

Selected articles (July 14, 2019)

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1)

Weaponizing the Dollar

The Trump administration's incessant sanctions wars are curbing the dollar's global hegemony and speeding the demise of U.S. empire.

By Patrick Lawrence

July 9, 2019

<https://consortiumnews.com/2019/07/09/patrick-lawrence-weaponizing-the-dollar/>

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2a)

Turkey Will Get a Chunk of Syria: An Advantage of Being in NATO

By Eric Zuesse

July 14, 2019

<http://thesaker.is/42620-2/>

2b)

Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova, Moscow, July 11, 2019

http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3719228

"[...] Update on Syria

The situation in Syria remains tense.

The most complicated situation is still in the Idlib de-escalation zone where terrorist groups continue to violate the ceasefire by shelling towns and villages and government army positions. This is resulting in the deaths of Syrian service personnel and civilians.

Significant progress has been achieved on the political track towards completing the creation and launching the Constitutional Committee. On July 5, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov received UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen. The

parties discussed in detail the political process and expressed hope that the envoy's visit to Damascus, planned for this week, would expedite the convocation of the Constitutional Committee. (News from the sidelines of the talks is encouraging). This will open up the way for a direct dialogue between the Syrians to outline the parameters of a final settlement to the Syrian crisis and the future of their country.

On the humanitarian track, we continue to watch with concern the situation in the Al-Hawl camp of internally displaced persons in the Hasakeh Province, which is outside Syrian government control. The disastrous humanitarian situation there has become chronic. The camp populated by mostly women and children is overcrowded and the residents suffer from outbreaks of seasonal diseases. Meanwhile, humanitarian organisations note plunging interest among the international community in aid for Syria. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, this year the donors have allocated only 17 percent of the required funds to implement the UN humanitarian relief plan.

In addition, UN officials complain of the persistent underfunding of their programmes in the Rukban camp for IDPs. Less than \$2 million was allocated in 2019, out of the \$10.6 million pledged by the donors. Against this background, the Russian side keeps resettling Rukban which is situated outside Al-Tanf in an area illegally occupied by the US. Over 16,000 people have left the camp, which means it was abandoned by 35 percent of its residents.

The Russian initiative on returning Syrian refugees to their homes is also on the move. Over 8,000 people have returned since July 1 alone, and the number of those returned since July 18, 2018 is close to 300,000.

We note the ongoing process of restoring Syria's ties with the outside world that were broken during the conflict, primarily with the Arab nations. On July 7, Foreign Minister of Oman Yusuf bin Alawi visited Damascus where he was received by the country's leaders. The parties discussed stepping up bilateral cooperation and coordinating efforts to enhance regional stability and security.

On July 1-2, a delegation of Syrian MPs headed by Deputy Speaker Najdat Anzour took part in the 2nd International Forum "Development of Parliamentarism" in Moscow. On the sidelines of the forum, the Syrians held meetings with their colleagues from Arab states, East Asian and Latin American countries.

After more than a nine-year break, a delegation from the Syrian Central Bank's Directorate on fighting money laundering and terrorism financing, took part in the 26th Egmont Group Plenary meeting in the Hague on July 1-4 (the group brings together financial intelligence units from most of the world's countries)."

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The Glaring Holes in Michelle Bachelet's Venezuela Human Rights Report

By Roger D. Harris

July 12, 2019

Roger Harris reports on how UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet's recent report is a gift to US regime change efforts in Venezuela.

<https://www.mintpressnews.com/glaring-holes-michelle-bachelet-venezuela-human-rights-report/260552/>

3b)

Norway, Bachelet, and the Twilight of Guaido's Insurrection

By Ociel Alí López

July 10, 2019

Venezuelan analyst Ociel Lopez examines Juan Guaido's US-backed coup following Bachelet's visit and new gov't-opposition talks.

<https://www.mintpressnews.com/venezuela-bachelet-twilight-juan-guaido-insurrection/260274/>

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4)

The Untold Story of Christian Zionism's Rise to Power in the United States

By Whitney Webb

July 12, 2019

Well before Theodore Herzl founded political Zionism and published The Jewish State, Christian Zionists in the United States and England were already seeking to direct and influence the foreign policy of both nations in service to a religious obsession end times prophecy.

