

# Aramco attacks solidify Iran's 'enemy' status among young Arabs

Mon, 2019-09-23 20:31

LONDON: Tehran-backed attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities will only add to the view among young Arabs that Iran is an "enemy," a panel of regional experts said on Monday.

According to the Arab Youth Survey, which was published in May by the PR consultancy ASDA'A BCW, 67 percent of the region's youth saw Iran as an enemy, as opposed to 32 percent who saw it as an ally.

However, members of a panel discussion at Chatham House, in London, said the attacks on the Saudi Aramco sites, as well as Iran's seizure of a UK-flagged oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, have solidified, if not increased, negative views of the country.

"I would imagine that the tensions demonstrate that the findings in the report hold. They may even have increased perceptions of Iran being an enemy," Dr. Simon Mabon, senior lecturer in international relations at Lancaster University, told Arab News.



CaptionTehran-backed attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities will only add to the view among young Arabs that Iran is an "enemy," a panel of regional experts said on Monday. (AFP)

Iran denies involvement in the attacks, which initially halved oil output from Saudi Arabia. Responsibility was claimed by Yemen's Houthi militants, an Iranian-aligned militia fighting the Arab coalition in Yemen's civil war.

However, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said last week: "Amid all the calls for de-escalation, Iran has now launched an unprecedented attack on the world's energy supply...There is no evidence the attacks came from Yemen."

The survey's results also showed the US becoming perceived more and more as an enemy rather than an ally since Donald Trump became president, with 59 percent of the youth seeing it as the former. This is a 27 percent rise in negative perception from 2016's survey result.

"This is where we see what's called the Trump effect...you don't have to look too far. Look at all the policies he made, the travel bans, and all those kinds of things," Sunil John, founder ASDA'A BCW, said.

Saudi Arabia featured prominently in the survey in several ways. When asked which countries had grown in prominence in regional and international affairs, 37 percent of young Arabs named the Kingdom as the biggest gainer in influence this year, with the UAE coming in second at 27 percent.

"We're moving from the power hubs of Baghdad and Cairo to those of Riyadh and

Abu Dhabi,” John added.

The eleventh annual survey is based on 3,300 face-to-face interviews with Arabs between the ages of 18-24, split equally between men and women, in January this year.



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Saudi Aramco has emerged from attacks ‘stronger than ever’ – CEO

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## [Suspected drones disrupt Dubai flights](#)

Sun, 2019-09-22 23:56

DUBAI: Flights at Dubai’s international airport, one of the world’s busiest,

were briefly disrupted Sunday due to “suspected drone activity,” officials said.

Two arriving flights had to be diverted, it said, while media reports said the planes had landed at a smaller airport in the neighbouring emirate of Sharjah.

“Dubai Airports can confirm that flight arrivals were briefly disrupted at Dubai International from 12:36 (0836 GMT) to 12:51 (0851 GMT) UAE local time this afternoon due to suspected drone activity,” a spokesperson said in a statement Sunday.

Flights at the airport have been disrupted several times in recent years by recreational drones, with the last incident occurring in February



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# Israel's Lieberman 'not backing anyone for PM'

Sun, 2019-09-22 23:16

JERUSALEM: Israeli ex-Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said on Sunday he will not endorse either Benjamin Netanyahu or Benny Gantz for prime minister following last week's deadlocked elections.

Lieberman, who could potentially play a kingmaker role, spoke to journalists as President Reuven Rivlin began consulting political parties on who they will back for prime minister. Lieberman's secular nationalist Yisrael Beitenu party won eight seats in the 120-seat Parliament in Tuesday's election. A delegation from Lieberman's secular nationalist Yisrael Beitenu party was due to meet Rivlin later on Sunday.

Yisrael Beitenu won eight seats in the 120-seat Parliament in Tuesday's election.

Lieberman has insisted on a unity government between his party, Netanyahu's right-wing Likud and Gantz's centrist Blue and White. He said he could not for now back Netanyahu because he is willing to form a coalition with Israel's ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties, which he accuses of seeking to impose religious law on the secular population.

Lieberman also said he could not back Gantz for now because he may reach a deal with either the ultra-Orthodox or Israel's Arab parties, which he called "enemies."



