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Raytheon shoots down drone with lasers, microwaves in Air Force test

May 2, 2019 spacedaily.com reported: "A U.S. Air Force exercise involving high-energy microwaves and guided lasers to shoot down drones was a success, contractor Raytheon announced.

Dozens of unmanned aerial targets were defeated in the tests at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., a Raytheon statement released on Tuesday said. The event expanded on previous directed energy demonstrations, including a U.S. Army exercise in 2017 and a previous Air Force test in January.

The high energy laser system uses invisible beams of light to shoot down aerial targets, and the high-powered microwave bursts disrupt drone guidance systems. Its primary advantages are speed and a low cost per engagement. The weapons have been mounted on all-terrain vehicles specially made by Minnesota's Polaris Industries for the military..."



Iris Automation offers turnkey collision-avoidance solution for commercial drones

May 1, 2019 spacedaily.com reported: "Iris Automation, an artificial intelligence and safety avionics company, has announced the launch of Casia - the first commercially available computer vision detect-and-avoid solution to enable Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations for autonomous vehicles. Providing the "eyes and brain" for drones, Casia enables missions beyond visual line of sight.

For the first time, there's a system that allows an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) to truly understand the aviation environment around it as if a pilot were on board. Casia detects other aircraft, uses machine learning to classify them, makes intelligent decisions about the threat they may pose to the vehicle, and triggers automated maneuvers to avoid collisions.

Casia is a combination of both hardware and software that's ultra lightweight, low power and small in size. It comprises sophisticated artificial intelligence algorithms and software packaged in a self-contained supercomputer that works with a machine vision camera.

"Casia is the critical piece our industry has been dreaming about for years - finally allowing us to use drones to their full commercial potential," said Iris Automation CEO Alexander Harmsen." ..."

Iran Designates All U.S. Troops in Middle East as Terrorists

May 1, 2019 voanews.com reported: "Iranian President Hassan Rouhani signed a bill into law on Tuesday declaring all U.S. forces in the Middle East terrorists and calling the U.S. government a sponsor of terrorism.

The bill was passed by parliament last week in retaliation for President Donald Trump's decision this month to designate Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards a foreign terrorist organization. It was not clear what the impact of the new Iranian law might have on U.S. forces or their Middle East operations.

Rouhani instructed the ministry of intelligence, ministry of foreign affairs, the armed forces, and Iran's supreme national security council to implement the law, state media reported.

The law specifically labels as a terrorist organization the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), which is responsible for U.S. military operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan..."

Boeing, Lockheed contracted for Apache work, Hellfire missiles for Saudi Arabia

May 1, 2019 spacedaily.com reported: "Boeing and Lockheed have been awarded contracts worth more than \$70 million for support of AH-64 Apache helicopters and Hellfire guided missiles for Saudi Arabia. The Defense Department announced the separate deals Monday.

Boeing was awarded a \$39.5 foreign military sales contract for post-production system support, which includes integrated product support, of the AH-64 twin-turboshaft attack helicopters in support of the Saudi Arabia National Guard.

Work will be performed at Boeing's plant in Mesa, Ariz., as well as Hazelwood, Mo., and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The estimated completion date is April 29, 2020, with the full amount of the contract obligated from fiscal 2019 foreign military sales funds at the time of award.

Boeing has had a relationship with the kingdom since 1945, when U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt presented a twin-engine DC-3 Dakota airplane, manufactured by Boeing heritage company Douglas Aircraft, to King Abdulaziz Al Saud. In 1982, the company established Boeing Middle East Limited in the Saudi capital of Riyadh.

Lockheed Martin has had a presence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia since 1965 with the first delivery of the C-130 Hercules. Lockheed's new \$30.8 million foreign military sales contract is for Hellfire guided missile launcher and electronic assembly."..."

Record 26 Ebola deaths in DR Congo in a single day

April 30, 2019 france24.com reported: Twenty-six people died of Ebola in a single day in the Democratic Republic of Congo's North Kivu province, the highest daily toll since its outbreak nearly nine months ago, the health ministry said Tuesday.



The current outbreak is the second deadliest on record, after the epidemic that struck West Africa in 2014-2016 and killed more than 11,300 people. The health ministry it had counted 957 deaths in the country, of which 891 were confirmed cases and 66 suspected ones.

"There were 26 deaths from confirmed cases" on Sunday, April 28, in the northeastern North Kivu province, the ministry said in a statement. It said of the total deaths of 957, 33 were health workers who had succumbed to the disease." ..."

