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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Armenia

US Ambassador discusses Armenia's nuclear energy sector with Westinghouse representatives

Armenpress, April 22, 2025

US Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Armenia Kristina Kvien met with representatives of the American company Westinghouse to discuss Armenia's nuclear energy sector, the U.S. Embassy in Armenia has said in a statement. "Ambassador Kvien met Westinghouse to discuss Armenia's nuclear energy sector. U.S. companies have deep expertise and innovative technology that will benefit both Armenia and the United States," reads the statement. Westinghouse Electric Company is an American company operating in the nuclear energy sector. In 2023, the company introduced a project to develop compact modular reactors with a capacity of 300 megawatts. Certification of these modular reactors is planned for 2027, with their integration into the general power grid expected by 2033. In January 2025, Armenia and the United States signed a strategic partnership document, which includes a provision for initiating negotiations on a nuclear cooperation agreement (the "123 Agreement").

<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1217865>

Armenia participating in NATO-Georgia 2025 military exercise

Marianna Mkrtchyan

Arminfo, April 29, 2025

The Armenian Armed Forces are participating in the NATO-Georgia 2025 exercises that have started on Georgian territory. As Georgia-Only reports, the

exercises officially opened at the Joint Military Center in Krtsanisi on April 28. This is the fourth exercise in the NATO-Georgia exercise cycle, which is held in Georgia every three years. The NATO-Georgia 2025 exercise is a brigade-level command post exercise using computer technologies, the purpose of which is to prepare a multinational brigade-level unit led by the Georgian side to plan and conduct crisis operations. The exercise will include a field component and multinational staff training, which will once again demonstrate the command and control capabilities of the JTEC and help improve coordination. They were planned by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SHAPE) and the General Staff of the Georgian Defence Forces and are conducted in accordance with the scenario, relevant procedures and doctrines developed by NATO. The multinational exercise involves 17 NATO Allies and partners. The following countries are participating in the exercise: Georgia, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Armenia and Tunisia.

https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=91116&lang=3

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan strengthens tech ties with China to lead in Fourth Industrial Revolution

Nazrin Abdul

Azernews, April 21, 2025

As the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR/4SIM) accelerates, Azerbaijan is

intensifying its efforts to become a regional hub of digital transformation — a vision underscored by its growing collaboration with global technology giants. In a recent move that signals Azerbaijan's strategic positioning in the emerging global tech landscape, key Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between the country's Center for Analysis and Coordination of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and two major Chinese institutions: the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT) and the World Internet of Things Convention (WIOTC). The agreements were inked during the China-Azerbaijan Industry and Investment Cooperation Promotion Conference held in Beijing. Co-organised by the Azerbaijan Export and Investment Promotion Agency (AZPROMO), the Azerbaijani Trade Representative's Office in China, and China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the event brought together high-level officials and nearly 200 entrepreneurs from diverse sectors, including energy, logistics, agriculture, and ICT. China's prominence as a global leader in next-generation technologies makes this partnership particularly significant for Azerbaijan. The signed MoUs aim to catalyse joint efforts in areas such as industrial innovation, green technology, sustainable development, and digital infrastructure. Key focuses include technology transfer, collaborative R&D, and capacity building — essential elements in accelerating Azerbaijan's technological modernisation.

<https://www.azernews.az/analysis/240594.html>

Iran

Iran 'not far' from nuclear bomb: IAEA chief

The Economic Times, April 16, 2025

Iran is not far from having an atomic bomb, the head of the UN nuclear watchdog was quoted as saying in a Le Monde interview published, just hours before a visit to Tehran. International Atomic Energy Agency head Rafael Grossi said Iran still had a way to go before getting the bomb, but added: "They're not far from it, you have to acknowledge." Grossi likened the development of a nuclear weapon to a jigsaw puzzle, adding that Iran "has the pieces and they could eventually put them together one day". Grossi was due in Iran later Wednesday for talks with senior officials. The UN watchdog was tasked with overseeing Iran's compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal that fell apart after Donald Trump withdrew from it during his first term as US president.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/iran-not-far-from-nuclear-bomb-iaea-chief/articleshow/120349070.cms?from=mdr>

After Israeli strikes, how strong are Iran's air defences?

