

MP: U.S. Trying to Reactivate Daesh in 5 Iraqi Provinces

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – A senior Iraqi lawmaker has warned of Washington's plots and attempts to awaken the Daesh sleeping cells in 5 provinces of the country in a bid to find a pretext for its prolonged deployment.

"The U.S. is after reactivating the remnants and sleeping cells of the Daesh in 5 Iraqi provinces to escalate crisis and chaos in Iraq to decrease power of Hashd al-Sha'abi and other security forces," Karim al-Aliwi said in an interview with the Arabic-language al-Ma'aloumeh news website, without naming the provinces.

He added that Washington wants to make the public opinion believe that the Iraqi forces cannot defend their country and pave the ground for its long-term presence in Iraq.

A senior commander of Hashd al-Sha'abi popular forces had warned on Wednesday that the U.S. forces were transferring the Daesh terrorists from Syria to safe areas in Iraq as part of a seemingly major plan to trigger security problems for the Arab nation again.

"The security forces are stationed and guarding the Iraqi-Syrian borders, but the airspace of these regions are fully open to the U.S. planes and helicopters, including Chinook cargo helicopters," Kazzem al-Fartousi, a commander of Kata'eb Seyed al-Shohada, told al-Ma'aloumeh.

He warned that the U.S. planes and helicopters are never checked by the Iraqi authorities and they easily transfer the terrorists from Syria to safe zone in Iraq in airborne operations.

Al-Fartousi joined many other senior military commanders and officials deeply wary of what seems to be a scheme by the U.S. to escalate ten-



Iraq's rapid response forces storm a home in the Tarmiyah district, north of Baghdad, searching for wanted Daesh terrorists on July 21, 2019.

sions through a revival of terrorist operations by the remnants of Daesh terrorists to undermine the central government in Baghdad and justify the U.S. buildup in Iraq.

An official had also revealed that the U.S. troops in Western Iraq are relocating Daesh ringleaders from Syria to Wadi Houran region in western al-Anbar province after the area was cleansed by

Hashd al-Sha'abi.

"After the U.S. forces prevented Iraqi forces from approaching Wadi Houran and the western desert of al-Anbar, finally, Hashd al-Sha'abi could remove the existing obstacles and defeat the Daesh terrorists in the region and cleanse Wadi Houran completely," head of the Badr Organization's office in al-Anbar Qusai al-Anbari told al-Ma'aloumeh.

Gazans Urge End to Zionist Regime's Violations

GAZA (Dispatches) – Palestinian factions in Gaza have called on the participants of the World Holocaust Forum held in al-Quds to stop the Zionist regime's practices and violations against the Palestinian people.

In a joint statement circulated during a demonstration in

front of the UN headquarters in western Gaza City, the factions expressed their rejection to the World Holocaust Forum because of the regime's violations against the Palestinians.

The factions included Hamas resistance movement as well as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad

and the Palestinian left-wing parties in the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The statement also called on the participants in the forum to visit Gaza and the West Bank "to look at the increasing settlement, the Israeli army's roadblocks and its daily demolitions

and killing of people in cold blood."

The factions called on the United Nations to increase its pressure on the regime to end its 13-year "unfair" blockade on the Gaza Strip and its military occupation of the West Bank and East al-Quds.

Yemen's Frontline Port Struggles to Fight Deadly Fever

HUDAYDADH (Dispatches) – In the grounds of a bombed-out building in the port that has become the main front of Yemen's war, workers use a hose mounted to a truck to suck up a green, insect-filled expanse of stagnant rainwater, then shovel in soil to fill it, trying to save lives.

The trash-strewn pools are perfect breeding grounds for the mosquito that spreads dengue fever, which aid workers say is killing people every day near the frontlines in Hudaydah.

The Saudi-led war on Yemen has complicated efforts to fight the world's fastest-spreading mosquito-borne virus, wrecked Yemen's health system and public sanitation, and made an impoverished and displaced population more vulnerable to the disease.

In a crowded children's hospital, flies crawled over the eyes and mouths of children struggling to breathe under the pain caused by the virus. Walid Yahya Mansour sat with two family members; two others had stayed home, too sick to travel.

"Dengue has been spreading fast," he said.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says the number of reported

cases of dengue fever worldwide has increased six-fold from 2010-2016. It describes the disease as one of the top 10 global public health threats.

Dengue causes fever, headache, vomiting and pain in the muscles and joints. A severe form can result in internal bleeding. There is no specific treatment and no widely available vaccine yet, although one is being trialed.

Hudaydah, which has an active frontline on its eastern edge where the United Nations is trying to enforce a ceasefire and troop withdrawal, is reporting the highest number of suspected dengue cases and deaths, an International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) report said.

The WHO said 76,768 suspected cases, including 271 deaths, were recorded last year across Yemen, although numbers started to fall in recent weeks.

