



Volume 4 | Issue 8

SYLLOGE ON WEST ASIA

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

16 April - 30 April 2024



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Armenia

A new era of opportunity for Armenia and Saudi Arabia

ArmenPress, April 17, 2024

With the historic step of diplomatic relations firmly established between Armenia and Saudi Arabia, April 2024 marks the start of a new era of opportunity for expanded economic, social, and strategic cooperation between the two countries. The importance and positive impact for Armenia could be tremendous. Saudi Arabia is a growing regional power that has significant sway in the Arab and Islamic arenas. For Armenia, the development of this relationship is both a signal of and a support for its foreign policy diversification, moving from an era of overreliance on a single partner to a broader set of active country relationships. Forging collaborations with Saudi Arabia and additional country partners such as France, Egypt, Greece, and Cyprus as part of its diversification agenda can strengthen Armenia's scope and the success of shared projects.

<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1134988>

Armenian PM defends decision to give four villages to Azerbaijan

The Guardian, April 22, 2024

Nikol Pashinyan, the Armenian prime minister facing four days of protests against his decision to hand four villages to Azerbaijan, urged Armenians to recognise that the way the issue was handled had determined the viability of the future peace process with its neighbour. Pashinyan, the leader of Armenia's velvet revolution in 2018, said the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan "need to convert the theoretical

peace agenda into an actual peaceful reality". He said that although the negotiated handover of the villages may be seen as a local matter, "the quality of implementation of these local agreements will increase or decrease trust in the peace agenda and the feasibility of peace". The potential for the border dispute turning into a wider dispute drawing in Russia, Iran and Turkey across the Caucasus is real, Pashinyan's aides acknowledge.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/22/armenia-prime-minister-villages-azerbaijan-nikol-pashinyan>

First border post installed on Armenia-Azerbaijan border: Pashinyan publishes photo

ArmenPress, April 23, 2024

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has published the photo of the first border post installed in the Tavush-Kazakh section of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border. "The work of the expert groups of the two countries continues. As reported earlier, according to the agreements reached as a result of the 8th meeting of the Commission on the Delimitation and Border Security of the State Border between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State Commission on the Delimitation of the State Border between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, on the border of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan, the expert groups of the two countries have today started the process of determining the coordinates, based on geodetic measurements on the site," read the statement.

<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1135482>

Yerevan ready to contribute to the cessation of military operations in the Gaza Strip

ArmenPress, April 30, 2024

In an interview with Al-Jazeera, the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ararat Mirzoyan, addressed the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip, emphasising Armenia's firm stance against the targeting of civilian populations. "We are strongly against targeting civilians, we have faced a similar situation in Nagorno-Karabakh when more than 100.000 Armenians had to flee their ancestral homeland to save the lives of their family members, so we stand strongly against targeting the civilian population. Besides that, we are ready to preserve the cultural and spiritual heritage, particularly when it comes to the written heritage we have a famous and world-known depository for the manuscripts so we can temporarily host the manuscripts, if there is a need, from the conflict zone, preserve them and then return when everything is settled," the Foreign Minister said.

<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1136075>

Armenia and Italy discuss military cooperation

ArmenPress, April 26, 2024

A delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Karen Brutyan, was on a working visit to the Republic of Italy from April 23 to 25. According to a statement by the Ministry of Defence of Armenia, during the visit, the delegation had meetings with officials, including the Secretary General of Defence-National Armaments Director of

the Ministry of Defence, Luciano Portolano, the Under Secretary of State for Defence, Matteo Perego di Cremnago, and the President of AIAD of the Italian Republic, Giuseppe Cossiga, along with representatives of military-industrial companies. The discussions during the meetings focused on the Armenia-Italy military, military-technical, and military-technological cooperation. Several agreements were reached as a result of the discussions.

<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1135779>

Armenian MP touches upon the necessity of a military agreement between Armenia and Iran

ArmenPress, April 29, 2024

Anna Grigoryan, Armenian National Assembly deputy, member of the Standing Committee on Defense and Security Affairs emphasised the need for a military agreement between Armenia and Iran to solve common security problems. In an interview with IRNA published on April 29, the MP expressed her conviction that the potential for the development of relations between the two countries is very high. She emphasised Iran's numerous statements regarding the preservation of Armenia's territorial integrity. Grigoryan noted that, despite Iran's firm statements supporting Armenia's territorial integrity, the two countries currently do not have any specific military agreement. The deputy expressed her belief that Iran's stance regarding the preservation of regional borders will not change, as this issue is a "red line" for Iran, given its national interests.

<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1135989>

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan explains rushed withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from Karabakh

News.am, April 17, 2024

Azerbaijan has explained the reason for the hasty pulling out of the Russian peacekeeping contingent from Nagorno-Karabakh. "The top leadership of both countries adopted a decision to withdraw Russian peacekeepers from the territory of Azerbaijan ahead of schedule," said Hikmat Hajiyev, Assistant to the President of Azerbaijan, Head of Foreign Policy Affairs Department of the Presidential Administration, reports APA. "According to the trilateral statement signed on November 10, 2020, the decision to withdraw Russian peacekeepers temporarily stationed on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan was adopted by the supreme leadership of both countries. The process has already started, the Defense Ministries of Azerbaijan and Russia are implementing the appropriate measures for the execution of that decision," Hajiyev added.

<https://news.am/eng/news/818338.html>

Bahrain

GPIC board chairman opens solar energy project

Bahrain News Agency, April 29, 2024

Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, the Board of Directors Chairman of the Gulf Petrochemical Company (GPIC), today inaugurated a solar energy project at the company. The project is within the framework of GPIC's continuous support for the use of renewable energy sources,

and efforts to preserve the environment and protect it from pollutants. It is also considered one of the environmental projects it is implementing inside and around the industrial complex, in support of the kingdom's policies to reduce carbon emissions, in a way that would contribute to achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. He unveiled that the project will generate a total of 1,072 megawatt-hours per year, which are quantities that will play an important role in the company's energy strategy.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/ArchiveDetails.aspx?archiveId=750110>

NPRA Undersecretary briefed on Singapore's security, safety experience

Bahrain News Agency, April 29, 2024

The Interior Ministry's Undersecretary for Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA), Shaikh Hisham bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, made an official visit to Singapore. He was accompanied by the Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Human Resources, Major-General Adel Ameen, and officials. The visit aimed to learn about strategic planning and the use of scientific technologies in security, as well as the latest developments in security and safety systems and training. He also visited the science and technology sector of the Singaporean Ministry of the Interior and the ST Engineering Company, specialising in artificial intelligence, where they were briefed on work areas related to border security, cybersecurity, sensing and surveillance.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/ArchiveDetails.aspx?archiveId=750113>

