



Volume 1 | Issue 25

SYLLOGE ON WEST ASIA

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

16 December - 31 December 2021



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

IRAN

Iran Rejects IAEA's Access to Memory Cards of Cameras at Karaj Facility

Fars News Agency, December 16, 2021

Spokesman of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Behrouz Kamalvandi confirmed on Thursday his country's agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency on installation of cameras at TESA Karaj complex, but meantime, said that the IAEA will not have access to the cameras' memory cards. Kamalvandi said the installation will be made as AEOI and IAEA officials have exchanged views on removing concerns over the possibility of using the cameras by saboteurs. The official went on to say that the cameras could not be opened without IAEA's agreement. So, the two sides agreed to give one camera to Iran for accurate technical review, he said, adding that the IAEA technical experts will answer technical questions being asked by Iranian security officials about the cameras.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000925000407/Iran-Rejecs-IAEA's-Access-Memry-Cards-f-Cameras-a-Karaj-Faciliy>

Iran flatly rejects statement by Persian Gulf Arab leaders as 'unconstructive'

Tehran Times, December 17, 2021

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh late on Wednesday strongly condemned an anti-Tehran communiqué issued at the end of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council summit, stressing the Islamic Republic will allow no meddling in its internal affairs, including its peaceful nuclear program. The group's leaders, who had gathered for an annual summit in Riyadh on Tuesday, repeated claims concerning the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy work, defensive missile program, and regional clout. According to Press TV,

Khatibzadeh roundly rejected the allegations, considering them to be "continuation of the unconstructive and wrong attitude that is held by some of the Council's members."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/468174/Iran-flatly-rejects-statement-by-Persian-Gulf-Arab-leaders-as>

AEOI Head: Iran, IAEA Agreement to Foil Enemies' Plots

Fars News Agency, December 17, 2021

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said on Thursday that the recent agreement between Tehran and the UN nuclear watchdog about TESA Karaj complex will thwart the ill-wishers' plots and help the Iranian negotiators. "Ill-wishers of the Iranian nation and the Zionists regularly resort to psychological warfare to claim that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is not aware of Iran's activities," Eslami told reporters. The AEOI seeks to neutralize such moves and foil the plots of the enemy so that the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna talks can reach their goal which is the removal of sanctions, he added. Eslami referred to his recent meeting with Director-General of the IAEA Rafael Grossi, and said that previously, four issues related to the Karaj site had remained unresolved.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000925000499/AEOI-Head-Iran-IAEA-Agreemen-Fil-Enemies'-Pls>

Iran: IAEA Camera's Storage Device Destroyed in Sabotage Attack against Karaj Facility

Fars News Agency, December 18, 2021

Iran announced that the memory card of the camera installed at TESA Karaj complex was destroyed during the June sabotage attack against the facility, dismissing the

UN nuclear watchdog's claims. Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi showed the camera system similar to those used in an Iranian centrifuge-parts workshop at Karaj at a press conference in Vienna on Friday. He claimed that critical footage from a surveillance camera at the facility had gone missing, though acknowledging that the camera, one of the four IAEA cameras placed at the facility, "had been destroyed" in a sabotage attack in June. Iran removed the cameras, along with the destroyed one, and showed them to the nuclear watchdog inspectors. However, Grossi on Friday asked for the so-called missing memory card of the destroyed camera.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000927000198/Iran-IAEA-Camera's-Srage-Device-Desryed-in-Sabage-Aack-agains-Karaj>

Iranian and Chinese FMs discuss Vienna negotiations and ties

Tehran Times, December 18, 2021

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday discussed bilateral relations, the nuclear talks in Vienna and international developments over the phone. Amir Abdollahian also thanked and appreciated the Chinese government's support during the nuclear talks in Vienna, describing the talks as good in general. He however criticized lack of initiative on the part of the Western parties in Vienna. The Chinese foreign minister, for his part, conveyed the warm greetings of Xi to Raisi. He described the relations between the two countries as "strategic" and announced the Chinese government's determination to expand and deepen relations. He supported the positions of Iran, stressing the need for convergence and cooperation with other

developing countries against unilateralism on the part of certain Western countries, particularly the United States.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/468177/Iranian-and-Chinese-FMs-discuss-Vienna-negotiations-and-ties>

Iran Equips Navy with New, Overhauled Helicopters, Aircraft, Vessels

Fars News Agency, December 19, 2021

The Iranian naval forces were equipped with new and overhauled helicopters, aircraft and vessels in a ceremony held on Sunday. Two SH3D-316 helicopters and two F27 Friendship and Hovercraft aircraft joined the Iranian Navy in Bandar Abbas port city in Southern Iran on Sunday in a ceremony participated by Deputy of Commander of the Iranian Army for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari and Army's Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani. The renovated and overhauled 'Alvand' destroyer joined the Navy fleet after the installation of surface and subsurface defense equipment. Four submarines also joined the Army Navy submarine fleet today.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000928000422/Iran-Eips-Navy-wih-New-Overhaled-Helicpers-Aircraf-Vessels>

Amir Abdollahian holds bilateral talks in Pakistan

Tehran Times, December 19, 2021

On the sidelines of the 17th extraordinary meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Iranian Foreign Minister held several meetings with the leaders and foreign ministers of Islamic countries. Amirabdollahian met with Imran Khan on Sunday on the sidelines of the emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Islamabad. Referring to the situation in Afghanistan, Imran Khan called

for consensus between regional and international actors to help overcome the humanitarian and economic crisis in the neighboring country.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/468245/Amir-Abdollahian-holds-bilateral-talks-in-Pakistan>

