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FOCUS, NUCLEAR, MISSILES & OTHER
SECURITY ISSUES IN WEST ASIA

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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

IRAN

Army: Pakistan continuing border fencing with Iran at fast pace

Islamic Republic News Agency, 17th July, 2021

Spokesman for Pakistan Army Major General Babar Iftikhar says fencing of border with the Islamic Republic of Iran is continuing at a fast pace, while referring to the strengthening of border security with neighbors and the use of modern technology to prevent illegal traffic. The Pakistani military spokesman said "We use modern systems to effectively control traffic on the common border." "We have also upgraded the border management system with Iran, and in addition work to fence the Pakistan-Iran border was also being expedited," he added. He added that so far, 44 percent fencing work on border with Iran has been completed while the whole border would be fenced by the end of 2021.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84407053/Army-Pakistan-continuing-border-fencing-with-Iran-at-fast-pace>

Iran Blasts US, UK for Linking Prisoners Swap with JCPOA

Fars News Agency, 18th July, 2021

"The US & UK need to understand this and stop linking a humanitarian exchange—ready to be implemented—with the JCPOA," Araqchi, aslo head of Iran's negotiating team in Vienna talks, tweeted. "We're in a transition period as a democratic transfer of power is underway in our capital. Vienna talks must thus obviously await our new administration. This is what every democracy demands," he added. He underlined that keeping such an exchange hostage to political aims achieves

neither, and said, "Ten prisoners on all sides may be released tomorrow if the US & the UK fulfill their part of the deal."

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000427000249/Iran-Blass-US-UK-fr-Linking-Prisners-Swap-wih-JCPOA>

Spokesman: Iran to Hold 7th Round of N. Talks after Power Transition to New Administration

Fars News Agency, 19th July, 2021

"Negotiations in 6 rounds in Vienna proceeded powerfully and seriously, and it is natural that religious democracy is ruling Iran, and these talks were delayed due to non-implementation (of undertakings) by the US, and elections were held in Iran and it is natural to allow the government to take over and move forward due to the requirements of democracy," Khatibzadeh told reporters in a press conference in Tehran on Monday. "The moment that the US returns to its undertakings under Resolution 2231 and the nuclear deal and we verify it, naturally the Islamic Republic of Iran will fully resume implementation of its undertakings. We have to wait for the new government to be established," Khatibzadeh said.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000428000438/Spkesman-Iran-Hld-h-Rnd-f-N-Talks-afer-Pwer-Transiin-New>

Iran: Unrests in Afghanistan Not Tolerated

Fars News Agency, 19th July, 2021

"We carefully control and monitor the situation at the borders. Afghanistan's security is our security and the unrest in Afghanistan will not be tolerated by Iran," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters in a press conference in Tehran on Monday. "Based

on the conditions of the day, we are examining the issue and taking action," he added. "We are actively in touch with Afghan groups. We are ready to continue this job [holding meeting] again. We welcome and support any initiative in this direction," Khatibzadeh said. "Only a comprehensive and mutually beneficial dialogue can help achieve peace in Afghanistan," he added.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000428000488/Iran-Unress-in-Afghanisan-N-Tleraed>

Raisi: Expanding ties with neighbors, top foreign policy priority

Islamic Republic News Agency, 20th July, 2021

Iran's President-elect Ebrahim Raisi in a telephone conversation with Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov said expansion of relations with neighbors is the first foreign policy priority. Raisi congratulated him on the great Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha as well as Turkmenistan's independence anniversary. He also described bilateral relations as "more than just a neighboring country" and pointed to the two countries' vast potential for improving relations. He further emphasized the continuation and strengthening of international cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan. Raisi also stressed developments in Afghanistan as very important for both countries and highlighted the need for the officials of the two countries for holding talks and consultations in this regard.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84410919/Raisi-Expanding-ties-with-neighbors-top-foreign-policy-priority>

Iran, India Call for Peaceful Solution to Afghan Crisis

Fars News Agency, 21st July, 2021

During the phone talk today, Zarif and Jaishankar called on the international organizations to help resolve and prevent further displacement of Afghan people. The Iranian and Indian foreign ministers called for an immediate political solution to Afghanistan crisis. In a relevant development last week, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai in a virtual meeting hosted by Tehran blasted the US military presence in Afghanistan for its adverse effects on that country. Karzai made the remarks in an online meeting hosted by Iran and dubbed "Afghanistan, Sustainable Peace and Security".

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000430000430/Iran-India-Call-fr-Peacefl-Slin-Afghan-Crisis>

Rouhani hails role of Turkey, Iran in solving regional, Islamic world problems

Islamic Republic News Agency, 21st July, 2021

President Hassan Rouhani in a phone conversation with his Turkish counterpart Recep Teyyep Erdogan hailed the roles of both countries as two great powers in the region and the Islamic world. During the conversation, he congratulated the Turkish government and people on Eid al-Adha and said Iran and Turkey, as two great powers in the region and the Islamic world, have an important role in resolving regional issues and problems. He also expressed satisfaction over the well-established relations between the two nations in all

possible areas including economic, Political, cultural and international issues.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84412616/Rouhani-hails-role-of-Turkey-Iran-in-solving-regional-Islamic>

Rouhani: Iran, Turkey's Responsible Approach Helps Resolution of Regional Problems

Fars News Agency, 22nd July, 2021

“Iran and Turkey, as two great powers in the region and the Islamic world, have an important role in resolving regional issues and problems,” Rouhani said in the phone talks on Wednesday during which he congratulated Erdogan on the occasion of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha (feast of Sacrifice). He hailed the continuous and good relationship between the two neighbouring countries in all areas of bilateral relations, including economic, political, cultural and international ones. Emphasizing the need to continue their cooperation in the future and the development and deepening of bilateral ties, Rouhani said,” Iran and Turkey have a responsible and cooperative approach in various global and regional issues and matters affecting the Islamic world, which has helped solve the region's problems through dialogue and negotiation.”

