

## **DAILY TRACKER**

### **NUCLEAR ISSUES**

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1. In the near future, new research from Texas A&M University scientists could help enhance the efficiency of nuclear power facilities. They discovered the main underlying components that cause radiation damage to nuclear reactors using a mix of physics-based modelling and advanced simulations, which could lead to the development of more radiation-tolerant, high-performance materials. "To improve performance, reactors must either run at higher power or burn fuel for longer periods of time. However, the risk of wear and tear increases in these environments," stated Dr. Karim Ahmed, an assistant professor in the Department of Nuclear Engineering.  
Source: <https://scitechdaily.com/new-research-could-help-boost-the-efficiency-of-nuclear-power-plants-in-the-near-future/>
2. Uranium prices have skyrocketed this year, making it one of the most sought-after commodities in 2021. In September, uranium spot prices reached a nine-year high and are up over 50% year to date. "We are starting to see countries around the world accepting nuclear energy. Those countries realize if they want to reach a carbon neutral future, nuclear energy has to be part of the equation," emphasized Jon Bey, President and CEO of Standard Uranium. At the Mines and Money London conference, Bey chatted with Michelle Makori, Lead Anchor and Editor-in-Chief of Kitco News. Standard Uranium is a uranium prospecting firm based in Canada.  
Source: <https://www.kitco.com/news/2021-12-09/Uranium-will-rally-in-the-next-5-years-as-a-shift-to-nuclear-energy-is-inevitable.html>
3. The outlook for nuclear energy has shifted dramatically in recent weeks. Major center-left forces have switched their posture from opposition to support in time for the global COP26 session. While a year ago, French President Emmanuel Macron called for reducing the nuclear share of France's electric power from 75 percent to 50 percent (thus eliminating the world's only truly decarbonized major electric-power grid), on November 9 he called for "relaunching construction of nuclear reactors in our country . . . to guarantee France's energy independence, to guarantee our country's electricity supply and achieve our objectives, in particular carbon neutrality in 2050."  
Source: <https://www.nationalreview.com/2021/12/the-new-nuclear-moment/>
4. This winter, Louisianians are dealing with increased energy expenses as well as lowering temperatures. Meanwhile, President Joe Biden is pursuing policies that would further suffocate the US energy industry and the economy that relies on it, such as considering shutting down the Line 5 pipeline.  
Source: <https://rollcall.com/2021/12/03/nuclear-energy-is-key-to-americas-economic-and-geopolitical-future/>
5. According to an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team of experts, Uganda's government is dedicated to constructing the infrastructure needed for a safe, secure, and peaceful nuclear power



programme. The government commissioned the eight-day Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) project.

Source: <https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/IAEA-completes-Ugandan-nuclear-infrastructure-revi>

## MISSILES/ BIO WEAPONS

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1. Finland has ordered 64 F-35A multi-role fighters from US contractor Lockheed Martin to replace its fleet of ageing fighter jets in a deal for 8.4 billion euros (\$9.5 billion).  
Source: <https://twitter.com/AFP/status/1469312112988233737>
2. India's Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter plane successfully tested the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile. Experts regard this as a watershed moment, as the deadly combo of BrahMos and Sukhoi can finally put an end to enemy offensive capabilities. According to a Ministry of Defense press release, "the missile launched from the aircraft followed the pre-planned trajectory and met all mission objectives."  
Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/deadly-combo-su-30mki-jets-brahmos-missiles-is-bad-news-for-pakistan/>
3. According to Department of Defense spokesman Lt. Col. Anton Semelroth, the US sent 30 Javelin anti-tank missile systems and 180 missiles to Ukraine in October. "The \$60 million Presidential Drawdown package previously announced on Sept. 1 included 30 Javelin Command Launch Units and 180 missiles. The Javelins were delivered to Ukraine on Oct. 23," Semelroth said at a press briefing on late Thursday.  
Source: [https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/us-delivered-30-javelin-anti-tank-missile-systems-to-ukraine-in-october-121121000377\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/us-delivered-30-javelin-anti-tank-missile-systems-to-ukraine-in-october-121121000377_1.html)
4. Tensions in Ukraine might trigger a repetition of the Cuban missile crisis during the Cold War, according to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov. The deployment of Soviet nuclear weapons on the Caribbean island sparked the Cuban crisis, prompting the US to enforce a naval blockade to prevent Moscow from bringing in more.  
Source: <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/ukraine-tensions-could-cause-repeat-of-cuban-missile-crisis-russia/news>
5. After the S-400 and AK-203 deals, a top Russian official warned a key Indian daily that the next significant agreement between India and Russia might be on the Igla-S man-portable missile defense system. On December 6, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had summit-level talks in New Delhi, following the signing of 28 agreements/MoUs to increase cooperation in defense and space, among other sectors.  
Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/igla-s-missile-india-likely-to-acquire-air-defense-system-from-russia/>