Spokesman: IAEA to Reinstall Cameras at Iran's Karaj Facility Soon

Fars News Agency, December 19, 2021

Spokesman of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Behrouz Kamalvandi said on Sunday that the UN nuclear watchdog will reinstall cameras at TESA Karaj complex in the next few days after meeting Tehran's conditions. "Today, meetings between the technical and security officials of the AEOI and the inspectors and technicians related to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) cameras are being held at the AEOI building (in Tehran)." Kamalvandi told FNA. He noted that Iran was suspicious that the IAEA cameras might have been used by enemies for the recent sabotage act at Karaj facilities and therefore, after negotiations and writings with the IAEA, the Agency accepted to provide us with a sample camera to answer to the questions of the Iranian technical experts. "Since the preconditions set by our country, including condemnation of the sabotage act in Karaj facilities (by the IAEA) and cooperation in the field of technical investigations about the possible role of the cameras in this incident has been accepted by the IAEA and are being implemented, the Agency's cameras will be installed in the TESA complex in Karaj probably in the next few days," Kamalvandi said.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000928000697/Spkesman-IAEA-Reinsall-Cameras-a-Iran's-Karaj-Faciliy-Sn>

Iran's Armed Forces Conduct Defense Drills over Bushehr Power Plant

Fars News Agency, December 20, 2021

Iranian Armed Forces carried out a defense drill over Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant on Monday to boost capabilities to defend the plant, a provincial official announced. "The purpose of this exercise was to prepare and fully coordinate the armed forces, adding that the Armed Forces exercises were held in the south of Bushehr province and the Persian Gulf," Deputy Governor General of Bushehr Province for Political, Security and Social Affairs Mohammad Taqi Irani said. He pointed out that Iran's Armed Forces carried out a defense drill over Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant on Monday morning. Bushehr facility sits 17 kilometers Southeast of the city of Bushehr along the Persian Gulf coast in Southwestern Iran.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000929000278/Iran's-Armed-Frces-Cndc-Defense-Drills-ver-Bshehr-Pwer-Plan>

IRGC launches 5-day drill in Persian Gulf, Hormuz Strait, coastal provinces

Tehran Times, December 20, 2021

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched a five-day drill on Monday morning in the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the coastal provinces of Hormuzgan, Bushehr and Khuzestan. The drill will continue for five days with the involvement of the IRGC Ground Force, Navy, Aerospace, military exercise spokesman Brigadier General Abbas Nilouforoushan announced on Monday. The exercise, codenamed Peyambar Azzam (Great Prophet), is in line with the military preparedness and tactics of the IRGC in the face of imagined threats and combined warfare.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/468251/IRGC-launches-5-day-drill-in-Persian-Gulf-Hormuz-Strait-coastal>

Iranian President: Good Syrian, Iraqi Defense Forces Trained by General Soleimani

Fars News Agency, December 20, 2021

Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Rayeesi commemorated former Commander of the IRGC Qods Force Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani on the threshold of his martyrdom anniversary, saying that he trained many good forces in Iraq and Syria who defended their countries against the terrorists. "If martyr Soleimani was not present in Syria and Iraq, what would happen to the region and the world?" Rayeesi asked, addressing a meeting with General Soleimani's family members and officials responsible to hold ceremony in his commemoration. He added that General Soleimani "was able to train very good forces among Iraqis and Syrians to defend these countries and fight against (terrorism and) oppression; this measure by Martyr Soleimani created a huge capacity in the Islamic world". President Rayeesi said that General Soleimani was sad about cooperation of a number of people in Iraq and Syria with Takfiri terrorists and was after leading them towards the right path with different means.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000929000561/Iranian-Presiden-Gd-Syrian-Irai-Defense-Frces-Trained-by-General>

Iran's Precision-Striking Drones Hit Standing, Mobile Targets in Massive Drills

Fars News Agency, December 22, 2021

Precision-striking combat drones as well as sophisticated ballistic and cruise missiles played a major role in the large-scale military exercises that Iran's Islamic

Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) is holding in an area stretching along the Southern shores of Iran on Wednesday. The IRGC Aerospace Forces flew unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and the aircraft struck a series of standing and mobile targets on the ground and in the sea using bombs with pinpoint accuracy in the Great Prophet 17 joint drills. Additionally, IRGC forces launched volleys of various surface-to-surface, anti-ship missiles, and coast-to-sea ballistic missiles against vessels, facilities, and bases of the hypothetical enemy and destroyed them as planned. IRGC naval units also utilized domestically-developed offshore and onshore air defense systems against hostile drones.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14001001000421/Iran's-Precisin-Sriking-Drnes-Hi-Sanding-Mbile-Targes-in-Massive>

IRGC Ground Force Uses New Homemade Tank in Military Exercise

Fars News Agency, December 22, 2021

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force used an advanced homegrown tank, Karrar, for the first time during the third day of massive joint military exercises in the Southern parts of Iran on Wednesday. Karrar, an upgraded version of the T-72m tanks, came into service during the Great Prophet 17 joint drills on the country's Southern coasts today. The new tank is furnished with special coatings to withstand heatwaves and can hide from heat-seeking missiles. It is also equipped with GPS navigation systems. The Great Prophet 17 drills kicked off on Monday, covering the coastlines of the southern Iranian provinces of Hormozgan, Bushehr, and Khuzestan.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14001001000712/IRGC-Grnd-Frce-Uses-New-Hmade-Tank-in-Miliary-Exercise>

