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Arms Control TODAY

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Cracks in the Foundation of the NPT
By Daryl G. Kimball

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30 **In Memoriam**
Stephen Warnke (1961-2026)

Features

6 **The Puzzle of Multilateral Arms Control**
By Alexey Arbatov
If the process of nuclear arms control is restarted, a primary challenge will be engaging China, France and the UK, along with Russia and the U.S., in limiting nuclear weapons.

10 **Saudi Arabia's Gilded Nuclear Sweetheart Deal**
By Sharon Squassoni
After decades of opposing the spread of uranium enrichment and spent fuel reprocessing, the United States apparently is prepared to allow Saudi Arabia to do just that.

16 **Experts Assess NPT Review Conference**
Veteran international diplomats offer spot analyses on why the 2026 nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference failed, whether the landmark treaty still has value and what must be done going forward to address nuclear weapons risks.





Cover photo: Conference President Do Hung Viet of Vietnam presides over the 2026 nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference held April 29-May 22 at UN headquarters in New York. (UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe)

News and Analysis

22 Trump Says U.S., Iran Close to Deal
Even if an agreement is reached, both sides said it will not address nuclear issues in detail and more negotiations will be necessary.

23 2026 NPT Review Conference Stymied by Disputes
The conference president said many difficulties blocked consensus but Iran was a "very important" obstacle.

26 Trump Claims to Discuss Arms Control in China
President Donald Trump told reporters after talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping that "We did discuss" denuclearization, but there was no confirmation from Beijing.

27 Trump, Xi Said Committed to North Korea Denuclearization
President Trump said he has been in communication with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un but declined to provide any details about the exchange of messages.

28 Intermediate-Range Missile Deployment in Doubt
The U.S. decision to deploy the missile unit to Germany was in question amid a dispute between U.S. and German leaders over the Israeli-U.S. war on Iran.

29 Russia Tests New Heavy Missile
After the successful test, Russia said the RS-28 Sarmat heavy intercontinental ballistic missile would be deployed on combat duty by the end of 2026.

31 U.S. to Analyze Options for New Bomber
If approved, the new heavy bomber could replace the B-52H, according to Air Force budget documents.

33 NNSA Holds Pit Production Hearings
The hearings took place as the U.S. Congress questioned cost overruns and delays to the pit program at production sites in Los Alamos, New Mexico, and Savannah River, South Carolina.

34 Trump Forces UK to Halt Chagos Island Transfer
The U.S. initially assented to the 2025 deal under which the UK would cede the Chagos Island archipelago, where the allies share a military base, to Mauritius, but later withdrew support.

35 U.S. and G-7 Commit to Secure Chernobyl
Repairs are needed after experts assessed that the New Safe Confinement structure, built over the reactor at the Chernobyl site after it melted down in 1986, sustained damage during a 2025 drone strike.

36 News In Brief

Democratic Lawmakers Challenge U.S. Policy on Israeli Nuclear Weapons

Turkey Unveils Long-Range Missile



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Features

6 The Pope's Historic Encyclical: Disarming AI and Building a Just Peace

By Maryann Cusimano Love

Leo XIV goes beyond calls for AI regulation and safety and says that any technological advancement detatched from ethics and human responsibilities exacerbate conflict instead of building a just peace.

11 How Can the U.S. Engage China in Arms Control? A Chinese Perspective

By Tianjiao Jiang

Although the United States criticizes China for being unwilling to engage in arms control dialogue, the United States never took Chinese concerns seriously.

16 Anticipatory Arms Control for the AI Age

By Douglas B. Shaw, Stephen Herzog, and William C. Potter

Organizers of a new initiative say governments, AI firms, security experts and the global epistemic community concerned with human survival must jointly shape technology before today's choices become tomorrow's constraints.

3 Focus

Trump's $100 Billion Iran War Mistake

By Daryl G. Kimball

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Cover photo: Pope Leo XIV prepares to speak during the presentation of his first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, which focuses on the need for artificial intelligence applied to nuclear weapons to remain grounded in ethics and human responsibilities, at the Vatican's Aula Nuova del Sinodo, May 25. (REUTERS/Yara Nardi)

News and Analysis

21 Fighting Mars U.S.-Iranian Pledges to End War, Restart Nuclear Talks
Iran and the United States announced a memorandum of understanding to end their war and begin new talks on a nuclear agreement, but negotiators face significant obstacles to a final deal.

23 U.S. Senate Panel Approves AI, Autonomous Weapons Rules
The new rules would impose a regulatory framework for autonomous weapons and military artificial intelligence that emphasizes human judgment and ultimate human responsibility, while also endorsing the Pentagon's embrace of the technology.

