

IN THE NEWS

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World News

The US plans to cut 50 land based ICBMs, 56 submarine missile launchers, and convert 30 B-52 bombers from the nuclear weapons force [1]. Meanwhile, Russia is preventing US plans from verifying their compliance as required by the last nuclear weapons reduction treaty [2]. Concurrently, Russia is massing troops along the Eastern border of Ukraine [3].

One report indicates Iran and Pakistan plan to conduct joint naval exercises in the Strait of Hormuz, where over a third of the world's oil flows [4]. Additionally, one article indicates India may reverse its policy of no first use of nuclear weapons [5].

Meanwhile, Iranian officials appear to recognize the importance of nuclear weapons. Case in point, Iran's Nuclear Chief claims whoever has nuclear technology has inherent power [6]. What's more, Iran's defense minister asserted that ICBM development is not negotiable [7]. What is perhaps more troubling is the appearance of an Iranian victory in the nuclear weapons discussions. For instance, the US unfroze an additional \$450 million in Iranian assets [8].

While the US relies on Russia for transport to the space station, China is highlighting the need to militarize space. Case in point, Chinese President Xi Jinping want air and space defense capabilities to be combined [9]. At sea, China is also getting more competition over its claims for the South China Sea. For instance, Japan is constructing a military base on one of its westernmost islands, near the area claimed by China [10]. The new base is the first Japanese western expansion in 40 years and will garrison around 100 troops with a radar facility [11]. Meanwhile, other Asian nations are hoping the US will stand with them in addressing China's militaristic territorial tensions [12]. The sad truth remains, China is growing in power because of the wealth transfer associated with unfair trade practices.

1. Alexander, David, Reuters, *U.S. to cut nuclear launchers under treaty with Russia -officials*, April 8, 2014.
2. Gertz, Bill, Washington Free Beacon, *Flying Blind*, April 17, 2014.
3. Soldatkin, Vladimir, Reuters, *Russia says reinforced troops on Ukraine border as precaution*, April 19, 2014.
4. Fineren, Daniel, Reuters, *Navies of Iran, Pakistan to hold joint drill in Hormuz strait*, April 6, 2014.
5. Miglani, Sanjeev, and Chalmers, John, Reuters, *India's BJP puts 'no first use' nuclear policy in doubt*, April 7, 2014.
6. Washington Free Beacon, *Iran Nuclear Chief: Whoever Has Nuclear*

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Security

Personal identity theft continues to be a dominant problem. What's more, without US regulatory leadership in adopting smart card technology, the news will continue to focus on this crime. For example, the credit checking agency

Experian, is being investigated for a security breach that puts 200 million people at risk [1]. One report suggests the number of data breaches during 2013 increased 62% from the year before [2].

After all the effort that

went into protecting the critical infrastructure, we discover just how vulnerable the power grid remains. For instance, researchers continue to discover easily exploitable vulnerabilities that exist in commercial

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Special points of interest:

- US reducing number of nuclear weapons

Security

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systems [3].

Patching software continues to be major undertaking. The latest Oracle release fixed 104 flaws [4].

1. Walker, Danielle, SC Magazine, Connecticut, Illinois to investigate mas-

sive breach at Experian co., April 4, 2014.

2. Robinson, Teri, SC Magazine, Report: Data breaches up 62 percent in 2013, April 9, 2014.
3. Halper, Evan, Los Angeles Times, Security holes in power grid have federal officials scrambling, April

7, 2014.

4. Walker, Danielle, SC Magazine, Oracle fixes 104 flaws in quarterly update, addresses Heartbleed bug, April 16, 2014.

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Technology Gains 'Inherent Power', April 11, 2014.

7. Washington Free Beacon, Iranian Defense Minister Says ICBM Development Non-Negotiable, April 17, 2014
8. Washington Free Beacon, U.S. Unfreezes \$450M in Iranian Funds, April 18, 2014.

9. Blanchard, Ben, Reuters, China's President Xi urges greater military use of space, April 14, 2014.

10. Reynolds, Isabel. Business Week, Japan Begins Building Base Near Islands Disputed With China, April 19, 2014.

11. Kubo, Nobuhiro, Reuters, Japan expands army footprint for first time in 40 years, risks angering China,

April 19, 2014.

12. Economic Times, Asia seeks Barack Obama's assurance in territorial spats, April 20, 2014.

How horrible, fantastic,
incredible, it is that we
should be digging trenches
and trying on gas-masks here
because of a quarrel in a
faraway country between
people of whom we know
nothing—Neville
Chamberlain

Terrorism

Now that the Libyan government has changed, the result is not what was expected. For instance, Southern Libya has a large contingent of militant Islamists [1].

