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# SYLLOGE ON WEST ASIA

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

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## IRAN

### **Iranian commodore emphasizes naval co-op with Pakistan**

Tehran Times, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Delegation of the General Staff of Iranian Armed Forces led by Rodsari met with Commander of Pakistan Fleet Admiral Naveed Ashraf in Karachi on Friday. The two countries decided to expand cooperation between the two navies through visiting each other's ports and holding joint exercises. The exercise is conducted by the Pakistan Navy after every two years with a resolve against terrorism and piracy. It is being held under motto of the exercise which is "Together for Peace" from February 11-16 in Karachi.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458022/Iranian-commodore-emphasizes-naval-co-op-with-Pakistan>

### **If U.S. sanctions continue Iran will change nuclear approach: presidential candidate**

Tehran Times, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

General Dehghan emphasized, "the U.S. was in no position to make conditions, given they left the nuclear deal," adding Iran "calls for guarantees that the U.S. will not leave the agreement again." He believes Joe Biden is continuing Donald Trump's foreign policies and noted, "Tehran is preparing retaliatory measures to force the U.S. to change its diplomatic trajectory." His remarks indicated the huge differences remain between the U.S. and Iran, and how the departure of President Hassan Rouhani may make it even harder to restore the nuclear deal.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458012/If-U-S-sanctions-continue-Iran-will-change-nuclear-approach>

### **Have E3 read JCPOA paragraph 36? Zarif asks**

Tehran Times, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

The European signatories to the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), issued a joint statement on Friday to express "grave concern" over Iran's recent nuclear activities. The three European countries – collectively known as the E3- tacitly accused Iran of trying to developing a nuclear weapon. "Have our E3 partners ever read para 36 of JCPOA & Iran's many letters on that basis? By what logic is the onus on IRAN to stop its remedial measures undertaken a full year after the US withdrew from—and continues to violate—the JCPOA? What have E3 done to fulfill their duties?" the Iranian foreign minister said in a tweet on Friday.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458032/Have-E3-read-JCPOA-paragraph-36-Zarif-asks>

### **Iranian Army Ground Force Test-Fires New Smart Missile**

FARS News Agency, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

The Army Ground Force's missile unit is testing a smart missile with a range of 300 km in one of the regions of the country, Commander of the Iranian Army Ground Force Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari said on Sunday. This missile enjoys smart, self-relying, pinpointing capabilities and is ready to defend the borders of Iran in different weather conditions, General Heidari said.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/13991126000707/Iranian-Army-Grnd-Frce-Tes-Fires-New-Smar-Missile>

### **Iran writes to IAEA, voices concerns on confidentiality of information**

Tehran Times, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

The letter was sent by Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna. The IAEA announced on Tuesday last week that it has received the letter. "Upon instructions received from my Government, I am writing to you regarding the urgent need for addressing the Islamic Republic of Iran's concerns and observations on the protection of confidential information," Garibabadi wrote to Grossi. The Iranian ambassador highlighted the harmful consequences of leaking confidential information for Iran's national security, urging the IAEA to take measures to protect classified information.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458162/Iran-writes-to-IAEA-voices-concerns-on-confidentiality-of-information>

### **Iran will execute nuclear law to halt Additional Protocol on Feb. 23: ambassador**

Tehran Times, 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Iran will implement a nuclear law obligating the government to halt implementing the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on February 23, Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, said on Monday.

