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

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IRAN

Lifting sanctions constitutes ‘essential part’ of JCPOA: EU and U.S.

Tehran Times, 16th June, 2021

The European Union and the United States have said that lifting sanctions on Iran constitutes an “essential part” of the 215 Iran nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), whose possible revival is the subject of the ongoing talks in Vienna since early April, according to Press TV.

“The European Union and the United States recognize that, alongside the return to full and effective implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments, the lifting of sanctions constitutes an essential part of the JCPOA,” the EU and the U.S. said in a joint statement after a summit on Tuesday.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462059/Lifting-sanctions-constitutes-essential-part-of-JCPOA-EU-and>

Commander: Iran Upgrades Air Defense Equipment

Fars News Agency, 16th June, 2021

Commander of Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base Brigadier General Qader Rahimzadeh underlined major progress in upgrading air defense systems and in training specialists. "The air defense systems, including combat, operation, collection, and electronic warfare systems, were updated in accordance with potential threats," General Rahimzadeh said.

He reiterated that monitoring all activities in the region is one of the tasks of the Air Defense, and said that preparing and upgrading air defense equipment in

accordance with the threats is on its agenda.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000326000398/Cmmander-Iran-Upgrades-Air-Defense-Eipmen>

ISIL Blows Up Iran's Power Transmission Line to Iraq

Fars News Agency, 17th June, 2021

The ISIL terrorists attacked a power transmission line from Iran to Iraq in Diyala province in Eastern Iraq, causing power cut in part of the province. The attack had been conducted on Wednesday afternoon, the Iraqi media quoted a member of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces Unit Mohammed al-Azzawi as saying. Al-Azzami said that the ISIL exploded two towers near Baquba, cutting Iran’s power export to Iraq. He, however, pointed out that the forces had been dispatched to the area to repair the power line.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000327000429/ISIL-Blws-Up-Iran's-Pwer-Transmissin-Line-Ira>

Iran Strongly Condemns PGCC Meddlesome Approach

Fars News Agency, 18th June, 2021

Iran’s Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh denounced Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC)’s intervention in Tehran’s nuclear and missile programs, stressing that his country will never tolerate such approach. “The Islamic Republic of Iran has always adhered to international laws and obligations and, hence, does not tolerate any interference in its nuclear and missile programs as well as issues related to its military policies and deterrent defense,” the spokesman said, adding that it is better for

these countries to think of fulfilling their remaining obligations to international organizations, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000328000535/Iran-Srngly-Cndemns-PGCC-Meddlesme-Approch>

Araghchi, Grossi discuss JCPOA developments

Islamic Republic News Agency, 19th June, 2021

"Deputy minister Araghchi and @rafaelmgrossi discussed today the latest developments around the JCPOA negotiations and possible assistance of the @iaeaorg in this process," Iran's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations Kazem Gharibabadi wrote in his Twitter account.

"They also reviewed mutual interactions and cooperation between Iran and the IAEA," he added. Earlier, in a letter to IAEA, Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi said that Iran has so far done its best with regard to its cooperation with the IAEA in content-based method by presenting elaborations and necessary responses.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84374169/Araghchi-Grossi-discuss-JCPOA-developments>

Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant has emergency shutdown - state TV

Jerusalem Post, 20th June, 2021

Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant underwent an emergency shutdown, Iranian media reported on Sunday. The Iranian Atomic Energy Organization reported that a technical defect in the power plant led to

the plant being temporarily shut down and disconnected from the national electricity grid, according to the Iranian Fars News Agency. The AEO stated that the plant would be reconnected to the electricity grid in the next few days. The deputy coordinator of the Iran Power Transmission, Generation and Distribution Company (TAVANIR) told Fars that the plant was temporarily closed for "technical repairs," which would continue for about three to four days. Last month, a massive fire broke out near the Islamic Republic's only functioning nuclear power plant in Bushehr. Last July, the city of Bushehr saw another large fire break out at the Delvar Shipyard.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/irans-bushehr-nuclear-power-plant-temporarily-shutdown-state-tv-671571>

Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey FM's meet

Islamic Republic News Agency, 20th June, 2021

Foreign ministers of Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey held a trilateral meeting in Antalya, Turkey on Sunday. In the meeting, Iran's Mohammad Javad Zarif, Afghanistan's Mohammad Hanif Atmar and Turkey's Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu emphasized active participation of their countries in the peace process in Afghanistan and the regional fight against terrorism. They also agreed to cooperate with Afghanistan on transit through Iran's transportation routes and also on expanding economic ties with Afghanistan.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84375847/Iran-Afghanistan-Turkey-FMs-meet>

Iran's Top Negotiator: Main Differences Still Remain in Vienna Talks

Fars News Agency, 20th June, 2021

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister and top negotiator Seyed Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that the main differences between Iran and the Group 4+1 (Russia, China, Britain and France plus Germany) still remain in place, adding that the delegations will return to their capitals for decision-making. "The main differences have remained. Some issues have been resolved and some issues still remain, but it has come to be precise now and it is quite clear what the dimensions of these differences are," Araghchi said in an interview with the state TV before the last round of meeting with the G4+1 representatives before leaving Vienna.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000330000540/Iran's-Tp-Negiar-Main-Differences-Sill-Remain-in-Vienna-Talks>

Araghchi: JCPOA agreement document prepared

Islamic Republic News Agency, 20th June, 2021

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that all Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement documents are almost ready but it requires decisions that mainly have to be made by the negotiating sides in Vienna.