Foreign Minister participates in 3rd session of Arab Economic and Cooperation Forum with Central Asian Countries, Azerbaijan

Bahrain News Agency, April 30, 2024

Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, participated in the third session of the Arab Economic and Cooperation Forum with Central Asian Countries and the Republic of Azerbaijan, held on April 30, 2024 in Doha. “We look forward to creating a stimulating environment that leads to increasing trade exchange and encouraging investment between the two sides, as well as intensifying joint cooperation in many other vital fields such as energy, transportation, environment, science, technology, health, education, tourism and culture, because of their positive impact on economic and social growth,” he said. The Foreign Affairs Minister noted that the ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip constitutes a painful tragedy that must be stopped immediately, because of the threat it poses to regional security, stability and prosperity.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/ArchiveDetails.aspx?archiveId=750241>

Bahraini-Sudanese relations, Arab Summit agenda discussed

Bahrain News Agency, April 30, 2024

Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Foreign Affairs Minister, held a meeting with Hussein Awad, Sudan’s Foreign Minister-designate, on the sidelines of the third session of the Arab Economic and

Cooperation Forum with Central Asian Countries and the Republic of Azerbaijan. They also exchanged views on the security and humanitarian situation in Sudan, in light of the continuing military confrontations between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, in addition to regional developments and efforts aimed at establishing peace, security and stability in the region. The meeting also focused on the ongoing preparations for the 33rd Arab Summit, set to be hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain on May 16, in addition to the Summit’s agenda.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/ArchiveDetails.aspx?archiveId=750247>

Foreign Minister meets Palestinian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

Bahrain News Agency, April 30, 2024

Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Foreign Affairs Minister, held a meeting with Dr. Mohammed Mustafa, the Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister of the State of Palestine, on the sidelines of the third session of the Arab Economic and Cooperation Forum with Central Asian Countries and the Republic of Azerbaijan held on April 30, 2024 in Doha. They also exchanged views on the regional developments and their impacts on regional security and stability, as well as the war on the Gaza Strip and the ongoing efforts aimed at reaching an immediate ceasefire, ensuring protection for civilians and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gazans.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/ArchiveDetails.aspx?archiveId=750251>

Bahrain regrets UN Security Council's failure to issue resolution accepting Palestine's full UN membership

Bahrain News Agency, April 20, 2024

The Kingdom of Bahrain regretted the failure of the UN Security Council to adopt a draft resolution accepting full membership of the State of Palestine in the United Nations, in light of the suffering of the brotherly Palestinian people from the occupation, the continuation of the war, and the catastrophic humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed that completing international recognition of the Palestinian State and its full membership in the UN is a legal and political right, within the Palestinian people's inalienable historical rights to establish their independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the two-state solution, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant international resolutions.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/ArchiveDetails.aspx?archiveId=749068>

Bahrain, China hold first round of political consultations

Bahrain News Agency, April 26, 2024

The Kingdom of Bahrain and the People's Republic of China discussed the latest regional and global developments, including the ongoing efforts aimed at reaching an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, delivering humanitarian aid to civilians, avoiding military escalation, and reducing tensions, in addition to endeavours to establish just and comprehensive peace regionally and globally, as well as promote

peaceful coexistence among cultures and civilisations. Deng Li affirmed his country's interest in strengthening political and economic cooperation and coordination with the kingdom, in a way that would serve the interests of the countries and their peoples, as well as contribute to enhancing regional and international security and peace.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/ArchiveDetails.aspx?archiveId=749808>

Iran

Biden announced new sanctions against Iran

News.am, April 18, 2024

The United States administration, together with its allies and partners, is imposing sanctions against Iran in connection with its attack on Israel late last week. US President Joe Biden said in a written statement. "Less than a week ago, Iran launched one of the world's largest missile and drone strikes on Israel. Together with our allies and partners, the United States defended Israel. We helped repel that attack. And today we are holding Iran accountable - imposing new sanctions and export controls against it," the head of state said. "Our allies and partners have imposed or will impose additional sanctions and measures to limit Iran's destabilising military programs," Biden added.

<https://news.am/eng/news/818592.html>

Kanaani: Iran's IRGC prevented ISIS from infiltrating West

News.am, April 27, 2024

If not for the sacrifices of the IRGC and its counter-terrorism advisers in the region,

ISIL terrorism would have "infiltrated from the backdoor of the European Parliament," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said, Mehr reported. According to Kanaani, Iran is a key partner in fighting terrorism and ensuring peace and stability in the world. In this way, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman commented on the new sanctions imposed on Iranian individuals and entities by the United States, Britain, and Canada, as well as on the anti-Iran communique issued by the European Union. Kanaani condemned calls by the EU parliament to blacklist Iran's elite armed forces, the IRGC, saying that the sacrifices made by members of these forces are "a key element in preventing the infiltration of terrorism into the Western world."

<https://news.am/eng/news/820287.html>

UK imposes sanctions on four Iranian UAV companies

News.am, April 25, 2024

The UK has expanded by six positions the sanctions list against Iran by extending restrictive measures to two individuals and four companies associated with the production of drones and missiles. This follows a statement released by the UK Foreign Office. Canada and the United States took similar measures. Seyed Mohsen Vahabzadeh Moghadam and Abbas Abdi Asjerd, who, according to the Foreign Office, "lead a network of Iranian companies involved in the production of drones," were placed under sanctions. Restrictions have been imposed on Alvand Motorbuilding, Bonyan Danesh Shargh, Industries Company, Moj Gostar Aseman

Parvaz Company, and Pishro Sanat Aseman Sharif Company.

<https://news.am/eng/news/819974.html>

Iran MFA spox: Foreign military's entry into South Caucasus does not contribute to establishment of regional stability

News.am, April 22, 2024

Iran has always emphasised that the entry of foreign military into the South Caucasus does not contribute to peace, stability, and security and securing the interests of the regional countries. This was announced in his weekly presser on Monday, by Nasser Kanaani, the spokesman of the Iranian foreign ministry, reports Mehr News Agency. Kanaani stated that Iran's strategy is to conduct negotiations and multilateral dialogue using the existing mechanisms in order to resolve differences and establish peace, stability, and security in the South Caucasus. "Any approach aimed at increasing militarization in the South Caucasus will complicate the security situation in the region and harm the peace process in the region—and Iran will not accept that" added the Iranian MFA spox.

