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**FOCUS, NUCLEAR, MISSILES & OTHER  
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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

## Armenia

### Armenia's high-tech minister and UAE minister of state for defence reached agreements to expand cooperation

First Channel News, February 19, 2025

Armenian Minister of High-Tech Industry Mkhitar Hayrapetyan and the United Arab Emirates Minister of State for Defence Affairs Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Mazrouei held a meeting on February 18 in Abu Dhabi. The Armenian minister presented the steps and vision aimed at the development of the sector, current programs and work, the Ministry said in a readout. A number of issues of mutual interest, as well as opportunities and prospects of implementing joint programs, were discussed. The parties agreed to expand and develop partnerships in various formats. Minister Hayrapetyan's first deputy Gevorg Mantashyan and the Chairman of the Military Industry Committee Aram Jivanyan also participated in the meeting.

<https://www.1lurer.am/en/2025/02/19/Armenia-s-High-Tech-Minister-and-UAE-Minister-of-State-for-Defense-reached-agreements-to-expand-coo/1267214>

### Mkhitar hayrapetyan attends IDC 2025 International Defence Conference in Abu Dhabi

The Republic of Armenia, February 16, 2025

On February 16, at the invitation of His Excellency Mohamed Bin Mubarak Fadhel Al Mazrouei, Minister of State for Defence Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, the Minister of High-Tech Industry of the

Republic of Armenia, Mkhitar Hayrapetyan, participated in the International Defence Conference (IDC) themed "Rethinking Defence: Innovation, Integration, and Resilience" in Abu Dhabi, as part of the IDEX 2025 International Defence Conference. During the panel titled "Disinformation and Influence Operations," Minister Hayrapetyan presented Armenia's policy on combating disinformation and the use of deepfakes. He emphasised the importance of the relationship between the state, private sector, and society, as well as the concepts of cybersecurity, media literacy, fact-checking, and international cooperation in the field of information security. He also discussed the RA Government's strategic priorities, the work carried out by the RA Ministry of High-Tech Industry, proposed legislative changes, measures taken in cybersecurity, and prospects for cooperation between the state and private sectors. Additionally, he highlighted programs aimed at increasing the accuracy and reliability of information systems.

<https://hightech.gov.am/en/tegekatvakan-kentron/ayl/norutyunner/minister-participates-idc-2025>

### Armenia FM: We consider possibility of joining Arms Trade Treaty

News.am, February 25, 2025

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan delivered a statement at the High-Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland. Mirzoyan stated as follows, in particular: "It is my pleasure to address the Conference on Disarmament in our capacity as an observer state. As a unique

forum the Conference on Disarmament plays a crucial role in strengthening international peace and security. More than four decades since its establishment, the Conference on Disarmament continues to hold significant yet unrealised potential in advancing global disarmament and security objectives.

[https://  
news.am/eng/news/868612.html/en  
g/news/868612.html](https://news.am/eng/news/868612.html/en-g/news/868612.html)

### **Army chief discusses cooperation with Greek counterpart**

Armenpress, February 27, 2025

The delegation led by the First Deputy Minister of Defence-Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia, Lieutenant General Edward Asryan, is on an official visit to the Hellenic Republic at the invitation of the Chief of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, General Dimitrios Choupis, the defense ministry said in a press release. On February 27, an official welcoming ceremony was held in honor of Lieutenant General Edward Asryan, featuring a guard of honor and a military orchestra. The national anthems of both countries were played. Following a private discussion between the Chiefs of the General Staff, an expanded-format meeting took place. The discussions focused on Armenia-Greece cooperation in the defence sector, with both sides highly appreciating the progress achieved thus far. They reviewed past collaborative efforts and outlined further steps to enhance bilateral defence relations.

<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1213140>

## **Azerbaijan**

### **Azerbaijan's deputy defence minister participates in IDEX 2025**

Azerbaijani Press Agency, February 19, 2025

Delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan – Director General Mr. Agil Gurbanov attends the 17th International Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX) and the 8th Naval Defence & Maritime Security Exhibition (NAVDEX) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), APA reports citing Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Ministry of Defence Industry of the Republic of Azerbaijan is also showcasing its booth at IDEX, one of the world's largest defence industry exhibitions, involving 1,560 exhibitors from 65 countries presenting their products. During the meetings, the sides discussed the current state and prospects for the development of military and military-technical cooperation and exchanged views on a number of other issues of interest.

[https://en.apa.az/military/azerbaijan-  
deputy-defense-minister-participates-in-  
idex-2025-460980](https://en.apa.az/military/azerbaijan-deputy-defense-minister-participates-in-idex-2025-460980)

### **Pakistan, Azerbaijan agree to expand security, trade collaboration**

Amir Latif

Anadolu Agency, February 24, 2025

Pakistan and Azerbaijan agreed to expand cooperation in trade, commerce, security, and energy, with the two countries announcing they would ink agreements worth \$2 billion in the coming April. Speaking at a joint press conference,

visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev pledged to capitalise on "immense" opportunities for trade and commerce cooperation, as well as exploiting opportunities in regional communication and forums. Sharif, who is on a two-day official visit to Azerbaijan, arrived in the capital, Baku, on Sunday evening with a high-level delegation that included Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and other key Cabinet members. This is Sharif's second visit to Azerbaijan since taking office in March 2024. Meanwhile, the two sides signed several agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) in trade, commerce, defense production, energy, climate change, tourism, culture, education, and other areas. Sharif, on the occasion, said the two countries will formally sign separate agreements totaling \$2 billion in the aforementioned fields in April in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-azerbaijan-agree-to-expand-security-trade-collaboration/3491578>

### **Azerbaijan strengthens air force with Pakistani JF-17 and joint production plans**

Qabil Ashirov

Azernews, February 26, 2025

The interview of Pakistani Information Minister Atta Tarar with the local media outlets in Azerbaijan sparked excitement and debate. Thus, the Pakistani minister noted that the two countries may jointly manufacture military aircraft. Azerbaijan, which owns a small but strong air force comprising various types of aircraft, such

as fighter bombers, tactical bombers, interceptors, interceptor-reconnaissance, and multirole aircraft, strived to renew and modernise its aircraft for a long. Pakistani-made JF-17 became the solution to the issue. With the 4+ generation JF-17, the strength of the Azerbaijani air forces increased, leaving all neighbouring countries, excluding Russia, in the dust. However, producing a military aircraft can elevate Azerbaijan to new levels, decreasing dependency on abroad in such strategic issues. Speaking to Azernews on the issue, military expert Ramil Mammadli noted the military technological collaboration between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, particularly in modern and advanced variants, is a highly successful and positive development. Here, it is important to recognise that this cooperation is not one-sided.

