



Volume 3 | Issue 4

SYLLOGE ON WEST ASIA

FOCUS, NUCLEAR, MISSILES & OTHER
SECURITY ISSUES IN WEST ASIA

16 February - 28 February 2023



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Iran

Iran to launch unmanned Qaher warplane in future months

Tehran Times, February 19, 2023

The indigenous Qaher single-seat unmanned stealth fighter will be unveiled by the Iran Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO) in the upcoming solar year, which starts on March 21. Talking to TV, Brigadier General Afshin Khajefard revealed on Saturday that the IAIO produced the fighter jet and the concept was initially discussed in the media ten years ago. He went on to say that the Qaher project has attained complete technological maturity, but the IAIO is creating a wider number of products. It indicates that new variants of this aircraft will be handed to the armed forces by the middle of next calendar year, he stated. In the future, the Qaher project will produce an unmanned aircraft. Khajefard further stressed that despite sanctions, Iran is able to manufacture parts and refurbish commercial airplanes on its own.

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

Iran Categorically Denies Enriching Uranium to 84%

Fars News Agency, February 20, 2023

Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi dismissed a report claiming that Tehran has enriched uranium to 84 percent purity level, and underlined that his country has never enriched uranium above 60% purity. Kamalvandi made the remarks in reaction to a report by Bloomberg that claimed the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is trying to clarify how "Iran accumulated uranium enriched to 84% purity". It added that the IAEA inspectors had found highly-enriched uranium particles "within the network of pipes connecting centrifuges used to separate uranium isotopes". The Iranian official told FNA on Sunday that the Bloomberg's report was aimed at distorting the realities.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011201000107/Iran-Categorically-Denies-Enriching-Uranium-4-در-صد>

Nuclear Chief: IAEA Team in Iran for Inspection, Talks

Fars News Agency, February 22, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said on Wednesday that International Atomic Energy Agency officials have visited Tehran to hold talks and conduct inspections to resolve ambiguities caused by the incorrect interpretation of an IAEA inspector over an alleged undeclared change to uranium enriching equipment at Fordow. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the cabinet session on Wednesday, Eslami said that the nuclear watchdog's team is currently visiting Iran's nuclear facilities and that the recent points of ambiguity with the UN nuclear body have either been or are being resolved. "Those ambiguities were caused by the misunderstanding of an IAEA inspector who had earlier visited Iran. We always avoid creating new ambiguity in our cooperation with the IAEA through interaction and coordination," he stated.

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

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

Fars News Agency, February 23, 2023

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

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14011204000370/Nclear-Chief-IAEA-Lef-wih-N-Excse-fr-Adpin-f-Ani-Iran-Reslin>

Iraq defense minister in Tehran for military talks

Tehran Times, February 25, 2023

Iraqi Defense Minister Thabet Muhammad Saeed Al Abbas landed in Tehran on Saturday afternoon for strengthening military cooperation between Baghdad and Tehran. Thabet Muhammad Saeed Al Abbasi was welcomed by his Iranian counterpart Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Gharaei Ashtiani. The visit by the Iraqi defense chief followed a few days

after the Iranian foreign minister visited Baghdad for talks with the country's senior officials.

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

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

Fars News Agency, February 25, 2023

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

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

Iran to possibly provide Syria with indigenous air defense system

Tehran Times, February 25, 2023

Iranian and Syrian military authorities have agreed to deploy missile systems to

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

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

IRGC unveils new long-range missile, warns Europe

Tehran Times, February 25, 2023

A senior Iranian official said Saturday that the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has added a new long-range cruise missile to its missile arsenal. IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said the new cruise missile, dubbed Paveh, has a range of 1,650 kilometers, according to a Tasnim report. General Hajizadeh also issued a warning to Europe about the range of Iranian missiles. He said Iran has missiles whose range is 2,000 km. "We can hit American warships within a range of 2,000 km and we kept this range out of respect for Europe, which we hope will avoid disrespecting [Iran]," he said. Paveh, which has gone into operation recently, is named

in remembrance of the Iranian forces martyred in Kurdistan province, he stated. The commander noted that all of Iran's missiles are now manufactured with pinpoint accuracy, adding that all American bases in the region are within reach of the Iranian missiles.