Paul Iddon

The New Arab, April 17, 2025

Amid heightened tensions with the United States, Iran has sought to emphasise the effectiveness of its air defences, which Israel hit with deadly airstrikes in October. Whether this is an attempt to save face on Tehran's part or an objective reality is

unclear. “The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly the powerful Air Defence Force, are more prepared than ever and maintain a high level of combat readiness,” stressed Alireza Sabahifard, commander of the Iranian military’s Air Defence Force and the Khatam al-Anbiya Air Defence Base in early April. Two days earlier, Sabahifard boasted that Iran’s “air defence prowess” was “standing firmly like a mountain” against potential threats. He made the statements amid a standoff between Iran and the Trump administration over the former’s nuclear program. President Trump gave Tehran a two-month deadline to negotiate over the future of its nuclear program directly. Washington has sent additional air defences to the region and forward-deployed strategic B-2 Spirit stealth bombers, the only aircraft capable of carrying bombs that could significantly damage Iran’s underground nuclear sites, on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

<https://www.newarab.com/analysis/after-israeli-strikes-how-strong-are-irans-air-defences>

Iran has ‘doubts’ about US intentions ahead of nuclear talks

Al-Jazeera, April 18, 2025

Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has cast doubt over the intentions of the United States a day before a second round of nuclear talks is set to take place with Washington. The new round will come a week after the two countries held their highest-level negotiations since US President Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned a 2015 landmark nuclear deal three years later. Iran has since abandoned

all limits on its nuclear programme, and enriches uranium to up to 60 percent purity – near weapons-grade levels of 90 percent. “Although we have serious doubts about the intentions and motivations of the American side, in any case, we will participate in tomorrow’s negotiations,” Araghchi said during a news conference in Moscow with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov. Araghchi will set off for Rome for a new round of Omani-mediated talks with US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff. “We are fully prepared to pursue a peaceful resolution for Iran’s peaceful nuclear programme,” Araghchi said. Lavrov said Moscow was ready “to play any role that will be useful from Iran’s point of view and that will be acceptable to the United States”.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/18/iran-has-doubts-about-us-intentions-ahead-of-nuclear-talks>

Five lessons for the current Iran Nuclear talks

Corey Hinderstein

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 18, 2025

In Oman, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump took the first steps toward a nuclear negotiation with Iran. The indirect discussions went well enough to warrant a second round, held this weekend. As the two sides move toward a substantive negotiation over the future of Tehran’s nuclear program, they should look back at the negotiations to conclude and implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015 and draw five lessons for the current process. The Iranian nuclear

program is in a very different position than it was a decade ago. Now, Iran has more nuclear material, more machines (gas centrifuges) to produce that nuclear material, and more advanced types of those machines. It also has years more experience designing, manufacturing, and operating gas centrifuges. This is not speculative—it is captured in the regular monitoring reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which have continued even since the Trump administration withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018. As a result of this sophistication, no new nuclear deal will be able to roll back Iran's capabilities to where they were before the JCPOA. What Iranian scientists have learned cannot be destroyed, even if the machines, material, and facilities can. This is true, regardless of whether destruction comes via a negotiated arrangement or a military strike. Iran's technical knowledge would persist for a generation, even if it agreed to a full dismantlement of its current program, which is unlikely.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/emissary/2025/04/iran-nuclear-talks-five-lessons-jcpoa-negotiations?lang=en>

Israel is the sole obstacle to nuke-free West Asia, says Iran's FM

Press TV, April 19, 2025

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi says Israel is the only obstacle to the realisation of a nuclear weapons-free West Asia, warning that the occupying regime is fomenting Iranophobia while committing genocide in the region. Araghchi made the remarks on Saturday in Rome during a meeting with his Italian counterpart,

Antonio Tajani. The two met ahead of the second round of indirect talks between Iran and the United States, mediated by Oman at its embassy in the Italian capital. Reaffirming Iran's commitment to diplomacy, Araghchi urged all parties to seize the opportunity for a "logical and reasonable understanding" that would recognise Iran's legitimate rights and lift "unjust and illegal sanctions." He emphasised Iran's peaceful nuclear intentions, reiterating the country's rejection of weapons of mass destruction based on its religious and national values and defensive doctrine. The Iranian minister also thanked Tajani for Italy's coordination in facilitating the talks and conveyed Easter greetings to the Italian people. Tajani welcomed Araghchi and expressed Italy's strong interest in deepening ties with Iran. He said hosting the talks was of great value to Rome and stressed Italy's readiness to assist the negotiations in any possible way.

<https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2025/04/19/746448/Israel-sole-obstacle-nuclear-free-West-Asia-Iran-FM>

Iran, US conclude second round of high-stakes nuclear talks in Rome

The Economic Times, April 19, 2025

The United States and Iran concluded a second round of high-stakes talks on Tehran's nuclear programme, with Iranian media saying the discussions took place in a "constructive atmosphere". The Oman-mediated talks in Rome began at around 0930 GMT and ended around four hours later, according to Iranian state television. Images broadcast by the state TV showed

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arriving in the Italian capital, with US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff also expected to participate. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said the delegations were "in two different rooms" at the Omani ambassador's residence, with Oman's Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi passing messages between them. After the talks concluded, Iranian state TV reported that "because of this constructive atmosphere that has been created, it is likely that in the coming days" the parties would hold more discussions. The meeting comes a week after the two sides had what Iran called indirect talks in Muscat. Those were the first discussions at such a high level between the foes since US President Donald Trump abandoned a landmark nuclear accord in 2018.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/iran-us-conclude-second-round-of-high-stakes-nuclear-talks-in-rome/articleshow/120435398.cms?from=mdr>

Iran showcases defence capabilities at major Baghdad military exhibition

Tehran Times, April 20, 2025

The Iranian Ministry of Defence is showcasing its latest military advancements at the 17th Baghdad Security and Military Expo, marking a significant step in the nation's ongoing efforts to highlight its defence capabilities on the international stage. The exhibition, which officially opened its doors, is hosting 155 companies from 24 countries, all eager to display their cutting-edge products and innovations in the military, safety, and security sectors.