IRGC Uses Suicide Drones in Massive Wargames in Southern Iran

Fars News Agency, December 23, 2021

Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami announced on Thursday that during the Payambar-e Azam (Great Prophet) 17 drills in Southern Iran, the IRGC forces used suicide drones to attack hypothetical enemy targets. The IRGC forces effectively employed their latest military achievements, including the suicide and combat drones on the fourth day of massive joint military exercises in the Southern parts of the country in the Persian Gulf region, General Salami said. He added that IRGC forces successfully employed other achievements, including bouncing mines against the moving targets of the hypothetical enemy as well as advanced home-grown Karrar tank, which was employed on Wednesday during the drills. General Salami further praised the coordination and harmony among the IRGC ground, naval, and air forces in the maneuvers.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14001002000313/IRGC-Uses-Sicide-Drnes-in-Massive-Wargames-in-Shern-Iran>

Iran's Top Commander: Great Prophet 17 Military Wargames Meant to Warn Israel

Fars News Agency, December 24, 2021

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri said that the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Great Prophet 17 military drills were held in response to the threats of the Israeli regime. "In this exercise, 16 missiles fired from different platforms hit a ceratin target accurately," General Baqeri told reporters on Friday on the sidelines of the final stage of IRGC's massive joint military exercises in Southern Iran in the

Persian Gulf region. "The Great Prophet Maneuver was held in response to the recent empty threats of the Zionist regime of Israel," he reiterated.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14001003000305/Iran's-Tp-Cmmander-Grea-Prphe-Miliary-Wargames-Mean-Warn-Israel>

IRGC Fires 16 Missiles in Joint Drills' Final Stage

Fars News Agency, December 24, 2021

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) successfully fired some 16 ballistic missiles on Friday at the final stage of the Great Prophet 17 Joint Drills. The IRGC Aerospace Force fired 16 ballistic missiles comprising long-range, medium-range and short-range missiles. The IRGC forces simultaneously fired the ballistic missiles in different classes which destroyed set targets. Missiles codenamed Emad, Qadr, Sejil, Zelzal, Dezful and Zolfaqar were fired to attack assimilated positions of mock enemies, which destroyed the targets with 100 percent precision. Concurrent with the firing of the ballistic missiles, 10 drones of the IRGC Aerospace Force targeted set goals.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14001003000498/IRGC-Fires-6-Missiles-in-Jin-Drills'-Final-Sage>

Iran, China & Russia negotiate ahead of Vienna talks

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 27, 2021

Iranian top negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani, who has arrived in Vienna for a new round of talks on the removal of sanctions on Iran, engaged in talks with his counterparts from China and Russia. Ali Bagheri Kani, Wang Kuan and Michael Ulyanov are reportedly negotiating in Cobourg Hotel of Vienna before a JCPOA Commission meeting

which is scheduled to begin at 18:00 Vienna time. During the past round of negotiations in Vienna, Iran and the G4+1 agreed on a joint text and the continuation of talks.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84592576/Iran-China-Russia-negotiate-ahead-of-Vienna-talks>

Bagheri Kani calls for guarantees for lifting sanction

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 27, 2021

Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani has urged other sides in Vienna talks to guarantee lifting of sanctions and pave the way for verification of the embargo removal. Bagheri Kani referred to progress made in the previous round of talks in Vienna, Austria, to lift anti-Iran sanctions and revive the 2015 nuclear deal, adding that the Iranian negotiating team is completely serious and ready to continue the Vienna talks. The eighth round of talks for lifting anti-Iran sanctions kicked off on Monday evening local time, when Iranian top nuclear negotiator and the European Union's representative in Vienna talks Enrique Mora co-chaired the Joint Commission meeting of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). At the end of Monday's Joint Commission meeting, the negotiating teams agreed upon carrying on negotiations at different levels and formats.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84592898/Bagheri-Kani-calls-for-guarantees-for-lifting-sanction>

Iran's demands for lifting of sanctions accepted

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 28, 2021

The eighth round of talks in Vienna, Austria, continues in an atmosphere that

Iran's demands for verification of lifting sanctions and assurance for non-recurrence of illegal acts by the United States have been accepted by other sides, indicating progress in negotiations. Enrique Mora, Deputy Secretary-General of the European Union, who co-chairs the Joint Commission meetings of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with top Iranian nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani told reporters Monday night that the Vienna talks is on right track to reach a final agreement.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84593279/Iran-s-demands-for-lifting-of-sanctions-accepted>

Iran vows to blow up Israel's Dimona first if war breaks out

Al-Monitor, December 29, 2021

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Maj. Gen. Mohammad Bagheri said Israel's key Dimona nuclear facility will be "a prime target" should a war break out between the two archenemies. According to Bagheri, to conduct such an attack at the heart of Israel's Negev Desert, Iran possesses the knowhow and technology to use "multiple routes" and firing options to nullify Israel's advanced anti-missile system, known as the Iron Dome. Bagheri's comments on the "reciprocal" strike were aired from the hard-line state TV Dec. 28, two days after the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) wrapped up a series of large-scale military maneuvers culminating in multiple strikes on a mockup site. IRGC-linked media earlier reported that the operation involved 16 missiles and five suicide drones that precisely impacted the Israeli "center for the development of weapons of mass destruction."

