

Report: U.S. Training Allied Militants in Syria Amid Reports of Turkish Incursion

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – The United States has been training the so-called SDF forces and militants from the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in Syria, as little as a few kilometers from the border with Turkey, with the drills including maneuvers involving the use of Javelin anti-tank missiles, Milliyet reported.

The Turkish newspaper recalled that just three days after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to launch a new military operation in Syria in late May, AFP published photos of a U.S. convoy patrolling in Rumeylan, an oil-rich region East of Hasakah, Syria, presumably as a message to Ankara not to intervene. Russia also called on Turkey to avoid an escalation at the time, while Syria warned that it could respond militarily.

Turkey, according to the newspaper, wants to establish a security buffer in Syria stretching from Manbij to the West to



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Qamishli in the east, with the latter under the control of the SDF. Only the area between Ras al-Ayn and Tell Abyad are controlled by the militants supported by Turkey, Milliyet noted.

In July, Erdogan called on U.S. forces to stop training the “terrorist” militias and demanded that Washington leave Syria.

“America has to leave areas east of the Euphrates now. This is an outcome that came out of the Astana process,” Erdogan said, referring to the Astana Format peace negotiations headed up by Russia, Iran and Turkey.

Weeks later, Milliyet recalled the U.S. troops had once again been spotted operating along

the Turkish border, this time in Qamishli, northeast Syria.

This week, an AFP photojournalist again spotted U.S. forces training Kurdish forces near al-Malikiyah, Syria, this time with Bradley and MRAP armored vehicles and Javelin and AT4 anti-tank missiles.

Milliyet emphasized that although the Pentagon has long justified its presence in Syria through “concerns over the resurgence of Daesh”, the terrorist group has been heavily weakened, and is not known to have a single operational tank in its arsenal.

The United States and Turkey have occupied vast areas of northern and northeastern Syria since 2016. While Ankara has justified its actions citing the fight against Daesh and Kurdish “terrorists”, Washington has justified its occupation via the ‘battle against Daesh’ and the need to help Kurdish forces against the terrorist group.

Egyptians Angry Over Closure of Largest Coke Factory Ahead of UN Summit

CAIRO (Middle East Eye) – The machines of Egypt’s largest coke factory, one of the biggest causes of pollution in Cairo, have stopped whirring and its doors firmly shut.

The closure of the El Nasr Coke Factory earlier this week comes as Egypt prepares to host world leaders, United Nations officials and hundreds of environmentalists, business executives and climate activists at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Sharm el-Sheikh in November.

However, the shutting of the factory, the latest in a series of closures of state-owned factories, has stirred up a wave of anger, with critics arguing the government, which owns the factory, is closing key businesses needed by the economy.

The government has also been accused of undermining the nationally owned businesses for the benefit of the private sector.

Commenting on the factory’s closure, MP and TV host Moustapha Bakri spoke of “blatant

corruption” and a “conspiracy” against national industries, calling on President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to intervene to protect the factory.

Workers at the factory, now without employment, also fear for their futures.

Ibrahim Adel, a member of the workers’ union of the factory, told Middle East Eye: “All the workers and I feel so sad and angry at this closure.

“There could have been solutions to the problems of the factory other than closure, in-

cluding relocating it to the desert.”

The El Nasr Coke Factory was established in 1960, together with dozens of others, by the late revolutionary leader President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who wanted to turn Egypt into a major industrial and agricultural force.

The factory used to produce 1.6mn tons of coke annually, some of which was used in the local market, with the remainder exported to other countries, including some in Europe.

UAE in Talks to Buy Large Number of Armed Drones From Turkey

ANKARA (Middle East Eye) – The United Arab Emirates is in negotiations to make a major purchase of armed drones from Turkish producer Baykar, two people familiar with the negotiations told Middle East Eye.

The talks between Baykar and state companies within the Emirati arms procurement agency Tawazun to supply the firm’s famed Bayraktar TB2 drones have continued since March, according to the sources.

Bayraktar TB2 drones have a proven track record against adversaries in conflicts in Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh. But they had not been used against an army with sophisticated electronic warfare capabilities and state-of-the-art air defense systems until the Russian operation in Ukraine, where they have been deployed by Ukrainian forces.

So far they have proved extremely effective in combating Russian troops deployed deep inside Ukrainian territory, as well as within Russia’s borders.

One of the sources said the negotiations were focusing on the supply of 120 TB2 Bayraktars. “They will come with a package of ammunition, command and control centers, and training. Together it could be a deal of up to \$2bn,” the source said.

The source added that some of the components of the TB2 might be produced in a Baykar plant in the UAE, if the deal goes forward.

