



Volume 4 | Issue 14

SYLLOGE ON WEST ASIA

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

16 July - 31 July 2024



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Armenia

Scholz: 2024 could be a year of peace for Armenia and Azerbaijan

Armenia News, July 19, 2024

The year 2024 could be a year of peace for Armenia and Azerbaijan, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said. "I had many other discussions here. Also important for me is the conversation with the Prime Minister of Armenia, Mr. Pashinyan and the President of Azerbaijan, Mr. Aliyev. The current year is extremely important for this region. It can become a year of peace if the parties continue to take effective and courageous steps towards each other," Scholz said at a press conference following the 4th European Political Community Summit in London. "Europe, as a whole, will accompany Armenia and Azerbaijan on the road to a peace with each other that will last and ensure long-term good cooperation between these two neighbouring countries," Scholz said.

<https://news.am/eng/news/834813.html>

Turkey, Armenia make progress in normalisation talks

Al Arabiya, July 30, 2024

Turkey and Armenia on July 30, 2024 resumed talks aimed at normalising ties after a two-year lull and agreed to simplify visa rules for some passport holders, the two countries said. Ankara severed diplomatic and commercial relations with Yerevan in 1993 in support of Azerbaijan during its war with Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, and has deepened ties with the ethnically Turkic – Azerbaijani in recent years. Since the

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict ended, NATO member Turkey has sought to revive its historically strained ties with Armenia, though it has said any normalisation depends on progress in Armenia's peace talks with Azerbaijan. Turkish and Armenian special envoys held a fifth round of negotiations on the Alican-Magara border crossing on July 30, 2024, the Turkish and Armenian foreign ministries said in a joint statement.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2024/07/30/turkey-armenia-make-progress-in-normalization-talks>

EU deepens engagement with Armenia, offering prospect of visa-free travel

EurasiaNet, July 23, 2024

The Council of the European Union, the EU's main decision-making body, endorsed a move July 22 to open talks with Armenia on visa-free travel. The process is expected to take years, but for Yerevan it provides a major incentive to continue its geopolitical pivot away from Russia towards the West. Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan "welcomed the decision" to kickstart visa liberalisation talks. Mirzoyan and Defense Minister Suren Papikyan additionally thanked Brussels for providing 10 million euros in non-lethal military assistance to Armenia within the framework of the European Peace Facility. Traditionally, the granting of visa-free travel for citizens marks a major milestone for states aspiring to integrate with the EU.

<https://eurasianet.org/eu-deepens-engagement-with-armenia-offering-prospect-of-visa-free-travel>

Armenia looks West to reduce nuclear energy dependency on Russia

Onnik James Krikorian

The Jamestown Foundation, July 22, 2024

At the beginning of July, Armenian National Security Secretary Armen Grigoryan announced that talks with the United States to replace Armenia's aging Metsamor nuclear power plant were now at a "substantive phase." The first of two reactors at the power plant started operating in 1976, and the plant has largely met Armenia's energy needs since. At the time of construction, the reactor was expected to last until 2016, more than a decade longer than the 1998 EU agreement required. If Yerevan continues to work with Moscow in this fashion, Armenia's turn to the West will continue to be stunted by its ties to Russia, especially in a sector as important as energy. At any rate, a new nuclear reactor is also vital for the country's carbon-free future.

<https://jamestown.org/program/armenia-looks-west-to-reduce-nuclear-energy-dependency-on-russia/>

US says Armenia and Azerbaijan must make "tough compromises"

The Armenian Weekly, July 17, 2024

Following a press briefing on July 15, during which U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller emphasised the necessity of "difficult choices and tough compromises" in the ongoing peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Vahe Hovhannisyan from the "Alternative Projects" group highlighted

the dire state of governance within Armenia. While acknowledging "incredible progress" in the talks, Miller stressed that reaching a final agreement will require both parties to confront tough decisions. "A peace agreement is crucial for the stability and security of both countries and the region," he said, underscoring the U.S. commitment to pushing for a resolution.

<https://armenianweekly.com/2024/07/17/us-says-armenia-and-azerbaijan-must-make-tough-compromises/>

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan hits out at EU for failing to agree long-term gas deals

Financial Times, July 21, 2024

Azerbaijan has accused the EU of treating the country as a "firefighter" by only committing to short-term gas deals despite asking the country to boost exports of the fuel to the bloc. Baku needed the certainty of long-term contracts in order to raise the finance required to increase gas production in the Caspian Sea and meet the additional EU demand, Vaqif Sadiqov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to the EU, told the Financial Times. In 2022 Brussels and Baku struck a deal to increase Azerbaijan's annual gas exports to the EU to 20bn cubic metres by 2027, compared with 11.8 bcm last year, as the bloc tried to wean itself off Russian gas after its invasion of Ukraine.