<https://www.azernews.az/analysis/238303.html>

### **Bahrain**

### **Bahraini military commander-in-chief reviews defence ties with UK ambassador**

Arab News, February 24, 2025

Field Marshal Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, commander-in-chief of the Bahrain Defence Force, reviewed historical and defense ties with Alastair Long, the UK ambassador to Manama. Several senior military officials from Bahrain attended the meeting, including Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Theyab bin Saqr Al-Nuaimi and Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, an adviser for financial and technical affairs at General Command. Khalifa highlighted the historic relationship between Bahrain and

the UK during his meeting with Long, and outlined developments in various sectors, according to the Bahrain News Agency.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2591460/middle-east>

## Iran

### Upgraded systems ready to counter any threat: Iranian air defence chief

Tehran Times, February 18, 2025

Iran's top air defence commander has declared the country fully prepared to counter any threat, emphasizing recent advancements in its defense capabilities. Speaking on the sidelines of the Fourth International Conference of Mahdavi Activists at the Shahid Khezravi Specialised Training Center, Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard told reporters that Iran's air defence forces are equipped with entirely domestically produced systems. "Our armed forces and air defence are ready to confront any threat. All of our current equipment is 100% homegrown, designed and manufactured by our own experts. This technology surpasses potential threats," Sabahifard stated. "Look at our military exercises—the Bavar-373 system is a prime example." He further highlighted ongoing upgrades, saying, "We have enhanced all our defence systems. The current and next-generation Bavar-373 are unmatched by any air defence system in the world." Meanwhile, U.S. intelligence assessments suggest Israel may launch a preemptive strike on Iran's nuclear facilities within the next six months. According to reports compiled by the intelligence director for the Joint

Chiefs of Staff and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Iran's Fordow and Natanz nuclear sites are considered potential targets.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/509943/Upgraded-systems-ready-to-counter-any-threat-Iranian-air-defense>

### IRGC: 'Inferno' to ensue any nuclear site strikes as Israeli media rolls out alleged assault plans

Tehran Times, February 19, 2025

Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Division, warned that a devastating response would follow any strikes on Iranian nuclear sites, regardless of their success. "If the Americans and Zionists try to strike our nuclear centers, the fire we ignite in the region will be of unquantifiable scale and scope," he said during an interview aired. Recently, Western news outlets, notably The Washington Post, highlighted alleged U.S.-backed Israeli plans to target Iran's nuclear sites "in the first half of 2025." This development aligns with recent threats of military action against Iran from key U.S. and Israeli figures, including President Donald Trump, National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Trump issued numerous inflammatory statements regarding the possibility of "obliterating" and "bombing the hell out of Iran."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/509988/IRGC-Inferno-to-ensue-any-nuclear-site-strikes-as-Israeli>



## **Iran unveils Qaem-118 air defence missile**

Mehrnews, February 19, 2025

The Qaem-118 air defence missile was unveiled during the second phase of the IRGC Ground Forces' Great Prophet 19 military exercise. During the second phase of the Great Prophet 19 military exercise, Iran's IRGC Ground Forces unveiled the Qaem-118 air defense missile. This state-of-the-art system boasts a 25 km range and is equipped with radar, electro-optical, and thermal tracking, ensuring high precision. The Qaem-118 missile fire control radar can also be connected to multiple launchers at the same time and hit a larger number of targets.

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/228590/Iran-unveils-Qaem-118-missile>

## **Iranian Navy fires AI-guided missiles during large-scale military exercises in the Persian Gulf**

Army Recognition, February 20, 2025

As reported by PressTV on January 25, 2025, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy of Iran conducted large-scale military drills under the code name "Great Prophet Authority 19" on January 24, 2025, spanning the southern Iranian provinces of Bushehr and Khuzestan's littoral waters. The exercises included the deployment of missiles guided by artificial intelligence (AI), which successfully hit mock enemy targets. The Qaem and Almas missiles, integrated with AI technology, were launched by Mohajer-6 and Ababil 5 drones, demonstrating the IRGC Navy's focus on incorporating AI into its weapon systems. During the drills, the IRGC Navy

fired a range of ballistic and surface-to-surface missiles, including an offensive missile from the Shahid Soleimani warship. Additionally, Kowsar 222 missiles were used to intercept and destroy airborne targets. The exercises took place across the northern and central parts of the Persian Gulf and aimed to improve the coordination and readiness of the IRGC naval forces to respond to potential threats. IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri stated that the drills were also intended to convey a message of peace and friendship to neighboring countries.

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/navy-news/2025/iranian-navy-fires-ai-guided-missiles-during-large-scale-military-exercises-in-the-persian-gulf>

## **Iran rules out 'direct talks' with US on nuclear issue**

The Economic Times, February 25, 2025

During Trump's first term, which ended in 2021, Washington withdrew from the landmark deal that had imposed curbs on Iran's nuclear programme in return for sanctions relief. Iran held a new round of talks with Germany, France and Britain about its nuclear programme after reviving engagement with the trio, known as the E3, late last year. Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov (left) at a press conference with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi, in Tehran Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi dismissed the possibility of direct negotiations with the United States on his country's nuclear programme. His remarks came a day after Washington announced fresh sanctions on Tehran targeting more than 30 vessels and people, including the head of the national

oil company, accused of involvement in brokering the sale and shipment of Iranian oil.

