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ARMENIA

US, Armenia sign civil nuclear pact, launch strategic dialogue

Yenisafak, May 3, 2022

The US and Armenia launched a bilateral strategic dialogue Monday with Secretary of State Antony Blinken pledging a "further strengthening" of diplomatic ties. Blinken hosted Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan at the State Department for a meeting in which the two nations signed an agreement on civil nuclear cooperation, which the State Department said "improves our cooperation on energy security and strengthens our diplomatic and economic relationship." The department said in a separate statement that the agreement is aimed at helping Armenia diversify its energy supplies.

<https://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/us-armenia-sign-civil-nuclear-pact-launch-strategic-dialogue-3594915>

Defense Ministers of Armenia and Georgia sign cooperation program for 2022

News.am, May 4, 2022

Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan is on a two-day official visit to Georgia. Papikyan met with Georgian Defense Minister Juansher Burchuladze after the official meeting ceremony, the MOD press service reported. Suren Papikyan and Juansher Burchuladze also discussed the prospects of developing bilateral cooperation in the defense sphere, military education, exchange of experience, discipline and human rights, social security and other spheres.

<https://news.am/eng/news/700109.html>

Times like these are most dangerous for countries like Armenia, PM warns citing changing world order

Armenpress, 11 May, 2022

Azerbaijan continues its policy of aggression against Armenia and Nagorno

Karabakh, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said during a lecture at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael in response to a question from the audience. "Unfortunately, Azerbaijan continues its very aggressive policy against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. You know that there is a Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno Karabakh. ...they say that the government in Armenia was brought to power by the West through a color revolution, which is acting against Russia", Pashinyan said.

<https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1082934.html>

Armenian military denies Azerbaijani accusations on opening fire

Armenpress, May 12, 2022

The Armenian Ministry of Defense denied Azerbaijan's accusations on opening fire at the border. "The Azerbaijani ministry of defense, continuing the practice of spreading disinformation about the border situation, released a statement according to which in the evening of May 11 the units of the Armenian Armed Forces opened fire at the Azerbaijani military positions located in the eastern section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border", the Armenian defense ministry said in a statement. "This information has nothing to do with the reality", the ministry said, adding that the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border is relatively stable and is under the full control of the Armenian Armed Forces.

<https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1083006.html>

CYPRUS

Cyprus and Luxembourg look to deepen ties

Cyprus Mail, May 5, 2022

The Prime Minister of Luxembourg Xavier Bettel said on Thursday his country is looking forward to deepen its relationship with Cyprus in the fields of energy and

space and lauded the government's efforts to end the Cyprus problem. Bettel's comments came during an official visit to the island, where he held talks with President Nicos Anastasiades at the presidential palace.

"Our two countries share common positions and values and that although they are not geographically close, they are members of the same family," he said after the meeting.

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/05/05/cyprus-and-luxembourg-look-to-deepen-ties/>

Foreign ministry hopes for complete end to US arms embargo

Cyprus Mail, May 7, 2022

The foreign ministry on Saturday said the Republic has now fulfilled the requirements of the US 2019 partnership act and hopes that Washington will fully lift its decades-old arms embargo on Cyprus. The ministry added that it believed Cyprus has now fulfilled all the requirements of the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act of 2019 passed by the US Congress following a proposal by US Senators Bob Menendez and Marco Rubio, and therefore expects a positive outcome.

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/05/07/foreign-ministry-hopes-for-complete-end-to-us-arms-embargo/>

IRAN

Iran looks to launch new power plants

Azernews, May 2, 2022

Iran is working to launch 12 new power plants in the current Iranian year (started March 21, 2022), Trend reports citing Fars News Agency. The construction of 12 thermal power plants is underway. Overall, the construction includes a total of 18 thermal and steam units with a production capacity of 4,500 megawatts, which will be launched by the end of spring. The mentioned power plants are part of the

government's plan to develop the country's thermal power sector, reaching generation of 6,000 megawatts of electricity. The government is looking to eliminate the issue of power outages in summer.

<https://www.azernews.az/region/193240.html>

MP: Iran's drone capabilities non-negotiable

Tehran Times, May 6, 2022

Mohammad Hassan Asfari said the United States' latest application of sanctions on Iran's drone industry shows that the Islamic Republic is a regional power due to its armed forces' skills, including drone strength. The Iranian-made unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), known as drones, can fly very long distances, carry weapons, and take images and videos. Asfari added the UAVs are very stealthy in the face of enemy radars. He added the Islamic Republic is willing to share its knowledge of manufacturing UAVs with neighbouring countries in order to improve regional security and military capabilities.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/472309/MP-Iran-s-drone-capabilities-non-negotiable>

Senate adopts measure against efforts to revive nuclear deal

Tehran Times, May 6, 2022

Senators voted late Wednesday to endorse a Republican-led measure stating that any nuclear agreement with Tehran should also address what they claimed Iran's support for terrorism in the region, and that the U.S. should not lift sanctions on a branch of the Iranian military, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC).¹⁶ Democrats voted with almost all Republicans to approve Sen. James Lankford's (R-Okla.) motion. While the measure itself was non-binding, the vote was hailed as a modest victory for Republicans who have pushed the Biden administration to walk away from the talks in Vienna. Lawmakers from both parties said it was a warning shot to Biden's

negotiating team, who have all but acknowledged in private that an agreement that goes beyond curtailing Iran's nuclear program is no longer possible, according to multiple people familiar with classified Hill briefings on the subject.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/472276/Senate-adopts-measure-against-efforts-to-revive-nuclear-deal>

No place for weapons of mass destruction in Islamic approach: IRGC chief

Tehran Times, May 6, 2022

Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps General Hossein Salami has said that weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) have no place in Islamic teachings. He said that weapons of mass destruction, as the Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed out, do not have any place in the Islamic approach, indicating that this is not a tactical decision, but a religious ruling. General Salami made the remarks during the closing ceremony of the Holy Quran competitions of the Revolution Guards, which was held on Thursday in the Holy Razavi Shrine in the city of Mashhad.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/472280/No-place-for-weapons-of-mass-destruction-in-Islamic-approach>

Senior Lawmaker: US Not Able to Stop Iran's Progress in Drone Industry

Fars News Agency, May 7, 2022

A senior Iranian legislator described the country's drone capability unnegotiable, saying that the US cannot hinder Iran's progress in production of different drones. The US is trying to obtain concessions from Iran in the Vienna talks by portraying Tehran as a threat and by imposing sanctions on the drone industry of the country, Mohammad Hassan Asqari said. He added that Iran's drone might has turned the Islamic Republic of Iran into a regional power, adding that the country's radar-evading unmanned aircraft are capable of doing long-range and reconnaissance flights and engage in

combat operations, including bombing enemy targets. Asqari said that the Islamic Republic's UAVs are capable of dodging the Zionist regime's Iron Dome missile shield and that's why the regime is so worried about the matter. He added that Iran is ready to share its drone know-how with regional countries.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14010217000253/Senir-Lawmaker-US-N-Able-Sp-Iran's-Prgress-in-Drne-Indsry>

