

DAILY TRACKER

NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. Iran dodged formal diplomatic censure at the United Nations nuclear watchdog as envoys opted to try coaxing Tehran back to the negotiating table rather than mount pressure over an investigation into decades-old traces of atomic material. By avoiding an official rebuke, the International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors created an opening for the resumption of stalled talks with world powers aiming to restore a 2015 deal that had rolled back Iran's nuclear advances in exchange for sanctions relief.

Source: <https://www.bloombergquint.com/global-economics/iran-dodges-diplomatic-censure-again-at-un-nuclear-watchdog> 17 September 2021

2. Nuclear power has critics everywhere, but in few places is it as controversial as Kazakhstan, where the Soviet nuclear weapons program left a legacy of contamination and illness. Since 1999, when the country's only nuclear power plant, in Aktau, was closed, the government has occasionally discussed building a new one. Officials raise the subject every few years, opinion leaders voice suspicion, and then the topic fades away. Now the president has thrown his weight behind the idea, saying nuclear power is imperative to meet Kazakhstan's energy needs, which are overwhelmingly served by burning dirty coal. Activists are alarmed, proponents smell a chance to clean up the energy mix, and political analysts see the hand of Russia.

Source: <https://eurasianet.org/nuclear-power-riles-kazakhs-once-again> 17 September 2021

3. For the first time since the Fukushima Daiichi accident a decade ago, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has revised up its projections of the potential growth of nuclear power capacity for electricity generation during the coming decades. The change in the IAEA's annual outlook for this low-carbon energy source does not yet mark a new trend, but it comes as the world aims to move away from fossil fuels to fight climate change. Many countries are considering the introduction of nuclear power to boost reliable and clean energy production.

Source: <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/iaea-increases-projections-for-nuclear-power-use-in-2050> 16 September 2021



- Spain's nuclear power generating industry will not be able to continue operating if a draft law approved on 14 September by the Council of Ministers is enacted, according to the country's nuclear industry forum Foronuclear. The law, together with other proposed measures, would impose an "excessive tax burden" on the industry, which Foronuclear says would make the continued operation of nuclear power plants economically unfeasible. Under Spain's nuclear phase-out policy, its nuclear fleet is scheduled to shut down by 2035.

Source: <https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Foronuclear-warns-of-early-Spanish-nuclear-exit> 16 September 2021

- With Australia making a deal with the United States and the United Kingdom to begin a nuclear-powered submarine program, we can expect the Aussie subs will look a lot like the latest versions in the US and British arsenals. The fleets of the US Navy and Royal Navy have two kinds of submarines -- categorized as attack and ballistic missile. Both are powered by nuclear reactors, which convert water into high-pressure steam that turns turbines to propel the subs. But attack subs and ballistic missile subs -- often called "boomers" -- serve very different purposes. Australia is signing up for the nuclear-powered option, or attack sub, rather than the boomers, which are nuclear-armed, with nuclear warheads on their ballistic missiles.

Source: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/09/17/australia/nuclear-submarines-aucus-explainer-intl-hnk-ml/index.html> 17 September 2021

MISSILES/BIO WEAPONS

- Cruise missiles, unlike ballistic missiles, can swerve and turn through most of their flight - allowing them to attack from unexpected angles. It shows North Korea is continuing its pursuit of ever more diverse and sophisticated means to deliver nuclear weapons. It's clear the pandemic, a spate of natural disasters, and internal economic difficulties have done little to deter North Korea's fundamental prioritisation of its nuclear deterrent. The latest successful test brings up a series of questions - why is North Korea doing this now, how significant is this, and what does it tell us about its priorities?

