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Iran

AEOI Chief: No Deviation in Iran's Peaceful N. Program

Fars News Agency, March 2, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami dismissed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report about 84% uranium enrichment in the country, and rejected any deviation in Iran's civilian nuclear program.

Eslami made the remarks on Wednesday, after the IAEA said in a confidential quarterly report that it had detected particles of uranium enriched to 83.7 percent during an inspection of the Fordow nuclear facility in January. "Regarding the 84% particle, which was a sample from the side of a tap in the process, the particle cannot be even seen with a microscope. What is important is the amount of material that is stored after production," he explained. The IAEA head further stated that the IAEA inspectors "observed the material that had come out of the process and found that its purity was not more than 60%."

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011211000118/AEOI-Chief-N-Deviain-in-Iran's-Peacefl-N-Prgram>

DM: Iran Constantly Monitoring US Actions in Persian Gulf

Fars News Agency, March 2, 2023

Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani underlined the Armed Forces' preparedness to defend the country against any military operation, and said that Tehran is keeping track of the US

military drills with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other countries in the Persian Gulf. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the cabinet session on Wednesday, Ashtiani stated that the military exercise of the US and a number of countries in the region is to "increase the American forces' spirit". "The wargames is not a threat to the Islamic Republic of Iran," he underscored.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011211000285/DM-Iran-Cnsanly-Mniring-US-Acins-in-Persian-Glf>

Cooperation is two-way road: Raisi

Tehran Times, March 4, 2023

Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi visited Tehran on Friday evening and held separate meetings with top Iranian officials on Saturday. This is Grossi's fourth trip to Iran since taking office in December 2019. The visit took place prior to the IAEA Board of Governors meeting on Monday. Grossi held talks on Saturday with Iran's nuclear chief Mohammad Eslami, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and President Ebrahim Raisi. In meeting with Grossi, President Raisi underlined the need to maintain the autonomy of the UN nuclear agency. President Raisi stressed that maintaining the independence of the IAEA and respecting the rights of the Iranian people are essential to bilateral collaboration and such a cooperation is a two-way road, said Mohammad Jamshidi, chief of the presidential office for political affairs.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482587/Cooperation-is-two-way-road-Raisi>

Nuclear Chief: Iran, IAEA Working on Mechanism to Limit Cooperation to Safeguard Agreement

Fars News Agency, March 4, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami on Saturday reminded that Tehran decided to lower its 2015 nuclear deal obligations after the non-compliance of the Western parties, and said Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency are working on an agreement to limit the IAEA expectations to Iran's NPT and Safeguard Agreement rules and regulations. Eslami made the remarks in a joint news conference with Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi in Tehran on Saturday. "The visit by the IAEA's head to Tehran carries a message of the establishment of professional relations [between the two sides]," Eslami stated at the beginning of the press conference. He underlined that communications and reports by the UN nuclear watchdog should help build trust between the two sides.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011213000618/Nclear-Chief-Iran-IAEA-Wrking-n-Mechanism-Limi-Cperain-Safegard>

IAEA Chief Meets Iranian President, FM

Fars News Agency, March 4, 2023

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi held separate meetings with Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian during his two-day visit to Tehran. Grossi arrived

in Tehran on a two-day visit on Friday and held two rounds of talks with Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami. After holding a joint press conference with Eslami, Grossi met and held talks with Rayeesi and Amir Abdollahian in Tehran. It's Grossi's fourth visit to Tehran since assuming office in December 2019 and comes ahead of the IAEA Board of Governors meeting on Monday. It came after the IAEA claimed in a confidential quarterly report that it had detected particles of uranium enriched to 84 percent during an inspection of the Fordow nuclear facility in January.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011213000817/IAEA-Chief-Mees-Iranian-Presiden-FM>

IAEA chief notes "significant progress" in talks while in Iran

Tehran Times, March 5, 2023

IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi has praised his most recent trip to Iran as significant, noting that a clear agreement was achieved about the continuation of cooperation on resolving safeguards-related issues. Grossi held a press conference in Vienna on Saturday after finishing a two-day visit to Iran. During his tour of Tehran, he met with important Iranian figures, including President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, and Mohammad Eslami of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI). A general framework for progress has been reached and alluded to the joint statement released by the UN nuclear watchdog and the AEOI, Grossi stated. When asked about political accusations regarding the safeguards

issues, he responded that trivial technical issues were not brought up in discussions with senior Iranian authorities.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482627/IAEA-chief-notes-significant-progress-in-talks-while-in-Iran>

Iran, IAEA Agree to Continue Cooperation Based on Safeguards Agreement

Fars News Agency, March 5, 2023

Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issued a joint statement following the UN nuclear watchdog chief's visit to Tehran, and agreed to continue their interactions in a spirit of cooperation and in full conformity with the competencies of the IAEA and the rights and obligations of Iran. The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and the IAEA issued a joint statement on Saturday at the end of a two-day visit by IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi to Tehran and his talks with AEOI Head Mohammad Eslami, President Seyed Ebrahim Rayeesi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian. Both sides recognized that such positive engagements between Iran and the IAEA can pave the way for wider agreements among state parties, the statement said.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011214000144/Iran-IAEA-Agree-Cnine-Cperain-Based-n-Safeguards-Agreemen>

