

Syrian Air Defenses Thwart Zionist Aggression

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Syrian air defenses have responded to an attack near the city of Damascus, the government’s SANA agency reported.

The media reported that explosions could be heard in the sky south of Damascus.

A video showing the projectiles in the night sky emerged on social media.

Meanwhile, in another aggression the occupying regime’s missiles had flown over the Syrian Golan Heights before being shot down by the Syrian air defenses over the capital, Syria’s official news agency SANA reported on Wednesday night.

The most recent attack was reported late last month, as according to SANA, the Zionist regime’s air force fired missiles at the town of Masyaf in the western province of Hama, while most of the rockets were successfully shot down by the Syrian Air Defense.

Later state-run SANA posted its footage of the incident over Da-

mascus.

The Zionist regime frequently targets military positions inside Syria, especially those of the resistance movement Hezbollah which has played a key role in helping the Syrian army in its fight against foreign-backed terrorists.

The Arab country has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Zionist regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in the country.

In another development, Turkish military forces and allied militants launched barrages of artillery shells at residential neighborhoods in the northern sector of Syria’s province of Raqqah.

Syria’s official news agency SANA, citing local sources, reported that Turkish troops and their proxies targeted buildings in villages on the outskirts of Ayn Issa town on Thursday afternoon, causing damage to public and private



Syria’s air defense system is seen responding to a missile strike by the Zionist regime in the sky over Damascus, Syria, on Jan 21, 2019.

property.

There was no immediate report of casualties.

Turkey has dispatched more than 250 troops to Ayn Issa, as Ankara beefs up its military presence in the embattled region.

Turkey’s official Anadolu news agency, citing a commander of the Diyarbakir provincial gendarmerie

command, said 258 soldiers were sent to the area.

On October 9, 2019, Turkey launched a cross-border invasion of northeastern Syria in an attempt to push Kurdish militants affiliated with the so-called People’s Protection Units (YPG) — which Ankara views as a terror outfit — away from its borders.

rhetoric.

“If you don’t fight like hell, you’re not going to have a country anymore,” he said. “Let the weak ones get out,” he went on. “This is a time for strength.”

His lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, told the crowd, “Let’s have trial by combat.”

Hours later, after they fought police and breached the building, Trump told them to “go home in peace.” He described them as “very special people” whose cause he supported.

Biden, speaking from Wilmington, Delaware, called on Trump to go on national television to demand “an end to this siege.”

What happened Wednesday was nothing less than an attempted coup, said Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo. Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., a frequent Trump critic, said, “Today, the United States Capitol — the world’s greatest symbol of self-government — was ransacked while the leader of the free world cowered behind his keyboard.”

Sasse went on: “Lies have consequences. This violence was the inevitable and ugly outcome of the president’s addiction to constantly stoking division.”

The violent siege forced painful new questions across government — about Trump’s fitness to remain in office for two more weeks, the ability of the police to secure the complex and the future of the Republican Party in a post-Trump era.

The tragedy deepened late Thursday as a Capitol police officer injured in the melee died, the fifth death related to the riot.

Second Trump Impeachment

Several lawmakers suggested that Trump be prosecuted for a crime, impeached for a second time or even removed under the Constitution’s 25th Amendment, which seemed unlikely before his term expires. The House impeached Trump in 2019 and the Senate acquitted him in 2020.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said any remaining day with the president in power could be “a horror show for America.” Likewise, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said the attack on the Capitol was “an insurrection against the United States, incited by the president,” and Trump must not stay in office “one day” longer.

Pelosi and Schumer called for invoking the 25th Amendment to the

Constitution to force Trump from office before President-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated on Jan. 20. Schumer said he and Pelosi tried to call Vice President Mike Pence early Thursday to discuss that option but were unable to connect with him.

The procedure allows for the vice president and a majority of the Cabinet to declare the president unfit for office. The vice president then becomes acting president.

Pelosi said if the president’s Cabinet does not swiftly act, the House may proceed to impeach Trump.

While Democrats led the charge to invoke the 25th Amendment, similar conversations among Republicans within the administration had made their way to Capitol Hill.

At least two Republicans, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan and U.S. Representative Adam Kinzinger, said Trump must go. The Wall Street Journal editorial page, seen as a leading voice of the Republican establishment, on Thursday evening called on Trump to resign.

“The president caused this,” Kinzinger said in a video posted to Twitter. “The president is unwell.”

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., did not join that effort but said Trump’s actions were the “problem” leading to the Capitol violence.

Meanwhile, other Republicans who echoed Trump’s claims of a fraudulent election, including rising stars and some party leaders, faced angry, unsettled peers — but also those cheering them on.

With tensions high, the Capitol shuttered and lawmakers not scheduled to return until the inauguration, an uneasy feeling of stalemate settled over a main seat of national power as Trump remained holed up at the White House.

