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IRAN

Iran Seeks Guarantees from US Not to Leave N. Deal Again

FARS News Agency, 1st July, 2021

Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi told reporters after a UN Security Council meeting on Wednesday that a guarantee by the US that it will never unilaterally withdraw from the 2015 nuclear deal again is crucial to a successful conclusion of the ongoing talks in Vienna aimed at reviving the agreement. He reiterated that the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was illegal and against international regulations. "The US left the JCPOA illegally, irrationally and without any reason," Takht Ravanchi said. "Now that we are speaking about a return to the JCPOA, it is our natural right that we must be given assurances and a guarantee that such a thing [the US withdrawal] will never be repeated again," he added.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000410000296/Iran-Seeks-Garanees-frm-US-N-Leave-N-Deal-Again>

Iranian Navy Wraps Up Drills in Caspian Sea

FARS News Agency, 1st July, 2021

The Iranian Naval forces ended their one-day massive wargames codenamed 'Amniyat-e Paydar (Sustainable Security) 1400' in the Caspian Sea after using different weapons and military equipment, including home-made drones. The Iranian Navy held one-day-long but extensive and diversely-faceted maneuvers in the Caspian Sea on Wednesday. The event saw Navy marines and commandos practicing intrusion into maritime areas while supported by Bell 212 helicopters and

missile cruisers. This operation featured an emphasis on accurate intelligence-gathering measures and the application of radar-jamming devices.

Navy drones, dubbed Yasir and Ababil, meanwhile, conducted surveillance missions covering the entire maritime expanse used for the purpose of the drills. The aircraft also staged reconnaissance operations against perceived enemy vessels, relaying the gleaned data to the command-and-control center.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000410000277/Iranian-Navy-Wraps-Up-Drills-in-Caspian-Sea>

Iran, Russia emphasize consultations on cyberspace, international security

Tehran Times, 2nd July, 2021

Kazem Jalali, the Iranian ambassador to Moscow, met with Andrey Krutskikh, the Russian president's special envoy for information security. During the meeting, the two countries' cooperation in the field of cyber security and international cooperation and international security were discussed. The two sides stressed the need to expand consultations on the area of cyberspace as well as international security between the two countries.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462678/Iran-Russia-emphasize-consultations-on-cyberspace-international>

Iran rejects involvement in attacks on American facilities in Iraq

Tehran Times, 3rd July, 2021

In response to a recent letter from the U.S. ambassador to the UN, Majid Takht Ravanchi denied the allegations against Iran and strongly condemned the recent U.S. attacks in Syria and Iraq, which he described as a violation of the UN Charter.

U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield recently claimed in a letter to the Security Council that recent U.S. airstrikes on the Iraqi-Syrian border were aimed at preventing “Iran-backed militias” attacks on U.S. personnel and facilities. In his letter to the president of the Security Council, Majid Takht Ravanchi stated that he had stated several times in the past, including in his letters to the president of the Security Council, that the Islamic Republic of Iran was not involved, directly or indirectly, in any armed attack by any institution or individual against U.S. personnel or facilities in Iraq.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/46270/2/Iran-rejects-involvement-in-attacks-on-American-facilities-in>

Iran pulls the plug on IAEA cameras

Tehran Times, 3rd July, 2021

In what appeared to be a bid to accelerate the process of reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran has decided to cut off the UN nuclear watchdog’s access to images and video footages taken by cameras installed inside Iranian nuclear facilities. CNN broke the news on Sunday, quoting a senior Iranian official, who told the American broadcaster that Iran plans to prevent inspectors from the UN nuclear watchdog reviewing video footage of some nuclear sites until there is an agreement to salvage the nuclear deal. “If the talks succeed Iran will surely show the tapes to the IAEA,” the official said. “Sharing the tapes depends on the way that the negotiations will proceed. The key to the question is the agreement. If they agree on something that will open the door for cooperation and better understanding including in the area of transparency.”

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/46271/3/Iran-pulls-the-plug-on-IAEA-cameras>

Spokesman: Iran Not to Change Position on N. Deal after Power Transfer to New Gov’t

FARS News Agency, 6th July, 2021

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh rejected speculations that Tehran might change its position on the nuclear deal after the transfer of power to new President Seyed Ebrahim Rayeesi, saying that the country’s stance is among the principled policies of the Islamic Republic. “Iran’s position on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the lifting of sanctions is one of the principled positions of the Islamic Republic and will not change with the change of administration,” Khatibzadeh told reporters in a press conference in Tehran on Tuesday.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000415000229/Spkesman-Iran-N-Change-Psiin-n-N-Deal-afer-Pwer-Transfer-New-Gv>

Gwadar, Pakistan’s vital trade route with Iran and importance of security in Balochistan

Islamic Republic News Agency, 6th July, 2021

The Government of Pakistan is seeking to establish a new trade route with the Islamic Republic of Iran by uplift of Gwadar, a strategic port in Balochistan Province, while ensuring lasting peace and security in the border province, said Prime Minister Imran Khan. Gwadar, located 70 km from the Rimdan-Gabd Crossing, the second official border between Iran and Pakistan, is now set to become an important route for Pakistan to develop trade with neighboring Iran and regional ties. Chairman of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Lt. Gen. (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa has also said that the work for Iran’s trade through the Gwadar Port was in

progress and trade would start soon through the port.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84395002/Gwadar-Pakistan-s-vital-trade-route-with-Iran-and-importance>

Spokesman Plays Down Impact of Recent Sabotage Attack on AEOI Building Near Tehran

