

Syrian Army Blocks U.S. Convoy in Hasakah

DAMASCUS (Press TV) – A U.S. military convoy has been forced to retreat from an area in Syria's northeastern province of Hasakah after government soldiers blocked its way, amid rising popular anger at the deployment of foreign occupying forces in the oil-rich region.

Syria's official news agency SANA reported that Syrian army troops, deployed at a security checkpoint, blocked the road and prevented the movement of the U.S. armored vehicles as they were heading towards Umm al-Khair village, which lies west of Tal Tamr town.

The American troops were subsequently forced to turn around and go back in the direction they came from. There were no reports of clashes or injuries.

Since late October 2019, the US has been re-deploying troops to the oil fields controlled by Kurdish forces in eastern Syria, in a reversal of President Donald Trump's earlier order to withdraw all troops from the Arab country.

The Pentagon claims the move aims to "protect" the fields and facilities from possible attacks by the Daesh terrorist group. That claim came although Trump had earlier suggested that Washington sought economic interests in controlling the oil fields.

Syria, which has not authorized American military presence in its territory, has condemned the U.S., saying it is "plundering" the country's oil.

The presence of U.S. troops in eastern Syria has particularly irked the civilians, and local residents have on several occasions stopped American military convoys entering the region.

Earlier this month, U.S. troops shot and killed a civilian in Syria's eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr.

SANA said the victim was driving along a



A U.S. military convoy patrols the M4 strategic highway, near the U.S. base in Tal Baydar, in the northern countryside of Syria's northeastern province of Hasakah on April 25, 2020.

highway when he veered off the road near the Koniko oil field in the eastern countryside of the province.

The incident prompted U.S. troops to open fire, killing the unidentified Syrian civilian on the spot.

Separately, an unidentified drone has attacked a military vehicle south of a northwestern Syrian city seized by Turkish military forces and their allied militants more than two years ago.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that the unmanned aerial vehicle targeted the car near the city of Afrin, located more than 40 kilometers (24 miles) north of Aleppo, on Thursday afternoon, killing all

those onboard.

The Britain-based war monitor did not provide any information about the identity of those inside the destroyed vehicle, as the bodies have reportedly been charred beyond recognition.

In March 2018, the Turkish military and allied Syria militants took control of Afrin after a two-month-long ground offensive, which dislodged the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) militants from the Syrian city.

Ankara views the YPG as the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) that has been fighting for an autonomous region inside Turkey since 1984.

Leader...

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World War they used the opportunity created by the negligence and problems of the regional countries, and dealt their blow. They announced the creation of the bogus regime, the nationless Zionist state.

The primary target of this blow was the Palestinian nation and secondarily all the other nations in the region. A look at the events that followed in the region shows that the main, short-term goal that Westerners and Jewish company-owners pursued by creating the Zionist regime was to build a stronghold for their permanent presence and influence in West Asia and also to gain easy access to the opportunity to interfere, coerce and dominate over the regional countries and governments. Therefore, they equipped the bogus and occupying regime with various kinds of military and non-military tools of power, even with atomic weapons, and their plans included the growth of this cancerous tumor from the Nile to the Euphrates.

Submission of Arab Governments

Sadly, after their initial struggles of resistance, some of which were praiseworthy, the majority of Arab governments gradually succumbed. Particularly after the United States took charge of this matter, they forgot their human, Islamic and political responsibilities and their Arab pride and with delusional hopes they contributed to the enemy's goals. The Camp David Accord is a clear example of this bitter historical fact.

After brave sacrifices and struggles in the early years, resistance groups were gradually pulled to the path of unsuccessful negotiations with the occupier and its supporters. They abandoned the route that could have led to the realization of the Palestinian dream. Negotiations with the United States and other Western governments, and also negotiations with useless international groups were bitter, and unsuccessful experiences for Palestine. Holding out an olive branch at the United Nations General Assembly had no result other than the injurious Oslo Accords, and it led to the eye-opening fate of Yasser Arafat.

Dawn of Islamic Revolution in Iran

The dawn of the Islamic Revolution in Iran opened up a new chapter in the struggle for Palestine. From the first steps – namely driving out the Zionist elements who considered Iran of the Pahlavi period to be one of their safe strongholds to delegating the unofficial embassy of the Zionist regime to the Palestinian representative office, stopping the flow of oil, other great achievements and widespread political activities - all of these measures brought about the emergence of a front of resistance in the entire region. The hope of solving this issue flourished in hearts. The emer-

gence of the resistance front presented the Zionist regime with increasing problems. God willing, the Zionist regime will encounter even more problems in the future.

