

DAILY TRACKER

NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. Militaries are rapidly implementing autonomous features into weapons systems, however they haven't yet handed over the nuclear launch codes to an AI system, as far as is publicly known. Russia has built a nuclear-armed, nuclear-powered torpedo that is autonomous in some unspecified way, while defence strategists in the US have proposed automating nuclear weapon launch decisions.
Source: <https://thebulletin.org/2022/02/giving-an-ai-control-of-nuclear-weapons-what-could-possibly-go-wrong/>
2. Unrest in Kazakhstan, the world's top uranium-producing country, and suggestions in Europe to classify nuclear energy as sustainable ushered in a flurry of activity for uranium miners in 2022. However, a clean-tech bear market has emerged since then, with the iShares Global Clean Energy ETF falling 11% in January.
Source: <https://www.bloombergquint.com/markets/volatility-rages-in-uranium-stocks-as-clean-tech-takes-a-beating>
3. Field activities at the Carbon Free Power Project (CFPP) site have been completed, marking a major milestone for the project to build a NuScale small modular reactor facility at the Idaho National Laboratory, according to Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS).
Source: <https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Fieldwork-completed-in-milestone-for-UAMPS-SMR>
4. A bill that would lift West Virginia's restriction on the construction of new nuclear power facilities has passed the state legislature and is now awaiting signature by the governor. The prohibition has been in effect since 1996.
Source: <https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/West-Virginia-to-remove-nuclear-construction-ban>
5. Following earlier delays caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, work on the Safety Substantial Confinement Ventilation System (SSCVS) at the US Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico made significant progress last year.
Source: <https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Progress-on-WIPP-ventilation-upgrade>

MISSILES/ BIO WEAPONS

1. According to a report by China Aerospace Studies Institute, a US think tank, the PLA Air Force 5th Aviation Brigade is now armed with J-20 stealth fighters.
Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/china-j-20-fleet-73-three-plaaf-brigades-stealth-fighters/>
2. On Tuesday, Israel's prime minister admitted that the country's Iron Dome missile defence system is too expensive, and the government is hastening the deployment of laser technology to assist defend it against rocket assaults.
Source: <https://apnews.com/article/technology-middle-east-iran-israel-tel-aviv-546b3d28c434b661412df39dcbb6509c>
3. The UAE said it intercepted a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi movement on Monday, as Israeli President Isaac Herzog arrived in the Gulf economic and tourism hub for the first time.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/yemens-houthis-say-disclose-details-new-military-operation-against-uae-tweet-2022-01-30/>
4. China has undertaken a training exercise to simulate a manned-unmanned aircraft dogfight. Chinese researchers claim to have developed an AI-based system capable of teaching military drones to win dogfights that is thousands of times faster than comparable US technology, according to reports.
Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/china-starts-training-its-combat-drones-to-dogfight-fighter-jets/>
5. A week after President Joe Biden's administration approved another huge arms sale to Egypt, South Korea said on Tuesday that it had inked a \$1.6 billion arms deal with the Middle Eastern country. The office of President Moon Jae-in in Seoul said the deal to provide K9 self-propelled howitzers to Egypt is the country's biggest export contract for the weapon. It is manufactured by Hanwha Defense.
Source: <https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-africa-egypt-cairo-seoul-a8ce7b5b90cffbafd0f13b1e7e58186d>
6. During an attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels on the United Arab Emirates during a visit by Israel's president, the US military fired interceptor missiles, marking the second time American troops have opened fire.
Source: <https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-israel-dubai-united-arab-emirates-abu-dhabi-d37770c718713461a4dc2592e1d291b6>

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

1. According to a senior US State Department official, indirect talk between the US and Iran on returning to the 2015 nuclear agreement are in the "final stretch," with both parties facing difficult political decisions.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/time-political-decisions-iran-talks-enter-final-stretch-us-official-2022-01-31/>
2. US and Qatari leaders will meet in Washington on Monday to discuss a wide range of issues, including Iran and energy security in the aftermath of a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine, according to US sources.
Source: <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202201319821>
3. On Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin voiced his hope that the debate on the Ukraine problem will continue. He expressed his hope that the dialogue will continue in order to avoid "negative scenarios," such as war.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/hope-dialogue-on-ukraine-continues-says-putin-449700>
4. Russia's President Vladimir Putin has amassed some 130,000 troops on the Ukrainian border, raising worries of an impending invasion by an upgraded and dangerous Russian military force. He has also made it clear to the US and Western Europe that Ukraine will never be allowed to join NATO, a demand that the West has refused.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/with-low-tech-trench-warfare-ukraines-army-isnt-nato-caliber-449683>
5. Boris Johnson has arrived in Ukraine for discussions with President Petro Poroshenko, amid growing fears of a Russian invasion. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom committed to cooperate with Volodymyr Zelensky to find a diplomatic solution to the Russian dispute and "avoid further bloodshed." Near Russia's border with Ukraine, Russia has gathered an estimated 100,000 troops, tanks, artillery, and missiles.
Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-60204847>
6. According to three Biden administration officials, the Russian government has responded in writing to a US proposal aimed at de-escalating the Ukraine issue. On the condition of anonymity, all of the officials talked. The Russian retaliation comes as the Biden administration continues to encourage the Kremlin to de-escalate a growing situation on the Ukraine border, where 100,000 Russian troops have gathered.
Source: https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/russia-responds-to-us-proposal-to-de-escalate-ukraine-crisis-report-122020100118_1.html
7. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has urged more countries to sign and ratify an Additional Protocol to their Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the IAEA. As part of a push to strengthen the worldwide nuclear non-proliferation system, the agreement offers IAEA inspectors more access to sites and information.
Source: <https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Grossi-aims-to-strengthen-non-proliferation->