Araghchi said that today is the last day of the sixth round of negotiations. Referring to some resolved and unresolved issues in the disputes, he added that these disputes have taken a precise form and now their dimensions are clear. He added that they will stop the talks and return to the capitals for a few days not just for further

consultation but for decision-making. But now, he can not say exactly how many days it will be.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84376209/Araghchi-JCPOA-agreement-document-prepared>

Next round of Vienna talks likely to be last: Spokesman

Islamic Republic News Agency, 21st June, 2021

The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Monday that it is not unlikely that the next round of talks in Vienna would be the last one. The sides have reached "a clear text" about all issues and what remains needs political decision from all sides, Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters at his weekly press briefing. As the spokesman said, if this political decision is taken, the next talks can be the last round. In a related development, Iran's top negotiator in Vienna Abbas Araghchi said on Monday that negotiations have gone a long way, but the remaining part of the road was not easy to pass.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84377043/Next-round-of-Vienna-talks-likely-to-be-last-Spokesman>

Spokesman: Iran Not to Negotiate on New N. Deal

Fars News Agency, 21st June, 2021

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh reiterated that the country will not negotiate on a new nuclear deal, saying that the US should now think of providing the necessary assurances to return to the 2015 agreement. "Everyone knows Iran had a single policy in the past few years. The nuclear deal has been sealed, signed and set aside. Never will a new nuclear deal be negotiated. The best thing that the US can

think of is to provide the guarantees needed to return to the nuclear deal and Resolution 2231. When the US returns to the nuclear deal, there is a list of measures that it needs to account for," Khatibzadeh told reporters in a press conference in Tehran on Monday.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000331000351/Spkesman-Iran-N-Negiae-n-New-N-Deal>

Top Negotiator: New Gov't Unlikely to Change Stance towards Vienna Talks

Fars News Agency, 21st June, 2021

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister and top negotiator Seyed Abbas Araqchi said that Iranian President-elect Ebrahim Rayeesi's stances during the presidential campaign showed his policies are based on cooperation with the international community and constructive economic interactions and reiterated Tehran's policies are not going to change under the new government. "Iran's policies are unchanging, irrespective of different administrations," Araqchi said. Asked about Tehran's stance under the next president, Araqchi said President-elect Raeisi is a realistic and reasonable person, and that Iran's position will not change even after the transition of government.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000331000421/Tp-Negiar-New-Gv'-Unlikely-Change-Sance-wards-Vienna-Talks>

Raisi to US: Return to JCPOA and carry out your commitments

Islamic Republic News Agency, 21st June, 2021

Iran's President-elect Ebrahim Raisi on Monday said the US should return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and carry out all its commitments

to the international nuclear deal. He made the remarks during his first press conference on Monday following his victory in the election. Answering the question "what do you have to say to the US and Europe?", the President-elect said he frankly advised the US to return to the JCPOA and fulfill its commitment because this is the demand of the Iranian nation. "We emphasize that the US government should be sincere towards its commitments while noting that the regional and missile issues are not negotiable," Raisi added.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84377057/Raisi-to-US-Return-to-JCPOA-and-carry-out-your-commitments>

IRGC Disbands 3 Terrorist Teams in Northwestern Iran before June 18 Presidential Election

Fars News Agency, 22nd June, 2021

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) forces identified and dismantled three terrorist and counterrevolutionary teams in the country's Northwestern provinces of West Azarbaijan and Kordestan 10 days before the Friday presidential election. "Two terrorist and counterrevolutionary teams were dismantled in the cities of Oshnaviyeh and Baneh in West Azarbaijan and Kordestan provinces, respectively," Commander of IRGC's Ground Force Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour said. General Pakpour pointed out that another terrorist team that infiltrated into the country from the city of Sarvabad in Kordestan province was also destroyed.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000401000305/IRGC-Disbands-3-Terris-Teams-in-Nrhwesern-Iran-befre-Jne-Presidential>

Five anti-Revolution terrorists murdered in Kurdistan province

Tehran Times, 23rd June, 2021

In a report on its website released on Wednesday the state news agency IRNA announced that days before the June 18 presidential elections five members of an anti-revolution terrorist group were killed in the western province of Kurdistan province. They were killed by local Basiji forces aligned to the Shahid Shahrmarfa base. The skirmishes with the anti-revolution groups took place in the Baneh and Sarvabad region.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/46234/1/Five-anti-Revolution-terrorists-murdered-in-Kurdistan-province>

Araqchi briefs President-elect Raisi on JCPOA talks

Tehran Times, 23rd June, 2021

Top Iranian nuclear negotiator has provided a thorough report on the Vienna nuclear talks to the new president of Iran in preparation for the transition of power.

Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi, who is leading the Iranian negotiating team in the Vienna talks, were instructed by outgoing President Hassan Rouhani to brief President-elect Ebrahim Raisi on the latest developments of the Vienna talks aimed at reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet session on Wednesday, Vaezi said, "As regards the JCPOA, which is an important issue, the president ordered Araqchi, along with the foreign minister, to meet with Mr. Raisi as soon as he arrives in Tehran, and to

announce the progress and restrictions. The meeting lasted an hour and a half and everything was announced."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/46236/5/Araqchi-briefs-President-elect-Raisi-on-JCPOA-talks>

Iranian ICT Minister Dismisses Failure of Satellite Launch

Fars News Agency, 23rd June, 2021

Iran's Minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi rejected the Pentagon's claims that Tehran has failed to launch a satellite into the space.