Held in Iraq's capital, Baghdad, this event serves as a key platform for global defence and cybersecurity solutions. As part of its participation, the Iranian Ministry of Defence is exhibiting a wide range of its military achievements. These include advancements in land, naval, air, and air defence technologies, as well as the latest developments in electronic warfare systems. By showcasing these innovations, Iran continues to position itself as a key player in the regional and global defence industry. Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani officially inaugurated the event, emphasising the strategic importance of the exhibition for Iraq's defence modernisation and international security cooperation. Al-Sudani, in his opening speech, highlighted the exhibition as a vital opportunity for fostering partnerships between Iraq's industrial sector and international companies, particularly in the areas of scientific research and technological development.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/512091/Iran-showcases-defense-capabilities-at-major-Baghdad-military>

Baghdad Defence Exhibition: Shahed-136 leads Iran's military display

Shafaq, April 4, 2025

Iran's Ministry of Defence unveiled a broad array of homegrown military systems at Iraq's 13th Security, Defence, Military Industries, and Cybersecurity Exhibition. According to Mehr News Agency, the exhibit includes technologies across land, air, and electronic warfare—featuring ballistic missiles, precision-guided munitions, and a variety of reconnaissance

and loitering drones. The Shahed-136, a widely known suicide drone, stood out among the displays. Mehr also reported the unveiling of a previously undisclosed unmanned aerial vehicle, described by Iranian officials as an “intelligent tactical system” equipped with geolocation and aerial guidance capabilities. Other systems on display include air defence platforms, radar units, counter-drone technologies, and electro-optical equipment. Iran’s delegation framed its participation as part of broader efforts to enhance international defence cooperation and expand its presence in global arms markets. The exhibition, which runs from April 19 to 22 in Baghdad, features more than 150 defence companies representing 22 countries, including Russia, China, India, Turkiye, Pakistan, Belarus, and Iran.

<https://shafaq.com/en/Iraq/Baghdad-Defense-Exhibition-Shahed-136-leads-Iran-s-military-display>

Iran showcases missiles and drones at Baghdad expo

News.Az, April 22, 2025

An Iranian delegation, led by the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL), participated in the 13th International Defence Exhibition (IQDEX) in Baghdad on April 20, showcasing a variety of military technologies. The event, attended by 150 companies from approximately 20 countries, featured some of Iran’s most advanced missile and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) systems, News.Az reports citing foreign media. Among the equipment were the Mohajer and Shahed drone series. The Mohajer 10,

with its 300-kilogram payload and 2,000-kilometer range, was presented alongside the less-advanced Mohajer 6. The Mohajer drones, which bear similarities to the American MQ-9 Reaper, also have surveillance capabilities. In addition, Iran highlighted the Shahed 136 UAV, a loitering munition or “suicide drone” known by its Russian designation, the Geran-2. The Shahed 136 has a larger warhead and greater range compared to its predecessor, the Shahed 131, which Russia has used against Ukrainian infrastructure. These drone models can reportedly be used in coordination, with the Mohajer 6 guiding the Shahed 136 to its targets. Another notable display was the Rezvan loitering drone, first unveiled in January 2025. The Rezvan, employed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Ground Forces (IRGC-GF), is a suicide UAV with a range of 20–50 kilometers and a 4-kilogram warhead.

<https://news.az/news/iran-showcases-missiles-and-drones-at-baghdad-expo>

Rubio says Iran must give up nuclear enrichment in any deal with the US

The Economic Times, April 24, 2025

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in an interview released Wednesday that Iran must give up all nuclear enrichment if it wants to make a deal during talks with the Trump administration and head off the threat of armed conflict. Iran insists its nuclear program is for civilian energy use and says it does not seek to make weapons-grade uranium to build atomic bombs. “If Iran wants a civil nuclear program, they can have one just like many other countries can

have one, and that is they import enriched material," Rubio said in a podcast interview with journalist Bari Weiss. But Iran has long refused to give up its ability to enrich uranium. President Donald Trump in his first term pulled the U.S. out of a Obama-era nuclear deal focused on monitoring to ensure Iran did not move toward weapons-grade enrichment. In the first months of his second term, Trump opened talks that he says will get a tougher agreement on Iran's nuclear program, with a second round of negotiations held Saturday and technical-level talks expected this weekend. Iran wants the easing of sanctions that have damaged its economy and is facing threatened Israeli or U.S. strikes aimed at disabling its nuclear program by force.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/rubio-says-iran-must-give-up-nuclear-enrichment-in-any-deal-with-the-us/articleshow/120567342.cms?from=mdr>

