

Nuclear, Missile & Space Digest

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December 15, 2024

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A. India

Navy chief confirms India tested 3,500-km range nuclear-capable missile

Pushkar Tiwari

India News, December 2, 2024

With the K-4 missile test, India became part of a small group of countries that can fire a nuclear missile from land, air and undersea. Navy Chief Confirms India Tested 3,500-km Range Nuclear-Capable Missile With the K-4 missile test, India became part of a small group of countries that can fire a nuclear missile from land, air and undersea Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi today confirmed that India has tested the 3,500-km range nuclear-capable missile from a ballistic missile submarine believed to be the recently commissioned INS Arighaat. Speaking to the media ahead of Navy Day, he, however, said more data was awaited on the trajectory of the missile. The K-4 missile was reportedly tested from submarine INS Arighaat - which was commissioned into the Indian Navy on August 29 - off the coast of Visakhapatnam on November 27

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/k4-missile-test-navy-chief-dinesh-k-tripathi-confirms-india-tested-3-500-km-range-nuclear-capable-missile-7153444>

India pivots from Russia to US for cutting-edge weapons

Sudhi Ranjan Sen

The Economic Times, December 3, 2024

India has sharply reduced orders for defence equipment with Russia and is now buying more from Western suppliers, officials said, a significant policy shift for a nation traditionally reliant on arms from Moscow. India and Russia's plans to jointly develop and manufacture helicopters and advanced fighter jets were shelved some time ago, according to senior Indian officials with direct knowledge, who asked not to be identified because the discussions are private. A separate proposal to lease a nuclear-powered submarine from Russia to train Indian crew is also unlikely to move

forward, they said, noting that the South Asian nation is building its own vessels.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-pivots-from-russia-to-us-for-cutting-edge-weapons/articleshow/115928326.cms?from=mdr>

B. Pakistan

Small modular reactors: A strategic solution to Pakistan's energy crisis

Samreen Shahbaz

CBS News, December 15, 2024

As Pakistan confronts a critical, major energy crisis, immediate and innovative approaches need to be adopted to navigate it. Power demand in the country has consistently lagged behind supply due to economic restrictions, inefficiencies, and high energy costs that discourage consumption. The reliance on imported fuels exacerbates the problem by increasing the overall cost of power generation, leading to even higher costs for consumers and further reductions in demand. This highlights the critical need for alternatives to fossil fuels, which threaten both energy security and the environment. In these circumstances, small modular reactors (SMRs) appear as an appealing option given their potential to significantly transform Pakistan's energy landscape.

<https://csspr.uol.edu.pk/smr/>

China wants to make Pakistan's navy stronger, India ready to counter any threat: Navy Chief Admiral Tripathi

The Economic Times, December 2, 2024

At the annual Navy Day press conference, Indian Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi on Monday discussed the growing partnership between Pakistan and China, particularly in the context of naval development. He pointed out that many Pakistan Navy warships and submarines are being built with Chinese support. "Many Pakistan Navy warships and submarines are being built with Chinese

support showing that China is interested in making Pakistan's Navy stronger," said Admiral Tripathi.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/china-wants-to-make-pakistans-navy-stronger-india-ready-to-counter-any-threat-navy-chief-admiral-tripathi/articleshow/115888157.cms?from=mdrAmbitious%20Digital%20Nation%20Pakistan%20Act%20to%20be%20tabled%20in%20NA%20on%2016th>

Ambitious digital nation Pakistan act to be tabled in NA on 16th

Aima Khosa

The News International, December 14, 2024

Senior government officials have revealed that the Digital Nation Pakistan Act will be tabled in the National Assembly on December 16, 2024 as part of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's national digital agenda spanning economy, society, and governance. According to government sources, the prime minister sought immediate execution of this comprehensive digital transformation strategy soon after coming into office. Sources close to the framing of the Act explained that the legislation will create a national digital identity for every citizen, providing seamless access to critical services ranging from birth certificates to health records.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1261475-ambitious-digital-nation-pakistan-act-to-be-tabled-in-na-on-16th>

C. Bangladesh

Rooppur power plant scam: HC questions ACC's inaction in probing Hasina

Star Digital Report, December 15, 2024

The High Court today issued a rule questioning the legality of the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) inaction and failure to conduct an inquiry into an allegation against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina of embezzling Tk 500 crore from the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant Project through Malaysian banks. Related allegations were also levelled against

Hasina's sister Sheikh Rehana, son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, and niece Tulip Siddiq and former defence and security adviser to Hasina, Tarique Ahmed Siddique. In the rule, the court asked the respondents to explain why the ACC's inaction and failure should not be declared illegal.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/rooppur-power-plant-scam-hc-questions-accs-inaction-probing-hasina-3776916>

Power and energy: A system designed for corruption

Star Business Report, December 2, 2024

No less than \$3 billion changed hands as kickbacks in awarding power plant projects during Sheikh Hasina's autocratic rule, according to a white paper on the state of the economy. The white paper, submitted to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his Tejgaon office yesterday, also highlighted irregularities in other areas of the power and energy sector with the tagline "A System Designed for Corruption". The corruption and nepotism practiced at the top level trickled down to every project, the report said, adding that the paramount allegation of corruption was in awarding power plant projects in the form of commission. "With an investment of \$30 billion in power generation since 2010, at least \$3 billion changed hands as kickbacks," the white paper said. The report estimated that 10 percent of the project cost was spent as commission.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/power-and-energy-system-designed-corruption-3766336>

D. Afghanistan

The fall of Afghanistan's horse power is a lesson to today's petro states: Power based on a strategic commodity is fleeting

David Chaffetz

Fortune, December 15, 2024

Afghanistan's Taliban government accepted a \$10 billion investment in the

country's mines last year. The funds came from a Chinese company, part of a years-long effort by the world's second-largest economy to get its hands on Afghanistan's metals and minerals. Beijing wants lithium, a key input for the new economy of smartphones and EVs. Some experts estimate that Afghanistan's lithium, as well as other metals, could be worth as much as \$1 trillion, a lifeline for a country that for years has labored at the lowest end of the UN's measures of human development. It wouldn't be the first time that natural resources have revived Afghanistan's prospects. Not that long ago, Afghanistan was a booming trade hub. Its prosperity was primarily based on a single strategic commodity: the horse.

<https://fortune.com/asia/2024/12/15/fall-afghanistan-horse-power-warning-to-petrostates-oil-david-chaffetz/>

Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, top destinations for Iranian nano-tech products Society

Tehran Times, December 3, 2024

Iranian nanotechnology companies export their products to 49 countries around the world, mainly to Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, India, and China. Iran's achievements in nanotechnology are noteworthy. The increase in scientific publications and sales of nano products proves Iran's rise as a global leader in this field. One of the industries that have experienced good growth in Iran in recent years is the nanotechnology industry, a subject area that has brought Iran to the impressive fourth place worldwide. According to Stat Nano, a leading nanotechnology website, Iran has made great strides in the field of nanotechnology being ranked fourth in terms of nanotechnology publication.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/507068/Iraq-Turkey-Afghanistan-top-destinations-for-Iranian-nano-tech>

E. China

China's seaside commercial spacecraft launch site completes first mission

Xinhua

Huaxia, December 1, 2024

China successfully launched a new carrier rocket into space from the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site in the southern island province of Hainan. The Long March-12 carrier rocket sent two experimental satellites into their planned orbits. The mission was the maiden flight of the Long March-12 carrier rocket, and the first launch mission undertaken by the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site. The launch site is located at a latitude of 20 degrees north, benefiting from the advantages of this low latitude, which can increase rocket payload capacities and reduce rocket fuel costs.

<https://english.news.cn/20241201/8e585e91141449e5852fbb26d68be5bc/c.html>

China and Russia stage nuclear bomber exercise in Sea of Japan

Ryan Chan

Newsweek, December 1, 2024

China and Russia sent nuclear-capable bombers over the waters between Japan and South Korea, which are the treaty allies of the United States, for their ninth joint strategic air patrol. The Chinese Defence Ministry said the joint bomber patrol was conducted over the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea in South Korea. It is located between the Japanese archipelago to the east, the Korean Peninsula to the west, and the Russian Far East region to the north. Newsweek has reached out to the defence ministries of Russia and Japan for comment by email.

<https://www.newsweek.com/russia-china-news-stage-nuclear-bomber-exercise-near-southkorea-japan-1993313>

China tensions prompt U.S. Navy race to reload missiles at sea

Daniel Michaels, Mike Cherney and Tonia Cowan

The Wall Street Journal, December 2, 2024

A U.S. Navy destroyer can fire dozens of cruise missiles within minutes. Reloading the deadly warship back in port can take two months. In a war against China, that could be a fatal weakness. To overcome the delay, Navy engineers pulled a 30-year-old crane out of storage, wired it up to computers, and used it to build a new prototype reloading system called the Transferrable Reload At-sea Method. TRAM, as it is known, promises to slash the time needed for missile reloading, potentially to just days.

<https://www.wsj.com/world/china-tensions-prompt-u-s-navy-race-to-reload-missiles-at-sea70d58178>

US hits China's chip industry with new export controls

Demetri Sevastopulo

Financial Times, December 3, 2024

The US has introduced new export controls in an effort to curtail China's ability to create an advanced semiconductor industry and to slow its development of artificial intelligence with military applications. The restrictions on the export of critical semiconductor manufacturing tools will affect both US companies and foreign firms that use American technology in their chip making equipment. The US will also prevent the export of advanced high bandwidth memory (HBM), a crucial component in AI chips, to China.

