

Remains of 165 Martyrs Transferred to Iran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Remains of 165 Iranian soldiers martyred during the Iraqi imposed war on Iran in the 1980s were delivered to the country's authorities via a southwestern border crossing on Sunday.

The bodies of the martyrs were transferred to Iran through Arvand River and delivered to an Iranian military delegation at Shalamchek border crossing. Later in the day, a public funeral will be held in the country's southwestern city of Dezful in Khuzestan province.

Kayhan International



Iranians Advised to Avoid Visiting Turkey

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran's Foreign Ministry on Sunday said Iranian nationals are advised to exercise caution while traveling to neighboring Turkey due to security concerns. "Given the imminent coming of Nowruz (the Iranian New Year) holidays and plans of a number of fellow countrymen for travels abroad and given the security situation in Turkey over the past months..., all compatriots who intend to make a trip to Turkey in case it is necessary are strongly advised to exercise caution," the ministry said in a statement.

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Viewpoint

By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

Why Does Israel Seek New Lebanon War?

Zionist Minister Says Lebanon Not as Bad as Syria: Bennett: Let's Send Lebanon Back to Middle Ages

TEL AVIV (Kayhan Int'l Political Desk) – The occupying regime of Israel's education minister Nafthali Bennett says a next war with Lebanon must hit civilians in order to confront Hezbollah.

"Today, Hezbollah is embedded in sovereign Lebanon. It is part of the government and, according to the president, also part of its security forces," the Zionist daily Haaretz on Sunday quoted him as saying.

The paper touched on Lebanese President Michel Aoun's support for the resistance movement, including his announcement that Hezbollah is a significant part of the Lebanese people.

"The Lebanese institutions, its infrastructure, airport, power stations, traffic junctions, Lebanese Army bases – they should all be legitimate targets if a war breaks out. That's what we should already be saying to them and the world now," Bennett said.

At a meeting of a Knesset committee this past week, the occupying regime of Israel's war minister Avigdor Lieberman said that the Lebanese army is now "a subsidiary unit of Hezbollah."

Haaretz said with Hezbollah able to launch more than 1,000 rockets in the north into Occupied Palestine on a single day of fighting, the offensive solution seems partial and the defensive solution limited.

Bennett said hunting rocket launchers during a war is almost impossible and Hezbollah has

learned to deploy in a more sophisticated manner, leaving the occupying regime with no choice other than hitting civilian targets.

"If Hezbollah fires missiles at the Israeli home front, this will mean sending Lebanon back to the Middle Ages," he said.

"Life in Lebanon today is not bad – certainly compared to what's going on in Syria. Lebanon's civilians, including the Shia population, will understand that this is what lies in store for them," he added.

According to Bennett, if war breaks out anyway, a massive attack on the civilian infrastructure – along with additional air and ground action by the Zionist army – will speed up international intervention and shorten the campaign. "That will lead them to stop it quickly – and we have an interest in the war being as short as possible," he said.

Bennett's approach is not entirely new. In 2008, the head of the Zionist army's Northern Command and today army chief of staff, Gadi Eisenkot, presented the "Dahiya doctrine."

He spoke of massive damage to buildings in areas identified with Hezbollah – as was done in Beirut's Shia Dahiya quarter during the 2006 war where the civilian neighborhood was massively bombed.

President Aoun paid an official visit to Cairo a month ago, ahead

Ali Atshani Wins Best Director Award at WIND Film Festival



Iranian Skiers Bag 6 Medals in South Korea



'One-Third of Western Mosul Retaken From Daesh'



Karrar, Iran's Most Advanced Tank, Unveiled



Iran began mass production of its main battle "Karrar" tank, pictured, in the western city of Durud in Lorestan province, March 12, 2017.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) — Iran on Sunday unveiled a domestically manufactured tank and launched a mass-production line, with Defense Minister Hussein Dehqan saying the tank has the capability to fire missiles and precisely guide them.

The tank named Karrar (Striker) is equipped with an electro-optical fire control system and laser rangefinder and is capable of firing at both stable and mobile targets day or night.

Dehqan also said the tank can compete with the most advanced tanks in the world in the three main areas of "power, precision and mo-

bility."

Iran has been producing its own weapons and military equipment, including missiles, fighter jets and submarines, for more than two decades.

Dehqan said Karrar, which has been three years in the making, is among the most advanced tanks in the world because of its remarkable features.

Its firepower and precision, mobility, and battleground endurance, he said, are comparable to the most state-of-the art of its kind in the world.

The tank's missile power has been

boosted with ballistics computer, laser-guided targeting, and the potential for both the gunner and military commander to aim the projectiles from two parallel gunsights fitted onto the vehicle.

"Updating armored equipment is one of the most essential strategies applied by the Defense Ministry in the area of ground warfare," the Iranian defense chief asserted.

Last week, Dehqan said Iran defensive military power would catch enemies off guard in case of an act of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

"The Iranian Defense Ministry in-

vests in sectors that would give us the upper hand. In line with this policy... we have developed a series of defensive systems so that we would not be caught off-guard by the enemy," he said.

Dehqan said the U.S. and the occupying regime of Israel would start a war against Iran if they had the slightest doubts about the Islamic Republic's defensive capabilities.

The minister noted that Iran was focusing on defense projects that would guarantee the country's victory in case of a confrontation, and that the Islamic Republic was fully capable of identifying and foiling potential threats.

