover, he noted that even Europe has returned to nuclear energy having proclaimed it safe and green.

<https://tass.com/world/1641315>

Russia to always consult with Belarus on use of nuclear weapons, says President Lukashenko

TASS, July 6, 2023

Russia will always consult with Belarus on the possible use of nuclear weapons, President of Belarus said on Thursday.

"Even if Russia had ventured to do it, I'm sure it [Moscow] would have held consultations with its closest neighbor," the Belarusian leader said at a meeting with foreign and domestic media outlets attended by a TASS correspondent. "Therefore there must be no worries: we have no intentions of attacking either the United States, or Germany or Great Britain. In general, we are not intending to attack anyone with the use of nuclear weapons," Lukashenko said.

<https://tass.com/defense/1643269>

Belarus ushers in arrival of Russian nuclear warheads – Lukashenko

TASS, July 6, 2023

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said that some Russian nuclear warheads have already been moved to the republic. "A certain number of nuclear warheads have been deployed to Belarusian soil," he

said during a meeting with foreign and Belarusian media representatives attended by a TASS correspondent. Lukashenko added that the warheads had not been transported overland. According to him, Russia and Belarus will decide on their placement and deployment jointly. "We cannot service them by ourselves, with the current contingent of armed forces. So currently we are doing everything together," he clarified.

<https://tass.com/defense/1643465>

Explosion at ZNPP not to end war in Ukraine, to seriously harm Europe – Lukashenko

TASS, July 6, 2023

A potential explosion at the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) will not end the conflict in Ukraine, but will inflict a colossal damage to all countries of the continent, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said Thursday. "Even if they blow up the station – this will not end the war. It will inflict colossal damage to the entire Europe, and not just Europe, but the entire Eurasian continent. The American continents will also be affected. But it will not end the war," the Belarusian leader said at a meeting with foreign and Belarusian reporters. Lukashenko also said that he did not discuss the situation around the ZNPP with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

<https://tass.com/defense/1643563>

Minsk not to disclose tactical nukes' storage location – Defense Ministry

TASS, July 7, 2023

Belarusian authorities do not plan to disclose where tactical nuclear munitions are stored, says Major General Leonid Kasinsky, aide to Belarusian Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin. He made this remark, commenting on the CIA's claim that the nuclear weapons are being stored near the city of Osipovichi, in the Mogilev Region. "You do realize that no one will ever tell you the location. What the CIA

believes is their business," the Major General told reporters Friday. Kasinsky noted President Alexander Lukashenko's remarks, who said during a July 6 meeting with reporters that Western intelligence agencies failed to track the relocation of Russian tactical nuclear weapons to the republic.

<https://tass.com/defense/1643991>

Second unit of the Belarusian NPP brought to 100% capacity for dynamic tests

TASS, July 12, 2023

The Ministry of Energy of Belarus announced the launch of the second power unit of the Belarusian NPP to 100% capacity for dynamic tests.

"As part of the pilot operation program, the second power unit of the Belarusian nuclear power plant was brought to 100% capacity for dynamic testing," the ministry's telegram channel said.

The Ministry of Energy explained that specialists will have to carry out a wide range of measurements, including with the subsequent unloading of the power unit and assessment of the characteristics of the equipment before starting its comprehensive testing at nominal power.

<https://tass.com/society/1646065>

Minsk passes protocol to agreement on Russia's lending for BelNPP construction

TASS, July 15, 2023

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus has greenlighted the protocol on amendments to the agreement with Russia on issues of lending for the construction of the Belarusian nuclear power plant (NPP), according to a respective decree released on the republic's national legal online portal.

"To approve the protocol on amendments to the agreement between the government of the Republic of Belarus and the government of the Russian Federation on

providing an export credit loan to the government of the Republic of Belarus for the construction of the nuclear power plant on the territory of the Republic of Belarus dated November 25, 2011 signed in the city of Moscow on March 2, 2023 and in the city of Minsk on March 3, 2023," the document reads.

<https://tass.com/economy/1647143>

G. NATO

NATO views possibility of nuclear, chemical weapons use against it as potential threat

TASS, July 12, 2023

NATO countries view the potential use of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons against the alliance's members as a security threat, says the final communique of the NATO summit in Vilnius, published on Tuesday. "The potential use of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) materials or weapons against NATO by hostile state and non-state actors remains a central and evolving threat to our security," the document says.

<https://tass.com/world/1645555>

NATO calls for moratorium on production of fissile materials

TASS, July 12, 2023

NATO is urging all countries to refrain from producing fissile materials that can be used for producing nuclear weapons, the alliance's members said in the final communique of the Vilnius summit on Tuesday. "We call on all states that have not yet done so to declare and maintain voluntary moratoria on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices," the document says. Participants of the summit underscored that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the essential bulwark against the spread of nuclear weapons.

<https://tass.com/world/1645581>

NATO countries agree to strengthen arms control – statement

TASS, July 12, 2023

During their summit in Vilnius, NATO member states have agreed to further strengthen arms control, the alliance said in the final communique of the Vilnius summit on Tuesday.

“Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation have made and should continue to make an essential contribution to achieving the Alliance’s security objectives and for ensuring strategic stability and our collective security,” the document says.

According to the statement, “after the end of the Cold War, NATO dramatically reduced the number of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe and its reliance on nuclear weapons in NATO strategy.”

