



Volume 4 | Issue 10

# SYLLOGE ON WEST ASIA

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

16 May - 31 May 2024



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR  
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

## Armenia

### What does the India-Iran Chabahar port deal mean for Armenia?

Yeghia Tashijan

The Armenian Weekly, May 21, 2024

On May 13, 2024, Iran and India signed a historic deal under which New Delhi was granted the right to develop and operate the Iranian port of Chabahar on the Gulf of Oman. Armenia would also benefit from this agreement. In January 2024, Iran granted access to Armenia to operate in its Chabahar and Bandar Abbas ports to facilitate trade with India. Following the 2020 Artsakh War, Armenia aimed to diversify its security partners and turned to India for defence cooperation and arms purchases. Tehran and New Delhi have been supporting Yerevan's aspiration to assist in developing and using Iran's ports. In 2023, Armenia's former deputy Foreign Minister Mnatsakan Safaryan said that the Chabahar port is an integral component in Armenia's quest to have access to Indian and Asian markets via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

<https://armenianweekly.com/2024/05/21/what-does-the-india-iran-chabahar-port-deal-mean-for-armenia/>

### Armenia and Azerbaijan step up work on peace deal

Vasif Huseynov

The Jamestown Foundation, May 21, 2024

On May 10 and 11, the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Ararat Mirzoyan and Jeyhun Bayramov, respectively, met for another round of bilateral peace negotiations in Almaty, Kazakhstan. It was

the second meeting this year between the two sides after the meeting in Berlin on February 28 and 29. One significant agreement came in choosing which maps to use for the delimitation process. Previously, the two countries were on opposite sides of the issue. Armenia proposed using a Soviet map drawn in 1975, while Azerbaijan insisted that the new boundaries not be based solely on one map. The location of Almaty for the talks was symbolic in this context as the Alma-Ata Declaration was signed in 1991.

<https://jamestown.org/program/armenia-and-azerbaijan-step-up-work-on-peace-deal/>

### Armenia: Feud with Russia experiences another spike

Ani Avetisyan

Eurasia Net, May 31, 2024

The Armenian government briefly pulled the plug on a major Russian propaganda platform, and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has accused two unnamed member states of a Moscow-led security alliance of conspiring to help Azerbaijan to reconquer Nagorno Karabakh. Once strategic partners, Armenia and Russia have fallen out amid accusations by Yerevan that the Kremlin did not fulfil its obligations to defend Armenian security interests during the Second Karabakh War. Officials in Yerevan announced May 29 the suspension of broadcasts by Russia's state-owned broadcaster, Channel One, ostensibly citing unpaid debts to the Armenian agency that controls digital frequencies. But the move appeared to have a political connection too.

<https://eurasianet.org/armenia-feud-with-russia-experiences-another-spike>

### **Why India held first-ever defence consultations with Armenia**

Aroonim Bhuyan

ETV Bharat, May 16, 2024

A month after Russian forces started withdrawing from Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh region, India held the first-ever defence consultations with the neighbouring Caucasian nation of Armenia. According to a statement issued by the Defence Ministry of Armenia following the consultations held in Yerevan on May 14, the Indian side was led by Joint Secretary for International Cooperation in the Ministry of Defence Vishwesh Negi while the Armenian side was led by the Head of the Department of Defence Policy and International Cooperation Levon Ayvazyan. According to the statement, a protocol on the results of the consultations was signed, which approved a cooperation plan between the defence ministries of India and Armenia for 2024-2025, and provided for the establishment of a joint working group on the issues of bilateral defence cooperation.

<https://www.etvbharat.com/en/international/why-india-held-first-ever-defence-consultations-with-armenia-enn24051607527>

### **Armenia returns four border villages to Azerbaijan as part of deal**

Al Jazeera, May 24, 2024

Armenia has returned four border villages to Azerbaijan, a key step towards normalising ties between the historic rivals who have fought two wars since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Armenia's

security service said on May 24, 2024 that its border guards had "officially" taken up new positions reflecting a border delimitation agreement between the two countries, handing back the villages of Baghanis, Voskepar, Kirants and Berkaber. Confirming the handover, Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev meanwhile announced that his country's border guards had taken control of the four settlements, which Azeris know as Baghanis Ayrum, Asagi Eskipara, Heyrimli and Kizilhacili.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/24/armenia-returns-four-border-villages-to-azerbaijan-as-part-of-deal>

### **NATO and Armenia strengthen their defence education cooperation**

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, May 21, 2024

Representatives from the Armenian Ministry of Defence met with their counterparts at NATO Headquarters at the end of April to review activities conducted within the framework of NATO's Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) for Armenia. They took stock of the achievements made and set out the plan of joint activities for the rest of the year and for 2025. The Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of Armenia, Colonel Arthur Yeroyan, underlined the importance of regular stock-taking and highlighted the added value of NATO's cooperation through its Defence Education Enhancement Programme. The Commandant of Armenia's Military Academy, Colonel Arsen Mangasaryan, added: "With the support of DEEP experts we implemented major changes in all levels

of our educational curriculum, starting from cadets up to the most senior levels.”

[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_225529.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_225529.htm?selectedLocale=en)

### **Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) supports Armenia’s security through CWMD Table-Top Exercise in Yerevan**

U.S. Embassy in Armenia, May 24, 2024

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) co-facilitated with Government of Armenia representatives the Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD) Table-Top Exercise (TTX) from May 20 – 24, 2024, in Yerevan. Over 60 participants from various Armenian Ministries and governmental agencies convened for this essential exercise. Participants immersed themselves in exercise storylines validating capabilities in threat determination, risk assessment, coordination, and information dissemination among governmental agencies. The insights gleaned from this exercise, along with comprehensive data analysis, will serve as the foundation for subsequent field training exercise.

<https://am.usembassy.gov/defense-threat-reduction-agency-dtra-supports-armenias-security-through-cwmd-table-top-exercise-in-yerevan/>

## **Azerbaijan**

### **France blames Azerbaijan for New Caledonia violence: Unpacking their spat**

Al Jazeera, May 17, 2024

France accused Azerbaijan of being behind protests and violence that have rocked its

Pacific island territory of New Caledonia for the past few days over the French government’s decision to change a voting law in May, 2024. Azerbaijan has been outspoken against what it sees as French colonialism. In July 2023, Baku invited pro-independence participants from the French territories of Martinique, French Guiana, New Caledonia and French Polynesia for a conference titled, “Towards the Complete Elimination of Colonialism”. Tensions between France and Azerbaijan have also been simmering since France expressed support for Armenia in the conflict over the disputed, breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region which is claimed by both countries.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/17/france-blames-azerbaijan-for-new-caledonia-violence-unpacking-their-spat>

### **Cop29 at a crossroads in Azerbaijan with focus on climate finance**

Fiora Harvey

The Guardian, May 17, 2024

Oil is inescapable in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. It will be an interesting setting for the gathering of the 29th UN climate conference of the parties, which will take place at the Olympic Stadium in November. It can provide a bridge between the wealthy global north and the poor global south; as a former Soviet bloc country, between east and west; and between its fellow oil and gas producers and the consuming countries that provide its export market. It is one of the most fossil-fuel dependent economies: oil and gas make up 90% of its exports and provide 60% of the government’s budget. An interconnector is planned to carry this

low-carbon power to eastern Europe, under the Black Sea to Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/17/cop29-at-a-crossroads-in-azerbaijan-with-focus-on-climate-finance>

