

# Conflict Weekly

An initiative by NIAS-IPRI and KAS India Office

*A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world*

15 June 2022, Vol.3, No.11

## The new UK new bill on Brexit, Turkey's NATO concerns on Finland and Sweden and the SIPRI report on nuclear arsenal/weapons

Sourina Bej and Ashwin Dhanabalan



Political parties of Denmark conduct the Yes Campaign in Copenhagen. (Image Source: EPA/BBC)

**SPECIAL**

**Report Review**

*SIPRI report on nuclear arsenal/weapons*

## Brexit: The UK introduces new bill to rewrite Northern Ireland Protocol

### In the news

On 13 June, the UK government published the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, to be debated and voted on by Parliament. The legislation is aimed at fixing parts of the existing Northern Ireland Protocol, in order to safeguard the institutional autonomy ensured by the Good Friday Agreement. According to the press release from the foreign, commonwealth, and development office of Elizabeth Truss, the bill will allow the government to address practical problems in four areas: burdensome customs processes, inflexible regulation, tax and spend discrepancies, and democratic governance issues.

On 15 June, Brussels urged Westminster to “throw out the illegal” attempt by Boris Johnson to unilaterally rewrite the post-Brexit arrangements for Northern Ireland, as the EU launches legal action against the UK. The EU’s Brexit commissioner, Maroš Šefčovič said “let’s call a spade a spade: this is illegal.” Ireland’s taoiseach, Micheál Martin, described his most recent call with Johnson as the worst of his political career. Miguel Berger, Germany’s ambassador to the UK, warned that countries such as China and Russia would be looking “very closely” at Britain’s stance on international law.

### Issues at large

First, the bill in brief. The new bill introduces the concept of green lanes and red lanes for trade between Great Britain and the EU. This indicates that goods from Great Britain into Northern Ireland (NI) would use a green lane with minimal to no checks. While goods moving from Britain through NI into Ireland or the wider European Union would use a red lane and continue to be checked at NI ports. Any trade disputes would then be resolved by “independent arbitration,” and not by the European Court of Justice as Northern Ireland would continue to receive same tax breaks as in the UK.

Second, another challenge for Boris Johnson. The new bill comes in the immediate background where PM Boris Johnson survived a no-confidence vote for violating covid protocols. Called the Partygate affair, Johnson barely toppled a Tory rebellion as he brings in the next challenge of being accused of “rule-breaking over the rule of law.” However, till 16 June, around 148 Conservative MPs who voted against Johnson’s leadership in the no-confidence motion decided not to criticise Johnson’s NI legislation, which has garnered a stark response from Ireland and the EU.

Third, political deadlock in Northern Ireland. The bill also aims to solve the political deadlock in Northern Ireland where a new executive head is yet to be nominated since the May elections. The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) has refused to nominate a deputy First Minister to Sinn Féin’s First Minister and return the power-sharing executive until changes are made to the protocol. At the same time, a majority of MLAs in the Stormont Assembly signed a joint letter to the prime minister stating their opposition to the proposed legislation to amend the protocol.

Fourth, a no-go with EU. Brussels has held back on taking targeted action over the new legislation and has continued to launch fresh legal actions. Amendments to the Northern Ireland protocol could take 18 months or longer. As Šefčovič said, “renegotiating the protocol” that has already been agreed upon was “unrealistic.”

### In perspective

First, the bill creates more problems than solves any. With new legal action against the UK, a return to the negotiating table would mean only after a trade conflict with the EU. With more paperwork for the business groups and confusion over imports of essential medical goods, the new bill is more politically motivated than an economic relief. The lane concept in the bill is similar to those tabled by the European Commission for an “express lane”. Thus, “getting Brexit done” is now being unravelled by the Tories themselves. Second, is the return of the debate on saving the Good Friday Agreement. The bill has shown that the withdrawal agreement with the old NI Protocol and Good Friday Agreement cannot coexist.