EU resumes push to revive JCPOA with last-ditch attempt

Tehran Times, May 7, 2022

The talks came to a standstill in March after the U.S. refused to make political decisions regarding some terrorism-related sanctions that Iran believes were imposed in the first place to make the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), ever more difficult. In the last round of talks, Iran demanded that the Biden administration remove the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) from the U.S. State Department Foreign Terrorist Organizations. The U.S. rejected the demand and blamed Iran for the delay in concluding the talks.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/472345/EU-resumes-push-to-revive-JCPOA-with-last-ditch-attempt>

Iran begins procedures to build a fully domestic nuclear reactor

Tehran Times, May 7, 2022

An Iranian official with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has said that Iran is planning to build a nuclear plant by using domestic knowledge. Pejman Jamshidi, deputy head of the AEOI, announced that Iran is seeking to build a fully Iranian-made nuclear reactor and that planning for the project is underway. Jamshidi said in an interview with Fars that Iran possesses the full cycle of nuclear fuel production, and this cycle has been fully localized from the stage of raw materials

discovery to the treatment of nuclear waste. Jamshidi also revealed that Iran plans to build a large facility for the production of radioactive drugs to meet the domestic need and increase exports until the end of the next Iranian year.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/472339/Iran-begins-procedures-to-build-a-fully-domestic-nuclear-reactor>

What is root cause of US sanction policy against Iran?

Islamic Republic News Agency, May 7, 2022,

The endorsement of Resolution 1929 by the United Nations Security Council in 2010 as well as the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (CISADA), which was signed into law by the then president Barack Obama on 1 July 2010, indicates that the UNSC and the US kicked off imposition of a wave of crippling sanctions on Iranian economy. The West's economic war against the Islamic Republic started at that time and the sanction policy could challenge economic development in the country. The administration of former president Hassan Rouhani vowed to boom economy following the 2015 nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but the then US president Donald Trump re-imposed sanctions on Iran despite the fact that Tehran complied with its commitments under the nuclear accord.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84743562/What-is-root-cause-of-US-sanction-policy-against-Iran>

Iran begins procedures to build a fully domestic nuclear reactor

Tehran Times, May 7, 2022

Pejman Jamshidi, deputy head of the AEOI, announced that Iran is seeking to build a fully Iranian-made nuclear reactor and that planning for the project is underway. Jamshidi said in an interview with Fars that Iran possesses the full cycle of nuclear fuel

production, and this cycle has been fully localized from the stage of raw materials discovery to the treatment of nuclear waste. Jamshidi pointed out that Iran is currently producing 20 types of radioactive drugs and supplies them to treatment centres at home, and is one of the main countries exporting such drugs.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/472339/Iran-begins-procedures-to-build-a-fully-domestic-nuclear-reactor>

How concerned should we be about the Iranian drone threat?

The Jerusalem Post, May 7, 2022

The US House of Representatives voted last week to pass the Stop Iranian Drones Act.

"It shall be the policy of the United States to prevent Iran and Iranian-aligned terrorist and militia groups from acquiring unmanned aerial vehicles, including commercially available component parts that can be used in attacks against United States persons and partner nations" the bill says. The move was an important step in highlighting the increased Iranian drone threat to the region. US lawmakers are beginning to understand how drones, and various versions of what are called UAVs and unmanned aerial systems (UAS), are playing an emerging role in the Middle East.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-705990>

Iranian resistance warns Iran's primary goal is to build a nuclear weapon

Arab News, May 8, 2022.

Iran is close to building a nuclear weapon and is using negotiations with the West to give them more time to achieve that goal, according to Shahin Gobadi, the spokesperson for the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). A thermal nuclear scientist who first joined the resistance while a college student at UCLA 40 years ago, Gobadi, 60, said the NCRI, which is based in Paris, works with the

People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK). The PMOI/MEK operates inside Iran taking great risks to expose Iran's nuclear weapons program, Gobadi said.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2077301/world>

IRGC Hits Terrorists Positions in Erbil by Artillery Fire

Fars News Agency, May 11, 2022

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force shelled terrorists' bases in Erbil in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

The IRGC conducted artillery attacks against terrorist bases in Erbil. No report has yet released on the casualties and damages of the attack. In a relevant development last month, the IRGC targeted a Mossad base in Erbil with precision-guided missiles. The Iranian Armed Forces, specially the IRGC, have repeatedly warned that they will never tolerate the presence and activity of terrorist groups along the north-western border and will give strong and decisive responses in case of anti-security activities.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14010221000624/IRGC-His-Terriss-Psiins-in-Erbil-by-Arillery-Fire>

IRGC pounds terrorist sites in northern Iraq

Tehran Times, May 11, 2022

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Wednesday that it had targeted a site in northern Iran used by terrorist groups with missiles and artillery attacks. The IRGC said in a statement that the attack took place after it arrested members of a terrorist group that was preparing for sabotage and infiltration operations inside Iran. Five individuals were arrested in Baneh county, western Iran. Using confessions obtained from the detainees, the IRGC targeted the terrorist group's headquarters in northern Iraq with missile and artillery attacks, according to

the statement. In March, the IRGC targeted a vast compound in Erbil with at least a dozen missiles. Iran said at the time that the target was a Mossad intelligence hub.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/472503/IRGC-pounds-terrorist-sites-in-northern-Iraq>

Iran FM underlines red lines in Vienna talks

Tehran Times, May 11, 2022

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has said that Iran still pursues the path of negotiations but the lifting of U.S. sanctions on Iran should be done in line with Iran's red lines. "Both paths of neutralizing sanctions and lifting them are being pursued," Amir Abdollahian said on Twitter. "The talks to lift sanctions are being pursued through sticking to Iran's red lines for reaching a good, strong and lasting agreement," Amir Abdollahian noted. The tweet comes as the European Union's coordinator of the Vienna talks, Enrique Mora, is in Tehran for talks over how to resume the stalled talks. In Tehran, Mora met with Iran's chief negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani. "Travelling again to Tehran for meetings with Bagheri Kani and other officials on the Vienna talks and other issues. Work on closing the remaining gaps of this negotiation continues," Mora said on Twitter before heading to Tehran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/472504/Iran-FM-underlines-red-lines-in-Vienna-talks>

