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NORTH KOREA PLACES LONG-RANGE NUKE MISSILES ON MOBILE LAUNCHERS

January 19, 2017 thesun.co.uk reported: "In a statement, South Korea's Joint Chief of Staff said the reports could not be confirmed but said the military was monitoring the situation closely. However, according to news reports in South Korea two missiles have already been placed on mobile launchers. The devices "are estimated to not exceed 15 meters (50 feet) in length, making them shorter than the North's existing ICBMs."

A news agency quoted unnamed military officials as saying the North was attempting to send a "strategic message" to incoming Trump ahead of his inauguration tomorrow. An ICBM test in the coming days is "highly plausible," Andrei Lankov, a professor at Seoul's Kookmin University, told CNN.

"Judging by earlier behaviour they usually like to greet a newly elected American president with some kind of nice surprise like a nuclear (test) or missile launch," he said.

"Because President-elect Trump tweeted that 'it won't happen,' such a launch could be seen as a serious humiliation for (the US)."

The news comes as satellite imagery shows increased activity at a major North Korean nuclear site, according to a new report. Any potential ICBM test, while a propaganda win for Pyongyang, would also reveal a great deal about the progress of North Korea's weapons programme. Military experts predicted that any test would only involve a missile with a range of under 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles), less than half the usual ICBM range of 5,500 km (3,400 miles). "..."

DRUG-RESISTANT 'NIGHTMARE BACTERIA' SHOW WARRISOME ABILITY TO DIVERSIFY AND SPREAD

January 18, 2017 MedicalExpress.com reported: "A family of highly drug-resistant and potentially deadly bacteria may be spreading more widely—and more stealthily—than previously thought, according to a new study from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard.

Researchers examined carbapenem resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) causing disease in four U.S. hospitals. They found a wide variety of CRE species. They also found a wide variety of genetic traits enabling CRE to resist antibiotics, and found that these traits are transferring easily among various CRE species. The findings suggest that CRE is more widespread than previously thought, that it may well be transmitting from person to person asymptotically, and that genomic surveillance of these dangerous bacteria should be increased...

CRE are a class of bacteria that are resistant to multiple antibiotics, including carbapenems, which are considered last-resort drugs when other antibiotics have failed..."



REPORT: TERRORISTS, CARTELS PLAN BORDER ATTACK FOR INAUGURATION

January 18, 2017 WND.com reported: "Islamic terrorists and drug cartels in Mexico are planning attacks against U.S.-Mexico border ports around Inauguration Day, according to a report by the Washington watchdog group Judicial Watch.

Jihadist and cartel groups reportedly attacked near the site of a new U.S. Consulate last week in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, which is located directly across the border from Laredo, Texas. The attacks are part of an effort to send incoming President Donald Trump a message about who is in control, the report states.

A deadly shootout took place last week at the construction site of a new \$155 million U.S. Consulate building, which is scheduled to be completed in September.

'The Mexican military responded to the attack, law enforcement sources on both sides of the border confirm insisting that their identities be kept confidential for security reasons, and at least three soldiers were either killed or critically wounded in the ambush,' Judicial Watch reported Jan. 12. 'A local newspaper in Tamaulipas reported that 13 people died during a shootout in Nuevo Laredo, referring to the deceased as heavily armed 'delinquents' with an arsenal that includes 12 automatic weapons, a rocket launcher, grenade, loads of ammunition and drugs in three vehicles, one of them armored. The deceased have not been identified and Mexican authorities will continue to investigate, the article states, attributing the information to a press release issued by Mexico's Defense Secretary.'

Judicial Watch's law enforcement and intelligence sources said the recent assault is part of a joint effort of Islamic terrorists and drug cartels in Mexico..."

GANGS OF US NAVY "KILLER" BOATS WILL ROAM THE SEAS

January 18, 2017 spacewar.com reported: "What have been appositely referred to as the "military's smartest toys," robot boats have just become a lot smarter, and so has the US Navy.

It has taken the US government some time, but its team of researchers and developers have begun to discover the effectiveness of swarming by means of autonomous boats - Unmanned Surface Vehicles (USVs) or Autonomous Surface Craft (ASCs). The Office of Naval Research (ONR) is committed to the idea of robot boats and the impact they can have in both defensive and offensive contexts at home and abroad.

A swarm of robot boats debuted in Virginia's James River approximately two years ago, and in the final weeks of 2016, the ONR put on another show with its small boats in the Chesapeake Bay estuary, near Washington, DC.

The second demonstration showcased better thinking by the ONR and its autonomous systems, which not only performed well individually, they also demonstrated their capacity to swarm as a coherent unit against a potential enemy while maintaining an intricate information relay system.

