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

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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

## Armenia

### Armenia, India discuss avenues for expansion of defence cooperation

Horizon, February 11, 2025

On a working visit to India, Armenian Defence Minister Suren Papikyan held a meeting with the Minister of Defence of India, Rajnath Singh. The parties commended the current state of bilateral cooperation and explored avenues for further expansion of defence cooperation between Armenia and India. Additionally, the Ministers exchanged views on regional and international security issues. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to India Vahagn Afyan and the Chairman of the Military-Industrial Committee of the Ministry of High-Tech Industry Aram Jivanyan attended the meeting.

<https://horizonweekly.ca/en/armenia-india-discuss-avenues-for-expansion-of-defense-cooperation/>

### Armenian, Belgian defence ministers discuss bilateral cooperation

Armenpress, February 14, 2025

On February 14, in the framework of his working visit to the Federal Republic of Germany, the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia Suren Papikyan met with the Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Belgium Theo Francken, the Defence Ministry of Armenia said in a press release. Minister Papikyan congratulated his counterpart on assuming office, wished him success, and expressed hope that Armenia-Belgium cooperation in the defence sector would continue to

develop and expand. The Defence Ministers discussed topics related to bilateral cooperation. During the meeting, it was emphasized that the partnership holds significant potential, and an agreement was reached to continue efforts toward its further development.

<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1212073>

### Ministers of defence of Armenia and Estonia discussed prospects for cooperation

News.am, February 15, 2025

On February 15, the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia Suren Papikyan met with the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Estonia Hanno Pevkur. This is reported by the Armenian Ministry of Defence. The parties discussed prospects for Armenia-Estonia cooperation in the defence sector. Notably, they agreed to initiate defence cooperation, identifying cybersecurity as a particularly promising area of cooperation.

<https://news.am/eng/news/866874.html>

### Armenia's high-tech minister, World Bank representatives discuss prospects of enhanced cooperation

Armenpress, February 15, 2025

Armenia's high-tech minister, World Bank representatives discuss prospects of enhanced cooperation. Minister of High-Tech Industry of the Republic of Armenia Mkhitar Hayrapetyan received representatives of the World Bank, led by the World Bank Regional Director for the South Caucasus, Rolande Pryce. The meeting was attended by First Deputy

Minister Gevorg Mantashyan, Deputy Minister Gevorg Meliksetyan, Country Manager of the World Bank (WB) for Armenia, Carolin Geginat, and other representatives. According to the Ministry of High-Tech Industry, Minister Hayrapetyan presented the strategic directions and priorities of the Government of Armenia, highlighting the importance of the “Crossroads of Peace” project, which aims to promote regional connectivity.

<http://armenpress.am/en/article/1212111>

## Cyprus

### Greece, Cyprus discuss defence upgrade

Iole Damaskinos

Cyprus Mail, February 5, 2025

The Greek defence minister met with his counterpart in Cyprus to discuss bilateral cooperation and upgrading the Republic’s defence infrastructures. The meeting came in the wake of a European Council resolution taken on Monday to boost defence spending across the bloc, over which President Nikos Christodoulides had expressed “absolute” satisfaction. Greek Defence Minister Nikos Dendias’ meeting with his counterpart Vassilis Palmas, preceded a meeting at the presidential palace with Christodoulides. “Cyprus and Greece are pillars of security, stability and peace in the Mediterranean, demonstrating an indisputable respect for the UN charter, international law and the Law of the Sea,” Palmas said after the meetings.

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2025/02/05/greece-cyprus-discuss-defence-upgrade>

## Iran

### Iran Advances in Air Defence Technology with Zoubin Missile System Amid Tensions with Israel

Army Recognition, February 3, 2025

According to a recent video published by Iran National TV, the Iranian defence industry has made significant strides in enhancing its air defense capabilities, showcasing the development of the locally-made Zoubin air defense missile system. This new system comes amid rising tensions in the region, particularly after Israel’s reported airstrikes on Iranian military sites. In response to these growing threats, Iran has ramped up its efforts to bolster the protection of its critical infrastructure with advanced mobile air defence systems. Following an escalation in tensions with Israel, which included reported strikes on Iranian military sites, Iran is focusing its efforts on improving the protection of its key infrastructure and defense assets. The Zoubin system is a direct response to the growing need for modern, mobile, and versatile air defense solutions capable of countering a variety of aerial threats, including cruise missiles, drones, and low-flying aircraft.