UN nuclear agency 'extremely concerned' by Iranian silence on undeclared sites

Times of Israel, 11 May 2022

The UN atomic energy watchdog chief said Tuesday that he was "extremely concerned" about Iran's lack of cooperation as the EU seeks to unblock talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal. Talks between world powers and Iran have stalled since mid-March as negotiators seek to return to the landmark accord that curtailed the Islamic

republic's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. The International Atomic Energy Agency is "trying to clarify a number of still open matters with Iran," IAEA head Rafael Grossi told a European Parliament committee.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-nuclear-agency-extremely-concerned-by-iranian-silence-on-undeclared-sites/>

Iran Voices Doubt about Authenticity of IAEA Chief's Recent Remarks

Fars News Agency, May 12, 2022

Spokesman of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Behrouz Kamalvandi said his country believes that the recent remarks attributed to the UN nuclear watchdog's Chief, Rafael Grossi, could have been distorted by the media. Iran believes Grossi's remarks have been distorted for political purposes, Kamalvandi told MNA on Wednesday. He made the remarks in reaction to the allegations raised by certain media outlets quoting International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Chief Rafael Grossi as claiming that uranium has been discovered in unannounced locations in Iran and Iran has not responded the IAEA's question in this regard in the last few months.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14010222000281/Iran-Vices-Db-ab-Aheniciy-f-IAEA-Chief's-Recen-Remarks>

Amir Abdollahian: Good agreement within reach if U.S. makes 'political decision'

Tehran Times, May 13, 2022

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Friday that a good and reliable agreement is within reach if the U.S. makes a "political decision" and follows through on its obligations. "After my meetings with Josep Borrell, Mr. Mora's visit and talks with Mr. Bagheri were another opportunity to work on steps to overcome the remaining concerns," Amir Abdollahian stated on Twitter. He went on to say that "a good and trustworthy outcome

is within reach if the U.S. takes its political decision and follows through on its obligations." On Wednesday, Iranian top nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani met in Tehran with Enrique Mora, the deputy EU foreign policy chief, who acts as the Iran nuclear talks coordinator.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/472547/Amir-Abdollahian-Good-agreement-within-reach-if-U-S-makes-political>

How US blacklisting of IRGC is stalling Iran nuclear deal revival

Al Jazeera, 13 May 2022

After weeks of optimism around the prospect of restoring the Iran nuclear deal earlier this year, the fate of the agreement appears to be in limbo again with no further talks on the calendar and Washington's attention focused on Ukraine. The push to revive the deal seems to have stalled over the US designation of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a "foreign terrorist organization", with American officials reluctant to meet Tehran's demand to remove the group from the blacklist to seal the deal.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/13/how-us-blacklisting-irgc-is-stalling-iran-nuclear-deal-revival>

Commander: Iran's Radar, Missile Systems Deter Enemies' Aggression

Fars News Agency, May 14, 2022

Commander of the Iranian Army's Air Defense Force Brigadier General Alireza Sabahi Fard lauded the country's progress in developing different radar and missile systems, saying that they prevent enemies from making any aggression. The Air Defense, in interaction with knowledge-based companies, has created an active deterrent power for the country by producing and manufacturing various sophisticated radar and missile systems, General Sabahi Fard said on Friday. The Air Defense of the Army has succeeded in localizing defense and military equipment and weapons by focusing on indigenous

technical know-how and knowledge as well as relying upon the most experienced and talented youth of this land and territory, he added.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14010224000383/Cmmander-Iran's-Radar-Missile-Sytems-Deer-Enemies'-Aggressin>

IRAQ

Pentagon: Iran-backed militias, PKK coordinated vs. Turkish troops in Iraq

Al-Monitor, May 3, 2022

US military intelligence believes Iran-backed militias have been coordinating with Kurdish guerrillas to launch attacks on Turkey's military presence in northern Iraq, according to a Pentagon inspector general report released today. Prominent Iran-backed militias have publicly slammed Turkey's military operations targeting fighters of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) from the mountains of northern Iraq, citing violations of Iraq's sovereignty. The militias are also behind a small but increasing number of rocket attacks on Turkish forces in both Iraq and Syria in recent months, according to the declassified report. Some of the strikes in Iraq were carried out "in cooperation with the PKK," the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) reported.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/05/pentagon-iran-backed-militias-pkk-coordinated-vs-turkish-troops-iraq#ixzz7Tj53SfIB>

Iraqi Kurdistan hit by multiple missile attacks as threats rise

Al-Monitor, May 4, 2022

The latest in a lengthening string of attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) assumed to have been conducted by armed groups close to Iran has induced the region's prime minister to warn on May 2 that this situation "cannot continue." Six missiles landed on Sunday night near a large refinery close to the regional capital of Erbil that had previously been targeted

on April 6. The May 1 attack sparked a fire in one of the main refinery tanks hit. The flames were put out some hours later. No casualties were reported in either of the two attacks. The rockets were found to have been shot from Bartella in Al-Hamdaniya district, east of Mosul, in central government territory. Shiite-led Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) are currently deployed in the area.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/05/iraqi-kurdistan-hit-multiple-missile-attacks-threats-rise#ixzz7Tj5OZ15W>

Peshmerga forces repel an attack by ISIS gangs in AltunKobri

Iraqi News Agency, May 5, 2022

The Peshmerga forces announced that they had repelled an attack by ISIS gangs in the town of Altun Kobri, northwest of Kirkuk. The commander of the 10th Peshmerga Brigade, Babir Sheikh Wasani, said in a statement to the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that "ISIS terrorist gangs carried out an attack on the 10th Peshmerga Brigade in AltunKubri in Kirkuk Governorate, but the Peshmerga forces managed to confront the attack." He added that "the attack did not result in any casualties among the Peshmerga."

<https://ina.iq/eng/19248-peshmerga-forces-repel-an-attack-by-isis-gangs-in-altun-kobri.html>

Sinjar becomes latest flashpoint for Iran-Turkey tensions in Iraq

Al-Monitor, May 6, 2022

Clashes between Iraqi security forces and a Yazidi militia known as the Shingal Resistance Units (YBS) may represent one of several new fronts in escalating tensions between Iran and Turkey in Iraq. Turkey has intensified air, drone and artillery attacks against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) targets beyond the remote, northern Qandil mountains of Iraq. The most recent Turkish military operation, called Operation Claw Lock, is the latest phase of

a campaign begun in 2019 to purge PKK bases in the region. Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said the present effort seeks to shut down all PKK access routes from Iraq into Turkey.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/05/sinjar-becomes-latest-flashpoint-iran-turkey-tensions-iraq#ixzz7Tj5yME5s>

Al-Araji: Iraq is keen to cooperate with NATO

Iraqi News Agency, May 8, 2022

The National Security Adviser Qasim Al-Araji confirmed on Sunday, Iraq's keen to cooperate with NATO. Al-Araji's media office stated in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that "the National Security Adviser, Qasim Al-Araji received, in his office on Sunday, the commander of the NATO mission in Iraq, Lieutenant-General Michael Lollsgaard, on the occasion of the end of the mission commander's duties in Iraq." Al-Araji stressed, according to the statement, that "Iraq is keen to cooperate with NATO and all the parties that supported it in its war against Daesh," reiterated, "Iraq's position to solve problems, end the war in Ukraine, and sit at the dialogue table."

