

# IN THE NEWS

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## World News

One report indicates Russia has developed an underwater nuclear drone capable of delivering a 100 Megaton nuclear device up to 6,200 miles [1]. Another piece identifies the new Russian weapon as the “Status-6 Oceanic Multipurpose System” [2].

The superpower tensions remain high in the South China Sea. For example, China claims it turned away a US warship conducting a freedom of navigation operation [3]. As such claims continue, the chance for an accidental conflict increase. One piece suggests China may have added thousands of nuclear warheads to its military during the eight years of the previous administration [4]. And yet some mainstream media sources still list China as having only 270 nuclear warheads [5]. Meanwhile, in response to Russian and Chinese nuclear weapons expansion, the US is planning on reintroducing lower yield nuclear weapons [6].

For some time China has embarked on advanced weapons for its military [7]. One example is the reported installation of a rail gun on one of its warships [8]. By one estimate, a rail gun could fire a projectile at speeds of Mach 6 with a range exceeding 100 miles [9].

1. Ballesteros, Carlos, Newsweek, *Russia Has Underwater Nuclear Drones, Leaked Pentagon Documents Reveal*, January 14, 2018.
2. Hayes, Christal, USA Today, *U.S. calls for new nuclear weapons as Russia develops nuclear-armed torpedo*, February 2, 2018.
3. Gertz, Bill, Washington Free Beacon, *Pentagon Denies Chinese Warship Drove U.S. Destroyer From S. China Sea*, January 24, 2018.
4. Drew, James, Aviation Week & Space Technology, *The Pentagon Wants Its Nuclear Tomahawks Back*, January 29, 2018.

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## Security

One important aspect of computer security is informing the proper people of vulnerabilities discovered. As such, one report indicates Intel let Chinese companies know of the chip vulnerability before it warned the U.S. Government [1].

Meanwhile, the race to fix security holes continues. Cisco released security software patches [2]. Concurrently, Mozilla released patches to correct security

flaws [3]. And sometimes the patches cause problems. For instance, Microsoft released a patch to correct Intel’s Spectre update [4].

With all the vulnerabilities in software and hardware, we should not lose sight of the risk to the critical infrastructure. Case in point, researchers are concerned the SCADA applications used to control the critical infrastructure are replete with security vulnerabilities [5].

1. McMillan, Robert, Wall Street Journal, *Intel Warned Chinese Companies of Chip Flaws Before U.S. Government*, January 28, 2018.
2. Able, Robert, SC Magazine, *Cisco patches ASA software flaw allowing VPN hacks*, January 30, 2018.
3. Able, Robert, SC Magazine, *Mozilla patches*

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### Special points of interest:

- Dow 26,000
- Exxon to invest \$50 billion in the US

## Security

hackers access to industrial control systems, January 11, 2018.

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*unsanitized output flaw in Firefox*, January 30, 2018.

4. Reuters, *Intel's Spectre patch created its own problems, so Microsoft put out an update to fix it*, January 29, 2018..
5. Palmer, Danny, ZD Net, *SCADA security: Bad app design could give*

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*Fast is fine, but accuracy is everything. –Wyatt Earp*

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(Continued from page 1)

5. BBC News, *Reality Check: Where are the world's nuclear weapons?*, February 2, 2018
6. Sonne, Paul, Washington Post, *Pentagon unveils new nuclear weapons strategy, ending Obama-era push to reduce U.S. arsenal*, February 2, 2018.
7. Gertz, Bill, Washington Free Beacon, *Report: China's Advanced Weaponry Threatens U.S. Military*, November 17, 2017.
8. Lin, Jeffrey, and Singer,

## World News

P.W., Popular Science, *Looks like China just installed a railgun on a warship, beating the U.S. Navy to the punch*, February 1, 2018.

9. Medrano, Kastalia, Newsweek, *What Is a Hypersonic Railgun? How The Superweapon China May Be Building Works*, February 2, 2018

## Terrorism

In Afghanistan, terrorists killed at least 18 people during a 12 hour assault on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul [1]. Then the Taliban set off a bomb placed a bomb in an ambulance killing at least 95 people in Kabul [2].