24 U.S. Plans Review of Force Posture in Europe
U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced that the six-month review of U.S. basing and force posture in Europe was aimed at preparing for "NATO 3.0."

25 North Korea Unveils New Enrichment Facility
State-run media said North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected the factory and reiterated the necessity of "implementing ambitious future plans designed to strengthen our state's nuclear forces exponentially."

26 South Korea Announces Plans for Nuclear-Powered Submarines
The government said the nuclear-powered attack submarines will run on low-enriched fuel produced domestically with the first submarine launch expected in the mid-2030s.

27 New Chemical Weapons Cache Uncovered in Syria
A top UN disarmament official told the UN Security Council that the cache included rockets of the same type used in the 2013 sarin gas attack in Ghouta that killed an estimated 1,400 people.

28 U.S. Selects Companies for Controversial Plutonium Transfer
Under the unprecedented program, participating companies would receive weapons-grade plutonium recycled from U.S. nuclear weapons for use in nuclear power plants.

29 U.S. Congress Committees Seek New Nuclear Systems
Defense policy committees in both houses of Congress have proposed expanding the U.S. nuclear arsenal in their respective drafts of the key annual defense policy bill.

30 UN Members Discuss AI in the Military Domain
UN member states and non-governmental organizations met in June to discuss artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security.

31 News In Brief

Drone Strike on UAE Nuclear Plant Raises Concerns

India Commissions Third Ballistic Missile Submarine



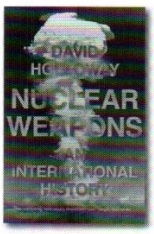
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Reducing Nuclear Dangers Through Diplomacy
Jack Mendelsohn (1934-2026)

39 **Book Review**
A Towering Achievement of a Narrow Type
Nuclear Weapons: An International History
Reviewed by Douglas B. Shaw
David Holloway's book is a commanding update to the political history of nuclear weapons but exaggerates the ability of leaders of nuclear-armed states to control the prospect of nuclear war.



Features

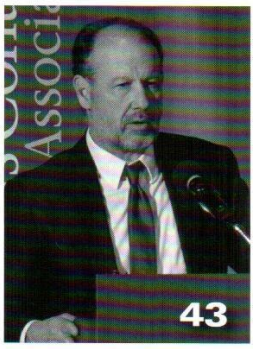
6 **Beyond Bilateral: What Trump's Multilateral Gambit Can and Cannot Fix**
By Amy J. Nelson
The conditions that make a comprehensive settlement most necessary are the same ones that make it least attainable.

11 **Military Microreactors and the Next Nuclear Governance Gap**
By Zohaib Altaf
The case for microreactors is credible. So is the need to govern them before deployment becomes routine.

16 **A New Arms Control Tool**
By Magnus Öberg and Siri Jansson
This new data platform provides structured and accessible information about 129 arms control agreements since 1817.

19 **'The Brink of War': What It Takes to Prevent Nuclear War**
Reviewed by David E. Hoffman
The film looks at when U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev came very close to agreeing to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

43 **Honoring 25 Years on the Arms Control Front Lines**
By Thomas Countryman
As executive director for the past quarter-century, Daryl G. Kimball has led the Arms Control Association through setbacks and breakthroughs, gloom and hope in the arms control field.



News and Analysis

21 Trump Threatens Economic Warfare on Iran
The U.S. president acted once the 60-day negotiating window that the United States and Iran set for reaching a nuclear deal ended in August.

22 Trump Scales Back U.S.-South Korean Military Exercises
The U.S. president offered conflicting messages for his decision but he may have been trying to signal interest in renewed diplomacy with North Korea.

24 DOD Officials Preview U.S. Tactical Weapons Push
Testifying to Congress, the officials said an ongoing review of U.S. nuclear forces will recommend additional limited options for nuclear warfighting below the strategic level.

25 Scientists Find Plutonium Pits Are 'Aging Slowly'
Observable changes "do not call into question present weapons performance," the JASON group of scientists reported.

26 Trump Adds Conditions to U.S.-Saudi Nuclear Cooperation Deal
His announcement that the agreement is contingent upon the kingdom's recognition of Israel throws the deal's future into doubt.

28 Nobel Laureates Call for Slowing AI, Nuclear Arms Races
In a declaration issued at a conference at the Vatican, the laureates and other experts called for an international treaty prohibiting "reckless integration" of AI in nuclear weapons operations.