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/iran-vows-blow-israels-dimona-first-if-war-breaks-out#ixzz7IG7pOkNi>

FM spox: Scientific, research progress inalienable right of Iranian nation

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 31, 2021

Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has commented on the recent experimental launch of Simorgh satellite by Iran and stressed that scientific and research progress, including in aerospace, is the nation's inalienable right. He made the remark in response to the recent claims by certain American and European officials regarding the test launch of Simorgh and said that making progress in aerospace is the inalienable right of the Iranian nation, stressing that such intervening statements will never weaken Iran's will to progress in this field. Khatibzadeh stressed that nothing in the Islamic Republic of Iran prohibits making progress in aerospace research and experiments, including the satellites.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84597302/FM-spox-Scientific-research-progress-inalienable-right-of-Iranian>

France slams Iran for satellite launch amid promising nuclear talks

Daily Sabah, December 31, 2021

France condemned Friday, Iran's satellite rocket launch, deeming it "all the more regrettable" to have occurred while nuclear talks with world powers were beginning to make progress, echoing the sentiments and concerns of United States and Germany. Iran said on Thursday it had used a satellite launch rocket to send three research devices into space, as indirect U.S.-Iran talks take place in Austria to try to salvage a 2015 nuclear deal. The satellite launch was in breach of United Nations Security Council resolutions, France's foreign ministry said. "These activities are all the more regrettable as they come at a time when we are making progress in the nuclear negotiations in Vienna," the French foreign ministry said.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/world/europe/france-slams-iran-for-satellite-launch-amid-promising-nuclear-talks>

IRAQ

Rasoul: International Coalition advisors work in Ein Al-Asad ran by an Iraqi military leader

Iraqi News Agency, December 18, 2021

The spokesman for the Office of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, Major General Yahya Rasoul, confirmed on Saturday, that the work of the advisors of the International Coalition at Ein Al-Asad base will be ran by an Iraqi military commander. "To follow up the implementation of the Iraqi agreement with the international coalition forces to completely withdraw the combat forces of the coalition forces, the Iraqi Military Technical Committee, which included the National Security Adviser, the Deputy Commander of Joint Operations and the Associate Chief of the Army Staff, a number of commanders and the spokesperson for the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and the Security Media Cell, visited Ein Al-Asad Air Base in Anbar Governorate," said Major General Rasoul in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA).

<https://ina.iq/eng/16228-rasoul-international-coalition-advisors-work-in-ein-al-asad-ran-by-iraqi-military-leader.html>

Al-Harir base is devoid of international combat forces

Iraqi News Agency, December 21, 2021

The Joint Operations Command announced that al- Harir base in Erbil is devoid of any combat forces belonging to the international coalition, while indicating that the advisers will be distributed between Ain Al-Assad and Harir bases. Command

spokesman Tahsin Al-Khafaji said in a statement to Al-Iraqiya News, which was followed by the Iraqi News Agency (INA) that "the withdrawal of the combat forces of the international coalition from Iraq done smoothly," noting that "al- Harir base in Erbil is devoid of any combat forces of the international coalition." He added, "These forces completed their withdrawal before the end of this year," noting that "what rests is a small part of the advisers who provide advice in the field of combating terrorism."

<https://ina.iq/eng/16296-al-harir-base-is-devoid-of-international-combat-forces.html>

Maan: Al-Assad base is free of the combat forces of the International Coalition

Iraqi News Agency, December 23, 2021

General Saad Maan, announced today, Thursday, that the Ain Al-Assad base is free of the combat forces of the international coalition. Maan told the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that "the committee charged with following up the file of the transition of the tasks of the international coalition in Iraq from combat to assistance and advice is continuing its work."

<https://ina.iq/eng/16335-maan-al-assad-base-is-free-of-the-combat-forces-of-the-international-coalition.html>

Iraq continues to kill, capture IS members as effectiveness questioned

Al-Monitor, December 24, 2021

Iraqi security forces continued their operations against Islamic State (IS) cells and sources of funding in December with a number of captures and killings as the US "combat mission" against IS in the country drew to an end. The US combat mission is due to officially end Dec. 31. Military advisers will remain in Iraq on bases in Anbar, Erbil and Baghdad.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/iraq-continues-kill-capture-members-effectiveness-questioned#ixzz7INVIPbiR>

The International Coalition to (INA): We no longer have combat forces in Iraq

Iraqi News Agency, December 26, 2021

The international coalition in Iraq confirmed today, Sunday, that it has no longer had combat forces in the country since the ninth of this December. The coalition said in a statement to the Iraqi News Agency (INA): "As of December 9, there are no US or coalition forces serving a combat role in Iraq, we were ahead of the schedule and we implemented the commitments made in the dialogue between The United States and Iraq in June 2021. The statement added, "The early transition was possible due to the tremendous progress made by the Iraqi security forces, and Peshmerga, in developing the capability and ability to lead the fight against Daesh terrorist gangs." And for the remaining US and coalition forces in Iraq, the primary mission is to advise, assist, and enable the Iraqi Security Forces to sustain the enduring defeat of Daesh.

