

U.S. Reports of 'Chemical Incident' In Syria Based on Terrorists' Claims

MOSCOW (Dispatches) – Recent U.S. claims about the alleged use of chemical weapons by Syrian government troops are based on information from unverified sources, including from terrorist groups, the Russian Foreign Ministry's spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, says.

"It is likely to be about one more [chemical attack] plot staged by militants of the armed Syrian opposition in the settlement of Kabani in the province of Latakia. The information [about the alleged attack] was posted at internet portals that belong to the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham terrorist group. These dubious sources of information were used for the statements made by the UN Security Council's permanent member [the United States]", Zakharova said at a press briefing. She pointed out that speculations about the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government troops became an inherent part of NATO policy on Syria and the Middle East.



This file photo, released by the Syrian official news agency SANA, shows medical staff treating a boy following a chemical attack on his town in Aleppo, Syria, on November 24, 2018.

From Zakharova's point of view, the West continues to uphold the policy of permanent destabilization of the situation in Syria, instead of promoting a peace settlement. The spokeswoman added that Western countries were showing readiness to react immediately to such information attacks.

Days earlier, the Russian Defense Ministry said foreign-sponsored terrorist groups have stockpiled a large number of chemical munitions in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib in preparation for a false-flag attack to implicate government troops and invent pretexts for possible foreign acts of aggression on the crisis-hit Arab country.

The ministry's Center for Syrian Reconciliation said in a statement that the extremists have laced the weapons with nerve agents for this end.

"The militants plan to stage such provocations in the village of Jar-janaz, as well as in the town of Saraqib, where a group of children and adults — refugees from the southern provinces of Syria — have already been gathered. Similar preparations are underway in the west of Aleppo province", Maj. Gen. Viktor Kupchishin said at a daily briefing.

The center went on to say that militant groups, under the leadership of the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terror outfit — formerly known as al-Nusra Front, sought to attack the positions of Syrian army forces in al-Hobait village of Idlib province as well as the towns of Kafr Nabudah and Kafr Zita in the western-central province of Hama by means of tank shell and car bombs.

Jordanian King Holds Meeting With Iraqi, Palestinian Presidents

AMMAN (Dispatches) – King Abdullah II of Jordan, Iraqi President Barham Salih and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas have held a trilateral meeting in Amman. Discussions addressed the Palestinian cause, the importance of supporting the Palestinians in securing their legitimate rights and establishing their independent state with East al-Quds as its capital, according to a Royal Court statement a copy of which was obtained by Xinhua. The three leaders also underscored the need to unify positions and bolster joint action to

overcome challenges and crises. President Salih and President Abbas reaffirmed the importance of the Hashemite Custodianship of Islamic and Christian holy sites in al-Quds, commending Jordan's historical and religious role, led by King Abdullah, in safeguarding holy sites. Days earlier, the Islamic Action Front has called on the Jordanian government not to participate in a U.S.-led conference in Bahrain next month in support of U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial proposal for "peace" between the Israeli regime and Palestinians,

dubbed "the deal of the century." The political party, which is the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, said in a statement that the forthcoming conference falls within the framework of the so-called deal of the century that is aimed at liquidating the Palestinian cause. "Jordan's official and popular position is to refuse any deal, which would undermine the rights of the Palestinian nation and interests of the Jordanian state," the statement pointed out.

The U.S. will host the economic conference on June 25 and 26 to purportedly encourage investment in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Mounir Rashid, a member of the Islamic Action Front, said the meeting represents a dangerous attempt to suffocate the Palestinian cause, and is in line with Trump administration's transfer of the American embassy from Tel Aviv to al-Quds, bids to abolish the right of return, and recognition of the annexation of the occupied Golan Heights as well settlements built on private Palestinian lands.

