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Iran

Biden, Macron pledge cooperation in Middle East and preventing Iranian nuclear weapon

Alarabiya News, December 1, 2022

US President Joe Biden and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron devoted a significant part of their joint statement on Thursday to the Middle East, vowing to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon and committing to engaging with allies in the region. “France and the United States are determined to work closely in support of peace and prosperity in the Middle East,” the statement read after Biden invited Macron for the State Visit under his presidency. “The Presidents also express their respect for the Iranian people, in particular women and youth, who are bravely protesting to gain the freedom to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms, which Iran itself has subscribed to and is violating,” a joint statement read.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2022/12/01/Biden-Macron-pledge-cooperation-in-Middle-East-and-preventing-Iranian-nuclear-weapon>

IRGC chief cmdr. says Iran is making progress

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 1, 2022

Salami was speaking in Shiraz, the capital city of the southern Fars Province, addressing groups of people there. The IRGC commander referred to enemies’ plots against Iran, saying that despite their plans, the Iranian nation will become more determined to safeguard what has achieved so far and take further steps in the path of

progress. Salami also praised Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei for his great leadership, saying that he turned Iran into a big power in the region. He said that Ayatollah Khamenei has taken a firm stance regarding the nuclear deal revival talks and has managed to turn sanctions into opportunities for growth.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84958759/IRGC-chief-cmdr-says-Iran-is-making-progress>

Iran, Iraq unite against separatist groups

Tehran Times, December 1, 2022

The new prime minister of Iraq, Mohammad al-Sudani, traveled to Iran on Tuesday and held talks in which the issue of Kurdish separatist groups based in Iraqi Kurdistan apparently featured high among other issues. In Tehran, al-Sudani held several high-level meetings, including a remarkable one with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. The Iraqi prime minister also met with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, First Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian. Bilateral issues, including economic cooperation, were discussed in detail with the Iraqi prime minister, who is now expected to implement many agreements that have not been implemented under his predecessor.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/479252/Iran-Iraq-unite-against-separatist-groups>

Biden, Macron issue joint statement on Iran

Tehran Times, December 2, 2022

After a meeting at the White House on Thursday, U.S. President Joe Biden and

French President Emmanuel Macron issued a joint statement that part of it made accusations against Iran. Biden and Macron said Washington and Paris are committed to bar Iran to build what they called nuclear weapons. They also expressed solidarity for the unrest in Iran. Since the outbreak of the insurgency in Iran, Western nations have been backing unrest under the tutelage of Washington. They also continued leveling accusations on Iran by saying, “France and the U.S. will cooperate with their allies to implement the anti-Iranian resolution of the IAEA board of governors.”

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/47928/6/Biden-Macron-issue-joint-statement-on-Iran>

U.S. implored Iran to release USVs: commander

Tehran Times, December 2, 2022

The chief commander of the Iranian Army Navy has said that the United States begged for the release of its Unmanned Surface Vessels (USVs) that were seized by Iran in the Red Sea in August. Speaking at Tehran’s Friday Prayer sermon, Rear Admiral Shahram Irani referred to the August seizure of U.S. USVs by Iran, saying that “after their vessels were seized in the Red Sea, the Americans started begging for the release of their vessels. They didn’t dare enter this region anymore.” Irani also praised the capabilities of the Iranian Army Navy, saying that the force is able to establish an around-the-clock presence on the high seas. “Today, the strategic naval fleet of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army has expanded to all ocean areas and has the task of escorting commercial vessels and oil tankers as the economic artery of the country and is

currently carrying out its mission,” he said, according to IRNA.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/47929/2/U-S-implored-Iran-to-release-USVs-commander>

Ulyanov: Iranian, Russian deputy FMs meet on nuclear agreement

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 2, 2022

Issuing a tweet, Ulyanov wrote, "Russian and Iranian deputy foreign ministers, Sergey Ryabkov and Ali Bagheri-Kani met in Moscow on Friday to survey the perspective of full implementation of the JCPOA." He offered no further details about the context of the two deputy foreign ministers' talks. The nuclear negotiations on JCPOA, to terminate sanctions, after many months of intensified talks had reached a point in which if the US, as the side that had initially breached the JCPOA, had agreed with Iran's logical demands of required guarantees for a sustainable and trustworthy agreement, it would have been reached in a short while.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84959391/Ulyanov-Iranian-Russian-deputy-FMs-meet-on-nuclear-agreement>

American miscalculation and Iran’s upper hand

Tehran Times, December 3, 2022

"The policy of escalating tension to reduce tension" is a wrong policy that United States usually adopts toward Iran. Such a policy usually leads to the sacrifice of a third party, without a victory for America. This wrong policy is clearly visible in Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Negotiations between Iran, the European trio (France, Britain, and Germany or E3) Russia and China to revive the 2015 nuclear deal were proceeding. However, the talks stalemated as the U.S. was not showing serious will to put the deal, officially known as the JCPOA, on the right track. Amid the stalemate, the U.S. and the E3 triggered a resolution against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors. China and Russia opposed the resolution. The resolution, which won 26 votes in favor in the 35-member board, claimed that Iran was not cooperating with the IAEA on the sources of uranium particles found at what it called three undeclared sites.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/47930/1/American-miscalculation-and-Iran-s-upper-hand>

Iran puts number of unrest casualties at 200

Tehran Times, December 3, 2022

The State Security Council of Iran under the leadership of the Interior Ministry released a statement on Saturday putting the number of people killed in the recent riots at 200. It classified those killed as defenders of security, people who fell victim to terrorist acts, innocent persons who were victims of false flag killings, innocent persons who lost their lives in the chaotic security situation, rioters, and armed anti-revolution elements aligned with separatist groups. “Defenders of security” refers to security forces.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/47930/6/Iran-puts-number-of-unrest-casualties-at-200>

EU’s Borrell, Iran’s FM discuss latest situation of JCPOA talks

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 3, 2022

In the phone conversation, the two sides discussed issues of mutual interest, including the Islamic Republic’s cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as well as the talks in Vienna, Austria, to lift anti-Iran sanctions and return to the 2015 nuclear deal officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Amirabdollahian appreciated Borrell’s role in paving the ground for interaction and negotiation and criticized a few European ministers for resorting to undiplomatic behavior, saying that today some radical politicians hide themselves behind the European Union and misuse the bloc’s reputation. The Iranian FM went on to say that as a result of such behavior, the strategic goals of the European Union have been sacrificed for interests of some violation seekers and even terrorists, who provide politicians with wrong information.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84959526/EU-s-Borrell-Iran-s-FM-discuss-latest-situation-of-JCPOA-talks>

Iran FM discusses JCPOA with Borrell, Ukraine war with Guterres

Tehran Times, December 3, 2022

In separate phone calls with European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian exchanged views on various issues, including the latest issues surrounding the

2015 Iran nuclear deal – JCPOA - as well as the newest developments in the Ukraine conflict. The Islamic Republic's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the talks in Vienna intended to lift the anti-Iran sanctions and return to the JCPOA were subjects of conversation between Amir Abdollahian and Borrell. The talks to revive the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, started in April last year. However, after many rounds of talks mediated by the EU the talks have stalemated to the intransigence by the U.S. which quit the agreement in 2018 under the leadership of Donald Trump.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/47932/2/Iran-FM-discusses-JCPOA-with-Borrell-Ukraine-war-with-Guterres>

Iran proved progress is possible without US, JCPOA: Minister

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 3, 2022

Speaking in a gathering on Saturday, Vahidi described the JCPOA as a deal “imposed” on Iran by the United States and added that the administration led by President Ebrahim Raisi has adopted economic policies to enable Iran to live without the deal. Iran has been under US sanctions since 2018 when the former government in Washington pulled out of the JCPOA and reimposed sanctions on Tehran. Experts say the sanctions on Iran’s crude exports have backfired as Iran has sought to diversify its economy away from oil revenues.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84959672/Iran-proved-progress-is-possible-without-US-JCPOA-Minister>

