

IRGC to Unveil Underground Missile, Floating Cities

TEHRAN -- The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said Monday it will unveil two new underground missile and floating cities along the coasts of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman that accommodate a broad range of cruise and ballistic missiles.

Brigadier General Ali Muhammad Naeini, who is also the head of the IRGC's Public Relations Department, said the military facilities will be inaugurated in a ceremony during the Great Prophet 19 war game, which started on Saturday.

Naeini further said the IRGC is prepared for large and

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Kayhan International

Iran Embassy Slams UK MP's Endorsement of Assassination

LONDON (Dispatches) -- The Iranian embassy in London on Monday censured Conservative British MP Tom Tugendhat for "absolutely unlawful" endorsing of the "arbitrary assassination" of Iran's top anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani ordered by Donald Trump.

In a post on its X account, the embassy rejected Tugendhat's claim that Trump's decision to authorize the assassination of Soleimani triggered a chain of events that finally led to the overthrow of former Syrian president Bashar al-Assad.

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U.S. Keeping Troops in Post-Assad Syria

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- The Biden administration has said it is taking a wait-and-see approach to the new regime in Syria, with diplomats in recent weeks holding initial meetings with the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) head, and the country's de facto leader, Muhammad al-Julani, as well as the newly appointed foreign minister Asaad al-Shibani.

But since militants toppled longtime leader Bashar al-Assad in early December, the U.S. has maintained it will keep its deployment of troops in northeast Syria, where U.S. personnel continue to support Kurdish SDF militants.

Turkey has long been ranked by the U.S.' support for the SDF in northern Syria.

Al-Julani, whose HTS group has long had ties with Turkey, told Al Arabiya TV on Sunday that the Kurdish-led forces should be integrated into the national army.

On January 2, the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that the U.S. military appeared to be bolstering its bases in the region, including, according to the monitor's sources, building a new base in Ain al-Arab.

Muhammad Salih, a senior fellow at the Philadelphia-based Foreign Policy Research Institute, said there are indeed several unspoken strategic interests behind the U.S. troop deployment.

The SDF currently controls a large swath of northeast Syria, accounting for nearly a third of the country's overall territory. The land it controls contains about 70 percent of Syria's oil and gas fields.

In combination with relief from the crushing U.S. and foreign sanctions imposed on areas controlled by Assad during his rule, control of those oil fields will be essential for Syria's future economic development. Al-Julani and al-Shibani have made that development the main emphasis in their early contacts with media and foreign envoys.

"Syria needs major foreign investment in its oil industry in order to put it back online, to renovate and refurbish it," Landis, the Center of Middle East Studies director, told Al Jazeera. "Only the Syrian government can do that because the U.S. does not have the authority to sign long term-leases with foreign governments. Neither do the Kurds, because they're not a recognized government. Those wells belong to the Syrian government."

The U.S. troop presence in Syria has, in part, aimed to ensure those fossil fuel fields stayed under their control.

In 2019, then-U.S. President Trump directly addressed that aim, saying during a White House news conference next to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that the U.S. had "left troops behind only for the oil".

Regardless of the U.S. motivation for securing the fields in recent years, their release will be a key leverage point in negotiations going forward, Landis said.

"Sanctions and oil are big bargaining chips," Landis said.

Those negotiations will include whether the SDF will have a role in the new government. In an early sign of cooperation, Julani met with SDF delegates last week.

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West Bank Escalates Resistance Operations



Resistance groups in the occupied West Bank have stepped up battling Israeli forces in solidarity with Gaza.

RAMALLAH (Dispatches) -- A shooting in the occupied West Bank killed three Zionist settlers, and wounded eight others, with one of the injured in critical condition.

Attackers on Monday morning targeted a bus and two cars near the village of Al-Funduq, east of Qalqilya, where settlers often transit through to the illegal settlements of Kedumim, Shavei Shomron, and others.

Zionist officials said two Palestinians were responsible for the

shooting with the fate of the attackers unknown.

According to Israel's emergency services, Magen David Adom, a bus driver was left seriously wounded while two other Israelis were in moderate condition and five more had mild injuries.

Israel's extremist finance minister, Bezalel compared the operation to the events in Gaza.

