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Juncker urges EU to take stronger world role

September 13, 2018 AFP reported: "In an age of trade wars, terrorism and rising nationalism, Europe must become a global player with a muscular foreign policy to match its economic strength, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker declared Wednesday.

Juncker used his annual speech to the European Parliament to call for the bloc to stand up for the international order in the face of "trade and currency wars", in a swipe at US President Donald Trump's "America First" approach. Europe's ability to take strong diplomatic action is often hampered by the need to get agreement from all 28 member countries, so in a bid to simplify the process, Juncker announced plans to abolish the need for unanimity on some foreign policy issues.

With Brussels and Washington at loggerheads on a host of major issues from trade tariffs to the Paris climate agreement and the Iran nuclear deal, Juncker said it was time for Europe to play a more influential role on the world stage.

"We must become a greater global actor," the head of the EU executive told lawmakers in French, before switching to English to add: "Yes we are global payers, but we have to be global players too."

The EU must do more to push the euro as a world currency, Juncker said, questioning why Europe pays 80 percent of its energy bills in dollars when only two percent of its energy imports come from the United States.

Boosting the role of the euro as a reserve currency would also create a means of skirting US sanctions that it disagrees with, such as those slapped back on Tehran by Trump when he pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal earlier this year in the face of bitter European opposition.

A European diplomat said in advance of the speech that Juncker knows it is a "critical" moment to prepare Europe for a world in which Trump's United States is an unpredictable foreign policy friend and a protectionist trade rival."..."

Israel sells Saudi Arabia Iron Dome

September 13, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "The Saudi-based Al-Khaleej Online reported today that Saudi Arabia had acquired an Iron Dome system from Israel to defend itself from missile attacks by the Houthi rebels in Yemen.

According to the report, the deal was mediated by the United States, in which the Saudis undertook that the system would not endanger Israel or its allies. Israeli security sources say this is a significant development in the relationship between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

According to the report, Israel initially refused to sell the Saudis to the system because the two countries have no diplomatic relations and the system may be used against it. Saudi Arabia involved the Americans who exerted pressure and brought about a change in the Israeli position..."

UN space agency ready to support states willing to adopt arms control in space

September 12, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) is ready to provide its technical expertise to member states willing to adopt a multilateral treaty on space arms control similar to the one proposed by China and Russia, Simonetta Di Pippo, the director of the organization, told Sputnik on Tuesday.

"We are working in coordination with the [UN] Office for Disarmament Affairs, for a few years now, so that we can also bring our technical expertise, because we are UNOOSA, so we have a lot of expertise in the field, or our staff members are experts in the field," Di Pippo said during the first UN Conference on Space Law and Policy jointly organized by UNOOSA and the Russian government in Moscow when she was asked how UNOOSA could work to help UN member states adopt such treaty on arms control. She further noted that UNOOSA could bring a lot to the table if member states wanted to receive technical support.



In addition, UNOOSA was looking to Russia to provide additional voluntary funding to be able to make progress on confidence-building measures and transparency. "We would really love to have champions - countries which could on a voluntary basis provide funds to us... Russia could be one, if they have any intention of doing that, for sure," Di Pippo said."..."

Russia launches biggest ever war games

September 11, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "Russia launched Tuesday what it called its largest ever military drills, with hundreds of thousands of troops taking part along with Chinese soldiers in a show of force NATO condemned as a rehearsal for "large-scale conflict."

President Vladimir Putin is expected to attend the games after hosting an economic forum in Russia's far eastern city Vladivostok where his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping is one of the prominent guests.

The week-long war games dubbed "Vostok-2018"(East-2018) "have kicked off" in far eastern Russia, the defence ministry said. Taking part in the drills are around 300,000 soldiers, 36,000 military vehicles, 80 ships and 1,000 aircraft, helicopters and drones.

Some 3,500 Chinese troops will take part in the exercise. The defence ministry released video footage of military vehicles, planes, helicopters and ships getting into position for the initial stage of the drills.

Putin praised Russia's increasingly close ties with China as he met Xi at the economic forum in Vladivostok on Tuesday.

"We have trustworthy ties in political, security and defence spheres," the Russian leader said. Xi for his part said the two countries' "friendship is getting stronger all the time."

The drills, which also include Mongolian soldiers, have been condemned by NATO as a rehearsal for "large-scale conflict". The military exercises come at a time of escalating tensions between Moscow and the West over accusations of Russian interference in western affairs and conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.