<https://ina.iq/eng/19301-al-araqi-iraq-is-keen-to-cooperate-with-nato.html>

Iraq Contracts with two countries to enhance artillery class

Iraqi News Agency, May 8, 2022

Ministry of Defense revealed on Sunday, the signing of contracts with US and France to import advanced weapons and enhance the quality of artillery."The ministry has concluded contracts with France and US to import advanced weapons, including artillery, which has proven in the recent period and effectively its influence in all battles with the terrorist gangs of Daesh," the commander of the artillery class in the ministry, Major General Abd-Al-Ardawi, told the Iraqi News Agency (INA)."The

state continues to develop weapons for the security services in importing long-armed cannons that target the enemy at long distances, after it has effectively proven its effect in battles, it considered better than aircraft and rifles," Ardawi added.

<https://ina.iq/eng/19303-iraq-contracts-with-two-countries-to-enhance-artillery-class.html>

Defense Ministry discussing with the European coalition forces and NATO training, development and logistical support

Iraqi News Agency, May 9, 2022

The Ministry of Defense discussed today, Monday, with the European and NATO forces training, development and logistical support. The ministry said in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that "the Minister of Defense, Juma'a Inad Saadoun, received in his office, today, Monday, the Deputy Supreme Commander of the European Coalition Forces, Lieutenant-General Tim Radford, and the commander of the NATO mission in Iraq, Lieutenant-General Michael Lollesgaard. ""During the meeting, they discussed ways of joint cooperation between the European coalition forces, the NATO mission and the Ministry of Defense, especially in the field of training, development and logistical support." The statement added.

<https://ina.iq/eng/19317-defense-ministry-discussing-with-the-european-coalition-forces-and-nato-training-development-and-logistical-support.html>

MOD discusses joint cooperation during the visit to the Czech Republic

Iraqi News Agency, May 12, 2022

The Czech Republic MOD and the Iraqi Defense Minister Juma Inad discussed joint cooperation. A statement issued by the Ministry of Defense, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), said that "Inad met during his visit to the Czech Republic, the Czech Minister of Defense, Mrs. Jana

Chernokhova, and during this meeting, the two sides discussed a number of topics of common interest, and ways of cooperation were also discussed joint Ministry of Defense of Iraq and the Czech Republic.

<https://ina.iq/eng/19389-mod-discusses-joint-cooperation-during-the-visit-to-the-czech-republic.html>

Iraqi air strikes target ISIS hideouts in the QaraChokh mountains

Iraq News Agency, May 14, 2022

The Iraqi Air Force targeted, today, Saturday, four hideouts of terrorist gangs in the QaraChokh Mountains. A statement by the Security Media Cell received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA) stated that "according to accurate intelligence information and through coordination and cooperation between the Anti-Terrorism Service and the Peshmerga forces, the sixth axis with the Joint Operations Targeting Cell, the Iraqi Air Force's F16 aircraft carried out four strikes, during which they targeted a cave in The QaraChokh mountains contain a number of ISIS terrorist elements," noting that "a force from the sixth axis in the Peshmerga units has begun to search the targeted place."

<https://ina.iq/eng/19421-iraqi-air-strikes-target-isis-hideouts-in-the-qara-chokh-mountains.html>

ISRAEL

Israel bolsters security efforts in aftermath of West Bank attack

I24 News, May 1, 2022

Yaakov Lappin, a military and strategic affairs analyst with the MirYam Institute, spoke to i24NEWS on the recent terror attack in the West Bank city Ariel, and why these incidents are so difficult to counter. On Friday night, two Palestinian assailants killed a 23-year-old man, identified as Vyacheslav Daniel Golev, who was working as a security guard in the area. He added that these attacks are often carried

out with the use of homemade firearms which are built in workshops throughout the West Bank.

<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/defense/1651390611-israel-bolsters-security-efforts-in-aftermath-of-west-bank-attack>

Gantz says Israel still coordinates with Russia on Syria

Al-Monitor, May 2, 2022

Israel's Defense Minister Benny Gantz told Al-Monitor that his government continues to engage with Russia in a tacit agreement that allows Israeli airstrikes against Iranian targets in Syria, even after Israel sent limited military aid to Ukraine. Gantz spoke to Al-Monitor's Ben Caspit on a wide range of Israeli security issues, both domestic and foreign, for the latest edition of the "On Israel" podcast. The interview came after the Biden administration reportedly pulled back from considerations to delist the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization as part of negotiations over a return to the 2015 nuclear agreement.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/05/gantz-says-israel-still-coordinates-russia-syria#ixzz7TiyW6SP6>

Israel's Liberman talks wheat, strategy in visit to Azerbaijan

Al Monitor, May 2, 2022

Why does Israel need Azerbaijan? For one thing, its proximity to Iran is a strategic asset. It could, for instance, be helpful in an Israeli assault on Iran's nuclear facilities. Iran has yet to return to the nuclear agreement. It continues to enrich uranium and is making progress in developing a nuclear bomb. Israel has said on countless occasions that it would not allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons and that it would take any steps necessary to prevent that. Statements like this have been made most recently by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, Defense Minister Benny Gantz and Israel

Defense Forces Chief of Staff Yair Kochavi.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/05/israels-liberman-talks-wheat-strategy-visit-azerbaijan>

Israel keen to set up cyber 'Iron Dome' to curb rise in attacks

I24 news, May 2, 2022

'We are trying to put the right standard on communications companies in order to protect Israel'. Israel ordered communications firms on Monday to step up cyber security efforts in the wake of a rise in attempted hacking attacks. New regulations are currently being implemented in which mandatory and unified standards will have to be met, the Communications Ministry and Israel's National Cyber Directorate said, according to Reuters.

<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/technology-science/1651503685-israel-keen-to-set-up-cyber-iron-dome-to-curb-rise-in-attacks>

Israel will defeat this wave of terrorism, President Herzog tells the 'Post'

The Jerusalem Post, May 2, 2022

Israel will defeat the current wave of Palestinian terrorism that has struck across the country, President Isaac Herzog said in a special Independence Day interview with The Jerusalem Post. Herzog spoke before the terrorist attack in Ariel on Friday night in which security guard Vyacheslav Golev was shot dead by two Palestinians who were caught the next day by Israeli special forces. Fifteen Israelis have been killed in a string of recent attacks in Beersheba, Hadera, Bnei Brak, Tel Aviv and now Ariel.

"The defense establishment has always known in the end how to identify the sources, to diagnose and to develop the tools needed to stop the terror ...