FARS News Agency, 6th July, 2021

Iranian Government Spokesman Ali Rabiye said that the recent sabotage act against one of the buildings belonging to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) near Tehran failed to inflict major damage on nuclear equipment. "I confirm the sabotage act but it has not led to significant human and equipment damage," Rabiye told reporters in a press conference in Tehran on Tuesday. He said there has been some slight damage to the roof of one of the sheds that is being replaced now, and added, "The aerial photo released in some media outlets showing damage to this site was, in fact, taken after the roof was removed for repair." An AEOI building West of the capital came under a sabotage attack on June 23.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000415000647/Spkesman-Plays-Dwn-Impac-f-Recen-Sabage-Aack-n-AEOI-Bilding-Near>

Progress made in Iran-Saudi talks: Gov't Spox

Islamic Republic News Agency, 6th July, 2021

Iran's Government Spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday that Iran and Saudi Arabia have discussed bilateral issues in a friendly manner and good faith and have made progress so far. Speaking to reporters, Rabiei said that it is understandable that there are still disagreements which need

time to be solved. He said that he had a positive assessment of the talks and Iran would continue talks with Saudi Arabia to minimize disagreements.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84395235/Progress-made-in-Iran-Saudi-talks-Gov-t-Spox>

Envoy Confirms Iran's Plan to Produce Enriched Uranium Metal

FARS News Agency, 7th July, 2021

Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the Vienna-based International Organizations Kazem Qaribabadi said that his country intends to produce enriched uranium metal in the near future, adding that the International Atomic Energy Agency has been informed of Iran's plan. Qaribabadi made the remarks on Tuesday, saying that the uranium silicide plate enriched to 20 percent purity would be used as fuel for a research reactor in the capital, Tehran. "Research and development regarding this issue with natural uranium began about three months ago. In the new process, a new fuel plate will be produced using 20 percent enriched uranium," he told reporters. "This measure, which will significantly improve the quality and quantity of radiopharmaceutical production, will make the Islamic Republic of Iran one of the leading countries in the field of nuclear technology," the Iranian diplomat added.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000416000184/Envy-Cnfirms-Iran's-Plan-Prdce-Enriched-Uranim-Meal>

New Military Equipment Delivered to IRGC Ground Force

FARS News Agency, 7th July, 2021

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force received several modern military equipment in a ceremony in which a new home-made anti-armor

missile was also unveiled. During the ceremony, a variety of strategic weapons and modern defense equipment, including different types of combat equipment in the field of armor, missiles, vehicles, UAVs, helicopters, and electronic warfare, joined the IRGC ground force. Missile launcher systems, combat helicopters equipped with home-made 'Qaem-114' missiles and 'Meraj-113' and 'Hanif' drones were among the most important pieces of equipment that joined the IRGC Ground Force. Qaem-114 is an anti-tank missile with a range of 10 km, which is capable of destroying stationed and moving targets with a variety of thermal and laser detectors.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000416000387/New-Military-Eipmen-Delivered-IRGC-Grnd-Frce>

Iran: Trans-Regional Deployment, Arms Race Weakening Security in Indian Ocean

FARS News Agency, 8th July, 2021

The military presence of trans-regional states and the arms race in the region threaten the security in the Indian Ocean, an Iranian envoy warned. "Fifty years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, the importance of the region has continued to grow, with some challenges such as the military presence of trans-regional powers and the desire for an arms race undermining regional security," Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN General Assembly First Committee Heidar Ali Balouji said at a biennial meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. Balouji said that according to the declaration, the major powers must end their military presence in the region and not send nuclear weapons and other weapons of

mass destruction to the region, and instead, destroy them.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000417000168/Iran-Trans-Reginal-Deplymen-Arms-Race-Weakening-Secriy-in-Indian>

Iran Warns of S. Arabia's Possible Bid to Develop Nukes

FARS News Agency, 8th July, 2021

Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the Vienna-based International Organizations Kazzem Qaribabadi warned that Saudi Arabia's opposition to the UN nuclear watchdog's access to its nuclear facilities reinvigorates speculations that the Arab country intends to develop atomic weapons. Qaribabadi wrote on his twitter page on Thursday that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been denied even the "minimum" authorities for verifying the nuclear activities in Saudi Arabia, warning that such situation allows the kingdom to pursue a covert atomic program. His comments came after the Saudi envoy to the IAEA Prince Abdullah Bin Khalid Bin Sultan expressed concerns about Iran's recent nuclear measures. "For the KSA, the IAEA is not being provided with even minimum necessary verification authorities," Qaribabadi said. "A failure to implement the safeguards by rescinding the SQPs, could allow them to hide certain nuclear activities without them being subject to the IAEA inspections," he added, referring to small quantities protocols to a comprehensive safeguards agreement.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000417000423/Iran-Warns-f-S-Arabia's-Possible-Bid-Develp-Nkes>

IRAQ

New cooperation areas opened by Al-Kadhimi's European tour

Iraqi News Agency, 1st July, 2021

During Al-Kadhimi's meetings with European Union officials and permanent representatives of NATO countries in the Belgian capital, the Prime Minister focused on the factor of rebuilding military institutions and strengthening the capabilities of the armed forces and security services in the face of terrorism and their ability to face challenges, and the price of the role played by NATO, in providing support Iraq's efforts to defeat the terrorist organization ISIS. He also referred to "the aspiration for NATO countries to continue training, qualifying and equipping the armed forces, and encouraging the international community to enhance investment opportunities in Iraq in a manner that ensures sustainable development that contributes to supporting economic reform."

