

# Russia: U.S. Mulls Using Terrorists in Afghanistan to Destabilize Region

MOSCOW (Dispatches) – Russia has accused the United States of seeking to use terrorists in Afghanistan to destabilize the entire Central Asia region.

“Afghanistan remains a hotbed of instability,” Russia’s Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu says, Russia’s ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

“The main threat comes from illegal armed groups that have significantly strengthened their positions in that country after the Taliban came to power,” he added.

Shoigu was addressing a meeting of the defense chiefs of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), an intergovernmental military alliance of Eurasian states, in the Belarusian capital of Minsk.

“We believe that the United States intends to use the potential of these terrorist organizations



Militants in the Afghan capital, Kabul

to destabilize the situation in the region,” the Russian official remarked. “For this purpose, the redeployment of fighters from the controlled gangs in the Middle East to Afghanistan has been organized,” he added.

The Taliban rose to power in Af-

ghanistan following the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. forces from the country in 2020. Ever since, the group has been hanging firmly onto power, preventing the formation of an inclusive government hailing from Afghanistan’s all political factions and ethnicities.

Over the past years, the United States has also been accused by many regional officials of being engaged in transferring terrorists belonging to the Daesh terror outfit and other terrorist groups from Iraq and Syria, where the terrorists have suffered defeat, to various other regional countries.

The Russian official, meanwhile, warned that the terrorists redeployed to Afghanistan in such a manner by Washington could start marking their way into Afghanistan’s neighboring countries.

“In the future, their infiltration into neighboring countries is possible for committing terrorist acts,” Shoigu said.

“Under these conditions, we believe it is important to coordinate efforts on the Afghan track and to pay due attention to joint exercises – both bilateral and multilateral,” he concluded.

## Palestinians Call on Zionist Regime to Mark Site of Mass Graves of Tantura Massacre

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) – Palestinian families from Tantura village near Haifa, where Zionist troops carried out a massacre in 1948, have asked the occupying regime authorities to demarcate areas believed to be burial sites of mass graves, and allow them to visit.

The request was made by Adalah, the Haifa-based legal center, citing new evidence uncovered by a year-and-a-half-long Forensic Architecture (FA) investigation of mass graves at the present-day beach resort, some 30km south of Haifa.

“We are asking for the graves and cemeteries to be marked, to put an end to the desecration of

the sites and to allow dignified visits of family members and religious ceremonies,” Suhad Bishara, Adalah’s director of Land and Planning Rights Unit, told Middle East Eye.

The request is believed to be the first of its kind, largely because it is the first massacre of many committed by Zionist troops during the Nakba to be investigated thoroughly, Bishara said.

Nakba, the Arabic word for “catastrophe”, refers to the ethnic cleansing of Palestine by Zionist militias to make way for the creation of the Zionist regime in 1948.

In a year-long premeditated military campaign, Zionist

troops killed thousands of Palestinians, destroyed over 500 villages, forcibly expelled 80 percent of the population and captured 78 percent of historic Palestine, on which the occupying regime was established.

On the evening of 22 May 1948, Zionist troops attacked Tantura, a small fishing village of around 1,500 residents, as part of the offensive. Within hours, they “conducted a systematic massacre of disarmed Palestinian fighters and civilians”, writes FA in their report.

Between 20 and 280 people are believed to have been executed.

Drawing on an ever-growing body of evidence and using 3D modeling, historic aerial pho-

tos and testimonies from survivors, FA identified two sites that are “very likely” mass graves and two others which are possibly mass graves.

“We don’t say it’s conclusive because, of course, we haven’t looked for the bodies there, but they are very likely, because the visual evidence and testimonial evidence correspond one to one,” said Shouredi Molavi, FA’s lead Palestine researcher.

“The other two sites are possible because there we see ground anomalies in the area where people said things have happened. So people were buried en masse or executions happened, but those sites don’t correspond one to one.”

## Saudi Arabia, Canada to Restore Diplomatic Ties

RIYADH (Middle East Eye) – Saudi Arabia and Canada have agreed to restore full diplomatic relations, ending one of the last political fissures Riyadh faced over its human rights record following a 2018 dispute over human rights that saw Riyadh expel Ottawa’s ambassador and freeze new trade.

The decision, announced by Canada and Saudi Arabia’s foreign ministry, came after talks last year between Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the sidelines of the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in Bangkok.

“It has been decided to restore the level of diplomatic relations

with Canada to its previous state,” Saudi Arabia’s foreign ministry said in a statement.

In 2018, the Saudi government expelled Canada’s ambassador and recalled its own envoy to Ottawa, while freezing all new trade over vigorous calls for the release of activists jailed in the kingdom.

The spat started when Canada’s embassy in Riyadh published a tweet in Arabic urging the immediate release of women’s rights activists held by Saudi Arabia.

