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Britain's Top General Calls for Retaliation on Iran for Drone Strike

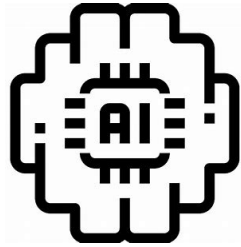
August 5, 2021 voanews.com reported: "Britain's top military commander, General Nick Carter, said Wednesday that Western powers need to retaliate for a suspected Iranian drone strike on an oil tanker, which killed a British security guard and the ship's Romanian captain — otherwise Tehran will feel emboldened.

Speaking to the *BBC*, Carter, chief of the British Defense Staff, said if a regime of deterrence is not restored in the Gulf, there will be more attacks and a higher risk of 'miscalculation' by Iran. 'What we need to be doing, fundamentally, is calling out Iran for its very reckless behavior,' he said.

Iran has vehemently denied playing any role in the July 29 drone strike on the MV *Mercer Street* off the coast of Oman. The vessel is Japanese-owned but managed by London-based firm Zodiac Maritime, which in turn is owned by Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer..."

The Pentagon Is Experimenting with AI That Can Predict Events 'Days in Advance'

August 5, 2021 sciencealert.com reported: If you're wondering just how advanced artificial intelligence (AI) systems are getting, then know this: the US military is testing an experimental AI network tasked with identifying likely future events worthy of closer attention, and days before they occur.



The series of tests are called the Global Information Dominance Experiments (GIDE), and they combine data from a huge variety of sources, including satellite imagery, intelligence reports, sensors in the field, radar, and more.

Cloud computing also plays an important part in this setup, making sure that vast chunks of data collected from all over the world can be processed efficiently, and then accessed by whichever military officials and agencies need them.

"GIDE, the Global Information Dominance Experiments, embodies a fundamental change in how we use information and data to increase decision space for leaders from the tactical level to the strategic level – not only military leaders, but [it] also gives opportunity for our civilian leaders," US Air Force General Glen D. VanHerck explained in a press briefing last week.

The idea is to anticipate the moves of other nations way ahead of time, which means deterrents and precautions can be put in place before the fighting starts, or before hostilities have a chance to ramp up.

In fact, the jumps in logic aren't as huge as you might think – if preparations are being made for a submarine to leave port, for example, then it's fairly obvious it's on its way out to sea. Where the AI really helps is in using machine learning to spot and collate all this information much more quickly than human operatives can." ..."

Israel 'Ready to Attack Iran' as Defense Minister Says 'We Need to Take Military Action'

August 5, 2021 Newsweek reported: "Israel's defense minister Benny Gantz has said that his country is ready to attack Iran and that there must be a global response to the threat that the Islamic republic poses.

His comments come amid growing tensions following a deadly drone strike on an Israeli-operated tanker off the coast of Oman. Israel, along with the U.S. and the U.K. have blamed Tehran for the attack on the *Mercer Street* last week that killed two people. Iran has denied involvement.

"Israel is ready to attack Iran, yes," Gantz told Ynet on Thursday."..."

Iran supreme leader Khamenei formally tasks ultraconservative Raisi as president

August 3, 2021 timesofisrael.com reported: "Iran's supreme leader officially endorsed his hardline protégé as the nation's next president on Tuesday, two days ahead of Ebrahim Raisi's inauguration.

'Following the people's choice, I task the wise, indefatigable, experienced and popular Hojatoleslam Ebrahim Raisi as president of the Islamic Republic of Iran,' Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei wrote in a decree read out by his chief of staff at a ceremony.

In his speech, Khamenei advised Raisi, a former judiciary chief, to 'empower the country's poor people and improve the national currency.'

While repeating his usual anti-West rhetoric about Iran's 'enemies' seeking to sway public opinion, Khamenei struck a milder tone during the endorsement. He focused on Iran's mounting domestic issues, praising Raisi's anti-corruption campaign and asking him to encourage local production..."

Iran Ready To Deliver "Crushing" Military Response After Tanker Attack

August 2, 2021 yahoo.com reported: "Iran on Sunday issued a formal denial that it was behind the major Thursday night drone attack on the Mercer Street oil tanker off Oman that was managed by an Israeli firm which left two crew members dead. But both the United States and Israel on the same day charged that Tehran was without doubt behind the attack, which the US Navy previously said involved multiple explosive drones targeting the vessel in the Arabian Sea. Iran's PressTV subsequently responded on Monday by vowing a "strong and crushing" military response to any hostile moves against the country.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken had warned that an "appropriate response" is coming: "There is no justification for this attack, which follows a pattern of attacks and other belligerent behavior," he said. "We are working with our partners to consider our next steps and consulting with governments inside the region and beyond on an appropriate response, which will be forthcoming." ..."

NATO fighter planes intercept Russian aircraft over Baltic Sea

August 2, 2021 spacewar.com reported: "NATO tracked and intercepted four Russian planes, traveling without flight plans or transponder codes, over the Baltic Sea, the bloc announced on Friday.

Aircraft of the Air Policing force, including Eurofighters of Spain's air force and F-35 fighter planes of Italy's based at Amari, Estonia, and Siauliai, Lithuania, scrambled to intercept two Russian Il-22PP MUTE electronic warfare reconnaissance planes, a Su-24 fighter plane and an Il-76 transport plane on Thursday.

After the Russian planes left Russia's Baltic Sea enclave of Kaliningrad, they were tracked by NATO's Combined Air Operations Center in Uedem, Germany.

Although the Russian planes never entered NATO nations' airspace, they nonetheless traveled without identifying themselves or their destination, and 'thus posed a potential risk to civilian flights,' the NATO statement said..."

Philippines says US military deal 'in full force again'

July 30, 2021 spacewar.com reported: "Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has walked back on a decision to end a key military deal with the United States, his defence secretary said Friday during a visit by Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin.

Duterte told the United States in February last year he planned to axe the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) after Washington cancelled the visa of a close ally who led his internationally condemned war on drugs. The deal has been prolonged three times since then, most recently in June after months of negotiations between the two sides.

Philippine Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Friday the VFA was "in full force again", during a news conference with Austin, who was in Manila on the last stop of a Southeast Asia tour.



President Duterte

"Last night, after the meeting between Secretary Austin and the president... the president decided to recall or retract the termination letter for the VFA," Lorenzana said, adding: "We are back on track".

The 1998 VFA provides the legal framework for the US to hold joint military exercises and operations in the Philippines and is a key component of their decades-long alliance. It is also seen as a bulwark against China's growing clout in the region.

Austin, who was visiting Southeast Asia for the first time as US defence secretary, welcomed Duterte's decision, saying it "provides us some degree of certainty going forward".

"A strong, resilient US-Philippine alliance will remain vital to the security, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific," Austin said.

"A fully restored VFA will help us achieve that goal together."