

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri has said after talks in Washington that he hoped for a final decision, possibly in September, on a proposal for resolving a maritime dispute with the Zionist regime on a gas pipeline. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo welcomed Lebanon's commitment to the talks and reiterated Washington's willingness to facilitate discussions. "We consider the process to be viable and will continue to support constitutional next steps leading up to a final decision in the coming months, hopefully September," Hariri said in a statement to the press after meetings with Pompeo.

Be very cautious of cold in the beginning of winter and welcome it at the close of the season because cold season effects your bodies exactly as it effects the trees; in the early season its severity makes them shrivel and shed their leaves and at the end it helps them to revive.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Syria Air Defenses Foil Missile Strike



The file photo of a Syrian air defense system

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) - Syrian air defenses have identified a missile that was fired toward the city of Masyaf near Hama and destroyed it before it hits its target, a Syrian military source says.

The missile was fired from the direction of northern Lebanon, the military source added in a statement distributed on a messaging app. State television had previously reported the sound of a massive

blast near Masyaf in Hama province although there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. Quoting an unnamed military source, Syria's official SANA

news agency reported that the "hostile" missile was shot down at 23:06 local time (20:06 GMT) on Thursday over the city of Masyaf before reaching its designated target.

State television had previously reported the sound of a massive blast near Masyaf although there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties.

A spokeswoman for the Zionist regime's military declined to comment on the strike, but the regime has acknowledged repeatedly striking targets inside Syria in recent years.

Such aggressive moves are usually viewed as attempts to prop up terrorist groups suffering defeats at the hands of Syrian government forces. Israel used to be very careful with its operations over Syria after Russia equipped Damascus with the advanced S-300 surface-to-air missiles in October 2018.

However, U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to recognize "Israeli sovereignty" over the Syrian territories of Golan Heights has seemingly emboldened the regime to launch new aggression on the Arab country.

Under Pressure From Trump

Zionist Regime Bars Two U.S. Congresswomen



U.S. Congresswomen Rashida Tlaib (L) and Ilhan Omar

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Donald Trump has defended the Zionist regime's decision to bar two Muslim Congresswoman from visiting the occupied territories, even as he claims he didn't "encourage or discourage" the move.

Trump told reporters that he "did speak to people over there" regarding the decision but says he was "only involved from the standpoint that they're very anti-Jewish and very anti-Israel."

The Zionist regime announced Thursday that it had taken the unprecedented move of preventing a visit by Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, both Democratic members of the U.S. House of Representatives, over their criticism of the Zionist regime.

Trump had tweeted before the occupying regime's announcement that it would "show great weakness" to let them in.

Tlaib and Omar are outspoken critics of the regime's treatment of the Palestinians and support a boycott of Tel Aviv.

They were due to visit the occupied West Bank and East al-Quds next week.

The two Muslim lawmakers, along with Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ayanna Pressley, have been a frequent tar-

get of Trump since their election to the lower chamber of Congress last year.

The Republican president triggered a firestorm last month after he tweeted that the four Democratic Congresswomen, known as "the squad," should "go back" where they came from, even though all are U.S. citizens and three are U.S.-born.

The decision by the regime appears to be an unprecedented move against American members of Congress. Even AIPAC, a pro-Israel lobbying group in Washington, criticized the Zionist regime for barring the pair from traveling there.

Israel's Knesset in 2017 passed a law banning entry to foreigners who support anti-Israeli BDS sanctions movement, which is meant to initiate "various forms of boycott against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law" and ends its occupation of Palestinian lands.

Omar has accused the Tel Aviv regime of discrimination against Palestinians similar to apartheid.

In January, she enraged the large pro-Israel contingent in Congress, particularly the largely Democratic US Jewish community, by mocking America's branding of Israel as a democracy.

Yemen Separatists Say Ready for Talks in Saudi Arabia Over Aden

ADEN (Dispatches) - Yemen's southern separatists say they are ready to attend a summit in Saudi Arabia to resolve a standoff in Aden after they seized the southern port, seat of Yemen's Saudi-backed former regime.

The takeover by the United Arab Emirates-backed separatist forces exposed cracks in the Saudi-led military coalition that has been battling the Houthi Ansarullah movement for more than four years and complicated United Nations efforts to end the war.

"We thank Saudi Arabia for its earnest efforts to contain the crisis and invite the parties for talks in Jeddah," the Southern Transitional Council (STC) said in a statement. "The meeting will be held as soon as necessary arrange-

ments are completed."