<https://news.am/eng/news/819175.html>

Iran said to cut Syria presence after strikes blamed on Israel

Times of Israel, April 24, 2024

Iran has reduced its military footprint in Syria after a succession of strikes blamed on Israel, a source close to Iran-backed terror group Hezbollah and a war monitor

had said on April 24, 2024. Iran has provided military support to Syrian government forces through more than a decade of civil war, but a series of strikes targeting its commanders in recent months has prompted a reshaping of its presence, the sources said. Recent months have seen a series of strikes on Iranian targets in Syria, widely blamed on Israel, culminating in an April 1 strike that levelled what Iran said was a consulate in Damascus and killed seven Revolutionary Guards, two of them generals. That strike prompted Iran to launch a first-ever direct missile and drone attack against Israel on April 13-14 that sent regional tensions spiralling.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-said-to-cut-syria-presence-after-strikes-blamed-on-israel/>

Iranian president threatens Israel's annihilation if major attack occurs

Times of Israel, April 23, 2024

An Israeli attack on Iranian territory could radically change dynamics and result in there being nothing left of the "Zionist regime," Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi was quoted as saying on April 23, 2024 by the official IRNA news agency. Iran launched a barrage of missiles and drones at Israel on April 13 in what it said was retaliation for Israel's suspected deadly strike on a consular building in Damascus on April 1, but almost all were shot down. On April 19, 2024, explosions were heard over the Iranian city of Isfahan in an alleged Israeli attack on a missile defence system, but Tehran played down the incident and said it had no plans for retaliation. Since October 7, Iran's proxies in Lebanon and Yemen have targeted Israel as well, which

they say is in support of Gaza's Palestinians.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-president-threatens-israels-annihilation-if-major-attack-occurs/>

Iraq

Iraqi air forces strike ISIS hideouts in the Hamrin Mountains

Iraqi News Agency, April 23, 2024

Joint Operations Command (JOC) announced on April 23, 2024, the implementation of an air strike on the hideouts of ISIS terrorist elements in the Hamrin mountain range. A statement from JOC, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), stated that "With distinguished efforts, follow-up, great intelligence, and very accurate information by the Directorate of Military Intelligence, and in cooperation and coordination with the targeting cell/Joint Operations Command, the Air Force Falcons carried out, with F16 aircraft, a crushing air strike on one of The hideouts of ISIS terrorist elements in the Hamrin mountain range/Diyala Operations Command sector at 08:10 this morning." The statement added, "The air strike resulted in the killing of a number of terrorists."

<https://ina.iq/eng/32363-an-iraqi-air-strike-against-isis-hideouts-in-the-hamrin-mountains.html>

Iraq and Iran discuss security developments in the region

Iraqi News Agency, April 23, 2024

National Security Advisor Qassim Al-Araji discussed on April 23, 2024, the latest

security developments in the region with the Secretary-General of the Iranian National Security Council, Ali-Akbar Ahmadian. The meeting came on the sidelines of the 12th international meeting of senior officials on security issues, held in the St. Petersburg, Russia. They discussed the latest security developments in the region and ways to strengthen cooperation relations between Baghdad and Tehran, especially in the fields of security, intelligence, border control, counter terrorism, and drugs. Al-Araji stressed “the importance of the international community coming together in the face of the challenges facing the region, to prevent the escalation of crises and conflicts in addition to their repercussions on the overall situation in the region.”

<https://ina.iq/eng/32369-iraq-and-iran-discuss-security-developments-in-the-region.html>

SMC: Agreement for 21 multi-purpose aircraft from the US

Iraqi News Agency, April 29, 2024

The head of the Security Media Cell - SMC, Major General Tahseen Al-Khafaji, announced a contract to purchase 21 multi-purpose and mission aircraft during the recent visit of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Muhammed S. Al-Sudani, to Washington. The recent visit of the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Muhammad Shia al-Sudani, to Washington "was successful by all standards, including the military aspect, as Iraq contracted through this visit 12 Bell 412 Multi-purpose aircraft, as well as 9 Bell 407 aircraft, according to Al-Khafaji. He pointed out that "Iraq needs multi-purpose aircraft that

can meet the requirements of air defence, ground attack, reconnaissance, and response. In addition to that, it must be flexible for use with ground units. There are other aircraft that provide logistical support to advanced units."

<https://ina.iq/eng/32470-smc-agreement-for-21-multi-purpose-aircraft-from-the-us.html>

Al-Sudani: The process of construction, reconstruction, and project implementation all require security stability

Iraqi News Agency, 24, 2024

Prime Minister Mohammad Shia Al-Sudani confirmed today, Wednesday that the process of construction, reconstruction, and project implementation all require security stability. Al-Sudani stressed, according to the statement, that “Anbar Governorate has importance and particularity because it extends over a wide area of Iraqi land, which requires a double effort in order to maintain security there,” noting that “the victories achieved over terrorism would not have been possible without the stance of the people of Anbar who they supported the security forces, worked in all their formations, and made sacrifices for the sake of their governorate and their homeland.” He directed that "the security man reflect the image of the state in the best possible way, and that he deal with citizens in accordance with the standards of law and human rights without transgression or assault on people's dignity."

<https://ina.iq/eng/32393-al-sudani-the-process-of-construction-reconstruction-and-project-implementation-all-require-security-stability.html>

Israel

UN Security Council committee unable to agree on Palestinian bid for full membership

Times of Israel, April 16, 2024

A United Nations Security Council committee considering an application by the Palestinian Authority to become a full UN member “was unable to make a unanimous recommendation” on whether it met the criteria, according to the committee report seen by Reuters on April 16, 2024. The Palestinian Authority still expected to push the 15-member Security Council to vote on a draft resolution recommending it become a full member of the world body, diplomats said. But an application to become a full UN member needs to be approved by the Security Council — where Israel’s ally the United States can block it — and then at least two-thirds of the General Assembly. UN membership is open to “peace-loving states” that accept the obligations in the founding UN Charter and are able and willing to carry them out.

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/un-security-council-committee-unable-to-agree-on-palestinian-bid-for-full-membership/

Hezbollah announce strikes on 2 Israel military bases

News.am, April 23, 2024

The Lebanese Hezbollah movement has announced that it carried out drone strikes on two Israeli military bases in response to the killing of two of its fighters, reported Al Jazeera. Hezbollah launched a "combined

air attack using decoy and explosive drones” that hit two Israeli positions north of the city of Acre. This was done in response to an Israeli drone attack, as a result of which Hussein Azqul, who served in the Hezbollah air defence unit in southern Lebanon, was killed. Muhammad Attiya, a member of Hezbollah’s Radwan force, was killed in an overnight airstrike near the town of Arzon, according to a statement from the Israeli army. This attack was Hezbollah's deepest penetration into Israel since the start of the Gaza war, added Al Jazeera.

