

Note from AFA President -- Musings, Courage

AFA members, Congressional staff members, civic leaders, DOCA members, I haven't sent a note to you in over two weeks. So, I think it's important to review a bit of what happened around the world. The list below is not all inclusive, but ...

- President Hu Jin Tao of the PRC visited the US ... and right before his visit, the Chinese flew their first test flight of their 5th generation fighter, the J-20.
- The Vice Chief of Staff of the Chinese Air Force declared publicly that the J-20 would not be deployed in 2020 as stated by Sec Gates, but it would enter the PLAAF by 2017 ... not long after the USAF F-35 achieves its Initial Operational Capability.
- Riots on the streets of Tunisia caused the government to fall.
- This was followed by riots in Yemen and by severe demonstrations in Egypt.
- The Egyptian street activity has sent shock waves throughout the world. Oil has jumped \$4 per barrel and countries are scrambling to get their citizens out of the country.
- The Russian press speculated that Russia would offer their 5th generation fighter, the PAK-FA, to Brazil. This aircraft has also been developed in partnership with India. The prototype of this aircraft also flew its first flight.
- The German press reported that Iran and Venezuela reached an agreement to station Iranian surface-to-surface missiles and advanced surface-to-air missiles in Venezuela. The piece went on to say the surface-to-surface missiles have the range to reach Miami.
- Talks meant to urge Iran toward heeding U.N. Security Council demands to stop uranium enrichment collapsed, with Tehran shrugging off calls by six world powers to cease the activity that could be harnessed to make nuclear arms. No new date for another meeting has been set.
- In a separate report, Iran flatly stated that it intends to continue to enrich uranium and to proceed towards development of nuclear weapons.
- For the first time in 20 years, Burma convenes its parliament – with the members all supporters of the junta. Opponents call it a “sham.”
- According to non-government estimates, Pakistan has now doubled its nuclear arsenal to more than 100 deployed weapons.
- Cyber “attacks” continue to occur against the US ... though not widely reported. In a separate report, half of U.S. government Web sites are vulnerable to commonplace Domain Name System (DNS) attacks because they haven't deployed a new authentication mechanism that was mandated in 2008.

The point of above ... is, very simply, that ... except possibly for the last item, no one predicted that these items would occur when they did. Most have looked optimistically at Afghanistan and definitely stated that all conflicts of the future would resemble the counter insurgency on-going in Afghanistan. It doesn't take much for any of you to posit scenarios based on any of the events above. That is why we have argued that we must have a strong military – one that is trained and ready across the spectrum on conflict. We can't wait for conflict to be imminent before we start to build up our forces and their equipment.

Secondly, the Air Force has released its next “Portraits in Courage.” In my notes, I will include one link which takes you to our website where we have them all listed. The first link is to the heroism of Tech Sergeant Anthony Campbell, Jr. TSgt Campbell was an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team Leader in Afghanistan. You can find the link here: http://www.afa.org/Portraits/2010/Portrait_Campbell.asp

For your consideration,

Mike

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