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## NATO: Turkey’s concerns over Finland and Sweden

### In the news

On 12 June, NATO’s chief Jens Stoltenberg mentioned that the security concerns raised by Turkey on Finland’s and Sweden’s NATO bid were ‘legitimate.’ He sympathized with Ankara and mentioned how Turkey as a member of NATO, had suffered the greatest number of terror attacks.

On the same day, in Finland, groups supporting the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and Syrian Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) launched protests in front of Helsinki’s parliament. They called on the government to reject Turkey’s demands. In Sweden, demonstrators carried posters of the YPG/PKK’s convicted leader at the Norra Bantorget Square in the capital Stockholm.

On 13 June, Sweden announced it would take steps to adhere to Turkey’s demands. Stoltenberg added that he was glad Sweden expressed its “readiness to address Turkey’s concerns as part of assuming the obligations of future NATO membership.”

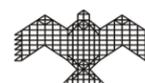
### Issues at large

First, Ankara’s security concerns. Turkey has been apprehensive of Sweden and Finland’s policies over the PKK and YPG, which Ankara deems as terrorist outfits. Sweden has also supported the Syrian branch of the PKK called the PYD, which Turkey alleges is a front of the terror organization.

Second, maintaining strategic ambiguity. Turkey has been playing a role as a crucial mediator in the Ukraine-Russia war, but it is making sure that it maintains a strategic ambiguity with both parties. Lately, it has been working towards a grain export corridor from Ukraine through Turkey to the world to avoid a global wheat shortage.

Third, divisions within Europe. Since the failed coup attempt of 2016, the EU has asked Turkey to clarify its definition of terrorism. This comes as Ankara had labelled all parties involved in the coup as terrorist outfits. Sweden’s announcement to change its terrorism laws indicates a policy shift to please Turkey. However, the officials at the EU stated that Turkey since 2017 violated the Copenhagen criteria of eligibility for the bloc’s membership.

Fourth, bilateral issues. In 2019, Sweden and Finland had imposed arms export embargoes on Turkey after Ankara’s military had carried out military operations to clear the YPG in the northern region of Syria near the Euphrates. In addition, Turkey had earlier asked the two



countries to extradite 30 people it identifies as terrorists; with Sweden and Finland accepting Turkey's demands, the 30 people would likely be extradited.

### In perspective

First, NATO appeases Turkey. NATO's approach to Turkey to help Finland and Sweden join the bloc has been by pleasing Ankara and agreeing on its security concerns. This comes as Finland and Sweden joining the NATO would help the bloc immensely in the Baltics and push forth a more vigorous collective defence against Russia.

Second, Erdogan's power play. Erdogan would use this as an opportunity to gain more concessions from Sweden and Finland, as Helsinki would give NATO an additional 810-mile-long border with Russia. Erdogan will also utilize this as a way of mustering votes or his re-contestation to the presidential and parliamentary elections of June 2023.

Third, all eyes on Turkey. NATO's summit in Madrid would be overshadowed by the impasse, even with Finland trying to soften Ankara's approach by hinting at buying drones once they are made members of the western alliance. Since Turkey's membership in the EU has been stalled since 2016, Ankara might push for a revival of the accession using the current stalemate. Turkey will also ask to expedite the order of 40 Lockheed Martin-made F-16 fighters from the US.

## Also, from around the world

By Avishka Ashok, Lavanya Ravi, Ashwin Dhanabalan, Shruti Sadhasivam, Apoorva Sudhakar, and Padmashree Anandhan

### East and Southeast Asia

#### **China: European Parliament's resolution on Xinjiang rejected**

On 9 June, China's Mission to the EU opposed a resolution passed by the European Parliament on the human rights situation in Xinjiang. The spokesperson of the mission explained that the resolution disregarded the facts and fabricated the facts. The spokesperson's statement said: "It maliciously attacks the human rights situation in China's Xinjiang and the Chinese government's governance of the region, grossly interferes in China's internal affairs and seriously violates international law and basic norms governing international relations." The mission expressed its strong and firm opposition to the resolution.