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

AEOI Chief: Iran Exporting Nuclear Products, Radiopharmaceuticals

Fars News Agency, February 26, 2023

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

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

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

Tehran Times, February 26, 2023

Iranian Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Gharaei Ashtiani said on Sunday that the

Islamic Republic is ready to share its experiences with Iraq in achieving self-sufficiency in military industry.

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

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

Army, IRGC launch joint aerial drills

Tehran Times, February 26, 2023

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

the IRGC’s air defense divisions participated in a massive exercise known as “Modafean Aseman Velayat 1400” (Guardians of “Velayat” Sky 1400), which involved air defense units and domestically built military weaponry.

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

AEOI Spokesman: IAEA Chief to Visit Iran within Days

Fars News Agency, February 27, 2023

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

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

Iraq

SMC: Three terrorists killed in an air strikes in Hamrin mountain range

Iraqi News Agency, February 17, 2023

The Security Media Cell announced that it had launched an air strike against terrorist

gangs, killing three terrorists in the Hamrin mountain range. A statement of the cell, which was received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), stated: "In revolt for the righteous martyrs, and in continuation of the exposure approach, and according to accurate information from the Federal Intelligence and Investigation Agency in the Ministry of the Interior in coordination with the targeting cell of the Joint Operations Command, the heroic air hawks dealt a precise, devastating strike in a mountain range." Hamrin, which resulted in the killing of 3 members of the terrorist ISIS gangs.

<https://ina.iq/eng/24912-smc-three-terrorists-killed-in-an-air-strikes-in-hamrin-mountain-range.html>

Launching major security operation in Al-Hadar desert in Nineveh: PMF

Iraqi News Agency, February 18, 2023

A force from Nineveh Ops Command at the Popular Mobilization Forces-PMF launched on Saturday, a major security operation in Al-Hadar desert of Nineveh governorate. A statement by PMF, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), stated that "The operation was carried out by the 21st, 44th, intelligence, medical brigades as well as the Shield Fighting Directorate, represented by the 1st Battalion, with the 44th Brigade, and other support formations in the Popular Mobilization Forces.

<https://ina.iq/eng/24927-launching-major-security-operation-in-al-hadar-desert-in-nineveh-pmf.html>

The Minister of Interior signs with his Saudi counterpart a protocol for security cooperation

Iraqi News Agency, February 19, 2023

Interior Minister Abdul Amir Al-Shammari signed, with his Saudi counterpart, a protocol for security cooperation between the two countries. A statement of the Ministry of Interior, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), said, "The Minister of Interior signed with his Saudi counterpart a protocol for security cooperation between the two countries, and discussed the completion of work on a number of joint projects of importance in the security and training fields, drug control and border security."

<https://ina.iq/eng/24958-the-minister-of-interior-signs-with-his-saudi-counterpart-a-protocol-for-security-cooperation.html>

In Iraq, Macron seeks bigger sphere of influence for France

Al-Monitor, February 22, 2023

France is increasingly flexing its diplomatic muscles in Iraq as French President Emmanuel Macron hosted the Kurdistan Regional Government's Prime Minister Masrour Barzani last Thursday, only weeks after meeting Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed al-Sudani. During the meeting, Macron expressed support for Iraq and the KRG in the face of external and domestic security threats, while Barzani lauded Paris as an "ally with a common vision." Both leaders discussed investments and economic diversification in sectors like agriculture and pledged to further

strengthen bilateral cooperation. France has maneuvered to rival Washington as Baghdad's primary Western partner and to counterbalance China's financial and geopolitical influence in the country.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/02/iraq-macron-seeks-bigger-sphere-influence-france>

PMF: Launching a joint security operation in Al-Hadar

Iraqi News Agency, February 23, 2023

The Popular Mobilization Forces announced on Thursday, the launch of a joint security operation in Al-Hadar. A statement by PMF, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), stated that "A joint security force from the army and the 44th Brigade in the Popular Mobilization Forces carried out today a security operation in Al-Hadar to raid the hideouts and tunnels of the remnants of the terrorist ISIS." The statement added, "The operation resulted in securing a large area of the desert, and finding hidoutes, motorcycles and weapons in Wadi al-Tharthar, south of Mosul".