### **Russian troops leave Karabakh, now back under Azerbaijan's control**

Nailia Bagirova

The Reuters, May 16, 2024

Russia shut down a military base in Azerbaijan on May 15, 2024 where nearly 2,000 of its troops had been deployed, after Azeri forces recaptured the area last year despite a two-year Russian mission to prevent war between Azerbaijan and Armenia. A total of 1,960 Russian peacekeepers had been housed in 10 barracks at the base in Khojaly, a town in the Karabakh region. Despite the deployment, Azerbaijan recaptured Karabakh in a lightning offensive last September, prompting an exodus of 100,000 ethnic Armenians who had enjoyed de facto independence since breaking away in the 1990s in the first of two wars between the South Caucasus neighbours.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/russian-troops-leave-karabakh-now-back-under-azerbajians-control-2024-05-15/>

### **3rd Strategic Dialogue meeting between Latvia and Azerbaijan held in Riga**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Latvia, May 30, 2024

On 30 May 2024, Riga hosted 3rd Strategic Dialogue meeting between Latvia and

Azerbaijan, chaired by the Under Secretary, Political Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Andžejs Viļumsons, and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Fariz Rzayev. During the meeting, the diplomats discussed matters of current relevance to bilateral cooperation, highlighting in particular the active dialogue between senior officials and the potential for economic cooperation, including in trade, green technologies and the transport and logistics sector. The consultations addressed climate-related topics, including the United Nations Climate Conference COP29 to be hosted by Azerbaijan this coming November, participation in which has been approved by the President of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs.

[https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/3rd-strategic-dialogue-meeting-between-latvia-and-azerbaijan-held-riga?utm\\_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F](https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/3rd-strategic-dialogue-meeting-between-latvia-and-azerbaijan-held-riga?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F)

### **China, Azerbaijan vow to lift bilateral relations to new heights**

The National Committee for the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

May 17, 2024

Shen Yueyue, vice chairperson of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev during a friendly visit to the country from May 14, 2024 to May 16, 2024. China is ready to implement the consensus reached by the two heads of state, enhance the alignment of high-quality joint construction of the Belt and

Road Initiative with Azerbaijan's Revival of the Silk Road national development strategy, expand cooperation in various fields, increase people-to-people exchanges, and elevate bilateral relations to new heights, said Shen, who was leading a Chinese delegation to visit Azerbaijan at the invitation of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan.

[http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/2024-05/17/c\\_988207.htm](http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/2024-05/17/c_988207.htm)

### **The strategic significance of Azerbaijan's acquisition of Pakistani fighter jets**

Ilya Roubanis

European Security and Defence, May 17, 2024

The sale of Pakistani fighter jets to Azerbaijan has been the subject of recurring speculation since 2007; the story resurfaced on 21 February 2024. According to the Centre for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), Azerbaijan's largest supplier of arms has historically been Russia. The JF-17 Block III (Thunder) is a joint venture between China Aviation Industry Corporation (AVIC) and the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC). Chinese systems make the aircraft a system with a claim to 4.5 generation credentials. Pakistan's offer appears to be a qualitative leap forward compared to Azerbaijan's current fleet and will transform the nature of aerial combat in the Caucasus.

<https://euro-sd.com/2024/05/articles/38065/the-strategic-significance-of-azerbaijans-acquisition-of-pakistani-fighter-jets/>

### **Azerbaijan and Tajikistan elevate partnership to strategic level**

News Central Asia, May 24, 2024

On 23 May 2024, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon signed a Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Tajikistan in Baku. In addition to the Declaration, 13 documents were signed on the sidelines of Rahmon's state visit to Azerbaijan, taking into account that a business forum was held on the eve of the visit. During the negotiations, security risks and threats were discussed. "For my part, I would like to note that the current situation in the world continues to be quite complicated and tense. Taking this opportunity, I would like to emphasize that Tajikistan is in favor of resolving all contradictions and conflicts through peaceful means," Emomali Rahmon said.

<https://www.newscentralasia.net/2024/05/24/azerbaijan-and-tajikistan-elevate-partnership-to-strategic-level/>

### **Bahrain**

#### **Telecommunications Minister attends AI Summit at WSIS Forum 2024**

Bahrain News Agency, May 30, 2024

Mohammed bin Thamer Al Kaabi, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, participated in the opening of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2024, held on 30 May in Geneva, Switzerland. Minister Al Kaabi noted that Bahrain aims to become a regional hub for innovation and technology. He added that the Kingdom is

working on implementing a national AI strategy, as outlined in the Sixth National Telecommunications Plan, which focuses on developing digital infrastructure, enhancing technological capabilities, and supporting AI research and development. The strategy also aims to improve government and private sector services using AI technologies, encourage private sector innovation, and support startups and entrepreneurs to build an advanced and sustainable digital society, positioning Bahrain as a leading technology hub in the region.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/TelecommunicationsMinisterattendsAISummitatWSISForum2024.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDoKB4aDnV%2BZBA9Gst6DOSa8%3D>

### **Bahrain opens to Iran: Last stage of shifting Gulf Dynamics**

Special Eurasia, May 30, 2024

On May 25th, 2024, the King expressed Bahrain's willingness to normalise diplomatic ties with Iran, marking a significant shift after a period of heightened tensions. This development follows the recent rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, suggesting a broader trend of regional reconciliation. The current changing scenario is driven by two trends. First, the US commitment to defend Bahrain in the event of an attack has provided the country with the confidence to engage more openly with Iran. Second, despite the death of President Raisi and his delegates, this diplomatic success can be attributed to his administration, particularly the efforts of the deceased Iranian Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian. Additionally,

Iran's substantial influence across the Middle Eastern region, facilitated through the resistance network with Amir-Abdollahian as a key reference figure, has led many regional countries to reassess the strategic importance of engaging with Tehran.

<https://www.specialeurasia.com/2024/05/30/bahrain-iran-persian-gulf/>

### **Bahrain, China establish comprehensive strategic partnership**

Bahrain News Agency, May 31, 2024

During His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's state visit to Beijing, a joint statement was issued on May 31, 2024, marking the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the People's Republic of China. The statement said that both countries will continue supporting each other on core issues. "China reaffirms its support for Bahrain's sovereignty, security, and stability, rejecting external interference in Bahrain's internal affairs," it read. Bahrain praised President Xi Jinping's Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, and Global Civilisation Initiative, the statement added. They will continue cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, expanding collaboration in infrastructure, economy, trade, investment, finance, new energy, advanced technology, agriculture, fisheries, education, culture, tourism, and health to foster development and prosperity.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/news?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDkiMBz6%2BPAAeg3TmfldBoD0%3D>

## Iran

### **‘Iran staging itself to reach [Nuclear] Goal in 1 or 2 Weeks,’ Experts tell TML**

The Medialine, May 17, 2024

Rafael Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN’s nuclear oversight organisation, flew to Iran last week to strengthen the UN’s supervision of Iranian nuclear activities. Iran has agreed to provide the agency with information about its nuclear facilities and access to cameras at its nuclear sights. Since 2022, many surveillance cameras have been removed, and traces of uranium have been found in unexpected locations. In 2018, Donald Trump’s administration decided to withdraw from the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and the US. Under the deal, Iran agreed to limit its uranium stockpile and enrich uranium only to 3.67%, the purity needed to run nuclear power plants. In return, Iran received relief from sanctions imposed by the US, the EU, and the UN Security Council.