"We have always stood up against threats," he said, adding that the Iranian nation now feels safe against any threats thanks to the Islamic Republic's defensive might.

Iran has managed to attain self-sufficiency in manufacturing necessary military equipment in line with its policy to boost defensive capabilities against potential threats.

Tehran maintains that its military power poses no threat to other countries and that its military doctrine is solely based on deterrence.

In his remarks, Dehqan also reaffirmed Tehran's support for resistance movements, calling it a major deterrent against adversaries.

France Urges Iran Help to Ensure Syria Truce

PARIS (Dispatches) -- The French foreign ministry condemned a deadly bombing in Damascus and called on truce guarantors, especially Russia and Iran, to ensure a ceasefire in Syria is fully respected.

The death toll from a double bomb attack on Saturday targeting Shias visiting a pilgrimage site in Damascus has climbed to 74, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported on Sunday.

"There is more than ever urgency to ensure that ceasefire is respected in Syria," the French foreign ministry said in a statement.

"France calls on the truce guarantors, especially Russia and Iran, who will meet in Astana next week, to put pressure on parties to ensure that ceasefire is fully respected".

Russian-backed peace talks are due to take place in Astana on March 14-15.

Most of the dead in Saturday's attack were Iraqi Shias who were going to visit a cemetery near the Old City of Damascus.

Turkey Promises Europe 'Harsh Retaliation'

ANKARA/ROTTERDAM (Reuters) -- Turkey told the Netherlands on Sunday that it would retaliate in the "harsh ways" after Turkish ministers were barred from speaking in Rotterdam, as a row over Ankara's political campaigning among Turkish immigrants escalated.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the Netherlands was the "capital of fascism" as it joined other European countries in stopping Turkish politicians holding rallies due to fears that tensions in Turkey might spill over into their communities.

The Dutch government barred Cavusoglu from flying to Rotterdam on Saturday and later stopped Family Minister Fatma Betul Sahan Kaya from entering the Turkish consulate there, before escorting her out of the country to Germany.

Dutch police used dogs and water cannon on Sunday to disperse hundreds of protesters waving Turkish flags outside the consulate in Rotterdam. Some threw bottles and stones and several demonstrators were beaten by police with

batons, a Reuters witness said. Mounted police officers charged the crowd.

The Dutch government - set to lose about half its seats in elections this week, according to polls, as the anti-Islam party of Geert Wilders makes strong gains - said the ministers' visits were undesirable and it would not cooperate in their campaigning in the Netherlands.

"If you can sacrifice Turkish-Dutch relations for an election on Wednesday, you will pay the price," Erdogan said in a speech at an awards ceremony in Istanbul.

"I thought Nazism was dead, but I was wrong. Nazism is still widespread in the West," he said. "The West has shown its true face."

Speaking to reporters before a public appearance in the northeastern French city of Metz, Cavusoglu said Turkey would continue to act against the Netherlands until it apologizes.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said he would do everything to "de-escalate" the confrontation, which he described as the worst

the Netherlands had experienced for years.

But he said the idea of apologizing was "bizarre".

"This is a man who yesterday made us out for fascists and a country of Nazis. I'm going to de-escalate, but not by offering apologies. Are you nuts?" he told a morning talk show.

In a statement issued early on Sunday, Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said Turkey would retaliate in the "harsh ways".

The row risked spreading on Sunday as Denmark's Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen proposed postponing a planned visit by Yildirim this month due to the dispute.

The French foreign ministry urged calm and said there had been no reason to prohibit a meeting in France between Cavusoglu and a local Turkish association.

Supporting Rutte's decision to ban the visits, the Dutch government said there was a risk of Turkish political divisions flowing over into its own Turkish minority, which has both pro- and anti-Er-

dogan camps.

The diplomatic row comes in the run-up to next week's Dutch election in which the mainstream parties are under strong pressure from Wilders' Party for Freedom (PVV).

After Turkey's family minister was escorted into Germany, Wilders tweeted: "go away and never come back".

Experts said it was too early to tell how events in Rotterdam might affect the election, though the two front runners have both campaigned on tough-on-immigration themes.

"If there is any impact, however, it is likely that Geert Wilders and his PVV Party will profit most," said Leiden Professor Joop van Holsteijn in an email to Reuters.

The Dutch government cited public order and security worries in withdrawing landing rights for Cavusoglu's flight and Turkey fired back saying the Dutch ambassador to Ankara should not return from leave "for some time".

Hundreds of protesters gathered outside the Dutch embassy in Ankara and consulate in Istanbul. Po-

lice sealed off both sites.

Cavusoglu kept up his harsh language during his visit to the northeastern French city of Metz.

"The Netherlands, the so-called capital of democracy, and I say this in quotation marks because they are actually the capital of fascism...", he said in a speech on Sunday.

Erdogan is looking to the large number of Turks living in Europe, especially in Germany and the Netherlands, to help secure victory next month in a referendum that would give the presidency sweeping new powers.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said she will do all she can to prevent Turkey's domestic tensions spreading onto German territory. Austria and Switzerland have also canceled Turkish rallies due to the escalating dispute.

A senior member of her conservative bloc in parliament, Hans Michelbach, demanded on Sunday that the European Union stop aid to Turkey and ruled out any hopes that it would join the bloc.

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