Smotrich added that the occupied West Bank must end up looking like north Gaza's Jabalia,

which has been decimated following Israel's implementation of the "General's Plan" to ethnically cleanse the area.

The Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza has turned into a "ghost town" with not a single building left unscathed, according to Israel's Maariv newspaper.

Any remaining structures are riddled with bullet holes or scarred by explosive shells, a grim testament to the relentless Israeli onslaught.

The situation has been exacerbated by heavy rains, which have turned the rubble into a mud-filled swamp, making the already dire conditions even more unbearable.

Meanwhile, Israel's far-right security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said that Zionists should realize that there are no commonalities with Palestinians.

"Whoever strives for an end to the war in Gaza will receive a war in Judea and Samaria," he said in a post on X, using a fictitious name for the occupied West Bank.

Palestinian factions called for escalating resistance operations in the occupied West Bank in retaliation for Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

In a statement, Hamas hailed the operation as a heroic response to the ongoing crimes and war of extermination committed by the (Israeli) occupation against our people in Gaza, the displacement plans in the West Bank, and the settler aggression on the Al-Aqsa Mosque and holy sites.

"This operation is a message to the extremist Israeli regime and its ministers that there is a free and rebellious nation that will not abandon its rights and that the resistance will continue until the occupation is removed from all of our lands," it added.

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Canadian PM Trudeau Announces Resignation

OTTAWA (CBS News) -- Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced on Monday he intends to resign as prime minister and Liberal Party leader amid growing opposition to his leadership.

"The fact is, despite best efforts to work through it, parliament has been paralyzed for months, after what has been the longest session of a minority parliament in Canadian history," Trudeau said in televised remarks outside of his home in Ottawa, Canada's capital city. "I intend to resign as party leader, as prime minister, after the party selects its next leader through a robust, nationwide competitive process."

Trudeau, a former high school teacher and son of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, became prime minister in 2015 after his Liberal Party won a decisive parliamentary majority.

The Liberal Party won two more successive elections in 2019 and 2021, but lost the popular vote, requiring him to form a minority government with a left-wing opposition

party, leaving his party dependent on allies to pass legislation.

Trudeau, in his press conference on Monday, called for a more unified political environment and suggested changes to Canada's election process that would allow voters to look "for things they have in common instead of polarizing and dividing Canadians against each other." He said failing to amend that process during his term is "one regret particularly" that he has leading up to the next election.

Trudeau's leadership has faced significant challenges in the wake of the COVID crisis, leading to a loss of confidence among Canadians from various backgrounds. Key issues such as housing affordability, the rising cost of living and high levels of immigration contributed to widespread disillusionment. This growing frustration led to Trudeau's own Liberal supporters to start calling for his resignation.

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's abrupt resignation on Dec. 16 further compli-

cated Trudeau's political landscape and threw his Liberal Party into disarray, reviving calls for him to step down.

In an explosive resignation letter posted online, Freeland said she and the prime minister had become "at odds about the best path forward for Canada." His housing minister had resigned a week earlier.

Asked to address Freeland's departure, which some saw as the catalyst to Trudeau's resignation announcement, the prime minister said he had hoped Freeland would agree to continue in his cabinet as deputy prime minister, "but she chose otherwise." Trudeau declined to share more details about their "private conversations."

Trudeau made a last-ditch effort to shuffle his cabinet, hoping to add some stability to his government, but that failed as well.

The Toronto Star's editorial board said in an op-ed published Dec. 16 that Trudeau is "seemingly more concerned with his own survival than with the national interest,"

urging him to walk away "for his legacy, his party and his country."

The Toronto Police Association also said in a post on social media Dec. 17 that it had lost faith in Trudeau's government, saying it's "time to resign and leave these critically important public safety issues to someone else."

Jagmeet Singh, leader of the New Democratic Party and once an ally of Trudeau, threatened to bring down the Liberals' minority government through a non-confidence vote in the next sitting if he didn't resign.

"Justin Trudeau failed in the biggest job a Prime Minister has: to work for people, not the powerful," Singh said in an online statement.

Calls for Trudeau's resignation gained momentum after U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's announcement of a potential blanket 25% tariff on Canada and Mexico if they don't take stronger action against illegal immigration and drug trafficking concerns.

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