[regime](#)

8. While Joe Biden spars with Vladimir Putin over Ukraine and Xi Jinping over human rights, he also has to worry about Kim Jong Un's missiles. North Korea's leader performed more weapons tests last month than he did all of last year, including the first launch of an intermediate-range ballistic missile since 2017.

Source: https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/kim-jong-un-blasts-his-way-onto-biden-s-foreign-policy-agenda-122020100158_1.html

9. If Russia invades Ukraine, the US and UK are prepared to impose asset freezes and travel restrictions on Russian elites close to President Vladimir Putin, Washington and London declared on Monday, as tensions flared at the United Nations. After Russia's build-up of soldiers near Ukraine fuelled fears of conflict, Britain urged Putin to "step back from the brink," warning that any intervention would result in sanctions against Kremlin-connected companies and individuals.

Source: https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/us-uk-threaten-sanctions-for-moscow-elite-if-russia-invades-ukraine-122020100147_1.html

10. While President Joe Biden seeks to resolve the problem in Ukraine caused by Russia, another major crisis is approaching, with a top State Department official telling reporters that the "end game" is just weeks away. The ninth round of Iran nuclear talks is set to begin this week, with the US and Iran still speaking indirectly about both countries returning to the Obama-era nuclear deal, which is in shambles.

Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/end-game-iran-nuclear-talks-nearing-resolution-nuclear/story?id=82610029>

UN REFORMS

1. Last year, as the Chinese government tightened its grip on the ethnic Uyghur community, one man was sentenced to death and three others to life in jail for textbooks that included historical rebel movements once sanctioned by the ruling Communist Party.

Source: <https://apnews.com/article/uyghur-death-sentence-china-banned-books-6da7d5d6ed5c9937d1a4796b3bcb94b1>

2. On Tuesday, Japan's parliament passed a rare resolution condemning China's "serious human rights situation" and urging the government to take action to relieve the situation.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-parliament-adopts-resolution-human-rights-china-2022-02-01/>

3. Since the military took control of Myanmar a year ago, there have been large protests, armed resistance, and mass deaths. Aung San Suu Kyi, the elected leader of Myanmar, has been imprisoned following what her supporters call "show trials."

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55902070>

4. The UN mission in Afghanistan demanded on Tuesday that the Taliban government reveal information about the detention of two Afghan journalists who went missing the day before.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-urges-taliban-release-information-about-missing-journalists-2022-02-01/>
5. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemns North Korea's intermediate-range ballistic missile launch on Sunday and urges Pyongyang "to desist from taking any further counter-productive actions."
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-chief-urges-north-korea-stop-counterproductive-actions-2022-02-01/>
6. According to media reports, US authorities have purposely delayed the acceptance of Pakistan's ambassador-designate Masood Khan's appointment as the next Pakistani envoy to Washington because of alleged terror affiliations.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/over-possible-terror-ties-us-delays-approval-of-pakistans-ambassador-designate-masood-khan-449411>
7. After the US summoned a meeting to examine Moscow's army build-up on its borders with Ukraine, there have been heated exchanges between Russian and US envoys at the UN Security Council. The mobilisation, according to US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, was the largest Europe had seen in decades. Her Russian counterpart accused the United States of inciting frenzy and interfering in Russia's internal affairs.
Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60203208>
8. At least 1,500 people are reportedly killed in Myanmar's year-long protests against the coup, with thousands more probably killed in the armed fighting, according to the UN human rights office.
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-death-toll-exceeds-1500-with-nearly-8800-custody-un-2022-02-01/>
9. The Taliban organised a joint ministerial committee on Monday to discuss the Durand Line issues.
Source: https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/taliban-forms-joint-ministerial-committee-to-address-durand-line-issues-122020100154_1.html