

'Russia Airstrikes Kill 120 Daesh Terrorists Fleeing Raqqa'

MOSCOW (Dispatches) – Russian airstrikes have killed as many as 120 Daesh terrorists who were trying to flee the outfit's last stronghold of Raqqa in northern Syria for the ancient city of Palmyra in the central part of the Arab country, a Russian Defense Ministry source says.

On Saturday, Russia's Sputnik news agency cited a source with the country's Defense Ministry as saying that the development had taken place two days earlier.

"As a result of these strikes, 32 pick-up trucks were destroyed and some 120 terrorists were killed," the source said.

Daesh seized Raqqa in 2014, the same year when it started its campaign of terror in Syria. It then proceeded to capture large swathes of Syrian territory.

Russia has been lending aerial support to the Syrian counterterrorism operations since last September. The combined push is also being reinforced by Lebanese resistance fighters and Iranian military advisors.

The terrorists' turf has now dwindled to just Raqqa.

The Russian source said the Russian military had received reports that the terrorists had entered a deal with the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which has been fighting the Damascus government since 2011. In line with the agreement, the SDF would allow the Daesh terrorists leave the city, in spite of the concerted international



Russian servicemen prepare an SU-34 fighter jet for a mission from the Russian Hmeimim military base in Latakia Province, in the northwest of Syria, May 4, 2016.

endeavor aimed at limiting their presence to the city.

"Upon receiving this information, the command of the Russian contingent in Syria has taken measures to prevent the exodus of Daesh terrorists in the southern direction," the source said. "Any attempts by Daesh militants to move toward Palmyra and to build up their forces there will be squashed."

The development comes as the United Nations has failed to denounce Washington for the death of over 100 civilians in the latest U.S.-led coalition airstrikes in eastern Syria, merely urging air forces operating in the Arab country

to be more cautious.

"The rising toll of civilian deaths and injuries already caused by airstrikes in Dayr al-Zawr and Raqqa suggests that insufficient precautions may have been taken in the attacks," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Zeid al-Husseini said in a statement on Friday.

Zeid's remarks came a day after the U.S.-led airstrikes in Mayadin town of Syria's oil-rich eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr killed at least 117 civilians, mostly women and children, according to the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Relatives of Daesh terrorists

were reportedly among the dead.

"There are multiple air forces operating in this part of Syria including the (U.S.-led) coalition, mainly the coalition," Zeid's spokesman Rupert Colville told a Geneva briefing on Friday, adding, "I can't begin to identify who is responsible."

Zeid said that on May 15 over two dozen farm workers, mostly women, had been killed in airstrikes on a village in Syria's Raqqa Province and nearly 60 civilians had lost their lives in air raids on residential areas of Dayr al-Zawr.

The U.S.-led coalition has denied having a role in the airstrikes.

Trump's Policy of Promoting Arab Despots Slammed



File photo of U.S. President Donald Trump (right) meeting with Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – A major U.S. daily has blasted what it described as President Donald Trump's "distorted foreign policy" in accommodating notorious Arab dictators in the Persian Gulf -- specifically the Bahraini monarch -- while harshly censoring American European partners.

Pointing to clear consequences of

Trump's statements and impressions, The Washington Post insisted in one of its editorials that a "good example" came on Tuesday "when Bahraini security forces stormed an opposition encampment just two days after Mr. Trump promised the Persian Gulf nation's king that there would be no more "strain" between their governments."

The influential newspaper then added, "Those strains, of course, concerned the Sunni regime's crackdown on its Shia opposition, which has been escalating in recent months."

Underlining Washington's "challenging" ties with the Bahraini regime, which it described as "a key ally that hosts the U.S. 5th Fleet and a conspicuous violator of human rights" the Post noted that the previous U.S. president Barack Obama also failed to rein in the Manama rulers for their human rights abuses but at least it tried by publicly urging the regime "to liberalize" and "held up arms sales... when it did not."

The daily then went on to further point out that last weekend Trump also "promised Saudi Arabia and other Sunni dictatorships that they 'will never question out support,' adding, 'We are not here to lecture.'"

However, it emphasized, the president on Thursday "declined to

restate the U.S. commitment to defend its democratic European allies if they are attacked, as Article 5 of the NATO treaty provides."

The editorial also drew another contrast between Trump's treatment of Arab despots and U.S. NATO allies, writing: "In Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Mr. Trump gamely joined in a chauvinistic, males-only sword dance. In Brussels, he was captured on videotape as he rudely shoved aside Montenegro's prime minister to position himself at the center of a group photo."

However, U.S. President Donald Trump has boasted that he has "made and saved" his country "billions of dollars and millions of jobs" during his first overseas visit as he arrived at its final destination in Sicily, Italy.

Trump made the claim in a tweet message on Friday after landing in the Italian city for a summit of Group of Seven industrialized nations, known as G-7, describing his trip as "very successful," without elaborating.

KUNA said, without elaborating.

Qatar says it is being targeted in a "hostile media campaign" after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates blocked its websites and broadcasters over certain remarks attributed to the Qatari emir.

"There is a hostile media campaign against the State of Qatar, which we will confront," Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said on Thursday.

Qatar ...

