

# 'Millions of Palestinian Fighters Will Enter al-Quds'

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas says millions of Palestinian fighters will one day enter the occupied al-Quds, as the occupied territories belong to the Palestinians and they shall remain there forever.

"We shall enter al-Quds — millions of fighters! We shall enter it! All of us, the entire Palestinian people, the entire Arab nation, the Islamic nation, and the Christian nation... They shall all enter al-Quds," Abbas has said in an address to a group of Palestinians during his visit to Jalazone Refugee Camp near Ramallah earlier this month, a video of which was uploaded to his Facebook page.

He made the comment in reaction to the audiences who were chanting "To al-Quds we march! Martyrs by the millions!"

"No matter how many houses and how many illegal settlements

they declare that they [plan to build] here and there — they shall all be destroyed, Allah willing. They will all go to the garbage bin of history," Abbas says.

He then argues that the Palestinians are descended from the people of ancient Canaan, saying, "This land belongs to the people who live on it. It belongs to the Canaanites, who lived here 5,000 years ago. We are the Canaanites!" The Zionist regime occupied East al-Quds during the Six-Day War in 1967 and later annexed it in a move not recognized by the international community.

The Palestinians, however, view al-Quds' eastern sector as the capital of their future sovereign state.

In his address, the PA president also lashes out at the recent international conferences held in Poland and Bahrain, where the U.S. unveiled the financial part of what the Donald Trump administration



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas speaks during a meeting with Palestinian leaders at the Muqata, the Palestinian Authority headquarters, in the West Bank city of Ramallah, on February 20, 2019.

calls the "Deal of the Century", and condemns the labeling of Palestinian martyrs as "terrorists".

"We will not accept their designation of our martyrs as terrorists. Our martyrs are the martyrs of the homeland," Abbas notes.

"We will not allow them to deduct a single penny from their money. All the money will go back to them, because the martyrs, the wounded, and the prisoners are the most sacred things we have."

## 'U.S. Sends Massive Military Equipment to Eastern Euphrates'

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – The U.S. Army dispatched a large convoy comprised of tens of heavy trucks carrying military tools and weapons to eastern Syria to support the Kurdish militants' secessionist goals as popular protests against the Washington-backed militants have risen in eastern Euphrates.

The Arabic-language al-Watan newspaper reported that around 110 U.S. military trucks carrying mas-

sive military equipment arrived in Tal Bidar military base in northern Hasaka via Simalka border crossing.

It noted that the move has taken place in line with U.S.-led coalition's support for the secessionist goals of the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in eastern Euphrates.

Al-Watan newspaper, meantime, pointed to the dispatch of 555 military trucks carrying military equip-

ment and logistical supplies to the U.S.-controlled military base in Ain Issa in Northern Raqqa.

The daily also pointed to the dispatch of weapons and military equipment to the eastern parts of Euphrates despite the U.S. declaration of end of the Daesh in eastern Euphrates.

The media activists in eastern Syria also pointed to large-scale popular protests against the presence of

the U.S.-backed troops in eastern Syria, and said that the Kurdish militias, backed by the U.S. Air Force, have arrested over 100 residents of the town of al-Tayaneh in southern Dayr al-Zawr.

Hasakah and Dayr al-Zawr provinces have been the scenes of large-scale protests over recent years concurrent with intensified tensions in SDF-controlled areas.

President Ghani:

# U.S. Troop Pullout Won't Affect Afghanistan

KABUL (Dispatches) – Afghan President Ashraf Ghani says a partial withdrawal of U.S. troops from the country will not have a crucial impact on the lives of the Afghan people.

President Ghani told Afghanistan's TOLONews that the withdrawal of some 5,000 troops from the country "will not bring basic changes in our lives."

He said the remaining number of forces "will support our Air Force, our Commando Force, and other Defense and Security Forces and will help the Resolute Support to continue [its mission in Afghanistan]."