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000431000281/Rhani-Iran-Trkey's-Respsible-Approch-Helps-Reslin-f-Reginal-Prblems>

Iran, EU Confer on JCPOA Developments

Fars News Agency, 22nd July, 2021

In a telephone conversation on Wednesday, Zarif exchanged views with Borrell on the nuclear deal and the latest developments in Afghanistan. Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said last

Monday that the major policies of the Islamic Republic will not change by change of administrations, and the government of new President Seyed Ebrahim Rayeesi will continue talks with the world powers in Vienna. “Of course, the major and principled policies of the Islamic Republic are the ones set by Supreme Leader and the mainstream bodies. The government is the executive body and the foreign ministry implements the decisions. This will continue in the normal way. It is important that the interests of people and the major decisions of the Islamic Republic will be met precisely,” Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000431000316/Iran-EU-Cnfer-n-JCPOA-Develpmens>

Khamenei calls largely Arab province of Iran 'loyal' amid protests

Al-monitor, 23rd July, 2021

Iran’s supreme leader praised the people of Khuzestan province Friday in an apparent response to continuing protests in the impoverished region. “The people of Khuzestan are very loyal,” Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a tweet. Oil-rich Khuzestan province in Iran's southwest has been the site in recent days of major protests against a lack of clean drinking water. Residents of the region, many of whom are from Iran’s Arab minority, also suffer from electricity cuts, poor air quality and neglect from the state, according to activists. Khamenei also praised the conduct of the people of Khuzestan during the Iran-Iraq war. When Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein invaded Iraq, he thought that Arabs in Khuzestan would side with his forces. Locals did not welcome the Iraqi military as liberators, however.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/khamenei->

[calls-largely-arab-province-iran-loyal-amid-protests#ixzz72SuSTLgS](#)

Iran, Pakistan discuss maritime security cooperation

Islamic Republic News Agency, 24th July, 2021

Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Karachi and Director General of Pakistan Maritime Security Agency in a meeting discussed security cooperation in the maritime sector. Hassan Nourian and Director General of PMSA Rear Admiral Muhammad Shuaib discussed mutual cooperation in the field of maritime security. During the meeting, the need to sign a memorandum of understanding was stressed between PMSA and Border Guard Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to develop and deepen cooperation on issues of mutual interest, the draft of which has already been provided to Border Guard Command through diplomatic channels.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84414487/Iran-Pakistan-discuss-maritime-security-cooperation>

Deputy DM: Iran Producing Drones from A to Z

Fars News Agency, 24th July, 2021

Deputy Defense Minister and Head of Iran Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO) Second Brigadier General Afshin Khajeh Fard underlined his country's self-sufficiency in manufacturing different types of drones, saying that all parts of the aircraft are produced indigenously. General Khajeh Fard made the remarks while visiting Iran's pavilion in Russia's international aerospace exhibition, officially known as the International Aviation and Space Salon or MAKS 2021.

"Today, we are self-sufficient in building drones from their fuselage to various subsystems and engines," the Iranian official added. Khajeh Fard said, "We have broken considerable grounds with regard to UAV flight ceiling, their precision, automatic takeoff and landing, as well as nocturnal missions."

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000502000360/Depy-DM-Iran-Prdcing-Drnes-frm-A-Z>

Navy commander terms presence of Iranian ships in Gulf of Finland as historic

Islamic Republic News Agency, 24th July, 2021

Iran's Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi described the presence of Iran's Sahand and Makran ships in the Gulf of Finland as a historic event and said the success means the opening of the gates of the North Sea and Finland to Iranian fleet. Khanzadi, who arrived in St. Petersburg, Russia, Saturday evening at the head of a delegation, the Iranian ships travelled via such a long routes to enter the strategic areas that is unprecedented." The Iranian navy commander has traveled to St. Petersburg upon the invitation of the Russian Minister of Defense. He took part in Russian naval drills as well.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84414827/Navy-commander-terms-presence-of-Iranian-ships-in-Gulf-of-Finland>

Iran Opens 1st Specialized Nuclear Industry Innovation Center

Fars News Agency, 27th July, 2021

The First Specialized Nuclear Industry Innovation Center was inaugurated in Tehran on Monday in the presence of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran

(AEOI) Chief Ali Akbar Salehi and Vice-President for Science and Technology Sourena Sattari. The First Specialized Nuclear Industry Innovation Center was launched with the aim of commercializing the research achievements of the country's nuclear scientists. In a relevant development in late May, Salehi said his country continues uranium enrichment at 5%, 20% and 60% levels of purity.

"The %5, 20% and 60% enrichments still continue and the quantity of our stored %20 enriched uranium is now over 90 kilograms," Salehi said, adding that the 90-kilogram uranium was achieved in four months. "The quantity of Iran's 60% enriched uranium is over 2.5 kilograms and our stored 5% uranium weighs more than five tons," he noted.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000504000843/Iran-Opens-s-Specialized-Nuclear-Industry-Innovation-Center>

Blinken: Iran nuclear talks 'cannot go on indefinitely'

Al-Monitor, 29th July, 2021

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Thursday that negotiations to revive the Iranian nuclear agreement "cannot go on indefinitely." Blinken made the remarks during a news conference in Kuwait City with the Kuwaiti foreign minister, Sheikh Ahmed Nasser Al Mohammed Al Sabah. "We're committed to diplomacy, but this process cannot go on indefinitely," Blinken said of Washington's indirect nuclear negotiations with Tehran. "We look to see what Iran is ready to do or not ready to do and remain fully prepared to return to Vienna to continue negotiations," Blinken said. "The ball remains in Iran's court."

[https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/blinken-](https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/blinken-iran-nuclear-talks-cannot-go-indefinitely#ixzz72T0scxnJ)

[iran-nuclear-talks-cannot-go-indefinitely#ixzz72T0scxnJ](https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000506000778/AEOI-Spokesman-Iranian-Parliament's-Law-on-Sanctions-Removal-Helping-Nuclear-Industry)

AEOI Spokesman: Iranian Parliament's Law on Sanctions Removal Helping Nuclear Industry

Fars News Agency, 29th July, 2021

Kamalvandi made the remarks in a meeting in the Iranian parliament while reporting on the progress of the implementation of the law "Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions and Protect Rights of the People". "The parliament's piece of legislation gives Iran nuclear agency a valuable opportunity to review, rebuild and update its technical-production capacities," he said. The parliament's piece of legislation dubbed "Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions and Protect Rights of the People" was approved in December amid the continued indifference of the JCPOA participants to the illegal US sanctions against Tehran.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000506000778/AEOI-Spokesman-Iranian-Parliament's-Law-on-Sanctions-Removal-Helping-Nuclear-Industry>

US taking hostage JCPOA for Iran's missiles, regional influence

Islamic Republic News Agency, 29th July, 2021

Iran's Ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations Kazem Gharibabadi has announced that the United States wants to take the 2015 nuclear deal hostage to pursue its pressure campaign against Iranians' missile program and their regional influence. The US authorities have said that their return to the JCPOA depends on potential future talks on regional issues, which are completely irrelevant to the nuclear negotiations, he said, adding that

they also refrain from lift arms embargo, which is in violation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231. The Americans made excessive demands on Iran's nuclear activities and obligations, which have been fully rejected by the Iranian side, Gharibabadi mentioned.