Iran starts to build nuclear plant in Khuzestan

Tehran Times, December 4, 2022

Mohammad Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), announced the process of building a nuclear plant in Darokhvein, Khuzestan. The 300 MW nuclear plant which has long been in the planning stage is known as the Karoun plant and is located in the small city of Darokhvein on the outskirts of Shadegan County. Upon completion, the Karoun plant will be a pressurized water reactor (PWR) that will be fueled with 4 percent uranium and will supply the region with electricity, according to Iran’s state news IRNA. It is expected to cost \$2 billion, IRNA said. Eslami, who travelled to Darokhvein to kick off the construction of the plant, said the plan to build the nuclear reactor is an old one and it was supposed to be built by foreigners but they reneged.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/47933/8/Iran-starts-to-build-nuclear-plant-in-Khuzestan>

American aircraft carriers staying 1,000 km away from Iran’s coasts

Tehran Times, December 5, 2022

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri said on Sunday that Iran has gained such great military and deterrent power that the American forces have to stay far from the Iranian coasts. No American aircraft carrier has been deployed to the Persian Gulf during the past two years, staying over 1,000 kilometers away from the coasts of Iran, Major General Bagheri told an administrative meeting in the southern port city of Bushehr, Tasnim reported. The

commander said the U.S. has admitted that Iran's success in extending the range of its missiles and boosting the accuracy and power of its fire has increased the costs and risks of American forces staying in the region. The military chief added the Iranian Armed Forces constantly monitor the enemies' moves across the region. The general also stated that the enemy's decision to give up plans for a military attack on Iran has nothing to do with its fake concern for human rights, but relates to its fear of war and Iran's massive deterrent power.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/479418/American-aircraft-carriers-staying-1-000-km-away-from-Iran-s>

Iran says never negotiates under pressure, threat

Tehran Times, December 5, 2022

The spokesperson for Iran's foreign ministry reaffirmed on Monday that the Islamic Republic's dedication to the negotiations to resurrect the 2015 nuclear agreement, but Tehran is not prepared to engage in negotiations under pressure or threat. American authorities themselves are aware that Iran does not negotiate under coercion, Nasser Kanaani told a weekly press conference. Iran's position on the negotiations, according to Kanaani, is "fully clear," and Tehran is dedicated to diplomacy to seek a settlement. Talks to revive the nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) started in April 2012. However, the talks have stalemated as Washington refuses to give guarantees that it will not quit the agreement again or not

punish companies or countries that invest in Iran if Washington again reneges on its commitments.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/479414/Iran-says-never-negotiates-under-pressure-threat>

Iran building 1000-km missiles to protect Persian Gulf: IRGC Navy chief

Tehran Times, December 6, 2022

The IRGC Navy chief announced on Tuesday that during the Shah regime Iran's most advanced missile was Harpoon that its range was just 40 kilometer and even that was run by foreign military advisors but today "we are building missiles ranging from 10 to 1000 kilometers for defending the Persian Gulf." Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri also said the "enemy has realized what capabilities we have and (therefore) wants to halt our progress." Iran is now quite self-sufficient in producing weapons, he added. Tangsiri also said the forces under his command has carried out every task that it has been assigned to. For example, he said, an Iranian oil tanker was seized by a country and Iran took the issue to the court but the court did not vote for its release. Even after they unloaded its oil, they refused to hand over the tanker to Iran, he added. In such a situation the IRGC Navy seized a tanker that was 240 meters long with a height of 21 meters and moved it to Bandar Abbas port and they (Americans) were searching for it for four days, he explained.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/479453/Iran-building-1000-km-missiles-to-protect-Persian-Gulf-IRGC>

U.S. slaps sanctions on 26 firms, 5 individuals for allegedly assisting Iran oil shipments

Tehran Times, December 9, 2022

For allegedly facilitating oil transactions on behalf of Iran, the United States has levied sanctions on five individuals, including a Turkish businessman, and 26 entities. The actions were disclosed on Thursday by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Treasury Department. It named some of the targets as "Turkish businessman Sitki Ayan and his network of companies" as well as "Ayan's son Bahaddin Ayan, his associate Kasim Oztas, and two other Turkish citizens," Reuters reported, citing the OFAC. According to the office, "Ayan has formed commercial commitments to export Iranian oil worth hundreds of millions of dollars to customers" in China, the United Arab Emirates, and Europe. The penalties freeze the targeted persons' and firms' assets in the United States and prohibit Americans from engaging with them.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/47954/0/U-S-slaps-sanctions-on-26-firms-5-individuals-for-allegedly>

Iran to EU: West is wrong if it thinks it can 'generate leverage' via pressure

Tehran Times, December 10, 2022

In a conversation with European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Friday that lasted for 70 minutes, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian stressed that the Islamic Republic is firm to "respond to sanctions and interference". The phone call came from Borrell, who is responsible to coordinate the talks to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

(JCPOA), the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal. Following the unrest in Iran, which started after the tragic death of Mahsa Amini in September, Western countries, particularly the U.S. and the three European countries of Britain, France and Germany (E3) that are still party to the 2015 nuclear deal, have been pressing Iran under the allegation that the Islamic Republic has cracked down on protestors. They have slapped new rounds of sanctions against Iran and helped approve two resolutions against the country, one at the IAEA Board of Governors and another at the UN Human Rights Council. However, Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian said the U.S. and the European trio are "wrong" if they think they can get concessions from Iran through pressure.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/47957/0/Iran-to-EU-West-is-wrong-if-it-thinks-it-can-generate-leverage>

UK claims on Tehran-Moscow military coop. unacceptable: Russia

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 12, 2022

The embassy issued a statement, dismissing accusations leveled by Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom James Cleverly. The British side is well aware that the allegations about military cooperation are shameful and far from mind, the statement underlined. "We categorically reject recent comments by UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly, who, following in the footsteps of US representatives, accused the Russian Federation and Iran of some 'sordid' deals in the context of the Ukrainian crisis," it read. The Russian side also reminds the UK

that the Western allies provide Ukraine with money and arms in the war.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84967714/UK-claims-on-Tehran-Moscow-military-coop-unacceptable-Russia>

Moscow strongly rejects British claim that Iran sending arms to Russia

Tehran Times, December 12, 2022

The remarks by British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly that Iran was supplying arms to Russia in its military campaign in Ukraine is utterly false, the Russian embassy in London has said, calling his statement “inappropriate”. “We categorically reject recent comments by Cleverly, who followed in the footsteps of US authorities and accused the Russian Federation and Iran of some ‘sordid’ deals concerning the Ukraine crisis. The United Kingdom is well aware of the fact that the allegations about Iran’s military supplies to Russia lack any factual basis,” the diplomatic mission said in a statement released on Monday. “Russia, unlike certain Western governments, is invariably committed to compliance with national legislations as well as international principles as regards its cooperation with third countries,” it added, Press TV reported.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/479661/Moscow-strongly-rejects-British-claim-that-Iran-sending-arms>

Ireland: There's collective desire to resume JCPOA implementation

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 12, 2022

Ahead of the upcoming meeting of the foreign ministers of the member states of

the European Union, Coveney told correspondents on Monday that in addition to topics related to the human rights issues and claims on Iran's contribution to Russia in the Ukraine war, another important matter concerning the Islamic Republic is an effort to find the best way on resuming the implementation of the JCPOA. Despite tensions and the sanctions to be agreed upon today, he said, there is a tendency to strive and find a way to advance the Iran nuclear agreement. He refused to point out the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA in May 2018 as well as the continuation of violating the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 by Washington, claiming that the implementation of the deal will help ensure that Iran would not access nuclear weapons.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84968095/Ireland-There-s-collective-desire-to-resume-JCPOA-implementation>

Kiev fails to provide evidence Iranian drones used in Ukraine: defense chief

Tehran Times, December 13, 2022

Ukrainian officials have not provided any proof for their accusation that Russia is deploying Iranian drones in its war with Ukraine, according to Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani. Ashtiani made the comments following a technical discussion between Iranian and Ukrainian experts. "At the technical meeting, the Ukrainian side did not give any evidence of Russia's deployment of Iranian drones in the fight with this state," he remarked. In the conflict in Ukraine, he continued, allegations that Russian forces utilized drones built in Iran are meaningless since they are based on "baseless statements and speculations."