<https://www.ft.com/content/2334d3d9-d744-4d1f-94cc-e328968b41ce>

U.S. officials say they still have not expelled Chinese telco hackers

Joseph Menn and Cate Cadell

The Washington Post, December 3, 2024

U.S. officials said they had not been able to expel Chinese government hackers from

telecommunications companies and internet service providers, warning concerned users to turn to encrypted messages and voice calls and giving no timeline for securing carriers. The downbeat press briefing came more than three months after the first report of Chinese spies deeply penetrating major carriers for espionage, and after the FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) met with scores of companies to help them shore up defences and hunt for hackers in their networks.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/12/03/china-hack-salt-typhoon-telecom/>

China readying satellite-based kill chain, key U.S. commander says

Shinnosuke Nagatomi

Nikkei Asia, December 4, 2024

China is "using increasingly large numbers of satellites to find, fix, track and target U.S. and allied terrestrial capabilities, aircraft carriers" and more, completing a "long-range kill chain," U.S. Space Forces Indo-Pacific Commander Anthony Mastalir said. "What we have seen over the last 5-to-10 years is increased investment in China regarding military space capabilities," such as anti-satellite missiles, he said while speaking to reporters at Yokota Air Base in Japan.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Defense/China-readying-satellite-based-kill-chain-key-U.S.-commander-says>

Launch of US Space Forces Japan eyes to serve military interests: experts

Li Yawei

Global Times, December 4, 2024

The US Space Force launched a unit at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, with Chinese expert saying the launch of US Space Forces Japan is part of US' effort to implement its so-called "Indo-Pacific strategy," specially to serve its overall

military interests. Japan in particular, is depicted by Washington as being on the forefront of America's own growing confrontation with China. In reality, Japan is given little choice, Brian Berletic, a geopolitical analyst and a former soldier of US Marine, told the Global Times recently. NASA has encountered a lot of difficulties, but the US will not allow itself to succumb to asking for China's help.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202412/1324349.shtml>

China missile test a key sign of Rocket Force power

Bill Gertz

The Washington Times, December 4, 2024

China's People's Liberation Army Rocket Force is aggressively building up its missile forces with new and more lethal systems and with a heavy emphasis on deploying and building hypersonic missiles, according to defence officials. The Rocket Force, in charge of both conventional and nuclear missile power, "continued an aggressive modernization and production plan" this year, one official told Inside the Ring in a recent briefing on the Chinese military.

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/dec/4/inside-ring-china-missile-test-key-signrocket-for/>

Chinese Foreign Ministry on the countermeasures against 13 US military companies and six senior executives

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, December 5, 2024

The Taiwan question is at the core of China's core interests. In recent months, the US has announced multiple arms sales to China's Taiwan region. This gravely violates the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiqués, interferes in China's internal affairs, and undermines China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In accordance with the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law of the People's Republic of China, China decided

to take countermeasures against relevant military companies and senior executives of the US.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/lxjzh/202412/t20241217_11495808.html

China's southern Hainan Province plans to unveil a super satellite manufacturing hub in 2025

The Global Times, December 5, 2024

A super satellite manufacturing factory is expected to commence operation at the Wenchang International Aerospace City in South China's Hainan Province in June 2025, the aerospace city said in a statement, noting that the factory will have the capacity to enable satellites to be launched immediately upon delivery. The super satellite factory covers an area of 60,000 square meters, making it the largest satellite factory in Asia, and it is estimated to complete roofing at the end of 2024. Construction of the factory and its supporting projects is now underway. According to the aerospace city, the site has already attracted nearly 1,000 aerospace companies and is set to become the nation's major satellite-related manufacturing hub.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202412/1324404.shtml>

Chinese associations urge caution in buying U.S. chips over semiconductor export control

CGTN, December 5, 2024

Chinese industrial associations have voiced strong opposition to the United States' latest control measures on semiconductor exports and urged domestic firms to exercise caution when purchasing U.S. chips. The China Semiconductor Industry Association (CSIA), the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM), the Internet Society of China (ISC) and the China Association of Communication Enterprises (CACE) released separate

statements saying that they firmly oppose the U.S. abuse of export control measures.

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2024-12-05/Chinese-associations-urge-caution-in-buying-U-S-chips-1z5CL1AR07m/p.html>

Bolster defences against China hackers or face fines, FCC warns telecoms

Eva Dou and Ellen Nakashima

The Washington Post, December 5, 2024

Federal Communications Commission Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel has drafted plans to regulate the cybersecurity of telecommunications companies as the federal government faces pressure to respond to a massive compromise of U.S. phone networks by Chinese government hackers. If implemented, the plans would put phone network operators on warning that the FCC could pursue financial penalties against them if they do not do enough to protect their networks. It would be the first time that the agency has asserted such powers under federal wiretapping law.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/12/05/fcc-salt-typhoon-cybersecuritychina/>

How the chip war could turn under Trump

Chris Miller

Financial Times, December 6, 2024

What does the return of Donald Trump imply for the global chip war? Trump didn't start the subsidy race — credit here goes to Chinese leader Xi Jinping — but his first administration focused the US on tech competition with China. Biden then extended Trump-era policies regarding tariffs, subsidies, and export controls. Now Trump is returning just as artificial intelligence intensifies demand for computing power.

<https://www.ft.com/content/44084570-19a1-4049-8306-46a38648a0a4>

PLA looks into China-US collaboration in biosecurity research

Stephen Chen South China

The Morning Post, December 6, 2024

In the field of biosafety research, Chinese scientists have collaborated significantly more with scientists from the United States than from any other country, according to a survey by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). In these collaborative studies, "the keywords with the highest emergence intensity are 'bioterror', followed by 'bacillus anthracis', 'PCR', 'identification' and 'biological warfare agents'," the project team wrote in a report published in the Journal of Air Force Medical University on November 27.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3289472/pla-looks-china-us-collaborationbiosecurity-research>

Mainland rebukes Lai Ching-te for separatist actions during U.S. "stopover"

Xinhua, December 6, 2024

A Chinese mainland spokesperson said the actions of Lai Ching-te during his "stopover" in the United States again proved that the so-called stopover was just political manipulation of Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities to solicit U.S. support for "Taiwan independence." Zhu Fenglian, spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said at a media briefing that Lai's "stopover" was also a political trick of the United States to use the Taiwan question to contain China. Zhu denounced the DPP authorities for obstinately advocating the separatist stance of "Taiwan independence," brazenly clinging to external forces and deliberately pursuing independence by force.

<https://english.news.cn/20241206/89b7583aa08b49098ebb0a7da3a9dd61/c.html>

Chinese rocket scientists find ICBMs age much faster than they thought

Stephen Chen

South China Morning Post, December 7, 2024

A subtle, yet significant, issue with the solid fuel used in intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) has been uncovered in a study by Chinese rocket scientists. And it could explain the frequent launch failures experienced by some nuclear powers in recent years. Under normal storage conditions, typical missile fuel can appear stable for 160 years or more. But tests conducted at the National Key Laboratory of Solid Rocket Propulsion in Xian found that considerable changes may occur in the fuel columns within 30 years, making them unable to withstand the loads during flight.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3289504/chinese-rocket-scientists-find-icbms-age-much-faster-they-thought>

Japan 'doesn't need to be nervous' about PLA warships' Miyako strait transit: expert

Liu Xuanzun

The Global Times, December 9, 2024

Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force claimed it had spotted three Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy vessels transiting through the Miyako Strait. Chinese military expert Song Zhongping said Japan does not need to be nervous over the Chinese warships' normal voyages. Japan's Self-Defence Forces (JSDF) have earned the nickname "chief photographer" among Chinese military observers, as JSDF often take photos of Chinese warplanes and warships when the latter conduct training exercises or patrols in far seas. Song, the Chinese military expert, told the Global Times that the PLA regularly makes transits in the Miyako Strait, and Japan is being excessively nervous about them, because the Miyako Strait, as well as the West Pacific, are high seas.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202412/1324694.shtml>

Chinese Foreign Ministry on China convening expert-level P5 meeting in Dubai

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, December 10, 2024

On December 4, 2024, as the chair of the P5 mechanism, China convened an expert-level P5 meeting in Dubai, the UAE. Representatives from the five nuclear-weapons States (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) attended the meeting. The parties had a candid discussion on nuclear doctrines. It was agreed that such discussion was timely for the purposes of enhancing understanding of each other's nuclear doctrines and avoiding misunderstanding and miscalculation. In its capacity as the chair, China will continue to facilitate the P5 discussions.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/lxjzh/202412/t20241217_11495828.html

Taiwan says China has deployed largest fleet of ships in decades

David Pierson and Amy Chang Chien

The New York Times, December 10, 2024

Taiwan said that China was conducting its largest maritime operations in nearly three decades, sending nearly 90 naval and coast guard vessels into waters stretching from the southern Japanese islands to the South China Sea. Taiwanese defence officials said the scope of the deployment suggested that China was not only trying to show that it could choke the self-governed island, but also that it could block American allies in the region like Japan and the Philippines from coming to Taiwan's defence. China has "extended their military strength outward," Gen. Hsieh Jih-sheng, a senior official in Taiwan's ministry of defence, told reporters. "The numbers are indeed astonishing," he said, referring to the surge of Chinese vessels in the waters.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/10/world/asia/taiwan-china-naval-largest.html>

Joe Biden to hit Chinese clean tech imports with more tariffs

Aime Williams

Financial Times, December 11, 2024

The Biden administration is poised to unveil steep new tariffs on imports of critical materials from China in its final effort to protect US manufacturing from the Asian superpower's dominant clean tech industry. The US trade representative's office will announce a doubling to 50 per cent of the tariff on Chinese solar wafers and polysilicon, and hit tungsten products with a 25 per cent levy, according to people familiar with the plans. The new tariffs, which will take effect on January 1, just weeks before Donald Trump replaces Joe Biden in the White House, mark an effort to shelter the US's fast-growing solar energy sector from cheap Chinese suppliers.

