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Five Years Ago in ACT

6 Eighty Years After the Atomic Bomb Attacks, My Mother's Stories Still Haunt Me

By Masako Wada

A survivor of the U.S. nuclear attack on Nagasaki shares memories and lessons from that fateful day as geopolitical instability and the threat of nuclear weapons use are again on the rise.

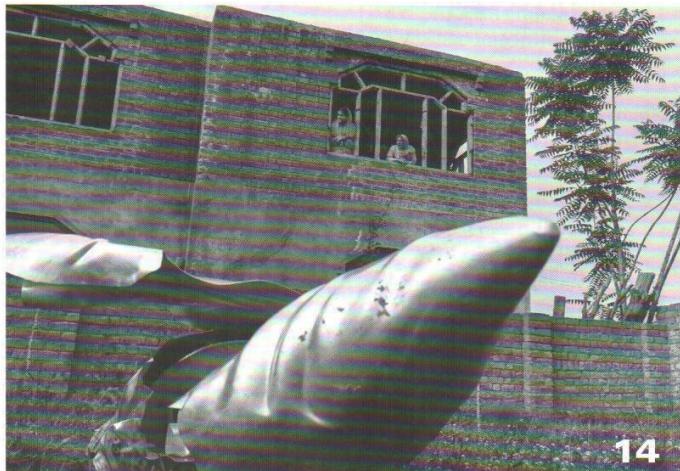
10 What Happens Now With Iran? An Interview With Wendy Sherman, Chief U.S. Negotiator for the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal

Sherman, the former U.S. deputy secretary of state, says "we must persist" in pursuing a diplomatic solution to the impasse over Iran's nuclear program.

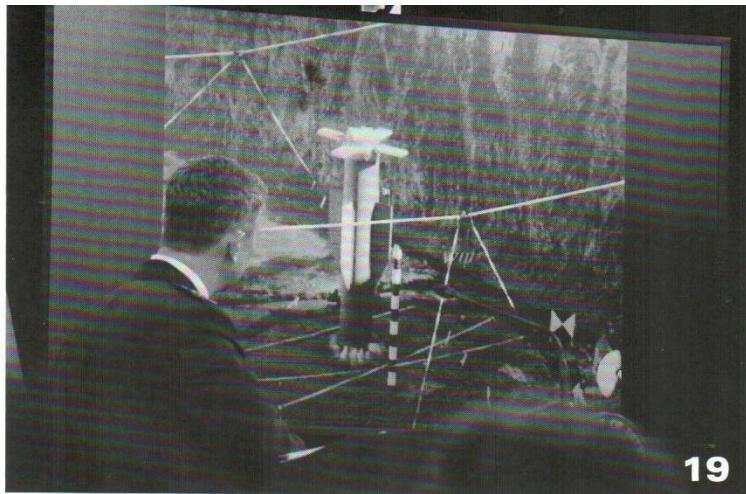
14 Brokered Bargaining in Nuclear South Asia: U.S. Mediation in the India-Pakistan Pahalgam Crisis

By Moeed W. Yusuf

With no serious bilateral escalation control mechanisms on the horizon, the United States and other third parties will remain critical to South Asian crisis stability.



Cover photo: Devastation caused by the U.S. atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, August 9, 1945 as it looked March 17, 1948. (Photo by U.S. Department of Energy/Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory/Handout via REUTERS)



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19 Israel and U.S. Strike Iran's Nuclear Program

U.S. President Donald Trump claims that Israeli and U.S. strikes "obliterated" Iran's nuclear program but other experts were more cautious.

21 Trump Administration Increases Nuclear Weapons Budget

New programs and accelerated funding would increase Pentagon spending on nuclear forces to \$62 billion in the Trump administration's 2026 defense budget request.

23 U.S. Energy Department to Reshuffle Warhead Budgets

The U.S. Department of Energy wants to increase funding for the W93 submarine-launched ballistic missile warhead while scaling back the W87-1 intercontinental ballistic missile warhead.

24 UK to Purchase F-35As and Join NATO Nuclear Mission

The decision represents an expansion of UK involvement beyond its purely sea-based nuclear force for the first time in this millennium.

25 Russian Strategic Forces Suffer Twin Setbacks

Ukrainian forces destroyed an estimated 12 Russian strategic bombers, days after Danish and German media published details of Russian missile bunkers.