Iran Rejects IAEA's Claims over Access to Individuals, Reinstalling Cameras at N. Sites

Fars News Agency, March 5, 2023

Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi

denied claims raised by the International Atomic Energy Agency Chief Rafael Grossi that the recent agreement between Tehran and the IAEA involves access to individuals and reinstalment of surveillance cameras at several nuclear facilities. Director General of the IAEA Rafael Grossi held talks with AEOI Head Mohammad Eslami, President Seyed Ebrahim Rayeesi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian during a two-day visit on Tehran. On his return to Vienna on Saturday, Grossi claimed that Tehran has pledged to restore cameras and other monitoring equipment at its nuclear sites and increase the pace of inspections. He also added that Iran is supposed to provide access to information, locations and people.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011214000283/Iran-Rejecs-IAEA's-Claims-ver-Access-Individals-Reinsalling-Cameras>

Iran prohibits private access to nuclear sites

Tehran Times, March 5, 2023

A senior Iranian nuclear official has denied allegations that individual access to Iran's nuclear installations will be granted based on agreements struck during a recent visit to Tehran by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Rafael Grossi. Speaking to IRNA on Sunday, Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said that the two-day visit by Grossi to Iran on Friday and Saturday was not intended to allow for the individual inspection of Iran's nuclear facilities. If such requests are made by the IAEA, Iran will definitely refuse them, according to Kamalvandi. He also noted that all agreements made with the

IAEA are within the bounds of the legislation passed by the Iranian parliament.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482629/Iran-prohibits-private-access-to-nuclear-sites>

DM: Iran in No Need of S-400 Missile Shield

Fars News Agency, March 6, 2023

Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani rejected a Bloomberg report claiming that Tehran is seeking to purchase Russian S-400 air defense system, saying that his country has attained self-sufficiency in the air defense field. Lauding friendly relations between Iran and Russia in various fields, Brigadier General Ashtiani dismissed any plan for Tehran to obtain S-400 missile system from Moscow. "Tehran has reached a high-level of technology and gained self-sufficiency in the air defense industry," the Iranian minister emphasized, speaking at a press conference on Monday. "Should the need arise to buy this [system], we will do so, but we don't currently need," he stressed, commenting on whether Iran could receive the S-400 from Russia.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011215000850/DM-Iran-in-N-Need-f-S-400-Missile-Shield>

AEOI Chief Underlines Necessity for IAEA to Monitor N. Activities within Iran's Framework

Fars News Agency, March 6, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said that his country considers the Safeguards

Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as well as strategic law adopted by the Iranian parliament as the basis for its nuclear activities, but underscored that the UN nuclear watchdog's supervisions should be within Tehran's frameworks and reservations. Eslami made the remark in an interview on Sunday, following a trip to Tehran by Director General of the IAEA Rafael Grossi. Commenting on Grossi's visit, the AEOI chief said Iran's interactions with the nuclear agency should continue and "we must not allow the destructive Zionist and terrorist current to take advantage of our relations and find excuses to mount pressure on the country".

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011215000237/AEOI-Chief-Underlines-Necessiy-fr-IAEA-Mnir-N-Aciviies-wihin-Iran's>

Iran Starts Mass Production of High-Velocity Ballistic Missile Able to Smash Moving Naval Targets

Fars News Agency, March 7, 2023

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri praised the country's astonishing achievements in the defense industry sector, and said that the country has manufactured a ballistic missile which enjoys advanced technologies to pound moving marine targets at the speed of Mach 8. Speaking to reporters on Monday, Maj. Gen. Baqeri said Iran is now capable of producing ballistic missiles destroying moving marine targets at high speeds. "This missile has been successfully tested and its mass production has started," he added. "After production of this missile,

Iran will be among the three countries possessing the [technical] know-how to make such missiles,” the top general stated.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011216000340/Iran-Sars-Mass-Prdcin-f-High-Velciy-Ballistic-Missile-Able-Smash-Mving>

Iran Raps E3 Efforts to Distract Attention from Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal

Fars News Agency, March 9, 2023

Iran's Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Mohsen Naziri Asl lashed out at the European states for their attempts to hype Iran’s peaceful nuclear program to distract the international community from the issue of Israel’s nuclear arsenal. “The European countries are drawing the world's attention to Iran’s nuclear program in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to cover up the important and very worrying issue of the Israeli regime’s military nuclear program, which is a source of instability in the region and a threat to peace and security,” Naziri Asl said in an address to a session of the IAEA Board of Governors on Wednesday.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011218000470/Iran-Raps-E3-Effrs-Disrac-Aenin-frm-Israel’s-Nclear-Arsenal>

