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Multiple attacks on Iran by unseen adversary send clear warning to regime

July 9, 2020 jpost.com reported: “Three weeks ago a paper written by the staff at Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya’s Institute for Policy and Strategy argued that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s focus on extending Israeli sovereignty to parts of the West Bank was deflecting his attention and that of the world from Israel’s main threat: Iran...

According to the paper, not only did the incessant chatter about the possibility of annexation mean that the world was focusing on Israel rather than Iran, but the annexation issue led Netanyahu to take his eye off the Iranian ball, and this at a particularly inopportune moment: as Iran continues to test how far the world will let it go beyond the limits of the 2015 nuclear agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and as the UN is scheduled to consider lifting an arms embargo on the Islamic Republic in October.

All that was written three weeks ago. Less than two weeks ago, however, something dramatic changed: on June 26 an explosion rocked a facility that produces liquid fuel for ballistic missiles near Tehran, and another massive fire erupted in Shiraz. These were the first of a series of six fires, explosions and chemical mishaps since then, including at a medical clinic in Tehran, the Natanz nuclear site, a power plant in Ahvaz, and at a petrochemical plant in Mahshahr...

These actions inside Iran send a strong message to the Islamic Republic – already reeling from the coronavirus, crippling US sanctions, a deep economic crisis and domestic foment – that it is vulnerable, that its most sensitive facilities can be reached and penetrated, and that facilities suspected of being used to further its nuclear and ballistic missile program can be severely damaged...”

Iran warns Israel: No attack will stop our nuclear program

July 8, 2020 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: “Iran vowed on Tuesday to maintain its nuclear program despite Israel’s alleged efforts to sabotage it, stressing the recent explosion at the Natanz nuclear enrichment center was not going to disrupt its pace.

‘The Israeli regime should be aware that creation of norm-breaking narrative on any attack against our nuclear facilities, even if it’s only propaganda, is considered as stepping in the path of violating red lines of global peace and security,’ government spokesman Ali Rabiei said, according to the *Israel Hayom* newspaper.

He was referring to the mysterious fire at the Natanz nuclear site last week, which Iran has publicly suggested could be attributed to the US or Israel.

Israel has not commented on the incident, but an unnamed Middle Eastern intelligence official told *The New York Times* that Israel was responsible for the attack, which he said was carried out using a powerful bomb...”

‘We’re next’: Hong Kong security law sends chills through Taiwan

July 7, 2020 sinodaily.com reported: “The imposition of a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong has sent chills through Taiwan, deepening fears that Beijing will focus next on seizing the democratic self-ruled island.

China and Taiwan split in 1949 after nationalist forces lost a civil war to Mao Zedong’s communists, fleeing to the island which Beijing has since vowed to seize one day, by force if necessary.

‘The law makes me dislike China even more,’ 18-year-old student Sylvia Chang told *AFP*, walking through National Taiwan University in Taipei.

‘They had promised 50 years unchanged for Hong Kong but they are getting all the more heavy-handed... I am worried Hong Kong today could be Taiwan tomorrow.’

Over the years China has used a mixture of threats and inducements, including a promise Taiwan could have the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ model that governs Hong Kong, supposedly guaranteeing key civil liberties and a degree of autonomy for 50 years after the city’s 1997 handover.” ...”

Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan warn Israel on annexation

July 7, 2020 ynetnews.com reported: “Egypt, France, Germany and Jordan on Tuesday warned Israel against annexing parts of the West Bank, saying that doing so could have consequences for bilateral relations.



In a statement distributed by the German Foreign Ministry, the countries, including Israel's two leading partners in the Middle East, said their foreign ministers had discussed how to restart talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. They, along with most other European countries, oppose Israeli plans that envisage annexing parts of the West Bank as part of a peace deal that is promoted by the U.S. administration of President Donald Trump.

The Palestinian Authority, which wants the West Bank for a future Palestinian state, opposes the move. The United States has yet to give its approval to the annexation plans..."

Iran brags that new 'missile cities' are nightmare for enemies

July 6, 2020 jpost.com reported: "In the Iranian rhetoric playbook, every failure must be met with an equal and opposite claim to some form of success. The failure of Iran to protect critical infrastructure, as well as a series of explosions at a missile factory and nuclear site over the last week and a half, led Tehran to point to new 'missile cities' as part of its arsenal that makes it a 'nightmare' for enemies. What is a 'missile city' and why is Iran talking about this now?"



Brig-Gen Alireza Tangsiri

The comments were made Sunday by Brig.-Gen. Alireza Tangsiri, who said that Iran has 'underground cities which house vessels and missiles.' The entire shoreline of southern Iran has these weapons, he asserted. Most of these weapons systems are in the hands of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, not the regular Iranian Navy. They consist of various marine forces, including units of the Basij, the reports in Iranian state media claim. They include 428 flotillas along 2,200 km. of coastline. The systems are concentrated at key areas along the Persian Gulf and facing the Gulf of Oman...

The bragging about the 'missile cities' comes in the wake of a mid-June test of an Iranian cruise missile that was fired out to sea, which supposedly has a range of 280 km. Iran also said in April it had increased the range of its naval missiles to 700 km..."

China takes on more conflicts around the world

July 3, 2020 spacewar.com reported: From remote Himalayan valleys to small tropical islands and tense Western capitals, an increasingly assertive China is taking on conflicts around the world like never before as the United States retreats.

China's imposition this week of a controversial security law in Hong Kong, defying a barrage of criticism from the West, offered another example of its rising confidence as a global superpower. The confrontations are seen as part of President Xi Jinping's nationalist drive to return a once-weak China to its rightful place of dominance in the world and shed past strategies of discreet diplomacy.

They also come as US President Donald Trump alienates allies with his America First policies and riles China with a trade war.

"There is a sense that the time has come for China to claim its spot under the sun," said Steve Tsang, director of the China Institute at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. That means meeting the call by Xi to "unsheathe the sword," Tsang said.

The most dramatic flare-up in a trio of territorial rows recently saw 20 Indian troops die in a fight with Chinese soldiers in a disputed part of the Himalayas last month. Both sides blamed each other for the brawl, which was the deadliest clash between the nuclear-armed neighbours in decades and sent relations plummeting.

China has in recent years also stepped up its claims to most of the South China Sea by building artificial islands and establishing a heavy military presence. China this week held naval drills near the Paracels, an archipelago in the sea also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan, which stoked tensions further.

The Pentagon voiced concern over the drills on Thursday, saying they would "further destabilise" the region, while Vietnam lodged a diplomatic protest.

And in the East China Sea, Japan said Chinese bombers last month flew over uninhabited islands claimed by both after Japanese efforts to rename them.

China has also seen relations with a range of Western nations plummet, as it has adopted increasingly strident diplomatic tactics." ..."

Compiled by L. Jim Tuck,
UCG Minister
<ljt5053@sbcglobal.net>