

UAE Fast Withdrawing from Controversial Yemen War

ABU DHABI - The future of Yemen is shrouded in speculation amid reports this week that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are abruptly withdrawing their troops from the Saudi-led onslaught on the neighboring nation.

Since early 2015, the UAE has served a key ally to Saudi's efforts to dislodge the Iran-backed Houthi rebels from large swaths of the nation - providing thousands of ground troops as well as weapons and money - in a war that has come under massive scrutiny and condemnation from the wider international community over concerns of high civilian casualties.

Essentially, the pullback is



believed to be associated with a high cost that could no longer be justified even by oil-swathed region.

"It is very hard to estimate how much the war

effort has cost the Emiratis but it runs into the billions before counting aid and development assistance. But the big cost has been to their reputation, which they really cherish," Peter Salisbury,

a senior analyst for Yemen at the International Crisis Group. "They have faced sustained criticism for their part in the war, including in Washington, in ways that Abu Dhabi probably didn't anticipate."

And thus after weeks of declarations from Emirati officials indicating that a phase-out will take place, "Emiratis are withdrawing their forces at a scale and speed that all but rules out further ground advances," according to the New York Times.

"Given that the UAE had more ground forces in Yemen than Saudi Arabia did, the cost was likely a factor leading to this decision. The speed ... (More on P4)...(14)

Merkel's Health Is a Private Matter, Germans Say after Shaking Bouts

BERLIN - Most Germans believe Angela Merkel's health is a private matter, a poll showed on Saturday, after the chancellor suffered the latest in a series of shaking episodes this week that have raised questions about whether she should give an explanation. Merkel, who turns 65 next week, shook visibly at a welcoming ceremony for Finland's prime minister on Wednesday - the third such episode in as many weeks. On Thursday, she broke

with protocol and sat at a similar welcome for Denmark's premier. The episodes have concerned many Germans and fired up a debate among some of the chancellor's Christian Democrats about whether she should pass power to her protégé sooner than a planned handover in 2021. Yet the survey of 4,495 representative voters, which pollster Civey conducted on Thursday and Friday for the Augsburg Allgemeine ... (More on P4)...(18)

BEIJING - China's manned space lab Tian-gong-2 has finished experiments and will re-enter Earth's atmosphere on July 19, authorities said on Saturday. A small amount of debris is likely to fall into the designated safe waters of the South Pacific Ocean, the China Manned Space Engineering Office said in a statement. China launched Tian-gong-2 on September 15, 2016, after Tiangong-1, its first manned space lab. (Reuters)

China's Manned Space Lab to Re-Enter Atmosphere on Friday



Russia Delivers More Air Defense Equipment to Turkey



ISTANBUL - Russia flew a fresh shipment of advanced air defense equipment to Turkey on Saturday, the Turkish

Defence Ministry said, continuing to implement a deal that is likely to trigger U.S. sanctions against a NATO ally.

The ministry said a fourth Russian cargo plane landed at the Murted air base near the Turkish capital Ankara, a day after three huge Russian air force AN-124 planes offloaded equipment at the base. Washington has tried for months to prevent the deal, arguing that the Russian S-400 air defense system is incompatible with NATO systems. It also says that if the S-400s are deployed near U.S. F-35 jets, which Turkey is buying and helping to produce, they

would undermine the stealth fighter planes' defenses. U.S. officials had warned that Turkey would be thrown off the F-35 program if it took delivery of the S-400s, and would also face sanctions under U.S. legislation seeking to prevent countries from buying military equipment from Russia. Turkey says S-400 is a strategic defense requirement, above all to secure its southern borders with Syria and Iraq. It says that when it made the ... (More on P4)...(15)

Dozens of Birds 'Bleeding from Their Mouths' Fall from The Sky in Australia

CANBERRA - More than 60 birds dropped from the sky in South Australia, landing in a "scene that looked like a horror movie," and authorities believe they were poisoned. The majority of birds found by rescuers on Tuesday and Wednesday were long-billed corellas, a protected species, and on the brink of death when they landed near a local primary school, according to reports by ABC Adelaide. "Only two or three

were actually deceased. The rest were just screaming on the ground. They couldn't fly anymore, they were bleeding out of their mouths," Sarah King, the founder of Casper's Bird Rescue, told The Guardian. King, whose staff member discovered the birds, said the corellas were "literally falling out of the trees" and likely died "a horrible, miserable and very stressful death." (Fox News)

'Destroy Caves & Shelters': Turkey Launches 2nd Wave of Military Op Against Kurdish PKK in Iraq

ANKARA - Ankara has launched military operation 'Claw-2', seeking to destroy PKK hideouts in northern Iraq. The move is part of Turkey's bigger fight against Kurdish militants, which has taken a toll on its relations with Baghdad.