<https://en.irna.ir/news/84419756/US-taking-hostage-JCPOA-for-Iran-s-missiles-regional-influence>

Parliament Speaker: Iran, Syria Finalize Comprehensive Agreement

Fars News Agency, 30th July, 2021

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that Tehran and Damascus finalized a previously signed comprehensive agreement to broaden economic cooperation during his official visit to Syria. Qalibaf made the remarks after a two-day visit to Damascus at Tehran Mehrabad Airport. "A comprehensive agreement between Iran and Syria which was signed more than a year ago was finalized during the meeting and will come into force in the next 3 months," the Iranian parliament speaker said. "My visit to Syria was done in an important period of time and with an important goal," he added.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000508000306/Parliamen-Speaker-Iran-Syria-Finalize-Cmprehensive-Agreemen>

FM Blasts US, E3 for Efforts to Blackmail Iran into Renegotiating JCPOA

Fars News Agency, 30th July, 2021

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif blasted the US and the three European parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal over their "ill-intention" with regard to Iran and trying to blackmail Iran into renegotiating the nuclear deal. "The US and E3 have been

transparent about their transgressions and have repeatedly stated their ill-intention to compel Iran to renegotiate the JCPOA provisions through economic pressure and blackmail," Zarif said in a letter to UN Secretary General António Guterres published on Friday. The Iranian foreign minister pointed out that his experience as Iran's foreign minister shows that the Western powers find it beneath them to engage on equal footing with middle-income countries, let alone developing nations. While Iran fully complied with its obligations under the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Western countries only paid lip service to their contractual obligations, Zarif said.

<https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000508000418/FM-Blass-US-E3-fr-Effrs-Blackmail-Iran-in-Renegiaing-JCPOA>

IRAQ

Baghdad explosion kills at least 28 in busy Sadr City market

Al-Monitor, 19th July, 2021

A bomb killed at least 28 people in Baghdad on Monday, hospital and police sources told Reuters, in what marked the latest explosion to target the Iraqi neighborhood of Sadr City this year. The attack occurred in a busy market in the mostly Shiite neighborhood as residents were shopping for the upcoming Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, Iraq's Interior Ministry said in a statement. The blast left at least 28 people dead and injured 50 others. Citing a police source, Reuters reported that the victims included women and children.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/baghdad-explosion-kills-least-28-busy-sadr-city-market#ixzz72YeMYnz7>

Al-Araji: we assured the American side that Iraq does not need any foreign combat force on its territory

Iraqi News Agency, 24th July, 2021

The National Security Adviser, Qassem al-Araji, confirmed to the American side that Iraq does not need any foreign combat force on its territory. Al-Araji, who is currently visiting Washington, said in a statement by his office, received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA) on Saturday: "We assured the American side that Iraq does not need any foreign combat force on its territory, and the day of December 31, 2021, will be an important date. Earlier, Foreign Minister Fouad Hussein confirmed that the Iraqi government is moving confidently towards holding the elections on schedule, while stressing full respect for Iraq's sovereignty.

<https://ina.iq/eng/12995-al-araji-we-assured-the-american-side-that-iraq-does-not-need-any-foreign-combat-force-on-its-territory.html>

Drone Attack Targets the Global Coalition Base in Kurdistan

Iraqi News Agency, 24th July, 2021

The Global Coalition announced on Saturday, that a drone had targeted its base in Kurdistan region. Wayne Marotto, the Coalition spokesman said in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that a drone targeted a base hosting the Global Coalition forces in Kurdistan region, noting that the attack did not cause any injuries or damage. Marotto pointed out that the United States and the coalition forces are vigilant and will reserve the right to self-defense.

<https://ina.iq/eng/12999-drone-attack-targets-the-global-coalition-base-in-kurdistan.html>

Iraq still needs US help to defeat Islamic State, foreign minister says

Al-Monitor, 24th July, 2021

Iraq still needs support from the US-led coalition to defeat the Islamic State, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said Friday amid reports the Biden administration is planning to withdraw combat troops from the country. "There's still terrorist activities for ISIS in Iraq," Hussein said alongside US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday, using a common abbreviation for the Islamic State. "We need cooperation with the international coalition and to work with the international coalition under the leadership of the United States and to exchange information with the international coalition, the United States and with Iraq to defeat ISIS," Hussein said.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/iraq-still-needs-us-help-defeat-islamic-state-foreign-minister-says#ixzz72YfhpGIR>

Iraqi Militia Leader Nasser Al-Shammari: Attacks On U.S. Forces In Iraq Will Continue Despite Change Of Designation From 'Combat Forces' To 'Advisors'

MEMRI TV, 26th July, 2021

Deputy Secretary-General of the Iraqi Hizbullah Al-Nujaba Movement Nasser Al-Shammari said that the organization will continue to consider American forces in Iraq a legitimate target even though they are now considered to be filling an advisory role rather than a combat role. He made his remarks in an interview that was aired on Mayadeen TV (Lebanon) on July 26, 2021. Al-Shammari said that Iraqi government officials have been claiming that American troops in the country were there as advisors and not combatants since the war against

ISIS, so it is impossible to know that anything has changed. He added that he believes that this is all a deception. Al-Shammari further said that Iraq has been engaging in wars of all kinds since the 1970s, therefore, it has no need of advisors to teach it how to fight, since Iraq is the country with the most combat experience in the region.

<https://www.memri.org/tv/Iraq-militia-leader-nasser-shammari-american-forces-continue-legitimate-targets>

Iraqi Forces Launch a Security Operation within Salah Al-Din Ops Sector

Iraqi News Agency, 26th July, 2021

The Security Media Cell announced on Monday, the launch of a new security operation within the Salah al-Din Ops Sector. SMC said in a statement received by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), that under the supervision of the Joint Operations Command, new security operation was launched this morning, within Salah al-Din Ops Sector, in which the 23rd Commando Brigade and the 88th Brigade of the Popular Mobilization forces (PMF), as well as the 91st Brigade of the Iraqi Army and the Oil Protection Regiment in Salah al-Din province participated in. SMC added that this operation comes to enhance security and stability, pursue the remnants of ISIS terrorist gangs, and to clear the areas within the range of Hamrin mountain, Ajil, Alas and Makhoul fields, up to the border with the advanced headquarters in Kirkuk province.