<https://www.ft.com/content/99772c5e-6506-4331-82f3-90d9b6911ed5>

Azerbaijan's energy achievements: Key projects and future directions

Nazrin Abdul

Azernews, July 20, 2024

Azerbaijan is uniquely positioned as the only country in the South Caucasus with extensive hydrocarbon reserves, a sophisticated fuel-energy infrastructure, and a fully self-sufficient energy system. Azerbaijan's energy resources serve as the foundation for the dynamic development of all sectors of the national economy. In particular, these resources are crucial in shaping the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and other key financial and economic indicators. It is important to recognize that energy security is a fundamental component of national security for any country. In this regard, energy security encompasses the protection of the nation, its citizens, society, and economy from both external and internal threats through the reliable provision of fuel and energy resources.

<https://www.azernews.az/analysis/228864.html>

Azerbaijan proposes document on principles of peace before full deal with Armenia

Al Arabiya News, July 21, 2024

Azerbaijan is proposing to sign a document with Armenia on the basic principles of a future peace treaty as an interim measure as they wrangle over a broader deal, a senior Azerbaijani official said on July 21, 2024. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan have repeatedly said they want to sign a peace treaty to end the conflict over the former breakaway Azerbaijani region of Nagorno-

Karabakh. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said on July 20, 2024 a text of a treaty was 80 percent-90 percent ready but repeated it was impossible to sign it before Armenia amended its constitution to remove an indirect reference to Karabakh independence, which Armenia has rejected.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2024/07/21/azerbaijan-proposes-document-on-principles-of-peace-before-full-deal-with-armenia>

Bahrain

Bahrain welcomes UN Envoy statement on de-escalation in Yemen agreement

Bahrain News Agency, July 24, 2024

The Kingdom of Bahrain welcomed the statement issued by the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Yemen, Hans Grundberg, on the agreement to de-escalation in the Republic of Yemen regarding the banking sector and Yemeni Airlines. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the Kingdom of Bahrain's appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations, and its support for regional and international initiatives aimed at achieving peace and stability in Yemen and the region. The statement also expressed hope that this agreement would mark a pivotal step in terms of the commitment of all Yemeni parties to maintain stability and prioritise dialogue within the framework of the UN road map to reach a comprehensive and lasting political solution that meets the aspirations of the Yemeni people for security, stability and prosperity.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/BahrainwelcomesUNEnvoystatementondeescalationinYemena>

[greement.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2bDpMunaLe8BgzNn30CEPkknU%3d](https://www.bna.bh/en/news?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2bDpMunaLe8BgzNn30CEPkknU%3d)

HH Shaikh Nasser underscores Bahrain's efforts to promote peace and coexistence

Bahrain News Agency, July 19, 2024

Lieutenant General His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the National Security Advisor and Royal Guard Commander, underscored Bahrain's efforts in promoting dialogue, cooperation, and providing support and aid to countries worldwide, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and supported by the government, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. This came during HH Shaikh Nasser's participation as a key speaker in the 15th edition of the Aspen Security Forum (ASF) held in the state of Colorado, United States. HH Shaikh Nasser emphasised HM King Hamad's vision of spreading peace and prosperity and promoting communication worldwide to address common challenges.

<https://www.bna.bh/en/news?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDgPvDpKlekedP2kuHsWhYnc%3D>

Kingdom of Bahrain participates in UNSC open debate session on Situation in Middle East, including the Palestinian Issue

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bahrain, July 17, 2024

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani affirmed

that Bahrain's declaration from the 33rd Arab Summit held in Bahrain last May under the auspices of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, emphasised the unified Arab position calling for a just and comprehensive peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue, which includes irreversible steps towards implementing the two-state solution in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions, ensuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to establish their independent sovereign state capable of sustainable living. These remarks were made in Bahrain's statement as the current president of the current session of the Arab Summit during the open debate session of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian issue, delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on July 17, 2024.

<https://www.mofa.gov.bh/en/kingdom-of-bahrain-participates-in-unsco-open-debate-session-on-situation-in-middle-east-including-the-palestinian-issue>

Bahrain's national security advisor says country remains committed to the Abraham Accords

Jewish Insider, July 19, 2024

Sheikh Nasser Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Bahrain's national security advisor, said his country remains committed to the Abraham Accords despite regional backlash toward Israel and is "proud" to be part of U.S. and Israeli cooperative military efforts. Asked at the Aspen Security Forum why his country remains committed to the Abraham Accords despite intense anger in the Arab world over Israel's operations in Gaza, Al Khalifa described the normalization

agreement as “one of the most important milestones that we have achieved.” Al Khalifa added that Bahrain is “proud” to have a “vital role in the deterrence and also the stability of the region,” including the April 13 Iranian missile attack on Israel, noting his country’s proximity to Iran.

