

Iraq’s Hashd Al-Sha’abi Foils Daesh Plot to Occupy Diyala Oil Wells



Iraqi pro-government fighters from Hashd al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization Units) react as they enter the village of al-Tofaha, southeast of the city of Tal Afar, on November 25, 2016.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – **Iraq’s popular Hashd al-Sha’abi forces have thwarted a Daesh plot to occupy the oil wells in Iraq’s Diyala province, a senior security official says.** Head of the security committee at Diyala governor-general’s office Sadeq al-Hosseini told the Arabic-language al-Ma’aloumeh website that Hashd al-Sha’abi forces in Naft Khaneh region repelled the Daesh plot to

occupy the oil wells in the region. He added that Hashd al-Sha’abi adopted the strategy of line of fire in its recent operations to confront the Daseh terrorist attacks against the oil-rich region of Naft Khaneh and the adjacent areas. “Hashd al-Sha’abi plays a strategic role in establishing security in Diyala and is in control of an extensive area in the province

which sometimes witnesses activities of the remnants of the Daesh terrorists,” al-Hosseini said. Hashd al-Sha’abi continues fight against the Daesh while, according to latest reports, the U.S. jets shrug off targeting the terrorists’ hideouts in al-Anbar province in western Iraq. A security source at Hashd al-Sha’abi command center told al-Ma’aloumeh news website that the U.S. warplanes in northern al-Anbar near the province of Saladdin close their eyes on Daesh moves, adding that the U.S. indifference has entailed negative impacts on the province’s security and stability. “The U.S. jets fly for a long time over these regions but they refrain from bombing the Daesh centers,” a move that runs counter to the U.S. troops’ main excuse for their presence at Ein al-Assad airbase, he said. Another high-ranking Iraqi security source said in September that the U.S. continues its support for the Daesh terrorist group in southwestern Kirkuk. The U.S. troops stationed in Iraqi Army’s Division 14 Command Headquarters have warned the Iraqi troops not to bombard the Daesh’s military positions in Makhoul mountainous region, the source noted. He told al-Ma’aloumeh that the U.S. troops had also warned the Iraqi army not to conduct any ground or air operations in the mountainous region and its surrounding areas against Daesh.

Over Khashoggi Murder Former Saudi Diplomat Barred From Entering U.S.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – **The United States barred from entering the country Mohammed al-Otaibi, the former Saudi consul general in Istanbul in October 2018, when Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was killed there, the U.S. State Department said.** “The murder of Jamal Khashoggi was a heinous, unacceptable crime,” the Department said in a statement, adding that it continued to urge the Saudi regime to conduct a “full, fair and transparent” trial to hold accountable those responsible for the former Washington Post columnist’s death. Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, who was a critic of bin Salman, was hacked to death and his body was dismembered at the kingdom’s consulate in Istanbul,

Turkey, on October 2, 2018. U.S. President Donald Trump and other administration officials had offered a weak and feckless response to the murder of Khashoggi and its subsequent cover-up by the Saudi leadership. There is still no objective accounting – by Saudi or American officials -- of what happened in the consulate, let alone any real accountability. President Trump has repeatedly brushed aside the grisly murder, saying a Saudi pledge to purchase billions of dollars worth of U.S. arms “means something to me.” Trump has cited the profits that the US economy reaps from maintaining good business relations with the Saudis, particularly the Crown Prince bin Slaman.



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Trump has described the Saudi crown prince as a “friend”. “It’s an honor to be with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, a friend of mine, a man who has really done things in the last

five years in terms of opening up Saudi Arabia.” Saudi Arabia is U.S. arms dealers’ most important client and Washington’s number one ally in the Middle East.

Riyadh Refutes Reports on Gas Deal With Qatar

RIYADH (Sputnik) – **Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz Bin Salman Al Saud has rejected media reports about a possible “gas deal of the century” with Qatar, saying that the kingdom has its own resources and projects with Russia.** “We have plenty of gas in Saudi Arabia. We will be impressing upon the world on how much gas we can develop. We will be developing, and we will be also involved with Russia on some gas projects. So we are more than well sufficient with our own resources,” the minister said. Earlier, The Telegraph reported, citing the King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center, that Saudi Arabia burned almost 900,000 barrels per day of oil for industrial use and power generation in 2017.