<https://ina.iq/eng/13032-iraqi-forces-launch-a-security-operation-within-the-salah-al-din-ops-sector.html>

Biden announces end to US combat mission in Iraq

Al-Monitor, 27th July, 2021

US President Joe Biden on Monday announced that the US military's role in Iraq would no longer involve combat operations by the end of the year. "Our role in Iraq will be ... just to be available to continue to train, to assist, to help and to deal with ISIS [the Islamic State] as it arises, but we're not going to be, by the end of the year, in a combat mission," Biden told reporters alongside Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi at the White House today. The two sides released a joint statement later on Monday reaffirming the position. "The delegations decided, following recent technical talks, that the security relationship will fully transition to a training, advising, assisting, and intelligence-sharing role, and that there will be no US forces with a combat role in Iraq by Dec. 31, 2021," the statement read. "The United States intends to continue its support for the [Iraqi Security Forces], including the Peshmerga, to build their capacity to deal with future threats," it read.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/biden-announces-end-us-combat-mission-iraq#ixzz72Z2IqEoO>

Al-Kadhimi: US forces will return to their country at the end of this year

Iraqi News Agency, 27th July, 2021

Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi confirmed that the American combat forces will return to their country at the end of this year, while noting that the relationship between Iraq and the United States will turn into a new stage. strategic dialogue is the

result of a long stage carried out by the government, and it is a dialogue in the future of Iraqi-American relations, noting that "the most important achievement in the strategic dialogue is that it united the positions of Iraqi political forces. He added, The relationship between Iraq and the United States will turn into a new stage, stressing that the security forces are able to protect our lands.

<https://ina.iq/eng/13062-al-kadhimi-us-forces-will-return-to-their-country-at-the-end-of-this-year.html>

JO: Security forces need continued international support

Iraqi News Agency, 28th July, 2021

The Joint Operations Command confirmed that the international support is still continuing to provide assistance to Iraq, while indicating that the security forces need continued support to raise their armament capabilities. The official spokesman for the leadership of Joint Operations, Major General Tahsin al-Khafaji, said, that "the international community contributed to assisting the Iraqi security forces in fighting and pursuing terrorist gangs of Saesh by providing air support and providing intelligence information, as well as training and arming. He pointed out that "the international community has so far contributed to providing air strikes in case the country needs drones," noting that "the security forces need to continue training to raise their abilities and capabilities through acquiring high and advanced weapons and equipment that contribute greatly to tracking the terrorist organization of Daesh.

<https://ina.iq/eng/13067-jo-security-forces-need-continued-international-support.html>

The International Coalition: We have provided the Iraqi forces with equipment worth five billion dollars

Iraqi News Agency, 30th July, 2021

The International Coalition announced that it has provided the Iraqi security forces with equipment worth more than \$5 billion since 2014, while noting that its mission in terms of support after the withdrawal of US combat forces is decided by the Iraqi and US governments. The spokesman for the international coalition, Colonel Wayne Morato, said in a statement to the Iraqi News channel, which was monitored by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), today, Friday, that "only in the last week, the international coalition equipped the Iraqi security forces with equipment worth 35 million dollars," noting that "this is part of From the Fund for financing, training and equipping the Iraqi security forces, which was supported by the American forces. He added, "This support includes communications equipment and intelligence equipment, as well as all matters in all areas of the Iraqi security forces," noting that "the support will continue to support the Iraqi forces.

<https://ina.iq/eng/13108-the-international-coalition-we-have-provided-the-iraqi-forces-with-equipment-worth-five-billion-dollars.html>

ISRAEL

PM Bennett: We won't tolerate rocket fire from Lebanon

The Jerusalem Post, 20th July, 2021

Israel will not tolerate rocket fire from Lebanon, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Tuesday after two rockets were fired into Israeli territory early in the morning. "I say this sharply and clearly: We will not allow harm to Israel's sovereignty and

security,” he said during a visit to Ma’alot-Tarshiha in the Upper Galilee several hours after the rocket fire. “Whoever tries to harm us will pay a painful price.” “Lebanon is on the verge of collapse, like any country in which Iran bases itself,” Bennett said. “Its citizens were taken hostage by [Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali] Khamenei and [Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan] Nasrallah for the sake of Iranian interests... This is unfortunate, but we will not accept a spillover of the situation in Lebanon into Israel.” The two rockets were fired at northern Israel from Lebanon at around 4 a.m. Tuesday morning.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/rocket-attacks-in-northern-israel-border-communities-674374>

UAE likely partner in Israel's moon mission

Al-Monitor, 21st July, 2021

The funding sources for Israel's ambitious Beresheet 2 have not been divulged, but there are hints that the United Arab Emirates may well be teaming up with Israel on a moon landing. As a country that takes great pride in its reputation as a “startup nation,” Israel is eager to join the exclusive club of nations with major projects in outer space. It wants to send spacecraft to do research in space and conduct exploratory missions across the solar system, not only to the moon but to the planets as well. The chances of such projects happening would increase exponentially if it succeeds in convincing the United Arab Emirates to join its Beresheet 2 project to send a research craft to the moon. It would also provide a major boost to cooperation between the two countries, already strengthened since the signing of the Abraham Accords.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/uae-likely-partner-israels-moon-mission#ixzz72Z9UjWgX>

Israel: Ties with Cyprus, Greece going strong after Herzog-Erdogan call

The Jerusalem Post, 21st July, 2021

Israel put its close relations with Cyprus and Greece on display, repeatedly and publicly supporting Cyprus’s side in its dispute with Turkey about northern Cyprus. The statements came a week after President Isaac Herzog and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held a friendly phone call, amid a decade of tensions between Jerusalem and Ankara. The Foreign Ministry released a statement on Tuesday that “Israel is following with deep concern recent unilateral Turkish actions and statements regarding the status of Varosha. Israel reiterates its solidarity and full support for Cyprus.” On Wednesday, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid met with his Greek counterpart, Nikos Dendias, and discussed the Verosha matter, “expressing deep concern about these steps.”

