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SYLLOGE ON WEST ASIA

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

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**MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

IRAN

Macron advocates Saudi, Israeli inclusion in Iran nuclear talks

Al-monitor, 5th February, 2021

French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday again suggested Saudi Arabia and Israel should be involved in renewed international engagement with Iran over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Speaking during a virtual event hosted by the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based think tank, Macron also offered his services as an “honest broker” to renewed talks, as the US administration of President Joe Biden seeks to reengage with Iran over its nuclear capabilities. “I will do whatever I can to support any initiative from the US side [to reengage in dialogue],” Macron said. The French president previously led an unsuccessful push to get the Trump administration back into the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/iran-jcpoa-macron-saudi.html#ixzz6m8ledmwc>

EU: We need to move from 'maximum pressure' to 'maximum diplomacy' toward Iran

Tehran Times, 5th February, 2021

Josep Borrell, the European Union foreign policy chief, said on Thursday that it is high time the former Donald Trump administration’s “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran is abandoned in favor of diplomatic engagement and interaction. “We need to move from 'maximum pressure' to 'maximum diplomacy' through the JCPOA Joint Commission,” Borrell told Interfax news agency before making a trip to Moscow. “U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and 'maximum pressure' policy, including secondary sanctions, had a negative impact,” the chief European diplomatic and security

official regretted. “The JCPOA could not reach its full potential - including in the economic field,” Borrell added.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457771/E-U-We-need-to-move-from-maximum-pressure-to-maximum-diplomacy>

Iran to U.S.: Objecting to ICJ ruling ‘not a good fresh start’

Tehran Times, 5th February, 2021

Iran has criticized the U.S. for objecting the ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in which it has ruled it can hear a case brought by Iran against the U.S. in a bid to end sanctions that the Trump administration reimposed in 2018 after pulling out of the 2015 nuclear deal. A majority of a panel of 16 judges on Wednesday found that the ICJ, also known as the world court, has jurisdiction in the dispute. However, the U.S. State Department on Wednesday expressed displeasure over the ruling. “New US admin purports to support multilateralism, yet is "disappointed" by @CIJ_ICJ rejection of its objection to case on US sanctions (on basis it is outside Court's jurisdiction),” Takht Ravanchi wrote on his Twitter account.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457790/Iran-to-U-S-Objecting-to-ICJ-ruling-not-a-good-fresh-start>

Hatami hopes to boost military ties between Iran and India

Tehran Times, 5th February, 2021

Brigadier General Amir Hatami, Iran’s defense minister, says Iran and India enjoy great capacities to promote defense and military ties given the many affinities that the two states share, including their position on various international issues. In a meeting on Wednesday with Indian Chief of Defense Staff General Bipin Rawat in the city of Bangalore, Hatami said, “Tehran and New Delhi have cultural and

historical commonalities, common approaches toward many regional and international issues and geographical capacities, particularly in the Indian Ocean.” Highlighting the capacities of both states to expand ties, the Iranian defense chief noted, “These capacities can play a significant role in expanding the two countries’ relations, particularly in the defense and military sectors.”

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457795/Hatami-hopes-to-boost-military-ties-between-Iran-and-India>

Russia eyes close cooperation with EU on JCPOA, Lavrov says

Tehran Times, 5th February, 2021

Speaking at a joint news conference with European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell in Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday that the Kremlin is ready to work with the EU on implementing the Iran nuclear deal. “We have entered a difficult period concerning the Iran deal, and everything depends on the actions of the United States. We hope that the United States will soon be able to explain its actions concerning Iran,” Lavrov said, according to Fars News. He pointed out that Russia and the EU will continue to work with the Europeans on the JCPOA. “We [Russia and the European Union] continue to work together to ensure the implementation of the JCPOA. We hope that this U.S. administration will be able to decide whether to return to this important international document. This agreement is a means to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and reduce regional tensions,” Lavrov continued.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457805/Russia-eyes-close-cooperation-with-EU-on-JCPOA-Lavrov-says>