<https://tass.com/world/1645587>

H. Africa

IAEA Concludes International Physical Protection Advisory Mission in Nigeria

IAEA, July 14, 2023

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has completed an International Physical Protection Advisory mission in Nigeria today. This peer review mission aimed to assess Nigeria’s nuclear security regime and provide recommendations to enhance its effectiveness.

The twelve day mission was carried out at the request of the Nigerian government.

The team reviewed the nuclear security regime for nuclear and other radioactive material and associated facilities and activities.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-concludes-international-physical-protection-advisory-mission-in-nigeria>

I. North America

World’s Biggest Nuclear Power Plant Being Planned in Canada

Bloomberg, July 5, 2023

A Canadian utility is starting early work to expand a nuclear plant, potentially building the world’s biggest facility as growing demand for clean energy spurs interest in atomic energy.

The Ontario government said Wednesday Bruce Power will conduct an environmental assessment of adding as much as 4.8 gigawatts of capacity to its plant in Canada’s most-populous province. The plant’s eight reactors currently have about 6.2 gigawatts of capacity and supply 30% of the province’s power.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-07-05/world-s-biggest-nuclear-power-plant-being-planned-in-canada#xj4y7vzkg>

Cuba calls US nuclear submarine at Guantanamo Bay an ‘escalation’

Aljazeera, July 11, 2023

Cuba’s government has decried the presence of a nuclear-powered submarine at the United States naval base in Guantanamo Bay, calling it a “provocative escalation”. In a statement released on Tuesday, the Caribbean nation’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the sub had relocated to Guantanamo Bay on Wednesday and stayed until Saturday.

The presence of the submarine “makes it imperative to wonder what is the military reason behind this action in this peaceful region of the world, what target is it aiming at and what is the strategic purpose it pursues”, the statement said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/11/cuba-calls-us-nuclear-submarine-at-guantanamo-bay-an-escalation>

J. United States of America

U.S. destroys the last of its chemical weapons stockpile

The Washington Post, July 10, 2023

The United States' last declared chemical weapon — an aging rocket filled with sarin nerve agent — was destroyed late last week at a Kentucky munitions plant, the Pentagon affirmed Monday, ending a decades-long operation to cull U.S. stocks of deadly toxins. Chemical agents, whose terrifying use throughout World War I led to global proliferation despite their horrifying effects, are considered weapons of mass destruction. They can disperse gases, liquids, aerosols or powders intended to kill or incapacitate their victims. Some cause a person's skin to blister. Others induce suffocation or destroy the nervous system. At its peak, the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile measured about 30,000 metric tons.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/07/10/chemical-weapons-pentagon/#>

United States, Iran Resume Nuclear Talks

Arms Control Association, July, 2023

After a monthslong stalemate, Iran and the United States resumed indirect talks over Iran's advancing nuclear program. It is unlikely that the two governments will reach an agreement to restore the 2015 nuclear deal or a new accord soon, but both sides appear willing to take steps to deescalate tensions. Such steps could reduce the likelihood of conflict because Iran's current nuclear trajectory is increasing the risk that the United States or Israel will determine that military action is necessary to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Since talks to restore the nuclear deal, or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), stalled last August, the political space for the United States and Europe to reach a deal with Iran has narrowed.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2023-07/news/united-states-iran-resume-nuclear-talks>

Sam Altman-Backed Nuclear Developer Oklo to Go Public With SPAC

Bloomberg, July 11, 2023

Oklo Inc., a developer of advanced nuclear systems backed by Sam Altman, plans to go public through a merger with his special-purpose acquisition company AltC Acquisition Corp.

The company would go public by combining with AltC Acquisition, a SPAC co-founded by Altman, the Chief Executive Officer of OpenAI, and former Citigroup banker Michael Klein, according to a release Tuesday. The transaction values California-based Oklo at about \$850 million.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-07-11/nuclear-developer-oklo-to-go-public-through-spac-merger#xj4y7vzkg>

Christensen Ranch project ready for restart

World Nuclear News, July 13, 2023

US uranium mining company Uranium Energy Corp (UEC) announced its plan to accelerate the steps required for a resumption of operations has been completed, enabling a faster restart at the Christensen Ranch in-situ leach (ISL) project in Wyoming. UEC acquired Uranium One Americas Inc (U1A) from Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom in December 2021. U1A's assets included the production-ready Christensen Ranch ISL project and associated orebodies, which together with the Irigaray central processing plant (CPP), form the Willow Creek uranium mine and have been under care-and-maintenance since 2018.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Christensen-Ranch-project-ready-for-restart>

Marshall Islands calls for US to pay more compensation over nuclear tests

The Guardian, July 13, 2023

The foreign minister of the Marshall Islands has called for more US

compensation over the legacy of massive US nuclear testing to enable the renewal of a strategic agreement governing bilateral relations. Marshall Islanders are still plagued by health and environmental effects of 67 nuclear bomb tests from 1946 to 1958, which included Castle Bravo at Bikini Atoll in 1954 – the largest US bomb ever detonated. Jack Ading told a US congressional hearing a memorandum of understanding covering terms to extend his country's Compact of Free Association (Cofa) with Washington was signed in January without proper domestic authorization and under pressure of a deadline for inclusion in Joe Biden's budget.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/13/marshall-islands-pacific-us-nuclear-bomb-test-payment>

Biden says chances are zero that Russia will use nuclear weapons

TASS, July 14, 2023

US President Joe Biden on Thursday downplayed the chances that Russia will use nuclear weapons in connection with the crisis around Ukraine.