"Act of Parliament will be executed on time (23 Feb) and the IAEA has been informed today to ensure the smooth transition to a new course in

due time. After all, goodwill brings about goodwill!" Ambassador Gharibabadi said in a tweet on Monday.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458214/Iran-will-execute-nuclear-law-to-halt-Additional-Protocol-on>

### **Iran and Japan agree to boost defense cooperation**

Tehran Times, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

In a video teleconference on Tuesday the defense ministers of Iran and Japan stressed the importance of making efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation and continue communications between the two countries' defense authorities. Japan Defence Minister Kishi also called for Iran's cooperation in providing security of navigation and safe passage of vessels, including those related to Japan, in the Persian Gulf waters. The two ministers also exchanged views on expanding cooperation, including in the Center for Maritime Safety in Indian Ocean located in Chabahar region in southern Iran, according to Press TV.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458253/Iran-and-Japan-agree-to-boost-defense-cooperation>

### **IAEA inspectors will not be expelled from Iran: Rouhani**

Tehran Times, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Speaking during a cabinet meeting, Rouhani said, "What is to happen is that Iran will stop implementing the Additional Protocol as of February 23, but no (IAEA) inspector is going to be expelled from Iran." The Additional Protocol allows an intrusive inspection of the Iranian nuclear facilities. However, the Iranian

Parliament adopted a law in December obliging the AEOI to install advanced centrifuges, increase the level of nuclear enrichment to 20 percent and halt the Additional Protocol if the illegal sanctions against Iran are not lifted. Based on the law, the AEOI has already installed advanced centrifuge machines, increased uranium to 20 percent. The date to suspend the Additional Protocol falls on Feb. 23.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458258/IA-EA-inspectors-will-not-be-expelled-from-Iran-Rouhani>

### **Iran, Russia Conduct Shooting Aerial Targets at Night**

FARS News Agency, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

A night shooting operation against aerial targets was conducted in the joint Iran-Russia naval drills in the Northern Indian Ocean, a spokesman of the Iran-Russia combined naval exercise announced. In a relevant development yesterday, at the beginning of the exercise and under the command of the Iranian Jamaran destroyer, Iranian and Russian floating units fired various weapons at predetermined surface targets at sea.

In the next stage, the "PHOTOEX" exercise was performed, including the offensive arrangement of the units participating in the exercise in accordance with the threats in the region. Iranian-Russian 'Marine Security Belt' drills are underway with the slogan "Collective Cooperation at Sea for the Security of Maritime Trade" in a 17,000-kilometer area with a message of peace and friendship.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/13991129000786/Iran-Russia-Cndc-Shing-Aerial-Targes-a-Nigh>

### **U.S. agrees to meet Iran, world powers on nuclear deal**

Tehran Times, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

The Biden administration said Thursday it would agree to meet with Iran and other world powers involved in negotiating the 2015 nuclear deal, the first public step toward renewed diplomacy with Tehran, USA TODAY reported. Ned Price, a spokesman for the State Department, said the United States "would accept an invitation" from a top European Union diplomat to attend a meeting of the nuclear deal's original signatories "to discuss a diplomatic way forward on Iran's nuclear program." A State Department official, briefing reporters on the condition of anonymity, said the U.S. would be represented at the meeting by Biden's special envoy for Iran, Rob Malley.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458273/U-S-agrees-to-meet-Iran-world-powers-on-nuclear-deal>

### **IRGC official says Iran's conventional arms non-negotiable**

Tehran Times, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

General Mohammad-Ismaeil Kowsari, the advisor to the IRGC commander, told Yemen's Al-Masira website on Thursday that conventional defense weapons are "our right" and cannot be negotiated in any way, and it is an issue on which there is consensus, according to Iran press. In recent weeks, the Iranian Army and the IRGC have conducted various military exercises across the country. These drills involve homegrown missiles, drones, helicopters, submarines, military ships, and UAVs. Different missiles have been tested during the drills, including Zolfagar Basir with

a range of 700 km, Dezfoul with a range of 1,000 km, and Qiyam with a range of 800 km.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458294/IR-GC-official-says-Iran-s-conventional-arms-non-negotiable>

### **Jake Sullivan says diplomacy is only path to revive JCPOA**

Tehran Times, 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Sullivan emphasized the U.S. wants to negotiate with Iran over its nuclear program and noted, "That means being prepared to sit down at the table with the permanent five members of the Security Council, plus Germany and Iran, to talk about how we get Iran back into compliance with the terms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action." Announcing that the Biden administration will accept the EU invitation to meet with the Iranian diplomats, he said, "So President Biden directed us to agree to the invitation by the European Union to join a meeting at a date to be determined where we can begin those discussions. We're at an early stage here."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458337/Jake-Sullivan-says-diplomacy-is-only-path-to-revive-JCPOA>