<https://news.am/eng/news/819453.html>

G7 to discuss Israel attack on Iran

News.am, April 19, 2024

The G7 countries will discuss the situation related to the alleged attack of Israel on the territory of Iran at the meeting of foreign ministers in Italy on Friday. This was announced by Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Melanie Joly. "I have been briefed by Global Affairs Canada officials about the overnight explosions in Iran. We are monitoring the situation closely. We will address the situation with the Foreign Ministers at the G7 session this morning in Italy," Joly wrote on X—formerly Twitter. Hosting the aforesaid G7 meeting, Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Antonio Tajani, noted on X that the development of the situation after the alleged Israeli strike on Iran will be discussed in a session on the morning of the last working day, when a final announcement is expected.

<https://news.am/eng/news/818679.html>

Netanyahu vows imminent ‘painful blows,’ diplomatic pressure on Hamas to free hostages

Sam Sokol and Jacob Magid

Times of Israel, April 21, 2024

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would “land additional and painful blows” on Hamas over Passover to increase pressure on the terror group to free the hostages it has held in the Gaza Strip for over six months. “In the coming days, we will increase the military and diplomatic pressure on Hamas because this is the only way to free our hostages and achieve our victory,” he had said. Meanwhile, on April 21, 2024, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi approved battle plans at the Southern Command headquarters in Beersheba, the military said. The IDF said the “assessment of the situation and approval of plans for the continuation of the war” was attended by the head of the Southern Command, Maj. Gen. Yaron Finkelman and other officers.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-vows-imminent-painful-blows-on-hamas-more-pressure-to-free-hostages/>

New satellite photos suggest ‘precise’ nature of alleged Israeli strike on Iran radar

Jon Gambrell

Times of Israel, April 22, 2024

Satellite photos taken on April 22, 2024 suggest an apparent Israeli retaliatory strike targeting Iran’s central city of Isfahan “precisely” hit a radar system for a Russian-made air defence battery, contradicting repeated denials by officials in Tehran of any damage in the assault. The strike on an

S-300 radar in what appears to have been a very limited strike by Israel would represent far more damage done than in the massive drone-and-missile attack Iran unleashed against Israel on April 13. Analysts believe both Iran and Israel, regional archrivals locked in a shadow war for years, now are trying to dial back tensions following a series of escalatory attacks between them as the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip still rages and inflames the wider region.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/new-satellite-photos-suggest-precise-nature-of-alleged-israeli-strike-on-iran-radar/>

IDF deploying two reserve brigades to Gaza as Israel girds for Rafah offensive

Emanuel Fabian

Times of Israel, April 24, 2024

The Israel Defense Forces said it was readying to deploy two reserve brigades for missions in the Gaza Strip, as the military appeared to move ahead with plans for an offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah as it seeks to remove the Hamas terror group from its last major redoubt in the enclave. The 679th “Yiftah” Armored Brigade and the 2nd “Carmeli” Infantry Brigade, which had been operating on the northern border, were set to take responsibility for areas of central Gaza that have remained under Israeli military control since troops largely pulled back from other areas of the Strip earlier this month, according to an Army Radio report. The mobilised brigades were to be placed under the 99th Division.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-deploying-two-reserve-brigades-to-gaza-as-israel-girds-for-rafah-offensive/>

Netanyahu slams reported US decision to sanction IDF unit: ‘The height of absurdity’

Times of Israel, April 20, 2024

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issues a statement denouncing any sanctions on the IDF, after a report said the Biden administration is set to blacklist a unit for alleged human rights abuses in the West Bank. Netanyahu added that he’s been working in recent weeks to fend off sanctions against “Israeli citizens, including in my conversations with senior American administration officials.” “While our soldiers our fighting terrorist monsters, the intention to impose sanctions on an IDF unit is the height of absurdity and a moral nadir,” he continues. “The government I lead will act with all means against these moves.”

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-slams-reported-us-decision-to-sanction-idf-unit-the-height-of-absurdity/

Jordan

Key Western ally Jordan on edge after Iran attack; Israel weighs up retaliation options

Daily Maverick, April 17, 2024

Iran’s unprecedented attack on Israel and the prospect of escalating hostilities threatened to embroil Jordan, a key Western ally and a country regarded by Gulf states as pivotal to their security. When the Islamic Republic fired a barrage of missiles and drones at Israel on Saturday night, Jordan helped shoot down some that flew over its capital, Amman, with Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi

saying the kingdom saw the projectiles as posing “a real danger” to its territory. All of this has raised concerns about Jordan’s stability in Abu Dhabi and Riyadh, and Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed have offered their support to King Abdullah.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-04-17-key-western-ally-jordan-on-edge-after-iran-attack-israel-weighs-up-retaliation-options/>

Iran attacks: Jordan faces scrutiny over Israel military ties after downing missiles

Rayhan Uddin

Middle East Eye, April 16, 2024

Jordan's involvement in intercepting Iranian projectiles bound for Israel over the weekend has sparked questions about its security relationship with Israel, in a country with the highest population of Palestinian refugees. Amman joined Israel, the US, UK and France in shooting down around 300 drones and missiles on April 13, 2024, in the first direct Iranian attack targeting Israeli territory. The operation was in response to Israeli strikes on the Iranian consular building in Syria earlier in April 2024 that killed seven members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Jordan reportedly intercepted missiles near the Jordan Valley and along the border with Syria.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/jordan-thwarting-iran-missiles-raises-questions-security-ties-israel>

Jordan lobbying to prevent Israel from using its airspace for Iran strike – officials

Jacob Magid

Times of Israel, April 18, 2024

Jordan's King Abdullah asked US President Joe Biden during a call over the weekend to urge Israel not to use Amman's airspace in a counter-strike against Iran, three officials familiar with the matter told The Times of Israel. Given how critical the Hashemite kingdom has been of Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza, Jordan was arguably the most notable member of the US-led coalition that joined the IDF in shooting down the over 300 missiles and drones Iran fired at the Jewish state on the night of April 13, 2024. While it is unlikely that Jordan would actually shoot down an Israeli drone, missile or plane that entered its airspace, Amman fears that allowing such a strike to go ahead, particularly after helping thwart the Iranian attack, will expose it to retaliation from Tehran, the officials said.

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/jordan-lobbying-to-prevent-israel-from-using-its-airspace-for-iran-strike-officials/

Kuwait

KOC explores renewable energy and green hydrogen transition

Times Kuwait, April 29, 2024

Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has signed an agreement with KBR Consulting to conduct a feasibility study on transitioning to renewable energy and green hydrogen. This initiative aligns with the Kuwait Petroleum

Corporation's (KPC) strategy to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, as announced by KPC CEO Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud. KOC is implementing a multi-pronged strategy encompassing exploration, production, energy transition, and all types of drilling, both onshore and offshore, in an integrated and systematic manner that can be developed at each stage. This strategy serves and achieves the overall strategy of KPC and its subsidiaries, under full coordination and understanding between the executive leadership of KPC and its subsidiaries, enabling the achievement of Kuwait's oil strategy.