However, the efforts of the supporters of that regime – with the U.S. in the front – increased sharply in order to defend the Zionists. The emergence of the faithful, young, self-sacrificing force of Hezbollah in Lebanon and the formation of highly-motivated groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad within the Palestinian borders unsettled and alarmed not only the Zionist ringleaders but also the U.S. and other aggressive Western powers. After and in addition to their support of the occupying regime with weapons and publicity, they added recruiting from within the region and from within Arab society to the top of their agenda. Today the result of their voluminous work is obvious and in plain view, revealing itself in the actions and words of certain leaders of Arab governments and certain treacherous political and cultural Arab activists. Today, both fronts engage in various activities in the arena of struggle. The difference between them is that the resistance front is moving with increasing power and hope, and it marches on towards attracting increasing elements of power, while the opposing front of oppression, unbelief and arrogance is growing more hollow, hopeless and powerless by the day. A clear manifestation of this assertion is the fact that the Zionist army—which was once considered to be invincible and lightning fast, one that would stop the aggression of two great armies in a matter of days—is currently forced to retreat and accept defeat against popular forces in Lebanon and Gaza.

Nevertheless, the arena of struggle is volatile and full of dangers. It requires constant vigilance, and the objective of this struggle is very important, fateful and vital. Any kind of negligence, inattention or mistakes in fundamental calculations will inflict heavy damage.

Therefore, I would like to offer some advice to all those who have strong feelings for the issue of Palestine:

Jihad in the Way of God

1- The struggle to liberate Palestine is Jihad in the way of God, and it is an obligation and an Islamic goal. Victory in such a struggle has been guaranteed, because the person who is fighting, even if he is killed, he will receive "one of the two excellent things." [The Holy Quran 9, Sura at-Tawbah: 52]. Apart from this, the issue of Palestine is a human issue. Driving out millions of human beings from their homes, farmlands and places of business, and doing so through murder and crimes, troubles everyone's conscience and inspires opposition in everyone who enjoys courage and determination. Therefore, restricting this to merely a Palestinian issue, or at best, an Arab issue, is a grave mistake. Those who consider the concessions made by a few Palestinian elements

or rulers of a few Arab countries as a license to sidestep this Islamic and human issue, are making a grave mistake in understanding the matter, and perhaps they are guilty of betrayal for distorting the truth.

2- The aim of this struggle is the liberation of all the Palestinian lands – from the river to the sea – and the return of all Palestinians to their homeland. Reducing this struggle to the formation of a government in a corner of the Palestinian lands – particularly, in the humiliating way that is mentioned in the discourse of shameless Zionists – is neither a sign of righteous struggle nor a sign of realism. The truth is that today millions of Palestinians have achieved a level of thinking, experience and self-esteem so much so that they can focus their efforts on this great struggle in the way of God and be certain of divine assistance and the ultimate victory. "And surely God will support those who support His cause; most surely, God is Strong and Mighty." [The Holy Quran 22, Sura al-Hajj: 40]. Undoubtedly, many Muslims throughout the world will support them and share in their struggle, God willing.

No Trust in Western Governments

3- Although using any halal and religiously permissible means, including global support, is allowed in this struggle - it is absolutely essential to avoid trusting Western governments and international groups that are covertly or overtly dependent on them. They are opposed to any effective entity of an Islamic nature. They have no regard for human rights. They themselves are the cause of the worst harm and crimes against the Islamic nation. Which international entity and which criminal power is currently being held accountable for the assassinations, the mass murders, the war mongering, the bombings and the human-made famines in many Islamic and Arab countries? Today, the world is counting one by one every victim of the coronavirus across the globe, but nobody has asked who is responsible for the hundreds of thousands of martyrdoms, imprisonments and disappearances in countries where the U.S. and Europe have waged wars. Who is responsible for all the unlawful bloodshed in Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Syria and other countries? Who is responsible for all these crimes and for the occupation, destruction and oppression in Palestine? Why didn't anyone count the millions of oppressed children, women and men in the world of Islam? Why doesn't anyone extend their condolences for the mass murder of Muslims? Why should millions of Palestinians spend 70 years away from their homes and in exile? And why should Holy Quds, the first Qiblah of Muslims, be desecrated? The so-called United Nations is not fulfilling its function and the so-called human rights organizations are dead. The slogan of defending the rights of women and children excludes Yemeni and Palestinian women

and children. This is the current conditions of the oppressive Western powers and dependent global organizations. The disgrace of certain regional governments that follow them is beyond words.

Therefore, a proud and pious Muslim society must rely on itself and its internal forces. It must raise its powerful hand and remove the obstacles by relying on and trusting in Allah.

