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FOCUS, NUCLEAR, MISSILES & OTHER
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India

Installing new IAEA cameras depends on adherence by JCPOA parties: nuclear chief

Tehran Times, September 1, 2023

Mohammad Eslami, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, has stated that the installation of more monitoring cameras in Iran's nuclear sites would be contingent on the other parties' adherence to the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially called the JCPOA.

In an interview with Al-Jazeera, he noted, "The commitment of the parties and America to the nuclear agreement will be met with an Iranian commitment."

He added that reversing the reduction in compliance with the nuclear agreement necessitates the lifting of all sanctions.

Eslami further emphasized the continuous communication with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), stating that "our dialogue with the agency continues, and the file of highly enriched uranium atoms was recently closed."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/488596/Installing-new-IAEA-cameras-depends-on-adherence-by-JCPOA-parties>

AEOI Spokesman: Iran Producing Highest Quality Heavy Water Across Globe

Fars News Agency, September 2, 2023

Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi praised the high quality of the heavy water produced in his country, and said that several European states are seeking to buy

this indigenous nuclear material from Tehran.

The spokesperson told Mizan news agency "Iran's heavy water ranks first in the world in terms of quality", and Europeans are interested in its procurement from Tehran.

Iran has in recent years turned into an exporter of heavy water to foreign states. Iranian nuclear officials have stated that Tehran is producing enough heavy water inside the country, and is even exporting surplus to several states.

Kamalvandi also stressed the AEOI's accomplishments in using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020611000610/AEOI-Spkesman-Iran-Prdcing-Highes-Qaliy-Heavy-Waer-Acrss-Glbe>

Iranian Commander: Indigenous Drone Warns Off RQ-4 Global Hawk, US P-8 Poseidon Near Border

Fars News Agency, September 3, 2023

Deputy Commander of the Iranian Army Air Defense Force Brigadier General Alireza Elhami praised the country's defense industry for manufacturing various type of military hardware, and further said that a domestically-developed drone, dubbed "Karrar", has on separate occasions forced an American RQ-4 reconnaissance drone and a US Navy's P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol and surveillance aircraft to change their courses and stay away from the Iranian airspace.

Brig. Gen. Elhami stated on Sunday the homemade drone, which has been furnished with a sophisticated radar system, has several times forced foreign manned and

unmanned aircraft to change their course over the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman at high altitudes.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020612000665/Iranian-Cmmander-Indigens-Drne-Warns-Off-RQ-4-Glbal-Hawk-US-P->

Iran Deploys New Satellite and Russian-Made Trainer Jets

Israel Defense, September 3, 2023

It's been a busy weekend for Iran's defense capabilities, which are now bolstered with a new homemade satellite as well as several Russian Yak-130 combat trainer jets.

The Tolu-3 remote-sensing satellite (meaning "sunrise"), manufactured by Iran Electronics Industries, was reportedly delivered to the Iranian Space Organization on Saturday after passing final tests.

According to the Tasnim news agency, which is affiliated with the Revolutionary Guards, the satellite weighs over 100 kg and will be sent into Low Earth Orbit to transmit images for applications "in various fields such as agriculture, water resources, and disaster management." Iranian press did not discuss any military applications for this satellite.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59461>

Iran FM says extensive talks held to revive JCPOA

Tehran Times, September 3, 2023

The Iranian foreign minister has said that talks between Iran and the remaining signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, have been

largely documented in what's known as the "September Document".

In an interview with the Etella' at newspaper published on Sunday, Hossein Amir Abdollahian said lots of discussions have taken place between Iran and the other parties regardless of the fact that some occurrences delayed any new agreements.

Amir Abdollahian was commenting on the 2022 fall riots in Iran that according to some officials resulted in the death of tens of security personnel and civilians.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/488692/Iran-FM-says-extensive-talks-held-to-revive-JCPOA>

DM: All Western Arms Embargos on Iran to Be Lifted within Weeks

Fars News Agency, September 5, 2023

Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani said that all the weapon sanctions on Tehran will be lifted in October, adding that his country is ready to establish and expand military relations with all independent and allied states.

Brig. Gen. Ashtiani, in an article published in the Arabic-language Al-Vefagh on Tuesday, stressed that all Western weapons sanctions on Tehran will be expired in the coming weeks.

He announced Iran's readiness to enhance its defense and strategic ties with all independent countries, especially with Muslim and regional nations.

"The defense industries of Iran have reached a level of maturity and prosperity

that can be a point of convergence and connection for defense, technical and technological ties with independent and neighboring states,” the minister wrote.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020614000584/DM-All-Wesern-Arms-Embargsn-Iran-Be-Lifed-wihin-Weeks>

Iranian drones; now in the Western Hemisphere

Tehran Times, September 9, 2023

Iran's military development, especially with the mass production of drones in recent years, has placed it among the most advanced countries. The Ukraine war added weight to the importance of Iranian drones.

Parallel to the importance of Iranian drones, Western media outlets have also increased their rhetoric about Iran's defense program. A similar approach was followed in recent years regarding Iranian missiles. In this regard, the Heritage Foundation discussed the export of Iranian military equipment, especially drones.