<https://www.ft.com/content/4c5a4858-b47b-4535-bb4b-99738c50abda>

Donald Trump has invited China's President Xi Jinping to his inauguration

Demetri Sevastopulo

Financial Times, December 12, 2024

US president-elect Donald Trump has invited President Xi Jinping to his inauguration in January, in an early sign that he intends to resume the high-level engagement with the Chinese leader that marked his first term. Karoline Leavitt, the incoming White House press secretary, told Fox News that Trump wanted to create an "open dialogue" with countries that were American adversaries, not just with allies and partners. "We saw this in his first term. He got a lot of criticism for it, but it led to peace around this world. He is willing to talk to anyone, and he will always put America's interests first," said Leavitt.

<https://www.ft.com/content/68036935-2dc9-411e-b57b-bfd318b98165>

Chinese Foreign Ministry on the "Global Development Report 2024"

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, December 13, 2024

The release of the "Global Development Report" is an important step to implement the Global Development Initiative (GDI). As the third annual report on the GDI released by relevant Chinese institutions, it forges consensus on global development, and explores cooperative paths and practices to address global development challenges. As President Xi Jinping said, prosperity and stability would not be possible in a world where the rich become richer while the poor are made poorer. Faced with the wider development divide, China has always put development at the centre of the international agenda. Since it was put forward more than three years ago, solid steps have been taken under the GDI in mobilizing resource, building mechanism, and promoting cooperation.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/lxjzh/202412/t20241217_11495844.html

More provocations lead to stronger countermeasures: Chinese defence ministry

China Daily, December 13, 2024

China's Ministry of National Defence issued a stern warning to the Philippines, pledging stronger countermeasures against escalating provocations in the South China Sea. Wu Qian, a spokesman for the ministry, accused the Philippines of stirring up troubles on many spots under the support and solicitation of the United States. "From Ren'ai Jiao to Xianbin Jiao and from Houteng Jiao to Huangyan Dao, such repeated provocations have allowed the international community to see clearly who is undermining peace and stability in the South China Sea and who is fabricating and spreading lies," Wu said. Wu made

the remarks during a press briefing in response to a query concerning the Philippine Coast Guard's allegations that China had taken "aggressive actions" against Philippine vessels heading toward Houteng Jiao.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202412/13/WS675bedc2a310f1265a1d2d18.html>

Alleged Chinese spy had 'unusual degree of trust' with

Andrew Dominic Casciani and Sean Coughlan

BBC, December 13, 2024

An alleged Chinese spy who formed an "unusual degree of trust" with the Duke of York has been banned from the UK, after a judgement by the UK's semi-secret national security court. The man, known only as H6 and described as a "close confidant" to Prince Andrew, brought an appeal against his initial ban but the decision was upheld by the court. Judges were told the businessman was attempting to leverage Prince Andrew's influence. Buckingham Palace declined to comment, saying they do not act for the prince, who is not a working royal.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd75vwdg3yvo>

Big Chinese naval exercise leaves Taiwan and US struggling for response

Kathrin Hille and Demetri Sevastopulo

Financial Times, December 15, 2024

A week ago, Taiwan was bracing for a Chinese military exercise to "punish" its president, Lai Ching-te, for a trip abroad that included two short visits to the US. It would have been another show of force from Beijing in retaliation for Taiwanese leaders asserting their country's independence. But what happened next took Taipei by surprise. Its military and national security officials observed what they called the largest Chinese naval deployment in nearly 30 years. At the same time, Beijing announced partial restrictions on air traffic in seven

zones hugging its coastline from Shanghai to Hong Kong for two days.

<https://www.ft.com/content/025a81f1-2cb2-459d-8427-46fd44b1b2c3>

F. Russia

Putin's nuclear threats aim to scare the west – but Ukraine's allies are now calling his bluff

Ruth Deyermond

The Conversation, December 4, 2024

The outgoing Biden administration recently reversed a ban on Ukraine's use of long-range missiles to strike targets inside Russia. The ban had been imposed by the White House and observed by Washington's allies out of fear that Russia could escalate the conflict to involve nuclear weapons. The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, responded by signing into law changes to Russia's nuclear doctrine, lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. Russia then struck Ukraine with an apparently new, nuclear-capable intermediate-range missile, the Oreshnik. Putin then announced that Russia had the right to attack the military installations of states allowing Ukraine to use their weapons to attack Russia – in other words, the US and UK.

<https://theconversation.com/putins-nuclear-threats-aim-to-scare-the-west-but-ukraines-allies-are-now-calling-his-bluff-244776>

Tucker Carlson warns of WWII, but Russia's nuclear threats ring hollow

Peter Dickinson

Atlantic Council, December 4, 2024

US media personality Tucker Carlson was back in Moscow this week to interview Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and raise the nuclear alarm. This is Carlson's second trip to the Russian capital in 2024 and comes following his headline-grabbing February interview with Russian President Vladimir Putin. On that occasion,

Carlson said his intention was to provide Putin with a platform to explain his reasons for invading Ukraine. This time, he appears intent highlighting the prospect of a direct clash between Russia and the United States. "We are closer to nuclear war than any time in history," Carlson commented in a promotional video previewing the Lavrov interview.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/tucker-carlson-warns-of-wwiii-but-russias-nuclear-threats-ring-hollow/>

What do we know about Russia's nuclear weapons?

The Moscow Times, December 3, 2024

Russia's nuclear arsenal has come under renewed scrutiny following its strike on Ukraine with the new Oreshnik ballistic missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The attack, Moscow said, was a response to Ukraine's use of U.S. and British-made missiles to hit Russian territory. The latest escalation in Russia's nearly three-year war on Ukraine comes just days after President Vladimir Putin approved changes to Moscow's nuclear doctrine to permit a nuclear response to conventional non-nuclear attacks on Russian soil.

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/12/03/what-do-we-know-about-russias-nuclear-weapons-a87203>

Russia has invented a missile that may change the way wars are fought

The Economic Times, December 13, 2024

Russian President Vladimir Putin has touted the Oreshnik hypersonic missile as a breakthrough that could significantly alter global defence strategies. Speaking from a Kremlin-released transcript, he said, "What we need now is not to improve the nuclear doctrine, but the Oreshnik, because enough of these modern weapons systems puts us on the verge of virtually eliminating the need to employ nuclear weapons." This missile, reportedly capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads, was

deployed for the first time during an attack in Dnipro, Ukraine, on 21 November.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/russia-has-invented-a-missile-that-may-change-the-way-wars-are-fought/articleshow/116284228.cms?from=mdr>

Russia targets Ukrainian energy infrastructure with massive cruise missile and drone attack

PBS News, December 13, 2024

Russia launched a massive aerial attack against Ukraine on Friday, firing 93 cruise and ballistic missiles and almost 200 drones, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, describing it as one of the heaviest bombardments of the country's energy sector since Russia's full-scale invasion almost three years ago. Ukrainian defences shot down 81 missiles, including 11 cruise missiles that were intercepted by F-16 warplanes provided by Western allies earlier this year, said. Russia is "terrorizing millions of people" with such assaults, he said on his Telegram channel, renewing his plea for international unity against Russian President Vladimir Putin. "A strong reaction from the world is needed: a massive strike – a massive reaction.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/russia-targets-ukrainian-energy-infrastructure-with-massive-cruise-missile-and-drone-attack>

Russia could launch another hypersonic missile at Ukraine soon, US official says

Steve Holland and Trevor Hunnicutt

Reuters, December 11, 2024

Russia could launch another hypersonic ballistic missile in Ukraine in the coming days, but Washington does not consider the Oreshnik weapon a game-changer in the war, a U.S. official said on Wednesday. Russia first fired the Oreshnik missile at the Ukrainian city of Dnipro on Nov. 21,

in what President Vladimir Putin cast as a response to Ukraine's first use of U.S. ATACMs ballistic missiles and British Storm Shadows to strike Russian territory with Western permission. "We assess that the Oreshnik is not a game-changer on the battlefield, but rather just another attempt by Russia to terrorize Ukraine, which will fail," the official said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-could-launch-another-new-missile-ukraine-soon-us-official-says-2024-12-11/>

Russia races ahead of NATO in weapons production for Ukraine war: SIPRI

John T Psaropoulos

Al-Jazeera, December 2, 2024

Despite a defence budget 10 times Russia's, new report lays bare how NATO is unable to turn spending power into firepower in a crisis. New research shows that the revenues of Russia's top defence contractors outpaced those of their United States and European counterparts last year, as they increased weapons production more effectively than their Western rivals. The figures, released today by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in its annual report on the world's top 100 defence companies, raise questions about the West's ability to supply Ukraine with the weapons it needs to defeat Russia's invasion.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/2/russia-races-ahead-of-nato-in-weapons-production-for-ukraine-war-sipri>

Europe

G. United Kingdom

The Guardian view on a race for missile supremacy: competition fuels a dangerous escalation