26 IAEA Gains Access to Former Syrian Nuclear Sites

Syria's decision to give the International Atomic Energy Agency unrestricted access to the sites will help resolve a yearslong investigation into the country's nuclear program.

27 Republican Spending Bill Revives Program for Radiation Victims

It took two years for House Republican leaders to agree to extend and expand an expired law that will help many downwinders exposed to the fallout from U.S. nuclear testing and certain uranium miners.

28 U.S. Supreme Court Rejects Mexico's Gun Lawsuit

The Mexican government brought the action over concerns about gun violence and the surge of weapons imported from the United States that benefit Mexican gun cartels.

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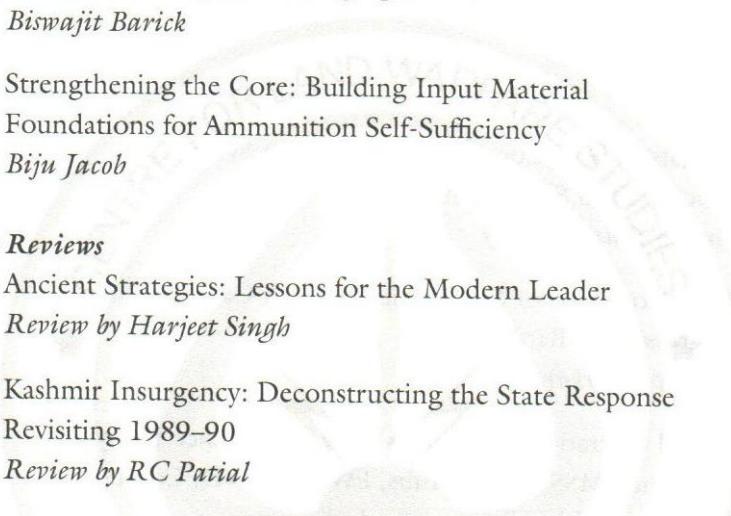
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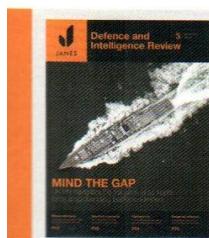
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The UK Royal Navy (RN) Type 23 frigate HMS *Somerset*. This month, *JDIR* looks at how the RN is balancing its operational commitments amid the decommissioning of its Type 23s and before its new Type 26 and Type 31 frigates come online.

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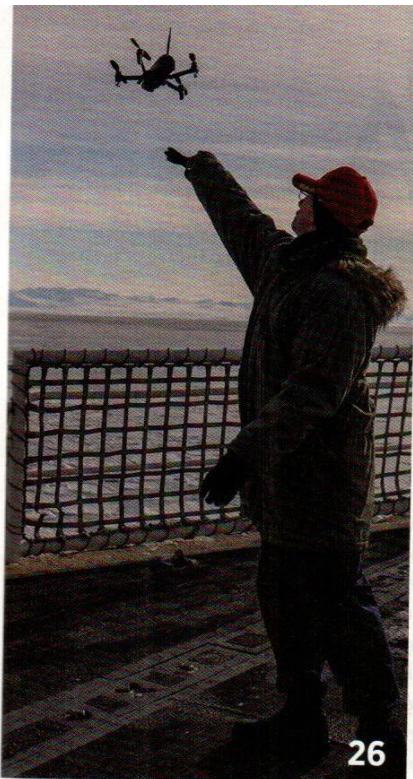
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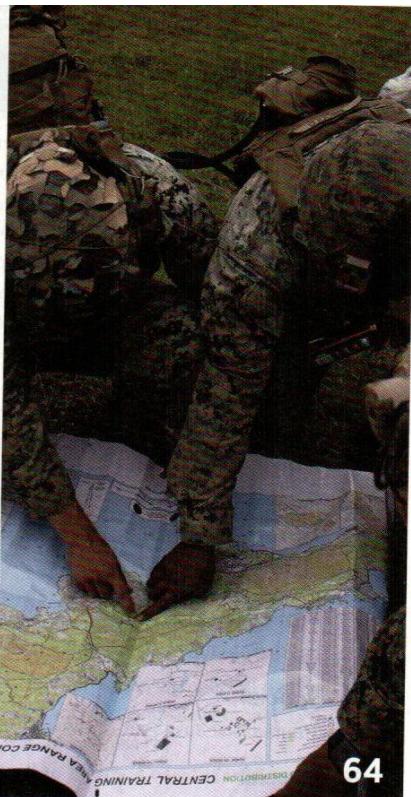




