

US delivering advanced anti-tank systems to Kurdish YPG in Manbij – Turkey's pro-gov't media

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Ankara has repeatedly blamed Washington for lending military support to the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), while the US insists its backing of the Kurds is needed to counter Daesh*. In February 2018, then-US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson claimed that the White House has "never given heavy arms to the YPG".

The United States has delivered advanced U.S. Javelin and TOW anti-tank missile systems to the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), in northern Syria's Manbij, the Turkish pro-government newspaper Yeni Akit reported on January 19.

"YPG is preparing a trap for Turkish tanks which are ready to enter Manbij," Yeni Akit quoted sources as saying.

The reported developments come after Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar repeated during his meeting with Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the US Joint

Chiefs of Staff, Turkey's call on the United States to promptly withdraw the US-backed YPG forces from Manbij.

Earlier, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that Ankara would launch a military operation east of the Euphrates river.

Earlier this week, U.S. President Donald Trump warned Turkey on his Twitter page and said the United States would "devastate Turkey economically if they hit Kurds".

The U.S. support for Kurdish forces in the fight against the Islamic State strained ties between two NATO allies, the United States and Turkey. Turkey considers the YPG to be the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been waging decades-long insurgency for Kurdish rights in Turkey.