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ENVELOPE

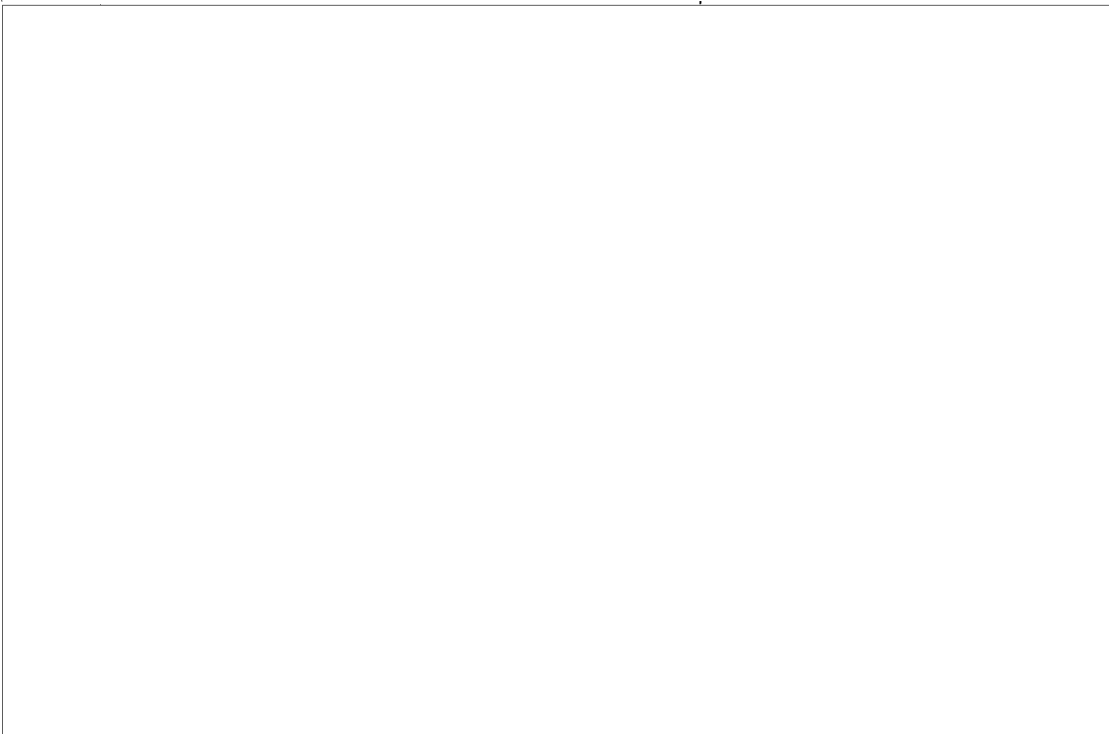
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WARNING: TOPIC: DISSENT, DOMESTIC ECONOMIC, DOMESTIC POLITICAL,
INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL, MILITARY, TERRORISM
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BODY

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COUNTRY: IRAN, IRAQ, SYRIA, TURKEY, UNITED STATES

SUBJ: ~~(U//FOUO)~~ IRAQ: REGIONAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM KURDISH MEDIA
Summary 19 May 2015

SOURCE: Arbil Kurdistan Regional Reconstruction
Team in English 19
May 15 ~~(U//FOUO)~~

TEXT:

[~~(U//FOUO)~~ The following is a roundup of Kurdish press published
on
19 May as provided by the Public Diplomacy Section, Regional
Reconstruction Team, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. OSC is not
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Hashid al Shaabi [Popular Mobilization forces] Launches Offence to
Liberate Anbar

Shar Press reported that today Hashid al-Shaabi militants have
launched an offence to liberate Anbar.

The Aim of The U.S. Operation in Syria Was Abu Sayyaf's Wife

Xendan reported that the aim of the U.S. commando's operation in
Syria May 15 was capturing Abu Sayyaf's wife, who was behind
torturing and killing American citizen Kayla Mueller.

KNN reported that the State Department Spokesperson stated that Abu
Sayyaf's wife was involved in committing crimes against Yezidi

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women.

Kerry: War Will Change in Favor of the GoI

Kurdistani Nwe newspaper reported that Secretary of State John Kerry stated that the balance of war will change soon in favor of the GoI, and the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) will defeat ISIL in Anbar.

The U.S. is Behind the Failure of ISF

Khabat newspaper reported that Chief of Security and Defense Committee at the Iraqi Council of Representatives (ICoR) Hakim Zamily accused the United States for the failure of the ISF, weakening the ISF, and making a mess in Iraq. Zamily stated that the United States has not provided necessary weapons and ammunition to the ISF and is not serious in targeting ISIL.

The United States Supports Iraq in Regaining Control Over Ramadi

Shar Press reported that the White House spokesperson stated that the United States and Coalition support Iraq in regaining control over Ramadi.

Dempsey: Fall of Ramadi Proves the Weakness of Iraqi Security Forces

PUK Media reported that Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey stated that the fall of Ramadi proves the weakness of the Iraqi Security Forces. Dempsey also stated that the U.S. supports the GoI to overcome the issue.

IKR President Meets with Peshmerga Commanders

Bas News reported that on May 18 the IKR President and Vice President met with commander of the Peshmerga forces and discussed the developments in frontlines.