One industry insider told MEE that each Bayraktar TB2 goes for \$5m and each aircraft requires 100 MAM-L smart micro munitions, which together are worth \$15m. There is also an additional cost for training as well as the command-and-control centers, which varies on the number of drones since each center can control up to six.

MEE has asked the UAE authorities for comment.

Baykar has ties to the family of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. One of its top engineers, Selcuk Bayraktar, is married to Erdogan’s daughter, Sumeyye.

ish the arsenals of allies who have been providing all kinds of weapons and military systems.

Turning to U.S., Canadian and European publics suffering under high energy prices, inflation and concerns about food supplies, Stoltenberg urged them to keep the faith, saying that the price of ending support now would be a price that’s too high to pay.

“I understand that many people are frustrated and actually feel the pain in NATO countries with increasing energy prices, the cost of living. But at the same time, we have to remember that the price we pay is measured in money, in U.S. dollars or pounds or euros, while the price that Ukrainians are paying is measured in lives lost every day,” he said.

Stoltenberg wouldn’t be drawn on how long the conflict might run for, but he said that it will end at some point, at the negotiating table.

“If President Putin and Russia stop fighting, then we will have peace. If

Ukraine stops fighting, then Ukraine will cease to exist as an independent nation. So therefore, we need to continue to provide support,” he said.

On Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has made a surprise visit to Kyiv as Washington approved \$2.7 billion in military aid to Ukraine and its allies.

Since the onset of Moscow’s operation, the US and its European allies have imposed an array of unprecedented sanctions against Russia and poured numerous batches of advanced weapons in Ukraine to help its military fend off the Russian forces. The Kremlin has always warned such measures will only prolong the war.

The latest package includes \$675 million to be sent shortly in arms, ammunition and supplies, \$1 billion in longer-term loans and grants for Kyiv to purchase more American equipment and an equivalent amount for purchases by neighboring countries deemed “threat-

ened” by Russia.

Washington has already authorized \$4 billion in loans and grants to Ukraine and its neighbors in the fiscal year that ended in June.

UK’s... (Continued From Page One)

Buckingham Palace initially tried to defend the “honor” of Prince Andrew and quash the spreading news.

When the facts came out eventually, Andrew was stripped of all his titles by the queen.

The succession has rekindled the long-running debate about colonialism and how the British monarchy spawned systems of oppression and slavery worldwide.

At its height about a century ago, Britain was the largest colonial power with its monarchy holding sway over 412 million people, or nearly one-fourth of the world population, in different corners of the globe from South Asia to Africa.

Uju Anya, an associate professor at Carnegie Mellon University, in a tweet on Thursday afternoon denounced the British colonial legacy.

“If anyone expects me to express anything but disdain for the monarch who supervised a government that sponsored the genocide that massacred and displaced half my family and the consequences of which those alive today are still trying to overcome, you can keep wishing upon a star,” she wrote.

In an interview later on Thursday, Anya said she was “a child of colonization” as her mother was born in Trinidad and her father in Nigeria, who met in England in the 1950s as colonial subjects, married there and then moved to Nigeria together.

“In addition to the colonization on the side of Nigeria, there’s also the human enslavement in the Caribbean,” she said. “So there’s a direct lineage that I have to not just people who were colonized, but also people who were enslaved by the British.”

Zoë Samudzi, a Zimbabwean writer and an assistant professor at the Rhode Island School of Design, also took to Twitter to slam the British royal family.

“As the first generation of my family not born in a British colony, I would dance on the graves of every member of the royal family if given the opportunity, especially hers,” she wrote.

The succession of Charles has prompted strong reactions from politicians and activists in former British colonies in the Caribbean, who have called for the abolition of the British monarchy.

“As the role of the monarchy changes, we expect this can be an opportunity to advance discussions of reparations for our region,” Niambi Hall-Campbell, an academic who chairs the Bahamas National Reparations Committee, was quoted as saying by Reuters on Thursday.

“Whoever will take over the position should be asked to allow the royal family to pay African people reparations,” David Denny, general secretary of the Caribbean Movement for Peace and Integration, was quoted as saying.

“We should all work towards removing the royal family as head of state of our nations,” he added.

Last year, Barbados, one of a dozen Caribbean nations which are Commonwealth members, ditched the British monarch as the head of state.

Many former British colonies, most recently Barbados, have snapped their ties with the British crown over the years.

In March this year, a group of 100 Jamaican political activists published an open letter to Prince William, the incoming monarch’s eldest son, demanding reparations.

“We see no reason to celebrate 70 years of the ascension of your grandmot her to the British throne because her leadership, and that of her predecessors, have perpetuated the greatest human rights tragedy in the history of humankind,” they wrote.

“During her 70 years on the throne, your grandmother has done nothing to redress and atone for the suffering of our ancestors that took place during her reign and/or during the entire period of British trafficking of Africans, enslavement, indentureship, and colonialization.”

