



PROPHETIC TIMES

January 30, 2016

Weekly World News Briefs

January, 1998

SCIENTISTS PLAN TO USE GENETICALLY ENGINEERED MOSQUITOES TO FIGHT THE SPREAD OF ZIKA VIRUS

January 28, 2016 yahoo.com reported: "If you've been paying attention to the news for the past week, you've undoubtedly heard about the recent Zika virus outbreak by now. The virus, which is currently spreading across the Americas, has been linked to a rare birth defect known as microencephaly, a condition in which infants are born with abnormally small heads and brains. Since the outbreak, there's been a sizable uptick in infants born with this condition. The World Health Organization estimates that as many as 4 million people could be infected with the virus — and to make matters worse, there's currently no vaccine to help stop it from spreading.

But all is not lost. Biologists are taking a bold new approach to stop the virus from spreading any further. Rather than developing a new vaccine or keeping mosquito populations at bay with insecticides, biotech firm Oxitec plans to fight the spread of Zika by deploying swarms of genetically engineered mosquitoes that will prevent virus-carrying bugs from multiplying. The science behind it all is immensely complicated, but the overall idea is actually pretty easy to grasp. Basically, Oxitec has created a genetically modified breed of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito — the species that is primarily responsible for spreading the Zika virus. This GM version (called OX513A), has been engineered to carry a gene that causes offspring to die before they reach reproductive age. When Oxitec releases these OX513A mosquitoes into the wild, they mate with females and produce offspring that never fully mature — eventually leading to a sizable reduction in the *Aedes aegypti* population, and (hopefully) a noticeable decrease in the spread of the Zika virus.

It's basically the biological equivalent of fighting fire with fire. To stop the spread of a disease that causes birth defects, we're essentially using genetic engineering to give mosquitoes birth defects. And it's highly effective too — Oxitec has reportedly seen a 90 percent reduction in mosquito populations in a number of different trial locations across the globe."...

SPACE WARFARE WITH RUSSIA AND CHINA? PENTAGON URGED TO PREPARE FOR IT



January 27, 2016 The Washington Post reported: "Picture this: A Chinese fighter jet accidentally crashes into a Navy P-8 Poseidon surveillance plane while attempting to buzz it over the South China Sea, killing all on board both aircraft. Fearing U.S. retaliation, China goes a relatively unexpected route: It uses surface-to-air missiles to shoot numerous U.S. satellites out of the heavens in quick succession. Very quickly, the Navy is forced to navigate the Pacific with little use of GPS and degraded communications, causing chaos and uncertainty. The Chinese strikes also have knocked out some of the Pentagon's ability to control its arsenal of precision-guided



weapons.

None of this has happened. But the hypothetical scenario points out the reliance the Pentagon has on space and the military technology it keeps in it. Satellites have soared over the earth's atmosphere for decades, providing the United States with a huge advantage militarily, even at a time when the conventional weapons U.S. rivals have are formidable. A new report released on Wednesday by the Center for a New American Security highlights the vulnerabilities the Pentagon has in space, and calls for a shift in strategy to safeguard it and prepare for conflict there. It's written by senior fellow Elbridge Colby, a former member of the presidential campaign staff of Gov. W. Mitt Romney (R.-Mass.), and argues that potential adversaries like China and Russia have noticed the degree to which the United States is reliant on its "space architecture," and begun to seek ways to threaten it.

"Indeed, many observers have noted that these potential opponents judge the U.S. space architecture to be the Achilles' heel' of U.S. military power, in light of the depth of American reliance on these systems and the vulnerability of the U.S. military satellite architecture," the report said. Threats to satellites include not only missiles, but also cyber and electronic attacks that could disable them. In effect, Colby argues, "space is becoming a domain like any other — air, sea, land, and electromagnetic — in which the United States will have to compete and fight the ability to access and exploit the domain rather than assume safe and uncontested passage within and use of it."...

GERMAN MILITARY OVERSTRETCHED: COMMISSIONER

January 26, 2016 spacedaily.com reported: "Germany's military is overstretched and underfunded as its troops are engaged in anti-jihadist missions from Syria and Afghanistan to Mali while also aiding refugees at home, the defence commissioner said Tuesday. Plagued by a series of defence equipment failures, the military is "at a crossroads" and has reached "the limit of its capacity for interventions", said Hans-Peter Bartels.

Founded in 1955, the Bundeswehr had a peak force of 600,000 at the end of the Cold War when West Germany conscripted young men, and has since shrunk to a 177,000-strong volunteer force. "The force is tired. Too much is lacking," said Bartels, a centre-left Social Democrat lawmaker, demanding a significant budget increase in his annual report. Systemic budget shortages now endanger training, military exercises and missions, while many barracks are crumbling, said Bartels, known in Berlin as "the soldiers' attorney". Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen has pledged a greater role for Germany in international crisis fighting, marking a shift for post-World War II Germany which has long been reluctant to send troops abroad for combat missions.