Blinken discusses Iran with British, French, German ministers

Tehran Times, 6th February, 2021

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed Iran and other issues on Friday in a virtual meeting with his British, French and German counterparts as the group weighs how to revive the Iran nuclear deal, Reuters reported. “We just had an in-depth and important conversation on Iran ... to handle together nuclear and regional security challenges,” French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said on Twitter. Britain’s Dominic Raab and Germany’s Heiko Maas also took part in the meeting. “The E3 and the U.S. discussed how a united approach could address our shared concerns towards Iran,” UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said in a statement about the meeting, according to DW. According to CNBC, the meeting came after President Joe Biden’s National Security Council met Friday afternoon to discuss the administration’s approach to Iran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457811/Blinken-discusses-Iran-with-British-French-German-ministers>

Iran opens shoulder-fired missile, hybrid solid fuel facilities

Tehran Times, 6th February, 2021

Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, on Saturday opened factories producing advanced shoulder-fired missiles and hybrid solid fuel for various missiles used in ground warfare, according to Tasnim news agency. Pointing to sophisticated and modern laser and optical technologies for navigation and control used in these missiles, the commander said, “Man-portable rocket launchers for air defense purposes can be employed by troops in various tactical conditions.”

“Iran is now among the three or four countries in the world with the technical know-how to manufacture shoulder-launched assault weapons, employed for air defense at low and medium altitudes,” he remarked.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457836/Iran-opens-shoulder-fired-missile-hybrid-solid-fuel-facilities>

Zarif urges U.S. to rejoin nuclear deal without hesitation

Tehran Times, 6th February, 2021

Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran’s foreign minister, has urged Washington to act fast to return to the nuclear accord, pointing out that legislation passed by the parliament obliges the government to harden its nuclear stance if U.S. sanctions are not eased by Feb. 21. Zarif also referred to presidential elections in Iran in June, saying if a conservative president is elected, this could further jeopardize the nuclear deal. The parliament, dominated by conservatives, passed the legislation in December that set a two-month deadline for an easing of sanctions. “We don’t need to return to the negotiating table. It’s America that has to find the ticket to come to the table,” he added. On Monday, Zarif hinted at a way to resolve the impasse over which side moves first, by saying the steps could be synchronized.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457853/Zarif-urges-U-S-to-rejoin-nuclear-deal-without-hesitation>

Leader: Iran will reverse nuclear steps if U.S. lifts all sanctions

Tehran Times, 7th February, 2021

“Iran will return to its JCOPA obligations once the U.S. fully lifts its sanctions in action and not in words or on paper, and once the sanction relief is verified by Iran,” Ayatollah Khamenei said during a meeting with commanders, pilots, and staff members of the Islamic Republic of

Iran Air Force (IRIAF). “The Americans and the Europeans have no right to set any conditions [of their own] as they violated their JCPOA commitments,” Ayatollah Khamenei said, according to Press TV. “They initially put some of the sanctions in abeyance for a brief period, but then reimposed and even intensified them,” Ayatollah Khamenei said in reference to Washington and its allies’ initial limited compliance with the JCPOA.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/457868/Leader-Iran-will-reverse-nuclear-steps-if-U-S-lifts-all-sanctions>

Iran’s foreign minister discusses ending war in Yemen with UN envoy

Al-monitor, 8th February, 2021

Iran’s Foreign Minister Javad Zarif sat down with United Nations’ lead envoy for the crisis in Yemen, Martin Griffiths, in Tehran on Monday to discuss how to bring about an end to the conflict. The two “exchanged views on Yemen and how to make progress towards a resumption of the political process,” UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a statement. “Mr. Zarif and Mr. Griffiths further discussed the urgent need to make progress towards a nationwide ceasefire, the opening of Sanaa airport and the easing of restrictions on Hodeida ports,” Dujarric said. The visit by Griffiths, his first to Iran as Yemen envoy, aimed at supporting “a negotiated political solution to the conflict in Yemen that meets the aspirations of the Yemeni people,” the statement read.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/iran-zarif-un-envoy-yemen-peace.html#ixzz6m8olQDES>

Iran could seek nuclear weapon if cornered, threatens intelligence minister

Al-monitor, 9th February, 2021

Iran's intelligence minister suggested on Tuesday that Iran would consider developing a nuclear weapon if crippling economic sanctions on his country aren't lifted. The rare statement from Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi comes as the US administration vows to lift sanctions only if Iran resumes full compliance with the nuclear deal. The country's leaders maintain that their nuclear program is used only for peaceful civilian purposes and often cite Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's apparent religious ruling banning the production of nuclear weapons. "The Islamic Republic sees them as religiously forbidden and does not pursue them," Intelligence Minister Seyyed Mahmoud Alavi said in an interview. "But a cornered cat may behave differently from when the cat is free. And if they push Iran in that direction, then it's no longer Iran's fault."