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/israel-ties-with-cyprus-greece-going-strong-after-herzog-erdogan-call-674509>

Israel concerned over possible new Russian policy on Syria

Al-Monitor, 27th July, 2021

The claims by Russian Rear Adm. Vadim Kulit that Russian-made defense systems intercepted missiles fired last week by two Israeli F16 fighter jets toward targets near the Syrian town of Homs prompted amazement in Israel. According to Kulit’s comments to the Tass news agency, several days earlier, Russian defenses also successfully intercepted most

of the missiles fired by Israeli jets at targets in Syria. A senior Israeli military source told Al-Monitor that Russia's claims were misleading. Most Israeli missiles are not intercepted and hit their marks with precision, the source said. Contrary to what the Russian general said, as far as Israel is aware, the SA17 and SA22 aerial interception systems deployed in Syria are operated by the Syrian military. The Russians only operate the S300 and S400 defenses in Syria, but these are intended to bring down aircraft, not missiles, said the source.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/israel-concerned-over-possible-new-russian-policy-syria#ixzz72ZAQYMwb>

Lockheed Martin, Rafael Advanced Defense Systems to make new laser weapon

The Jerusalem Post, 27th July, 2021

Lockheed Martin and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems will work together to develop a ground-based laser weapon for Israel, the companies announced on Tuesday. The two companies signed a Principles of Cooperation agreement stating that they will “also explore opportunities to market this system in the US,” read a statement released by Lockheed Martin. “This agreement captures the commitment of Lockheed Martin and Rafael to work together with their respective governments to support this important collaborative opportunity,” the statement said, adding that “the companies will explore opportunities and technology implementations for developing a ground-based laser weapon system.” Israel's Defense Ministry has been working on laser technology and has made several breakthroughs in the development of the

system that can intercept a variety of aerial threats, including rockets and unmanned aerial vehicles.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/lockheed-martin-rafael-advanced-defense-systems-create-new-laser-system-675034>

Defense establishment to receive NIS 58 billion in 2022 budget

The Jerusalem Post, 28th July, 2021

After three years without a budget, Israel's defense establishment will receive NIS 58 billion in the upcoming 2022 budget, an increase of NIS 7b. The allocation was finalized late on Tuesday night by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, Finance Minister Avigdor Liberman and Defense Minister Benny Gantz. The funds will be used to “equip and strengthen” the IDF in accordance with the threats that Israel faces, “with an emphasis on purchasing from defense companies operating in Israel's periphery,” read a statement released by the Defense Ministry.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-establishment-to-receive-nis-58-billion-in-2022-budget-675120>

Over 100 Palestinians protest in West Bank, nine injured in IDF clashes

The Jerusalem Post, 30th July, 2021

Nine Palestinians were injured in clashes with IDF on Friday evening, after they caused a disturbance and threw rocks earlier on Friday towards incoming cars on Highway 443 and Highway 60, which connects between Gush Etzion and Hebron, Walla reported. Over 100 Palestinians took part in the violent protests, in response to the five Palestinians killed over the past week due to clashes with IDF security forces in the West Bank. The protests were

mainly focused in Evyatar outpost, where the Palestinians burned tires and threw stones aimed at IDF forces arriving on the scene. IDF began shooting rubber bullets and injured nine Palestinians.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/palestinians-throw-stones-on-israels-highways-in-response-to-idf-clashes-675400>

US State Dept. gives green light to sale of helicopters to Israel

The Jerusalem Post, 31st July, 2021

The US State Department has approved the sale of 18 Sikorsky CH-53K King Stallion heavy-lift helicopters to Israel to replace its aging CH-53 Yasurs. The deal will also include up to 60 T408-GE-400 Engines, and up to 36 embedded GPS/Inertial Navigation Systems (EGI) with Selective Availability/Anti-Spoofing Module (SAASM), as well as an unspecified number of GAU-21 .50 caliber machine guns and more. The main contractors will be Lockheed Martin Global and General Electric Company. It is worth an estimated \$3.4 billion. “The United States is committed to the security of Israel, and it is vital to US national interests to assist Israel to develop and maintain a strong and ready self-defense capability,” the State Department said.

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/us-state-dept-approves-possible-sale-of-helicopters-to-israel-675421>

Israel weighs risks, options for dealing with Hezbollah’s precise missiles

Al-Monitor, 30th July, 2021

Israel’s greatest concern is what it dubs the “precision project,” Hezbollah’s intense ongoing effort to upgrade as many of the rockets in its arsenals as possible into

precision missiles, making them strategic weapons as far as Israel is concerned. Israeli intelligence assessments put the number of such adapted rockets at several dozen, a quantity that could increase into the hundreds within two-three years, barring unforeseen developments. This would constitute a strategic tie-breaker, turning the armed Shiite terrorist organization into a force capable of paralyzing Israel for long days in case of a military clash. The chief-of-staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi, has said in media briefings that if Hezbollah crosses a red line in terms of the quality and quantity of its precision missiles, Israel would be justified in taking the initiative and going to war.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/israel-weighs-risks-options-dealing-hezbollahs-precise-missiles#ixzz72ZCZXVSf>

JORDAN

Lapid: We’ve reassured Jordan there’s no change to Temple Mount status quo

Ammon News, 19th July, 2021

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid says there is no change to the longstanding religious arrangements on the Temple Mount, under which only Muslims may pray at the site, timesofisrael reported. “There is no change to the status quo on the Temple Mount. We’ve clarified this to the Jordanians,” says Lapid. The Jordanian Waqf are the official custodians of the site. His comments come after sources in the Prime Minister’s Office told Army Radio that Prime Minister Naftali Bennett had misspoken on Sunday when he said both Jews and Muslims have “freedom of worship” on the Temple Mount.

<https://en.ammonnews.net/article/51228>

Biden to King Abdullah: "I look forward to hearing from your Majesty about the challenges that Jordan faces"

Ammon News, 19th July, 2021

Joe Biden hosted His Majesty King Abdullah at the Oval office where they held talks. Joe Biden said that the U.S. will always stand by Jordan, adding that "We also want to thank you for your vital leadership in the Middle East. You live in a tough neighborhood. Fact is, I look forward to hearing from His Majesty about the pressing challenges that Jordan faces.... and we're going to continue to strengthen our bilateral cooperation". For his part, His Majesty King Abdullah said his region has many challenges. "You can always count on me, my country and many of our colleagues in the region," he told Biden.