"Pars 1 and (Nahid) Venus satellites, whose entire launching processes have been paved, are now in the hands of the Iranian Space Agency, and the process to send them to us has not yet been paved and the report on the unsuccessful launch of the satellite is not true," Azari Jahromi told reporters in Tehran after a cabinet meeting on Wednesday. He also added that Iran's construction of a satellite with 1 meter resolution will be finished soon upon an order by Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. His comments came in response to a claim by Pentagon that Iran attempted and failed to launch a satellite into orbit in early June.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/1400040/2000464/Iranian-ICT-Minister-Dismisses-Failure-of-Satellite-Launch>

Sabotage attack on Iran's Atomic Energy Organization building foiled

Tehran Times, 23rd June, 2021

A sabotage attack on one of the buildings owned by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) near Karaj was foiled on

Wednesday morning, security forces announced. Karaj is 40 kilometers west of the capital Tehran. The security forces said the sabotage attack left no damage, the IRIB news agency reported.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462327/Sabotage-attack-on-Iran-s-Atomic-Energy-Organization-building>

Iran fails to launch satellite into orbit as Pentagon watches

Jerusalem Post, 23rd June, 2021

Iran failed to launch another satellite in space in mid-June, according to CNN citing US defense officials. The Pentagon and defense officials were observing the launch and stated that while the June launch failed, the Islamic Republic is preparing for another attempt within the coming months, according to satellite imagery. The assumption is working off the presence of fuel containers, platforms and vehicles that could be seen around the Imam Khomeini Spaceport in Iran, as well as increased activity in and around the site.

"US Space Command is aware of the Iranian rocket launch failure which occurred early June 12th," Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Uriah Orland told CNN. The details surrounding the failed launches, and causes of its failure were unclear, however, the report stated.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-fails-to-launch-satellite-into-orbit-as-pentagon-watches-671799>

Iran nuclear centrifuge facility substantially damaged in attack - sources

Jerusalem Post, 24th June, 2021

A sabotage operation against one of the buildings of Iran's Atomic Energy

Organization (IAEO) caused major damage – despite Iranian denials, *The Jerusalem Post* learned on Wednesday night. Although Iran has claimed throughout the day that the sabotage failed and caused no damage or casualties, the *Post* has been given strong indications otherwise, though it has no way to independently confirm. The *Post* also reported that the attacked site was likely one of Iran's centrifuge manufacturing sites, which meant a major setback for the Islamic Republic's uranium enrichment program for nuclear weapons.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/drone-attack-targets-irans-atomic-energy-organization-671834>

Iran: US Should Lift All Sanctions before Returning to JCPOA

Fars News Agency, 26th June, 2021

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh underlined that it is now time for the US to make up its mind and return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by lifting illegal sanctions and effectively implementing its final commitments. Khatibzadeh made the remarks in reaction to recent allegations by the US and French officials who said they are waiting for Iran to go back the deal. He stressed that Iran has never left an international agreement, and said, "The US and the Europeans know best that Iran made its decision by remaining in the agreement and made it survive when the US unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA and imposed illegal and oppressive sanctions against the Iranian people."

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000405000148/Iran-US-Shld-Lif-All-Sancins-befre-Rerning-JCPOA>

Iran says ‘will not negotiate forever’

Tehran Times, 27th June, 2021

In what appeared to be a response to remarks by U.S. diplomats threatening to halt negotiations in Vienna if Iran failed to give concessions, Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said late on Saturday that “Iran will not negotiate forever.” Khatibzadeh said Iran remains committed to saving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal - which was ditched by the former U.S. administration in May 2018 and it has been the most active party in the Vienna nuclear talks aimed at salvaging the tattered deal. “Out of a steadfast commitment to salvage a deal that the US tried to torpedo, Iran has been the most active party in Vienna, proposing most drafts. Still believe a deal is possible, if the US decides to abandon Trump's failed legacy. Iran will not negotiate forever,” Khatibzadeh said on Twitter.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/46250/1/Iran-says-will-not-negotiate-forever>

IRGC Commander: Iran Able to Manufacture Wide-Body Drones

Fars News Agency, 27th June, 2021

Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami said on Sunday that Iran is now able to produce wide-body UAVs which can fly thousands of kilometers away. “We have wide-body drones which can fly 7,000km and they are able to land at any points,” General Salami said, addressing a ceremony to unveil the IRGC’s new coronavirus vaccine named Noora.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000406000377/IRGC-Cmmander-Iran-Able-Manfacre-Wide-Bdy-Drnes>

Iran won’t give data recordings to IAEA: parliament speaker

Tehran Times, 27th June, 2021

Iranian Parliament Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has announced that Iran’s three-month deal with the UN nuclear watchdog has expired and thus Iran won’t give its data recordings to the UN body. Qalibaf made the remarks in response to a question from a lawmaker on the latest developments regarding the deal between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency, which expired recently.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/46250/0/Iran-won-t-give-data-recordings-to-IAEA-parliament-speaker>

Iran Calls on UN to Seriously Pursue Banning Chemical Weapons

Fars News Agency, 29th June, 2021

Head of Iran’s Civil Defense Organization Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali called on the international organization, specially the United Nations, to seriously follow up banning the use of chemical weapons by certain countries. "If those involved in the chemical bombing of Sardasht and Halabja had been sentenced in courts, we would have not been witnessing the use of chemical weapons by certain countries today," General Jalali said, addressing the Fourth National Conference on Chemical Defense held simultaneous with the chemical attack on Sardasht and Halabja.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000408000809/Iran-Calls-n-UN-Serisly-Prse-Banning-Chemical-Weapons>

Iranian Army Holds Naval Drills in Caspian Sea

Fars News Agency, 30th June, 2021

The Iranian Army's Naval forces staged massive wargames in the Caspian Sea codenamed 'Amniyat-e Paydar (Sustainable Security) 1400' on Wednesday. 'Amniyat-e Paydar 1400' naval drills, held to send a message of peace and friendship, started on Wednesday morning in the Caspian Sea with the participation of the Army Navy's surface and aerial units, including missile launchers, fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, naval drones and electronic warfare systems, as well as Navy's ranger units. The naval exercises will be carried out in an area of approximately 77,000 square kilometers in the 20% of the Islamic Republic of Iran's share in the Caspian Sea, during which offensive and defensive scenarios will be implemented to protect the country's territorial waters and maintain transportation lines.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000409000314/Iranian-Army-Hlds-Naval-Drills-in-Caspian-Sea>