Iraq

Defence Push: Iraq targets cyber, military upgrades

Shafaq, April 4, 2025

Iraqi Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Mohammed Shia al-Sudani reaffirmed his government's commitment to expanding the country's defence industry, warning of growing capabilities among terrorist groups. Speaking at the opening of the 13th Security, Defence, Military Industries and Cybersecurity Exhibition in Baghdad, al-Sudani said Iraq has laid the groundwork for a national arms industry through legislation and the formation of the Military Industrialisation Authority. "Our factories

are now operational, producing light and medium ammunition, along with other military supplies," he said. "Modern security threats extend beyond traditional battlefields, with militant and criminal groups exploiting new platforms for attacks, recruitment, and data breaches," he noted, calling for early and focused efforts to strengthen the digital defences. Al-Sudani stressed the importance of staying ahead of cyber risks by training specialised security personnel, securing financial and service-related applications, and protecting government data from potential breaches, adding, "We are advancing toward comprehensive digital transformation of government operations and believe in the potential for a strong, integrated Iraqi defence industry."

<https://shafaq.com/en/Iraq/Defense-Push-Iraq-targets-cyber-military-upgrades>

Israel

Israel still eyeing a limited attack on Iran's nuclear facilities

The Economic Times, April 19, 2025

Israel has not ruled out an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities in the coming months despite President Donald Trump telling Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the U.S. was for now unwilling to support such a move, according to an Israeli official and two other people familiar with the matter. Israeli officials have vowed to prevent Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and Netanyahu has insisted that any negotiation with Iran must lead to the complete dismantling of its nuclear program. U.S. and Iranian negotiators are set for a second round of preliminary

nuclear talks in Rome. Over the past months, Israel has proposed to the Trump administration a series of options to attack Iran's facilities, including some with late spring and summer timelines, the sources said. The plans include a mix of airstrikes and commando operations that vary in severity and could set back Tehran's ability to weaponise its nuclear program by just months or a year or more, the sources said. The New York Times reported that Trump told Netanyahu in a White House meeting earlier this month that Washington wanted to prioritise diplomatic talks with Tehran and that he was unwilling to support a strike on the country's nuclear facilities in the short term.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/israel-still-eyeing-a-limited-attack-on-irans-nuclear-facilities/articleshow/120428579.cms?from=mdr>

Israel halts imminent strike on Iran's nuclear facilities under US pressure

Army Recognition, April 23, 2025

According to The New York Times, Israel was preparing to launch a large-scale military operation against Iranian nuclear facilities as early as May 2025. However, the plan was put on hold following a decision by U.S. President Donald Trump. After several months of internal deliberations within his administration, Trump chose to initiate a new diplomatic track with Tehran aimed at curbing its nuclear program. This shift came amid rising regional tensions, with Iran weakened both militarily and economically, yet showing signs of

openness to indirect negotiations. Sources close to the Israeli government indicated that the goal of the proposed operation was to delay Iran's nuclear advancement by at least a year. However, to be truly effective and mitigate the risk of a major Iranian retaliation, the operation required active support from the United States. While some American officials, including General Michael E. Kurilla, commander of CENTCOM, appeared open to providing logistical and operational backing, others voiced concern about the risk of a regional escalation. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard notably presented an assessment warning that an increase in American military presence could trigger a broader conflict.

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/2025/israel-halts-imminent-strike-on-irans-nuclear-facilities-under-us-pressure>

Netanyahu: Bad Iran deal is 'worse than no deal'; Trump: A deal is 'going to happen'

Lazar Berman Jacob Magid

Times of Israel, April 28, 2025

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on Sunday for Iran's entire nuclear infrastructure to be dismantled, as talks between the US and Iran appeared to move in a positive direction following a third round of indirect negotiations in Oman over the weekend. Netanyahu also specified that Iran must not be allowed to enrich uranium or even to retain the capacity to do so, and told a conference that he had presented his position on the matter to US President Donald Trump, and was in close contact

with the US on the subject. It was unclear, however, exactly how much Netanyahu's position aligns with that of the US. Speaking to reporters, also on Sunday, Trump did not appear to share his concerns. "On the Iran situation, I think we're doing very well," said Trump. "I think a deal is going to be made there. It's going to happen. Pretty sure it's going to happen." "We'll have something without having to start dropping bombs all over the place," Trump added. The US-Iran negotiations — aimed at sealing a deal blocking Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, while lifting crippling economic sanctions imposed by Washington — are expected to continue to a fourth round in the coming days.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-says-iran-talks-going-very-well-as-pm-warns-bad-deal-is-worse-than-no-deal/>