Referring to the recent Iran-Bolivia agreement and sale of the Iranian missiles to Venezuela, the report concluded that Iran is exploiting its military capacity in the Western Hemisphere. According to Joseph Humire, the writer of the article in the think tank "Iran's goal is to bring war to America. Bolivia is the most successful project of Iran's foreign policy in Latin America.”

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/488862/Iranian-drones-now-in-the-Western-Hemisphere>

Spokesman: Pressures, Propaganda Unable to Hinder Iran's Nuclear Program

Fars News Agency, September 9, 2023

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kana'ani stressed that his country's peaceful nuclear program will move forward and political interventions and pressures have all failed to hamper its progress.

The top diplomat responded to a statement issued at the end of the 157th session of the Persian Gulf Security Council foreign ministers on Thursday, stressing the country's nuclear program won't succumb to the pressures exerted by some countries.

The spokesperson reiterated Tehran's firm determination to advance its peaceful nuclear program and to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regardless of foreign pressure and propaganda.

The development of Iran's nuclear program and its collaboration with the UN nuclear watchdog would be based on the rights and obligations per the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in a constructive manner, he underlined.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020618000157/Spkesman-Pressres-Prpaganda-Unable-Hinder-Iran's-Nclear-Prgram>

IRGC Deputy Commander: Israel Powerless Against Iran's Hypersonic Missiles

Fars News Agency, September 10, 2023

Deputy Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) for

Operations Brigadier General Abbas Nilforoushan said that his country is manufacturing a new generation of hypersonic missiles, adding that Israel has to give up its current air defense shields as the advanced projectiles are capable of overcoming all defense systems.

Brig. Gen. Nilforooshan told Tasnim news agency that Tehran plans to produce new indigenous hypersonic missiles.

Pointing to the domestically-developed hypersonic ballistic missile, dubbed "Fattah", the military official stated that the projectile that can maneuver at a speed of Mach 14 to 15 has been designed to defeat the Israeli regime's anti-missile systems.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020619000389/IRGC-Depy-Cmmander-Israel-Pwerless-Agains-Iran-s-Hypersnic-Missiles>

Grossi urges Iran to seriously cooperate with IAEA

Tehran Times, September 11, 2023

The IAEA director general, speaking at a news conference before the IAEA's Board of Governors in Vienna on Monday, urged Iran to seriously work with the Agency in line with the joint statement made in Tehran on March 4.

Rafael Grossi also claimed that he only is worried about the nuclear issue with Iran, adding there is no connection between the Iran-IAEA cooperation and the current indirect discussions between Iran and the United States as well as the prisoner swap between them.

He used the most recent IAEA report on Iran's nuclear program to argue that ties between Tehran and the IAEA had not made "much progress" on the unresolved issues.

The joint statement between Iran and the IAEA was intended to be "a gradual process of confidence-building," Grossi said, adding that it was also intended to expand the Agency's tangible and electronic presence in Iran (CCTV cameras).

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/488955/Grossi-urges-Iran-to-seriously-cooperate-with-IAEA>

AEOI Chief Calls on West to Refrain from Raising Excessive Demands Regarding Iran's N. Program

Fars News Agency, September 13, 2023

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami underlined that his country is standing against excessive demands by the European troika regarding its peaceful nuclear program, and further said that Tehran will continue its nuclear measures as long as US sanctions remain in place.

"European countries cannot expect us to fully implement the nuclear deal while they do not fulfill any of their obligations," Eslami told reporters on Wednesday.

"As long as the other parties [to the 2015 agreement] fail to live up to their commitments and sanctions are not fully lifted, it is natural that we will continue the current trend," he underscored.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020622000537/AEOI-Chief-Calls-n-Wes-Refrain-frm-Raising-Excessive-Demands>

IRGC Commander: Israel to Further Shorten Its Life by Threatening Iran

Fars News Agency, September 14, 2023

Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami warned Israel that any threat against the Islamic Republic will only shorten the Tel Aviv regime's diminishing life.

Major General Salami made the remarks three days after David Barnea, director of Israel's Mossad spy agency, threatened to hit Iran's "highest echelon ... in the heart of Tehran".

"The Zionists are grappling with many problems, and signs of their decline are evident. Thus, they have resorted to empty rhetoric and threats to assassinate our commanders," the IRGC commander said.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14020623000217/IRGC-Cmmander-Israel-Frher-Shren-Is-Life-by-Threaening-Iran>

Iraq

US holds offensive arms in military base in Iraq

Iraqi News, September 5, 2023

Despite an agreement to turn the combative mission of US troops in Iraq into an advisory one, the US is stockpiling offensive military equipment at Ain Al-Assad base in western Iraq.

A senior Iraqi military official told Al-Araby Al-Jadeed that he had seen weaponry, including Black Hawk and Apache helicopters, during a recent visit to the air base in Anbar governorate.

The official explained that this was against the terms of the agreement reached in 2021, which permitted the advising task group to have defensive weapons there.

According to the source, the base also included sophisticated radar and monitoring systems.

In mid-August, the Pentagon Press Secretary, Brigadier General Pat Ryder, denied that the United States had moved or deployed additional reinforcements on the Iraq-Syria border.

Ryder also denied that the US military has any plans to seal off the border or some points of entry along the border.

