

# US Missiles in Asia Anger China, Russia



The first of two Terminal High Altitude Area Defense interceptors is launched during a successful intercept test on Sept. 10, 2013.

WASHINGTON (Press TV) – The United States says it is mulling to deploy an advanced missile system in South Korea, despite concerns from China and Russia over the move.

A high-ranking American defense official said that Washington is now trying to find an appropriate site for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense or THAAD in South Korea, Stars and Stripes reported on Wednesday.

“We’re working with the government of South Korea now to determine if that is the right thing to do,” said US Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work in a forum in Washington DC hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations.

The US official said the missiles are “strategic assets” of the United States and their movement requires “very, very important na-

tional level decision,” according to a transcript of his comments.

The development comes amid concerns in South Korea that the deployment could draw the ire of China.

A spokesman for South Korea’s Ministry of National Defense said on Wednesday that Seoul has had no discussion with Washington regarding the deployment of a politically sensitive THAAD battery in the country.

He added that South Korea has not received any request from the United States about the deployment of the system.

The Korean official also refused to comment whether Seoul supports the idea of deploying THAAD into the country. Many in South Korea believe that China deems the system as a threat.

There have also been reports

that Seoul has been under pressure from Washington in order to put the advanced anti-ballistic missile system in South Korea as part of a regional system which also includes Japan.

Last year the United States placed deployed a THAAD system in Guam, an unincorporated territory of the United States in the western Pacific Ocean.

“We’ve emphasized to both China and to Russia that these are not strategic anti-ballistic missiles, that ... they are essentially designed to address regional threats against both our allies and against U.S. territory,” Works said during the forum.

“So we continue to work with the Russians and the Chinese to allay any concerns that they have, but they have both indicated concerns, without question.”

## German Defense Crisis Puts Potential Merkel Successor in Hot Seat

BERLIN (Reuters) - Ursula von der Leyen, whose ambitions of succeeding Angela Merkel are too transparent for German taste, is finding out the hard way why her job as defense minister is considered the most dangerous in the cabinet, nicknamed the ‘ejector seat’.

News that Germany’s military hardware is in such a state of disrepair that it is struggling to meet NATO commitments or keep a promise to arm Iraqi Kurds against Islamic State has put the minister in the firing line.

Dubbed “the War Minister” by a magazine for wanting to put military muscle behind Germany’s growing presence in geo-political affairs, von der Leyen is one of the only contenders to succeed the popular Merkel as conservative leader.

But the defense equipment scan-

dal, which erupted last week, is an unmitigated embarrassment for Germany which could put an end to such ambitions.

Meanwhile, the satirists and headline-writers are having a field day.

Many German tanks “are only held together by von der Leyen’s hairspray”, said one TV show after the forces acknowledged that only 70 of their 180 Boxer armored fighting vehicles, seven of 43 navy helicopters or 42 of 109 air force Eurofighters and 38 of 89 Tornado fighters were operational. The list goes on.

As well as casting doubt on commitments on air defense for NATO allies in the Baltics if the Ukraine crisis escalates, it coincided with a spate of breakdowns of military planes taking weapons to Iraq and aid to African states hit by Ebola.

## First Case of Ebola Diagnosed in US: Health Officials

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States has diagnosed its first case of the deadly Ebola virus in a man who became infected in Liberia and traveled to Texas, US health officials said Tuesday.

The patient was hospitalized with symptoms that were confirmed to be caused by Ebola, which has killed more than 3,000 people in West Africa, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention spokesman told AFP.

“He acquired the disease in Liberia,” the spokesman said, adding that the man, who has not been named, was not a healthcare worker.

The man is the first person to be diagnosed with Ebola in the United States, although a handful of US medical workers who were infected in West Africa have been flown back to the United States for treatment. They have since recovered.

“The patient is an adult with a recent history of travel to West Africa,” the Texas Department of Health said in a statement.

“The patient developed symptoms days after returning to Texas from West Africa and was admitted into isolation on Sunday at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas.”

The world’s largest outbreak of Eb-

ola has infected 6,574 people across five west African countries, and killed 3,091 since the start of the year, according to the World Health Organization.

The hemorrhagic fever causes a range of symptoms including fatigue, fever, muscle aches, vomiting, diarrhea and bleeding.

It can be spread by close contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person who is showing symptoms, or by touching the corpse of a person who died from Ebola.

The beginning of the West Africa outbreak has been identified as a two-year-old boy in Guinea who became sick with Ebola in December 2013.

Experts do not know how he came down with Ebola, but the New England Journal of Medicine has reported that he may have come in contact with an infected fruit bat, which are natural hosts for the virus.

Since then the disease has spread rapidly, primarily affecting Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea and overwhelming the healthcare systems there.

The Ebola outbreak in Nigeria is almost over, US health officials said separately Tuesday, in a rare sign of authorities turning the tide on the highly contagious disease.

## Ukraine Sends New Military Equipment to East



Ukrainian troops in eastern part of the country (file photo)

KIEV (Press TV) – The Ukrainian government has sent new military equipment to the eastern parts of the country.

