

US warship targeted

Washington blames Iran-backed Huthi rebels for the launch

AFP, Dubai

Two missiles fired from rebel-held territory in Yemen fell short of a US warship patrolling the Red Sea off the coast of the war-torn country, the US navy said yesterday.

The USS Mason "detected two inbound missiles" within an hour of each other from around 7:00 pm (1600 GMT) on Sunday, said US Naval Forces Central Command spokeswoman Paula Dunn.

The destroyer had been "conducting routine operations in international waters" at the time, she said in a statement.

from Huthi-controlled territory in Yemen," she said, referring to the Iran-backed rebels fighting Yemen's internationally recognised government.

The Huthis described as "unfounded" reports they fired missiles at the US destroyer. Rebel forces "did not target any warships," said a spokesman quoted by the insurgents' sabanews.net website.

Also yesterday, the Arab coalition fighting the Iran-backed Huthis accused the rebels of firing a ballistic missile towards the southwestern Saudi city of Taif.

The missile was one of two which the Saudi-led coalition intercepted on Sunday, the coalition said, adding the other was launched toward Marib, east of Yemen's rebel-held capital Sanaa.



MISSILE ATTACK FROM YEMEN

SECOND CLINTON-TRUMP DEBATE: KEY QUOTES

ON DONALD TRUMP'S SEXUAL ASSAULT BOASTS
"This is who Donald Trump is, and the question for us, the question our country must answer is that this is not who we are"

ON BILL CLINTON
"If you look at Bill Clinton, far worse. Mine are words, his was action"

ON USE OF PRIVATE EMAILS
"That was a mistake, and I take responsibility for using a personal e-mail account"

ON SOMETHING POSITIVE ABOUT EACH OTHER
"I respect his children"

ON RUSSIAN INFLUENCE
"We have never in the history of our country been in a situation where an adversary, a foreign power, is working so hard to influence the outcome of the election"

ON THREATS TO JAIL HILLARY CLINTON
"If I win, I'm going to instruct the attorney general to get a special prosecutor to look into your situation because there's never been so many lies, so much deception"

Certainly I'm not proud of it. But this is locker room talk"

SOURCE: AFP/DEBATE TRANSCRIPT
PHOTO: CHIP SOMODEVILLA
AFP/PHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

German police arrest IS bomb plot suspect

AFP, Leipzig

A Syrian man suspected of plotting an Islamic State bomb attack was arrested yesterday by German police with the help of three of his compatriots, in a case that sparked fresh calls for greater checks on asylum seekers.

Jaber Albakr, 22, had narrowly slipped through the police net Saturday when commandos raided this apartment and found 1.5 kilos of TATP, the homemade explosive used by jihadists in the Paris and Brussels attacks last year.

The explosives were "almost ready, or even ready for use," said Joerg Michaelis, chief investigator in the eastern state of Saxony, adding that the suspect was apparently preparing a "bomb, possibly in the form of a suicide vest".

Deadly gun battle erupts in Kashmir town

One Indian soldier wounded as suspected terrorists lay siege to govt office; two rebels holed up

AGENCIES

Indian police say security forces are battling a group of gunmen inside a government compound in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir.

Police told the Associated Press news agency yesterday that army and paramilitary soldiers cordoned off the compound after gunshots were heard near Pampore town, about 10km outside of Srinagar, capital of Indian Kashmir.

One soldier was reported wounded in the initial fighting. Sources told Al Jazeera that at least two suspected rebels are holed up inside the Entrepreneurship Development Institute, and that intermittent shooting could be heard in the building.

approached the campus on the outskirts of Srinagar through boats on the River Jhelum, which flows from Kashmir into Pakistan.

"We are confident of neutralising the terrorists as soon as possible," an army officer supervising the operation said.



Smoke rises after the Indian army blows up a landmine during a firefight between Indian army soldiers and suspected militants in Pampore, Srinagar yesterday.

The attack comes as Kashmir is experiencing its largest protests against Indian rule in recent years, sparked by the killing in July of a popular rebel commander by Indian soldiers.

The protests, and a sweeping military crackdown, have all but paralysed life in Indian-controlled Kashmir, with shops, schools and most banks remaining shut and mobile phone and internet services working intermittently.

There are no hostages, sources said, because classes have been suspended for more than three months because of the unrest in the state that began with the killing of 22-year-old terrorist Burhan Wani.

According to police, terrorists who broke into the institute in the morning

Kashmir has been divided between rivals India and Pakistan since the end of British rule in 1947. Both claim the territory in full.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep in Kashmir, where rebel groups have fought Indian troops since 1989 for either independence or a merger with Pakistan. More than 70,000 people have been killed since then.