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58592308> 17 September 2021



2. Tensions have risen dramatically on the Korean Peninsula in recent days after North and South Korea tested a series of ballistic missiles. On September 12, North Korea said it tested a “strategic” long-range cruise missile that successfully hit targets 1,500km (930 miles) away before falling into North Korean territorial waters.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/16/infographic-missile-programmes-north-korea-v-south-korea-interactive> *17 September 2021*

3. Australia said Thursday that more US troops will rotate through the island nation and that the allies will cooperate on missiles, the latest joint steps amid shared concerns over a rising China. Australia announced a three-way alliance with the United States and Britain in which Canberra will acquire nuclear-powered submarines, enraging France whose own major contract for conventional submarines was scrapped. Outlining further measures on a visit to Washington, Defense Minister Peter

Source: <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/australia-says-more-us-troops-to-come-eyes-missile-work-2543627> *17 September 2021*

4. North Korea recently said that it successfully launched ballistic missiles from a train for the first time and was continuing to bolster its defences, after the two Koreas test-fired missiles. As per Pyongyang’s official Korean Central News Agency, the missiles were launched during a drill of a “railway-borne missile regiment”. This transported the weapons system along rail tracks in the country’s mountainous central region and accurately struck a sea target 800km away.

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/north-korea-fired-ballistic-missiles-from-train-for-the-first-time-ever-413670> *17 September 2021*

5. The Korean Peninsula has seen an incredible number of missile tests this week, including first looks of new advanced South Korean weapons. The most notable test may be South Korea’s successful test-launch of a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), following successful precursor tests last week.

Source: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/09/week-of-tit-for-tat-missile-tests-on-korean-peninsula/> *17 September 2021*



6. Australia will acquire greater long-range strike capability across the air, land and maritime domains, including Tomahawk cruise missiles for Royal Australian Navy's Hobart class destroyers, to "enhance Australia's ability to deter and respond to potential security challenges".

Source: <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2021/09/australia-to-procure-tomahawk-and-hypersonic-missiles/> 17 September 2021

7. Taiwan's Cabinet on Thursday (Sept 16) approved a military weapons procurement plan that allows for the mass production of an extended-range variant of the Hsiung Feng III anti-ship missile, as part of the defense ministry's development of land-based anti-ship missile systems. An analyst familiar with national defense technology research pointed out the maximum range of this new Hsiung Feng III missile is almost 400 kilometers, which greatly increases Taiwan's ability to keep China's military at bay, Liberty Times reported.

Source: <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4290059> 16 September 2021

8. The 100th Missile Defense Brigade's Detachment 1 provided the necessary human-in-the-loop to execute the Missile Defense Agency's successful launch of a ground-based interceptor during the Sept. 12 flight test of the nation's ground-based midcourse defense system. This small team of 100th Missile Defense Brigade Soldiers plays a vital role in the U.S. Northern Command's GMD mission to defend the U.S. homeland and designated areas from long-range ballistic missile threats.

Source: https://www.army.mil/article/250346/100th_missile_defense_brigade_helps_complete_mda_flight_test 17 Septemehr 2021

9. Russia's Aerospace Force has successfully launched a missile interceptor, the Defense Ministry told the media. "At the Sary-Shagan test site of the Strategic Missile Force (in the Republic of Kazakhstan) a combat crew of an Air Defense and Missile Defense unit of Russia's Aerospace Force has successfully carried out another test launch of a new missile defense system," the Defense Ministry said.

Source: <https://tass.com/defense/1338761> 17 September 2021

10. Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Republic of Austria and the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations and international organisations in Vienna H E Sultan bin Salmeen Al Mansouri (pictured) delivered the statements of the Arab Group before the session of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) currently being held in Vienna, on Israeli nuclear capabilities, the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East, and nuclear and radiological safety.

