



## US naval movements around Syria. Hizballah moves rockets

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The USS Bataan opposite Syrian coast

debkafile's military and intelligence sources report that Monday, June 13, the US deployed the USS Bataan amphibian air carrier strike vessel opposite Syria's Mediterranean coast with 2,000 marines, 6 war planes, 15 attack helicopters, including new V-22 Ospreys, and 27 choppers for landing forces aboard. Also this week, US naval units went operational in the Aegean, Adriatic and Black Seas as part of the joint US-Ukrainian Sea Breeze 2011 exercise.

The USS Monterrey cruiser armed with Aegis surface missile interceptors has additionally been stationed in the Black Sea. Western sources additionally report a build-up of ship-borne anti-missile strength in the Mediterranean basin.

This huge concentration of naval missile interceptor units looks like preparations by Washington for the contingency of Iran, Syria and Hizballah letting loose with surface missiles against US and Israeli targets in the event of US military intervention to stop the anti-opposition slaughter underway in Syria.

Moscow, Tehran and Damascus, in particular, are taking this exceptional spate of American military movements in and around the Mediterranean as realistically portending American intervention in Syria.

This concentration of US might also the effect of deterring the Turkish government from going through with its decision to send Turkish troops into Syria. The plan was to create a protected buffer zone where the thousands of refugees in flight from the Assad regime's military crackdown would be kept safe on Syrian side of the border and out of Turkey.

Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan is averse to be seen working hand in glove militarily with any US interference in Syria. At the same time, Western intelligence sources in the Persian Gulf are sure Washington is coordinating its military movements with Ankara and that Erdogan quietly agreed to place Turkish bases at US disposal for an operation in Syria.

debkafile's military sources also report that Monday, June 13, Hizballah began shifting the long- and medium-range rockets it had stored in northern Lebanon to locations in the center of the country. Western military sources first thought the Lebanese Shiite group was taking the precaution of keeping its arsenal safe from a spillover of violence from Syria. Tuesday, however, they learned that Iranian intelligence had advised Hizballah to remove its rockets out of range of a possible American operation in Syria.

Tuesday, Iran capped these events with three separate warnings to the Obama administration against military interference in Syria.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast said Tuesday: "The Americans are not allowed to launch a military intervention in any country of the region including Syria."

He accused "Israel and the USA of standing behind the riots in Syria, Iran's closest ally in the Arab world... with particular aims...of provoking terrorist groups in Syria and in the region to carry out terrorist and sabotage operations."

Another spokesman warned: "Western attempts to set the model of Libya in Damascus are

doomed to failure."

Iranian Vice President Reza Rahimi accused the United States of preparing and executing "the slaughter of Muslims" worldwide.

Iran's ground forces commander Brig. Gen. Kioumars Heidari added this threat: Any new military move by the US in the region will impose heavy costs on the country far greater than the costs it paid in Iraq and Afghanistan."

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