

'U.S. Made Serious Mistake in Blocking Palestinian Pick for Libya'

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres says Washington made a "serious mistake" by blocking a former Palestinian prime minister from heading the global body's political mission in Libya. "I believe that it's essential for everybody to understand that people serving the UN are serving in their personal capacities. They don't represent a country or a government," said Guterres, while addressing the Munich Security Conference.

Have hope only in Allah. Be afraid of nothing but sins. If you do not know a thing never feel ashamed to admit ignorance. If you do not know a thing never hesitate or feel ashamed to learn it.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Iraq Launches Operation to Recapture Western Mosul



Iraqi security forces advance towards the western side of Mosul, Iraq, February 19, 2017.

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has announced the start of an operation to liberate the western side of the flashpoint city of Mosul from the grip of the Daesh terrorist group.

"Our forces are beginning the liberation of the citizens from the terror of Daesh," Abadi said in a televised speech on Sunday morning. "We announce the start of a new phase in the operation. We are

coming, Nineveh, to liberate the western side of Mosul," he added, referring to the province of which Mosul is the capital.

The Iraqi air force dropped millions of leaflets on west Mosul to warn of an imminent offensive to rid the city of Daesh terrorists.

The Iraqi Defense Ministry announced that the leaflets had been dropped on the city on Saturday, adding that Iraqi forces had begun

advancing towards the city.

"Your armed forces ... are advancing in the direction of the right side, relying on God," read the leaflets, while calling on the terrorists to lay down their weapons and surrender.

"Get ready to welcome the sons of your armed forces and to cooperate with them, as your brothers on the left side have done, in order to reduce losses and speed up the conclusion,"

added the leaflets.

Daesh's last remaining stronghold in Iraq has been under siege since a coalition of forces surrounded it last month.

The eastern side of the city was liberated from Daesh earlier in January as part of massive operations launched on October 17, 2016, to rid the city of the terrorists who captured it in 2014.

Meanwhile, the U.S.-led coalition claimed that it had destroyed west Mosul's main medical center as it was being used as a command center by the terrorists.

"The coalition was able to determine through intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance efforts that Daesh did not use the building for any medical purposes and that civilians were no longer accessing the site," read a statement released on Saturday.

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Lise Grande, has warned that some 400,000 Iraqi civilians may be displaced by operations to retake the city's western side.

She added that troops preparing to enter the city "need to ensure that humanitarian concept of operations is adhered to, and that all of the parties to the conflict do absolutely everything they can to ensure that civilians survive the battle, and that they live," she added.

Syria Troops Push Against Terrorists Near Damascus

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Syrian government forces have fired rockets at a district held by foreign-backed terrorists on the outskirts of the capital, Damascus, in a fresh counter-terrorism push.

Informed sources said that Sunday's attacks targeted the terrorist-controlled Qabun neighborhood. The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 16 people had died in the fighting around Qabun since Saturday.

Additionally, a medical worker in the nearby Eastern Ghouta region, who was speaking on condition of anonymity, said that at least 13 people had died in the renewed Qabun fighting.

Other reports said at least three shells fired by terrorists had struck the government-held Damascus neighborhoods of Adawi and Tijara. However, there was no immediate word on possible casualties or damage.

Syrian army units also foiled a Daesh attack on Panorama area of Dayr al-Zawr city, Syria's official SANA news agency reported.

The army soldiers clashed with Daesh elements that had infiltrated into the region, killing and injuring many of them while others fled the scene, according to the report.

The developments come as Turkey has presented the U.S. with two plans for an alleged potential operation to "liberate" the northern Syrian city of Raqqah from Daesh.

The Turkish military chief Hulusi Akar had submitted the proposals to American counterpart Joseph Dunford a day earlier.

Turkey began a major military intervention in Syria in August last year, sending tanks and warplanes across the border in a purported mission to fight the Takfiri terror group.

Ankara has, for long, been demanding creation of a buffer



Syrian army soldiers man a checkpoint along a road in Aleppo, Feb. 1, 2017.

zone in the periphery of its border inside Syria, which holds great concentrations of Kurdish forces.

The fighters have seized considerable territory there from Daesh either directly or by contributing to counterterrorism operations.

Turkish leaders, however, consider the Kurds to be associated with the outlawed anti-Ankara Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The PKK has been fighting for decades towards creating an independent state for itself in southeastern Turkey.