[https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/iran-rules-out-direct-talks-with-us-on-nuclearissue/articleshow/118564189.cms?UTM\\_Source=Google\\_Newsstand&UTM\\_Campaign=RSS\\_Feed&UTM\\_Medium=Referral](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/iran-rules-out-direct-talks-with-us-on-nuclearissue/articleshow/118564189.cms?UTM_Source=Google_Newsstand&UTM_Campaign=RSS_Feed&UTM_Medium=Referral)

### **Iran deploying air defences to brace for possible US-Israeli strike**

Times of Israel, February 25, 2025

Iran has placed its nuclear facilities on high alert bracing for a potential attack by Israel and the United States. According to a report in the British Telegraph, Tehran has deployed additional air defence system launches around key nuclear and missile sites. "They [Iranian authorities] are just waiting for the attack and are anticipating it every night and everything has been on high alert – even in sites that no one knows about," a source was quoted telling the news outlet, saying that concerns have heightened with rhetoric from new US President Donald Trump.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/report-iran-deploying-air-defenses-to-brace-for-possible-us-israeli-strike/>

### **Iran rules out 'direct talks' with US on nuclear issue**

The Economic Times, February 25, 2025

Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov (left) at a press conference with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi, in Tehran. Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi dismissed the possibility of direct

negotiations with the United States on his country's nuclear programme. His remarks came a day after Washington announced fresh sanctions on Tehran targeting more than 30 vessels and people, including the head of the national oil company, accused of involvement in brokering the sale and shipment of Iranian oil. The sanctions were the latest to be imposed since US President Donald Trump reinstated his "maximum pressure" policy towards Iran, reprising his approach during his first term. "There will be no possibility of direct talks between us and the United States on the nuclear issue as long as the maximum pressure is applied in this way," Araghchi said during a joint presser with his visiting Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/iran-rules-out-direct-talks-with-us-on-nuclear-issue/articleshow/118564189.cms?from=mdr>

### **Iran deploys Russian Yak-130 jets to intercept drones in military exercises**

Army Recognition, February 25, 2025

On February 24, 2025, during the Zolfagar 1403 military exercises, Iran demonstrated a step in integrating new aerial capabilities by deploying its Yak-130 aircraft in operational missions. According to Mehr News, which reported the event, these drills involved all branches of the Iranian Armed Forces and took place over a wide area stretching from the northern Indian Ocean to the Makran coasts in southeastern Iran. It was within this framework that the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) tested the Yak-130 for the first time in an interception mission, marking a notable

evolution in the aircraft's role beyond its primary use as a trainer. The Yak-130, developed by Russian manufacturer Yakovlev, is a subsonic twin-seat aircraft originally designed for advanced pilot training for modern fighter jets such as the Su-35 and Su-57. According to Brigadier General Alireza Sheikh, the spokesperson for the exercises, a Yak-130 was deployed alongside two MiG-29s to intercept and neutralise a drone simulating a hostile aircraft. In a coordinated approach, the MiG-29 pilots first detected and tracked the target before relaying the data to the Yak-130, which then successfully eliminated it using guided missiles. This operation demonstrated the IRIAF's coordination and responsiveness, confirming the Yak-130's ability to be integrated into aerial operations alongside heavier combat aircraft.

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/2025/iran-deploys-russian-yak-130-jets-to-intercept-drones-in-military-exercises>

### **Iran will not yield to US 'pressure and sanctions' on nuclear issue**

Middle East Monitor, February 25, 2025

Iran will not yield to pressure and sanctions imposed by Washington, the Islamic Republic's top diplomat after meeting his Russian counterpart, days after Moscow held initial talks with the US just a month into Donald Trump's second term in the White House. During his one-day trip to Iran, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov discussed regional and bilateral topics with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, said state media. The visit came a day after the US imposed a fresh round of

sanctions targeting Iran's oil industry, the Islamic Republic's main source of income. Trump earlier this month restored his "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran that includes efforts to drive the country's oil exports to zero, re-imposing a tough policy on Iran that was followed throughout his first term. "Iran's position regarding nuclear talks is clear and we will not negotiate under pressure and sanctions," said Araghchi during a televised joint press conference with Lavrov. "There is no possibility of direct negotiations with the US as long as maximum pressure is being applied in this way."

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/2025-02-25-iran-will-not-yield-to-us-pressure-and-sanctions-on-nuclear-issue/>

### **Iran rules out 'direct talks' with US on nuclear issue**

The Jordan Times, February 25, 2025

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi dismissed the possibility of direct negotiations with the United States on his country's nuclear programme. His remarks came a day after Washington announced fresh sanctions on Tehran targeting more than 30 vessels and people, including the head of the national oil company, accused of involvement in brokering the sale and shipment of Iranian oil. The sanctions were the latest to be imposed since US President Donald Trump reinstated his "maximum pressure" policy towards Iran, reprising his approach during his first term. "There will be no possibility of direct talks between us and the United States on the nuclear issue as long as the maximum pressure is applied in this way," Araghchi said during a joint press conference with his visiting Russian



counterpart Sergei Lavrov. "Regarding the nuclear negotiations, the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran is very clear. We will not negotiate under pressure, threat or sanctions." Lavrov arrived in Tehran on Tuesday for talks with Araghchi and other senior officials on a range of topics including bilateral relations, regional developments and the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major powers.

<https://jordantimes.com/news/region/iran-rules-out-direct-talks-us-nuclear-issue>

### **Iran accelerates production of near weapons-grade uranium, IAEA says, as tensions with US ratchet up**

The Economic Times, February 26, 2025

Iran has significantly increased its stockpile of near weapons-grade uranium, reaching 274.8 kilograms of uranium enriched up to 60% as of February 8. This escalation raises alarms amid heightened tensions with the U.S. Iran's decision follows its ban on experienced IAEA inspectors and continued expansion of advanced centrifuges for uranium enrichment at Natanz and Fordo. The report by the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency said that as of Feb. 8, Iran has 274.8 kilograms (605.8 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 60%. That's an increase of 92.5 kilograms (203.9 pounds) since the IAEA's last report in November. That material is a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%.