<https://ina.iq/eng/25030-pmf-launching-a-joint-security-operation-in-al-hadar.html>

The Commander-in-Chief agrees to form the 21st Division in Salah al-Din

Iraqi News Agency, February 24, 2023

The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Muhammad Shia Al-Sudani, approved on Friday, forming the command of the 21st Division at the Iraqi army. "The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Muhammad Shia' al-Sudani, agreed on the request of the Ministry of Defense to form

the command of the Army's 21st Division", A senior security source said in a statement to The Iraqi News Agency (INA). He added, "The headquarters of the 21st Infantry Division will be formed from the resources of the Ministry of Defense, and the deployment of the division's sectors will be in Salah al-Din Governorate."

<https://ina.iq/eng/25054-the-commander-in-chief-agrees-to-form-the-21st-division-in-salah-al-din.html>

Commander of ground forces directs intensifying military operations in Diyala

Iraqi News Agency, February 24, 2023

The commander of the ground forces, Lieutenant General Qassem Al-Muhammadi, directed the intensification of military operations in the Diyala sector. A statement of the command, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), said: "The commander of the ground forces, Lieutenant General Qassem Al-Muhammadi, inspected the division of the Diyala Operations Command, and he was received by the operations commander, the commander of the 1st Infantry Division, and a number of commanders of formations and units in the command."

<https://ina.iq/eng/25065-commander-of-ground-forces-directs-intensifying-military-operations-in-diyala.html>

Baghdad hosts the Security and Defense Exhibition

Iraqi News Agency, February 25, 2023

The Baghdad International Fair will witness the launch of the activities of the eleventh session of the Security, Defense

and Military Industries Exhibition next March, under the auspices of Prime Minister Muhammad Shia Al-Sudani, with the participation of 18 countries and more than 100 companies. The director of the company organizing the exhibition, Falah Al-Shammari, said, in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that "the new session of the exhibition will be held under the auspices of Prime Minister Muhammad Shia'a Al-Sudani for the period from 4 to 7 next March," noting that "this session focuses on the military equipment of the Air Force." and electronic security technology.

<https://ina.iq/eng/25084-baghdad-hosts-the-security-and-defense-exhibition.html>

Al-Shammari arrives in Tunisia to participate in the meeting of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers

Iraqi News Agency, February 28, 2023

The Minister of Interior, Abdul Amir Al-Shammari, arrived today, Tuesday, in the Republic of Tunisia to participate in the meeting of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers. The ministry said in a brief statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA): that "The Minister of Interior, Abdul al-Amir Al-Shammari and his accompanying delegation, arrived in the Republic of Tunisia to participate in the meeting of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers, and he was received by the Secretary-General of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers, Muhammad bin Ali Kuman, and the Tunisian Minister of Interior Tawfiq Sharaf Al-Din.

<https://ina.iq/eng/25151-al-shammari-arrives-in-tunisia-to-participate-in-the-meeting-of-the-council-of-arab-interior-ministers.html>

A security operation launched to track down ISIS remnants south of Mosul

Iraqi News Agency, February 28, 2023

The Popular Mobilization Authority announced today, Tuesday, the launch of a joint security operation to track down ISIS remnants south of Mosul. The authority said, in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that "a force from the army and the 58th Brigade in the Popular Mobilization carried out a security operation to track down ISIS remnants south of Mosul," noting that "the operation included searching Kanous Island, south of Mosul." According to the statement "The security services and the Popular Mobilization Brigades continue their proactive operations to prevent ISIS from returning to the liberated areas."