<https://jewishinsider.com/2024/07/bahrain-israel-abraham-accords-sheikh-nasser-bin-hamad-al-khalifa/>

Cyprus

US-Cyprus military cooperation ‘a threat to the north’ says Turkish Cypriot ‘FM’

Cyprus Mail, July 31, 2024

Military cooperation between the Republic and the USA is intended as a threat against the ‘TRNC’, the north’s ‘foreign ministry’ has said. In his statement, as relayed by the Cyprus News Agency (CNA) on Tuesday, the north’s ‘foreign minister’ Tahsin Ertuğruloğlu, said that “open military support of the Greek Cypriot administration by a country like the USA contributes to maintaining the mentality of supremacy [of the Greek Cypriot side] in Cyprus.” The arrival of the destroyer USS Roosevelt at the port of Limassol in July 2024, “reportedly carried out to ensure freedom of navigation” in the Eastern Mediterranean and to “support crisis management in the region, is in fact part of the strategic partnership that the US recently signed with Nicosia and an indicator of “US support to the Greek Cypriot administration in military matters,” Ertuğruloğlu said.

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2024/07/31/us-cyprus-military-cooperation-a-threat-to-the-north-says-turkish-cypriot-fm/>

Turkish Cypriot leadership lines up behind Erdogan over Israel

Cyprus Mail, July 30, 2024

Turkish Cypriot political leadership figures lined up behind Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan following a spat between Erdogan and Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz. Erdogan had on July 28, 2024 night warned Israel against continuing and escalating its actions in Gaza, saying “we must be very strong so that Israel can’t do these ridiculous things to Palestine. Just like we entered Karabakh, just like we entered Libya, we might do similar to them.” “It is unacceptable that the authorities of genocidal Israel, which has been continuing to massacre civilians, including women and children in a planned and organised manner before the eyes of the world since October last year, have overstepped the mark and attacked [Erdogan],” he said.

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2024/07/30/turkish-cypriot-leadership-lines-up-behind-erdogan-over-israel/>

Iran

Iran capable of producing fissile material for use in nuclear weapons soon: Blinken

Al Arabiya, July 21, 2024

Iran is capable of producing fissile material for use in a nuclear weapon within “one or two weeks,” US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday. News of Iran’s capabilities follows the recent election of President Masoud Pezeshkian, who has said his goal is to “get Iran out of its isolation,” and who favours reviving the 2015 nuclear

deal between Iran and global powers. The United States unilaterally withdrew in 2018 from the Iran nuclear deal, which was designed to regulate Iran's atomic activities in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions. Speaking at a security forum in Colorado, Blinken blamed the collapse of the nuclear deal for the acceleration in Iran's capabilities.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2024/07/19/iran-capable-of-producing-fissile-material-for-use-in-nuclear-weapons-soon-blinken>

Self-sufficiency in equipment production a top priority of Iran Army: commander

Tehran Times, July 13, 2024

During a speech conducted on July 12, 2024, Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard celebrated the swift progress achieved, attributing it to the extensive experience of retired military members, the expertise of specialised personnel, and research-driven training programs. He further explained that the blend of veteran experience and the innovative spirit of young researchers has played a crucial role in advancing the Air Defense Force's capabilities. "The daily acquisition of new experiences and ongoing progress within the Defense Force is truly commendable," Sabahifard added. Sabahifard also emphasized the continuous commitment of the Defense Force to progress, driven by dedicated efforts, the recruitment of skilled young professionals, and the integration of insights from seasoned veterans.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/50112/2/Self-sufficiency-in-equipment-production-a-top-priority-of-Iran>

Ministry of Intelligence reports 79 counter-terrorism operations across country

Tehran Times, July 13, 2024

In a recent announcement, the Ministry of Intelligence disclosed that its counter-terrorism unit has executed 79 targeted operations against terrorist elements from May to the beginning of July. According to the statement, these operations were aimed at thwarting terrorist plots across several provinces including Tehran, Alborz, Qazvin, Razavi Khorasan, Fars, Sistan and Baluchestan, Hormozgan, and Bushehr. The intensified efforts were prompted by the tragic incident involving the sudden crash of the President's plane and coinciding with the national presidential election. Highlighting the scope of the threat, the Ministry of Intelligence underscored that separatist groups operating from the Kurdistan region of Iraq had attempted to infiltrate the country with a semi-heavy military shipment via northwestern borders.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/50112/3/Ministry-of-Intelligence-reports-79-counter-terrorism-operations>

Three new radiation sites established in Iran's nuclear plants: official

Tehran Times, July 17, 2024

The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran has announced the launch of three new sites in the field of radiation at Iran's nuclear power plants. According to IRNA, during a cabinet meeting on July 17, 2024, Mohammad Eslami disclosed the inauguration of three new radiation sites in the nuclear industries over the first three months of the year.