"I don't think there's any real prospect - you never know but - of Putin using nuclear weapons. Not only has the West, but China and the rest of the world have said - don't go there," he said at a joint news conference with his Finnish counterpart Sauli Niinisto in Helsinki, in comments broadcast on the White House website.

The Finnish capital was the final stop on Biden's European tour, which also took him to Vilnius and London. In Vilnius, the US president took part in a NATO summit.

<https://tass.com/world/1646627>

US, South Korea, Japan Conduct Missile Defense Drill

VOA News, July 15, 2023

The U.S., South Korea and Japan held a joint naval missile defense exercise on Sunday to

counter North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats, the South's navy said, days after the North launched an intercontinental ballistic missile.

North Korea fired its latest Hwasong-18 missile, which Pyongyang describes as the core of its nuclear strike force, off the east coast on Wednesday in what it said was a "strong practical warning" to the adversaries.

Sunday's trilateral drill was conducted in international waters between South Korea and Japan, bringing together destroyers equipped with Aegis radar systems from the three countries, the navy said.

<http://www.voanews.com/a/us-south-korea-japan-conduct-missile-defense-drill/7182724.html>

West Asia

K. Iran

Iran's Damavand-2 Destroyer to be armed with hypersonic missiles

Tehran Times, July 3, 2023

The Damavand-2 destroyer will soon be armed with a hypersonic missile, Iranian Navy Commander Shahram Irani announced on Monday, a step that he said will greatly bolster Iran's naval power. The advanced Moudge-class warship, the Damavand destroyer, which is entirely Iranian, is an improved version of the Jamaran destroyer. The destroyer was built thanks to the collaboration between Defense Ministry experts, armed forces including the Navy, and knowledge-based industries. It has been effectively incorporated into the active combat unit of the Navy using cutting-edge technology. Notable features of the Damavand destroyer include new radar and missile systems, thrust systems, and advanced weaponry.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/486446/Iran-s-Damavand-2-Destroyer-to-be-armed-with-hypersonic-missiles>

Deputy Commander Underscores Iran's All-Out Defense Progress Amid Sanctions

Fars News Agency, July 4, 2023

Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari underlined that Tehran has made significant headway in various sectors of its defense program despite Western sanctions, and further said that Iran's Armed Forces, based on potential threats, prepare several scenarios to defend the country against any act of aggression.

"Despite sanctions, Iran has experienced growth in all fields and achieved significant accomplishments through the efforts of Iranian elites and youth," Rear Admiral Sayyari said on Monday.

"Highly qualified human resources can contribute to the growth and excellence of the organization," he added.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020413000263/Depy-Cmmmander-Underscres-Iran's-All-O-Defense-Prgress-Amid-Sancins>

Iran Emerging as Hub of Radiopharmaceuticals: Nuclear Chief

Tasnim News Agency, July 4, 2023

In comments at a cultural event on Monday, Eslami highlighted Iran's progress in the development of radiopharmaceuticals for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases, saying the production capacity in this scientific sector could be increased by five to seven times. "Considering the capacities that have been created, Iran will soon emerge as a hub of production and export of radiopharmaceuticals," he stated. Lauding the AEOI's strides during the past 16 months in plasma science and technologies, Eslami said local experts have also made great progress in developing radiation technologies used in the medical and agricultural sectors. He also pointed to the production of high-quality heavy water in the country, noting that Iran has gained a strong position in this industry in the world

and can export the glut of its heavy water to other countries.

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2023/07/04/2920496/iran-emerging-as-hub-of-radiopharmaceuticals-nuclear-chief>

Iran produces its 1st nuclear reactor simulator, AEOI chief says

Islamic Republic News Agency, July 4, 2023

Referring to the production of the first nuclear reactor simulator in the country, Eslami said on Tuesday that the simulator is an effective part of the process and assemblies of a power plant or a nuclear power reactor with a scale of 100 MW of heat that is capable of managing the control room. Iran succeed to manufacture the first nuclear reactor simulator in the country, he said, adding that the simulator is one of the most effective achievements of the experts in the country that is most influential in the field of advanced science and technologies.

From now on AEOI has big projects and power plants in hand, he said, noting that the older generation of the simulators have already handed over to eight universities in the country so they can use them.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/85160054/Iran-produces-its-1st-nuclear-reactor-simulator-AEOI-chief-says>

Iran enjoys self-sufficiency in radar system, missile weapons

Mehr News Agency, July 4, 2023

Commander of the Iranian Army's Air Defense Force has said that Iran's Army enjoys self-sufficiency and optimization of radar systems and missile weapons. Visiting the operational sections of the Khandab air defense group on Tuesday, Brigadier General Alireza Sabahi-Fard evaluated the combat capability and defense readiness of this group and its subsidiary sites. During his visit, Brigadier General Sabahi-Fard said that today, the defense complex has achieved a level of knowledge, ability, and authority that modern defense systems are domestically

designed, produced, and placed in the operational cycle.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/202781/Iran-enjoys-self-sufficiency-in-radar-system-missile-weapons>

