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US 5th Fleet commander: 'Iranian actions have the attention of everyone'

February 23, 2023 israelnationalnews.com reported: "As tensions rise over Iran's advancing nuclear program, Iranian attacks in the waterways of the Middle East and elsewhere in the region 'have the attention of everyone,' Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, the head of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, told *AP* Tuesday.

'We're focused on expanding our partnerships,' Cooper said on the sidelines of Abu Dhabi's International Defense Exhibition and Conference. 'The short answer is, the Iranian actions have the attention of everyone.'

Cooper says he's seen a rise in 'malign activities' on Iran's part in the region over his two years leading the Bahrain-based 5th Fleet. While Cooper pointed to recent weapons confiscations by American and allied forces in the region as a success, he acknowledged that Iran has been able to carry out drone attacks targeting shipping in the Middle East and other assaults in the region



Vice Admiral Brad Cooper

Earlier in the week, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN's nuclear watchdog, announced that their monitors in Iran had detected uranium enrichment levels of 84% purity, only 6% less than the amount needed to create a nuclear weapon." ..."

Report: Israel significantly increasing its preparations for an attack on Iran

February 22, 2023 israelnationalnews.com reported: "In recent weeks, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has held five secret discussions on the Iranian issue, in which it was decided to significantly raise the level of Israeli preparation and readiness for an attack on the nuclear facilities in the Islamic Republic, *Channel 12 News* reported on Tuesday.

According to the report, Israel's top defense officials participated in the discussions, including Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi, the head of the Mossad, the head of the National Security Council, the head of the Military Intelligence Directorate, the head of the Operations Directorate, as well as the operational ranks of the relevant units in the IDF.

The summaries of these meetings, from which messages were conveyed by Prime Minister Netanyahu to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, President Joe Biden's National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and French President Emmanuel Macron, made it clear that if the world does not act against Iran - Israel will be forced to act and will not hesitate to do so..."

Putin says Russia will halt participation in New Start nuclear arms treaty

February 21, 2023 theguardian.com reported: "Vladimir Putin has said Russia will halt its participation in New Start, the last major remaining nuclear arms control treaty with the US, in a speech devoted to the one-year anniversary of Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine.

"They want to inflict a strategic defeat on us and claim our nuclear facilities," the Russian president said during a speech characterised by grievances against the west. "In this regard, I am forced to state that Russia is suspending its participation in the strategic offensive arms treaty."

The full implications of Putin's threat were not immediately clear. Russia has already suspended mutual inspections of nuclear weapons sites and participation in a bilateral consultative commission. Experts said that if Putin now went further and stopped routine reporting and data exchange on nuclear weapon movements and other related developments, it would be a serious blow.

"The announcement by Russia that it's suspending participation in New Start is deeply unfortunate and irresponsible," the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, told reporters on a visit to Athens.

"We'll be watching carefully to see what Russia actually does. We'll of course make sure that in any event we are postured appropriately for the security of our own country and that of our allies." ..."

Six killed after fresh earthquake hits Turkey-Syria border

February 21, 2023 [*irishtimes.com*](#) reported: “The toll from two earthquakes that hit Turkey and Syria on Monday – two weeks after powerful quakes killed more than 47,000 people – has risen to eight, with up to 300 recovering from injuries and up to a dozen buildings toppling on both sides of the border.

The widespread anxiety and panic sparked by the latest tremors has rattled a region that is still coming to terms with the devastation caused earlier this month. The seismic activity was felt in Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Lebanon, where schools and public services were closed on Tuesday, partly to calm people’s nerves.

Millions of people who fled ruined cities across southern Turkey and northern Syria, which were both shaken violently by the two tremors on Monday evening, now fear for their lives in temporary shelters.” ...”

Russia accuses Kyiv of planning to stage nuclear incident

February 20, 2023 [*reuters.com*](#) reported: “Russia said on Sunday that Ukraine was planning to stage a nuclear incident on its territory to pin the blame on Moscow ahead of a United Nations meeting, without providing evidence for the accusation.

Since the start of its invasion of Ukraine nearly a year ago, Russia has repeatedly accused Kyiv of planning “false flag” operations with non-conventional weapons, using biological or radioactive materials. No such attack has materialized.

Russia’s defence ministry said in a statement that radioactive substances had been transported to Ukraine from a European country and Kyiv was preparing a large-scale “provocation” ...”

US says China mulling arming Russia in Ukraine war

February 20, 2023 [*spacewar.com*](#) reported: “The United States on Sunday accused China of considering arming Russia in its war against Ukraine, ratcheting up tensions as the conflict hits its one-year mark this week.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken leveled the allegations as US-Chinese relations have been further tested by Washington’s shooting down this month of what it said was a large Chinese spy balloon.

The European Union also sounded the alarm over munitions in the Ukraine conflict — saying that severe ammunition shortages facing Ukrainian forces had to be overcome within weeks.

Blinken told *CBS* that China was now ‘considering providing lethal support’ to Moscow ranging ‘from ammunition to the weapons themselves.’

‘We’ve made very clear to them that that would cause a serious problem for us and in our relationship,’ he added...”

Biden Admin Negotiates Deal to Give WHO Authority Over US Pandemic Policies

February 18, 2023 [*inexusnewsfeed.com*](#) reported: The Biden administration is preparing to sign up the United States to a “legally binding” accord with the World Health Organization (WHO) that would give this Geneva-based UN subsidiary the authority to dictate America’s policies during a pandemic.

Despite widespread criticism of the WHO’s response to the COVID pandemic, U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra joined with WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in September 2022 to announce “the U.S.-WHO Strategic Dialogue.” Together, they developed a “platform to maximize the longstanding U.S. government-WHO partnership, and to protect and promote the health of all people around the globe, including the American people.”

These discussions and others spawned the “zero draft” of a pandemic treaty, published on Feb. 1, which now seeks ratification by all 194 WHO member states. A meeting of the WHO’s Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) is scheduled for Feb. 27 to work out the final terms, which all members will then sign.

Written under the banner of “the world together equitably,” the zero draft grants the WHO the power to declare and manage a global pandemic emergency. Once a health emergency is declared, all signatories, including the United States, would submit to the authority of the WHO regarding treatments, government regulations such as lockdowns and vaccine mandates, global supply chains, and monitoring and surveillance of populations.

“They want to see a centralized, vaccine-and-medication-based response, and a very restrictive response in terms of controlling populations,” David Bell, a public health physician and former WHO staffer specializing in epidemic policy, told *The Epoch Times*. “They get to decide what is a health emergency, and they are putting in place a surveillance mechanism that will ensure that there are potential emergencies to declare.” ...”



WHO headquarters in Geneva