<https://timeskuwait.com/koc-explores-renewable-energy-and-green-hydrogen-transition/>

Lebanon

Lebanon: Flash Update #16 - Escalation of hostilities in south Lebanon, as of 18 April 2024

UNOCHA Publications, April 23, 2024

Lebanon continues to experience a surge in hostilities, as Israeli airstrikes extend far beyond its southern border, where the most intense bombardments are concentrated. These strikes persistently targeted residential houses, shops, and civilian infrastructure, exacerbating the situation. As of 16 April, 92,621 people had been internally displaced and were seeking refuge across Lebanon, with 96 per cent originating from Bint Jbeil, Marjayoun, and Tyre districts. On 12 April, Israeli Forces opened fire with small arms on Public Electricity Company employees in Aadaise, South Lebanon. Led by the Prime Minister, the Presidency of the Council of

Ministers oversees national preparedness and response efforts, supported by the National Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Unit.

<https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/lebanon/lebanon-flash-update-16-escalation-hostilities-south-lebanon-18-april-2024>

Gaza war spillover compounds misery for most vulnerable in Lebanon

UN News, April 30, 2024

In a call for an immediate end to the war in Gaza which sparked intensifying exchanges of fire between armed militants Hezbollah and the Israeli military, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned that airstrikes are hitting "deeper and deeper" into Lebanon, with 344 people killed to date, including eight youngsters. Inside Lebanon, the UN official reported that key water station infrastructure has been destroyed, leaving "around 100,000 people now denied access to clean drinking water". Amid growing needs and a spike in tensions between Lebanese and Syrian refugee communities, which could be defused with prompt humanitarian action, the UNICEF officer warned that a number of donor countries had "significantly reduced" critical funding.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1149166>

France's FM in Lebanon to prevent Israel-Hezbollah conflict escalation

Radio France Internationale, April 28, 2024

France's Foreign Minister Stéphane Séjourné was in Lebanon on April 28, 2024 to push proposals to prevent further

escalation and a potential war between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah. Israel and the Hezbollah group in Lebanon have exchanged tit for tat strikes in recent months, but these have increased since Iran launched a barrage of missiles on Israel in response to a suspected Israeli attack on the Iranian embassy in the Syrian capital Damascus that killed members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps' overseas Quds Force. France's proposal, which has been discussed with partners, notably the United States, has not moved forward, but Paris wants to keep momentum in talks and underscore to Lebanese officials that Israeli threats of a military operation in southern Lebanon should be taken seriously.

<https://www.rfi.fr/en/international/20240428-france-s-fm-in-lebanon-to-prevent-israel-hezbollah-conflict-escalation>

Israeli strikes hit southern Lebanon as cross-border fire escalates

Laila Bassam and James Mackenzie

Reuters, April 24, 2024

The Israeli military said artillery and fighter jet strikes had hit around 40 targets in southern Lebanon on Wednesday as the intense fighting of recent days continued to escalate, with Hezbollah firing dozens of rockets at an Israeli border village. The Iran-backed Hezbollah and Israel have been waging their worst hostilities in nearly two decades since war erupted in Gaza last October, stirring concern about the risk of a wider and more destructive conflict between the heavily armed foes. The Israeli military said the strikes in the area of Ayta al-Shaab, about 3 km (1.6 miles) inside the Lebanese border, had hit infrastructure

including storage facilities and weapons in an area it said was used extensively by Hezbollah forces.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-lebanons-hezbollah-trade-heavy-fire-sources-lebanon-say-2024-04-24/>

Oman

Scores martyred, injured in ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza

Oman News Agency, April 16, 2024

Scores of Palestinians were martyred and injured in Israeli airstrikes that targeted different areas in the Gaza Strip. According to Palestinian news agency (WAFA), the Israeli warplanes targeted Al-Fakhoura Mosque west of Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip, leaving several casualties. The airstrike also caused a massive destruction to the neighbouring areas and homes. In the centre of the Gaza Strip, intense artillery and missile shelling continues on the Nuseirat camp for the sixth day in a row, resulting in at least five casualties and significant property damage, WAFA added. Meanwhile, the occupation aircraft bombed multiple homes in Al-Mughraqa and the neighbouring city of Al-Zahraa.

<https://omannews.gov.om/topics/en/81/show/116566>

Arab group urges all security council members to vote in favour of Palestine's full UN membership

Oman News Agency, April 17, 2024

The Arab Group at the United National underlined firm support for the State of

Palestine's request for full UN membership, saying it is a long-awaited step that should have been taken since 1948. In a statement, the Arab Group affirmed continued efforts to work constructively with the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security, especially its responsibilities towards the State of Palestine and the Palestinian people. The Arab Group urged the Security Council to respond to the call of the international community and approve Palestine's membership application without further delay, otherwise it would be a blatant abdication by the Council of its responsibility to support the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

<https://omannews.gov.om/topics/en/81/show/116584>

Oman condemns Israeli attack on Isfahan

Oman News Agency, April 19, 2024

A spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry said that the Sultanate of Oman followed the ongoing regional tension and condemned the Israeli attack this morning on Isfahan in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It also condemns and denounces Israel's repeated military attacks in the region. The spokesperson added that Oman once again appeals to the international community to address the causes and roots of tension and conflict through dialogue, diplomacy and political solutions. It also appeals to the international community to focus on ceasefire efforts in Gaza and resort to international law and United Nations resolutions to reach a just and lasting

solution to the Palestinian cause in order to restore regional security, stability and peace.

<https://omannews.gov.om/topics/en/81/show/116616>

Oman participates in EU-GCC High-Level Forum on regional security and cooperation

Oman News Agency, April 23, 2024

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Foreign Ministry, took part in the High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation between the GCC and the European Union, held in Luxemburg. Oman's delegation was chaired by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs. The forum discussed means of enhancing cooperation between the GCC countries and the European Union countries. It also touched on the tragic conditions in the Gaza Strip and the necessity of a ceasefire. It stressed the importance of maintaining peace in the Middle East and establishing an independent Palestinian state.

<https://omannews.gov.om/topics/en/81/show/116672>

Oman serves as a crucial back channel between Iran and the US as tensions flare in the Middle East

National Security News, April 25, 2024

For years, Oman has worked hard to avoid the escalation of the Middle Eastern crisis. As conflict rages between Israel and Gaza and Iran, Oman is reprising its role as peacemaker, enabling back-channel talks in an attempt to avoid any further escalation.