#### **China: Minister accuses US of swaying countries against Beijing in the Asia-Pacific region**

On 12 June, China's defence minister General Wei Fenghe accused the US of swaying the countries in the Asia-Pacific region and causing conflicts against Beijing in the region. The accusation was a response to the US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin's claim at the Shangri-La Dialogue that China would cause instability in the region with its claim on Taiwan. Austin's suggestion for multilateral cooperation and partnerships in the region was also seen as an attempt to corner China in the Indo-Pacific by China. General Fenghe said: "No country should impose its will on others or bully others under the guise of multilateralism. The strategy is an attempt to build an exclusive small group in the name of a free and open Indo-Pacific to hijack countries in our region and target one specific country — it is a strategy to create conflict and confrontation to contain and encircle others."

### **South Korea: Lorry driver strike affects car and steel industry production**

On 14 June, South Korean businesses stated they are hit hard as lorry drivers conducted strikes across the country. The strike, currently on its seventh day, has adversely impacted car makers like Hyundai and the country's major steel producer POSCO. In the first 10 days of June, exports fell by 13 per cent. Hyundai's spokesperson stated they experienced "partial production disruption" in its biggest manufacturing plant in the city of Ulsan. POSCO has suspended its operations in some factories because it has run out of storage space as its stocks have not been shipped due to the disruptions caused by the strike. Truck drivers demand pay rises and a guarantee for minimum rates for freight to be maintained. South Korea is a massive exporter of semiconductors, smartphones and automobiles. The twin effects of the Russia-Ukraine war and the trucker protests have shrunk its exports and added to global inflation.

### **New Zealand: A week of storms brings lightning strikes and destruction**

On 12 June, The Guardian reported New Zealand had been hit by intense storms that have caused uprooted trees, damaged roofs and major flooding. The country has been hit by more than 100,000 lightning strikes that have caused massive destruction. Cold fronts across the Tasman Sea and the Southern Ocean have caused wild turbulence in New Zealand's weather. The most affected areas include Waikanae town in the North, Auckland, Greymouth town in the South and Queenstown's Coronet peak. The rains have touched the density of 120 cm and the recorded top speed of winds stand at 100km/h. Some parts of the country witnessed rains that lasted more than 72 hours.

### **Australia and New Zealand: Sends largest warships for RIMPAC exercise**

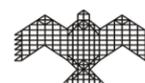
Australia and New Zealand have sent some of their largest warships to participate in the 28th biannual Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise, scheduled to take place from 29 June to 4 August. Australia has sent HMAS Warramunga and Supply along with a Collins class submarine. Two Australian P-8A Poseidon aircraft will join the exercise. They departed on 6 June and will be deployed for 4 months. New Zealand has sent HMNZS Aotearoa which departed on 13 June. It contains 185 personnel who will participate in RIMPAC drills. The deployment will last five and a half months. The ship will also participate in the Japan Maritime Self Defence Forces (JMSDF) international fleet review.

### **Philippines: Bangkok agrees to settle the tobacco products dispute with Manila**

On 13 June, The World Trade Organisation (WTO) stated that the Philippines and Thailand had agreed to resolve their cigarette disputes. The WTO stated the two countries had "Agreed Procedures Toward a Comprehensive Settlement of the Dispute in Thailand — Customs and Fiscal Measures on Cigarettes from the Philippines (DS371)." According to Philippines, Thailand had consistently failed to adhere to WTO's customs valuation agreement which had caused the dispute to last 14 years. Thailand has also assured that its government and its judicial branch will work towards upholding the customs valuation agreement and WTO norms.

### **Indonesia: Jakarta signs an MoU with Brussels to enhance counter-terrorism exercises**

On 12 June, Indonesia's national counter-terrorism agency (BNPT) signed an MoU with Belgium's coordination unit for threat analysis (CUTA) to strengthen counter-terrorism efforts. BNPT's head Rafli Amar said: "Coordination and collaboration between countries, especially Indonesia and Belgium, is necessary to handle the dynamic threats of terrorism." The MoU would increase cooperation, mitigation, and information exchanges to tackle the problem of terrorism. Rafli added that it was important that both Belgium and Indonesia coordinate and collaborate as both countries face threats of terrorism that affect their respective security, prosperity, and development.



