

DAILY TRACKERNUCLEAR ISSUES

1. Last week, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists released its periodic report on the state of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists is a US non-profit that does research on the threats to humanity from nuclear 'risks', climate change and disruptive technologies. The report—*Pakistani Nuclear Weapons, 2021*—has already made headlines given its predictions that Islamabad's stockpile could grow to 200 warheads by 2025.

Source: <https://www.theweek.in/news/world/2021/09/12/pakistan-still-relying-on-ageing-mirage-jets-to-carry-nuclear-weapons.html> 12 September 2021.

2. North Korea says it successfully test fired what it described as newly developed long-range cruise missiles over the weekend, its first known testing activity in months, underscoring how it continues to expand its military capabilities amid a stalemate in nuclear negotiations with the United States. The Korean Central News Agency said Monday the cruise missiles, which had been under development for two years, successfully hit targets 1,500 kilometers (932 miles) away during flight tests on Saturday and Sunday. The North hailed its new missiles as a "strategic weapon of great significance" that meets leader Kim Jong Un's call to strengthen the country's military might, implying that they were being developed with an intent to arm them with nuclear warheads.

Source: <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/12/1036494952/north-korea-nuclear-test-long-range-missiles-kim-jong-un> 12 September 2021

3. It has been fifty years since Australia made a formal decision not to acquire nuclear weapons. However, since then the regional geo-political environment has starkly changed, and is likely to become more turbulent over the next few decades, as balances are changing. The nuclear equilibrium in the region is shifting. China's rise in military force is prompting countries like India to upgrade its nuclear arsenal to much more powerful thermonuclear weapons.

Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/13092021-australia-needs-to-reconsider-acquisition-of-nuclear-weapons-analysis/> 13 September 2021

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

1. According to a report in the US-based 'Bulletin Of The Atomic Scientists' dated 9 September, Pakistan continues to expand its nuclear arsenal with more warheads, more delivery systems, and a growing fissile materials production industry. According to the publication, if the country continues in the same manner, it will have 200 warheads by 2025. "We estimate that the country's stockpile could more realistically grow to around 200 warheads by 2025 if the current trend continues," read the report prepared by Hans M Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, and Matt Korda, research associate for the NIP.

Source: <https://www.firstpost.com/world/heres-a-look-at-the-missiles-in-pakistans-expanding-nuclear-arsenal-9957781.html> 12 September 2021

2. Over the weekend of September 11th, Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), will visit Iran for talks to try and ease a standoff that has emerged between Iran and the Western world over the former's nuclear program. Earlier this same week, the U.N. atomic watchdog criticized Iran for obstructing an investigation into past activities and jeopardizing ongoing monitoring work. Iran now risks punishment from the 35-member Board of Governors of the IAEA when the group meets next week, and this could ultimately spoil negotiations on reviving the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal).

Source: <https://theowp.org/iranian-lack-of-transparency-jeopardizing-nuclear-deal/> 12 September 2021

MISSILES/BIO WEAPONS

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1. Belorussian President Alexander Lukashenko said that he focused on military cooperation during eight hours of talks with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin last week. The meetings in Moscow included discussions of advanced S-400 missile defense systems, according to a statement posted Sunday on Lukashenko's website.

Source: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-12/lukashenko-wants-putin-to-send-s-400-missile-defense-and-jets> 12 September 2021

2. North Korea has test-fired what it called a new type of "long-range cruise missile" over the weekend, the country's state Korean Central News Agency reported early Monday, amid a long standoff with

the United States over denuclearisation. The test launches, which took place on both Saturday and Sunday, were observed by high-level officials, KCNA said, adding that the tests had been carried out "successfully". The missiles travelled for 7,580 seconds along "oval and pattern-8 flight orbits" above North Korea and its territorial waters, and hit targets 1,500 kilometres (about 930 miles) away, KCNA said."

Source: <https://www.deccanherald.com/amp/international/world-news-politics/north-korea-test-fires-long-range-cruise-missile-report-1029745.html> 13 September 2021

UN REFORMS

1. The United Nations is convening an aid conference in Geneva on Monday in an effort to raise more than \$600 million for Afghanistan, warning of a humanitarian crisis there following the Taliban takeover. Even before the Taliban's seizure of Kabul last month, half the population - or 18 million people - was dependent on aid. That figure looks set to increase due to drought and shortages of cash and food, UN officials and aid groups warn. An abrupt end to billions of dollars in foreign donations following the collapse of Afghanistan's Western-backed government and the ensuing victory of the Taliban has heaped more pressure on UN programmes.

Source: <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/united-nations-seeks-600-million-to-avert-humanitarian-crisis-in-afghanistan-2538743?amp=1&akamai-rum=off> 13 September 2021

2. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed on Friday for an injection of cash into Afghanistan to avoid an economic meltdown that would spark a "catastrophic" situation for the Afghan people and be a "gift for terrorist groups." His remarks come after his special envoy on Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, warned the Security Council on Thursday that the freezing of billions of dollars in international Afghan assets to keep them out of Taliban hands would inevitably spark "a severe economic downturn.

Source: <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/afghan-economic-meltdown-would-be-gift-for-terrorists-says-un-chief-1852037-2021-09-12> 12 September 2021