

Iraqi Official:

Zionist Regime Struck Iraq From Syria With Saudi Backing

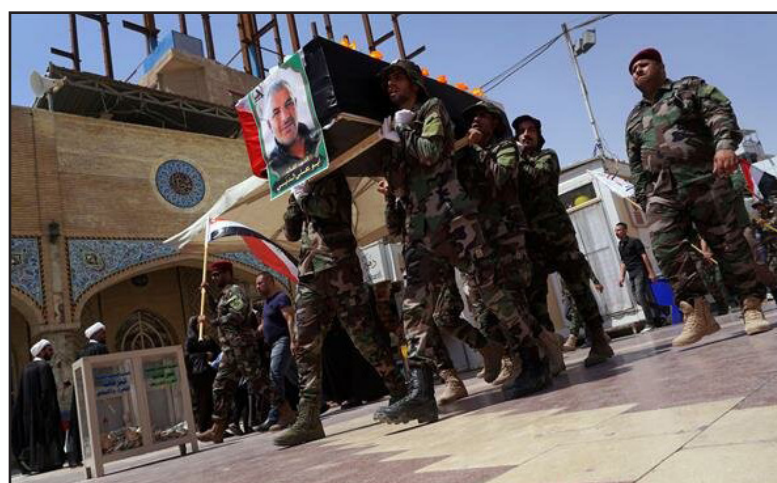
BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – The recent Zionist drone attacks targeting a pro-government military force in Iraq had the backing of the Saudi regime and were launched from the areas controlled by U.S.-backed Kurdish militants in neighboring Syria, a senior Iraqi official says.

The official, who has knowledge of the latest intelligence briefing from Baghdad's security services, told the Middle East Eye news portal that the attacks were conducted from bases belonging to the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a U.S.-backed anti-Damascus alliance of mainly Kurdish militants.

"The drone attacks were launched from SDF areas with the financing and backing of the Saudis," said the official, who was speaking on condition of anonymity.

The latest such drone attacks struck Sunday a convoy of Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) or Hashd al-Sha'abi near the Iraqi town of al-Qa'im close to the Syrian border.

It killed Kazem Mohsen, 45th PMU Brigade logistical support chief who was also known by his



Members of the pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) or Hashd al-Sha'abi carry the coffin of their comrade Kazem Mohsen, known by his nom de guerre Abu Ali al-Dabi, during his funeral procession in Najaf, Iraq, August 26, 2019.

nom de guerre Abu Ali al-Dabi, and severely wounded another fighter.

The PMU said the United States was providing air support to Israel for the strikes.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iraqi source said the plan to target the PMU was hatched during a visit by Saudi Arabia's Persian Gulf Affairs Minister Thamer al-Sabhan to the SDF-held Syrian

area in June.

Sabhan, he added, offered funds to the SDF in return for their base being used as a launchpad for the strikes.

The Iraqi official also stressed that northern Syria was used to launch the attacks as the Zionist regime's drones do not have the range needed to hit targets in Iraq from the occupied territories.

"Israeli personnel were operat-

ing the drones from SDF-controlled bases," he said.

Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi says his country's armed forces are fully prepared to respond firmly to any act of aggression launched either from outside or inside Iraq.

"The prime minister pointed to the high readiness of our armed forces to respond firmly and by all means available to any aggression launched either from outside or inside Iraq," Abdul-Mahdi's media office said in a statement released following a cabinet session in the capital Baghdad on Tuesday.

The statement added, "Abdul-Mahdi also touched on the ongoing diplomatic contacts with all neighboring countries besides Arab and regional states as well as the international community in order to explain the position of Iraq and mobilize regional and international support for solidarity with it and its just position and its policy in support of peace and stability.

Johnson... (Continued From Page One)

52 percent voted in favor of leaving the bloc, a result that has left parliament and the country bitterly divided.

Johnson insists Britain must leave on the October 31 deadline -- already twice-delayed -- with or without a divorce deal from Brussels.

Parliament has rejected three times the withdrawal agreement struck between Brussels and the government of Johnson's predecessor Theresa May.

Parliament typically goes into recess again around the annual party conference season, which kicks off on September 14 and ends on October 2.

Bercow, who was not forewarned about Johnson's suspension decision, said: "It is blindingly obvious that the purpose of prorogation now would be to stop parliament debating Brexit."

