

# *Syrian Air Defense Shoots Down U.S. Drone*

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Damascus, March 18 (RHC)-- A U.S. drone has been shot down by Syria's military over the coastal province of Latakia near a stronghold of President Bashar al-Assad, Syrian state media say. "Syrian air defenses brought down a hostile U.S. surveillance aircraft over north Latakia," AFP quoted the official SANA news agency as saying on Tuesday.

Turkish military sources told the website of the Hürriyet newspaper that the aircraft was an unarmed American Predator drone, which had taken off from the U.S. Incirlik air base in Turkey's southern province of Adana.

The Syrian state-run television has also broadcast footage of what it referred to as the drone's wreckage, which was being loaded onto the back of a truck by soldiers.

The U.S. military has confirmed that communications with an unarmed predator drone over northwest Syria was lost on Tuesday and that it is investigating claims that its unmanned aircraft was downed.

If confirmed, the incident would be the first time Damascus has engaged a U.S. aircraft over its airspace since the U.S.-led military coalition began its so-called battle against the ISIL Takfiri terrorists in the Syrian territory in September 2014.

The coalition, which claims to have been targeting ISIL positions, has also attacked the provinces where the ISIL militants are not active and even hit Syrian infrastructure.

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