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/2025/iran-advances-in-air-defense-technology-with-zoubin-missile-system-amid-tensions-with-israel>

### Iran displays Russian-made defence systems in military exercise

The Economic Times, February 5, 2025

Iran used Russian-made long-range air defence systems in a military exercise following Israeli strikes last October which

Israel said had seriously weakened Tehran's defensive capabilities. The exercise took place one day after Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met U.S. President Donald Trump to discuss regional topics including Iran's nuclear programme. Both leaders said Iran could not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons, with Trump announcing earlier the resumption of his "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran to drive its oil exports down to zero in order to stop it from obtaining a nuclear weapon. On Oct. 26, Israeli war planes hit missile factories and other sites near Tehran and in western Iran, the Israeli military had said. This followed an Iranian attack on Israel on Oct. 1 involving about 200 ballistic missiles.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/iran-displays-russian-made-defence-systems-in-military-exercise/articleshow/117950314.cms?from=mdr>

### **Iran air defence systems work in tandem in war game**

Mehrnews, February 5, 2025

The Iranian military forces employed the homegrown Bavar 373 and the S-300 air defense missile systems in an exercise to bring down high-altitude targets. On the final day of the second stage of the large-scale war game on Wednesday, the Iranian air defenses utilized the Bavar 373 and the S-300 missile systems integrated into the nationwide air defense network. Operating in tandem, the two air defense missile systems detected and detonated high-altitude targets. On February 2, the Defense Ministry unveiled an upgraded version of 'Bavar 373' air defense missile system, whose launcher stations have been

equipped with separate radar sets that provide detection and tracking of targets as well as fire control, allowing each launcher to act independently without reliance on a central radar.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/227957/Iran-air-defense-systems-work-in-tandem-in-war-game>

### **Iran to unveil new defence systems**

Mehrnews, February 5, 2025

Iran's Defence Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh announced that the country is set to unveil new defence systems in the near future. Iranian Minister of Defence and Armed Forces Logistics stated that Iran's defence industry achievements will increasingly benefit other sectors of the country. Speaking on the sidelines of the cabinet meeting, he emphasized that over 7,000 knowledge-based companies are currently collaborating with the defence sector. He further announced that Iran is set to export all its defence industry products, adding that a significant portion of the country's military production is already being exported. Regarding upcoming military drills, Minister Nasirzadeh confirmed that the ongoing exercises are expected to continue until mid-March, with the unveiling of new defence systems.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/227961/Iran-to-unveil-new-defense-systems>

### **Iran says Trump's concern about nuclear weapons can be resolved**

The Economic Times, February 5, 2025

U.S. concerns about Iran developing nuclear weapons are not a complicated

issue and can be resolved given Tehran's opposition to weapons of mass destruction, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi. U.S. President Donald Trump restored his "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran, that includes efforts to drive its oil exports down to zero in order to stop Tehran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. "If the main concern is that Iran should not pursue nuclear weapons, this is achievable and not a complicated issue. Iran's position is clear: it is a member of the Non Proliferation Treaty, and the Supreme Leader's fatwa has already clarified our stance [against weapons of mass destruction]," Araqchi said. "Maximum pressure is a failed experience and trying it again will lead to another failure." Trump initiated the "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran during his first term, after exiting a nuclear pact between Tehran and world powers which had lifted international sanctions in exchange for limits on Iran's nuclear programme.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/iran-says-trumps-concern-about-nuclear-weapons-can-be-resolved/articleshow/117944616.cms?from=mdr>

### **Iran claims to have integrated S-300 components with indigenous Bavar-373**

Jeremy Binnie

Janes, February 6, 2025

An S-300 launcher and a 64N6E2 radar are seen behind the Bavar-373 TELAR during the air-defence exercise. The Islamic Republic of Iran Air Defence Force (IRIADF) has successfully integrated its Bavar-373 indigenous long-range air-defence system with its Russian-made S-

300, it was claimed on 5 February. In a report on the second phase of an ongoing air-defence exercise, Iranian television news showed the new transporter erector launcher and radar (TELAR) version of the Bavar-373 deployed with the system's search radar and a launcher from the S-300 system at a location that could be identified as an air-defence base south of Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport.

<https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/weapons/iran-claims-to-have-integrated-s-300-components-with-indigenous-bavar-373>

### **Iran's nuclear program achieving world-class advancements, declares AEOI chief**

Tehran times, February 7, 2025

Iran has achieved full mastery of nuclear science and is now ranked among the 18 countries with a recognized nuclear industry, according to Mohammad Eslami, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI). During a one-day visit to the city of Qom on Thursday, Eslami met with senior religious scholars and clerics to discuss the country's latest advancements in nuclear technology and its broader applications in various fields. Speaking at the meeting, Eslami emphasized that Iran's nuclear energy program has reached the level of developed nations, despite ongoing opposition from global powers. "Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran has full mastery of nuclear science and is among the select group of 18 countries with an established nuclear industry," he stated. Eslami highlighted that Iran's progress in nuclear technology has been achieved despite resistance from "hegemonic powers." He noted that the country remains under some



of the strictest monitoring measures imposed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) due to its nuclear advancements.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/509523/Iran-s-nuclear-program-achieving-world-class-advancements-declares>

