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Picture taken at the 'Journey with the Maritime Heritage' exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Kuwait City.

EU, Kuwait 'fluent partners' in fighting against terrorism

New strategy on the cards: official

By Hani Albahrani

KUWAIT CITY, March 4, (KUNA): Kuwait and the European Union (EU) enjoy a very fluent partnership in terms of fighting terrorism, said a senior official on Monday.

"We are in the process of developing ideas already discussed some months ago to identify many concrete projects to feed our partnership," said Gilles de Kerchove, Counter-Terrorism Coordinator at the EU on his visit to Kuwait.

In an exclusive interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), De Kerchove said the two-day visit came "because we want a strong and balanced relationship, especially in regards to counter-terrorism. The EU, by definition, is in favor of multilateralism and regional cooperation. Thus, we would like to see the GCC conflict come to an end. If we see we can do something to help in the process, of course we will do it."

On his meeting with Deputy Premier

and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, the EU official noted that it mainly focused on combating the threat of terrorism, "as the Global Coalition has nearly completely destroyed the physical 'caliphate of DAESH'". DAESH is the Arabic acronym of the so-called Islamic State (in Iraq and the Levant and/or Sham).

He elaborated saying "we are also concerned with dealing with the remains of DAESH, addressing the legacy and ideology of the group, which is still very strong and active. This can be addressed and detected in various ways, like through inspection of prisoners charged with terrorism, access to evidence, as well as aviation security, document fraud and terrorism-financing."

Therefore, Kuwait, currently a member of the UN Security Council, is seen by the EU as a "fluent partner" in this regard, noted De Kerchove.

On the degree of terrorism prevalence in the Middle East region, especially in Iraq and Syria, he said "I've been to Iraq recently. They are confronted by many difficult challenges, including the huge number of those arrested on terrorism charges, the reconstructing of the secu-

riety sector and politically help justice and reconciliation processes triumph, especially in post IS-Mosul."

In Syria, the current situation is different, according De Kerchove, "especially after the US announcement of withdrawing its troops ... its impact is difficult to predict with the existence of many major regional players like Turkey."

In Europe, "we have reduced significantly our vulnerabilities. The EU worked a lot in the last 3-4 years to address the challenge, and I think that explains why all security services are in a position to foil plots, to stop, and detect people who are close to the 'tipping points'; when they are likely to commit attacks. The Global Coalition did a great job in destroying the physical caliphate of DAESH, which reduces the ability of DAESH to plan attacks from their territory, but that doesn't mean there is no threat any more.

"The main threat, as we see it, is now 'homegrown': people that have not travelled to Iraq and Syria, who have no link with either DAESH or al Qaeda, but are inspired by these ideologies. And those challenges for the security services, for several reasons."

DIWANIYA كيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'India-Pakistan ties on edge'

'Belligerents seek peaceful solution'

"ONE month ago on Feb 2, 2019, India decided to change the course of its eastern rivers to supply water for Indians in the Indian Kashmir," columnist and former ambassador Ahmad Al-Dawas wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"This Indian decision actually harmed Pakistan, because the water of these rivers will flow to the Indian territories before reaching to Pakistan and we know that Pakistan's agriculture mostly depends on the water coming from India.

"However, following the Indian decision we found one armed Islamic group called the Jaish-e-Muhammad (Muhammad Army) which is based in Pakistan carrying out a suicide attack on Feb 19, 2019 against the Indian troops in Kashmir state killing 44 Indian soldiers.

"India retaliated by an airstrike carried out by the Indian Air Force targeting some territories inside Pakistan about one hundred kilometers away from the Pakistani capital Islamabad. India believes the targeted part of Pakistan is a camp to train terrorists.

"But the Pakistani air force, in turn retaliated by shelling Indian objectives and managed to capture an Indian pilot and detained him for a few days, before sending him back to his country.

"In the framework of his comments on the Pakistani army, the outstanding British writer Guine Dyer says, 'Other states have their own armies, but the Pakistani army has its own state.' He added this army dominates both the economy and the politics of this country simultaneously.

"He clarified that 'this army is selling insurance certificates, clothing, meat and concrete,' not just that, he added 'it is the Pakistani army which possesses many real estate belonging to the nation and as such grants its elements a lot of financial privileges while in service and after retirement.'

"The British writer added, 'The Pakistani army shall go ahead in terms of having the lion's share from Pakistan's economy as long as there is a danger threatening the country and making the Pakistanis feeling of a persistent danger. It is the Pakistani army which is keen to keep the relevant game alive, because this army is the sole beneficiary of this game.'

