

Headlines:

- **US to Withdraw from Missile Treaty**
- **Imran Khan Goes Begging to Riyadh**
- **UN: French Niqab Ban Violates Human Rights**

Details:

US to Withdraw from Missile Treaty

US President Donald Trump announced on October 20 that he intends to withdraw the US from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. That agreement prohibits the deployment of nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with intermediate ranges, defined as 310-3,410 miles. Although the US accused Russia of violating the treaty, the White House provided no evidence of the violations. China was never a signatory to the treaty, but it has become an increasingly key consideration as it built up a massive land-based arsenal of short- and intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles as part of its wider military modernization. This powerful arsenal allows China to challenge US and allied forces in the Western Pacific. The US has placed sanctions on Iran for testing its ballistic missiles and undertaken similar actions when North Korea tests its long-range missiles. It seems US national interests trumps all considerations.

Imran Khan Goes Begging to Riyadh

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan attend an investment conference boycotted by other leaders over the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Khan told an interviewer before leaving for the conference he was concerned at Khashoggi's death but could not skip the conference because "we're desperate" for possible Saudi loans to shore up Pakistan's economy. It is Khan's second visit to Saudi Arabia in just over a month, but he has not succeeded in securing significant financial assistance to stave off a looming balance of payments crisis. Khan told the Middle East Eye in an interview published on Monday 22 October that he could not pass up the invitation to meet Saudi leaders again. "The reason I feel I have to avail myself of this opportunity is because in a country of 210 million people right now we have the worst debt crisis in our history. Unless we get loans from friendly countries or the IMF (International Monetary Fund), we actually won't have in another two or three months enough foreign exchange to service our debts or to pay for our imports. So we're desperate at the moment." Despite promises of change, it seems carrying the begging bowl to starve off the country's problems is the only solution successive Pakistani leaders have.

UN: French Niqab Ban Violates Human Rights

France's niqab ban violates human rights, the United Nations Human Rights Committee has found, after looking into the cases of two French women who were convicted for wearing a full Islamic veil. "The Committee found that the general criminal ban on the wearing of the niqab in public introduced by the French law disproportionately harmed the petitioners' right to manifest their religious beliefs," a statement from the committee read, noting that the two cases marked the first time it had looked into laws banning the niqab or other full Islamic veils. The UN body's decisions specifically looked at a French law adopted in 2010 which stipulates that "no one may, in a public space, wear any article of clothing intended to conceal the face". The French government has 180 days - or until late April 2019 - to inform the committee of steps it has taken to implement the decision, including compensating the two petitioners and any other actions to prevent similar violations in the future, such as revising the 2010 law. While the committee's decisions are not enforceable, as a signatory of an optional protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), France is obliged under international law to comply "in good faith".