

MRC ALERTS NO 23. - SEPT 19

These are some of the critical crises going on at present.

- 1. Israel's indecisive election, and the wrangling ahead.**
- 2. The Iranian attack on Saudi oil facilities, and a possible retaliation.**
- 3. The Preparations for War in an around Israel.**
- 4. The UK's inconclusive Brexit from the E.U.**
- 5. The Hong Kong rebellion against China's threat to H K's democracy.**
- 6. The Threat to the Freedom of Speech in many countries.**

NETANYAHU FAILS TO WIN ENOUGH SEATS FOR RIGHT-WING COALITION

National unity government most likely outcome after Israeli elections, but many twists and turns ahead. Here's the latest. by JOEL ROSENBERG

(Jerusalem, Israel) -- Israel is the only true democracy in the Middle East. And we love elections so much **we've had two in the last six months.**

But the latest vote didn't go well for Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu, currently the longest-serving Prime Minister in Israeli history. After pulling out all the stops to secure 61 or more seats to build a right-wing coalition government, Bibi fell well short.

In fact, his main rival -- Benny Gantz, founder of the *Blue & White* party and former chief of staff of the Israeli Defence Forces -- won more seats (33) than Bibi's Likud (31).

Israeli politics are cutthroat and complicated, so there's no point in going through all the possibilities of what happens next.

Short version: the most likely outcome is now a "national unity government," in which either Gantz serves as Prime Minister for the first two years and Netanyahu for the second two years, or vice versa.

That said, here's what you need to know:

Netanyahu faces an all-important court hearing on October 2, and it is very possible that he will be formally indicted in three separate corruption cases. Though Bibi deserves the presumption of innocence, many Israelis believe government officials should not forge a deal with Bibi because he will need to spend so much of his time on his own legal defence in the years ahead.

Gantz and his *Blue & White* co-leaders say they want to form a "broad... national unity government." They're happy to form one with Likud, they say, but only if someone else leads *Likud*. They **don't want to make a deal with Bibi** because he's facing indictments.

Avigdor Liberman -- the former Defence Minister, is head of his own political part, and the former chief of staff for Netanyahu, and who is now a fierce rival of Netanyahu -- and he (Liberman) won 9 seats. This is nearly double from his previous 5 seats, and he is widely regarded as the "kingmaker" whose support is crucial to anyone trying to create a majority coalition. **Liberman however, indicated that he will recommend Gantz, not Netanyahu -- to be next Prime Minister**, though he, too, supports a national unity government.

If all this weren't complicated enough, neither *Blue & White* nor Liberman's party are keen on having **ultra-Orthodox religious parties** in the coalition, believing those parties

already exert too much control over Israeli social policy and the budget. Will *Likud* be willing to join a national unity government only with *Blue & White* and Liberman, jettisoning their long-time alliance with the religious parties? That remains to be seen, and is likely going to be a major point of contention in the negotiations. ... watch!

SAUDI ARABIA

IRAN-BACKED MILITANTS LAUNCH DRONE STRIKE ON SAUDI ARABIA'S ARAMCO REFINERIES WIPING OUT OVER HALF OF THE KINGDOM'S OIL REFINING CAPABILITIES

Half of Saudi Arabia's oil production power is feared to have been wiped out after Iran-backed militants turned two of the world's most valuable refineries into infernos with a devastating drone strike.

Iran is fighting a proxy war on many fronts including Saudi Arabia and Israel, by supplying weapons and funding to Islamic terror groups in Yemen, Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. These one-off type of attacks can be, as you can see here, devastatingly effective. In this recent **drone strike** attack on Saudi Arabia, it wiped out half of the kingdom's production power to produce oil.

So it's a good thing that the United States, due largely to the shale boom in **the Permian Basin of West Texas**, has just this month surpassed Saudi Arabia at now over 11 million barrels per day. The United States isn't expected to cede its crown any time soon. The EIA expects US oil production to stay ahead of Russia and Saudi Arabia through 2019.

DAMAGE FROM IRAN-LINKED DRONE ATTACK ON SAUDI OIL FACILITY CAPTURED IN SATELLITE IMAGES

SEPT 16, 2019. - Saudi oil sites attacked in a drone assault linked to Iran -- were seen to have sustained damage after satellite images released captured char marks and smoke billowing from the world's largest oil processing facility.

The weekend attack ignited huge fires at Saudi Aramco's Abqaiq oil processing facility world's daily supply. U.S. satellite images appeared to show approximately 17 points of impact on key infrastructure at the site after the attack.

THE US IDENTIFIES LOCATIONS OF IRAN ATTACK ON SAUDI OIL

SEPT 19. CBS reports that the US has identified the exact locations from which more than 20 drones and cruise missiles were launched against Saudi oil facilities on Saturday.

The **locations are in southern Iran** at the northern end of the Persian Gulf.

SAUDI KING CALLS FOR INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO OIL FACILITY ATTACKS

SEPT 17. Saudi King Salman said his country is capable of defending itself against the "cowardly attacks" that knocked out half of its oil production but called on the international community to "clearly confront" the perpetrators.