Using sophisticated software called, Control Architecture for Robotic Agent Command and Sensing (CARACaS), the USN's Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBs) processed data about the potential threat in US waters and responded as if they had a life of their own. The USN's advanced robot boats deftly demonstrated the essence of swarming, much like a flock of hyenas in the presence of a gazelle or lion.

Information relayed among the RHIBs involved an elaborate system of detection, identification, and an autonomous process of determining which unit would engage the enemy vessel. Part of the assessment process involved a threat level appraisal associated with the approaching vessel.

During the entire course of action, information was relayed to the boats' living counterparts. Human actors have the potential to alter action undertaken by the robot boats, manipulating both tactic and strategy in the face of a potential threat in friendly waters. The use of these systems resurfaces numerous questions about autonomous weapons just like those raised after the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) first Predator took to the skies in a targeted killing mission over Afghanistan."..."

DONALD TRUMP RATTLES EUROPE BY BRANDING THE NATO ALLIANCE 'OBSOLETE'

January 17, 2017 news.com.au reported: "ANGELA MERKEL has led a sharp European response to Donald Trump after he branded the NATO military alliance "obsolete" and criticised the German chancellor's "catastrophic" open-door refugee policy. In an explosive interview with German newspaper Bild and The Times of London, Trump unleashed a volley of verbal attacks on Europe, hailing Britain's decision to leave the European Union and saying more countries were going to quit the bloc.

"I said a long time ago — that NATO had problems. Number one it was obsolete, because it was, you know, designed many, many years ago," he said.

"Number two — the countries aren't paying what they're supposed to pay. I took such heat, when I said NATO was obsolete. It's obsolete because it wasn't taking care of terror."

Trump also praised Britain's impending exit from the European Union as being "so smart."

"I think Brexit is going to end up being a great thing," he said.

With fears growing in Europe over the US President-elect's commitment to the transatlantic alliance and over signs he will pivot towards Russia, Merkel warned that the continent now had to take responsibility for itself.

"We Europeans have our fate in our own hands," Merkel told reporters in Berlin when asked about Trump's criticisms..."..."

INDONESIA, JAPAN TO DEEPEN DEFENCE TIES AMID CHINA CHALLENGE

January 15, 2017 spacedaily.com reported: "Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Sunday reaffirmed their commitment to cooperate on maritime security and deepen defence ties, as both nations feud with China over sea territory. Abe -- in Indonesia on a regional tour that has taken in Australia and the Philippines and will include Vietnam -- said their two island nations gave maritime cooperation the "highest priority".

"Japan will actively encourage cooperation on maritime security and encourage the development of the remote islands of Indonesia," he said through a translator at the presidential palace in Bogor. Last month Tokyo and Jakarta unveiled an agreement aimed in part at strengthening Indonesia's ability to defend its vast marine borders.

Indonesia has no argument with China over ownership of reefs or islets in the disputed South China Sea. But Beijing's expansive claims overlap with Indonesia's exclusive economic zone -- waters where a state has the right to exploit resources -- around the Natuna islands. Indonesia has vowed to protect its sovereignty from intrusions by fishing vessels, and has blown up foreign boats in a show of force, including some from China.

Japan, which has a territorial row with China over disputed islands in the East China Sea, has worked to strengthen ties with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations such as Indonesia. It has repeatedly stressed that maritime disputes should be addressed according to law."..."

POLES WELCOME US TROOPS AS NATO EYES RUSSIA

January 14 2017 spacedaily.com reported: "Polish authorities and ordinary Poles welcomed Saturday US troops who arrived this week as part of an unprecedented deployment to NATO's eastern flank aimed at deterring Russia.

"Welcome to Poland," Prime Minister Beata Szydlo told US troops in Zagan, the Polish town on the German border where the brigade will be headquartered, adding "we hope you feel at home."

"The presence of American soldiers in Poland is another step in our strategy to ensure safety and security for Poland and the region," she added. Hailing from Fort Carson, Colorado, the so-called "Iron Brigade" comprising some 3,500 soldiers and heavy equipment will also be deployed in NATO partners Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary on a rotational basis.

It is part of the Pentagon's "Atlantic Resolve" operation aimed at countering security concerns triggered on NATO's eastern flank by Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

"This is America's most capable fighting force: a combat-ready, highly trained US armoured brigade, with our most advanced equipment and weaponry," US ambassador to Poland Paul Jones said at the ceremonies, also attended by hundreds of Zagan residents.

"This force embodies America's iron-clad commitment to honour our NATO treaty obligation to defend our NATO allies."

The US troops and tanks began streaming into Poland Thursday as part of one of the largest deployments of US forces in Europe since the Cold War, an operation that Russia angrily branded a security "threat".

The brigade's deployment, ordered by the outgoing Obama administration, comes a week ahead of the inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump, who has suggested his Republican administration will seek to ease tensions with the Kremlin."..."