[https://m.economictimes.com/news/defence/iran-accelerates-production-of-near-weapons-grade-uranium-un-nuclear-watchdog-iaea/amp\\_articleshow/118582347.cms](https://m.economictimes.com/news/defence/iran-accelerates-production-of-near-weapons-grade-uranium-un-nuclear-watchdog-iaea/amp_articleshow/118582347.cms)

### **Iran raises alert level around nuclear facilities**

Middle East Monitor, February 26, 2025

Iran is on "high alert" in anticipation of a possible Israeli attack on its nuclear facilities. According to two senior government sources in Tehran, cited in the reports, Iran has strengthened its defence system at nuclear sites across the country amid fears that the United States and Israel may launch a joint attack. One of the sources stated that any major attack could put Iran at risk, as its defence system has already been weakened by the Israeli attack on Eshtiqad. A recently published US intelligence report indicated a strong possibility that Israel could strike Iran in the first half of the year.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20250226-iran-raises-alert-level-around-nuclear-facilities/>

### **Iran's nuclear weapons potential leaps ahead of IAEA meeting**

Andrea Stricker

Foundation For Defense Democracies, February 27, 2025

Iran's major strides in its march towards a nuclear weapon hang ominously over the meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors in Vienna on March 3-7. The nuclear monitoring agency reports that Tehran surged production of 60 percent highly enriched uranium (HEU), increasing this stock by 50 percent since the IAEA's last reporting in November. Using this roughly 275-kilogram stock of HEU, Tehran can

fuel nearly seven nuclear weapons. Overall, Iran is currently assessed to possess enough material for at least 17 weapons, if further enriched to weapons grade. The IAEA also reported that Iran once again failed to answer the agency's questions about nuclear weapons work at two sites. Tehran continues to build new nuclear facilities without notifying the IAEA, a violation of Iran's legal safeguards obligations. In addition to Iran's advancing capability to produce fuel for multiple nuclear weapons, The New York Times reported in February that the Islamic Republic has a secret team dedicated to shortening the country's route to constructing nuclear weapons. Axios reporting in 2024 suggested that Iran had restarted weaponisation activities such as computer modeling, metallurgy, and tests to trigger an implosion that compresses a nuclear device, which leads to its detonation.

[https://www.fdd.org/analysis/policy\\_briefs/2025/02/27/irans-nuclear-weapons-potential-leaps-ahead-of-iaea-meeting/](https://www.fdd.org/analysis/policy_briefs/2025/02/27/irans-nuclear-weapons-potential-leaps-ahead-of-iaea-meeting/)

### **Senior diplomat says Iran ready to share nuclear knowledge with regional countries**

Tehran Times, February 28, 2025

Iran is prepared to collaborate with regional countries by sharing its scientific and technical expertise on nuclear matters, according to Seyed Kamal Kharrazi, head of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations. In an interview with Egypt's Al-Masry Al-Youm, Kharrazi discussed the region's turbulent history, asserting that colonial powers have long sought dominance in West Asia. He said that the

establishment of Israel was intended to destabilise the region. Criticising U.S. and Israeli policies, Kharrazi stated, "The U.S. and Europe do not abandon this region. They use division, instability, and war to justify their interventions." On Iran-Egypt relations, he emphasised the deep historical and civilizational ties between the two nations, stating that any political engagement depends on the decisions of their leaders, irrespective of past or present differences. Addressing the concept of the Resistance, Kharrazi described it as an enduring ideology rather than a movement that can be eliminated. "Even if it faces setbacks, Resistance remains a fundamental part of the region's struggle," he said. Regarding Iran's nuclear program, he reiterated that economic sanctions have failed to halt Iran's progress in peaceful nuclear technology. He reaffirmed Iran's readiness to share its scientific advancements with regional partners.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/510347/Senior-diplomat-says-Iran-ready-to-share-nuclear-knowledge-with>

### **Iraq**

### **Public-Private partnership to strengthen Iraq's digital industrial framework, says government advisor**

Iraq News Agency, February 16, 2025

Iraq's commitment to digital transformation and industrial modernisation is gaining momentum through an enhanced public-private partnership model, according to the Prime Minister's Financial Advisor, Mudher Mohammed Saleh. He emphasised that

integrating digital industrial licensing and governance mechanisms will bolster transparency, efficiency, and data-driven decision-making across key economic sectors. In an interview with the Iraqi News Agency (INA), Saleh stated that the government is actively working to streamline trademark registration and industrial licensing via digital platforms. “The shift toward digital governance will provide a high degree of disclosure and transparency, facilitating the seamless registration and protection of trademarks while accelerating industrial investment procedures,” he noted. Saleh highlighted several key aspects of Iraq’s digital economic strategy, including advanced industrial data analytics, online consultancy services, and capacity-building programs. These initiatives, he explained, aim to equip businesses with cutting-edge tools for digital transformation, enhancing their competitiveness in an increasingly technology-driven global economy.

<https://ina.iq/eng/38351-public-private-partnership-to-strengthen-iraqs-digital-industrial-framework-says-government-advisor.html>

### **Iraq turns to China for agreement on peaceful nuclear energy use**

Shafaq, February 25, 2025

Iraq decided to enhance the country's peaceful nuclear energy capabilities by signing agreements with China. The Prime Minister's media office confirmed that the Cabinet held its regular session and voted to authorise the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, also

head of the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission, to negotiate and sign a cooperation agreement between the governments of Iraq and China. The agreement will focus on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, while The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will prepare the necessary authorisation document and submit it to the Cabinet Secretariat for final approval and signature by the Prime Minister. Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani stated last year that Iraq was among the first countries to seek membership in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to commit to its treaties, emphasising Iraq’s efforts to establish nuclear reactors for peaceful purposes, believing that nuclear energy should be a source of prosperity, not a means for developing deadly weapons. Iraq previously had three nuclear reactors in the al-Tuwaitha area south of Baghdad. One of these reactors was destroyed by an Israeli airstrike in 1981, while the other two were destroyed by U.S. aircraft during the Gulf War in 1991, following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990. These sites were used by the previous regime for the production of internationally banned weapons.