Currently, there are about 20,000 foreign troops, mostly American, in Afghanistan as part of a U.S.-led mission to purportedly train, assist and advise Afghan forces.

Ghani further said he had called on U.S. President Donald Trump in a letter seven months ago to reduce the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

The remarks came as representatives from the U.S. and the Taliban militant group resumed a new round of talks in Qatar's capital city, Doha, on Thursday.

A senior U.S. official said that American negotiator "Zalmay Khalilzad will inform the top Afghan leaders about the peace deal and then finalize a declaration to end the war in Afghanistan."

Ghani, however, said previously that peace was only possible with an agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

The Taliban, which now control or have influence in about half of Afghanistan's territory, have held several rounds of direct talks with U.S.

officials in the Qatari capital since October. The militants say they do not recognize the government in Kabul.

The negotiations take place almost 18 years after the U.S. military invaded Afghanistan to overthrow a ruling Taliban regime.

The exit of foreign troops from Afghanistan is a condition set by the Taliban to extend the talks.

The Taliban's five-year rule over at least three quarters of Afghanistan came to an end following the US invasion of the country in 2001.

American forces have since remained bogged down in Afghanistan through the presidencies of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and now, Donald Trump.

In the latest incident in the country, three policemen and five militants were killed during fresh clashes in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province overnight, provincial government spokesman confirmed on Friday.

"Taliban launched a group attack on Ghazni Abad police checkpoint in Khogyani district overnight. The Afghan Local Police (ALP) fought back the attackers and the clashes left three ALP personnel and five attackers dead," spokesman Attahullah Khogyani told Xinhua.

Two policemen and eight militants were also wounded in the fighting, the spokesman added.

Local police is a local security entity composed of villagers to defend their community where the presence of national army or national police is slim to ensure law and order.

"The next of kin of the martyred policemen will be notified soon," Khogyani said, adding that the bodies of the slain militants will be handed over to Afghan Red Crescent or local villagers later Friday.

## 'Iran's Bavar...

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He added that the Iranian defense industry experts have gone through the reverse engineering phase and designed and manufactured the parts relying on domestic capacities.

The anti-air defense system can detect 60 targets, identify 13 targets and engage 6 targets. The system is much more powerful than the Russian S-300 and some of its features could be compared with S-400.

General Hatami had earlier said that the new defense shield will be delivered to the Iranian Army's Air Defense Unit.

Also, President Rouhani appreciated the Iranian defense industry experts for developing the powerful home-made defense system.

Meantime, on Wednesday night, Iranian Deputy Defense Minister Brigadier General Seyed Hojjatollah Qureishi had said that Bavar 373 enjoys the capability to intercept flying objects at the range of 300km and the altitude of 65km.

"It can also detect, trace and prioritize 100 targets simultaneously and intercept 6 targets instantly," he added.

Iran designed and developed its own version of the S-300 missile shield, named Bavar 373, after the Russians shrugged off delivery of their advanced missile defense system to Iran on the pretext of the UN Security Council sanctions.

The Iranian version has superior features over the original Russian model as it enjoys increased mobility, agility and reduced launch-preparation time.

Iranian commanders had earlier said that Bavar 373 is similar to its original Russian model and traces and intercepts high-altitude targets.

After the removal of sanctions, Russia delivered S-300 air defense systems to Iran under the existing contract.

## Only Regional

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Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has emphasized during his tour of Northern European countries that Iran invests all its efforts in ensuring security of the Persian Gulf, asserting that the United States cannot cause insecurity in this strategic region.

"They should know that they cannot create insecurity here," the top diplomat stated while making a speech at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) on Thursday, reminding that Iran's Persian Gulf coastline stretches as far as 1,500 miles (2,414 kilometers), making it the longest among the body of water's littoral states.

The country also enjoys control over half of the expanse of the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's foreign minister said, adding that provision of security for the lifeline shipping route is impossible without participation of the Islamic Republic.