<https://en.ammonnews.net/article/51237>

King underlines Jordan-U.S. mutual agreement on Mideast challenges

Ammon News, 21st, July, 2021

His Majesty King Abdullah II on Tuesday said that Jordan and the United States "come together in mutual agreement" on the challenges facing the Middle East. His Majesty told a joint press conference with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken that Jordan and the U.S. "will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder on the challenges that are in our region, and you know that you can always count on Jordan to be steadfast and always be a loyal, strong ally."

<https://en.ammonnews.net/article/51249>

King, Cyprus president, Greece PM hold trilateral summit in Athens

Ammon News, 29th July, 2021

His Majesty King Abdullah, Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades, and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis held a trilateral summit on Wednesday in Athens. The summit, convening for the third time, focused on the importance of the deep-rooted ties and partnership between the three countries, leading to expanding cooperation prospects across all sectors, and contributing to achieving peace and enhancing security and stability in the region and beyond. "We are nations that share the Eastern Mediterranean. And I think that we will continue to play a vital role in looking at wider cooperation, not only in the Levant and Eastern Mediterranean, but also global cooperation because there is so much potential," His Majesty King Abdullah said.

<https://en.ammonnews.net/article/51392>

China supports Jordan's participation in Belt & Road Initiative, says ambassador

Ammon News, 29th July, 2021

Chinese ambassador in Amman Chen Chuandong on Thursday said his country backs up Jordan's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative and called for "seizing new development opportunities between the two countries to take bilateral relations to a new level". "Jordan is a country with a unique position and important influence in the Middle East and an important regional partner," Chen said, emphasizing that his country was ready to work with other Arab countries, including Jordan, to make the first China-Arab Summit in 2022 an opportunity to enhance its strategy and actions, and join hands to move ahead with the "Belt and Road Initiative".

<https://en.ammonnews.net/article/51433>

LEBANON

Hariri blames Aoun and Hezbollah for failure to form a gov. 'They tortured Lebanon and took us to hell'

Ya Libnan, 16th July, 2021

Lebanon's former PM and resigned PM designate Saad al-Hariri said on Thursday he gave up on government formation after he was sure President Michel Aoun still wanted a blocking minority. Hariri said in an interview with local television Al Jadeed hours after announcing that he would no longer attempt to form a cabinet

He denied imposing conditions on Aoun. He announced that his Future Movement parliamentary bloc would not nominate a successor for the PM post. "I nominated myself to form a government based on the French initiative, which means a government of specialists, and today I decided to quit the mission of forming 'Michel Aoun's government,'" Hariri said hours after giving up on government formation citing differences with Aoun.

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/07/16/hariri-blames-aoun-and-hezbollah-for-failure-to-form-a-gov-they-tortured-lebanon-and-took-us-to-hell/>

Israel says 2 rockets launched from Lebanon, retaliates after strikes in Syria

Ya Libnan, 20th July, 2021

The Israeli military has said that two rockets were fired into the country from its northern border with Lebanon and retaliated, marking more cross-border unrest hours after Syria accused Israel of conducting airstrikes there. The sirens sounded in Israel's Western Galilee region

and the IDF reported that "two rockets were fired from Lebanon into Israeli territory." "The Iron Dome Air Defense System intercepted one rocket," the statement said, referring to Israel's anti-rocket system, "while the second fell in an open area." The statement said that no special Home Front Command guidelines have been issued, indicating no immediate risk of escalation in northern Israel. Shortly after, however, the Israeli military said that "IDF Artillery struck in Lebanese territory."

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/07/20/israel-says-2-rockets-launched-from-lebanon-retaliates-after-strikes-in-syria/>

Biden tells Congress Iran arms to Hezbollah undermines Lebanon

Ya Libnan, 22nd July, 2021

In a message to the US Congress regarding Lebanon on July 20, President Joe Biden referred to Iran's "continuing arms transfers to Hezbollah", as undermining Lebanese sovereignty. Biden cited Iran's military support for Hezbollah as the main reason for extending the Emergency Act.

Biden wrote, "Iran's continuing arms transfers to Hezbollah — which include increasingly sophisticated weapons systems — serve to undermine Lebanese sovereignty, contribute to political and economic instability in the region, and continue to constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. "

<https://yalibnan.com/2021/07/22/biden-tells-congress-iran-arms-to-hezbollah-undermines-lebanon/>

PALESTINE

Jenin becomes flashpoint for Israel-Palestinian confrontations

Al-Monitor, 17th July, 2021

The city of Jenin, in the northern West Bank, is back to the forefront amid daily incidents in the past weeks involving clashes between armed young men of the Palestinian resistance in the area and Israeli forces. On July 12, a number of streets witnessed some of the most violent armed clashes in years after special Israeli forces raided the area to arrest a number of wanted men. Six Palestinians were shot and injured by the Israeli military, and another six were arrested. Palestinian youths have been confronting the Israeli forces using light firearms such as Kalashnikov and M16 rifles. They also throw Molotov cocktails and homemade bombs at army vehicles. Clashes in Jenin have been taking place on a daily basis since the 11-day war on the Gaza strip began May 10.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/jenin-becomes-flashpoint-israel-palestinian-confrontations#ixzz72bMyBqlz>

Israel retaliates against the launch from Gaza of incendiary balloons

Al-Monitor, 26th July, 2021

Israel bombed the Gaza Strip early Monday morning following incendiary balloon attacks. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said they bombed a Hamas base near civilian areas in response to the fire attack. "In response to arson balloons launched toward Israel, we struck a Hamas military base containing infrastructure and means used for terror activity," the IDF said in a tweet at around 12:45 am local time. "The base was near civilian sites in Gaza,

including a school." The Palestinian Authority (PA) said Israeli missiles hit farmland northwest of Gaza City, causing material damage.

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/israel-retaliates-against-launch-gaza-incendiary-balloons#ixzz72bNQYp00>

Hamas Official Musa Abu Marzouk: We Accept Any Aid Offered, Even From The Americans, But Iran Helps Hamas More Than Any Other Country, In Training, Weapons, And Expertise

MEMRI TV, 29th July, 2021

Deputy chairman of Hamas abroad Musa Abu Marzouk said that "as a liberation" movement, Hamas accepts aid from any country that offers it, including the Americans, but Iran helps Hamas more than any other country. He made his remarks in an interview that aired on Hiwar TV (U.K.) on July 29, 2021. Abu Marzouk said that there is no limit to Iran's aid for Hamas, and it includes military training, weapons, and know-how. He asked: "How can we not thank Iran for that?"

