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Weekly World News Briefs

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Iran Threatens to Avenge 'Israel's Crime' in Syria

April 12, 2018 Breitbart.com reported: "The IDF has been put on high alert after Iran threatened to retaliate for the airstrike in Syria attributed to Israel that killed at least 14 people, including seven Iranians.



Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, called it 'Israel's crime' and said it would 'not remain without response,' the Lebanese Al-Mayadeen channel reported.

Russia, Syria and the U.S. all said Israel carried out the strike on the T-4 airbase near Palmyra. Jerusalem has not confirmed the charge.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said Israel was responsible for 'flagrant' aggression in Syria.

On Tuesday, Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman said he 'didn't know what happened' in regard to who was responsible for the attack but reiterated that Israel 'will not allow Iranian entrenchment in Syria. Whatever the cost.'



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'Accepting Iranian entrenchment in Syria would be to accept Iranians putting a chokehold on us. We cannot allow that,' Liberman said...'

US displays military muscle as carrier sails in South China Sea

April 12, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "SpaceDaily.com reports: "More than two dozen F/A-18 Hornets roared off the deck of the USS Theodore Roosevelt in an ear-splitting display of US military might as the aircraft carrier sailed through the South China Sea.

The training exercise Tuesday came ahead of a port call in the Philippines, which along with several other nations is embroiled in disputes with Beijing over its claim to the strategic waters. The demonstration, during a visit by Philippine generals and journalists, was held just days after Beijing flexed its own military muscle with a huge naval drill involving its sole aircraft carrier and dozens of other vessels several hundred kilometres to the north.

'We have seen Chinese ships around us,' carrier strike group commander Rear Admiral Steve Koehler said.

'They're one of the navies that operate in the South China Sea but I would tell you that we've seen nothing but professional work from the ships that we've encountered,' he said. Koehler acknowledged 'there's a lot of disputes' over the area but insisted the carrier group was transiting through international waters...'

Tehran, Beijing to boost nuclear cooperation

April 11, 2018 Islamic Republic News Agency reported: "Energy cooperation between Iran and China is important, and the two countries are to boost ties in all areas including peaceful use of nuclear energy, Iran's ambassador to Beijing said on Wednesday.

History of Tehran-Beijing ties goes back to over 2,500 years ago, Ali Asghar Khaji said at the Seminar on Iran-China Civil Nuclear Cooperation under the JCPOA which is underway in the Chinese capital.

Describing the seminar as important, Khaji said Silk Road newly known as 'One Belt, One Road' project has significant impact on boosting trade exchange between the two countries.

Referring to mutual dependence and common interests and threats which are the basis of today's global relations, the ambassador said that Iran and China are cooperating to counter their common threats of terrorism and extremism.

As regional peace and stability are important for China, Iran as a country which is directly fighting terrorists in the region can play a leading role in ensuring trade security, the diplomat said.

About Tehran-Beijing commercial ties, Khaji said China has been Iran's number one trade partner for a decade. He went on to say that the two countries have witnessed a 20 percent increase in their trade exchange which stood at 37 billion dollars in 2017.

Iran, as one of the world's richest countries in terms of oil and gas reserves and also as the most stable country in the Middle East region, can play a key role in providing energy for China and ensuring security of its transportation, the diplomat said.

Due to its strategic location, Iran can be a safe and short way for international trade exchanges, the ambassador said, adding Iran with its population of 80 million can be the best place for China to implement the 'One Belt, One Road' project and expand trade ties with the West...'

Vanuatu says no to China military base

April 10, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "Vanuatu insisted Tuesday it had no plans to allow China to set up a military base on its territory after a report suggesting Beijing was pushing the proposal sparked concern in Australia and New Zealand.

The Sydney Morning Herald said China had approached the Pacific nation about the possibility, potentially upsetting the delicate strategic balance in the region. China has been aggressively growing its military and expanding its footprint deeper into the Pacific, forging closer links by showering nations with development money.

The Herald, citing multiple sources, said Beijing's military ambition in Vanuatu would likely be realised incrementally, possibly beginning with an access agreement allowing Chinese naval ships to dock routinely for refuelling.

This arrangement could then be built on, it added, with intelligence and security figures in Australia, New Zealand and the United States becoming increasingly worried about China's growing influence. But Vanuatu Foreign Minister Ralph Regenvanu angrily rebuffed the claim.

"No one in the Vanuatu government has ever talked about a Chinese military base in Vanuatu of any sort," he told ABC radio.