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/iran-alavi-nuclear-weapons-fatwa-biden-sanctions-lift-jcpoa.html#ixzz6m8pNN4Bq>

Iran, Russia, China to conduct joint naval exercise in Indian Ocean

Al-monitor, 9th February, 2021

Russia, China and Iran will kick off a joint naval exercise in the northern Indian Ocean this month, the Kremlin's ambassador to Iran said Monday. Ambassador Levan Dzhagaryan told Russia's RIA news agency that the exercises would include search and rescue and shipping safety drills. In December 2019, the three countries held a joint naval exercise in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Oman as tensions escalated between Washington and Tehran. Six months prior to that exercise, two civilian oil tankers were bombed in an attack the United States blamed on Iran's Islamic Revolutionary

Guard Corps (IRGC), though officials in Tehran denied responsibility.

Read more: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/iran-russia-china-naval-drill.html#ixzz6m8pk7oGg>

Iran set to unveil 50 nuclear achievements in April: AEOI chief

Islamic Republic News Agency, 9th February, 2021

Iran will unveil more than 50 achievements in the area of nuclear industry on April 9, the National Day of Nuclear Technology, Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali-Akbar Salehi said on Tuesday. Salehi made the remarks speaking on the sidelines of a ceremony in which the 2nd Nuclear Industry Exhibition was opened. Hailing the efforts made by the AEOI scientists, Salehi said that thanks to preparedness of the country's nuclear experts and officials, Iran's decision to resume enrichment of nuclear fuel up to 20% became practical in 12 hours. He said that the Iranian nuclear energy organization has full control over the activities and meets its needs in the least possible time.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84223945/Iran-set-to-unveil-50-nuclear-achievements-in-April-AEOI-chief>

Rouhani: No one should expect Iran to take first commitment step

Islamic Republic News Agency, 9th February, 2021

President Hassan Rouhani said on Tuesday that the US' and Europe's lack of loyalty to their nuclear deal commitments was the reason Iran reduced its own commitments and that no one can expect anything from Iran because it will not take the first step. Regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), he said that the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed in 15 reports that Iran has

been loyal to its commitments. But the US withdrew from it and other signatories of the deal failed to do their commitments, Rouhani said, adding after a year Iran started to reduce its commitments step by step. Rouhani went on to say that whenever 5+1 countries do their commitments, Iran will return to its own commitments. He added that the US that has left the deal and has acted against international rules for three years should take the first step.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84224464/Rouhani-No-one-should-expect-Iran-to-take-first-commitment-step>

Iran's IRGC receives 340 new boats, some with drones

The Jerusalem Post, 10th February, 2021

Iran's IRGC receives 340 new boats, some with drones. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps claimed this week that it received 340 new vessels, mostly the small fast boats it uses in the Persian Gulf that sometimes harass US ships. The vessels were displayed in Bandar Abbas in Iran. "The exact numbers and status as 'new' should be treated with healthy skepticism," notes H.I. Sutton, an expert on naval issues who writes and maintains a website devoted to this topic. "Many are armed with multiple rockets, light anti-ship missiles, or lightweight torpedoes." There is also a Taedong-B North Korean submersible boat. North Korea and Iran have cooperated in the past on missile technology. There are also C-14 "China cat" missile boats, which Iran has used for many years. "The speedboats that are capable of carrying and firing various missiles and rockets and supporting diving operations joined IRGC Naval Combat Organization in Bandar Abbas," said Fars News. "The light, fast and offensive speedboats that were built in the centers affiliated with the IRGC Navy and in cooperation with the Defense Ministry will be ready for missions and operations in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Caspian Sea."