Albanian ... (Continued From Page One)

search operations in the empty diplomatic mission following the severance of ties between the two countries.

Albanian special police forces, wearing

masks and helmets and carrying automatic rifles, were said to have violated the compound of Iran’s diplomatic mission after two cars with diplomatic plates had left.

The reports said the Albanian police were inside the diplomatic mission for 30 minutes and searched the building which still flew the Iranian flag.

“If the reports by media outlets are true, this was a behavior contrary to international law and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Rights,” Kanaani said.

He said Iran holds the Albanian government accountable for any act of violation targeting its embassy in Tirana.

Under international law, embassies and consulates receive special protection and immunity and are regarded as the territory or “soil” of the sending state.

The trespassing took place a day after Albania, which has for years hosted anti-Iran terrorists in collusion with the U.S., severed diplomatic ties with Tehran, accusing it of orchestrating a July “cyberattack” against Tirana.

Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama ordered Iranian diplomats and embassy staff to leave within 24 hours, following a so-called investigation into the alleged cyberattack.

On Wednesday, Kanaani denounced Albania’s decision to sever diplomatic relations with Iran as “injudicious” and “lacking in foresight.”

He also dismissed allegations leveled against Tehran as “baseless” and “unsubstantiated,” while blaming “third parties” for Albania’s decision to cut ties with Iran.

He said the U.S., the occupying regime of Israel and MKO terrorists residing in Albania since 2016 are the “third parties” that have propelled Tirana into taking the decision.

Albania took in around 3,000 members of the MKO terrorist group in 2016 at the request of Washington, after the group was disowned by Iraq and snubbed by many European countries.

The anti-Iran terrorist group based in Albania has carried out numerous acts of terrorism on Iranian soil since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, martyring senior political leaders, clerics and thousands of ordinary civilians.

Three... (Continued From Page 2)

Israel, as well as miscalculations of certain regional states to allow for outsiders’ interference in the security equations of West Asia, are the main causes of instability in the region.

“It is very unfortunate that certain GCC member states insist on their old and tedious statements as well as blame game instead of taking on responsibility and rectifying their failed and ineffective policies,” he said.

The Iranian spokesman also said the Islamic Republic believes in regional cooperation without foreigners’ presence as the best way to resolve issues, enhance relations among neighboring countries, and safeguard common security and stability.

Kanaani also welcomed the return of Kuwaiti and Emirati ambassadors to Iran and the continuation of talks between representatives from Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Iraqi capital city of Baghdad to restore diplomatic ties.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran, as in the past, underlines the need for cooperation among all regional states to improve security, stability, and peace in the Persian Gulf region,” he added.

The Iranian spokesman then urged certain regional countries to change their contradictory approaches toward Iran, reiterating that Tehran welcomes positive initiatives to improve bilateral and regional relations.

Envoy... (Continued From Page 2)

She noted that Iran regrets the delay in halting nuclear tests and considers it a major reason for the failure of the 10th NPT review conference.

“Should these calls be effective, these ominous tests would not have been utilized for the production, proliferation and even use of nuclear weapons. After all, the world, including the NWSS, should have taken note of the devastating consequences of nuclear tests that are nearly identical to the actual use of nuclear weapons,” the Iranian envoy said.

She highlighted the importance and necessity of “putting an end to all nuclear tests for not only the sake of humanity and its future generations but also mother Earth.”

She said the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was a “right step in the right direction” and the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Whoever... (Continued From Page One)

During the Thursday meeting, the two sides also discussed Kadhim’s efforts to curb the current political crisis in Iraq through the “National Dialogue” initiative in order to find solutions that guarantee the stability and security of Iraq.

Vahidi conveyed the greetings of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Kadhim and underlined the importance of strengthening cooperation between Iran and Iraq in all fields.

Iran’s Foreign Minister Hussein Amir-Abdollahian also spoke over phone with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein, calling for hassle-free arrangements for pilgrims traveling to Iraq by land or air.

He also raised the issue of problems being faced by Pakistani and Afghan pilgrims, his office said, who are also said to be stranded at the Iran-Iraq border for days.

Last year, the Iraqi government eased coronavirus travel restrictions for foreign pilgrims planning to observe the Arbæen pilgrimage. It allowed 80,000 pilgrims to enter Iraq, of which nearly 60,000 were Iranians.

This year, no limits have been applied, with the number of visitors to the gold-domed shrine expected to exceed 10 million, according to government estimates.

In 2019, 14 million people attended Arbæen commemorations in Karbala, a third of them from overseas countries including Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan and Persian Gulf states, official figures showed.

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Stoltenberg also said that NATO is working with the defense industry to explore ways to boost arms production to better meet Ukraine’s needs and replen-