Some key applications of radiation in the nuclear industries include radiotherapy, the production of diagnostic and therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals in the medical field; sterilisation of medical equipment, pest control in agriculture, and enhancing the shelf life of food in the health and hygiene sector; improving the properties of polymers, ion implantation, and the production of industrial radioisotopes in the industry.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/501235/Three-new-radiation-sites-established-in-Iran-s-nuclear-plants>

Iraq

Minister of Interior chairs Extensive Security Meeting at Karbala Ops Command HQ

Iraqi News Agency, July 16, 2024

Minister of Interior Abdul Amir Al-Shammari chaired an extensive security meeting at the headquarters of Karbala Operations Command to discuss the progress of the security and service plan for the commemoration of Ashura. In a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), the ministry noted that "Minister of Interior Abdul Amir Al-Shammari chaired an extensive security meeting today at the headquarters of Karbala Operations Command to discuss preparations for the tenth of Muharram, the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him), attended by the Karbala Operations Commander, the Chief of Police, and security, intelligence, and Popular Mobilization Forces."

<https://ina.iq/eng/33662-minister-of-interior-chairs-extensive-security-meeting-at-karbala-ops-command-hq.html>

Al-Sudani inaugurates four factories of MOD Industries Commission

Iraqi News Agency, July 20, 2024

Prime Minister Mohammed S. Al-Sudani inaugurated several defence production factories and rehabilitation facilities at the State Company for Military Industries within the industrial complex of the Defence Industries Commission in southern Baghdad. During his visit to the complex, Prime Minister Al-Sudani also inaugurated the first phase of the Transformer Distribution and Power Maintenance Workshop and agreed to contract with the Ministry of Electricity based on the workshop's annual production capacity. The Prime Minister launched the execution of the Capsule Factory for light ammunition and the Gunboat and Civilian Boat Production Plant. He also reviewed the progress of the Medium Ammunition and Oil Production projects and monitored the work at the Electric Vehicle Production Plant, which was implemented in partnership with the private sector and is expected to open by the end of this year.

<https://ina.iq/eng/33729-al-sudani-inaugurates-four-factories-of-mod-industries-commission.html>

NSA: Iraqi institutions remained unaffected by global shutdowns

Iraqi News Agency, July 19, 2024

The Cyber Security Center at the National Security Advisory confirmed, on July 19, 2024, that Iraqi government institutions were not affected by the global shutdowns. The centre stated, in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that

"Iraqi government institutions were not affected by the global glitch that hit Windows servers today, and our institutions' systems are operating normally and have not been exposed to any negative impact, and the transportation and communications sector in Iraq was not affected by global outages." He added that "technical systems around the world are witnessing massive disruptions amid suspicions that it is one of the largest cyber attacks in history.

<https://ina.iq/eng/33712-nsa-iraqi-institutions-remained-unaffected-by-global-shutdowns.html>

According to SMC, the Iraqi military production is comparable to match the output of major global factories

Iraqi News Agency, July 20, 2024

The Security Media Cell confirmed, July 20, 2024, that military industries are part of the requirements of sovereignty and the consolidation of security, and Iraqi production is comparable to what is found in major global factories. While calling for supporting military industries and purchasing their products, it explained the types currently equipped for the security forces. The head of the cell, Major General Tahseen Al-Khafaji, told the Iraqi News Agency (INA): "The Iraqi military industries are in continuous development and their production is comparable to that of major international factories."

<https://ina.iq/eng/33730-according-to-smc-the-iraqi-military-production-is-comparable-to-match-the-output-of-major-global-factories.html>

Israel

Israeli occupation seizes 441 Donums of Palestinians' lands West of Ramallah

Qatar News Agency, July 16, 2024

The Israeli occupation authorities, on Tuesday, seized 441 donums of the Palestinians lands in the villages of Shabtin, Deir Ammar, and Deir Qaddis, west of Ramallah. In a statement, the Colonization & Wall Resistance Commission (CWRC), said by seizing such lands, Israel is unequivocally intended to maintain control over the entire lands surrounding the Nili and Naale colonies established on the Palestinians lands and further complete their annexation that was initiated by the Israeli occupation authorities in the past years. On Jul.9, 2024, the Israeli occupation authorities seized 65 donums of the Palestinians' lands in villages of Qabalan and Beita, south of Nablus, in the West Bank.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-07/16/0061-israeli-occupation-seizes-441-donums-of-palestinians'-lands-west-of-ramallah>