### Myanmar: UN's special rapporteur accuses the military regime of attacks on children

On 14 June, UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, reported on the torture minors were undergoing during military interrogation. He remarked that the minors were being beaten, stabbed, and mentioned that some even had their fingernails or teeth taken out as a part of the regime's attempt to subjugate the people. Andrews added: "The junta's relentless attacks on children underscore the generals' depravity and willingness to inflict immense suffering on innocent victims."

### South Asia

#### India: Protests rage over anti-Islam comments made by BJP members

On 14 June, Muslims across Kolkata gathered for a continuous second week protesting against the "anti-Islamic" comments by two members of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In the protests, both Muslims and Hindus clashed leading to the arrest of 400 protestors by the police. Earlier, in Uttar Pradesh (UP), chief minister Yogi Adityanath gave an order to demolish illegal buildings which belonged to those involved in the protests. The move triggered action from former judges and lawyers asking the Supreme Court to act. They said: "The coordinated manner in which the police and development authorities have acted lead to the clear conclusion that demolitions are a form of collective extra-judicial punishment, attributable to a state policy which is illegal." On the same date, India's West Asia partners, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Iran and the UAE struck diplomatic protests against the anti-Islam comments.

#### Afghanistan: UN official discusses Afghan refugees issues

On 13 June, the UN deputy high commissioner for refugees, Kelly T. Clements pledged to discuss solutions to end the Afghan refugee crisis and their return to their homeland with the Emirate officials. The statement said: "We will be talking over the course of the next days with the interim authorities about how we can support the needs of the Afghan people and how we can find solutions for those that are outside the country that want to come home and want to be able to rebuild their lives in peace and have an Afghanistan that is inclusive of all." The UN official sought to confer with officials over assisting Afghan refugees to return to their country and establish a secure life for themselves in the region. However, the minister of refugees and repatriations, Khalil Rahman Haqqani, claimed that the state no longer encounters "corruption" and "instability," and many Afghan people are returning to Afghanistan.

#### Afghanistan: Four people killed in bomb explosion

On 11 June, a bomb exploded in a minibus, killing four people and harming many others in the "eastern Bagrami district" of Kabul, a Sunni Pashtun majority region. As of now, no entity has "claimed responsibility" for committing the brutal crime. The Taliban police forces have been tasked with inspecting the affected region. Previously, the country witnessed massive blasts by the ISIL (ISIS) terror outfit on sectarian lines during the Ramadan festival time. Primarily, the targets of attack have been the Shia Hazaras and Sufi groups, the minority communities of Afghanistan.

#### Pakistan: Soldier killed in a terrorist shootout

On 12 June, a Pakistani soldier was killed during a fierce shootout between the army and the terrorists at the Datta Khel township in "North Waziristan tribal district." President Arif Alvi, conveyed his condolences over the soldier's death and claimed that the State was in unison in its battle against terrorism and that this battle is inevitable until the menace ends. Previously, four terrorists were killed by the army. While two terrorists were shot dead in the North Waziristan region and their "ammunition was seized," the military also killed another two terrorists, part of the Baloch Republic Army in the Parodh region of the Noshki district.

## Central Asia, Middle East and Africa

### **Kyrgyzstan: Tajik bodyguard shot during border firing**

On 14 June, one Tajik personnel was shot dead and three people wounded in a clash at the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. The Tajik police officers claimed that the Kyrgyz border personnel fired at Tajik guards for “no reason.” However, the Kyrgyz border agency claimed that the shooting occurred due to Tajik forces opening fire and alleged that the latter used mortars during the clash. The firing at the disputed border zone has ceased and both sides have initiated dialogue. In a statement, the Kyrgyz border service said: “The first result of the negotiations was the decision to withdraw units from their combat positions.”

