

[UAE's Gargash says Turkey's army in Qatar is an element of instability in region](#)

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Sat, 2020-10-10 23:31

LONDON: The presence of Turkey's army in Qatar is an "element of instability in the region," the UAE's minister of state for foreign affairs said on Saturday.

"The Turkish military presence in the Arab Gulf is an emergency... It reinforces polarization, and it does not take into account the sovereignty of states and the interests of the Gulf countries and its peoples," Anwar Gargash tweeted.

Commenting on a statement made by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during his recent visit to Qatar, Gargash said that Turkey's army is not working toward stability in the region as the President claimed.

"The statement of the Turkish President during his visit to Qatar, in which he indicates that his army is working toward the stability of all Gulf states, is inconsistent with Turkey's regional role, and the evidence (for this) is numerous," the minister said.

Gargash added that the statement is an attempt to divert attention away from the economic reasons for the president's visit.

Erdogan visited Qatar on Wednesday and met with the country's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.



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[Iran short of 'significant quantity' of potential bomb material: IAEA boss](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Sat, 2020-10-10 17:49

ZURICH: Iran does not at this stage have enough enriched uranium to make one nuclear bomb under the UN atomic watchdog's official definition, the agency's head told an Austrian paper.

“The Iranians continue to enrich uranium, and to a much higher degree than they have committed themselves to. And this amount is growing by the month,” International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) head Rafael Grossi told Die Presse in an interview published on its website on Saturday.

Asked about how long Iran would need to build a nuclear weapon – the so-called “breakout time,” he said:

“In the IAEA we do not talk about breakout time. We look at the significant quantity, the minimum amount of enriched uranium or plutonium needed to make an atomic bomb. Iran does not have this significant quantity at the moment.” Iran denies ever having had a nuclear weapons program, saying its nuclear program is purely for energy purposes.

The IAEA defines “significant quantity” as the approximate amount of nuclear material for which the possibility of manufacturing a nuclear explosive device cannot be excluded.

The most recent quarterly IAEA report on Iran last month said it had 2,105.4 kg of enriched uranium, far above the 202.8 kg limit in a 2015 deal with big powers but a fraction of the enriched uranium it had before the accord. It is also enriching to up to 4.5% purity, far below the 20% it achieved before the deal and the 90% that is considered weapons-grade.



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[Egypt to conduct naval drills with Russia in Black Sea](#)

Author:

Sat, 2020-10-10 22:18

CAIRO: For the first time, Egypt will participate in joint naval drills with Russia in the Black Sea before the end of 2020, the official Russian news agency TASS reported.

To reach the Black Sea, Egypt's vessels will pass through Turkey's Bosphorus Strait. There have been tensions between the two countries since the late Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi was ousted in 2013.

In the Russian city of Novorossiysk, delegations from the Russian and Egyptian navies "held a three-day conference on preparing and holding the joint exercise Bridge of Friendship -2020," TASS reported.

During the exercises, the navies, with the support of aircraft, will train to defend sea lanes against various threats.

The exercises will include maneuvers to deploy troops and return supplies at sea, and search suspicious ships.

The navies will conduct training in all types of defense at sea, launching missiles and artillery using shipborne weapons.

TASS reported that the exercises aim to enhance naval cooperation in a way that serves security and stability at sea, and to exchange experience in fighting various threats in busy shipping lanes.

Turkey has said it intends to conduct military drills in the Black Sea on Oct. 13-16. Video footage showed the Turkish military's transfer of Russian S-400 air defense systems to Samsun province on the Black Sea coast.

Mohamed Soliman, a researcher at the Washington-based Middle East Institute for Political Studies, said this is the first time that Egypt will send military vessels to the Black Sea. He added that this sends a message to Turkey.

This view was echoed by Egyptian military expert Nabil Muharram, who said Cairo wants to send a message that its navy is present to create balance in the region and is ready to defend Egypt's interests. Muharram added that Egypt's navy has had strong relations with Russia's since the 1950s.

Ayman Salama, a member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, said his

country's participation in the drills comes at an important time amid tensions in the Mediterranean due to Turkish efforts to control energy resources.

He added that the strengthening of Egyptian-Russian strategic relations is a source of concern for Ankara, whose relationship with Moscow has deteriorated due to Turkish interventions in Libya and the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

Moussa Mostafa Moussa, head of Egypt's Al-Ghad Party and a former presidential candidate, said Russia wants to send a strong message to Ankara against its interference in Kyrgyzstan and the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.