Multi-Purpose Oceangoing Warship Joins IRGC Navy

Fars News Agency, March 9, 2023

An oceangoing warship, known as mobile naval city capable of carrying helicopters and drones, joined the fleet of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy at

a ceremony attended by high-ranking military officials in Southern Iran. The domestically-developed ship, named Martyr Mahdavi, joined the IRGC Navy along with 99 new vessels in different classes after being unveiled in the Southern port city of Bandar Abbas on Thursday. IRGC Chief Major General Hossein Salaami and Commander of the IRGC Navy Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri were among the senior military officials taking part at the ceremony.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011218000293/Mli-Prpse-Oceanging-Warship-Jins-IRGC-Navy>

Iran disfavors to produce testable nuclear device: report

Tehran Times, March 10, 2023

The U.S. intelligence community issued its 2023 annual threat assessment on Wednesday, highlighting that Iran is “not currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons-development activities that would be necessary to produce a testable nuclear device.” The report allegedly said that Iran is an escalating threat to the United States and its allies because of its advances in both conventional and unconventional capabilities, including cyber technology, ballistic and cruise missiles, arsenal of drones and nuclear potential. “Tehran will try to leverage diplomacy, its expanding nuclear program, its conventional, proxy, and partner forces, and its military sales and acquisitions to advance its goals,” the report purportedly warned.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482745/Iran-disfavors-to-produce-testable-nuclear-device-report>

Iran Unveils Advanced Domestic Training Jet

Fars News Agency, March 11, 2023

The second prototype of the Iranian-developed Yasin training jet was unveiled in the presence of Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani in Tehran on Saturday. Iran has had great achievements in the fields of knowledge and technology, and piloting as a combined educational field is no exception. An important feature of the advanced training jet is that it can also be used by the pilots of the operational bases to learn the tactics and techniques of air combat and air-to-surface combat. In a relevant development earlier this week, an oceangoing warship, known as mobile naval city capable of carrying helicopters and drones, joined the fleet of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy at a ceremony attended by high-ranking military officials in Southern Iran.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011220000711/Iran-Unveils-Advanced-Dmesic-Training-Je>

Iran says deal reached to buy Russian fighter jets

Arab News, March 11, 2023

Tehran has finalized a deal to buy Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets from Russia, state media reported, as defense cooperation between the two countries deepens. The air force of sanctions-hit Iran has an aging fleet of aircraft and has struggled to acquire spare parts to keep its warplanes in the air. In a statement to the United Nations, Tehran

said it began approaching “countries to buy fighter jets” to replenish its fleet in the wake of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. “Russia announced it was ready to sell them” after the expiry in October 2020 of restrictions on Iran purchasing conventional weapons under UN Resolution 2231, said the statement carried late Friday by the official IRNA news agency. “The Sukhoi 35 fighter jets were technically acceptable for Iran,” it added.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2266616/middle-east>

IRGC Receives New Vessels Equipped with Laser-Guided Missiles

Fars News Agency, March 13, 2023

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy Force received new vessels equipped with laser-guided missiles and air defense systems. New high-speed vessels joined the IRGC Navy, which had a different design from the previous vessels and were equipped with laser-guided missiles instead of rockets. In addition, a new generation of IRGC speed vessels equipped with anti-ship cruise missiles with a range of 180 km was also unveiled. In the ceremony, for the first time, the Zolfaghar high-speed boat with the ability to fire 'Nawab' air defense missiles joined the IRGC Navy. Therefore, the IRGC became the first owner of high-speed boats with the ability to carry air defense missiles in the world.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011220000799/IRGC-Receives-New-Vessels-Eipped-wih-Laser-Gided-Missiles>

Indicators of where the Chinese brokered Iranian-Saudi Arabian deal is heading

Tehran Times, March 14, 2023

The Chinese brokered deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia to resume diplomatic ties holds the prospect of the U.S. coming to a point of recognition of the regional power balance, that has been shifting in favour of the resistance axis in West Asia, spearheaded by Iran, for a long time now. This deal may therefore be the preliminary introduction to a larger deal pertaining to U.S.-Iranian relations through the nuclear negotiations. The reality is that nothing has changed overnight. Iran is in a strong position and has not entered this agreement out of desperation. The American fist is only getting smaller and the shift towards a multi-polar world is happening before us.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/482929/Indicators-of-where-the-Chinese-brokered-Iranian-Saudi-Arabian>

Iraq

Turkish Drone Kills Two PKK-Affiliated Fighters in Iraq: Kurds

The Defense Post, March 1, 2023

A Turkish drone strike in northern Iraq killed two Yazidi fighters affiliated with the rebel Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) Wednesday, the second such action this week, Iraqi Kurdish officials said. Both strikes were carried out in Sinjar district, one of the heartlands of Iraq's non-Muslim Yazidi minority, which endured massacres and sex slavery during the brief but brutal rule of the Islamic State jihadist group in 2014. The strikes targeted the Sinjar Resistance Units, a locally recruited militia

affiliated with both the PKK and Iraq's Shiite-led paramilitary force Hashed al-Shaabi, with whom it fought against the jihadists.

