

Zionist PM Plans to Meet Saudi Crown Prince: Report

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Zionist regime authorities are reportedly working hard to arrange a meeting between Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the kingdom.

The meeting is being arranged as the occupying regime is bringing out in the open its relations with several Arab regimes after years of clandestine contacts.

The Hebrew-language Israel Defense magazine, citing sources requesting not to be named, reported that efforts are underway for such a meeting to happen in the Saudi capital city of Riyadh before legislative elections in the occupied territories, which are set for March 2.

The report added that the expected meeting falls within the Zionist regime’s attempts to normalize relations with Arab states, which commenced in Oman and then spread to Morocco and Sudan. The attempts are apparently backed by the White House.

Israel Defense further highlighted that Washington wants to advance President Donald Trump’s so-called deal of the century on the decades-old Zionist-Palestinian conflict, which could greatly help him in the U.S. presidential race.

The magazine went on to say that there is a desire among Zionist officials to promote a round of communications with Arab countries, which may help Netanyahu’s election campaign.

Last month, senior Saudi cleric and former justice minister, Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdul



This combo photo shows Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman (L) and Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Karim bin Abdulaziz al-Issa, paid an official visit to the former Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz, in Poland. A delegation of American Jewish Committee (AJC) officials was in the company as well.

The CEO of the AJC, David Harris, described Issa’s visit to the site as highly significant, claiming that the trip represented “the most senior delegation” of Muslim scholars to visit Auschwitz ever.

Back on July 22, 2019, angry Palestinians jeered and cursed a Saudi blogger known to be a

huge fan of establishing formal ties between the Zionist regime and Saudi Arabia.

Last May, Lebanese daily Arabic-language newspaper al-Akhbar said the Saudi crown prince had offered Palestinian Authority chief Mahmoud Abbas 10 billion dollars in return for accepting Trump’s controversial proposal for “peace” between the Zionist regime and Palestinians.

Akhbar noted that Abbas had turned down the offer, saying supporting the deal would be “the end of his political life.”

Amid Zionist Regime Pressure

Palestinian Fishers Hope to Expand Fishing Area

GAZA (Dispatches) – The joy of the Palestinian fisherman, Medhat al-Shantaf, in awaiting the abundant fishing season has not lasted after the Zionist regime authorities reduced fishing zone off the Gaza coast to 10 nautical miles instead of 15.

The 26-year-old fisher and a father of two, is impatiently waiting for the fishing season next March, in order to earn more money.

“In the fishing season, we can earn a lot of money, but now I am afraid to lose the coming fishing season if Israel continues its reduction,” al-Shantaf told Xinhua, while he was knitting his nets.

He said “all fishermen here are considered as the poorest people,” adding that “they and I are waiting this season to earn some money to live at a stable level.”

Nevertheless, al-Shantaf and his three brothers are managing their small boat to be ready for deep fishing if the Zionist regime re-expands the fishing area, as he said.

On Wednesday, the occupying regime’s army decided to reduce the allowed fishing zone off the Gaza Strip coast from 15 to 10 nautical miles, according to Israeli and Palestinian sources.

The office of the Israeli coordinator of the regime’s activities

in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip said in a statement that the permitted area will be reduced to 10 nautical miles or some 18.5 km.

According to the office, the decision was taken “after security consultations” following “continued rocket firing and explosive balloons from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory.”

However, Mohammed Abu Ryala, a fisherman in his 50s, told Xinhua that they are not armed persons and the Zionist regime knows this very well.

“So, Israel should avoid any sanctions against the fishermen during the military tensions between it and the Palestinian

armed factions,” as he said.

The reduction of the fishing area forced the fishermen to catch various kinds of small fishes without earning enough to live at a stable level.

Abu Ryala complained that about 350 fishermen are threatened to be pangs of hunger with their families soon. They are anxiously waiting for the announcement of the Zionist regime authorities to increase the area of fishing, as he said.

On the other hand, Zakaria Baker, coordinator of fishermen’s committees in the Gaza Strip, said the occupying regime intends to reduce the fishing area for political purposes.

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protect Saraqeb against the advance were also besieged.

Video taken by The Associated Press showed terrorists lobbing shells at government troops from around the town of Binnish, northwest of Saraqeb. They stacked artillery shells and burned tires, the American news agency said.

