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Exclusive: Zarif threatens 'all-out war' in case of military strike on Iran

September 19, 2019 [cnn.com](#) reported: "Iran's foreign minister has warned of "all-out war" in the event of US or Saudi military strikes against his country, and questioned whether Saudi Arabia was prepared to fight "to the last American soldier."

Javad Zarif told CNN that Iran hoped to avoid conflict, adding that the country was willing to talk to its regional rivals Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. But Iran would not hold talks with the US unless Washington provided full relief from sanctions as promised under the 2015 nuclear deal, Tehran's top diplomat said.

He again denied that Iran was involved in weekend attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities, which dramatically ratcheted up tensions in the region. Zarif said Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, who claimed responsibility for the attack, have stepped up their military capabilities and were capable of conducting a sophisticated operation such as the one that knocked out half of the kingdom's energy production.

Probed further, however, Zarif was unable to provide proof that Houthis launched the drones and missiles. "I cannot have any confidence that they did it because we just heard their statement," said Zarif. "I know that we didn't do it. I know that the Houthis made a statement that they did it."..."

German intel: Iran sought to acquire weapons of mass destruction in 2018

September 19, 2019 [jpost.com](#) reported: "A new German intelligence report from the state of Hesse on Wednesday outlined the Islamic Republic of Iran's illicit espionage activities in the central European country, including efforts to obtain weapons of mass destruction during 2018.

The Hesse report noted that, 'Against this background [of proliferation], weapons of mass destruction continued to be a powerful political instrument during the reporting period, which could shake the stability of an entire state structure in both regional and international crisis situations. In particular, states such as Iran, North Korea, Pakistan and Syria attempted to acquire and redistribute such weapons in the context of proliferation, for example by concealing transport routes via third countries.'

The Jerusalem Post reviewed the 312-page document that details threats to the democratic state in Hesse. The intelligence agents said that foreign academics seek to obtain knowledge about the uranium enrichment process.

According to the intelligence agency, visiting professors from states such as Iran, North Korea and Pakistan are connected to "proliferation conduct" that is coordinated with intelligence services from those countries.

"An example of this is the field of electrical engineering combined with the use of centrifuges in the process of uranium enrichment," the report said. "Here, again and again, there are suspicions that foreign intelligence services put pressure on their own visiting scientists to obtain the desired technical know-how."

The Hesse domestic intelligence agency findings have not been previously reported...."

Tehran vows to shoot down US planes as war fears grow

September 18, 2019 [thesun.co.uk](#) reported: "The US President is said to have been given a "menu" of options by Pentagon chiefs that includes air raids and crippling cyber attacks.

Trump has said his military was "locked and loaded" as the Middle East moves to the brink of a vicious new war, which threatens most of the world's oil supplies and shipping. He also announced he has ordered treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin to "substantially increase sanctions" in a bid to further squeeze Iran's faltering economy.

But Iran denies involvement and defiantly vowed to shoot down US warplanes.

In a letter to the United States via the Swiss Embassy, Iran said any move by America against Iran "will get immediate reaction".

Tehran's ally in Yemen's civil war, the Houthi movement, claimed responsibility for the attacks despite their lack of technology. But US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that "emerging information indicates that responsibility lies with Iran..."

Russia says no threat after blast in lab holding smallpox

September 18, 2019 [TerraDaily.com](#) reported: "Russia has said there is no threat of contamination after an explosion and fire at a Soviet-era biological weapons facility in Siberia that stocked samples of the Ebola and smallpox viruses.

The blast happened Monday at 'Vector', a state-run virus and biotechnology research centre that is one of only two locations in the world to hold the smallpox virus. The Russian health watchdog Rospotrebnadzor said a fire broke out when a gas cylinder exploded, injuring one worker at the facility.

Glass was broken but the structure of the building remained intact and there were no biohazardous materials in the room where the explosion happened, the watchdog said. The fire was extinguished Monday, authorities told news agencies..."



North Korean propaganda video accuses Christians of being 'spies'

September 17, 2019 [christiantoday.com](#) reported: "A North Korean propaganda video obtained by Voice of the Martyrs portrays Christians as 'religious fanatics' and spies' operating on behalf of the South Korean government.

Voice of the Martyrs believes the video was used in training for North Korean security agents to help them identify and root out anyone spreading religion within the hermit communist country.

