

IN THE NEWS

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World News

The chance for miss-calculation in the Syrian conflict has escalated. That is, the NATO member Turkey shot down a Russian fighter [1]. In a further sign of Russia's commitment to Syria; they are adding a second air base [2]. In other Syrian news, Britain has joined in bombing Islamic State targets [3].

While much of the world news is focused on Islamic terrorism, the situation with China remains uncertain. For example, one piece suggests a rise in anti-American nationalism [4]. China announced plans to make its army the World's largest and is modernizing for beyond border engagements [5]. Meanwhile, the pollution in Beijing is so bad the visibility is reduced to 200 meters [6]. What's more, Beijing issued its first smog red alert forcing schools to close [7].

Elsewhere, another Islamic country, Pakistan, continues to enhance its nuclear weapons capability. Case in point, Pakistan tested an intermediate-range ballistic missile capable of hitting all of India or targets in the Middle-East [8].

The future of the South China Sea is uncertain. However, one opinion piece is suggesting the US and China will end up in a nuclear conflict over the South China Sea [9].

1. Onyanga-Omara, Jane, USA Today, *Turkey says it shot down Russian warplane*, November 24, 2015.
2. Tomlinson, Lucas, Fox News, *Russia adding 2nd airbase in Syria, pursuing 'expansion' in military campaign*, December 1, 2015.
3. Faulconbridge, Guy, and Osborn, Andrew, Reuters, *Britain joins Syria air war; Putin vows more sanctions on Turkey*, December 3, 2015.

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Security

Vulnerabilities continue to be discovered in commercial products. For instance, one report indicates 600,000 cable modems have a back door that could be used to re-write firmware without alerting users [1]. Moreover, once a vulnerability is exploited; notification to the victims may take considerable time. Case in point, following discovery of the massive OPM breach, notification to victims took five months

[2]. Highlighting the race to fix evermore security vulnerabilities; the last Adobe patch for the year addresses 78 bugs [3]. What's more, Microsoft's patch Tuesday includes fixes for 12 security bulletins [4].

1. Millman, Rene, SC Magazine, *600,000 cable routers found to have a backdoor within a backdoor*, November 26, 2015.
2. Chalfant, Morgan, Washington Free Beacon, *OPM Took Five Months to Notify Victims of Massive Cyber Attack*, December 11, 2015,
3. Abel, Robert, SC Magazine, *78 bugs in last Adobe Patch Tuesday of the year*, December 8, 2015.
4. Robinson, Teri, SC Magazine, *Patch Tuesday: Microsoft publishes*

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Special points of interest:

- Terror attacks in California

Security

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12 bulletins, 8 critical,
December 8, 2015.

*War is a blessing
compared with national
degradation—Andrew
Jackson*

World News

(Continued from page 1)

4. Young, Stephen B., Minneapolis Star Tribune, *Trouble is brewing in China*, November 24, 2015.
5. Bloomberg, *China Announces Military Overhaul to Make Army More Combat Ready*, November 26, 2015.
6. Stanway, David, et. al., Reuters, *Smog chokes Chinese, Indian capitals as climate talks begin*, November 30, 2015.
7. Fox News, *Beijing issues first-ever red alert for smog, forcing schools to close*, December 7, 2015.
8. Silva, Precious, International Business Times, *OPINION: Analyst claims South China Sea nuclear war imminent for US and China*, November 30 2015.
9. New York Times/AP, *Pakistan Tests Ballistic Missile With Intermediate Range*, December 11, 2015.

*I pity the man who wants
a coat so cheap that the
man or woman who
produces the cloth will
starve in the process—
Benjamin Harrison*

Terrorism has once again taken American lives. Case in point, a husband and wife terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, left at least 14 people dead [1]. In response, President Obama addressed the Nation and assured Americans, the U.S. is equipped to meet the evolving threat of terrorism [2]. It also appears the terrorists set bombs that were targeted against first responders [3].

In Afghanistan, Taliban fighters attacked Kandahar airport, resulting in at least 37 deaths [4]. Additionally, the Taliban targeted the Spanish Embassy in Kabul leaving at least 8 dead [5].

One observation is terrorism overseas continues to include the use of bombs directed at the civilian population. For example, at least 15 people near a hospital were killed by a car bomb in Homs, Syria [6]. Then, at least 12 people were killed in a market bombing in Pakistan [7].

The risk of terrorists entering the US may be on the increase. Case in point, one piece suggests IS may be in possession of a passport printing machine [8]. This comes after reports indicating Chicago and Toronto are potential terrorist targets [9].

1. Nagourney, Adam, et. al.,

Terrorism

New York Times, *San Bernardino Community Struck by Massacre Seemed on Verge of Turnaround*, December 6, 2015.

2. Johnson, M. Alex, et. al., NBC News, *Obama to Nation: Terrorist Threat to U.S. Is 'Evolving' but Beatable*, December 7, 2015.
3. Housley, Adam, Fox News/AP, *Terror couple's bombs were set to kill first responders*, December 7, 2015.
4. Sarwar Amani, Sayed and Sameem, Ismail, Reuters, *Scores dead, wounded in Taliban attack on Kandahar airport*, December 9, 2015.
5. Fox News, *Spanish Embassy compound targeted in Taliban attack in Kabul*, December 12, 2015.
6. The Hindu/AFP, *Car bomb kills 15 in Syria's Homs*, December 13, 2015.
7. New York Times/AP, *Bomb in Market Kills 12 in Pakistani Tribal Region*, December 13, 2015.
8. Howell, Kellan, The Washington Times, *ISIS may have seized passport printing machine, U.S. officials say*, December 11, 2015.
9. Howell, Kellan, The

Washington Times, *Chicago, Toronto named among potential ISIS targets*, December 12, 2015

Economy

According to the Labor Department, the number of first time unemployment claims for the week ending November 21 was 260,000 [1]. Then for the week ending November 28, the number of first time claims was 269,000 [2]. Finally, for the week ending December 5, the number increased to 282,000 [3]. While the Labor Department announced the unemployment rate remained at 5%; the rate including discouraged and underemployed increase to 9.9% from November [4]. In another example of currency manipulation, China guided its currency (the yuan) to

the weakest level in four years [5]. Additionally, China is lowering export taxes and providing domestic industry subsidies [6]. Consequently, as long as unfair trade practices are in place, job growth in the US will be difficult.

1. Mutikani, Lucia, Reuters, *U.S. jobless claims fall more than expected*, November 25, 2015.
2. Reuters/Economic Times, *US jobless claims up, but still suggest firming labor market*, December 3, 2015.
3. Reuters, *U.S. jobless claims at five-month high; import*

prices fall, December 10, 2015.

4. Wells, Nicholas, CNBC, *Charts: What's the REAL unemployment rate*, December 4, 2015.
5. Trivedi, Anjani, and Wei, Lingling, Wall Street Journal, *China Sets Yuan at Four-Year Low in 'Stress Test'*, December 9, 2015.
6. Martina, Michael, et. al., Reuters, *Trade rows brew as China helps home team tackle slowdown*, December 11, 2015.

*Guilt for being rich, and
guilt thinking that perhaps
love and peace isn't
enough and you have to go
and get shot or something.
—John Lennon*