N. Chief: Iran-IAEA Cooperation Merely Limited to NPT, Safeguards

Fars News Agency, July 5, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami once again ruled out rumors about installation of surveillance cameras at a power plant in Central Iran, and underscored that Tehran's coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Safeguards Agreement. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a weekly cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, Eslami rejected a claim made by an Iranian lawmaker that the government has violated the Iranian Parliament Strategic Law, underlining that his country is not offering collaboration with the IAEA beyond customary boundaries. Further, the AEOI chief refuted activation of more IAEA monitoring cameras at a site in the Central Iranian province of Isfahan.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020414000536/N-Chief-Iran-IAEA-Cperain-Merely-Limited-NPT-Safeguards>

Report: Nuclear Reactor Simulator Being Built in Iran

Israel Defense, July 6, 2023

A nuclear reactor simulator is being built in Iran for the first time, representing a significant technological achievement. This, according to the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Committee, Mohammad Eslami.

Eslami explained that the simulator's role is to monitor and supervise the temperatures within the reactor facility, and it has a thermal power of 100 megawatts. According to Eslami, the simulator is a domestically-produced product in terms of hardware and software and was built without external assistance. The simulator

is located at the Nuclear Science Institute.

Global Security reports that the simulator is primarily intended for training, education, and the study of operational teams and scientists, as well as for research purposes for students. In the past, the Atomic Energy Committee had eight older simulators, but they were handed over to universities.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58797>

Comdr: Iran makes MiG-29 electronic warfare simulator operational

Islamic Republic News Agency, July 9, 2023

Mousavi made the remarks on the sidelines of visiting Shahid Sattari Aeronautical University, southwestern Tehran. The simulator has been successfully tested and finalized by the skilled Iranian pilots and will soon be delivered to the units that have MiG-29 aircraft, he stated. The electronic warfare system improves the operational capacity of the units and is one of the valuable achievements at Shahid Sattari Aeronautical University, he noted. He went on to say that the electronic warfare simulators of all aircraft, including F-4 and Sukhoi Su-24, were made by researchers and commanders of Shahid Sattari Aeronautical University.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/85164471/Comdr-Iran-makes-MiG-29-electronic-warfare-simulator-operational>

Official Underlines Iran's Unique Place in Manufacturing Diagnostic, Therapeutic Radiopharmaceuticals in West Asia

Fars News Agency, July 12, 2023

Ghannadi said in an interview that Iran ranks first in the region in terms of production of diagnostic and therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals. He added that his country also has a high place in exporting diagnostic and therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals. Diagnostic

radiopharmaceuticals are useful in diagnosing a great range of diseases such as brain hemorrhage, various types of cancer, osteoporosis, and cardiac conditions, the official continued. "Each year, at least one million Iranian patients use [these] diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals such as Technetium-99m [which is being produced by the country]...and helps diagnose 85 percent of the [above] diseases," he stated.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020421000268/Official-Underlines-Iran's-Unie-Place-in-Manfacring-Diagnsic->

Iran Not Undertaking Nuclear Weapons Development Activities, Says US Intel

Israel Defense, July 12, 2023

Iran is not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that would be necessary to produce a testable nuclear device, says the Office of the US Director of National Intelligence in its latest report, titled "Iran's Nuclear Weapons Capability and Terrorism Monitoring Act 2022." "Since the assassination of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh in November 2020, Iran has accelerated the expansion of its nuclear program, stated that it is no longer constrained by any Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) limits, and undertaken research and development activities that would bring it closer to producing the fissile material needed for completing a nuclear device following a decision to do so," says the report's summary.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58864>

L. Israel

Israel to Procure Third "Adir" F-35 Squadron

Israel Defense, July 3, 2023

Israel's Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant has approved the recommendation proposed by the senior defense echelon, to procure a third F-35 squadron for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The Ministry of Defense will purchase a total of 25 F-35 aircraft from the American

government, which will be manufactured by Lockheed Martin. This acquisition will expand the world's most advanced stealth aircraft fleet operated by the Israeli Air Force to 75 aircraft. Following the Minister of Defense's approval, the IMOD Mission to the USA will issue an official letter of request (LOR) to the F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office (JPO). This step will facilitate the approval and signing of the transaction in the coming months.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58747>

Ahead of the Arrow-3 Deal: Meeting of High-Ranking Defense Officials from Israel and Germany

Israel Defense, July 4, 2023

The Director General of the Israel Ministry of Defense, Major General (Res.) Eyal Zamir, met with Mr. Benedikt Zimmer, the State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry of Defense, in Berlin yesterday (Monday). During the meeting, the Director General of the Israel Ministry of Defense updated his colleague on the IDF operation targeting terror hotspots in the city of Jenin. The leaders discussed the strengthening of defense relations between the two countries' defense ministries and advanced the agreement regarding the sale of the Arrow 3 air and missile defense system to Germany. Maj. Gen. (Res.) Zamir stated that according to the directive of the Minister of Defense, Yoav Gallant, the Israel Ministry of Defense is working to finalize the process soon. Once the sale receives approval from the American government, the production phase will commence.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58768>

Dassault Aviation to use 3DEXPERIENCE platform to develop Future Combat Air System