The United States has announced plans to form a coalition to supposedly protect shipping in the Strait of Hormuz following a series of mysterious attacks on oil tankers in the strait and the Sea of Oman.

Washington has accused Iran of having a hand in those attacks, a claim Tehran has strongly rejected. Tehran has warned that such acts of sabotage may be part of a general ploy to target Iran amid increasing regional tensions.

The US has asked its allies to join the coalition, a call which has not been warmly received by several countries, including Germany, Japan and Spain, over apparent fears

that such a mission could further ratchet up tensions with Iran.

"Should any one favor security in the Persian Gulf, it must seek security for all of its coastal countries," Zarif said, expressing the Islamic Republic's readiness for interaction with all those who are interested in collective action aimed at ensuring regional security.

The foreign minister said Iran has proven its disinclination towards escalating tensions, citing the country's bilateral and multilateral negotiations with the previous U.S. administration that resulted in the conclusion of a 2015 nuclear agreement between Tehran and major world powers, which is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

## Despite U.S.

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Referring possibly to a deadly Yemeni drone attack on a large air base occupied by Saudi mercenaries in the southwestern Lahij province in January, the EPC report highlighted that the Saudi failure to thwart such attacks came despite the Yemeni drones' simple and rudimentary design.

"The attack on the Lahij Military Base demonstrates a weakness in Saudi air defenses and the lack of capacity in electronic war if we take into account that these drones are basic and are not launched on tarmac," it wrote.

The EPC reported that there had been as much as 155 drone Yemeni attacks against Saudi targets between January and May, a figure much higher than previously admitted.

Saudi attempts to destroy the drones have also failed, with the report noting that Riyadh has launched numerous airstrikes on caves allegedly used to store the drones, without any success.

## Putin ...

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He said Washington's testing of a ground-launched missile shows that the administration of President Donald Trump "is ready for an arms race."

"Are you aware of the fact that all of us have found ourselves just one step away from an uncontrolled arms race, because of the US geopolitical ambitions?" said Polyanskiy.

"This is a source of great concern for us, but apparently not for the U.S.," he added.

During the council meeting, the acting U.S. envoy to the UN Jonathan Cohen described the missile test as a "prudent response" to the "aggressive strategies" pursued by Russia and China.

He accused both Beijing and Moscow of causing a "deteriorating security environment" in the world.

"The Russian Federation and China would still like a world where the United States exercises self-restraint while they continue their arms buildups unabated and unabashed," said Cohen.

"U.S. flight tests to develop a ground-launched, conventional capability are neither provocative nor destabilizing. We will not stand idle," he added.

Cohen also went on to say that Washington was interested in "serious arms control" that includes China and "goes beyond treaties focused on limited types of nuclear weapons or missile ranges."

China's Ambassador to the UN Zhang Jun, however, said in response that Beijing "has no interest" in being part of any arms control treaty with Washington and Moscow.

China has already warned the U.S. against deploying new missile systems to various Asian countries, including Japan and South Korea.

## Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon Strike to Protest Against Labor Law

BEIRUT (Xinhua) – Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have gone on strike to protest against the law adopted by Lebanese government requiring the refugees to obtain work permits.

Palestinian refugees shut down their shops in the refugee camps in Ain El Helwe, Al-Baddawi and Tyre, south of Lebanon, as the Lebanese government held meetings in Beirut to discuss the work of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, among other issues.

Protesters chanted slogans calling upon the government to provide them with facilities allowing them to live with dignity in Lebanon, local media reported.

Lebanese Labor Minister Camille Abou-sleiman gave employers and workers a one-month grace period, which expired on July 10, to apply for work permits.

The Labor Ministry has closed down dozens of shops and fined many others as they were found to employ foreign workers

without work permits.

This has sparked anger among Palestinian refugees who decried this move as "unfair," prompting them to hold protests all over Lebanon.

Some 450,000 Palestinian refugees are registered with the UN refugee agency, UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). They represent about 10 percent of Lebanon's population.