

Headlines:

- **Protests Return to Jordan**
- **US-Turkey Cut Deal over Manbij**
- **Pakistan-Turkey Defence Deal**

Details:

Protests Return to Jordan

Protests have continued to grow in Jordan over the past week over government attempts to increase taxes and remove subsidies. Jordan was an artificial construct created by Britain 100 years ago, as a result lacks mineral resources and has long relied on Gulf handouts. With Jordan's regional backers all facing their own economic problems with the global economic crisis in 2008 and low oil prices, Jordan turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to deal with its rising debt. The IMF imposed a restructuring plan that required the government to implement austerity measures which required cutting subsidies on over 150 goods and commodities. The removal of subsidies on staple food items and the introduction of a 10% tax on agricultural goods that were previously exempt from taxes is what was the final straw for many protestors. Public protests against rising bread prices started six months ago with a handful of unemployed people in isolated locations and evolved into organized demonstrations involving multiple groups and thousands of protesters. The government has tried to alleviate some of the pain related to rising prices but the problems have not gone away.

US-Turkey Cut Deal over Manbij

On June 4, following a meeting between US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, the two countries released a joint statement indicating that Washington and Ankara have endorsed a "road map towards ensuring security and stability" in the Manbij region. This came after extensive talks took place after significant differences between the US and Turkey over the North of Syria. Turkish and US reports following the statement show the agreement involved vacating the remaining members of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) from the Manbij region in exchange for Turkish cooperation in stabilizing the area. Ever since Turkey launched an offensive on the YPG positions in the northern Syrian city of Afrin as part of Operation Olive Branch in January 2018, Ankara has repeatedly threatened to extend its attack to include the YPG forces remaining in and around Manbij. This caused tension with the US due to the presence of US forces in the vicinity. But now a compromise between Ankara and Washington in which the YPG would be obligated to vacate the area has been reached.

Pakistan-Turkey Defence Deal

Turkey and Pakistan signed their largest ever bilateral defence contract, an estimated \$1.5 billion deal that allows Islamabad to purchase 30 Turkish combat helicopters. The deal is a sign of deepening defence cooperation between the two countries. Pakistan is looking to strengthen its regional defence partnerships in the face of increasing US pressure, including cuts in military aid. Turkey has undertaken significant strides in its defence industry and it has deep relations with Pakistan which go back over decades.