The Taliban is not the only terrorist organization in Afghanistan. Case in point, the Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for an attack on a military academy near Kabul that left at least 11 dead [3]. What's more, fighting between the IS and Taliban have uprooted many in the northern part of Afghanistan [4].

Furthermore, the Taliban are active in Pakistan. For instance, the Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for a suicide attack that killed at least 11 soldiers [5].

One big concern is terrorists getting shoulder-fired missiles that can bring down aircraft. If reports are correct, commercial flying just got more dangerous. Case in point, in Syria

the al-Qaeda linked group Tahrir al-Sham claimed responsibility for downing a Russian Su-25 fighter by using a shoulder-fired missile [6]. So all the baggage screening protocols will not prevent a missile hitting a commercial jetliner.

1. Popalzai, Ehsan, and Cullinane, Susannah, CNN, *Kabul hotel siege ends after 12 hours with 18 dead, Afghan officials say*, January 21, 2018.
2. Mashal, Mujib, and Sukhanyar, Jawad, New York Times, *'It's a Massacre': Taliban Bomb in Ambulance Kills 95 in Kabul*, January 27, 2018.
3. Mashal, Mujib, and Abed, Fahim, New York Times, *Attack Near Kabul Military Academy Kills 11 Afghan Soldiers*, January 28, 2018.
4. VOA, *Taliban, IS Fighting Causes Families to Flee in Northern Afghanistan*, February 1, 2018.

5. AP/Washington Post, *Pakistani Taliban claim attack that killed 11 soldiers*, February 4, 2018.
6. McCausland, Phil, NBC News, *Russian jet downed and pilot killed by Syrian militants*, February 3, 2018.

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*The most important six inches on the battlefield is between your ears—James Mattis*

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## Economy

On January 16, the Dow Jones Industrial Average broke through the 26,000 level for the first time [1]. Then on January 17, the Dow closed above the 26,000 level for the first time [2].

In other good news in response to the new tax law, Apple announced plans to bring in overseas cash to include pay \$38 billion in taxes and \$30 billion in capital investments [3]. Additionally, also citing the new tax reform law; Exxon announced plans to invest \$50 billion in the US over the next five years [4].

In other economic indicators; the number of first time unemployment claims for the week ending January 13 was 220,000, the lowest since 1973 [5]. Then, for the week ending January 20, the number was 233,000 [6]. For the week ending January 27, the number of claims reported was 230,000 [7]. Overall, the January unemployment rate

remained at 4.1% [8]. Finally, the GDP grew at a 2.6 % rate during the fourth quarter [9].

However in the economic race with China, the communist giant is still a force to be reckoned with. Case in point, one report suggests China's economy grew by 6.9% during 2017 [10].

1. Reuters, *Dow breaks above 26,000 but ends below that level*, January 17, 2018.
2. Shell, Adam, *USA Today, Dow jumps 323 points, closes above 26,000 for first time in its 121-year history*, January 17, 2018.
3. Mickle, Tripp, *Wall Street Journal, Apple to Pay \$38 Billion in Taxes on Cash Overseas, Build New U.S. Campus*, January 17, 2018.
4. DiChristopher, Tom, *CNBC, Exxon Mobil to invest \$50 billion in US over 5 years, citing tax reform*, January 2018.
5. Reuters, *US weekly jobless claims total 220,000, vs 250,000 expected*, January 18, 2018.
6. Business Insider, *U.S. Weekly Jobless Claims Rebound From Nearly 45-Year Low*, January 25, 2018.
7. Reuters, *US jobless claims unexpectedly fall as job market strengthens*, February 1, 2018.
8. Wall Street Journal, *U.S. Adds 200,000 Jobs; Wage Growth Best Since Recession*, February 2, 2018.
9. Cohen, Patricia, *New York Times, U.S. Economy Grew at 2.6% Rate in Fourth Quarter*, January 26, 2018.
10. BBC News, *China's economy grows by 6.9% in 2017*, January 18, 2018.

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*Just the minute the FBI  
begins making  
recommendations on what  
should be done with its  
information, it becomes a  
Gestapo. –J. Edgar Hoover*

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