<https://ina.iq/eng/25153-a-security-operation-launched-to-track-down-isis-remnants-south-of-mosul.html>

Israel

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

Al-Monitor, February 16, 2023

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

eliminating the environmental impact of mining lithium, and also reducing ownership costs for companies planning to use it at scale.

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

IAI & Bharat Electronics Limited to enhance India Defense Forces products

Israel Defense, February 16, 2023

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a leading manufacturer of defence electronic products and systems for India's defense sector, have concluded the agreements to form a joint venture that will extend product support services for India's Defence Forces. The announcement was made by Honourable Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri. Ajay Bhat during the Aero India 2023 being held at Bengaluru. An agreement was signed by BEL and IAI in this regard on February 14 in Aero India in Bengaluru, India .

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

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

Israel Defense, February 19, 2023

Rotary Unmanned Aerial Systems (RUAS) developer Steadicopter, and BIRD Aerosystems, a global provider of innovative defense technology, are unveiling the BlackEagle 50H (BE50H) – an advanced hybrid unmanned helicopter, featuring a miniature airborne radar with advanced proprietary technology, for use in

maritime intelligence missions, at IDEX 2023. Advanced capabilities for long endurance of up to five hours, together with BIRD Aerosystems' μMPR capabilities for the detection and tracking of maritime vessels, enable the BE50H to carry out accurate mapping of all vessels within a radius of 200 km within a few hours, in harsh environmental conditions, day or night.

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

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

Israel Defense, February 19, 2023

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

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

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

Israel Defense, February 20, 2023

The Israel-U.S. Binational Industrial Research and Development (BIRD)

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

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

Israel, UAE jointly present new marine system

Israel Defense, February 21, 2023

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

conversion of commercial and other vessels.

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

IDEX: BIRD Aerosystems to present airborne mission protection systems

Israel Defense, February 21, 2023

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

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

NASA to launch Israel's first space telescope mission

Israel Defense, February 22, 2023

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

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

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

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

Israel Defense, February 23, 2023

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

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

Israel steps up military planning against Iran's nuclear program

Al-Monitor, February 24, 2023

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Defense Minister Yoav

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

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

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

Israel Defense, February 28, 2023

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

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

Israel's FM urges Germany to add Iran's IRGC to terror list, but hurdles remain

Al-Monitor, February 28, 2023

On a visit to Berlin on Tuesday, Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen discussed the Iranian threat with his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock, including Jerusalem's request to add the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to the European Union's list of terror-supporting organizations. Speaking at a joint press conference, Cohen focused on Iran, saying that the international community's immediate response to Iran ramping up its uranium enrichment should be to restore sanctions on the regime in place before the 2015 nuclear agreement. There are two options on the table, argued Cohen. "We can go back to sanctions or have a credible military option." He hailed Baerbock's commitment to preventing Iran from reaching nuclear capabilities.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/02/israels-fm-urges-germany-add-irans-irgc-terror-list-hurdles-remain>

Lebanon

Iran Mulling Delivering Missile System To Syria

Iran International, February 25, 2023

The Islamic Republic is likely to sell surface-to-air missiles to Syria, state television said on Friday, to help reinforce the air defenses of Tehran's close ally in the face of frequent Israeli air strikes. In a report on Thursday night, IRIB News said Iran and Syria have reached an agreement for the delivery of equipment related to air

defenses and electronic warfare as "Syria needs to rebuild its air defense network and requires precision bombs for its fighter planes." Having felt threatened by increased Israel attacks on facilities needed by Iran to deliver arms and equipment to its proxy forces, "Syria needs to reconstruct the network of its air defenses and also required precision bombs for its fighter jets," the report said. "It is very likely that we will witness the supply of Iran's radars and defense missiles, such as the Khordad 15 missile system, to reinforce Syria's air defenses." The Islamic Republic claims Unveiled the missile system is capable of detecting fighter jets and combat drones from 150 kilometers away and tracking them within a range of 120 kilometers.