<https://www.thedefensepost.com/2023/03/01/turkish-drone-kills-pkk-fighters/>

A joint security operation launched east of Salah al-Din: PMF

Iraqi News Agency, March 1, 2023

Popular Mobilization Forces PMF announced Wednesday the launch of a joint security operation east of Salah al-Din Governorate, to enhance security and prevent the remnants of the terrorist Daesh from exploiting any security breach. A statement by PMF, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), stated that "a joint force of the army, the federal police, and the supporting formations in PMF, and with air cover from the army's aviation, began an operation to secure the areas of Al-Aith Island, the Al-Dawaji area, the Asila area, and the outskirts of Al-Malh, east of Salah Al-Din."

<https://ina.iq/eng/25169-a-joint-security-operation-launched-east-of-salah-al-din-pmf.html>

An advanced technology to detect mines

Iraqi News Agency, March 2, 2023

The Ministry of Environment announced the trend to use advanced technology in surveying operations to detect mines, which contributes to 90% of the work. The director of the mine department in the ministry, Dhafer Mahmoud, told the Iraqi News Agency (INA): "The environment used drones in survey operations to detect mines, and it proved tremendous success and effectiveness in relation to the non-

technical survey." He stated, "The ministry is in the process of using other aircraft in the technical survey capable of scanning more than one hundred thousand square meters per day," explaining, "This will shorten the work time by 90%."

<https://ina.iq/eng/25204-an-advanced-technology-to-detect-mines.html>

Ahead of Israel visit, US defense secretary makes unannounced trip to Iraq

The Times of Israel, March 7, 2023

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin arrived in Iraq on Tuesday on an unannounced visit barely two weeks before the 20th anniversary of the US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein. Austin is slated to arrive in Israel on Wednesday for a two-day visit as part of an overall Mideast tour that also includes stops in Jordan and Egypt. During his meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah in Amman on Sunday, Austin "discussed his concern regarding the escalation in tensions in the West Bank and Jerusalem," according to the US Defense Department. Austin also thanked Abdullah for hosting the recent Aqaba summit, "which reaffirmed the necessity of de-escalating tensions."

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/ahead-of-israel-visit-us-defense-secretary-makes-unannounced-trip-to-iraq/>

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Addresses Media in Baghdad, Iraq, on March 7, 2023

U.S. Department of Defense, March 7, 2023

Well, good afternoon, everyone. It is great to be back in Baghdad today, and I just

wanted to say a few words about our ongoing work here. I just concluded a productive meeting with Prime Minister Sudani and Minister of Defense Abbasi. This was just the latest high-level contact between our governments. And all of these engagements underscore the U.S. commitment to expanding our partnership with the people and the government of Iraq. We're deeply committed to ensuring that the Iraqi people can live in peace and dignity, with safety and security and with economic opportunity for all.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3320887/secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-addresses-media-in-baghdad-iraq-on-marc/>

JOC: Diyala is safe and we have capabilities to undermine terrorists

Iraqi News Agency, March 8, 2023

The Joint Operations Command JOC announced that the cell that was targeted in Tuz Khurmato was intending to carry out some terrorist operations, and while it indicated that the Diyala governorate is safe and stable and the situation is under control, it confirmed that the security forces have the capabilities and ability to undermine terrorist gangs. The spokesman for the joint operations, Major General Tahsin al-Khafaji, told the Iraqi News Agency (INA): "The security situation in Diyala is controlled by the security forces, as the Diyala Operations Command carries out proactive and qualitative operations to hunt down terrorists and anyone who tries to tamper with societal peace."

<https://ina.iq/eng/25315-joc-diyala-is-safe-and-we-have-capabilities-to-undermine-terrorists.html>

PMF: New joint security operation launched south of Mosul

Iraqi News Agency, March 11, 2023

The Popular Mobilization Forces-PMF announced on Saturday, the launch of a joint security operation south of Mosul province. PMF said, in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA) that "A joint force of the army, river police detachments, and Nineveh Operations Command of the Popular Mobilization Forces launched a raid and search operation in the villages of Al-Kasr, Hawi Aslan, and the islands located along the Zab River, south of Mosul."

<https://ina.iq/eng/25375-pmf-new-joint-security-operation-launched-south-of-mosul.html>

Al-Saedi announces killing 22 terrorists in a qualitative operation in Anbar

Iraqi News Agency, March 12, 2023

The head of the Counter-Terrorism Service, Lieutenant General Abd al-Wahhab al-Saedi, announced Sunday, the killing of 22 terrorists in a qualitative operation in Anbar, indicating that among the dead were prominent leaders of Daesh terrorist gangs. Al-Saedi said, during a press conference attended by the reporter of the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that "the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces directed a qualitative operation in the northern Rutba region in Anbar," noting that "after monitoring the information obtained by the intelligence, the operation was planned." He pointed out, "The operation took place in two stages, and the transfer of sectors

lasted for 6 hours," noting that "the airdrop sectors were trained."

