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GERMAN ISLAMISTS FACE TRIAL FOR ENACTING 'SHARIA POLICE' ON CITY STREETS

May 5, 2016 timesofisrael.com reported: "A group of German radical Islamists will face trial for forming 'sharia police' street patrols that told people to stop drinking, gambling and listening to music, a court said Tuesday.

The ultra-conservative Muslim group around German Salafist convert Sven Lau sparked public anger with their vigilante patrols in 2014 in the western city of Wuppertal.

A city court last December said the group would not face charges — but a higher court has now overturned that decision, announcing that eight members of the group could face trial, without setting a date.

It sided with state prosecutors who had argued the group's orange vests with the words 'Sharia Police' on them constituted a violation of a ban on uniforms at public rallies.

The state high court in Duesseldorf also found that the law — which is aimed against militant street movements such as the early Nazi party — could be applied in this case.

The vests had signified the group's 'shared political view' that traditional Islamic law could be applied on German streets, the court found..."

RUSSIA SAYS BOLSTERING FORCES TO COUNTER NATO

May 5, 2016 SpaceDaily.com reported: "Russia's defence minister said Wednesday that Moscow will set up three new divisions in the west and south of the country by the end of the year to counter NATO forces close to its border.

'The defence ministry is taking a range of measures with the aim of countering the build-up of NATO forces in close proximity to Russia's borders,' Sergei Shoigu was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies.

'By the end of the year two new divisions will be established in the western military district and one in the southern military district.'

Relations between NATO and Russia have deteriorated since Moscow annexed the Crimea region of Ukraine and eastern European countries are worried that they too might be targets of Russian aggression.

In response, NATO has deployed additional military resources on its eastern flank. At its previous summit in 2014, the alliance decided to reinforce its presence along the Russian border, angering Moscow..."

VENEZUELA SHOULD BE RICH. INSTEAD IT'S BECOMING A FAILED STATE

May 4, 2016 The Washington Post reported: "It's come to this: The country with the largest oil reserves in the world can't afford to brew its own beer, stay in its own time zone, or even have its own people show up to work more than two times a week.



Venezuela, in other words, is well past the point of worrying that its economy might collapse. It already has. That's the only way to describe an economy that the International Monetary Fund thinks is going to shrink 8 percent and have 720 percent inflation this year.

And that's not even the worst of it. No, that's the fact that the state itself is near collapse. Venezuela already has the world's second-highest murder rate, and now the Chavista regime seems to be threatening violence of its own if the opposition succeeds in recalling President Nicolás Maduro. It's a grim race between anarchy and civil war.

This is an entirely man-made catastrophe. Venezuela, by all rights, should be rich. As we just said, it has more oil than the United States or Saudi Arabia or anyone else for that matter. But despite that, economic mismanagement on a world-historical scale has barely left it with enough money to even, well, pay for printing money anymore.

That's right: Venezuela is almost too poor to afford inflation. Which is just another way of saying that the

government is all but bankrupt."...

It's a lot easier to come up with a list of things that aren't failing. That's nothing. Venezuela's economy is collapsing, its currency is too, its stores have nothing in them, and it can't keep the lights on or its people safe. The only things the Chavistas are good at is creating scapegoats, creating lines, and creating misery."..."

IRANIAN COMMANDER THREATENS TO CLOSE STRAIT OF HORMUZ TO U.S.

May 4, 2016 The Times of Israel reported: "The deputy commander of Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard said Iranian forces will close the strategic Strait of Hormuz to the United States and its allies if they 'threaten' the Islamic Republic, Iranian state media reported on Wednesday.

The comments by Gen. Hossein Salami, carried on state television, follow a long history of both rhetoric and confrontation between Iran and the US over the narrow strait, through which nearly a third of all oil traded by sea passes.

The remarks by the acting commander of the Guard also follow those of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who on Monday criticized US activities in the Persian Gulf. It's unclear whether that signals any new Iranian concern over the strait or possible confrontation with the US following its nuclear deal with world powers..."

JAPAN AGREES TO LEASE MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO PHILIPPINES

May 3, 2016 spacedaily.com reported: "Japan will lease military aircraft to the Philippines in another sign of deepening security ties between the two former foes to counter Beijing's increasing regional influence.

The agreement was made Monday afternoon during telephone talks between Japan's Defence Minister Gen Nakatani and his Philippine counterpart

Voltaire Gazmin, the ministry said.

Tensions in the South China Sea -- through which one third of the world's oil passes -- have mounted in recent years since China transformed contested reefs into artificial islands capable of supporting military facilities.