U.S., Zionists Targeting Front of Resistance

4- The important point that must not be ignored by the political and military elites of the Islamic world is that the policy of the U.S. and the Zionists is to transfer conflicts to behind the frontlines of the front of resistance. Staging civil wars in Syria, the military siege and constant killings in Yemen, the assassinations, the destruction, the creation of Daesh in Iraq and other similar things in some other countries in the region are all machinations to divert the attention of the resistance front and to provide opportunities for the Zionist regime. Some Muslim politicians knowingly, and some others unknowingly, have contributed to these machinations of the enemy. The main way to prevent these machinations is for the proud youth throughout the world of Islam to seriously make this demand. Young people in all Islamic countries, particularly in Arab countries, must pay attention to this advice from Imam Khomeini (r.a.): "Vent all your shouts on the U.S." and of course, on the Zionist enemy.

Normalizing Ties With Zionist Regime Futile

5- The policy of normalizing the presence of the Zionist regime in the region is one of the main policies of the United States of America. Certain Arab governments in the region, which act as the puppets of the U.S., have been preparing the ground for this normalization, by establishing economic ties and the like. These efforts are completely vain and futile. The Zionist regime is a deadly, cancerous growth and a detriment to this region. It will undoubtedly be uprooted and destroyed. Then, the shame will fall on those who put their facilities at the service of this policy of the arrogant powers. To justify such disgraceful behavior, some people argue that the Zionist regime is a reality that the region must come to terms with. They forget that it is necessary to fight and destroy fatal and harmful realities. Today the coronavirus is a reality and yet all wise people agree that it is necessary to fight it. Undoubtedly, the long-lasting virus of Zionism will not last much longer and it will be uprooted thanks to the determination, faith and pride of the youth.

Everyone Must Help Palestinian Fighters

6- My main advice is to continue this struggle and to better prepare the organizations for Jihad

work, and to expand the arenas of Jihad inside Palestinian territories. Everyone must assist the Palestinian nation in this holy struggle. Everyone must contribute to the Palestinian fighters and stand behind them. We will proudly do everything in our power on this path. One day we came to the conclusion that the Palestinian fighters had piety, pride and courage and their only problem was that they had no weapons in their hands. With divine guidance and assistance, we planned and the result was that the balance of power was transformed in Palestine, and today Gaza can stand against the aggression of the Zionist enemy and defeat it. This change in the equations in the occupied lands will bring the question of Palestine closer to the final steps. The Palestinian Authority has a great responsibility in this regard. One cannot communicate with a savage enemy except through force and from a position of power. Thankfully, the ground has been prepared for the brave and resistant people of Palestine to gain this power. Today, the Palestinian youth are yearning to defend their dignity.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon have been a proof for everyone. The world has not forgotten and will not forget the day when the Zionist army broke through the Lebanese borders and marched to Beirut or the day when a criminal murderer by the name of Ariel Sharon caused a bloodbath in Sabra and Shatila. It has not forgotten and will not forget the day when the same army pounded by Hezbollah had no choice but to retreat from the borders of Lebanon and beg for a truce after sustaining heavy casualties and admitting defeat. This is what full hands and a position of power means. Now let that European government, which should be eternally ashamed of selling chemical agents to the regime of Saddam Hussein, designate the devoted Hezbollah as illegal. Illegal is a regime like the U.S. that creates Daesh and a regime like that European government whose chemical agents caused the death of thousands in the city of Baneh in Iran and the city of Halabja in Iraq.

Palestine Belongs to Palestinians

7- My final word is that Palestine belongs to the Palestinians; therefore, it should be run as they wish. The referendum - with the participation of all Palestinians of all religions and ethnicities; this is what we have been suggesting for almost two decades - is the only solution for the challenges which Palestine is facing at the present time and in the future. This proposal shows that the Western accusations of anti-Semitism which have been repeated time and time again are completely unfounded. On the basis of this proposal, Jewish, Christian and Muslim Palestinians will determine, together, the political system of their country by participating in a referendum. That which should definitely go is the Zionist regime, since Zionism is a bizarre invention which has been fabricated in the name of Judaism and is totally alien to that religion. I would like to close this speech by remembering the martyrs of Quds, including Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, Fathi Shaqaqi, Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi, Martyr Soleimani, the great Muslim commander and the unforgettable face of resistance, and also the great Iraqi Mujahid, Martyr Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. I extend my greetings to the soul of the great Imam Khomeini (r.a.) who opened the path of dignity and Jihad for us. I also ask God the Exalted to bestow His mercy on our late brother, Hussein Sheikh al-Islam who for years worked hard diligently on this path. May God's greetings and mercy be upon you.

Venezuela ...