<https://www.memri.org/tv/musa-abu-marzouk-hamas-abroad-aid-americans-iran-training-weapons-thanks>

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

US is UAE's 'most important and enduring strategic partner': Anwar Gargash

Saudi Gazette, 18th July, 2021

Concluding a weeklong visit to Washington, D.C., Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the president of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, called the UAE-US relationship as strong as it has ever been

and noted that the US is the UAE's "most important and enduring strategic partner". At a White House briefing with National Security Council Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk and other senior officials, Dr. Gargash underscored the UAE's renewed emphasis on diplomacy and de-escalation. He reaffirmed the UAE's commitment to work closely with the US on regional matters and explored ways to build upon the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement between the UAE and Israel to bring about greater regional prosperity and stability.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/608941/World/Mena/US-is-UAEs-most-important-and-enduring-strategic-partner-Anwar-Gargash>

SAUDI ARABIA

Crown Prince discusses bilateral, regional developments in meeting with Abu Dhabi counterpart

Saudi Gazette, 19th July, 2021

Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman met in Riyadh on Monday with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Saudi Press Agency reported. The two leaders also discussed the latest regional and international developments and efforts being made to address them. Taking to Twitter following the meeting, Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed said: Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed said: "During our meeting in Riyadh, my brother Mohammed bin Salman and I discussed ways to further deepen the fraternal bond and strategic cooperation between our nations."

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/608968/SAUDI-ARABIA/Crown-Prince-discusses-bilateral-regional-developments-in-meeting-with-Abu-Dhabi-counterpart>

Iran's ballistic missiles, support for militias must be included in Vienna talks: GCC chief

Saudi Gazette, 25th July, 2021

The Gulf Cooperation Council has always adhered to international laws and is one of the strongest advocates of respecting national sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs of other countries unlike Iran, said the GCC chief on Saturday. He added that Iran, in defiance of all international laws, is destabilizing the region with its intervention in internal matters of other countries. Iran's nuclear program, ballistic missiles, and its support for militias, must also be included in ongoing talks in Vienna and they should not be limited to restoring the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action related to the Iranian nuclear program, the GCC chief said.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/609122/World/Mena/Irans-ballistic-missiles-support-for-militiasmust-be-included-in-Vienna-talks-GCC-chief>

Yemen drones, ballistic missile targeting Saudi Arabia destroyed

Gulf News, 25th July, 2021

The Arab Saudi-led alliance said that four drones and a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Al Houthis towards Saudi Arabia have been intercepted and destroyed in the past 24 hours, the latest such attacks by the Iran-allied rebels. The drones were launched in the direction of the southern region of the kingdom, the alliance command said. The Saudi air defences destroyed the ballistic missile that had targeted Jazan in south-western Saudi Arabia, the coalition said. No casualties or damage was reported. "The aggressive Al

Houthi militia continues to target civilians and civilian facilities,” the alliance added.

<https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/saudi/yemen-drones-ballistic-missile-targeting-saudi-arabia-destroyed-1.80918007>

US condemns Houthi attacks targeting southern region of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Gazette, 27th July, 2021

The United States has expressed its condemnation of the recent Houthi attacks with armed drones and ballistic missiles, targeting civilians and civilian facilities in Saudi Arabia’s southern region. In a statement on Monday, the US Department of State said: “We condemn the Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia following the calm over Eid Al-Adha. The Houthis must stop their destabilizing actions and commit to an immediate, comprehensive ceasefire to help end the Yemen war. Time to return to negotiations and end the conflict.” Saudi Arabia-led Arab Coalition forces intercepted four Houthi militia drones and a ballistic missile targeting the Kingdom’s southern region on Saturday.

<https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/609178/SAUDI-ARABIA/US-condemns-Houthi-attacks-targeting-southern-region-of-Saudi-Arabia>

SYRIA

Moscow: Jabhat al-Nusra terrorists plot to fabricate chemical attack in Idlib

Syrian Arab News Agency, 17th July, 2021

Deputy commander of the Russian Coordination Center in Hmeimim, Naval Captain Vadim Kolet of the Russian Ministry of Defense, told reporters that the terrorists are preparing to imitate a chemical attack in the de-escalation zone of Idlib and that they are likely planning to do

so on the day that sets for the president to take the constitutional oath.

The Russian military officer indicated that the terrorists are planning to implement their plans in the vicinity of the towns of Saraqeb and Khan Sheikhoun, with the participation of the White Helmets organization and the local media, to film the drama in order to accuse the Syrian government forces of using toxic materials against civilians.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=242042>

Russian Defense Ministry: Jabhat al-Nusra terrorists carry out 32 attacks in de-escalation zone, Idlib

Syrian Arab News Agency, 25th July, 2021

Deputy head of the Russian Coordination Center in Hmeimim Airport, Rear Admiral Vadim Kolet said in a statement to SANA that 32 attacks have been recorded from the positions of Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist organization in de-escalation zone in Idlib, of which 19 attacks in Idlib, 8 in Lattakia, 1 in Aleppo and 4 in Hama.

It is notable that in July 18th, the Russian Defense Ministry said that Jabhat al-Nusra terrorists deployed to the de-escalation zone in Idlib and other areas in the province countryside, carried out 28 attacks, of which 6 targeted the safe areas in Hama northern countryside.