"The dengue cases began in mid-November," said Ahmad Mu'ajam, a doctor at Thawra hospital in Hudaydah. "With time, there were fewer cases in the countryside areas, but they increased inside the city."

Turkish Foreign Minister:

Russian S-400 Air Defense No Threat to NATO

DAVOS (Dispatches) – Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu says that Russia's S-400 air defense system is compatible with NATO, which needs to set up a working group to study it.

"The claim is that the S400 and F-35s are incompatible. That's the claim. Here is our proposal, let's have a working group and NATO can chair this and let's let experts make the assessment and come back to us," he said.

"We believe the S400 and F-35 are compatible," Cavusoglu said during a panel discussion at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

"It does not pose any threats to the NATO system or to NATO allies," he added.

Ankara's purchase of the S-400 system and its recent testing of US-made F-16 Viper and F-4 Phantom II fighter jets have strained its relations with Washington and other NATO members.

Ankara announced the tests on November 24 last year. The testing, which began the following day, continued through November 26. The S-400 systems are presently based at Murted Air Base, which is situated just outside the Turkish capital.

The U.S. has already punished Turkey by suspending it from the F-35 stealth fighter jet program. Washington says operating the S-400 system alongside the F-35 would compromise the fighter's hi-tech secrets, adding that it will not allow F-35s to operate in airspace where the Russian system is active.

On December 12, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova strongly condemned U.S. pressures on Turkey over its purchase of the Russian S-400 missile defense systems, also dismissing Washington's threats of sanctions over procurement of the systems as "unacceptable."

"We consider this rhetoric unacceptable,

since it is actually about pressure," Zakharova said at a press briefing in Moscow at the time.

She added, "There are examples of similar pressure by Washington on a number of other states, this is not only about Turkey, and not only about the S-400, and not only about topics related to Russia. In recent years, Washington has used sanctions policy in those issues where it is necessary to promote its own interests."

Her remarks came a day after U.S. senators backed legislation to impose sanctions on Turkey over its military offensive in northern Syria and the purchase of the Russian S-400 missile system.

Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar has said his country would not back away from the procurement of S-400 missile systems, and is currently in contact with its NATO allies, particularly the United States, to work out a solution to the matter.

'Millions'... (Continued From Page One)

political bureau of Iraq's Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, said Friday's rallies marked "a new chapter" in the Arab country's relations with the U.S.

"We believe we have reached the zero hour in facing off with the U.S.," he said.

Qais al-Khazali, leader of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, which is also part of the PMU, described Friday's rallies as a "second revolution" a century after the Great Iraqi Revolution of 1920 against British forces. The rally coincided with a report by the Middle East Eye that the U.S. was reportedly seeking to carve out a "Sunni state" in Iraq's Anbar province in a bid to secure the presence of its military forces.

The plan was discussed at a secret meeting nine months ago between Saudi ambassador to Jordan and a group of Iraqi politicians and businessmen from Anbar, Salah al-Din and Nineveh provinces, the report said.

The meeting, which was held in Amman, was hosted by Saudi minister for Persian Gulf affairs, Thamer bin Sabhan al-Sabhan, who is Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman's point man for the region. On the agenda was a plan to push for a Sunni autonomous region, akin to Iraqi Kurdistan.

A bigger meeting was held some weeks later, this time attended by a U.S. and Israeli representative. The MEE has quoted the U.S. envoy as telling his Saudi counterpart: "If you can do it, it's welcome." A third meeting was held in Dubai, this time attended by Iraq's Sunni Parliament speaker Mohamed al-Halbousi. He has denied that plans to create a Sunni region were discussed or agreed upon, but Sunni members of the Iraqi parliament have broken the cover, the report said.

Anbar comprises 31 percent of the Iraqi state's landmass. It has significant untapped oil, gas and mineral reserves, bordering Syria.

Zionists... (Continued From Page One)

Troops fired rubber bullets, injuring a number of Palestinians. Several others were detained.

The attacks came as U.S. President Donald Trump reportedly prepared to unveil his so-called "Deal of the Century" on Tuesday which Palestinians have rejected.

Spokesman for the Palestinian president, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, said the initiative is aimed at liquidating the Palestinian cause.

Trump has invited Zionist PM Benjamin Netanyahu and his challenger in upcoming elections, Benny Gantz, to Washington next week. "This step only reaffirms our absolute rejection of what the U.S. administration has done so far, particularly the recognition of Al-Quds as Israel's capital," Abbas's spokesman said in a statement.

Abu Rudeineh said the Palestinians "warn Israel and the U.S. administration not to cross any red lines". Palestinians stopped recognizing the U.S. as a mediator in the conflict with the Zionist regime in 2017, after Trump recognized occupied Jerusalem Al-Quds as the "capital" of the occupying regime of Israel in violation of international law.