<https://ina.iq/eng/12623-new-cooperation-areas-opened-by-al-kadhimis-european-tour.html>

Iraq is willing to expand military cooperation with Italy

Iraqi News Agency, 2nd July, 2021

Today, Friday, Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi met with Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi in the Italian capital, Rome. Al-Kazemi expressed his appreciation for the Italian role within the international coalition to combat Daesh terrorist gangs and the support provided to the Iraqi forces in this aspect, noting that "Iraq looks forward to a greater role for Italy during the next stage. Al-Kadhimi explained that "Iraq is willing to expand military cooperation with Italy, including the aspect of training

and work development in the field of fighting organized crime and prosecuting money smuggling.

<https://ina.iq/eng/12632-iraq-is-willing-to-expand-military-cooperation-with-italy.html>

Islamic State suspected of sabotaging Iraqi electrical towers

Al-Monitor, 3rd July, 2021

The Joint Operations Command in Iraq called on citizens July 1 to "be brave" and report individuals who are damaging electric power transmission towers. Hours before this announcement by the Joint Operations Command, the Government Security Media Cell in Iraq announced that the security forces had seized a cache belonging to the Islamic State (IS) containing dozens of explosive devices intended to target the electrical transmission towers in the north of the country. Sources told Al-Monitor that the attacks on power transmission towers in Iraq may not be limited to IS; one source said they are being intensely attacked by "several parties" and a government statement blamed "terrorist and subversive groups." This is the biggest sustained attack on power transmission lines that has taken place in the country, which has long been suffering from a major electricity crisis.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/islamic-state-suspected-sabotaging-iraqi-electrical-towers#ixzz713ZaiSXk>

Iraqi forces launch military operation to pursue the sleeping cells southwest of Mosul

Iraqi News Agency, 5th July, 2021

Nineveh Operations Command launched on Monday a military operation to pursue

sleeper cells in the areas of Al-Sabuniya and Al-Tiniya, southwest of Mosul. A statement issued by the Command, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), stated that the security forces conducted a military operation to pursue the sleeper cells this morning in Al-Sabuniyah and Al-Tiniyah areas, southwest of Mosul, on the heels of the terrorist attacks against the electric power transmission lines. The forces of the 92nd Iraqi Army Brigade, the 21st and 33rd Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces participated in the operation to arrest the wanted, according to the existing database.

<https://ina.iq/eng/12685-iraqi-forces-launch-military-operation-to-pursue-the-sleeping-cells-southwest-of-mosul.html>

US Embassy, Ain al-Asad base targeted in Iraq as militias up tension

Al-Monitor, 6th July, 2021

The US Embassy in Baghdad, in the heart of the Iraqi capital's Green Zone, was the intended target of an armed drone the night of July 6. The C-RAM defense system of the embassy was able to bring it down before an attack. Just hours before, Ain al-Asad base in Anbar province of western Iraq was hit by three rockets. The attack left no casualties. The drone was launched from a residential area near the airport in Baghdad. This is the first time that militias have used a public place for launching an attack against US sites. This comes a few days after US airstrikes were carried out against targets belonging to Iran-backed militias along the Iraqi border with Syria.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/us-embassy-ain-al-asad-base-targeted-iraq-militias-tension#ixzz713a64UBS>

Pro-Iran militias increase attacks, rhetoric against foreign troops

Al-Monitor, 6th July, 2021

On July 5, three Katyusha rockets targeted Ain al-Asad air base in the western province of Anbar. No casualties have been reported yet. On the same day, a drone tried to attack the US embassy in Baghdad but failed after the C-RAM defense system shot it down. The United States last week targeted militias on the Iraqi border with Syria, killing a number of soldiers from the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU). The attack was a response to the militias' previous attacks on several US bases and convoys.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/pro-iran-militias-increase-attacks-rhetoric-against-foreign-troops#ixzz713a13imX>

Drones target Erbil airport

Iraqi News Agency, 7th July, 2021

The Kurdistan Counter-Terrorism Service announced an attack by drones targeting Erbil International Airport. In a brief statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), counter-terrorism center said that "a drone attack targeted Erbil International Airport. For his part, the director of Erbil International Airport, Ahmed Hoshyar, that "air traffic is regular in Erbil Airport, and there are no fires at the airport.

<https://ina.iq/eng/12716-drones-target-erbil-airport.html>

Targeting Ain al-Assad base, damaging citizens houses

Iraqi News Agency, 7th July, 2021

Security Cell clarified the details of targeting Ain Al-Assad base and the

damage caused to citizens houses. Media cell said in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that a loading wheel (type of trailer) with a container inside it stopped today in Al-Baghdadi area in Anbar Governorate, as it appears from this wheel that it was carrying bags of flour, but it carries a base for launching missiles, 14 missiles were fired at Ain al-Assad air base, which fell in the vicinity of the base. In addition, the rest of the missiles that were left inside the wheel exploded, causing damage to the nearby citizens' homes and one mosque.

