

34 Taliban Terrorists Killed in Pakistani Airstrikes
 ISLAMABAD (FNA) – At least 34 Taliban terrorists were killed and several injured in Pakistan's army air strikes on Wednesday, media report said.
 A senior military official said, on condition of anonymity, that the strikes targeted hideouts belonging to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan network and the allied Lashkar group in the Northwestern Khyber Agency, World Bulletin reported.

Thought for Today
 Whoever warns you is like one who gives you good tidings.
 Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Syrian Adviser: Int'l Community Inactive in Fighting Terror

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Syrian presidential advisor Bouthaina Shaaban says the international community has been paying only lip service in the fight against terrorism in Syria.
 The Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's media adviser made the remarks in an interview with Al-Manar Website, adding the international community's stances on fighting terror in Syria is only at media level.
 She further noted in order to counter terrorism in the Arab country, the processes of funding and supporting the terrorist groups should be halted.
 Shaaban called on the international community to fight terrorism within the framework of the United Nations Security Council resolutions pertaining



Bouthaina Shaaban, media adviser to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad

to counterterrorism. She also urged certain regional countries to stop providing support for the Takfiri terrorists operating in Syria and change their hostile policies toward the war-torn country.
 A US-led military coalition began its so-called battle against the ISIL Takfiri terrorists in Syria in September 2014. The coalition, which claims to have been targeting ISIL positions, has also attacked the provinces where the ISIL terrorists are not active and have

even hit the Syrian infrastructure. The US-led coalition's airstrikes have failed to dislodge the terrorists. Syria has been grappling with a deadly crisis since March 2011. According to a recent report by the UN, over 220,000 people, including thousands of children, have been killed due to the ongoing crisis in Syria. Nearly 4 million Syrians have left their country since the beginning of the crisis, and 7.6 million civilians have been internally displaced. The violence fueled by ISIL Takfiri groups has reportedly been supported by the Western powers and their regional allies - especially Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

'Palestinians to Step Up Campaign Against Zionist Regime at ICC'



Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Palestinians will step up their efforts at the International Criminal Court (ICC) to pursue war crime charges against the Zionist regime's authorities, says a top Palestinian official.
 "We say clearly that we will go to the Hague Tribunal, we will accelerate, continue and intensify" efforts against Israel, chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said.
 Erekat also said that the Palestinians will step up their diplomatic campaign for statehood. Erekat's comments came after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party claimed victory in general elections. With nearly all counts voted, Netanyahu's Likud party has now secured 30 seats in the 120-member parliament. Netanyahu had said before the elections he would block any Palestinian statehood if re-elected as prime minister.
 Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian unity government, has issued a decree for the formation of a new committee to follow through Palestine's bid to prosecute the regime at the ICC. The committee will be tasked with preparing the legal documents that Palestine needs to present to the ICC. Palestine officially joined the ICC in January, but the statute will enter into force on April 1.
 Israel's war on the Gaza Strip last summer and its settlement expansion policies in the occupied Palestinian territories make strong cases for Palestinians to sue the regime at ICC. By joining the ICC, Palestinians would be able to bring war crimes charges against Zionist officials.
 The occupying regime's latest war on Gaza that ended in August 2014 with an Egyptian-brokered truce killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians. The latest Zionist assault also left over 11,100 others injured.

Military Source: Syria Shot Down US Drone on Suspicion of Spying

DAMASCUS (Press TV) – The Syrian air defenses recently shot down a US drone on suspicion that the unmanned aerial vehicle was snooping around an area where the ISIL Takfiri terrorists are not present, a military source says.
 The drone over the northwestern coastal province of Latakia was not immediately identified as belonging to the US Army, but the aerial vehicle was downed as a hostile target, the source in Damascus told AFP on Wednesday on condition of anonymity.
 "As soon as it entered Syrian

air space, we considered it to be gathering security and military information on Syria's territory," the source said, adding, "The aircraft entered areas where Daesh (an Arabic acronym for ISIL) is not present."
 Late Tuesday, Syrian media reported that air defenses had targeted a US surveillance jet over Latakia near a stronghold of President Bashar al-Assad.
 The Syrian state-run television also broadcast footage of what it referred to as the drone's wreckage.