The Turkish army began moving into northern Iraq at 10pm local time on Friday, after conducting airstrikes and shelling the area with artillery, the Defense Ministry said. The goal of this operation, codenamed 'Claw-2', is "to destroy caves and shelters" used by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is listed as a ... (More on P4)...(19)

Russia, India Discuss 'Futuristic' Tech & Space Cooperation Ahead of New Delhi's Lunar Mission

NEW DELHI - Ahead of India's first-ever lunar lander launch this weekend, Russia has offered New Delhi a hand in space exploration, with a range of cooperation opportunities, including the delivery of an Indian astronaut to space in 2022.

Potential joint development of "futuristic technologies," including rocket engines and propellants, as well as new space launch systems and spacecraft, took center stage in the discussion this week when the head of Russian space agency Roscosmos, Dmitry Rogozin, met with the Indian National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, in New Delhi. Moscow also welcomed future Indian participation ... (More on P4)...(20)

Clashes Erupt as Hong Kong Protest Targets Chinese Traders

HONG KONG - Several thousand people marched in Hong Kong on Saturday against traders from mainland China in what is fast becoming a summer of unrest in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory. Violent clashes broke out at the end of the march between police and a group of mostly young protesters who say they believe peaceful demonstrations have failed to bring about change.

After issuing a warning, police moved forward to disperse the crowd with pepper spray and batons. In panicky scenes, fleeing protest-



ers scrambled over each other, some falling to the ground. Some had donned protective masks and helmets ahead of the confrontation. Earlier, walking behind a banner that read "Strictly enforce the law, stop cross-border traders," the marchers

passed by pharmacies and cosmetic shops that are popular with Chinese tourists and traders who bring goods back to sell in the mainland. Many of the stores were shuttered because of the protest. Major demonstrations in the past month ... (More on P4)...(16)

S. Korea, Japan Fail to Resolve Growing Trade Dispute

SEOUL, South Korea - South Korea and Japan on Friday failed to immediately resolve their dispute over Japanese export restrictions that could hurt South Korean technology companies, as Seoul called for an investigation by the United Nations or another international body. Tokyo last week tightened the approval process for shipments of photoresists and other sensitive materials to South Korea, saying they can be

exported only to trustworthy trading partners. The move, which could affect South Korean manufacturers of semiconductors and display screens used in TVs and smartphones, has triggered a full-blown diplomatic dispute and further soured relations long troubled over Japan's brutal colonial rule of Korea before the end of World War II. At their first meeting in Tokyo since the ... (More on P4)...(17)

UN Security Council Visits Colombia as Peace Worries Mount

BOGOTA, Colombia - Maria del Pilar Hurtado's son screamed in anguish at the sight of his mother's dead body on a dirt road in the poor community in northern Colombia the family called home. He kicked his feet on the ground and grasped his face in his hands. Passersby stopped and watched the boy's agonizing grief but did little to console him.

The wrenching scene was caught on a cellphone camera and quickly made headlines around Colombia in June. For many, the social leader's violent death was another painstaking reminder that in numerous parts of the South American nation peace remains elusive.

Now the United Nations Security Council is getting a firsthand look at the challenges of peace nearly three years into Colombia's historic accord with leftist rebels as they visit Friday with the nation's president, politicians and former rebels at a time of mounting concern.

The council ambassadors kicked off their trip by expressing their steadfast support for the accord ending Latin America's longest-running conflict, even as observers warn that implementation needs to move more quickly to avoid more anguishing scenes of death.