Gorran Submits a Proposal to the IKR President on How to Resolve the Issue of Disputed Areas

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KNN reported that on May 18 the Gorran Movement submitted a proposal to the IKR President on how to return the disputed areas to the IKR.

Gorran's proposal includes: voting by local councils of cities and towns in the disputed areas on whether they want to be part of the IKR or not; an IKP referendum on the disputed areas; and steps to assure ethnic and religious minorities that their rights will be protected.

Ministry of Trade and Industry Cancels Licenses of 64 Companies

Bas Newspaper reported that the KRG Ministry of Trade and Industry decided to cancel the licenses of 64 companies, and asked the Ministry of Municipality to take back public lands that have been allocated to those companies for investment purposes. The decision came after the companies failed to abide by KRG regulations and used public land for irrelevant purposes.

Kirkuk Governor Denies U.S. Discussion of an Independent Region of Kirkuk

Hawlati newspaper reported that Kirkuk Governor Najmadin Karim denied that he discussed the establishment of an independent region for Kirkuk during his recent visit to the United States. Karim stated that he supports the idea that Kirkuk become part of the IKR with special status as a way to protect the rights of all components of the province. Kirkuk Governor also stated that after the GoI failed to release the Kirkuk budget, the Kirkuk administration began working with all the government departments in Kirkuk to discuss options for the future of Kikruk.

IKR President Meets with IKR Political Parties

Rudaw reported that on May 18 the IKR President and Vice President met with the IKR political parties and discussed various issues such as Barzani's visit to the United States and Europe, KRG-GoI relations, the possibility of a referendum on independence and the future of the disputed areas, and the reform process in the IKR.

Below are the key themes of the meeting that were highlighted by

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media outlets:

Barzani's Visit to the United States

NRT: Barzani stated that the White House said they will neither oppose Kurdish independence nor support it. During the meeting the decision was made to form a committee responsible for preparations for declaring independence and holding a referendum in the disputed areas. The committee will visit Jordan, Iran, and Turkey to gain support for Kurdish independence.

Rudaw: Barzani told the IKR political parties that "if you support me I will declare independence at an appropriate time."

Kurdish Unity

Awene reported that the meeting emphasized Kurdish unity and practical efforts to generate trust among political parties and the public.

KRG Oil

NRT reported that in the meeting the KRG Deputy PM stated that some international companies are ready to buy oil from the KRG.

Rudaw reported that Poland and Hungary are ready to buy Kurdish oil.

Awene reported that during the meeting participants reiterated that only resolution of the KRG-GoI oil and budget issue can calm GoI-KRG political relations. The political parties expressed support to the KRG to find sources of revenue for the KRG budget according to the IKR law No 5, 2013.

KRG-GoI Relations

The political parties agreed that the KRG should continue negotiations with the GoI over oil and budget issue.

ICoR Deputy Speaker: More Common Points Among Iraqis Than Differences

Radio Nawa reported that during a meeting with his Hungarian

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counterpart on May 18, ICoR Deputy Speaker Aram Muhammad stated that common points among Iraqis outnumber the differences.

IKP Approves Constitutional Committee

NRT reported that tomorrow the IKP will give approval to the constitutional committee that is responsible for review and preparation of the IKR constitution for referendum in no more than 90 days.

Confession of Terrorist Group Arrested in Erbil

NRT reported that on May 18 the IKR Security Council arrested six ISIL-linked terrorist in Erbil. They were Kurdish, and residents of Erbil. NRT aired the suspects' confessions, during which they claimed to have prepared 18 pieces of explosive materials to use in Erbil.

Bas reported that three of them had participated in training workshops organized by the Kurdistan Islamic Group (KIG) headquarters in Erbil in the past years. One of them was a KRG employee at the Ministry of Agriculture, and two of them have been praying at Abdullah Dizyee Mosque where KIG MP Mullah Salim Shwshkayee gives Friday speeches.

Rudaw TV's Coverage on Developments in Anbar Province

On May 18 Prime Time news Rudaw widely covered the developments in Anbar province. Below are some key excerpts of the coverage:

"Today (May 18) is the fourth day since Ramadi fell into the hands of ISIL."

"The situation in Baghdad is not normal, and people of Baghdad are frustrated after the fall of Ramadi."

"People of Baghdad fear that Baghdad might fall into the hands of ISIL, and the GoI fall, and Abadi's cabinet to be turned into an ISIL cabinet."

"The U.S. role is not clear in Ramadi."

"The chief of the Anbar Provincial Council stated that the U.S.

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Ambassador to Iraq agreed on the participation of Hashid al-Shaabi in the Anbar war, but under the command of the GoI."

"The GoI attempts to liberate Anbar have had counter results."

"Pentagon spokesperson: The fall of Anbar is a disaster."

Rudaw: al-Baghdadi says "We Will Control Baghdad and Karbala"

Citing an ISIL outlet Rudaw reported that in a taped statement the leader of ISIL, Abubakir al-Baghdadi, stated that ISIL will control Baghdad and Karbala. (NOTE: Rudaw calls al-Baghdadi "the Caliphate of

ISIL" while other Kurdish media outlets using phrases such as "terrorists of ISIL" or "so-called ISIL." In the past there have been

criticism by journalists, activists and politicians about Rudaw's coverage of ISIL war and some people called it pro-ISIL coverage.

END

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