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outside service stations in the country's capital said they were eager to fill their tanks. Franklin Luzardo, a restaurant wait-staff manager who during the coronavirus-related quarantine has been making ends meet doing deliveries, said getting gasoline is what matters.

"I'm not interested in the origin," Luzardo, 56, told Reuters at a gas station in eastern Caracas. "Without gasoline, the car stops, and that's the bread on our table."

The shortages have hindered food delivery and left doctors struggling to reach hospitals.

"I don't care if the gasoline comes from Iran, just that we get it," said Carmen Rivero, a 35-year-old economist waiting at the La Bandera station. "Without gasoline, food distribution fails, people cannot work."

Iran has often expressed its support for the Maduro government, which also counts on support from Russia, China, Turkey and Cuba.

Teheran and Caracas established close ties during the government of the late Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez.

Admiral Craig Faller, head of the Florida-based U.S. Southern Command, said Monday that the United States is following the Iranian actions "with concern," but refrained from any comments on the tankers.

Iran's Fars News said Saturday that 52 U.S. Navy warships are in the Caribbean for a "possible confrontation with Iran's tankers."

The following day Iran's Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif warned Washington against deploying its navy to disrupt the fuel shipments.

In a letter to United Nations chief Antonio Guterres, Zarif said that any such action

would be "illegal and a form of piracy," according to a foreign ministry statement.

Zarif added that the U.S. would be responsible for "the consequences of any illegal measure".

Tensions between Washington and Caracas remain high following Venezuela's disruption of a seaborne raid by 52 mercenaries that included two Americans and was coordinated by a private U.S. security company.

Maduro blames Washington and Guaido for being behind the raid.

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may be here to stay, at least until a coronavirus vaccine is distributed.

At the urging of San Francisco Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer, the city's parks and real estate departments are compiling an inventory of open spaces that might be suitable for tent camps.

"It is just a new world that we're living in," she said, "and it's going to have to be our new normal."

Soros: EU May Not Survive Coronavirus

Billionaire financier George Soros said the European Union could break apart in the wake of the new coronavirus pandemic unless the block issued perpetual bonds to help weak members such as Italy. The novel coronavirus, which emerged in China last year, has stalled swathes of the global economy while governments have ramped up borrowing to levels not seen in peacetime history.

Soros, 89, said the damage to the eurozone economy from the new coronavirus would last "longer than most people think", adding that the rapid evolution of the virus meant that a reliable vaccine would be hard to develop.

The hedge-fund veteran and chairman of Soros Fund Management LLC said perpetual bonds, used by the British to finance wars against Napoleon, would allow the European Union - itself created out of the ashes of World War Two - to survive. "If the EU is unable to consider it now, it may not be able to survive the challenges it currently confronts," Soros said in a transcript of a question-and-answer session emailed to reporters. "This is not a theoretical possibility; it may be the tragic reality." Asked about Brexit, Soros said he was particularly worried about Italy: "What would be left of Europe without Italy?"

"The relaxation of state aid rules, which favor Germany, has been particularly unfair to Italy, which was already the sick man of Europe and then the hardest hit by COVID-19," Soros said.

Iran...

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"The IRGC said that hopefully, as the two leaders of the Islamic Revolution have promised, the end of the Zionist regime is close and soon the news of Ayatollah Khamenei congregation prayers in the Holy Quds and the region emerging without the Zionist regime and the U.S. will be covered by all the media of the world," the Fars news agency quoted the message as saying.

The military force also vowed to continue to fight the occupying regime of Israel and said the Palestinians remain its top priority.

Quds Day, which Iran has marked since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, is usually commemorated with massive demonstrations across Iran and elsewhere, expressing support for the Palestinians. It is held on the last Friday of Ramadan.

Zarif said on Friday the Zionist regimes is the greatest threat to international peace and security.

"Qud Day is the day to revive Palestinian rights and for the occupation and settlers to disappear," Zarif said on Twitter. "Israel is the largest human rights violator and the only holder of nuclear weapons in the region. Israel, he said, is "the most serious chronic threat to international peace and security," adding that U.S. President Donald Trump's "racist" Deal of the Century "proved Washington to be a hopeless partner of the aggressor".

Jews Must Rise Against Zionism: Jewish MP

The representative of the Jewish community at the Iranian parliament called on Jews throughout the world to rise against and denounce Zionism, just as Muslim people rise against figures such as Osama bin Laden, who take advantage of religion.

"The Zionist regime seeks to take advantage of the Jewish religion, and is not committed to any of its principles," Siamak Moreh Sedq noted.

"Therefore, it is both a humanitarian and a religious duty for all Jewish people across the world to stand up to this regime," the lawmaker added.