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Russian official: If Iran attacks Israel, we'll stand with you

February 15, 2018 timesofisrael.com: "Were Iran to attack Israel, Moscow would stand by the Jewish state's side, a Russian official said this week days after an Iranian-made drone infiltrated Israel from Syria and was shot down by the IDF.

'In the case of aggression against Israel, not only will the United States stand by Israel's side — Russia, too, will be on Israel's side,' Russian Deputy Ambassador to Israel Leonid Frolov said. 'Many of our countrymen live here in Israel, and Israel in general is a friendly nation, and therefore we won't allow any aggression against Israel.'

Still, in a wide-ranging interview conducted at the Russian Embassy in Tel Aviv on Monday, Frolov cast doubt on Israel's assertion that Iran was behind the drone incursion and suggested Israeli intelligence agencies establish contacts with its Syrian counterparts.

He also predicted that Israelis would not be happy about the forthcoming American peace plan, and dismissed the outrage against Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas's condemnation of Israel as a European colonial project with no connection to Judaism..."

Top US admiral warns of China's growing military might

February 14, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: China's military might is growing at such a pace that it could soon rival American power "across almost every domain," a top US military official said Wednesday.

Admiral Harry Harris, who heads up the military's enormous Pacific Command (PACOM), warned lawmakers they must be wary of Beijing's investments in traditional assets as well as its development of a new wave of technologies such as hypersonic missiles and artificial intelligence.

"China's impressive military buildup could soon challenge the United States across almost every domain," Harris told the House Armed Services Committee.

"Key advancements include fielding significant improvements in missile systems, developing fifth-generation fighter aircraft capabilities, and growing the size and capability of the Chinese navy to include their first overseas base in the port of Djibouti."

He added: "If the US does not keep pace, PACOM will struggle to compete with the People's Liberation Army on future battlefields."

Harris, who has been nominated to become the next US ambassador to Australia, has led PACOM for more than two years. He also addressed politicians' concerns about the threat of a missile strike from North Korea. The Pentagon can, as of now, block any missile coming from the regime of Kim Jong Un, he said, but warned America needs to adapt to the rapid advances in Pyongyang's capabilities.

"Given what we think the North Korean capability might be in terms of their missiles in three or four years.... I think we must continue to improve our missile defenses," he said."...The admiral said Kim's long-term goal is not merely to ensure the survival of his regime, but to control the entire Korean peninsula.

Turkey rejects Israeli claims it helped Hamas

February 14, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Turkey on Tuesday rejected Israel's claims it had helped the Hamas terrorist organization to gain in military strength, calling them 'incompatible with reality'.



Turkey's comments came a day after it was cleared for publication that the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) and Israel Police had arrested two men suspected of having recruited individuals for the Hamas terror organization and directing their activities from Turkey.

These include an Israeli citizen from Umm al-Fahm as well as Turkish national Cemil Tekeli, a lecturer in law. The two are suspected of aiding Hamas through business platforms. Tekeli was arrested in January and later deported.

The Turkish foreign ministry said it rejected the allegations, describing the claim as 'incompatible with reality and lacking in seriousness', according to AFP. Alluding to the Israeli investigation into Tekeli, it said that Israel made the claims based on 'statements obtained from our detained citizen under ambiguous circumstances.'

'It is out of the question for Turkey to permit an activity on its soil that can jeopardize the security of another country,' said the foreign ministry in Ankara..."

'North Korean nukes existential threat to US: intel chief'

February 13, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "North Korea's nuclear program poses a potential "existential threat" to the United States, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats warned on Tuesday.

"The decision time is becoming ever closer in terms of how we respond to this," Coats said in remarks to the Senate Intelligence Committee, quoted by AFP.

"Our goal is a peaceful settlement," he stressed. "We're using maximum pressure on North Korea in various ways."

Asked about Pyongyang's nuclear program, Coats said "this is an existential threat, potentially to the United States, but also to North Korea."

North Korean leader "Kim Jong Un views this as -- any kind of a kinetic attack or effort to force him to give up his nuclear weapons -- is an existential threat to his nation and to his leadership in particular," Coats said.

"The provocative nature and the instability that Kim has demonstrated potentially is a significant threat to the United States," he added.

Tensions have been high between the U.S. and North Korea in recent months as Pyongyang has continued testing intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that had the potential range of reaching the United States mainland."..."

Iran Unveils New Homemade Nuclear-Capable Ballistic Missiles Amid Massive War Celebrations

February 13, 2018 freebeacon.com reported: "Iran unveiled a series of new homemade nuclear-capable ballistic missiles during military parades held over the weekend, a move that experts view as a bid to bolster the hardline ruling regime as dissidents continue efforts to stir protest.