<https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq/us-holds-offensive-arms-in-military-base-in-iraq/>

PMF launches a security operation in Tarmiya

Iraqi News Agency, September 9, 2023

The Popular Mobilization Forces PMF announced on Saturday launching a security operation in Tarmiya operations sector, north of Baghdad. A statement by PMF, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), said that "a force from the 12th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces carried out a security operation in Tarmiya operations sector, north of the capital Baghdad." "The force, with the participation of the engineering effort of the Military Engineering Directorate of the Popular Mobilization Forces, and in cooperation with the Directorate of Shields of the Popular Mobilization Forces, began conducting a large-scale security survey

operation within the responsibility section," the statement added.

<https://ina.iq/eng/28500-pmf-launches-a-security-operation-in-tarmiya.html>

MOI will take over the security file in all the provinces, says Al-Shammari

Iraqi News Agency, September 10, 2023

Minister of Interior, Abdul Amir Al-Shammari, stressed on Sunday the necessity of developing the performance and capabilities of the Ministry of Interior-MOI in order to assume the security responsibility in all governorates. "Over a whole month, the preparations were ongoing in planning and mobilizing to protect the pilgrims of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him), and I must especially mention the staff of the Ministry of Interior who had a high level of control and commitment to duty, and the provincial police leadership also had a prominent role in securing all roads leading to Holy Karbala," stated Interior Minister Abd al-Amir al-Shammari in a video clip followed by the Iraqi News Agency (INA).

<https://ina.iq/eng/28525-moi-will-take-over-the-security-file-in-all-the-governments-says-al-shammari.html>

National Security Council discusses establishing chemical testing labs at ports

Iraqi News Agency, September 12, 2023

The National Security Agents Council held its sixteenth session for the year 2023, headed by National Security Advisor Qasim Al-Araji and in the presence of members of the Council. It discussed several topics, including establishing laboratories for testing chemical and

radiological materials at the ports. "The Council discussed the topics on its agenda, and took the necessary decisions and recommendations regarding them, including the topic of (establishing laboratories to test dangerous chemical and radioactive materials at border crossings), and directed that the committee formed for the research topic, in coordination with the Order Committee (23559) in the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, unify the ports related to this file," according to a statement by the Media Office of the National Security Advisor, received by the Iraqi News Agency - INA.

<https://ina.iq/eng/28571-national-security-council-discusses-establishing-chemical-testing-laboratories-at-ports.html>

Israel

Aeronautics Secures \$40M Contract to Supply Loitering Munition UAS to Int'l Customer

Israel Defense, September 3, 2023

Aeronautics Ltd., a designer, developer, and manufacturer of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) for the global defense and HLS markets, announced a significant contract to supply its cutting-edge Orbiter 1K loitering munition UAS to a major international customer. This contract, valued at \$40 million, reinforces Aeronautics' position as a premier provider of advanced UAS solutions worldwide.

The Orbiter 1K is a Class 1 loitering munition UAS that demonstrates high performance for real-time Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions and operations. It is part of the Orbiter family of UAVs that covers the

complete tactical class mission requirements set and are all operated via an advanced and common ground segment & operating system, enabling maximum flexibility and ease of use.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59447>

Report: India Acquires Rampage Missile from Israel, Is Establishing Testing Facility

Israel Defense, September 3, 2023

A delegation of three UAE Navy officers, led by Colonel Dr. Ali Saif Ali Al Marzai, visited INSHansa in India on August 30th in order to familiarize themselves with the meteorological and oceanographic facilities of the Indian Navy, as a step towards establishing cooperation in these areas. This, according to a tweet by IN_GNA.

The tweet included a photo showing Indian officers presenting Israeli Rampage missiles that India purchased from Elbit for its Su-30MK aircraft. According to AdithyaKM_, India is establishing a testing facility for the missile in Goa.

The purchase of the Rampage missile was already reported in December 2022 on India Today. According to the report, the missile is intended for ground targets with a range of up to 250 km.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59448>

IAI to Tap Opportunities in India's Short-Range Air Defence Systems

Israel Defense, September 4, 2023

Israel Aerospace Industries and India's Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics

Limited (BEL) have inked an MoU for cooperation in addressing India's requirements in the domain of Short Range Air Defence Systems. The partnership marks yet another significant step towards cementing the synergy between the two companies which have a long history of association. BEL and IAI are engaged in several joint development/production/product support programs for the Indian Defence forces.

The MoU aims at leveraging IAI and BEL's capabilities and is in sync with the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India' policies of the Government of India.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59470>

Israel Orders Third F-35 Fighter Jets Squadron

Israel Defense, September 4, 2023

Following the approval of the Minister of Defense, Yoav Galant, and the Director-General of the Ministry of Defense, Major General (Ret.) Eyal Zamir, the procurement delegation of the Ministry of Defense in the United States has submitted a formal Letter of Request (LOR) to the American F-35 Program Office (JPO) with the goal of finalizing and signing the contract in the coming months.