<https://ina.iq/eng/25408-al-saedi-announces-killing-22-terrorists-in-a-qualitative-operation-in-anbar.html>

Up to 500 IS Fighters Still Active in Iraq: Military

The Defense Post, March 14, 2023

The Islamic State group still has up to 500 active fighters in Iraq, a senior military official estimated Sunday in the country where jihadist cells continue to launch sporadic attacks. But Iraqi General Qais al-Mohamadawi, part of the anti-jihadist coalition, stressed that IS — now based in remote desert and mountain hideouts — has "lost its ability to attract new recruits." The United Nations estimated in a report published last month that IS still has "5,000 to 7,000 members and supporters" across Iraq and neighboring Syria, "roughly half of whom are fighters." The IS extremists in 2014 launched their self-proclaimed "caliphate" across swathes of both countries in a campaign marked by brutality, including mass killings, torture, rape, and slavery.

<https://www.thedefensepost.com/2023/03/14/is-fighters-active-iraq/>

Israel

First batch of Hermes 90 Thor drones delivered to Philippine Army

Israel Defense, March 1, 2023

The Philippine Army has received an initial batch of new Hermes 90 THOR mini unmanned aerial systems (mUAS) from

Israel's Elbit Systems. According to Philippine website Max Defense, the Philippine Army ordered 533 systems, which each system composed of 2 Hermes 90 THOR unmanned aerial vehicles and a man-portable flight and surveillance operating system. As a reminder, on October 6, 2019, Israeli Elbit was awarded a contract worth \$153 million to supply a multi-layered UAV system to a military in Southeast Asia, including over 1,000 Hermes 90 Thor units. It remains to be seen how many systems have been delivered although Max Defense believes that at least 100 systems or more could have been delivered before the end of 2022.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57411>

Israel, US sign bilateral security and supply arrangement

Israel Defense, March 2, 2023

Delegates from the Israeli Ministry of Defense and the US Department of Defense convened the annual U.S.-Israel Defense Acquisition Advisory Group this week in Israel. Director General of the IMoD, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Eyal Zamir hosted the DoD delegation led by Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, Dr. William A. LaPlante, together with additional senior Israeli and American officials. The leaders discussed the countries' ironclad defense partnership and the breadth and depth of the bilateral armaments cooperation, industrial cooperation, joint research and development, and priority procurement initiatives. The delegations also focused on Israel's capabilities to cope with regional challenges and threats, namely the Iranian

ambition to undermine Middle Eastern stability.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57428>

IAI releases software-defined radio system with innovative network-centric operations capability

Israel Defense, March 2, 2023

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), through its defense electronics subsidiary, ELTA Systems, has announced the release of its new multi-mission ARC 840 Software Defined Radio – Network Centric Operations (SDR-NCO) system. The latest product in ELTA's line of military airborne communications systems, SDR-NCO draws on decades of experience in the development of high-performance communications solutions, including advanced Line of Sight (LOS) and AESA satellite terminal systems. The SDR-NCO provides voice, video and data communications over a comprehensive frequency range including VHF, UHF and L-Bands. It is interoperable with a wide variety of existing military and commercial radios – allowing aircrews to communicate with forces on the ground, in the air, and on the sea, for effective collaboration across a diverse task force.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57433>

Elbit awarded \$252 million deal to supply NATO member with advanced artillery systems

Israel Defense, March 6, 2023

Elbit Systems announced today it was awarded two contracts with an aggregate

value of \$252 million to supply artillery rocket systems to a European NATO member country. Under the first contract in an amount of \$119 million, Elbit Systems will supply a battalion's worth of ATMOS (Autonomous Truck Mounted Howitzer) 155mm/52 caliber truck-mounted howitzers systems. The contract will be performed over a period of two years. Under the second contract in an amount of \$133 million, Elbit Systems will provide two batteries worth of PULS artillery rocket-launcher systems including a package of rockets and missiles. The contract will be performed over a period of three years.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57461>

Elbit inaugurates new facility in Germany

Israel Defense, March 7, 2023

Elbit Systems opened a second production facility in Ulm, Germany. According to the company, the 540-square-meter facility will focus on the digitization of land-based operations (D-LBO), including E-LynX soldier radios systems (PNR). In the future, an expansion to 800 square meters is planned in order to allow Elbit Systems Germany to meet the current and future requirements of the German Army and the German security authorities even more comprehensively, from development and production to support in the field. Bez Halel (Butzi) Machlis, President and CEO of Elbit Systems, commented on the inauguration of the new location: "Germany is an important partner for Elbit Systems, as is our ongoing collaboration with local industry.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57470>

Shin Bet uncovers Turkey-based Hamas terror cells

Israel Defense, March 7, 2023

The Israel Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency – ISA) has recently uncovered and thwarted a Turkey-based Hamas terror cell, indicting four members with serious security offenses. The organization said that it has detained and interrogated a 24-year-old Palestinian, Ahmed Mahmoud Abu Salah, who lives in the West Bank, following his return from a lengthy study period in Turkey. The interrogation revealed that during his time abroad, Abu Salah was recruited by a Hamas operative, and carried out "military" training in both Turkey in Syria, learning how to shoot firearms and manufacture bombs, with the eventual goal of carrying out terror attacks in Israel. He was also asked to recruit additional terror activists and train them.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57476>