Although the row pre-dated the killing of Middle East Eye and Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi the same year, it underscored Riyadh’s fraught ties with the West and the contentious

approach to the foreign policy of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly said the two countries will “appoint new ambassadors”. A Canadian foreign ministry statement named Jean-Philippe Linteau as Ottawa’s new envoy to the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia made no mention of its pick for ambassador.

The reconciliation was based on “the desire for both sides to restore diplomatic relations between the two countries on the basis of mutual respect and common interests”, Canada’s foreign ministry said.

Saudi Arabia’s geopolitical fortunes have turned since the

Khashoggi murder, which the CIA said in a de-classified report was sanctioned by the crown prince.

The kingdom’s 37-year-old ruler has overseen a sharp crackdown on dissent at home but is also pushing economic and social “reforms” designed to attract western investment and visitors in a push to diversify Saudi Arabia’s economy.

On the international stage, Mohammed bin Salman is being courted by leaders that once vowed to make him a pariah. U.S. President Joe Biden visited the kingdom in July. The crown prince followed up with a diplomatic blitz across Europe a few weeks later.

### Missile... (Continued From Page One)

Regional tensions likely played a role in Iran’s missile display Thursday. A miniature example of Al-Quds’ golden Dome of the Rock on the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound stood next to the mobile launcher.

U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Washington was aware of the missile report and reiterated that “Iran’s development and proliferation of ballistic missiles poses a serious threat to regional and international security.”

“These activities are all the more worrying in the context of the continuing escalation of Iran’s nuclear program,” French foreign ministry spokesperson

Anne-Claire Legendre told reporters.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani on Friday slammed the reaction of some Western countries to the successful launch, saying they are opposed to the enhancement of the Islamic Republic’s defensive power.

In a tweet, Kanaani referred to the history of the Western countries’ arming of Saddam Hussein’s regime during the eight-year imposed war on Iran in the 1980s.

“The same Western governments, especially the U.S. and France, that played a big role in provoking and arming Saddam’s Baathist regime to attack Iran and showering Iranian cities and people with missiles, those are the main suppliers of weapons to the region, are now worried about Iran’s defensive power,” he wrote.

“They are against a powerful Iran.”

### Zionist... (Continued From Page One)

of in the ranks of the Axis of Resistance.

He said the positions of Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi during his recent visit to Syria after 12 years of a global war against the Arab country are a clear indication of the cohesion of the Axis of Resistance.

He also addressed Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu over his recent threats against Lebanon, saying, “You are not the ones threatening an all-out war, we are the ones doing so.”

He touched on the superiority of the Axis of Resistance in terms of its human capacity, warning that any all-out war will extend to include all borders.

Nasrallah said the Israeli occupation’s

internal front is weak and is facing an “ideological retreat”, which is driving Zionist settlers to pack up and leave occupied Palestine.

“The liberation of Palestine, prayers in Al-Aqsa Mosque, the demise of the occupation entity, and confidence and certainty in our victory” are inevitable, he said.

He said “among the current transformations is the development of the military capabilities of the resistance forces, an example of which is what we have in Lebanon.”

Nasrallah said the Zionist regime was able to normalize ties with some Arab regimes but failed to normalize with their people.

“The occupation entity realized that the Arab regimes are incapable of imposing normalization on their people.”

He said although Iran supports the Pal-

estinian resistance, the Palestinians are the decision-makers, right-holders, and the ones who resist since they are the original landowners.

He said one of the most important transformations that have taken place is the deterrence power of the resistance forces, where the Israeli occupation today rationally calculates every step it would take against the resistance and Iran.

Nasrallah also hailed the support of Iran and Syria, who stood by the resistance in Lebanon and still continue to support it.

### Boy... (Continued From Page One)

demands for change came from across the country.

But in the midst of the deadly coronavirus pandemic, economic uncertainty and a divisive U.S. presidential election, 2020 ended without the kind of major police reforms that many hoped, and others feared, would come. Then, 2021 and 2022 also failed to yield much progress.

Now, three years since Floyd’s murder, proponents of federal actions — such as banning chokeholds and changing the so-called qualified immunity protections for law enforcement — still await meaningful signs of change. The beating death of Tyre Nichols at the hands of Memphis police officers in early January underscored just how long it could take.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Ayanna Pressley, of Massachusetts, said during a recent press conference convened by a Black Lives Matter collective that she sees no evidence of a “racial reckoning.”

Around the world, protests against racial violence and police brutality erupted after Floyd’s murder, reigniting the Black Lives Matter movement. Videos circulated on social media of U.S. police using tear gas and less-lethal munitions like rubber bullets, fueling calls for accountability, which so far has largely come in the form of civil settlements.

New York City found 146 officers had committed misconduct at protests, including one officer who drove a car into protesters. Independent reviews in Philadelphia, Minneapolis and Los Angeles also found those departments had mishandled their responses.