### **Iran to inaugurate several nuclear technology projects**

Mehrnews, February 8, 2025

Several nuclear projects are set to be inaugurated inside the Islamic Republic of Iran's soil. Coinciding with the Ten-Day Dawn celebrations of the Islamic Revolution, several nuclear technology projects are set to be inaugurated and put into operation during the visit of Mohammad Eslami, the Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), to Isfahan Province. According to reports, on Saturday, February 08, in the presence of Mohammad Eslami, multiple nuclear-related projects will be inaugurated at the Shahid Raeisi Nuclear Site (UCF) in Isfahan. The projects include a comprehensive technical safety test facility, a semi-continuous/ semi-industrial scale fuel pellet sintering furnace, and a Resistance Welding (RW) Machine.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/228030/Iran-to-inaugurate-several-nuclear-projects>

### **IAEA seeking agreement to rein in Iran's nuclear programme**

Reuters, February 14, 2025

Time is running out to secure an accord to rein in Iran's nuclear programme as Tehran continues to accelerate its enrichment of uranium to near weapons grade, U.N.

nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi. Iran has stepped up nuclear work since 2019, after U.S. President Donald Trump in his first term abandoned a 2015 agreement reached under predecessor Barack Obama. So far there has been little clear policy on the issue, and Iran has continued to advance its nuclear programme, accelerating enrichment of uranium to up to 60% purity, close to the roughly 90% of weapons grade. Grossi said Iran was in the process of increasing around sevenfold its monthly production of uranium enriched to up to 60%. He said Iran would likely have about 250 kg of uranium enriched to up to 60% by the time of the agency's next report in the coming weeks. That is enough in principle, if enriched further, for six nuclear bombs, according to an IAEA yardstick.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/iaea-chief-sees-time-running-out-revive-iran-nuclear-deal-2025-02-14/>

### **Iraq**

### **Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Jordan aim to jointly tackle Islamic State, Ankara says**

Reuters, February 5, 2025

Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Jordan will take steps toward jointly combating Islamic State in the region and they aim to hold a first meeting on the issue in Jordan, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. Since the ousting of former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in December, Western and regional countries have warned of a possible resurgence of Islamic State. Thousands of members of the militant Islamist group are being held in prison camps in northeast Syria. Fidan told

Turkey's state-owned Anadolu news agency that the four countries had reached a preliminary agreement for closer cooperation involving their foreign and defence ministries and intelligence agencies.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-iraq-syria-jordan-aim-jointly-tackle-islamic-state-ankara-says-2025-02-05/>

### **NATO chief hails strong partnership with Iraq, praises mission's progress**

Beyza Binnur Donmez

Anadolu Agency, February 5, 2025

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte reaffirmed the military alliance's strong partnership with Iraq during his two-day visit to Baghdad, where he met top officials to discuss regional security and the evolving role of the organization's mission in the country. Rutte, who was joined by US Army Gen. Christopher Cavoli during the Feb. 4-5 visit, highlighted the mission's success since 2018. "I congratulate our Iraqi partners and NMI's (NATO Mission Iraq) leadership and personnel for the excellent level of cooperation developed, in several domains, including security education, logistics, cyber defense, and good governance,". Rutte emphasized that NATO's work in Iraq, based on mutual respect for sovereignty, has been crucial in strengthening the country's security forces and institutions.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/nato-chief-hails-strong-partnership-with-iraq-praises-missions-progress/3473049>

### **Iraqi Air Force Strikes ISIL Hideout in Kirkuk**

Mehrnews, February 10, 2025

Iraq's Air Force launched a precision airstrike on an ISIL hideout in Kirkuk, targeting terrorist remnants based on intelligence reports. The Iraqi Air Force has conducted a new airstrike against ISIL hideouts. According to Iraq's Security Media Cell, the F-16 fighter jets carried out the attack in Kirkuk based on accurate intelligence and special operations efforts. The statement emphasized Iraq's ongoing counterterrorism operations, vowing to eliminate ISIL remnants wherever they operate. In 2017, Iraq declared victory over the ISIL terrorist group after three years of fighting with this group. Despite the Iraqi declaration of victory over ISIL, remnants of ISIL terrorists are still active in some areas of Diyala, Kirkuk, Nineveh, Saladin, Anbar, and Baghdad provinces.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/228121/Iraqi-Air-Force-Strikes-ISIL-Hideout-in-Kirkuk>

### **Israel**

#### **Defence Ministry carries out tests on new anti-drone systems in development**

Emanuel Fabian

Times of Israel, February 5, 2025

The Defense Ministry's Directorate of Defence Research & Development said Wednesday that it had completed a series of tests on new anti-drone defense systems that are still in development. Arms contractors Elbit Systems, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Rafael, and six smaller companies — Airobotics, Tamar, Xtend,

