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Donald Trump could be ready to order a strike against Iran, Australian Government figures say

July 26, 2018 abc.net.au reported: "It comes amid intense sabre-rattling by US President Donald Trump and his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani.

The ABC has been told Australian defence facilities would likely play a role in identifying targets in Iran, as would British intelligence agencies. But a senior security source emphasised there was a big difference between providing accurate intelligence and analysis on Iran's facilities and being part of a "kinetic" mission.

"Developing a picture is very different to actually participating in a strike," the source said.

"Providing intelligence and understanding as to what is happening on the ground so that the Government and allied governments are fully informed to make decisions is different to active targeting."

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said this morning he had no reason to believe the US was preparing for a military confrontation.

"President Trump has made his views very clear to the whole world, but this story ... has not benefited from any consultation with me, the Foreign Minister, the Defence Minister or the Chief of the Defence Force," he said.

The top-secret Pine Gap joint defence facility in the Northern Territory is considered crucial among the so-called "Five Eyes" intelligence partners — the US, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand — for its role in directing American spy satellites."..."

Iran army warns of 'firm, strong response' to US threats

July 26, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "Iran's armed forces chief of staff on Tuesday warned the US of a robust reaction if it continued to threaten Iranian interests.

'They will receive a firm and strong response to an unbelievable degree in the places and interests where they are based in the region and around the world,' said Major General Mohammad Bagheri, according to the official IRNA news agency.

'The vain and useless imaginings of the US president will never be realised,' he said..."

Hamas 'on high alert'

July 26, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Hamas' military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, issued a statement on Thursday following the events on the Gaza Strip border and the rocket shooting overnight.

'We are raising the level of alert among our fighters to the highest level,' it said. 'The enemy must know that he will pay the price of his crimes.'

An IDF officer was moderately wounded during an incident on the Gaza border. A military source said the incident occurred when an army force encountered a group of rioting children under whose cover a sniper fired at the soldiers."..."

These American states are drowning in 'irretrievable' debt

July 26, 2018 foxbusiness.com reported: "Connecticut may be the richest state in the country, on a per capita basis, but it's racked up a sizable debt worth more than \$53 billion – and it could be taxpayers who are forced to bail out the Constitution State, according to the former governor of Indiana.

"Someone's going to the barbershop," Mitch Daniels, a Republican, said during an interview with FOX Business' Stuart Varney on Thursday. "The first will be the taxpayers, already beleaguered in some of these states."

And Connecticut isn't the only state struggling with a debt crisis: California, Illinois, New Jersey and New York are unable to make pension payments to retired government workers.

In Illinois, for instance, vendors wait months to be paid by a government that's \$30 billion in debt, and one whose bonds are just one notch above junk bond status, according to Daniels. New York's more than \$356 billion in debt; New Jersey more than \$104 billion; and California more than \$428 billion."..."

Israel shoots down Syrian fighter near Golan Heights

July 25, 2018 bbc.com reported: "Israel says it has shot down a Syrian warplane which entered its airspace – a rare incident between the two foes. Two surface-to-air missiles were fired at the Sukhoi fighter jet, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) tweeted. According to Israeli reports, it happened over the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The pilot's fate is not clear.

Syrian news agency Sana said Israel had targeted the jet over Syrian airspace, but did not say whether it was hit. Sana quoted an unnamed military source as saying the plane was conducting raids against 'armed terrorist groups' near the southern Yarmouk Valley. Syria routinely describes rebel groups as terrorists..."

Seoul considers reducing troops along N. Korea border zone

July 24, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "South Korea is considering withdrawing some troops from its border zone with North Korea as a confidence-building measure after their landmark summit, the defence ministry said Tuesday.



The ministry said it would withdraw some soldiers and equipment at guard posts inside the Demilitarised Zone on a trial basis, and consider a gradual expansion of the pullout later.