### **Palestine: EU fund for Palestinian Authority to be restored**

On 13 June, a European Commission working on restoring funding for Palestinian Authority stated it is nearing its completion of the procedure. The funds were withheld due to a controversy in school books. The books were controversial as they allegedly contained anti-semitic materials and incited violence. Funds released will be utilised for hospitals in East Jerusalem and allowances for aggrieved families of Palestine. The move follows the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen’s visit to Israel and Palestine.

### **The UAE: Gulf Cooperation Council accuses India’s BJP of Islamophobia**

The six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have come together in outrage and accused BJP, the ruling party of India of Islamophobia. BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma's remarks on Prophet Muhammed’s youngest wife and her age caused clashes in India, demanding Sharma's arrest. The UAE and Saudi Arabia have been particularly vocal in condemning the remarks. The Indian government suspended the spokesperson. The GCC is currently demanding a public apology from the Indian government.

### **Syria: Prisoner exchange successful in Aleppo**

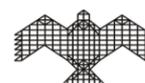
On 14 June, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported prisoners were exchanged at the Abu Al-Zandin crossing in East Aleppo. The swap was facilitated by the UN, International Red Cross and Revolutionary Liberation Committee under a Russian-Turkish agreement. Five prisoners were swapped from each side. The prisoner swap took place under the Astana agreement, which exists to facilitate the exchange of prisoners between opposition forces and the Al-Assad regime in the city of Al-Bab.

### **Iran: 20-year agreement signed with Venezuela**

On 11 June, Venezuela’s leader Nicholas Maduro visited Iran and signed a 20-year cooperation agreement to expand ties on oil and petrochemical industries, military and development of the economy. Maduro stated Venezuela and Iran are united by a “common vision” on international issues as they are both heavily sanctioned by the US. A strategy of resistance economy is formed by both the countries in an effort to counter the impact of sanctions and reduce their dependence on the US.

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo: Kinshasa blames Kigali for M23’s capture of Congolese town**

On 13 June, the military said it would defend the country’s territory after M23 rebels claimed the capture of Bunagana town in North Kivu province, along the border with Uganda. The province’s military governor’s spokesperson termed the town’s capture “no less than an invasion” by Rwanda. The development comes after the DRC and Rwanda engaged in a series of accusations of cross-border firing amid an escalation of tensions. Previously, on 11 June, the UN condemned attacks against civilians and called for ceasing violence. Meanwhile,



Uganda's resident district commissioner for Kisoro district said the latest violence led to the arrival of 30,000 Congolese asylum seekers in Uganda.

### **UK-Rwanda: Appeals court gives permission for asylum seekers to be deported**

On 13 June, the UK's Court of Appeal approved the High Court's decision to commence the deportation of the first batch of asylum seekers to Rwanda and also said further appeals could not be filed against the decision. On 10 June, the High Court had rejected attempts to block the first flight; several activists criticised the UK's plan to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda over concerns of human trafficking. On 14 June, the number of asylum seekers to be deported reportedly fell to less than ten.

### **Burkina Faso: Several killed in two different attacks in the north**

On 13 June, Al Jazeera reported a government spokesperson's statement that at least 50 people had been killed in an attack spanning between 11 June and 12 June in a village in northern Burkina Faso. The exact death toll has not been released; various media sources have reported a varied number of casualties with some pinning the same at over 100. The UN and the EU condemned the attack and the latter called for an investigation to understand the circumstances of the killing. The latest attack comes after gunmen killed 11 military policemen in the same region on 9 June.

### Europe and the Americas

#### **Denmark and Canada: Deal signed to end dispute over Hans Island**

On 13 June, Denmark and Canada reached a deal over an uninhabited island in the Arctic. The foreign affairs minister Mélanie Joly signed the deal officially with Danish foreign minister Jeppe Kofod and Greenland's prime minister Múte Bourup Egede marking the end to the Hans Island dispute. Through the agreement, both Denmark and Canada will divide the island from the rift that goes from north to south. Although the deal is seen as a signal of the victory of diplomacy and rule of law, after the parliamentary approval and with the deal made official it would have established the world's longest maritime border of 3,882 kilometres.

