

IN THE NEWS

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World News

The US is currently negotiating with Iran. For example, one report indicates the US and UN are in agreement with Iran's proposal for nuclear reduction [1]. However, Israel's president Netanyahu warned the deal is a historic mistake [2]. Furthermore, it is unclear if Iran is serious. For instance, at a rally in Tehran, protesters were calling for the death of America [3]. What's more, Iran continues military involvement in Syria. Case in point, one Iran Revolutionary Guard commander, was killed in Syria while fighting rebel forces [4]. Expectedly, after extensive UN negotiations, Iran still did not sign a nuclear treaty [5]. In fact, Iran's actions are stimulating a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. For example, one report indicates Saudi Arabia has purchased nuclear weapons from Pakistan and are currently awaiting delivery [6]. In summary, the risk of nuclear war in the Middle East has greatly increased.

In future wars, space technology will be critical. Consequently, technology that advances space capability has a direct bearing on military capability. With this backdrop, India successfully launched a spacecraft that will travel to Mars on a scientific mission [7]. In contrast, NASA has such confidence in Russia's ability to support the International Space Station that live broadcasts from Russia are planned [8]. In other words, NASA lacks the organic sustainment capability to maintain the ISS without Russia. In turn, Russia is using the knowledge and experience from its NASA support to modernize its military. For instance, the Russian military will receive 400 new missiles along with nuclear weapons modernization [9].

In Asia, China's military expansion could trigger war. Case in point, Japan's president warned it would shoot down any Chinese drones that enter Japan's airspace; in response China threatened war should Japan take such action [10]. Meanwhile, China started deployment of a new bomber with a land attack cruise missile capability [11]. What's more, China has an extensive underground system of tunnels that prevent accurate estimates of the communist country's nuclear weapon count [12]. In contrast, the US has reduced its nuclear stockpile by 80% and now has an inventory not seen since the Eisenhower administration [13]. Elsewhere in Asia, the North Korean KN-08 road mobile intercontinental missile could be used to hit the US with nuclear weapons [14]. Additionally, India is developing multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles, hosting 4–6 warheads, for its Agni V (referred to as the China killer) missile [15].

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Security

On election day, November 5, our local voting had only one electronic machine, the rest were paper ballots. The election official stated that due to hackers, viruses, and the like; they are phasing out the electronics ballot machines. Instead, they are using a scanner to record the ballot. In pointing out that once the record was

scanned, it's in the computer; the official stated that at least there is a paper trail. With the electronic machines, they had no way to reconcile what the votes were. This is a sad testament to the poor quality of today's computer security environment. The current approach is to use poor controls to protect poor software. As a society, we

may be doomed by the poor security and the lack of *security experts* that are actually capable of security engineering.

On a different note, one of the big concerns is the role of state sponsored cyber espionage. To this end, one report suggests China is involved in a large scale

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Special points of interest:

- Saudi Arabia purchases nuclear weapons from Pakistan
- Russian cosmonauts spread computer virus aboard Space Station

Security

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operation directed against the US [1].

Similarly, Identity theft continues to be a major problem. For example, the Internal Revenue Service refunded \$4 billion in fraudulent claims last year [2]. Then Microsoft's Patch Tuesday fixed only one of two actively exploited zero-day attacks [3].

As previously noted, the US relies on Russia for transportation to the International Space Station [4]. However, this reliance comes at a cost. For example, Russian cosmonauts carried a computer virus on a USB device that spread to other space station connect-

ed computers [5]. Elsewhere, one report indicates a Russian nuclear plant was infected by the Stuxnet virus [6]. This is the virus allegedly developed by the US and Israel to target Iranian centrifuges [7].

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2. CBS News/AP, *IRS re-funded \$4 billion to identity thieves last year, inspector general's report says*, November 11, 2013.
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I do not believe that civilization will be wiped out in a war fought with the atomic bomb. Perhaps two-thirds of the people of the earth will be killed—
Albert Einstein

World News

(Continued from page 1)

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7. BBC News, *Inside India's Mars mission HQ*, November 5, 2013.
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15. Menon, Jay, Aviation Week & Space Technology, *India's Advance*, November 11, 2013.