<https://shafaq.com/en/Iraq/Iraq-government-turns-to-China-for-agreement-on-peaceful-nuclear-energy-use>

### **Israel**

### **How US tech giants supplied Israel with AI models, raising questions about tech's role in warfare**

The Economic Times, February 18, 2025

US tech giants have quietly empowered Israel to track and kill many more alleged

militants more quickly in Gaza and Lebanon through a sharp spike in artificial intelligence and computing services. But the number of civilians killed has also soared, along with fears that these tools are contributing to the deaths of innocent people. Militaries have for years hired private companies to build custom autonomous weapons. However, Israel's recent wars mark a leading instance in which commercial AI models made in the United States have been used in active warfare, despite concerns that they were not originally developed to help decide who lives and who dies. The Israeli military uses AI to sift through vast troves of intelligence, intercepted communications and surveillance to find suspicious speech or behaviour and learn the movements of its enemies. After a surprise attack by Hamas militants on October 7, 2023, its use of Microsoft and OpenAI technology skyrocketed, an Associated Press investigation found.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/how-us-tech-giants-supplied-israel-with-ai-models-raising-questions-about-techs-role-in-warfare/articleshow/118361016.cms?from=mdr>

### **Israel's strategic calculations: Is an attack on Iran imminent?**

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

Al-Arabiya, February 19, 2025

This week, a high-stakes diplomatic meeting took place between US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem. The meeting was significant not

only for its timing but also for the explicit rhetoric used by Netanyahu, who declared, "With the support of President Trump, we will finish the job against Iran." His statement has fueled speculation about Israel's immediate and long-term plans regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions and broader regional influence. The phrase "finish the job" carries heavy implications. For years, Israel has considered Iran's nuclear program an existential threat and has repeatedly warned that it would not allow Tehran to acquire nuclear weapons. Netanyahu's statement, coupled with heightened Israeli military activity and US diplomatic backing, suggests that Israel may be preparing for decisive military action. Secretary Rubio, standing beside Netanyahu, reinforced this perception by stating that Iran is "behind every terrorist group" operating in the Middle East. This characterisation aligns with Israel's long-standing position that Iran is the primary sponsor of militancy in the region. Given these strong remarks, the meeting between the two leaders has intensified discussions over whether Israel is poised to launch a preemptive strike against Iran's nuclear sites.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/views/2025/02/19/israel-s-strategic-calculations-is-an-attack-on-iran-imminent>

### **Is Israel preparing to strike Iran's nuclear sites?**

Jonathan Spyer

The Jerusalem Post, February 21, 2025

In a soon-to-be-published article in Middle East Quarterly magazine, Colin Winston, a 30-year veteran of the CIA and former head

of research at the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), lays out a succinct case for an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. "Hezbollah and Hamas no longer pose a threat to Israel," Winston writes. "The Islamic Republic of Iran's 'axis of resistance' lies in ruin. Both Iran's and Syria's air defense systems have been destroyed, and Iran's missile capabilities decimated. "Despite this, Iran is on the verge of producing enough weapons-grade uranium to build several bombs – so close, in fact, that relying on a timely warning from US or Israeli intelligence of Iran's imminent 'breakout' may no longer be a reliable strategy.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-843077>

### **Iran deploying air defences to brace for possible US-Israeli strike**

The Times of Israel, February 25, 2025

Iran has placed its nuclear facilities on high alert bracing for a potential attack by Israel and the United States. According to a report in the British Telegraph, Tehran has deployed additional air defense system launches around key nuclear and missile sites. "They [Iranian authorities] are just waiting for the attack and are anticipating it every night and everything has been on high alert – even in sites that no one knows about," a source was quoted telling the news outlet, saying that concerns have heightened with rhetoric from new US President Donald Trump. An official told the newspaper that there was an understanding in Tehran that Iran's already-weakened air defenses "may not be effective in the event of a large-scale strike." Last year, Israel carried out a wave

of retaliatory airstrikes on Iran after Tehran carried out a second missile attack on Israel. Israeli jets targeted Iranian air defenses as well as its ballistic missile program, striking factories, storage sites, launchers and research facilities, and targeting one facility believed to be used for the regime's pursuit of a nuclear weapon.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/report-iran-deploying-air-defenses-to-brace-for-possible-us-israeli-strike/>

### **Israeli official says the army won't withdraw from a Gaza corridor in potential jolt to truce**

The Economic Times, February 27, 2025

Israel will not withdraw from a strategic corridor in the Gaza Strip as called for by the ceasefire, an official said Thursday. Israel's refusal could spark a crisis with Hamas and key mediator Egypt at a sensitive moment for the fragile truce. Hours earlier, Hamas released the remains of four hostages in exchange for over 600 Palestinian prisoners, the last planned swap of the ceasefire's first phase, which ends this weekend. Talks over the second and more difficult stage have yet to begin. Much could hinge on a visit by US President Donald Trump's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, who is expected in the region in the coming days. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meanwhile said in a brief statement that he was sending negotiators to Cairo, without providing further details.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/israeli-official-says-the-army-wont-withdraw-from-a-gaza-corridor-in->



[potential-jolt-to-truce/articleshow/118600858.cms](https://www.jpost.com/business-and-innovation/tech-and-start-ups/article-843951)

### **Demystifying drones: The evolving role of unmanned aerial vehicles**

Judith Segaloff

The Jerusalem Post, February 28, 2025

Once thought to be the ideal solution for efficient pizza deliveries, drones have become integral soldiers in armies all over the globe. With swarms of drones able to fly literally “under the radar,” they have proven to be successful in reconnaissance, search/rescue, and performing targeted attacks. UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles), an acronym for drones, have actually been around longer than you may think. How did these buzzing mechanical mosquitoes evolve into flying machines with the ability to replace human soldiers as sniffers, scouts, searchers, snipers, megaphones, and bombers? Drone technology is extremely dynamic. We learn not only from Israel’s hi-tech geniuses but also from our drones that crash and fail and even more from the drones that our enemies use against us. According to experts interviewed, drone falls are more frequent than not. One source said that as many as 95% of drones fall for different reasons. But the data is being revised constantly, and even as this article is being written, advances are being made throughout the drone world that are expected to change the face of war, save soldiers’ lives, and go on to influence our everyday lives.