The government advance came after a rare confrontation between Turkey and Syria forces Monday that killed seven Turkish soldiers and a Turkish civilian member of the military, as well as 13 Syrian soldiers.

In Moscow, Russia’s Foreign Ministry announced that Russian soldiers had been killed in a northern Syrian province alongside Turkish servicemen. The ministry blamed “terrorists” for the deaths.

Syrian troops have been advancing since December into the country’s last terrorist stronghold, which spans Idlib province and parts of nearby Aleppo.

Turkey has set up four military posts to prevent Syrian government forces from marching deeper into Idlib, Syria’s Foreign Ministry said. It said Turkish troops have “flagrantly violated” Syria’s border and deployed in several areas, including the villages of Binnish, Taftanaz and Maaret Musreen.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov responded Thursday that Russia was concerned about the concentration of terrorist groups in Idlib and their “continuing activity”.

Peskov said the Kremlin doesn’t rule out a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to discuss the situation in Syria.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said a delegation from Russia would arrive in Turkey soon for talks on the situation following the attack on Turkish soldiers. He said a follow-up meeting between Erdogan and Putin could also take place “if there is a need.”

Turkey has sent nearly 150 vehicles with commandos and ammunition to bolster its observation outposts in Idlib, a Turkish security source said Friday.

Russia said Idlib-based militants had staged “more than 1,000 attacks in the last two weeks of January” from a Turkish-controlled de-escalation zone in Idlib. Most of the attacks had been conducted by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham militant group.

Iran...

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defense system. The IRGC said the aircraft was targeted near the Kouh-e Mobarak region in Hormozgan province after violating Iran’s skies.

The RQ-4 Global Hawk surveillance aircraft can fly at high altitudes for more than 30 hours, gathering near-real-time, high-resolution imagery of large areas of land in all types of weather, according to its maker Northrop Grumman.

The IRGC also captured a U.S. ScanEagle drone over the Persian Gulf waters after it intruded into the Iranian airspace in December 2012.

Iran’s air defenses further captured a U.S. RQ-170 Sentinel drone in December 2011, which was flying over the Iranian city of Kashmar, near the Afghan border.

Sudan...

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... he did not give any commitment and did not talk of normalizing relations,” government spokesman Faisal Mohamed Salih told reporters early Thursday.

“He did not give a promise of normalizing or having diplomatic relations.”

Salih said the issue of relations with the occupying regime of Israel was something the current transitional government was not mandated to decide.

Burhan, however, said his government would allow flights to and from Occupied Palestine — except for those belonging to the Israeli El Al airline — to use Khartoum’s airspace, according to Al Jazeera. Netanyahu said Tuesday that Israel had

received permission to fly over Sudan and that only an unspecified technical matter remained before finalizing the agreement.

Israel remains technically at war with Sudan during the rule of ousted leader Omar al-Bashir.

Monday’s meeting came just a day after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo invited Burhan to visit the United States in a phone call. The date of the visit has not yet been set.

Sudan, a Muslim-majority African country, has long been part of a decades-old Arab boycott of Israel over its treatment of the Palestinians and its control of land the Palestinians want for a state.

The Palestine Liberation Organization called Burhan and Netanyahu’s meeting “a stab in the back of the Palestinian people.”

In the wake of the Six Day War of 1967 in which the occupying regime of Israel seized the West Bank from Jordan and seized the Golan Heights from Syria, Arab leaders held a historic meeting in Khartoum to announce what became known as the “three nos” — no peace, no recognition, no negotiations with Israel.

Iran...

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initially vowed a severe response to any Iranian retaliation, sought to play down the attack and claimed that its forces had suffered no casualties in the attack.

The Pentagon has since, however, gradually revealed figures of troops which have suffered “brain injuries” in the Iranian attack.

Earlier this week, the Associated Press reported what it described as an “uneasy quiet” for US forces following Iran’s missile strikes.

The report cited U.S. Central Command commander General Frank McKenzie saying that Washington is uncertain how future events may unfold in the Middle East and that Washington needs to accumulate “military might” in the region as it fears possible confrontation with Iran.

The report described how McKenzie has requested a “much larger than usual naval presence” in the region, shifting naval assets from other locations to the Middle East despite the U.S. Navy’s need to deploy against naval powers such as Russia and China.