After deadly Tel Aviv attack, restraint against Houthis was no longer deemed an option

The Times of Israel, July 20, 2024

Yemen's Houthi rebels, another of Iran's terror proxies avowedly seeking to destroy Israel, have been targeting the country since soon after Hamas's October 7 invasion and slaughter. And Israel had elected not to strike back, even after a missile scored a direct hit on Eilat in March. But in the early hours of July 19, 2024 morning, an

apparently upgraded Houthi drone evaded Israel's defences — for reasons thus far ascribed by the IDF to “human error” — and exploded in Tel Aviv, striking an apartment bloc and killing a 50-year-old Israeli, Yevgeny Ferder. The Houthis declared that this marked a “new phase” in their operations against Israel. At this point, Israeli security chiefs are reported to have told cabinet ministers who gathered in an emergency session on Shabbat afternoon, restraint was no longer an option.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-deadly-tel-aviv-attack-restraint-against-houthis-was-no-longer-deemed-an-option/>

Israel targets senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut air strike

Cyprus Mail, July 30, 2024

An Israeli air strike targeted a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut's southern suburbs late on July 30, 2024 in what the Israeli military said was retaliation for a cross-border rocket attack three days before that killed 12 children and teenagers. The head of Lebanese armed group Hezbollah's operations centre Muhsin Shukr survived an Israeli strike on the southern suburbs of Beirut aimed at killing him on July 30, 2024, two senior security sources told Reuters. A senior Lebanese security source said a senior Hezbollah commander had been the target of the air strike and his fate remained unclear. Lebanon's state-run national news agency said an Israeli air strike had targeted the area around Hezbollah's Shura Council in the Haret Hreik neighbourhood of the capital.

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2024/07/30/israeli-killed-by-rocket-from-lebanon/>

Jordan

Central region holds estimated 41,000 tonnes of yellowcake - JAEC

Jordan Times, July 16, 2024

Experts estimate that the central region holds about 41,000 tonnes of yellowcake uranium, according to Nuclear Reactors Officer at the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission (JAEC) Khaled Khasawneh. The Jordanian Uranium Mining Company manages the uranium project in the central region and is working to explore and develop optimal processing methods for uranium ore, he noted. He emphasised that nuclear power is one of the world's best low-carbon energy sources and can be used in a variety of sectors, noting that technical assessments and economic feasibility studies are underway for several SMR designs, as well as detailed feasibility studies for the use of nuclear power in water desalination and pumping in Jordan.

<https://jordantimes.com/news/local/central-region-holds-estimated-41000-tonnes-yellowcake-jaec>

Specialised lecture on nuclear power reactors and their contribution to reducing energy and water costs in Jordan

Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Kingdom of Jordan, July 16, 2024

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, in partnership with the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission, held a specialized lecture to discuss nuclear power reactors and their positive impact in addressing the challenges facing the energy and water sectors in Jordan. Al-Khasawneh discussed the mechanism of operation of nuclear power reactors and their future contribution to reducing energy production

costs compared to traditional energy generation sources that constitute additional financial burdens on governments. He pointed out the advantages of this type of reactor in terms of its low need for cooling water compared to traditional large nuclear power reactors, which results in wider options for choosing the reactor site away from water sources.

https://www.memr.gov.jo/En/NewsDetails/Specialized_lecture_on_nuclear_power_reactors_and_their_contribution_to_reducing_energy_and_water_costs_in_Jordan

Kuwait

India-Kuwait strengthen bilateral ties at 6th Foreign Office Consultations

Times Kuwait, July 24, 2024

The 6th round of India-Kuwait Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held on 24 July 2024 in Kuwait. The Indian delegation was led by H.E Mr Aseem R. Mahajan, Joint Secretary (Gulf) (JS), Ministry of External Affairs. H.E. Ambassador Sameeh Essa Johar Hayat, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs of Kuwait (AFM), headed the Kuwaiti delegation. During the FOC, both sides undertook a comprehensive review of bilateral relationship and exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. Expressing satisfaction with the traditionally strong bilateral ties, both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in various areas, including political ties, regular high-level exchanges, trade and investment, education, technology, health, culture and people to people contacts.