<https://ina.iq/eng/12722-targeting-ain-al-assad-base-damaging-citizens-houses.html>

Militias launch spate of attacks on US positions in Iraq

Al-Monitor, 7th July, 2021

Fourteen rockets rained down on Iraq's Ain al-Asad air base on Wednesday in the second such attack on the site in three days. Two people were reported to have sustained minor injuries in today's attack on the base, which houses US personnel. Iraq's military released photos of what it said was the rocket launch system hidden inside a container truck packed with bags of flower in a nearby residential neighborhood. Leftover rockets in the truck exploded, damaging a nearby mosque, Iraq's Security Media Cell said. The fusillade appears to be part of a sudden spate of attacks on sites used by US personnel in Iraq since July 4. On Monday, Ain al-Asad was struck by three rockets, though no one was reported injured. Yesterday, Erbil air base, located at the Kurdistan Region's main international airport, was hit with a barrage of rockets. No damage or injuries were reported, according to Marotto.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/militias->

[launch-spate-attacks-us-positions-iraq#ixzz713sYbJb0](https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/militias-launch-spate-attacks-us-positions-iraq#ixzz713sYbJb0)

US-Led International Coalition delivers \$2.5 worth equipment worth to Iraq

Iraqi News Agency, 10th July, 2021

Ministry of Interior - MOI announced that it had received equipment from US-Led International Coalition, worth \$2.5 million. "Under the supervision of the Joint Operations Command, and in order to assist the Ministry of Interior in the efforts to combat Daesh terrorist gangs, the coalition forces / Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTFOIR) handed over the security forces in the Iraqi MOI with a value of \$2.5 million, 35 four-wheel drive and 15 backhoe loaders," according to a statement by MOI, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA).

<https://ina.iq/eng/12781-us-led-international-coalition-delivers-25-worth-equipment-worth-to-iraq.html>

ISRAEL

Israeli army bombs Hamas site after balloons start fires

Al-Monitor, 2nd July, 2021

The Israeli army said its fighter jets bombed Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip early Friday in retaliation for balloon attacks launched from the Palestinian territory, casting further doubt on a recent cease-fire between the two sides. "In response to the arson balloons launched from Gaza toward Israel today, IDF fighter jets struck a weapons manufacturing site used to research and develop weapons belonging to Hamas tonight," the Israel Defense Forces tweeted. "The IDF will respond firmly against terror attempts from Gaza," the army said. There were no reports of injuries or casualties from the bombing, which came a day after balloons sent from

Gazan territory caused four fires along Israel's southern border. Hamas, the militant Islamist group that rules Gaza, confirmed the bombing. Fawzi Barhoum, a spokesperson for Hamas, described Israel's retaliatory strikes as a "showy reaction."

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/israeli-army-bombs-hamas-site-after-balloons-start-fires#ixzz715z0YdSm>

IDF: IAF opens third F-35 squadron, will focus on training pilots

The Jerusalem Post, 2nd July, 2021

The Israeli Air Force's third squadron of F-35i "Adir" stealth fighter jets was officially inaugurated at Nevatim Air Base in the South. The ceremony will be attended by senior IAF commander Maj.-Gen. Amikam Norkin and other IAF commanders. The 117th squadron will join the 116th squadron, nicknamed "Lions of the South," and the 140th "Golden Eagle" squadron. But unlike the two other operational squadrons, which have been carrying out missions, this will be a skeleton squadron focused on training other F-35 pilots. It will not have any facilities except for simulators and a small crew. The squadron will take aircraft from other ones in order to train new pilots.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/idf-iaf-opens-third-f-35-squadron-will-focus-on-training-pilots-672528>

New government in Jerusalem keeps Israel's enthusiasm for UAE

The Jerusalem Post, 10th July, 2021

Jordan's King Abdullah told President Isaac Herzog that he is satisfied by the new Israeli government's efforts to rebuild relations between the countries, in a phone

call between the leaders Saturday night. Abdullah called Herzog to congratulate him on his inauguration into the presidency earlier in the week. The President's Office characterized the call as "friendly and warm." The Jordanian monarch "expressed satisfaction from the return of the diplomatic relations between the country to their proper trajectory recently," the president's spokesman said.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/king-abdullah-satisfied-new-israeli-govt-rebuilding-ties-with-jordan-673449>

Bennett: Israel 'on alert' over Lebanon crisis

The Jerusalem Post, 11th July, 2021

Israel is monitoring the crisis in Lebanon to ensure it does not spill over the border, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Sunday. "Lebanon is on the verge of collapse, like every country that Iran takes over," he said at the opening of the cabinet meeting. "The citizens of Lebanon are paying a heavy price for the Iranian takeover of the country." Israel is "watching the situation closely... and we will continue to be on alert," he added. The IDF and Israel Police prevented an attempt to smuggle weapons from Lebanon into Israel last Friday, which Bennett cited as "one of many examples." Security forces detained suspects who had 43 pistols in their possession at Ghajar, the Alawite-Arab village astride the border between Lebanon and the Israeli Golan. An investigation was underway to determine whether Hezbollah was involved, the IDF said.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/bennett-israel-on-alert-over-lebanon-crisis-673479>

Bennett: Ties with Jordan essential for Israel's security

Al-Monitor, 12th July, 2021

Relations with Jordan are important to Israeli security, and opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu destroyed them, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Monday in the Knesset. Bennett spoke in response to an accusation by Netanyahu that by moving to repair ties with Amman, the new government is indirectly empowering Iran. Bennett met with Jordanian King Abdullah less than two weeks ago, and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid met with his Jordanian counterpart, Ayman Safadi. Israel agreed to double the amount of water it sells to Jordan and to allow Jordan to increase its exports to the Palestinian Authority.

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/bennett-ties-with-jordan-essential-for-israels-security-673636>

JORDAN

King Abdullah to be first Arab head of state to meet with Biden

Al-Monitor, 8th July, 2021

US President Joe Biden will host Jordan's King Abdullah II at the White House on July 19 as the king faces increasing domestic pressures at home. The visit, Abdullah's first during the new US administration, comes just three months after Jordanian authorities arrested the king's half-brother, Prince Hamzah, in response to an alleged plot to seize power.