IRAQ

KRG puts PKK on notice for killing of peshmerga forces

Al-Monitor, 15th June, 2021

In response to the killing of its members at the hands of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the Ministry of Peshmerga in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) said in a statement it is always the people who pay the price. The KRG accused the PKK of causing multiple losses to the region due to such operations. The ministry stressed it will allow neither Kurdistan nor its people to fall prey to the PKK's erroneous policy. The Biden

administration condemned the PKK attack on the peshmerga forces and described it as "brutal" at a time when the Iraqi government vowed a just punishment is in store for whoever sheds Iraqi blood.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/krg-puts-pkk-notice-killing-peshmerga-forces#ixzz6ziuNyak6>

US announces reward in targeting Iraqi militias

Al-Monitor, 18th June, 2021

The United States announced a \$3 million reward for anyone who has information about attacks on diplomatic missions in Iraq. The news agitated armed groups opposed to the US presence and linked to Iran. In response, these militias, which operate outside of the direct control of the Iraqi security services, escalated their campaign against the presence of US forces in Iraq. In response to the reward, Qais Khazali, secretary-general of Asaib Ahl al-Haq, which is designated by the United States as a terrorist group, said June 14 that the decision for escalation in targeting the US forces has been made and will continue until they are officially out.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/us-announces-reward-targeting-iraqi-militias#ixzz6ziutOtfy>

Iraq's PMF display tanks and weaponry in large anniversary parade

Aljazeera, 26th June, 2021

Thousands of members of Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) have marched in a parade showcasing tanks and rocket launchers, in the biggest demonstration of

military might since the founding of the umbrella organisation of mostly Muslim Shia paramilitary groups. The event on Saturday at a military base in Diyala province, in eastern Iraq, marked the seventh anniversary of the formation of the PMF, established after a 2014 call to arms by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani to help defeat the ISIL (ISIS) armed group. At the time, ISIL held a third of Iraq's territory and the PMF, or Hashd al-Shaabi, was critical in helping the US-backed Iraqi army defeat it in 2017. The parade, held in Camp Ashraf, saw Russian-made tanks, boats and locally made rocket launchers come down a broad thoroughfare. Iranian-made weaponry, including drones, were also displayed during the event that was broadcast on Iraqi state TV and was attended by Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, officially the country's commander-in-chief.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/26/iraq-paramilitaries-show-off-weaponry-in-big-anniversary-parade>

US carries out air raids on Iran-backed militias in Syria, Iraq

Aljazeera, 28th June, 2021

The United States carried out another round of air raids against Iran-backed armed groups in Iraq and Syria, in response to drone attacks against US personnel and facilities in Iraq, with the militias threatening to retaliate. In a statement on Sunday, the US military said it targeted operational and weapons storage facilities at two locations in Syria and one location in Iraq. "The United States took necessary, appropriate, and deliberate action designed to limit the risk of escalation – but also to

send a clear and unambiguous deterrent message," John Kirby, spokesman for the Pentagon, said in a statement.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/28/us-carries-out-air-raids-on-iran-backed-groups-in-syria-iraq>

US raids slammed as 'blatant violation' of Iraq's sovereignty

Aljazeera, 28th June, 2021

Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi has condemned the overnight US air attack on Iran-backed armed groups in Iraq and Syria which a monitor said killed at least seven fighters. In a statement on Sunday, the US military said it targeted operational and weapons storage facilities at two locations in Syria and one location in Iraq in response to drone attacks against the US personnel and facilities in Iraq. The attacks came at the direction of US President Joe Biden, the second time he has ordered retaliatory attacks against Iran-backed militia since taking office five months ago. "We condemn the US air attack that targeted a site last night on the Iraqi-Syrian border, which represents a blatant and unacceptable violation of Iraqi sovereignty and Iraqi national security," said a statement from the Iraqi PM's office.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/28/iraq-pm-slams-us-raids-as-flagrant-violation-of-sovereignty>

ISRAEL

In test, Defense Ministry shoots down drone with plane-mounted laser

The Times of Israel, 21st June, 2021

The Defense Ministry said on Monday that a plane-mounted laser it is developing

successfully shot down several drones, in some cases from more than a kilometer away, over the Mediterranean Sea, as part of an initial test of the system. According to the head of the ministry's research and development team, Brig. Gen. (res.) Yaniv Rotem, a fully functional prototype of the plane-mounted, solid-state laser is at least three to four years away, though a ground-based version of the system, capable of shooting down rockets and mortar shells in addition to small drones and larger unmanned aerial vehicles, is expected to not only be operational but to be in use by the Israel Defense Forces by the end of 2024. "We will perform an operational test by the end of this year, and... when it works — within three years — we will have a laser in the Gaza area," Rotem told reporters on Monday.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/defense-ministry-shoots-down-drone-with-plane-mounted-laser-in-latest-test/>

Israel and US said to increase cooperation to combat Iranian drones

Times of Israel, 23rd June, 2021

The United States and Israel reportedly held talks earlier this month on cooperation against unmanned Iranian drones, with which the Islamic Republic is believed to be arming Shiite militias and terrorist organizations in the region. Building on an April agreement by the two countries' national security advisers, an interagency working group dealing with the threat to Israel and other US allies from Iranian drones and precision-guided missiles convened for the first time three weeks ago, the Walla news site reported. Quoting both senior US and Israeli officials involved in the talks, the report said the American team was led by White House National Security

Council Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk and the Israeli team was headed by deputy national security adviser Reuven Ezer.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-and-us-said-to-increase-cooperation-to-combat-iranian-drones/>

IDF chief argues against Iran deal in Washington

Al-Monitor, 24th June, 2021

Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces Aviv Kochavi reiterated Israel's position against the United States rejoining the Iran nuclear deal during a meeting in Washington. Yesterday Kochavi met with US national security adviser Jake Sullivan and other top American defense officials including Brett McGurk, the National Security Council's coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, and Cara Abercrombie, the special adviser to the president on defense affairs. The IDF head voiced warnings over the "failures of the current nuclear deal," urging his counterparts to explore alternative methods to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

An IDF statement read, "Throughout the day, the chief of staff has presented possible ways to prevent Iran from obtaining military nuclear capabilities during his meetings."

