

Kayhan International



Cleric: Hezbollah Response 'Perfect'

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- An Iranian cleric said Friday the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah gave a perfect response in retaliation for the Israeli regime's airstrike on Syria's Golan Heights. Addressing worshippers at the Friday Prayers here, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said Hezbollah took best revenge on the Israeli regime. "This is the first of the responses to the Zionists and they should wait for more," Jannati said. The cleric expressed hope that Hezbollah would manage to achieve more victories and inflict repeated defeats on the Israeli regime.

Iran Condemns Terror Attacks in Sinai

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iran's Foreign Ministry on Friday denounced terrorist attacks across Egypt's volatile Sinai Peninsula, urging regional countries to reinforce their unity in the fight against terrorism and extremism. "Such terrorist moves are aimed at keeping Muslim and regional countries busy with secondary issues and distracting them from the main and top priority of the Muslim world that is support for the Palestinian people," ministry Spokeswoman Marzieh Afkham said. She stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation and solidarity among countries in the region to battle extremism and terrorism.

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Viewpoint

By: Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

Joining Hands With SCO

Moscow, Washington Discuss Possible Kerry Visit to Russia: Sources



Saudi King Dismisses Prince Bandar



Bomb Blast Kills Scores at Shia Mosque in Pakistan



The Divinely-Exalted House in Qom

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"In houses Allah has allowed to be exalted and wherein His Name is celebrated, He is glorified therein, morning and evening." (Holy Qur'an 24:36)

According to Tha'labi, the famous Sunni Muslim exegete of the holy Qur'an, on revelation of this ayah, when Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) elaborated to his companions the houses referred here by the Almighty, Abu Bakr asked: whether these include the house of his venerable daughter, Hazrat Fatema Zahra (AS) and her husband Imam Ali (AS)? The reply came: "Yes, rather the Greater One of these houses."

The mercy of God is All-Encompassing. It is widespread and covers many venerable spots around the world. It is fully manifest in the principal mosques of Islam - Mecca, Medina, Kufa, Bayt al-Moqaddas etc.

The unending showers of divine mercy are evident in the houses where the Prophets were born as well as around their graves, where the Name of God is constantly recited and glorified day and night - irrespective of whether these places of pilgrimage have been bulldozed by the Salafi heretics or it is beyond their power to desecrate them.

Qutadah, a prominent Hadith narrator held in high esteem by our Sunni brethren, says that once during a visit to the Prophet's 6th Infallible Heir, he said: I have sat with great scholars but never did my heart feel the effect of a glorious awe on it, as I do feel in your presence. The Imam smiled and said: "Do you know where you sit? You sit in the House about which God has said: "In houses Allah has allowed to be exalted and wherein His Name is celebrated, He is glorified therein, morning and evening."

This is another firm testimony of the grace of God covering the houses and the shrines of the Ahl al-Bayt for the benefit of humanity - even though the sacred tombs of four of the 12 Infallible Successors of the Prophet lie in a dilapidated state today as testimony to the unpardonable blasphemous sin of the Wahhabis.

Imam Sadeq (AS), who revived the genuine Sunnah and Seerah of his ancestor the Prophet has further elaborated on the sanctity of the sites where torrents of Divine mercy continue to pour, when he expressed the famous statement:

"Indeed, God has a sanctuary and that is Mecca (the Holy Ka'ba); the Messenger of God (Prophet Muhammad - SAWA) has a sanctuary and that is Medina; the Commander of the Faithful (Imam Ali - AS) has a sanctuary and that is Kufa (in Iraq) and we (the Ahl al-Bayt) have a sanctuary and that is Qom (in Iran)."

Today, on the 10th of Rabi al-Akher, Qom is draped in black. Processions of black clad mourners beating their chests in grief could be seen in the city centre, where all shops and the marketplace are closed.

The chants of "Ya Ma'souma, Ya Fatema" rent the air. Thousands of believers have converged on a shrine topped by a gold-plated dome and flanked by two majestic minarets.

It is the mausoleum of a venerable descendent of the Prophet, or to put it more properly, it is one of those houses exalted by God Almighty, where His Name is constantly recited and He is glorified day and night.

The people are commemorating the martyrdom of the revered daughter of Imam Musa al-Kazem (SA), whose tomb has made Qom the second most holy spot in Iran after that of her brother Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, Khorasan.

In fact, the noble lady had left her hometown Medina and was on her way to see her brother in distant Merv (presently in Turkmenistan), when her caravan was attacked near the city of Savah by brigands of the usurper Abbasid regime, making her to head for nearby Qom, where the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt came out in great numbers to welcome her.

The people knew she was no ordinary person but the most knowledgeable lady of her times, regarding whom her father had said "Fidaha Abuha" (may her father be sacrificed for her), on seeing the correct answers she had given as a girl of less than ten years to a set of complicated jurisprudential queries presented by a group of visitors from Iran.

She was known as a prominent narrator of Hadith. On her authority, scholars penned down such important events as the Hadith al-Manzila (comparison of Imam Ali (AS) to Aaron the brother of Prophet Moses), the Ayah al-Muwadda (obligating love and affection for the Ahl al-Bayt as a token of a Muslim's gratitude towards the Prophet), the prime position of Imam Ali (AS) and his followers, and the memorable proclamation of Imam Ali (AS) as his vicegerent by the Prophet at Ghadir-Khom on the express commandment of God.

