

# Russia has Ground Troop Battalion, Advanced Tanks in Syria: USNATO Envoy

BRUSSELS - Russia's military build-up in Syria includes a "considerable and growing" naval presence, long-range rockets and a battalion of ground troops backed by Moscow's most modern tanks, the U.S. ambassador to NATO said on Wednesday. Speaking on the eve of a NATO defense ministers meeting to be dominated by Russia's intervention in Syria's civil war, U.S. Ambassador to NATO Douglas Lute said Moscow had managed a "quite impressive" military deployment over the past week to its Syria naval base in Tartous and its army base in Latakia. "There is a considerable and growing Russia naval presence in the



eastern Mediterranean, more than 10 ships now, which is a bit out of the ordinary," he told a news briefing. "The recent Russian reinforcements over the last week or so feature a battalion-size ground force ... There is artillery, there are long-range rocket capabilities, there are air defense capabilities," Lute said. A battalion is typically around 1,000 soldiers. Western officials say that in strategic terms, Russia's new air strike campaign in Syria appears designed to help reverse rebel gains increasingly endangering Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, protect Russian military assets in the country including its sole ... (More on P4)...(15)

# Responsible for Kunduz Tragedy Must be Brought to Justice



KABUL - Former spy chief and leader of the Green Trend has called on government to conduct an investigation into Kunduz attack that led to a tragedy and drag those responsible to justice. While talking to a gathering organized about Kunduz, Amrullah Saleh said that government published a press release regarding the incident which is not satisfactory. He said those who showed negligence in their duties need to be dragged to judiciary. Saleh further said that Taliban infiltrators who are considered to be the fifth pillar of the government must be identified and trialed. The former spy chief mentioned that at the time of need he is ready to take arm and stand for the defense of the country. "If manpower is needed, we are all ready to take up arms within the official frame to defend our values against Taliban and Terror," he said. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has also said that an investigation would be conducted into Kunduz attack and ... (More on P4)...(19)

# Soldier Claims Insurgents Were Hiding in Hospital at Time of Air Strike

KABUL - An Afghan National Army (ANA) commando claimed on Wednesday that Taliban members were possibly present at the Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) hospital when the facility was bombed last week. The Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) hospital was the main medical facility that the Taliban used for its wounded, he said. "Taliban were being treated in this hospital ... because it was their main center (in Kunduz) for their health-care services. I think they had come in large num-



bers and that the aircraft attacked them," he told TOLONews correspondent Wali Arian in Kunduz. In addition, he said the Taliban had used the hospital to launch attacks on security forces. Another ANA officer said the Tali-

# ICRC Supportive of Activation of IHFFC in Kunduz Hospital Attack Investigation

GENEVA - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Wednesday said it would welcome greater efforts to respect international humanitarian law in the investigation of the air strikes on a hospital in Kunduz of Afghanistan. The remarks were made in reaction to a call by charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) for the activation of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC), a body set up under an as yet unused additional protocol to the Geneva Conventions. ICRC said it would welcome all impartial investigations which could help to determine the facts behind the bombing of a hospital run by MSF in Kunduz, Afghanistan and to try to make sure such tragedies are not repeated. "We have always been supportive of the IHFFC. If it can help to clarify the facts surrounding this tragic incident which led to the deaths of medical staff and patients in a health care facility, which should be protected under the laws of armed conflict, that would be a positive development," said Dr. Helen Durham, ICRC's director of International Law and Policy. According to ICRC, an IHFFC investigation could be complementary to those being conducted by the United States, NATO and potentially Afghanistan. In the early hours of last Saturday, air raids struck the MSF hospital in the Afghan city of Kunduz, capital of the northern Kunduz province, killing at least 22 people, including three children. The UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) ... (More on P4)...(18)

