

World faces new nuclear arms race

Warn researchers

AFP, Stockholm

Most of the world's nuclear-armed states continued to modernise their arsenals last year, setting the stage for a new nuclear arms race, researchers warned yesterday.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said nuclear powers including the United States and Russia -- which account for around 90 percent of the world's stockpile -- had spent time last year "upgrading existing weapons and adding newer versions".

Since the end of the Cold War, old warheads have generally been dismantled quicker than new ones have been deployed, resulting in a decrease in the overall number of warheads.



Smoke billows for the second day from the Shahran oil depot, northwest of Tehran, Iran, yesterday. Addressing Iran's parliament, President Masoud Pezeshkian urged citizens to "stand strong against this genocidal criminal aggression with unity and coherence".

PHOTO: AFP

The real reason Israel attacked Iran

AGENCIES

As the Israeli-Iranian confrontation enters its fourth day, casualties on both sides are mounting. At least 220 people have been killed in Iran and at least 24 in Israel. Despite the deadly response from Iran, Israeli officials have continued to insist that attacks on various Iranian nuclear and military facilities were necessary.

A number of justifications have been broadcast to the Israeli public, but none explains the true reasons why the Israeli government decided to carry out the unilateral, unprovoked assault.

The nature of campaign as it unfolds seems to indicate that Israel never meant to wipe out Iranian nuclear activities

The Israeli government claims that the strike was a "preventive" one, meant to address an immediate, inevitable threat on Iran's part to construct a nuclear bomb. There appears to be no evidence for this claim.

Additionally, Israel has suggested that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report released on June 12 that condemned Iran for material violations of its Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) commitments until the early 2000s constitutes such an emergency. But even the IAEA seems to reject that claim.

The nature of the campaign as it

unfolds also seems to indicate that Israel never meant to wipe out Iranian nuclear activities, reports Al Jazeera online.

A third suggestion is that Israel has its heart set on jumpstarting "regime change" in Tehran. Even if that were the case, presuming that all the Iranians are waiting for is an Israeli strike to move against the regime demonstrates a profound lack of understanding with regard to the forces driving Iranian politics.

While many Iranians undoubtedly oppose the Islamic Republic, Iranians of all political persuasions are consistently "patriotic", committed to supporting Iranian sovereignty and independence from any attempts by external elements to impose their agendas on their country.

The "security" is what has motivated Israel's actions from Gaza to Yemen to Lebanon and Syria, and now in Iran. Such a "security regime" must expand continuously, of course. It can never stop. By striking Iran, Netanyahu has gone for broke, staking a claim for complete and absolute impunity for Israel as well as for himself, in The Hague as well as in domestic courts.

Will this be Netanyahu's salvation? Will the Israeli public forgive him for his abject failures at home and horrid transgressions in Gaza? When observing the current sense of jubilation in public Israeli discourse, this may very well be the case.

The long lines stretching from every open store, hardware to food, demonstrate that Israelis have entered blank survival mode. A docile citizenry may be good for Netanyahu, but it portends ill for any attempt to build and defend a robust Israeli society.

US senator moves to limit Trump's war powers on Iran

REUTERS, Washington

A Democratic senator introduced legislation yesterday to prevent US President Donald Trump from using military force against Iran without Congress's authorisation, as an escalating battle between Israel and Iran raised fears of broader conflict.

Tim Kaine of Virginia has tried for years to wrest back Congress's authority to declare war from the White House.

During Trump's first term, in 2020, Kaine introduced a similar resolution to rein in Trump's ability to wage war against Iran. That measure passed both the Senate and House of Representatives, winning some Republican support, but did not garner enough votes to survive the Republican president's veto.

Kaine said his latest war powers resolution underscores that the US Constitution gives Congress, not the president, the sole power to declare war and requires that any hostility with Iran be explicitly authorised by a declaration of war or specific authorisation for the use of military force.

"It is not in our national security interest to get into a war with Iran unless that war is absolutely necessary to defend the United States. I am deeply concerned that the recent escalation of hostilities between Israel and Iran could quickly pull the United States into another endless conflict," Kaine said in a statement. Under US law, war powers resolutions are privileged, meaning that the Senate will be required to promptly consider and vote on the matter.

Iran hangs man convicted of spying for Israel

AFP, Tehran

Iran's judiciary said yesterday it hanged a man arrested in 2023 and convicted of being a spy for Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, as fighting raged between the two foes.

"Esmail Fekri, a Mossad agent convicted of the capital offences of 'corruption on Earth' and 'moharebeh' (waging war against God) was hanged after going through the full process of criminal procedure," the judiciary's Mizan Online news website said.

Mizan said the execution was carried out after all legal procedures were completed and the verdict was upheld by the supreme court.

Yesterday, Iran's chief justice Ebrahim Raisi vowed swift trials for people arrested on suspicion of collaborating with Israel.

Hunger crisis deepens in 13 global hotspots

UN warns, blames conflict for conditions in worst-hit areas

REUTERS, Rome

Extreme hunger is intensifying in 13 global hotspots, with Gaza, Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti and Mali at immediate risk of famine without urgent humanitarian intervention, a joint United Nations report warned yesterday.

The "Hunger Hotspots" report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) blamed conflict, economic shocks, and climate-related hazards for conditions in the worst-hit areas.

The report predicts food crises in the next five months. It called for investment and help to ensure aid delivery, which it said was being undermined by insecurity and funding gaps.

"This report is a red alert. We know where hunger is rising and we know who is at risk," said WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain. "Without funding and access, we cannot save lives."

For famine to be declared, at least 20 percent of the population in an area must be suffering extreme food shortages, with 30 percent of children acutely malnourished and two people out of every 10,000 dying daily from starvation.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS Trump orders drive targeting Democratic cities

AFP, Washington


US President Donald Trump directed federal authorities to ramp up deportation efforts in Democratic-led cities on Sunday, doubling down on a politicized anti-immigration drive after major protests in Los Angeles.

"We must expand efforts to detain and deport Illegal Aliens in America's largest Cities, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, where Millions upon Millions of Illegal Aliens reside," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

"These, and other such Cities, are the core of the Democrat Power Center," he claimed, citing debunked right-wing conspiracy theories that undocumented immigrants are voting in US elections in significant numbers. Trump has made deporting undocumented immigrants a key priority for his second term.

Raiders by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency in Los Angeles have sparked days of mainly peaceful protests, though they have seen sporadic violence at times.





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