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-705620>

Israel reportedly leaning toward sending defensive military aid to Ukraine

The Times of Israel, May 3, 2022

Israeli officials are set to discuss expanding aid to Ukraine, including supplies of defensive military equipment so far withheld by Jerusalem, according to a report Tuesday. Since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, Israel has rejected requests from Kyiv and the West for military equipment such as anti-missile batteries, and only recently agreed to send helmets and flak jackets to civilian rescue and medical forces, part of a policy meant to preserve ties with Russia. Instead it has sent some 100 tons of humanitarian aid and set up a field hospital in western Ukraine for six weeks. However, Israeli officials are now expected to support sending Ukraine military aid, albeit at symbolic levels, and still with hopes of keeping its relationship with Russia intact, Haaretz reported Tuesday, citing officials with knowledge of the matter.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-reportedly-leaning-toward-sending-defensive-military-aid-to-ukraine/>

Israeli intel shares story of Iranian spy plot

Al-Monitor, May 3, 2022

The Shin Bet security agency announced on May 2 that it had uncovered a fake Iranian Facebook profile used to recruit Israelis for intelligence collection and possible violence against targets within Israel. The Iranians reportedly made up a Jewish woman they named Sara Puppi who was said to have business connections in Israel and promised payment in bitcoin. Two days earlier, in a highly unusual disclosure, the Mossad provided a photo and recording of a man it identified as Mansour Rasouli, 52, said to be an Iranian operative of the Quds Force who admitted to being tasked with assassinating an Israeli diplomat in Istanbul, an American general in Germany and a French journalist. The Mossad said its agents detained the man on Iranian soil,

questioned him and released him there. His fate is unknown.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/05/israeli-intel-shares-story-iranian-spy-plot#ixzz7TiyriET>

Mossad tries again to directly influence US diplomacy on Iran

The Jerusalem Post, May 3, 2022

Once upon a time, there was a clandestine spy organization that acted only in the shadows. Then came the 2018 Mossad raid on Iran's nuclear archives, and a new age of the agency openly trying to influence America's diplomacy on Iran. This past week, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett firmly moved into Benjamin Netanyahu's use of the Mossad in an open way to achieve strategic statecraft goals...At the end of the day, if it turns out that Bennett successfully influenced the US not to delist the IRGC from the terrorist list in part because of having exposed this plot to assassinate a US general, many may not care what Bennett's political motivations might have been.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/politics-and-diplomacy/article-705791>

Beyond Iran: Four Long-term Challenges Facing Israel

Haaretz, May 4, 2022

The daily media coverage in Israel is devoted almost exclusively to the here-and-now. In the security-strategic realm, it's rare for the press to devote time or thought to what is lurking beyond the horizon, at a distance of more than a few weeks. A random survey of the headlines in the past year will turn up the usual mix of threats: Iran, Hezbollah and more frequently Palestinian terrorism, from the launching of rockets in the Gaza Strip to attacks by lone terrorists in the West Bank. But Israel needs to look far past this. Here are four of the acute problems facing the country, without a word (almost) about Iran. IDF,

Palestinians, Cyber Warfare and Israeli Arabs.

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-beyond-iran-four-long-term-challenges-facing-israel-1.10779001>

Drones participate in Independence Day flyover for first time

The Jerusalem Post, May 7, 2022

Israeli drones took part in this year's Independence Day flyover, marking the first time that unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) took part in the event. The two drones that participated were the Heron 1 and Heron TP UAVs built by Israel Aerospace Industries that are flown by the Israel Air Force. Other than the drones, various other IAF aircraft took part including F-15, F-16 and F-35 fighter jets, Black Hawk and Apache attack helicopters, and refuelling and transport aircraft. The Heron 1 is a medium-altitude, long-endurance (MALE) drone used primarily for strategic reconnaissance and surveillance operations.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-705841>

IDF believes Hamas not driving terror spate, but 'riding the wave'

The times of Israel, May 7, 2022.

Military analysts believe the Hamas terror group is not behind a recent string of deadly terror attacks, but has rather been "riding the wave" to encourage further violence, defense officials said Monday. In an assessment delivered to political leaders, the Israel Defense Forces presented a picture of the terror group milking the successful assaults for their PR value and to push more Palestinians to take similar action. The group was not directly involved in orchestrating the attacks, the IDF said, even one that it claimed responsibility for.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-believes-hamas-not-driving-terror-spate-but-just-riding-their-wave/>

Israel considering military op in Jenin or Gaza in response to terror wave – reports

The Times of Israel, May 8, 2022

Israel is considering responding to the ongoing wave of deadly terror attacks by launching a military operation in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank, with a focus on the city of Jenin, according to Hebrew media reports Sunday. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Defense Minister Benny Gantz were said to be divided over which of the two options to pursue, during a meeting with top security officials about the terror onslaught. A broad military operation in Jenin would aim to arrest suspects and prevent further attacks. It would also include additional arrest operations in other towns and cities as well as a show of force across the West Bank, according to reports.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-considering-military-op-in-jenin-or-gaza-in-response-to-terror-wave-reports/>

'Edge of Tomorrow': The IDF's combat soldiers of the future

The Jerusalem Post, May 10, 2022

Israel's future combat soldiers will incorporate augmented reality goggles, a computerized assault rifle system, a digital head-mounted display system, hostile fire detection technology and more. The Directorate of Defense Research and Development (DDR&D) and Elbit Systems unveiled on Tuesday the "Edge of Tomorrow," an innovative program that strengthens the synergy between dismantled combat soldiers and their teams and enables optimal operational value, the Defense Ministry said.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-706293>

Ambassador Herzog says Israel maintains freedom to act apart from Iran deal

The Jerusalem Post, 12 May 2022

The Jewish Federations of North America held its Washington Conference on

Wednesday and Thursday, featuring US senators and Israeli officials. Israeli Ambassador to Washington Mike Herzog, in his remarks about the Abraham Accords, said that the agreements were "really an amazing achievement and a key to a better future in our region."

"This is a warm peace, it's not just a cold peace between governments," he said. "The sky's the limit, it really is a success story, and people look at it and say 'We want to join.' We are now looking to deepen the agreements but also to expand them and to add additional countries.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-706578>

Israel wraps up 1st week of 'Chariots of Fire' military exercise

I24 news, May 12, 2022

'Northern Command practiced how to deal with challenges and erupting events in a multi-armed manner'. The first week of one of Israel's largest ever military exercises ended on Thursday, with another three weeks to go for the "Chariots of Fire" drill. Since Monday, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers have been practicing for wartime scenarios, including strengthening defenses at the sometimes-volatile northern borders with Lebanon and Syria. "Safeguarding Israel's security is tied to two anchors: force activation, and force building in a sustained, multi-year manner. The IDF can do both..."