Wave of Resignations

Several high-ranking Trump administration officials have resigned in protest over the invasion of the Capitol, including two Cabinet members: Elaine Chao, the transportation secretary and McConnell’s wife, and Betsy DeVos, the education secretary.

U.S. Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund, under pressure from Schumer, Pelosi and other congressional leaders, was forced to resign. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell asked for and received the resignation of the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate, Mi-

chael Stenger, effective immediately. Paul Irving, the longtime Sergeant at Arms of the House, also resigned.

Sund had defended his department’s response to the storming of the Capitol, saying officers had “acted valiantly when faced with thousands of individuals involved in violent riotous actions.”

In his first public comment on the mayhem, Sund said in a statement earlier Thursday that rioters attacked Capitol police and other law enforcement officers with metal pipes, discharged chemical irritants and “took up other weapons against our officers.”

It was “unlike any I have ever experienced in my 30 years in law enforcement here in Washington, D.C.,” said Sund, a former city police officer.

Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser called the police response “a failure.”

Lawmakers from both parties pledged to investigate and questioned whether a lack of preparedness allowed a mob to occupy and vandalize the building. The Pentagon and Justice Department had been rebuffed when they offered assistance.

Black lawmakers, in particular, noted the way the mostly white Trump supporters were treated.

The FBI offered a reward of up to \$50,000 for information on people responsible for placing pipe bombs in the headquarters of the two main U.S. political parties. The agency released a picture of a suspect wearing gloves and a hoodie, carrying an object.

The mob swiftly broke through police barriers, smashed windows and paraded through the halls, sending lawmakers into hiding.

The protesters ransacked the place, taking over the House area and Senate chamber and waving Trump, American and Confederate flags. Outside, they scaled the walls and balconies.

One protester, a white woman, was shot to death by Capitol Police, and there were dozens of arrests. Three other people died after “medical emergencies” related to the breach.

Trump, who had repeatedly refused to concede the election, did so in a late Thursday video from the White House vowing a “seamless transition of power.”

Insurrection...

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represented one of the most alarming attacks on democratic institutions in recent memory, it wasn’t the only seen that day. Apparent Trump supporters forced disruptions at statehouses across the country, including in Georgia, New Mexico and Ohio.

And that wasn’t the first time that such a disparate law enforcement response to such attacks drew national outrage and criticism of police. Last May, a large group of mostly white men carrying long rifles stormed the Michigan Statehouse building in Lansing over the governor’s coronavirus pandemic shutdown mandates. There were few arrests and little condemnation from the White House.

In June, Trump administration officials had federal officers clear BLM protesters with flash bang grenades and tear gas, to facilitate a now infamous photo-op in front of a church near the White House.

BLM protesters and their supporters in Portland, Oregon, quickly pointed out Wednesday the huge disparity between Trump’s response to racial justice protests in the Pacific Northwest city and his encouragement of the violence in D.C.

On July 27, following his deployment of U.S. agents to quell weeks of demonstrations, Trump tweeted: “Anarchists, Agitators or Protestors who vandalize or damage our Federal Courthouse in Portland, or any Federal Buildings in any of our Cities or States, will be prosecuted under our recently re-enacted Statutes and Monuments Act. MINIMUM TEN YEARS IN PRISON. Don’t do it!”

The thousands of Capitol building rioters, many who were egged on by the

president’s speech at a Wednesday afternoon rally over his election loss, heard a much more compassionate message from their leader, albeit a defiant one.

“I know your pain, I know your hurt,” Trump said in a now-deleted video posted to his Twitter account. “You have to go home, now. ... We love you. You’re very special.”

On Thursday, President-elect Joe Biden noted the double standard, saying he had received a text message from his granddaughter, Finnegan, of a photo showing “military people in full military gear — scores of them lining the steps of the Lincoln Memorial” during a BLM protest last year.

“She said ‘Pop, this isn’t fair.’” the president-elect recounted.

“No one can tell me that if it had been a group of Black Lives Matter protesting yesterday ... they would have been treated very, very differently than a mob of thugs that stormed the Capitol,” Biden said.

“We all know that’s true. And it is unacceptable,” he added.

Former presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter also weighed in with expressions of consternation, some of them placing blame squarely on Trump.

Adding to the cruelty of it all, some observers have noted, is the Capitol building’s history. It was built with help from enslaved Africans, whose blood and sweat later allowed the union to meet there and strategize its battle against proslavery Confederates. On Wednesday, images emerged showing custodial staffers of color in the Capitol sweeping up the shards of glass and trash left behind by the rioters.

NAACP President Derrick Johnson said the people who violated the Capitol on Wednesday should not be seen as patriotic.

“This is not protesting or activism; this is an insurrection, an assault on our democracy, and a coup incited by President Trump,” Johnson said.