"Shutting down parliament would be an offence against the democratic process."

The pound slumped more than one percent at one stage, but shares rose as London-listed multinationals stand to gain from a weaker currency.

Johnson's move "certainly caught markets off-guard", noted Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at Oanda.

Corbyn called it "an outrage" and a "smash-and-grab on our democracy in order to force through a no-deal exit", while Labor's finance spokesman John McDonnell branded it a "coup".

Liberal Democrat Brexit spokesman Tom Brake tweeted: "The mother of all parliaments will not allow him to shut the people's parliament out of the biggest decision facing our country. His declaration of war will be met with an iron fist."

Lib Dem MP Sarah Wollaston said Johnson was "behaving like a tin pot dictator".

Robert Craig, a constitutional expert at Durham University, said there was "theoretically absolutely nothing wrong" with the suspension, noting it was normal for a new leader to start a fresh parliamentary session.

"But the reason that it is causing outrage is because it's reducing the number of available days for parliament to stop a no-deal."

Analyst Maddy Thimont Jack, from the Institute for Government think-tank, said the timing was controversial. "I don't think it's a constitutional crisis," he told AFP, adding: "Stopping no-deal is definitely still possible. There is still time."

A petition against the move has already collected around 350,000 signatures, meaning it will be debated by MPs.

More than 70 parliamentarians have also launched a fast-track legal bid at the highest civil court in Scotland, aimed at preventing Johnson from suspending parliament.

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

Meanwhile, the second-in-command of the Iranian Army said that the Iranian drones are at the service of peace, stability and security of the Middle East.

"Our region does not need foreign forces presence," Brigadier General Muhammad Hussein Dadras told reporters on Wednesday.

"Today, the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran has acquired unparalleled capabilities and stands ready in all areas to meet its needs (in defending the country)," he added.

The commander said that Iran is now in possession of modern military equipment, noting that many of such equipment are displayed in drills and some need not be unveiled, but only if need be and in case of a threat against the country.

Zarif... (Continued From Page 2)

The Japanese premier paid a visit to Tehran in June amid heightened tensions between Iran and the U.S.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have been rising since President Donald Trump withdrew the US from the nuclear accord, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and imposed unilateral sanctions against Iran, mainly targeting its oil exports.

In May, the Trump administration escalated the tensions after it decided to send a U.S. air force bomber task force, including B-52 bombers, and 1,500 troops to the Middle East in response to an unspecified Iranian "threat".

The top Iranian diplomat visited China on Monday and would travel to Malaysia on Wednesday. He began his Asian tour after a short visit to the French city of Biarritz, where a meeting of the world's seven top economic powers, known as G7, was held.

Official... (Continued From Page 2)

Salehi emphasized that production of uranium may increase to 50 tons if the current trend continues.

Speaking in an interview with the German daily Süddeutsche Zeitung on Monday, Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif said Iran will take the "third step" in reducing its commitments under a 2015 multilateral nuclear deal unless the other signatories take action to protect the agreement.

The third step will be taken on September 6, Zarif said, adding that if Tehran comes to an agreement with Europe and the European side begins to implement it, it will not take such a measure.

The top Iranian diplomat lashed out at the US for unilaterally leaving the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and pushing the European signatories to follow suit.

The Americans, he said, need to stop preventing others from fulfilling their obligations or pushing them into breaching the JCPOA.

Tehran has rowed back on its nuclear commitments twice in compliance with articles 26 and 36 of the 2015 deal.

Iran says its reciprocal measures will be reversible as soon as Europe finds practical ways to shield the Iranian economy from unilateral US sanctions which were imposed last year when President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal.

The European signatories to the JCPOA have so far failed to uphold their commitments. They have expressed vocal support for the deal, but failed to provide meaningful economic incentives as required under the nuclear agreement.

The Europeans have already missed a 60-day deadline set by Tehran, prompting Iran to go for the second phase of cutting its commitments on July 7, which marked the start of a second such deadline for them.

As a first step Iran increased its enriched uranium stockpile to beyond the 300 kilograms set by the JCPOA.

In the second step, Tehran began enriching uranium to purity rates beyond the JCPOA-limit of 3.76 percent.

'Russia Concerned About West's Double Standards on Daesh in Afghanistan'

MOSCOW (Sputnik) – Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations earlier stated that at least 4,000 Daesh terrorists are currently present in Afghanistan mainly operating in the provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar.