<https://themedialine.org/top-stories/iran-staging-itself-to-reach-nuclear-goal-in-1-or-2-weeks-experts-tell-tml/>

### **The death of Iran’s President could change the world**

John Ghazvinian

The New York Times, May 23, 2024

The uncertainty ushered in by the death of Iran’s president, Ebrahim Raisi, in a helicopter crash, just weeks after an unprecedented exchange of military attacks with Israel, has brought a chilling question to mind: Is 2024 the year that Iran finally decides it can no longer take chances with

its security and races to build a nuclear bomb? Even before Mr. Raisi’s death, there were indications that Iran’s position might be starting to shift. The recent exchange of hostilities with Israel, a country with an undeclared but widely acknowledged nuclear arsenal, has provoked a change of tone in Tehran. “We have no decision to build a nuclear bomb but should Iran’s existence be threatened, there will be no choice but to change our military doctrine,” Kamal Kharrazi, a leading adviser to Iran’s supreme leader, said on May 9.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/opinion/iran-nuclear-president.html>

### **Analysis: Iran’s nuclear policy of pressure and talks likely to go on even after president’s death**

Jon Gambrell

The Associated Press, May 21, 2024

While Iran’s nuclear program stands at the precipice of tipping over into enriching uranium at weapons-grade levels, Tehran has held quiet, indirect talks with the United States and invited the head of the United Nations’ atomic watchdog into the country for negotiations. Tehran is attempting to exert its own version of Trump’s “maximum pressure” on the international community to see the economic sanctions that have crippled the country’s economy and currency lifted in exchange for slowing down its program. The Islamic Republic also appears to be trying to contain the risk it faces from the U.S. after launching an unprecedented attack on Israel amid its war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

<https://apnews.com/article/iran-nuclear-program-raisi-helicopter-crash-diplomacy-27de312812676e698219a38e69bb9233>



### **Iran's near-bomb-grade uranium stock grows, talks stall, IAEA reports say**

Francois Murphy

Reuters, May 27, 2024

Iran is enriching uranium to close to weapons-grade at a steady pace while discussions aimed at improving its cooperation with the U.N. nuclear watchdog are stalled, two confidential reports by the watchdog showed on May 27, 2024. The International Atomic Energy Agency faces a range of difficulties in Iran, including the fact it only implemented a small fraction of the steps IAEA chief Rafael Grossi thought it committed to in a "Joint Statement" on cooperation in 2023. Grossi travelled to Iran this month for talks with Iranian officials aimed at improving cooperation and IAEA monitoring in Iran. Follow-up talks have stalled, however, after the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash earlier in May, 2023.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/irans-near-bomb-grade-uranium-stock-grows-talks-stall-iaea-reports-say-2024-05-27/>

### **Iran's supreme leader sets its hardline foreign policies: expect more of the same**

Peter Beaumont

The Guardian, May 20, 2024

In the immediate aftermath of the death of the Iranian president, Ebrahim Raisi, and foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, in a helicopter crash on Sunday, Iran's regional proxies lined up to offer their condolences. Foreign policy in

Iran – including on the key nuclear issue – is set by the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, and the supreme national security council. Raisi and Abdollahian represented, in different ways, the enactment of the hardline policies that have come to the fore since Raisi was manoeuvred into the president's office in 2021 with substantial assistance from Khamenei and the council of guardians, a powerful decision-making body.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/20/iran-supreme-leader-hardline-foreign-policies-death-president-foreign-minister-analysis>

### **Iran's nuclear threat escalates as US, European allies appear at odds**

Iran International, May 29, 2024

In the ever-intricate dance of international diplomacy, tensions between the US and its European allies are reportedly intensifying over how to address Iran's advancing nuclear program. Earlier in May 2024, a confidential report by the UN nuclear watchdog – and seen by several news agencies – painted a starker image of Tehran's nuclear ambitions. It revealed that Iran's stockpile of uranium enriched to 60% purity had surged to 142.1 kilograms, edging close to weapons-grade levels. The increase, a significant jump from previous reports, not only underscores Iran's ongoing advancements in its nuclear capabilities but also intensifies the public pressure on the West to counter Tehran's accelerating nuclear efforts.

<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202405299149>

## Deep Dive: Shamkhani's return adds complexity to Iranian nuclear file

Amwaj Media, May 27, 2024

The tragic demise of President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and several other Iranian officials in a helicopter crash on May 19 has put the spotlight on upcoming snap elections and possible impacts on leadership succession. Protocol dictates that a foreign minister should avoid negotiations with an official of lower rank, in this case White House Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk. Speaking on condition of anonymity, multiple diplomatic and political sources in Iran told Amwaj.media that talks between Tehran and Washington have been held in parallel with the indirect engagement in Oman and Qatar. That channel is not led by Baqeri-Kani, and could become the main venue for engagement if the acting foreign minister were to desist from continuing to lead indirect talks with McGurk in the region.

<https://amwaj.media/article/deep-dive-shamkhani-s-return-adds-complexity-to-iranian-nuclear-file>

## Iraq

### Baghdad Summit 2025: Iraq reunites the Arab brothers around the table of dialogue and common interests

Iraqi News Agency, May 17, 2024

The upcoming Arab Summit in Baghdad, a decision by the Arab League that responded to the request of Prime Minister Mohammad Shia Al-Sudani during Riyadh Summit in May 2023, and coincided with the Bahrain Summit, on May 16, 2024, and

was met with an official Iraqi welcome, expressed by the Prime Minister in a statement issued by his media. According to the statement, "The arrival of our brothers, kings, presidents, leaders, and heads of fraternal Arab delegations, once again, as guests in Baghdad of history and civilization, is a continuation of our country's approach to integration with the Arab world." While observers confirmed that the upcoming summit will achieve important political and economic gains that will open more doors for Arab brothers to contribute to supporting the investment file in stable Iraq.

<https://ina.iq/eng/32789-baghdad-summit-2025-iraq-reunites-the-arab-brothers-around-the-table-of-dialogue-and-common-interests.html>

### Security Council to end UN Iraq mission next year

Iraqi News Agency, May 31, 2024

The UN Security Council decided on May 31, 2024, to end the tasks of the UNAMI mission in Iraq, by the end of the year 2025, and while it praised the efforts of the Iraqi government in settling internal issues in the country, it praised the progress achieved in the goals specified in the program and priorities of the Iraqi government. The Security Council said in a resolution issued that it took note of the Government of Iraq's letter dated 8 May 2024 and decided to extend UNAMI's mandate for a final 19-month period until 31 December 2025 after which UNAMI will cease all work and operations except with respect to any remaining liquidation of the Mission.