<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/defense/1652369590-israel-wraps-up-1st-week-of-chariots-of-fire-military-exercise>

More drones, artificial intel to be used in naval cooperation in Red Sea

The Jerusalem Post, May 12, 2022

The US is pushing to use new technology to help secure the Middle East's important waterways, including the Red Sea. US Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, commander of US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT), a part of the US Fifth Fleet, gave a telephone press briefing last

week...Ostensibly, this is of importance to Israel, which conducted a naval drill last November in the Red Sea with the US, Bahrain and the UAE. It also joined the IMX drill in February. US marines also trained with their Israeli counterparts last year. Cooper said the current work of his partners was to focus on the Red Sea, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-706588>

Israel not trying to drag US into military conflict with Iran, PM adviser says

The Times of Israel, May 12, 2022

National Security Adviser Eyal Hulata reportedly said Thursday that Israel is not interested in a military solution to Iran's nuclear program. "We are not looking for a confrontation with Iran — we don't consider that to be a solution," Hulata said during a closed conference held for the Board of Governors of Tel Aviv University. He added that Israel "does not want to drag the United States into a military confrontation" with the Islamic republic and indicated that Jerusalem was looking into other options of dealing with the threat posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions. "We think the issue can be solved in other ways," he said, according to a report by the Walla news site. "We believe it can."

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-not-trying-to-drag-us-into-military-conflict-with-iran-pm-adviser-says/>

Israel says it foiled Hamas attempt to smuggle arms production parts via sea

The Times of Israel, May 11, 2022

Israeli security forces thwarted an attempt to smuggle weapon production materials from the Sinai Peninsula through the Mediterranean Sea to the Hamas terror group in the Gaza Strip several weeks ago, the military said Wednesday. Three Palestinians, including one previously jailed in Israel for similar offenses, were arrested when Israeli troops stopped a

vessel allegedly involved. Details of the operation, which occurred on April 8, were barred from publication until Wednesday. The Israel Defense Forces said the operation was a "joint intelligence and operational effort by Israeli Navy forces and the Shin Bet security service, along with Military Intelligence."

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-says-it-foiled-hamas-attempt-to-smuggle-arms-production-parts-via-sea/>

Syria says air defenses engaging airstrikes in northwest

The Times of Israel, May 13, 2022

Syria's state news agency is reporting that air defenses are engaging "hostile targets" over Masyaf, in the north-western part of the country. The state-run SANA does not immediately accuse Israel, but other media outlets in the country do. A Twitter account tracking Israeli military activity in Syria posts an image alleging to show a site that was struck.

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/syria-says-air-defenses-engaging-airstrikes-in-northwest/

Syria says five killed, 7 hurt in Israeli airstrikes in northwest

The Times of Israel, May 13, 2022

Five people were killed and seven others were hurt in an alleged Israeli airstrike on Friday night in north-western Syria, the country's state news agency said. It was the second alleged Israeli strike on the country in days, after missiles were reportedly launched at a site just across the border from Israel in the pre-dawn hours of Wednesday. The state-run SANA said a large number of missiles were launched by Israeli fighter jets over Masyaf during the Friday night strike. SANA quoted an unidentified Syrian military official as saying most of the missiles were intercepted.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/syria-says-five-killed-7-hurt-in-israeli-airstrikes-in-northwest/>

JORDAN

King Abdullah Stresses US-Jordan Relations With House Speaker Pelosi

Albawaba, May 12, 2022

In remarks to the media ahead of his meeting with Pelosi, King Abdullah commended the United States' support to Jordan, "I'm delighted to be back here, and, as always, I thank the American people and the US Congress for the great support that they provide to our country Jordan and to the region", according to a Royal Court statement. His Majesty said he looks forward to the meeting to discuss means of moving the region towards the light and finding a new vision for the Middle East whereby leaders work towards achieving stability, especially with two years into the COVID pandemic.

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/king-abdullah-stresses-us-jordan-relations-house-speaker-pelosi-1476495>

Jordan announces uranium production

World Nuclear News, May 13, 2022

The Jordan Uranium Mining Company (JUMCO) has announced the production of 20 kg of yellowcake from 160 tonnes of uranium ore at a newly operational processing facility. State news agency *Petra* reported the achievement, citing JUMCO General Director Muhammad Shunnaq who said the factory is set to produce "tens of kilograms" of yellowcake from the processing of "hundreds of tons" of ore over the next few months. Production is being carried out in accordance with International Atomic Energy Agency standards, he said. JUMCO is the commercial arm of the Jordanian Atomic Energy Commission (JAEC) and was established in 2013 to carry out radioactive elements exploration and development in Jordan. Its exploration and development efforts have been focused on the Central Jordan Uranium Project, where a pilot plant began operation in early 2021.

JUMCO later that year said the plant was fully operational.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Jordan-announces-uranium-production>

KUWAIT

Kuwait, US affirm importance of enhancing military cooperation

Kuwait Times, May 12, 2022

The State of Kuwait and the US affirmed on Tuesday the importance of enhancing military cooperation in different fields. This came during the meeting between Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Saleh Al-Sabah and US Army Chief of Staff General James McConville at the US Department of Defense headquarters in Washington, DC, said the Army General Staff in a statement. It noted that the Kuwaiti general visited the US Capital in a highly ranked delegation to participate in the 14th US-Kuwait Joint Military Committee.

<https://www.kuwaittimes.com/kuwait-us-affirm-importance-of-enhancing-military-cooperation/>

LEBANON

Lebanon election should be a referendum on disarming Hezbollah, ending the Iranian Occupation

YaLibnan, May 10, 2022

The so called Hezbollah resistance movement is the force protecting Lebanon's states quo and the corrupt political elite in Lebanon. Hezbollah stopped being a resistance movement ever since Israel pulled out of Lebanon in May 2000. Most recently anti-Hezbollah sentiment is "growing like a snowball". Since 2000 Hezbollah has been using its arms to gain influence in Lebanon and dictate the politics of the country. No government could be formed unless Hezbollah decides who should be the prime

minister and how the cabinet should be formed and no president could be elected unless Hezbollah decides who should be the president. The straw that broke the camel's back" over the past two decades was power being handed to a militia faction that follows a sectarian ideology foreign to its local sectarian community, as well as the Lebanese and Arab climates. It is part and parcel of the Iranian-Syrian political axis and is totally loyal to it.

<https://yalibnan.com/2022/05/10/lebanon-election-should-be-a-referendum-on-disarming-hezbollah-and-ending-the-iranian-occupation/>

Lebanon 2022 vote: Hezbollah arms at the heart of Lebanon's elections

YaLibnan, May 14, 2022

It was a sea of yellow as thousands of men, women and children waving Hezbollah flags and wearing the group's trademark yellow caps rallied on a giant plot of land in the ancient eastern city of Baalbek in support of the heavily armed militant group.