The separatists are a major component of the alliance that too part in Saudi-led attacks on Yemen in March 2015.

An STC spokesman told Reuters on Wednesday they would not cede control unless the Islah party, a backbone of former regime, and northerners were removed from positions of power in the south.

The warning came in the wake of deadly clashes between UAE-backed southern separatists and Saudi-led militants loyal to ex-Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi in Aden, a gateway for commercial and aid supplies.

Both camps serve the Riyadh-led coalition, and have been engaged, since 2015, in a bloody military campaign against Yemen aimed at rein-

stating Hadi, who resigned in 2014 and later fled to the Saudi capital.

The clashes erupted weeks after the UAE announced a surprise plan to withdraw its troops from Yemen in a major blow to its coalition allies.

The Western-backed military aggression, coupled with a naval blockade, has killed tens of thousands of Yemenis, destroyed the country's infrastructure, and led to a massive humanitarian crisis.

In a latest development, Yemen's army and allied forces intercepted and targeted an unmanned aerial vehicle belonging to the Saudi-led military coalition, in retaliation for the alliance's military campaign against the impoverished country.

Yemen's al-Masirah televi-

sion network quoted an unnamed military source as saying that Yemeni troops shot down the drone as it was on a reconnaissance mission over the mountainous Jabal al-Doud district in Jizan, situated 966 kilometers south of the capital Riyadh, on Wednesday.

The source said that army forces managed to push back pro-Hadi forces advancing into Yemen, seizing a considerable amount of weapons and causing material damage to them.

In a separate development, a Yemeni child was killed and another person was injured when artillery rounds and mortar shells launched by Saudi-backed militiamen rained down on residential buildings in Manba border district in the northern province of Sa'ada.

Turkey to Open New Military Base in Qatar

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey will open a new military base in Qatar this autumn, reports say.

"A new Turkish base has been built near Qatar's Tariq Bin Ziyad military base," Hurriyet correspondent, Hande Firat, said, adding that the military base's inauguration ceremony was expected to be "unveiled by the Qatari Emir and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan."

Turkish soldiers were first deployed to Qatar in October 2015, in an attempt to contribute to the regional peace and to boost bilateral relations between Turkey and Qatar. In December 2017, the military base was named the Qatar-

Turkey Combined Joint Force Command.

Some reports say about 3,000 Turkish forces are stationed in the Tariq Bin Ziyad base, which has a capacity for up to 5,000 military personnel.

Since Qatar's Arabic neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain, placed Doha under a blockade in June 2017, Turkey's military presence has taken on greater significance.

The Saudi-led quartet accused Qatar of supporting terrorism, an allegation strongly denied by Doha.

They also presented Qatar with a list of de-

mands and gave it an ultimatum to comply with them or face consequences.

Among the demands was that Qatar shut down the Turkish military base and halt military cooperation with Turkey.

Doha, however, refused to meet the demands and stressed that it would not abandon its independent foreign policy.

"All in all, the (Persian) Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, are uncomfortable with the Turkish-Qatari cooperation. In spite of all this, Turkey is trying to establish a durable security architecture and a military and political domain," the report said.

Baghdad Says Will Down Any Vehicle Violating Iraqi Airspace

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abd Mahdi, following a mysterious blast that hit a munitions depot in Baghdad, has ordered the air defenses to immediately bring down any aerial vehicle that will violate the country's airspace, the government's press service says.

The decision came after a blast hit the ammo depot in the Iraqi capital on Monday, leaving one civilian killed and dozens injured.

Though the causes of the explosion remain unknown, the incident has given rise to a number of theories, including that the Zionist regime might have been allegedly behind the airstrike on the depot belonging to the Popular Mobilization Forces.

"The prime minister ordered to revoke all special flight permits in Iraqi airspace for reconnaissance aircraft, reconnais-

sance aircraft with weapons, fighters, helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles of all kinds available to the Iraqi and non-Iraqi sides", the press service said following the Iraqi National Security Council meeting.

The council also ruled that flight permits would now be issued exclusively by the commander-in-chief of the Iraqi Armed Forces, i.e. Mahdi, or officials authorized by him.

"All authorities are required to comply with this order. Any flights that violate this regulation will be considered an aggression, which our air defense will immediately respond to", the statement added.

It is noteworthy that the decision also comes amid the Turkish Air Force's regular raids against the Kurdistan Workers Party's positions in Iraq, which the latter has repeatedly slammed as an assault on its sovereignty.