### **Iranian army produces domestic radar system**

Tehran Times, 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021

Two home-grown defense products, namely the Bahman radar system and the Nejat mobile operating room, were unveiled on Saturday. General Sabahi Fard said the Bahman radar system has been manufactured by Iranian specialists. "One of the projects unveiled today is the Bahman radar system and its rival has not been seen anywhere in the world," Fars quoted

Sabahi Fard as saying. "One of the features of the Bahman radar system is that it is passive, which can detect and identify all conventional aircraft and drones with a very small cross-section," he added.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458388/Iranian-army-produces-domestic-radar-system>

### **IAEA will continue 'necessary verification' of Iran's nuclear activities: statement**

Tehran Times, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021

Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have reached an understanding on how to continue cooperation two days before Iran starts implementing a nuclear law obligating the Iranian government to halt implementing the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The deal was reached during a two-day visit by the IAEA Director-General Mariano Grossi to Iran.

"Intensive consultations led to a good result. A temporary technical understanding has been reached. The IAEA will continue its necessary verification and monitoring in Iran," the UN nuclear watchdog chief said in a tweet following his visit to Iran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458409/IAEA-will-continue-necessary-verification-of-Iran-s-nuclear>

### **Assembly of Experts says resistance will continue with or without JCPOA**

Tehran Times, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021

The Assembly of Experts says the Iranian nation's resistance will remain unaffected, no matter whether the U.S. rejoins 2015 nuclear agreement or not. The Assembly of Experts, a panel of clerics tasked to elect and supervise leader of the Islamic Revolution, also

emphasized that Iran's defense and missile capabilities will never be subject to negotiations.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458441/Assembly-of-Experts-says-resistance-will-continue-with-or-without>

### **Iran halts implementation of Additional Protocol**

Tehran Times, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2021

Iran has stopped the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the United States failed to lift the sanctions it imposed on Iran during the Trump administration. Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's permanent representative to Vienna-based international organizations, announced late on Monday that the IAEA will no longer be allowed to carry out inspections in accordance with the Additional Protocol as of midnight. "As of 12:00 p.m. local time (2030 GMT), we have nothing called obligations beyond the Safeguards Agreement," the ambassador said. "Necessary orders have been issued to nuclear facilities."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/458489/Iran-halts-implementation-of-Additional-Protocol>

### **Supreme Leader: Iran to Enrich Uranium Up to 60% If Needed**

FARS News Agency, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2021

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said that Iran is not after nuclear weapons, but it will not stop at 20% enrichment of uranium, and will increase enrichment up to 60% based on the country's needs. "The Islamic Republic will not retreat from its rational stance on the nuclear issue and will pursue enriching uranium to the extent that

is required for the interests of the country even up to 60 percent enrichment," the Supreme Leader said in session with the members of the Assembly of Experts on Monday.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/13991205000203/Supreme-Leader-Iran-Enrich-Uranium-Up-to-60-If-Needed>

## **IRAQ**

### **Iran denies involvement in Erbil rocket strike**

Al-Monitor, 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Iran's government Tuesday denied involvement in Monday night's rocket strike that killed one person and injured nine in Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan. Some 14 rockets landed in and around the base, located at the city's international airport, on Monday night, the US-led coalition said. One Iraqi civilian contractor was killed, while eight other contractors, including four Americans, and a member of the US military were injured. "These rumors are strongly rejected," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Saeed Khatibzadeh said Tuesday in Tehran of speculation that Iran was behind the attack.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/iran-erbil-strike-kurdistan-denies.html#ixzz6oSV2mTDb>