<https://timeskuwait.com/india-kuwait-strengthen-bilateral-ties-at-6th-foreign-office-consultations/>

Kuwait urges Security Council reform amid comprehensive UN overhaul

Times Kuwait, July 18, 2024

Dr. Abdullah Al-Yahya, Minister of Foreign Affairs, led Kuwait's delegation at the Security Council session on the existing international system, titled "Multilateral cooperation towards a more just, democratic, and sustainable world," Al Anba newspaper reported. Minister Al-Yahya delivered Kuwait's speech during yesterday evening's session, emphasising the importance of recommitting the international community to the goals, principles, and objectives of the United Nations Charter. He highlighted that the Charter serves as the cornerstone of collective international action and a framework for enhancing international cooperation in addressing global challenges.

<https://timeskuwait.com/kuwait-urges-security-council-reform-amid-comprehensive-un-overhaul/>

France, Kuwait are partners in stability and security

Times Kuwait, July 16, 2024

Ambassador of France H.E. Claire Le Flécher affirmed that France and Kuwait have a lot in common and hold a shared commitment to pluralism, peace, and international solidarity. She also praised Kuwait's exemplary humanitarian commitment, especially in supporting the civilian populations in Gaza and Sudan. Recollecting the three years she spent in Kuwait representing France, Ambassador Le Flécher noted that the two countries

“share a lot and have a lot to build together”. She added that during her tenure, the two countries “were able to elevate the French-Kuwaiti strategic dialogue to the level of a ministerial meeting”, and to continue developing the strong bilateral relationship. The French Ambassador stressed that France and Kuwait are partners in stability and security.

<https://timeskuwait.com/france-kuwait-are-partners-in-stability-and-security/>

Lebanon

Lebanon’s Hezbollah confirms senior commander killed in Israeli strike

Al Arabiya, July 31, 2024

Lebanon’s armed group Hezbollah confirmed on July 31, 2024 that senior military commander Fuad Shukr had been killed, more than 24 hours after an Israeli strike hit a building in the southern suburb of the Lebanese capital that he was in. A source close to Hezbollah earlier told AFP that the body of top commander Fuad Shukr had been recovered. The strike was followed by another, hours later, which killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, triggering fears the war in Gaza could escalate into a wider regional conflict. The Israeli military said its July 30th evening strike had “eliminated” Shukr, who it blamed for carrying out a weekend rocket attack on the annexed Golan Heights that killed 12 children in a Druze Arab town.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/07/31/body-of-hezbollah-s-commander-fuad-shukr-found-in-rubble-in-beirut>

Oman

Oman confirms commitment to nuclear non-proliferation

Foreign Ministry of Oman, July 24, 2024

Oman has stressed its commitment to the nuclear non-proliferation system, especially the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its three pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. This came in a statement by Oman's Permanent Delegation during the meeting of the Second Preparatory Committee for the 11th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons 2026 at the United Nations in Geneva. The Ambassador said that the voluntary accession of all Arab countries to the treaty, and their acceptance of subjecting their nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency’s comprehensive safeguards system, represents a clear and frank confirmation of their good intentions in adhering to the international non-proliferation agenda.

<https://www.fm.gov.om/oman-confirms-commitment-to-nuclear-non-proliferation-system/>

Establishing nuclear-weapon-free zone in Middle East enhances security, stability: Oman

Gulf Digital News, July 31, 2024

The Sultanate of Oman has said that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East constitutes an urgent necessity towards the realization of security and stability, noting that a NWFZ in the Middle East would bring about political, geopolitical,

economic and humanitarian benefits to the Middle East and the world at large. Al Ma'ashani delivered the statement during the meeting of the Second Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) being convened in Geneva from 22 July to 2 August 2024 at the United Nations premises. Oman also called upon the global community to exert immediate and sufficient pressure to compel Israel to implement Security Council Resolution No. 487 of 1981.

<https://www.gdnonline.com/Details/1319220/Establishing-nuclear-weapon-free-zone-in-Middle-East-enhances-security,-stability-Oman>

Qatar

U.S. Flies B-52H Bomber Over Mideast For 32 hours: Qatar provides key support as Washington sends message to Hezbollah

Military Watch Magazine, July 28, 2024

The U.S. Air Force was confirmed on July 27 to have deployed a B-52H nuclear capable strategic bomber two days prior for a 32 hour flight across the Middle East, in response to attacks by local paramilitaries on U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria on July 25 and July 26. The aircraft was based on Romania, and flew over the Mediterranean Sea, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, before reaching the Persian Gulf and turning back. The operation also closely coincided with rising tensions between Israel and the Lebanese paramilitary group Hezbollah, which have been exchanging fire since October 2023. The overflight over Saudi Arabia was also interpreted as a

show of force to the Yemeni Ansurullah Coalition. During its flight the B-52 bomber flew alongside locally based A-10 attack jets, and notably also with Qatari Air Force F-15QA fighters.