General Robotics. SMARTSHOOTER, and Robotican — presented different solutions for the unmanned aerial vehicle threat, with the first tests being carried out in October and a final test. The systems that did well in the tests would move on with development with full Defence Ministry funding. The ministry said that during final tests at a firing zone in southern Israel, each of the nine companies “displayed interception capabilities of UAVs of different ranges, speeds, and altitudes.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/defense-ministry-carries-out-tests-on-new-anti-drone-systems-in-development/>

### **IDF confirms SPYDER air-defence system was rushed into service**

Yaakov Lappin

Janes, February 6, 2025

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) has confirmed that it has operationally deployed the Rafael SPYDER air-defence system during the war with Hamas and Lebanese group Hizbullah since October 2023. “Prior to the war, the SPYDER system was not integrated due to the prioritisation of other interception means within the constraints of available resources,” the IDF Spokesperson's Unit told Janes. “It was decided [during the war] to acquire the system in accordance with the urgent operational need, after an operational and professional analysis. The process of its integration was carried out in an orderly manner and with the approval of all relevant authorities. “The SPYDER system represents a new concept for the Air Defense Wing of the Israeli Air Force,” it added, referring to the IDF branch that

operates all its air-defence systems. Unlike Israel's existing air-defence systems, the SPYDER is mobile, rather than operated from fixed sites. It can use Python-5, I-Derby, and I-Derby ER missiles, with all three types available with additional boosters for the longer range versions of the system.

<https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/weapons/idf-confirms-spyder-air-defence-system-was-rushed-into-service>

### **Iran May Be on the Verge of a Nuclear Weapon; Will Israel and the United States Act?**

Andrea Stricker

Foundation For Defense of Democracies, February 6, 2025

US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu just met in Washington — and not a moment too soon. A team of scientists in Iran is reportedly working to short-cut Tehran's route to nuclear weapons in case the Iranian leadership orders their complete construction. Trump and Netanyahu have a narrow window to stop Iran if it opts to build those weapons. The US and Israel must urgently review and revamp their intelligence gathering and sabotage capabilities, while preparing military options to jointly destroy Iran's nuclear facilities should it sprint for atomic weapons. According to current and former US officials who spoke to The New York Times on February 3, during the waning months of Joe Biden's administration, unnamed countries — likely the United States and Israel — gathered intelligence



indicating “a secret team of [Iranian] scientists is exploring a faster, if cruder, approach to developing an atomic weapon if Tehran’s leadership decides to race for a bomb.”

[https://www.fdd.org/analysis/op\\_ed/2025/02/06/iran-may-be-on-the-verge-of-a-nuclear-weapon-will-israel-and-the-united-states-act/](https://www.fdd.org/analysis/op_ed/2025/02/06/iran-may-be-on-the-verge-of-a-nuclear-weapon-will-israel-and-the-united-states-act/)

### **India, Israel hold 13th round of Staff Talks, focus on improving defence cooperation**

The Economic Times, February 7, 2025

India and Israel successfully held the 13th round of Staff Talks from February 3 to 6 in New Delhi, which focused upon improving several areas of defence cooperation such as joint training, technology sharing, and regional security. The Additional Directorate General of Public Information of the Indian Army shared details of the talks on X, stating, "The 13th India-Israel Staff Talks were successfully conducted from 03 to 06 February at New Delhi, India. The discussions focused on enhancing defence cooperation, joint training, technology sharing and regional security." Highlighting the importance of the dialogue, the Indian Army added, "This strategic dialogue reaffirms the commitment to mutual growth in defence capabilities, fostering deeper bilateral ties between the two nations united by shared interests and trust."

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-israel-hold-13th-round-of-staff-talks-focus-on-improving-defence-](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-israel-hold-13th-round-of-staff-talks-focus-on-improving-defence-cooperation/articleshow/117998600.cms?from=mdr)

[cooperation/articleshow/117998600.cms?from=mdr](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-israel-hold-13th-round-of-staff-talks-focus-on-improving-defence-cooperation/articleshow/117998600.cms?from=mdr)

### **US intelligence warns of potential Israeli strike on Iran’s nuclear sites by mid-year**

Fatma Zehra Solmaz

Anadolu Agency, February 13, 2025

US intelligence officials warned that Israel is likely to launch a preemptive strike on Iran’s nuclear program by midyear, aiming to exploit Iran’s perceived weakness, according to multiple intelligence reports, according to The Washington Post. Intelligence assessments from the former Biden administration and the current Trump administration suggest that such an attack would delay Iran's nuclear program by only weeks or months, while greatly escalating regional tensions and increasing the risk of a broader conflict. White House National Security Council spokesperson Brian Hughes told The Washington Post that President Donald Trump "will not permit Iran to get a nuclear weapon" and emphasized that while Trump prefers a peaceful resolution with Iran, he will not wait indefinitely for negotiations. The most detailed intelligence assessment, issued in early January by the Joint Chiefs of Staff's intelligence directorate and the Defense Intelligence Agency, warned that Israel is likely planning an attack on Iran’s Fordow and Natanz nuclear sites, the report added.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/us-intelligence-warns-of-potential-israeli-strike-on-iran-s-nuclear-sites-by-mid-year-report/3480960>