### **NATO to expand its training mission in Iraq to 4,000 troops**

Al-Monitor, 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

NATO has agreed to significantly broaden its military advising and stabilization mission in Iraq to roughly 4,000 troops, the alliance

announced Thursday. “Today we decided to expand NATO’s training mission in Iraq to support the Iraqi forces as they fight terrorism and ensure that ISIS does not return,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters in Brussels on Thursday, making a reference to the Islamic State. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin welcomed NATO’s decision, according to a Pentagon statement released Thursday.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/nato-iraq-expand-mission-isis.html#ixzz6oSW62eFH>

## ISRAEL

### Israel campaigns against the US rushing to negotiate with Iran

Al-monitor, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

A few days after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Iran could be weeks away from obtaining sufficient fissile material for a nuclear bomb, Israel’s annual intelligence assessment presented a completely different forecast. According to the report compiled by the Military Intelligence Directorate, Iran is at least two years away from nuclear breakout capability. From the moment it decides to enrich uranium to a 90% level, military intelligence Chief Maj. Gen. Tamir Hayman told reporters on Feb. 9, Iran will need two years to arrive at a bomb.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/israel-us-lebanon-syria-iran-hezbollah-anthony-blinken-biden.html#ixzz6oV2V0UbB>

### Israeli air force holds ‘surprise’ drill near Lebanon border

Aljazeera, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Israel’s air force has begun a “surprise exercise” to improve combat readiness along the United Nations-demarcated Blue Line between it and Lebanon, according to its military. The military said on Monday that the drill, which will last until Wednesday, would result in increased air traffic throughout the country and that explosions may be heard in northern Israel. It said the “exercise simulates combat scenarios in the northern front and will test all components in the (air force’s) core missions, including maintaining aerial superiority, protecting the country’s skies, as well as attacking and gathering intelligence”.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/15/israel-air-force-holds-surprise-combat-drill-along-border>

### Israel may not be part of strategy if US returns to nuclear deal

Aljazeera, 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Israel’s ambassador to the United States has suggested his country would not engage with President Joe Biden on strategy towards Iran’s nuclear programme if the US returns to the 2015 nuclear deal.

“We will not be able to be part of such a process if the new administration returns to that deal,” Erdan said. The statement comes as Israel has increasingly suggested taking military action against Tehran for its nuclear programme.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/16/israel-may-halt-future-cooperation-if-us-returns-to-nuclear-deal>

## LEBANON

### Lebanese Army receives three US helicopters.

National News Agency, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

The U.S. authorities handed the Lebanese army three Huey II helicopters during a ceremony attended by Representative of the Lebanese Armed Forces Chief, Major General Milad Ishaq, and U.S. ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy Shearman. Major General Ishaq delivered a speech in which he praised the relations between the Lebanese and American armies, noting that "this occasion is evidence of the continued qualitative support provided by the U.S. to the army and the strengthening of its military air capabilities, as well as the confidence of the American authorities in the national role that the army plays in protecting Lebanon from dangers, especially the terrorist threat."

<http://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/show-news/124882/Lebanese-Army-receives-three-US-helicopters>

## SAUDI ARABIA

### Saudi Arabia says it foiled Houthi drone attack on Abha airport

Aljazeera, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Saudi Arabia said it foiled a Houthi drone attack on an airport on Saturday just days before the new US administration is to stop designating the Yemeni rebels as a "terror" group. Saudi air defences "intercepted and destroyed a drone rigged with explosives which had been launched by the Houthis against Abha airport" in southwestern Saudi Arabia, the Saudi-led coalition fighting the rebels said in a statement.