<https://ina.iq/eng/16395-the-international-coalition-to-ina-we-no-longer-have-combat-forces-in-iraq.html>

PM Al-Kadhimi: The Coalition has fully completed their combat role

Iraqi News Agency, December 29, 2021

Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi confirmed on Wednesday, upon the end of combat missions of the international coalition and the completion of the exit of its troops. "The Coalition has fully completed their combat role after transfer of personnel and material outside Iraq. Going forward, their role will be to advise

and assist our security forces per the outcome of the Strategic Dialogue," Al-Kadhimi stated in a tweet followed by the Iraqi News Agency (INA). He added, " We thank the leadership of the Coalition, it's members, our partners and neighbors in combating Daesh and reaffirm that our security forces stand ready to defend our people,"

<https://ina.iq/eng/16451-al-kadhimi-the-coalition-have-fully-completed-their-combat-role.html>

Al-Sadr issues a statement after the end of the combat missions of the international coalition forces

Iraqi News Agency, December 30, 2021

The leader of the Sadrist movement, Muqtada al-Sadr, issued today, Thursday a statement on the occasion of the end of the combat missions of the international coalition forces. Al-Sadr indicated that "Iraq is a fully sovereign state, and every agreement that departs from that is null and void," noting that "this step is considered a prelude to ending all foreign presence, including advisors and others in the future." He stressed, "Any military and security presence inside the US embassy is prevented, and the official Iraqi forces pledge to do so, in addition to the fact that the mutual diplomatic representation between the two countries must be balanced according to the international diplomatic rules."

<https://ina.iq/eng/16471-al-sadr-issues-a-statement-after-the-end-of-the-combat-missions-of-the-international-coalition-forces.html>

Rasoul confirms the need to the coalition's advisors

Iraqi News Agency, December 30, 2021

The Office of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces confirmed, today,

Thursday, the need for advisors of the international coalition in 4 areas, and while specifying their locations, it stressed the need for coalition aviation to continue striking the remnants of ISIS terrorist gangs. A spokesman for the Office of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, Major General Yahya Rasoul, told Al-Iraqiya News, followed by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that "there are currently no international coalition forces in Iraq that carry out combat missions, and the rest are advisors working to provide advice, support and empowerment in the areas of training, arming and exchanging information."

<https://ina.iq/eng/16480-rasoul-confirms-the-need-to-the-coalitions-advisors-.html>

ISRAEL

US national security adviser meets with Bennett, Lapid, Gantz in Israel

Al-Monitor, December 22, 2021

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett met today in Jerusalem with US national security adviser Jake Sullivan and other senior US officials on a three-day visit to the region. Addressing the press ahead of the beginning of the encounter, Bennett said, "These days are pretty important. What happens in Vienna has profound ramifications for the stability of the Middle East and the security of Israel for the upcoming years. And that's why it's such a timely meeting."

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/us-national-security-adviser-meets-bennett-lapid-gantz-israel#ixzz7IOFzvqOo>

Herzog: With or without a deal, Iran's nuclear program 'must be neutralized'

The Times of Israel, December 22, 2021

President Isaac Herzog called on Wednesday for Iran's nuclear program to be "neutralized" regardless of whether an

accord is inked between Tehran and world powers. “Iran is a ticking time bomb that threatens Israel and the whole Middle East,” Herzog said at a ceremony for graduates of the Israeli Air Force’s pilot course. “I am following the negotiations surrounding the nuclear deal, and I call on the international community not to be led astray and not to underestimate the gravity of the threat,” he added. “The Iranian nuclear threat must be neutralized once and for all, with or without an agreement. Iran must not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons capabilities.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/herzog-irans-nuclear-program-must-be-neutralized-with-or-without-a-deal/>

Lapid: ‘Bad’ nuclear pact with Iran worse than no deal at all

The Times of Israel, December 24, 2021

Israel would prefer that the US and other powers walk away from nuclear talks with Iran rather than pursue a “bad deal,” Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said in comments published Thursday. Lapid told The New York Times that the best case scenario was what he called a “good deal” with Iran, appearing to give rare backing to negotiations on reviving the 2015 nuclear pact that Jerusalem has largely dismissed as an Iranian delaying tactic. “We have no problem with a deal. A good deal is a good thing,” Lapid said. “Second best would be no deal but tightening the sanctions and making sure Iran cannot go forward. And the third and worst is a bad deal,” he added.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/lapid-bad-nuclear-pact-with-iran-worse-than-no-deal-at-all/>

Israeli defense official says Iran faces ‘no deterrent’ to its nuclear goals

The Times of Israel, December 28, 2021

A senior Israeli defense official said that there currently exists no deterrent against

Iran’s nuclear program. “The problem with Iran’s nuclear program is that, for the time being, there is no diplomatic mechanism to make them stop,” said Zohar Palti, the former intelligence director in the Mossad who now heads the Defense Ministry’s political-military bureau, in an interview with the New Yorker magazine. “There is no deterrent,” he added. “Iran is no longer afraid.” “We don’t want to reach a point where we will have to ask ourselves how Iran was allowed to enrich to 90%,” Palti added.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-is-playing-with-fire-says-us-special-envoy-as-nuclear-talks-restart/>

Bennett: Israel is not opposed to a ‘good’ nuclear deal with Iran

The Times of Israel, December 28, 2021

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Tuesday morning that Israel would not automatically oppose any deal forged by world powers with Iran during the ongoing nuclear talks in Vienna. “We are not automatic naysayers. We’re taking a practical approach,” Bennett said during an interview with Army Radio. “Unlike others, we’re not looking to fight for the sake of fighting; rather, we’re trying to bring a result.” “At the end of the day, of course there could be a good deal — we know the parameters,” he added. “But is that currently expected to happen in this dynamic? No, because you need a much stronger position [from world leaders]. Iran is holding very weak cards, but the world is acting as if it’s negotiating from a position of strength.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/bennett-israel-is-not-opposed-to-a-good-nuclear-deal-with-iran/>

Israel's \$318M plan in the occupied Golan Heights

Daily Sabah, December 28, 2021

"Settling the Golan Heights is a top priority for Zionism. I urge Israelis who are sick of fighting traffic to live well and do good for the country and come to the Golan." These are the words Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett wrote in an article published in Israel Hayom recently, promising to follow the steps of Menachem Begin, whose government applied Israeli sovereignty to the Golan Heights in December 1981. Bennett, in his article, declared that he plans to strengthen the Golan Heights and help it grow through a "billion-shekel (\$318 million) plan (that) the Israeli government will approve." "We are shining a spotlight on the Golan and saying clearly, we are with the Golan, and we are on the Golan."