29 China Tests Submarine-Launched Missile in Pacific
The launch was the second Pacific-facing long-distance Chinese missile test in recent years.

30 Syria Declares Newly Discovered Nuclear Materials to IAEA
Syria's new government also allowed IAEA inspectors access to the site, which was likely part of the former government's illicit nuclear weapons development program.

31 U.S. Signals More Cautious AI Governance
In two new directives, the administration claims to seek accelerated adoption of advanced AI models by the national security establishment but also incorporates new restraints.

32 German Military to Join French Nuclear Exercise for First Time
German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said the exercise would be held by the end of the year.

33 Australia Clears Path to Export Uranium to India
Twelve years after reaching a nuclear cooperation agreement, the two countries finalized the technical arrangements to allow exporting to begin.

34 U.S. Doubles Down on Alleged Sudanese Chemical Weapons Use
The U.S. implemented more sanctions and called for further investigation into chemical weapons use by Sudan in 2024.

35 Outages Rising at Zaporizhzhia Power Plant
The complex lost all off-site power 25 times since Russia invaded Ukraine.

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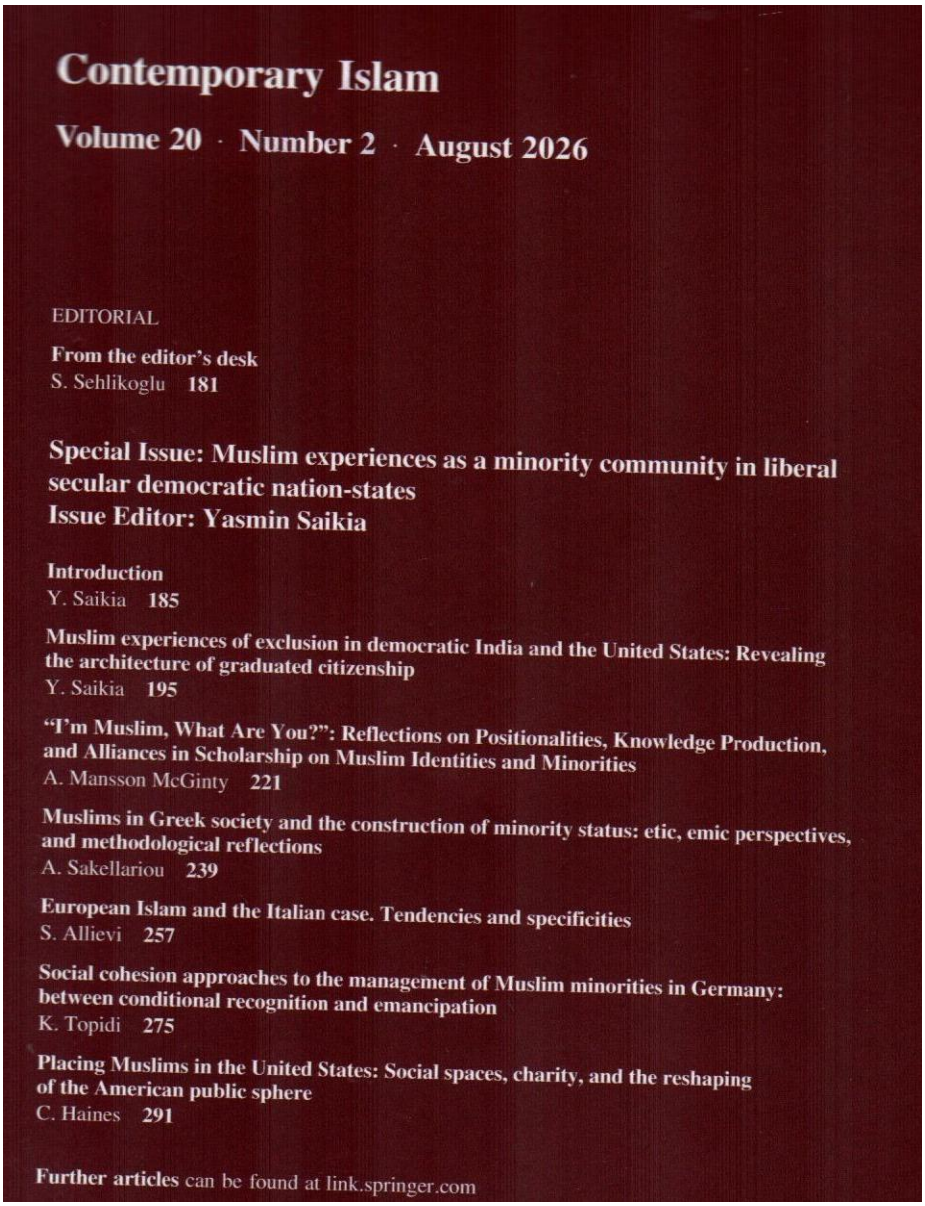
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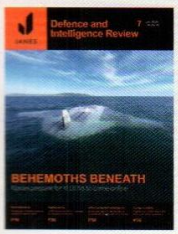
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Northrop Grumman: 2043599