Israel Defense, July 4, 2023

Dassault Systèmes and Dassault Aviation announced the next step in their long-term collaboration aimed at bringing the highest levels of security, sovereignty and

collaboration on the cloud to major defense programs. The announcement was made at the Paris Air Show last month. Dassault Aviation will use Dassault Systèmes' 3DEXPERIENCE platform on the cloud to develop its next-generation fighter, a key project in the Future Combat Air System industrial collaboration to ensure the future of European autonomy and sovereignty in defense and security. This cloud environment will be localized in Dassault Aviation premises and operated by Dassault Systèmes through its OUTSCALE brand, whose SecNumCloud qualification is the highest security recognition given by the National Cybersecurity Agency of France.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58769>

Six Destroyed Explosives Labs, Hundreds of Bullets Seized: IDF Ends Jenin Operation

Israel Defense, July 5, 2023

Overnight, Israel has concluded counterterrorism operation "Home and Garden", held in Jenin for the past two days. According to IDF data, 14 apartments and command rooms of persons of interest were located and neutralized by security forces; six explosives labs were located and destroyed; Ten mortar charges, 24 M-16 rifles, eight handguns, and hundreds of bullets for various types of weapons were seized and neutralized; and hundreds of thousands of terror funds were seized. Furthermore, dozens of kilograms of chemical materials for manufacturing bombs were seized, and six underground tunnels and two underground smuggling tunnels associated with a terrorist organization were discovered, containing numerous combat equipment.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58781>

Elta, BAE to Develop Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T)

Israel Defense, July 6, 2023

BAE Systems announced that it has tested manned-unmanned teaming (MUM-T) on the Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) C4UAS as a technology demonstration using

IAI/ELTA Systems Rex MK II Unmanned Infantry Combat Support System. The teaming technology enhances mission effectiveness through greater situational awareness and decision-making capabilities. According to BAE, the successful demonstration of MUM-T capabilities shows the versatility of the built-in growth capacity in the ACV C4UAS. The ability to incorporate MUM-T into mission planning expands mission parameters and the tactical sphere while decreasing the risk to human and technological assets in uncertain or hostile environments.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58794>

Another Layer of Protection: David's Sling Successfully Performs Live-Fire Tests

Israel Defense, July 10, 2023

The Israeli Air Force, Ministry of Defense Israel Missile Defense Organization, and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems have successfully concluded a series of exercises and tests in southern Israel in which the "David's Sling" air and missile defense system intercepted complex scenarios. The scenarios simulated advanced threats, enhancing the system's capabilities and significantly improving the State of Israel's multi-tiered air and missile defense array. The "David's Sling" successfully performed a series of live-fire tests, specifically designed to counter advanced threats like ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, aircrafts, and UAVs. Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and Elbit Systems also participated in the tests.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58834>

IAI Acquires India's HELA Systems

Israel Defense, July 10, 2023

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) has signed a deal to acquire HELA Systems Private Limited, an Indian subsidiary of ELTA Systems Ltd. IAI's investment in Aerospace Services India is a strong demonstration of IAI's support for the

Indian government's Atmanirbhar Bharat (Make in India) vision. The current deal also shows IAI's commitment to its strong partnership with India's DRDO in developing and supporting advanced systems for India's Armed Forces. HELA will provide full Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul product support for ELTA Systems, as well as testing and technical services including annual maintenance contracts and supply of spares to Indian defense customers.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58835>

RAFAEL Demonstrates Tactical Communication Systems for Romanian Special Forces

Israel Defense, July 12, 2023

Israeli defense giant RAFAEL successfully conducted a comprehensive demonstration of its BNET Advanced Tactical Communication System for Romanian special forces, intelligence units, and other official government services in May 2023.

This event, held in collaboration with local partner STARC4SYS SRL, showcased the capabilities of RAFAEL's BNET in a variety of scenarios, illustrating its effectiveness in complex operational environments. The demonstration encompassed combat simulations in diverse arenas, including urban settings both above and below ground, as well as open terrain.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58861>

Azerbaijan, Israel discuss bilateral ties, military-technical cooperation

Anadolu Agency, July 13, 2023

Azerbaijan and Israel on Thursday discussed the development of bilateral ties, including military-technical cooperation, an Azerbaijani presidency statement said.

This came during a meeting between Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in the capital Baku. "During the conversation, the meeting between the head of state and the

defense minister of Israel, which took place in Munich this year, was recalled," the statement said. "The role of Israeli President Ishak Herzog's visit to Azerbaijan in the development of our relations was noted," it added.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/azerbaijan-israel-discuss-bilateral-ties-military-technical-cooperation/2944647>

Small and Agile: Raphael's Loitering Munition Can Deceive Rooftop Snipers

Israel Defense, July 13, 2023

Ukraine is currently a testing ground for advanced weapons systems, produced by many countries. One of the trends resulting from this war is the growing interest in the use of small, agile loitering munition systems. Raphael's contribution to this trend is the Spike Firefly, also known as the "Maoz" - a small, micro-tactical hovering munition that can stay in the air for only 15 minutes and has a combat payload weight of only 350 grams. Despite its small size, it inflicts severe and deadly damage, and it has already undergone operational tests in combat. The IDF has deployed the Spike Firefly during the recent operation in Jenin, and Raphael concludes that "We are satisfied with its capabilities, learning lessons, implementing those lessons, and improving in future models."