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/irans-irgc-receives-340-new-boats-some-with-drones-658442>

ISRAEL

Israeli military drones dropping like flies in enemy territory

The Jerusalem Post, 9th February, 2021

An Israeli military drone was downed on Tuesday in the southern Gaza Strip, marking the third time in the past three days that Israel lost one of its drones in enemy territory. On Sunday, a military spokesperson reported that an army unit operating near Gaza, the Palestinian coastal enclave controlled by Hamas, lost one of the drones it was flying as part of a mission. Then on Monday, another Israeli drone fell into enemy hands, when army forces lost the small unmanned aircraft vehicle over Lebanon. Initially reported by Hizbullah, the Iran-backed Shi'ite organization that controls southern Lebanon, the capture of the advanced equipment was later confirmed by Israel. An Israeli military spokesperson told The Media Line that the drone "fell in the course of military activity," but did not specify whether its drop was caused by a technical malfunction or by enemy interception.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/israeli-military-drones-dropping-like-flies-in-enemy-territory-657760>

Israeli Defense Officials Suspected of Illegally Trading Missiles With Asian Country

Hamodia, 11th February, 2021

Some two dozen Israelis — among them veterans of the defence industry — were interrogated by the Shin Bet and the Israel Police over the suspicion that they developed, manufactured, and traded illegal weapons for a

foreign country. According to a Shin Bet statement released on Thursday, during the investigation, the organisation found out that the suspects were dealing with developing, manufacturing, conducting tests and illegally selling loitering missiles for a country in Asia. The investigation also found that the suspects received operation orders from people tied to this foreign country and in return received money and other benefits. After revealing the investigation, the Shin Bet said: "This case illustrates the potential damage to the security of the country that lies within illegal deals that are conducted by Israeli citizens with foreign entities. "It also raises fears that technologies will get to the hand of enemy countries," it added.

<https://hamodia.com/2021/02/11/defense-industry-officials-suspected-illegally-trading-missiles-asian-country/>

LEBANON

Hezbollah operates missile sites near Beirut charity-run schools, NGO finds

Israelhayom, 9th February, 2021

The Islamic Shiite Waqf Committee in Burj al Barajneh foundation is suspected of being used to hide ballistic missiles and launch sites, according to the Alma research organization. The report, produced by the Israeli Alma Research and Education Center for geopolitical affairs, highlights a social charity called the Islamic Shiite Waqf Committee in Burj al Barajneh foundation that has been cynically used by Hezbollah to store an array of medium-range Fateh 110 missiles in close proximity to sites such as a high school in Beirut.

"This is a continuation of a report that we published in July 2020, which exposed 28 Fateh 110 missile sites in greater Beirut," Maj. (res.)

Tal Beeri, who directs Alma's research department, said.

<https://www.israelhayom.com/2021/02/09/hezbollah-operates-missile-sites-near-beirut-charity-run-schools-ngo-finds/>

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia welcomes Biden's commitment to support Kingdom defend its sovereignty

Saudi Gazette, 5th February, 2021

Saudi Arabia has welcomed the United States' commitment to supporting the Kingdom in defending its sovereignty to confronting threats targeting it. Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry made the statement late Thursday in response to US President Joe Biden's speech outlining his foreign policies. "The Kingdom reiterates its firm stance in supporting efforts to achieve a comprehensive political solution to the crisis in Yemen," the Saudi foreign ministry said in the statement. "The Kingdom welcomes the United States' position underscoring the importance of supporting diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation in Yemen, including the efforts of the United Nations Yemen Envoy, Martin Griffiths."