# Daesh Militants Gun down Religious Scholar in Nangarhar



KABUL - Daesh militant has shot dead a religious scholar in Bati Kot District of eastern Nangarhar province on Wednesday, officials said. Maulawi Gul Agha was heading from his residence towards a Madrasa (seminary) close to the district center when Daesh militants attacked him. Niamatullah Noorzai, governor of Bati Kot District said that Maulawi Gul Agha was an instructor at the Madrasa who was attacked in Shashkhal area around 07:00 am. Noorzai said Maulawi Gul Agha was honest and a good man but Daesh martyred him brutally. Maulawi Gul Agha was second religious scholar being killed by Daesh in less than a month. The group killed a religious scholar in Bati Kot's neighboring Achin District in the middle of September. Daesh is trying to expand in Nangarhar and currently operates in at least eight of the 22 districts of this province. Ministry of Defense is mulling a large-scale military operation against Daesh in Nangarhar but a specific DATE FOR this operation is not yet. (KP)

# Taliban Flips the Switch on Women's Radio, TV in Kunduz



KUNDUZ CITY - What had begun as an ordinary workday turned quickly into real-life drama for the employees of Roshani, a women-run radio and TV station in the Afghan city of Kunduz. Residents knew that the Taliban, which had surrounded the city for weeks, were closing in. But Roshani director Sediqa Sherzai says the militant group's advance on Kunduz on September 28 nevertheless came as a surprise. "The Taliban attack began in the early hours," Sherzai re-

# Clashes Erupt as Kunduz Battle Enters its Ninth Day

KUNDUZ CITY - Fierce fighting broke out in the city center around the main traffic circle on Tuesday with insurgents once again lowering the Afghan flag on the roundabout. Reporting from the frontline, TOLONews correspondent Karim Amini said the insurgents launched a massive attack early Tuesday morning at the roundabout and took control of

the area. "The fighting is around the circle. One side of the circle is the stronghold of the Taliban and the other side is controlled by the security forces," Karim reported. He said the Taliban had seized two military tanks and had taken the fight to the streets, making it difficult for the troops to contain them. "The situation is getting worse. Yesterday the se-

curity forces were in control of the traffic circle but today the Taliban came and lowered the flag," Karim said. Security officials meanwhile said insurgents are still hiding in residents homes; therefore the forces are not taking the risk of targeting them due to the presence of civilians. "Taliban are hiding in civilian homes and using ... (More on P4)...(17)

## Outlook Horoscope

### Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)



Your key planet Mars is engaged in a cosmic tug of war with otherworldly Neptune, spinning you into a parallel universe before you know it. You might even slip on an imaginary banana peel, leaving you dazed and wondering if you should even bother getting up now. Remember, you are a fearless warrior; you're not going to take this disruption without fighting back.

### Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)



You could waste too much time and energy worrying about the future, especially since the conclusions you draw are probably built upon incorrect assumptions. Your senses are unreliable now because you can't help but project your fantasies onto the current events, creating a loss of objectivity. Enjoy the movie your mind is directing today.

### Gemini (May 21-June 20)



You might sound confident when you share your plans with your friends or coworkers today, but it may just be a clever decoy to cover up your ambivalence. Don't make decisions now just to placate others, even if you believe you're running out of time. Avoid finalizing your schedule because cloudy Neptune can mess up even the simplest agenda for the next few days.

### Cancer (June 21-July 20)



You are raring to show your colleagues how you can take charge and run the show. You're highly motivated now, confident that little can stop you on your road to success. But you may lose your concentration and temporarily succumb to your insecurities if you move too fast. Paradoxically, you will likely excel as a leader today if you don't push your crew so hard.

### Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)



You may believe you've lost your fighting edge today as nebulous Neptune dissipates the energy of macho Mars. It's not that your defensive skills are diminished; it's just that you're inclined to engage with people in a more subtle manner now. Additionally, your intuitive radar is on target with the reflective Moon camping out in your sign.

### Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)



Putting your finger on the origin of a problem is nearly impossible today, yet you feel certain that you're close to finding a significant piece of the puzzle. You can sense that a major energetic shift is drawing near, but you're not quite ready to let go of your old agenda yet. Even if you're itching to begin your next adventure, hold on a while longer until you gather more information about your future mission.

### Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)



Facts and figures go in one ear and right out the other today. You hear the words, but just can't seem to retain any data because your mind is working in the mythical realm of symbols and not the rational realm of details. Luckily, your current fascination with the power of dreams does not put you at a disadvantage. Decisions you make based on intuition are just as valid now as someone else's choice determined.

### Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)



You know that participating in a group activity will nourish your soul, but you're afraid of losing your personal space in the process. Balancing your social commitments with the amount of time you spend in solitude can mean the difference between frustration and satisfaction today. You need some time alone in order to explore your creative urges now.

### Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)



Your unquenchable penchant for adventure could get the best of you today as you obsess about embarking on a once-in-a-lifetime journey to an exotic destination. Unfortunately, delusional Neptune is tugging on action-hero Mars, making it wiser to entertain fantasies now than to go anywhere at all. Nevertheless, confusing your hopes with reality will leave you stuck in your tracks.

### Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan19)



You may feel as if you're on an amusement park ride that's messing with your center of gravity today - and you don't like it one bit. You're not happy wasting valuable time because you have too many important things to do. You long to reestablish your balance and plant both feet firmly on the ground. You are not one to take kindly to someone else controlling your life, even if it's just for a spin on the tilt-a-whirl.

### Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)



Encountering an overly optimistic person could put you in a grouchy mood today when you realize you've been sold a bill of goods. However, the fault may not lie with anyone else; strangely enough, others might be telling the truth. Mixing up your desires with reality is all too easy now. However, there's no free lunch when it comes to love or money.

### Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)



Someone may give you specific directions today, but you're still confused about which way you're supposed to go. Maybe the communication is muddled, or, perhaps, you have fixed ideas about how to reach your goal. Unfortunately, you can jeopardize a healthy working relationship unless you cooperate with others. Remembering there are multiple paths to every destination saves you from feeling frustrated when you realize.



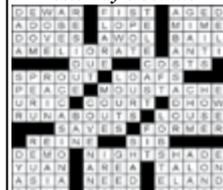
### Across

- 1. Blackthorn, 5. Colonic, 10. Short run, 14. Twinge, 15. Pertaining to the oceans, 16. Ancient Peruvian, 17. Variety, 19. Cal's meat, 20. South southeast, 21. Stadium, 22. Odd-numbered page, 23. Dappled, 25. A combination of 3 notes, 27. Beer, 28. People who eat to excess, 31. Deflect, 34. High society, 35. Letter after sigma, 36. "What a shame!", 37. Unlocks, 38. Fabricated, 39. Slice, 40. Unpaid, 41. Celebrations, 42. Green gems, 44. Pull, 45. Handbag, 46. Creative persons, 50. Boorish, 52. Send, as payment, 54. Spy agency, 55. Puts down, 56. Uncertain, 58. Curved molding, 59. Sad song, 60. Pot, 61. Sourish, 62. Dash, 63. Untidiness.

### Down

- 1. Muscular contraction, 2. Lariat, 3. Beginning, 4. Conceit, 5. Main course, 6. Appointed, 7. Not odd, 8. Handcuffing, 9. Altitude (abbrev.), 10. Deviate, 11. Based on personal accounts, 12. Leave in a hurry, 13. Angel's headwear, 18. Come from behind, 22. Learning method, 24. Sailors, 26. Shacks, 28. Secluded valleys, 29. Nil, 30. Litigates, 31. Rate, 32. Astrigent, 33. Taxpayer, 34. Relating to a cuticle, 37. «Wise» birds, 38. Wise men, 40. Paddles, 41. Minim, 43. A reddish brown, 44. A three-legged metal stand, 46. Spanish for «Friend», 47. Display, 48. Shades, 49. Satisfies, 50. Coagulate, 51. Indian music, 53. River of Spain, 56. Commercial, 57. Flee.

### Yesterday's Solution



access, alternate, analysis, apart, bands, cage, creation, deep, dream, ensue, expert, extra, fling, focus, hail, hues, impact, impressions, jeer, latch, lets, lore, marketplace, minute, paper, parent, pitcher, pose, purple, radio, rational, reason.