<https://www.mintpressnews.com/untold-story-christian-zionists-power-united-states-israel/260532/>

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5a)

A Major Conventional War Against Iran Is an Impossibility. Crisis within the US Command Structure

By Prof Michel Chossudovsky

July 8, 2019

<https://www.globalresearch.ca/a-major-conventional-war-against-iran-is-an-impossibility-crisis-within-the-us-command-structure/5682514>

"[...] Under these conditions, a major conventional theater war by the US involving the deployment of ground forces would be suicide.

This does not mean, however, that war will not take place. In some regards, with the advances in military technologies, an Iraq-style war is obsolete.

We are nonetheless at a dangerous crossroads. Other diabolical forms of military intervention directed against Iran are currently on the drawing board of the Pentagon. These include:

- *various forms of "limited warfare", ie. targeted missile attacks,*
- *US and Allied support of terrorist paramilitary groups*
- *so-called "bloody nose operations" (including the use of tactical nuclear weapons),*
- *acts of political destabilization and color revolutions*
- *false flag attacks and military threats,*
- *sabotage, confiscation of financial assets, extensive economic sanctions,*
- *electromagnetic and climatic warfare, environmental modification techniques (ENMOD)*
- *cyberwarfare*
- *chemical and biological warfare. [...]"*

5b)

"Endless War Isn't Inevitable": House Votes to Stop Trump From Launching Unauthorized Attack on Iran

"Congress must continue using every available tool at its disposal to ensure that Donald Trump and John Bolton's march to war is fully blocked."

By Jake Johnson

July 12, 2019

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/07/12/endless-war-isnt-inevitable-house-votes-stop-trump-launching-unauthorized-attack>

5c)

Iran Keeps Calm While U.S. And Britain Continue Their Provocations

By Moon of Alabama

July 11, 2019

<https://www.moonofalabama.org/2019/07/iran-keeps-calm-while-us-and-britain-continue-their-provocations-.html#more>

“ [...] On July 3 a U.S. military spy plane crossed into Iranian airspace, twice, likely to provoke a reaction. The pirating of the GRACE 1 on July 4 was a U.S. planned provocation of Iran but carried out by the Brits. The passage of the empty BRITISH HERITAGE without AIS but with a military shadow seems to have been an attempt to lure Iran into a revenge action. When that did not work John Bolton strewed the scare story about a failed attempt to 'seize' the ship. The Brits say the incident was less serious, and Iran says it never happened. The arrest of the captain of the GRACE 1 is another step on the provocation ladder.

The people who planned these provocation do not understand how Iran acts and reacts. Its military forces are obviously under orders not to react to provocations as such could allow the John Bolton's of this world to escalate towards a war.

Iran will react to these provocations and especially the British seizure of its tanker. But, as we noted in an earlier piece, its responses to such incidents are nearly always asymmetrical and come at an unexpected place and time.”

5d)

US Naval Coalition in Gulf – a Provocation Too Far

Editorial

July 12, 2019

<https://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2019/07/12/us-naval-coalition-in-gulf-a-provocation-too-far/>

5e)

Iran vs. Spineless Europe. How far will US-western Threats Go?

By Peter Koenig

July 12, 2019

<https://www.globalresearch.ca/iran-vs-spineless-europe-how-far-will-us-western-threats-go/5683369>

5f)

Qatar Looks Set to Not Only Be a Conduit of Trump's Befuddled Foreign Policy, but Might Even Save Him in Iran

By Martin Jay

July 13, 2019

<https://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2019/07/13/qatar-looks-set-not-only-conduit-trump-befuddled-foreign-policy-but-might-even-save-him-in-iran/>

5g)

Piracy on High Seas... US and British Aim to Sink Iran Nuclear Deal

The seizure of two million barrels of Iranian crude oil by British commandoes is a blatant act of piracy aimed at provoking Iran into war. Also, confiscation of the supertanker in Britain's Mediterranean territory of Gibraltar seems aimed at sinking the last chances for the international nuclear accord being upheld.

By Finian Cunningham

July 8, 2019

<https://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2019/07/08/piracy-on-high-seas-us-and-british-aim-to-sink-iran-nuclear-deal/>

5h)

'This Is a Dangerous Game': Iran Tells US and UK to Leave Gulf Region Immediately as Tensions Soar

With control of world's oil supplies still dominant U.S. goal, the Iranian government claims U.K. attempting to provoke conflict with illegal tanker seizure and false accusations

By Jake Johnson

July 12, 2019

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/07/12/dangerous-game-iran-tells-us-and-uk-leave-gulf-region-immediately-tensions-soar>

5i)

Is Iran's influence in Iraq waning?