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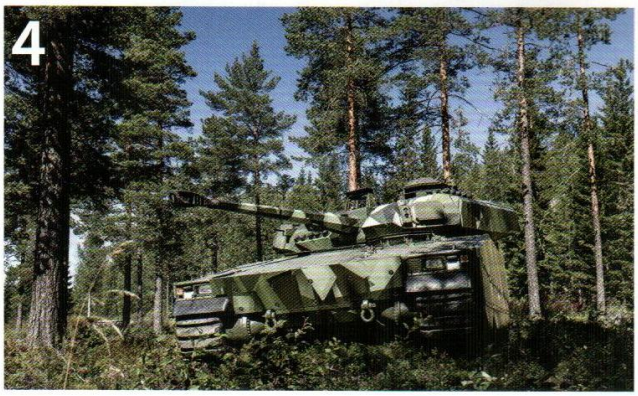
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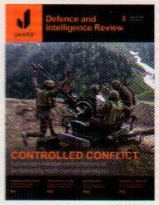


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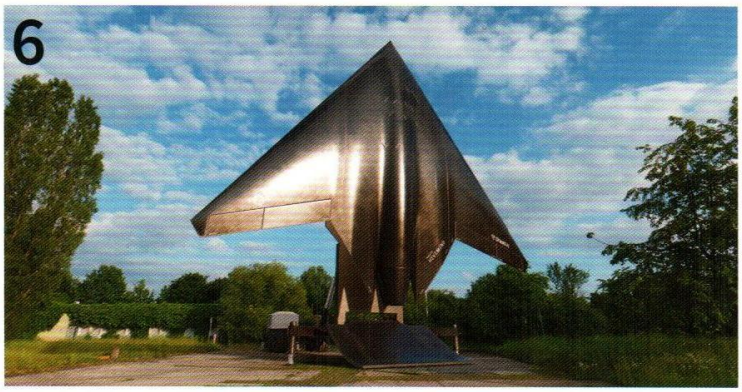
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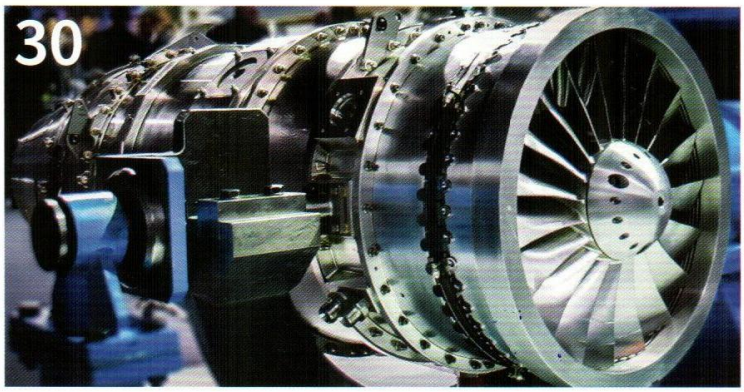
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Indian Army soldiers demonstrate an anti-aircraft gun near the Line of Control between Pakistan and India in May 2025. *JDIR* examines how the countries are adapting to more effectively integrate and co-ordinate multi-domain capabilities.

Tauseef Mustafa/AFP via Getty Images: 2043607







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The ancient Tengwangge Pavilion in the modern city of Nanchang, Jiangxi Province