## **As Israel fields Iron Beam, Gulf states are pining for the technology**

Elisabeth Gosselin-Malo

Defensenews, February 14, 2025

Interest in direct-energy weapons is rising in the Gulf region, a technology in which Israel has proclaimed itself a leader with the fielding of the Iron Beam. Absent the breakthrough capability, militaries in the region are stuck with the costly proposition of shooting interceptor missiles at incoming threats, an economic calculus untenable for some. Sasha Bruchmann, a research fellow at the Bahrain office of the International Institute for Strategic Studies think tank, explained that while there is a common allure among Gulf states to directed-energy weapons, there is no joint initiative in place dedicated to researching or developing such systems. “There has been a shared interest in so far as most would want to have them, they are high on the priority list of most regional states – however, there is no common Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) approach or umbrella that I am aware of to foster this cooperatively or even bilateral cooperation,” he said.

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/mid-east-africa/2025/02/14/as-israel-fields-iron-beam-gulf-states-are-pining-for-the-technology/>

### **Jordan**

## **Jordan’s King Abdullah, Iraq’s president discuss regional developments**

Arabnews, February 7, 2025

Jordan’s King Abdullah II on Friday spoke on the phone with Iraqi President Abdul

Latif Rashid. During the call, the two leaders discussed the latest regional developments and ongoing coordination between their countries. During the call, King Abdullah emphasized the need to intensify Arab efforts in supporting the Palestinian people in securing their full legitimate rights. He reiterated Jordan’s firm rejection of any attempts to annex land or forcibly displace Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The King also stressed the importance of maintaining the ceasefire in Gaza, increasing humanitarian aid, and preventing further escalation in the West Bank. In addition to Palestinian concerns, the conversation highlighted the necessity of continued coordination between Jordan and Iraq in response to regional challenges. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and addressing shared security and political priorities.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2589386/middle-east>

### **Kuwait**

## **Egypt, Kuwait sign military agreement for cooperation, exchange of expertise**

Ibrahim Khazen

Anadolu Agency, February 2, 2025

The agreement came during a meeting between Egyptian Defence Minister Abdel Majeed Saqr and his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Fahad Youssef Saud Al-Sabah, at the Defence Ministry headquarters in Cairo, according to a statement from the Egyptian army. The meeting addressed “the latest developments on both the regional and international fronts and their impact on

security and stability in the region amid current circumstances and challenges." They also discussed ways to enhance military relations between the two sides. The Egyptian minister expressed commitment to supporting the prospects of military cooperation between the armed forces of both sides.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/egypt-kuwait-sign-military-agreement-for-cooperation-exchange-of-expertise/3469749>

### **U.S. Approves \$1B Military Construction Sale to Kuwait**

Defense Mirror, February 7, 2025

The U.S. State Department has approved a potential \$1 billion Foreign Military Sale to Kuwait for design and construction services to enhance its military infrastructure. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) has notified Congress of the possible sale. Kuwait has requested support for maritime and land facility development at Mohammed Al Ahmed Naval Base, Ras Al Ard Naval Base, and an alternate logistics station. The package includes construction of a headquarters complex and various services such as engineering studies, technical support, infrastructure assessments, and project management. The U.S. government states that the proposed sale aligns with its foreign policy objectives by strengthening the defense infrastructure of Kuwait, a key non-NATO ally in the Middle East.

[https://www.defensemirror.com/news/38777/U\\_S\\_Approves\\_1B\\_Military\\_Construction\\_Sale\\_to\\_Kuwait](https://www.defensemirror.com/news/38777/U_S_Approves_1B_Military_Construction_Sale_to_Kuwait)

### **Kuwait thwarts large-scale cyberattacks on telecom towers, banks**

Middle East Monitor, February 13, 2025

Kuwait said that it had foiled large-scale cyberattacks targeting telecom towers and banks in the Gulf country. An Interior Ministry statement said that the attacks were orchestrated by an international cybercrime ring of Chinese nationals. The ministry said the suspects behind the attacks were arrested and affirmed its commitment to safeguarding national security and strengthening cybersecurity measures to protect the country. It, however, did not specify how many individuals were arrested. According to the statement, the perpetrators used sophisticated electronic devices and advanced data analysis techniques to send fraudulent messages impersonating banks and telecom companies in a bid to carry out phishing scams. The ministry said the suspects were referred to the relevant authorities for legal action.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20250213-kuwait-thwarts-large-scale-cyberattacks-on-telecom-towers-banks/>

### **Lebanon**

### **Lebanon official media report Israeli drone strike in south**

The Economic Times, February 15, 2025

The Israeli military said that it has launched airstrikes on Hezbollah targets in eastern and southern Lebanon. Lebanese official media said an Israeli drone struck the country's south on Saturday, without reporting casualties, days before a deadline in a fragile ceasefire between