Russia is concerned about the double standards demonstrated by the West toward the presence of Daesh in Afghanistan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday.

"Undoubtedly, fight against terrorism should be free of double standards... There is

alarming information... that some Western colleagues have double standards in relation to this terrorist organization banned by the UN Security Council and try to use them to accomplish their unilateral geopolitical tasks in Afghanistan", Lavrov told a press conference after talks with his Indian counterpart, Subrahmanyam Jaisankar.

The foreign minister also commented on U.S. President Donald Trump's call on Russia and other regional powers, including India, to step up the fight

against Daesh in Afghanistan.

"Fight against terrorism and drug trafficking that funds it — all of this is in the focus of our position on Afghanistan. And the goal of all our efforts, which we have undertaken in both the Moscow format and Russia-U.S.-China format — we would like to involve other countries in the work [in this format], including India, Pakistan, and Iran — all of these efforts are aimed at facilitating a political settlement that would be accepted by all ethnic, religious and political groups and

that would be based on broad national consensus, while eliminating threat of terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking from Afghanistan", Lavrov said.

Conflict-stricken Afghanistan has long been afflicted by fighting between government troops and Taliban militants, in addition to groups affiliated with al-Qaeda, Daesh and other terrorists.

Daesh claimed responsibility for the recent explosion at a wedding in Kabul that killed over 80 people and left another 180 injured.

Syrian Presidential Aide Likens U.S. to 'Policeman With Baton'

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) - Syrian President Bashar Assad's aide, Bouthaina Shaaban, says Washington threatens the participants in the 61st Damascus International Fair by posing as a "policeman with a baton".

"To be interested in those who come to the exhibition and to determine any specific sanctions for the participants ... means that they are afraid. Such a state as the United States should not talk about such insignificant things", Shaaban told Syrian state television.

According to Shaaban, the United States is trying to pretend to be a "cop with a baton" and its statements cause more problems for Washington itself than for anyone else.

Shaaban noted that she had been included in sanctions lists and banned from visiting European countries and the United States.

"The behavior of the United States is similar to the behavior of any empire, the end of all of which was the same: they used the same style and language", the official concluded.

The U.S. Embassy in Damascus, which was closed in 2012, has recently stepped up its activities on social media, urging foreign companies to avoid participating in the exhibition, threatening them with possible sanctions.

The diplomatic mission called participation in the exhibition of foreign companies and businessmen "unacceptable", urging everyone to notify U.S. authorities about specific exhibitors via email.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said earlier that Moscow considered U.S. attempts to disrupt the Damascus International Fair to be detrimental to Syria and contrary to UN Security Council resolutions.

The Damascus International Fair was held annually since 1954 up until the crisis in 2011. The annual fair was resumed in 2017 and has established itself as the largest event of its kind in the Middle East.

This year, the 61st Damascus International Fair is scheduled to be held from 28 August - 6 September.

Kuwait Receives 42,000 Books Returned From Iraq

KUWAIT CITY (Xinhua) – Iraq handed over on Wednesday 42,000 books to Kuwait which were seized by Iraqi side during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

At a handover ceremony held in Kuwait City, Iraqi Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Hazem Al-Yousefi said that the books were seized by the Iraqi side during its invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and were recently found in Iraq.

These books belonged to the National Library of Kuwait (NLK) and Kuwait University, he noted, stressing that the Iraqi authorities are working to finish

the file of Kuwaiti property in Iraq by the end of this year.

Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations' Affairs Counselor Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah confirmed that Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry has received nearly 800 boxes containing 42,000 books from the Iraqi side.

Al-Jarallah added that the books and the returned items are part of the Kuwaiti archives, appreciating the United Nations for sponsoring the handover.

Director General of the NLK Kamel Al-Abduljalil said that the books are valu-

able in their content and concerned with different types of knowledge and science.

He expressed happiness for the fruitful cooperation between the two countries, which resulted in the return of these important and valuable assets.

The UN Acting Resident Coordinator Hideko Hadzialic congratulated the Iraqi and Kuwaiti leaderships for this tangible improvement in the bilateral relations.

She also voiced satisfaction with the Iraqi government's efforts in backing the cooperation and friendly ties with Kuwait.