Abdullah's wife, Queen Rania, and their son Crown Prince Hussein will also travel to Washington. The visit will "highlight the enduring and strategic partnership between the United States and Jordan, a key security partner and ally of the United States," the White House said in a statement

Wednesday. Abdullah's visit comes as both countries look to turn the page on the Benjamin Netanyahu-era in their relations with Israel.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/king-abdullah-be-first-arab-head-state-meet-biden#ixzz7164G7efJ>

LEBANON

US, France and Saudis discuss Lebanon reform

Ya Libnan, 1st July, 2021

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met his Saudi and French counterparts on Tuesday on the sidelines of a G20 ministerial in Rome to put the heat on Lebanese political leaders to implement economic reforms as they continue to fail to form a government. Mr Blinken noted on Twitter that he had met Saudi Prince Faisal bin Farhan and French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian to call on "Lebanon's political leaders to show real leadership by implementing overdue reforms to stabilise the economy and provide the Lebanese people much-needed relief". The US and France have repeatedly called on Lebanon to enact economic reforms, but the Lebanese political elite have been unable to coalesce around a new government to implement those reforms since former prime minister Hassan Diab resigned last year after a deadly explosion at Beirut port.

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/07/01/us-france-and-saudis-discuss-lebanon-reform/>

Pro-Iranian Lebanese TV says Israeli cargo ship attacked in Indian Ocean

Ya Libnan, 3rd July, 2021

Lebanese pro-Iranian TV channel Al Mayadeen said on Saturday in a post on Telegram that an Israeli cargo ship was

attacked with an unknown weapon in the Indian Ocean on its way to the United Arab Emirates. According to Al Mayadeen, the ship was heading to the UAE from Saudi Arabia when it was hit by an unidentified weapon. Israeli defense officials, confirming earlier reports by the Hezbollah-affiliated Al Mayadeen, said they believe Iran was behind the attack on the ship, Tyndall, which is partly owned by Israeli businessman Eyal Ofer. The ship, however, was not flying an Israeli flag nor were its personnel Israeli.

According to Al Mayadeen, citing “reliable” but unidentified sources, a fire broke out on the ship after the strike. No party has claimed responsibility for the incident, and there was no official comment from Israel.

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/07/03/pro-iranian-lebanese-tv-says-israeli-cargo-ship-attacked-in-indian-ocean/>

U.S. Central Command Envoy Visits Lebanon to Review Border Security Installations

Naharnet, 6th July, 2021

A representative from the United States Central Command, in coordination with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, is conducting a visit to review security upgrades to border security systems installed at Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) land and maritime border regiments, the U.S. Embassy said on Tuesday. The two-week visit, which concludes on July 9, includes engagements with regimental commanders and the head of the LAF Navy to ensure the communications and surveillance systems integrate successfully into the operational framework at LAF headquarters, the Embassy added in a statement. “This visit is part of ongoing U.S. assistance to the LAF, which has totaled over \$2 billion since 2010, and

supplements LAF investments in training, equipment and resources for its staff,” the statement said.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/28250-0-u-s-central-command-envoy-visits-lebanon-to-review-border-security-installations>

Israel foils “largest arms smuggling attempt in years” from Lebanon

Ya Libnan, 10th July, 2021

The Israeli military said Saturday it has foiled an arms smuggling attempt by the border with Lebanon calling it the “largest in years” and said it was investigating whether Hezbollah militant group was involved in it. Israeli spokesman Avichay Adraee wrote on his Twitter account that Israeli troops rushed to the scene and were able to seize 43 weapons next to the village of Ghajar on the Israeli-Lebanese border, valued at about 2.7 million shekels. The IDF is examining the possibility that Hezbollah is behind the smuggling attempt, and, in cooperation with the police, is investigating the identity of those involved. Last week, the IDF reported that a Hezbollah official was involved in smuggling drugs and weapons across the border with Israel.

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/07/10/israel-foils-largest-arms-smuggling-attempt-in-years-from-lebanon/>

Bennett: Lebanon on Verge of Collapse, Israel Monitoring Situation

Naharnet, 11th July, 2021

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Sunday said that Lebanon is “on the verge of collapse,” in reference to the country’s severe economic and financial crisis.

“Lebanon is on the verge of collapse, like all countries that Iran takes over, and this

time, the citizens of Lebanon are paying the price,” Bennett said during an Israeli cabinet meeting, according to an English-language statement published by his office. “It must be understood that the citizens of Lebanon are paying a heavy price because of the Iranian takeover of the country,” Bennett added. “We are closely monitoring what is happening there, (together with) both the Defense Minister and the Foreign Minister, and we will continue to be prepared,” the Israeli PM added.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/282574-bennett-lebanon-on-verge-of-collapse-israel-monitoring-situation>

Lebanon’s army needs \$100 million immediately for soldiers’ basic needs, general says

Ya Libnan, 15th July, 2021

Lebanon’s armed forces need an immediate \$100 million to cover its soldiers’ basic needs, a general told CNBC, as a currency crisis pushes their salaries below the poverty line. His comments come as the country’s military tries to avoid collapse. “Without the morale and the motivation of our soldiers, it’s going to impact negatively the mission,” Brig. Gen. Youssef Haddad told CNBC. “If the army collapses, Lebanon will be lost.” He said that by September, the army will be in a “critical condition.”

