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ISRAEL EX-DEFENCE CHIEF SAYS ERDOGAN SEEKING 'NEO-OTTOMAN EMPIRE'

March 16, 2017 SpaceDaily.com reported: "Israeli ex-defence minister Moshe Yaalon accused Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday of seeking a 'neo-Ottoman empire' while warning of growing instability in the Middle East.

Yaalon, seeking to build a campaign to become Israel's next prime minister, spoke of his concerns while addressing regional issues in a meeting with foreign journalists.

The ex-minister, forced out of office last year as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought to expand his right-wing coalition, accused Erdogan of pursuing 'hegemony by establishing (a) neo-Ottoman empire using the Muslim Brotherhood ideology, not just within Turkey'.

He also accused NATO-member Turkey of working against Western interests..."

U.S. CARRIER IN SOUTH KOREA FOR SHOW OF FORCE TO NORTH KOREA

March 16, 2017 SpaceDaily.com reported: "A nuclear-powered US aircraft carrier arrived in South Korea on Wednesday for joint military exercises, the US Navy said, in the latest show of force against the North.

The USS Carl Vinson berthed in the southern port of Busan as US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson began a tour of the region, where tensions have spiked in recent weeks with missile launches from the nuclear-armed North and the brazen assassination of Kim Jong-Un's half-brother in Malaysia.

Pyongyang has long condemned the annual joint drills, which involve tens of thousands of troops, as provocative rehearsals for invasion, while Seoul and Washington insist they are purely defensive in nature.

The aircraft carrier and a US destroyer will conduct naval drills including an anti-submarine manoeuvre with South Koreans in waters off the Korean peninsula as part of the annual Foal Eagle exercise. Yonhap news agency said the navy drills will kick off next week.

'The importance of the exercise is to continue to build our alliance and our relationship and strengthen that working relationship and interoperability between our ships,' Rear Admiral James Kilby, commander of USS Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group 1, told journalists..."

SUPER HUMANS WILL ARRIVE BY 2029

March 16, 2017 dailymail.co.uk reported: "Technological singularity will turn us into super humans some time in the next 12 years, according to a Google expert."...This may sound like science fiction, but Google's Director of Engineering, Ray Kurzweil, has made 147 predictions since the 1990s and has a success rate of 86 per cent. Kurzweil says when we live in a cybernetic society we will have computers in our brains and machines will be smarter than human beings.

He claims this is already happening with technology - especially with our addiction to our phones - and says the next step is to wire this technology into our brains. Kurzweil, an author who describes himself as a futurist and works on Google's machine learning project, predicted that technological singularity would happen by 2029 at the South by Southwest (SXSW) conference in Austin, Texas.

Singularity is when carbon and silicon-based intelligence will merge to form a single global consciousness.

'By 2029, computers will have human-level intelligence,' Kurzweil said in the interview with SXSW, and 'that leads to computers having human intelligence, our putting them inside our brains, connecting them to the cloud, expanding who we are.'..."

CHINESE PREMIER WARNS U.S. AGAINST 'TRADE WAR'

March 15, 2017 EnergyDaily.com reported: "Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday warned the United States against starting a trade war while expressing optimism that the world's two largest economies could keep relations steady despite frictions in the Trump era.

'We don't want to see any trade war breaking out between the two countries. That wouldn't make our trade fairer,' Li told reporters at a press conference closing China's annual parliamentary session.

'No matter what bumps the China-US relationship may run into, we hope this relationship will continue to move forward in a positive direction.'

China and the United States are currently discussing arrangements for a summit between President Donald Trump and his counterpart Xi Jinping that could help ease tensions stoked by Trump's fiery election-campaign rhetoric.

Trump threatened to upend decades of multilateralism and raised fears of a trade war with China while on the campaign trail..."

RUSSIAN SPECIAL FORCES REPORTEDLY DEPLOYED TO EGYPT

March 14, 2017 timesofisrael.com reported: "Russia has reportedly dispatched special forces to western Egypt near the Libyan border, amid growing US concerns over increasing Russian involvement in Libya.

The deployment of Russian soldiers, reported on by Reuters Monday, was apparently made in order to further boost Russia's involvement in war-torn Libya and support Khalifa Hifter, a militia commander in eastern Libya who despite being backed by Egypt has been shunned by the US.

According to unnamed US security officials who spoke with Reuters, the Russian contingent of Special Forces and drones are operating in the area of Sidi Barrani, some 60 miles from Egypt's border with Libya.

Although an Egyptian army spokesman denied any Russian troops were in Egypt, anonymous Egyptian security officials confirmed to Reuters that a



Special Forces unit comprised of 22 soldiers is currently operating in Egypt, while adding that Russia also used an Egyptian base in February in the area of the port city of Marsa Matrouh.

