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Publisher: Wea H. Lee
President: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins

Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
E-mail: News@scdaily.com

U.S. drone strike kills 30 pine nut farm workers in Afghanistan



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U.S. building coalition after Saudi oil attack, Iran warns against war

DUBAI (Reuters) - The United States said on Thursday it was building a coalition to deter Iranian threats following a weekend attack on Saudi Arabian oil facilities.

Iran has warned U.S. President Donald Trump against being dragged into a war in the Middle East and said it would meet any offensive action with a crushing response.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that Trump, who has ordered more sanctions on Iran, wants a peaceful solution to the crisis.

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He was speaking after talks with Saudi and Emirati leaders over the strike that Washington and Riyadh have blamed on Tehran.

Iran denies involvement in the Sept. 14 attack that initially halved Saudi oil output and which Pompeo earlier called an act of war against the world's largest oil exporter. Pompeo appeared to soften his tone on Thursday after talks with Abu Dhabi's crown prince, the de facto ruler of the United Arab Emirates, which is Riyadh's main Arab ally.

"We are here to build out a coalition aimed at achieving peace and a peaceful resolution. That's my mission, that's what President Trump certainly wants me to work to achieve and I hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran sees it that way," Pompeo told reporters.

He did not provide details about the coalition. The United States has however been trying to create a global maritime security alliance since attacks on oil tankers in Gulf waters, which Washington also blamed on Iran.

Pompeo described his proposed coalition as "an act of diplomacy while the foreign minister of Iran is threatening all out war".

Iran's foreign minister, Mohammed Javad Zarif, told CNN that the Islamic Republic "won't blink" if it has to defend itself against any U.S. or Saudi military strike, which he said would lead to "all-out war".

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and U.S. special representative on Iran Brian Hook arrive at al-Bateen Air Base in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates September 19, 2019. Mandel Ngan/Pool via REUTERS
'B TEAM'
Zarif mocked Pompeo, saying he was part of a so-called "B-team", along with Saudi Arabia's crown prince, which is trying to dupe Trump into opting for war.

Pompeo on Wednesday met Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has called the assault on oil plants a "test of global will". Riyadh has displayed what it described as remnants of 25 Iranian drones



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and U.S. special representative on Iran Brian Hook arrive at al-Bateen Air Base in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates September 19, 2019. Mandel Ngan/Pool via REUTERS

and missiles used in the strike, saying it was undeniable evidence of Iranian aggression. Pompeo earlier welcomed an announcement by the UAE that it was joining the maritime coalition, a day after Riyadh said it would too. Britain and Bahrain previously said they are participating but most European countries have been reluctant to sign up for fear of stoking regional tensions. Iraq said it would not join the mission, and also rejected any Israeli role in it. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov urged all countries in the Gulf to sit down for talks to defuse tensions and said groundless accusations against Iran over the attacks were inflaming tensions, Interfax news agency reported. Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi movement, which is battling a Saudi-led military coalition, claimed responsibility for the assault on two Saudi oil plants, including the world's largest processing facility. U.S. and Saudi officials rejected the claim, saying the attack had not come from the south. Kuwait, which said earlier this week it was investigating the detection of a drone over its territory, has put its oil sector on high alert and raised security to the highest level as a precautionary measure. Oil prices, which soared following the attack, steadied after Saudi Arabia pledged to restore full oil production

by the end of September.
U.N. MEETING IN FOCUS
Proof of Iranian responsibility, and evidence that the attack was launched from Iranian territory, could pressure Riyadh and Washington, which want to curb Iranian influence in the region, into a response. Pompeo said the attacks would be a major focus of next week's annual U.N. General Assembly meeting and suggested Riyadh could make its case there. Iran's Zarif accused Pompeo of trying to "dodge a U.S. obligation" to issue visas for Iran's U.N. delegates. Tehran says the U.S. accusations are part of Washington's "maximum pressure" policy on Iran to force it to renegotiate a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which Trump exited last year, re-imposing sanctions to choke off Iran's oil exports. Tehran, which has gradually scaled back its nuclear commitments, has rejected any talks unless sanctions are lifted. "The United States is now using oil as a weapon; oil is not a weapon," Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zangeneh said.