Meanwhile, violence within Syria continues. For instance, fighting in the city of Aleppo claimed at least 29 lives [2].

In Pakistan, terrorism continues to leave its mark. A bomb explosion killed at least 21 people at a market located on the outskirts of the Pakistani capital of Islamabad [3].

In Nigeria, at least 70 people were killed in a terrorist bomb blast at a crowded bus station [4]. In Egypt, a bomb blast wounded two policemen [5].

Recall, the September 11 terrorists used commercial aircraft as weapons. So whenever a commercial plane disappears, one has to ask where it went. It has been over one month since the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight 370. After failing to find any plane wreckage, a robotic submarine is searching the

waters in an area that may hold the final location [6]. Given it has been over 10 years since the September 11 terrorist attack; do we not know the location of every commercial aircraft flying (especially in Asia)?

A favorite target of Islamic terrorist groups remains Israel and its people. For example, a planned Hezbollah attack against Israeli tourists was foiled in Bangkok, Thailand [7].

1. Irish, John, Reuters, *France says Southern Libya now a 'viper's nest' for Islamist militants*, April 7, 2014.
2. Surk, Barbara, AP, *Activists: Fierce Fighting in North Syria Kills 29*, April 12, 2014.
3. USA Today/AP, *Bomb blast in Pakistan kills more than 20*, April 9, 2014.
4. BBC, *Nigeria violence: More than 70 killed in Abuja bus blast*, April 14, 2014.
5. Hendawi, Hamza, AP/

ABC News, *Bomb Explosion on Cairo Bridge Wounds 2 Policemen*, April 14, 2014.

6. AP/Fox News, *Robotic sub should finish seabed search in focused area for missing Malaysia plane in 1 week*, April 19, 2014.
7. Washington Free Beacon, *Hezbollah Terror Plot Against Israelis in Bangkok Foiled*, April 18, 2014.

*It has become appallingly
obvious that our
technology has exceeded
our humanity—Albert
Einstein*

Economy

The information provided by the Labor department continues to show some improvement. For the first time since May 2007, the number of first time unemployment claims, was only 300,000 [1]. Then for the following week, the number reported was 304,000 [2].

By all indications, the economy is starting to rebound. For example, in March 503,000 more people joined the labor force [3]. This indicates greater confidence in the job mar-

ket. However, the same article indicated only 192,000 new jobs were created pointing to problems ahead. Other factors that could influence the economy are: the Russian expansion into Ukraine, China's expanded territory claims, Iran, North Korea, and terrorism.

1. Stilwell, Victoria, Bloomberg, *Jobless Claims in U.S. Drop to Lowest Level Since May 2007*, April 10, 2014.
2. Mutikani, Lucia, Reuters,

Jobless claims, factory data put some shine on economy, April 17, 2014.

3. Woellert, Lorraine, Bloomberg, *Payrolls in U.S. Rose 192,000 in March, Unemployment 6.7%*, April 4, 2014.

China Pollution

In a rare report, a study cited the effects of Asian pollution in altering the weather [1]. What's more, the pollution in China is worse than any person has seen, except for those caught in forest fires or volcanic eruptions [2].

One issue with determining the actual pollution in China, is getting valid information. Nevertheless, the Chinese government released a report indicting almost 20% of the land is polluted [3]. So if China is admitting one fifth of its soil is polluted, what is the actual percentage?

One technique China uses to downplay its pollution problem is to blame Western countries. Case in point, a French utility firm was blamed for tap water pollution in Lanzhou, China [4]. Such charges also help China maintain unfair trade by subjecting foreign investors to ever more regulation. In this example, the pollutant identified was benzene; typically used in chemical and other manufacturing processes. The question here is how can a utility company filter out unlimited quantities of pollution? Has China ever blamed a domestic water utili-

ty for pollution found in the tap water?

1. Morelle, Rebecca, BBC, *Asian air pollution strengthens Pacific storms*, April 14, 2014.
2. Fallows, James, *The Atlantic*, *2 Charts That Put the Chinese Pollution Crisis in Perspective*, April 18, 2014.
3. BBC, *Report: One fifth of China's soil contaminated*, April 18, 2014.
4. Business Insurance, *China blames French utility for water pollution*, April 17, 2014.

If you're Iran's minister of defense, I think you'd try to develop at least one nuclear weapon to save yourself from what happened to Iraq—George McGovern