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/idf-chief-argues-against-iran-deal-washington#ixzz6zn0KRbOU>

Israel's Lapid puts Iran talks on table in meeting with Blinken

Al-Monitor, 28th June, 2021

Meeting in Rome with US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, Foreign Minister

Yair Lapid said he intends to mend the rift created by the Netanyahu government in Jerusalem's relations with Washington. Referring to negotiations with Iran, Lapid said, "We will have disagreements, but they are not about the essence; they're all about how to get there. We want the same things. We sometimes disagree about how to achieve them. Israel has some serious reservations about the Iran nuclear deal being put together in Vienna. We believe the way to discuss those disagreements is through direct and professional conversations, not in press conferences."

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/israels-lapid-puts-iran-talks-table-meeting-blinken#ixzz6zn0w8uFk>

Israel, US issue veiled warnings to Iran

Jerusalem Post, 30th June, 2021

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and the US issued veiled threats against Iran on Wednesday from Jerusalem and New York. "The State of Israel will always defend itself, by itself, against any external threat," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said at a special memorial ceremony for the founder of political Zionism Theodor Herzl, at the military cemetery in Jerusalem named in his honor. "Israel won't let its hands be tied when it comes to ensuring our security. We will act firmly, creatively and continuously, in the face of emerging threats, both from near and far," Bennett added. It was a line that hinted at potential Israeli reaction to Iran, which threatens Israel from its own territory and from its proxy forces on Israel's borders, particularly in Syria and Lebanon. Bennett spoke as the United Nations Security Council in New York

debated Iranian compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/israel-us-issue-veiled-warnings-to-iran-672495>

LEBANON

France-Hosted Int'l Meeting Rallies Support for Crisis-Hit Lebanese Army

Naharnet, 17th June, 2021

A France-organized virtual international meeting for supporting the Lebanese Army was held Thursday with the participation of 20 countries. The conference was also backed by the United Nations and Italy. "We must meet the needs of the Lebanese Army through providing it with the essential assistance requirements," Italian Defense Minister Lorenzo Guerini said.

French defense minister Florence Parly for her part said all participants should be concerned with making sure that the Lebanese Army will remain able to "carry out its missions in preserving security and stability." U.N. Special Coordinator for Lebanon Joanna Wronecka meanwhile said that the conference aims to keep the army coherent and effective, calling on participants to meet the military's urgent needs.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/28213-3-france-hosted-int-l-meeting-rallies-support-for-crisis-hit-lebanese-army>

Israel Says Arms Smuggling Thwarted on Border with Lebanon

Naharnet, 18th June, 2021

Israeli spokesman Avichay Adraee said on Friday that Israeli troops thwarted an alleged arms smuggling attempt on the

border with Lebanon. On Twitter, Adrae said Israeli troops allegedly spotted a suspect early in the morning carrying a handbag near the Lebanese town of al-Mtolleh, and then another suspect came from the Israeli side to pick it up. He added that Israeli army forces “carefully tracked down the smuggling attempt and thwarted it.”

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/282148-israel-says-arms-smuggling-thwarted-on-border-with-lebanon>

Report: Israel Makes First Official Position on Demarcation Talks with Lebanon

Naharnet, 18th June, 2021

In a first since the launch of indirect talks with Lebanon on their disputed maritime borders, Israel made a position expressing eagerness for “innovative solutions to complete and bring the file to a close”, media reports said Friday. Israeli Energy Minister Karin Elharrar told US mediator, John Desrocher, during a meeting earlier on Wednesday that “despite Israel’s strong legal case, we are ready to consider creative solutions to end this file,” Israeli media quoted her as saying. She also considered that the goal of the negotiations is to find a solution to the maritime border dispute, “which will enable the development of natural resources for the benefit of the people of the region.” On Monday, Desrocher met with Lebanese President Michel Aoun who in turn notified the American side of Lebanon’s keenness to pursue negotiations, stressing “pressure for fair talks without preconditions.”

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/282143-report-israel-makes-first-official->

[position-on-demarcation-talks-with-lebanon](#)

US weighs options as Lebanon’s allies move to assist military

Al-Monitor, 21st June, 2021

The State Department notified Congress last week of a plan to grant the Lebanese armed forces an additional \$15 million in foreign military funding, bringing the fiscal year's total to \$120 million. The funds, to be drawn from the overseas contingencies operations budget, will cover spare parts to maintain US-made military equipment as well as longer-term support for Lebanon's border security and counterterrorism operations. The Lebanese military's top commander, Gen. Joseph Aoun, has been sounding the alarm for months about the army’s inability to adequately pay the more than 80,000 troops under his command. Lebanon’s currency has lost 90% of its value since late 2019, leaving the country with worsening food, fuel and electricity shortages from which the armed forces are not exempt.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/us-weighs-options-lebanons-allies-move-assist-military#ixzz6znRsQCaz>

Tripoli Protests Leave Nearly 20 Wounded

Naharnet, 27th June, 2021

Nearly twenty people were wounded in overnight scuffles in northern Lebanon between security forces and protesters angered by a spiraling economic crisis, a medical association said on Sunday.