The Guardian, December 1, 2024

The 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty ended when the US

withdrew, citing Russian violations dating back to 2014 under Vladimir Putin. While abandoning the treaty aligned with the first Trump administration's broader opposition to arms control, continuing to pressure Mr Putin into compliance would have been the wiser course. Targeting Kyiv's forces are the hypersonic Oreshnik missile and the ballistic Iskander missile. Both can carry a nuclear warhead and would have been barred under the INF treaty. These weapons signal an alarming return to cold war-style tit-for tat posturing, with great powers ramping up their military capabilities.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/dec/01/the-guardian-view-on-a-race-for-missile-supremacy-competition-fuels-a-dangerous-escalation>

China now a nuclear threat to the West, warns armed forces head

Danielle Sheridan

Telegraph, December 4, 2024

Era of post-Cold War stability is over, says defence chief after minister claims British Army would be destroyed in six months of full war. The world faces a "third nuclear age", the head of the Armed Forces has said as he warned that China poses a major threat to the West. In a speech on Wednesday night, Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, Chief of the Defence Staff, said that the nuclear stability achieved in the wake of the Cold War was at an end. He warned that Russia, China, Iran and North Korea all posed a threat, and highlighted Beijing as a particular challenge for the US. or decades, the nuclear threat from China was not considered significant, but it is now thought to be expanding its arsenal more quickly than any other country and is set to be on a par with the United States and Russia by 2030.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/12/04/china-a-nuclear-threat-to-the-west-warns-armed-forces-head/>

World entering third nuclear age with few guardrails, UK military chief says

John Paul Rathbone

Financial Times, December 5, 2024

Radakin warns 'dangerous' new era involves proliferating and disruptive technologies.

The head of the British military has warned the world is on the brink of a third nuclear age with an "almost total absence" of guardrails to keep it safe. Admiral Sir Tony Radakin said this new era, which followed the first nuclear age of the cold war and the disarmament efforts that followed it, was "more ambiguous and more dangerous than we have known in our careers". The central question, Radakin said, was whether western countries were "able to recognise that one era has ended and another has begun". "Do we understand what is at stake? And are we sufficiently motivated to respond?"

<https://www.ft.com/content/c8c3c09f-a596-4c0f-9ba2-3b9b851e6be3>

H. Ukraine

Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons. Now it's asking why

Paul Adams

BBC, December 5, 2024

Under heavy grey skies and a thin coating of snow, hulking grey and green Cold War relics recall Ukraine's Soviet past. Missiles, launchers and transporters stand as monuments to an era when Ukraine played a key role in the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons programme - its ultimate line of defence. Under the partially raised concrete and steel lid of a silo, a vast intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) peeks out. But the missile is a replica, cracked and mouldy. For almost 30 years, the silo has been full of rubble. The whole sprawling base, near the central Ukrainian city of Pervomais'k, has long since turned into a museum.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crl3ndxglwwo>

U.S. will send Ukraine \$725 million more in arms

The Associated Press

NPR, December 3, 2024

The U.S. is preparing to send Ukraine an additional \$725 million in military assistance, including counter-drone systems and munitions for its High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, which could indicate more of the longer-range missiles are headed to the battlefield. It was unclear whether the munitions for the HIMARS are the coveted ATACMS — the Army Tactical Missile System — but Ukraine has been pressing for more of the longer-range missiles to strike additional targets inside Russia. The package, announced Monday by the State Department, also includes more of the anti-personnel land mines that Ukraine is counting on to slow Russian and North Korean ground forces in Russia's Kursk region.

<https://www.npr.org/2024/12/03/g-s1-36575/us-ukraine-weapons>

Ukraine has arms to resist at least until mid-2025 if US cuts aid, finance minister says

Martin Fornusek

The Kyiv Independent, December 11, 2024

Ukraine has enough funds and ammunition to continue resisting Russia at least throughout the first half of 2025, even if U.S. assistance dries up, Finance Minister Serhii Marchenko said in an interview with the El Pais newspaper published on December 11. Marchenko's comments come amid growing concern that U.S. President-elect Donald Trump might withdraw Washington's crucial support for Kyiv after he takes office in January. "I believe that we have enough funds, enough weapons, missiles, and artillery shells to resist at least during the first half of 2025," Marchenko said.

<https://kyivindependent.com/ukraine-has-enough-arms-to-resist-at-least-until-mid-2025-marchenko/>

US announces new arms aid package for Ukraine worth \$500 million

Reuters

Voice of America, December 12, 2024

The Biden administration announced another package of weapons aid for Ukraine on Thursday, valued at \$500 million, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. White House spokesperson John Kirby said earlier the U.S. would continue to provide additional packages for Ukraine "right up to the end of this administration. "Washington said 10 days ago it would send Ukraine \$725 million worth of missiles, ammunition, anti-personnel mines and other weapons. Biden's outgoing administration is seeking to bolster Ukraine in tackling Russia's invasion, before Biden's term ends in January when Republican President-elect Donald Trump would take office.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/us-announces-new-arms-aid-package-for-ukraine-worth-500-million/7899855.html>

I. United States of America

Army and navy successfully test conventional hypersonic missile

U.S. Department of Defence, December 12, 2024

The U.S. Army's Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office, in collaboration with the U.S. Navy Strategic Systems Programs, recently completed a successful end-to-end flight test of a conventional hypersonic missile from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida. "This test builds on several flight tests in which the Common Hypersonic Glide Body achieved hypersonic speed at target distances and demonstrates that we can put this capability in the hands of the war fighter," said Secretary of the Army Christine Warmouth. A missile launches leaving behind a trail of smoke.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3999835/army-and-navy-successfully-test-conventional-hypersonic-missile/>

US successfully conducts ballistic missile intercept test from Guam, Pentagon says

Mike Stone

Reuters, December 11, 2024

The U.S. Missile Defence Agency successfully intercepted an air-launched intermediate range ballistic missile target during a test off Guam for the first time, a significant milestone in the island's defence capabilities, the Pentagon said on Tuesday. Guam, a U.S. territory in the Western Pacific, is a strategic military outpost that is located closer to China than to Hawaii. It plays a crucial role in maintaining U.S. presence in the region and deterring potential adversaries. The successful test underscores the Pentagon's commitment to bolstering Guam's defences against evolving missile threats.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-successfully-conducts-ballistic-missile-intercept-test-guam-pentagon-says-2024-12-10/>

Did the U.S. defence of Israel from missile attacks meaningfully deplete its interceptor inventory?

Wes Rum Baugh

Centre for Strategic and International Studies, December 4, 2024

Following Iran's ballistic missile attack on Israel on October 1, defence analysts have expressed concerns about the U.S. use of about a dozen Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) interceptors. The debates surrounding aid to Ukraine have turned concerns about munitions production into an almost reflexive reaction to any use or transfer of U.S. weapons. While there are reasonable concerns about the capacity of certain air and missile defence interceptors, for example, expenditure rates of the SM-2 missile in the Red Sea, the case of SM-3 production is one where the concern is somewhat overblown. Some

commentators have observed that the U.S. Navy fired a year's worth of SM-3 interceptors in a single day.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/did-us-defense-israel-missile-attacks-meaningfully-deplete-its-interceptor-inventory>

US will not return nuclear weapons to Ukraine

Reuters

Voice Of America, December 1, 2024

The United States is not considering returning to Ukraine the nuclear weapons it gave up after the Soviet Union collapsed, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Sunday. Sullivan made his remarks when questioned about a New York Times article last month that said some unidentified Western officials had suggested U.S. President Joe Biden could give Ukraine the arms before he leaves office. "That is not under consideration, no.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/us-will-not-return-nuclear-weapons-to-ukraine-7883247.html>

West Asia

J. Armenia

Armenia-France 2025 defence cooperation program signed

News.am, December 10, 2024

Armenia-France strategic defence consultations were held Tuesday at the Armenian Ministry of Defence (MoD), the latter reports. During the consultations, the work carried out in the framework of cooperation in 2024 was recapped and the plans for the next year were outlined. Also, the visiting French military delegation was received by the Chief of the General Staff of the Armenian Armed Forces, Edward Asryan. The priorities of the Armenian Armed Forces' transformation process and the course of cooperation with France in that regard were discussed. Asryan expressed his

satisfaction with the current level of cooperation and expressed hope that it will continue to develop. During the consultations, the parties exchanged views on regional and international security as well.

<https://news.am/eng/news/856588.html>

India, Iran, Armenia hold 2nd trilateral consultations in New Delhi, discusses connectivity, regional cooperation

The Economic Times, December 13, 2024

The second India-Iran-Armenia trilateral consultation was held on 12 December, where the three sides discussed a wide range of matters, including connectivity initiatives, engagement in multilateral fora, and regional developments, the Ministry of External Affairs press release stated. The discussion in the trilateral consultations was led by Joint Secretary of the Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran Division JP Singh from the Indian side, along with delegations from Iran and Armenia. From Iran, the Director General of the South Asia Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Hashem Ashja' Zadeh, led the discussion; meanwhile, Armenia was represented by the Head of the Asia-Pacific Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Anahit Karapetyan. "The 2nd India-Iran Armenia Trilateral Consultations took place in New Delhi today. Discussions covered connectivity initiatives, multilateral engagement & regional developments. Emphasis was placed on enhancing trade, tourism, cultural exchanges & strengthening people-to people ties," the MEA stated in a post in X.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/india-iran-armenia-hold-2nd-trilateral-consultations-in-new-delhi-discusses-connectivity-regional-cooperation/articleshow/116271744.cms?from=mdr>

K. Cyprus

Cyprus modernises air defence capabilities with new Israeli Barak MX surface-to-air missile system

Army Recognition, December 4, 2024

According to Sigma Live on December 3, 2024, the Cypriot National Guard received the first batch of Israeli Barak MX surface to-air missile systems, with additional deliveries expected to enhance the nation's defence infrastructure. The procurement, initiated under the Anastasiades government in October 2021 and continued under the Christodoulidis administration, represents a significant investment aimed at upgrading Cyprus's air defence capabilities, which currently rely on Cold War-era systems. Negotiations for the acquisition began in October 2021 under the Anastasiades administration, initially exploring a variant of Israel's Iron Dome system.