The Russian army has compared the show of force to the USSR's 1981 war games that saw between 100,000 and 150,000 Warsaw Pact soldiers take part in "Zapad-81" (West-81) -- the largest military exercises of the Soviet era. But Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said these exercises are even larger.

"Imagine 36,000 military vehicles moving at the same time: tanks, armoured personnel carriers, infantry fighting vehicles -- and all of this, of course, in conditions as close to a combat situation as possible," Shoigu said.

The exercises will be held across nine training ranges and three seas: the Sea of Japan, the Bering Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk."..."

Iran's nuclear chief warns of 'harsh consequences' if scientists attacked

September 11, 2018 timesofisrael reported: "Iran's nuclear chief told The Associated Press on Tuesday that he hopes the atomic deal between Tehran and world powers survives, but warns the program will be in a stronger position than ever if not.

Ali Akbar Salehi also told the AP in an exclusive interview Tuesday in Tehran that the 'consequences will be harsh' if there are any new attacks targeting Iran's nuclear scientists. A string of bombings, blamed on Israel, targeted a number of scientists beginning in 2010 at the height of Western concerns over Iran's program.

Salehi also said that US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw America from the 2015 accord 'puts him on the loser's side' of history..."

Muslims 'proselytizing' at U.S. school assemblies

September 10, 2018 WND.com reports: "Two Muslim organizations are suspected of proselytizing California public school students at assemblies. The Freedom of Conscience Defense Fund dispatched a records request to the Gilroy Unified School District because of a possible constitutional violation for letting the Muslim groups indoctrinate students.

'Last year, a Muslim high school student complained to school officials she was bullied after Donald Trump got elected and that she was offended by a class assignment that included a Fox News op-ed,' the legal team explained.

'After school board members met with the student's family, the district engaged in 'great partnerships' with the Islamic Networks Group (ING) and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) to conduct 'Islamophobia' presentations and lecture students at school assemblies about Islam,' the group said..."

Chinese Officials Burn Bibles, Close Churches in Crackdown on Christianity

September 10, 2018 Breitbart.com reports: "The Chinese government's campaign to 'Sinicize' organized religion -- to make religion completely subordinate to the Communist Party -- grew more aggressive this year and featured the destruction of Bibles, crosses, and entire churches.

Religious freedom activists call it the worst crackdown on Christianity since religious freedom was nominally granted by the 1982 Chinese constitution.

Fox News reported...linked the crackdown with Communist Party leader Xi Jinping's ascension to dictatorial power and the fulfillment of worst-case fears expressed by underground Christian leaders when Beijing began using government-controlled churches to co-opt the religion..."

Harbinger to Messiah: Red Heifer Is Born

September 9, 2018 breakingisraelnews.com reported: "Last Tuesday, the Temple Institute's Red Heifer program was blessed with results; an entirely red female calf was born, paving the way for re-establishing the Temple service and marking the final stage of redemption.

Almost three years ago the Temple Institute inaugurated its Raise a Red Heifer in Israel program. Due to laws restricting the importation of live cattle into Israel, the Temple Institute imported frozen embryos of red angus, implanting them in Israeli domestic cows. The pregnant cows were raised on cattle ranches in different locations throughout the country. The cows are giving birth this summer with several calves already having been born.

One week after it's birth, the newborn red heifer was certified by a board of rabbis as fulfilling all the Biblical requirements. The rabbis emphasized that the heifer could, at any time, acquire a blemish rendering it unsuitable. They will be inspecting the calf periodically to verify its condition..."

ANALYSIS: Iran continues attempts to expand Islamic Revolution

September 9, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "As was pointed out in last week's analysis about Iran, the Islamic Republic is in deep trouble due to a huge economic crisis which is expected to worsen once the United States introduces more sanctions intended to cripple the country's petrochemical industry.

The new sanction regime was introduced to deprive Iran of the possibility to continue its policy of expanding the Islamic revolution in the Middle East and beyond and to destabilize the regime of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The regime, however, has no intention to cave in and last week stepped up its efforts to turn Iraq and Syria into satellite states by attacking or threatening U.S. related targets in both Syria and Iraq and by reinforcing its proxy forces in the Middle East.

After a three-state summit in Tehran about the Syrian war, which was attended by the leaders of Iran, Turkey, and Russia, Iranian president Hassan Rouhani openly stated that Iran was seeking the ouster of the US military from Syria..."