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Israeli Arab parties back Gantz for PM in break with precedent  
Israel vote deadlock confirmed by near-complete official results

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## [US emphasizes diplomacy in Iran despite Tehran threats](#)

Author:

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Sun, 2019-09-22 17:17

WASHINGTON: The United States said Sunday it will make its case against Iran at the United Nations this week, insisting it wants to give diplomacy "every opportunity to succeed" after a devastating attack on a vital Saudi oil complex.

Setting the stage for President Donald Trump's address to the annual UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo put aside threats of US military retaliation against Iran for the attack.

"President Trump and I both want to give diplomacy every opportunity to succeed," Pompeo said in an interview with ABC's "This Week."

"Our administration's taking this on in a serious way and we are working diligently to see that this has a diplomatic outcome," he said.

"But make no mistake about it, if we're unsuccessful in that and Iran continues to strike out in this way, I am confident that President Trump will make the decisions necessary to achieve our objectives."

The United States has accused Tehran of carrying out the sneak air attacks that set aflame Saudi Arabia's Abqaiq plant and the Khurais oil field September 14, knocking out half the Kingdom's oil production.

Pompeo called it "one of the largest attacks on the global energy supply in history."

Trump initially said US forces were "locked and loaded," and has so far ordered stepped up sanctions against Iran, and a deployment of US troops to Saudi Arabia, primarily focused on defensive missions like air and missile defense.

On Fox News, Pompeo said the administration was "deeply aware of the risks" of a miscalculation leading to conflagration in the tinderbox region.

“It’s why we want to resolve this in a way that doesn’t resort to kinetic action if it’s at all possible to achieve that,” he said.

On Sunday, before leaving the White House on a trip to Texas, Trump once again left open the possibility of an unscheduled meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

“Nothing is ever off the table, completely, but I have no intention of meeting with Iran and that doesn’t mean it doesn’t happen,” Trump said. “I’m a very flexible person, but we have no intention. It’s not set up.”

The US diplomatic offensive comes as Iran has sharpened its tone with a warning from a Revolutionary Guard Corps commander that Iran is “ready for any type of scenario.”

“Whoever wants their land to become the main battlefield, go ahead,” Major General Hossein Salami told a news conference in Tehran.

In a pre-recorded interview with CBS’s “Face the Nation,” Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif denied Iran was behind the September 14 attack, which was claimed by Iranian-back Houthi rebels in Yemen.

“I’m not confident that we can avoid a war,” he said. “I’m confident that we will not start one but I’m confident that whoever starts one will not be the one who finishes it,” he said.



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## [Sudan launches probe into protesters' deaths](#)

Author:

Sun, 2019-09-22 21:40

CAIRO: Sudan's newly appointed prime minister has launched an independent investigation into June's deadly crackdown on protesters that killed dozens of people and threatened to crush the country's pro-democracy uprising.

Protest leaders had demanded the establishment of an international inquiry as part of a subsequent power-sharing agreement with the military, but the generals insisted on a Sudanese-led probe.

According to the protesters, at least 128 people were killed and hundreds wounded when security forces violently dispersed the protesters' main sit-in outside the military headquarters in the capital, Khartoum, on June 3. Authorities put the death toll at 87, including 17 inside the sit-in area.

The violence signaled a crackdown across Sudan that led to a breakdown in talks between the protesters and the ruling generals, who ousted leader President Omar Al-Bashir in April amid nationwide protests against his nearly 30-year rule.

Sudan's new civilian leader, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, said late on Saturday the investigation will be led by a seven-member committee that includes a top judge, an independent figure and two attorneys. The justice, defense and interior ministries will also be represented on the committee.

The probe, which should conclude its work within six months, could seek support from the African Union if needed, said Hamdok, who was headed to New York to attend the UN meetings.

An investigation by Sudanese prosecutors in July said the ruling generals did not order the deadly break-up, but blamed the widely condemned dispersal on paramilitary forces who exceeded their orders.

Prosecutor Fathel-Rahman Said said at the time that security forces were told only to clear a lawless area close to the protest camp, not the sit-in itself.

In the days leading up to the dispersal, the military said the lawless area near the camp had become a haven for "drug dealers and other criminals."

Troops from the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces however moved to disperse

the protest camp on their own initiative, Said added.

He said eight RSF officers, including a major general, have been accused of crimes against humanity. He did not elaborate on how the investigation would proceed against the accused officers.



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Sudan's new PM meets with Egyptian president in Cairo  
Sudan PM Hamdok arrives in Juba on first official trip