

Trump to Leave Iran Nuclear Deal: U.S. Senator

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- Republican U.S. Senator Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Sunday he expected President Donald Trump to pull out of the Iran nuclear agreement in May. "The Iran deal will be another issue that's coming up in May, and right now it doesn't feel like it's gonna be extended," Corker said on the CBS "Face the Nation" program. Asked if he believed Trump would pull out on May 12, the deadline for the president to issue a new waiver to suspend Iran sanctions as part of the deal, Corker responded, "I do. I do."

Kayhan International



FM Zarif Briefly Hospitalized: Ministry

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif was briefly hospitalized due to severe illness, the IRNA news agency cited a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying Sunday. Zarif was hospitalized for a few hours on Saturday and cancelled all his meetings on Sunday so he could rest. The spokesman did not provide further details on his illness. Zarif was the lead negotiator in the talks leading up to the 2015 nuclear accord with world powers. He was briefly hospitalized with back pain in October 2013.

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Viewpoint

Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

Trump's Theatrics in Taiwan Does Not Please China

Iranian National Orchestra to Perform in Italy



Iran Rout Sierra Leone 4-0 in World Cup Warm-Up



Syrian President Visits Troops in Eastern Ghouta



A Remarkable Coincidence on Nowruz Eve

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"Ya Moqallab al-Qoloub wa'l-Absaar;
"Ya Modabber al-Layl wa'n-Nahaar;
"Ya Mohawwel al-Howl wa'l-Ahwaal;
"Hawwil Halana ila Ahsan il-Haal."

(O' Transformer of Hearts and Eyes;
O' Regulator of Day and Night;
O' Rotator of Time and Situation;
Change our state to the most excellent of Situation.)

At 19:45:28 sharp on Tuesday, March 20, the Islamic Republic of Iran would be ushering in the calendar year 1397 solar hijri, with prayers and supplications to the Lord Most High, especially by recitation of the above-mentioned Arabic quatrain.

By a remarkable coincidence, this year the eve of Nowruz, on which according to numerous hadith important events took place in the life and messages of the Prophets of the past, happens to be the birth anniversary of the 5th Infallible Heir of the Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger to all mankind.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqer (AS) needs no introduction. He was the great-great-grandson of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), and during the 19 years of his imamate, he expounded to the seekers of truth the true teachings of Islam of his Illustrious Ancestor.

He flourished at a crucial time of history when the tyrannical Omayyad rulers had emptied the message of Islam of its spiritual contents. These usurpers who masqueraded as caliphs neither had any faith in Islam nor were they interested in knowing anything about the life of Messenger of Mercy.

Under these circumstances, the 5th Imam who as a 4-year boy had witnessed the heartrending tragedy of Karbala where his grandfather Imam Husain (AS) drank the elixir of martyrdom to grant immortality to genuine Muhammadan Islam, and where his father Imam Zain al-Abedin (AS) waged the unique Jihad of patience under captivity to expose Yazid in his true heathen colours, shouldered the Divine Trust in 95 AH until his own martyrdom through poisoning in 114 AH.

By Divine Providence, Imam Baqer (AS) passed this legacy to his son and successor, Imam Ja'far as-Sadeq (AS), who took Islam to great heights by showing to the world the true "Sunnah" and "Seerah" (behaviour and practice) of the "Seal of Messengers", to the extent that till this day the "shari'ah" of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) is known as "Fiqh al-Ja'fariyya" (Ja'fari Jurisprudence).

Since the birthday this year of Imam Baqer (AS) has coincided with Nowruz or the new solar year, which like the lunar year is also dated as per the auspicious migration of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) from Mecca to Medina, here is a hadith on the Vernal or Spring Equinox from his son, Imam Sadeq (AS):

"The sun attained its brightness, the wind started to blow, the Ark of Prophet Noah (AS) stopped at Mount Joudi and was saved from drowning; Prophet Abraham (AS) broke the idols of his community; Archangel Gabriel brought the first revelation to our Prophet (Muhammad - SAWA); the Prophet lifted Imam Ali (AS) on his shoulders to enable him to topple the idols from atop the Ka'ba; and (years later) the Prophet proclaimed Imam Ali (AS) as his (divinely-designated) vicegerent at Ghadir-e-Khom (on 18th Zilhijja 10 AH by the command of Almighty Allah)."

Another famous saying from the 6th Imam reads:

"Today is the day on which God made a pact with His servants to pray to Him not to follow polytheism but to follow the Prophets and the Ahl al-Bayt. On this day the last Imam, the Awaited Mahdi (AS) is expected to reappear..."

Thus, it is the One and Only Creator of this vast universe, Who has set in motion the wonderful solar system, with Planet Earth in a disciplined orbit around the sun, while rotating on its axis, so that the days and nights follow each other, the months are calculated and the year determined to keep track of the cyclic changing of the seasons.

Glory to Allah the Exalted! The seconds, the minutes, the nights, the days, the months, and the years, are all signs of the Grandeur and the Blessings of the Almighty Creator. This orderly cycle of the changing seasons, with verdant spring enlivening the environment after the frost of 'lifeless' winter; is without doubt a pointer to the Day of Resurrection.

"And Allah is He Who sends the winds so they raise a cloud, then We drive it on to a dead land, and therewith We give life to the earth after its death; even so is the quickening (of the dead on Resurrection Day)." - Holy Qur'an 35:

In view of these undeniable realities, Nowruz (New Day in Persian), in addition to being a much welcome holiday season to relieve the pressures of the year-long routine and an energizer to refresh us for the challenges and opportunities of the next year, is a time for reflection.