Israel and Hezbollah. "An Israeli enemy drone carried out a strike" targeting the outskirts of the town of Ainata, the state-run National News Agency (NNA) said, adding that "nobody was hurt" and that "drones and surveillance aircraft are still flying over the area at low altitude". The ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah came into effect on November 27 after more than a year of hostilities including two months of all-out war. Under the deal, Lebanon's military was to deploy in the south alongside United Nations peacekeepers as the Israeli army withdrew over a 60-day period, and Hezbollah was also to vacate its positions near the border during that timeframe.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/lebanon-official-media-report-israeli-drone-strike-in-south/articleshow/118279547.cms?from=mdr>

## Oman

### Oman launches first electronic Drone management platform

Zawya, February 6, 2025

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), in collaboration with SIRB Company, has officially launched the 'Sirb Platform', the first electronic system in the Sultanate of Oman dedicated to the regulation and management of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones. The inauguration ceremony was held under the patronage of Sayyid Dr Kamil bin Fahd al Said, Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, in the presence of senior officials, aviation sector specialists, and drone enthusiasts.

Malik bin Mohammed al Nabhani, co-founder and CEO of Sirb, provided an overview of the platform, highlighting its role in streamlining drone registration and licensing. He noted that the platform will provide detailed guidance on permitted and restricted flight zones, contributing to the safe and structured development of the drone industry in Oman.

<https://www.zawya.com/en/business/aviation/oman-launches-first-electronic-drone-management-platform-hyvexpkv>

## Qatar

### Qatar, Turkiye sign defence agreements

Gulf Times, February 4, 2025

HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani met with the visiting Turkish Minister of National Defence Yasar Guler, and his accompanying delegation. An official reception ceremony was held for the Turkish defence minister. During the meeting, the two sides discussed topics of common interest and ways to enhance and develop them. A number of agreements were also signed between Barzan Holding owned by the Ministry of Defence and Turkish MKE and ISFALT companies, owned by the Turkish Ministry of Defence; with the aim of co-operation in defence technology and military manufacturing fields. The meeting and signing ceremony were attended by a number of senior officials and officers from both sides.

<https://www.gulf-times.com/article/699699/qatar/qatar-turkiye-sign-defence-agreements>

## Saudi Arabia

### Saudi Arabia increases defense spending to \$78B in 2025

Breaking Defense, February 3, 2025

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has allocated \$78 billion for defense spending in 2025, up from \$75.8 billion spent in 2024, Governor of the General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI) Ahmad Al-Ohali said in a statement. “The Kingdom allocated approximately \$78 billion to the military sector in the 2025 budget, which constitutes 21% of total government spending and 7.1% of Saudi Arabia’s gross product,” he said, according to the statement. The statement further noted that the Kingdom has witnessed a 4.5 percent annual defense growth since 1960, adding that it has become the fifth largest defense spender worldwide and the largest in the Arab world.

<https://breakingdefense.com/2025/02/saudi-arabia-increases-defense-spending-to-78b-in-2025/>

### Saudi Arabia to invest \$5b in AI data centre

The Jordan Times, February 12, 2025

A Saudi company will invest \$5 billion to build an artificial intelligence data centre in the futuristic city of NEOM. The agreement, signed between DataVolt and NEOM, would fund the creation of a fully sustainable AI data centre with a 1.5 gigawatt capacity. The project will be located in Oxagon, an industrial city within NEOM, which the kingdom aims to transform into the world's largest floating industrial complex. The NEOM project, unveiled by Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Salman, features a mirrored building dubbed The Line stretching 170 kilometres (105 miles) across the desert from the Gulf of Aqaba. When announcing The Line in 2022, Prince Mohammed said it would house more than one million residents by 2030 and nine million by 2045. But developers have since revised those projections to 300,000 residents by the end of the decade, according to Bloomberg.

<https://jordantimes.com/news/business/saudi-arabia-invest-5b-ai-data-centre>

## Syria

### Satellite images show Israel building military bases in Syria buffer zone

Al-Jazeera, February 3, 2025

Israel is building military bases in the demilitarised buffer zone with Syria, according to satellite images seen by Al Jazeera’s Sanad verification unit. The images were taken between December 19, 2024, just 11 days after Syria’s deposed President Bashar Al-Assad fled to Moscow, and February 1, 2025. They show six sites constructed in that time inside the buffer zone. Another is being constructed outside the buffer zone and inside Syrian territory.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/3/satellite-images-show-israel-building-military-bases-in-syria-buffer-zone>

### Armed groups in Syria must lay down arms to take part in National Dialogue Conference

Muhammed Karabacak

Anadolu Agency, February 13, 2025

Armed groups in Syria that resist disarming and reject the authority of the Defense