<https://ina.iq/eng/33009-security-council-to-end-un-iraq-mission-next-year.html>

### **Four terrorists are detained by CTS, and various hideouts are destroyed**

Iraqi News Agency, May 29, 2024

The Security Media Cell said on May 29, 2024, that the Counter-Terrorism Service had captured four terrorists and destroyed multiple hideouts across various locations. "They were able to arrest (4) suspects in Sulaymaniyah province as part of the ongoing coordination between the Directorate of Operations of the Asayish Kurdistan Region and the Counter-Terrorism Service," according to a statement from the Cell that the Iraqi News Agency (INA) obtained. "(5) hideouts and a number of homemade explosive devices were detonated, in addition to a booby-trapped boat in the provinces of Salah al-Din and Diyala," the statement noted in a related context.

<https://ina.iq/eng/32966-four-terrorists-are-detained-by-cts-and-various-hideouts-are-destroyed.html>

### **Destroying logistical sites for ISIS in Diyala**

Iraqi News Agency, May 18, 2024

A joint force from the Popular Mobilization Forces and the Iraqi army was able, today, Saturday, to destroy logistical support sites for the terrorist ISIS, north of Diyala Governorate. A statement by the Popular Mobilization Forces, said: "A joint force from the Fourth Brigade of the Popular Mobilization Forces and the army was able to destroy logistical support sites for the remnants of the terrorist ISIS north of Diyala Governorate." The statement

added, "This came during a large security operation carried out by the force within the Diyala operations sector of the Popular Mobilization Forces, where it was able to find logistical support locations for the remnants of the terrorist ISIS in the village of Al-Kajj, which the terrorist elements were using to store food supplies," indicating that "The force managed to destroy those places."

<https://ina.iq/eng/32797-destroying-logistical-sites-for-isis-in-diyala.html>

### **DMI captures two terrorists in Nineveh**

Iraqi News Agency, May 21, 2024

The Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) announced, on Tuesday, the capture of two terrorists working in the ISIS bomb squad in the city of Mosul in Nineveh Governorate. The Directorate of Military Intelligence said, "With two separate duties and a intelligence effort, based on accurate intelligence information of the 16th Division Reconnaissance Battalion of the Military Intelligence Directorate and through coordination and follow-up with the Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Cell, two tight ambushes were set up in the Al-Mamoun neighbourhood and Al-Intisar neighbourhood in the right side of the city of Mosul." "The two terrorists were working in a vehicle bombing and IEDs in ISIS terrorist gangs, and they were handed over to the appropriate authority," it added.

<https://ina.iq/eng/32839-dmi-captures-two-terrorists-operating-a-booby-trap-in-nineveh.html>

### **Al-Rusafa Police conducts security operation, under MOI Minister Oversight**

Iraqi News Agency, May 21, 2024

The Ministry of Interior announced on May 21, 2024, conducting a security operation in Al-Adhamiya area in Baghdad, under the supervision of Minister Abdul Amir Al-Shammari. The Ministry of interior-MOI, stated in a statement, “a force from Al-Rusafa Police Command, along with a force from the holding units, the 1st Baghdad Al-Rusafa Emergency Regiment, the rescue detachments and the rest of the security services, carried out a search duty in the Adhamiya area in Baghdad,” indicating that “the operation was carried out under the supervision of Minister Abdul Amir Al-Shammari.” The statement added, "The operation resulted in the arrest of 72 violators according to various legal articles, in addition to 35 foreigners who violated residency procedures, in addition to 4 violators carrying unlicensed weapons and 4 different weapons."

<https://ina.iq/eng/32843-al-rusafa-police-conducts-security-operation-under-moi-minister-oversight.html>

### **Joint Ops: Cooperation with NATO in advisory and training missions is important**

Iraqi News Agency, May 21, 2024

Deputy Commander of Joint Operations, Lieutenant General Qais al-Muhammadawi, stressed on May 21, 2024, the importance of cooperation between Iraq and NATO in advisory and training missions. The meeting was attended by the new Commander of NATO forces in Iraq,

Lieutenant General Luclos Schweres, and his accompanying delegation, as Lieutenant General Al-Muhammadawi "wished him success in his new mission in Iraq." The Deputy Commander of Joint Ops stressed "the ability of the security units to manage the security file and the importance of cooperation in advisory and training tasks to build and enhance the capabilities of the various security forces, especially the Iraqi army, to confront challenges and keep pace with scientific and technological development."

<https://ina.iq/eng/32846-al-mohammadawi-cooperation-with-nato-in-advisory-and-training-missions.html>

### **Iraq and Iran talk about bilateral cooperation and shared border security**

Iraqi News Agency, May 29, 2024

During his visit to Tehran on May 28, 2024, Interior Minister Abdul Amir Al-Shammari spoke with Iranian officials about bilateral coordination and border security. The statement asserts that they also talked about coordinating efforts to combat terrorism, organised crime, cross-border crimes, and extradition; they also spoke about bolstering cooperation in the areas of training, experience sharing, and postgraduate study opportunities, Arbaeen Pilgrimage, pilgrims numbers, and entry security were also discussed. After these discussions, the Iranian counterpart and the interior minister jointly addressed the media to discuss the purpose of the visit.

<https://ina.iq/eng/32959-iraq-and-iran-talk-about-bilateral-cooperation-and-shared-border-security.html>

## Jordan

### Amid Gaza war, will Iraqi ‘resistance’ draw Jordan into confrontation?

Amwaj Media, May 23, 2024

Amid growing tension stemming from Israel’s military campaign in Gaza, fears are rising that Jordan will be increasingly drawn into the conflict’s complex regional dynamics. The Hashemite kingdom is a long-standing ally of the United States, and has observed a peace treaty with Israel—Iran’s arch-rival—for three decades. These ties have put Jordan in the crosshairs of Iran-backed ‘resistance’ groups in Iraq who have sought to pressure Amman over its perceived tacit support for Tel Aviv’s war effort. In response to signals of rapprochement between Amman and Baghdad, Iran’s armed allies in Iraq have in recent years sought to stymie moves to integrate the flow of oil between the two neighbors. This may signal a growing political divide between Iraq’s ruling Shiite Coordination Framework, and the armed groups that helped put the Muhammad Shia’ Al-Sudani administration in power.

<https://amwaj.media/article/amid-gaza-war-will-iraqi-resistance-draw-jordan-into-confrontation>

### Political consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Armenia and Jordan

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, May 16, 2024

On May 15 political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan were held in Yerevan.

The parties commended the current high level of political dialogue between Armenia and Jordan, both highlighting the important role of high-level visits and regular contacts on international platforms. The interlocutors exchanged views on the prospects of developing cooperation between the two countries in the spheres of trade and economy, IT and AI, tourism, science, education and culture, as well as on deepening the partnership within the framework of international organisations.

