

DAILY TRACKER

NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. Fermi 2, the nuclear power plant in Monroe County is undergoing a powering down for periodic refueling and to replace a rotor, a spokesman said. The plant closes every roughly 18 months or so for refueling and maintenance, said Stephen Tait, the nuclear communications manager at DTE Energy, which owns and operates Fermi. The shutdown will last a few weeks.

Source: <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/business/2022/02/20/fermi-2-nuclear-power-plant-down-southeast-michigan-rotor-refuel/6805401001/>

2. Nuclear power is progressively shedding the stigma, thanks to considerable advancements in technology and safety protocols. In developing countries, pro-nuclear energy sentiment is considerably greater. Asia is a major centre for the construction of nuclear reactors. Asia is a major centre for the construction of nuclear reactors.

Source: <https://seekingalpha.com/article/4488552-nuclear-energy-and-uranium-moving-into-the-mainstream>

MISSILES/ BIO WEAPONS

1. Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov announced on Saturday that Ukraine had received a planeload of machine guns, surveillance equipment, and weapons as part of a Canadian military package.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/ukraine-receives-shipment-machine-guns-surveillance-gear-canada-2022-02-19/>

2. In a recent development that could cause a further rift between China and the Western allies in the Pacific, a Chinese military vessel was accused of endangering the lives of the Australian Defense Force after a laser was shone at a maritime aircraft just north of Australia. A RAAF P-8A Poseidon spotted a military-grade laser illuminating the aircraft while in flight at 12:35 a.m. in February, revealed the Australian Department of Defense (DoD). When the event occurred, up to ten people were on board the aircraft.

Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/laser-weapons-china-fires-military-grade-dazzlers-at-p-8-poseidon-aircraft/>

3. In the face of escalating regional tensions, China's President and Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), Xi Jinping, pushed the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to maintain combat readiness and told them to be ready to "act any second." Beijing has just announced new laws to ensure that the PLA has a direct role in the design, testing, and upgrading of weapons systems.

Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/xi-jinping-gives-more-power-to-chinese-pla/>

4. According to a senior official, a "super squadron" of around 20 F-35C stealth aircraft could be added to the US Navy's carrier air wing in the future. His comments came only days after F-35C fighter fighters returned from their maiden operational deployment aboard the Nimitz-class carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70).

Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/f-35c-super-squadron-us-navys-future-carrier-air-wing-likely/>

5. Since every government wants contemporary, powerful fighter planes like the Rafales, Typhoons, or F-35s, their exorbitant costs are a major disadvantage. Not every country could afford them, resulting in fruitless discussions, a long period of security lapses, or budget cuts in other areas. Some countries would prefer have a plane that can safeguard their airspace and carry out basic combat tasks than a fleet of high-end fighters.

Source: <https://eurasianimes.com/conquering-the-fighter-jet-market-why-us-needs-to-pitch-its-hawks-over-eagles-falcons-to-come-on-top/>

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

1. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Sunday regarding Iran that "we may see an agreement shortly. The new agreement that appears will be made is shorter and weaker than the previous one," Bennett said before a weekly cabinet meeting, adding that Israel was "organising and preparing for the day after, in all dimensions".

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/israel-sees-iran-nuclear-deal-shortly-warns-it-may-be-weaker-naftali-bennett-454791>

2. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has warned the West against challenging Tehran's red lines in the Vienna talks aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal.

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/iran-warns-west-not-to-challenge-red-lines-in-vienna-uke-talks-454708>

3. In a letter to President Ebrahim Raisi published on Sunday, Iranian legislators laid forth six requirements for the restoration of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal with world powers, according to the country's official IRNA news agency.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iranian-parliament-issues-conditions-return-nuclear-deal-irna-2022-02-20/>

4. According to the Elysee, French President Emmanuel Macron spoke with his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi on Saturday, pressing him to commit to a deal to resurrect a 2015 nuclear accord.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/frances-macron-urges-iran-agree-nuclear-deal-2022-02-19/>

5. Iran's foreign minister said on Saturday that Iran is willing to swap detainees with the US, and that talks to resuscitate a 2015 nuclear deal may occur "at the earliest possible time" if the US makes the required political decisions.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/irans-top-diplomat-says-2015-nuclear-deal-revival-depends-us-political-decision-2022-02-19/>