The Ministry of Defense will acquire 25 F-35 aircraft from the American government, manufactured by Lockheed Martin, in a deal that includes support and maintenance. With the completion of the contract, the Israeli Air Force will operate a total of 75 advanced stealth fighter aircraft in the world. The supply of the

aircraft to the IDF will begin in 2027 at a rate of three aircraft per year.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59471>

Gallant, defense brass met to examine consequences of Saudi normalization – report

Times of Israel, September 4, 2023

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant convened defense officials last month to discuss the security consequences of a potential normalization deal with Saudi Arabia, according to a report Monday.

National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi, Mossad spy agency director David Barnea and IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi attended the meeting, which focused on security questions relating to Riyadh's demand for a US-backed civilian nuclear program on Saudi soil, the Kan public broadcaster reported, citing unnamed officials with knowledge of the talks.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has held similar deliberations, the report added.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/gallant-defense-brass-met-to-examine-consequences-of-saudi-normalization-report/>

SpearUAV Unveils the MCL Viper, Aimed at Revolutionizing Strike Capabilities for Maneuvering Forces

Israel Defense, September 5, 2023

SpearUAV Ltd., an Israeli developer of autonomous, AI-based technology for encapsulated Unmanned Aerial Systems

(UAS), unveiled the MCL Viper (Multi Canister Launcher), which enables the immediate launch of VIPER 300 System while in motion, from any military manned or unmanned platform.

The MCL Viper system features a customizable configuration with four or more canisters, adaptable to a wide array of military platforms and vehicles. This game-changing launcher enhances the maneuverability and operational pace of forces while minimizing operator exposure and safeguarding crew members within the vehicle.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59483>

Senior Defense Administrator Says Israel Must Prepare for War Against Precision Munitions

Israel Defense, September 5, 2023

An article recently published on the "Ma'arachot" defense establishment website examines the aspect of air defense in the Russia-Ukraine war and provides several insights relevant to Israel. The article was written by Lieutenant Colonel Yair, from the the Israel Missile Defense Organization (IMDO, "Homa" in Hebrew), which is part of the Ministry of Defense.

"One area in warfare where it seems the Ukrainian air defense system is struggling to cope is dealing with precise munitions," writes Yair.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59496>

Elbit Awarded \$200 Million Contracts in Europe

Israel Defense, September 6, 2023

Elbit Systems announced it was awarded two contracts by a European country, worth an aggregate amount of approximately \$200 million, to supply a C4I (Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Intelligence) solution to artillery battalions and a Hostile Fire Counter Attack (HFCA) solution. The contracts will be executed until 2026, with options for further extensions.

The C4I solution will provide advanced C4I capabilities to four battalions of 155mm howitzers guns, including Elbit Systems' SDR radios – the E-Lynx and TORCH-X Fire applications.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59500>

Report: IAI Trying to Sell Drones to Uzbekistan

Israel Defense, September 11, 2023

A meeting between representatives of Uzbekcosmos Agency and officials from the Israel Aerospace Industry (IAI) took place last week, as reported by the UZ Daily website.

“During the meeting, representatives of the Israeli company made presentations on satellites for remote sensing of the earth, telecommunications satellites, as well as a constellation of small satellites,” said the article.

Special attention was given to products such as the small communication satellite MCS, remote sensing drones for Earth

observation OptSat3000 and OptSat500. Discussions were also held on personnel training, technology transfer, and cooperation in formulating proposals for the continued development of Uzbekistan's space and ground infrastructure.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59553>

Elbit Awarded \$109 Million Contract to Supply BAE Systems Hägglunds with Iron Fist Active Protection System

Israel Defense, September 11, 2023

Elbit Systems Ltd. was awarded a contract worth \$109 million to supply BAE Systems Hägglunds (Sweden) with the Iron Fist Active Protection System (APS) for its CV90 platform, for a European customer. The contract will be carried out over three years.

The Iron Fist APS is characterized by low volume, weight, and power requirements. The system provides armored platforms with 360-degree protection from a wide variety of anti-armor threats, such as rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) and up to KE tank rounds in both open terrain and urban environments.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59559>

Israel Air Force Welcomes New UAV, Dubbed “Spark”

Israel Defense, September 12, 2023

The Israeli Air Force (IAF) received this week the new unmanned aircraft, dubbed “Spark”, developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and Aeronautics as part of the "Storm Cloud" project.

A welcome ceremony for the Spark was held at the 144th Squadron, known as the Phoenix Squadron, at the Hatzor Air Force Base. The Spark UAV is designed for various missions, including intelligence, ground forces support, targeting, and more. Some of its specifications and capabilities are classified.

The 144th Squadron, which will operate the Spark, was originally established in 1972 as a combat squadron and was converted to a UAV squadron in 2022, reopening at the Hatzor Air Force Base.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59567>

Elbit Systems Unveils the Find-and-Strike (FAST) Capsule

Israel Defense, September 13, 2023

Elbit Systems has unveiled its latest development in the world of unmanned aerial systems: The Find-and-Strike (FAST) Capsule, combining the Skylark III and SkyStriker Loitering Munition (LM).