Elbit Systems Receives Order for the 120th Hermes 900 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

Israel Defense, March 8, 2023

Elbit Systems has received an order for its 120th Hermes™ 900 Medium-Range Long-Altitude (MALE) unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). The family of the Hermes 900 multi-role MALE UAV is Elbit Systems' largest unmanned aerial vehicle and is capable of performing a wide range of missions including persistent intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR). The advanced UAV can also perform ground support and maritime patrol missions, and provides the capabilities for integrated multi-platform, multi-sensor operations. The

UAV has an endurance of up to 30 hours in a single sortie and features over-the-horizon, persistent multi-mission capabilities with a class leading payload carrying capacity of 450 kgs and maximum ceiling of 30,000 feet.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57487>

US National Security Advisor hosts Israeli counterpart to discuss Iran, regional cooperation

Israel Defense, March 8, 2023

Israel's National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi traveled to the US to meet with senior officials, including his counterpart Jake Sullivan, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Hanegbi was joined by Israeli Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer as well as senior foreign policy, defense and intelligence senior representatives from both countries, for a meeting of the U.S.-Israel Strategic Consultative Group, which took place at the White House on Monday. "The officials reviewed with significant concern advances in Iran's nuclear program, and affirmed their mutual objective of further enhancing the longstanding security partnership between Israel and the United States," said the official post-meeting joint statement.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57489>

Elbit Systems Awarded a Contract to Supply Electronic Warfare Self-Protection Suites to a NATO Member Country

Israel Defense, March 14, 2023

Elbit Systems was awarded a contract to supply Electronic Warfare (EW) self-protection suites for a fighter aircraft that is

being supplied to a NATO member country in Europe. As part of the contract, Elbit Systems will equip the aircraft with its EW self-protection suite, including Radar Warning Receivers (RWR) and Countermeasure Dispensing Systems (CMDS). The operational and combat-proven RWR rapidly detects and accurately locates a wide range of enemy threats, even in a dense EW environment, enabling reliable and timely warnings to the aircrew, and an automated or manual response by the CMDS.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57564>

Israel Aerospace Industries to cooperate with Australian defense company in aerial and missile defense

Israel Defense, March 15, 2023

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) has signed an MOU with Australian defense company Daronmont Technologies, to deliver advanced air and missile defense capabilities within the framework of Australian MOD Tender for the purchase of defense systems and other ADF programs. The signing took place as part of the AVALON Australian International Airshow. IAI will leverage Daronmont's integration, development and manufacturing capabilities as part of its broad Australian Industry Capability (AIC) strategy to deliver the combat proven BARAK-MX Air and Missile Defense (AMD) system providing effective defense to the ADF and Australian national assets, rapid initial operational capability (IOC), and a proven path to Australian industrial sovereignty in the AMD realm.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/57574>

Jordan

Jordan's king tells US defense secretary West Bank violence threatens stability

Reuters, March 6, 2023

Jordan's King Abdullah told U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Sunday a surge in West Bank violence threatened regional stability and asked for assistance to fight a growing drug war along its borders with Syria blamed on Iranian-backed militias, Jordanian officials said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us-defense-secretary-lands-jordan-start-middle-east-tour-2023-03-05/>

Kuwait

Boeing consolidates ties with Kuwait for F/A-18 \$70m logistics contract

Airforce Technology, March 2, 2023

The deal supports the realisation of the F/A-18E/F entering the Kuwait armed forces as a strike fighter designed for traditional strike operations and air support. Kuwait has previously used the aircraft for homeland defence but is phasing out its fleet of Hornet F/A-18C and F/A-18D aircraft. Work on the project includes general logistics support, logistics programme management, and logistics support to aircraft during pilot training with Sniper advanced targeting pods (ATPs). It will be carried out for three years and will help enhance targeting capabilities. This contract will strengthen Kuwait's capability to counter regional threats and safeguard its borders and major infrastructure, according to the US.

[https://www.airforce-](https://www.airforce-technology.com/news/boeing-consolidates-)
[technology.com/news/boeing-consolidates-](https://www.airforce-technology.com/news/boeing-consolidates-)

[ties-with-kuwait-for-f-a-18-70m-logistics-contract/](https://www.airforce-technology.com/news/boeing-consolidates-ties-with-kuwait-for-f-a-18-70m-logistics-contract/)

Lebanon

Syrian soldier among three dead in Israeli strikes: war monitor

France 24, March 12, 2023

Israeli airstrikes targeting a weapons depot in Syria killed an army officer and two pro-Iran fighters, a war monitor said, raising the death toll of the Sunday morning raid. "Israeli strikes targeted a weapons depot belonging to pro-Iran forces located... between Tartus and Hama provinces," said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, adding that an air defence position was also targeted. "The number of dead has risen to three," the Britain-based Observatory said, reporting that an army officer was killed in addition to two pro-Iran fighters, while two other soldiers were wounded. Syrian state news agency SANA, citing a military source, reported that "at around 7:15 am (0415 GMT), the Israeli enemy carried out an air attack, firing missiles from the direction of north Lebanon with targets in the Tartus and Hama countryside".