UNRWA Rejects U.S. Call for Dismantling Agency for Palestinian Refugees

NEW YORK (Press TV) – The head of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has rejected a U.S. call to dismantle the agency, saying it cannot be blamed for the stalemate in the so-called peace efforts. "I unreservedly reject the accompanying narrative that suggests that somehow UNRWA is to blame for the continuation of the refugee-hood of Palestine refugees, of their growing numbers and their growing needs," UNRWA's Commissioner General Pierre Krahenbuhl said in a press conference in the Gaza City on Thursday. His comments were in response to a question about what Jason Greenblatt, US President Donald Trump's special representative for international negotiations, provocatively had said a day earlier, claiming that the agency had run its course and was no longer needed. Addressing the UN Security Council on Wednesday, Greenblatt claimed that UNRWA had been a "bandaid" and that it was time to hand over services assured by the refugee agency to those countries hosting the Palestinian Arab refugees. "The UNRWA model has failed the Palestinian people," he added. UNRWA was originally set up in 1949 to take care of hundreds of thou-

sands of Palestinians displaced by the 1948 Arab-Israeli war in the Middle East mainly through providing them with humanitarian aid. It was initially established as a temporary agency, but it has continued to provide support for Palestinian refugees for the better part of six decades. It currently supports more than five million Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip, the occupied West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, providing them with healthcare, education and social services with funding from international donors. Most are descendants of the roughly 700,000 Palestinians who were driven out of their homes or fled the 1948 war that led to Israel's creation. Last year, however, Washington cut its roughly \$300 million annual donation to the UN agency, claiming that it was flawed as Trump's administration pressed ahead with work on its so-called peace plan. The U.S. has accused UNRWA of expanding the definition of the refugee so that it includes all descendants of refugees regardless of whether they have taken citizenship in another country. The UN agency will host a conference on June 25 at which international donors are expected to pledge financial support.

Zionist Regime Shrinks Gaza Fishing Zone

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime has cut the offshore fishing restriction it imposes for vessels off the Gaza shore after an alleged launch of incendiary balloons from the blockaded coastal sliver towards the occupied territories. Gaza's permitted fishing zone had been reduced from 15 nautical miles to 10 and that the limit would be upheld "until further notice," the so-called Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), a unit in the regime's war ministry that oversees civil matters in the Palestinian lands, said in a statement. "A decision was taken this Wednesday

evening to reduce the fishing zone off the Gaza Strip to 10 nautical miles until further notice," it said. "The decision was taken after the launch of incendiary balloons from Gaza." The announcement came one day after the Zionist regime expanded the fishing zone to 15 nautical miles from 12 in what is presumed to be part of a ceasefire between the Tel Aviv regime and the Gaza-based Hamas resistance movement. On Monday, Israel's Channel 12 news reported that the regime and Hamas have reached an agreement for a six-month truce in Gaza.

According to the report, the agreement includes a Hamas obligation to end clashes with Zionist troops along the Gaza fence, maintain a buffer zone of 300 meters, abandon launching incendiary balloons towards occupied territories and stop flotillas trying to break the Gaza siege. In return, the report added, the occupying regime expanded the Gaza fishing zone and agreed to enable UN cash-for-work programs, allow medicine and other civil aid to enter the coastal enclave and open talks on issues such as electricity, crossings, healthcare and funds.

British... (Continued From Page One)

The EU has said it will not renegotiate the Withdrawal Agreement it sealed with Britain in November. Spain said it now seemed almost impossible to avoid a so-called hard Brexit, or clean break from the EU, and the bloc signaled there would be no change on the agreement despite European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker learning of May's resignation "without personal joy". Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney underlined the bloc's stance that there would be no better Brexit deal. "This idea that a new prime minister will be a tougher negotiator and will put it up to the EU and get a much better deal for Britain? That's not how the EU works," Coveney told Ireland's News-talk radio station. Johnson, the face of the official Brexit campaign in 2016, is the favorite to succeed May, with betting markets giving him a 40% implied probability of winning the top job.