Ministry will not be invited to the National Dialogue Conference, said Hassan al-Dughaim, spokesman for a Preparatory Committee for the conference. Talking to reporters in the capital Damascus, Hassan al-Dughaim added that the PKK/YPG terror group does not represent the Syrian people. "The conference is a patriotic platform that rejects sectarian and ethnic divisions. The conference is a national dialogue, not a demonstration of military power." Those who do not surrender their weapons to the Ministry of Defense will definitely not be invited. Armed groups and military formations will not participate in the conference as they are against the nature of the dialogue," he added. Since the fall of the Assad regime, the PKK/YPG has attempted to exploit regional instability to create a "terror corridor" along the border with Türkiye.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/armed-groups-in-syria-must-lay-down-arms-to-take-part-in-national-dialogue-conference/3481519>

### **From rebuilding the armed forces to selling drones, how Turkey can enhance Syria's defence**

Breaking Defense, February 13, 2025

As the new administration in Syria takes control, experts are looking at the role Ankara may play to help boost the Syrian defense sector — starting with rebuilding the armed forces which disassembled after the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime in December. And if Turkey and Syria truly strengthen their ties, analysts say, expect Syria to emerge as a market for Turkish-made weapons and security systems. Syrian transitional president Ahmad Al-Sharaa

and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met Feb. 4, during which the two men announced the relationship between the two nations would be elevating to a "strategic level." More concretely, Reuters reported the two men also discussed creating a defense pact that would could include establishing Turkish military bases inside Syria.

<https://breakingdefense.com/2025/02/from-rebuilding-the-armed-forces-to-selling-drones-how-turkey-can-enhance-syrias-defense/>

## **Türkiye**

### **Turkish defence company Aselsan opens office in Oman**

Mucahithan Avcioglu

Anadolu Agency, February 5, 2025

Aselsan, one of Türkiye's leading defence companies, has opened an office in the Gulf nation of Oman. "The new office opened in Muscat, the capital of Oman, will be part of Aselsan's efforts to strengthen its presence in the Middle East and Gulf region, which currently has offices and subsidiaries in Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan," said a statement released by the firm. The Oman office will contribute to Aselsan's global advancement as it produces the best products in its field, develops game-changing technologies, and expands its exports, according to the statement. "Aselsan's presence in Oman will offer new opportunities for knowledge transfer and capacity-building activities between the two countries," it noted. "This expansion is a testament to our commitment to providing advanced defense solutions and developing partnerships in the Gulf region. Our Muscat

office will focus on marketing and trade," said Ahmet Akyol, Aselsan's CEO and president.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/science-technology/turkish-defense-company-aselsan-opens-office-in-oman/3472969>

### **Turkish defence industry makes technology transfer to Germany**

Goksel Yildirim

Anadolu Agency, February 7, 2025

The capabilities of the Turkish defence industry will benefit Germany in a new technology transfer, as Turkish-based Repkon signed a deal with a leading German artillery maker to produce and deliver ammunition to the German Army in a 155-millimeter explosive filling facility. The demand for artillery ammunition has risen significantly since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war, as many countries have been making investments to boost their production capacities. Germany is one of the countries that supplies military aid to Ukraine. Turkish firm Repkon came into the spotlight with its artillery production capabilities, as the company has so far signed contracts to install production facilities for the US, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan. Repkon signed a high-volume contract with a German company to establish a turnkey facility, which will boost the country's 155-millimeter artillery production capacity. The facility is set to be operational in early 2027.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/turkish-defense-industry-makes-technology-transfer-to-germany/3475289>

### **Turkiye 'neutralizes' 15 PKK/YPG terrorists in northern Iraq, Syria**

Muhammed Enes Calli

Anadolu Agency, February 9, 2025

Turkish security forces "neutralized" 15 PKK/YPG terrorists in northern Iraq and northern Syria, Türkiye's National Defence Ministry. Seven PKK terrorists were "neutralized" in the Gara region and four others in the Hakurk region through air operations carried out in northern Iraq between Jan. 29 and Feb. 7, the ministry said on X. "The Turkish Armed Forces continue to take preventive and destructive measures against terrorist organizations for our sacred homeland," it added. A total of 4 PKK/YPG terrorists were "neutralized" in the Operation Peace Spring zone in northern Syria, the ministry said in a separate statement. "We will continue to respond to terrorist harassment and attack attempts with retaliation," the ministry said. The term "neutralize" is used by Turkish authorities to indicate that the terrorists were killed, captured, or surrendered.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/turkiye-neutralizes-15-pkk-ypg-terrorists-in-northern-iraq-syria/3476454>