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Egypt begins trial of ex-student in case fueling #MeToo wave

[**Aden seaport authorities demand hire**](#)

charge before dumping fertilizers

Author:

Sat, 2020-10-10 21:32

AL-MUKALLA: Seaport authorities in Aden continue to store urea fertilizer despite an order to dump the hazardous material, government officials said Saturday.

In August, a committee assigned by Yemen's attorney general to investigate reports of thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate being stored at the port found that the material was in fact a different fertilizer, urea. It ordered the seaport authority to get rid of it as it could explode if mixed with other materials.

The investigation followed a media report about ammonium nitrate gathering dust at the port that could cause a massive explosion, similar to the one that ravaged Beirut on Aug. 4.

The story caused uproar and panic in Yemen, prompting lawmakers, government officials and the public into demanding a quick investigation.

When asked why the judiciary order had not been followed, Mohammed Amzrabeh, chairman of the Yemen Gulf of Aden Ports Corporation, told Arab News that the case was in court, without giving further details.

But, according to two local government officials familiar with knowledge of the case, seaport authorities are demanding that a local trader who imported the materials pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in hire charge for storing the urea.

"The seaport authorities seek a financial settlement with the trader," one of the officials, who requested anonymity, told Arab News. "The materials have expired and no longer pose a threat to anyone."

The Saudi-led Arab coalition and the internationally recognized government have asked local traders to get permission before importing urea fertilizer, widely seen as an explosive material that could be used by the Houthis for military purposes.

Last month, a busted arms ring that had supplied the Houthis with weapons from Iran confessed to importing tons of urea fertilizer for the rebels.

There has been fighting between government forces and the Houthis in the northern provinces of Jouf and Marib and the western province of Hodeidah for the second consecutive week, leaving dozens dead on both sides.

Yemen's Defense Ministry said on Friday that coalition warplanes targeted a gathering of Houthi fighters in Marib, killing dozens of rebels and destroying vehicles. The rebels had been heading to battlefields in the province as reinforcement.

Coalition warplanes also hit Houthi military forces and equipment in Marib's Serwah district.

Army troops and allied tribesmen on Friday announced seizing control of new areas in Khab and Sha'af district in Jouf, days after securing a strategic military base and neighboring areas.

Backed by coalition air support, government troops in Jouf have been pushing forward to recapture Hazem, the provincial capital that fell to the Houthis in March.

Fighting subsided in Hodeidah on Saturday, days after government forces foiled Houthi attacks in Hays and Al-Durihimi districts and in contested districts in Hodeidah city.



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Three dead as forest fires burn in Syria, Lebanon

Author:

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DAMASCUS: Forest fires in Syria and neighboring Lebanon have killed three people and burned swathes of land since Thursday, state media and officials said.

Syrian state television on Saturday morning broadcast scenes from the affected areas, where firefighters were working to extinguish the blazes. It said hundreds of hectares had burned in the countryside of Syria's coastal Latakia and Tartus provinces, and in the central Homs province.

The health ministry said three people had died in Latakia province since Friday as a result of the fires, and that 70 people were taken to hospital suffering breathing difficulties.

Dozens of fires were burning, including "45 in Latakia and 33 in Tartus," Syria's Agriculture Minister Mohammed Hassan Qatana told a radio station late Friday.

The Latakia fire brigade said they were "facing the largest series of fires seen in Latakia province in years."

Official news agency SANA said fire burned homes in Baniyas, in Tartus province.

In neighboring Lebanon, there have been more than 100 fires across the country since Thursday, according to George Abu Musa, head of operations for the country's civil defense.

"The situation is crazy, there are fires everywhere," Abu Musa told AFP.

"We have mobilized 80 percent of our personnel and almost all our centers in Lebanon," he said.

He said most of the blazes had been extinguished but some were still burning in the mountainous Chouf region in the south, and in Akkar in the north.

Military helicopters were assisting firefighters in "hard-to-reach" areas, he added.

Abu Musa was unable to identify the cause of the blazes, but said wind and high temperatures were helping them spread.

On Friday, authorities reported several fires across northern and central Israel and the occupied West Bank as temperatures soared, forcing thousands to evacuate.

Dozens of fires hit Lebanon in mid-October last year, amid unusually high temperatures and strong winds.

The government faced heavy criticism and accusations of ill-preparedness over its response to the 2019 blazes.

Days after Lebanon's 2019 fires, mass protests broke out, triggered by proposed tax hikes but quickly transforming into months-long demonstrations against the ruling class, deemed by protesters as inept and corrupt.





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