The US military confirmed that communication with an unarmed predator drone over northwestern Syria was lost on Tuesday and that it was investigating claims that its unmanned aircraft was downed. Meanwhile, a UK-based Syrian opposition group said the US drone was shot down in al-Maqa village near the provincial capital of Latakia. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights added that there are no ISIL terrorists in the region but a large number of government forces instead.
 The ISIL terrorists control some

parts of Syria and neighboring Iraq. The United States and some of its allies have been conducting airstrikes against what is said to be ISIL positions in Iraq since early August 2014. The attacks also began to cover some parts of Syria in September that year, although the move was not made upon authorization by the government in Damascus, which slammed it as a blatant violation of Syria's sovereignty.
 The raids by the US-led coalition have so far failed to dislodge the Takfiri terrorist group.

Kurdish Fighters Repel ISIL Attack on Iraqi Town



A member of the Kurdish Peshmerga forces walks down a dirt road following clashes with ISIL terrorists during a large operation southwest of Kirkuk, Iraq.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces have managed to thwart an offensive by members of the Takfiri ISIL terrorist group against a town in the country's northwestern province of Nineveh.
 A Kurdish military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Peshmerga fighters on Wednesday thwarted an attack by ISIL terrorists on Sinjar, located approximately 350 kilometers (217 miles) north of the capital, Baghdad, Iraq's al-Sumaria satellite TV network reported.
 The source added that the ISIL extremists used machine guns as well as grenades to push their way into the town, as fierce exchanges of fire between the two sides lasted for about two hours.
 The unnamed Kurdish official went on to say that scores of ISIL terrorists were killed during the heavy clashes, while Peshmerga forces did not suffer any casualties. Meanwhile, Iraqi forces have temporarily put on hold a major military operation to take back the strategic northern city of Tikrit from ISIL. The army says the offensive is paused to allow civilians to leave the city.
 Iraq's Interior Minister Mohammed Salem al-Ghabban says the operation has so far managed to achieve 90 percent of its objectives, and the terrorists have been forced to gather in a pocket of the city center. ISIL has booby-trapped buildings and roads leading to Tikrit, so the Iraqi forces, backed by volunteer fighters, have slowed down the push to reduce their own casualties, protect the infrastructure and let residents leave, Ghabban said.

7 Killed, 41 Injured In Afghanistan Car Bomb Explosion



Afghan police inspect a car destroyed in a bomb explosion in Helmand province. (File photo)

KABUL (AFP) – At least seven people have lost their lives and 41 others have been injured in a car bomb blast by Taliban militants in Afghanistan's southern province of Helmand, officials say.

On Wednesday, a bomber detonated his explosives-laden car near a complex that houses the governor, the head of the provincial council and the deputy provincial police chief in Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand

province, Deputy Provincial Governor Mohammad Jan Rasolyar said. All three survived the attack that "was targeted at a gathering of senior government officials, civil society members and journalists in a hall for a seminar on human trafficking and kidnapping," Rasolyar added. The injured, including provincial government spokesman Omar Zhwak, were taken to hospital. Last month, the Afghan army began an operation against Taliban militants in Helmand to weaken them before the start of the so-called "fighting season," which traditionally begins in April or May. The army operation, code-named "Zolfiqar," was the Afghan troops' first major offen-

sive after US-led forces ended their combat mission in the war-torn country. The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 as part of Washington's so-called war on terror. The military offensive removed the Taliban from power, but insecurity continues across the country despite the presence of thousands of US-led troops. The US-led combat mission in Afghanistan ended on December 31, 2014. However, at least 13,500 foreign forces, mainly from the United States, have remained in Afghanistan in what the US is calling a support mission. US-led NATO says the forces will focus mainly on counterterrorism and training Afghan soldiers as well as police officers.