Why Israel will resist any US-Iran nuclear deal

Danny Citrinowicz

Atlantic Council, April 28, 2025

The Israeli government and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu welcomed the election of US President Donald Trump for a variety of reasons, but the most important of them was his stance on Iran. It seemed that Israel hoped that the president's election would open a window of opportunity for a military strike against Tehran's nuclear sites. The massive reinforcement of Washington's regional military presence, and threats from senior officials that Tehran will face serious consequences if it does not completely dismantle its own nuclear program,

indicated to Israel that the United States is serious about implementing military force and intends to attack Iran, or at least back up an Israeli attack. However, Trump's statement of intent to open nuclear negotiations with Iran in his meeting with Netanyahu last month caught the Israeli government by surprise. Moreover, after the rounds of talks between Tehran and Washington, it is clear that both parties are indeed interested in reaching an agreement. In the background, it seems that the US has given up its basic demand for dismantling the enrichment sites in Tehran and is content with restrictions on the existing program.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/why-israel-will-resist-any-us-iran-nuclear-deal/>

Amid US-Iran talks, Netanyahu says Iran's entire nuclear program must go

Middle East Monitor, April 28, 2025

Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, repeated calls for Iran's entire nuclear infrastructure to be dismantled, as Washington and Tehran engage in talks for a nuclear accord, Reuters reports. The United States and Iran have, so far, held three rounds of indirect talks, mediated by Gulf state, Oman, aimed at sealing a deal that would block Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon but also lift crippling economic sanctions imposed by Washington. After talks in Rome earlier this month, Oman said that the US and Iran were pursuing an accord that would see Tehran "completely free" of nuclear weapons and sanctions but "maintaining its ability to develop peaceful nuclear energy."

Netanyahu said the only “good deal” would be one that removed “all of the infrastructure” akin to the 2003 agreement that Libya made with the West that saw it give up its nuclear, chemical, biological and missile programs. Israeli officials have long vowed to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons, an assertion Netanyahu repeated. Iran’s Foreign Minister, Abbas Araqchi, said on Monday Tehran was confident it could thwart attempts to sabotage its foreign policy or dictate its course, adding that he hoped his US counterparts would be equally steadfast.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20250428-amid-us-iran-talks-netanyahu-says-irans-entire-nuclear-program-must-go/>

Jordan

Amman hosts high-profile workshop on nuclear security for MENA region

Mai Anati

Jordan Times, April 28, 2025

HRH Prince El Hassan, Chairman of the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST), on Monday inaugurated a regional workshop on nuclear security for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), organised by the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission (JAEC) in cooperation with the US Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Addressing the gathering, Prince Hassan emphasised that true security must be grounded in human dignity and sustainable development, particularly in regions along the 35th meridian east, where countries are grappling with wars, political instability

and economic crises. He also stressed that the protection of life and human dignity should not be secondary concerns but fundamental pillars of any enduring security framework. The Prince called for human-centred policies that focus on stability, objectivity, and sustainability, urging collective action to bridge divides. He also underscored the importance of building trust through meaningful dialogue and cooperation, rather than conflict and division. "Nuclear security is the most critical issue of our time," he said, highlighting the need for cross-border cooperation to reinforce both international and regional nuclear security.

<https://jordantimes.com/news/local/amman-hosts-high-profile-workshop-nuclear-security-mena-region>

Kuwait

Kuwait, China discuss strategic nuclear energy partnership

Times Kuwait, April 16, 2025

Secretary-General of the China Atomic Energy Agency (CAEA), Huang Ping, has reaffirmed China’s commitment to deepening its strategic partnership with GCC countries and boosting cooperation in peaceful nuclear energy. His remarks came during talks with Kuwait’s Ambassador to China, Jassim Al-Najem, ahead of the First Gulf-China Forum on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, set for April 21 in Chengdu, according to Al-Jarida daily. Ambassador Al-Najem praised China’s global efforts in promoting peaceful nuclear energy and highlighted the importance of future collaboration. The five-day forum will focus on political

dialogue, expertise exchange, and building long-term partnerships. It will also feature participation from the International Atomic Energy Agency, research centers, and global nuclear energy experts.

<https://timeskuwait.com/kuwait-china-discuss-strategic-nuclear-energy-partnership/>

Kuwait reaffirms right to peaceful use of nuclear energy at China-Gulf Forum

Kuwait Times, April 21, 2025

Kuwait has reiterated its firm support for the right of all nations to develop and utilise nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The reaffirmation came during remarks delivered by Abdulaziz Al-Dakhil, Counselor at the Kuwaiti Embassy in China, at the opening session of the First China-Gulf Forum on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technologies held Monday in Chengdu, the capital of China's Sichuan Province. Al-Dakhil emphasised Kuwait's unwavering commitment to promoting a nuclear-weapon-free zone, while highlighting the country's active cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He noted that such collaboration enables Kuwait to effectively harness nuclear technologies to support national development plans, enhance economic growth, and improve societal welfare. The Counselor pointed to Kuwait's growing partnership with the IAEA, particularly through technical cooperation initiatives.