Russia and Iran have both vehemently refuted allegations that Tehran sent Moscow drones for use in the conflict in Ukraine.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/479678/Kiev-fails-to-provide-evidence-Iranian-drones-used-in-Ukraine>

Iran, Russia agree to exchange space experience

Tehran Times, December 14, 2022

Hassan Salariyeh, the head of the Iranian Space Agency, stated on Wednesday that Iran and Russia have agreed on exchanging experiences in the realm of space. He also stressed that the agency has taken essential steps to build necessary infrastructure for launching satellites up to 200 kg and is working to promote such equipment for rolling out bigger sub-ton satellites. The official made the statements while visiting the Iran Airshow 2022 on Kish Island, southern Iran. Iran entered the space technology twenty years ago with the goal of domesticating the technology and that it is still moving forward with its goals under a different façade, he asserted. Salariyeh mentioned that the nation has created a 10-year vision plan for the space industry with a focus on improving users and furthering indigenization of the industry.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/479740/Iran-Russia-agree-to-exchange-space-experience>

IAEA officials to visit Iran in coming days

Islamic Republic News Agency, December 14, 2022

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the cabinet session this morning, Mohammad

Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), expressed hope that a forward step would be taken to remove obstacles and ambiguities. He went on to say that interactions with the IAEA have kept going.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84970155/IAEA-officials-to-visit-Iran-in-coming-days>

Iran underscores timetable for implementing 25-year agreement with China

Tehran Times, December 14, 2022

Head of Iran-China friendship association Allaedin Boroujerdi has recalled the historical and ancient roots of ties and friendship between Iran and China and underlined the need to implement 25-year agreement between the two countries. Speaking to IRNA, Boroujerdi stressed that it is China's or any other country's natural right to seek improvement of ties with other countries. China's relations with the other countries are not at odds with the interests of Iran, he added. He also emphasized that "what triggered angst in the public opinion regarding Tehran-Beijing relations was dos and don'ts set forth in the joint statement issued by GCC and China during Chinese president's tour to Riyadh. Boroujerdi suggested that it is substantial to set a timetable for implementing the 25-year agreement in a bid to signify progress transparently and accelerate its process and procedure.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/479735/Iran-underscores-timetable-for-implementing-25-year-agreement>

Iraq

Iran-linked militia in Iraq threatens Saudi Arabia as Iraqi PM visits Tehran

Al-Monitor, December 1, 2022

As Iran warns of a possible cross-border ground operation into Iraqi Kurdistan, an armed faction operating within Iraq has called for Iran-linked armed groups across the region to take the fight to the Saudi capital. As reported by local media outlets, Kataib Hezbollah issued a statement this week saying, "The optimal solution to deal with the Saudi entity is to establish an alliance from the countries affected by its criminal deeds to transfer the conflicts into the streets of Riyadh." Kataib Hezbollah's call came after Iraq's new government seemed to imply that they will continue the previous government's attempts to bring about rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It has also come on the heels of Iran's accusations that Saudi Arabia is in some way supporting the ongoing mass protests in Iran through affiliated media outlets.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/12/iran-linked-militia-iraq-threatens-saudi-arabia-iraqi-pm-visits-tehran>

IRGC stresses confronting terrorists in Iraq's Kurdistan

Mehr News Agency, December 3, 2022

Emphasizing confronting the terrorists based in Iraq's Kurdistan region, an IRGC commander in Sardasht said that his forces are located one kilometer away from the terrorists' bases. IRGC forces are able to push back the terrorists trying to infiltrate into Iran from the Iraqi Kurdistan region,

the Second Brigadier General Delavar Ranjbarzadeh said on Saturday evening. "We are monitoring the movements of terrorists in Iraq's Kurdistan region and we could prevent them from carrying out their malicious plans," he told the Lebanon-based 'Al-Mayadeen' News Network. He went on to say that IRGC has a lot of information about the activities of terrorists, and "If they attack us, we will target them."

<https://en.mehrnews.com/news/194414/IRGC-stresses-confronting-terrorists-in-Iraq-s-Kurdistan>

Maj. Gen. Rasool: PM Al-Sudani confirms developing Air Defense in arming

Iraqi News Agency, December 4, 2022

The spokesman for the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Major General Yehia Rasool, announced Sunday, in a press conference attended by the reporter of the Iraqi News Agency (INA) that "Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani met with the Armament Committee at the Ministry of Defense to consider contracting mechanisms in light of the priorities studied, where he stressed the need for air defense to progress in arming and equipping because of the importance of this Force." He pointed out that "Commander-in-Chief Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, also received the commander of the NATO mission in Iraq, General Giovanni M. Iannucci, to review the mission's tasks within the framework of security and military cooperation with Iraq, which includes advice, training and developing the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces,"

explaining that "Commander-in-Chief Muhammad Shia Al-Sudani, as part of his activities, conducted an official visit to the Kingdom of Jordan and discussed with the King of Jordan bilateral relations and stressed the continuation of coordination and consultation between the two countries in order to achieve the interests of the two countries."

<https://ina.iq/eng/23370-maj-gen-rasool-pm-al-sudani-confirms-developing-air-defense-in-arming.html>

PM Al-Sudani confirms the importance of strengthening the leadership of the Border Guard forces with weapons and equipment , says Maj. Gen. Rasool

Iraqi News Agency, December 4, 2022

Spokesperson for the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Major General Yehia Rasool, announced on Sunday, directives to hold the zero line, while indicating that the cities file would be handed over to the police. Rasool said in a press conference, attended by the reporter of the Iraqi News Agency (INA): "The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Muhammad Shia' al-Sudani, stressed during the security ministerial meeting the need to hold the borders from the Border Guard forces and hold the zero line with the two neighbors, Iran and Turkey," pointing to "the importance of Strengthening the leadership of the border guard forces with weapons, equipment and people to ensure that the borders are well maintained." He stressed, "Iraq refuses to use its land to attack any neighboring country," pointing out: "We have good relations with all neighboring countries and we seek to develop them in a

way that serves the interests of the parties, with the need to respect Iraq's sovereignty."

<https://ina.iq/eng/23373-the-importance-of-strengthening-the-leadership-of-the-border-guard-forces-with-weapons-and-equipment-says-maj-gen-rasool.html>

Kirkuk is witnessing great security stability JOC reports

Iraqi News Agency, December 4, 2022

Joint Operations Command (JOC) announced on Sunday, that the Kirkuk province is witnessing great security stability. "JOC supervises the sector of responsibility in Kirkuk," said the spokesperson for JOC , Major General Tahsin al-Khafaji, to the Iraqi News Agency (INA). He added, "Kirkuk is now witnessing great security stability, and enjoys high capabilities," noting that "the security services have contributed to the stability of the province and achieved great results by killing many terrorists."

<https://ina.iq/eng/23374-kirkuk-is-witnessing-great-security-stability-joc-reports.html>

Iraqi air forces kill a number of terrorists in Hamrin mountain, SMC reports

Iraqi News Agency, December 7, 2022

The Security Media Cell (SMC) announced on Wednesday, that the Iraqi air force killed a number of terrorists in Hamrin mountain. A statement of the SMC, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), stated that, "Under the supervision and planning of the Joint Operations Command, and according to accurate information from the

Directorate of Military Intelligence in coordination with the technical effort of the targeting cell affiliated with the command, the air force destroyed the terrorists' dens in Hamrin mountain in Narin area within Diyala Operations Command sector." The statement explained, "A force from Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service headed towards the area to search the targeted location, and they found a number of dead terrorist members."

<https://ina.iq/eng/23437-iraqi-air-forces-kills-a-number-of-terrorists-in-the-hamrin-mountain-smc.html>

SMC: Daesh cave targeted by an air strike, Kirkuk

Iraqi News Agency, December 10, 2022

Security Media Cell - SMC announced that a cave where Daesh terrorists were inside had been targeted by an air strike in Kirkuk. "Painful strikes by our security units continue targeting the terrorists' dens," according to a statement by SMC received by the Iraqi News Agency - INA. The statement included, "Based on information from the Federal Intelligence and Investigation Agency in the Ministry of Interior and in cooperation with the targeting cell of the Joint Operations Command, the Heroes Air Hawks carried out a successful air strike with F_16 aircraft, during which it targeted a cave with elements of Daesh terrorist gangs inside it in the Alton Bridge area within the sector of the advanced headquarters of the Joint Operations Command in Kirkuk."