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/07/15/lebanons-army-needs-100-million-immediately-for-soldiers-basic-needs-general-says/>

Lebanon’s Hariri quits mission, cites ‘key differences’ with Aoun declares ‘may God help the nation’

Ya Libnan, 15th July, 2021

Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri on Thursday announced that he is quitting the government formation mission, following

talks with President Michel Aoun in Baabda. “I met with the President and we held consultations over the government. During the discussions, the President requested essential changes and we discussed the issue related to the vote of confidence and the issue of naming the two Christian ministers,” Hariri said after a 20-minute meeting. “It is clear that the stance on this issue has not changed and it is clear that we will not agree with the President,” he added. “I asked President Aoun if he needs more time to discuss the line-up but he answered that it seems that we won’t agree, that’s why I submitted to him my resignation and may God help the country,” Hariri went on to say.

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/07/15/lebanons-hariri-quits-mission-declares-may-god-help-the-nation/>

Israel: We Will Target All Hizbullah Sites in Any Future War

Naharnet, 15th July, 2021

The Israeli army stated on Wednesday that “Hizbullah’s military depots are being planted in residential areas,” accusing Hizbullah of “using the Lebanese residents as a military tactic to implement its plans.” The Israeli military claimed that “Hizbullah has an arms depot 25 meters away from a school in the Nabatieh town of Ebba.” The statement threatened that Israel “will take the necessary measures” regarding the “active targets” and “will hit all of Hizbullah’s sites in any future war.” “We will reveal the sites that will be targeted in Lebanon in any war with Hizbullah,” the Israeli army added.

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/282642-israel-we-will-target-all-hizbullah-sites-in-any-future-war>

PALESTINE

Head Of Hamas Diaspora Office Khaled Mash'al: Hamas Seeks To Restore Ties With Arab Countries, Especially Saudi Arabia; We Adhere To The Ideology Of The Muslim Brotherhood But Are An Independent Movement

MEMRI TV, 4th July, 2021

Head of Hamas Diaspora Office Khaled Mash'al said that Hamas seeks to restore ties with Arab countries that had previously supported the movement, especially with Saudi Arabia. He made his remarks in an interview that aired on Al-Arabiya Network (Saudi Arabia) on July 4, 2021. Mash'al said also that Hamas adheres to the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, but it remains an independent movement. "I will tell you. We are a Palestinian movement of resistance against the occupation. Yes, our roots are in the Muslim Brotherhood. Ideologically, we were, and still are, part of the Muslim Brotherhood, but we are an independent Palestinian movement. No one interferes in our matters. There are movements with a certain organizational structure and history. But today, Hamas is a Palestinian, Islamic, national movement that wages resistance against the occupation. Its leaders are the ones making the decisions. It is not under the control of any country or organization.

<https://www.memri.org/tv/hamas-diaspora-office-khaled-mashal-seeks-restore-ties-arabs-saudi-arabia-adhere-ideology-muslim-brotherhood-independent>

Teen Attendee Of Islamic Jihad Gaza Summer Camp: Hitler Left Some Of You Alive To Show Us How Wicked You Are; We Will Tear Your Bodies Apart With Our Rockets; PIJ Official: The Children

Of Palestine Will Sacrifice Their Blood And Body Parts

MEMRI TV, 6th July, 2021

A teen camper of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) "Sword of Jerusalem" summer camp, said: "We did not come here to enjoy ourselves or play," rather, he said, campers came to sacrifice themselves for the sake of Palestine and their people. He made these remarks in a news report about the camp that aired on Al-Quds Al-Youm TV (Islamic Jihad – Gaza) on June 29, 2021. The teen boy said that Hitler left some Jews alive to show how wicked they are. He threatened that the PIJ will tear the Jews' bodies apart with their rockets, and said: "Scram into the shelters, you mice, you sons of Jews!" *Ahmad Al-Ra'I, spokesman for the "The Sword of Jerusalem" summer camps*, said that the camps are run by trainers and commanders with the Al-Quds Brigades and that they instill military knowledge and skills in the boys, which will enable them to confront the enemy in the "next stage."

<https://www.memri.org/reports/teen-attendee-islamic-jihad-gaza-summer-camp-hitler-left-some-you-alive-show-us-how-wicked>

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia intercepts 'hostile air target' launched by the Houthis in Yemen

Alarabiya, 3rd July, 2021

Saudi Arabia has intercepted a "hostile air target" launched by the Iran-backed Houthi militia towards the Kingdom, the Arab Coalition said in a statement. "Our joint forces were efficient and thwarted an imminent hostile act," the Arab Coalition

says after intercepting the Houthi attack targeting Saudi Arabia.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/07/03/Saudi-Arabia-intercepts-hostile-air-target-launched-by-the-Houthis-in-Yemen>

Arab Coalition foils Houthi attack, destroys booby-trapped boats in the Red Sea

Alarabiya, 3rd July, 2021

The Arab Coalition on Saturday said it foiled an imminent attack by the Iran-backed Houthi militia using two booby-trapped boats off the coast of the Hodeidah port in Yemen. The coalition was able to destroy the boats off the coast of the As-Salif village before the Houthis carried out their operation, according to a statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA). The Iran-backed group continues to threaten maritime navigation and international trade in the southern Red Sea, the Arab Coalition said. The Houthis also continue to violate the Stockholm Agreement by planning hostile attacks from the Hodeidah governorate, which is currently under their control, the statement added.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/07/03/Arab-Coalition-destroys-two-explosive-laden-Houthi-boats>

Saudi Arabia's Prince Khalid meets top US diplomat, senior State Department officials

Alarabiya, 7th July, 2021

Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister of Defense Prince Khalid bin Salman met with senior US officials, including President Joe Biden's top diplomat, at the State Department on Wednesday as part of

his official trip to Washington to discuss ways of boosting bilateral ties. Prince Khalid met with Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland and Counselor Derek Chollet, according to a statement from the State Department. Discussions touched on "regional security, support for Saudi Arabia to defend itself from cross-border attacks, and improving human rights," the State Department said. Prince Khalid tweeted about his "great meeting" with Blinken to "discuss the strategic Saudi-US partnership, review the latest developments in the region, and explore ways to strengthen Saudi-US ties."