"Pakistan is accustomed to support the terrorists who are involved in attacking India. In this context, we say in addition to the group Jaish-e-Muhammad there is another Pakistani armed group which operates under the name 'Lashkar-e-Taiba' and has carried out many terrorist attacks inside India topped by an attack in Mumbai (formerly Bombay) in 2008 which resulted in the killing of 165 Indians.

"However, in the wake of such attack, the Pakistani army, had pledged to close down the centers of the extremist groups, but this army had failed to fulfill its pledges in this connection.

"For his part, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has seemingly exploited the recent events and issued orders to strike Pakistani territories.

"This happens because the prime minister wants to make some political gains and is looking forward to win the forthcoming Indian elections. In other words, the foreign danger represents an opportunity for him to flex his muscles.

"However, this man looks violent and this was evident through his statement. He is actually a fanatic Hindu, and believes that his attack on Pakistan shall help mobilize the Hindus around his thoughts and win the forthcoming elections and ultimately maintain his post as a prime minister.

"In this context, we say the government of Modi which lasted for five years, harbors enmity against Indian Muslims and sympathizes with the Hindus - the adorers of cows.

"As a matter of fact, there is a political hardline current in India against the Muslims. In this connection, we elucidate that just if any Muslim slaughters a cow for meat, the Hindus will revolt and hasten to kill Muslims.

"On the other hand, we say there are a lot of analyses made by many foreign writers indicating that both the Indian leadership and his Pakistani counterpart have the desire to end their differences peacefully through official negotiations.

"In this context, we cite what was attributed to one of the Western political analysts who considers the conflict between the two countries (India and Pakistan) as just a clash between some students in their school compound."

Also:

"The relation between India and Pakistan are currently passing through its worst historical diversion," columnist and attorney Riyadh Al-Sanea wrote for *Annahar* daily.

"Not only that the current crisis between the two countries can be deemed as the worst military crisis and the first of its kind since about two decades.

"In this context, we say the confrontation between the two states will be too difficult and with catastrophic repercussions even if the two states had no nuclear weapons.

"As a matter of fact, the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir, could be dated back to 1947, because this state had not been completely annexed to India or to Pakistan and this can be attributed to the then British policy which had given the power and freedom to Kashmir to join India or Pakistan as per the desire of the people of the State.

"But due to the contradicting opinions between the people of Kashmir who wanted to join Pakistan and the then ruler of the state preferred India, a war erupted between India and Pakistan in 1947.

"However, following this development, the United Nations hastened to intervene and concluded a ceasefire between the two countries and disarmed Kashmir in addition to conducting a referendum in 1947 under the supervision of the United Nations.

"But India in turn, did not approve the recommendations of the United Nations in this connection as such the relevant situations remained unchanged without any progress or solution to satisfy the two conflicting parties.

"This situation continued up to 1965 which witnessed the eruption of a war between Islamabad and New Delhi and this resulted in the United Nations Security Council intervening and its efforts in this connection succeeded in achieving ceasefire during the same year.

"However, the third war between the two states, erupted in 1971 and the most prominent outcome of this war, was the establishment of Bangladesh and the signing of the 'Simla Agreement' in 1972. This agreement was signed on behalf of Pakistan by the then prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and on behalf of India by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi.

"Anyway, in spite of the big escalation and tension between the two states, we believe the relevant crisis will gradually vanish in future, particularly given the statements that have been issued by the two parties indicating they have no desire to escalate the conflict. Moreover, they have turned down any mediation in this connection, because for them this conflict doesn't need any mediation."

"When the young Saad Al-Kharraz was appointed as Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, people were very happy with the choice. He grew up in the ministry and had occupied various positions before reaching the position of the minister", Mubarak Fahad Al-Duwailah wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"Al-Kharraz also adopts a balanced and rational ideology away from extremism. However, it was not expected for the ministry to fall into a new unprecedented depth of

such magnitude.

"On Tuesday, Feb 19, we were invited to the General Assembly of Kuwait Teachers Association. Everyone who attended thought the meeting would be postponed by 30 minutes due to lack of quorum, and then reconvened regardless of the quorum, in accordance with the law and custom of the assembly. I do not exaggerate when I say this is what happens in most similar associations.

"However, what happened that evening was surprising. The representative of the ministry announced that the next general assembly of Kuwait Teachers Association will be held after two weeks due to lack of quorum! Everyone was surprised by this step. The one who invites for the general assemblies is the board of directors. The system states that the postponement can be up to two weeks, not entirely two weeks. The teachers know that the postponement is usually for only half an hour.

"What did the NGO director want from this postponement? Why did the ministry change its policy towards Kuwait Teachers Association this year? For many years, the general assemblies of most NGOs were carried out in this manner under the supervision of the ministry.