Representing a small state in a volatile region, Omani officials have created diplomatic spaces that permit them to engage with regional issues on their own terms and in ways that play to their strengths. In January 2024, Omani officials hosted delegations of senior negotiators from both countries, shuttling between the representatives in separate rooms. Even as a wider regional conflict loomed in the Middle East after Israel presumably bombed an Iranian embassy compound in Damascus on April 1, Oman was on hand to try to tamp down tensions.

<https://nationalsecuritynews.com/2024/04/oman-serves-as-a-crucial-back-channel-between-iran-and-the-us-as-tensions-flare-in-the-middle-east/>

Qatar

Minister of State for International Cooperation meets French Officials

Qatar News Agency, April 16, 2024

HE Minister of State for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid Al Khater met on Tuesday in Paris with HE Cabinet Director of the French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Luis Vassy and HE Director of the Crisis and Support Center of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs Philippe Lalliot. During the meeting, they discussed the developments in Sudan and ways to address them among the priorities of the international agenda. They also discussed the developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, especially the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza and the efforts

of the two countries to increase their joint cooperation in that regard. In addition, they discussed the recent escalation in the region and the latest developments in Lebanon.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/newsbulletins/2024-04/16/0043-minister-of-state-for-international-cooperation-meets-french-officials>

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia to host Arab, EU diplomats for talks on Gaza war

Times of Israel, April 30, 2024

Top Arab and European diplomats are expected to begin arriving in the Saudi capital this weekend for an economic summit and meetings on the war in Gaza, diplomatic officials said on April 26, 2024. The two-day World Economic Forum special meeting, scheduled to begin in Riyadh on Sunday, includes in its official program appearances by the Saudi, Jordanian, Egyptian and Turkish foreign ministers. A Gaza-focused session on April 29, 2024 was set to feature newly appointed Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa, Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly and Sigrid Kaag, the United Nations aid coordinator for the Gaza Strip. Saudi Arabia has never recognized Israel, but before the Hamas attack, United States President Joe Biden's administration was hoping it would do so as part of a landmark deal that would also see Riyadh and Washington ramp up their security partnership.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/saudi-arabia-to-host-arab-eu-diplomats-for-talks-on-gaza-war/>

'To the Future': Saudi Arabia spends big to become an A.I. superpower

Adam Satariano and Paul Mozur

The New York Times, April 25, 2024

On a Monday morning in March 2024, tech executives, engineers and sales representatives from Amazon, Google, TikTok and other companies endured a three-hour traffic jam as their cars crawled toward a mammoth conference at an event space in the desert, 50 miles outside Riyadh. The lure: billions of dollars in Saudi money as the kingdom seeks to build a tech industry to complement its oil dominance. More than 200,000 people converged at the conference, including Adam Selipsky, chief executive of Amazon's cloud computing division, who announced a \$5.3 billion investment in Saudi Arabia for data centres and artificial intelligence technology.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/technology/saudi-arabia-ai.html>

Saudi Arabia ramps up regional diplomacy to avert Iran-Israel war

Beatrice Farhat

Al - Monitor, April 17, 2024

Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's de facto leader, spoke on the phone with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Wednesday. They discussed the Iranian-Israeli escalation and the "grave threats" it poses to regional stability and security, according to the Emirati state news agency WAM. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps launched hundreds of drones and missiles at Israel on Saturday in retaliation

for a suspected Israeli strike at the Iranian Consulate complex in Damascus April 1 that killed seven military officers, including two IRGC commanders. Saudi Arabia, one of the United States' main allies in the Middle East, has been seeking a more balanced role in the region after resuming diplomatic ties with Iran under a Chinese-brokered agreement last March.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/04/saudi-arabia-ramps-regional-diplomacy-avert-iran-israel-war>

ROSHN Signs MoU with Cisco to explore the use of IoT Technology for smart buildings

Saudi Press Agency, April 21, 2024

ROSHN Group, according to a press release, has signed a collaboration framework with Cisco that seeks further innovation in areas such as designing and building future-proof, sustainable smart buildings. The MoU with Cisco focuses on the potential collaboration between both companies to explore using Internet-of-Things (IoT) technology in building future-proof, sustainable, and smart buildings. The initiative will see Cisco's state-of-the-art technologies deployed to help empower ROSHN's upcoming Innovation Hub. Managing Director at Cisco Saudi Arabia, Salman Faqeeh, stated, "Our collaboration with ROSHN underscores Cisco's dedication to leveraging cutting-edge technologies and sustainable practices for smart and connected communities in the Kingdom."

<https://spa.gov.sa/en/N2087205>

Saudi Arabia did not participate in intercepting Iranian attacks on Israel – sources

Arab News, April 16, 2024

Informed sources denied to Al Arabiya on April 15, 2024 Saudi Arabia's participation in intercepting Iranian drones during its attack on Israel on April 13, 2024. Israeli news websites had published statements attributed to an official Saudi website stating that the Kingdom participated in the recent defence Iran launched drones and missiles toward Israel on April 13, 2024 evening into the morning of April 14, 2024 and described the attack as a response to several crimes, including the strike on its consulate in Damascus on April 1. Tehran indicated that the attack targeted military targets, while the Israeli army announced that it intercepted 99 percent of the Iranian missiles.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2493856/saudi-arabia>

Syria

Syria crisis intensifies in shadow of Gaza war

UN News, April 25, 2024

Briefing ambassadors on the Security Council, Geir Pedersen called for a regional de-escalation, starting with an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Highlighting the bleak humanitarian situation, Mr. Pedersen stressed the need for greater access and generous donor support to alleviate the suffering of millions. Volker

Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, briefed the General Assembly on the implementation of its resolution that established the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria. He underscored that victims and survivors will be “central to every aspect” of the Institution, adding that his Office is also reaching out to other individuals and organisations doing similar work. The High Commissioner urged all States and all parties to the conflict in Syria, to cooperate.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1149016>

Rocket attack from Iraq targets US base in Syria

Al Jazeera, April 22, 2024

Several rockets have been fired from Iraq towards a US military base in northeastern Syria. The attack, launched from the town of Zummar late on Sunday, was the first since early February to target US troops, when Iranian-backed groups in Iraq brought to an end a campaign that had seen regular strikes against the US-led international coalition. The resumed hostilities came a day after Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani returned from a visit to the United States where he met with President Joe Biden. A statement from the Iraqi security forces accused “outlaw elements of having targeted a base of the international coalition with rockets in the heart of Syrian territory.”

