



PROPHETIC TIMES

January, 1998

Weekly World News Briefs

December 23, 2017

State Department: Islamic State Building Up in North Africa as It Fails in Iraq, Syria

December 21, 2017 Breitbart.com reports: "The Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) is developing networks across North Africa that seek to attack the continent, Europe, and the United States while it loses control of its so-called caliphate in Iraq and Syria, a top U.S. State Department counterterrorism official warned lawmakers.

During a hearing Wednesday held by the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Nathan Sales the ambassador-at-large for State's counterterrorism bureau, testified:

ISIS is on the ropes in Iraq and Syria. But as the group loses control over territory in its core, it is essential that we prevent it from reconstituting itself elsewhere. In particular, ISIS maintains networks in North Africa that seek to conduct or inspire attacks on the continent, in Europe, and against U.S. interests.

He cautioned that the United States must remain vigilant against the menace posed by North African foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) returning home after fighting on behalf of ISIS in Iraq and Syria..."

The Latest: Iran calls UN vote on Israel 'global no' to US

December 21, 2017 Associated Press reported: "Iran's foreign minister is welcoming the U.N. General Assembly resolution rejecting the Trump administration's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, calling it a "global no" to intimidation by President Donald Trump. Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted after the vote that the resolution soundly criticizes "Trump's regime thuggish intimidation at UN."

Iran does not recognize Israel and supports anti-Israeli militant groups such as the Palestinian Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, and the Lebanese Hezbollah..."

North Korea testing biological warheads for its missiles — report

December 20, 2017 timesofisrael.com reported: "North Korea is carrying out tests toward arming its long-range missiles with deadly anthrax spores and other biological weapons, the Japanese Asahi newspaper reported Wednesday, citing a South Korean intelligence source.

The source, who was not identified in the report, said that Pyongyang is conducting heat and pressure experiments to find ways of protecting biological agents in the intense conditions a warhead experiences during reentry. As long-range missile warheads plummet back from space through the atmosphere toward their targets, they can experience temperatures of over 7,000° C, the paper said.

An unconfirmed intelligence report suggested some of the tests have been successful.

The South Korean intelligence source assessed the North Koreans are looking at developing biological weapons as they do not yet have the ability to hit all of the US mainland with nuclear weapons.

On Monday US President Donald Trump released his first National Security Strategy, declaring that 'North Korea is also pursuing chemical and biological weapons which could also be delivered by missile.'

According to the Asahi report, the US has known about North Korea's anthrax research for a while. As a precaution, US troops serving in South Korea have been vaccinated against smallpox and anthrax since around 2004..."

China, Russia slam US 'imperialist' and 'Cold War mentality'

December 19, 2017 spacedaily.com reported: "China and Russia on Tuesday decried President Donald Trump's first National Security Strategy -- which pilloried both nations as challengers to US power -- as a "Cold War mentality" with an "imperialist character". The two global powerhouses hit back hours after the Trump administration unveiled its approach to the world with biting language framing Beijing and Moscow as global competitors.

"We urge the United States to stop intentionally distorting China's strategic intentions and to abandon outdated notions such as the Cold War mentality and zero-sum game, otherwise it will only harm itself or others," Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said.

Moscow issued its own denunciation moments later.

"The imperialist character of this document is obvious, as is the refusal to renounce a unipolar world, an insistent refusal," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

The report's tough tone contrasts sharply with Trump's friendlier face-to-face encounters with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

"China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity," the document says..."

U.S. blames North Korea for 'WannaCry' cyber attack

December 19, 2017 Reuters reported: "The Trump administration has publicly blamed North Korea for unleashing the so-called WannaCry cyber attack that crippled hospitals, banks and other companies across the globe earlier this year.

'The attack was widespread and cost billions, and North Korea is directly responsible,' Tom Bossert, homeland security adviser to President Donald Trump, wrote in a piece published on Monday night in the Wall Street Journal.