Reuters also reported on Monday that a group of Russian mercenaries was recently operating in eastern Libya in an area near the city of Benghazi under Hifter's control..."

HOW FAR WILL ERDOGAN GO IN FARMING TURKEY'S DIPLOMATIC CRISIS WITH EUROPE?

March 14, 2017 csmonitor.com reported: "Diplomatic crisis has often helped boost Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's popularity. And he appears to be hoping that the latest standoff with Europe, particularly the Dutch, will resonate as well with his domestic audience.

Prickly Turkey-Europe relations nose-dived over the weekend, as the Netherlands prevented Turkish ministers from addressing election rallies, and Mr. Erdogan called the Dutch "Nazi fascists" who would "pay the price." He continued the rhetoric on Tuesday, blaming the Dutch for not stopping the Srebrenica massacre by Bosnian Serbs in 1995.

The crisis, on its face, should bolster Erdogan. Politically, it makes him appear tough in the face of European intransigence and anti-Turkish sentiment. And it also could help eke out a victory in a closely fought referendum to fulfill his long-held personal dream to create an unassailable executive presidency in Turkey.

But it is not yet clear how far the clash will go because of Turkey's close economic ties to Europe, its status as a NATO ally, and a host of shared interests from migration policies to the fight against the so-called Islamic State.

Dubbed the "Tulip Crisis" – both nations share an affection for tulips, and the flower the Netherlands is now famous for first came from present-day Turkey in the 16th century – Turkey has imposed modest diplomatic sanctions on the Dutch, but no economic ones that could jeopardize its biggest single source of foreign investment.

"For sure, the Turkish government is trying to use this crisis as a tool in the referendum process," says Behlül Özkan, an associate professor of international relations at Marmara University in Istanbul.

"It's a very easy tactic. Our national pride is attacked by Europe, this is the argument, and non-AKP voters will stand united," says Mr. Özkan. "This tactic played well in the past, toward Israel and Russia. However, in this case I have doubts if it will work as planned ... because Turkish society has an interesting relationship with Europe."

The diplomatic crisis – in which Germany, Austria, and Denmark too have moved to cancel Turkish rallies on their soil – comes at a pivotal moment for the Turkish government at home and abroad.

Turkey votes on April 16 to expand Erdogan's presidential powers, and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) wants to galvanize support among the 3 million Turks living in Europe to ensure a "yes" result. Polls currently show an even split between those for and against Erdogan's proposal."..."

U.S. NAVY SEALS TO TAKE PART IN JOINT DRILLS IN S. KOREA

March 13, 2017 YonhapNews.co.kr reported: "U.S. special operations forces, including the unit that killed Osama Bin Laden, will take part in joint military drills in South Korea to practice incapacitating North Korean leadership in the case of conflict, a military official said Monday. The U.S. Navy SEAL Team Six will join the annual Foal Eagle and Key Resolve exercises between the two allies for the first time, along with the Army's Rangers, Delta Force and Green Berets.



"A bigger number of and more diverse U.S. special operation forces will take part in this year's Foal Eagle and Key Resolve exercises to practice missions to infiltrate into the North, remove the North's war command and demolition of its key military facilities," the official told Yonhap News Agency asking not to be named...Seoul and Washington said the joint drills are purely defensive, but Pyongyang has denounced them as rehearsal for an invasion."

U.S. DEPLOYS ATTACK DRONES TO SOUTH KOREA AMID TENSION WITH NORTH

March 13, 2017 yahoo.com/news reported: "The United States has started to deploy attack drones to South Korea, a U.S. military spokesman said on Monday, days after it began to deploy an advanced anti-missile system to counter "continued provocative actions" by isolated North Korea.

The drones, Gray Eagle Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) coming to South Korea are part of a broader plan to deploy a company of the attack drones with every division in the U.S. Army, the spokesman said.

"The UAS adds significant intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability to U.S. Forces Korea and our ROK partners," United States Forces Korea spokesman Christopher Bush said in a statement.

He did not say exactly when the drones would arrive in South Korea, officially the Republic of Korea (ROK).

North Korea has conducted two nuclear tests and a string of missile tests since the beginning of last year, despite the imposition of new U.N. sanctions.

Last week, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, said Washington was re-evaluating its North Korea strategy and "all options are on the table."

The Gray Eagle is a remotely controlled attack drone made by U.S.-based General Atomics. They will be stationed at Kunsan Air Base, 180 km (112 miles) south of Seoul, Bush said, and would be permanently based in South Korea.

On March 7, the United States deployed the "first elements" of the controversial Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile system to South Korea, despite angry opposition from China."..."

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