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/22/rocket-attack-from-iraq-targets-us-troops-military-bases-in-syria>

‘Syria strives to stay out of Gaza war despite Iran ties’

The Hindu, April 27, 2024

Syria has avoided getting embroiled in the Gaza war, experts said, despite a strike on Iran’s Damascus consulate, blamed on Israel, that threatened to ignite a regional conflagration. The government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is seeking to strike a delicate balancing act between Russia and Iran, which have propped it up during 13 years of civil war and helped it reclaim lost territory. Last year, Syria returned to the Arab fold, seeking better ties with wealthy Gulf states, in hopes they can help fund reconstruction — although Western sanctions are likely to deter investment. Syria appears to have heeded Russia and the UAE’s call, and its border with the Golan Heights remains relatively calm despite a handful of strikes launched by Hezbollah-allied fighters.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/syria-strives-to-stay-out-of-gaza-war-despite-iran-ties/article68113068.ece>

Turkiye

President Erdoğan stresses Palestinian unity in meeting with Haniyeh

Daily Sabah, April 20, 2024

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan highlighted the importance of Palestinian unity, as he held discussions with Hamas Political Bureau Chief Ismail Haniyeh in Istanbul on April 20, 2024. The closed-door meeting took place at the Dolmabahçe Office, with the participation of delegations from Türkiye and Hamas. President Erdoğan said it is vital for Palestinians to

act in unity, which he said would be the strongest response to Israel. He also said the truth about Palestinians and their rightful cause needs to be conveyed more to the global community against Israel and its false propaganda. Erdoğan has harshly criticised Israel and accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of committing a "massacre" since the latter launched a deadly military offensive on Gaza after Oct. 7.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/president-erdogan-stresses-palestinian-unity-in-meeting-with-haniyeh>

Erdoğan calls on Germany to lift defence restrictions

Daily Sabah, April 24, 2024

Speaking at a joint news conference with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the Presidential Complex in the capital Ankara on April 24, 2024, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said Germany and Türkiye should remove restrictions on the Turkish defence industry. Germany drastically reduced military exports to Türkiye after the latter launched counterterrorism operations against the PKK in Syria. He said their countries should focus on joint production projects in the future. Erdoğan also voiced concerns over the activities of terrorist groups in Europe and said they expected German authorities to do more in the fight against terrorism. Several prominent members of the Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ) received asylum in Germany, especially in the aftermath of July 15, 2016, in Türkiye by the group.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/erdogan-calls-on-germany-to-lift-defense-restrictions>

Ukraine's sudden exit derails new Türkiye-mediated Black Sea deal

Daily Sabah, April 16, 2024

Negotiations spanning two months between Russia, Ukraine and Türkiye aimed at ensuring Black Sea shipping safety reportedly reached an agreement, which was poised for announcement by Ankara. However, Kyiv's sudden withdrawal thwarted the deal, according to sources familiar with the matter. A deal was reached in March "to ensure the safety of merchant shipping in the Black Sea," and though Ukraine did not want to sign it formally, Kyiv gave its assent for President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to announce it on March 30, the day before critical regional elections, the sources said. The talks on the shipping deal, which have not been reported before, offer a glimpse of the quiet diplomacy going on behind closed doors on ways to bring the two warring sides to negotiation, if only, at first, about merchant shipping.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/economy/ukraines-sudden-exit-derails-new-turkiye-mediated-black-sea-deal>

Türkiye reveals plans for largest-ever domestic aircraft carrier

Daily Sabah, April 25, 2024

Türkiye is preparing for its largest-ever domestic aircraft carrier through a project led by the Directorate of Design Project Office (DPO) of the Turkish Naval Forces Command, media reports indicated on April 24, 2024. This national aircraft carrier is set to surpass the TCG Anadolu, a landing helicopter dock (LHD)-type multipurpose amphibious assault ship

commissioned last year. Situated at the Ministry of National Defense (MSB) Istanbul Shipyard Command, the DPO opened its doors to the press on April 24, 2024 offering insights into the ongoing work. The TCG Anadolu, measuring 231 m. (758 ft.) in length, 32 m. in width and with a displacement of 27,436 tons, was ordered in 2015 and launched in April 2019. It was officially commissioned in the ceremony on April 10, 2023.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiye-reveals-plans-for-largest-ever-domestic-aircraft-carrier>

Key project, security, oil dispute in focus as Erdoğan heads to Iraq

Daily Sabah, April 21, 2024

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's trip to Iraq after over a decade was expected to bolster bilateral relations and add momentum to a vast infrastructure project pitched as a link between Asia and Europe. Iraq is Türkiye's key trade ally in the region although relations have been strained over what Ankara sees as Baghdad's insufficient cooperation in its fight against the PKK terrorist group, as well as a row over oil exports. A focal point of the visit will undoubtedly be the Development Road, a \$17 billion (TL 552.26 billion) project designed to connect the Basra Gulf hinterland to Europe via Türkiye. The project aims to link the Grand Faw Port, a major commodities port in Iraq's oil-rich south, to Türkiye's border and onward to Europe through railways and highways.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/economy/key-project-security-oil-dispute-in-focus-as-erdogan-heads-to-iraq>

Türkiye to provide Iraq technical help to bolster border security

Daily Sabah, April 25, 2024

Türkiye prepared to provide Iraq with technical assistance for securing its borders to prevent the mobility of the PKK terrorist group around the region, according to a Defense Ministry official on April 25, 2024. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Baghdad and Irbil this week as Ankara ramped up cross-border operations against PKK militants based in mountainous northern Iraq, ruled by the semi-autonomous Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). Ankara plans a new swoop in on the PKK militants this spring and says Iraqi cooperation is paramount to eradicating the group "at its roots." Türkiye has been a key transit point for irregular migrants who want to cross into Europe to start new lives, especially since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/turkiye-to-provide-iraq-technical-help-to-bolster-border-security>

Turkish warship docks in Mogadishu under Somalia defence deal

Daily Sabah, April 24, 2024

A Turkish Navy vessel arrived at the Port of Mogadishu on April 23, 2024 following the signing of a defence and economic agreement between Somalia and Türkiye in February 2024. The TCG Kınalıada F514 docked at the port two months after the landmark deal signed between the two countries, under which Türkiye committed to provide maritime security support to Somalia. Stating that the agreement signed between Türkiye and Somalia is an

indication of the strong ties between the two brotherly countries, Ambassador Aktaş said that Türkiye will continue its support with determination within the scope of protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-warship-docks-in-mogadishu-under-somalia-defense-deal>

United Arab Emirates

Abdullah bin Zayed, Hungarian FM discuss fallout of growing regional tensions

Emirates News Agency, April 16, 2024

H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, discussed with Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, recent developments in the region and their fallout on regional and global peace and security. In a phone conversation with Szijjártó, the UAE top diplomat stressed the importance of boosting efforts towards de-escalation to avoid the region being pulled into new levels of tensions and instability. H.H. Sheikh Abdullah warned against escalating tensions in the region and its direct impact on regional and global peace and security. Sheikh Abdullah highlighted the urgency of de-escalation and protecting civilians, highlighting the importance of intensifying regional and global efforts to enhance the humanitarian response to meet the needs of civilians in the Gaza Strip and alleviate their suffering.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b2op538-abdullah-bin-zayed-hungarian-discuss-fallout>