The Skylark III is a leading Small-Tactical Intelligence UAS, equipped with the most advanced intelligence-gathering sensors and with extensive endurance of up to 18 hours, it is designed to support ISTAR missions in GPS-denied environments. The Skylark III is capable of integrating a range of payloads including high-resolution Electro-Optical gimballed payload, SIGINT sensors, laser designators, and more.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59588>

IAI, 2Excel Aviation Develop Future Use of Uncrewed Aerial Systems

Israel Defense, September 14, 2023

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and 2Excel Aviation have signed an agreement to forge ahead in developing the future use of uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) in UK airspace. Initial efforts will focus on growing and enhancing 2Excel's regulatory approvals in the uncrewed sphere using the maritime version of IAI's Heron, the world's most prolific UAS.

The highly-capable Heron has notched up 500,000 hours of safe operations around the globe. It carries a suite of advanced sensors, cameras, and communications equipment that provide persistence reconnaissance for a range of missions, including search and rescue, border protection, fisheries patrol, and safety at sea.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59602>

Elbit Debuts Crossbow Next Generation Turreted Mortar System

Israel Defense, September 14, 2023

Elbit Systems' Crossbow Next Generation Turreted Mortar System will be making its first appearance at the Company's booth during the upcoming DSEI exhibition in London, England.

The automatic mortar system was developed by Elbit Systems' Land under an Israel Defense Force contract and is MIL-STD-810G compliant.

The Crossbow system has the capability of shooting the first round in less than 30 seconds, a maximum rate of ten rounds per minute, and a sustained rate of fire of six rounds per minute, with a short sensor-to-shooter circle. It can fire a variety of munitions including the Iron Sting guided mortar munition providing an effective range of up to 10 kilometers.

<https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/59606>

Lebanon

Lebanon faces new influx of Syrian refugees amid economic crises, with 20,000 crossings since start of 2023

The New Arab, September 5, 2023

Lebanon is facing a new influx of Syrian refugees via informal crossing points in the north of its territory.

The country currently already hosts an estimated one and a half million to two million Syrian refugees who fled their country following the outbreak of conflict there in 2011.

On Wednesday, Lebanon's Minister of the Displaced, Issam Sharaf Al-Din claimed 8,000 Syrians entered Lebanon through irregular crossings bringing the total number of Syrians who entered this way to 20,000 since the start of the year. The New Arab could not independently verify these numbers

<https://www.newarab.com/news/20000-entering-lebanon-faces-new-syrian-refugee-flow>

Fresh clashes break out at Palestinian refugee camp in southern Lebanon

The Times of Israel, September 8, 2023

Clashes broke out late Thursday in a restive Palestinian refugee camp in south Lebanon that was rocked by deadly fighting just weeks ago, an AFP correspondent said.

The fighting in the Ein al-Helweh camp once again pitted members of Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah movement against members of rival terror groups, a source within the Palestinian camp's leadership said, requesting anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media.

The AFP correspondent in the southern city of Sidon, where the camp is located, reported the sound of automatic weapon fire and rocket launchers.

Dozens of families with women and children were fleeing from the camp's northern end where the clashes were concentrated, the correspondent added.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/fresh-clashes-break-out-at-palestinian-refugee-camp-in-southern-lebanon/>

Iran building airport in southern Lebanon to attack Israelis, Gallant says

Times of Israel, September 11, 2023

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Monday accused Iran of setting up an airport in southern Lebanon, 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the Israeli border, which he said was being used "for terror purposes" against Israelis.

Speaking at an annual conference of the Institute for Counter-Terrorism Policy (ICT) at Reichman University in Herzliya, Gallant presented pictures of the airport, being built in the Qalaat Jabbour mountain region, which he said bore the fingerprints of Iran and its proxy terror group Hezbollah.

“In the pictures, you can see the Iranian flag flying over the runways, from which the ayatollah regime plans to operate against the citizens of Israel,” Gallant said.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/gallant-says-iran-building-airport-to-attack-israelis-in-southern-lebanon/>

US sanctions Lebanon-South America network accused of financing Hezbollah

ABC News, September 12, 2023

The U.S. Treasury on Tuesday slapped terrorism sanctions on a family network of seven individuals and businesses in Lebanon and South America accused of financing the militant group Hezbollah, including a Lebanese man who officials say was involved in two deadly attacks in Argentina in the 1990s.

Amer Mohamed Akil Rada was described as “one of the operational members” who carried out the attack on the Argentine-Israelite Mutual Association in Buenos Aires in 1994, which killed 85 people and wounded hundreds. A 1992 attack on the Israeli Embassy in Argentina killed 29 people.

“Today’s action underscores the U.S. government’s commitment to pursuing

Hezbollah operatives and financiers no matter their location,” said Brian Nelson, the Treasury's under-secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, in a statement.

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-sanctions-lebanon-south-america-network-accused-financing-103123141#:~:text=BEIRUT%20%2D%2D%20The%20U.S.%20Treasury,in%20Argentina%20in%20the%201990s.>

Palestine

Palestinians set out terms for agreeing to historic Saudi-Israeli deal

BBC, September 7, 2023

A cash boost of hundreds of millions of dollars and more control of land in the

occupied West Bank are among Palestinian demands in the event of a three-way deal involving the US, Saudi Arabia and Israel, the BBC has learned. Officials from the Palestinian Authority (PA) held talks in Riyadh with Saudi counterparts on Wednesday.

They were also due to see US officials.

The Americans are long thought to have been pushing for a landmark pact to normalise Israel-Saudi ties.

