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In the Name of the Most High

Viewpoint

Pentagon Under Fire for Concealing Attack Casualties



U.S. troops stand near a damaged installation hit by Iranian airstrikes inside the Ain al-Asad base near the Iraqi city of Anbar, on Jan. 13, 2020.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- The Pentagon has gone to great pains to claim that there had been no effort to play down or delay the release of information on injuries from Iran's Jan. 8 attack on a base hosting U.S. forces in Iraq.

U.S. President Donald Trump, Pentagon chief Mark Esper and others throughout the U.S. government for a week had said that Iran's attack on bases in Iraq, in retaliation for the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, had not killed or injured any U.S. troops.

That is no longer true, the Pentagon now acknowledges. But Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman claimed on Friday that U.S. military leadership in Washington only became aware on Thursday

that 11 U.S. service members were flown out of Iraq due to concussive symptoms.

"This idea that there was an effort to de-emphasize injuries for some sort of amorphous political agenda doesn't hold water," Hoffman said.

The claim that Pentagon officials did not know enough about the situation at the base after the Iranian retaliation for days adds insult to injury and reveals a serious break in the command and control chain. Otherwise, they must be lying to the Americans.

Reuters said the disclosure of the concussive symptoms late on Thursday, more than a week after the attack itself, is likely at a minimum to open a debate about the Pentagon's longstanding treat-

ment of brain injury as a different class of wounds that it says do not require immediate reporting up the chain of command.

Esper was only informed on Thursday that the service members were flown out of Iraq to receive additional screening and treatment in bases in Kuwait and Germany, the Pentagon said.

The first U.S. service member was flown out of Iraq on Jan. 10 for further evaluation, while others were flown out on Jan. 15.

Hoffman claimed that top Pentagon officials have not sought to minimize Iran's attack and instead repeatedly said Iran tried to kill U.S. troops when it fired ballistic missiles at two Iraqi bases from at least three locations inside Iran.

Trump Changes His Lies About Assassination

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- President Donald Trump has changed his narrative on the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, saying he ordered the terrorist operation because the prominent commander was "saying bad things about our country".

Trump, speaking at a Republican fundraising event on Friday at his Mar-a-Lago property in Florida, did not mention the "imminent threat" that he previously claimed led to his decision to order Gen. Soleimani's assassination.

The latest remarks further contradict the Trump administration's publicly stated justification for ordering the U.S. drone strike which martyred the charismatic general.

The "imminent threat" justification has been used by U.S. officials in the aftermath of the assassination, but they have failed to provide any evidence for their claim.

NBC News reported on Monday that Trump had authorized the U.S. military to assassinate Gen. Soleimani seven months ago, contradicting his "imminent threat" allegation.

Gen. Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iran's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were assassinated in the Iraqi capital Baghdad early January 3.

Iran responded by launching missiles at the military bases that house U.S. troops in Iraq.

In his latest remarks, Trump, who has a reputation for getting facts wrong, claimed erroneously that Gen. Soleimani was meeting the head of Lebanon's resistance movement Hezbollah in Baghdad.

Trump acknowledged at the fundraising event that the assassination of Gen. Soleimani "shook up the world".

He went on to recount listening to U.S. military officials as they watched the strike from "cameras that are miles in the sky".

"They're together sir," Trump recalled the military officials saying. "Sir, they have two minutes and 11 seconds. No emotion. '2 minutes and 11 seconds to live, sir. They're in the car, they're in an armored vehicle. Sir, they have approximately one minute to live, sir. 30 seconds. 10, 9, 8 ...'"

(Continued on Page 7)

Zarif Urges India to Expedite Chabahar Development

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) -- Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif has said that India and Iran should work to expedite rail connectivity to Afghanistan and procurement for the development of Chabahar Port.

"Chabahar Port is essential for Afghanistan and Central Asia," Zarif said. "There are several problems and we made several advances...One of them is that our parliament has recently approved the expansion of the free zone."

Late in December, Indian media reported that the United States had given written assurances to India that it would help facilitate global banks fund-

ing the purchase of equipment worth \$85 million to be established at Chabahar Port in Iran.

In November 2018, the U.S. granted a waiver from the sanctions it has imposed on Iran for activities related to the port.

But Zarif on Friday said that the problem in the project's progress is that India has found difficulty procuring the required equipment for the port, despite exemption from sanctions.

"The other issue is connecting Chabahar to Afghanistan and to Central Asia through rail. We need to complete the Chabahar-Zahedan rail network. We have the infrastructure for that, but we need rails," Zarif said.

He noted that Iran is discussing the matter with India.

Chabahar is located in the Sistan-Baluchistan Province on Iran's southeastern coast outside the Persian Gulf and is of strategic importance for the development of regional maritime transit traffic to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Zarif also said the Islamic Republic is ready to hold talks with Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf countries to promote regional security.

"We are ready for negotiations with Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf littoral states and we are ready to give proposals (Continued on Page 7)

The Holy Qur'an

And We did not send any apostle but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly; then Allah makes whom He pleases err and He guides whom He pleases and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

The Holy Qur'an (14.4)

PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	12:15
Evening (Maghreb)	17:37
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:45
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	07:12

Zafar Satellite Ready for Launch Into Orbit

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- The Islamic Republic of Iran is due to send a highly advanced version of its satellites on discovery missions, the latest breakthrough in the field of aerospace by the country's competent experts and specialists.

The Zafar, a fully sophisticated satellite built at the Iran's University of Science and Technology, was announced by the Iranian Space Agency (ISA) on Saturday to have been placed atop the ready-to-launch list.

The new satellite, designed for an 18-month activity plan, weighs about 90 kilograms and is equipped with four color cameras to capture the Earth's surface with a resolution of 80 meters.

Zafar is similar in size and weight to its previous version -- the Payam satellite -- but distinct in one way as it can move in circular orbit and send a message alongside its exploratory missions.

In January 2019, the domestically-built Payam (Message) satellite was launched into space with an aim to collect environmental information; however, technical problems that occurred during the final stage of the launch prevented the spacecraft from reaching orbit.

Iran's indigenous satellite launch capabilities first made headlines when the first locally-built satellite, Omid (Hope), was launched in 2009.

The country also sent its first bio-capsule containing living creatures into space in February 2010, using a Kavoshgar-3 (Explorer-3) carrier.

In February 2015, the Islamic Republic placed its domestically-made Fajr (Dawn) satellite into orbit, which is capable of taking and transmitting high-quality photos to stations on Earth.

Iran considers its space program a matter of national pride, and has said its space vehicle launches are for scientific purposes.