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/07/08/Saudi-Arabia-s-Prince-Khalid-meets-top-US-diplomat-senior-State-Department-officials>

Saudi-UAE commanders review progress of Yemeni operations

Saudi Gazette, 15th July, 2021

Deputy Chief of the General Staff and Acting Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Forces Lt. Gen. Mutlaq Al-Azima held a meeting with Commander of the UAE Joint Operations Maj. Gen. Saleh Al-Amiri at the headquarters of the Joint Forces Command here on Thursday. During the meeting, they reviewed the progress of military operations with the support of the Yemeni National Army and the joint efforts exerted in the ongoing operations of the Coalition Forces to support legitimacy in Yemen.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/608868/SAUDI-ARABIA/Saudi-UAE-commanders-review-progress-of-Yemeni-operations>

SYRIA

President al-Assad receives Lavrentiev, talks deal with strategic relations

Syrian Arab News Agency, 1st July, 2021

President Bashar al-Assad received on Thursday Alexander Lavrentiev, the special envoy for president Vladimir Putin of Russia and an accompanying delegation. Talks during the meeting dealt with the strategic relations between Syria and Federal Russia and means of expanding them in the interest of both peoples and countries. The talks also dealt with the latest situation in the region and the efforts exerted by Russia in support of Syrian people against terrorism and sanctions, based on its firm stance on the need to respect the principles of international law and the will of peoples and to adopt dialogue as a basis and only way to find solutions to problems and crises in the world.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=240063>

India affirms continuous support for Syria at all levels

Syrian Arab News Agency, 5th July, 2021

Indian Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Sanjay Bhattacharya affirmed his country's continuous support for Syria in the political, economic, cultural, scientific and humanitarian domains, and its firm stance for non-interference in the affairs of sovereign states and rejecting terrorism and extremism with all its forms. During a meeting on Monday with Syria's Ambassador to India, Riad Abbas, Bhattacharya hoped that Syria would come out of the repercussions of the terrorist war that was imposed on it, especially after the successful fulfilment of the presidential election. Ambassador Abbas affirmed that

India, like other friendly countries to Syria, will have an active role during this stage and that the doors are open for it to participate in the reconstruction process. Bhattacharya and Abbas affirmed the commitment of India and Syria to continue coordination and mutual cooperation to prevent projects supporting terrorism at international forums under various pretexts and false titles like humanitarian corridors and buffer zones.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=240615>

Russia, Iran reiterate need to continue fighting terrorism in Syria, remove coercive measures

Syrian Arab News Agency, 8th July, 2021

At the conclusion of the Final Statement of 16th International Meeting in Astana Format, Russia and Iran reiterated the need to continue combating terrorism in Syria until eliminating it completely, lifting the coercive measures imposed on the country and supporting efforts to reach a political solution to the crisis in it. "Guarantor states of Astana process (Russia, Iran and Turkey) had always focused during the meetings on the need to preserve Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, reach a political settlement to the crisis in the country, and continue the fight against terror organizations until their total elimination," said head of the Russian delegation to the meeting Alexander Lavrentiev at the press conference in the in the Kazakh capital, Nur Sultan on Thursday. "Of course, there must be an end to the use of collective punishment methods against the Syrian people, which we consider defective," Lavrentiev said.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=241003>

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham kicks Chechen jihadis out of Idlib

Al-Monitor, 15th July, 2021

Well-informed sources among jihadi groups told Al-Monitor that the Chechen Jund al-Sham (Soldiers of the Levant) group has given in to pressure from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and evacuated its military positions in the Latakia mountains. The sources said that many members of Jund al-Sham left their weapons and went with their families to live in the countryside of Jisr al-Shughur in response to the demands of HTS, which had given the group the choice to dissolve itself or join its ranks. According to the sources, HTS had given Jund al-Sham a deadline to dissolve or be forced to join it. In meetings between HTS leaders headed by Abu Maria al-Qahtani and five leaders from Jund al-Sham headed by Muslim al-Shishani, Qahtani rejected all the solutions Shishani proposed and insisted the faction be dissolved. On July 2, Shishani shared the details of his meeting with HTS, saying that his group was asked to leave Idlib.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/hayat-tahrir-al-sham-kicks-chechen-jihadis-out-idlib#ixzz718qPW2fF>

Syrian government shelling in Idlib kills 9, including 3 children

Al-Monitor, 15th July, 2021

At least nine civilians, including three children, are dead following government shelling on towns in the opposition-controlled northwest of Syria, the United Nations and rescue workers said Thursday. The Syrian Civil Defense, also known as White Helmets, said artillery shelling on the town of al-Foua in eastern Idlib province killed six civilians, including a child, and injured eight others.