AP FACT CHECKS OF SECOND US PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Clinton, Trump claims reviewed

Trump mischaracterized the record on Clinton's defence of her husband and her own treatment of women when he brought up Bill Clinton's sexual history and other episodes of the past. Clinton didn't give a square account of the fallout from her email practices. A look at some of the claims in the second presidential debate:

TRUMP, asked whether the predatory behaviour with women that he described in a 2005 video amounted to sexual assault: "No, I didn't say that at all."

THE FACTS: He certainly didn't own up to sexual assault in his boastful remarks in 2005. But he clearly described groping and kissing women without their permission, using his celebrity to impose himself on them. "I don't even wait," he bragged in the video. "And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything."

TRUMP on Hillary Clinton's behavior when, as a young public defender, she was assigned to represent an accused child rapist: "She's seen on two separate occasions, laughing at the girl who was raped. Kathy Shelton, that young woman, is here with us tonight."

THE FACTS: At no point was Clinton seen laughing at the victim. In 1975, at the age of 12, Shelton was sexually assaulted in Northwest Arkansas. Clinton was asked by a judge overseeing the case to represent her alleged attacker. After the prosecution lost key evidence, Clinton's client entered a plea to a lesser charge.

TRUMP on women linked to Bill Clinton sexually: "Hillary Clinton attacked those same women and attacked them viciously."

THE FACTS: There is no clear, independent

evidence that Hillary Clinton "viciously" attacked women who alleged or confirmed sexual contact with her husband. To be sure, in the 1992 Democratic primaries, she was deeply involved in the Clinton campaign's effort to discredit one accuser, actress Gennifer Flowers, who alleged she had a long-running affair with Bill Clinton. Both Clintons acknowledged past troubles in their marriage but sought to undermine Flowers' claims.

CLINTON: "After a yearlong investigation, there is no evidence that anyone hacked the server I was using, and there is no evidence that anyone can point to, at all... that any classified material ended up in the wrong hands."

THE FACTS: Direct, explicit evidence that classified information was leaked or that her server was breached, it was nevertheless connected to the internet in ways that made it more vulnerable to hackers - and the public may never know who saw them. FBI Director James Comey has said: "We assess it is possible that hostile actors gained access to Secretary Clinton's personal e-mail account."

TRUMP on Bill Clinton: "He lost his license. He had to pay an \$850,000 fine."

THE FACTS: Trump's facts are, at best, jumbled. In

1998, lawyers for Bill Clinton settled with former Arkansas state employee Paula Jones for \$850,000 in her four-year lawsuit alleging sexual harassment. It was not a fine, and there was no finding or admission of wrongdoing.

CLINTON: "We are now, for the first time ever, energy independent."

THE FACTS: Clinton inaccurately overstates the case. For the first time in decades the United States gets more energy domestically than it imports, but it is not yet energy independent as the country continues to rely on oil imports, from the Mideast and elsewhere. Estimates vary as to when the US might achieve energy independence.

TRUMP: "She (Clinton) wants to go to a single-payer plan, which would be a disaster...she wants to go to single-payer, which means the government basically rules everything."

THE FACTS: It's Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders - not Clinton - who supports a Canada-style government-run health care system. While Clinton's health care proposals would expand the government's role in the health care system, she's not talking about dismantling the current system, which is a hybrid of employer-sponsored coverage, government programs like Medicare and Medicaid, and individually purchased insurance.



Turkish riot police clash with demonstrators as they gather to commemorate last year's deadly suicide bombing near the main train station in Ankara yesterday. People rallied to mark the first year anniversary of the October 10 twin suicide bombings in Ankara in which 103 people were killed and more than 500 wounded in a blasts that targeted a pro-Kurdish peace rally in the city.

Putin meets Erdogan to normalise ties

AFP, Istanbul

Russian President Vladimir Putin met Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul yesterday, pushing forward ambitious joint energy projects on his first visit to Turkey since a crisis in ties.

Only a few months ago, the two post-imperial strongmen were exchanging bitterly personal accusations after Turkey shot down a Russian war plane on the Syrian border last November.

But after a June agreement to normalise ties, this was the pair's third meeting following an initial ice-breaking meeting in Saint Petersburg and an encounter on the sidelines of the G20 in China in September.

Before their meeting began at the Ottoman-era Yildiz Palace in Istanbul, the pair reaffirmed their commitment to the planned TurkStream gas pipeline to pump Russian gas under the Black Sea to Europe in speeches to an energy congress.