"The elections were conducted according to these procedures, and the boards of directors were formed under similar conditions. We have not heard any objection from the ministry or about the cancellation or nullification of the previous elections.

"I do not know the director of NGOs Department at the ministry, but I heard about him on more than one occasion. I do not doubt this minister and I am sure it was not he who is behind such a strange procedure. Thus, there may be a hidden agenda behind this sabotage in relations between groups of teachers. There are some individuals who want to engage the next board of directors in other conflicts with the aim of drawing attention away from discussing the main issues."

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"A majority of the citizens ask the same question: Is the government serious about reform and fighting corruption, or is it just a slogan and statements for media consumption or to pass time since there is least accountability for corruption. Most of the citizens feel they suffer as a result of luxury democracy gives or is it a treatment with painkillers which is no longer effective. What we need is a surgery to cure the disease," columnist Sattam Ahmed Al-Jarallah wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"These questions and many others cannot be answered in light of the prevailing quota system at the executive and legislative levels. There can be no reform if we do not have the intention to change the reality by pushing for the election of representatives of the people who can serve the country.

"The wealth is collected at the expense of the poor Kuwaiti people who suffer from poor services and underdeveloped legislation to the extent that the majority now believes that what is happening is far worse than the brutal Iraqi invasion.

"During that dark period of our country's history, we knew the enemy. It was clear and resistance was easy. But today the enemy is unknown, and therefore, the resistance looks like you resist a ghost, you cannot catch or bring to justice.

"We see around us all kinds of bribery, favoritism, and election outcomes reflect the reality of the people, and the mediator intervenes in everything, even in the medicine which is the natural right of the citizen, and no one bears responsibility, but fingers of accusation are pointed in all directions as a result chaos prevail.

"The educational output is at the lowest levels because even in this area there is intervention since this teacher is protected and that employee has enough arsenal of protection to prevent accountability, and this influential has a whole network of means of pressure to prevent accountability.

"The issue of poor services and infrastructure is one of the examples of what Kuwait is suffering from, and certainly not hurling accusations at others, but failure to learn from the lessons of the past, especially the invasion and occupation during which Kuwait was a model of solidarity and unity and strength to face the plight and overcome it."

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"Even though 28 years have passed since the liberation of Kuwait from the brutal invasion of Iraq, which witnessed a treachery unprecedented in contemporary political history and in the history of the entire Arab nation, the devastating effects of this war continue to bear witness to the brutality," Zayed Al-Zaid wrote for *Al-Nahar* daily.

"One of the most prominent effects is the presence of landmines scattered throughout the country. They were planted by the occupiers after confirming that they lost the battle against the Kuwaiti people, who remained steadfast to the legitimacy of the ruling family and dismissed the tyranny and madness of the dictator who decided to challenge the global coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United States of America.

"The occupiers during the battle planted more than two million landmines which resulted in the martyrdom of more than 1,700 people long after the occupiers were defeated. With the use of expert international companies, more than 1.6 million landmines have been removed from the Kuwaiti territory but 400,000 mines still remain hidden in Kuwaiti sand, exposing the lives of citizens and residents to danger every day.

"Unfortunately, rarely a month passes and we hear news of the injury or death of a shepherd in remote areas because of these landmines. The most recent incidents were the serious injuries sustained by an Indian shepherd and the injuries to a Kuwaiti citizen who was searching for truffle.

"Ministry of Interior had warned citizens and residents of the danger of tampering with strange objects which surfaced after the heavy rainfall a few months ago. This is only an indication that the crisis of the landmines is a continuing process and that the government should solve this issue and remove more than 400,000 mines which are still scattered throughout Kuwait.

"Ministry of Defense should launch a massive new campaign to remove the remaining landmines for protecting citizens and residents."

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"Seeing the Humanitarian Leader His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who was shown on local television channels few days ago, was not an ordinary scene for Indonesian orphans", Dr Ahmad Al-Ammar wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.

"He was not seen just as a father meeting his children or as an Amir meeting child guests passing through the usual protocols of guests. There was an atmosphere of excitement that translated all the meanings of humanity and fatherhood and expressed concepts away from the scope of interpretation meanings in the pages of dictionaries and diligent researches of scholars in the Arabian language and curricula extended over the years. The 'Amir of Humanity' has created new concepts for meanings of the words leadership, wisdom and authority in the political world.

"It is good that the Indonesian-Kuwaiti Charity Society, represented by its Chairman Sheikh Ahmad Al-Houli and its Director Khalid Al-Kandari, has taken this blessed step of presenting a model of the work of our philanthropists on the land of Kuwait to see with their own eyes what they have offered while Indonesian orphans shared our happiness. I wish His Highness the Amir a long life, great appreciation and respect."

— Compiled by Zaki Taleb

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