<https://militarywatchmagazine.com/article/b52h-32hrs-qatar-message-hezbollah>

The State of Qatar stresses importance of guaranteeing an independent Palestinian State via a Two-State Solution

Qatar News Agency, July 18, 2024

The State of Qatar has stressed the need for irreversible steps to achieve a two-state solution that ensures the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The State of Qatar reiterated that the Gaza Strip is an integral part of Palestinian land and rejected any attempts to cause demographic or regional changes there, as affirmed by Resolution 2735. The State of Qatar also highlighted that temporary solutions are insufficient and that a sustainable solution is necessary in accordance with international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative. This came in a statement by HE Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani during the quarterly open debate of the UN Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian issue, at the UN headquarters in New York.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-07/18/0056-the-state-of-qatar-stresses-importance-of-guaranteeing-an-independent-palestinian-state-via-a-two-state-solution>

Egypt, Qatar commit to regional stability and security

Egypt Today, July 31, 2024

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, received Bader Abdelatty, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigration, and Affairs of Egyptians Abroad, during his visit to the Qatari capital, Doha. Ambassador Abu Zeid explained that the meeting touched on the continued efforts of the two countries and the joint coordination between them to end the war in Gaza, in light of the convergence of the visions of the two countries on the need to reach an immediate ceasefire and ensure the continued flow of humanitarian aid sufficient to meet the needs of the Palestinian people, and the demand for the need for the international community to assume its responsibilities to achieve peace in the Middle East in accordance with the two-state solution, as well as the efforts of Cairo and Doha to prevent the conflict from spreading in the region and joint work to ensure the security and stability of the region.

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/133842/Egypt-Qatar-commit-to-regional-stability-and-security>

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia condemns Israeli threats of nuclear weapon use against Palestinians

Saudi Gazette, July 25, 2024

Saudi Arabia condemned incendiary remarks and threats made recently by an Israeli government official regarding the use of nuclear weapons against Palestinians. The Permanent Representative to the United Nations and

International Organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Abdulmohsen bin Khothaila, described these statements as violations of international law and threats to global peace and security. During the general discussion session of the preparatory committee, he emphasized Saudi Arabia's commitment to peaceful international cooperation as a means to achieve prosperity, stability, and global security. He stressed the importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and the need for its full implementation to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/644465/SAUDI-ARABIA/Saudi-Arabia-condemns-Israeli-threats-of-nuclear-weapon-use-against-Palestinians>

Saudi Arabia wants to fully recognize Israel in exchange for arms, nuclear facility — Biden

Jacob Magid

The Times of Israel, July 16, 2024

US President Joe Biden says Saudi Arabia wants to normalise relations with Israel in exchange for security guarantees from the United States. Riyadh has not publicly gone this far, and its officials have reiterated that their country will not normalise relations with Israel unless Jerusalem agrees to establish a pathway to a future Palestinian state — a condition Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has flatly rejected. Biden doesn't mention the Palestinian condition, and instead asserts that what Saudi Arabia wants in exchange for normalizing relations with Israel is a guarantee that the US will provide them

weapons “if they’re attacked by other Arab nations — one just around the corner.”

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/saudi-arabia-wants-to-fully-recognize-israel-in-exchange-for-arms-nuclear-facility-biden/

US, Saudi Arabia sign new deal for civilian space cooperation and research

Al Arabiya, July 16, 2024

The US and Saudi Arabia have signed a new agreement for civilian space cooperation and research, the State Department announced on July 16, 2024. Known as the “Framework Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Cooperation in Aeronautics and the Exploration and Use of Airspace and Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes,” the new deal will establish a legal framework to facilitate and strengthen collaboration between the two countries. The agreement is also an acknowledgement of the Artemis Accords, which the US signed in October 2020 and Saudi Arabia signed in July 2022, which commits member nations to the transparent, safe, and responsible exploration of space.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/united-states/2024/07/16/us-saudi-arabia-sign-new-deal-for-civilian-space-cooperation-and-research>

Training for budding nuclear engineers launched in Saudi Arabia

Arab News, July 17, 2024

The Kingdom has launched a summer training program for aspiring nuclear engineers, the Saudi Press Agency reported

on July 17, 2024. The initiative, spearheaded by the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy and King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, targets undergraduate nuclear engineering students. According to the SPA, the eight-week program will be held partly in Saudi Arabia and later at the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute in South Korea. The curriculum includes lectures and practical experiments, in addition to visits to nuclear facilities and reactors in South Korea.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2551326/saudi-arabia>

