

Headlines:

- American Intends Never to Leave Syria
- Venezuela Shows that America Will Never Cease Interference in other Countries
- Malaysia trying to Reduce Chinese Influence

Details:

American Intends Never to Leave Syria

According to Foreign Policy:

Despite President Donald Trump's December pledge to withdraw all U.S. forces from Syria, the U.S. government is considering a plan to keep some troops in a remote U.S. base in southeastern Syria to counter Iranian activity, sources tell Foreign Policy.

The al-Tanf garrison, located near Syria's eastern border with Jordan, was established to help local forces fight the Islamic State militant group. But the base, which sits along a potential Iranian supply route through Iraq to Syria, has also become a critical buttress for combating Iranian influence in the region.

"Al-Tanf is a critical element in the effort to prevent Iran from establishing a ground line of communications from Iran through Iraq through Syria to southern Lebanon in support of Lebanese Hezbollah," said one former senior U.S. military commander.

A U.S. presence at al-Tanf helps to block Iran's hopes for a "Shiite Crescent," a continuous land bridge from Iran through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon. From this position, Iran could threaten Israel.

Under the current withdrawal plan, the more than 200 U.S. troops who have been advising local Syrian fighters out of al-Tanf will be the last to leave the country, officials say. The vast majority of U.S. troops are concentrated in northeast Syria, hundreds of kilometers from al-Tanf. But given the garrison's strategic importance, sources said the U.S. government is considering a plan to keep at least some forces there.

The significance is not just the strategic location of al-Tanf itself but also a 55-kilometer exclusion zone, about 34 miles around the garrison, that allows U.S. troops to claim self-defense in striking Iranian or other forces moving through that area, said one source close to the discussions. Legally, the United States does not have the authority to attack a state actor such as Iran unprovoked.

"When they come through, we've claimed, I think reasonably, that they've been threatening either U.S. forces or partner forces," the source said.

It is well known that when American forces enter a country, they are usually planning permanent military occupation. America has by far the largest military budget in the world and its military bases encircle the globe. Whatever US President Donald Trump says domestically in an effort to win his next election, it is inconceivable that America forces will simply exit Syria at the conclusion of the war. In particular, the al-Tanf Base in southeastern Syria has high strategic value because of its control of Syria's oil, its waters, and its borders with Iraq and Jordan, in addition to being close to the Kurd forces that have supported America while otherwise being a region of low population. America has chosen the best location for a permanent military base but, with Allah's permission, the revolution in Syria will yet produce its results and the world will soon see American and other foreign disbelieving forces ejected from Muslim lands.

Venezuela shows that America Will Never Cease Interference in other Countries

According to Reuters:

The United States is pushing for a United Nations Security Council statement expressing full support for Venezuela's National Assembly as the country's "only democratically elected institution," but Russia is expected to block the move, diplomats said on Friday.

The council will meet on Saturday at the request of the United States after Washington and a string of countries in the region recognized Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido as head of state and urged President Nicolas Maduro to step down.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza, along with several other ministers, are due to address the 15-member body. Ahead of the public meeting, the United States circulated a draft Security Council statement.

The draft, seen by Reuters, said: "As conditions in the Republic of Venezuela continue to deteriorate, the Security Council expresses its full support for the National Assembly as Venezuela's only democratically elected institution."

If the council backed the statement, it would effectively recognize Guaido - who is head of the National Assembly - as Venezuela's head of state. Guaido declared himself the country's interim president on Wednesday.

America's wars in Muslim lands placed an enormous burden on its political leadership in the first decade of the 21st century, one consequence of which was neglect of South and Central America. One by one, America has been working to restore its control over each of the countries in its hemisphere, as the US considers itself to be the sole master of what it considers to be the New World.

It is not only America that has such designs over others. The West claims to follow the nation-state principle, introduced in the 17th century Peace of Westphalia, according to which no country has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of any other country. But the West has a greater precedent than Westphalia, which is the 19th Century Council of Europe, the forerunner of the United Nations Security Council, according to which the leading Western powers consider it their right to manage the affairs of the entire world. The world will never be free of imperialism as long as the secular liberal Capitalist ideology continues to drive Western governments.

Malaysia trying to Reduce Chinese Influence

According to Reuters:

Malaysia's economics minister said on Saturday the country will cancel its \$20 billion East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project with contractor China Communications Construction Co Ltd (CCCC).

Mohamed Azmin Ali said at a media event that the project's cost was too great, while also giving an assurance that Malaysia would welcome investment from China on a case by case basis.

"The cabinet has made this decision because the cost to develop the ECRL is too big and we don't have (the) financial capacity," said Azmin.

The government was still determining how much to pay CCCC for the project cancellation fee, he said.

The interest on the project alone amounted to half a billion ringgit (\$120 million) a year.

China is also learning Capitalist techniques, with its companies engaging in numerous commercial and strategic investments in Asia and beyond. It was in fact America that introduced China into Malaysia under the government of Najib Razak, as America plays out a complex struggle with former European colonial powers. Britain continues to have influence in Malaysia, and Mahathir is an old British hand, so while he works to reduce Chinese influence, he is intent on strengthening British control. For example, according to *Business Recorder*:

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad will undertake a working visit to Britain, the Malaysian Foreign Ministry said on Thursday.

In a statement, the ministry said Mahathir was scheduled to deliver a speech at Oxford University on Jan. 18 and meet the secretary general of the Commonwealth on the same day.

"Among the issues to be discussed during their meeting are intra-Commonwealth trade and investment, good governance and preventing and countering extremism.

"The Prime Minister's visit aims to continue the long standing good relations that have been established between Malaysia and the UK. The visit is also expected to strengthen the bond of friendship and cooperation between the two countries," the statement added.

This will be the second working visit to the country by Mahathir since taking office in May last year.

Muslims will continue to suffer as long as we continue to support a ruling class that cannot think beyond seeking help from foreign disbelieving powers.