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230312-syrian-soldier-among-three-dead-in-israeli-strikes-war-monitor>

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, UK sign defense agreement

Alarabiya News, March 1, 2023

Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman has met with Britain's Defense Minister Ben Wallace on Wednesday in the Saudi capital Riyadh. During the meeting a declaration of intent

regarding the Kingdom's participation in the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) program has been signed, according to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA). The Future Combat Air System (FCAS), first announced in 2017 by French President Emmanuel Macron and then German Chancellor Angela Merkel, is designed to replace the Eurofighter and the Dassault Rafale with a combination of manned and unmanned aircraft from 2040.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2023/03/01/Saudi-Arabia-s-Prince-Khalid-bin-Salman-receives-UK-defense-minister>

Saudi FM, Blinken discuss strategic ties during G20 meeting

Alarabiya News, March 2, 2023

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed on Thursday bilateral strategic ties on the sidelines of the meeting of G20 foreign ministers in New Delhi. According to a series of tweets by the Saudi foreign ministry, Prince Faisal and Blinken "reviewed the strategic relations between the two friendly countries and ways to enhance and support them in various cooperation and joint coordination fields." They also discussed regional and international developments including those related to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. Saudi Arabia has been exerting efforts to help reach a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The Kingdom has also been providing humanitarian aid and assistance to Ukraine the last of which was announced last week during Prince Faisal's visit to Kyiv.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2023/03/02/Saudi-FM-Blinken-discuss-strategic-ties-during-G20-meeting>

India's defense ties with Middle East deepen as security engagements on rise

Arab News, March 5, 2023

India is deepening its defense ties with the Middle East, experts said on Sunday, following a number of recent security engagements with Gulf countries. In the past few weeks alone, Indian forces have engaged with their counterparts in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Oman. On Feb. 20, INS Sumedha, a patrol vessel of the Indian Navy, arrived in Abu Dhabi to participate in the Naval Defense Exhibition and International Defense Exhibition. A week later, eight fighters, tankers and transport planes of the Indian Air Force were extended hospitality by the Royal Saudi Air Force for refueling and interaction with Saudi airmen. On Feb. 28, an Indian submarine made a call for an operational turnaround in the Salalah port of Oman.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2262886/world>

Report: Saudi Arabia Seeks U.S. Security Promises, Nuclear Aid in Exchange for Ties With Israel

Haaretz, March 9, 2023

Saudi Arabia has asked for U.S. security guarantees and assistance with building up its civilian nuclear program as a condition for normalizing ties between the Arabian kingdom and Israel in talks currently being brokered by the United States. In a report published by the Wall Street Journal on Thursday, sources close to the talks said that the Biden administration is heavily involved in the talk between the two Middle Eastern countries. Both U.S. President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are seeking to reach a deal with the Saudis as an apparent counter to Iran as it ratchets up its own nuclear program, and continues providing military aid to the Russians during its war with Ukraine. Any deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia, the report says, would reverberate throughout the Arab world, as the kingdom is home to two of Islam's holiest sites, and would signal to other Arab countries that they too could pursue formalizing ties with the Jewish state.

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-03-09/ty-article/.premium/saudi-arabia-seeks-u-s-security-promises-nuclear-aid-in-exchange-for-ties-with-israel/00000186-c770-dc44-abe6-c7fa4ac20000>

Saudi Arabia likely to agree to nuclear curbs if US gives backing, Congress told

Middle East Eye, March 10, 2023

Saudi Arabia would likely commit to an agreement stopping it from taking steps towards building a nuclear weapon if the US backs the development of a civilian nuclear programme in the kingdom, US congressional members were told on Thursday. The comment, made by the head of the institute supporting the implementation of the Abraham Accords, come as US support for the programme emerges as one of a handful of asks Riyadh has reportedly made of Washington in order to normalise relations with Israel. "They don't want to see a standard upheld by the United States that is one way for Tehran and another way for partners and allies in the region," Robert Greenway, Abraham Accords Peace Institute executive

director, told the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/saudi-arabia-nuclear-abraham-accords>

Saudi Arabia demands US security pledges, nuclear help for peace deal with Israel: report

WION, March 11, 2023

Saudi Arabia is demanding security guarantees and help in the development of its civilian nuclear programme from the United States, as the latter is trying to broker its peace deal with Israel, according to a report published by The Wall Street Journal. Reaching a normalisation deal between Saudi Arabia and Israel has become a priority for Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and United States President Joe Biden as chances of confrontation with Iran, over its military aid to Russia amid the Ukraine war and the nuclear programme, remain high. The reports stated the deep involvement of the Biden administration in the complex negotiations, adding that any deal would reshape the political landscape of the Middle East.