The Houthis confirmed Saturday's attack on the airport.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/13/saudi-arabia-says-it-foiled-houthi-drone-attack-on-abha-airport>

### Coalition forces intercept, destroy Houthi-fired drone toward Khamis Mushayt

Saudi Gazette, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

The Arab Coalition on Wednesday morning intercepted and destroyed an explosive-laden drone launched by the Iran-backed Houthi militia toward Saudi Arabia. The drone attack targeted civilians and civilian facilities in Khamis Mushayt, according to the spokesman of the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, Brig. Gen Turki Al-Maliki. <https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/603588/SAUDI-ARABIA/Coalition-forces-intercept-destroy-Houthi-fired-drone-toward-Khamis-Mushayt>

## SYRIA

### Syrian air defences 'intercept Israeli aggression' over Damascus

Aljazeera, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Syria's army said on Monday the country's air defences intercepted "Israeli aggression" over the capital, Damascus, in the latest stepped-up bombing of alleged Iranian targets inside the country over the last two months. Israeli missile strikes against several targets killed at least nine pro-government fighters, a Britain-based war monitor said. "Nine Iran-backed militia fighters were killed" in attacks on arms depots around Damascus, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.



The Israeli military, which just began a surprise air force combat drill along the country's northern border, said "it did not comment on foreign reports", according to a spokeswoman.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/15/syrian-air-defences-intercept-israeli-aggression-over-damascus>

## TURKEY

### Turkish, US navies conduct joint exercises in Black Sea

Daily Sabah, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

The U.S. ambassador to Turkey welcomed the holding of joint drills Thursday by American and Turkish forces. "We welcome this opportunity for American Navy ships USS Donald Cook and USS Porter to conduct exercises with the Turkish armed forces in the Black Sea," said David Satterfield in a statement.

According to the statement, the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Donald Cook, USS Porter and a U.S. Navy P-8A from Patrol Squadron 46 participated in the joint air and surface exercises with Turkish frigates TCG Orucreis and TCG Turgutreis and two Turkish F-16 fighters alongside reconnaissance aircraft.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/turkish-us-navies-conduct-joint-exercises-in-black-sea/news>

### Turkey hires Washington lobbyists in bid for return to F-35 program

Al-Monitor, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Turkey's government has hired a law firm in Washington to lobby on its behalf as it seeks

rapport with the Biden administration amid a continuing dispute over Ankara's purchase of Russia's S-400 air defense system. A defense company owned by Turkey's main defense industrial agency signed a contract with the Arnold & Porter law firm to provide "strategic advice and outreach" in a bid to persuade US policymakers to readmit Turkey to the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, Foreign Lobby Report first reported.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/turkey-hire-lobby-firm-f35-s400.html#ixzz6oVHYqeDi>

### Turkey's, Pakistan's 3-week joint military exercise concludes

Daily Sabah, 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021

The three-week joint military exercise between Turkey and Pakistan came to a close on Saturday with a ceremony at the Pakistani military's Special Service headquarters in Tarbela in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkwa province, bordering neighboring Afghanistan. Turkish Special Forces and the Pakistani military's elite Special Services Group troops participated in the drill. The exercise focused on counterterrorism, close quarter battle, cordoning and searching, rappelling, fire and movement techniques, helicopter rappelling, compound clearance, hostage and rescue situations and free-fall operations. In July 2018, Pakistan's navy signed a contract with Turkish state-owned defense contractor ASFAT for the acquisition of four Turkish-built MILGEM corvettes.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkeys-pakistans-3-week-joint-military-exercise-concludes>

## **Greek F-16 fighter jets harass Turkey's TCG Çeşme vessel in Aegean**

Daily Sabah, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2021

Four F-16 fighter jets belonging to the Greek Air Force harassed Turkey's TCG Çeşme research vessel while on duty conducting a hydrographic scientific and technical survey in international waters in the northern Aegean, Turkish Defense Ministry sources said Tuesday. The vessel, which is scheduled to continue its works in the region until March 2, was targeted by Greek fighter jets near the island of Lemnos in the northern part of the Aegean Sea. One of four Greek fighter jets harassed the Turkish research vessel dropping a chaff cartridge 2 nautical miles (3.7 nautical kilometers) away.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/greek-f-16-fighter-jets-harass-turkeys-tcg-cesme-vessel-in-aegean>