By Hamidreza Azizi

July 10, 2019

Iran is formalizing its relationship with Baghdad as a strategic step in lessening the negative economic effects of US sanctions, but the pro-Iran PMU integrating into Iraqi armed forces leave some Iraqi leaders uneasy.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/07/iran-influence-iraq-waning.html>

5j)

Tehran says it will stick to phased reduction of nuclear deal commitments

By Al-Monitor Staff

July 10, 2019

Iran told a French envoy that it will continue to scale back its commitments under the nuclear deal unless the other signatories honor their end of the deal.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/07/iran-policy-reduce-nuclear-deal-commitments-french-envoy.html>

5k)

Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova, Moscow, July 11, 2019

http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3719228

“ [...] Outcome of the extraordinary IAEA Board of Governors meeting

On July 10, the IAEA Board of Governors held an extraordinary meeting in Vienna to discuss Iran's compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Ahead of the event, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano made two reports on the partial suspension by Iran of its voluntary JCPOA commitments to simultaneously keep on its territory up to 300 kg of uranium enriched to 3.67 percent.

The IAEA pointed out that these steps do not pose an immediate proliferation risk. The Agency is closely monitoring all of Iran's projects, which are not in violation of its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the IAEA Safeguards Agreement or the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement, which Iran is strictly honouring.

It looks like we have long entered the age of a "developed looking-glass world." Ironically, the extraordinary IAEA Board of Governors meeting was held at the request of the United States, which announced back in May 2018 that it was pulling out of the JCPOA. Washington has unilaterally abandoned all of its obligations and openly violated UNSC Resolution 2231 and Article 25 of the UN Charter. At the same time, Washington continues to demand that Iran strictly comply with all the provisions of the nuclear deal, which the US has torpedoed for more than a year and is trying to prevent the other signatories from honouring it. I cannot understand Washington's intentions. Does it think that the general public will not bother about the details and that the endless repetition of phrases, like "the nuclear potential," "nuclear threat" and "non-compliance with agreements," will create the impression that Iran is always the guilty party and that this subject can be endlessly exploited? Is this what Washington wants? I hope that Washington still has a trace of respect for the public, which provides the foundation for democracy.

The US position has not been supported by the IAEA, which sharply criticised it. It is obvious that the root cause of the current JCPOA tension is Washington's policy of putting maximum pressure on Tehran based on anti-Iran sentiments and a desire to bring about a change of government in a sovereign state. The United States has been shown that the overwhelming majority of the IAEA states believe that there is no alternative to the JCPOA, have unilaterally spoken up in its support and for the continued implementation of the comprehensive agreements. We hope that our American colleagues will learn a lesson from this and possibly chew things over once again.

We appreciate the IAEA's contribution to the stability of the comprehensive agreements and hope that the Agency will retain a professional, objective and unbiased attitude when implementing its monitoring and verification obligations based on UNSC Resolution 2231.

We consistently and strongly urge all the JCPOA states to honour their obligations under the comprehensive agreements and UNSC Resolution 2231. We believe that this is a vital condition for ensuring that the nuclear deal, which was made following years of difficult and stressful talks and is an example of an effective settlement of one of the most complicated problems, survives this stress test and that the goals of the JCPOA are achieved in full. [...]"

“[...] Question: Please comment on the UK’s reckless behaviour in detaining an Iranian oil tanker in the Strait of Gibraltar in violation of international law. Do you think that these actions are a case of piracy and a breach of JCPOA?”

Maria Zakharova: I would prefer to use the term “fanning tensions in the region.” This expression is not so much legal as political, but it captures the meaning of the developments to a T. Possibly this is part of a strategy to change Iran’s position on a number of issues. I think Washington is not concealing this either, as part of the Anglo-Saxon partnership. In any case, this road has never led to anything good. At the same time, negotiations with the Iranian partners, which take into account the legal specifics of some or other situation and are based on mutual respect, always yield excellent results. Quite likely, those in the West, who are responsible for foreign policy implementation and for the international agenda, lack the experience pointing to the advantages of the negotiating process involving Tehran, among others. They may be aware that these negotiating processes are difficult and require not so much political rage as skills, knowledge and aptitude. Perhaps, this is the reason. But it is totally unclear why they always choose escalation and tension. I think those who peruse the relevant literature from the last ten years or so will come to the conclusion that this sort of approach always leads to an impasse. [...]”