Speaking at the World Energy Congress, Putin vowed that the project would be realised, while Erdogan said work was already under way and Turkey looked on it "positively".

Putin also congratulated Erdogan for defeating the July 15 coup bid against his rule, saying Russia had been very concerned by the situation and was "glad" Turkey was now recovering.

Yet the two countries still face a major task to raise relations to the level enjoyed before the jet crisis.

NEWS IN brief

- Colombian president donates Nobel money**
AFP, Bogota
Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos announced Sunday that he would donate his \$925,000 in Nobel Peace Prize money to victims of the conflict that has roiled his country for half a century. The winner of this year's Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to broker a peace deal with the FARC said the funds would go toward "projects, foundations or programs that deal with victims and reconciliation."
- Libyan forces push into last IS area in Sirte**
REUTERS, Tripoli
Libyan pro-government forces are advancing into the last area controlled by Islamic State in the coastal city of Sirte, surrounding the militants after a five-month campaign backed by US air strikes, military officials say. At least eight pro-government fighters were killed over the weekend as their forces pushed into the 600 block, an area in central Sirte, with snipers and boobytraps posing the main obstacles to their advance, the officials said.
- Mastermind of Lanka team attack killed**
AFP, Peshawar
Afghan security forces have killed a senior member of the Pakistani Taliban accused of masterminding a deadly attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in 2009, militant sources said yesterday. Qari Ajmal, a leader of the banned Lashkar-e-Jhangvi sectarian group that allied with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, died in a raid carried out by Afghan and NATO forces in Afghanistan's Paktika province, a Taliban commander said.

Polygamy 'not essential part of Islam': Indian govt

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The Indian government has petitioned the country's Supreme Court for a ban on polygamy, the practice of having more than one wife.

It has also called the practice of triple talaq "misplaced in a secular country". It allows Muslim men to divorce their wives by repeating the word "talaq," meaning "I divorce you," three times.

Currently, India's constitution allows Muslims - the biggest minority religion in the country - to regulate their own laws governing matters such as marriage, divorce and inheritance.

However the government of Narendra Modi has filed an affidavit to the court arguing that polygamy and triple talaq impacts a woman's status and her right to live with confidence and dignity. The Indian Express reports.

"It is submitted that the issue of

MYANMAR BORDER RAIDS Four dead as army hunts culprits

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's army yesterday hunted the attackers who staged deadly raids on border posts, searching homes in Rakhine state for stolen weapons, as police said four people were killed in one clash.

The operations in the western state were focused in and around Maungdaw, a town near the Bangladesh border that was among the targets of Sunday's mysterious attacks which left nine police officers dead.

The vast majority of its residents are Rohingya, a stateless Muslim minority reviled as foreign illegal immigrants by many among Myanmar's Buddhist majority.

The unrest has stoked fears of a repeat of 2012, when sectarian violence which ripped through Rakhine left more than 100 people dead and displaced tens of thousands.

The state remains on edge and bitterly divided along religious lines.

"Fighting took place today (Monday) along the border near Maungdaw as the military tracked the culprits," a senior police source in the capital Naypyidaw told AFP on condition of anonymity.

World at dangerous point Says Gorbachev as US-Russia tensions soar

AFP, Moscow

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev warned yesterday that the world had reached a "dangerous point" as tensions between Russia and the United States have spiked over the Syria conflict.

Relations between Moscow and Washington -- already at their lowest since the Cold War over the Ukraine conflict -- have soured further in recent days as the United States pulled the plug on Syria talks and accused Russia of hacking attacks.

The Kremlin meanwhile has suspended a series of nuclear pacts, including a symbolic cooperation deal to cut stocks of weapons-grade plutonium.

"I think the world has reached a dangerous point," Gorbachev, 85, told state news agency RIA Novosti.

"I don't want to give any concrete prescriptions but I do want to say that this needs to stop. We need to renew dialogue. Stopping it was the biggest mistake."

As the last leader of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev oversaw an easing of decades of tensions with the West that helped to end the Cold War.

He inked several landmark nuclear disarmament deals with Washington aimed at defusing the standoff between the two superpowers.

"It is necessary to return to the main priorities. These are nuclear disarmament, the fight against terrorism, the prevention of an environmental disaster," he said.

"Compared to these challenges, all the rest slips into the background."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Sunday he had detected increasing US hostility towards Moscow and complained about what he said was a series of aggressive US steps that threatened Russia's national security.

In an interview with Russian state TV likely to worsen already poor relations with Washington, Lavrov made it clear he blamed the Obama administration for what he described as a sharp deterioration in US-Russia ties.

Mastermind of Lanka team attack killed

AFP, Peshawar

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