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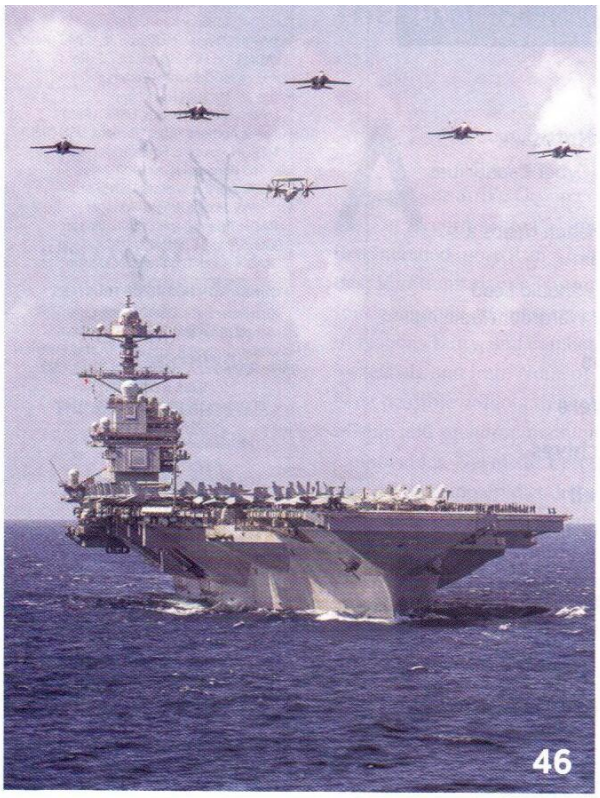
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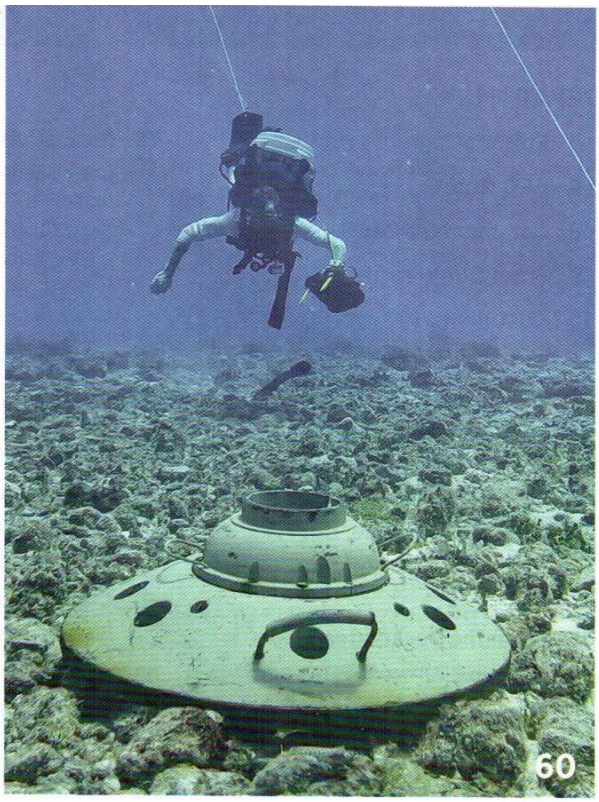
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An aviation boatswain's mate assigned to the air department on board the USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-78) signals to the crew of an F/A-18E Super Hornet attached to Strike Fighter Squadron 87 on 24 September 2025..

U.S. Navy (Mariano Lopez)

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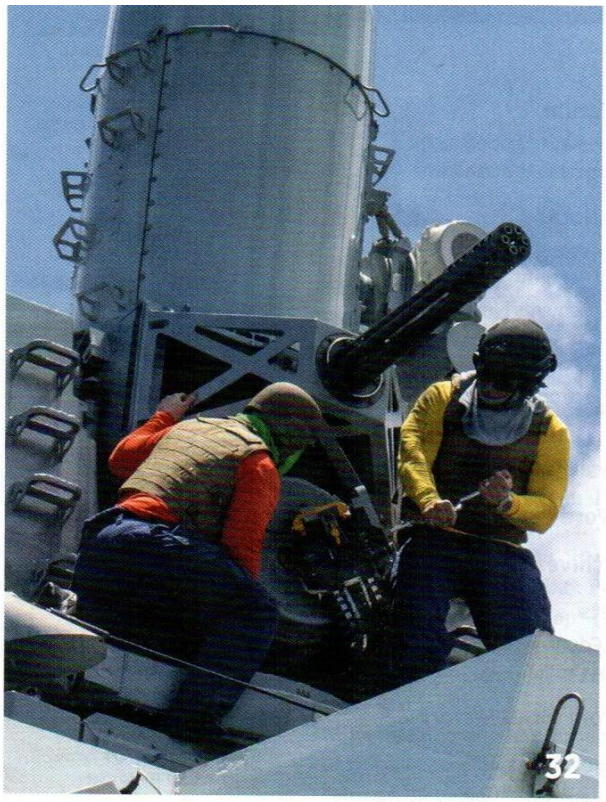
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A Coast Guard aviation survival technician is lowered from an MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter during a training evolution off the coast of Chincoteague, Virginia, in October 2025. The training ensures aircrew proficiency in hoisting operations for real-world search-and-rescue missions.
U.S. Coast Guard (Matt Thieme)

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