6. Blinken, speaking on CNN's State of the Union show, stated that the US was determined to using every chance until the last minute to try if diplomacy could persuade Russian President Vladimir Putin not to go ahead with an invasion.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/all-indications-russia-on-brink-of-invading-ukraine-says-blinken-454871>
7. Russian President Vladimir Putin said diplomatic attempts to resolve the Ukraine situation must be stepped up, indicating Moscow may be willing to consider ways to reduce the possibility of war in Europe. After a call with French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday, Putin blamed NATO for “pumping modern weapons and ammunition” into Ukraine.
Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/20/vladimir-putin-diplomacy-over-ukraine-crisis-must-intensify>
8. Russia’s President Vladimir Putin oversaw military manoeuvres by strategic nuclear missile forces as the worst crisis since the Cold War grips Europe. The Kremlin said on Saturday that Russia successfully test-launched hypersonic and cruise missiles at sea and land-based targets during the exercises.
Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/19/ukraine-crisis-president-putin-launches-nuclear-drills>
9. An overwhelming majority of Iranian legislators have set to define strict conditions for a return to the country’s 2015 nuclear deal as an agreement with world powers in Vienna appears close.
Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/20/irans-parliament-sets-conditions-for-return-to-nuclear-deal>
10. Indirect talks between Tehran and Washington could succeed "at the earliest possible time" if the United States makes the necessary political decisions, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said at the Munich Security Conference.
Source: <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-697011>
11. Russia flexed its nuclear muscle Saturday with a series of alarming missile drills at the same time it continued denying that it is preparing to invade Ukraine. The wargames by Russia’s strategic nuclear forces involved launches from land, ships, submarines and planes that struck targets on land and at sea, the Kremlin said.
Source: <https://nypost.com/2022/02/19/the-missiles-russia-is-launching-in-its-alarming-wargames-drills/>

UN REFORMS

1. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated on Saturday that UN Human Rights Chief Michelle Bachelet is welcome to visit Xinjiang (February 19). A complete investigation is unlikely, however, because Beijing has stated that any probe based on the presumption of guilt in the region is unwelcome.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/un-human-rights-chief-can-visit-xinjiang-but-beijing-doesnt-welcome-any-probe-says-chinas-foreign-minister-454717>
2. A P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft was illuminated on Thursday while flying over Australia's northern approaches by a laser from a People's Liberation Army–Navy (PLA-N) vessel, potentially endangering lives, the defence department said.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/chinese-naval-vessel-directs-laser-at-australian-military-plane-454687>
3. After a Chinese navy vessel fired a laser at an Australian military surveillance aircraft last week, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison accused Beijing of a "act of intimidation."
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australia-accuses-china-act-intimidation-after-laser-aimed-aircraft-2022-02-19/>
4. Civilians in eastern Ukraine describe fear and destruction as shelling by Russian-backed separatists escalates. 'They shoot, we hide' that is the status of life amid shelling on Ukraine's front line.
Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/20/eastern-ukraine-front-line-civilians-shelling-russia>
5. Despite rising outcry from Kyiv and domestic adversaries, the Biden administration hesitated to impose sanctions on Russia ahead of a widely anticipated Russian invasion of Ukraine on Sunday.
Source: <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-698090>
6. China, Turkey and France are trying to play a role mediating the Ukraine crisis. This symbolizes a shift in world power away from US hegemony and the "new world order" promised by US president George H.W. Bush to a world that is multipolar and where a rising China may soon mediate conflicts in Europe.
Source: <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-698073>
7. In the case of an invasion, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson indicated that penalties on Russia will go considerably further than previously suggested in public.
Source: <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-697044>
8. Local media reported that members of the Jogi ethnic minority group living in Kabul have complained about a lack of basic living essentials as well as a lack of national identity.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/afghanistan-members-of-jogi-minority-demand-basic-necessities-rights-454739>
9. On Saturday, Washington accused Russian forces massed near Ukraine's border of being 'poised to strike.' On Saturday, Russian President Vladimir Putin saw military drills involving Russia's strategic nuclear forces.

Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/putin-oversees-military-drills-us-says-russia-can-attack-ukraine-at-any-time-454681>

10. On Sunday, Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, called for an urgent truce in the country's east, where hostilities between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian forces have escalated in recent days.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/ukraine-president-volodymyr-zelenskiy-calls-for-immediate-ceasefire-454864>
11. According to AFP, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and his Russian colleague Sergei Lavrov will meet on Monday amid rising tensions and a war-like scenario in eastern Europe.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/russia-ukraine-crisis-french-and-russian-foreign-ministers-to-speak-on-monday-454841>
12. Russia and Belarus have agreed to extend joint military exercises that were set to expire on Sunday, according to Belarus' Defense Ministry. "The presidents of Belarus and Russia agreed to continue inspections of Union State forces' readiness," Belarusian defence minister Victor Khrenin said in a statement.
Source: <https://www.wionews.com/world/ukraine-crisis-belarus-says-russian-forces-to-remain-for-more-drills-454821>