(Continued From Page One)

Doha's rivals "are trying to portray Qatar on the wrong side of the Trump-endorsed, Saudi-led alliance in the region," Davidson added. It is "Saudi Arabia, Israel rapprochement versus Hamas."

Beyond the gilded corridors of power, this week's dispute has played out on social media. Supporters of both sides took to Twitter, with Qataris using hashtags such as #Tamimtheglorious and comparing those responsible for the alleged hack to Nazi propagandists. Even the country's biggest football star, Spain-based Akrim Afif, posted a picture of the Emir to show his support.

Thursday, Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdul-Rahman al-Thani tried to downplay the political ramifications: "We are not looking at it as a big deal."

But Trump's outreach to Qatar's regional rivals may yet cause a headache for Doha.

"It appears that Saudi Arabia and the UAE will enjoy special security privileges under the Trump administration and will function as the regional spearhead of U.S. policy priorities," Ulrichsen said.

Architect ...

(Continued From Page One)

Before the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979, Vance had resisted Brzezinski's proposals that Washington back a military crackdown against Iran.

Once the embassy was taken, Vance sought Carter's backing for an attempt to come to terms with Iran. Brzezinski characteristically favored military action to free the 52 American hostages and punish Iran.

Carter vacillated but eventually accepted Brzezinski's proposal for the ill-fated rescue mission, in which eight servicemen died.

Brzezinski also took part in negotiations toward the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1979, which was seen by many as the major achievement of Carter's presidency.

In the arms control field, Brzezinski, despite his lifelong antipathy to Soviet communism, joined defense secretary Brown in spearheading the unsuccessful drive to win Senate approval of the 1979 SALT-2 accord with Moscow.

Although it never cleared the Senate as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, SALT-2 remained unofficially in effect even beyond its original five-year life-span.

After the Carter years, Brzezinski became a consultant on international affairs and a senior adviser for the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. He also taught American foreign policy at Johns Hopkins University.

He frequently wrote opinion articles for newspapers and published several books, including "Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power" in 2012.

Vice President George H.W. Bush, trying to build up his own image as a tough foreign policy realist, considered it a coup to secure Brzezinski's support in his 1988 presidential campaign.

Brzezinski was at times critical of the foreign policies of both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. He was sharply critical of Bush's "war on terror" and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

In August 2007 Brzezinski endorsed Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, saying that Obama "recognizes that the challenge is a new face, a new sense of direction, a new definition of America's role in the world."

Iranians ...

(Continued From Page 2)

Saudi Arabia has backed Bahrain's monarchy in its operation in Diraz, Sheikh Isa Qassim hometown.

Vice-chairman of Iran's Assembly of Experts strongly condemned the "inhumane aggression" against peaceful protests in Bahrain and urged Manama to avoid fanning the flames of ethnic strife.

In a statement released on Saturday, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi decried recent killings of Bahraini youths and raid on Sheikh Qassim's home.

"We strongly condemn the savage and inhumane aggression in response to peaceful conducts of a gathering of youths of Diraz, which led to the killing and wounding of a large number of them and desecration of the house of the great cleric, Sheikh Isa Ahmad Qassim and his family," said the statement.

Ayatollah Shahroudi further advised the Bahraini regime to refrain from dealing with the people in such a way that would fan the flames of ethnic strife in the near future and to enter into serious dialogue with the opposition.

Sectarianism ...

(Continued From Page 2)

Qassemi urged countries and international organizations to fulfill their international responsibilities vis-à-vis collective security and a genuine campaign against terrorism.

He also expressed his sympathy with the Egyptian government, nation and the bereaved families of the victims.

At least 28 people, including children, were killed and over two dozen others wounded after unknown gunmen attacked a bus carrying Coptic Christians on a visit to a monastery south of Cairo on Friday.

According to Egypt's Interior Ministry, the assailants in three pick-up trucks attacked the bus as it carried visitors to the Saint Samuel monastery in Minya province, more than 200 kilometers from the capital.

The attack came after church bombings in December and April claimed by the Daesh group that killed dozens of Egypt's Coptic Christians. The Takfiri terrorists have threatened more attacks against the Arab country's Christian minority.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Friday's attack.

Kuwaiti Envoy Meets Qatar's Emir Amid Dispute

KUWAIT CITY (Dispatches) – Kuwait's foreign minister has met Qatar's ruler for talks that apparently aimed at trying to ease renewed tensions between Qatar and fellow Persian Gulf Arabs over its regional policy.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates signaled frustration at Qatar after its state media published purported remarks by Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani

criticizing Persian Gulf rhetoric against Iran and suggesting tensions between the emir and U.S. President Donald Trump.

Qatar said the remarks, published late on Tuesday, were fake and that the news agency that ran them had been hacked in an apparent attempt to misrepresent Sheikh Tamim's views.

But Persian Gulf Arab countries including Saudi Arabia allowed

their state-backed media to run them throughout the day on Wednesday, infuriating Doha and triggering a war of words in regional media.

Kuwait, which acted as a mediator during a previous Persian Gulf dispute with Qatar, sent its top diplomat Sheikh Sabah al-Khalid al-Sabah to visit Sheikh Tamim on Friday. He conveyed greetings from the Kuwaiti emir to the ruler and Qatari people, state news agency