<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202302249156>

Oman

Sultan Of Oman To Travel To Iran Regarding Nuclear Talks: MP

Iran International, February 22, 2023

The Sultan of Oman, Haitham bin Tariq, will visit Tehran in the coming days to hold talks regarding the stalled nuclear negotiation between Iran and the West. The Sultan of Oman, Haitham bin Tariq, will visit Tehran to hold talks regarding the stalled nuclear negotiation between Iran and the West. MP Ali Alizadeh told Tasnim News Agency on Tuesday that "Omani authorities have recently expressed willingness to play the role of mediator between Iran and the United States in order to bring the nuclear negotiations to a conclusion". He made the comments after the National Security and Foreign Policy

Committee of the Parliament held a meeting on Tuesday with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202302227372>

Oman to allow Israeli aircraft to fly through its airspace, says Jerusalem

WION, February 23, 2023

Oman has decided to allow Israeli aircraft to fly through its airspace, indicating another sign of closer ties between the two countries. The announcement was made by Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen on Thursday (February 23). Cohen said the approval (from Oman) is a "significant and historic decision for the Israeli economy and Israeli travellers," the news agency AP reported. Taking to Twitter, Oman's Civil Aviation Authority did not directly mention Israel but said, "As part of the Sultanate of Oman's continuous efforts to fulfil its obligations under the Chicago Convention of 1944, the Civil Aviation Authority affirms that the Sultanate's airspace is open for all carriers that meet the requirements of the Authority for overflying."

<https://www.wionews.com/world/oman-to-allow-israeli-aircraft-to-fly-through-its-airspace-says-jerusalem-565230>

India explores energy, defense engagements with Oman

Arab News, February 28, 2023

Oman has joined the Gulf countries where India is focusing on partnerships in energy and defense, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Tuesday, following an India-Oman Strategic Consultative Group meeting. The India-Oman Strategic Consultative Group was established in

2003 to provide a joint forum for regular reviews of relations and exchanges between the maritime neighbors. The latest edition of the annual meetings took place in Muscat on Monday, co-chaired by Ausaf Sayeed, overseas Indian affairs secretary at the foreign ministry, and Oman's Diplomatic Affairs Undersecretary Sheikh Khalifa Al-Harthy. "The discussions were focused on exploring avenues of cooperation in key sectors, including energy, trade and investment, health, education, defense and cultural exchanges," the Indian foreign ministry said in a statement.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2259601/world>

Saudi Arabia

US officials visit Riyadh to discuss Iran, regional security

Arab News, February 18, 2023

America's Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs Daniel Benaim expressed concern over the impact of Iran's supply of weapons to Russia and reaffirmed America's commitment to advancing regional security at a press roundtable hosted in the US Embassy's Quincy House in Riyadh on Thursday. Benaim was part of a high-level US delegation that visited Riyadh from Feb. 13 to 16 and included Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley; acting coordinator for counterterrorism and Acting US Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS Christopher Landberg; and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East Dana Stroul. "Iran's continuing supply of drones and other armaments to Russia for its aggression and

brutal attacks on civilian targets in Ukraine will affect the security and safety of this region, and I think we should all be concerned by what Iran is getting in return for helping Russia's brutal assault on civilians in Ukraine," Benaim said.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2253686/saudi-arabia>

Saudi FM discusses Russia ties, Iran nuclear deal in Munich

Alarabiya News, February 18, 2023

Saudi Arabia maintaining a good relationship with Russia is beneficial to all and keeps the doors of dialogue open, the Kingdom's Minister of Foreign Affairs said during a panel at the Munich Security Conference. The GCC is unified in supporting dialogue as a means to resolve the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Prince Faisal bin Farhan added. Saudi Arabia "continues dialogue with Kyiv and Moscow" to find a solution, "but issues between them are complex," the diplomat said, noting that there is willingness on both sides to negotiate. As for relations with Washington, Prince Faisal reiterated that Saudi Arabia disagrees with the US on some issues on the basis of national interest, but maintained that the Kingdom is working jointly on security and stability in the region.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2023/02/18/Saudi-FM-discusses-Russia-ties-Iran-nuclear-deal-in-Munich>

Saudi Arabia says nuclear arms race in the Middle East 'cannot be ruled out'

The National News, February 19, 2023

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, has said

he "cannot rule out" a nuclear arms race in the region. Speaking at the Munich Security Conference, he said the kingdom was concerned about Iran's nuclear programme and wanted negotiations between Tehran and world powers to resume. At a session titled Middle Men: The Geostrategic Role of Middle Eastern Countries, Prince Faisal said: "If one state gets nuclear weapons, especially one that has expressed aggression towards its neighbours, I think everyone will start thinking about how to protect themselves.