Terrorism

China is once again on the receiving end of terrorist activities. For instance, six bombs were exploded outside the Communist party headquarters in the province of Shanxi [1]. Reports indicate one person was killed and another eight injured from the explosions [2]. Then 11 people were killed by axe-wielding attackers on a police station located in the volatile western Xinjiang province [3]. Readers should note the recent terrorist attacks in China did not involve guns.

In the Middle East, Syria continues to be an area of concern. Case in point, volumes of shoulder fired anti-aircraft missiles are flooding into Syria [4]. It is just a matter of time before terrorist elements gain access to these weapons.

What's more, the US lacks adequate southern border security [5]. We expect that following terrorist attacks that use the porous southern US border, then and only then will we strengthen the border.

Furthermore, terrorism continues in those areas the US had vacated. For example, twin bombs targeted against Shiites, detonated in Baghdad, killed at least 41 and injured another 100 people [6]. What's more, within Iraq the terrorist group, al-Qaeda, is now at its strongest since 2006 [7]. In a sign of escalating violence, over 5,000 Iraqis were killed from bombings and shooting this year [8].

Then in Tripoli, 6 people were killed and 45 injured in clashes between militiamen and armed residents [9].

One important item that terrorists typically need is money to finance their activities. Often, money is obtained via illegal enterprises. Case in point, terrorists in Africa are killing elephants and selling the harvested ivory [10].

With all the damage inflicted by terrorist organizations; the oft approach is to negotiate [11]. For example, with no international response, two US sailors were released by pirates after a ransom was paid [12]. With little resistance from world powers, piracy is effectively allowed as another tool to finance terrorism. Until the terrorist organizations are destroyed, in all likelihood they will continue to flourish. The take-away is summarized in one observation; trying to negotiate with a cancer does not cure the disease.

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*When you see something
that is technically sweet,
you go ahead and do it
and you argue about what
to do about it only after
you have had your
technical success. That is
the way it was with the
atomic bomb—J. Robert
Oppenheimer*

Economy

One measure of economic health is the number of poor people. To this end, the upwardly revised count now stands at 48.7 million Americans, or 1 in every 6, is living in poverty [1].

For the week ending November 2, the number of first time unemployment claims reported by the Labor Department was 336,000 [2]. Then for the week ending November 9, the number of first time claims reported was 339,000 [3]. Meanwhile, the Labor Department reported the unemployment rate for October increased to 7.3% [4]. However, by one survey, 30% of small franchises and 12% of other small businesses are cutting employee work hours because of the new Affordable Care Act [5]. Essentially, many businesses are replacing 40-hour week employees with part timers. This skews employment numbers and makes it appear that more people are finding jobs.

The US trade deficit for September increased to \$41.8 billion [6]. While the US continues to struggle China continues to grow. For October,

China's trade surplus grew to \$31.1 billion [7]. Furthermore, one report indicates that although there are more billionaires in the US, China has more "self-made" billionaires [8].

Meanwhile, American cities continue to struggle. Case in point, Moody's is warning that Scranton, Pennsylvania, may be forced into bankruptcy over the latest \$20 million budget deficit [9]. Then Fitch lowered Chicago's bond rating from AA- to A- [10].

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*Second point is no one here could predict or know that Israel was involved or started producing the hydrogen bomb - the most advanced and powerful atomic bomb that can kill millions of people—
Mordechai Vanunu*

China Pollution

With winter rapidly approaching, some of China's neighbors are worried about air pollution. For instance, Japan and South Korea expect China's air pollution will be worse than last year [1]. Meanwhile, in China, even

coastal cities are suffering heavy air pollution. For instance, Shanghai was blanketed with severe smog [2].

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