#### **Spain and France: Second episode of heat wave hits early**

On 13 June, Spain and southern France experienced their second extreme heat wave of the year, with scientists warning that summer heatwaves are occurring earlier and more frequently. Temperatures near the Mediterranean had already surpassed 35 degrees celsius, according to Météo France, and would continue to increase from midweek as the hot air mass advanced northwards, with areas of the south-west and Rhone valley reaching 39 degrees celsius. Temperatures were anticipated to reach and, in some cases, surpass 30 degrees celsius in Alsace, Brittany, and the greater Paris region may reach 35 degrees celsius by 16 June.

#### **Finland: Arms sent to Ukraine amid NATO ambitions**

On 10 June, Finland announced that it would provide more defence aid to Ukraine in the middle of its aspirations to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Finland's defence minister Antti Kaikkonen said that Finland would send the equipment that Ukraine and its army need. Finland and Sweden decided to openly support Ukraine after Russia threatened them against their application for membership in NATO and violated their airspace. Finland is ready to contribute to the aid of Ukraine and the security of the alliance thereby showing its commitment to the principles of NATO. This might fasten the process of Finland's membership in NATO. Although their membership hasn't been finalized, the US has shown its full support for Finland's and Sweden's admission into NATO as well as being watchful of any security threats in both countries. If any threat to the security of Finland and Sweden may arise, the US will work with the countries to deal with them.

### Spain: A new type of marine pollutant found termed plastitar

On 13 June, scientists at the Canary Institute of Marine Sciences in Spain coined the term Plastitar for the new type of ocean pollutant. The formation of plastitar is a result of oil spills in the ocean, which when evaporates and weathers, washes ashore as tar balls that stick to the rocky shores. The structure solidifies over time, fusing anything from abandoned fishing equipment to plastic pellets and scraps of polyester and nylon to the tar. Plastitar was discovered along the shorelines of numerous Canary Islands, it was widespread, spanning more than half of the region they were investigating. The occurrence of plastitar was related to the archipelago's location along a major oil tanker shipping route, but the scientists believe it may exist worldwide.

### Ukraine: Lagoons and marine life under threat due to Ukraine war

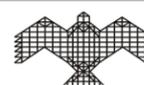
On 07 June, Guardian reported on the damaging effect caused on the oceans and wetlands due to the Ukraine war. The Tuzly Lagoons national park on the Black Sea is known for being dug by environmentalists to ensure the flow of water bodies. The channels will be the path to numerous small fishes, which come to the lagoons for breeding. With the war in place, the digging cannot be done and the beaches are now being filled with mines to keep the Russian forces away. The digging has been in practice for the last 30 years and it was seen as a way to restore the marine life, environmentalists warn that this was only one affected area brought into light while many other wetlands have been impacted due to the continuity of war. Ukraine's deputy minister of environmental protection and natural resources said: "Almost 400,000 hectares and 14 Ramsar sites [wetlands designated to be of international importance by UNESCO] along the coastline and lower reaches of the Dnipro River are under threat."

### Ecuador: Protests to reduce the price of fuel

On 13 June, protestors from Ecuador carried out demonstrations by setting roadblocks against the economic policies of the government. Highways across Ecuador were blocked using tyres, and trees and the protestors had their list of demands. It included reducing the fuel cost, price caps on agricultural goods and more employment. Recently, the government finalized a financial deal worth USD 6.5 billion from IMF to recover from the pandemic and the economy is facing high levels of inflation. In response to the protests, the police have arrested the leader of Ecuador's biggest indigenous group, Leonidas Iza for engaging in the protests. According to the leader, the protests will continue until their requests are addressed by the government.

