

U.S. State Department:

Zionist Regime Won't See Aid Cuts Under Trump

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) — The U.S. State Department says that President Donald Trump's proposed budget would not reduce American aid to the Zionist regime.

"Our assistance to Israel is, if I could say, a cutout on the budget, and that's guaranteed, and that reflects, obviously, our strong commitment to one of our strongest partners and allies," State Department spokesman Mark Toner told reporters in Washington, DC.

"With respect to other assistance levels, foreign military assistance levels, those are still being evaluated and decisions are going to be made going forward," he added.

The State Department also said the assistance levels to other nations, including Egypt and Jordan, were still being evaluated.

"We're still at the very beginning of the budget process, and in the coming months these are all going to be figures that we evaluate and look at hard, obviously bearing in mind ... our treaty obligations going forward," it said.

Trump's \$1.5 trillion budget blueprint has seen drastic spending cuts in foreign aid and U.S. domestic programs as the president seeks to boost military spending and make a down payment on a border wall with Mexico.

It includes \$54 billion to finance U.S. combat operations abroad. The budget proposal has been submitted to Congress



Anti-Israel protesters rally outside the annual AIPAC conference in Washington D.C. on March 20, 2016

for ratification.

The Zionist regime is the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II. America's military assistance to the regime has amounted to \$124.3 billion since it began in 1962, according to a recent congressional report.

Hours before the announcement, the Zionist regime's warplanes once again carried out several airstrikes on multiple

locations throughout the Gaza Strip.

According to al-Aqsa TV, the occupying regime's jets targeted areas to the west of the Dayr al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, and an empty patch of agricultural land to the east of Gaza City in the early hours of Thursday morning.

The regime's F16 jets also bombed the Shejaiya area, reportedly resulting in power cuts across the region.

There have been no immediate reports

of possible casualties as a result of the attacks.

Earlier, Zionist troops claimed that a rocket was fired from the Gaza Strip into an unpopulated area in the southern occupied territories without causing any injuries.

The occupying regime's troops frequently bomb the Gaza Strip, with civilians being the main target of such attacks.

China Hosts Saudi King, Zeroes In on Bigger Mideast Role



Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) welcomes visiting Saudi King Salman in Beijing on March 16, 2017.

RIYADH (Press TV) — Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has paid a visit to China amid

Beijing's efforts to play a more active economic and diplomatic role in the Middle East.

The king oversaw the conclusion of deals worth potentially \$65 billion with the Chinese side at the start of his three-day visit.

According to Deputy Chinese Foreign Minister Zhang Ming, the agreements cover a variety of issues, ranging from energy to space technology, but he did not provide further details.

Speaking to reporters, Chinese President Xi Jinping said King Salman's visit highlights the importance of Beijing-Riyadh ties, adding "this visit will push forward and continue to improve the quality of our relations and bear new fruit."

The octogenarian monarch arrived in Beijing at the head of an entourage of 1,000 people on the fourth leg of his one-month tour of Asia, after

he visited Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia.

The king's Asian tour is aimed at promoting investment opportunities in the kingdom, including the sale of a stake in its giant state firm Saudi Aramco.

Saudi Arabia has sought to increase oil exports to China by working mostly with the Asian country's top three state oil firms after it lost market share to Russia in 2016.

Salman and Xi also discussed the Yemen and Syria crises, stressing that the issues must be resolved through political channels, Zhang said.

Over the past year, China has tried to shift away from its traditional policy of keeping a low profile in the Middle East and assume a more active role with regard to the regional issues.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be Daesh terrorists inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate. It has also been involved in a similar campaign in neighboring Iraq.

The U.S. and its allies have on many occasions attacked Syrian civilians, military and infrastructure under the guise of fighting the terror group.

The latest U.S. air raid came just after Syria contacted the United Nations to warn against an imminent disaster in the wake of air raids by the U.S. and its allies close to the Euphrates and Tishrin dams.

Damascus urged UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to help stop the attacks.

"The total destruction of these dams that are being targeted by the airstrikes will wash away and flood cities, towns and villages, endangering the lives of hundreds of thousands of people living in those areas," Syria's Deputy UN Ambassador Mounzer Mounzer said in a letter to Guterres.

Washington has currently between 800 and 900 Special Operations troops in Syria. A Pentagon official told AFP on Wednesday that the United States was set to deploy about 1,000 additional troops to the northern parts of the country.

In an interview with Chinese TV station Phoenix, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad called U.S. troops in Syria invaders because under international law, foreign governments cannot deploy troops to sovereign countries.