[https://kuwaittimes.com/article/26792/kuwait/other-news/kuwait-reaffirms-right-to-](https://kuwaittimes.com/article/26792/kuwait/other-news/kuwait-reaffirms-right-to-peaceful-use-of-nuclear-energy-at-china-gulf-forum/)

[peaceful-use-of-nuclear-energy-at-china-gulf-forum/](https://kuwaittimes.com/article/26792/kuwait/other-news/kuwait-reaffirms-right-to-peaceful-use-of-nuclear-energy-at-china-gulf-forum/)

US approves possible sale of Patriot equipment to Kuwait

Diyar Guldogan

Anadolu Agency, April 30, 2025

The US State Department approved a possible sale of Patriot post-deployment build 8.1 and related equipment to Kuwait, the Pentagon said. The estimated cost is \$425 million. "This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the infrastructure of a major non-NATO ally that has been an important force for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East," it said in a statement. The principal contractor will be RTX Corporation in Waltham, Massachusetts.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/us-approves-possible-sale-of-patriot-equipment-to-kuwait-/3553811>

Lebanon

Will weakened Hezbollah in Lebanon disarm?

The Economic Times, April 29, 2025

Israel's latest airstrike on what it called a Hezbollah missile storage facility in Beirut's southern suburbs came during increasing pressure for the Lebanese militant group to disarm. The disarmament of what has been the region's most powerful non-state armed group has come to look increasingly inevitable. Hezbollah is severely weakened after a war with Israel in which much of its top leadership was killed,

and after losing a key ally with the fall of former Syrian President Bashar Assad, a conduit for Iran to send arms. Israel and the US are pushing for swift disarmament, but when and how it will happen - if it does - is contested. Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun has said he is committed to bringing all arms in the country under state control, but that it will happen through discussions around a national security plan and not through force. Many fear that an attempt to force the issue would lead to civil conflict, which Aoun has called a "red line."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/will-weakened-hezbollah-in-lebanon-disarm/articleshow/120721266.cms?from=mdr>

Oman

Saudi Arabia, Oman sign nuclear, radiation safety deal

Arab News, October 22, 2023

In a joint effort to improve nuclear and radiation safety and protection, Saudi Arabia and Oman have signed an agreement, furthering their commitment to advancing the sector's technology. The memorandum of understanding aims to advance and strengthen cooperation using nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes. The deal stipulates the exchange of experiences, information, and best practices in nuclear and radiation safety, radiation defence, and environmental protection. The agreement also aims to enable the two parties to exchange nuclear and radiation regulatory guidelines, operational experiences, studies, and research,

according to the Oman News Agency. Under the pact, both sides will work toward crisis communications and radioactive waste management and collaborate in emergency and response planning. The MoU was co-signed by Chairman of Oman's Environment Authority Abdullah bin Ali Al-Amri and CEO of the Saudi Nuclear and Radiological Regulatory Commission Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Issa.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2395716/business-economy>

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia and China to advance nuclear cooperation

Pramod Kumar

Arabian Gulf Business Insight, April 22, 2025

Barely a week after a deal on cooperation with the US, Saudi Arabia and China have agreed to work more closely on nuclear energy development, China's state-run Global Times reported. The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding at a China-Gulf Cooperation Council forum on nuclear technology in Chengdu. The agreement comes after US energy secretary Chris Wright said the US and Saudi Arabia – the world's second-largest oil producer – are on a "pathway" towards co-developing a civilian nuclear programme for the kingdom. The forum was hosted by the China Atomic Energy Authority and was attended by officials from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE and Oman, the newspaper said. The pact allows nuclear regulators of China and Saudi Arabia to cooperate on nuclear safety,

security, non-proliferation and emergency response. During the first China-GCC summit in Riyadh in December 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced plans to work with the GCC in some priority areas, including energy, over the next three to five years.

<https://www.agbi.com/energy/2025/04/saudi-arabia-and-china-to-advance-nuclear-cooperation/>

US green light for Saudi Arabia's nuclear project

Salem Alketbi

Makkah Al-Mukarramah, April 23, 2025

The Middle East is witnessing rapid strategic changes in nuclear technology. Nuclear technology has been central to global power equilibriums since World War II ended. Recently, clear indications have surfaced showing a considerable alteration in US policy toward nuclear cooperation with regional countries. Saudi Arabia distinguishes itself among these nations as the Kingdom methodically works to diversify its energy sources under Vision 2030. A thorough assessment of the current political scene reveals that US Energy Secretary Chris Wright's Riyadh visit on April 13, 2025, constituted a decisive juncture in nuclear cooperation between both countries. During his press conference in the Saudi capital, Wright announced that the United States will sign a "broad memorandum" with the Kingdom for cooperation in "civilian nuclear technology and energy production." Moreover, Wright noted, "For a U.S. partnership and involvement in nuclear here, there will definitely be a 123

agreement... there's lots of ways to structure a deal that will accomplish both the Saudi objectives and the American objectives."