On the heels of an encounter between an Iranian drone and Israeli forces, Iranian leaders showcased their ballistic missile capabilities, which includes a nuclear-capable medium-range missile that appears to share similarities with North Korean technology, according to experts.

The nuclear-capable missile can strike Israel even when fired from Iranian territory, raising concerns about an impending conflict between Tehran and the Jewish state that could further inflame the region.

Iranian military leaders bragged the ballistic missile 'can be launched from mobile platforms or silos in different positions and can escape missile defense shields due to their radar-evading capability,' according to reports in Iran's state-controlled media.

The latest technology could further inflame tensions between Israel and Iran, which funds and controls terror organizations operating along Israel's border. Concerns that this nuclear-capable technology could be shared by Iran with its terrorist proxies are fueling longstanding concerns among the Israelis that an attack is imminent..."

'We'll teach Iran a lesson it'll never forget'

February 12, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Transportation and Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz (Likud) said on Sunday that 'If Iran continues to threaten and carry out offensive actions against Israel from Syria, we will teach it a lesson that it will never forget.'

In an interview with the Saudi Arabian newspaper Elaph, Katz said, as quoted by Ma'ariv, 'This is not the first time that Syria has launched missiles at Israel Air Force planes. Israel will continue to maintain aerial superiority and control the skies of the region.'

The interview came following Saturday's incident in which an Iranian drone entered Israeli airspace from Syria, remaining in Israel some 90 seconds before the IAF shot it down.

In response to the provocation, Israel attacked the drone's command center. During the IAF operation, Syrian surface-to-air missiles downed an Israeli F-16I fighter jet. Both pilots suffered injuries, and ejected after reaching Israeli territory. Katz stressed in the Elaph interview that Israel is not interested in an escalation, but would continue to implement the red lines it had set, as it did in Saturday's incident.

'Israel stresses that it will not accept an Iranian presence in Syria, damage to its sovereignty, and development and construction of missiles for Hezbollah in Lebanon by Iran,' the minister said. He made it clear that Iran is playing with fire, and that the Syrian army, which adopts the Iranian agenda, will find itself under fire..."

Preparing for war in the north, Israel boosts air defenses

February 12, 2018 The Jerusalem Post reported: "Israel has boosted its air defense in the North following a significant confrontation between the Jewish state, Syria and Iran that led to the loss of an F-16i fighter jet.

While the army refused to comment on the reports, witnesses reported seeing a convoy of missile-defense batteries heading north near the Israeli-Arab city of Baka al-Gharbiya. Other witnesses posted photos of several trucks carrying the batteries on central highways in northern Israel.

Israel's air defenses currently include the Iron Dome, designed to shoot down short-range rockets; the Arrow system, which intercepts ballistic missiles outside of the Earth's atmosphere; and the David's Sling missile-defense system, which is designed to intercept tactical ballistic missiles, medium- to long-range rockets and cruise missiles fired from ranges of between 40 km to 300 km.

Israel also has Patriot-missile batteries stationed in the North and has used them to intercept drones infiltrating into Israeli airspace from Syria. In September, an Iranian-built unmanned aerial vehicle breached the 'Bravo line' that marks the Syrian demilitarized zone, and was intercepted by an Israeli Patriot anti-ballistic missile launched from a station near the northern city of Safed..."

Erdogan, Pope Form Unholy, Anti-Trump Alliance to Control Jerusalem

February 7, 2018 breakingisraelnews.com reported: "A meeting on Monday between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Pope Francis may have grave implications for Jerusalem as both leaders appear to be building an agenda based upon their joint opposition to US President Donald Trump's recognition of the city as Israel's capital.

The meeting, which took place at the Vatican, was already significant in that it was the first visit by a Turkish head of state since diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Turkey were established in 1960. However, a statement released by the Vatican says that both leaders also used the occasion to discuss the "status of Jerusalem, highlighting the need to promote peace and stability in the region (Middle East) through dialogue and negotiation, with respect for human rights and international law."

Both Erdogan and Pope Francis are opposed to U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Erdogan responded to the move by calling for an emergency meeting of the OIC. The summit, held in Istanbul, declared "East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine" and called upon "all countries to recognize the State of Palestine and East Jerusalem as its occupied capital."

The OIC also declared Trump's decision "null and void legally" and "a deliberate undermining of all peace efforts" that would give impetus to "extremism and terrorism."

Erdogan, who spoke by phone with the pope at the time expressing his concerns over Jerusalem, called upon the Vatican in Monday's meeting to help Turkey and the Muslim world "preserve Jerusalem's status..."