It would be underwritten by Washington and would include a major security deal the Saudis want to achieve with the US. But the prospects for such agreements face significant obstacles and remain distant.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-66734638>

Israel's Netanyahu denies report of weapons for Palestinians

Reuters, September 13, 2023

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was forced on Wednesday to deny a report his government had approved a shipment of weapons to Palestinian security forces after hard-right ministers in his coalition expressed outrage.

Israel's Army Radio reported that the United States had supplied 1,500 assault rifles to Palestinian security services in the occupied West Bank with Israel approving the deal on condition the weapons be used against the militant Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-netanyahu-denies-report-weapons-palestinians-2023-09-13/>

Qatar

Iran, US on verge of prisoner swap under Qatar-mediated deal

Reuters, September 11, 2023

When \$6 billion of unfrozen Iranian funds are wired to banks in Qatar as early as next week, it will trigger a carefully choreographed sequence that will see as many as five detained U.S. dual nationals leave Iran and a similar number of Iranian prisoners held in the U.S. fly home, according to eight Iranian and other sources familiar with the negotiations who spoke to Reuters.

As a first step, Iran on Aug. 10 released four U.S. citizens from Tehran's Evin prison into house arrest, where they joined a fifth, who was already under house arrest. Later

that day U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the move the first step of a process that would lead to their return home.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/iran-us-verge-prisoner-swap-under-qatar-mediated-deal-2023-09-10/>

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's Nuclear Ambitions Have Put The U.S. Into A Bind

Huffington Post, September 7, 2023

Saudi Arabia's bid to build its first nuclear energy station is setting up a tough choice for the United States: relax a Cold War-era policy designed to prevent the proliferation of atomic weapons, or risk pushing one of the world's most powerful energy exporters further into China's orbit.

It's a question that could dictate how quickly the global economy breaks its addiction to planet-heating fossil fuels and alter the balance of power in a region that has long defined Washington's foreign policy. But this pivot point also raises questions about whether the U.S. — which has struggled to keep atomic energy going at home, much less construct new reactors — should still command such sway over other nations' nuclear energy ambitions.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/saudi-nuclear_n_64f229b7e4b0cf2755340114

Spanish minister says she will work to block Saudi purchase of Telefonica

Anadolu Agency, September 8, 2023

Spanish minister Yolanda Diaz said on Friday that she will work to block Saudi Telecom's purchase of a major stake in

Spanish telecommunications company Telefonica.

“We cannot allow the operation to continue,” Diaz, Spain’s acting labor minister and second deputy prime minister, told reporters in Rome. “Telefonica manages the most important thing in our lives – data.”

Telefonica is one of the world’s largest telecom companies, operating in Spain, across Europe and in Latin America. It also provides equipment and services to Spain’s military.

On Tuesday night, Spanish officials were caught off guard when Saudi Telecom announced it purchased a 9.9% stake in Telefonica worth €2.1 billion (\$2.25 billion). The move would make the state-controlled Saudi Telecom the largest shareholder in the Spanish telecom.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/spanish-minister-says-she-will-work-to-block-saudi-purchase-of-telefonica/2986969>

Top Biden aide: There’s still work to do on Israel-Saudi Arabia normalization deal

Times of Israel, September 8, 2023

White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said Thursday that the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia have a general idea of the major elements of a potential normalization agreement between Jerusalem and Riyadh, but there is still much more work to do before a deal can be signed.

“Many of the elements of a pathway to normalization are now on the table. We

don’t have a framework, we don’t have the terms ready to be signed. There is still work to do,” Sullivan told reporters aboard Air Force One, as US President Joe Biden made his way to India in order to attend the Group of 20 Summit in New Delhi this weekend.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/top-biden-aide-theres-still-work-to-do-on-israel-saudi-arabia-normalization-deal/>

India and Saudi Arabia announce agreement to expand economic, security ties

Times of Israel, September 11, 2023

India and Saudi Arabia agreed Monday to expand trade and security ties, two days after their leaders and others attending a Group of 20 summit announced a new railways and port corridor deal that will link India, Middle East and Europe.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met in New Delhi and chaired a meeting of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council. The two leaders discussed issues ranging from energy security, trade and investment to defense, health care and food security, India’s foreign ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

The India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council, established in 2019, serves as a platform between the two countries to increase ties.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/india-and-saudi-arabia-announce-agreement-to-expand-economic-security-ties/>

Saudi Nuclear Ambitions Worry Israeli Defense Officials, but Netanyahu's Happy to Look the Other Way

Haaretz, September 12, 2023

Last week, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant spoke at a Friends of the IDF fundraising event in Chicago. The defense minister wanted to take advantage of his U.S. trip to meet with his American counterpart, Lloyd Austin, and senior officials from the National Security Council and the White House.

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-09-12/ty-article/.premium/saudi-nuclear-ambitions-worry-defense-officials-but-netanyahu-looks-the-other-way/0000018a-83bc-d37d-a19a-e3bca34b0000>

Saudi nuclear program can be secretly managed - top Israeli sources

The Jerusalem Post, September 14, 2023

Top Israeli sources have told *the Jerusalem Post* that there are secret technological ways to ensure that the Saudis do not misuse civilian nuclear items, which the US may give them as part of a three-way normalization deal, for military purposes.