"I hope that never happens. If it is a genie that gets out, it will be very hard to put back into the bottle.

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/uk-news/2023/02/18/saudi-arabia-says-nuclear-arms-race-in-the-middle-east-cannot-be-ruled-out/>

Saudi FM seeks GCC participation in nuclear talks with Iran

Saudi Gazette, February 19, 2023

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan reaffirmed that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states must have a say regarding the nuclear agreement with Iran. "Acquiring nuclear weapons by an enemy country would push everyone to discuss their options," he said while addressing a dialogue session at the Munich Security Conference 2023 here on Saturday. Prince Faisal said that Saudi Arabia wants to return to the nuclear agreement, but with a "comprehensive view and with Gulf participation." He said that the proliferation of armaments is not beneficial for the region. "We support the efforts to make the Middle East region free from nuclear weapons," he said while

expressing Saudi Arabia's concern about conflicts and divisions in the world. Referring to the reports about Tehran's desire for dialogue, he said: "We heard about the Iranians' desire to sit down and talk with us. We warned previously against Iran's marches, and they are now striking in Ukraine," he said.

<https://saudigazette.com.sa/article/629970>

Saudi Arabia moves forward with bids for nuclear plant

Al-Monitor, February 27, 2023

The Saudi Ministry of Finance's 2023 budget statement published Feb. 15 notes that bids to build the plant were received last December, reported the Dubai-based business intelligence outlet Middle East Economic Digest on Monday. Background: Saudi Arabia has had an interest in nuclear power for decades. The kingdom was a major investor in Pakistan's nuclear weapons program that began in the 1970s, for example. In 2009, the late Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz told the Obama administration that the country would obtain nuclear weapons of its own if Iran were to do so. In 2018, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said the same thing to the US news outlet CBS.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/02/saudi-arabia-moves-forward-bids-nuclear-plant>

Syria

After Syria earthquake, Saudi Arabia is linchpin to Assad's normalization

Al-Monitor, February 22, 2023

The devastating earthquake that tore through Syria and Turkey two weeks ago

has left cities in ruin and tens of thousands dead. But as humanitarian assistance began to pour in, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad found himself at the center of attention. After years in the political wilderness, Assad is now taking a steady stream of calls and visitors, and on Feb. 20, he went on a red carpet visit to Oman. Earthquake diplomacy seems to be working out well for Assad, and there are even signs that Saudi Arabia — long the main obstacle to Syria's reintegration in Arab politics — has softened its approach. Since the earthquake, Syrian state media has revealed in the many supportive messages and delegations received by the president. In addition to visiting Syrian allies from Lebanon, Assad hosted the Emirati and Jordanian foreign ministers. He also spoke on the phone, for the first time, with King Hamad of Bahrain and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/02/after-syria-earthquake-saudi-arabia-linchpin-assads-normalization>

Turkey

Bayraktar TB2, Akıncı UAVs conduct over 1,551 hours of flights in quake zone

Daily Sabah, February 17, 2023

Turkish drone magnate Baykar's Bayraktar TB2 and Akıncı unmanned aerial vehicles (UCVs) have conducted a total of 1,551 hours and 53 minutes of flight over the earthquake zone in Türkiye's southeast since massive quakes hit the region on Feb. 6. The 7.7 and 7.6 quakes with epicenters in Kahramanmaraş's Pazarcık and Elbistan have affected 10 provinces nearby while leaving at least 38,044 people dead,

according to official figures. The related statement about the UAVs was made on Baykar's Twitter account. "Since the first day of the earthquake, 9 Bayraktar #AKINCI and 37 #BayraktarTB2 have performed a total of 1,551 hours and 53 minutes of mission flight in disaster areas. Our national UAVs are currently continuing their mission flights in the region. We exist for our nation, we stand by our nation," the statement read.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/bayraktar-tb2-akinci-uavs-conduct-over-1551-hours-of-flights-in-quake-zone>