UAE President and Prime Minister of Romania discuss bilateral relations, witness exchange of two memoranda of understanding

Emirates News Agency, April 18, 2024

President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan today received His Excellency Ion-Marcel Ciolacu, Prime Minister of Romania, who was on a working visit to the UAE. His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Prime Minister of Romania also witnessed the announcement of two memoranda of understanding between the two countries, the first in the field of artificial intelligence and the digital economy, and another between the UAE Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority and the National Authority for Management and Regulation in Communications of Romania, in addition to the minutes of the Masdar Strategic Alignment Meeting, which defines the key agreed-upon cooperation principles that will be included in the joint venture shareholders agreement and signed by both sides in July 2024.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b2pw0e6-uae-president-and-prime-minister-romania-discuss>

UAE and French Presidents discuss bilateral relations and latest regional and international developments

Emirates News Agency, April 20, 2024

UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan received a phone call on April 20, 2024 from His Excellency Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic, during which the

two leaders discussed bilateral relations and ways to further enhance cooperation within the framework of the strategic partnership that unites the two countries. They reviewed the latest regional and international developments, particularly the situation in the Middle East, stressing that dialogue and diplomacy are vital for overcoming various crises taking place across the world that threaten global peace and stability. During its participation in the International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan in Paris, the UAE pledged to provide USD 100 million to support humanitarian efforts in Sudan and neighbouring countries, as the total amount of relief aid provided to those affected by the conflict has reached USD 150 million, including medical, food and relief supplies.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/13via71-uae-and-french-presidents-discuss-bilateral>

UAE and Oman issue joint statement reaffirming their calls for peace, stability and prosperity for all nations

Emirates News Agency, April 23, 2024

The UAE and the Sultanate of Oman issued a joint statement following the two-day visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Sultan of Oman, to the UAE. During the visit, the two leaders held productive talks in a spirit of brotherhood and solidarity, reaffirming the outcomes of the state visit made by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to the Sultanate of Oman in September 2022, and ushering in a new stage of beneficial strategic cooperation and partnership between the two countries across all fields. In light of developments in the region, the two sides called on all parties to exercise

the utmost restraint to protect the region and its peoples from the effects of escalation and instability. They reiterated their firm belief in the importance of abiding by international law and settling disputes through diplomacy and dialogue.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b2sv693-uae-and-oman-issue-joint-statement-reaffirming>

UAE participates in World Energy Congress

Emirates News Agency, April 25, 2024

A high-level UAE delegation participated in the 26th edition of the World Energy Congress, held in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The high-level delegation included Sharif Al Olama, Undersecretary for Energy and Petroleum Affairs at the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, and representatives of Abu Dhabi Department of Energy, Etihad Water and Electricity, and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), and BEEAH Group. Al Olama held multiple bilateral meetings with leaders from the energy sector to explore areas for partnership, learn about best practices in research and technology, and drive investment in sustainable energy. He also toured ADNOC's stand at the World Energy Congress.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b2u214z-uae-participates-world-energy-congress>

UAE condemns drone terror attack on Khor Mor gas field in Iraq's Kurdistan region

Emirates News Agency, April 27, 2024

The UAE strongly condemned the drone terror attack that targeted the Khor Mor gas

field in Iraq's Kurdistan region, which has resulted in a number of deaths of innocent people from the Republic of Yemen. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) affirmed that the UAE expresses its strong condemnation and denunciation of these attacks aimed at undermining security and stability in Iraq, and are a blatant violation of international law. The Ministry expressed the UAE's solidarity with all measures undertaken by Iraq to protect its sovereignty, security, and stability, stressing the UAE's support for its endeavours in combating terrorism, while underscoring the UAE's commitment to reinforcing security and stability in Iraq.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b2v8wnp-uae-condemns-drone-terror-attack-khor-mor-gas>

Yemen

Yemen's Houthis damage oil tanker, shoot down US drone

Al Jazeera, April 27, 2024

Yemen's Houthis have damaged an oil tanker and downed another MQ-9 Reaper drone of the United States as they promise more attacks in opposition to Israel's war on Gaza. The Houthi military spokesman also said its air defence forces in Yemen also shot down an MQ-9 Reaper attack drone of the US military with a missile in the airspace of the Saada governorate "while it was carrying out hostile missions". This is the third US attack drone shot down by the Houthis since the start of the war on Gaza, with the first brought down in November 2023, followed by another in February, 2024. The Yemeni group made no comments about further attacks on vessels in its nearby waterways,

but the US military said the anti-ship missiles fired by the Houthis also targeted MV MAISHA, an Antigua/Barbados-flagged, Liberia-operated vessel.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/27/yemens-houthis-damage-oil-tanker-shoot-down-us-drone>

Yemen's Houthis attack four ships in Indian Ocean, Red Sea

Al Arabia News, April 30, 2024

Yemen's Houthis said they targeted the MSC Orion container ship in a drone attack in the Indian Ocean as part of their ongoing campaign against international shipping in solidarity with Palestinians against Israel's military actions in Gaza. Portugal-flagged MSC Orion was sailing between the ports in Sines, Portugal and Salalah, Oman and its registered owner is Zodiac Maritime, according to LSEG data. Iran-aligned Houthi militants have launched repeated drone and missile strikes in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandab Strait and Gulf of Aden since November 2023, forcing shippers to re-route cargo to longer and more expensive journeys around Southern Africa and stoking fears that the Israel-Hamas war could spread and destabilise the Middle East.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/04/30/yemen-s-houthis-say-they-attacked-two-vessels-two-us-destroyers>

Yemen's Houthis conduct 'operations' in Indian Ocean, leader says

The Indian Express, April 18, 2024

The leader of Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis, who have been attacking shipping

in the Red Sea, said on April 18, 2024 the group had carried out "operations" in the Indian Ocean and towards southern Israel. Abdul Malik al-Houthi's comments made clear that the Houthis have acted on earlier threats to expand operations to the Indian Ocean region and attacks towards southern Israel. Al-Houthi said in a televised speech that the Houthis had launched 14 operations in two weeks in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and the Indian Ocean. The Houthis say their attacks on shipping, which started in the Red Sea region last November, are carried out in solidarity with Palestinians who are under fire from Israel in Gaza.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/yemen-houthis-operations-indian-ocean-9278332/>

NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Ms. Shipra Dwivedi

Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

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



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