On Tuesday, Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk inspected the new armored vehicles during a visit to a base for National Guard soldiers near the capital, Kiev.

The new equipment includes armored vehicles with off-road capability.

The nearly 5,000 Ukrainian

troops at the base also received new winter gear.

Ukraine’s mainly Russian-speaking regions in the east have witnessed deadly clashes between pro-Moscow forces and the Ukrainian army since Kiev launched military operations to silence pro-Russians in mid-April.

Violence intensified in May after the two flashpoint regions of Donetsk and Luhansk held local referendums

in which their residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of independence from Ukraine.

On September 5, a truce was agreed between representatives from the Ukrainian government and pro-Russian forces to pave the way for an end to the crisis in the country’s eastern regions.

The United Nations says over 3,500 people have been killed during the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

## Japanese Rescuers Find More Dead on Volcano, Toll at 47

TOKYO (Reuters) - The death toll from a Japanese volcano eruption rose to 47 on Wednesday, the worst in 88 years, after more victims were discovered on the ash-covered mountain.

Military searchers resumed a recovery operation with helicopters early on Wednesday a day after officials called off rescue efforts because of poisonous gas and fears of another blast.

The eruption of 3,067-metre (10,062-foot) Mount Ontake, 200 km (125 miles) west of Tokyo, blanketed the summit with a deadly rain of ash and stone as it was crowded with climbers and hikers enjoying the autumn colors.

Police said earlier 48 people had

been killed but later revised the toll down to 47. They did not say why they revised the toll but said more victims could still be on the mountain.

The toll exceeds the 43 people killed in a 1991 eruption in southwest Japan and becomes the deadliest volcano since a 1926 eruption on the northern island of Hokkaido, which killed 144 people, according to government data.

Japan is one of the world’s most seismically active countries. There had been no fatalities since the 1991 eruption of Mount Unzen, which caused a pyroclastic flow of superheated current of gas and rock.



Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) soldiers conduct rescue operations near the peak of Mt. Ontake, October 1, 2014.



WASHINGTON (Press TV) – Amid the rise of civilian deaths in US-led military operation against ISIL, Washington has acknowledged that any strikes in Syria and Iraq are exempt from its “standards” applied to other aerial attacks.

US National Security Council spokesperson Caitlin Hayden revealed that the current airstrikes will not be performed in line with a previously announced standard for allegedly minimizing civilian casualties.

Obama announced last year that the highest standard which the US can meet is unauthorizing drone attacks unless there is “near certainty” about the lack of civilian casualties.

The confirmation came a week after a dozen civilians, including children, were killed in a US attack in the village of Kafr Daryan in Syria’s Idlib province.

Human Rights Watch says the bombing should be investigated for possible violations of the laws of war.

The US-led coalition has been bombing ISIL targets in Iraq and Syria, but has largely failed to halt militant advances.

The “near certainty” standard was intended to apply “only when we take direct action ‘outside areas of active hostilities,’ as we noted at the time,” Hayden added.

“That description, outside areas of active hostilities, simply does not fit what we are seeing on the ground in Iraq and Syria right now,” Hayden noted.

US current and former officials said that the Pentagon would use satellite, drones and surveillance flights for determining targets for airstrikes, the Associated Press reported on Wednesday.

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HONG KONG (Reuters) – Thousands of pro-democracy protesters thronged the streets of Hong Kong on Wednesday, some of them jeering National Day celebrations, and students threatened to ramp up demonstrations if the city’s pro-Beijing leader did not step down.

There was little sign of momentum flagging on the fifth day of the “Occupy Central” protest, whose aim has been to occupy sections of the city, including around the Central financial district, in anger at a Chinese decision to limit voters’ choices in a 2017 leadership election.

Many had feared police would use force to move crowds before Wednesday’s celebrations marking the anniversary of the foundation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Those fears proved unfounded, and police stayed in the background.

The crowds have brought large sections of the Asian financial hub to a standstill, disrupting businesses from banks to jewelers. There were no reports of trouble on Wednesday, but witnesses said the number of protesters swelled in the evening.

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MADRID (Press TV) – Thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets of Barcelona, vowing to disobey Spain’s blocking of Catalonia’s independence referendum.

Some 5,000 angry Catalans gathered in one of the city’s main squares on Tuesday, waving Catalan independence flags and chanting “We will vote”.

“Not rain nor snow nor any court will stop us,” said Carme Forcadell, leader of the Catalan National Assembly, adding, “On November 9, we will vote and we will win.”

Pro-independence demonstrations were also held in several other Catalan towns.

The protests follow a Monday decision by Spain’s constitutional court to suspend Catalonia’s referendum on independence after a request from the Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy.

The Spanish government lodged a formal appeal with the constitutional court, asking it to declare the independence referendum illegal.

The Spanish premier expressed regret over a recent decision by Catalan President Artur Mas to call for the November 9 vote, which is designed to allow the region to declare its independence from Madrid.

Catalonia’s regional parliament has approved a law that allows its leaders to hold consultations on independence. However, a ‘Yes’ vote for independence in the referendum will not automatically lead to the secession of the region. The vote would only give Mas the mandate to negotiate independence with the Spanish administration.