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/603253/SAUDI-ARABIA/Saudi-Arabia-welcomes-Bidens-commitment-to-support-Kingdom-defend-its-sovereignty>

Coalition forces intercept, destroy 4 Houthi-launched UAVs

Saudi Gazette, 7th February, 2021

In a statement on Sunday carried by the Saudi Press Agency, Brig. Gen. Al-Maliki said: "Joint Coalition Forces have intercepted and destroyed this evening (Sunday) (2) additional bomb-laden UAVs. "A total of (4) bomb-laden UAVs launched systematically and deliberately by the terrorist Houthi militia to target civilians and

civilian objects in the Southern Region have been destroyed today (Sunday). Brig. Gen. Al-Maliki had said earlier in the morning: "The Joint Coalition forces intercepted and destroyed this morning (Sunday) a bomb-laden UAV launched systematically and deliberately by the terrorist Houthi militia to target civilians and civilian objects in (Southern Region)."

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/60331/1/SAUDI-ARABIA/Coalition-forces-intercept-destroy-4-Houthi-launched-UAVs>

US voices concern as allies condemn Houthi militia's continued attacks on Saudi Arabia

Saudi Gazette, 8th February, 2021

The US Department of State spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement; "We call on the Houthis to immediately cease attacks impacting civilian areas inside Saudi Arabia and to halt any new military offensives inside Yemen, which only bring more suffering to the Yemeni people." "We urge the Houthis to refrain from destabilizing actions and demonstrate their commitment to constructively engage in UN Special Envoy Griffiths' efforts to achieve peace. The time is now to find an end to this conflict", the statement added.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/60332/3/SAUDI-ARABIA/US-voices-concern-as-allies-condemn-Houthi-militias-continued-attacks-on-Saudi-Arabia>

Countries affected by Iran's threats must be party to any future deal, says Prince Faisal

Saudi Gazette, 8th February, 2021

Addressing an emergency meeting of Arab foreign ministers here on Monday, Prince Faisal underlined that the countries most affected by Iran's threats must be a party to any future agreement. Iranian regime's support for militias across the region as well as its nuclear activities and ballistic missiles pose a threat to the security and stability of Arab countries and the

region. The minister welcomed the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement by the Yemeni parties, appreciating their keenness on safeguarding the interests of their country.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/60335/1/SAUDI-ARABIA/Countries-affected-by-Irans-threats-must-be-party-to-any-future-deal-says-Prince-Faisal>

SAMI's first Saudi-US partnership begins operations

Saudi Gazette, 10th February, 2021

Underlining its commitment to building a robust indigenous defense industry ecosystem through global partnerships, Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Public Investment Fund (PIF), has successfully launched a new joint venture (JV) with L3Harris Technologies, one of the world's largest aerospace and defense systems manufacturers. Initially focusing on localization of L3Harris' advanced communication and sensor products, the JV scope will expand to include prime contractor responsibilities for integrated mission systems and platforms, leveraging robust local industry partnerships. Together, the two parties aim to collaborate in areas, such as technical/specialized operator and maintenance training; Transfer of Production (ToP); and Transfer of Technology (ToT) through research and development programs in approved technologies.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/60339/6/SAUDI-ARABIA/SAMIs-first-Saudi-US-partnership-begins-operations>

Arab Coalition intercepts Houthi drone targeting Saudi city of Khamis Mushait

Saudi Gazette, 11th February, 2021

The Arab Coalition said its forces intercepted and destroyed early Thursday an armed drone launched by the Iran-backed Houthi militia, targeting the southwestern Saudi city of Khamis

Mushait. In the statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency, the spokesman of the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen, Brigadier General Turki Al-Malki, said: “The coalition forces have intercepted and destroyed this morning a bomb-laden UAV launched systematically and deliberately by the terrorist Houthi militia to target civilians and civilian facilities in Khamis Mushait.” On Wednesday, the coalition said a terrorist attack by the Houthi militia hit the Abha International Airport in Saudi Arabia in which a civilian airplane caught fire. The attack, however, did not result in any loss of life and the fire was immediately put out by the local authorities.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/603424/SAUDI-ARABIA/Arab-Coalition-intercepts-Houthi-drone-targeting-Saudi-city-of-Khamis-Mushait>