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/58875>

M. Saudi Arabia

Thales expands presence in Saudi Arabia through focus on defense and civil aviation sectors

Arab News, July 2, 2023

Multinational defense and civil company Thales is committed to strengthening its presence in Saudi Arabia and expanding its operations to align with the country's Vision 2030 initiative, one of the firm's leading figures has told Arab News. Speaking on the sidelines of the Paris Air

Show, Pascale Sourisse, president of Thales International, said the organization not only wants to bolster the Kingdom's defense sector, it is also branching out into other areas such as security, civil aviation and higher education. Thales specializes in areas such as defence and security, aeronautics and space, digital identity and security. It currently operates in 68 countries with 77,000 employees. The firm has been a trusted partner in Saudi Arabia for over 50 years, steadily increasing its footprint in the region, said Sourisse, adding: "The first sector in which we operate in Saudi Arabia is defense.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2331106/business-economy>

Saudi Arabia can alleviate US concerns over its civilian nuclear energy program

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, July 3, 2023

Saudi leaders have stepped up their plans for developing peaceful nuclear energy, inviting technical bids to the planned construction of two 1.4 gigawatt-electric nuclear reactors and restating the kingdom's intention to use domestic uranium resources for producing low-enriched uranium as nuclear fuel. Although open to cooperating with any country willing and able to support its atomic aspirations, Saudi Arabia so far has preferred US nuclear technology. Saudi leaders are now pushing for a joint US-Saudi domestic project on nuclear energy, which would follow the US-Saudi cooperation model of Aramco, the Saudi state oil company. Recent reports suggest that Washington may also consider upgrading military relations if the kingdom normalizes its ties with Israel. In recent weeks and months, President Biden's top diplomat and national security aides travelled to Riyadh to discuss these very issues with Saudi officials.

<https://thebulletin.org/2023/07/saudi-arabia-can-alleviate-us-concerns-over-its-civilian-nuclear-energy-program-heres-how/>

How to help the Saudis achieve their nuclear-powered dreams without giving them the bomb

The Hill, July 12, 2023

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is offering the U.S. a deal he believes it cannot refuse. He is prepared to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel, granting the Jewish state unprecedented legitimacy in the Islamic world and handing Joe Biden a major foreign policy victory. What the crown prince wants in return is nuclear power, including the ability to enrich uranium. This would enable Riyadh to produce fuel for nuclear reactors...or material for a nuclear bomb. Biden should agree to significant U.S. nuclear assistance, but obviously he must reject the enrichment request. Riyadh doesn't need enrichment to achieve its goal of becoming a nuclear electricity-producing powerhouse.

<https://thehill.com/opinion/international/4091021-how-to-help-the-saudis-achieve-their-nuclear-powered-dreams-without-giving-them-the-bomb/>

Riyadh receives Duwaiheen nuclear advisory bids

MEED, July 14, 2023

State offtaker Saudi Power Procurement Company (SPPC) has received bids for the financial, legal and technical consultancy contracts to prepare and review project agreements related to the procurement of electricity from Saudi Arabia's first nuclear power plant. The scope extends to signing a power purchase agreement (PPA) with the project company for the planned Duwaiheen nuclear power plant, provisionally called Duwaiheen Nuclear Energy Company. Saudi Arabia plans to build a large-scale nuclear power plant facility as part of its energy diversification agenda. The current status of the main contract to implement the kingdom's first nuclear plant project is unclear.

<https://www.meed.com/sppc-receives-duwaiheen-nuclear-advisory-bids>

N. Türkiye

US reaffirms support for selling F-16 jets to Türkiye

Daily Sabah, July 11, 2023

Washington reiterated its support for selling F-16 jets to Türkiye Monday. Speaking at a press briefing, State Department Spokesman Matthew Miller said Washington has publicly “supported the provision of F-16s to Türkiye for some time.” “We’ve made that clear publicly that we support it but that there are a number of members of Congress, who as much as we don’t believe the issue should be linked with NATO accession, there are members of Congress who believe that it is. And so we always make that clear, privately and publicly,” said Miller. He noted Sweden took steps to address Türkiye’s concerns, including changing its Constitution and arresting terrorism suspects, and added that the U.S. believes those actions have been sufficient to address the concerns.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/us-reaffirms-support-for-selling-f-16-jets-to-turkiye>

US says to move forward with sale of F-16 jets to Türkiye

Daily Sabah, July 11, 2023

The United States will move forward with Türkiye’s request to purchase F-16 fighter jets, a top official said Tuesday, as diplomacy gained pace to resolve a prolonged process that has frustrated Ankara. Türkiye has been seeking to buy 40 new Lockheed Martin F-16s as well as nearly 80 modernization kits for its existing warplanes from the U.S., looking to revamp and refresh its aging fleet. The Biden administration has voiced its backing for the deal potentially worth around \$20 billion.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/us-says-to-move-forward-with-sale-of-f-16-jets-to-turkiye>

Canada reportedly unfreezes Türkiye talks on defense export controls

Daily Sabah, July 14, 2023

Canada has decided to resume talks with Türkiye on lifting export controls on drone parts after Ankara agreed to support Sweden’s bid to join NATO, a person familiar with the talks said, a move seen as one of several concessions won in exchange for the Turkish blessing. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s greenlight ended more than a year of opposition to Sweden’s membership bid. Ankara held out on the ratification, accusing Sweden of doing too little against terrorist organizations such as the PKK, its affiliates, and the Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ), the group behind the 2016 defeated coup in Türkiye.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/canada-reportedly-unfreezes-turkiye-talks-on-defense-export-controls>

