Welcome to this week's Future Trends - the must-read weekly briefing covering the changing face of global politics, economics, development, and conflict.

Here's what you need to know this week:

- Ukraine to sue Poland, Hungary and Slovakia over food import bans
- UK, France and Germany to keep nuclear sanctions on Iran
- Kremlin says Karabakh tensions rising
- Eurozone interest rates raised to all-time high
- Libya PM: We will only accept 'necessary aid'
- 3D-printed vegan salmon now in supermarkets
SPECIAL EDITION: UKRAINE

Ukraine says Klishchiivka village near Bakhmut recaptured. The general in command of Ukraine’s ground forces said that Ukrainian forces had recaptured the eastern village of Klishchiivka on the southern flank of Bakhmut, which the Russians took control of in January.

Ukraine claims to have destroyed Russian submarine. Ukraine’s military intelligence service claims that a Russian submarine was destroyed in a missile attack on a shipyard in Sevastopol, along with a tank landing ship.

Ukraine to sue Poland, Hungary and Slovakia over food import bans. Ukraine will sue the countries via the WTO over bans on Ukrainian agricultural products. This followed a decision by the three countries, which border Ukraine, to ban imports of the country's key export commodities due to domestic over-supply.
POLITICS

The UK, France, and Germany have decided to maintain nuclear sanctions on Iran. They will retain the sanctions as they believe Iran breached the 2015 nuclear deal by enriching and storing uranium. The renewed sanctions also aim to discourage Tehran from selling drones and missiles to Russia.

Congo presidential candidate gets seven years in jail for insulting president. A high court in the DRC has sentenced presidential candidate Jean-Marc Kabund to seven years in prison on 12 charges that include spreading false rumours, and insulting the head of state.

Russia has 'neutralised' hundreds of foreign spies. The Russian Security Council secretary Nikolai Patrushev said hundreds of employees of foreign intelligence services have been neutralised in recent years.

Mexico says it has proof of Chinese fentanyl smuggling. A container with hidden packages of the drug was intercepted in the Pacific port of Lázaro Cárdenas. The intercepted container had packages weighing 34-35kg with traces of fentanyl and methamphetamine hidden in fuel resin.

Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso establish Sahel security alliance. The three Sahel countries have signed a mutual defence pact known as the Alliance of Sahel States. The pact binds the signatories to assist one another, including militarily, against possible threats of armed rebellion and external aggression on any one of the three countries.
CONFLICT

Kremlin says Karabakh tensions rising. The Kremlin expressed concern that tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh were increasing. Armenia's prime minister described the situation in the blockaded territory as critical.

China flies 103 military planes toward Taiwan. China sent 103 warplanes toward Taiwan in a 24-hour period in what the island’s defence ministry says is a 'recent new high'. The ministry called the Chinese military action 'harassment' that it warned could 'escalate in the current tense atmosphere'.

Wagner camp in Belarus being dismantled. Satellite images of a military base located southeast of the Belarus capital Minsk appear to show dismantling of tents in recent weeks, indicating the winding down of the base for the Wagner Group.
Houthi envoys heading to Riyadh for ceasefire talks. Houthi and Omani envoys are planning to head to Saudi Arabia to try to negotiate a permanent ceasefire with Saudi officials with the aim of ending the war in Yemen.

A quarter of schools closed in Burkina Faso as fighting escalates after coup. The schools have been closed after a sharp rise in fighting between militants and the government, according to a new report that warns of a looming education crisis in the region.

ECB rates at record high

European Central Bank rate as of 20 September 2023

ECONOMICS

Eurozone interest rates raised to all-time high. The bank raised its key rate for the 10th time in a row to 4%, an all time high since the implementation of the Euro in 1999, as it warned inflation was "expected to remain too high for too long". Forecasts predict inflation would be 5.6% on average in 2023.
**Italy's PM says migration won't solve Europe's demographic crisis.** Some legal migration can benefit European economies, but migration is not the solution to the continent's demographic crisis, Italian Prime Minister Meloni said. Nearly 126,000 migrants have arrived in Italy so far this year, compared with around 66,000 in the same period in 2022.

**Inflation is ranging between 30 to 40% in Ethiopia because of war.** The war has driven up the price of commodities, while increasing the trade deficit because of military spending. The productive sector of the economy has also been hit by the war.

**Africa refines its demands for the climate: financing, debt and taxes.** Financing of renewable energies, reform of the international financial system and carbon taxes, are some of the demands from the first African summit on the climate to lighten the financial burden of the fight against global warming.