The video tells the story of a woman called Cha Duksoon who flees to China to find her uncle after suffering from hunger during the Great Famine of the nineties, in which millions are believed to have died. Arriving in China, she discovers that her uncle is dead but she finds instead the Suhtap Church where she hears the Gospel for the first time and gives her life to Christ..."

'U.S. preparing response to attack on Saudi oil facilities'

September 17, 2019 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "US Defense Secretary Mike Esper said on Monday that the US military is preparing a response to the attack on major Saudi Arabia oil facilities, AFP reported.

After briefing President Donald Trump in the White House, Esper singled out Iran as undermining international order, without directly pinning blame on Tehran for the attack.

'The United States military, with our interagency team, is working with our partners to address this unprecedented attack and defend the international rules-based order that is being undermined by Iran,' he said in a tweet.

Earlier on Monday, Trump said that it's 'looking like' Iran was responsible for the weekend attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil supply..."

Ahead of Erdogan-Putin meeting, Rouhani blames Israel, US for regional tension

September 16, 2019 timesofisrael.com reported: "Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Monday blamed Israel and the US for tensions in the Middle East, in comments made ahead of a trip to Ankara for a tripartite meeting with his Russian and Turkish counterparts for discussions on Syria.

'Today, what is taking place in this region and has concerned many countries of the world is the result of erroneous plans and conspiracies of the United States,' Rouhani said, according to the Tasnim news agency. 'We have declared time and again that regional issues must be resolved by regional countries and through dialogue.'

'If we want the establishment of real security in this region, a full stop must be put to acts of aggression by the US and provocative interventions by the Zionist regime. Otherwise we will witness the continuation of insecurity,' he said..."



Presidents Rouhani, Putin & Erdogan

Pentagon steps up efforts to counter China's rising power

September 16, 2019 spacedaily.com reported: "Maritime operations, missile tests, landing exercises: the Pentagon has been sharply stepping up its efforts to counter China's growing military power, seen increasingly as a threat.

On Friday an American warship approached the Paracel Islands, an island chain claimed by Beijing in the South China Sea, to affirm international 'freedom of navigation' in the region.

The USS Wayne E. Meyer, a guided-missile destroyer, passed near the islands to contest Beijing's sweeping claims to the seas around the archipelago, which is also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam.

The Chinese claim would block 'innocent passage' by other countries' ships and is 'not permitted by international law,' a US Seventh Fleet spokeswoman, Commander Reann Mommsen, said..."

EU creates directorate for European defense industry

September 16, 2019 spacewar.com reported: "A new agency established within the European Commission to deal with Europe's fragmented defense industry will have France's former defense minister in charge..."

The EU does not have an army, and member states treat defense policies as internal issues, but the bloc has encouraged cross-border defense initiatives.

The EU's defense and external security budget has increased from \$3.1 billion in the period 2014 to 2020 to \$24.7 billion for 2021 through 2027. The new budget also allocates another \$14.3 billion to a European Defense Fund to promote unified defense projects..."

Iran dismisses U.S. claim it was behind Saudi oil strikes, says ready for war

September 15, 2019 reuters.com reported: "Iran rejected accusations by the United States that it was behind attacks on Saudi oil plants that risk disrupting world energy supplies and warned on Sunday that U.S. bases and aircraft carriers in the region were in range of its missiles..."

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi dismissed the U.S. allegation as 'pointless'. A senior Revolutionary Guards commander warned that the Islamic Republic was ready for 'full-fledged' war.

'All American bases and their aircraft carriers in a distance of up to 2,000 kilometers around Iran are within the range of our missiles,' the semi-official Tasnim news agency quoted commander Amirali Hajizadeh as saying..."

Attacks on Saudi oil facilities cut 5% of global oil supply

September 15, 2019 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Saudi Arabia said on Saturday night that drone strikes on its key oil facilities, among the world's largest and most important energy production centers, have disrupted about half of the kingdom's oil capacity, or 5% of the daily global oil supply.

Saudi Arabian Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said in a statement quoted by CNN that 5.7 million barrels a day of crude oil and gas production have been affected. The latest OPEC figures from August 2019 put the total Saudi production at 9.8 million barrels per day. The energy minister said the 'company is currently working to recover the lost quantities' of oil and will update the public within the next two days.

'These attacks are not only aimed at the vital installations of the kingdom, but also on the global oil supply and its security, and thus pose a threat to the global economy,' he added..."