Despite the concerns, Peruvian Ambassador Gustavo Meza Cuadra maintained that the accord, "Continues to be an example not just for Latin America but the entire world." (AP)

Neighbor News

India Bank Trebles Number of Branches Dealing with Iran: Report

TEHRAN - A major Indian trade bank has significantly expanded its operations meant to circumvent US sanctions against Iran, a report by an Indian newspaper shows.

The Hindu Business Line said in a Friday report that the UCO bank had increased the number of its branches engaged in business with Iran from 22 to 67, a surge of more than three times.

The branches are especially designated to facilitate trade with Iran as the country struggles with sanctions imposed by Washington which restrict its ability to trade in major international currencies.

"As many as 14 Iranian banks have opened Indian Rupee Vostro Ac-

count with UCO Bank," said UCO Bank Managing Director Atul Kumar Goel, adding, "Whenever we import oil, the money is paid by the oil companies in India and credited to this account. That bank will send this Indian rupee to the bank in Iran and the payment to the exporter will be made in Iranian rial."

The mechanism will also help Indian exporters to continue to trade with Iran. Speaking on the sidelines of an exporters' meeting in Coimbatore, in southern India, Goel said export opportunities to Iran are huge and exporters could use the designated branches of the UCO for any help they need. (Press TV)

Ashgabat to Host Int'l Telecommunications Forum

ASHGABAT - An international exhibition-conference of telecommunications, information technologies "Turkmentel" will be held in Ashgabat Oct. 10-12, Trend reports with reference to the organizers of the event - the Ministry of Communications and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan.

Participants in last year's event included Sony, Huawei, Airbus, Iskratel, Thales, Rostelecom and others.

The participants are expected to present their developments in the field of communications in such sections of the ex-

hibition as telecommunications, information technology, telemetry and measuring equipment, wireless communications, equipment for professional audio and video recording.

In addition, there will be equipment for TV and radio broadcasting, cable products, components, as well as transport, special equipment and operators for the provision of various communication services. The sphere of communications and telecommunications is one of the most promising and dynamically developing sectors of the economy of Turkmenistan. (Trend)

Pakistan to Review TAPI Project

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and Turkmenistan experts are set to meet next month to review arrangements and finalise modalities for groundbreaking of Pakistan-section of TAPI gas pipeline, scheduled to be performed in Chaman in October 2019. According to an official of Petroleum Division, a meeting between experts of the two countries is scheduled to be held in August.

He said Pakistan is determined to start practical work on its section of the multi-billion dollar Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project during the current year and complete it within the stipulated time frame. Turkmenistan has already completed the construction work on its section, while the

Afghanistan also performed groundbreaking of the project last year. He said Pakistan had recently signed the Host Government Agreement with Turkmenistan and would lay gas pipeline on its section from Chaman to Multan via Quetta and Dera Ismail Khan. Under the project, he said, a 56-inch diameter 1,680 kilometers pipeline, having capacity to flow 3.2 billion cubic feet per day (bcfd) gas, would be laid from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan up to Pakistan border by the year 2020. As per the TAPI agreement, Pakistan and India will be provided 1.325 bcfd (billion cubic feet per day) gas each and Afghanistan will be getting the share of 0.5 bcfd gas. (Monitoring Desk)

'Pakistan-Turkey Trade Drastically Falls to \$792mln on Heavy Duties'

KARACHI - Bilateral trade between Pakistan and Turkey drastically fell to \$1.08 billion from \$792 million after the latter jacked up duties on textile imports from the former, a trade leader said on Friday. Daroo Khan Achakzai, president of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), said Turkey should remove local preventive in a proposed preferential or free trade agreement. In the past, textile exports to Turkey bore normal tariffs, but later Turkey imposed protective duties of 18 percent, which were very high, leading to slowdown in growth in

textile exports from Pakistan, he said. Main Pakistan's exports to Turkey consist of cotton, yarn made staple fibres, denim fabrics, rice, beverages, spirits and vinegar, while its imports include ethylene, dyes, chemicals and apple juices. Achakzai appreciated the efforts of the governments of Pakistan and Turkey to enter into strategic economic framework (SEF) for enhancement of bilateral relations in trade, tourism, healthcare, hospitality, industry, education, housing, agriculture, aviation and banking. (Monitoring Desk)