<https://ina.iq/eng/23520-smc-daesh-elements-cave-targeted-by-an-air-strike-kirkuk.html>

With Sudani at the helm, Iran holds sway in Iraq

The Arab Weekly, December 13, 2022

Sanctions-hit Iran is consolidating its hold over neighbouring Iraq, an economic lifeline where pro-Tehran parties dominate politics, all to the chagrin of the United States, experts say. For years, Iraq has been caught in a delicate balancing act between its two main allies Tehran and Washington. After a 2003 US-led invasion toppled Iraqi long-time ruler Saddam Hussein, Iran's influence has grown through political proxies. Pro-Iran parties now dominate Iraq's parliament and in October they named a new prime minister following a year-long tussle with their Shia rivals, the followers of populist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. Iraq has become an "economic lifeline" for Iran, said Ihsan al-Shammari, a political scientist at the University of Baghdad.

<https://theArabWeekly.com/sudani-helm-iran-holds-sway-iraq>

Israel

Elbit to supply German army with E-LynX personal soldier radios

Israel Defense, December 1, 2022

Israeli defense giant Elbit Systems, together with its subsidiary Elbit Systems Germany, will supply the German Army E-LynX personal soldier radios. The deal includes 15,227 devices worth €162 million. According to the German website ESUT, in the first phase, devices worth 23.2 million euros will be supplied until 2026. In addition, there are additional services up to 2028 for 85 million euros and optional services with a volume of 53.8 million

euros in the years 2029 and 2030. The article claims that for the first time, the German Army wants to enable its units to conduct networked operations in land-based operations and to implement an information and communication network from the lowest tactical level of the dismounted soldier to the deployable facilities at the lower tactical level.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56485>

A new market for Spike missiles? Greece is showing interest

Israel Defense, December 1, 2022

Negotiations between Greece and Israel for the Spike-NLOS missile systems, addressing the needs of the Hellenic Navy and Air Force, have reportedly reached a critical point. This, according to media reports. The Director General of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amir Eshel, is currently on an official visit in Athens. Prior to his arrival, Greek website Ekathimerini reported that during Eshel's visit, he is expected finalize - or indefinitely defer - discussions on the Spike NLOS systems, worth around €400 million, that would be installed on Apache helicopters of the Hellenic Air Force, on Navy gunboats and possibly on boats of the Special Forces.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56487>

Israel, US simulate attack on Iran during joint three-day military exercise

Israel Defense, December 1, 2022

The Israeli and United States militaries have concluded a series of joint exercises, which simulated various scenarios

regarding emerging threats in the region. The exercise began as four IAF F-35i "Adir" aircraft accompanied four American F-15 fighter jets through Israel's skies yesterday. During the exercise, an American KC-135 aerial refuelling aircraft refuelled a number of IAF F-16i "Sufa" fighter jets, as the IAF and the US Air Force performed midair refuelling. Additionally, the IAF simulated a long-range operational scenario and long-distance flights. The IDF Intelligence Directorate conducted an extensive simulation replicating campaign against distant countries, testing the IDF's abilities of intelligence gathering, target determination and outlining, and making intelligence available to operational forces.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56490>

Israeli-manufactured drones documented as being used in Ukraine

Israel Defense, December 2, 2022

In 2009, talks began about a possible drone deal between Israel and Russia, with the purpose of establishing a knowledge base in Russia for the local drone industry. The deal was finalized in 2011 as a G2G agreement, and following Washington's approval, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) provided Russia with the relevant knowhow, which included drones to be used by the Russia army. Based on this deal, the IAI drone known in Israel as the Searcher became the Forpost in Russia. No one in the Israeli Ministry of Defense or its US counterpart even dreamed that a decade later, Russia would invade Ukraine. They probably envisioned Russian wars in central Asia, far from Europe. In 2016, the Americans pulled the plug, and Israel

stopped providing Russia with the drones – most likely, since Moscow used these tools during its Crimea invasion in 2014. The first known record of this drone, which fell in Ukraine and remained almost intact, was in 2015.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56491>

Lockheed Martin And Rafael Advanced Defense Systems To Collaborate On High-Energy Laser System

Lockheed Martin Press Release, December 5, 2022

Lockheed Martin and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, Ltd., of Israel, have signed a teaming agreement that includes jointly developing, testing and manufacturing High Energy Laser Weapon Systems (HELWS) in the U.S. and Israel. The future joint-development will be based on the assets that have been developed independently by RAFAEL and the Ministry of Defense's Directorate of Defense Research and Development (DDR&D) within the framework of the IRON BEAM project. The cooperation will be geared towards developing a variant of the system for the American market as well as others. After years of joint development by the Ministry of Defense's Directorate of Defense Research and Development (DDR&D) and RAFAEL, the IRON BEAM project was initiated by the DDR&D. IRON BEAM is a 100kW-class HELWS, expected to be the first-ever operational system for ground-based air defense against threats such as rockets, mortars and UAV's, delivering engagement at the speed of light.

<https://news.lockheedmartin.com/2022-12-05-Lockheed-Martin-and-Rafael-Advanced-Defense-Systems-to->

Collaborate-on-High-Energy-Laser-System

KMW and Elbit intensify rocket artillery cooperation

Israel Defense, December 5, 2022

After having signed a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) in last June, German Krauss-Maffei Wegmann (KMW), Elbit Systems Deutschland and Elbit Systems Land have agreed to intensify their strategic cooperation. This means a Future Rocket Artillery System made in Europe. According to the announcement by Elbit, the background is the modernization and the capability extension of the European Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS / MARS II). Elbit provides a modern effector portfolio, to fully comply with the MLRS-User demands from extended range rockets to new training ammunition which will enable the user to “train as you fight” on national proving grounds. KMW and Elbit have established the concept “Euro-PULS” for the next generation European Long Range Rocket Artillery as the successor system for the MLRS. This concept has already been offered to the first European customers.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56523>

Elbit, BAE teaming on design for the U.S. Army's Optionally Manned Fighting Vehicle (OMFV)

Israel Defense, December 7, 2022

Bae Systems announced this week that it teamed with Israeli Elbit Systems to work together to produce an innovative, purpose-built, next-generation combat vehicle designed to meet the U.S. Army's

requirements for an agile, lethal, and survivable solution that will help redefine land combat operations and maneuverability in future conflicts. According to BAE's announcement, the two companies are leveraging their extensive experience in the evaluation, demonstration, and validation of next generation combat systems. For OMFV, Elbit is providing its 50mm Unmanned Turret (UT50), one of the most versatile armament configurations with multiple mission payloads and capabilities, which recently completed a successful live fire demonstration at the Aberdeen Test Center. The UT50 features a XM913 50mm cannon and a high-capacity ammunition handling system.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56542>

Israel, Germany defense execs discuss Arrow 3, Iran

Israel Defense, December 7, 2022

Israel and Germany held the yearly bilateral dialogue in Jerusalem earlier this week, which was led by Director General of the Israel Ministry of Defense, Amir Eshel, and German State Secretary for the Federal Ministry of Defense, Benedikt Zimmer. The dialogue included the participation of senior officials from the Policy & Pol-Mil Bureau and the DDR&D in the Israel Ministry of Defense and their German counterparts in the MOD Political Directorate, the Strategic Armament Cooperation Office, State Secretary Office, and the Middle East Desk Office. Israel's Ministry of Defense described the dialogue as "fruitful" and said that it focused on "global and regional strategic issues, discussed the growing Iranian threat and

Iran's malign behavior, the global ramifications of the Russia-Ukraine war, bilateral defense cooperation, the joint interest to strengthen regional stability, broadening research and development processes, and more in light of the developments in the region and around the world."