6. Putin described the violence in Donbas, Ukraine's eastern region, as "genocide-like." The military build-up by Moscow along the border continues.  
Source: <https://www.news18.com/videos/ivideos/india-test-fires-air-version-of-brahmos-supersonic-cruise-missile-1-why-this-is-significant-4538432.html>
7. The Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) are said to be solely responsible for the defense of Japanese soil and have no offensive capabilities. The JSDF is strongly geared around maritime defense and naval force to protect against attacks from the sea, given it is an island nation.  
Source: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/upgrades-japans-type-12-missiles-will-help-it-fly-higher-and-farther-197683>
8. According to the commander of US Army Japan, the US Army lacks sufficient missile defence capabilities at its locations in the western Pacific, where threats come from a variety of sources, not just China. Despite the fact that a Chinese orbital hypersonic missile test alarmed US authorities this summer, Maj. Gen. Joel Vowell simply cited China "building more capabilities" as a bullet point on his list of concerns every day.  
Source: <https://breakingdefense.com/2021/12/not-enough-us-defensive-capabilities-in-asia-us-army-japan-commander/>

## NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

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1. If the difficult discussions over Iran's nuclear programme, which started Thursday in Vienna, fail to produce a resolution, US President Joe Biden has directed his team to prepare "additional measures." "The president has asked his team to be prepared in the event that diplomacy fails and we must turn to other options," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters.  
Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/biden-orders-to-prepare-additional-measures-in-case-iran-nuclear-diplomacy-fails/>
2. "In the event that diplomacy fails and we must turn to other options," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters. As tense discussions with Iran started in Vienna, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said, "The president has asked his team to be prepared in the event that diplomacy fails and we must turn to other options... we will have no choice but to take additional measures".  
Source: <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/us-president-joe-biden-orders-preparations-in-case-iran-nuclear-diplomacy-fails-2644789>
3. The remaining signatories to the agreement are meeting, and European governments are urging Iran to bring 'realistic ideas' to help ease tensions. Negotiations between Iran and foreign powers to save the shattered 2015 nuclear deal have resumed in Vienna after a brief hiatus, with emotions rising after Tehran

made demands last week that European countries harshly criticised.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/9/talks-on-iran-nuclear-deal-resume-in-vienna-amid-disagreement>

4. According to an Iranian website, 'productive talks' between the UN Atomic Energy Agency and officials from the Islamic Republic are also taking place in Vienna. Negotiations between Iran and foreign powers to save the shattered 2015 nuclear deal are progressing, according to a European official and an Iranian media report. "My opinion is that we are simply advancing in quite the logical way of the discussion," a senior European Union official told Reuters when asked if the European Union, which is chairing the negotiations in Vienna, is enthusiastic about the new Iranian negotiating team's attitude.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-nuclear-talks-advancing-logically-says-eu-official/>

5. On Thursday, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida committed to do everything in his power to ensure that real progress is made at a summit in January to review the Non-Proliferation Treaty and urge action to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/japan-pm-push-progress-npt-meet-scrap-nuclear-weapons-2021-12-09/>

6. According to the ministry's press service, the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement praising the outcomes of the P5 Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. On December 2-3 in Paris, representatives from the five Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Nuclear Weapon States (NWS), also known as the P5, including the US, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China, met to discuss the agenda for the 10th NPT Review Conference. The NPT meeting will be held in New York from January 4 to 28, 2022, at the United Nations headquarters.

Source: <https://astanatimes.com/2021/12/kazakhstan-praises-results-of-recent-p5-conference-on-non-proliferation-of-nuclear-weapons/>

7. On Thursday in Washington, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz met with his American counterpart Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken. According to Reuters, US officials said that the meeting would explore possible war scenarios against Iran's nuclear programme.

Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/iran-warns-military-option-doomed-fail-us-israel-talk-deal-alternatives-1658238>

8. According to the Saudi publication Okaz, a former Syrian parliamentarian and current member of the Syrian opposition has stated that Iran and North Korea are assisting the Syrian dictatorship in developing a nuclear reactor. According to Mohammad Barmo, a member of Syria's opposition in the north, the Syrian regime of Bashar Al-Assad is working on a scheme to build a nuclear reactor in the Al-Ghab plain in northwestern Syria, with the help of its allies Iran and North Korea.