Alas, this repository of knowledge was not destined to stay long in Qom after suffering the consequences of the attack on her caravan that led to the martyrdom of two of her brothers near Savah. A mere 17 days after her arrival in this Iranian city on the edge of the desert, the 28-year old young lady, who had remained unmarried since no man of her age was worthy of her hand, left for the ethereal heavens in the year 201 AH - true to the prophecy of her grandfather Imam Sadeq (AS), who had said decades before birth:

"There will pass away in Qom a lady of my descendants known as Fatema bint Musa, by whose intercession believers will enter the heaven."

Qom, which today has been transformed into the leading centre for diffusion of Islamic sciences all over the world, is indeed honoured to be the stairway to the heavens, thanks to the mercy of God in exalting this city by virtue of this noble descendent of the Prophet. Let us join the pilgrims at her shrine to salute her in the proper manner with the words:

"Ya Fatema ishfa' li fi'l-jannah fa inna laki ind-Allah shaanan min ash-shaan (O Fatema! Intercede for me for (the reward of) paradise, for indeed you have with Allah a lofty status)."

Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah:

Fusion of Resistance Blood Key to Victory



Hezbollah Secretary General Seyyed Hasan Nasrallah speaks on a screen during a ceremony in Beirut's southern suburbs.

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Hezbollah is ready to respond to the occupying regime of Israel at any time and in any place, party chief Hassan Nasrallah underlined in a fiery speech Friday, two days after his troops ambushed a Zionist military convoy, killing at least two soldiers.

"Don't try us again," Nasrallah warned in a televised speech during a Hezbollah ceremony commemorating the martyrdom of six party

fighters and an Iranian commander in a Jan. 18 Israeli airstrike on the Golan Heights town of Qunaitra.

"We don't want war but we don't fear it," he declared. "The resistance in Lebanon is not concerned with rules of engagement. It is our legitimate and legal right to fight aggression, wherever and whenever it may occur.

Nasrallah said: "If the Israel thinks that the resistance fears war, I tell

them today in the commemoration of the Qunaitra martyrs and after the Shebaa revenge attack, that we don't fear war and we are not reluctant to engage in it if it is imposed on us."

Nasrallah revealed that the Wednesday ambush against an Israeli (Continued on Page 7)

U.S. Panel Approves Sanctions Amid Talks

ANKARA (Dispatches) -- Iran said talks with France, Germany and Britain on Thursday on its nuclear program were "promising" but more work was needed to settle the 12-year standoff, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Political directors from Iran and the three European countries held talks in Istanbul in an effort to overcome the remaining gaps on a long-term nuclear deal by a self-imposed June 30 deadline.

"The talks were very useful, positive and promising but still we are not in a position to say we made progress," IRNA quoted senior Iranian nuclear negotiator and Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi as saying after the talks.

"While discussing details ... we face more diversity of views," he added. "We can reach an agreement if all the parties involved show strong political will to end this issue."

Negotiators from Iran and six major powers failed to meet a self-imposed deadline in November to clinch a final agreement.

Under a Nov. 24, 2013 accord with Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States, Iran halted its most sensitive nuclear activity and took other steps in exchange for some easing of economic sanctions. (Continued on Page 7)

Government Faces Balancing Act

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- The Iranian government is grappling with a steady slump in oil prices and President Hassan Rouhani is hard pressed to balance the sheet.

According to new official figures, Iran's crude oil prices skidded to around \$50 per barrel over the two months leading to January. That was 30% down from their value in October, the statistics released by the Central Bank of Iran show.

The government's revenues from the sale of oil and gas in the period declined to \$6 billion from \$9 billion.

Oil and gas revenues in the second quarter of the Iranian year totaled \$15 billion, down from \$22 billion in the first four months. Iran earned \$5.5 billion per month from oil sales in the first fiscal quarter when prices hovered above \$100 per barrel.

Government's revenues from the sale of crude oil, oil products, natural gas and gas condensates added

up to \$33.6 billion in the first six months of the Iranian year.

President Rouhani saw earnings from those sales run up to \$34.4 billion in the six months after taking office in June 2013.

According to the Central Bank of Iran, the Rouhani administration has earned as much as \$83 billion from oil and gas sales so far.

With those proceeds growing smaller, the government is facing a balancing act to keep the state running.

The state finances are already under pressure from a multi-billion dollar subsidy program, under which the government is obliged to pay out a monthly stipend to every Iranian.

The program has few favorites among the Rouhani administration, with calls to cut the sum for the rich. But, the government has flip-flopped on that.

Government spokesman Mohammad (Continued on Page 7)

Asia Imports of Iran Oil Hit Three-Year High

TOKYO (Dispatches) -- Asian imports of Iranian crude rose by 19.8% last year to hit a three-year high, although further increases by the OPEC nation's biggest buyers will depend on whether Tehran and world powers can settle the dispute over its nuclear energy program.

Imports by Iran's four biggest buyers - China, India, Japan and South Korea - averaged 1.12 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2014, government and tanker-tracking data showed, the highest since the region took more than 1.5 million bpd in 2011.

Soaring imports last year by China and India after the partial easing of economic sanctions at the end of 2013 more than offset declining shipments into Japan and South Korea. December imports into Asia rose

22.1% from a year ago to 1.21 million bpd - the highest since May - due to a huge jump in India's imports for the month and higher seasonal winter demand.

Iran agreed with the United States and five other world powers in 2013 to work towards a permanent agreement on its nuclear program in exchange for an easing of some sanctions.

Two deadlines for a final deal have slipped since then, and now the goal is to reach a political understanding by the end of March, with a view to a lasting agreement by a self-imposed June 30 deadline.

The U.S. Senate Banking Committee on Thursday advanced a bill that would toughen sanctions on Iran, but a full vote on the bill is not expected until at least March 24 in the (Continued on Page 7)