Although there are no guarantees, because the issue is highly technical and there are issues to address regarding the Palestinians and highly complex politics, these technological fixes could be key to locking in a normalization deal between Riyadh and Jerusalem, under Washington's auspices.

There are at least two aspects to the Saudis request that Washington provide it with a civilian nuclear program as one major incentive for Crown Prince

Mohammed Bin Salman's (MBS) willingness to normalize relations with the Jewish state.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-759141>

Syrian Arab Republic

Iran affirms respecting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity

Syrian Arab News Agency, September 3, 2023

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian called for the need for respecting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, stressing that his country opposed the geopolitical changes in the region. During the joint press conference with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan in Tehran Sunday, Abdollahian affirmed the necessity of respecting Syria's sovereignty and without prejudice to its territorial integrity.

Abdollahian underlined the priority of the Palestine cause, stressing that the presence of Zionist entity in the region has caused sedition, division between its countries, and instability therein.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=316125>

Mikdad discusses with al-Sayegh and El-Khereiji bilateral relations among Syria, UAE and Saudi Arabia

Syrian Arab News Agency, September 6, 2023

Foreign and Expatriates Minister, Fayssal Mikdad, discussed with Head of the United Arab Emirates' delegation to the Arab-Japanese political dialogue meeting, Minister of State Ahmed Ali al-Sayegh,

bilateral relations and means of enhancing them in different domains.

Mikdad described as deep and brotherly the relations between Syria and the UAE that were enhanced under the leadership of President Bashar al-Assad and his Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

He appreciated the role played by the UAE during its membership in the Security Council, during which it defended the Arab interests.

Mikdad highly evaluated the UAE's humanitarian stance in supporting Syria during the earthquake disaster that struck it last February. In turn, al-Sayegh conveyed amity and appreciation of the people and leadership in the UAE to the Syrian leadership and people.

Al-Sayegh hoped Syria would rapidly recover and restore of its role, which would be positively reflected on the security of the region and the Arab countries.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=316273>

Mikdad: Arab National Security is interconnected and indivisible, the challenges require strengthening joint action

Syrian Arab News Agency, September 6, 2023

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Fayssal Mikdad, affirmed that Arab national security is interrelated and indivisible, and the challenges facing many Arab countries threaten Arab security as a whole.

“These challenges, including interference in countries’ domestic affairs, military

attacks, foreign occupation of parts of their lands, the spread of terrorism, poverty, and a decline in development indicators, threaten Arab security as a whole and requires strengthening Arab action and joint efforts to put an end to them”, Mikdad said before the 160th session of the Arab League Council at the ministerial level in Cairo held on Wednesday.

“The West, which today proposes the concept of a world based on rules, wants to impose its own on other peoples of the world, and it is aware that such rules contradict our morals and values”, he added.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=316299>

Syria presents a great experience in confronting all forms of extremism, Awqaf Minister

Syrian Arab News Agency, September 9, 2023

Activities of the 34th Int'l Conference of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs Kicked off in the Egyptian capital city of Cairo on Saturday with participation of Syria.

The two-day Conference is held under the motto (Cyberspace and modern means of religious rhetoric).

Minister of Awqaf (Religious Endowments) Mohammad Abdul-Sattar al-Sayyed affirmed, during the conference, that Syria, with all its institutions, has offered a great experience in confronting all forms of extremism and intolerance, referring to Syria's significant challenges related to terrorism, killing, Takfir, and extremism which affect the youth through cyberspace.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=316467>

Syria, Egypt discuss dangers of religious extremism

Syrian Arab News Agency, September 11, 2023

Minister of Awqaf ,Dr. Mohammad Abdul-Sattar al-Sayyed and his Egyptian counterpart, Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar Gomaa discussed raising awareness of youths of dangers of extremist ideology ,especially through modern technologies, in addition to the necessary steps to enhance cooperation between the two ministries.

During the meeting held in Cairo, the two sides discussed bolstering cooperation between the two religious institutions in Syria and Egypt and exchanging experiences, especially in the field of developing religious discourse, Islamic education, and interpretation of Holy Qur'an.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=316594>

Mikdad: Syria welcomes return of refugees but continuous US and Turkish occupation hinders the process

Syrian Arab News Agency, September 13, 2023

Syria welcomes the return of refugees to their homeland but what prevents this process is the consequences of the Turkish and US occupation of parts form the country, Foreign and Expatriates Minister Fayssal Mikdad affirmed.

That came during a telephone call the minister Mikdad received from his Lebanese counterpart Abdallah Bou Habib on Wednesday.

Mikdad underlined that Syria spares no single effort to facilitate the return process

but the mentioned occupation, looting the resources from the Syrian territories, along with the sanctions imposed on the country are all obstacles of this return.

<https://sana.sy/en/?p=316709>

Suspected Israeli strikes in Syria hit military sites in Tartus, Hama

Al-Monitor, September 14, 2023

At least two Syrian soldiers were killed in suspected Israeli airstrike that hit military positions on Syria's coast, local media reported.

The Syrian state news agency, SANA, cited a military source saying that Israel had fired a series of rockets from the direction of the Mediterranean Sea on Wednesday afternoon, targeting a number of air defense sites in the Tartus countryside.

