

MOSCOW (Reuters) – Russia and Turkey are discussing the possibility of deliveries of the Russian-made Sukhoi Su-57 stealth fighter jet and Su-35 aircraft to Turkey, the RIA news agency cited a Russian official as saying on Wednesday. Russia began delivering S-400 missile systems to Turkey this year, in a step that strained ties with Ankara's NATO allies and prompted Washington to begin removing Turkey from its program for manufacturing F-35 jets, which Turkey also planned to buy. The head of Russia's Federal Service of Military-Technical Cooperation said he planned to discuss the S-400 missile system with a Turkish colleague later on Wednesday as well as "possibly deliveries of the Su-35 or Su-57".

Many persons get nothing out of their fasts but hunger and thirst, many more get nothing out of their night prayers but exertions and sleepless nights. Wise and sagacious persons are praiseworthy even if they do not fast and sleep during the nights.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

## Taliban Say Near Agreement on U.S. Withdrawal From Afghanistan



U.S. troops are seen through a firing position at the Afghan National Army (ANA) checkpoint in the Nerkh district of Wardak Province, west of Kabul, Afghanistan, on June 6, 2019.

KABUL (Dispatches) – The Taliban said on Wednesday they were close to an agreement with U.S. officials on a deal that would see U.S. forces withdraw from Afghanistan in exchange for a Taliban promise the country would not become a haven for interna-

tional militants.

Negotiations over how to end the 18-year war in Afghanistan have been held in Qatar's capital, Doha, since late last year. The ninth round of talks began last week.

"We hope to have good news soon for our Muslim, indepen-

dence seeking nation," said Suhail Shaheen, a spokesman for the Taliban's political office in Doha.

U.S. officials engaged in talks with the Taliban in Doha were not immediately available for comment.

Two sources with knowledge of the negotiations said the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, who has been leading the talks, is scheduled to be in Kabul to brief President Ashraf Ghani about the agreement.

A senior security official in Kabul said the Taliban and U.S. officials had agreed upon a timeline of about 14 to 24 months for the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

Details would be shared with the Afghan government before they were made public, the official said.

Eighteen years ago, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan to overthrow a Taliban regime. It is still fighting the militants in what has become

the longest war in U.S. history.

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

In the latest development, Taliban militants in Afghanistan killed at least 14 pro-government militia members and wounded several other people in the country's western province of Herat, government officials say.

The casualties occurred when a large number of Taliban militants stormed security checkpoints in the Chahardara area, in Rubate-Sangi district of Herat, Abdul Ahad Walizada, a spokesman for Herat police, said on Wednesday.

"At least nine others are wounded in the clashes, and the Taliban militants were pushed back after Afghan forces reinforced the area," said Walizada.

It was not clear precisely how many of the wounded were civilians, and potential casualties on the part of the Taliban were also not mentioned in reports.

## Explosions Hit Gaza police Checkpoints, Three Dead



Palestinians inspect the aftermath of an airstrike by the Zionist regime at the al-Dahdouh junction in the southern part of Gaza City on August 27, 2019.

GAZA (Dispatches) – Explosions hit two police checkpoints in the Gaza Strip, killing three officers and wounding several other Palestinians, the Gaza-based interior ministry said, declaring a state of emergency after the blasts.

Such attacks in the enclave were rare.

Interior ministry spokesman, Eyad Al-Bozom, said security forces were making progress in their pursuit of those behind the explosions, but he did not disclose further details.

"The sinful hands that carried out this crime will not escape punishment," said Bozom.

A spokesman for the Zionist regime's military said he knew of no involvement by the regime in the back-to-back incidents in Gaza city at a time of simmering confrontations with Hamas.

The strike came hours after an Israeli fighter jet targeted a position of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement in the central part of the Gaza Strip.

The Zionist regime's army said "the aircraft bombed a Hamas observation post east of Juhor ad-Dik (village) in the central Gaza Strip."

There were no immediate re-

ports of casualties and the extent of damage caused.

The military claimed that the strike was carried out after four rockets were fired toward the Israeli-occupied territory. Only one of the rockets reached the area, while the other three appear to have exploded within the Gaza Strip, it added.

The regime frequently bombs the Gaza Strip, with civilians being the main target of such attacks.

The regime has also launched several wars on the Palestinian coastal sliver, the last of which began in early July 2014. The military aggression, which ended on August 26, 2014, killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians. Over 11,100 others were also wounded in the war.

The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli siege since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standards of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

The occupying regime denies about 1.8 million people in Gaza their basic rights, such as freedom of movement, jobs with proper wages as well as adequate healthcare and education.