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56546>

Rafael wins multi-million dollar contact for Typhoon deal with Asian navy

Israel Defense, December 8, 2022

Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd. announced today that it has been awarded a contract to supply its Typhoon Mk30-C, counter-UAS, Next Generation Naval Remote Weapon Station (NRWS) to an undisclosed navy in Asia. The contract is worth tens of millions of dollars and will be fulfilled over the course of five years, with an option for expansion for more systems over the course of the contract. Equipped with the highly-reliable NGC Mk44S Bushmaster 30 mm gun and its advanced ammunition, the Typhoon Mk30-C offers a superior capability in defending against multiple threats. As a world leader with a global install base of more than 750 medium caliber Stabilized NRWS Systems, Rafael is offering its Typhoon Mk30-C counter-UAS, as a solution for airborne, marine and shore-based threats. The Typhoon Mk30-C fires all NATO standard ammunition with adjustable rates of fire, up to 200 rounds per minute. Its magazine holds 190/380 ready rounds on mount. With 70-degree elevation, coupled with ABM, the Typhoon Mk30-C can defeat multiple small and medium UAS, including

the latest emerging drone threats using a single ammunition load.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56556>

IDF chief confirms Israel behind November strike on convoy in Syria

YNET News, December 12, 2022

IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Aviv Kochavi confirmed on Wednesday that Israel was behind an airstrike near the Syrian border with Iraq against a convoy of trucks, in November. Kochavi, speaking at an annual memorial ceremony for former IDF intelligence chief Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, said the mission was an indication of the IDF's abilities to locate and target threats. "We could've been unaware of the Syrian convoy moving from Iraq to Syria a few weeks ago," Kochavi said. "We could've been unaware of what it was carrying, and that out of 25 trucks in the convoy, number eight was carrying military equipment. We then need to send pilots able to evading surface-to-air missiles," he said. "To be clear," Kochavi added, "Sometimes, 30 to 40 missiles are launched at our aircraft, with the highest number fired in one operation being 70. Forces need to attack, get a clean hit and return home. They're also required not to kill uninvolved people. These are very advanced capabilities," he said.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/bypm8fddo>

Finnish Army authorizes massive procurement of Rafael Spike missile systems

Israel Defense, December 8, 2022

The Finnish Ministry of Defense authorized last weekend to order SPIKE SR, LR2 and

ER2 missile systems from Israel's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems. The procurement also includes munitions, training equipment, maintenance equipment, training, documentation and spare parts. The overall value of the procurement is €223.6 million. According to the Ministry statement, Spike SR and LR2 are procured to complement the anti-tank capabilities as part of the Army's critical additional procurements. The procurement will increase the number of SPIKE LR missiles in the PSTOHJ2000M system and the new features of the SPIKE SR missiles that are procured for the first time will improve the capabilities of anti-tank troops.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56580>

A new opportunity for the Israeli defense industry? The British navy is interested in loitering munitions

Israel Defense, December 12, 2022

The British Royal Navy is looking to boost its capabilities by equipping its warships with loitering munitions that can "await their targets on the battlefield," according to the Ministry of Defence. The Ministry has issued a call to industries to submit proposals for the development of medium-sized loitering munitions with automatic launch capabilities. The system, known as POD, will be tested with live firing trials to evaluate its effectiveness. Proposals are required to include details on development costs, integration and safety, and plans for achieving goals and ranges.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56593>

Israel to establish nuclear fusion research institute after US success

The Jerusalem Post, December 13, 2022

A major breakthrough that promises to eventually supply the world with clean, carbon-free energy in the same way that the sun creates energy with fusion was announced on Tuesday by researchers working with lasers at California's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. It will someday dismantle the fossil fuel industry controlled by Arab countries and others that produce and sell oil. The lab is a federal facility with a huge budget that has been working for many years towards this aim, which scientists have pursued since the 1950s. So far, they have produced only 20% or 30% more energy than the amount utilized for fusion. Only if the reaction produces 100 times that amount will it be practical, effective and able to be applied in the years ahead, Dr. Naama Charit-Yaari, a nuclear physicist at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot told *The Jerusalem Post* in an interview. A total of 192 laser beams delivered more than two million joules of ultraviolet energy to a tiny fuel pellet to create fusion ignition.

<https://www.jpost.com/business-and-innovation/energy-and-infrastructure/article-724783>

Rejecting JCPOA, Netanyahu Rules Out A Peace Agreement With Iran

Iran International, December 15, 2022

In an interview with al-Arabiya, Benjamin Netanyahu has reiterated opposition to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and urged Saudi Arabia to 'normalize' with Israel. Netanyahu, who is working for a

government with militant settler and Otzma Yehudit party leader Itamar Ben-Gvir as security minister, praised the Middle policies of former US President Donald Trump. Israel's US-sponsored 2020 'normalization' agreement with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan had broken with an "old groove" and the "same rabbit holes" represented by the 2002 Saudi-drafted Arab Peace Initiative (API), Netanyahu said. The API, which remains Arab League and Saudi policy, made recognition of Israel dependent on a viable Palestinian state in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza. Netanyahu, however, urged the United States to reaffirm its commitment to Saudi Arabia and pledged to pursue formal Israeli ties with Riyadh for a "quantum leap" in peace.

<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202212158308>

Turkiye makes arrests over alleged Israeli Mossad operation targeting Palestinians

Arab News, December 15, 2022

Turkish security authorities on Wednesday reportedly arrested several people linked to an Istanbul consulting company allegedly involved in targeting Palestinian expats and organizations operating in Turkiye. As part of an operation launched earlier this week, 44 suspects had been identified as having ties to the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad, Turkiye's pro-government Sabah newspaper said. Seven have been jailed, others remain at large, and some are still being investigated by Turkiye's counter-espionage unit. The alleged campaign against Palestinian citizens, non-governmental organizations, and

institutions based on Turkish soil is thought to have involved threats and damaging reputational remarks made via social media channels, as well as information about them being leaked to Mossad.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2216801/middle-east>

Report: Slovakia upgrading IFV fleet with Israeli Iron Fist active protection system, Spike missiles

Israel Defense, December 15, 2022

The Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic has signed a \$1.37 billion (€1.3 billion) agreement for the delivery of 152 CV9035 infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) from BAE Systems, as part of a government-to-government agreement between Sweden and the Slovak Republic. The Slovak Army will receive the newest iteration of the CV9035, known as the CV90MkIV, equipped with the new D-series turret with a 35 mm gun. The turret provides CV9035 crews with improved protection and amplified combat efficiency through the latest generation of sensors, artificial intelligence and augmented reality software, increasing the CV9035s multi-domain capabilities on the battlefield. Israel Defense has learned that the Slovak CV9035 will also be equipped with Israeli Elbit Systems' "Iron Fist" active protection system (APS) solution. It also seems that the CV9035 will also be equipped with Israeli Rafael SPIKE-LR, an advanced anti-tank guided missile, but there is no official confirmation of this yet.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/56624>

Kuwait

Kuwait and France to hold Joint Military Exercises

Foreign Brief, December 7, 2022

The "Pearl of the West 2022" military exercises between the Kuwaiti army and Kuwait National Guard (KNG) and in cooperation with French forces, concludes today. The "Pearl of the West" joint military exercise has been a feature of defense cooperation and coordination between the French and Kuwaiti armies for years. In the previous edition of the event, France and Kuwait aimed to set up an operational bilateral command structure to improve interoperability between French and Kuwaiti armed forces. A main feature of this year's drills is information exchange to support planning and implementation of joint operations while enhancing combat readiness of both nations' forces. Close military cooperation between the two countries exists outside of the Pearl of the West drills, with French troops stationed at the Arifjan base in Kuwait, as well as French technicians training the Kuwaiti Armed Forces to use French Caracal helicopters.

<https://foreignbrief.com/daily-news/kuwait-and-france-to-hold-joint-military-exercises/>

Kuwait Defence Ministry to co-operate with parliamentary probe into military deals

The National News, December 15, 2022

Kuwait's Defence Ministry has said it will co-operate with a parliamentary investigation into alleged corruption in two

multi-billion dollar deals. The National Assembly on Wednesday announced the formation of a panel to investigate the ministry's \$8.7 billion deal to purchase Eurofighter warplanes and another \$1 billion deal to buy 30 Caracal military helicopters from Airbus. "The ministry affirms the necessity of co-operation between the ministry and the National Assembly to ponder any issues and that such co-ordination falls within the parliament jurisdiction and is warranted for serving public interest," said Minister of Defence Sheikh Abdullah Al Sabah. Kuwait's government in January referred two senior military officers for prosecution over the Eurofighter deal after an investigation revealed that the price of the jets was improperly inflated. Kuwait ordered 28 Eurofighter Typhoon jets valued at about \$8.7 billion from a consortium of European companies in 2016.

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/gulf-news/2022/12/15/kuwait-defence-ministry-to-co-operate-with-parliamentary-probe-into-military-deals/>

Lebanon

U.S. sanctions Hezbollah's accountants, weapons facilitator

Ya Libnan, December 2, 2022

The United States on Thursday sanctioned individuals and companies for allegedly providing financial services to and facilitating weapons procurement for Hezbollah, the U.S. Treasury Department said. The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) took action against two individuals and two companies based in Lebanon for providing financial services to Hezbollah, along with an

additional individual involved in facilitating weapons procurement for the group, it said in a statement. OFAC regulations generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated entities. Among the individuals sanctioned on Thursday were Adel Mohamad Mansour, who led a Hezbollah-run quasi-financial institution; Hassan Khalil, who worked to procure weapons on behalf of Hezbollah; and Naser Hassan Naser, who worked with an entity that provided financial services to the group, the Treasury Department said.