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Photo above shows new biometric scanning technology at Terminal F in Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, Georgia. (Photo/Delta Air Lines).

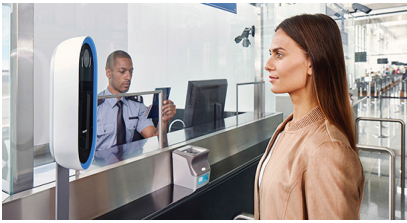
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It's the "next leap in airport security," says Matt Cornelius, vice president of Airports Council International, North America. Although Cornelius is confident in the technology and it "continues to evolve very rapidly," he says it "still has a lot of development to go."

It's more secure

Using the system is totally optional. Passengers who don't feel comfortable using it can opt to go through traditional ID verification using their passports. Privacy groups say they're worried facial recognition databases are subject to limited accountability and vulnerable to government abuse or lack of oversight.

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conditions, for example. "If you do get rejected, all you do is present your passport and your boarding pass."

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When it does work, the CBP's facial recognition database can help authorities nab travelers who use false passports. Recently three airline passengers at Washington's Dulles International Airport were caught over a period of 40 days, according to CBP.

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When authorities have your facial image in a database, you're giving up control over how the government can use it, said Jeramie Scott at the Electronic Privacy Information Center, a Washington-based organization aimed at protecting privacy.

The CBP says facial images of US citizens scanned at airports are deleted from their database shortly after confirmation. Facial images of non-citizens who arrive in the US are stored for 75 years, the CBP website says, and departure photos of non-citizens are deleted after 14 days.



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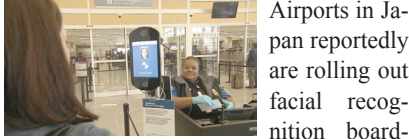
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If all goes as planned, airports believe facial recognition can reduce those annoying bottlenecks at security lines and make air travel safer for all of us. (Courtesy cnn.com)

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U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, Chinese Vice Premier Liu He and U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin take their position for a family photo at the Xijiao Conference Center in Shanghai



FILE PHOTO: The Levi Strauss & Co. logo is seen on display ahead of IPO on floor of New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York



A U.S. flag on an embassy car is seen outside a hotel in Shanghai, China, July 31, 2019. REUTERS/Aly Song



US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin in China



A car with a U.S. flag arrives at the Fairmont Peace Hotel on The Bund in Shanghai, China July 30, 2019. REUTERS/Aly Song



Chinese and U.S. flags flutter near The Bund, before U.S. trade delegation meet their Chinese counterparts for talks in Shanghai, China July 30, 2019. REUTERS/Aly Song



FILE PHOTO: Models take a selfie during a promotional event of Northwest Cherries in Shenzhen



FILE PHOTO: Bottles of the Chinese spirit baijiu are on display at a bar in Beijing, China June 22, 2017. REUTERS/Thomas Peter/File Photo



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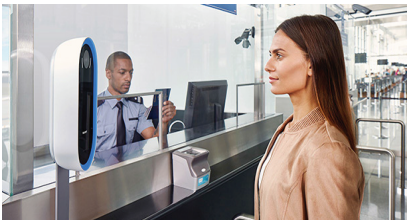
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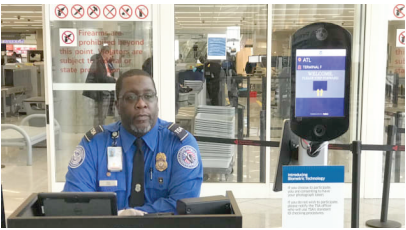
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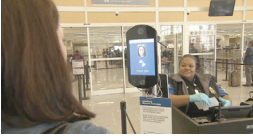
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