Saudi Base Hit by Yemeni Rockets



This file photo shows Saudi border guards at the country's southwestern border with Yemen.

SANAA (Dispatches) – Amid no letup in Saudi carnage of Yemen's civilians, counter-strikes by Yemeni forces have hit a military base inside Saudi Arabia close to the common border.

They targeted the outpost in the 'Asir region in the kingdom's extreme southwest with an unknown number of projectiles on Sunday, Yemen's War Media outlet reported.

It also carried extended footage of the counter-raid after Saudi officials denied that such retaliatory attack had ever taken place.

In another development, Yemeni army soldiers, backed by fighters from allied Popular Committees, shot dead a Saudi trooper in the kingdom's southwestern border regions of Jizan and Asir in response to Riyadh's aerial bombardment campaign against their country.

Yemeni forces and their allies targeted the Saudi troops in the al-Farizeh military base of the region, located 969 kilometers south of the capital, Riyadh, on Saturday afternoon, Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported.

Army troops and Popular Committees

fighters also launched an attack on the al-Alab border crossing of Asir region, killing a Saudi trooper there.

Separately, several pro-Saudi militiamen loyal to resigned Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi were injured when Yemeni forces fired a barrage of artillery rounds at their gatherings in the Usaylan district of the central Yemeni province of Shabwah.

Earlier, Yemeni soldiers and their allies fired artillery shells at a gathering of Saudi mercenaries in the Kabboub area of southwestern Lahij province, though no words on possible casualties and the extent of damage were reported.

Yemeni forces also launched a salvo of Katyusha rockets at an outpost of pro-Saudi militiamen in the al-Jadid region of the southwestern province of Ta'izz. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Yemeni soldiers and allied fighters have been hitting targets in the kingdom's border area in response to its invasion of the impoverished country.

The offensives, which have killed more than 11,000 civilians, are underway to restore power to Yemen's former Saudi-backed government.

Pakistan Closes Major Border Crossing With Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (Press TV) – Pakistan has shut down a second major border crossing into Afghanistan, two days after a huge explosion killed scores of people in the southern province of Sindh.

Islamabad closed its border crossing with Afghanistan near the city of Chaman in the southwest province of Baluchistan, said two senior Pakistani army officials, speaking on condition of anonymity. The move blocked trade supplies to the neighboring landlocked country.

Chaman is one of the two border crossings between the neighbors and thousands of people use it daily to visit relatives on the other side. In addition

to that, trade between the two countries can be badly hit due to the closure of the border in the restive province.

On Thursday evening, a massive explosion ripped through Lal Shahbaz Qalandar shrine while a large number of people had gathered for a special Sufi ritual. The blast killed at least 80 people, including 20 children, and wounded some 250 more in the city of Sehwan.

According to security officials, the assailant entered the main hall of the shrine and detonated his explosives in the middle of the crowd. The Daesh terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

President Aoun:

Lebanon to Give Befitting Response to Zionist Threats



Lebanese President Michel Aoun

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Lebanese President Michel Aoun has dismissed the Tel Aviv regime's recent threats of military strikes against the Arab country, stressing that any attempt by to violate Lebanon's sovereignty would be met with an "appropriate response."

"Any attempt to hurt Lebanese sovereignty or expose the Lebanese to danger will find the appropriate response," Aoun said in a statement released by his office on Saturday.

According to the statement, Aoun

was reacting to recent remarks in a letter by the Zionist regime's envoy to the United Nations, Danny Danon, which amounted to a "masked attempt to threaten security and stability" in southern Lebanon. The statement did not elaborate what Danon's remarks were.

Last week, Aoun said Hezbollah must arm itself to complement the Lebanese army's ability to deal with the regime's threats. Danon sent a letter to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and to

the Security Council in response.

The statement said that the Lebanese president also called on the international community to be aware of the regime's aggressive intentions against his country.

The Zionist regime is still refusing to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which is aimed at transition from cessation of hostilities to ceasefire stage by stage, irrespective of the fact that more than 11 years have passed since its adoption, Aoun pointed out.

The Lebanese leader went on to say that the occupying regime's military still occupies the northern part of Ghajar village, Sheba'a Farms, Kfarchouba village, and violates the Blue Line -- border demarcation between Lebanon and the occupied territories -- and Lebanese sovereignty by air and sea on a daily basis.

The Lebanese president warned that the Zionist regime would be "surprised by what we are hiding which would change the course of any war."