"We are a non-aligned country. We are not interested in militarisation, we are just not interested in any sort of military base in our country."

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, who travelled to Vanuatu last weekend with Britain's Prince Charles, earlier said she was confident of Canberra's strong relationship with Port Vila.

"We have very good relations with Vanuatu and I remain confident that Australia is Vanuatu's strategic partner of choice," she said."..."

Pentagon weighs military response after Syria 'chemical attack'

April 9, 2018 spacewar.com reported: "With global outrage mounting over an alleged chemical attack on a rebel-held town in Syria, the Pentagon on Monday weighed its options for a retaliatory strike.



Military action against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad seemed likely, after President Donald Trump warned of a "big price to pay" and spoke of imminent "major decisions" within the next 48 hours.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said he won't rule anything out militarily. But thanks to the Trump administration's whipsawing messaging over whether America will even stay in Syria, and the dangerous complexities of the multi-national conflict, the Pentagon's options appeared limited.

The attack on the rebel-held Syrian town of Douma killed at least 48 people Saturday after a "poisonous chlorine gas attack" in Eastern Ghouta, rescuers and medics said. By Monday, the United States and France had promised a "strong, joint response" and Britain, too, joined a growing chorus demanding action."..."

Russian submarines lurk near underwater cables powering internet

April 10, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Russian ships have recently been active in the vicinity of vital undersea fiber-optic cables that power the internet, texts, calls, and world financial transactions, reports the Associated Press.

The US and its allies are concerned the Kremlin may be developing a new information warfare theatre. 'We've seen activity in the Russian navy, and particularly undersea in their submarine activity, that we haven't seen since the '80s,' Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, commander of the U.S. European Command, told Congress this month.

Some say the Russian activity is unprecedented: 'We are now seeing Russian underwater activity in the vicinity of undersea cables that I don't believe we have ever seen,' said U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Andrew Lennon, the commander of NATO's submarine forces. 'Russia is clearly taking an interest in NATO and NATO nations' undersea infrastructure.'..."

Russia, Syria blame Israel for deadly strike on Syrian Air Base

April 9, 2018 timesofisrael.com: "In a rare move, Russia on Monday accused Israel of carrying out a predawn missile strike on an air base in central Syria that reportedly killed 14 people, among them Iranian nationals. Dictator Bashar Assad's regime also said Israel was behind the airstrike.

Israeli military officials refused to comment on the allegations.

'This is a very dangerous development. I hope at least that the US military and those of the countries participating in the coalition led by the United States understand that,' Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told a press conference Monday.

The United States and France officially denied carrying out the strike, which came shortly after both countries threatened to retaliate for a chemical weapons attack allegedly conducted by Assad in the Syrian town of Douma late Saturday.

The target of the reported airstrike was the Tiyas air base — also known as the T-4 air base — outside Palmyra in central Syria. Israel has previously carried out at least one explicitly acknowledged attack on the base, which it said was home to an Iranian drone program..."

Iran's Rouhani says US 'will regret it' if it violates nuke deal

April 9, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Monday that the United States would regret violating the nuclear deal, and that Iran would respond in "less than a week" if that happened.

"We will not be the first to violate the accord but they should definitely know that they will regret it if they violate it," Rouhani told a conference to mark National Nuclear Technology Day in Tehran.

"We are much more prepared than they think, and they will see that if they violate this accord, within a week, less than a week, they will see the result."

US President Donald Trump has threatened to walk away from the nuclear deal and reimpose sanctions by May 12 unless tough new restrictions are imposed on Iran's nuclear and missile programmes."..."

Germany: Rising Security Threat as Authorities Warn Islamic Extremists Have Doubled to 11,000

April 8, 2018 Breitbart.com reports: "Authorities warned that the number of Muslim fundamentalists including 'jihadists' living in Germany has doubled to 11,000 in just a few years.

Salafism — the radical Islamic ideology to which international terror groups such as Islamic State and al-Qaeda are usually said to subscribe — has grown rapidly in recent years, according to security statistics reported by Tagesspiegel. The 11,000 figure, which represents the number of Salafist residents known to regional authorities in each state, has risen sharply from 5,500 in 2013, and marks a rise of almost 300 per cent from 2011, when domestic intelligence estimated around 3,800 fundamentalists to have been active in the EU nation.

Data presented by the Interior Ministry this week showed that speed of the ideology's growth varies region by region, with large cities housing a large share of extremists present in Germany..."