Source: <https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/17/09/2021/Qatar-envoy-addresses-IAEA-Board-of-Governors-on-Israel%E2%80%99s-nuke-capabilities> 17 September 2021

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

1. China has lashed out at Australia over its decision to enter a partnership with the US and UK to boost security in the Indo-Pacific. The partnership, referred to as 'AUKUS', was announced on Thursday and envisages Australia being provided with technology to build nuclear submarines and the three nations cooperating in cutting-edge research. Zhao Lijian, the spokesperson for China's foreign ministry, noted on Thursday that the US and UK were "using nuclear exports for geopolitical gaming tools and applying double standards, which is extremely irresponsible". Lijian said the partnership, "greatly undermines regional peace and stability, aggravates the arms race and hurts the international non-proliferation efforts". Lijian called on the three nations to "shake off their Cold War mentality and do more to contribute to peace and stability".

Source: <https://www.theweek.in/news/world/2021/09/17/submarine-deal-makes-australia-potential-nuclear-strike-target-chinese-media.htm> 17 September 2021

2. Nuclear weapons and climate change are two of the great challenges facing the international community. I nearly said "the" two challenges facing us but, given the continuing pandemic, that would have been to invite ridicule. But those two are the great medium to long term challenges and our success, or lack of it, in mastering them will be with us for far longer than the pandemic and its aftermath. Today's conference is also timely as it marks the International Day against Nuclear Testing. The good news on that issue is that we do now have a de facto moratorium on nuclear testing observed by all except North Korea. The less good news is that it is not a *de jure* binding international treaty subscribed to worldwide. So it remains fragile and vulnerable. And we must therefore not give up on



efforts to achieve the necessary ratifications to bring the CTBT into force and to give the CTBTO the mandate it needs to carry out its work.

Source: <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/nuclear-weapons-and-climate-change-the-two-great-challenges/> *17 September 2021*

3. Tensions have risen dramatically on the Korean Peninsula in recent days after North and South Korea tested a series of ballistic missiles. On September 12, North Korea said it tested a “strategic” long-range cruise missile that successfully hit targets 1,500km (930 miles) away before falling into North Korean territorial waters.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/16/infographic-missile-programmes-north-korea-v-south-korea-interactive> *16 September 2021*

UN REFORMS

1. Brazilian President **Jair Bolsonaro’s reluctance to get a COVID-19 vaccine** is a rarity in his country, and may complicate his plans to attend the UN’s General Assembly next week. The assembly’s leader, Abdulla Shahid, announced Wednesday that all attendees must be vaccinated to speak at the gathering, citing a New York City policy. That could bar Bolsonaro, a beleaguered right-wing leader seeking to rehabilitate his image abroad.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/un-rule-hurdle-brazil-vaccine-skeptic-bolsonaro-7514739/> *17 September 2021*

2. Two important events hosted by the United Nations are coming up that are widely hoped to help address what the UN calls the “dual challenge” – fighting climate change and ensuring that poorer countries can develop sustainably. Energy is a central theme in both. For the first time in 40 years, the UN General Assembly is convening a global summit of world leaders focused solely on energy. If all goes as planned on Sept 24, 2021, and in meetings surrounding the summit, they will consider a road map that includes tripling investment in renewable power and making affordable modern and clean energy available to everyone everywhere within the decade.



Source: https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/4-strategies-for-a-un-breakthrough-on-energy-and-climate-change-121091700175_1.html *17 September 2021*

3. UN official meets Afghan minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, discusses humanitarian aid. Sirajuddin Haqqani, who is one of the world's most wanted terrorists is founder of the Haqqani network, which was designated as a terror group by the United States in 2012. Sirajuddin carries a bounty of USD 5 million on his head.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/unofficial-meets-afghan-minister-sirajuddin-haqqani-discusses-humanitarian-aid-101631801369557.html> *17 September 2021*

4. In international acclaim, 'CoronaSafe Network', an open-source pandemic management software solution co-developed by software industry volunteers and a clutch of engineering students from India, has been recognised by the United Nations as a Global Digital Public Good. Digital Public Good is the highest recognition accorded by the UN to open-source software that can help achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in low- and middle-income countries.

Source: <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/un-awards-pandemic-management-software-co-developed-by-indian-students-11631792208573.html> *17 September 2021*