Elsewhere in Idlib, the rescue organization said laser-guided artillery struck the village of Ibleen, killing a mother and her child, as well as another child. Four other children were injured when their home was hit, the White Helmets said. The UN children's agency, UNICEF, also confirmed that three children in Idlib were killed in two separate attacks on Thursday. In the past two weeks alone, UNICEF says at least 10 children have been killed.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/syrian-government-shelling-idlib-kills-9-including-3-children#ixzz718qksSI1>

TURKEY

Turkey, Kyrgyzstan discuss security, defense cooperation

Daily Sabah, 1st July, 2021

Turkey eyes further cooperation with Kyrgyzstan in the fields of security and defense, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar stated Wednesday. During discussions with Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhaparov in the capital Bishkek, Defense Minister Hulusi Akar also stressed the importance of collaboration in the fight against the Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ), the group behind the 2016 defeated coup in Turkey. Akar said the fifth meeting of the Turkey-Kyrgyzstan High Level Strategic Cooperation Council – chaired by Zhaparov and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Ankara earlier this month – gave fresh impetus to bilateral relations and produced a roadmap for the future.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-kyrgyzstan-discuss-security-defense-cooperation>

Turkey-US contact on Kabul airport security will continue: Akar

Daily Sabah, 2nd July, 2021

A decision is yet to be reached on the Turkish mission to operate and secure Afghanistan's Kabul Hamid Karzai International Airport, Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said Friday, adding that contact between Turkey and the United States on the issue will continue. A delegation of U.S. State Department and Pentagon officials arrived in Ankara last week to discuss progress on efforts to keep Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul operational after the U.S. troop pullout, set to conclude by Sept. 11. Contact between Turkey and the U.S. over the security of Kabul's international airport after the U.S. pullout will continue, Akar said. "No decision has been reached at the moment," he told reporters after his visit to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-us-contact-on-kabul-airport-security-will-continue-akar>

NATO allies Greece, Turkey, Romania hold military drill in Black Sea

Daily Sabah, 5th July, 2021

NATO allies Greece, Turkey and Romania held a military drill in the Black Sea region, Oana Lungescu, the alliance's spokesperson stated late Sunday to improve cooperation, practice air-maritime communications and build stronger relationships. "The air-maritime integration training demonstrates NATO's capabilities, readiness and resolve to protect Allied populations; with our ships and aircraft peacefully operating off the Romanian coast we also assure the Allies in the region," a written statement of NATO said. NATO elaborated that Turkish F-16 fighters simulated attacks on the NATO

ships, which trained in defense drills against these attacked while the Greek and Romanian F-16s, in a separate event, conducted similar training maneuvers with the Greek fighters attacking the ships which responded in a joint manner with the Romanian fighters. Subsequently, the Greek and Romanian fighters conduct air-to-air combat drills, it added.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/nato-allies-greece-turkey-romania-hold-military-drill-in-black-sea>

Turkish, American defense chiefs to hold phone call

Anadolu Agency, 6th July, 2021

Amid ongoing talks on ensuring the security of the airport in Afghanistan's capital after this summer's NATO pullout, the Turkish and US defense chiefs are due to speak on the phone on Wednesday, said Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar. Stressing that the operation and security of Hamid Karzai International Airport in the capital Kabul carries critical significance for Afghans' future, Akar told reporters that talks with the US on this are ongoing – including his call with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin this Wednesday – along with looking at what other countries could do in this regard. Referring to Afghanistan as the "heart of Asia" and a crucial country, Akar said Ankara and Kabul share deep historical and cultural ties.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/turkish-american-defense-chiefs-to-hold-phone-call/2295877>

Turkey, Pakistan to increase military cooperation

Daily Sabah, 6th July, 2021

Turkey and Pakistan on Monday agreed to increase their cooperation in the military

field, especially in training and the fight against terrorism. According to a statement by the Inter Services Public Relations Pakistan (ISPR), Gen. Ümit Dündar of the Turkish Land Forces met with Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, chief of army staff (COAS) in Pakistan's Rawalpindi. Discussing bilateral relations during the visit, the two senior military officials underlined the importance of defense and security cooperation.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkey-pakistan-to-increase-military-cooperation>

Turkey-US fighter jets carry out NATO patrols over Iceland, Poland

Daily Sabah, 8th July, 2021

Turkish and U.S. fighter jets are carrying out air patrols this week to guard the skies over Poland and Iceland as part of NATO air policing duties, a bloc spokesperson said Wednesday. "We thank our Allies the United States and Turkey for contributing to NATO's air policing missions," Oana Lungescu said in a statement. Stressing that air patrols help the alliance keep its skies safe and secure around the clock, Lungescu said it is a clear example of alliance solidarity in action, "demonstrating that NATO has the capabilities and the resolve to protect all Allies."

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-us-fighter-jets-carry-out-nato-patrols-over-iceland-poland>

YEMEN

Iran-backed Houthis confirm death of 20 leaders in battle in Yemen's al-Bayda

Alarabiya, 11th July, 2021

The Iran-backed Houthi militia confirmed that 20 of its military leaders had been killed in a battle in Yemen's al-Bayda, Al Arabiya reported on Sunday. Fighting

between the internationally-recognized Yemeni government and the Houthis raged in a battle for the al-Zaher district, south of the central al-Bayda province. The Yemeni army had managed to thwart the Iran-backed group's attacks on its sites in the outskirts of the district, the country's defense ministry said on Saturday, adding that the fighting in the area ended with the Houthis suffering "large human and material losses."

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/07/11/Iran-backed-Houthis-confirm-death-of-20-leaders-in-battle-in-Yemen-s-al-Bayda>