The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), which monitors events in Syria through a wide network of sources in the country, said the attack targeted two weapons depots belonging to the Iran-backed Hezbollah militia. It confirmed the death of the two soldiers and added that an unidentified allied fighter had also been killed. Eight were injured.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/09/suspected-israeli-strikes-syria-hit-military-sites-tartus-hama>

Turkiye

Turkish defense firm exports advanced surveillance system to Africa

Daily Sabah, September 3, 2023

A Turkish defense firm, STM has agreed to export its unmanned surveillance and

reconnaissance system to an African country for the second time, the company's general manager told Anadolu Agency (AA).

STM has sold its multi-rotor unmanned aerial system (UAS) for tactical surveillance and reconnaissance, named Togan, to Nigeria previously, and now agreed to export to another African country, Özgür Güleriyüz, the general manager of the company said in his interview with AA.

The projects carried out in the sector under the leadership of the Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB), have matured, Güleriyüz said, adding: "We have gained confidence in ourselves, from now on, we are all motivated in exports."

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-defense-firm-exports-advanced-surveillance-system-to-africa>

Biden admin says does not link Türkiye's F-16 deal to Sweden's NATO bid

Daily Sabah, September 12, 2023

The sale of F-16 fighter jets to Türkiye is not intertwined with Sweden's membership in NATO, but some Congress members draw a connection between the two issues, the U.S. State Department said Monday.

"We do not believe that they are linked or should be linked," said State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller at a press briefing, in response to a question about the current status of the potential sale. Days earlier, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said the U.S. was linking the warplane deal with Turkish ratification of

Sweden's NATO membership bid, and this "seriously upsets" Ankara.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/biden-admin-says-does-not-link-turkiyes-f-16-deal-to-swedens-nato-bid>

Turkish defense giants display innovations at London expo

Daily Sabah, September 12, 2023

Turkish defense companies are showcasing their latest products and innovations at the Defense and Security Equipment International (DSEI) exhibition, which started in London on Tuesday.

Running for four days, this year's event hosts over 2,800 defense and security suppliers, with over 230 new exhibitors showcasing their latest products and capabilities. One standout participant is Turkish armored vehicle manufacturer Nurol Makina, which has recently expanded its footprint in Europe with the establishment of Nurol Makina U.K.

The new venture aims to support the British Army and provide services to third countries from the U.K. Their primary focus will be the design, development, and production of 4X4 armored vehicles, creating local employment opportunities.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/defense/turkish-defense-giants-display-innovations-at-london-expo>

Türkiye says nears deal with China for 3rd nuclear power plant

Daily Sabah, September 15, 2023

Türkiye hopes to finalize discussions with China and strike a deal on the construction

of the country's third nuclear power plant "within the next few months," a top energy official said on Thursday.

The move is part of Türkiye's ambitious plan to triple its renewable energy capacity by 2053 as it strives to become a carbon-neutral economy.

The discussions, aimed at boosting the nation's energy production, are now reaching their conclusive stages, with Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar emphasizing the importance of sealing the deal amid interest from other parties.

Bayraktar said negotiations with China to build the plant in Kırklareli province in the Thrace region had been ongoing for an extended period.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/business/energy/turkiye-says-nears-deal-with-china-for-3rd-nuclear-power-plant>

United Arab Emirates

UAE space mission: Sultan al-Neyadi's return to Earth delayed due to bad weather

Alarabiya, September 2, 2023

UAE astronaut Sultan al-Neyadi's return to Earth after his historic six-month mission in space has been delayed due to "unfavorable" weather at the splashdown site, NASA has confirmed.

Al-Neyadi was originally due to leave the International Space Station on 5:05 p.m. UAE time on Saturday. Now, he is due to leave the orbital outpost at 3:05 p.m., UAE time, on Sunday, with a scheduled splashdown off the coast of Florida at approximately 8:07 a.m., UAE time, on

Monday. Live coverage of al-Neyadi's blast-off, on board a SpaceX Dragon capsule, will capture the moment the UAE astronaut – who made history during his mission to become the first Arab to perform a spacewalk – waves a final farewell from space.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2023/09/02/UAE-space-mission-Sultan-al-Neyadi-s-return-to-Earth-delayed-due-to-bad-weather>

ENEC, OSGE cooperate to advance SMRs in Europe

World Nuclear News, September 12, 2023

The framework agreement, signed by ENEC Managing Director and CEO Mohamed Al Hammadi and ORLEN Synthos Green Energy CEO Rafał Kasprów, aims to provide the parties with an enabling framework to develop SMRs based on GE-Hitachi Nuclear Energy's BWRX-300 technology in Poland and the UK, as well as within Central and Eastern Europe.

OSGE is planning to build and operate Poland's first SMR power plant by the end of this decade, and to launch further units in the 2030s. As a partner of GE-Hitachi, the Polish company has exclusive rights to use BWRX-300 technology in Poland, and is also cooperating with Ontario Power Generation and the Tennessee Authority Valley, which have also chosen to deploy BWRX-300 technology in projects in Canada and the USA, respectively.

<https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/ENEC,-OSGE-cooperate-to-advance-SMRs>

NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

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