"Any foreign troops coming to Syria without our invitation... are invaders," said the Syrian leader.

The bloody U.S. attack came in the midst of a countrywide ceasefire in Syria in parallel with a diplomatic process aimed at ending the crisis in the Arab state.

FM ...

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"The U.S. administration knows that sanctions against Iran are not helpful, and implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is the best possible option," Zarif pointed out.

He also denounced U.S. President Donald Trump's new travel ban on citizens of the six Muslim-majority countries of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, saying the restriction is a "gift" to extremists.

Iran ...

(Continued From Page 2)

He further said the deadly conflicts and "wars of attrition" plaguing the Middle East and North Africa have led to "the formation of armed groups, terrorists and transnational crime networks — leading to an upsurge in trafficking."

"Occupation, war, political instability, terrorism, genocide, ethnic cleansing and foreign aggression created conditions that forced millions to become displaced in their own countries or seek refuge overseas, becoming vulnerable to human trafficking," added the Iranian official.

He further warned against the upsurge in violence caused by terrorist groups, who view civilians, particularly women and children, as a resource or commodity as is the case with the Takfiri Daesh terror group.

He said Daesh treatment of refugees could amount to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Khoshroo called on the Security Council and member states to address the root causes of human smuggling, and protect the rights of refugees and migrants by reinforcing existing laws against all illegal acts, especially racially-motivated crimes.

Prior to Khoshroo, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres addressed the participants, saying 21 million people around the world faced forced labor and extreme exploitation, while the perpetrators reaped annual profits estimated at \$150 billion.

Syrian ...

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In a statement, the military said the Syrian air force fired numerous anti-aircraft missiles at the warplanes and the Israeli air force "intercepted one of the missiles."

The explosion caused by the incident set off sirens in the Jordan Valley of the West Bank and the blast was heard as far as Jerusalem Al-Quds, according to the Israeli military statement.

The Zionist military later said in a separate statement that its aircraft were unharmed in the operation.

The occupying regime and Syria are technically at war due to Tel Aviv's continued occupation of the Golan Heights since 1967. Tel Aviv has also been supporting the militants operating to topple the Syrian government.

Some of the attacks have reportedly struck targets belonging to the Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah, which has been assisting the Syrian military in the face of the militancy.

In addition, Israel has been offering medical treatment to the militants fighting Assad, who would reach Golan as well as entering the Syrian territory to carry out spying operations.

Late last month, Israel's Channel 2 said the Zionist regime had sent its troops on repeated spying missions into a village located half a kilometer inside Syria's territory.

UN: ...

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"We've also worked with the government on incorporating refugees into a government-sponsored health insurance scheme which is a ground-breaking development not just for Iran but globally for refugees," Dhanapala said.

The UN is fostering hopes that the country will ease work permit restrictions and register more undocumented Afghans in the future.

They are unlikely to return home voluntarily as Afghanistan becomes more unstable than it has been in years and its economy continues to stagnate. Worldwide, the average amount of time a refugee spends outside their home country is 20 years.

"In a world where you have multiple bad stories about hosting refugees, I think Iran is really a good news story," Dhanapala added.

The UN official hailed a 2015 decree by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, which called on education administrators to allow all Afghan children -- documented or not -- to attend Iranian schools.

The directive prompted Iranian officials to build 15,000 new classrooms across the country to accommodate refugee children in the country, which, according to UN estimates, has the world's fourth largest refugee population.

More than 350,000 Afghan refugee children are now in school in Iran while some 48,000 undocumented Afghan children were allowed last year to enroll for the first time in Iranian public schools.

According to Samad Haj Jabbari, the director general for non-Iranian university students at the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, 24,000 foreign students are currently studying in Iranian universities.

More ...

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UAE Court Jails Jordanian Journalist for Blasting Gaza War



The file photo shows clouds of heavy smoke billowing into the air following the Zionist regime's military strike on Gaza City.

be found not guilty.

"We respect the UAE's judicial system..., but we truly believed he would be found innocent," JPA head Tareq Momani told AFP.

A journalist for more than 15 years, Najjar had been working in the UAE since April 2015 as a culture reporter for the UAE-based al-Dar newspaper.

Najjar's 2015 arrest sparked

condemnations from international rights groups such as Human Rights Watch (HRW). Emirati authorities held the journalist incommunicado for nearly two months while his detention was confirmed in February 2016.

Joe Stork, HRW's deputy Middle East director, called on the UAE to release the reporter immediately.