Turkish, US defense chiefs discuss ‘bilateral and multilateral defense goals’

Anadolu Agency, July 11, 2023

Turkish National Defense Minister Yasar Guler spoke by phone late Monday with his US counterpart Lloyd Austin on “shared bilateral and multilateral defense goals,” according to a statement by the US Defense Department. “Secretary Austin and Minister Guler lauded the long history of military cooperation between the United States and Türkiye and applauded our continued close cooperation,” said the readout of the phone call. “They also discussed the positive talks between Türkiye, Sweden and NATO Secretary General (Jens) Stoltenberg, as well as the Department of Defense’s support for Türkiye’s military modernization,” it added.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/turkish-us-defense-chiefs-discuss-bilateral-and-multilateral-defense-goals/2942110>

O. East Asia

Japan Set to Pour Fukushima Waste Into Pacific, Irking China

Bloomberg, July 3, 2023

Japan is set to win approval to discharge more than a million cubic meters of treated water from the Fukushima nuclear disaster site into the Pacific Ocean, a contentious plan that's soured ties with neighbors including China.

The International Atomic Energy Agency's Director General Rafael Grossi will visit Japan from Tuesday to deliver a final report on the safety of the process and meet with officials including Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi. A domestic nuclear regulator is also set to issue a crucial assessment.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-07-02/japan-is-set-to-pour-fukushima-wastewater-into-pacific#xj4y7vzkg>

IAEA Finds Japan's Plans to Release Treated Water into the Sea at Fukushima Consistent with International Safety Standards

IAEA, July 4, 2023

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safety review has concluded that Japan's plans to release treated water stored at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station into the sea are consistent with IAEA Safety Standards.

In a report formally presented by Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo today, the IAEA also said that the discharges of the treated water would have a negligible radiological impact to people and the environment.

The report is the outcome of nearly two years of work by an IAEA Task Force made up of top specialists from within the Agency advised by internationally recognised nuclear safety experts from eleven countries.

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-finds-japans-plans-to-release-treated-water-into>

the-sea-at-fukushima-consistent-with-international-safety-standards

South Korea says Japan's water release plan meets standards

Reuters, July 7, 2023

South Korea said on Friday Japan's plan to discharge treated radioactive water from its tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant met global safety standards and it respected the U.N. nuclear watchdog's approval for the release.

Japan plans to soon start releasing more than a million tons of treated radioactive water, now being stored at the crippled plant north of Tokyo, most of which was used to cool the reactors destroyed by a March 2011 tsunami. Japan has faced opposition to its plan, both at home and abroad, including from South Korea, despite assurances that the water is safe after being filtered to remove most isotopes.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/south-korea-says-respects-iaea-review-japans-fukushima-wastewater-plan-2023-07-07/>

First South Korea-U.S. Nuclear Consultative Group meeting to be held on July 18

The Japan Times, July 8, 2023

The first meeting of the Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) between South Korea and the United States will take place on July 18 in Seoul, South Korea's Presidential Office said Saturday.

The meeting will discuss "information sharing, consultation mechanism and joint planning and execution designed to bolster nuclear deterrence against North Korea."

The NCG was first announced during the bilateral summit in Washington in April amid growing calls in South Korea for its own nuclear bombs, a step Washington opposes.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/07/08/asia-pacific/south-korea-us-nuclear-consultative-group/>

South Korea's Yoon pushes for strong resolve against North's nuclear ambitions at NATO summit

ABC News, July 10, 2023

South Korea's president says it's time to clearly demonstrate strong international resolve to deter North Korea's nuclear ambitions, and he plans to discuss how to cope with the North's expanding weapons arsenal with NATO leaders this week. Yoon Suk Yeol will attend the annual NATO summit being held this year in Vilnius, Lithuania, on Tuesday and Wednesday as part of a two-nation trip that includes a stop in Poland. "Now is the time to clearly demonstrate that the international community's determination to deter North Korea's nuclear weapons program is stronger than North Korea's desire to develop nuclear weapons," he said.

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/south-koreas-yoon-pushes-strong-resolve-norths-nuclear-100982116>

China urges ASEAN regional forum to oppose Fukushima water release

Kyodo News, July 10, 2023

China has called for the chair statement of an ASEAN Regional Forum meeting later this week to express opposition to Japan's planned release of treated radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear plant, a diplomatic source said Monday.

The move reflects Beijing's efforts to involve the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and its partners in putting more pressure on Tokyo to halt the water discharge plan at the 27-member forum's ministerial meeting slated for Friday in Jakarta.

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2023/07/5242c031a7c5-china-urges-asean-regional-forum-to-oppose-fukushima-water-release.html>

'Undisguised nuclear blackmail': Pyongyang on US sub entering South Korean port

TASS, July 10, 2023

A US nuclear submarine entering a South Korean port for joint drills is "the most

undisguised nuclear blackmail" bringing the situation near the Korean Peninsula to the brink of a nuclear conflict, according to a statement by a spokesman for the North Korean Defense Ministry. "This is a very dangerous situation as it will bring the regional military tension to a more critical state and may incite the worst crisis of nuclear conflict in practice. The present situation clearly proves that the situation of the Korean peninsula is coming closer to the threshold of nuclear conflict due to the US provocative military action. The US attempt to introduce strategic nuclear weapons into the Korean peninsula is the most undisguised nuclear blackmail against the DPRK and its neighboring countries and a grave threat and challenge to the regional and global peace and security," the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted him as saying.