Replacing the oil with natural gas could allow more oil to be exported, generating additional revenues of around \$10 billion. According to the paper, this could mean that Riyadh could be tempted to strike a ‘gas deal of century’ with Qatar and thereby improve political relations that have become strained in recent years. Bin Salman Al Saud has also declined to speculate on a possible oil price crash, saying that the market will be stable if all OPEC+ nations comply with the output cut deal. “I don’t talk about prices, I talk about market stabilization. I think if everybody attends to their commitments we will have a stable oil market,” the minister said, when asked about a possible price crash if the current OPEC+ deal does not hold.

MPs Vote to Dissolve Zionist Regime’s Parliament

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – **Lawmakers have approved in preliminary reading a bill to dissolve the Zionist regime’s parliament, after no party could form a cabinet for months amidst post-election political deadlock.** The bill is expected to be approved in three more readings before a midnight deadline to dissolve the parliament, or the Knesset. According to the bill, the elections will be held on March 2.

Approval of the bill means the Zionist regime will head into an unprecedented third election within a year. Following neck-to-neck results in the September election, both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s right-wing Likud party and Benny Gantz’s centrist Blue and White party have been unable to form a coalition. The last elections were called after a simi-

lar political deadlock in April’s elections. Each of this year’s elections, and their subsequent coalition jockeying, have largely been a referendum on Netanyahu, who was recently indicted for bribery, breach of trust and fraud in three corruption affairs. Blue and White’s Gantz has refused to sit in a Netanyahu-led coalition, citing the long-serving prime minister’s legal troubles. Netanyahu has refused to step down.

Massive... (Continued From Page One)

in his nation by spending hundreds of millions of dollars over the past two decades without accountability. “What could we do? It was U.S. money coming here and used by them and used for means that did not help Afghanistan,” Karzai said. According to the New York Times, “All told, the cost of nearly 18 years of war in Afghanistan will amount to more than \$2 trillion.”

Minister... (Continued From Page One)

The United States and Iran on Saturday swapped prisoners - American citizen Xiyue Wang, detained for three years for spying, and imprisoned Iranian stem-cell researcher Massoud Soleimani. Soleimani was arrested upon arrival in the U.S. last year after being invited to take part in a research program at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. Several dozen other Iranians are being held in U.S. prisons, many of them for allegedly breaking sanctions. Iran’s Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif said on Monday the Islamic Republic is ready for a full prisoner exchange with the United States, tweeting: “The ball is in the US’ court”.

Suu... (Continued From Page One)

that he had been released but declined to comment further, saying: “We were told to shut up.” Two fellow inmates told the news agency that the release came in November - less than a year into the 10-year prison term. Opening Myanmar’s defense, Suu Kyi said, “Gambia has placed an incomplete and misleading picture of the factual situation in Rakhine state in Myanmar.” “Surely, under the circumstances, genocidal intent cannot be the only hypothesis,” she told the panel of 17 judges. Gambia’s legal team provided a photograph of Suu Kyi with three smiling generals who are also Myanmar government ministers. The lawyers argued that the picture is an evidence of her close ties to the military. “All that The Gambia asks is that you tell Myanmar to stop these senseless killings, to stop these acts of barbarity that continue to shock our collective conscience, to stop this genocide of its own people,” Gambian Justice Minister Abubacarr Tambadou told the judges. The final ruling on genocide may be years away, though. A United Nations fact-finding mission has previously found that “the gravest crimes under international law” have been committed in Myanmar and called for genocide trials. The International Criminal Court (ICC) recently approved a long-awaited full investigation into the crimes against the Rohingya minority. Soldiers and Buddhist mobs razed hundreds of villages in the remote western Rakhine State, torturing, killing, and raping the Rohingya people. The Rohingya have inhabited Rakhine State for centuries, but the state denies them citizenship.

Iran... (Continued From Page 2)

islands have been always in line with the country’s inalienable rights and in compliance with its sovereignty and territorial integrity,” he stated. Mousavi also hit out at the GCC’s reaction to Iran’s decision to scale back its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), saying it was ironical “the countries that invested all their efforts and capital to wreck the JCPOA are now opposing Iran’s legitimate measures”. The spokesperson also strongly condemned the GCC’s “brazen support for the U.S. economic terrorism against the great Iranian nation”, saying it runs counter to the policy of good-neighborliness. “Many of the bogus and repetitious claims in that statement do not merit a response,” Mousavi said. He further voiced hope that the GCC members would change their policies to cooperation instead of making provocative remarks which drive the region into a gloomy future.