<https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/oped/israels-318m-plan-in-the-occupied-golan-heights>

Israel said to strike key Syrian port of Latakia, causing 'massive' damage

The Times of Israel, December 28, 2021

Israeli warplanes fired a number of missiles at the port of the coastal city of Latakia early Tuesday morning, causing large explosions and fires, in the second alleged Israeli strike in a month on the key facility. For years, Israel avoided conducting strikes against the Latakia port due to the large presence of Russian forces nearby, despite Iran allegedly using the terminal to transport advanced munitions through it to its proxies in the region, notably the Lebanese Hezbollah terror group. Videos posted to social media showed huge explosions and fires raging across the port, some of them apparently caused by secondary blasts from the missiles causing Iranian munitions to detonate.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-airstrikes-said-to-hit-key-syrian-port-of-latakia-causing-massive-damage/>

After reported Syria strike, Israel says won't let Iran bring 'game-changing' arms

The Times of Israel, December 28, 2021

Defense Minister Benny Gantz warned Iran on Tuesday that Israel will not allow it to spread "game-changing" weaponry to its proxies in the region, hours after the Israeli military reportedly struck arms shipped from Iran in Syria's Latakia port. "I call on all countries of the region to stop Iran's harm to their sovereignty and to their citizens. Israel will not allow Iran to stream game-changing weapons to its proxies and to threaten our citizens," he said.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-reported-syria-strike-israel-says-wont-let-iran-bring-game-changing-arms/>

Israel, US sign \$3.1B deal for helicopters, refueling planes

Daily Sabah, December 31, 2021

Israel signed agreements to buy 12 Lockheed Martin Corp CH-53K helicopters and two Boeing Co KC-46 refueling planes from the United States, the Israeli Defense Ministry announced on Friday, estimating the total price at around \$3.1 billion. The deal, signed on Thursday, is part of an upgrade of Israel's air force capabilities and includes an option to buy six additional helicopters, a ministry statement said. It said the first helicopters were due to arrive in Israel in 2026. Brigadier-General Shimon Tsentsiper, chief of materiel for the air force, told Israel's Army Radio on Thursday that the refueling planes would not be delivered before 2025.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/israel-us-sign-31b-deal-for-helicopters-refueling-planes>

LEBANON

GCC calls on Lebanon to prevent Hezbollah from conducting ‘terrorist operations’

Ya Libnan, December 16, 2021

The Gulf Cooperation Council called on Lebanon to prevent Hezbollah from conducting “terrorist operations”, strengthen its military and ensure that arms are limited to “legitimate state institutions”, the six-member group’s Secretary General Nayef Falah Mubarak al-Hajraf said on Tuesday. He also called on Lebanon to tighten border controls and take measures to deter drug smuggling via exports into Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/12/16/gcc-calls-on-lebanon-to-prevent-hezbollah-from-conducting-terrorist-operations/>

US accuses Iran of harboring Qaeda, ISIS leaders, brands Hezbollah as “most dangerous terrorist” group

Ya Libnan, December 18, 2021

In its annual terrorism report, the US State Department described al-Qaeda as the most “active and dangerous terrorist group in the world,” especially after the “gains” achieved by the US-led International Coalition against ISIS. Washington accused Iran of providing a haven for senior Qaeda members and the report considered Lebanon’s Hezbollah as “Iran’s most dangerous terrorist partner.” Also, it highlighted Saudi antiterrorism efforts and acknowledges that the Kingdom is a strong partner in fighting terror, despite it facing threats from Qaeda, ISIS, and Houthi militias. “The US continued to address threats posed by state-sponsored terrorism, sanctioning Iran-supported groups such as Iraq-based Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq and Bahrain-based Saraya al-Mukhtar.” “Nine countries across the Western Hemisphere and Europe took significant steps in 2020 to designate,

ban, or otherwise restrict Hezbollah — following the lead of four other governments that took similar actions the previous year.”

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/12/18/us-accuses-iran-of-harboring-qaeda-isis-leaders-brands-hezbollah-as-most-dangerous-terrorist-group/>

KSA-Led Coalition Says Hizbullah, Iran Aiding Huthi Strikes

Naharnet, December 27, 2021

The Saudi-led coalition on Sunday accused Iran and Hizbullah of helping Yemen’s Huthi rebels to launch missiles and drones at the kingdom, where two people were killed. Since the coalition intervened almost seven years ago to support Yemen’s government, Saudi Arabia has regularly accused Iran of supplying the Huthis with weapons and Hizbullah of training the insurgents. Tehran denies the charges. Hizbullah has previously denied sending fighters or weapons to Yemen. Coalition spokesman Turki al-Malki told a news conference the Huthis were “militarizing” Sanaa airport and using it as a “main center for launching ballistic missiles and drones” towards the kingdom. Malki showed reporters a video clip which he said depicted “the headquarters of Iranian and Hizbullah experts at the airport” where, he alleged, “Hizbullah is training the Huthis to booby-trap and use drones.”