"We will push for plans for a full-scale withdrawal in sync with surveys of historical remains and ecological features," it said in a report to parliament.

The 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice rather than a peace treaty, leaving the two Koreas technically at war. The DMZ was designated as a buffer zone but the areas to the north and south of it are heavily fortified."..."

British scientists create artificial embryo from stem cells

July 24, 2018 irishnews.com reported: "Artificial embryos built from scratch using stem cells have been created by British scientists.

Researchers bypassed the act of fertilisation by growing the self-assembling structures in the laboratory. Although the cells used came from mice, the experiment has opened up a new frontier in embryo research with major ethical implications.

Creating embryos in the lab is expected to help scientists unlock the mysteries of early human development..."



Egypt warned Hamas: Israel will go to war 'in two hours' if you respond to raids

July 24, 2018 timesofisrael reported: "An unofficial ceasefire reached overnight Friday-Saturday between Israel and Hamas came after Egypt warned the Palestinian terror group that Israel would launch a war 'in two hours' if Hamas responded to IDF retaliatory strikes in Gaza following the killing of an IDF soldier by Palestinian sniper fire, Israeli television reported Saturday.

Channel 10 news also reported that Egypt threatened to impose sanctions on Hamas if it does not end the launch of incendiary airborne devices toward Israeli territory.

In return for honoring these conditions, Hamas demanded Israel ease restrictions on the flow of goods into Gaza, the report said. Hamas also called for Egypt to keep open the Rafah border crossing and to press Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to pay the salaries of PA employees in Gaza..."

Pompeo to urge Iranians abroad to 'support' anti-regime protests

July 23, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo plans on Sunday to urge members of the Iranian diaspora to 'support' protesters in Iran, as the Trump administration hints at a desire for regime change in Tehran after turning its back on the Iranian nuclear accord.

President Donald Trump — who has made the Islamic republic a favorite target since his unexpected rapprochement with North Korea — decided on May 8 to restore all the sanctions that had been lifted as part of the multi-nation agreement aimed at preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Following the US withdrawal that stunned even Washington's closest European allies, Pompeo on May 21 unveiled a "new strategy" intended to force Iran to yield to a dozen stringent demands or else face the "strongest sanctions in history."

The next US step is due at 6:00 pm Sunday (0100 GMT Monday) in the Ronald Reagan presidential library in Simi Valley, California, when the secretary of state delivers a speech entitled "Supporting Iranian Voices."

With the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 a year away, Pompeo plans to retrace "40 years of stealing from the Iranian people, the terrorism they have committed around the region, the brutal repression at home" as well as the "religious persecution" there, a senior State Department official told reporters ahead of the speech. The venue for Pompeo's address is significant, the official noted: some 250,000 Iranian-Americans live in Southern California."..."

IDF: Two surface-to-surface missiles fired at Israel

July 23, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "An IDF investigation showed that the missiles fired Monday morning from Syria were ballistic surface-to-surface missiles.

The SS-21 Tochka missiles with warheads carrying half a ton of explosives would have fallen deep in Israeli territory if not for the IDF firing two 'David's Sling' interceptors. The interceptors destroyed at least one of the missiles. What happened to the second SS-21 is still being investigated..."

Berkeley High grad pleads guilty to helping ISIS, spoke of plan to kill 10,000 in Bay Area

July 20, 2018 FoxNews.com reported: "A graduate of Berkeley High School in California, who reportedly told authorities he wanted to help ISIS kill 10,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area, pleaded guilty to federal charges Wednesday, while his attorney claimed he was a victim of the 'system.'

Amer Sinan Alhaggagi, 23, of Oakland, pleaded guilty to trying to provide material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization, possession of device-making equipment and identity theft, said officials of the state's Department of Justice.

Authorities arrested Alhaggagi in November 2016 after he bought clothes online with a phony credit card, but he was held so federal authorities could continue to investigate him, the San Francisco Chronicle reported..."