[https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/05/16/Kostanyan\\_Jordan/12649](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/05/16/Kostanyan_Jordan/12649)

### Humanity in ‘race against time’ on AI

The Jordan Times, May 31, 2024

Humanity is in a race against time to harness the colossal emerging power of artificial intelligence for the good of all, while averting dire risks, a top UN official said on May 30, 2024, “We’ve let the genie out of the bottle,” said Doreen Bogdan-Martin, head of the United Nations’ International Telecommunications Union (ITU). Bogdan-Martin highlighted that AI holds “immense potential for both good and bad”, stressing that it was vital to “make AI systems safe”. She said that was especially important now, given that “2024 is the biggest election year in history”, with votes in dozens of countries, including in the United States. And “with the rise of sophisticated deep fakes disinformation campaigns, it’s also the most contentious one,” she said.

<https://jordantimes.com/news/features/humanity-%E2%80%99race-against-time%E2%80%99-ai>

### **Jordan is ready to adopt AI thanks to its young talents, say media experts**

Jordan News Agency, May 21, 2024

Media experts said that the world is now in the age of content creation rather than transmission, and all media schools in Jordan have updated their study plans to keep pace with technological developments. Founder of the Pangeanis platform, Mohammad Al-Arab, said that Jordan is ready to adopt artificial intelligence because it has young talents, noting that Amman can produce digital transformations, as the income of artificial intelligence can reach more than the income of oil countries within 10 years. On the investment of artificial intelligence in content creation, Al-Arab added that the world today has reached a stage where social media sites powered by artificial intelligence have been able to filter events through algorithms and show and highlight the most important events.

[https://petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=60154&lang=en&name=en\\_news](https://petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=60154&lang=en&name=en_news)

### **Aqaba launches 2024-2028 strategic plan**

Jordan News, May 29, 2024

The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) launched its 2024-2028 strategy on May 29, 2024 in cooperation with the USAID-funded Economic Reform Activity, attended by strategic partners. The ASEZA Chief Commissioner Nayef Fayez stated at the launch ceremony that the strategy aims to position Aqaba as a global destination for tourism, trade, and investment, and as a model of modern administration aligned with global developments and national

economic modernization goals. It aims to empower the region as a global investment destination, promote green growth, and achieve sustainable development. The plan also seeks to create a flexible region capable of adapting and transforming into a smart city, improving the quality of life, and establishing Aqaba as a regional center for artistic and technical skills, leadership, and innovation.

<https://www.jordannews.jo/Section-109/News/Aqaba-Launches-2024-2028-Strategic-Plan-35909>

### **JAF carries out three airdrops of aid into southern Gaza**

The Jordan Times, May 29, 2024

The Jordanian Armed Forces – Arab Army (JAF) said it carried out three more airdrops on Sunday to the southern part of the war-torn Gaza Strip in cooperation with other countries. With the ongoing Israeli aggression and escalating conflict, Gaza has become a battleground, with civilians suffering from severe shortages of food and supplies, an army said in a statement on May 28, 2024. The operation involved the participation of one aircraft from the Royal Jordanian Air Force, one aircraft from Egypt and one from Germany. The endeavour is part of the Kingdom's continuous efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians in the besieged strip and support them in light of the difficult circumstances imposed by the Israeli aggression on Gaza since October 7, JAF said.

<https://jordantimes.com/news/local/jaf-carries-out-three-airdrops-aid-southern-gaza>

## What lies behind Jordan's announcement of thwarting Iranian plot from Syria

Enab Baladi, May 17, 2024

One day prior to the 33rd Arab Summit kicking off on Thursday, May 16, which featured the Syrian file on its agenda, Jordanian security sources revealed to Reuters an attempt by Iran-backed factions to send weapons to a cell affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, linked to Palestinian resistance factions. The purpose of the "plot," according to Jordanian sources, is to "destabilise Jordan, which could become a regional flashpoint as it hosts a US military base, and borders Israel as well as Syria and Iraq." The timing of Jordan's announcement of the arrest of the cell and the seizure of weapons indicates clear Jordanian displeasure with the Syrian regime and Iran, also confirming Jordan's approach to invoking the risks of expanding Iranian influence at the Arab Summit.

<https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2024/05/what-lies-behind-jordan-announcement-of-thwarting-iranian-plot-from-syria/>

## Kuwait

### Joint Statement for the 15th U.S.-Kuwaiti Joint Military Commission

US Department of Defence, May 22, 2024

The United States and Kuwait held the 15th U.S.-Kuwaiti Joint Military Commission (JMC) in Kuwait City from May 20-21, 2024. Both delegations reaffirmed the strength of the bilateral strategic partnership and the importance of continuing to expand the defence relationship. Lt. Gen. Al Muzaien and DASD Shapiro exchanged views on

regional security challenges, including border security threats, maritime security, ballistic missiles, and uncrewed aerial systems. Maj. Gen. Salene and Brig. Gen. Fahad Al-Otaibi, Kuwait Ministry of Defense Director of Military Cooperation, co-chaired the Security Cooperation subcommittee, detailing critical security cooperation programs, synchronising Foreign Military Sales and Procurement efforts, and identifying opportunities for continued cooperation.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3784869/joint-statement-for-the-15th-us-kuwaiti-joint-military-commission/>

### Unlocking the Future: IDC Kuwait CIO Summit 2024 shapes the next era of Digital Innovation

Sheila Manek

International Data Corporation (IDC), May 16, 2024

More than 250 of Kuwait's foremost IT and telecom leaders, digital government pioneers, regulators, and industry luminaries gathered at the Courtyard by Marriott in May 2024 for the IDC Kuwait CIO Summit 2024. Addressing the theme 'The Future of IT: Rethinking Digitalization for an AI Everywhere World', this pivotal event explored the profound impact of AI on digital innovation and the evolving role of the modern CIO. Supported by Kuwait's Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT), the summit brought together a distinguished lineup of speakers and thought leaders at the forefront of digital transformation. The potential benefits include a technologically advanced and efficient public sector, benefiting citizens and society as a whole and

positioning Kuwait as a regional leader in the AI era.