The protests in the city of Tripoli came as the Lebanese pound plumbed fresh lows on the black market due to a financial crisis that the World Bank says is likely to rank among the world's worst since the mid-19th century. Calm returned to the city on Sunday after protesters tried to storm official buildings, including a branch of the central bank, overnight, forcing the army to deploy. "18 people, both civilians and soldiers, were injured, including four who were hospitalized," said the Emergency and Relief Corps, a local medical charity that dispatched ambulances to treat the wounded.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/282315-tripoli-protests-leave-nearly-20-wounded>

Hizbullah Strongly Condemns U.S. Strike on Iran-Backed Groups

Naharnet, 28th June, 2021

Hizbullah on Monday strongly deplored an overnight U.S. airstrike against Iran-backed armed groups which a monitor said killed at least seven fighters. In a statement, Hizbullah said it "strongly condemns the treacherous American aggression that targeted the Iraqi-Syrian border." "What the U.S. warplanes have done is a blatant attack on sovereignty... the region will not enjoy stability... until U.S. forces are expelled" from Iraq and Syria, it said. The Pentagon said it had conducted retaliatory targeted airstrikes against "facilities used by Iran-backed militia groups" on the Iraq-Syria border.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/282354-hizbullah-strongly-condemns-u-s-strike-on-iran-backed-groups>

SYRIA

Uzbek jihadis destroy antiquities in Idlib Museum

Al-Monitor, 21st June, 2021

Uzbek jihadis affiliated with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which controls the northwestern province of Idlib, destroyed some antiquities such as statues in the Idlib Museum on June 11, claiming they were "false idols" that should not be displayed. The Islamic State previously took similar actions in areas it controlled in Syria. A video circulated on social media that showed debris scattered in one of the museum halls that were stormed by the jihadis at night. It appears that the video was filmed by one of the jihadis, who was speaking the language of Uzbekistan.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/uzbek-jihadis-destroy-antiquities-idlib-museum#ixzz6zncLuspL>

Islamic State revives religious police in northeast Syria

Al-Monitor, 21st June, 2021

The Islamic State's religious police — known as Hesba — has made a comeback in the areas under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces in northeast Syria, spreading fear among the residents. The Hesba's emergence comes as the SDF is preoccupied with events in Manbij in the eastern countryside of Aleppo and in the countryside of Hasakah. In early June, the Hesba called on all residents of the eastern countryside of Deir ez-Zor not to engage with the SDF and the US-led international coalition and to resign from the local councils of the Kurdish-led Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria,

threatening to kill anyone who violates their instructions.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/islamic-state-revives-religious-police-northeast-syria#ixzz6znckttgv>

Russian Defense Ministry: Jabhat al-Nusra carries out assaults, plans for chemical attacks in de-escalation zone, Idleb

Syrian Arab News Agency, 23rd June, 2021

Russian Defense Ministry said that terrorists of Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist organization deployed at the de-escalation zone in Idleb, have carried out 37 attacks on safe areas in Idleb, Lattakia, Aleppo and Hama in parallel with preparing to fabricate a chemical attack to accuse the Syrian Arab Army. In a press statement, Deputy Head of the Russian Coordination Center in Hmeimim, General, Vadim Kolit said that the terrorists of Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist organization have committed 37 attacks on safe areas in four provinces, out of which 19 attacks in Idleb, 10 in Lattakia, 2 in Aleppo and 6 in Hama.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=238972>

Putin: We will continue to support Syria in combating terrorism, resolve international issues through dialogue

Syrian Arab News Agency, 23rd June, 2021

Russian President, Vladimir Putin affirmed that Russia will continue to support Syria in combating terrorism till eliminating it completely, as well as, it will continue to exert efforts to resolve the international issues through dialogue, underlining the importance of UN role as a basis for the international relations system. In a speech at the opening of the IX Moscow

Conference on International Security on Wednesday, Putin said that the international security and law system are crumbling and the geopolitical turmoil, threat of terrorism and mass destruction weapons are increasing, in addition to that attempts to use force to achieve personal interests and enhance private security at the expense of others' security continue.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=238976>

US forces in Syria come under attack after airstrikes on Iran-backed militias

Al-Monitor, 29th June, 2021

Iran-backed militias launched several rockets near a US-led coalition base in eastern Syria on Monday evening in apparent retaliation for American airstrikes that killed four of their fighters the night prior. No US or coalition personnel were initially reported hurt in the attack, according to Operation Inherent Resolve spokesperson Col. Wayne Marotto. US troops responded to the barrage with their own artillery fire aimed at knocking out the launch sites, Marotto said. Local networks Ayn al-Furat and Deir Ezzor 24 also reported that the United States responded with airstrikes, which neither the coalition nor Pentagon has confirmed.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/us-forces-syria-come-under-attack-after-airstrikes-iran-backed-militias#ixzz6znduSSbP>

Russian forces continue training off Syrian coast ... anti-drones air maneuvers

Syrian Arab News Agency, 29th June, 2021

The Russian Defense Ministry announced that its forces, during training in the

Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Syria, carried out reconnaissance exercises under and over the sea and repelled an air attack from a supposed enemy. The ministry said in a statement broadcast by RT Channel website that, within the framework of the combat training activities, training courses were conducted on tactical maneuvers for carrying out reconnaissance operations above and under the sea, with the participation of Sukhoi Su-34 and Su-35 fighters, a Type 38 anti-ship aircraft and a Ka-27 anti-ship helicopter.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=239856>