<https://www.jpost.com/business-and-innovation/tech-and-start-ups/article-843951>

## **Jordan**

### **Kazakhstan, Jordan team up for uranium studies**

World Nuclear News, February 19, 2025

Kazakhstan's national atomic company Kazatomprom has signed a memorandum of understanding and cooperation with Jordan Uranium Mining Company. The document - signed during an official visit of Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to Jordan - focuses on the joint study of uranium exploration and mining projects in Jordan in order to assess their potential for further development. This initiative, Kazatomprom said, is aimed at refining geological characteristics and resources estimates of the deposits considering the heap leaching mining technology. Significant emphasis will be placed on environmental sustainability and economic feasibility of the project when evaluating the potential for its implementation, it added. "Implementation of joint projects opens up promising opportunities for Jordan's nuclear industry, including new labour market opportunities, infrastructure development, and engagement of local contractors," Kazatomprom noted. "For Kazakhstan, the world's leading uranium producer, entering a new market could be a significant step toward expanding its global presence, strengthening strategic positions, and enhancing bilateral economic ties with Jordan."

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/kazakhstan-jordan-team-up-for-uranium-studies>

## Kuwait

### ACWA to acquire ENGIE's assets in Bahrain and Kuwait for \$693m

Power Technology, February 20, 2025

Saudi Arabia-based energy company ACWA Power has signed a share purchase agreement with the regional subsidiary of French utility developer ENGIE to acquire assets located in Bahrain and Kuwait valued at \$693m. The acquisition includes 4.61GW of gas-fired power generation and 1.11 million cubic metres per day of water desalination facilities. ACWA Power will acquire ENGIE's shares in four key operating assets. The Bahrain assets are an 18% stake in the Az Zour North in Kuwait, 45% stakes in both the Al Ezzel and Al Dur projects, and a 30% stake in the Al Hidd facility. The expansion aligns with ACWA Power's strategy to triple its assets under management to \$250bn by 2030. ACWA Power CEO Marco Arcelli stated: "This acquisition represents a pivotal milestone for ACWA Power, reinforcing our position as a global leader in water desalination. We consolidate our presence in Bahrain where we are already a reliable supplier of power and water, and we enter Kuwait, where we recently submitted a bid for a large power and desalination plant.

<https://www.power-technology.com/news/acwa-engie-assets-bahrain-kuwait/>

## Lebanon

### Lebanon presses for full Israeli withdrawal as troops remain in 5 places

Al-Monitor, February 17, 2025

Lebanese leaders said they were in contact with the United States and France to press

Israel to withdraw fully, branding its continued presence in five places an "occupation" after a ceasefire deadline expired. The UN called the incomplete pullout a violation of a Security Council resolution, though it has allowed many displaced residents to return to devastated border villages after more than a year of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. It has also enabled the emergency services to retrieve bodies from previously inaccessible areas. Lebanon's civil defence agency said it had recovered 23 corpses from border villages. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said the government was in contact with truce brokers the United States and France to press Israel to complete its withdrawal, after an initial late January deadline set under the deal was already extended. Decision-makers are "unified in adopting the diplomatic option, because nobody wants war", Aoun said in a statement. Earlier, Aoun joined the prime minister and the speaker of parliament in declaring that any Israeli presence on Lebanese soil constituted an "occupation".

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2025/02/lebanon-presses-full-israeli-withdrawal-troops-remain-5-places>

### Israel smuggled pagers into Lebanon prior to 7 October attack, says Mossad chief

Middle East Monitor, February 27, 2025

Israeli intelligence agents smuggled 500 pagers into Lebanon for the purpose of sabotaging the Hezbollah movement even before the Hamas cross-border incursion on 7 October 2023, the head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency has revealed. On 17 September last year, thousands of pager

devices exploded simultaneously across Lebanon, targeting alleged Hezbollah fighters and members who used them as a form of low-tech communication. The next day, thousands of walkie-talkies also exploded throughout the country. The incidents marked an extensive Israeli intelligence operation that killed at least 51 people and wounded thousands more, including civilians. Many at the time believed that Israel had been working on the operation for months, but as more information came out, it was revealed to be a years-long effort of setting up shell companies, hacking into devices' hardware, and arranging shipments to Lebanon, all with the aim of infiltrating Hezbollah and sabotaging the group's members at a time of Tel Aviv's choosing.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/2025/0227-israel-smuggled-pagers-into-lebanon-prior-to-7-october-attack-says-mossad-chief/>

## **Qatar**

### **Qatar participates in high-level segment of conference on disarmament**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Qatar, February 24, 2025

The State of Qatar participated in the High-level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament, held in Geneva. HE Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi headed the State of Qatar's delegation at the conference. In the State of Qatar's statement before the conference, HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasised that Qatar has adopted a fixed national policy and clear positions on disarmament issues, based on

its commitment to its responsibilities toward maintaining international peace and security, and its belief in the necessity of supporting all efforts aimed at disarmament in the world. He noted that Qatar has joined several major international agreements in the field of disarmament and continues to develop and update national legislation related to weapons of mass destruction to be in line with its obligations under the agreements to which it has joined.

<https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2025/02/24/qatar-participates-in-high-level-segment-of-conference-on-disarmament>

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **Saudi Arabia unveils pavilion at International Defence Exhibition and conference in UAE**

Asharq Al-Aawsat, February 17, 2025

The activities of the Saudi pavilion, organised by the General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI), kicked off at the International Defense Exhibition and Conference "IDEX 2025" in Abu Dhabi. This event is being held under the patronage of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates. Governor of GAMI Eng. Ahmad Abdulaziz Al-Ohali participated in the launch, in the presence of Lt.-Gen. Mohammad Bin Abdulrahman bin Hamed Al-Gharibi, Chief of Staff of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces, Sultan bin Abdullah Al-Angari, Saudi ambassador to the UAE, and a number of officials, international investors and decision-makers in the sector. Al-Ohali emphasised the significance of the Kingdom's participation in IDEX 2025 as a

leading global platform for showcasing the latest military technologies. He underscored the importance of establishing international partnerships that enhance the Kingdom's defense and security capabilities.