He made his pitch at an economic conference in Switzerland, appealing to Brexit-supporting Conservative Party members by saying: "We will leave the EU on Oct. 31, deal or no deal." He said Britain could forge a "fantastic free trade relationship" with Europe after it quits the bloc but could also be a champion for global free trade. Others tipped are Dominic Raab, a Brexit supporter and former Brexit secretary, with a 14% implied probability on his chances. Environment Secretary Michael Gove, former House of Commons leader Andrea Leadsom and Hunt each have a 7% probability, according to betting markets. Defense Secretary Penny Mordaunt and International Development Secretary Rory Stewart each have a 4% chance of the top job while Home Secretary Sajid Javid has a 3% chance. Conservative lawmaker Graham Brady resigned as chairman of the party's 1922 Committee of backbench MPs in preparation for a potential leadership bid, the BBC said. For many Conservative lawmakers, speed is of the essence to install a new leader to try to break the Brexit impasse. The governing party said it would move quickly to try to end the leadership contest before parliament breaks for a summer holiday, a so-called recess which usually falls in late July. Sterling swung back and forth on May's resignation, and British government bond yields edged off near-two-year lows struck first thing on Friday.

Iran's... (Continued From Page 2)

Zarif met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday. A brief statement from Khan's office said only that bilateral issues were discussed during the meeting. Iran and Pakistan share a troubled 900-kilometer-long border, or about 560 miles, and Tehran says that anti-Iranian militants have found safe havens in Pakistan's border province of Baluchistan. IRNA reported that Zarif came to Pakistan with a proposal to link Iran's port of Chabahar on the Arabian Sea with Pakistan's Gwadar port, mostly being developed by China as part of the multi-billion-dollar One Road project that will connect the Arabian Sea with China. India has been Iran's partner in developing Chabahar while Saudi Arabia has been in talks to develop an oil refinery facility at Pakistan's Gwadar, though no agreements have been signed.

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

is the official who worked with former Secretary of State John Kerry on the divisive nuclear deal, which President Donald Trump announced the U.S. was withdrawing from in May 2018. Trump called Iran the "number one provocateur of terror in this country". "They've been very hostile. Truly been the number one provocateur of terror in this country and representing their country, but certainly our country has been very much involved because we're trying to help a lot of people out and I don't mind that at all," the president told reporters on the South Lawn as he left for a campaign rally in Pennsylvania Monday. Over the weekend, Trump issued a threat to the Iranian nation. "If Iran wants to fight, that will be the official end of Iran. Never threaten the United States again!" Trump posted to Twitter May 20. Zarif hit back, claiming Trump had been "goaded" into "genocidal taunts". "Trump 'hopes to achieve what Alexander, Genghis-Khan & other aggressors failed to do. Iranians have stood tall for millennia while aggressors all gone. Economic terrorism and genocidal taunts won't 'end Iran'. Never threaten an Iranian. Try respect-it works!" Zarif tweeted.

Youth... (Continued From Page 2)

order to reach the envisaged future. The committed youth will naturally act as the main players for carrying out this movement." The Leader also urged the young generation to launch a movement for the progress of the nation and recommend. "Prepare the grounds for the formation of a young and pious government. We expect you the university students to be self-organized and self-motivated, like when we acted during the tyrannical Pahlavi rule. Do not wait for others to get you involved." Ayatollah Khamenei recalled the resistance formed against the Pahlavi regime and described it as a model to be adopted by the young generation today, saying "At that time, no one was leading us; at times a new announcement reached us from Imam Khomeini, which motivated us."

Imminent... (Continued From Page 2)

During his visit to Japan, Zarif said Iran was committed to its obligations under the international nuclear deal despite the U.S. withdrawal from the landmark agreement. He called the reimposition of U.S. sanctions "unacceptable". Meanwhile, Oman's Foreign Ministry said it was working to "ease the tensions" between Iran and the U.S. The ministry in a series of tweets on Friday morning attributed the comments to Yusuf bin Alawi, the sultanate's minister of state for foreign affairs, and cited an interview in Asharq Al-Wasat, the London-based newspaper owned by a Saudi media group long associated with the Al Saud royal family. In the interview, bin Alawi warns war "could harm the entire world if it breaks out." He did not confirm any current Omani mediation but said both the U.S. and Iran realized the gravity of the situation. Oman's Sultan Qaboos bin Said spoke last week by telephone with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.