### Canada: Huge amounts of methane were found to be released 30 times faster

On 14 January, a Canadian firm GHGSat which works on methane sensors reported that it had found a largest gas emission from Raspadskaya coal mine located in Russia. It said that close to 90 tonnes was released every hour which was increasing the carbon dioxide 30 times in the atmosphere which occurs over 100 years. According to GHGSat's director, Brody Wight said: "We did reach out to Raspadskaya about their emissions, but so far we've not had a response. The rate of 87,000 kg per hour we detected on 14 January is a huge amount; the biggest we've seen bar none."

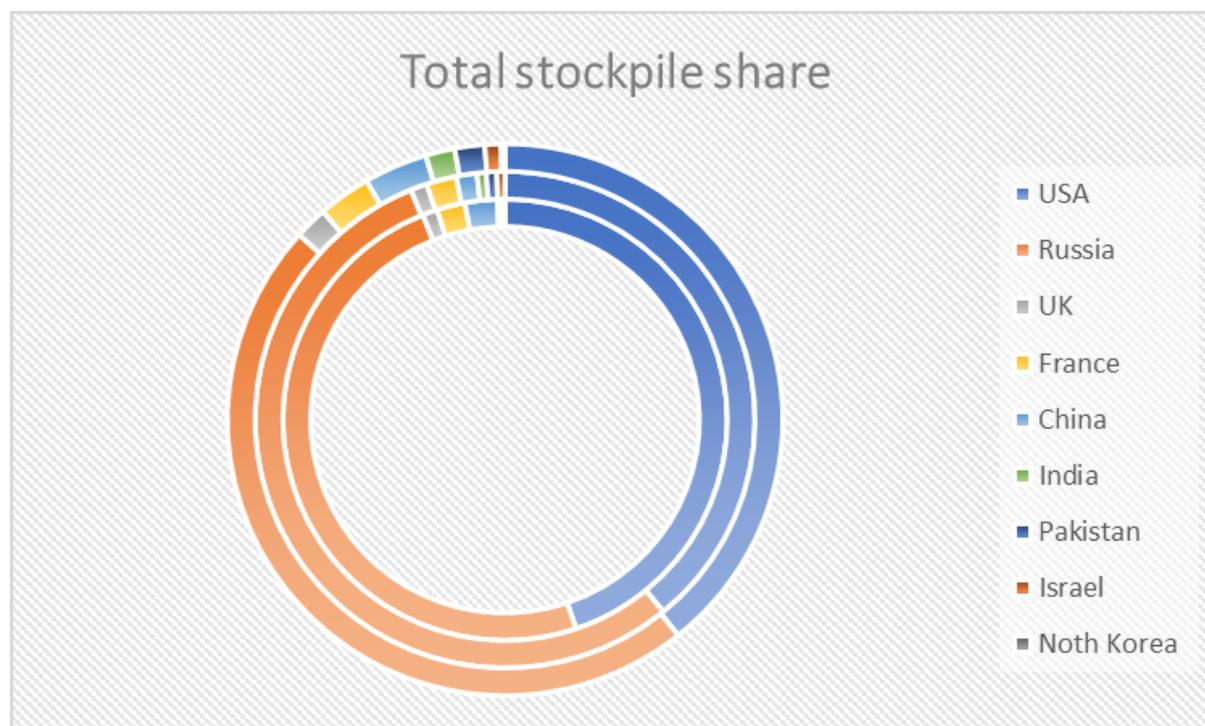


Conflict Weekly Special, 15 June 2022

Report Review: *Global nuclear arsenals are expected to grow as states continue to modernize—New SIPRI Yearbook 2022*

SIPRI report on nuclear arsenal/weapons: Five takeaways

By Ankit Singh



On 13 June, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) launched the findings of "SIPRI Yearbook 2022." A key trend SIPRI mentions is that despite a marginal decrease in the number of nuclear warheads in 2021, nuclear arsenals are expected to grow over the coming decade. There are higher chances of risks of nuclear weapons being used than at any time since the height of the cold war. The inventory table in the press release indicated a net increase in inventory of India from 156 in 2021 to 160 in 2022. Wilfred Wan, Director of SIPRI's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme in a worrying tone, said: "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." The press release points to five trends as follows.

