

SWEIMEH, Jordan (Disptches) -- Moving the American embassy in Tel Aviv to occupied Jerusalem Al-Quds would end the "peace" process between the occupying regime of Israel and the Palestinians, a senior Palestinian official said Saturday.

"We believe that moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem (Al-Quds) would mean the end of the peace process," Saeb Erekat, second-in-command of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), said days ahead of a visit to the region by U.S. President Donald Trump.

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Members of Daesh have "executed" 19 civilians including two children in a village held by anti-extremists in eastern Syria, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Saturday.

"ISIS (Daesh) fighters entered Jazrat al-Boushams village Friday evening and executed 19 civilians, including two women and two children, with bullets to the head before torching the corpses," Rami Abdel Rahman of the Britain-based activist group told AFP.

Viewpoint

By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

The Right to Vote at the Heart of Iranian Democracy


Tehran to Hold 6th INOTEX



Iranian Climber Gheichisaz Joins 8,000ers Club



Iraqi Forces Retake Control of Key Districts in Mosul



Beleaguered U.S. President in Saudi Arabia Trump Starts Mideast Trip With Huge Arms Deal

RIYADH (Dispatches) -- Washington has agreed arms deals with Saudi Arabia worth almost \$110 billion, a White House official said on Saturday, the first day of President Donald Trump's visit to the traditional U.S. ally, with options for as much as \$350 billion over 10 years.

"This package of defense equipment and services support the long-term security of Saudi Arabia and the (Persian) Gulf region in the face of Iranian threats," the official said.

Trump and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson "will attend a signing ceremony" for the deals, the official said.

The official described the agreements as "a significant expansion of the over seven-decade-long security relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia".

The official did not provide details of the agreements with Riyadh, which is one of the world's biggest military spenders.

A preliminary deal worth \$6 billion to assemble 150 Lockheed Martin Blackhawk helicopters in Saudi Arabia was separately announced at the Saudi-U.S. CEO Forum held in Riyadh during Trump's visit.

U.S. military contractors are major suppliers of weapons to Saudi Arabia, which for more than two years has led a coalition conducting airstrikes and other operations against impoverished Yemen.

The new deals come despite mounting pressure on Washington from rights groups to stop arms sales to Riyadh, which has come under repeated criticism over very high civilian casualties in Yemen.

At least six civilians were killed when Saudi military aircraft carried out two separate airstrikes on Yemen's western-central province of Sana'a and the southwestern province of Ta'izz on Saturday.

Two people lost their lives and four others sustained injuries when Saudi fighter jets bombarded a residential neighborhood in the village of Bayt Baws, Arabic-language al-Masirah satellite television network reported.

Later in the day, a Saudi combat drone fired missiles into Al-Barh market in the Maqbanah district of Ta'izz Province, situated 260 kilometers south of the capital, leaving four civilians dead and two others dead. A child was re-

portedly among those killed in the aerial assault.

Saudi Arabia on Thursday announced the creation of a new military industries firm as part of the kingdom's efforts to boost arms production.

The kingdom's Public Investment Fund said the new government-owned company, Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI), "aims to become one of the world's top 25 defense companies by 2030".

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said in an April report that Saudi Arabia last year was the world's fourth-largest military spender, spending \$63.7 billion.

Dogged by controversy at home, Trump opened a nine-day foreign trip looking to shift attention from a spiraling political firestorm over his firing of former FBI director James Comey last week.

With delicate diplomatic meetings facing him, including three summits, Trump faces a challenge of advancing his "America First" agenda without alienating key allies during his first trip abroad.

Stepping off Air Force One in sweltering heat with his wife, Melania, Trump and his entourage received a red-carpet welcome from Saudi King Salman.

The trip has been billed by the White House as a chance to visit places sacred to three of the world's major religions while giving Trump time to meet with Arab, Israeli and European leaders.

Uproar in Washington threatened to cast a long shadow over the trip. His firing of Comey and the appointment of a special counsel to investigate his campaign's ties to Russia last year has triggered a stream of bad headlines.