### FM... (Continued From Page 2)

he said, referring to the 1998 killing of eight Iranian diplomats in Iran’s consulate in the city after Taliban militants ran it over.

Amir-Abdollahian reiterated that the foreign policy doctrine set by the current administration is based on “dynamic diplomacy” and “smart interaction”.

The administration follows “a doctrine based on a balanced foreign policy, which means interaction with all parts of the world”, he added.

The minister said strengthening ties with neighboring countries and Asian nations is Iran’s tops priority.

The foreign minister touched on the stalemated talks to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), saying the agreement remains an international document despite its weaknesses and strengths, but Iran’s top objective is the removal of the U.S.-led sanctions.

“We have made good progress” towards the removal of the illegitimate sanctions, he said.

Talks between Tehran and other parties to the JCPOA resumed in Vienna in April 2021 aimed at bringing the U.S. back into the accord and enforcing an end to Washington’s brutal “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran.

The discussions, however, have remained at a standstill since August 2022 due to the Biden administration’s insistence on not lifting all of the anti-Iran bans and its refusal to provide essential guarantees that it would not again abandon the agreement.

### Pakistan... (Continued From Page 2)

relations between Tehran and Riyadh would also have a positive effect on Pakistan.

Career Pakistan Foreign Service Officer Asad Majeed Khan touched on meetings between Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, describing them as very important that reflect the strong resolve of both countries to take steps forward.

Saadia Abbasi, another Pakistani senate member, stressed the importance of developing bilateral relations with Iran. She said sanctions should not prevent the expansion of relations between the two neighbors because Iran’s position as

a powerful country in the region and the world is very important to Pakistan.

President Raisi and Sharif jointly inaugurated the 100 MW Polan-Gabd electricity transmission line which runs from Iran to Pakistan’s Gwadar region on May 18.

Raisi said in addition to energy exchanges, the two countries seek to expand ties in all aspects.

The president said six markets are planned to be launched on the border between Iran and Pakistan to help boost employment and trade between the two countries.

Sharif touched on the history of ties between Iran and Pakistan, saying they have always enjoyed brotherly and friendly relations.

### Oman’s... (Continued From Page 2)

for the development of bilateral cooperation and trade given existing capacities in air and sea transport.

A visa waiver, he emphasized, has helped promote tourism and trade exchange, and increased the number of daily flights between various Iranian and Omani cities.

Najafi said Iran has always welcomed Oman’s balanced and influential role in regional and global arenas.

“There is mutual trust at the highest levels of the two countries and we have always welcomed Oman’s wise and benevolent initiatives,” he said.

According to the Oman News Agency, Sultan Haitham “will go on an official two-day visit to Iran... in response to an invitation from the Iranian president.”

“The visit will also touch on means of promoting cooperation between Oman and Iran in different spheres,” he said.

Sultan Haitham’s trip to Iran, scheduled for May 28-29, comes one week after his visit to Egypt.

Last year, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi paid a visit to Oman, during which the two countries signed a number of trade deals.

### Russian... (Continued From Page 2)

located on the border of Syria, Jordan and Iraq is used to train Daesh militants for carrying out subversive acts; moreover, not only on Syrian territory but also in Russian regions,” the foreign intelligence chief was quoted as saying by RT.

The United States continues to keep its illegal military presence in northeastern Syria, occupying part of the sovereign state, Naryshkin said.

He also said the U.S. is waging an economic war in the form of sanctions against Damascus, which prevents the restoration of the country.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official accused Washington and London of thwarting efforts to reach a settlement over the conflict in Ukraine and of turning a blind eye to increasing “terrorism and violence” inflicted on civilians by Ukraine.

Naryshkin also expressed satisfaction that most countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have not imposed sanctions on Russia over its actions in Ukraine, despite what he called colossal pressure from Washington to do so.

Naryshkin accused the West of trying to resist a shift towards a multipolar world, and doing all it can to stop other powers from rising.

Russia’s top intelligence official argued that Western powers could play a role in ensuring global security and prosperity, but only as one of numerous centers of a multipolar world.

However, the “insane vanity” of these nations precludes them from acting on an equal footing with other players, Naryshkin added.

“Turbulent periods (in world history) are essentially a test of the extent to which nations and peoples have preserved their true foundations,” said Naryshkin.

“Our countries, unlike the West, have preserved a significant margin of strength and strategic depth in this respect,” he said. Quoting from the Bible, the Russian official added that “their end will correspond to their deeds,” and predicted that America and Britain’s fate “will be sad.”

### Iraqi... (Continued From Page 2)

running from Iran to Iraq as well as regional cooperation, among other things. For his part, Amir-Abdollahian thanked Iraq for facilitating the banking and monetary transactions related to Hajj pilgrims through Iran’s financial credits, calling for closer banking cooperation between the two countries.