<https://english.aawsat.com/business/5113211-saudi-arabia-unveils-pavilion-international-defense-exhibition-and-conference-uae>

### **Vision 2030 and Saudi Arabia's military industry: Insights from world Defence show**

Army Recognition, February 19, 2025

Saudi Arabia is actively advancing the transformation of its defense industry under Vision 2030, with the goal of localising 50% of military spending by 2030. This objective is supported by key initiatives and significant progress. The country is making strategic investments to develop its domestic defense manufacturing capabilities, increase self-sufficiency, and reduce reliance on foreign suppliers. One of the key events showcasing these advancements is the World Defence Show (WDS) 2026, scheduled to take place in Riyadh, where Saudi Arabia will highlight its growing defense capabilities and industry partnerships. The World Defence Show (WDS) 2026 will serve as a strategic platform for Saudi Arabia to present its latest advancements in defense manufacturing and innovation. Since the launch of Vision 2030 in 2016, Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in localising its defense industry. The localisation rate of military expenditures increased from 4% in 2018 to 19.35% by the end of 2023.

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/defense-web-tv/vision-2030-and-saudi-arabias->

[military-industry-insights-from-world-defense-show](#)

### **General atomics pursues major MQ-9B seaguardian drone sale to Saudi Arabia**

Army Recognition, February 20, 2025

During the IDEX defence exhibition in Abu Dhabi, General Atomics announced ongoing discussions with Saudi Arabia regarding the potential sale of a number of MQ-9B SeaGuardian drones. While negotiations remain in the early stages, the company has emphasised Saudi Arabia's strong interest in these remotely piloted aircraft. According to Dave Alexander, president of General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, the Kingdom has substantial requirements for the MQ-9B, and if finalized, the deal could create thousands of jobs in the United States. However, specific details, including the number of drones and the overall scope of the agreement, have not been disclosed. The proposal reportedly includes a large fleet and involves local industrial participation in Saudi Arabia, though the exact nature of this involvement remains unspecified.

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/2025/general-atomics-pursues-major-mq-9b-seaguardian-drone-sale-to-saudi-arabia>

## **Syria**

### **New Syria leader vows state 'monopoly' on weapons**

The Economic Times, February 25, 2025

Syria's new interim president pledged to ensure the state has a monopoly on

weapons at a national dialogue conference on the country's future after Bashar al-Assad's overthrow. Ahmed al-Sharaa, whose Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) led a rebel alliance that toppled Assad in December, also said he plans to establish a transitional justice committee. The conference, held at the presidential palace in Damascus, marks the beginning of a crucial phase for Syria's future governance after years of devastating civil war. "The unity of arms and their monopoly by the state is not a luxury but a duty and an obligation," Sharaa told the gathering. "Syria is indivisible; it is a complete whole, and its strength lies in its unity." Sharaa has previously said that Kurdish-led forces should be integrated into the national army.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/new-syria-leader-vows-state-monopoly-on-weapons/articleshow/118554700.cms?from=mdr>

## Turkiye

### **Turkish defence giants secure new deals, spark interest at IDEX 2025**

Daily Sabah, February 20, 2025

Top Turkish defence companies have garnered notable interest at a major international industry fair held this week in Abu Dhabi while also reaching new deals for collaboration, such as that signed between FNSS and EDGE Group, one of the world's leading advanced technology groups. Major domestic firms, from the developer of the fifth-generation fighter jet KAAN – Turkish Aerospace Industries

(TAI) to tech giant Aselsan, arms maker CANiK and missile producer Roketstan joined the International Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX). IDEX is a premier defense exhibition serving as a global platform for showcasing cutting-edge defense technologies and fostering cooperation among international defence entities. Held in Abu Dhabi, it commenced on Feb. 17 and is running through Feb. 21. The expo is held alongside the Naval Defence and Maritime Security Exhibition (NAVDEX), which offers a dedicated platform for the naval defense and maritime security sector. Some 90 Turkish defence companies were set to join the event, Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) head Haluk Görgün said earlier this week.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-defense-giants-secure-new-deals-spark-interest-at-idex-2025>

### **Turkiye ranks 11th globally in defense industry exports: President Erdogan**

Middle East Monitor, February 23, 2025

Turkiye is a world leader in drones production and ranks 11th globally in defense industry exports, the Turkish president. Speaking at a meeting of the ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party in the capital Ankara, Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: "Turkiye is a world leader in uncrewed aerial vehicle (UAV) production and ranks 11th globally in defense industry exports." The country is on the verge of a great transformation and exciting economic breakthrough, he said, adding that "developments in our region will facilitate this process." Erdogan said the government



had prepared a reform program for the “Century of Türkiye,” which he described as “comprehensive” that will “enhance our country’s growth potential and productivity.” In 2024, Türkiye’s defence and aerospace industry exports reached a record-breaking \$7.154 billion, marking a 29% increase compared to the previous year and exceeding the year’s target of \$6.5 billion by 11%. According to Haluk Gorgun, head of the country’s Defence Industries Secretariat, Turkish defence products were exported to 180 different countries, reflecting the sector’s expanding global reach.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20250223-turkiye-ranks-11th-globally-in-defense-industry-exports-president-erdogan/>

### **Türkiye launches \$262M financial leasing support for defence industry**

Türkiye Today, February 25, 2025

The Presidency of Defence Industries has launched a new “Financial Leasing Support” program in collaboration with Vakıf Leasing, providing financing solutions without requiring collateral. This initiative aims to reduce financial barriers for defence industry companies, supporting domestic and national production in Türkiye’s defence sector. The program is expected to facilitate technological advancements and increase export capacity by eliminating the need for collateral and offering long-term repayment options. Unlike traditional loan mechanisms, this program does not require collateral, making it more accessible to companies in need of

financing. Repayment terms are structured for up to 60 months, with an optional grace period of up to one year. The total financing volume allocated for this program is 250 million euros (\$262.6 million). Applications for the program will be open until December 31, 2025.