<https://www.wionews.com/world/saudi-arabia-demands-us-security-pledges-nuclear-help-for-peace-deal-with-israel-report-570778>

Syrian Arab Republic

Polyanskiy: Israeli attacks on Syria a flagrant violation of international law

Syrian Arab News Agency, March 1, 2023

First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN, Dmitry Polyanskiy, has stressed the need to stop the

repeated Israeli attacks on Syrian territory, the most recent of which was the attack that targeted points in and around Damascus which caused the martyrdom of five people and the injury of 15 others. “We strongly condemn the Israeli military acts as a flagrant violation of international law, and we strongly urge the Israeli side to stop armed provocations against Syria and refrain from steps that are fraught with dangerous consequences for the entire region,” Polyanskiy said during a session of the Security Council on Wednesday.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=302233>

Russian MoD: Terrorists in de-escalation zone attack safe areas

Syrian Arab News Agency, March 1, 2023

Over the past 24 hours, terrorist organizations in the de-escalation zone attacked with a number of missiles the safe areas and posts of the Syrian Arab Army in the countryside of Idleb and Lattakia, Russian Ministry of Defense said. Terrorists of “Jabhat Al-Nusra” and “Turkistani Party” organizations in Idleb region attacked safe areas and posts of the Syrian Arab Army in the countryside of Idleb and Lattakia with mortar shells and bombings carried out by drones,” Deputy Head of the Russian Coordination Center in Syria, Oleg Egorov, said in a statement.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=302262>

Three citizens killed, 1000 sheep stolen in attack by Daesh terrorists, Hama countryside

Syrian Arab News Agency, March 9, 2023

Three citizens of one family were killed in a terrorist attack by Daesh organization in

Salamiyeh area, Hama eastern countryside.

‘A group of Daesh terrorists attacked, with machine guns, a number of citizens while they were grazing sheep in al-Sib Dam area in Salamiyeh eastern countryside, east of Hama, causing the death of three citizens’ according to a source at Hama Police Command. The terrorist group, after assaulting citizens, stole more than 1,000 sheep and transported them to al-Badia region, as groups of terrorists are positioning there, the source added. On February 17th, 53 citizens, who were collecting truffles, were killed in an attack by Daesh terrorists in southeast of al-Sukhna area, Homs eastern countryside.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=302986>

Russian, Syrian Defense Ministers discuss bilateral military cooperation

Syrian Arab News Agency, March 15, 2023

Syrian Defense Minister Ali Mahmoud Abbas discussed with his Russian counterpart Sergey Shoigu mutual cooperation in the military domain. “The Syrian and Russian Defense Ministers held official talks on the latest developments in Syria and the military-technical cooperation between the two countries,” Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation stated on Wednesday. The two sides underlined the importance of continued close cooperation; one that preserves the security and stability of Syria.

Shoigu extended condolence to the families of the victims and those affected by the devastating earthquake, asserting his country’s support to Syria.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=303623>

United Arab Emirates

UAE nuclear programme, future pillar of UAE space exploration era

Emirates News Agency, March 1, 2023

The UAE is ready to make history and shoot for the stars again, inspired by the ambitions of the nation's Founding Father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Sultan Al Neyadi will become the second Emirati to take the UAE flag to space, spending 180 days on board the orbiting laboratory of the International Space Station (ISS) alongside crew mates from Roscosmos and NASA. A seemingly unlinked sector to space exploration is nuclear power's role beyond clean electricity, with the UAE Peaceful Nuclear Energy Programme to become a catalyst for the nation's era of space exploration in the decades ahead.

<http://wam.ae/en/details/1395303134423>

Türkiye

Kazakhstan eyes wide range of military cooperation with Türkiye

Daily Sabah, March 1, 2023

Kazakhstan is eyeing cooperation with Türkiye in the military sector, according to the head of Kazakhstan's Association of Defense Industry Enterprises. Speaking during an interview with Anadolu Agency (AA), Aibek Baryssov took the opportunity to first offer his condolences over the devastating earthquakes that hit Türkiye in early February. "We are with you. Our hearts are with you. We pray every day for the people affected by the earthquakes," he said. "In 1991, we had an earthquake in Kazakhstan. I'm from the territory where it

occurred. I experienced it myself, so I perfectly understand the current difficulties," he added, likely referring to the Suusamyр earthquake.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/kazakhstan-eyes-wide-range-of-military-cooperation-with-turkiye>

Türkiye not without options on F-16 fighter jets: Defense chief

Daily Sabah, March 12, 2023

Türkiye on Sunday reiterated its frustration over the prolonged process of its request to acquire F-16 fighter jets from the United States, again signaling it could look elsewhere in case Washington fails to provide it with the warplanes. "We want everyone to know that we are not desperate in this matter; we have options in our hands," Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said, stressing they were waiting for approval by the U.S. Congress and that "there is a constructive environment in general." Ankara has stressed that it would not accept any conditions linked to its purchase of the F-16 jets and called on the Biden administration, which has backed the deal, to maintain a decisive stance.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiye-not-without-options-on-f-16-fighter-jets-defense-chief>

NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

*Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Mr. Kushal Agrawal
with inputs from Mr. Niranjana C. Oak*

Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

**No. 1, Development Enclave,
Rao Tula Ram Marg,
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi-110 010
Telephone: 91-11-26717983;
Fax: 91-11-26154191,
Website: www.idsa.in**



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