Source: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20211209-assad-north-korea-iran-developing-nuclear-reactor-syria-opposition-member-claims/>

9. According to thermal infrared footage released by a Washington-based think tank on Wednesday, North Korea is operating its main plutonium-producing nuclear reactor at the Yongbyon site. Thermal imaging analysis uncovered "clear and irrefutable proof" that the 5-megawatt reactor was operational, according to the CSIS Korea Chair in a report. The Yongbyon Nuclear Complex's 5-megawatt nuclear reactor, which is capable of producing about six kg of plutonium each year, is at the heart of Pyongyang's proliferation operations.

Source: <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20211209000644>

## UN REFORMS

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1. At a UNSC open debate on "Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Security in the Context of Terrorism and Climate Change," India highlighted terrorism and climate change on Thursday. Terrorism, according to India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, TS Tirumurti, is a serious worldwide problem. Even 20 years after the landmark resolution 1373 was approved in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks, the battle against terrorism is still important.  
Source: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/india-highlights-terrorism-climate-change-at-uns-c-open-debate/articleshow/88197518.cms>
2. The United Nations Security Council has voiced concern over the jail terms imposed on Myanmar's deposed leaders. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has voiced concern about the sentencing of Aung San Suu Kyi, the former de facto leader who was deposed in a military coup on February 1st, and deposed President Win Myint.  
Source: <https://citytoday.news/uns-c-concerned-over-jail-sentences-for-ousted-myanmar-leaders/>
3. Two recent "terrorist" acts in Iraq have been harshly condemned by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The Security Council members issued a press statement condemning the terrorist incident in Basra on Tuesday, which left at least four people dead and 20 more injured.  
Source: <https://www.socialnews.xyz/2021/12/08/uns-c-condemns-recent-terrorist-attacks-in-iraq/>
4. The World Food Programme (WFP) has halted food delivery in Ethiopia's Kombolcha and Dessie towns after supplies were looted and personnel were unable to stop it due to intimidation, including being held at gunpoint, according to the UN.  
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/un-suspends-food-distribution-two-towns-ethiopia-after-looting-2021-12-08/>
5. Large amounts of food supplies were robbed from UN warehouses in northern Ethiopia on Wednesday, resulting in the suspension of food delivery in two towns, according to the UN. "The World Food Programme teams on the ground were not able to prevent the looting in the face of extreme intimidation, including staff being held at gunpoint," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters. "As a result, WFP has suspended food distributions in the towns of Dessie and Kombolcha."  
Source: <https://www.voanews.com/a/un-food-stocks-looted-in-n-ethiopia-some-aid-distribution-halted-6344726.html>
6. In a statement, UN Political Chief Rosemary DeCarlo expressed concern over the position of women

and girls in Afghanistan, saying, "The progress that has been made in this area must not be undone." On Thursday, the UN political chief concluded a three-day visit to Afghanistan by saying she had "frank and useful" discussions with a wide range of people, including senior Taliban officials, about "about what needs to be done to bring about an Afghanistan that is inclusive, abides by its human rights obligations and is a resolute partner in suppressing terrorism."

Source: <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/un-political-chief-urges-taliban-to-be-inclusive-on-three-day-visit-to-afghanistan/404493>

7. The United Nations humanitarian head warned that Afghanistan's economic collapse "is happening before our eyes" and begged the international community to intervene to stop "the freefall" before more people die. In an interview with The Associated Press on Thursday, Martin Griffiths said that, in addition to emergency humanitarian aid, donor countries must agree to support basic services for Afghans, such as education, hospitals, electricity, and paying civil servants — and they must inject liquidity into the economy, which has seen the banking system "pretty well shut down."

Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2021/dec/10/afghanistans-economy-is-collapsing-before-our-eyes-un-2394017.html>

8. The subject of this year's International Human Rights Day is 'Equality.' "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," says Article 1 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "The principles of equality and non-discrimination are paramount for the enjoyment of human rights by all. We call upon the Taliban to make this principle a day-to-day reality in Afghanistan," Deborah Lyons, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, said as much.

Source: <https://www.dtnext.in/News/World/2021/12/10213256/1333149/UN-mission-asks-Taliban-to-uphold-rights-of-every-.vpf>

9. China has been convicted guilty of genocide against Uyghurs by a London-based tribunal. The Uyghur tribunal found that Chinese President Xi Jinping was "primarily responsible" for atrocities against Muslim minorities.

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/tribunal-rules-china-committed-genocide-against-uyghurs-jinping-primarily-responsible-435811>