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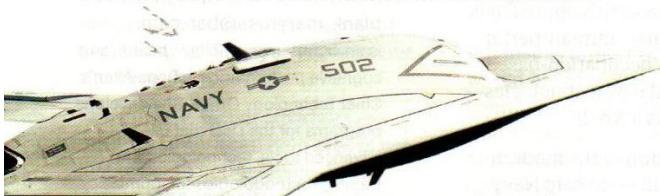
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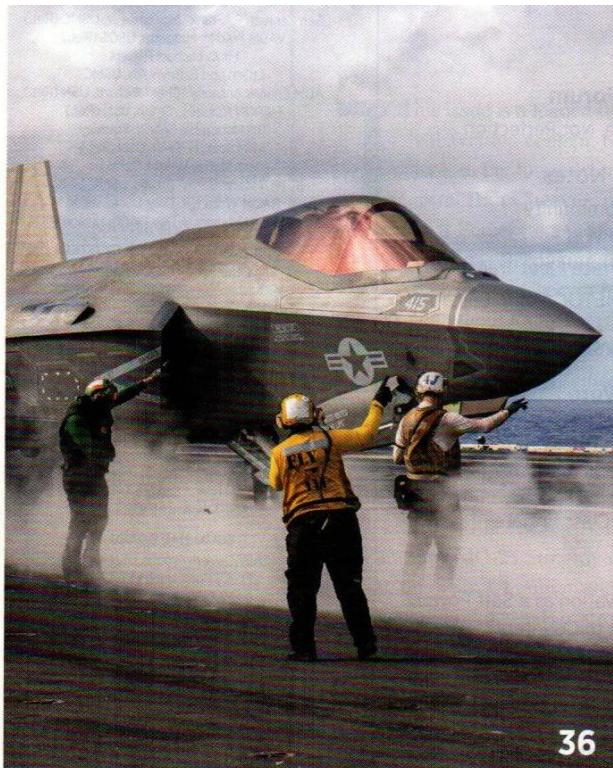
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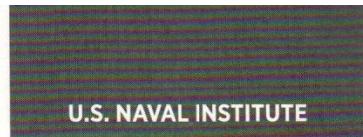
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7 Global Swing States and the New Great Power Competition

■ *Richard Fontaine and Gibbs McKinley*

Policymakers should focus on these six “global swing states” that will together exert disproportionate influence over the future of international order. That requires the United States to deal with each, not simply as a pawn in great-power competition, but as an important country in their own right with interests that differ from, but can ultimately align with, those of the US.

29 Iran’s Strategic Crossroads: Options Beyond the Axis?

■ *Mahsa Rouhi*

Events of 2023-2024, culminating with the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria, have brought Iran’s regional strategy—a triad of ballistic missile capabilities, nuclear latency, and a decentralized network of regional armed partners—to a moment of reckoning. Will Tehran double down on support for the “Axis of Resistance,” or pivot toward regional diplomacy and economic normalization? The answer will define a new phase in Middle East geopolitics.

43 China’s Strategic Calculus: It’s Not Just About Economics

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77 Protecting Undersea Cables and South Korea's Role

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The growing frequency of high-profile undersea cable disruptions have exposed the extent to which global connectivity hinges on their integrity and vulnerabilities. Despite their strategic significance, these cables remain insufficiently protected. South Korea, home to one of the world's largest fiber-optic cable manufacturers and consistent with its vision to become a global pivotal state, is uniquely positioned to spearhead efforts in advancing undersea cable governance.

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95 Can the Iron Dome Be Transmuted into a Golden Dome?

■ *Steve Fetter and David Wright*

Israel's apparent success in defending against Iranian ballistic missile attacks in 2024 has stimulated renewed interest in missile defense. This experience, however, has little or no relevance to defending against long-range nuclear missiles, which would be equipped with countermeasures and require different defensive systems. There remains no basis for believing an effective defense is possible against long-range nuclear-armed missiles.

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