SAUDI ARABIA

GCC says Iran missile program should be addressed in nuclear talks

Alarabiya, 16th June, 2021

Gulf Arab states said on Wednesday it would be dangerous to separate global powers' nuclear deal with Iran from Tehran's missile programme and "destabilising" behaviour, and reiterated a call that they be included in the dialogue. Gulf Arab foreign ministers urged the powers to secure a deal with stronger restrictions and a longer duration, and to "link it with practical steps to build trust" in order to prevent an arms race and further conflict in the region. The statement stressed "the danger of separating implications of the nuclear deal" from Iran's missiles programme and support for regional proxies, and urged Tehran to engage seriously with talks and avoid escalations.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/06/16/GCC-says-Iran-missile-program-should-be-addressed-in-nuclear-talks>

Saudi Arabia intercepts, destroys Houthi drone launched towards Khamis Mushait

Alarabiya, 17th June, 2021

Saudi Arabia's air defenses intercepted and destroyed a booby-trapped drone launched by the Iran-backed Houthi militia towards Khamis Mushait, the Arab Coalition said on Thursday. "We are taking operational measures to protect civilians and civilian objects from hostile attacks," the Arab Coalition said in a statement. Earlier this week, Saudi Arabia's civil defense in Asir region said a Houthi drone had landed on a school without causing any injuries, according to a statement.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/06/17/Saudi-Arabia-intercepts-destroys-Houthi-drone-launched-towards-Khamis-Mushait>

Saudi air defenses intercept, destroy 17 Houthi explosive drones

Alarabiya, 20th June, 2021

Saudi Arabia's air defenses late on Saturday destroyed six armed drones launched by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi militia towards the kingdom, bringing the total it intercepted during the day to 17, according to the Arab Coalition. The coalition said two further drones were fired at Khamis Mushait while eight drones were fired towards the south of the kingdom, one of which was aimed towards the city of Najran. All of these were intercepted and destroyed.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/06/20/Saudi-air-defenses-intercept-destroy-17-Houthi-explosive-drones>

US withdraws Patriot missile defence system from Middle East

Middle East Monitor, 21st June, 2021

The United States is withdrawing its Patriot anti-missile defence batteries from four Middle Eastern states as it continues to reduce its military presence in the region, according to a report published by the *Wall Street Journal*. Citing anonymous US officials, the newspaper revealed on Friday that the Pentagon is currently in the process of pulling out eight of the Patriot system's batteries from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and Jordan. The Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system based in Saudi Arabia – established by the Trump administration – is also reportedly being removed. Hundreds of US troops who operated the systems and their batteries in the countries will be redeployed elsewhere. According to the report, the withdrawal began earlier this month after the US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin called Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman on 2 June to inform him of the move.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210621-us-withdraws-patriot-missile-defence-system-from-middle-east/>

Saudi Arabia's FM and IAEA chief discuss Iran's nuclear program

Alarabiya, 22nd June, 2021

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister discussed with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief "the importance of imposing the necessary mechanisms for a rapid and comprehensive inspection of all Iranian nuclear sites," the foreign ministry wrote in a tweet on Monday. During the meeting, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud and IAEA's Rafael Grossi discussed the

most prominent developments towards the Iranian nuclear program and the significant requirements needed to stop Iranian violations and policies of international laws and norms that destabilize the security and stability of the region and the world.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/06/22/Saudi-Arabia-s-FM-discusses-Iran-s-nuclear-program-with-IAEA-chief>

Iran-backed Houthis launch explosive drone toward Saudi Arabia's Khamis Mushait

Alarabiya, 22nd June, 2021

Saudi Arabia has intercepted and destroyed a drone launched by the Houthi militia toward the southern city of Khamis Mushait, the Arab Coalition confirmed in a statement. The coalition confirmed that the Iran-backed Houthis continue its attempts to target civilians and civilian objects. It also coalition stressed that it takes operational measures to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure objects from hostile attempts.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/06/22/Iran-backed-Houthis-launch-explosive-drone-toward-Saudi-Arabia-s-Khamis-Mushait>

Saudi Arabia continues efforts to attract US military investment

Alarabiya, 23rd June, 2021

Saudi Arabia's military-industrial authority is aiming to attract US investment as part of a wider drive to diversify its economy away from oil, the authority's head said. A webinar was held Wednesday by the General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI) along with the US-Saudi Business Council (USSBC) and US company heads to explain the Kingdom's strategy for its

defense and security sector. Key speaker and GAMI governor Ahmad al-Ohali highlighted the role of research and technology in Saudi Arabia's defense strategy. In 2017, then-president Donald Trump signed a deal to provide Saudi Arabia with \$7 billion worth of arms. Saudi Arabia will also invest \$20 billion in its domestic military industry over the next decade as part of aggressive plans to boost local military spending, al-Ohali told a conference in Abu Dhabi in February.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/06/23/Saudi-Arabia-continues-efforts-to-attract-US-military-investment>

TURKEY

Turkey and Azerbaijan ink Shusha Declaration to further boost ties

Anadolu Agency, 16th June, 2021

Ankara and Baku have signed the Shusha Declaration to boost post-war cooperation and promote stability in the region. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev on Tuesday to ink the joint declaration in Azerbaijan's historic city of Shusha following Monday's NATO summit in Belgium. The pact focuses on defense cooperation, promoting stability and prosperity in the region, and establishing new transportation routes. The declaration affirms joint efforts by the two armies in the face of foreign threats. It also pledges joint efforts for the restructuring and modernization of the armed forces.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/turkey-and-azerbaijan-ink-shusha-declaration-to-further-boost-ties/2276305>