More... (Continued From Page One)

Besides Wuhan, 12 other smaller cities nearby have battened down the hatches, with most of them going public on Friday with various measures ranging from closing public venues and restricting large gatherings to halting public transportation and asking citizens not to leave their cities.

Several of the cities have populations numbering several million, led by Huanggang, which has 7.5 million.

The pathogen -- 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) -- has caused many outlets in Shanghai, Beijing and other cities to sell out their stocks of face masks.

As reports surfaced of bed shortages in Wuhan hospitals, state media said authorities were rushing to build a new facility devoted to the outbreak in a mind-blowing 10 days.

The Wuhan hospital is targeted to be ready by February 3. Dozens of excavators and trucks were filmed working on the site by state television. To discourage nationwide travel, the government has said all tickets for rail, air, road, or water transport could be exchanged for a refund.

On Friday, staff in full body protective suits were seen checking the temperatures of people entering a subway station in Beijing.

Thermal cameras scanned passengers arriving at Beijing's West Railway Station.

Chinese authorities said the number of cases leapt overnight to more than 800, with 177 in serious condition. There were another 1,072 suspected cases.

Officials also said that a virus patient died in Heilongjiang province in China's far northeast, the second death outside the Wuhan epicenter.

Beijing has been praised for its response in contrast to SARS, when it took months to report the disease and initially denied WHO experts any access.

Gao Fu, head of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, asked China's people to forego New Year gatherings this year and confine themselves at home until the all-clear.

"If we all work as one, we can contain the virus in Wuhan and add no more cases exported from Wuhan, so as to stem the virus nationwide," Gao told state TV.

Beijing has cancelled popular New Year public events at temples in the capital, the historic Forbidden City will close from Saturday, and Shanghai Disneyland said it also will shut down for an indefinite period from Saturday to protect visitors and staff.

Kosovo ... (Continued From Page One)

"By killing the master of the house you have killed all members of the family, then revenge is obligatory but it has no border," Huduti wrote, according to Pristina media which had screenshots of her postings.

Kosovo has been a strong supporter of the United States. When the Iranian general was assassinated, Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj said: "Kosovo stands firm in support of the U.S. in its right to self-defense."

U.S.... (Continued From Page 2)

of world states are not entitled to utter them," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

Gen. Soleimani earned a reputation as the Middle East's most prominent anti-terror commander due to his indispensable contribution to defeating terrorist outfits such as the Daesh terrorist group across the region.

The IRGC retaliated against the assassination by firing a volley of ballistic missiles at two U.S. air bases in Iraq, which Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei described just a "slap".

Despite U.S. efforts to play down the extent of damage and casualties, reports are emerging about a high number of troops rushed American hospitals in Iraq, Kuwait and Israel.

After his appointment, General Qaa'ni said he would "continue in this luminous path" taken by Martyr Soleimani and that the goal was to drive U.S. forces out of the region.

The IRGC aerospace division commander said four U.S. military bases in the region were used to deploy aircraft and drones involved in the Jan. 3 attack that martyred Gen. Soleimani, including two bases in Iraq and another in Kuwait. "Most of the drones" had taken off from Kuwait, General Amirali Hajizadeh said.

EU... (Continued From Page 2)

The diplomats say that the measure seeks to persuade Tehran against taking major "new nuclear steps Iran has not taken yet" and "restrain" the expansion of its nuclear activities.

The report added that European officials are currently divided, however, on what would constitute as a restrained approach from Iran, with some proposing that Tehran's "modest" continued expansion of its uranium production would be acceptable. Earlier this month, Iran announced that it will no longer observe any operational limitations on its nuclear industry and that it will continue activities based on its "technical needs". According to Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif, the announcement marked Iran's final step in its gradual and reciprocal suspension of its obligations in the face of U.S. sanctions and the European signatories to meet their commitments.

Iran... (Continued From Page 2)

armed forces was given at the highest level of standards in terms of the timing, quality and accuracy of the missiles," the minister said.

On January 8, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched a missile attack on Ain al-Assad airbase in Iraq's western province of Anbar, in retaliation for the U.S. assassination of General Soleimani. Thirteen missiles rained down on the American base, none of which were intercepted by the U.S. army's radar systems. Hatami also said Hatami said Iran's investigation into the accidental shooting down of a passenger plane outside will be made public.

"By the strict orders of the commander in chief [Ayatollah Ali Khamenei] and the other heads of the government the dimensions of this bitter incident will be presented to the people," Hatami said. On Jan. 8, after Iran had launched missiles at the Ain al-Asad base in Iraq, surface-to-air missiles were launched at the Ukrainian plane, killing all 176 people on board. The Civil Aviation Organization of Iran later said that Russian-made Tor-M1 surface-to-air missiles were used in the accidental downing of the plane; the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said the plane had been mistaken for a U.S. cruise missile. Hatami said General Soleimani had brought "national cohesion, unity, and strength to the international scene."