U.S. agrees with Russia, China on pulling troops from Afghanistan

April 29, 2019 spacewar.com reported: "The United States on Friday found backing from rivals Russia and China on the key formula of a peace deal it is negotiating in Afghanistan — withdrawing troops in return for Taliban pledges not to welcome foreign extremists.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the US envoy who is set shortly to hold his latest round of talks with the Taliban, called the consensus a 'milestone' in efforts to end the war after he met Russian and Chinese representatives in Moscow.

A joint statement by the three countries called for an 'inclusive Afghan-led' peace process and outlined points expected to feature in an eventual agreement.

'The three sides call for an orderly and responsible withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan as part of the overall peace process,' said the statement issued by the US State Department..."

Global military spending at new post-Cold War high, fueled by US, China - think-tank

April 29, 2019 Reuters reported: "Global military expenditure reached its highest level last year since the end of the Cold War, fueled by increased spending in the United States and China, the world's two biggest economies, a leading defence think-tank said on Monday.

In its annual report, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said overall global military spending in 2018 hit \$1.82 trillion, up 2.6 percent on the previous year. That is the highest figure since 1988, when such data first became available as the Cold War began winding down.

U.S. military spending rose 4.6 percent last year to reach \$649 billion, leaving it still by far the world's biggest spender. It accounted for 36 percent of total global military expenditure, nearly equal to the following eight biggest-spending countries combined, SIPRI said.

China, the second biggest spender, saw military expenditure rise 5.0 percent to \$250 billion last year, the 24th consecutive annual increase.

"In 2018 the USA and China accounted for half of the world's military spending," Nan Tian, a researcher with the SIPRI Arms and Military Expenditure (AMEX) programme, said.

With President Donald Trump committed to strong national defence despite reducing U.S. troops numbers in conflict zones such as Afghanistan, 2018 marked the first increase in U.S. military spending since 2010, SIPRI said. His defence spending request to Congress this year is the largest ever in dollar terms before adjustment for inflation.

"The increase in U.S. spending was driven by the implementation from 2017 of new arms procurement programmes under the Trump administration," Aude Fleurant, the director of the SIPRI AMEX programme, said in a statement.

The other top spenders are, in declining order, Saudi Arabia, India, France, Russia, Britain, Germany, Japan and South Korea. Saudi Arabia, which is leading a military coalition battling Iran-aligned Houthis in Yemen, was the biggest per capita spender on defence, just ahead of the United States."..."

Coast Guard plans to add resources in Arctic to counter Russia, China

April 25, 2019 spacedaily.com reported: "The U.S. Coast Guard wants to add resources to the Arctic because 'dramatic changes in the physical environment' of the region have allowed China and Russia to become more competitive there.



The military branch has proposed upgrading ships, aircraft, unmanned systems and communications systems in a 48-page Arctic Strategic Outlook, which was released Monday.

'Since the release of the Coast Guard Arctic Strategy in 2013, the resurgence of nation-state competition has coincided with dramatic changes in the physical environment of the Arctic, which has elevated the region's prominence as a strategically competitive space,' the report says.

'America's two nearest-peer powers, Russia and China, have both declared the region a national priority and made corresponding investments in capability and capacity to expand their influence in the region.'

Because of Russia and China's 'persistent challenges to the rules-based international order around the globe,' there is concern of 'similar infringement to the continued peaceful stability of the Arctic region.'..."

'Iran will make U.S. regret its decision to sanction us'

April 25, 2019 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Iranian President Hassan Rouhani vowed Wednesday to make the US regret its sanctions against the Islamic republic, while demanding that the US drop the sanctions and offer an apology as conditions for the renewal of negotiations.

Rouhani spoke out Wednesday following the Trump administration's decision Tuesday not to renew sanctions exemptions granted to several countries doing business with Iran.

'The United States, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, the three largest energy producers in the world, together with our friends and allies, are committed to ensuring the world's oil markets receive all supplies, including the deficit created by the non-use of Iranian oil.

'The Trump administration and its allies are determined to continue and expand the campaign of economic pressure on Iran to put an end to the destabilizing activities of the regime, which is a threat to the United States, its partners, and its allies in the Middle East,' the White House said Tuesday.

On Wednesday, Rouhani responded to the decision, saying that Iran had 'no choice but to resist'..."



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