<https://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=prMETA52117824>

## Lebanon

### Hezbollah introduces new weapons and tactics against Israel as war in Gaza drags on

The Economic Times, May 17, 2024

The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, in early weeks of May 2024, struck a military post in northern Israel using a drone that fired two missiles. The attack wounded three soldiers, one of them seriously, according to the Israeli military. Hezbollah has regularly fired missiles across the border with Israel over the past seven months, but the one on May 13, 2024 appears to have been the first successful missile airstrike it has launched from within Israeli airspace. While the cross-border exchanges of fire have been ongoing since early October, "complex attacks" by Hezbollah began a few days after Iran's unprecedented drone and missile barrage attack on Israel in mid-April.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/hezbollah-introduces-new-weapons-and-tactics-against-israel-as-war-in-gaza-drags-on/articleshow/110213275.cms?from=mdr>

### Israel strikes on Lebanon kill five, including Hezbollah fighter and civilians

AlArabiya News, May 17, 2024

Israeli strikes on southern and eastern Lebanon killed at least five people on May 17, 2024 including Lebanese militants, Palestinian fighters and Syrian civilians, security sources told Reuters. Israeli

airstrikes hit an area of southern Lebanon far from the border, with Hezbollah announcing one dead fighter and official media saying two Syrian children were killed. Hezbollah, a Hamas ally, has traded cross-border fire with Israeli forces almost daily since the Palestinian group's October 7 attack on southern Israel that sparked the war in Gaza. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said "Israeli strikes targeted Najjariyeh and Addousiyeh," two adjacent villages just south of the coastal city of Sidon, about 30 kilometres (19 miles) from the Israeli border.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/05/17/lebanon-state-media-reports-fresh-israeli-strikes-in-south>

### Hezbollah shells Israeli outpost after deadly strikes in southern Lebanon

PressTV, May 26, 2024

Fighters from the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement have conducted an operation against an Israeli military outpost in the 1948 occupied territories after the Tel Aviv regime launched two separate deadly strikes in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah claimed the attack in a statement, saying it had shelled an Israeli military outpost and soldiers stationed in the area "in response to the assassination carried out by the Zionist enemy in the town of Naqoura and the injury of civilians." According to the Israeli military, a total of 15 rockets crossed the border in the attack. No injuries were reported. Sirens had sounded in the Israeli border communities of Betzet, Hanita, Rosh Hanikra, and Shlomi.

<https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2024/05/26/726268/Hezbollah-shells-Israeli-outpost-after-deadly-drone-strike-in-southern-Lebanon>



## **Biden adviser sees path to Israel-Lebanon land border agreement**

Timothy Gardner

Reuters, May 30, 2024

A land border agreement between Israel and Lebanon implemented in phases could dampen the simmering and deadly conflict between the two countries, a senior adviser to President Joe Biden said on May 30, 2024. Hochstein brokered an Israel-Lebanon maritime boundary agreement in late 2022, after two years of talks, that opened the way for both countries to develop natural gas and other resources in the region. Hochstein has been working on a demarcation of the land border between the two countries that could have a number of phases. If politics and the economy are stabilised in Lebanon, it could help reduce Iran's influence there, he said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/biden-adviser-sees-path-israel-lebanon-land-border-agreement-2024-05-30/>

## **Oman**

### **HH Sayyid Theyazin inaugurates COMEX Global Technology Show 2024**

Times of Oman, May 27, 2024

His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, patronised the opening of the 33rd edition of the COMEX Global Technology Show 2024, with the participation of more than 100 local and international institutions in the technical field. His Excellency Dr. Ali bin Amer Al-Shaythani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and

Information Technology, confirmed that the National Program for the Digital Economy aims to raise the percentage of the digital economy's contribution to the gross domestic product from 2 percent to 10 percent by the year 2040, and to achieve growth in 8 executive programs, which are: Digital industry, digital transformation, space, artificial intelligence and advanced technologies, e-commerce, technology, cybersecurity industry, and technical infrastructure.

<https://timesofoman.com/article/146003-hh-sayyid-theyazin-inaugurates-comex-global-technology-show-2024>

### **Oman hosts US talks with Tehran on Iran's proxies, nuclear programme**

The Arab Weekly, May 18, 2024

Two top Biden administration officials held indirect talks with Iranian counterparts earlier in May 2024 in an effort to avoid escalating regional attacks, news website Axios reported on May 17, 2024. The talks, involving President Joe Biden's Middle East adviser Brett McGurk and acting US envoy to Iran Abram Paley, marked the first round of discussions between the US and Iran since January when a similar round of talks was held in Oman, said Axios. Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei banned the development of nuclear weapons in a fatwa in the early 2000s, reiterating his stance in 2019 by saying: "Building and stockpiling nuclear bombs is wrong and using it is haram (religiously forbidden) ... Although we have nuclear technology, Iran has firmly avoided it."

<https://theArabweekly.com/oman-hosts-us-talks-tehran-irans-proxies-nuclear-programme>

## Qatar

### Officials of agencies supporting OCHA stress need for rapid humanitarian action to address effects of wars, climate change

Qatar News Agency, May 19, 2024

A number of officials from Qatar's agencies supporting the projects of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stressed the necessity of urgent humanitarian action to avoid the dire consequences of wars, conflicts, natural disasters, climate change, and the resulting waves of displacement, asylum, and deportation, during the High-level Strategic Dialogue between the State of Qatar and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), held in Doha earlier in May 2024. Deputy Director General for Development Projects at the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) Sultan Ahmed Al Aseeri indicated that through this time window, which was determined through intensive coordination with partners, the QFFD developed a number of resources concerned with housing, shelters, health facilities, and mobile schools for emergency and rapid response.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-05/19/0058-officials-of-agencies-supporting-ocha-stress-need-for-rapid-humanitarian-action-to-address-effects-of-wars,-climate-change>

### Qatar affirms prioritising protection of civilians in conflicts

Qatar News Agency, May 23, 2024

The State of Qatar affirmed that protecting civilians in armed conflicts is one of its top priorities on the national, regional and

international levels. This came in the statement of the State of Qatar delivered by Her Excellency Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani, during the Open Debate on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, at the UN Security in New York. Her Excellency voiced the State of Qatar's strong condemnation to the Israeli occupation forces' bombing of the municipality of Rafah, its invasion of the land crossing and the threat to displace citizens from shelter and refuge centres.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-05/23/0038-qatar-affirms-prioritizing-protection-of-civilians-in-conflicts>

### Qatar underscores importance of enhancing African nations' role in countering security, global development challenges

Qatar News Agency, May 26, 2024

The State of Qatar has affirmed that reinforcing the role of African countries in addressing the challenges facing security and global development in Africa is extremely significant, in addition to bolstering global peace and security, as well as accelerating the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. Qatar pointed out that the strategic significance of Africa, its rich resources and the growing number of its population - which is projected to exceed 2.5 billion by 2050, centralises the continent and makes it an indispensable player in shaping the global future. The State of Qatar reiterates the importance of strengthening conflict prevention efforts and addressing their root-causes that hamper the efforts of

curbing the challenges facing stable governance, sustainable peace, security, and development in Africa.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-05/26/0035-qatar-underscores-importance-of-enhancing-african-nations-role-in-counteracting-security,-global-development-challenges>

## Saudi Arabia

### **MbS, MbZ meet in Saudi Arabia amid rumours of widening rift**

Amwaj Media, May 28, 2024

Observers and political insiders had in May 2024 speculated that differences between Abu Dhabi and Riyadh have reached a point where the Saudi crown prince and the Emirati president are no longer on speaking terms. Against this backdrop, a photo of the two Gulf Arab leaders meeting in the Kingdom's Eastern Province had then surfaced on social media. Details of the meeting have not been unveiled. Saudi Arabia on Mar. 18 filed a complaint with the United Nations against a 2019 decree by the UAE designating Al-Yasat as a "maritime reserve." The two sides have long disputed the area off the Saudi coast, which is made up of four islands. The Kingdom's move has sparked questions about the state of the bilateral relationship.