Syria

Rockets launched at bases hosting US troops in Iraq and Syria

Agence France-Presse

Voice of America, July 26, 2024

Several rockets were launched on July 25 and 26, 2024 against bases hosting troops from the U.S.-led anti-jihadist coalition in Iraq and Syria, security officials and a war monitor said. Such attacks were frequent early in the war between Israel and Hamas Palestinian militants in Gaza but since then have largely halted. A United States official said initial reports indicated that projectiles landed outside the base without causing injuries or damage to the base. At least one rocket also fell near a base of the coalition in the Conoco gas field in Deir Ezzor province of eastern Syria, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/rockets-launched-at-bases-hosting-us-troops-in-iraq-and-syria/7713780.html>

Cross-border ops, Syria thaw top agenda for Türkiye's security council

Betül Usta

Daily Sabah, July 24, 2024

From the war on terrorism to normalisation with Damascus, Türkiye's National Security Council (MGK) will be tackling a series of issues at its first meeting in two months. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is set to convene his aides, minister and Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) commanders in the capital Ankara on July 25, 2024. The tentative push for a rapprochement with Syria is also on the agenda, along with possible steps to be taken and the recent conditions on the ground. The council will discuss Turkish operations in Syria, which target the PKK's local offshoot, the YPG, as well as support to the terrorist group from formations and countries like the U.S.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/cross-border-ops-syria-thaw-top-agenda-for-turkiyes-security-council/news>

Israel, Lebanon, Syria: Cross-border violence to continue and could potentially escalate into late August

Crisis 24, July 31, 2024

Tensions along the Israel-Lebanon frontier, as well as cross-border violence between the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Lebanese Hizballah (LH), will remain unpredictable and could intensify through at least late August. Major escalations in the conflict between Israel and the LH militant group have greatly increased after a rocket attack hit a soccer field in the town of Majdal Shams in the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights on July 27, killing at least 12

people and wounding some 20 others. As of late July, intensive diplomatic efforts by the US and French governments to avoid escalation into a broader conflict remain ongoing.

<https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2024/07/israel-lebanon-syria-cross-border-violence-to-continue-and-could-potentially-escalate-into-late-august-update-18>

Turkiye

Iraqi-Turkish power transmission line becomes operational with 300 Megawatts Capacity

Qatar News Agency, July 21, 2024

The Iraqi-Turkish power transmission line to supply the northern region with a capacity of 300 megawatts, became operational on Sunday. Also, the line will energise three Iraqi governorates. A statement from the office of the Iraqi Prime Minister reported that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shia Al Sudani inaugurated, via a video conference, the line through the KIsik station west of Mosul to supply the northern region. Al Sudani highlighted the importance of establishing a connection that extends to the Turkish grid and beyond to Europe, viewing it as a strategic energy option for the future. He added that this initiative is part of the government's vision for connecting with neighbouring countries' grids and aims to complete the connection with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) electric grid by the end of 2024.

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-07/21/0051-iraqi-turkish-power-transmission-line-becomes-operational-with-300-megawatts-capacity>

United Arab Emirates

UAE could start tender process this year for second nuclear power plant: Report

Middle East Eye, July 17, 2024

The United Arab Emirates is mulling building a second nuclear power plant as it looks for ways to address growing electricity demand in the Emirates, according to a report by Reuters. The deliberations are based on Emirati predictions that there will be a substantial increase in electricity use in the coming years as a result of the UAE's growing population and investments in the industrial sector. "The government is looking at this option. No final decision has been made in terms of the tender process but I can tell you that the government is actively exploring this option," Hamad Alkaabi, the UAE's ambassador to Austria and its permanent representative to the UN's nuclear agency, told Reuters.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/uae-could-start-tender-process-second-nuclear-power-plant-year-report>

Yemen

Israel strikes Houthi targets in Yemen one day after Tel Aviv drone attack

Rina Bassist

Al Monitor, July 20, 2024

The Israeli military said it had carried out strikes against Houthi military targets in the port city Al Hudaydah in western Yemen on July 20, 2024, just a day after a drone launched by the Houthis killed an Israeli citizen in Tel Aviv and injured several others. The Iran-backed group has been firing missiles and drones toward Israel

since the war in Gaza began last October, yet Israeli and US forces have shot down the vast majority of these. According to the Israeli military, the Houthis have launched more than 200 drones and cruise missiles at Israel since the Oct. 7 assault by Hamas, but only one drone and one cruise missile made contact with Israeli soil.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/07/israel-strikes-houthi-targets-yemen-one-day-after-tel-aviv-drone-attack>

NUCLEAR AND ARMS CONTROL CENTRE

Sylloge on West Asia is compiled by Ms. Shipra Dwivedi

Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

**No. 1, Development Enclave,
Rao Tula Ram Marg,
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi-110 010
Telephone: 91-11-26717983;
Fax: 91-11-26154191,
Website: www.idsa.in**



**MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES**
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान