

## Biden Says Airstrikes a Warning to Iran

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) — President Joe Biden said Friday that Iran should view his decision to authorize U.S. airstrikes in Syria as a warning that it can expect consequences for its support of anti-terror resistance groups that threaten U.S. interests or personnel.

"You can't act with impunity. Be careful," Biden said when a reporter asked what message he had intended to send with the airstrikes, which the Pentagon said destroyed several buildings in eastern Syria.

# Kayhan International

## Owner of Damaged Ship Close to Mossad: Report

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- Reports have disclosed that the owner of a ship hit by an explosion in the Sea of Oman is Israeli businessman Abraham Ungar, who has close relationship with the head of the Zionist regime's Mossad spy agency, Yossi Cohen. Maritime security firm Dryad Global and a United Nations ship database identified owners of the Bahamas-flagged ship, the MV Helios Ray, as a Tel Aviv-based firm called Ray Shipping Ltd., which registered in the Isle of Man. On Saturday, Hebrew-language media outlets reported that Ungar, 74, who goes by "Rami," is the founder of Ray Shipping Ltd., and is known as one of the richest men in Occupied Palestine.

VOL NO: LV 11375 TEHRAN / Est.1959

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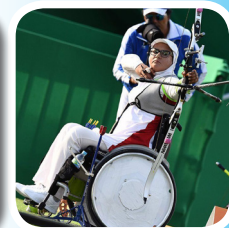
### Viewpoint

## Biden Exploiting Khashoggi Case to Keep MBS under Leash

## China Delivers 250,000 Doses of Vaccine to Iran



## Iran Female Para-Archer Runner-Up in UAE Event



## Yemen's Ma'rib Inching Closer to Liberation



### CENTCOM Head Gen. McKenzie:

## Iranian Missiles Could Have Killed 150 U.S. Troops

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- American troops who survived Iran's retaliatory missile attack on Ain al-Assad air base in Iraq last year say only "luck" helped them ride out the strike, a top U.S. military commander says.

On January 8, 2020, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) targeted the American airbase in the western Iraqi province of Anbar, home to 2,000 U.S. troops and scores of aircraft, with a barrage of missiles in retaliation for the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani five days earlier.

The American strike, which came on then-U.S. president Donald Trump's direct orders, martyred the top Iranian anti-terror commander - who was in Baghdad on an official visit - and his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) - better known by the Arabic word Hashd al-Sha'abi.

Iran responded by firing dozens of ballistic missiles, each carrying a warhead weighing more than 1,000 pounds, at Ain al-Assad air base, as well as another U.S. air base in Erbil, declaring that the attacks were part of its promised "tough revenge" for the assassination of General Soleimani.

In an exclusive interview to be fully aired on CBS News on Sunday, General Frank McKenzie, the commander of the U.S. Central Command, said, "It was an attack certainly like nothing I've ever seen or experienced."

McKenzie said the Iranian missiles were "accurate" and "they hit pretty much where they wanted to hit."

Pointing to events ahead of the retaliatory strikes, the American commander claimed that the U.S. intelligence had detected Iran's preparations for the missile attack and saved enough time to evacuate the base of 1,000 troops and 50 aircraft.

"I think we might have lost 20 or 30 airplanes and we'd have lost 100 to 150 U.S. personnel" without the evacuation, McKenzie said.

Top Iranian military officials, however, have said they notified the Americans of the coming attack in advance, because Tehran did not want to kill U.S. soldiers but sought to send a message.

For those involved in the assassination, the Islamic Republic has said several times that a befitting retaliation will come in due time.

U.S. Army Major Alan John-

son also told CBS News that there was no defense against the Iranian missiles for the American troops who had remained at the base except to take cover.

Johnson described cramming roughly 40 people into a bunker designed to protect just ten people from much smaller munitions.

"We start heading down maybe 135 meters, make it about a third of the way there, the Big Voice we call it, clicks in, 'Incoming, incoming, take cover, take cover, take cover.' I've got another football field to run. I don't know when this next missile's going to hit," Johnson said in the interview, adding that the missiles sounded "like a freight train going by you."

Acknowledging that more than 100 of the U.S. troops had been diagnosed with traumatic brain injury from the blasts in Ain al-Assad air base, Johnson said he still has headaches, ringing in his ears and nightmares.

"Luck. The only thing I can actually come up with is that hand of God protected us. Because, really, nobody should have lived through this," Johnson underlined.

On Sunday, the 60 Minutes program on CBS News is also to release for the first time drone footage of ballistic missiles that ripped through the U.S. airbase.

According to the Pentagon, more than 100 American forces suffered "traumatic brain injuries" during the counterstrike on the U.S. base.

Iran has described the missile attack on Ain al-Assad air base as a "first slap."

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.

General Soleimani and his Iraqi trenchmate were both admired by Muslim nations for eliminating the U.S.-sponsored Daesh terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

The U.S. assassination drew a wave of condemnation from officials and movements throughout the world. It also triggered huge public protests across the region.

Head of the Iranian Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights Ali Baqeri-Kani announced on December 28 last year that the country had identified and was prosecuting 48 individuals for masterminding and conducting General Soleimani's assassination.

### Officials Warn of Plot to Revive Terrorists

# Iran, Iraq Discuss Suspicious U.S. Moves



Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein holds talks with his Iranian counterpart Muhammad Javad Zarif in Tehran, Feb. 27, 2021.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Friday's U.S. airstrikes against Iraq's popular anti-terror forces encourage terrorism in the region, Iran's top security official Ali Shamkhani said on Saturday.

Washington said the strikes on positions of the Kataib Hezbollah (KH) group along the Iraq border were in response to rocket attacks against U.S. targets in Iraq, but the force has denied any role in the attacks.

"America's recent action strengthens and expands the activities of the terrorist Daesh in the region," Shamkhani, the Secretary of

Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said in remarks to visiting Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein.

"The attack on anti-terrorist resistance forces is the beginning of a new round of organized terrorism," he said.

Over the past week, numerous reports had emerged about unusual movements by U.S. troops near the border between Iraq and Syria.

U.S. troops are based across the border in Al-Tanf in Syria, where militants fighting the Syrian government are reportedly trained and armed and used for operations in

Iraq and elsewhere.

Over the years, there have been numerous reports about the infiltration of Daesh elements from Syria into Iraq under the protection and logistical assistance of U.S. troops.

Hashd al-Sha'abi and its affiliates, which have been integrated into Iraq's regular forces, are deployed on the Syrian border and helping the army to stem the movement of terrorists between the two countries.

Suspicious attacks, supposedly against U.S. targets but often with little impact, have escalated over the past year, especially since the

Iraqi parliament passed a law that mandated a full withdrawal of all foreign troops from the country.

Experts say the rise in terrorist activities is apparently aimed at creating a sense of insecurity in Iraq and providing a pretext for the U.S. to keep its troops in the country.

Syria's official news agency SANA on Thursday reported that U.S. military forces planned to transport a new batch of imprisoned Daesh terrorists from the northeastern Syrian province of Hasakah to Al-Tanf.

Hussein, on his second visit to Iran in a month, later met with his Iranian counterpart Muhammad Javad Zarif.

Zarif condemned the "dangerous move" to attack anti-terror forces on the Syrian-Iraqi border, denouncing the raids as violation of the two country's sovereignty.

He said the attacks as well as the recent events in Iraq are suspicious and that they could be aimed at disrupting Tehran-Baghdad relations as well as security and stability in Iraq.

"We insist that the Iraqi government identify those behind these incidents," said the top Iranian diplomat.

The Iraqi foreign minister urged both sides to work together closely to further boost mutual relations, saying Baghdad stands ready to expand its relations with Iran.

He touched on progress made over Iran's access to its funds in Iraq, voicing Baghdad's readiness to facilitate it.

(Continued on Page 7)

## After Much Fanfare About Khashoggi Case: Biden Refuses to Penalize MBS for Murder

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- The virtual ink on a U.S. intelligence report blaming Muhammad bin Salman for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi had not dried when the Biden administration ruled out imposing sanctions on the crown prince - a move that rights groups say would be fundamental for ensuring justice for the slain journalist.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken confirmed on Friday that Washington will not take action against the crown prince himself.

The U.S. State and Treasury departments had announced sanctions against dozens of Saudi individuals over their involvement in the Khashoggi murder and other rights violations without identifying them.

"What we've done by the actions that we've taken is really not to rupture the relationship but to recalibrate it to be more in line with our interests and our values," Blinken told reporters.

Earlier on Friday, the State Department unveiled new visa restrictions dubbed the "Khashoggi Ban" that would allow Washington to target "individuals who, acting on behalf of a foreign government, are believed to have been directly engaged in serious, extraterritorial counter-dissident activities".

For its part, the Treasury said it had imposed sanctions on several Saudi officials, including Ahmed al-Asiri, former deputy head of military intelligence at the time of Khashoggi's assassination, and members of the hit team that carried out the murder, known as the "Tiger Squad" or Rapid Intervention Force.

However, without sanctions against MBS, whom the U.S. government now publicly acknowledges was responsible for the killing, some advocates and lawmakers are saying the mastermind of the assassination is getting away with murder.

Andrea Prasow, deputy Washington director at Human Rights Watch, called failure to impose sanctions on MBS over the killing "unconscionable".

"The fact that the U.S. has sanctioned so many of MBS's associates but not him sends a terrible message that the higher up in a government you are, the more likely it is you can commit crimes with impunity," Prasow told MEE.

"It also undermines U.S. credibility. It's hard to see what incentive MBS has to alter his conduct, whether inside Saudi Arabia, in his conduct in the war in Yemen, or in other extraterritorial attacks on dissidents, when he knows he can literally get away with murder."

Khashoggi, a former Saudi government insider and journalist who wrote for the Washington Post and Middle East Eye, resided in the United States before his death.

Saudi government agents murdered him and dismembered his

body at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul, while he was trying to retrieve personal paperwork, in October 2018.

After initially insisting that Khashoggi left the building alive, Saudi officials acknowledged more than two weeks after the murder that the journalist had been killed. Riyadh insists that the assassination was a rogue operation that happened without the approval of top officials.

The murder sent shockwaves throughout Washington, amplifying criticism against the kingdom in Congress, but then-president Donald Trump moved to shield Riyadh and particularly the crown prince from the fallout.

The Trump administration refused a legally binding congressional request to release a report on the U.S. intelligence community's findings about the involvement of Saudi officials in the murder.

(Continued on Page 7)