One after another, many attendees vowed to vote Sunday for the Shiite Muslim Hezbollah and its allies in Lebanon's closely watched parliamentary elections, rejecting any attempt to disarm the powerful group. Despite a devastating economic collapse and multiple other crises gripping Lebanon — the culmination of decades of corruption and mismanagement — the deeply divisive issue of Hezbollah's weapons has been at the center of the vote for a new 128-member parliament. Disarming the group has dominated political campaigns among almost all of the group's opponents. Those include Western-backed mainstream political groups and independents who played a role in nationwide protests since the start of the economic meltdown in October 2019.

<https://yalibnan.com/2022/05/14/hezbollah-arms-at-the-heart-of-lebanons-elections-sunday/>

Does Hezbollah have a new Iranian long range cruise missile? – analysis

The Jerusalem Post, May 15, 2022

A Hezbollah video circulating online purports to show that the terrorist group has some new munitions in its always expanding arsenal. Over the years, Hezbollah has stockpiled more than 100,000 missiles and rockets. However, the real danger of these weapons is that some have been upgraded or use new technology that enables them to be precision-guided munitions, or manoeuvring munitions, drones and cruise missiles.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-706732>

QATAR

Qatar leader in Iran in bid to help salvage 2015 nuclear pact

Aljazeera, May 12, 2022

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani has met President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran as the Gulf state tries to help end a dispute between Tehran and Washington over revival of the 2015 nuclear deal. State TV showed the arrival of the Qatari leader at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport, where he was received by Iran's Senior Vice President Mohammad Mokhber. The report said bilateral, regional and international issues are on agenda during the visit. The one-day visit on Thursday came as the European Union's coordinator for the nuclear talks, Enrique Mora, held a second day of meetings in Tehran with Iran's chief negotiator Ali Bagheri.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/12/qatars-emir-in-iran-in-bid-to-help-salvage-2015-nuclear-pact>

SAUDI ARABIA

What Saudi Arabia Wants From America

The National Interest, May 2, 2022

Last month, Saudi Arabia's crown prince reportedly refused to take the American

president's calls; last week, the prince instead had a telephone conversation with Chinese president Xi Jinping, in which the two men agreed to strengthen Saudi-Chinese cooperation, including coordinating Saudi Arabia's grand "Vision 2030" national development project and China's globe-spanning Belt and Road Initiative. China has much to offer Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia laments what it sees as America's willful dismantling of an international order that it established and led for the better part of a century. In the last ten years, we witnessed the United States handing over Syria and Crimea to Russia while bending over backward to strike a "deal" with an Iranian theocratic regime whose national motto is "death to America" and seeks to develop nuclear weapons.

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/what-saudi-arabia-wants-america-202137>

CENTCOM chief hits out at Iran, says US committed to Middle East partners

Alarabiya, May 12, 2022

The top US military general for the Middle East said in a recent interview that Iran was the "most destabilizing force" in the region, noting that countering this threat needed regional cooperation. "I view Iran as the most destabilizing force in the Middle East. The United States' position is that we will not allow a nuclear Iran. However, our concerns about Iran go beyond its nuclear capability," US Central Command (CENTCOM) chief Gen. Erik Kurilla told Al Arabiya during Tuesday's interview in Saudi Arabia. Asked about his trip to Saudi Arabia, the US general said it was part of a "listening tour" and that he would be making several more trips back to the kingdom. He was in Egypt before heading to Saudi Arabia. "This visit to the CENTCOM region... is largely an opportunity to glean insights from our partners here. In so doing, I'm looking for gaps, risks, and opportunities in security for

our partners and for the region," Gen. Kurilla said.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2022/05/12/CENTCOM-chief-hits-out-at-Iran-says-US-committed-to-Middle-East-partners>

SYRIA

Syria supports China's initiative on global security, Foreign Ministry says

Syrian Arab News Agency, May 10, 2022

Syria reaffirmed its support and interest in the initiatives proposed by the People's Republic of China on the international level, particularly the global security initiative, all of which are consistent and agree with many principles and stances of Syria in its foreign policy. Foreign and Expatriates' Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday that the Syrian Arab Republic is following with great interest the initiatives proposed by the People's Republic of China at the international arena and sees them positively because they are consistent and agree with the principles that Syria always reaffirms in its foreign policy at all international forums, on top, the commitment to the rules and principles of the United Nations' Charter, respect for the sovereignty of states and non-intervention in their domestic affairs.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=271588>

Israel said to strike Syrian Golan in missile attack; damage reported

The Times of Israel, May 11, 2022

A site in southern Syria was damaged in an Israeli missile attack in the pre-dawn hours of Wednesday, Syrian state media reported. The attack targeted an area near the town of Hader, north of Quneitra in the Syrian Golan Heights, just across the border from Israel, according to the state-run SANA news agency. There were no reports of injuries, but material damage was caused, SANA reported. There was no

immediate word on what sites were hit. A Twitter account tracking Israeli military activity in Syria claimed four missiles were launched from a warplane, causing damage to the area.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-said-to-strike-syrian-golan-in-missile-attack-damage-reported/>

Satellite images show complete destruction of Syrian site hit by Israel

The Jerusalem Post, May 15, 2022

Images published by Israeli intelligence firm ImageSat International (ISI) of a site allegedly struck by Israel on Friday show its complete destruction. According to ISI, the structures that were hit served as an entrance to underground tunnels and were completely destroyed by the airstrikes. The same structures were hit on September 2018 in another strike blamed on Israel and were rebuilt. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the Syrian civil war, said that at least eight missiles were fired toward weapons depots and sites belonging to Iranian militias. A five-man crew of a Pantsir missile-defense system was killed after firing toward Israel Air Force jets. Another seven civilians were injured.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-706768>

TURKEY

How can new Saudi-Turkey ties impact the Middle East? – Analysis

The Jerusalem Post, May 1, 2022

Turkey and Saudi Arabia, two key countries in the region, are seeking to renew ties. The presidential visit from Turkey went well last week, and Ankara is keen to speak about new brotherly ties. This is a big change from the last half-decade when the countries appeared to be rivals. In fact, Turkey appeared to be trying to angle to more control over global Islamic sensibilities, championing causes in places such as Kashmir and hosting groups

like Hamas. Riyadh, in contrast, was moderating. Both Ankara and Riyadh have faced tensions with the US and some Western countries in recent years.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-705587>

Turkey Plans to Fully Normalize Ties With Armenia

Al bawaba, May 5, 2022

“The special representatives reaffirmed the declared goal of achieving full normalisation between their respective countries through this process,” the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday. It came after the third meeting of Turkish and Armenian envoys in the Austrian capital Vienna. The envoys discussed the possible steps that can be taken for tangible progress in normalisation, the statement said.