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/armynews/army-news-2024/cyprusmodernizes-air-defence-capabilities-withnew-israeli-barak-mx-surface-to-airmissile-system>

Cyprus takes delivery of Israeli air defence system, report says

The Economic Times, December 5, 2024

Cyprus has taken delivery of an Israeli air defence system, local media reported on Thursday, as the east Mediterranean island taps new markets to upgrade its defence capabilities after the loss of key supplier Russia. TV station Sigma said the first deliveries were made on Tuesday. Cypriot officials declined to comment on the specifics of the report. "The only thing I can say is we will, and are doing everything necessary to bolster the deterrence force of Cyprus, not only because we are a country under occupation, but an EU member state in a region of particular geo-strategic importance," Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides told reporters on Thursday.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/cyprus-takes-delivery-of-israeli-airdefence-system-reportsays/articleshow/116008922.cms?from=mdr>

Cyprus turns to west for new air defence system

Tom Cleaver

Cyprus Mail, December 5, 2024

Cyprus is turning to the west to renew its air defence systems, a senior government source said on Thursday. The source told Reuters the country is "turning to other countries of the European Union, as well as Israel" as it seeks to replace older military hardware which had been supplied by Russia. "As part of that, efforts are underway to upgrade our anti-aircraft umbrella," the source added. Cyprus' National Guard had suffered from sanctions placed on Russia in the aftermath of the country's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Russia had previously been a leading supplier of military hardware to the National Guard, but Cyprus' reorientation towards the west had already begun to have a detrimental impact on that infrastructure even before a blanket ban was placed on Russian military hardware exports two years ago.

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2024/12/05/notbeing-in-nato-prevents-national-guardfrom-further-strengthening>

L. Israel

Israel, Argentina deepen defence ties in official ministerial talks

The Jerusalem Post, December 3, 2024

Newly appointed Defence Minister Israel Katz welcomed Argentina's Defence Minister Dr. Luis Alfonso Petri to Israel for an official visit aiming to deepen the strategic partnership between the two countries, the Israeli Defence Ministry announced on Monday. During the visit, Katz highlighted Argentina's steadfast support for Israel throughout the Israel Hamas War and proposed a multi-year program to enhance bilateral ties through strategic workshops and seminars across various fields of mutual interest. Additionally, Dr. Petri spoke with Maj. Gen. (Res.) Eyal Zamir, Director General of Israel's Defence Ministry. Their dialogue addressed critical security concerns,

focusing on Iran's destabilizing activities in both the Middle East and Latin America. According to the announcement, both sides emphasized the need for sustained cooperation to foster regional stability and security.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article831713>

'Forward-looking capabilities': Defence min. purchases advanced drones, autonomous defence systems

The Jerusalem Post, December 3, 2024

The Defence Ministry announced on Tuesday it had purchased advanced drones and autonomous systems from Elbit Systems Ltd. The systems are set to "upgrade the operational capabilities of the forces on the ground," the ministry stated. These were developed in conjunction with the Directorate of Defence Research & Development and the IDF Ground Forces, the ministry added, noting that these systems included advanced capabilities for intelligence gathering and conducting precision strikes. Tens of thousands of Jews immigrated to Israel since October 7 massacre, data reveals. The military is set to acquire drones from Elbit, including models designed for intelligence gathering, strike-capable drones, and smaller drones suited for urban operations.

<https://www.jpost.com/breakingnews/article-831743>

Israel buys advanced drones worth \$40m

Middle East Monitor, December 3, 2024

Israel today revealed that it purchased advanced drones worth around \$40 million amid its deadly war on the Gaza Strip. In a statement, the Defence Ministry said it "has completed several contracts with Elbit Systems totalling approximately \$40 million." Under the contracts, Elbit Systems, an Israeli military company, will supply the army "with advanced drones and autonomous systems to upgrade the operational capabilities of its forces in the field," it added. "They include advanced

capabilities and are designed for various missions, including precise intelligence gathering and targeted strikes," the ministry said. Israeli occupation forces have extensively used drones in their genocide in Gaza, targeting medical and aid workers, Palestinians as they flee their homes and to mimic the cries of babies in an effort to encourage Palestinians to lure and shoot Palestinians in Gaza.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20241203-israel-buys-advanced-drones-worth40m/>

Israel has 'destroyed the most important military sites in Syria': war monitor

The Economic Times, December 11, 2024

A war monitor said Tuesday that Israel had "destroyed the most important military sites in Syria" with a flurry of air strikes since the fall of president Bashar al-Assad's government. Israel, which borders Syria, sent troops into a buffer zone on the east of the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights after Assad's fall, in what Foreign Minister Gideon Saar described as a "limited and temporary step" for "security reasons". It has also carried out "about 250 air strikes on Syrian territory" over the last 48 hours with the aim of destroying the former regime's military capabilities, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/israel-has-destroyed-the-most-important-military-sites-in-syria-war-monitor/articleshow/116164384.cms?from=mdr>

IDF signs NIS 2.8b. deal for five new advanced and faster Navy ships

Yonah Jeremy Bob

The Jerusalem Post, December 12, 2024

Despite years of delay, the Defence Ministry on Thursday took another move to modernize the Israel Navy. It signed a NIS 2.8 billion deal to acquire five advanced Reshef missile ships from Israel Shipyards. These ships are 1000 tons lighter than the new Saar 6 ships. They

are intended to replace the Saar 4.5 ships at the level of a maritime vehicle that can move faster and be more manoeuvrable. Defence Ministry Director-General Eyal Zamir approved the deal after the Ministerial Procurement Committee and the Knesset Joint Committee on the Defence Budget gave the green light.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article833241>

Israel's defence tech sector showcases Israel's pioneering edge – analysis

Seth J. Frantzman

The Jerusalem Post, December 12, 2024

Recently, over 120 students took part in a hackathon aimed at providing solutions to the defence technology sector. One of the teams was made up entirely of students from the minority Druze community. The team showcased their innovation by offering a solution to a problem that combat vehicles and sensors that are deployed on the battlefield face. In essence, many combat vehicles and other systems rely on cameras and various sensors and electro optics that provide the operators with a way to see what is happening. The problem: Sensors can become clouded with dirt and dust. The team, all of whom are reservists, sought to solve this with a way to clean the external cameras using a system of rolling film.

<https://www.jpost.com/israelnews/defense-news/article-833220>

M. Syria

How Syria's rebels developed lethal drone technology

The Economic Times, December 5, 2024

Just five years ago, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), Syria's most prominent Islamist rebel group, was a beleaguered jihadist force fighting for survival after relentless assaults by the Russian-backed Assad regime. Today, HTS operates as a polished protomilitary force in its stronghold of Idlib province. Its transformation is marked by a

centralised command structure, specialised combat units, advanced weaponry, and locally developed manufacturing capabilities, as reported by the Financial Times. This shift underscores HTS's evolving role in Syria's prolonged conflict and its challenge to regional stability. The changes in HTS's operations and structure have been striking. The group now boasts a military academy, rapid-deployment specialist units, and the capacity to manufacture weapons domestically.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/how-syrias-rebels-developed-lethal-drone-technology/articleshow/116008411.cms?from=mdr>

N. Yemen

US Navy destroys Houthi missiles and drones targeting American ships in Gulf of Aden

The Economic Times, December 2, 2024

US Navy destroyers shot down seven missiles and drones fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels at the warships and three American merchant vessels they were escorting through the Gulf of Aden. No damage or injuries were reported. US Central Command said late Sunday that the destroyers USS Stockdale and USS O'Kane shot down and destroyed three anti-ship ballistic missiles, three drones and one ant ship cruise missile. The merchant ships were not identified. The Houthis claimed the attack in a statement and said they had targeted the US destroyers and "three supply ships belonging to the American army in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden." Houthi attacks for months have targeted shipping through a waterway where \$1 trillion in goods pass annually over the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and Israel's ground offensive in Lebanon. A ceasefire was announced in the latter last week.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/us-navy-destroys-houthi-missiles-anddrones-targeting-american-ships-in-gulf-ofaden/articleshow/115885325.cms?from=mdr>

Yemen's Houthis and Russia: Why their growing ties matter

The New Arab, December 5, 2024

Since the 7 October Hamas attack on Israel, the Houthi movement has emerged as one of the most active and capable members of Iran's so-called 'Axis of Resistance' - an alliance built over years of Iranian support to counter Israeli and US influence in the Middle East. Over the past year, the Yemeni group has intensified threats to global naval trade by attacking commercial shipping in the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb while defying US-led efforts to neutralise its arsenal. Despite growing ties with Tehran and alignment with other members of the Axis, the Houthis remain the most autonomous entity in Iran's network. They have distinct regional ambitions, forging new partnerships beyond the Middle East.