<https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/286641-ksa-led-coalition-says-hizbullah-iran-aiding-huthi-strikes>

Defense Minister to Sign Military Agreement with Iraqi Counterpart

Naharnet, December 27, 2021

Defense Minister Maurice Slim has left Beirut for Baghdad on an official visit to meet Iraqi officials. Slim will hold talks Tuesday with his Iraqi counterpart Juma

Inad at the defense ministry in Baghdad. The two ministers will sign a memorandum of understanding on military cooperation between the defense ministries of Lebanon and Iraq.

<https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/286656-defense-minister-to-sign-military-agreement-with-iraqi-counterpart>

Blast Rocks Outskirts of Baalbek Town

Naharnet, December 28, 2021

A blast rocked the outskirts of the Baalbek town of al-Nabi Sheet in Lebanon's Eastern Mountain Range on Tuesday. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the explosion resulted from the detonation of leftover ammunition near the Lebanese-Syrian border. Al-Jadeed TV said the blast was caused by "the detonation of an old rocket left over from the 1982 (Israeli) invasion" of Lebanon.

LBCI television for its part said the explosion went off at a Hizbullah post.

<https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/286682-blast-rocks-outskirts-of-baalbek-town>

Saudi King Urges Lebanon to Stop Hizbullah 'Hegemony'

Naharnet, December 30, 2021

Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdul Aziz urged Lebanon on Thursday to stop "the hegemony of terrorist Hizbullah over the state." King Salman said in a speech before the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia (Shura Council) that "KSA stands by the Lebanese people." "KSA urges all Lebanese leaders to prioritize the interests of their people and to work on achieving what the Lebanese aspire to in terms of security, stability and prosperity," the king said.

<https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/286734-saudi-king-urges-lebanon-to-stop-hizbullah-hegemony>

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi, Egyptian FMs stress importance of Iran not having a nuclear weapon

Alarabiya News, December 16, 2021

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan and his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry stressed on Thursday the importance of Iran not having nuclear weapons. The two officials held a joint press conference in Cairo. The Saudi foreign minister also said the Kingdom and Iran did not hold "security talks" in Jordan, rejecting recent media reports.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/12/16/Saudi-Egyptian-FMs-stress-importance-of-Iran-not-having-a-nuclear-weapon>

Coalition forces intercept and destroy Houthi drones targeting Abha airport

Saudi Gazette, December 19, 2021

The command of the Arab Coalition Supporting Legitimacy in Yemen announced Sunday that it had intercepted and destroyed two drones launched by the "terrorist Houthi militias" targeting Abha International Airport. Saudi Press Agency (SPA) stated via its Twitter account that the Houthi militias attempted to target travelers with three drones. The Coalition indicated that the drones were launched from Sanaa airport, which has become a center for attacks launched across borders. In a separate statement earlier Sunday, the Coalition stated that the Saudi defenses destroyed a drone launched by the Iran-backed Houthi militia targeting city of Khamis Mushait.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/614896/SAUDI-ARABIA/Coalition-forces-intercept-and-destroy-Houthi-drones-targeting-Abha-airport>

Arab Coalition conducts airstrikes on Houthi targets at Sana'a airport

Saudi Gazette, December 21, 2021

The Saudi-led Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen carried out air strikes on the Sana'a International Airport of the Houthi-controlled Yemeni capital city after asking civilians and UN aid workers to immediately evacuate, the Saudi Press Agency reported quoting spokesman of the Coalition. "The Joint Forces Command of the Coalition has carried out on Monday evening a limited military operation against legitimate military targets in Sana'a airport after they were used for military purposes by the Iran-backed terrorist Houthi militia," Brig. Gen. Turki Al-Malki, spokesman of the Coalition, said in a statement.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/614972/SAUDI-ARABIA/Arab-Coalition-conducts-airstrikes-on-Houthi-targets-at-Sanaa-airport>

Arab coalition destroys nine Houthi weapons depots in Yemen

Saudi Gazette, December 24, 2021

The Arab coalition has said it destroyed nine Houthi weapons depots near the Yemeni capital Sanaa on Friday. A military operation targeted the Tashreefat military camp run by Iran-backed Houthi rebels, the Saudi state news agency quoted the coalition as saying. Coalition forces learnt that the Houthis were storing weapons at the Al Thawra sports ground in northern Sanaa and gave the rebels six hours to remove them from the populated area. The coalition closely monitored the transfer of weapons from the sports facility to the camp and, after the 2300 GMT deadline, attacked the camp to which weapons had been transferred, it said in a statement early on Friday.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/615123/SAUDI-ARABIA/Arab-coalition-destroys-nine-Houthi-weapons-depots-in-Yemen>

SYRIA

UK warplane shoots down 'hostile' drone near US base in Syria

Al-Monitor, December 16, 2021

British fighter jets shot down a drone approaching al-Tanf base in Syria on Tuesday night, the UK's Defense Ministry said in a statement today. The incident is the latest in a series of pinprick attacks believed to be launched by Iran-backed militias in Syria and Iraq against US and international coalition troops in the wake of the war against the Islamic State (IS). US Central Command and the Pentagon on Thursday both confirmed the incident. Press secretary John Kirby said two unmanned drones were detected entering the 55-kilometer buffer zone surrounding al-Tanf outpost, which houses US special operations troops and Syrian militia fighters on Syria's remote southern border with Iraq and Jordan. Royal Air Force Typhoons on routine patrols in the area were called to investigate, the UK statement read. "As one of these drones infiltrated deeper into the deconfliction zone, it was assessed it was demonstrating a hostile intent," Kirby told reporters today. "It was shot down. The second one was not engaged, and it likely left the area," he said.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/uk-warplane-shoots-down-hostile-drone-near-us-base-syria#ixzz7IOjngikB>