<https://makkahnewspaper.com/article/1621702/english-opinion/us-green-light-for-saudi-arabias-nuclear-project>

Saudi nuclear project: Military threat or long-term investment in clean energy?

Ibrahim Ba Matraf

Turkiye Today, April 24, 2025

U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright stated during his visit to Saudi Arabia on April 14 that the Trump administration is in talks with the Saudis to reach an agreement that would give the kingdom access to U.S. nuclear technology and could even allow it to enrich uranium itself on its own soil. "We haven't worked out the details of the agreement yet, but it certainly looks like there's a way to get there," he said. He added, "As for the US partnership in the nuclear sector with Saudi Arabia, there will definitely be a 123 agreement... and there are many ways to formulate an agreement that achieves both Saudi and American goals." The so-called "123 agreement" is based on Section 123 of the U.S. Atomic Energy Act of 1954, a basic legal requirement that allows the U.S. government and its companies to engage in nuclear cooperation with other countries, provided they meet nonproliferation standards, including preventing the use of the technology to develop nuclear weapons or transfer sensitive nuclear materials to a third party. Although the recent statement by the US Secretary of Energy represents a qualitative shift in the trajectory of the Saudi nuclear project, it is not the first step the Kingdom has taken in its dream of

completing the project and bringing it to fruition.

<https://www.turkiyetoday.com/region/saudi-nuclear-project-military-threat-or-long-term-investment-in-clean-energy-148498>

Turkiye

Turkiye's defence dream comes true: Now a global brand

Deniz Istikbal

Daily Sabah, April 21, 2025

Turkiye has emerged as a prominent player in the global defence industry in recent years. Countries from numerous continents have imported Turkish defence products and incorporated them into their military inventories. According to international estimates, Türkiye has developed the world's 10th-largest defence industry and is simultaneously modernising the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), which ranks ninth globally in military power. This process, initiated to promote domestic production and technological advancement, has created a trade network stretching from Asia to Latin America. While this development has refreshed the global image of the Turkish military, the Turkish defence industry has become a recognised brand in air, naval and land systems. As a result, Türkiye has now surpassed countries like the Netherlands and Poland to become a net defence industry exporter. Countries from the Americas such as the U.S., Chile, Brazil and Ecuador, to Europe such as the U.K., Italy, Spain, Poland, Slovenia, Croatia, Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, from closer allies and neighbors such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan,

Pakistan and Iraq, to the farthest ones such as Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have recently imported Turkish defence industry products and significantly contributed to strengthening their defence infrastructures. A similar trend is also observed in countries such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, Tunisia, Libya and Niger.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/turkiyes-defense-dream-comes-true-now-a-global-brand>

Main circulation pumps installed in Akkuyu's second unit

World Nuclear News, April 22, 2025

The four main circulation pump units are used to ensure circulation of coolant in the primary circuit of the reactor core, with a pressure of about 160 times atmospheric pressure and with temperatures of about 300 degrees Celsius. The lifting was done by crane via the open top of the cylindrical reactor containment building. Sergey Butskikh, Director General of Akkuyu Nuclear JSC, said: "Having installed the main circulation pumps, we have completed the assembly of the main equipment of the reactor unit of the second power unit. The reactor vessel, steam generators, and safety system hydraulic tanks are already in place, and we will soon begin welding the main circulation pipeline to connect all these components." The Akkuyu plant, in the southern Mersin province, is Turkey's first nuclear power plant. Rosatom is building four VVER-1200 reactors under a so-called BOO (build-own-operate) model. Construction of the first unit began in 2018 and all four are concurrently under construction. The

4800 MWe plant is expected to meet about 10% of Turkey's electricity needs, with the aim that all four units will be operational by the end of 2028.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/main-circulation-pumps-installed-in-akkuyus-second-unit>

Turkiye rejects sending weapons to Pakistan amid India tensions

Daily Sabah, April 28, 2025

Claims that Türkiye sent six planes of weapons to Pakistan were refuted by the Presidency's Directorate of Communications. The fight against disinformation, centered on social media, stated that the claims were not reflecting the truth. "A cargo plane from Türkiye landed in Pakistan for refueling. It then continued on its route. Speculative news made outside of the statements of authorised persons and institutions should not be relied upon," it underlined. The announcement of the center comes after several news outlets claimed that Türkiye was sending arms to Pakistan, posting a picture of the Turkish cargo plane. Ankara last week condemned a deadly terrorist attack in the Pahalgam region of Jammu and Kashmir that claimed multiple civilian lives and left many others injured. The Muslim-majority region of Jammu and Kashmir has long been at the center of a bitter territorial dispute between India and Pakistan. Relations between the nuclear-armed rivals have plunged to their lowest level in years, sparking worries by analysts of possible military action.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/turkiye-rejects-sending-weapons-to-pakistan-amid-india-tensions/news>