<https://www.newarab.com/analysis/yemens-houthis-and-russia-why-their-growing-ties-matter>

Houthis claim attack on central Israel in response to Gaza 'massacres'

Al-Jazeera, December 9, 2024

Yemen's Houthi group says it has carried out a drone attack in central Israel's Tel Aviv area in "a specific military operation" in support of Palestinians in Gaza. The Houthis said in a statement on Monday that their forces struck "a sensitive target of the Israeli enemy". An Israeli military statement said a drone hit a building in the city of Yavne after air defence systems failed to detect it and an investigation into the failure is under way. The Houthis said the operation "achieved its objective" without providing details. No injuries were reported in the attack, which caused damage to several apartments in the building, according to Israeli media reports. The Houthis said the attack was in response to Israel's "massacres" against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip, where Israel has been waging a devastating assault for more than a year.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/9/houthis-claim-attack-on-central-israel-in-response-to-gaza-massacres>

Israel says its air strikes destroyed most of Syria's strategic weapons stockpiles

The Economic Times, December 11, 2024

Israel aims to impose a "sterile defence zone" in southern Syria that would be enforced without a permanent troop presence, Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Tuesday, as the military said a wave of air strikes had destroyed the bulk of Syria's strategic weapons stockpiles. Over the past 48 hours, following the collapse of the government of President Bashar al-Assad, the military said jets had conducted more than 350 strikes on targets including anti-aircraft batteries, military airfields, weapons production sites, combat aircraft and missiles. In addition, missile vessels struck the Syrian naval facilities of Al-Bayda port and Latakia port, where 15 Syrian naval vessels were docked.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/israel-says-its-air-strikes-destroyed-most-of-syrias-strategic-weapons-stockpiles/articleshow/116192631.cms?from=mdr>

O. United Arab Emirates

Union Fortress showcases capabilities of 'Guardians of the Union'

Emirates News Agency, December 6, 2024

Over its nine editions, the Union Fortress military parade has showcased the UAE Armed Forces' exceptional capabilities, highlighting their efficiency in defending the nation, safeguarding the Union, and upholding national unity. The Union Fortress underscores the UAE's leadership dedication to empowering its Armed Forces, prioritising personnel training, and equipping them with the most advanced and cutting-edge weapons globally. These efforts have positioned the UAE Armed Forces among the world's most well-trained, professional, and well-equipped armies.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b6k0kbvunion-fortress-showcases-capabilitiesguardians>

India, France, UAE strengthen defence ties with Desert Knight air combat exercise

The Economic Times, December 12, 2024

India, France, and the UAE began a major air combat exercise, "Desert Knight," on Wednesday over the Arabian Sea. The operation aims to enhance trilateral defence cooperation and foster better interoperability among their air forces during complex combat scenarios, as reported by TOI. The Indian Air Force (IAF) participated with aircraft such as Sukhoi-30MKIs and Jaguars, along with IL-78 mid-air refuellers and AEW&C (airborne early-warning and control) systems, operating from Jamnagar on India's west coast. French Rafale jets and UAE's F-16 fighters were deployed from the Al Dhafra airbase in the UAE. The exercise, described as a "large force engagement," featured intensive combat manoeuvres approximately 350-400 km southwest of Karachi over the Arabian Sea.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-france-uae-strengthen-defence-ties-with-desert-knight-air-combat-exercise/articleshow/116245509.cms?from=mdr>

India, UAE discuss IMEEC; resolve to expand energy, trade ties

The Economic Times, December 13, 2024

India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Friday discussed implementation of the ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) and resolved to shore up ties in areas of energy including long-term supplies and collaboration in upstream and downstream projects. Ways to further deepen bilateral relations in areas of energy, connectivity and trade figured prominently at the 15th India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) that was cochaired by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his UAE counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-uae-discussimeec-resolve-to-expand-energy-trade-ties/articleshow/116295662.cms?from=mdr>

Abu Dhabi civil defence authority supports manifesto for global industrial safety

Emirates News Agency, December 13, 2024

Abu Dhabi Civil Defence Authority (ADCDA) has announced its support for the Manifesto for Global Industrial Safety, becoming the first official entity worldwide to adopt its guiding principles, which sets a new global benchmark for enhancing safety standards and protecting lives and property. The announcement was made during the 2024 edition of the Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit (GMIS2024), held as part of Abu Dhabi Business Week. The event brought together global leaders, decision-makers, and representatives of international organisations, with ADCDA signing three strategic global partnerships, reaffirming its commitment to leveraging modern technologies to safeguard lives, protect property, and enhance operational efficiency. The summit witnessed the signing of a strategic partnership between ADCDA and the Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit, in the presence of representatives from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to officially join the Global Initiative for Industrial Safety (GIFIS) and support efforts to scale the global adoption of the Manifesto.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b606m7aabu-dhabi-civil-defence-authority-supports>

P. Turkiye

Turkey's evolving geopolitical strategy in the black sea

Antonia Colibasanu

Foreign Policy Research Institute, December 4, 2024

Turkey's strategic position between Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia places it at a pivotal crossroads in Eurasian geopolitics, particularly as regional conflicts reshape power dynamics and

international alliances. Turkey's strategic significance has long been underscored by its control over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits, which grant exclusive access to the Black Sea from the Mediterranean. This geographical position, combined with deep historical and cultural ties to Ukraine's Crimea, positions Turkey as a key player in Black Sea security. Recent years witnessed significant changes in the Eurasian security framework.

<https://www.fpri.org/article/2024/12/turkey-s-evolving-geopolitical-strategy-in-the-black-sea/>

Southeast Asia

Q. Philippines

U.S. and Philippines hold 2nd annual energy policy dialogue

U.S. Department of State, December 10, 2024

On December 6, the Philippines and the United States held the second annual Energy Policy Dialogue (EPD) in Manila, where the two sides underscored their commitment to deepen cooperation on energy security, energy access, and the clean energy transition. The Philippines' Department of Energy's Secretary Raphael Lotilla and Undersecretary Felix William Fuentebella hosted the EPD. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Diplomacy Kimberly Harrington, from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Energy Resources, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Ann Ganzer, from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, and Ambassador MaryKay Carlson led the U.S. delegation.

<https://2021-2025.state.gov/u-s-and-philippines-hold-2nd-annual-energy-policy-dialogue/>

PH, UAE ink MOU on energy transition

Kris Crismundo

Philippines News Agency, December 2, 2024

The Philippines and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to deepen energy

transition cooperation. The MOU was one of the key agreements reached at the meeting between President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during Marcos' working visit to the Gulf state last Nov.26. In a statement over the weekend, Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the MOU includes several areas of cooperation particularly in renewable energy; liquefied natural gas as a transition fuel; power generation, transmission, and distribution system; nuclear energy; energy efficiency and conservation; and alternative fuels and emerging technologies

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php/articles/1239084>

PNRI: Uranium may be used to create 'dirty bombs'

Janovic Mateo

The Philippine Star, December 11, 2024

The powdered form of the depleted uranium recently confiscated by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) may be used to create "dirty bombs," the head of the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) said yesterday. While the primary motive appears to be the fraudulent sale of the hazardous material as precious metal, PNRI director Carlo Arcilla said the powdered form of the substance can be a security issue if it falls into the hands of unscrupulous people.

"I'm not so much concerned about the solid depleted uranium, but the powder. Because the powder can be mixed with explosives to make a dirty bomb.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/12/11/2406459/pnri-uranium-may-be-used-create-dirty-bombs>

Philippine navy tracks Russian submarine in South China sea amid growing regional tensions

Global Defence News, December 2, 2024

On November 28, 2024, the Philippine Navy confirmed the presence of a Russian

Kilo-class submarine, the Ufa 490, in the contested waters of the South China Sea, near the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The submarine was detected about 148 kilometres (92 miles) off the coast of Occidental Mindoro, a province in the western Philippines. The Philippine Navy's flagship, the BRP Jose Rizal (FF-150) guided missile frigate, was dispatched to monitor the submarine's activities. Russian Kilo-class submarine Ufa 490 spotted in the South China Sea on November 28, 2023, as observed by the Philippine Navy's BRP Jose Rizal (FF-150).

<https://armyrecognition.com/news/navy-news/2024/breaking-news-philippine-navy-tracks-russian-submarine-in-south-china-sea-amid-growing-regional-tensions>.

R. Indonesia

Second Joint Naval Operation completed, successful missiles and rockets firing

Renold Rinaldi

Indonesia Business Post, December 12, 2024

The Second Joint Sea Operation Exercise 2024 (Latopslagab) held in conjunction with the Commemoration of the 2024 Indonesian Naval Fleet Anniversary has completed, with proven and successful firing of missiles and rockets. The two-day exercise began with a task force troop roll call at the Indonesian Navy's Second Fleet (Koarmada 2) Headquarters in Surabaya, East Java, on Monday, December 9, 2024 led by Rear Admiral Ariantyo Condrowibowo, Commander of Koarmada 2, who was also Commander of the joint exercise. Upon the completion of the opening ceremony, all participating personnel then moved to the location of the joint exercise on Gundul Island, Karimun Jawa Islands, Central Java.