<http://www.sana.sy/en/?p=242935>

TURKEY

US-backed YPG kills 2 civilians, wounds 10 in Syria’s Afrin

Daily Sabah, 16th July, 2021

The PKK terrorist group’s Syrian wing, the YPG, has killed two civilians, including one child, and injured another 10 in a rocket

attack on northern Syria's Afrin province on Thursday. Terrorists fired seven rockets at central Afrin, according to initial reports. The rockets also caused property damage when several houses were struck. The northwestern Afrin province was rid of terrorist elements thanks to Turkey's Operation Euphrates Shield, but the YPG/PKK maintains its occupation in the Tal Rifaat district although it was supposed to evacuate in line with a deal between Turkey and Russia on Oct. 22, 2019. The terrorist group continues to target central Afrin.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/us-backed-ypg-kills-2-civilians-wounds-10-in-syrias-afrin/news>

Turkey's support for Afghanistan to continue, FM Çavuşoğlu says

Daily Sabah, 16th July, 2021

Turkey's support to friendly and brotherly Afghanistan will continue, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu stated Thursday. Çavuşoğlu met the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani as well as his counterpart Mohammad Haneef Atmar in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent. Çavuşoğlu stated that he discussed efforts for lasting peace in Afghanistan. Turkey, whose forces in Afghanistan have always consisted of noncombatant troops, has offered to guard Hamid Karzai International Airport as questions remain on how security will be assured along major transport routes and at the airport, which is the main gateway to the capital Kabul. The security of the airport is crucial for the operation of diplomatic missions out of Afghanistan as Western forces pull out.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkeys-support-for-afghanistan-to-continue-fm-cavusoglu-says>

Turkey ready to discuss Afghan peace process with Taliban: Turkish president

Anadolu Agency, 20th July, 2021

Turkey is considering operating a major airport in Afghanistan and Ankara is ready to discuss the Afghan peace process with the Taliban, the Turkish president said on Tuesday. "By negotiating this process with the Taliban, just as the Taliban made some of the talks with the United States, the Taliban should hold these talks with Turkey much more comfortably," Recep Tayyip Erdogan told reporters after offering Eid prayers in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). "Turkey is considering handling the operation of Kabul Airport," if some conditions are met, he said. "Now there is a new era," Erdogan said, adding: "Three main authorities are seen here; NATO, the US, and Turkey."

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/turkey-ready-to-discuss-afghan-peace-process-with-taliban-turkish-president/2309792>

Taliban wants good relations with Turkey: spokesperson

Daily Sabah, 21st July, 2021

Taliban spokesperson said Wednesday that the group has asked Muslim countries to support a political solution that will end the war in Afghanistan, adding specifically that the group wishes to maintain good relations with Turkey. Zabihullah Mujahid argued that the solution to the current problem in Afghanistan is an "inclusive" Islamic government and said the group wants to work with other countries to restore peace and security and start a rebuilding process. "We want good relations with Turkey, Turkey is our brother, we have many points in common based on faith. We want Turkey to leave the past and return to the present

and the future. After that, we can ask for dialogue," Mujahid told TRT Arabi, the Arabic broadcasting service of Turkey's public broadcaster, TRT.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/taliban-wants-good-relations-with-turkey-spokesperson>

US-led coalition trained 400 YPG terrorists in NE Syria

Daily Sabah, 23rd July, 2021

The U.S.-led coalition against the Daesh terror group provided military training to 400 members of the Syrian wing of the PKK terrorist organization, the YPG, in Hassakeh province in northeastern Syria, sources revealed Thursday. YPG terrorists received three months of training on Mount Abdulaziz, said sources. They were taught how to operate light, medium and heavy weapons as well as methods of infiltrating and raiding villages. A graduation ceremony was held on the completion of the training, which was attended by U.S. commanders and Ferhat Abdi Şahin, code-named "Mazloun Kobani," one of the ringleaders of the YPG.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/world/syrian-crisis/us-led-coalition-trained-400-ypg-terrorists-in-ne-syria>

'Secondhand jets can't change power balance,' Turkey tells Greece

Daily Sabah, 27th July, 2021

Turkey expects its neighbor Greece to adopt peaceful political solutions rather than aggressive ones, Defense Minister Hulusi Akar stated Tuesday, underlining that secondhand French Rafale jets will not change the power balance in the region. Speaking on Athens' recent purchase of

French Rafale jets, Akar said: "They have been engaging in an arms race. They buy jets, arms, equipment. It is not possible to change the power balance with a few secondhand jets." Akar was making statements on security and defense issues and touched upon Greece's increasing arms spending. Greece has earmarked 11.5 billion euros (\$14 billion) for the modernization of its armed forces over the next five years, at a time of increased tension with neighboring Turkey.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/secondhand-jets-cant-change-power-balance-turkey-tells-greece>

Turkey' eastern Iran border to be safer with modular wall system

Daily Sabah, 27th July, 2021

To ensure the safety and security of the Turkish-Iranian border, a 295-kilometer (183-mile) long wall will be constructed along the entire shared border, Emin Bilmez, the governor of the eastern province of Van, said Tuesday. It is hoped that the wall will help to prevent illegal crossings and the trafficking of contraband and that it will also hinder terrorists from infiltrating. "Due to the increasing waves of migration, our land forces have dispatched two reconnaissance and two commando companies along with armed vehicles to the region. The Ministry of the Interior has allocated 35 special operations teams and 50 armed vehicles to the zone to assist the troops guarding the border," Bilmez said.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/turkey-eastern-iran-border-to-be-safer-with-modular-wall-system/news>

Turkey 'neutralized' nearly 1,600 terrorists in 2021: Defense Ministry

Anadolu Agency, 29th July, 2021

Turkish forces have neutralized 1,595 terrorists this year in operations both within the country and outside its borders, the National Defense Ministry said on Thursday. Over the last two months, Turkish forces carried out 40 domestic and cross-border anti-terror operations against such groups, including Daesh/ISIS, PKK/YPG/KCK and the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO), ministry spokeswoman Maj. Pinar Kara told a press conference. The figure includes 215 terrorists neutralized in the Pence-Simsek and Pence-Yildirim operations in northern Iraq. Nearly 300 caves and shelters and over 600 landmines were destroyed, while dozens of weapons and ammunition were held, she added.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-neutralized-nearly-1-600-terrorists-in-2021-defense-ministry/2318190>

NATO launches military training for Afghan special forces in Turkey

Daily Sabah, 29th July, 2021

NATO has launched a military training program for soldiers from Afghanistan in Turkey. It marks the first military training program outside the country for soldiers from Afghanistan after the end of the NATO training mission there. According to information from Ankara, members of the Afghan Special Forces were flown to Turkey on Wednesday for a training course. It is supposed to be the prelude to regular training programs outside Afghanistan. A NATO spokesperson in Brussels confirmed the start of the training program to dpa but

would not comment on the location or details for security reasons. "In addition to continued funding and diplomatic presence, NATO's continued support to Afghanistan includes out-of-country training for Afghan special forces. This training has now begun," he said.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/nato-launches-military-training-for-afghan-special-forces-in-turkey>