<https://www.albawaba.com/news/turkey-plans-fully-normalize-ties-armenia-1475680>

Key US Congress members inclined to sell F-16s to Turkey: Report

Daily Sabah, May 5, 2022

Several U.S. lawmakers of critical importance in Washington's potential sale of dozens of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey have stated their inclination in favor of the deal, a report said on Thursday. The matter has been complicated by Turkey's purchase of the advanced Russian S-400 anti-air system, which has led to an ongoing row with Washington that resulted in sanctions and Ankara's expulsion from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program. "Several key lawmakers" who were instrumental in Turkey's removal from the F-35 program told the Defense News website that they are now potentially inclined to approve the sale of 40 F-16 fighters and 80 kits to modernize Ankara's existing fleet.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/key-us-congress-members-inclined-to-sell-f-16s-to-turkey-report>

Turkiye to produce drone in Kazakhstan

Anadolu Agency, May 11, 2022

Turkiye will produce its drone at a facility soon to be established in Kazakhstan. Anka, an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) exported to Kazakhstan, will be jointly produced by Turkish and Kazakh experts, according to a statement by the Turkish Aerospace Industries (TUSAS). The company signed a memorandum of understanding with state-owned Kazakhstan Engineering on technology transfer, including maintenance and repair. The latest development will make Kazakhstan the first production base of Anka outside of Turkiye.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/economy/turkiye-to-produce-drone-in-kazakhstan/2584822>

Turkey becoming 'persistently further from EU values and standards

Cyprus Mail, May 12, 2022

Without clear and significant progress in EU-related reforms, the European Parliament cannot envisage resuming accession negotiations with Turkey, MEPs warned in a report adopted on Thursday. The report was adopted with 54 votes in favour, 7 against and 13 abstentions. MEPs warned that in spite of Turkey's repeated declarations on the objective of EU accession, over the past two years the country has consistently gone back on its commitments in relation to the accession process.

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/05/12/turkey-becoming-persistently-further-from-eu-values-and-standards-meps-say/>

Biden Administration requests Congress to approve defence sale to Turkey

Middle East Monitor, May 12, 2022

The United States' government under the Administration of President Joe Biden has reportedly asked Congress to approve the sale of advanced weapons and military equipment to Turkey, after years of marginalising Ankara and its defence interests. According to

the *Wall Street Journal*, anonymous US officials familiar with the matter revealed that the Biden administration is attempting to gain approval from congressional leaders for major defence sales to Turkey, primarily for the upgrading of the country's fleet of F-16 fighter jets. The potential deal would provide Turkey with missiles, radar equipment, and key electronic components for the upgrade of its F-16s, and would also include AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles and AIM-120 Amraam missiles. The sale would reportedly be worth over \$400 million.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20220512-biden-administration-requests-congress-to-approve-defence-sale-to-turkey/>

Turkey breaks with rest of NATO to oppose membership for Finland, Sweden

The Times of Israel, May 14, 2022

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday said Turkey did not have a "positive opinion" on Finland and Sweden joining NATO, throwing up a potential obstacle for the nations' membership bid. The leader of NATO member Turkey spoke ahead of expected confirmations from the Nordic nations on Sunday that they will apply to join the Western military alliance. Once a country has decided to apply for NATO membership, the alliance's 30 members must agree unanimously to extend a formal invitation, which is followed by membership negotiations.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/turkey-breaks-with-rest-of-nato-to-oppose-membership-for-finland-sweden/>

Turkey integrates S. Korean engine with MBT Altay, tests continue

Daily Sabah, May 15, 2022

The engine of Turkey's indigenously developed domestic main battle tank (MBT) Altay, which arrived from South Korea in March, has been integrated into the tank, while the mass production of the tank is expected to begin within two years,

according to the Turkish daily Sabah Sunday. Turkish land vehicle manufacturer BMC, the company that heads the Altay project, previously signed an agreement with two South Korean companies, Doosan Infracore Co. and S&T Dynamics Co., for the engine and transmission. Work on the development of a domestic engine, on the other hand, has also gained momentum as it was repeatedly stated that the next versions of the Altay would bear a domestic engine.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkey-integrates-s-korean-engine-with-mbt-altay-tests-continue>

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

UAE to be first Arab state to send astronaut on long-term space mission

The Jerusalem Post, May 1, 2022

The United Arab Emirates will send an astronaut to the International Space Station for a 6-month-long mission in 2023, becoming the first Arab country to send an astronaut on a long-term space mission, the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Center (MBRSC) announced on Friday. The MBRSC and Axiom Space signed an agreement at the UAE's embassy in Washington, DC on Wednesday to fly a UAE professional crew member to the ISS. The Emirati astronaut will join the SpaceX Crew-6 in the Spring of 2023.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-705553>

Greece, UAE agree joint investments in energy, other sectors (Updated)

Cyprus Mail, 9 May 2022

Greece and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Monday agreed to jointly fund investments worth 4 billion euros (\$4.2 billion) in the Mediterranean country and explore further cooperation in the energy sector, the Greek prime minister's office said.

“Due to its geographical position, Greece has the potential to become a gate for natural gas from the Middle East to

Europe,” Mitsotakis added. “We would like to explore the possibilities for further strategic cooperation and the participation of funds from the UAE in this direction.”

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/05/09/greece-uae-agree-joint-investments-in-energy-other-sectors/>

YEMEN

GCC Sec-Gen reaffirms support for efforts aimed at enhancing security and stability in Yemen

Arab News, May 9, 2022

The Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council reaffirmed the bloc's support for all efforts aimed at enhancing security and stability in Yemen on Monday. During a meeting with UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg in Riyadh, Dr. Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf also reaffirmed the GCC's support for achieving development and peace for the people of Yemen. The officials reviewed UN efforts to end the conflict in Yemen, represented by the ceasefire announced by the UN envoy, and the outcomes of GCC sponsored Yemen peace talks that were held recently.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2078471/middle-east>

UN Yemen envoy in Aden to sustain truce, revive peace talks

Arab News, May 10, 2022

Hans Grundberg, UN special envoy for Yemen, on Tuesday landed in Yemen's southern port city of Aden on a two-day visit aimed at salvaging a shaky truce between warring parties and pushing for opening roads in Taiz and resuming flights from the Houthi-held Sanaa. Grundberg's visit to Aden comes as the internationally recognized government of Yemen and the Iran-backed Houthis traded accusations over breaches to the UN-brokered truce across the country and delays in resuming commercial flights from Sanaa airport.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2079346/middle-east>

NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

*Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Mr Stephen Koshy James
with inputs from Mr Kushal Agrawal and and Mr Niranjana Oak*

Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

**No. 1, Development Enclave,
Rao Tula Ram Marg,
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi-110 010
Telephone: 91-11-26717983;
Fax: 91-11-26154191,
Website: www.idsa.in**



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