Under the accord, Tokyo will lease up to five TC-90 training airplanes and help Manila train pilots and aircraft mechanics, the ministry said. The planes can be used as surveillance aircraft, according to local media.

It will be Japan's first lease of its Self-Defence Forces' aircraft to another country after it recently lifted a self-imposed ban on weapons exports.

"We agreed that it is important for all the countries in the region to strengthen cooperation in order to maintain peace and stability of the South China Sea," Nakatani told reporters.

"We believe that improving the Philippines' capability will lead to stability in the region," he added.

The TC-90 is capable of flying some 1,900 kilometres (1,180 miles), roughly double the flight range of the Philippine navy's aircraft, Kyodo News said.

The Philippines has been seeking to strengthen ties with Japan, its former World War II rival, as tensions mount over disputed South China Sea waters, almost all of which are claimed by China. The southeast Asian country has a severely under-equipped military."..."

IRANIAN SUPREME LEADER WARNS U.S.: FLEE THE PERSIAN GULF

May 3, 2016 freebeacon.com reported: "The Washington Free Beacon reports: "Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on Monday warned the United States against keeping a military presence in the Persian Gulf and vowed that the Islamic Republic will continue to carry out a range of war drills in the area, despite warnings, according to recent comments. Khamenei blasted the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf in wide-ranging remarks that ordered America to return its forces 'back to the Bay of Pigs.'

Khamenei also said that Iran has the military know-how to eradicate American forces from the region. "Today, the enemies utter words bigger than their mouths; for instance they develop plans to bring to a halt Iran's military wargames in the Persian Gulf, what a foolish remark," Khamenei was quoted as saying on Monday, as Iran holds a series of war drills..."

US NAVY CHIEF HOPES FOR 'NORMALIZATION' WITH RUSSIA IN BALTIC

May 2, 2016 spacewar.com reported: "Admiral John Richardson, the US Navy's top officer, said Monday he hopes for a "normalization" of relations with Moscow in the Baltic Sea, where Russian jets have buzzed US planes and ships.

The latest incident came Friday, when a Russian SU-27 intercepted a US RC-135 reconnaissance plane flying in international airspace over the Baltic Sea. It was the second such incident in recent weeks and the Pentagon called the encounter "unsafe and unprofessional."

In April, the US Navy released video of Russian aircraft flying very close to the USS Donald Cook, including in a "simulated attack profile."

"It just increases the chance for some kind of a tactical miscalculation," Richardson told Pentagon reporters...It just sort of raises the overall tension in the region, so we look for sort of normalization there." He called on Moscow to abide by a maritime agreement, signed by US and Soviet powers in 1972, to avoid naval mishaps and prevent any such event from escalating.

"We continue to advocate for that," Richardson said. Still, he downplayed the idea of there being any aggressive intent during the recent incidents."..."

KHAMENEI: US IS MAIN ENEMY, 'ZIONIST REGIME' A CLOSE SECOND

May 2, 2016 thetimesofisrael.com reported: "Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Sunday that the United States is the Middle East's main enemy, with the 'Zionist regime' a close second.

Speaking at a meeting in Tehran on Sunday with the head of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Ramadan Abdullah, Khamenei said that looking at the turmoil in the region in a 'macro' sense, the US was clearly to blame, with Israel following closely behind. PIJ is an Islamist terrorist organization.

In comments carried by Iranian websites, some of which were then posted to Khamenei's Twitter page, the Iranian leader unleashed a series of anti-US and anti-Israel remarks.

Khamenei, said Iran's Mehr News agency, 'reaffirmed that with this perspective in regional issues, Iran sees the United States as main enemy with the Zionist regime standing behind it. He pointed to extensive, unprecedented sanctions of US and its followers against the Islamic establishment in recent years and dubbed the objective of them as discouraging Iran from continuing its path; 'but they failed to achieve their goals and will fail in future as well'..."

GEORGIA ARRESTS FIVE FOR TRYING TO SELL URANIUM

April 28, 2016 spacedaily.com reported: "Georgia has arrested five people for trying to sell radioactive uranium material, the second such seizure this month, investigators said Thursday. The State Security Service said the five were trying to sell 1.6 kilos (3.5 pounds) of nuclear material that included uranium-238 and uranium-235 isotopes for \$3 million (2.6 million euros).

The suspects, who were arrested in the Black Sea resort of Kobuleti, were remanded in custody on Wednesday. If convicted, they could face jail terms of up to 10 years.

Uranium enriched in the 235 isotope can be used for a nuclear bomb if it is used in a large enough quantity. The seizures have raised questions about nuclear security in the former Soviet Union amid fears that extremists are seeking to acquire nuclear material to use in attacks."..."