German forces are currently engaged in the international alliance against the Islamic State group, including by arming and training Kurdish forces in northern Iraq and flying reconnaissance missions over Syria with Tornado jets. German lawmakers in December authorised the deployment of up to 1,200 personnel for the operation, which also includes an A310 aerial refuelling plane and a frigate to help guard the French

aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle in the Mediterranean. Berlin also plans to send an additional 500 troops to Mali to relieve French forces in the west African country, where Germany is already part of an EU military training mission. In November, Germany also decided to increase to 980 its troop strength in Afghanistan to train and support national forces.

The engagements come as the German army has been plagued by a series of equipment failures. It is phasing out the G36 assault rifle after reports it has failed to shoot straight at high temperatures. Its Tornado surveillance aircraft cannot fly night missions because of a glare problem involving cockpit displays and pilots' goggles.

And across its fleet of fighter jets, helicopters and Transall C-160 transport aircraft, it is falling short of its target of 70 percent operational readiness, said the report. Meanwhile, thousands of troops have been mobilised at home to house and support asylum-seekers, of whom a record 1.1 million arrived last year. To help the military cope, parliament has approved raising its budget from 33 billion euros (\$36 billion) in 2015 to 35 billion euros annually over four years.”...”

VATICAN: IRAN MUST JOIN FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

January 26, 2016 The Associated Press reported: “Pope Francis held talks with Iran's president at the Vatican Tuesday, calling on Tehran to play a key role in stopping the spread of terrorism as Iran tries to improve its image in the global arena following an agreement on its nuclear program. The pontiff warmly clasped the hand of President Hassan Rouhani in the first official call paid on a pontiff by an Iranian president since 1999. They held 40 minutes of private talks before Rouhani met with other top Vatican officials.

The talks "delted into the conclusion and application of the nuclear accord, and the important role that Iran is called upon to play, together with other countries of the region, was highlighted," the Holy See said. It added that that role should "foster adequate political solutions to the issues plaguing the Middle East, fighting the spread of terrorism and arms trafficking." The "cordial" talks also stressed common spiritual values, the statement said. Usually it's the pope who asks his audience to pray for him. This time, after the two men spoke with the help of Italian and Farsi language translators, it was the guest who asked the pope for prayers. "I ask you to pray for me," Rouhani said.

The Vatican meeting was a key part of the Iranian effort to take a more prominent place on the world stage after the nuclear deal with Western powers.”...”

CHRISTIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY HIDE THEIR RELIGION IN FEAR

January 26, 2016 Breitbart.com reported: “Persecution in Turkey has forced many of the 45,000 Christians, who fled the Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) in Iraq and Syria, to hide their true identities and pretend to be Muslim. The Armenians, Syrians, and Chaldean Christians received residency in Turkey until 2023, but they have applied to go to the U.S., Canada, or Austria. Syriac and Armenian Patriarchates, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other human rights groups do as much as they can to support the families, but they need more.

Hürriyet Daily News spoke with Armenian Anonis Alis Salciyan and her family, who left Iraq over a year ago. They are a family who pretend to be Muslim in public, but worship privately at home. The children cannot attend school because they do not speak Turkish. Linda and Vahan Markaryan fled Baghdad a year ago with their two children after the Islamic State raided their home...”

ZIKA VIRUS: OUTBREAK ‘LIKELY TO SPREAD ACROSS AMERICAS’ SAYS WHO

January 25, 2016 BBC News reported: “The Zika virus is likely to spread across nearly all of the Americas, the World Health Organization has warned. The infection, which causes symptoms including mild fever, conjunctivitis and headache, has already been found in 21 countries in the Caribbean, North and South America.

It has been linked to thousands of babies being born with underdeveloped brains and some countries have advised women not to get pregnant. No treatment or vaccine is available. The virus is native to Africa and was first found to be spreading in the Americas in Brazil in May 2015...”

TURKISH BORDER ON BRINK OF BECOMING A RUSSIAN WARFRONT?

January 22, 2016 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: “Turkey is ‘closely watching’ Russian troop movements in Syria near its border, a government source in Ankara said on Friday, after reports that Russian servicemen had deployed in the Syrian border town of Qamishli.



Britain-based monitor the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights had said that Russia had sent a number of engineers to Qamishli to strengthen the runway and increase the capacity of an airport just south of the town.

Russia’s reported move into Qamishli comes as Ankara and Moscow are experiencing their biggest crisis in years over the shooting down of a Russian war plane by Turkey on November 24.

Observers have said that Russia, which has for years been at loggerheads with Turkey over the Syrian conflict, may want to refit the airport as a Russian base, as happened in Hmeimim in Latakia province. Qamishli lies just south of the Turkish border town of Nusaybin...”

*Compiled by L. Jim Tuck, Pastor
UCGIA Oakland, San Jose, Santa Rosa, & Hawaii
ljt5053@sbcglobal.net*