Türkiye's Havelsan to debut its unmanned land vehicle in UAE fair

Daily Sabah, February 19, 2023

The Turkish defense industry is set to introduce its uncrewed land vehicle, Kapgan, developed by Havelsan, abroad for the first time at the IDEX International Defense Exhibition and Conference in Abu Dhabi on Feb. 20-24. The event will host high-level official delegations worldwide to showcase the latest defense industry technologies. As part of the "digital unity" concept, Havelsan will exhibit its range of uncrewed aerial and land vehicles at the fair, including Kapgan, a medium-class-2 uncrewed land vehicle; Barkan, a medium-class-1 uncrewed land vehicle, and Baha, an under-cloud uncrewed aerial vehicle (UAV). Kapgan, exhibited with a 30x113 millimeter cannon, has undergone integration studies in collaboration with Turkish arms maker Canik and Unirobotics.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiyes-havelsan-to-debut-its-unmanned-land-vehicle-in-uae-fair>

Türkiye rejects preconditions to buy F-16s as Biden admin vows support

Daily Sabah, February 20, 2023

Türkiye's top diplomat on Monday said Ankara would not buy U.S. F-16 fighter jets with preconditions and expressed his belief that the issue can be overcome if the Biden administration maintains a decisive stance.

Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu made it clear that Türkiye objects to the sale of F-16 warplanes being tied to ratifying the NATO membership of Sweden and Finland, which must be agreed upon by all 30 members of the trans-Atlantic defense alliance. Only the parliaments of Türkiye and Hungary have yet to give consent. "It would not be right or fair to make two independent issues – the two countries' NATO membership and the purchase of F-16s – conditional on each other," Çavuşoğlu told a news conference alongside his American counterpart Anthony Blinken.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiye-rejects-preconditions-to-buy-f-16s-as-biden-admin-vows-support>

Record number of Turkish firms pour in for IDEX arms fair in UAE

Daily Sabah, February 20, 2023

More than 50 Turkish defense companies offered a range of products for sale Monday at the biennial arms fair in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), marking the country's highest participation in recent years. Attended by the industry's most prominent players and high-level official delegations from all over the world, the International Defense Exhibition and Conference (IDEX), held in the UAE capital of Abu

Dhabi, highlights the Turkish arms industry's rise over recent years. Spearheaded by armed drones, the Turkish defense industry has made its way into the global spotlight and transformed into a major manufacturer and exporter. Held every other year, IDEX is the only international defense fair and conference held in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/record-number-of-turkish-firms-pour-in-for-idex-arms-fair-in-uae>

Turkish defense giant Otokar expands presence in UAE, Gulf

Daily Sabah, February 21, 2023

Turkish defense giant Otokar, which exports its vehicles to over 40 countries, is set to expand its presence in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with new versions of its Rabdan 8x8 vehicles. These vehicles serve as a key component for ground troops. Otokar is showcasing six vehicles, including the Akrep II Armored Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Weapon Platform Vehicle Cockerill CSE 90LP with a 90-millimeter turret, the Arma 8x8 Armored Combat Vehicle with a 30-millimeter Spear turret system, and the Tulpar Tracked Armored Combat Vehicle with a 30-millimeter Spear turret, at the IDEX International Defense Industry Fair held in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE.

With these new offerings, Otokar is positioning itself to play an even greater role in the UAE's defense industry.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-defense-giant-otokar-expands-presence-in-uae-gulf>

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<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-defense-giant-otokar-expands-presence-in-uae-gulf>

NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

*Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Mr. Kushal Agrawal
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