<https://indonesiabusinesspost.com/3337/insider/second-joint-naval-operation-completed-successful-missiles-and-rockets-firing>

Digital technology can build Indonesia's sustainable future: Minister

Antara News, December 15, 2024

Minister of Communication and Digital Affairs Meutya Hafid emphasized the role of digital technology in building an inclusive and sustainable future for Indonesia. "Digital technology can help reduce the potential for conflict and inequality, while opening up equal opportunities for all, including for marginalized communities," Hafid said in the Knitting Indonesia's Future Dialogue in Denpasar, Bali. As quoted through the ministry's press statement here on Sunday, she said that the government implements digital transformation in order to empower the community, especially marginalized communities. According to her, the use of digital technology must be based on the values of ethics, tolerance, and collaboration to answer various global challenges, such as the digital divide, climate change, the struggle for achieving equality, and solving cross-border conflicts.

<https://en.antaranews.com/news/338209/digital-technology-can-build-indonesias-sustainable-future-minister>

S. Malaysia

Technology transfer to KIMIA Malaysia concludes phase II of hydro chlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) phase-out plan

UNDP, December 9, 2024

UNDP in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam today paid a visit to Department of Chemistry Malaysia (KIMIA Malaysia) to witness the successful transfer of Gas Chromatography instrumentations for sampling and testing Ozone-Depleting Substances (ODS). The analysis obtained from the instrumentations will enable the

Department of Environment (DOE) Malaysia to enforce regulations for controlling ODS in the country. This technical procurement demonstrates how UNDP local and global expertise, in close collaboration with partners like KIMIA Malaysia, supports Malaysia in achieving its sustainable development goals. The technology investment is part of a capacity building initiative between KIMIA Malaysia and the Department of Environment Malaysia, under Phase II of the Hydro chlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP).

<https://www.undp.org/malaysia/news/technology-transfer-kimia-malaysia-concludes-phase-ii-hydrochlorofluorocarbons-hcfc-phase-out-plan>

T. Japan

Japanese Nobel Peace Prize winner calls for end to nuclear weapons

Nikkie Asia December 11, 2024

Nuclear weapons have no place in the world and more must be done to eliminate them, Terumi Tanaka, the 92-year-old co-chair of Japan's atomic bomb survivors group, said at the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony in Norway on Tuesday. "I would like everyone around the world to together discuss what it is that we must do to eliminate nuclear weapons, and demand actions from governments to achieve this goal," Tanaka said in a speech after he accepted the award in Oslo with co-chairs Toshiyuki Mimaki, 82, and Shigemitsu Tanaka, 84. They represent Nihon Hidankyo, the group of survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings in 1945. Tanaka also called on the world to listen to the survivors, for more countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. He also urged the formation of an international convention to abolish stockpiles of these arms.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Society/Japanese-Nobel-Peace-Prize-winner-calls-for-end-to-nuclear-weapons>

Japanese atomic bomb survivors accept Nobel Peace Prize

Aljazeera, December 11, 2024

Nihon Hidankyo, a group of Hiroshima and Nagasaki survivors, honoured for fighting to abolish nuclear weapons. Nihon Hidankyo, the Japanese atomic bomb survivors' group, has accepted the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize "for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons". Now in their 80s and 90s, members of the group who survived American bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki accepted the award at a ceremony in Oslo's City Hall in Norway. In an interview with Al Jazeera inside the award venue, Toshiyuki Mimaki, 82, the co-chair of Nihon Hidankyo, said he was surprised to learn the group had won this year's award.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/12/11/japanese-atomic-bomb-survivors-accept-nobel-peace-prize>

Japan unveils first images of new Type 12 anti-ship missile tests

Yoshihiro Inaba

Naval News, December 7, 2024

According to ATLA, five launch tests of the anti-ship missile were conducted to date, from early October to early November 2024 on Niiijima Island, which faces the Pacific Ocean. The Type 12 SSM originally had a range of about 200 km. The new upgraded version aims to extend the range to at least 900 km, and eventually to 1,200 km. The shape of the missile has also been modified to reduce the radar cross section (RCS) and make it stealthy. The "Type 12 SSM (Upgraded)" will also implement Up to Date Command (UDTC), which allows the missile to receive information about the target via satellite communications while in flight and more accurately attack moving targets.

<https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2024/12/japan-unveils-first-images-of-new-type-12-anti-ship-missile-tests/>

U. South Korea

Australia and South Korea: leveraging the strategic potential of cooperation in critical technologies

Afeeya Akhand & Angela Suriyasene

*Australian Strategic Policy Institute,
December 5, 2024*

Cooperation between Australia and the Republic of Korea (hereafter South Korea or the ROK) in a range of critical technology areas has grown rapidly in recent years. Underpinned by the Australia – South Korea Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cyber and Critical Technology Cooperation signed in 2021, collaboration is currently centred around emerging technologies, including next-generation telecommunications, artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing. Such technologies are deemed to be critical due to their potential to enhance or threaten societies, economies and national security. Most are dual- or multi-use and have applications in a wide range of sectors. Intensifying geostrategic competition is threatening stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

<https://www.aspi.org.au/report/australia-and-south-korea-leveraging-strategic-potential-cooperation-critical-technologies>

South Korean researchers introduce drone tailored for steep terrain

Telecom Review, December 2, 2024

South Korean researchers from Seoul National University of Science and Technology have developed a transport drone, dubbed “Palletrone,” featuring multiple flexible rotors that self-correct to maintain level flight. This drone acts as a “flying shopping cart,” capable of carrying goods over uneven terrain, such as stairs. The prototype includes a cargo platform controlled by a user, who guides the drone. The drone can move objects up and down stairs and uses a “centre of mass estimation” algorithm to hover and maintain balance.

<https://www.telecomreview.com/articles/editor-s-choice/technology-pick/8627-south-korean-researchers-introduce-drone-tailored-for-steep-terrain>

researchers-introduce-drone-tailored-for-steep-terrain

Why South Korea is the ideal mentor for nuclear energy research and development in Southeast Asia

NBP, December 7, 2024

Some Southeast Asian nations, including Indonesia and the Philippines, Vietnam, are exploring the possibility of incorporating nuclear energy. While nuclear plants can generate reliable, emissions-free energy, investing requires thorough research and expertise. Emerging nuclear energy nations should build robust R&D programs to enable safe, sustainable sectors. Strong R&D develops critical knowledge and best practices for operations and regulation. As Indonesia and the Philippines lack decades of focused nuclear R&D like South Korea’s, tapping into South Korean expertise could allow efficient, safe adoption. Only few countries can match South Korea’s 35+ years of focused nuclear energy R&D.

<https://www.nuclearbusinessplatform.com/media/insights/why-south-korea-is-the-ideal-mentor-for-nuclear-energy-research-and-development-in-southeast-asia>

South Korea just saved itself – and its nuclear energy industry

Ariel Cohen

Forbes, December 4, 2024

South Korea’s embattled president, Yoon Sok Yeol of the conservative People Power Party, declared martial law to combat “anti-state forces” tied to purportedly pro-communist/pro-North Korea circles. After a chaotic few hours in which South Korea’s political elites and military seemed utterly confused, the coup unraveled. The people of Seoul poured onto the streets, South Korea’s parliament nullified the martial law decree by a vote of 190-0, most of the military sided against the President, and now ministers of Yoon Sok Yeol’s

government are resigning. If military rule had returned, nervous investors would strangle the nation's emerging arms sector in its crib, not to mention South Korea's nuclear energy industry.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/arielcohen/2024/12/04/south-korea-just-saved-itself-and-its-nuclear-energy-industry/>

V. North Korea

North Korea and Russia's dangerous partnership

Edward Howell, December 4, 2024

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has prompted a rapid escalation in cooperation between North Korea and Russia, to the point where in October 2024 North Korea was confirmed to have sent troops to assist Russian forces. Such actions show that the North Korea-Russia relationship has moved beyond the merely transactional to become a longer-term strategic and ideological partnership. This still-developing partnership poses a threat to the international community, by increasing the potential for regional conflict and undermining the current international order. This research paper provides a wake-up call for the US and its partners in northeast Asia and beyond, warning them to take this emerging Kim-Putin axis seriously and recommending a set of actions to prepare for where this dangerous partnership might go next.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/12/north-korea-and-russias-dangerous-partnership/how-north-korea-benefits>

Russia fired at least 60 North Korean missiles against Ukraine, military intelligence says

Boldizsar Gyori

The Kyiv Independent, December 2, 2024

Russia has fired at least 60 North Korean-supplied ballistic missiles during the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a Ukrainian military spokesperson told Radio Free Europe/Radio

Liberty on Dec. 2. North Korea supplied Russia with ammunition, ballistic missiles, and now soldiers since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. Pyongyang has ratcheted up its support for Russia following Russian President Vladimir Putin's signing of a mutual defence pact with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in June. Earlier reports mentioned more than 5 million artillery shells and 100 short-range ballistic missiles, including short-range ballistic missiles of the KN-23/24 type, supplied to Russia. "Their accuracy, in principle, is not very high.