<https://yalibnan.com/2022/12/02/u-s-sanctions-hezbollahs-accountants-weapons-facilitator/>

Biden, Macron take credit for Lebanon's border deal with Israel

Ya Libnan, December 3, 2022

"Dear Joe, you elegantly thanked France for the role we played in the historical agreement between Israel and Lebanon,"

French President Emmanuel Macron said, referring to the recent deal to demarcate the maritime border between the two countries.

"Let me be honest: I think most of the work was yours." But U.S. President Joe Biden batted the same compliment back yet again. "Well, thank you Emmanuel. I began to refer to you in private as my 'closer,' of that deal with Lebanon and Israel. We did negotiate, but we needed a closer to get the job done, and you did it." The leaders, with aides, had met on Thursday for about three hours after taking part in a formal ceremony with hundreds of people gathered on the South Lawn on a sunny, chilly morning. There was a 21-gun salute and review of

troops, and ushers distributed small French and American flags to the guests.

<https://yalibnan.com/2022/12/03/biden-macron-take-credit-for-lebanons-border-deal-with-israel/>

Israel threatens to attack Beirut airport if Iran uses it to smuggle arms to Hezbollah

Ya Libnan, December 9, 2022

A new Iranian attempt to smuggle weapons via civilian airline flights to Beirut, is being tracked by Israel according to Israeli media. According to the reports Iran is using the airline Meraj, which has recently started flying to Beirut. Israel has reportedly warned that it could carry out strikes at Beirut International Airport to thwart weapons deliveries to Hezbollah as it has done in Damascus. Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea on Friday called for an emergency cabinet meeting after media reports claimed that Hezbollah is using Beirut's airport to smuggle weapons from Iran. "This is a delicate, dangerous and emergency matter that requires an urgent and necessary meeting by the caretaker cabinet in order to gather all the needed information and take all the necessary measures to preserve the security and stability of the Lebanese," Geagea said in a tweet.

<https://yalibnan.com/2022/12/09/israel-threatens-to-attack-beirut-airport-if-iran-uses-it-to-smuggle-arms-to-hezbollah/>

Mikati and Chinese President Xi Jinping meet in Saudi capital

Ya Libnan, December 10, 2022

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Riyadh,

Saudi Arabia on Friday on the sidelines of an Arab-Chinese summit. During the meeting, Xi said that China and Lebanon enjoy traditional friendship and have always supported each other. Last year, the two countries celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations, Xi said, adding that China is willing to make joint efforts with Lebanon to promote the in-depth development of China-Lebanon friendly and cooperative relations. China firmly supports Lebanon in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, supports Lebanon in preserving national security and stability, opposes interference by external forces in Lebanon's internal affairs, and will continue to speak up for Lebanon on international multilateral occasions, Xi said. China is willing to work with Lebanon in deepening Belt and Road cooperation and encourage capable Chinese enterprises to participate in Lebanon's economic and social development, Xi said.

<https://yalibnan.com/2022/12/10/mikati-and-chinese-president-xi-jinping-meet-in-saudi-capital/>

Palestine

Israeli air force strikes Hamas military sites after 'militants fired missile into southern Israel'

Daily Mail, December 4, 2022

Israeli aircraft struck several military sites in the Gaza Strip early Sunday, hours after Palestinian militants fired a missile into southern Israel in a move apparently linked to rising tension in the occupied West Bank, Israel said. The attack came as one of Gaza's larger armed factions, the

Palestinian Islamic Jihad, threatened to retaliate after Israeli troops killed two of its leaders in the West Bank town of Jenin on Thursday. 'In response to the rocket fired toward Israeli territory, IDF fighter jets targeted overnight (Sunday) a weapons manufacturing site belonging to the Hamas terrorist organisation,' the Israeli military said in a statement. The target was a site 'where the majority of the organisation's rockets in the Gaza Strip are being manufactured', it added.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11500083/Israeli-air-force-strikes-Hamas-military-sites-militants-fired-missile-southern-Israel.html>

New Palestinian armed groups emerge in West Bank

Al-Monitor, December 5, 2022

Israel's security establishment is increasingly concerned about the emergence of new armed Palestinian groups in the West Bank committing shooting attacks against Israeli checkpoints and settlements. As the Israeli military continues its operations against these groups, specifically the Lions' Den in the city of Nablus, these factions are gaining public support and luring more young Palestinians into their ranks. Despite the Israeli arrest campaigns and raids in the West Bank as well as the killing of one of the the Lion's Den's leaders, Tamer al-Kilani, and the surrender of a number of the group's members to the Palestinian Authority, the Lion's Den continues to operate, and more groups have recently emerged, including one called the Black Cave.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/12/new->

[palestinian-armed-groups-emerge-west-bank](#)

Saudi Arabia

Navantia To Build Multi-Mission Combat Ships For Saudi Arabia

Naval News, December 1, 2022

With the presence and patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Defense, and Her Excellency Mrs. Reyes Maroto Illera, Minister of Industry of Spain, the Ministry of Defense and the General Authority for Military Industries signed a memorandum of understanding with the Spanish company Navantia to acquire and build a number of multi-mission combat ships for the Royal Saudi Naval Force. The memorandum was signed by His Excellency the Assistant Minister of Defense for Executive Affairs, Dr. Khaled bin Hussein Al-Bayari, and from GAMI, Eng. Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al-Ohali, Governor of the Authority, and from the side of the Spanish company, Navantia the CEO and Chairman Mr. Ricardo Dominguez Garcia-Baquero.

<https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/12/navantia-to-build-multi-mission-combat-ships-for-saudi-arabia/>

Saudi Arabia demanded defense firms set up in country by 2024. So far, most seem unmoved.

Breaking Defense, December 8, 2022

Almost two years ago, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced that it would stop doing business with foreign firms that don't have their regional headquarters in the Kingdom by the start of 2024. But while the mandate appeared far-reaching, so far it has done little to sway major defense firms to

relocate their regional hubs, largely based in the nearby United Arab Emirates, even if the Saudi rule has managed to draw in some smaller companies, according to analysts and a review of public announcements. “If a company refused to move their headquarters to Saudi Arabia it is absolutely their right and they will continue to have the freedom to work with the private sector in Saudi Arabia,” Saudi finance minister Mohammed al-Jadaan told Reuters in February 2021. “But as long as it is related to the government contracts, they will have to have their regional headquarters here.”

<https://breakingdefense.com/2022/12/saudi-arabia-demanded-defense-firms-set-up-in-country-by-2024-so-far-most-seem-unmoved/>

Why is Saudi Arabia looking to China to buy weapons after years of arms deals with the US?

South China Morning Post, December 8, 2022

As the world’s largest defence spender, Saudi Arabia has sourced weapons from a variety of countries and in the past has imported mostly from the US. But amid increased tension with Washington in recent years following the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 and in light of the recent Opec+ oil dispute, Riyadh is actively looking to diversify its weapon sources, with China now considered a top alternative. Chinese media recently reported that Saudi Arabia bought US\$4 billion worth of weapons after the Zhuhai Air Show in November, a sale much larger than their previous arms deal, according to observers. The arms trade between China and Saudi Arabia dates back

to the late 1980s, after the two countries held their first official meetings in 1985. They officially established ties in 1990.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3202245/why-saudi-arabia-looking-china-buy-weapons-after-years-arms-deals-us>

China, Saudi Arabia strengthen partnership on energy, defence

Al-Jazeera, December 9, 2022

Saudi Arabia and China reaffirmed their cooperation on global oil markets and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs during Chinese President Xi Jinping’s visit, which was aimed at deepening strategic relations, at a time when Washington’s ties with Riyadh appear increasingly frayed. Xi and Saudi King Salman signed a series of deals, including one involving Chinese tech giant Huawei, since the Chinese leader’s state visit began on Wednesday. In a joint statement on Friday, the two sides said they “exchanged views regarding ways to reinforce and develop comprehensive strategic partnership relations between the kingdom and China”. The statement stressed the principles of sovereignty and “non-interference”, while affirming the importance of a peaceful solution to the Ukraine conflict.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/9/china-saudi-arabia-strengthen-partnership-on-energy-defence>