It is the time to take stock of things, of our own selves, of the environment around us, of our duties towards family, friends, society, country and the world we live in, and which unfortunately, is groaning under the jackboots of an oppressive political- economic-financial-industrial-scientific system that is totally opposed to God, to human dignity, to moral values, to spirituality, and to the peace and progress of nations.

Under these circumstances, Nowruz and its message of peace and harmony within the egalitarian frame of Islam, stands as beacon of hope for mankind - and certainly not those frivolities that have come to be associated with this purely Godly event of the Vernal Equinox, ever since the ancient Iranians borrowed it from the astronomically advanced Babylonians, and then thoroughly Persianized it over the millenniums.

This means that marking of the Spring Equinox is an Islamic ritual, since Islam did not start suddenly 1,400 odd years in the Arabian Peninsula. Islam, which means peace, healthy way of life and submission to none but Almighty Allah, was the message entrusted to the father of the human race, Adam, at the dawn of the creation of mankind.

In view of these wonderful facts, isn't it advisable for the Islamic world - in addition to the religiously indispensable lunar hijri calendar - to adopt the precisely calculated solar hijri calendar year in Iran for keeping track of the season and running the bureaucracy; instead of following the alien and a bit imperfect Gregorian calendar that has been imposed by the colonialists and is based on an illusion, which the Holy Qur'an rejects, saying Prophet Jesus (AS) was not crucified?

MbS's Visit to U.S. Spells Trouble for Mideast



Saudi Arabia's adventurous Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman is about to begin his first official visit to the U.S. on Tuesday.

NEW YORK (Dispatches) -- Before Saudi Arabia's trailblazing crown prince touches down in the U.S. on Monday, locals will have already had a chance to decide what they think of the 32-year-old petro-royal and his rapid social, political and military reboot for the desert kingdom.

The excitement and alarm that surrounds Muhammad bin Salman - or MbS as he is also known - has already crossed the Atlantic ahead of his meeting with President Donald Trump on Tuesday and a multi-city U.S. tour for trade and finance talks.

Equally shocking was a NBC

News report that bin Salman, widely viewed as the power behind the throne of his father King Salman, stopped his mother from seeing the 82-year-old monarch for fear she would stymie his rise to power. At one point, he reportedly caged her in a palace.

Riyadh has spent millions on its well-oiled PR machine, persuading wonks and lawmakers that bin Salman is a reformer - lifting bans on cinemas and women drivers as he counters religious bigotry and weans the kingdom off its declining oil reserves.

But the mostly-Saudi 9/11

hijackers cast a long shadow over U.S.-Saudi ties. Critics deride bin Salman as a risk-taking autocrat whose gambles in Yemen and Qatar and bellicose rhetoric on Iran are making an already-turbulent region worse.

This week, the Washington Post daily urged the "bold modernizer" to prove he is a true reformer by releasing political prisoners, including the blogger and activist Raif Badawi who was sentenced to 10 years in jail and 1,000 lashes in 2014.

The visit is not just window dressing. Bin Salman may meet

Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, Los Angeles movie moguls, oil industry tycoons in Houston and New York financiers to drum up support and greenbacks for his Vision 2030 agenda back home.

For this, he must persuade U.S. investors he is no wildcard, and that locking up dozens of top officials and businessmen in Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton Hotel in an anti-graft purge did not show weaknesses in Saudi's rule of law.

It won't be easy, said former CIA officer Bruce Riedel. The sparkplug royal will have to leverage his personal ties with Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner and others to further his goals in a frenetic White House, Riedel told Middle East Eye.

"Saudi strategy toward the U.S. is built on the Trump family connection, expensive lobbyists and bashing Iran. The prince has little experience of the intricacies of U.S. politics, which are more complicated than ever in the Trump era," Riedel said.

Revelations this week that Saudi officials are in peace talks with their Houthi foe in Yemen may not wholly allay concerns in Washington about the civilian death toll from Riyadh's three-year-old military campaign next door.

Leftist senator Bernie Sanders and others are touting a resolution to pull U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition, which would deprive Riyadh of U.S. intelligence support and the refueling of aircraft that bomb Yemen.

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Russians Vote to Give Putin Another Mandate

UST-DJEGUTA, Russia (Dispatches) -- Russians voted in a presidential election Sunday that was expected to give Vladimir Putin an easy victory.

Opinion polls give Putin, the incumbent, support of around 70%, or nearly 10 times the backing of his nearest challenger.

Many voters credit Putin, a 65-year-old former KGB spy, with standing up for Russia's interests in what they view as a hostile outside world.

Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region, alleged Kremlin meddling in the U.S. presidential election, and Moscow's bombing of terrorists in Syria, have been condemned in the West. But for most people at home, they have only burnished Putin's reputation as a strong leader.

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Rouhani Underlines Urgent Need to End Yemen War

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Sunday highlighted the urgent need for ending the Saudi war on the innocent people of Yemen, saying Tehran and Muscat can play a crucial role in resolving the disastrous conflict.

Speaking in a meeting with Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi here, President Rouhani said Iran and Oman shoulder a heavy responsibility towards the chaotic region.

Rouhani said the two governments must work towards promoting peace and stability in West Asia, as an unstable region harms its inhabitants the most.

The president expressed hope the two countries could help restore calm to Yemen and end bombardments and bloodshed in the poorest Arab country, as

the humanitarian situation in the country is grave.

Bin Alawi, for his part, thanked the Islamic Republic for its efforts to strengthen peace and stability in the region, emphasizing the need for putting an end to various conflicts in West Asia.

"The clashes in Yemen have brought nothing but chaos and destruction for the region. We must try to end bloodshed there as soon as possible and provide humanitarian aid for the nation," bin Alawi said.

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Holiday Notice

Wishing our readers a happy Nowruz, we hereby announce that our next issue will be published on Tuesday, April 3, 2018.