<https://amwaj.media/media-monitor/mbs-mbz-meet-in-saudi-arabia-amid-rumors-of-widening-rift>

### **Saudi crown prince, US national security adviser meet on Gaza, bilateral deal**

Deccan Herald, May 19, 2024

Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and White House National

Security Adviser Jake Sullivan met to discuss a broad bilateral agreement and Israel's war in Gaza, the Saudi state news agency reported on May 19, 2024. Washington and Riyadh have been discussing the United States security guarantees and civilian nuclear assistance as part of a broader deal that the US hopes would lead to normalising Saudi Israeli relations. Saudi Arabia, as the world's largest oil exporter, is not an obvious candidate for a nuclear pact typically aimed at building power plants. But the kingdom is seeking to generate substantial renewable energy and reduce emissions under an ambitious long-term plan, while critics say Riyadh might want nuclear expertise in case it someday wishes to acquire nuclear weapons, despite safeguards enshrined in any deal with Washington to prevent this.

<https://www.deccanherald.com/world/saudi-crown-prince-us-national-security-adviser-meet-on-gaza-bilateral-deal-3028848>

### **The weapons Saudi Arabia might buy if it secures defense pact with U.S.**

Paul Iddon

Forbes, May 29, 2024

The Biden administration is scrambling to secure a landmark deal with Saudi Arabia, which includes a defence pact. The finalisation of agreements related to the U.S.-Saudi deal, which includes a defence pact and unprecedented cooperation on nuclear energy, "could be weeks away," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told a House of Representatives hearing on May 22, 2024. However, without Saudi-Israeli normalisation, Congress won't approve any defence pact between Washington and

Riyadh. But even if Saudi Arabia did secure a major defence pact, it probably would not change much regarding the American military hardware it could buy. In the 2010s, Riyadh bought 84 F-15SA, Saudi Advanced fighters, the most advanced F-15 until recent years—the U.S. has since developed the similar Qatar Advanced variant for Riyadh's neighbour and then the F-15EX Eagle II, which Riyadh also has the option of buying.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/pauliddon/2024/05/29/the-weapon-saudi-arabia-might-buy-if-it-secures-defense-pact-with-us/>

### **PIF launches NSG to boost Saudi Arabia's space industry**

Space Watch Global, May 29, 2024

The Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund (PIF) has established the Neo Space Group (NSG), a wholly-owned PIF company to become a national champion in the Saudi satellite and space sector. The development of the aerospace sector aligns with PIF's strategy to unlock the potential of promising sectors in Saudi Arabia. The group aims to develop and enhance commercial space operations in Saudi Arabia, providing innovative satellite and space solutions locally and globally. NSG will invest in local and international assets and capabilities, promising venture capital opportunities to catalyse the advancement and localization of sector-specific expertise. The group will also invest in localization, technology, start-ups, and knowledge in the space and satellite sector in Saudi Arabia.

<https://spacewatch.global/2024/05/pif-launches-nsg-to-boost-saudi-arabias-space-industry/>

### **US worried Netanyahu may torpedo normalisation deal with Saudi Arabia**

Bethan McKernan

The Guardian, May 22, 2024

The US is worried that Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, may be willing to torpedo a potential normalisation deal with Saudi Arabia if it entails ending the war in Gaza and committing to working towards a two-state solution to the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, told the Senate's foreign relations committee on May 21, 2024: "There's an opportunity for Israel to become integrated in the region, to get the fundamental security it needs and wants, to have the relationships it's wanted since its founding. The Saudis have been clear that this would require calm in Gaza and a credible pathway to a Palestinian state," he said, adding: "It may well be at this moment, Israel is not able or willing to proceed down this pathway."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/may/22/us-israel-netanyahu-normalisation-deal-saudi-arabia>

### **Syria**

#### **Syria: Suspected Israeli airstrikes result in multiple casualties in Homs and Tartus governorates as of late May 29**

Crisis 24, May 29, 2024

Suspected Israeli airstrikes targeted the Al-Furqlus area of Homs Governorate and the Baniyas area of Tartus Governorate late May 29. Syrian authorities stated the country's air defences intercepted "hostile

“targets” in the country's airspace. The airstrikes in Al-Furglus killed at least three Syrians who were allegedly associated with the Lebanese Hizballah (LH) militant organisation. While the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) did not immediately acknowledge the incident, alleged Israeli airstrikes have regularly targeted military bases across Syria. Military forces in Syria and northern Israel will almost certainly maintain a heightened security posture over the coming days. Further airstrikes, retaliatory attacks, and exchanges of cross-border fire are possible over the short term.

<https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2024/05/syria-suspected-israeli-airstrikes-result-in-multiple-casualties-in-homs-and-tartus-governorates-as-of-late-may-29-update-1>

### **Israeli airstrikes on Syria kill one girl, three Hezbollah fighters**

Al Arabiya, May 29, 2024

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said an Israeli strike on central Syria on Wednesday killed three Syrian fighters working with Lebanon's Hezbollah group. Syria's defence ministry and state media said another Israeli strike killed a girl in the coastal city of Baniyas and wounded 10 civilians. “The Israeli enemy launched an air attack from the direction of Lebanon, targeting a central site and a residential building in Baniyas city in the coastal region, killing a girl and wounding 10 civilians,” a ministry statement said. Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes in Syria since the outbreak of the civil war in its northern

neighbour, mainly targeting army positions and Iran-backed fighters including from Hezbollah. Syria's war has killed more than half a million people and displaced millions more since it erupted in 2011 after Damascus cracked down on anti-government protests.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/05/29/syrian-air-defense-s-intercept-hostile-targets-over-homs>

### **Israel, Lebanon, Syria: Violence across the shared border region likely to continue through late June**

Crisis 24, May 28, 2024

Cross-border violence along Israel's northern border with Lebanon and Syria will likely persist and could intensify through late June. The Lebanese Hizballah (LH) and Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continue to exchange fire almost daily. Israeli authorities have stated that the current situation cannot continue along the border with Lebanon and that they will stabilise the region either through mediation or force. Despite the IDF's retaliatory strikes, LH and Palestinian militants continue to launch projectiles targeting northern Israeli areas. Israeli retaliatory fire has impacted sites across southern Lebanon. Cross-border fire and Israeli airstrikes continue to target military sites deep inside Syria and increasingly inside Lebanon. Additional Israeli military forces have deployed to the northern border.