TRUMP: US 'LOCKED AND LOADED' AGAINST ATTACKERS OF SAUDI OIL FACILITY 'DEPENDING ON VERIFICATION'

SEPT 16. - President Trump has suggested that U.S. investigators had "reason to believe" they knew who launched crippling attacks against a key Saudi oil facility, and vowed that America was "locked and loaded depending on verification."

While he did not specify who he believed was responsible for Saturday's drone attacks, U.S. investigators previously have pointed the finger at Iran.

"Saudi Arabia oil supply was attacked. There is reason to believe that we know the culprit, are locked and loaded depending on verification, but are waiting to hear from the Kingdom as to who they believe was the cause of this attack, and under what terms we would proceed!" the president tweeted. - Worthy News

IRAN: REPUBLIC READY FOR "FULL-FLEDGED WAR"

SEPT. 16. Iran has denied it was involved in Yemen rebel drone attacks the previous day targeting the world's biggest oil processing facility and an oil field in Saudi Arabia, just hours after America's top diplomat alleged that Tehran was behind the "unprecedented attack on the world's energy supply."

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi, speaking on state TV, dismissed the US allegation as "pointless." A senior Revolutionary Guards commander warned that the Islamic Republic was ready for "full-fledged" war.

The attacks Saturday claimed by Yemen's Houthi rebels resulted in "the temporary suspension of production operations" at the Abqaiq processing facility and the Khurais oil field, Riyadh said. - Worthy News

NETANYAHU: ISRAEL PREPARED FOR SPILL-OVER FROM GULF ATTACK

SEPT 16. Israel is prepared for the possibility of being drawn into any US-Iranian confrontation over a strike on a Saudi oil plant, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday. "**I am taking care of our security on a 360-degree basis, and I can tell you that we are well-prepared,**" Netanyahu, who hopes for re-election in a national ballot on Tuesday, told Army Radio when asked whether Iran might try to provoke Israel.

A 6-kilometre strip of northern Israel up to the Lebanese border was **closed to civilian traffic** from Monday morning. **No explanation was offered.** The order also covers the Kiryat Shmona airfield.

PRES. TRUMP TO DELIVER "RELIGIOUS FREEDOM MESSAGE" AT U N.

SEPT 18. President Trump will deliver an inclusive call to address all forms of religious persecution and anti-Semitism at the United Nations next week. He will be hosting and speaking at the Global Call to Protect Religious Freedom event next Monday. Vice President Mike Pence will also be there.

UK: TONY BLAIR THINK-TANK PROPOSES END TO FREE SPEECH

By **Judith Bergman** /UK • September 12, 2019

A new law proposed by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change would make the British government the arbiter of accepted speech, especially political speech. Such an extraordinary and radically authoritarian move would render freedom of speech an illusion in the UK.

Disturbingly, the main concern of Blair's think-tank appears to be the online *verbal* "hatred" displayed by citizens in *response* to terrorist attacks -- *not* the actual *physical* expression of hatred shown in the mass murders of innocent people by terrorists.

Terrorist attacks, it would appear, are now supposedly normal, unavoidable incidents that have become part and parcel of UK life.

Unlike proscribed groups that are banned for criminal *actions* such as violence or terrorism, the designation of "hate group" would mainly be prosecuting *thought*-crimes.

Democratic values, however, appear to be the think-tank's **least concern**. The proposed law would make the British government the arbiter of accepted speech, especially political speech. Such an extraordinary and radically authoritarian move would render freedom of speech an illusion in the UK.

The Home Office would be able to accuse any group it found politically inconvenient of "spreading intolerance" or "aligning with extremist ideologies" -- and designate it a "hate group."

FRANCE BETRAYS US WITH \$15 BILLION IRAN BAILOUT

France slapped the U.S. in the face with its \$15 billion Iran bailout offer, which would serve to undo all the progress made by the sanctions imposed by the Trump administration on Iran. What should the consequences be?

Listen to Clarion's National Security Analyst and Shillman Fellow Ryan Mauro discuss this on *I24 News* as well as the latest reports that Hezbollah has now moved its precision missiles intended for Israel into civilian areas.

Israel's response to the Iranian and Hezbollah missile build up in Syria and Lebanon is now being publicly defended by Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

FRANCE: MACRON SIDES WITH IRAN'S MULLAHS

On September 14, just a few days after former National Security Advisor Ambassador John R. Bolton was comfortably disappeared from the administration, Iran inflicted major damage on a massive oil processing facility in Saudi Arabia.

Macron, in short, has done as much or more than any other European country to favour the Iranian regime -- more than Germany, and even more than the European Union itself. He could have chosen to act as a reliable ally of the United States, but the choice he made was a different.

The French officials act and speak as if the Iranian regime was totally honourable, and as if they did not discern the obvious: that the Iranian regime has destructive goals. The nuclear deal did not divert the regime from its goal of building nuclear weapons. The deal, in fact, floated the regime toward precisely that end. The American strategy of applying maximum pressure through economic sanctions seems the only non-military way to pressure this regime to change course.

During a visit to Washington in April 2018, French President Emmanuel Macron's main goal seemed to be convincing US President Donald Trump not to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal. He tried seduction, hugging Trump incessantly, before turning to arrogance, saying in a speech before Congress: "France will not leave the Iranian nuclear agreement because we signed it. Your President and your country will have to face their responsibilities." By **Guy Millière** • Sept. 19, 2019

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