‘North Korea has acted especially badly, largely unchecked, for more than a decade, and its malicious behavior is growing more egregious,’ Bossert wrote. ‘WannaCry was indiscriminately reckless.’

The White House was expected to follow up on Tuesday with a more formal statement blaming Pyongyang, according to a senior administration official.

The U.S. government has assessed with a ‘very high level of confidence’ that a hacking entity known as Lazarus Group, which works on behalf of the North Korean government, carried out the WannaCry attack, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity...”

Jerusalem: US vetoes UN resolution rejecting Trump’s declaration

December 19, 2017 BBC News reported: “The US has vetoed a draft UN Security Council resolution rejecting President Donald Trump’s decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The text put forward by Egypt affirmed that any decisions on the status of Jerusalem had ‘no legal effect, are null and void and must be rescinded’.

The 14 other members of the council voted in favour of the motion. The US permanent representative, Nikki Haley, described it as an ‘insult’ and warned that it would not be forgotten.

‘It’s one more example of the United Nations doing more harm than good in addressing the Israeli Palestinian conflict,’ she added.

‘Today, for the simple act of deciding where to put our embassy, the United States was forced to defend its sovereignty. The record will reflect that we did so proudly.’

Separately US Vice-President Mike Pence postponed a controversial scheduled visit to the Middle East, due to begin on Tuesday, until mid-January. Mr. Pence may be required to break a tie in the US Senate in a crucial vote on tax reform. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has refused to meet the vice-president following the Jerusalem decision.

The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of Israel’s conflict with the Palestinians. ...”

Trump’s New National Security Doctrine: Israel Is Not the Cause of the Middle East’s Problems

December 18, 2017 Haaretz reported: “Prioritizing national sovereignty over alliances, President Donald Trump is poised to outline a new national security strategy that envisions nations in a perpetual state of competition, reverses Obama-era warnings on climate change, and de-emphasizes multinational agreements that have dominated the United States’ foreign policy since the Cold War.

The Republican president, who ran on a platform of ‘America First,’ will detail his plan Monday, one that if fully implemented could sharply alter the United States’ relationships with the rest of the world. The plan, according to senior administration officials who offered a preview Sunday, is to focus on four main themes: protecting the homeland and way of life; promoting American prosperity; demonstrating peace through strength; and advancing American influence in an ever-competitive world...

The strategy document asserts that ‘for generations the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has been understood as the prime irritant preventing peace and prosperity in the region. Today, the threats from radical jihadist terrorist organizations and the threat from Iran are creating the realization that Israel is not the cause of the region’s problems. States have increasingly found common interests with Israel in confronting common threats.’ ...”

Japan eyes \$46bn defence budget to counter N. Korea: report

December 16, 2017 spacedaily.com reported: “Japan plans a record \$46 billion defence budget for the next fiscal year to strengthen its missile defence against the threat posed by North Korea, a report said Saturday.

The government is expected to set aside 5.19 trillion yen for defence in the country’s initial budget proposal for the fiscal year starting April 2018, the Nikkei daily said.

It will mark the sixth straight year of increases in defence outlays, topping the 5.12 trillion yen budget for the current fiscal year, the business daily said. Much of the increase will go on protecting Japan against North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile development, the newspaper said. The extra funding will cover the cost of preparations for introducing the US military’s Aegis Ashore land-based missile interceptor system, the Nikkei said.” ...”

China inserts itself into Jerusalem debate

December 16, 2017 World Net Daily reported: “A new player has entered the Holy Land conflict, and it is taking sides in the debate over Jerusalem. China has now formally declared its support for an independent Palestinian state, premised upon the pre-1967

borders. China has also said East Jerusalem should be the capital of the new state.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang made the statement during a regular press briefing in Beijing. The statement was in direct response to an initiative by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to recognize East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state.

‘China understands the concerns of Islamic countries on the status of Jerusalem, supports the resolution of the status of Jerusalem in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and international consensus,’ Lu said.

China also called for the resumption of talks between Israelis and Palestinians...”