Aoun reiterates condemnation of Israeli enemy's use of Lebanese airspace to attack Syria

Syrian Arab News Agency, December 20, 2021

Lebanese President General Michel Aoun reiterated his condemnation of the continued Israeli violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and the use of Lebanese airspace to launch attacks on Syria. President Aoun's remarks came during a

joint press conference on Sunday with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. Aoun stressed Lebanon's adherence to exercising its sovereignty over its entire territory and its full rights to invest its natural resources.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=258197>

Russia expresses concern over the increase in terrorist attacks in Syria

Syrian Arab News Agency, December 21, 2021

Head of the Russian delegation to the 17th Meeting on Syria in the Astana Format, Alexander Lavrentiev, expressed his country's concern over the increase in attacks by terrorist organizations in Syria. "The increase in attacks by terrorist organizations, not only in northern Syria, but throughout its territory, raises our concern," Lavrentiev said in statements to journalists in the Kazakh Capital of Nur-Sultan. He noted that the Turkish regime is not fully implementing its obligations under the agreements reached between the Russian and Turkish presidents in March 2020.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=258331>

TURKEY

Turkish Aerospace, Malaysian institute ink cooperation pact

Daily Sabah, December 16, 2021

Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) and a Malaysian aviation technology institute have signed an agreement on educational and technical cooperation in the field. According to a press release issued by the Turkish aerospace company on Thursday, the agreement signed in Malaysia with the Kuala Lumpur-based Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology (UniKL MIAT) will provide a collaborative framework in which the two organizations will work on human capital, faculty and academic program

developments. "The collaboration will focus on programs in areas such as aerospace design and engineering, manufacturing, system integration and maintenance, repair and overhaul for both light aircraft and drones," it said.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-aerospace-malaysian-institute-ink-cooperation-pact>

Turkish navy adds 2 maritime patrol aircraft to its fleet

Daily Sabah, December 17, 2021

The Turkish defense industry has delivered two more maritime patrol aircraft developed in great part domestically to the navy, head of the Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) said. Ismail Demir broke the news late Thursday via his Twitter account, sharing that the two P-72 maritime patrol aircraft developed under the Meltem-3 project were delivered to the Naval Forces Command (DzKK). "We have added new steel-wing guards to our Blue Homeland (protection). We have delivered two more P-72 Marine Patrol Aircraft to the DzKK as part of the Meltem-3 Project. Our Marine Patrol planes, which serve as the strategic element of the DzKK, add strength to our country's power in the sky," the tweet read.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-navy-adds-2-maritime-patrol-aircraft-to-its-fleet>

SpaceX launches Turkey's Türksat 5B satellite into space

Daily Sabah, December 19, 2021

Turkey's new telecommunication satellite was launched on Sunday by United States aerospace company SpaceX at 6:59 a.m. Turkish time (3:59 a.m. GMT). Türksat 5B, which launched from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in the U.S. state of Florida, will reach its orbital slot of 42 degrees East in 164 days. Then, a 45-day

test process will begin. The satellite produced by Airbus and transferred from France to the U.S. on Nov. 29, is the most powerful Turkish satellite so far and will increase its Ka-band capacity by over fifteenfold.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/tech/spacex-launches-turkeys-turksat-5b-satellite-into-space>

Turkey gears up to build 3 new domestic warships

Daily Sabah, December 22, 2021

Turkey's top defense industry body announced Wednesday that it will hold a tender for the manufacturing of three new frigates as part of the National Ship (MILGEM) project that has already provided the Turkish Naval Forces with domestically produced combat vessels. The Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) said the production rate of the domestically made parts in the new ships will be higher than before.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkey-gears-up-to-build-3-new-domestic-warships>

Turkish army receives updated Aselsan electronic attack system

Daily Sabah, December 28, 2021

Turkish defense giant Aselsan has delivered its upgraded electronic attack system, the ILGAR Combat Electronic Warfare System, to the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), the head of Turkey's top defense body shared Tuesday. İsmail Demir, chairperson of the Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) said in a Twitter statement that the army recently received the updated ILGAR system. Demir stated that the ILGAR system has been developed for electronic warfare and that with its "national software and hardware

infrastructure," it provides security forces a great tactical advantage.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-army-receives-updated-aselsan-electronic-attack-system>

Fast track to autonomy: Turkish firm builds embargoed parts for defense industry

Daily Sabah, December 30, 2021

After starting as a research and development (R&D) center, an Istanbul-based company is producing key components for the Turkish defense industry that were previously imported from abroad but are now subjected to embargoes and other restrictions, thus circumventing obstacles to the sector on its way to full independence. With more than 40 years of experience in the metal forming industry, Repkon Machine and Tool Industry & Trade Inc. manufactures strategically important technologies such as flowforming, shearforming and hot spinning machines and explosion-proof presses. The company not only provides these critical technologies to the local defense sector but also exports them abroad, with the United States having become one of the main markets.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/fast-track-to-autonomy-turkish-firm-builds-embargoed-parts-for-defense-industry>

NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

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