Saudi FM says ‘all bets are off’ if Iran makes a nuclear weapon

The Times of Israel, December 12, 2022

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud said Sunday that the

Islamic Republic's Gulf neighbors will not sit by if Tehran produces nuclear weapons. "If Iran gets an operational nuclear weapon, all bets are off," Al Saud told reporters at the World Policy Conference in Abu Dhabi, according to Reuters. "We are in a very dangerous space in the region... you can expect that regional states will certainly look towards how they can ensure their own security," he added, without elaborating on what that could entail. The remarks come as Iran remains at odds with the West over its nuclear program and with talks for a revival of a 2015 deal frozen. Iran said last month that it had moved ahead on uranium enrichment that Western governments worry is part of a covert nuclear weapons program.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/saudi-fm-says-all-bets-are-off-if-iran-makes-a-nuclear-weapon/>

Saudi Arabia's Prince Khalid in Britain to strengthen defense ties

Alarabiya News, December 14, 2022

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Defense Prince Khalid bin Salman met with his British counterpart Ben Wallace for official talks in London on Tuesday, the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. Wallace welcomed Prince Khalid at the Royal Cavalry Guard Square in London, where an official reception was held in the Saudi defense minister's honor. The pair reviewed their kingdoms' strategic and historical ties, discussing ways to further enhance cooperation in the defense and military sectors, during a meeting at the headquarters of Britain's defense ministry. Prince Khalid and Wallace signed a defense cooperation plan, which aims to develop the capabilities of Saudi Arabia's defense

ministry, localize military industries, and strengthen both nations' partnerships.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/saudi-arabia/2022/12/14/Saudi-Arabia-s-Prince-Khalid-in-Britain-to-strengthen-defense-ties>

Syrian Arab Republic

Syrian opposition gears up for Turkish ground operation

Al-Monitor, December 2, 2022

The Turkish-backed factions in northern Syria are gearing up for an imminent ground operation led by Turkey against Kurdish forces, which Ankara accused of being behind the Nov. 13 Istanbul bombing that killed six people. Speaking to reporters in Ankara Nov. 21, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed to eradicate "terrorists" — in reference to Kurdish forces — from the areas of Tal Rifaat, Manbij and Ain al-Arab in northern Syria. These areas are controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance of Arab and Kurdish fighters backed by the United States. Erdogan confirmed his country will launch a ground operation in northern Syria at the "appropriate time." He also warned, "The operations we carry out with planes, artillery and unmanned combat aerial vehicles are just the beginning."

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/11/syrian-opposition-gears-turkish-ground-operation>

International oil assets reported hit as Turkey strikes Syria's Kurdish zone

Al-Monitor, December 2, 2022

Oil assets licensed to international oil companies are believed to have been

damaged in Turkey's wave of air attacks against Kurdish-controlled northeast Syria, industry sources speaking not for attribution told Al-Monitor. The sources gave no further details and declined to identify the facilities that were reportedly affected. Salih Muslim, the co-chair of the Democratic Unity Party, which is part of the governance structure in the Kurdish-controlled zone, confirmed that oil wells in Rmeilan near the Iraqi border where international oil companies operated prior to the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011 were struck in the Turkish attacks. But he was unable to confirm whether the actual blocks licensed to those companies were among those damaged. Turkish airstrikes began on Nov. 20, hitting targets over a broad swath of territory, including civilian infrastructure.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/12/international-oil-assets-reported-hit-turkey-strikes-syrias-kurdish-zone>

Dandi: Security Council must address “chemical file” in Syria without politicization

Syrian Arab News Agency, December 6, 2022

Syria's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations al-Hakam Dandi has stressed the need for the Security Council to reconsider its approach on the “chemical file” in Syria by dealing with developments related to it objectively away from any politicization. “Syria voluntarily joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, fulfilled its obligations under it and destroyed all its stockpiles and production facilities in a record time,” Dandi said during a Security

Council session dedicated to discussing the “chemical file” in Syria. He added that some Western countries still insist on wasting the Council's time and resources at the expense of other more urgent issues to discuss related to the maintenance of international peace and security and the defense of the objectives and principles of the UN Charter.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=292401>

Russian delegation heads to Turkey amid potential Syria offensive

Al-Monitor, December 7, 2022

A high-level Russian diplomatic delegation is heading to Turkey on Thursday for talks amid repeated Turkish threats of a new ground offensive against the Kurdish groups in northern Syria. The delegation led by Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin will hold talks with their Turkish counterparts headed by Turkey's Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said. The visit comes as Ankara threatens to launch a new ground operation against the Syrian Kurdish groups in northern Syria. “Someone comes out and says: ‘You can't do this in Kobani, you can't do that in Kobani.’ Kobani is finished,” Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Tuesday in reference to the Syrian Kurdish town that remains under Russian military influence. “We've been taking the necessary measures both in Idlib and Kobani and we will continue to do so,” he added.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/12/russian-delegation-heads-turkey-amid-potential-syria-offensive>

Russia stands firm against any infringements on Syria's territorial integrity — Lavrov

Syrian Arab News Agency, December 7, 2022

Russia shall resolutely preclude any infringements on the territorial integrity of Syria, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told an international forum on Wednesday. “We will work hard to ensure that there are no infringements on Syria’s territorial integrity,” Russia’s top diplomat insisted, addressing the Primakov Readings Forum. The parties to the Astana format (Russia, Iran and Turkey) confirmed their stance on that issue at a recent meeting in Astana, Lavrov said.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=292616>

US, Russia stall Turkey's ground operation, but Kurdish gains under threat

Al-Monitor, December 15, 2022

Turkish plans for a ground operation against Kurdish-held areas in Syria have been stalled by Russian and US objections, but a strategy of sustained pressure seems to be taking shape to incrementally undo Kurdish gains on the ground. The proposals that Moscow and Washington have reportedly made to appease Ankara would both shrink the area of control of the de facto Kurdish-led autonomous administration in northern Syria, though they would prevent any Turkish boots on the ground. Moreover, Turkey’s talks with Russia are premised on the prospect of Ankara normalizing ties with Damascus and the Russians using that prospect to pressure the Kurds to compromise with the Syrian government. Syria was high on the

agenda of Turkish-Russian talks in Istanbul on Dec. 8-9, led by the two countries’ deputy foreign ministers and attended by the Kremlin’s Syria envoy Alexander Lavrentyev.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/12/syrian-kurdish-gains-under-threat-russia-us-try-placate-turkey>

Turkey's Erdogan seeking a meeting with Assad and Putin

Al-Monitor, December 15, 2022

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Thursday that his country was seeking three-way meetings between Ankara, Moscow and Damascus, a fresh addition to Turkey’s efforts to restore its ties with the Syrian government of Bashar Al-Assad, ten years after relations broke off between them. “We want to take a tripartite step as Syria-Turkey-Russia,” Erdogan told reporters during his return from Turkmenistan, adding that the three countries' defense and foreign ministers could come together first. “Following their meetings, let us get together as the leaders. I offered this to Mr. Putin and he received it positively. Thus, a series of contacts would be launched.” he said, referring to a Dec. 11 phone call between the two leaders.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/12/turkeys-erdogan-seeking-meeting-assad-and-putin>

Turkey

Turkish, US defense chiefs discuss defense, security issues

Anadolu Agency, December 1, 2022

Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin

discussed bilateral and regional defense and security issues in a phone call Wednesday. Akar stressed that Türkiye and the US are important allies, said a Turkish National Defense Ministry statement. Referring to Türkiye's cross-border operations in northern Iraq and Syria, Akar said the counter-terrorism operations are being carried out in line with the right of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter to ensure the security of the Turkish nation and its borders. He also emphasized that the only target in the operations was terrorists and that Türkiye never targets coalition forces or civilians. Cooperation and solidarity in the fight against terrorism will contribute to regional and global peace and security, he said, underlining that in this context, Türkiye is ready for cooperation against Daesh/ISIS and all other terrorist organizations.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/turkish-us-defense-chiefs-discuss-defense-security-issues/2752540#>

