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North Korea Confirms 2nd Hwasong-18 Test, Forewarns of More Pressure

July 13, 2023 *voanews.com* reported: “North Korea has confirmed its latest weapons launch was a second test of its newest intercontinental ballistic missile, the Hwasong-18, saying it will ‘clearly show’ Washington the danger and recklessness of its military choices on the peninsula.

The North’s leader, Kim Jong Un, who was present at the morning launch, also forewarned of ‘a series of stronger military offensive[s] ... until the U.S. imperialists and the south Korean puppet traitors admit their shameful defeat of their useless hostile policy’ against Pyongyang, according to state media *KCNA* Thursday.

The report added that the region is in a ‘phase of nuclear crisis beyond the Cold War era,’ citing the deployment of an American nuclear-powered submarine and nuclear strategic bombers to South Korea as well as a planned inaugural meeting of the allies’ Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) next week.

Both are commitments the U.S. made to Seoul as part of the Washington Declaration in April to galvanize deterrence amid growing North Korean threats and to reassure the South Korean public of its commitment to defend it in the event of a nuclear emergency on the peninsula...”

Taiwan Says Chinese Air Force, Navy Stage Mass Drill to Island’s South

July 12, 2023 *voanews.com* reported: “China’s air force and navy staged another large-scale drill involving fighters, bombers and warships to Taiwan’s south and southwest on Tuesday, the island’s defense ministry said, as Beijing keeps up its military pressure on Taipei.

China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, has over the past three years regularly sent warplanes into Taiwan’s air defense identification zone, or ADIZ, to try and force the island to accept Chinese sovereignty.

China staged war games around Taiwan last August and again in April, and has since August also regularly flown military aircraft across the median line of the Taiwan Strait, which had previously served as an unofficial barrier between the two.

Taiwan’s defense ministry, in a statement on Wednesday, said that in the past 24 hours it had detected 32 Chinese air force planes entering the island’s ADIZ, a mixture of fighter jets, helicopters and early warning aircraft, among others...”

Russia and Gulf countries seek to increase cooperation

July 11, 2023 *jpost.com* reported: “Russia held a meeting with the Gulf States this week in what is the sixth ministerial meeting of Russia and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The meeting has added importance this year because of Russia’s war in Ukraine and also other shifting global issues that put the Gulf states in a unique position. The Gulf has also hosted important Chinese delegations and this week the N7 Initiative is holding a meeting in Bahrain. That means the Gulf is increasingly a center of world affairs.

According to *Arab News*, the ‘GCC countries are keen to enhance all forms of cooperation with Russia, secretary-general of the GCC, Jassim al-Budaiwi, said.’ The countries discussed increasing cooperation on economic issues and also regarding energy issues. This includes both oil and also clean energy...”

Xi says Russia and China should ‘lead global governance reform’

July 10, 2023 *breitbart.com* reported: “China and Russia need to ‘lead the correct direction of global governance reform’, according to Chinese President Xi Jinping, who hailed the two countries’ partnership at a meeting with a top Russian politician in Beijing on Monday, state media reported.

Beijing and Moscow have ramped up economic cooperation and diplomatic contacts in recent years, with exchanges only growing closer since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine last year.



China's President Xi Jinping

On Monday, Xi met Valentina Matviyenko, the speaker of the Federation Council — the Russian parliament's upper house — at the Great Hall of the People, state broadcaster *CCTV* reported.

Xi said the development of relations between the two countries was ‘a strategic choice made by both countries based on the fundamental interests of their respective countries and peoples’, according to *CCTV*.

‘Both sides also need to strengthen communication and collaboration within multilateral mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the BRICS countries, lead the correct direction of global governance reform, and safeguard the common interests of emerging market countries and developing countries,’ the statement continued...”

A threat to Iran: IDF and US military team up for joint drill

July 10, 2023 jpost.com reported: “The IDF and the US have started another joint drill which is a not-so-veiled threat against Iran, the military announced on Monday.

The statement by the IDF did not specifically mention the Islamic Republic by name, but mentioned training for situations where there would be conflict ‘at a distance’ – an often-used code phrase for Iran, and noted use of the KC-46 midair refueling aircraft.

Midair refueling is not necessary for the IDF to strike Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, or Syria, but would be necessary for any potential strike on Tehran...”

Timeline: Use of controversial cluster bombs in past conflicts

July 10, 2023 aljazeera.com reported: “Several countries have announced they will not send Ukraine cluster munitions following the United States’ decision to send the controversial weapons to the front line.

On Friday, Washington confirmed it would supply Kyiv with the widely condemned bombs as part of a new \$800m security package.

US President Joe Biden defended his decision as difficult but necessary, saying Ukraine needed them and has assured Washington that the bombs would not be used to target territory in Russia.

More than 100 countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany and Canada, have signed an accord under the Convention on Cluster Munitions to ban the production, stockpiling, use and transfer of cluster bombs.

Paul Hannon, of the Cluster Munitions Coalition (CMC), said the US move will “contribute to the terrible casualties being suffered by Ukrainian civilians both immediately and for years to come”.

Cluster munitions typically release large numbers of smaller bomblets that can kill indiscriminately over a wide area but have a high failure rate leaving those that fail to explode to pose a danger for decades after a conflict ends...”



World powers in rush to get killer robots on battlefield in AI arms race

July 10, 2023 nypost.com reported: “A new kind of cold war is here. Military forces around the globe are in a covert arms race to develop terrifying new AI weaponry, a new documentary exploring the future of artificial intelligence in battle reveals.

“World leaders in Russia and China, people in the US military have said, whoever gets the advantage in AI is going to have an overwhelming technical advantage in war,” Jesse Sweet, director of “UNKNOWN: Killer Robots, premiering Monday on Netflix, told The Post.

“This revolution is happening now, but I think our awareness [is] lagging behind,” Sweet, an Emmy Award-winning filmmaker and producer, warned. “Hopefully, it doesn’t take a mushroom cloud to make us realize, ‘Oh man, this is a pretty potent tool.’”

Weapons-grade robots and drones being utilized in combat isn’t new, the documentary shows. But AI software is, and it’s enhancing — in some cases, to the extreme — the existing hardware, which has been modernizing warfare for the better part of a decade.

Now, experts say, developments in AI have pushed us to a point where global forces now have no choice but to rethink military strategy — from the ground up.

“It’s realistic to expect that AI will be piloting an F-16 and will not be that far out,” Nathan Michael, Chief Technology Officer of Shield AI, a company whose mission is “building the world’s best AI pilot,” says in the episode...”

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