Iraqi ...

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The court said the preliminary inquiry had been completed but “investigations are continuing in order to unmask the other culprits in this crime, be they Iraqis or foreigners.”

General Soleimani and Muhandis were assassinated along with their companions in a US terror drone strike authorized by Trump near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020. Iraqi lawmakers approved a bill two days after the attack, demanding the withdrawal of all foreign military forces led by the United States from the country.

Qatar...

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resistance to pressure & extortion.” He also said in a message to other Arab leaders that “Iran is neither an enemy nor a threat — especially with your reckless patron on his way out,” referring to U.S. President Donald Trump.

Chairing the Tuesday meeting, Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman said Persian Gulf states had reached a “solidarity and stability” agreement that had closed all preexisting rifts.

He also reiterated Riyadh’s accusations against Iran, saying that they “need to unite our efforts to advance our region and confront the challenges that surround us, particularly the threats posed by Iran.”

Bin Salman urged the regional council to stand against Iran’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs as well as what he called “destructive sabotage projects.”

Observers say the Saudi royal tries to regularly demonize Iran in order to deflect attention from his own grave human rights violations, including overseeing a hugely deadly war on Yemen since 2015, his widely-reported ordering of the 2018 assassination of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and an ongoing crackdown against the kingdom’s Shia minority and oppositionists.

God...

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Ayatollah Khamenei’s remarks came shortly after Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps unveiled one of its “strategic missile bases” located on the “shores of the Persian Gulf”.

In his speech, the Leader reiterated Iran’s position that the missile program is developed to “defend” the country against any threats from outside.

“Today our defense power is so much that the enemies have to take into account Iran’s capabilities in their calculations. When our missile can shoot down the intrusive American aerial vehicle that had entered our airspace, and when our missiles can pound the Ain al-Assad airbase in such a way, the enemy has to count on these capabilities of Iran in its military decisions,” the Leader said.

“We have no right to leave our country defenseless. We should not do something that emboldens the enemy, and makes us unable to respond,” Ayatollah Khamenei added.

Since 2019, Iran has gradually suspended implementation of its obligations under the nuclear deal, which set strict limits on its activities in return for the lifting of sanctions.

Other parties to the agreement, notably Britain, France and Germany, have pressed Iran to return to its commitments in a bid to rescue the deal, but Iran has repeatedly demanded that the United States first lift its sanctions or help it circumvent them.

“When the other party meets practically none of its obligations, it is not logical for the Islamic republic to honor all of its commitments,” Ayatollah Khamenei said. “If they return to their commitments, we will return to ours.”

Iran’s Influence in Region

The Leader further pointed to Iran’s regional presence and said,

“Our establishment is duty-bound to behave in a way that its friends in the region are reinforced.”

“This is our duty. Our presence is meant to strengthen our friends. We should not do anything to weaken those loyal to the Islamic Republic in the region,” he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei said Iran’s presence creates stability, and that was proved in fighting Daesh terrorism and the like. “Therefore, Iran’s regional presence is definite, and will continue to exist,” the Leader added.

No American or British Vaccine

Ayatollah Khamenei further voiced his opposition to the import of COVID-19 vaccines produced by the U.S. and Britain.

“I have already said it to government officials, and now announce it publicly. The import of American and British vaccines is prohibited,” the Leader said.

“Had the Americans managed to produce a vaccine, they would not have faced such a mess today in their own country. In one day, some 4,000 people died from COVID-19 in the U.S.,” Ayatollah Khamenei said.

“I really don’t trust them. Sometimes they want to test the vaccine on other nations,” the Leader added.

Ayatollah Khamenei also said he is not optimistic about France after it sold HIV-infected blood kits to Iran in the early 1990s.

The Leader stressed, however, that the Iranian government is allowed to supply the COVID vaccine from other reliable sources.

Ayatollah Khamenei also hailed the domestically-developed Iranian coronavirus vaccine, calling it a source of pride and honor. The Leader noted that first human trials of the Iranian vaccine were successful.

“This should not be denied ... The vaccine has gone under human trials. God willing a better version will also be developed in Iran. This is a source of pride and dignity,” the Leader said.

U.S. ...

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proceedings to certify the Electoral College vote. That certification would eventually take place, but not until well after midnight.

These and other scenes from Capitol Hill shocked the world as violent protesters loyal to President Donald Trump stormed the nation’s halls of power in a brazen attempt to keep Democrat Joe Biden from replacing Trump in the White House in two weeks.

The chaos halted Congress’ counting of the Electoral College results, which showed Biden defeated Trump, 306-232.

In the morning, Trump rallied his supporters outside the White House and urged them to march to the Capitol.

Trump told his morning crowd at the Ellipse that he would go with them to the Capitol, but he didn’t. Instead he sent them off with incendiary