Türkiye's 1st unmanned fighter jet edges closer to maiden flight

Daily Sabah, December 3, 2022

The Turkish pioneering drone maker announced on Saturday its unmanned fighter jet would soon perform its maiden flight, as it edged closer to the landmark task after a successful takeoff test where it lifted off the ground for a short duration of time. The latest progress came after the National Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle System (MIUS), named Kızılelma, completed its first runway run and autonomous taxiing test last month at an air base in northwestern Tekirdağ province. Both tests were overseen by Baykar's Chief

Technology Officer (CTO) Selçuk Bayraktar. "Having a hard time keeping #KIZILELMA on the ground," Bayraktar wrote on Twitter after the takeoff test on Saturday.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiyes-1st-unmanned-fighter-jet-edges-closer-to-maiden-flight>

Turkish firm to aid in mass production of S. Korea's fighter jet

Daily Sabah, December 6, 2022

Turkish technology company SDT Space and Defense Technologies Inc. will continue to contribute to South Korea's domestically developed fighter jet during the mass production process after already providing a simulation link system to the project during the prototype stage. The company's general manager, Ömer Korkut, told Anadolu Agency (AA) that the firm made one of its most important exports by providing the in-arm simulation data link system for South Korea's fifth generation fighter jet, the KF-21, and stated that they delivered 19 air units and a ground station during the prototype phase of the project. Korkut stated that they recently received another ground station order that they will deliver in April 2023.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-firm-to-aid-in-mass-production-of-s-koreas-fighter-jet>

US drops defense bill articles blocking F-16 sale to Türkiye

Daily Sabah, December 7, 2022

Amendments making sales of F-16 fighter jets to Türkiye contingent on a series of conditions have been removed in the final

U.S. defense spending bill, a report said Wednesday. Legislation approved by the House of Representatives in July sought to bar the sale to Türkiye unless the Biden administration certifies that doing so is essential to U.S. national security. It also described concrete steps taken to ensure they are not used for “unauthorized overflights” of Greece. Ankara has been voicing its firm opposition to any conditions on the sale of the jets. A conference committee made up of House and Senate members completed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) bill, which includes the 2023 defense budget.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/us-drops-defense-bill-articles-blocking-f-16-sale-to-turkiye>

Türkiye expects 'concrete steps' from US on F-16 sales

Anadolu Agency, December 8, 2022

In line with the US' recent positive approach, now Türkiye wants to see concrete steps from Washington, said the Turkish defense chief on Thursday, referring to Türkiye's pending purchase of F-16 fighter jets. At a joint press conference with his Finnish counterpart Antti Kaikkonen in the capital Ankara, National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said: "Based on these positive approaches, we now expect positive and concrete steps from the US. We want this work and the process to be concluded as soon as possible in a positive and rapid manner." After the US Congress dropped restrictive language on the F-16 sales from a defense bill, after Türkiye's insistence, Ankara has signaled that it wants the sales approved by Congress

and signed by President Joe Biden as soon as possible.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/turkiye-expects-concrete-steps-from-us-on-f-16-sales/2758862>

Türkiye's MÜSIAD, defense giant Aselsan join forces for industrialization

Daily Sabah, December 11, 2022

One of Türkiye's top business associations, the Independent Industrialists and Businesspersons Association (MÜSIAD), and leading Turkish defense company Aselsan on Friday has organized an 'Industrialization Event' to contribute to Aselsan's ecosystem and create the ground for new collaborations with domestic suppliers. MÜSIAD Chairperson Mahmut Asmalı, delivering an opening speech at the 1st Aselsan-MÜSIAD Industrialization Event that was held at MÜSIAD headquarters in Istanbul said that Türkiye has further strengthened its strategic position with the defense industry breakthroughs it has made in recent years. He said while the country has gained attention with the high-level technologies it has developed, it has gained the capacity to carry out all kinds of operations within and beyond its borders without any disruptions.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiyes-musiad-defense-giant-aselsan-join-forces-for-industrialization>

Türkiye expects from US to meet F-16 jets demand 'as soon as possible'

Anadolu Agency, December 12, 2022

Ankara expects the US to realize the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Türkiye as it is important for NATO's deterrence as well,

the country's Vice President Fuat Oktay said on Monday. "The importance of defense cooperation between Türkiye and the US is obvious. Our request for F-16 procurement and modernization is an opportunity to further strengthen our defense relations. "Meeting our demand as soon as possible is critical not only for Türkiye, but also for NATO's deterrence and defense capabilities," Oktay said in the video message addressing the Turkish-American Business World Awards Ceremony. Oktay said Türkiye is pleased with the support of the US administration towards the request, adding: "We expect the Congress to play a positive role in this process."

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/turkiye-expects-from-us-to-meet-f-16-jets-demand-as-soon-as-possible/2762095>

Bosnian defense ministry, Turkish firm ink military maintenance deal

Daily Sabah, December 12, 2022

The Bosnian and Herzegovina defense ministry and Turkish state-owned defense firm ASFAT has signed an agreement on Monday. The agreement foresees the maintenance of the tanks and armored vehicles in the inventory of the Bosnian ministry and the supply of spare parts. Sifet Podzic, the Defense Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina and ASFAT General Manager Esad Akgün signed the agreement. The ceremony was attended by Türkiye's Ambassador to the Balkan country, Sadık Babür Girgin and the embassy's military attache, Colonel Mustafa Sıtkı Tatar. While speaking at the signing ceremony, Girgin appreciated that Türkiye is always ready for

the assistance of Bosnia and Herzegovina's armed forces.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/bosnian-defense-ministry-turkish-firm-ink-military-maintenance-deal>

'US' F-16 sale to Türkiye critical for NATO's deterrence'

Daily Sabah, December 12, 2022

Ankara expects Washington to go on with the sale of the F-16 fighter jets to Türkiye as it is important for the deterrence of NATO, Vice President Fuat Oktay said Monday. "The importance of defense cooperation between Türkiye and the U.S. is obvious. Our request for F-16 procurement and modernization is an opportunity to further strengthen our defense relations," Oktay noted. "Meeting our demand as soon as possible is critical not only for Türkiye, but also for NATO's deterrence and defense capabilities," the vice president said during the video message addressing the Turkish-American Business World Awards Ceremony.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/us-f-16-sale-to-turkiye-critical-for-natos-deterrence>

Uncrewed fighter jet Kızılelma to take Turkish defense to 'new heights'

Daily Sabah, December 13, 2022

Türkiye's latest drone or uncrewed fighter jet will take the country's defense industry to new heights, according to its manufacturer Baykar. Speaking to Türkiye Innovation Week, organized by the Turkish Exporters' Assembly (TIM) in Istanbul, Baykar CEO Haluk Bayraktar said

the National Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle System (MIUS), named Kızılelma (Red Apple), with low detectability and hypersonic speed, is a very critical and strategic project. He said that the dependence on foreign countries in the defense sector is a problem, adding that technologies such as Kızılelma will ensure self-reliance. He further said the project is a private project developed with support from Baykar's export revenue. The fast drone fighter jet Kızılelma represents a significant expansion of capabilities for slow-moving reconnaissance and missile-carrying drones.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/uncrewed-fighter-jet-kizilelma-to-take-turkish-defense-to-new-heights>

Türkiye touts herd feature of its unmanned maritime vessels

Daily Sabah, December 13, 2022

The Turkish defense industry has completed another test with its domestic armed unmanned surface vessel (AUSV), Albatros-S, which was used in a herd concept, the head of the Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) Ismail Demir said Tuesday. On Twitter, Demir said that they completed the third phase of the project, where the defense giant Aselsan-developed Albatros-S herd capabilities were exhibited. "We continue to develop high-autonomy unmanned sea vehicles and expand our IDA (unmanned sea vehicle) family!

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkiye-touts-herd-feature-of-its-unmanned-maritime-vessels>

KEPCO seeks to build 4 nuclear reactors in Turkey

The Korea Times, December 15, 2022

Korea Electric Power Corp. (KEPCO) plans to build up to four nuclear reactors in Turkey, according to the state-run energy firm, Thursday, in what market watchers say will generate up to 40 trillion won (\$30 billion) in export income. This is the latest development in the country's energy initiative to elevate nuclear power as a vital, stable source of energy, including the export of APR1400 reactors. The Korea-developed reactors are increasingly recognized for cost, quality and technological advantage by global peers.

https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/tech/2022/12/129_341813.html

NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

*Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Mr. Kushal Agrawal
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