<https://kyivindependent.com/russia-fired-at-least-60-north-korean-missiles-against-ukraine-military-intelligence-says/>

Russia fires at least 60 North Korean missiles against Kyiv, Ukrainian intelligence says – Russia-Ukraine war as it happened

The Guardian, December 2, 2024

A Ukrainian military spokesperson told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that Russia has fired at least 60 North Korean-supplied ballistic missiles during the war, launched by Moscow in February 2022. "Their accuracy, in principle, is not very high. We understand that the technology with which they were manufactured is outdated," Andrii Cherniak, a military intelligence spokesperson, said, answering questions about the likelihood of Russia's use of KN-23 ballistic missiles. The German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, has been in Kyiv for an unannounced visit that marks his first trip to Ukraine since the early months of full-scale war in the summer of 2022. Scholz, who met with Volodymyr Zelenskyy during the visit, used the trip to announce further equipment deliveries worth •650m (£540m) to be delivered this month.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2024/dec/02/olaf-scholz-volodymyr-zelenskyy-vladimir-putin-russia-ukraine-war-live-updates>

Central Asia

W. Kazakhstan

Project sapphire at 30: U.S.-Kazakh cooperation to reduce nuclear threats

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 4, 2024

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, weapons of mass destruction materials were scattered far and wide. In 1994, the United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan undertook a secret joint operation, now known as Project Sapphire, to secure large quantities of weapons-grade uranium and stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as documented in the Netflix miniseries, *Turning Point: The Bomb and the Cold War*. Join the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Council on Strategic Risks, and the Embassy of Kazakhstan as we recognize the 30th anniversary of Project Sapphire as key participants reflect on this successful effort and commemorate decades of partnership to address the risks posed by weapons of mass destruction.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/events/2024/11/project-sapphire-at-30-us-kazakh-cooperation-to-reduce-nuclear-threats?lang=en>

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its impact on nuclear proliferation

Luke Coffey,

Hudson, December 6, 2024

Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has led to numerous unintended global consequences. Among these are heightened concerns about food insecurity, especially in vulnerable regions, and an acute energy crisis in Europe, which is only now being addressed through a complete restructuring of the continent's energy imports. Economic uncertainty and inflation have surged, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. However, one consequence that has escaped widespread discussion is the impact on efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation.

<https://www.hudson.org/arms-control-nonproliferation/russias-invasion-ukraine-its-impact-nuclear-proliferation-luke-coffey>

Kazakhstan holds talks with France on first nuclear power plant

Le Monde, December 6, 2024

The Uranium-rich nation, which suffers from chronic energy shortages, approved plans to build a nuclear power plant in a referendum earlier this year, despite lingering resentment over massive radiation exposure from Soviet-era nuclear tests. Kazakhstan on Friday, December 6, said that its energy minister had held talks with French officials and companies in the running to build the Central Asian country's first nuclear power station. The Uranium-rich nation, which suffers from chronic energy shortages, approved plans to build a nuclear power plant in a referendum earlier this year, despite lingering resentment over massive radiation exposure from Soviet-era nuclear tests.

https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/12/06/kazakhstan-holds-talks-with-france-on-1st-nuclear-power-plant_6735383_4.html#

X. Tajikistan

Tajik delegation presents a new centre for chemical and biological safety at a conference in Vienna

Asia Plus, December 4, 2024

The Director of the Agency for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Safety (Agency) of the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan (NAST), Ilhom Mirsaidzoda, participated in the ministerial conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) held in Vienna, Austria. The Agency says that speaking at the conference dedicated to nuclear science, technology, and technical cooperation programs in Vienna on November 28, Ilhom Mirsaidzoda delivered a presentation titled "The Role of the Leader of the Nation, Emomali Rahmon, in Establishing the Regional Centre for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Safety, Physical Protection, and Safeguards at the National Academy of Sciences of

Tajikistan. "It is worth recalling that the new building of the Regional Centre for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Safety in Dushanbe was inaugurated on October 29.

<https://asiaplustj.info/en/news/tajikistan/society/20241204/tajik-delegation-presents-a-new-center-for-chemical-and-biological-safety-at-a-conference-in-vienna>

Iranian delegation attends Tajikistan's ICT conference

Tehran Times, December 1, 2024

An Iranian delegation, representing the Ministry of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT), has participated in the first conference of innovation and digital technologies of Tajikistan, providing detailed information on Iran's accomplishments and projects in the ICT sector. The Iranian officials elaborated on the country's achievements in electronic government and post services, high capabilities in manufacturing communication equipment, telecommunication infrastructure, and optical fiber network, as well as electronic authentication which were all well received by the Tajik side, Mohr news agency reported.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/506976/Iranian-delegation-attends-Tajikistan-s-ICT-conference>

Standard in national policy under new agreement

Hydropower Sustainability Alliance, December 5, 2024

The Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of Tajikistan has committed to embedding the Hydropower Sustainability Standard (HSS) in national policy under a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), marking a pivotal step in advancing sustainable hydropower practices in Central Asia. The MoU, signed ahead of COP29 between the Ministry and the Hydropower Sustainability Alliance (HSA), outlines common objectives on the development of sustainable hydropower projects, and

establishes mutual areas for long-term collaboration.

<https://www.hs-alliance.org/news/tajikistan-embeds-hydropower-sustainability-standard>

Y. Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan signs agreements on nuclear cooperation

World Nuclear News, December 5, 2024

As a one-day international conference on nuclear energy takes place, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev announced that the country is to work with the International Atomic Energy Agency to expand cooperation on nuclear energy development. Uzbekistan's national atomic agency Uzatom and World Nuclear Association have signed a memorandum of understanding to promote bilateral cooperation. IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi and Mirziyoyev met ahead of the one-day Prospects for the Use of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes in Sustainable Development of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Member States conference on 5 December in Samarkand.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/articles/uzbekistan-signs-agreements-on-nuclear-cooperation>

Iran ready to share agricultural technology with Uzbekistan: minister

Tehran Times, December 9, 2024

Iranian Minister of Agriculture Gholamreza Nouri Ghezeli has stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to enhance cooperation with Uzbekistan in sharing agricultural experiences and technology. Nouri Ghezeli met with a joint delegation from the Ministries of Agriculture, Trade, and Investment of Uzbekistan in Tehran on Sunday. Referring to the 14th Iranian government's strategic vision to enhance relations with other countries, Nouri highlighted the initiative taken by the President of Uzbekistan to foster

international relations, which has created significant opportunities for constructive cooperation between the two countries.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/507272/Iran-ready-to-share-agricultural-technology-with-Uzbekistan>

Z. Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan hosted the anniversary meeting on strengthening cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones

United Nations, December 5, 2024

A meeting of States parties to the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan on the theme "Strengthening cooperation among existing nuclear-weapon-free zones". The meeting was dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the entry into force of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. Turkmenistan is hosting this meeting in the framework of its chairmanship of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. The main objective of the meeting is to intensify cooperation among the five existing nuclear-weapon-free zones present in the world.

<https://un.mission.gov.tm/news/140234>

UN General Assembly adopts Turkmenistan's nuclear-free zone in CA

Business Turkmenistan, December 7, 2024

The UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, initiated by Turkmenistan, during its regular meeting on December 2 as part of the 79th session. Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Foreign Minister, announced this during an online government meeting on Friday, as reported by official media in Turkmenistan. In his report, Meredov emphasized that developing multifaceted cooperation with the UN plays a crucial role in

Turkmenistan's foreign policy. At the initiative of the head of state, the country regularly proposes measures aimed at strengthening global peace, building trust, and enhancing international efforts in various areas.

<https://www.business.com.tm/post/12788/un-general-assembly-adopts-turkmenistans-nuclearfree-zone-in-ca>

Africa

AA. Nigeria

Turkiye secures Nigeria's border with STM TOGAN surveillance drones.

Defence & Security Industry Technology, December 13, 2024

STM announced that the TOGAN tactical multi-rotor reconnaissance drone, developed by Turkey's defence industry, has officially entered service in two African countries, including Nigeria. Designed for surveillance and reconnaissance operations, the TOGAN has been delivered to the respective armed forces and is already conducting operational missions. This development marks a major milestone for STM's export strategy, as the company is actively engaging with other African nations, with several negotiations reportedly nearing conclusion.

<https://armyrecognition.com/focus-analysis-conflicts/army/defence-security-industry-technology/tuerkiye-secures-nigerias-border-with-stm-togan-surveillance-drones>

AB. Tunisia

US State Department approves Tunisian purchase of Javelin missiles

Peter Felstead

European Security & Defence, December 5, 2024

The US State Department has approved a possible Foreign Military Sale (FMS) to Tunisia of Javelin anti-tank missiles, the US

Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) announced on 3 December 2024. The potential sale, which is worth USD 107.7 million (EUR 101.9 million), has been passed to the US Congress for final approval. Tunisia has requested to buy 184 Javelin FGM-148F missiles (including four fly-to-buy missiles) and 30 Javelin Lightweight Command Launch Units. Also included in the package is missile simulation round system integration and check-out; operator manuals; spare parts; indoor/outdoor trainers; and various aspects of technical, training, logistics and programme support.

<https://euro-sd.com/2024/12/major-news/41756/tunisia-cleared-to-buy-javelin/>

China's Huawei supports Tunisia's smart education

Xinhua, December 11, 2024

China's tech giant Huawei and Tunisia's El-Khawarizmi Computing Centre (CCK) held the CCK-Huawei Technology Summit 2024 on Tuesday in Tunisia's capital city, Tunis, with the aim of enhancing Tunisia's smart education. "Tunisia has made education one of the priority pillars of its national strategy; we have been gradually taking advantage of technological advances to promote innovation," Tunisian Minister of Communication Technologies Sofiene Hemissi said at the summit. The Tunisian minister added that his country is proud to be in partnership with Huawei, and the summit is "a big opportunity to develop Tunisia's working methods and strategies in education by making good use of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies to make a better future for Tunisia's future generations."

<https://english.news.cn/africa/20241211/6ebf2ec5541444efa2ffa8c7de6991bd/c.html>

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Prepared by :

Ms. Parul Yadav



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

No.1, Development Enclave,
Rao Tula Ram Marg, Near USI, Delhi-110010
Tel. No (91-11) 2671-7983
Fax No. (91-11)2615-4192