Blinken reiterates US commitment to helping Saudi Arabia defend its sovereignty

Saudi Gazette, 11th February, 2021

New US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has reiterated Washington’s commitment to helping Saudi Arabia defend its sovereignty. The US secretary of state made the remarks in his talks on the phone with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan late Wednesday following a terror attack launched by the Iran-backed Houthi militia on Abha airport, causing fire to a passenger plane. According to the Saudi Press Agency, they discussed the attack on airport and several regional developments. “Secretary Blinken condemned the Houthi attacks against the Abha International Airport, which struck a civilian airliner,” the US State Department said in a statement.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/603428/SAUDI-ARABIA/Blinken-reiterates-US-commitment-to-helping-Saudi-Arabia-defend-its-sovereignty>

SYRIA

Russian Defense forces repel terrorist rocket-launcher attack on Hmeimem base

Syrian Arab news Agency, 10th February, 2021

Russian Defense Ministry announced on Wednesday that its forces repelled a terrorist multiple rocket-launchers on Hmeimem base in Lattakia. “The Russian air defense forces repelled a multiple rocket-launcher attack on Hmeimem air base,” Deputy head of the Russian Coordination Center in Hmeimem , Rear Admiral, Vyacheslav Sytnik, said in a statement. He added that the monitoring devices specified the place from which the shelling was carried out in the areas of terrorists where they are positioned in the de-escalation zone of Idlib.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=221737>

Russia, Iran compete for influence in Syria via private security companies

Al-monitor, 11th February, 2021

Private security companies in Syria with ties to Russian and Iranian forces are busily recruiting young men with attractive salaries. They recently urged private security companies to open offices across Syria, offering young men large amounts of money to work for them amid deteriorating economic conditions and a lack of job opportunities in the Syrian regime-controlled areas. There are over 70 private security companies registered in Syria. These companies provide protection to wealthy individuals and supporters of the Syria regime. They also offer protective services facilities and factories, accompanying convoys and large transfers of cash.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/syria-iran-russia-recruit-private-security-companies.html#ixzz6mFyLUJTI>

TURKEY

Turkish official hints at possible S-400 missile compromise with US

Al-monitor, 9th February, 2021

Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said Tuesday that Ankara might be willing to "find a solution" for its Russian-made S-400 missile acquisition if Washington reevaluates its cooperation with Kurdish forces in Syria. "The most sensitive issue in our relations with the US is the country's support to the YPG, the PKK's arm in Syria," Akar told Hurriyet. "We can find a solution for the S-400s in our negotiations with the US but we expect them to see the facts about the YPG. If we cannot find a solution [regarding the YPG], we cannot go anywhere in relations with the US." Erdogan said Jan. 15 that he hoped the incoming Biden administration would take "positive steps" in negotiations regarding the S-400s and Turkey's suspension from the F-35 fighter jet program.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/turkey-defense-minister-hulusi-akar-s400-russia-kurds-syria.html#ixzz6mFb3D7uI>

'Turkey will not turn back from S-400 defense system acquisition'

Daily Sabah, 11th February, 2021

Turkey will not turn back from its acquisition of Russian S-400 defense systems, over which the United States sanctioned Ankara, Presidential Spokesperson Ibrahim Kalın said on Thursday, adding that Ankara would seek to resolve issues with its NATO ally through dialogue. Kalın said talks are being held with Washington over their disagreements, but that quick solutions to problems over a host of issues should not be expected. Turkey's defense minister said on Tuesday that Ankara would propose only partially activating the S-400s in negotiations with the United States.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-will-not-turn-back-from-s-400-defense-system-acquisition>

YEMEN

Houthi Drone Sets a Civilian Plane on Fire at a Saudi Airport

Albawaba, 11th February, 2021

A drone strike launched by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis on Wednesday left a civilian plane ablaze at a Saudi airport, days after the US moved to delist the rebels as terrorists. The attack occurred on the same day the new US special envoy for Yemen Timothy Lenderking met Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan in Riyadh for talks. Colonel Turki al-Maliki, the spokesman for the Saudi-led military coalition fighting in Yemen, said forces earlier intercepted and destroyed two drones launched by Houthis toward the country's south. Colonel Turki al-Maliki, the spokesman for the Saudi-led military coalition fighting in Yemen, said forces earlier intercepted and destroyed two drones launched by Houthis toward the country's south.

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/houthi-drone-sets-civilian-plane-fire-saudi-airport-1410612>