No change of course from Turkey on F-35s, S-400s: President

Anadolu Agency, 17th June, 2021

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told his US counterpart this week that Ankara will not change course on F-35 fighter jets or Russian S-400 missile defense systems, he said on Thursday. "I told (Joe Biden), don't expect us, as Turkey, to take a different step on either the F-35 or S-400 issue because we did our part on the F-35s," Erdogan told reporters in the Azerbaijani capital Baku, referring to his Monday recent face-to-face meeting with the US president at a NATO summit in Brussels.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/no-change-of-course-from-turkey-on-f-35s-s-400s-president/2277176>

US, Turkey did not reach agreement on Russian S-400s: Biden aide

Alarabiya, 17th June, 2021

The United States and Turkey did not reach an agreement on the Russian-supplied S-400s to Ankara during this week's meeting between President Joe Biden and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a senior US official said Thursday. "They discussed it; there was not a resolution of the issue. There was a commitment to continue dialogue on the S-400s," National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said in a briefing with reporters. Sullivan was speaking a day after Biden returned from his first overseas trip since taking office.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2021/06/17/US-Turkey-did-not-reach-agreement-on-Russian-S-400s-Biden-aide>

Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran hold trilateral meeting

Anadolu Agency, 20th June, 2021

A trilateral meeting between the foreign ministers of Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan was held in Antalya, Turkey on Sunday.

"Started last day of Antalya Diplomacy Forum with a trilateral meeting with Javad Zarif and Haneef Atmar," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu tweeted.

Afghan Foreign Minister Haneef Atmar described the meeting as "first & very successful." In a tweet, he termed it a "crucial mechanism" to coordinate combined efforts for peace, security, counter-terrorism, and economic cooperation. Separately, Cavusoglu also met the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Guinea Bissau and Nigeria, among other leaders.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/turkey-afghanistan-iran-hold-trilateral-meeting/2280062>

Turkish drones to strengthen Ukrainian military power, FM says

Daily Sabah, 20th June, 2021

Turkish drones will strengthen Kyiv's military power, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated, praising the drones and their deterrent capabilities.

Speaking to journalists in southern Antalya province, Kuleba said: "Strategically we want to do two things: We want Turkish drones to be equipped with Ukrainian engines and we want to localize production of drones in Ukraine." Ukraine in 2019 purchased six Bayraktar TB2 armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and three

ground control station systems from Turkey.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkish-drones-to-strengthen-ukrainian-military-power-fm-says>

Turkey accepts lead role in Kabul airport security, Pentagon says

Daily Sabah, 22nd June, 2021

Turkey has accepted a leading role in ensuring the security of Afghanistan's Kabul International Airport, but there is still a lot of work to do, the Pentagon said Monday. Addressing reporters in a media briefing, Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby was asked whether the issue of protecting the Kabul Airport had come to the fore during a recent phone call between Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin. "Turkey agreed to take the lead on the protection of the airport in this meeting. However, there are still details to be worked out on this issue. There is much more work to be done," Kirby said.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-accepts-lead-role-in-kabul-airport-security-pentagon-says>

Turkey announces NAVTEX in Aegean in response to Greek violations

Daily Sabah, 23rd June, 2021

Turkey on Wednesday announced a new NAVTEX in the Aegean Sea's international waters in retaliation for Greece's recent NAVTEX announcement that violated the two countries' bilateral agreements. After Greece announced military training in the international waters of the Aegean Sea during the tourism season, contrary to the Athens Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with Turkey, Turkey also

started exercises in the international waters of the Aegean Sea with the navigation announcements (NAVTEX) dated 22 June within the framework of reciprocity. A NAVTEX is a maritime communications system that allows ships to inform other vessels about their presence in an area, as well as other information.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-announces-navtex-in-aegean-in-response-to-greek-violations>

Turkey, Azerbaijan carry out joint military drills

Daily Sabah, 28th June, 2021

The Turkish and Azerbaijani militaries have started joint drills in Baku, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said in a statement on Monday. The two countries deployed tanks, helicopters and drones in the drills in an effort to improve the two countries' combat interoperability, the ministry said. Some 600 soldiers, 40 tanks and armored vehicles, 20 cannons, seven war helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles and 50 other vehicles are taking part in the drills. The drills are expected to continue until June 30.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-azerbaijan-carry-out-joint-military-drills>

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

UAE orders Italy to withdraw forces from base in arms sale row

Al-Monitor, 29th June, 2021

The United Arab Emirates has given Italy until Friday to pull its forces from a military base in the Gulf country in apparent

retaliation for Rome's blocking of arms sales to Abu Dhabi earlier this year. The pullout was already underway late last week when Defense News broke the story, citing Matteo Peregò Di Cremona, a member of the Italian parliament's defense committee. Reuters confirmed Friday's deadline for the withdrawal. Italy has used Al Minhad airbase in Dubai as a stopover in support of multinational operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Indian Ocean and Horn of Africa. The withdrawal from Al Minhad is likely to force the Italian government to find other ways to withdraw its remaining forces in Afghanistan as NATO and the United States leave the country this summer.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/uae-orders-italy-withdraw-forces-base-arms-sale-row>

YEMEN

Several dead following Houthi missile attack on Yemen's Marib

Al-Monitor, 30th June, 2021

Three people died on Tuesday following a missile strike on Yemen's embattled city of Marib. The Yemeni government and Houthi rebels disagree on the details. Houthi rebels fired two missiles that landed in the Rawdha neighborhood of Marib. Three people were killed, including a child. An additional 10 people, among them two children, were injured, The Associated Press reported, citing a local Yemeni government official. Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sare'e disputed the account, saying missiles hit the Sahn al-Jin military base in Marib, killing and

injuring “dozens of Saudi-backed forces & mercenaries,” he tweeted. “The media's promotion of targeting civilian sites is false and baseless. Our rocket and drone strikes target clear and well-known military positions, and we take all necessary operational measures to protect civilians and civilian objects,” he added.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/several-dead-following-houthi-missile-attack-yemens-marib>