Turkiye, Egypt to cooperate in field of drones production, Israel media says

Middle East Monitor, April 30, 2025

Turkiye intends to produce the BAHA unmanned aerial vehicle in Egypt under a licensing agreement inked between the two sides, an Israeli military magazine has reported. According to Israel Defence, the cooperation in the field of advanced drones production will enhance the Egyptian army's intelligence gathering capabilities, similar to the drones used by the Turkish army. The magazine also noted the possibility of exporting these drones later to other markets. Earlier this week, the Turkish defence company Havelsan announced that the BAHA drone, which operates with sub-cloud technology, had been officially incorporated into the Turkish armed forces' arsenal following inspection and acceptance procedures. The BAHA drones entered service for the first time in 2024. It features vertical takeoff and landing capabilities and a hybrid propulsion system, with a flight time ranging from two hours for the electric version to six hours for the fuel-powered version. The aircraft has a speed of 80 km/h and can operate in various weather conditions. It is used for reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence gathering missions, in addition to civilian applications such as search and rescue operations, disaster management, border and coastal surveillance, anti-smuggling and environmental monitoring.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20250430-reports-turkiye-egypt-to-cooperate-in-field-of-drones-production-israel-media-says/>

United Arab Emirates

Republic of Korea and UAE sign cooperation agreement on KF-21 fighter jet programme

Defence Industry Europe, April 19, 2025

The Republic of Korea and the United Arab Emirates have signed an agreement on cooperation in the KF-21 next-generation fighter jet programme. The signing took place during a visit by senior air force officials from both countries to Sacheon. General Lee Young-su, Chief of Staff of the Republic of Korea Air Force, and Major General Rashed Mohammed Al Shamsi, Commander of the UAE Air Force and Air Defence, visited the Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) facilities. As part of the agreement, UAE representatives will be allowed to visit KF-21 testing units and observe the aircraft's trials. The cooperation will also enable Emirati pilots to fly prototype versions of the KF-21. Additionally, UAE personnel will be able to take part in South Korean military exercises involving the aircraft. The KF-21 Boramae is a multirole fighter jet developed by South Korea using its domestic defence industry capabilities. The development programme began in December 2015, aiming to replace the Republic of Korea Air Force's ageing F-4 and F-5 fleets. The first KF-21 prototype made its maiden flight in July 2022. By the end of 2024, six prototypes had completed over one thousand flights in total.

<https://defence-industry.eu/republic-of-korea-and-uae-sign-cooperation-agreement-on-kf-21-fighter-jet-programme/>

UAE, Korea review achievements of peaceful nuclear energy cooperation

Zawya, April 23, 2025

The 6th meeting of the High-Level Consultations Committee on Nuclear Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Korea (RoK) and the Government of the UAE was convened in Abu Dhabi. The meeting was chaired by Suhail bin Mohammed Faraj Faris Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, and Kang Insun, Second Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Korea, and attended by the senior leadership teams of the key nuclear energy stakeholders in the UAE and Korea. Al Mazrouei affirmed the strength of bilateral relations between the UAE and the Republic of Korea, highlighting that the strategic partnership between the two countries has led to major achievements, most notably the UAE Peaceful Nuclear Energy Programme. He added that the High-Level Consultations Committee on Nuclear Cooperation has played a pivotal role in deepening cooperation and establishing a strong foundation for further strategic partnerships. Al Mazrouei expressed confidence that both nations will continue working together to realise their shared vision. "I am confident that we will work more together towards achieving our leadership directions, as well as our joint vision," Minister Al Mazrouei noted.

<https://www.zawya.com/en/business/energy/uae-korea-review-achievements-of-peaceful-nuclear-energy-cooperation-l6c2g814>

Yemen

What the US troop drawdown means for post-Assad Syria

Francesco Salesio Schiavi

New Arab, April 28, 2025

On 18 April, the Pentagon confirmed a significant reduction in US troop levels in Syria, marking a new phase in America's military involvement in the country. This move follows a brief surge in deployments during 2024 when the number of US personnel in Syria rose to 2,000 after roughly 900 in 2019. Now it's being reduced back down to what Pentagon Spokesperson Sean Parnell described as a "conditions-based" presence of fewer than 1,000 troops. As reported by the New York Times, Washington looks to close three bases in Syria, including Mission Support Site Green Village and Euphrates, all of which have enabled US forces to support Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) counter-Islamic State (IS) operations along the Euphrates River in zones where IS cells operate. The drawdown coincides with profound changes inside Syria. The collapse of the Assad regime in early December 2024 was followed by the rise of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and the formation of a new provisional government under HTS leadership. This fluid post-regime environment has altered the US calculus in the Levant, forcing Washington to choose: recalibrate engagement or risk leaving a vacuum others could fill.

<https://www.newarab.com/analysis/what-us-troop-drawdown-means-post-assad-syria>

NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Ms. Bhawna

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