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West pledges more arms for Ukraine, as Russia and China renew ties

June 16, 2022 spacewar.com reported: "US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin urged European allies to step up arms shipments to Ukraine on Wednesday, as Russia and China renewed their mutual support in the face of Western sanctions. In eastern Ukraine, troops fired a volley of shells from French-supplied Caesar howitzers towards Russian positions, even as Western ministers met at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Britain announced that its delivery of the advanced Multiple Launch Rocket System to Ukraine was now 'imminent' — but still Kyiv pleaded that it is outgunned on the frontline and in need of quicker support..."

Five Nations Revive 51-year-old Security Pact Amid China Threat

June 15, 2022 voanews.com reported: "Britain and four Asian members of the Commonwealth have announced efforts to expand and re-energize the Five Powers Defense Arrangements (FPDA), a 51-year-old series of mutual assistance agreements embracing the U.K, Malaysia, Singapore, and New Zealand.

At its core, the pact commits the members to consult with one another in the event or threat of an armed attack on any of the FPDA members and to mutually decide what measures should be taken, jointly or separately. There is no specific obligation to intervene militarily. The pact was established in 1971, following the termination of the United Kingdom's defense guarantees for what was then known as Malaya..."

EU, Egypt, Israel Agree to Export Israeli Liquefied Natural Gas to Europe

June 15, 2022 voanews.com reported: "Egypt, Israel and the European Union signed a gas deal Wednesday in which Egypt will export Israeli liquefied natural gas to Europe via two Egyptian LNG plants.

The memorandum of understanding was inked at the East Mediterranean Gas Forum in Cairo, expanding upon gas cooperation among the three partners. Representatives of participants at the gas forum applauded announcement of the deal. Egypt is the only country in the gas forum to have plants that can produce liquefied natural gas. Egyptian political sociologist Said Sadek told VOA that the announcement of the deal formalized cooperation among the EU, Egypt and Israel that has been going on for several months.



"This is a memo of understanding between Egypt, Israel and the EU that they will increase the gas production from Israel and Egypt, will process it and make it liquefied, and export it to the EU," Sadek said. "Already this is going on. A lot of things have been going on in the last few months in the gas field between Egypt, Israel and the EU. Now, this is just to add more."

Sadek also said the U.S. "is currently trying to negotiate a settlement to the maritime territorial dispute between Israel and Lebanon so that the gas in the disputed sector can be used as part of the current deal with the EU."

Al Jazeera TV reported that Russia cut exports of its natural gas to Europe on Wednesday "as a sign of displeasure at the deal signed in Cairo..."

Satellite Images Suggest Iran Preparing Rocket Launch

June 15, 2022 voanews.com reported: "Iran appeared to be readying for a space launch Tuesday as satellite images showed a rocket on a rural desert launch pad, just as tensions remain high over Tehran's nuclear program.

The images from Maxar Technologies showed a launch pad at Imam Khomeini Spaceport in Iran's rural Semnan province, the site of frequent recent failed attempts to put a satellite into orbit.

One set of images showed a rocket on a transporter, preparing to be lifted and put on a launch tower. A later image Tuesday afternoon showed the rocket apparently on the tower.

Iran did not acknowledge a forthcoming launch at the spaceport and its mission to the United Nations in New York did not immediately respond to a request for comment. However, its state-run *IRNA* news agency in May said that Iran likely would have seven homemade satellites ready for launch by the end of the Persian calendar year in March 2023. A Defense

Ministry official also recently suggested Iran soon could test its new solid-fueled, satellite-carrying rocket called the Zuljanah.

It wasn't clear when the launch would take place, though erecting a rocket typically means a launch is imminent. NASA fire satellites, which detect flashes of light from space, did not immediately see any activity over the site late Tuesday night. Asked about the preparations, State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters in Washington that the U.S. urges Iran to de-escalate the situation.

"Iran has consistently chosen to escalate tensions. It is Iran that has consistently chosen to take provocative actions," Price said. "..."

Report: China Pursuing 'Substantial Expansion' of Nuclear Arsenal

June 15, 2022 brietbart.com reported: "A report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on Monday said China is pursuing a 'substantial expansion' of its nuclear arsenal, including the development of new delivery systems and the construction of hundreds of additional missile silos.

'Several additional nuclear warheads are thought to have been assigned to operational forces in 2021 following the delivery of new mobile launchers and a submarine,' SIPRI said of China's nuclear development. The report noted that China's total inventory of warheads did not increase last year, but 'the number of stockpiled warheads potentially available for use has changed because new launchers became operational during 2021.'

The Institutes Yearbook 2022 said that all nine nuclear-armed states 'continue to modernize their nuclear arsenals,' although the total number of nuclear weapons 'declined slightly' last year – a trend expected to reverse over the next decade.

"All of the nuclear-armed states are increasing or upgrading their arsenals and most are sharpening nuclear rhetoric and the role nuclear weapons play in their military strategies. This is a very worrying trend," said Wilfred Wan, director of SIPRI's Weapons of Mass Destruction Program...."

Israel warns Assad, will bomb palaces if Iran operations continue

June 14, 2022 jpost.com reported: "Israel has threatened Syrian President Bashar Assad with bombing his palaces if he does not cease or reduce military cooperation with Iran within his territory, the Arabic news site *Elaph* reported late on Monday.

The Jerusalem Post was unable to independently confirm the dramatic developing story, and the IDF declined to comment. The report could either dovetail with ongoing Israeli efforts to rid itself of an Iranian threat embedded in Syria, or could be an exaggeration of such efforts by various interested parties..."

U.S., South Korea warn of swift reply if North Korea conducts nuclear test

June 14, 2022 spacewar.com reported: "The United States and South Korea warned Monday of a swift response if North Korea conducts a nuclear test, including US military 'adjustments,' but again offered talks as a way out.

The two allies say that North Korea could at any time test its first nuclear weapon since 2017, after months of escalating tensions including missile tests and Pyongyang's rebuffing of overtures from President Joe Biden's administration.

Meeting his South Korean counterpart, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the United States was working with allies in Tokyo and Seoul 'to be able to respond quickly should the North Koreans proceed with such a test.'

'And we are prepared to make both short- and longer-term adjustments to our military posture as appropriate,' he said..."

Nine European countries urge NATO to beef up eastern flank

June 13, 2022 spacewar.com reported: "Nine Central and Eastern European countries on Friday asked NATO to strengthen its eastern flank following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The meeting of the leaders of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia was held in the Romanian capital Bucharest less than three weeks ahead of a NATO summit meeting in Madrid.

'In view of the increased security risks in Romania and the Black Sea, consolidating NATO on its eastern flank, in a unified and balanced manner, becomes all the more urgent and crucial,' said Romanian President Klaus Iohannis at the opening of the meeting, which he co-chaired with Polish counterpart Andrzej Duda..."