**Argentina’s August inflation at highest rate since 1991.** Analysts have forecasted that inflation will remain in double figures during September, and predicated that inflation will have a carry-over effect for the population and the upcoming elections.
DEVELOPMENT

Libya's PM: We will only accept 'necessary aid'. The Libyan government is implementing a comprehensive approval process for aid because of security concerns. Although some international aid has arrived, the process is delaying vital assistance and supplies.

NASA names chief of UFO research. NASA said it has named a new director of research into what the government calls "unidentified anomalous phenomenon". The US space agency's chief said an expert panel has found no evidence of an extra-terrestrial origin for these objects.

Ram temple built on site of razed Babri mosque in India to open. A grand temple of Lord Ram, worshipped by millions of Hindus, will open in January in northern India at a site believed to be his birthplace, fulfilling a promise from the ruling party in a location that was once a flashpoint for Hindu-Muslim violence.

UAE seizes billion dollar amphetamine haul. Police in the UAE have seized 13 tonnes of amphetamine pills smuggled in furniture. The suspected
origin of the illegal shipment is yet to be confirmed, but it is believed to be produced in huge quantities in Syria.

**Rwanda signs deal to build nuclear reactor.** Dual Fluid Energy Inc., a Vancouver-based nuclear power start up, has signed an agreement with the government to build a one megawatt prototype reactor in the country set to be operational by 2026.

---

**SOCIAL**

**3D-printed vegan salmon now in supermarkets.** The food product is the first 3D-printed vegan seafood and product to be made available in supermarkets in Austria. The goal is to offer a more environmentally friendly substitute for conventional fishing and aquaculture practices.

**Scientists kill brain cancer with nanoparticle therapy in a first.** Scientists at the University of Nottingham have devised a unique spray treatment method to cure glioblastoma, a highly aggressive brain cancer that annually kills over
10,000 people in the US. The treatment involves using bio-nanoantennas, gold nanoparticles coated with redox-active molecules.

**World’s largest radio telescope being built in Western Australia.** The massive telescope will comprise 130,000 antennas across 74 kilometres at a cost of $3bn. The location is considered one of the 'radio quietest' places on earth. The telescope will be able to look at the oldest galaxies in the universe.

**Artificial wombs for premature babies are a step closer to reality.** FDA regulators in the US will weigh how scientists should conduct the first human tests of bag-like wombs, meant to nurture babies born so premature that modern medicine struggles to keep them healthy.

**Decongestant in cold medicines found ineffective.** An advisory panel to the FDA in the US has claimed that an ingredient in oral decongestants don't work. At issue is phenylephrine, an almost-century-old ingredient used in versions of Benadryl, Mucinex, Tylenol and other over-the-counter medicines.

---

**PEACEBUILDING**

*Interaction* has published a report on the “Big Think” on the US global food security response. The effort aimed to identify key gaps in the USG response to growing food insecurity, develop policy solutions to address them, and mitigate future hunger. Six months of learning events and targeted discussion groups culminated in a report that identified six recommendations: make agrifood system resilience the core of US global food security and nutrition programming, better coordinate existing food security programs, increase investments in systemic, long-term global food security, put local communities and partners in the lead, focus on solutions that target the underlying drivers of hunger, and galvanize private sector investment for local agrifood systems.

*Estee Lauder Companies UK & Ireland* has announced the launch of an innovative financing platform to expand woodlands in the South Downs National Park. The project is the second to be supported by the company as part of its five-year £500,000 commitment to Revere, Palladium’s partnership with UK National Parks to restore nature and contribute to the UK’s effort to achieve Net Zero by sequestering greenhouse gases.
The Stimson Center has published the results of its Global Governance Survey, which examined international support for “real, credible, global solutions” for issues of peace and security. The 2023 survey found a marked international preference for multilateral action on security, climate, global health and human rights issues, including widespread support for universal health care, measures to prevent another pandemic, and action on climate. Substantial majorities also back institutional reform, including an international anti-corruption court and broadening permanent membership in the UN Security Council. The survey was conducted in 12 countries: the US, Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Common Cause’s report, Under the Microscope: Election Disinformation in 2022, details key findings from the 2022 US election cycle. The document highlights successful efforts to refute disinformation, counter voter suppression, and educate the media on how to report disinformation accurately and responsibly. Looking ahead to the 2024 election cycle, the article identifies current and potential challenges to the electoral process and offers suggestions for addressing them, including working with partners to combat disinformation and adopting new state and federal legislation that would protect election workers, tackle disinformation in political advertising, and fight deceptive practices.