<https://tass.com/world/1644505>

Indonesia warns nuclear weapons put Southeast Asia a 'miscalculation away' from a catastrophe

ABC News, July 11, 2023

Indonesia's top diplomat warned Tuesday of the threat posed by nuclear weapons, saying that Southeast Asia is "one miscalculation away from apocalypse" and pressing for world powers to sign a treaty to keep the region free from such arms.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi raised the alarm ahead of a two-day summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which started later Tuesday in Jakarta. The agenda would spotlight Myanmar's deadly civil strife, continuing tensions in the South China Sea and efforts to fortify regional economies amid the global headwinds set off by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/indonesia-warns-nuclear-weapons-put-south-east-asia-miscalculation-101065261>

North Korea technologically capable of launching nuclear strike on Japan, Tokyo warns

TASS, July 12, 2023

North Korea possesses technologies that enable it to target Japan with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters.

“We believe that as far as technologies go, North Korea is now capable of launching a strike on our country, using nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles,” he noted. Matsuno once again criticized Pyongyang’s recent missile launch, stressing that it posed a threat to peace and stability in the region in general, and to Japan in particular.

Earlier on Wednesday, North Korea launched what Japan believes to have been an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

<https://tass.com/world/1645791>

Kim vows to boost North Korea’s nuclear capability after observing new long-range missile launch

APN News, July 13, 2023

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to further bolster his country’s nuclear fighting capabilities as he supervised the second test flight of a new, powerful intercontinental ballistic missile designed to strike the mainland United States, state media reported Thursday. Kim’s statement suggested North Korea would ramp up weapons testing activities to expand its arsenal in response to recent U.S. steps to enhance its security commitment to ally South Korea. On Thursday, in an apparent show of force against North Korea, the U.S. flew a nuclear-capable B-52 bomber to the Korean Peninsula for joint aerial exercises with other U.S. and South Korean fighter jets.

<https://apnews.com/article/north-korea-kim-icbm-nuclear-802a6a0719460463030c50429d27a087>

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un lauds new test-launch of Hwasong-18 ICBM

TASS, July 13, 2023

North Korea will continue developing more advanced weapons because of the actions of ‘hostile forces,’ which undermine security on the Korean Peninsula, KCNA news agency reported on Thursday citing North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as saying.

North Korea confirmed earlier in the day that it test-fired on Wednesday a Hwasong-18 solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and Kim Jong-un personally attended the test-fire.

According to the agency, “The missile traveled up to a maximum altitude of 6,648.4 km and flew a distance of 1,001.2 km for 4,491s before accurately landing on the preset area in the open waters off the East Sea of Korea.”

<https://tass.com/defense/1646205>

Japan, South Korea displaying interest in acquiring nuclear arms – top Russian diplomat

TASS, July 13, 2023

Tokyo and Seoul are sending signals that they would not be against obtaining their own nuclear arsenals or hosting US nuclear weapons, which represents a dangerous trend, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told reporters on Thursday.

“NATO is promoting the idea that security in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific, as they call it, regions, is indivisible. Plans are in the works to transfer parts of NATO’s military infrastructure to that region, including to those countries that were invited to the Vilnius summit; I mean Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Korea,” he said. “Japan and Korea, by the way, are already sending signals that they

are not against deploying US nuclear weapons on their soil or obtaining their own. This is a very serious and dangerous trend," the top Russian diplomat added.

<https://tass.com/politics/1646227>

Lavrov allows for option of Russia signing protocol on nuclear-free zone treaty in SE Asia

TASS, July 13, 2023

Russia is ready to sign a protocol to the agreement for creating a nuclear-free zone in Southeast Asia, together with other permanent members of the UN Security Council, but only provided that all parties to the document meet their obligations to not develop or deploy any elements of nuclear arms, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Thursday.

Following the Russia-ASEAN meeting in Jakarta, reporters asked the top Russian diplomat to comment on a statement by the Indonesian Foreign Ministry that, during current ASEAN ministerial meetings, member countries will ask Russia and other nuclear powers to join the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty.

<https://tass.com/defense/1646317>

Japan calls on China to approach Fukushima water release in 'scientific manner'

Reuters, July 14, 2023

Japan called on China to approach the release of radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant in a "scientific manner" at a meeting held between Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and Chinese top diplomat Wang Yi on Friday.

In a move that has caused alarm among neighbouring countries and local fishermen, Japan is set to start releasing more than 1 million tonnes of water from the wrecked Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant this summer. China has emerged as the most vocal of those critics, saying the plan would

endanger the environment and human lives.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-calls-china-approach-fukushima-water-release-scientific-manner-2023-07-14/>

In rare UN appearance, North Korea defends missile launch

Reuters, July 14, 2023

North Korea's launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) was an exercise of its right to self-defense "to deter dangerous military moves of hostile forces and safeguard the security of our state," the country's U.N. envoy told the Security Council on Thursday during a rare appearance. The 15-member Security Council met after North Korea said it tested on Wednesday its latest Hwasong-18 ICBM, adding the weapon is the core of its nuclear strike force. "We categorically reject and condemn the convening of the Security Council briefing by the United States and its followers," North Korea's U.N. Ambassador Kim Song told the council.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/north-korea-make-rare-statement-un-security-council-2023-07-13/>

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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