#### Five takeaways

First, Russian and US total warhead inventories continued to decline in 2021, this was due to the dismantling of warheads that had been retired from military service several years ago. The USA and Russia have an agreement on the new START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), but the treaty does not guarantee a limit on total non-strategic nuclear warhead inventories, which means that short-range nuclear-tipped can fill the void in the treaty. With changing security reality in Europe, the treaty itself may require some upgrades.

Second, increase in nuclear arsenal but a decrease in nuclear warheads. The data chart below takes data decadal stats of net stockpiles from the SIPRI summaries of 2002 (outermost circle), 2012 and 2022 (innermost circle due to decreased warheads). Recently the world has seen several tests in various types of weapon platforms to achieve multi-domain deterrence, be it hypersonic cruise missiles, short-range subsonic cruise missiles and technologically diverse launching platforms. Of the total inventory of an estimated 12,705 warheads at the start of 2022, about 9440 were in military stockpiles for potential use and the press release has speculated that the number of nuclear arsenals will probably increase in the next decade.

Third, instability in North-East Asia. In previous SIPRI yearbooks figures for North Korea were SIPRI's estimates of the number of warheads that North Korea could build with the amount of fissile material it has produced, this year the estimate is for the number of assembled warheads North Korea possesses, which means there is consensus on accepting the reality that North Korea does possess nuclear weapons in its Kitty. With regards to China, the inventory remains unchanged from last year but the release did acknowledge China is in the middle of a substantial expansion of its nuclear weapon arsenal, which satellite images indicate includes the construction of over 300 new missile silos.

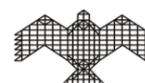
Fourth, UK has officially declared in 2010 that its nuclear weapon stockpile would not exceed 225 warheads, however, last year said it would increase the ceiling on its total warhead stockpile, and would no longer publicly disclose figures for the country's operational nuclear weapons. The mum from the pacifist country has been hyphenated in the nuclear inventory table from SIPRI, meaning that the data with regard has to take with a pinch of salt.

Fifth, Iran is not mentioned in the summary of yearbook officially. Yet it has enriched Uranium at levels over 60 per cent purity, meaning that they are short of technical gap and have a possession of fissile material. On 12 June, Israeli prime minister had warned that Iran is getting 'dangerously' close to completing its nuclear weapons programme and will soon have a nuclear bomb in its arsenal. The non-mention of Iran in the nuclear haves can be considered discriminatory and risky and kept under the wraps to avoid being noticed by readers.

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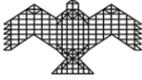
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National Institute of  
Advanced Studies



### About NIAS-International Peace Research Initiative (IPRI)

The International Peace Research Initiative (IPRI), initiated in 2018 at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), is a part of the Conflict Resolution and Peace Research Programme at the School of Conflict and Security Studies.

IPRI undertakes research on various issues relating to peace with special emphasis on radicalisation, sustainable peace, gender roles in peacebuilding and global protest movements. IPRI research are published as briefs, reports and commentary.



### About Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation. Established in 1955 as “Society for Christian-Democratic Civic Education”, in 1964, the Foundation proudly took on the name of Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. With 16 regional offices in Germany and over 120 offices abroad, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is committed to achieving and maintaining peace, freedom and justice through political education. KAS promotes and preserves free democracy, social market economy, and the development and consolidation of the value consensus. KAS also focus on consolidating democracy, the unification of Europe and the strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as on development cooperation.

KAS cooperates with governmental institutions, political parties and civil society organizations, building strong partnerships along the way. In particular, KAS seeks to intensify political cooperation in the area of development cooperation on the foundations of its objectives and values. Together with the partners, KAS makes a significant contribution to the creation of a global order that empowers every country to determine its own developmental priorities and destiny in an internationally responsible

### About Conflict Weekly

The Conflict Weekly an academic endeavour to bring every Wednesday/Thursday a weekly analysis of the conflict and peace processes in the world; aiming to look at the larger peace picture. It is published by the NIAS-IPRI in collaboration with the KAS India Office.



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