### **United Arab Emirates**

### **Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation to launch transformational projects in 2025**

Emirates News Agency, February 4, 2025

UAE's Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR) will further launch a number of transformational projects to support the UAE Government in achieving

the vision "We the UAE 2031" to make the UAE 'the most secure and safe country in the world', covering radiation safety and safeguards. "We plan to expand our international cooperation by exporting the UAE's expertise to nuclear newcomer countries to learn about the UAE's journey of building and operating a four-unit nuclear power plant. We will host the 8th International Symposium on the System of the Radiological Protection, to be held in October 2025 in Abu Dhabi where almost 600 experts will discuss recent trends and developments in radiation protection and applications, among other aspects," Christer Viktorsson, Director-General of FANR, told a press briefing in Abu Dhabi today.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/bil7ejw-federal-authority-for-nuclear-regulation-launch>

### **For more than 30 years, the UAE's defence shows have represented the country's ambitions**

Nasser Humaid Al Nuaimi

The National News, February 10, 2025

With steady strides, the UAE continues to solidify its position as a global leader in industrial and technological innovation, particularly in the sectors of defence and security. The Tawazun Council stands as one of the strategic pillars driving this vision forward, empowering national industries and enhancing their position within the global framework. These efforts are complemented by a comprehensive system that includes leading national companies, advanced infrastructure, and supportive legislation aligned with global

transformations. This integrated system fosters synergy between national security objectives and sustainable development, positioning the UAE as an attractive destination for advanced defence and technology industries.

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/2025/02/10/index-navdex-2025-defence-military-exhibition-abu-dhabi-uae/>

### **UAE Energy Minister says Chinese AI app DeepSeek will not affect demand for nuclear energy**

Zawya, February 12, 2025

The United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Suhail Mohamed Al Mazrouei he does not think Chinese AI app DeepSeek will affect demand for nuclear energy. Chinese startup DeepSeek has developed AI models that achieve similar results with significantly less computing power, leading to substantial energy savings.

<https://www.zawya.com/en/special-coverage/ai-shaping-digital-future/uae-energy-minister-says-chinese-ai-app-deepseek-will-not-affect-demand-for-nuclear-energy-k5sqgjre>

### **UAE firm rules out role in nuclear power plant flagged by Indonesia**

Stefanno Sulaiman

Zawya, February 13, 2025

Emirates Global Aluminium is not in the nuclear business, a spokesman said on Thursday, describing as "inaccurate" an Indonesian government statement that the company plans to build a nuclear power plant in the Southeast Asian nation. Indonesia has been trying to develop its

mineral processing industry by attracting investment on the basis of its rich reserves of minerals such as nickel, copper and bauxite. Its economic affairs ministry said the plant, with capacity of up to 5 gigawatts, was aimed at remedying a shortage of low-carbon power that bedevils an effort to boost capacity at an aluminium smelter in North Sumatra. "EGA is not in the nuclear power business so, with all respect, the account of this aspect ... is inaccurate," the company's spokesperson said in an email on Thursday, while reiterating its interest in other sectors in Indonesia.

<https://www.zawya.com/en/business/energy/indonesia-says-uaes-emirates-global-aluminium-plans-nuclear-power-plant-nvc5w7hm>

## Yemen

### Yemen's Houthis warn they are ready to attack Israel if Gaza war resumes

Al-Jazeera, February 11, 2025

Yemen's Houthis have announced they are ready to attack Israel if it reneges on its ceasefire deal with Hamas and resumes its assault on Gaza. Leader Abdel-Malik al-Houthi said in a televised speech on Tuesday that the group was "ready to launch a military intervention at any time in case of escalation against Gaza". The Houthis, who control most of western Yemen, including capital city Sanaa, have launched attacks throughout the Gaza war in stated solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. Since November 2023, the group has carried out more than 100 attacks on commercial and military ships in the Red

Sea and launched missiles and drones towards Israel. It said it would limit attacks after Israel and Hamas reached a ceasefire deal aimed at ending the war last month.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/11/yemens-houthis-warn-they-are-ready-to-attack-israel-if-gaza-war-resumes>

### Yemeni military ready to confront US, Israeli armies

Mehr News, February 14, 2025

Mohammed Nasser al-Atifi, Defence Minister Yemen said Friday that the Yemeni armed forces are ready to confront the United States and Israeli regime. Speaking in a massive rally in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa on Friday which was held to show solidarity with Palestine, Major General al-Atifi said that the armed forces of Yemen are ready to confront the US and Israeli regime in line with the order of the Ansarullah movement Abdul Malik al-Houthi. "We will carry out painful military attacks against the enemies in support of our brotherren in Gaza and in confronting displacement of the Palestinians with God's support," said the minister. The demonstrators in the huge rally in the Yemeni capital waved flags of Palestine and Yemen, while chanting slogans in denunciation of Donald Trump's Gaza displacement scheme. They also chanted slogans in support of the Yemeni Ansarullah movement and other forces of the Axis of Resistance.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/228331/Yemeni-military-ready-to-confront-US-Israeli-armies>

# NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

*Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Ms. Bhawna*

**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](http://www.idsa.in)**



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