According to observers, Iran’s rare and direct attack against U.S. bases last month served to showcase part of Tehran’s military capability to counter U.S. military presence in the region.

Many U.S. politicians and officials have also slammed the Trump administration for putting American troops in danger and entangling the US in another military quagmire in the region.

Undesirable...

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mourning its national hero and celebrating Iran’s retaliation.

In an Instagram video posted on Thursday, Macaire claimed in Farsi that the visit was “an important trip that was planned some time ago” and had included a meeting with foreign minister Dominic Raab.

Macaire, who has been in the post since 2018, added that he had recently returned to Tehran.

Tensions between Iran and the West have risen since Gen. Soleimani was assassinated on Jan. 3, prompting an Iranian missile attack against a U.S. base in Iraq days later.

Friction between Tehran and Washington has been building since 2018, when President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from a six-nation nuclear deal in which Tehran agreed to curb its nuclear energy program in exchange for the lifting of most sanctions.

Iran announced in January that it would abandon restrictions on enriching uranium but would continue to cooperate with the UN nuclear agency.

Macaire said in the video posting that Britain wanted to use the dispute resolution mechanism in the nuclear deal - which Britain, France and Germany triggered last month - to find a path forward.

U.S. Contractor Kidnapped in Eastern Afghanistan

KABUL (Dispatches) – A United States military contractor has been kidnapped in eastern Afghanistan, an Afghan official confirmed.

An Afghan security official with knowledge of the incident told AFP news agency the former U.S. navy member had been working in Afghanistan as a contractor when he was abducted last week in eastern Khost province, near the Pakistani border.

There was no indication whether an armed group or a criminal organization was behind the kidnapping. The Taliban said it did not have information on the incident.

Afghanistan’s former intelligence chief Amrullah Saleh was quick to blame the Taliban, saying on Twitter the abduction had been orchestrated by “the Taliban & their Pakistani backers. Kidnapping must end & end without ransom”.

Pakistan has long been accused of backing the Taliban but has repeatedly denied supporting the group.

The U.S. State Department said it was aware of reports of the kidnapping, but declined to comment further.

The incident comes after the Taliban in November handed two Western hostages over to U.S. forces in southern Afghanistan, three years after they were abducted, in a swap for three high-ranking prisoners.

The exchange of American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks for the militants - including Anas Haqqani, brother of the Taliban’s deputy leader - was widely believed to be instrumental in kick-starting stalled talks between the two sides.

The Taliban later described the exchange as “a step forward in goodwill and confidence-building measures that can aid the peace process”.

The kidnapping of Afghans and foreigners for ransom is common across Afghanistan where swathes of the country are infested with armed groups or criminal gangs.

Turkish Clothes Makers See Orders Shifting From Coronavirus-Hit China

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – Several fashion retailers that manufacture clothing in coronavirus-hit China are in talks with Turkish firms about shifting production to Turkey, two sector officials told Reuters, with one predicting new orders worth up to \$2 billion.

An outbreak of the newly-identified coronavirus has killed 637 people in mainland China, where it is believed to have started, prompting many factories to suspend operations until next week or later as authorities try to contain its spread.

Polish fashion retailer LPP has said it is in talks with factories in Turkey, Bangladesh

and Vietnam as a backup plan if Chinese production delays continue.

Turkish manufacturers have in recent years shifted their clothing production up-market as China’s dominance grew globally. But the outbreak has sent some European companies back to Turkey, the officials said.

“Purchasing managers and designers can’t go to China due to coronavirus worries and travel restrictions. So several well-known brands started discussions for production of new seasonal items in Turkey,” said Hadi Karasu, head of Turkish Clothing Manufacturers’ Association (TGSD).

Rising Chinese manufacturing costs and a 36% slide in the value of the Turkish lira in the last two years, on the back of a currency crisis in 2018, has already made Turkey an affordable option, Karasu added.

“As manufacturing costs leveled between China and Turkey, some European firms were (already) considering shifting orders towards here,” Karasu said.

“China has some \$170 billion ready-to-wear exports,” he added. “According to our calculations some 1% of orders will (now) be shifting to Turkey initially which could amount to \$2 billion.”