<https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2024/05/israel-lebanon-syria-violence-across-the-shared-border-region-likely-to-continue-through-late-june-update-15>

## Turkiye

### Turkish defence firm to provide Nigeria with 'system of systems' to secure north

Anadolu Ajansı, May 30, 2024

In northern Nigeria, authorities have long been trying to face down threats posed by terrorist groups, insurgents, and armed gangs known locally as bandits. Integrating groundbreaking Turkish defence industry products under a multimillion-dollar project, Asisguard will be providing Nigeria with a so-called "system of systems" to secure the road spanning from the capital Abuja to the city of Kaduna, roughly 160 kilometres (100 miles) north. This project is the first of its kind in the West African nation, set to be handed over to Nigerian authorities by the end of 2024 as part of the project, Nigeria will be receiving an assortment of Turkish-made defence equipment, according to Duzgun. These include Baha drones manufactured by Ankara-based defence firm Havelsan, as well as mini-spotter unmanned aerial systems called the Togan by STM, armoured Yoruk 4x4 trucks by Nurol Makine, components of Songar armed drones from Asisguard and other products from about 10 other Turkish subcontractors., Asisguard's General Manager Baris Duzgun told Anadolu.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/turkish-defense-firm-to-provide-nigeria-with-system-of-systems-to-secure-north/3235731>

### Turkish National Security Council stresses importance of Palestinian state recognition for security

Anadolu Ajansı, May 28, 2024

The Turkish National Security Council on May 28, 2024 emphasised the critical

importance of increasing the number of countries that recognize Palestine as a state and stepping up efforts to hold those responsible for "massacres" accountable. The National Security Council, which convened at the Presidential Complex in the capital Ankara under the chairmanship of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, said: "It is of critical importance to increase the number of countries recognizing the State of Palestine and enhance the efforts towards ensuring that those responsible for the massacre are held accountable before justice by being on the right side of history." Addressing regional security concerns, particularly regarding Iraq and Syria, the statement said: "No fait accompli will be allowed against our national security or neighbors Iraq, Syria's territorial integrity."

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/turkish-national-security-council-stresses-importance-of-palestinian-state-recognition-for-security/3233495>

### Turkey's Erdogan threatens Syrian Kurdish groups as local elections near

Ezgi Akin

Al Monitor, May 30, 2024

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lashed out Thursday at the upcoming local elections in the de facto autonomous region in northern Syria. During a ceremony on the sidelines of a major Turkish military exercise in the Aegean province of Izmir, Erdogan described the planned elections as a threat to Turkey's territorial integrity, saying, "We did what needed to be done before," referring to Turkey's military incursions into Kurdish-held regions of Syria. Turkey considers the

Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, the armed wing of the autonomous administration in northern Syria, a threat to its national security due to its ties with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the militant group fighting for Kurdish self-rule inside Turkey.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/05/turkeys-erdogan-threatens-syrian-kurdish-groups-local-elections-near>

### **Turkey gives President Right to declare National Mobilisation**

Hamdi Firat Buyuk

Balkan Insight, May 22, 2024

Turkey's new State of War and Mobilisation Regulation, published on Wednesday in the Official Gazette, makes President Recep Tayyip Erdogan the only decision maker when it comes to declaring national mobilisation in cases of wars and rebellions. The right to declare national mobilisation previously belonged to the cabinet. The regulation explains that a national mobilisation will become effective with its publication and will be presented for the approval of parliament the same day. The new regulation makes an important amendment to the issue of purged public workers, including soldiers, who were dismissed following the 2016 failed coup attempt. These purged public workers can now be classified as substitute soldiers in times of national emergency.

<https://balkaninsight.com/2024/05/22/turkey-gives-president-right-to-declare-national-mobilisation/>

## **United Arab Emirates**

### **International Conference on Nuclear Security begins in Vienna**

Emirates News Agency, May 21, 2024

The International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS), organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), kicked off on May 20, 2024 under the theme 'Shaping the Future'. The conference aims to raise awareness of issues related to maintaining national nuclear security and enhancing systems for nuclear materials and other radioactive materials and associated facilities used for peaceful purposes. It also seeks to strengthen the IAEA's guidelines in the field of nuclear security and share the experiences of countries in their application, as well as discuss further improvements to the agency's nuclear security activities to ensure their sustainability. The conference activities include reviewing nuclear security experiences and achievements, current approaches and trends, and highlighting areas that may require further attention, including technological dimensions.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b39jb1b-international-conference-nuclear-security-begins>

### **United Arab Emirates, Republic of Korea issue joint statement on state visit of President of UAE to ROK**

Emirates News Agency, May 30, 2024

The United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Korea have issued a joint

statement on the occasion of the State Visit of President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to the Republic of Korea from 28 to 29 May 2024. The two leaders expressed their steadfast commitment to strengthening strategic cooperation in priority fields including economy and investment, conventional energy and clean energy, peaceful nuclear energy, and defense and defense technology and cybersecurity; as well as other areas of mutual interest such as infrastructure, high-tech industry, space, water technology, information and communication technology, SMEs and startups, agriculture, maritime transportation, civil aviation, education, culture and healthcare.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/13xw0nj-united-arab-emirates-republic-korea-issue-joint>

### **Mohammed Bin Rashid Innovation Fund, AzurX forge strategic partnership to propel innovation in space sector**

Emirates News Agency, May 30, 2024

Mohammed Bin Rashid Innovation Fund (MBRIF), an initiative launched by the UAE Ministry of Finance to support innovation in the UAE, announced a strategic partnership with AzurX, a leading private space and satellite professional services and investment firm in the Middle East. This collaboration serves as a cornerstone in MBRIF's efforts to reinforce its position as a regional and global leader in space innovation, aligning

closely with the UAE National Innovation Strategy. The partnership will also seek to leverage existing collaborations of both entities with the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) and the UAE Space Agency.

<https://www.wam.ae/en/article/b3ew81k-mohammed-bin-rashid-innovation-fund-azurx-forge>

## **Yemen**

### **Yemen's Houthi rebels say they've downed another US drone**

Voice of America, May 18, 2024

Yemen's Houthi rebels on May 17, 2024 claimed to have shot down an American drone, hours after footage circulated online of what appeared to be the wreckage of an MQ-9 Reaper drone. Early on May 18, 2024, a vessel also came under attack in the Red Sea. Houthi military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed that rebels shot down the Reaper on Thursday with a surface-to-air missile. He described the drone as "carrying out hostile actions" in Yemen's Marib province, which remains held by allies of Yemen's exiled, internationally recognized government. The Houthis later released footage they claimed showed the surface-to-air-missile being launched at night, along with night-vision footage of the missile hitting the drone.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/yemen-s-houthi-rebels-say-they-ve-downed-another-us-drone-/7617313.html>



## **The Red Sea attacks highlight the erosion of US leadership in the region**

Jean-Loup Samaan

Atlantic Council, May 16, 2024

Six months after the Joe Biden administration launched Operation Prosperity Guardian to ensure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, the biggest issue facing the White House is not the Houthi threat but the US failure to rally partners and allies behind its leadership. Fortunately, since the Houthis waged their attacks on ships crossing the Red Sea, US forces have succeeded in intercepting projectiles fired from Yemen. The European operation faces its own issues, particularly regarding the modest naval capabilities provided by the contributing nations. As of today, the operation merely relies on four warships to counter Houthi attacks. Europeans also suffer from limited air-defense capabilities. The French Navy has repeatedly used Aster 30 surface-to-air missiles to counter multiple Houthi ballistic missiles.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/mediasource/red-sea-attacks-houthis-biden-administration-leadership/>

# NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

*Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Ms. Shipra Dwivedi*

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