Russian Envoy to UN:

## 3,000 Daesh Terrorists Remain in Syria

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – Russia estimates that some 3,000 individuals with links to the Daesh terror group and its affiliates still remain in Syria, but there are other terrorist groups operating in the country, Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Gennady Kuzmin says.

"Presently, the overall number of Islamic State [Daesh] members and their affiliates in Syria amounts to approximately 3,000 people", Kuzmin told a UN Security Council meeting. "Furthermore in Syria, there is a multitude of other terrorist groups that are present, the most combat-ready of which is still Jabhat al Nusra".

Kuzmin said that the ground in Syria remains fertile for further destabilization an announcement of a coalition draw-down.

Daesh had seized huge territories in Syria and Iraq in 2014 and created the so-called caliphate on the territories under its control.

The organization has also claimed responsibility for a number of terror attacks across the world.

By March 2019, Iraqi forces, backed by U.S.-led coalition airstrikes, retook all the territories occupied by the Daesh terrorists. However, the terror group is still present in Iraq and Syria and continues to stage sporadic attacks.

## Fighting Between Rival Groups in Yemen's Aden Continues

ADEN (Dispatches) – Fighting shook Aden again on Wednesday when former regime forces attacked the Yemeni city's eastern suburbs and fought artillery duels with southern separatists, residents said, deepening the rift between supposed allies in a Saudi-led coalition.

Forces of the Saudi-backed former regime have recaptured most of the neighboring towns they had previously lost to the United Arab Emirates-backed separatists before moving towards the port city of Aden, they said.

The former regime's information minister Moammar al-Eryani said on Twitter that the forces had taken Aden's airport from the separatists.

The separatists and the former regime of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi are nominally united under the Saudi-led coalition in their battle against Yemen's Houthi movement.

United Nations Special En-

voy for Yemen Martin Griffith has told the Security Council that war-ravaged Yemen faced the threat of breaking apart unless an agreement ending the persisting conflict is found immediately.

"The fragmentation of Yemen is becoming a stronger and more pressing threat," said via videolink from Jordan, adding, "The stakes are becoming too high for the future of Yemen, the Yemeni people and the wider region. Yemen cannot wait."

The Saudi-led coalition invaded Yemen in March 2015 to reinstate Hadi.

The separatists have long eyed independence for southern Yemen. Prodded by the UAE, though, they had agreed to fight under the coalition's command. Recently, and after a decision by the Emirates to effectively pull its forces from Yemen, the group has turned its weapons to rival militia.



Forces affiliated with the UAE-trained Security Belt Forces loyal to the so-called pro-independence Southern Transitional Council (STC) man a checkpoint near the south-central coastal city of Zinjibar in south-central Yemen, in the Abyan Governorate, on August 21, 2019.

Southern Yemen was a separate country until it merged with the north in 1990.

Early this month, STC forces seized Hadi's temporary base in Aden port city from his militants on August 10. Some 40 people were killed in the clashes at the time.

Zinjibar is about 60 kilometers from Aden.

According to estimates by the U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), the Saudi-led war has killed more than 60,000 Yemenis since January 2016.

## Iraq, UNDP Sign Deal to Stabilize Areas Liberated From Daesh

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – The Iraqi government Wednesday signed an agreement worth 33 million U.S. dollars with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for stabilization activities in the liberated areas that were once controlled by the Daesh terrorist group.

A statement from the UNDP in Iraq said that the contribution will be used to rehabilitate essential infrastructure and services like water, electricity, healthcare, housing and education in key areas of the provinces of Nineveh, Anbar, Salahudin, Diyala, and Kirkuk.

"We're extremely grateful for this contri-

bution, which represents the government of Iraq's unwavering commitment to stabilizing Iraq and encouraging the safe and dignified return of communities who fled the atrocities of IS (Daesh) group," the statement quoted Zena Ali Ahmed, UNDP's resident representative in Iraq, as saying.

"The government of Iraq has been a strong partner and leader within UNDP's stabilization efforts. Without their support, we wouldn't have been able to complete more than 2,000 stabilization projects benefitting more than 8 million Iraqis. We look forward to bolstering our partnership with this new agreement," Ahmed said.

For his part, Secretary General of Iraqi Council of Ministers Hamid al-Ghazi said "through this agreement, the Iraqi government seeks to implement projects in various affected geographic areas, while focusing on those areas that have experienced the most damage," the statement said.

The agreement also reaffirms Iraq's commitment to the strategic partnership with the UNDP to restoring stability in the liberated areas, enabling displaced communities to return, building and rehabilitating the infrastructure in the provinces that have been affected by the tragic circumstances that have passed through the country," he added.