<https://www.turkiyetoday.com/turkiye/turkiye-launches-262m-financial-leasing-support-for-defense-industry-124212/>

### **United Arab Emirates**

### **Indonesia says UAE firm to explore clean energy, amending statement on nuclear power**

Zawya, February 17, 2025

Emirates Global Aluminium plans to explore alternative clean energy development in Indonesia, Jakarta said, amending a statement denied by the company that EGA planned to build a nuclear power plant in the Southeast Asian country. Indonesia's economic affairs ministry issued a statement, replacing one that had said EGA planned to build a nuclear plant of up to 5 gigawatts in an attempt to remedy a shortage of low-carbon power bedeviling efforts to boost capacity at an aluminium smelter in North Sumatra. An EGA spokesperson said in an email that the company "is not in the nuclear power business so, with all respect, the account of this aspect... is inaccurate". EGA reiterated it was "interested in Indonesia".

<https://www.zawya.com/en/business/energy/indonesia-says-uae-firm-to-explore-clean-energy-amending-statement-on-nuclear-power-up13jajo>

## **UAE inks \$1 billion deal with local firm Calidus for missile system**

Lee Ferran

Breaking Defence, February 18, 2025

The United Arab Emirates today announced an AED 3.76 billion (\$1 billion USD) deal with local defence firm Calidus for a new missile system, the largest deal announced on the second day of the International Defense Exposition (IDEX) in Abu Dhabi. The “Phase 1” announcement, made by the governmental Tawazun Council, was sparse on details, including the number of systems to be procured, but representatives at Calidus’s expansive exhibit here said the system was a ground-to-ground missile system that can be mounted on armored vehicles, including light infantry fighting vehicles. Calidus occupies a large event space in an outdoor pavilion, where it’s showing off several armored vehicles, one of which featured an “ALHEDA” mounted missile pod. Also at the stand, the company displayed a new, rugged 8×8 vehicle, which local media said was the “first to be designed and produced in the region.”

<https://breakingdefense.com/2025/02/uae-inks-1-billion-deal-with-local-firm-calidus-for-missile-system/>

## **UAE's new Sea Drone lands on water to enhance surveillance and emergency response**

Army Recognition, February 19, 2025

At IDEX 2025, the UAE-based company Advanced Integrated Technology (AIT), a subsidiary of Streit Group, introduced the Sea Drone, a quadcopter drone designed for operations in adverse weather conditions. Capable of landing on water, the drone is

resistant to snow, rain, salt fog, and fine dust, allowing for deployment in maritime and desert environments. The system is intended for cargo delivery and territory monitoring, providing operational capabilities in various scenarios. The Sea Drone is equipped with multiple payload options to support different functions. These include a loudspeaker system, a Wingsland Z15 flashing light, a ball drop system for fire extinguishing, a mobile cellular station, and a lifebuoy casting system designated MSS SSI-9D-L. It also integrates the KURSIR search engine, enabling search operations in case of crashes. These features allow the drone to be used for civilian and security applications, such as emergency response operations and reconnaissance missions.

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/2025/uaes-new-sea-drone-lands-on-water-to-enhance-surveillance-and-emergency-response>

## **IDEX 2025: Airbus prep to propose A400M to UAE Air Force**

John Hill

Airforce-Technology, February 19, 2025

In an exclusive media briefing, Airbus revealed its intention to deliver the A400M military airlift aircraft to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) when the time comes. On the margins of the International Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX 2025) in Abu Dhabi on 18 February, the company’s newly appointed president for Africa and the Middle East, Gabriel Semelas, was joined by the head of the programme, Gerd Weber, to offer details behind their preparations for the future bid. The A400M, known as the Atlas in UK service, can carry payload up to 37 tonnes, fly a maximum

range of 4,800 nautical miles, and perform air drop tasks, among other roles. Currently, the UAE Air Force operate six C-130H transport aircraft provided by the American defence prime Lockheed Martin; the oldest of them entered service in 1981 according to intelligence from GlobalData's 'UAE Defence Market 2024-2029' report. "The A400 is a natural successor to C-130," the duo asserted. Out of ten A400M users, only three – Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, and Spain – have not operated the alternative legacy aircraft before.

<https://www.airforce-technology.com/news/idx-2025-airbus-prep-to-propose-a400m-to-uae-air-force/>

### **UAE's defence giant EDGE Group inks \$2.9B in deals at IDEX 2025**

Breaking Defence, February 24, 2025

Emirati defense conglomerate EDGE Group wrapped up an Abu Dhabi defense expo with just under \$3 billion in new deals, most signed with the United Arab Emirates. The firm said in a statement on Friday that it signed 16 contracts, launched 46 "solutions," and inked 32 strategic international agreements at this edition of International Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX) 2025. Among the largest contracts, at \$1.2 billion, was with the UAE's Ministry of Defence for aerial munitions. Another deal, worth \$524 million, was signed between the UAE's navy and EDGE subsidiary Maestral for in service support.

<https://breakingdefense.com/2025/02/uaes-defense-giant-edge-group-inks-2-9b-in-deals-at-idx-2025/>

## **Yemen**

### **How the Houthis' strikes on US MQ-9 Reaper drones serve a wider regional agenda**

Leonardo Jacopo Maria Mazzucco

Atlantic Council, February 26, 2025

On December 28, 2024, Yahya Sare'e, the spokesperson for the Houthis, announced that a Houthi surface-to-air missile shot down a US MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) overflying the Al Bayda governorate in Yemen. Four days later, the Houthis boasted the downing of a second US-made drone in the Marib governorate, marking the first Houthi strike of an MQ-9 Reaper in 2025. These attacks represent the latest in a long string of successful Houthi strikes against US UAVs since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war, showcasing the Houthis' growing offensive capabilities. For the Yemeni militant group, imposing a heavy toll on the US drone fleet serves tactical, strategic, and symbolic goals at the domestic and regional levels. The strikes against MQ-9 Reaper drones impair US intelligence and targeting systems and help the Houthis shore up domestic and regional support. And, with the Houthis' ties to China, Russia, and Iran, downed MQ-9 Reaper drones could end up in the hands of US adversaries.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/houthi-strikes-on-us-mq9-reaper-drones/>

# NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

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