The New York Times reported Trump had called Comey a "nut job" in a private meeting last week in the Oval Office with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. Ambassador to the United States Sergei Kislyak.

The White House did not deny the report, but said the "the real story is that our national security has been undermined by the leaking of private and highly classified conversations".

Trump and King Salman seemed at ease with each other, chatting through an interpreter. Walking

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President Rouhani Wins Election: Time to Rise Up to Expectations



President Rouhani leaves the podium after addressing reporters in Tehran following his election victory, May 20, 2017.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday Iran has chosen the "path of engagement with the world" following his re-election victory.

"The Iranian people want to live in peace and friendship with the rest of the world, but will not accept any threat or humiliation," he said on state television.

He made the remarks after election victory with more than 57% of the vote against main challenger, Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, who received 38%.

Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli announced the vote tallies in a televised news conference, based on a count of more than 99% of the ballots. He said Rouhani garnered 23.5 million votes out of 41.2 million ballots cast. Iran has 56.4

million eligible voters.

In 2013, Rouhani won the presidential election with nearly 51% of the vote. Turnout for that vote was 73%.

"Our nation's message in the election was clear: Iran's nation chose the path of interaction with the world, away from violence and extremism," Rouhani said. He promised to serve as president for all Iranians, not just those who voted for him.

The president, however, made defiant references to a central element in a "sedition" which followed Iran's presidential election in 2009, calling him "my dear brother".

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei praised Iranians for their big turnout after voters queued up for hours

to cast their ballots. The strong turnout of around 73% of eligible voters was "massive and epochal", he said.

"The winner of the yesterday's (Friday) elections, is you, the Iranian people, and the Islamic establishment, which has managed to win the increasing trust of this big nation despite the enemies' plot and effort," the Leader said.

The Leader said the "massive and enthusiastic" participation of the Iranian people, who stood in long lines to reach the ballot boxes throughout the country, was "a clear indication of the strength of the pillars of the Islamic democracy."

Elsewhere in his message, Ayatollah Khamenei stated that during the Friday elections, people from all walks of life and various political affiliations took part in elections to-

gether and once again voted for the Islamic establishment.

The Leader urged the Iranian people to thank God for their success in holding elections, saying that after going through hectic days and weeks ahead of elections, they must now think about unity and public solidarity, which is undoubtedly an important factor boosting power and might of the nation.

Ayatollah Khamenei also recommended the elected president and all people who will be part of the next administration to pursue "highly-motivated and thoughtful and youthful efforts" in order to do away with the country's problems and do not neglect this right path even for a moment.

Another point reminded by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution was maintaining "national dignity while observing wisdom in international relations" and making efforts to boost the country's international might, which the Leader said were among priorities in revolutionary and Islamic management of the country's affairs.

Ayatollah Khamenei also praised presidential candidates for creating necessary fervor for elections, all officials involved in executive and supervisory aspects of the Friday elections, as well as the state-run television and all forces that played a role in ensuring security of the elections.

Among the congratulatory messages sent to Rouhani by world leaders, Iran's battlefield ally Syrian President Bashar al-Assad looked forward to cooperating "to strengthen the security and stability

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Tunisian Troops Fire Shots to Disperse Protesters

TUNIS (Reuters) -- Tunisian troops fired shots in the air to disperse protesters who tried to close down a gas pumping in southern Tataouine province as part of their demands for jobs, a witness and two local radio stations said on Saturday.

There were no immediate reports of any injuries around the gas pumping station near Vana in Tataouine, where troops have been stationed as part of plans to protect gas and oil facilities from disruption.

Mosaique FM radio and a local state radio both reported troops had shot in the air to break up a group of protesters who for weeks have been threatening to blockade roads and shut gas production in southern Tunisia.

"The young men were angry and shouting about the need for work and the army fired in the air when they arrived at the pumping station. Troops are refusing to let them in," Jamal Daifallah, a local protester told Reuters by telephone.

A military helicopter was circling overhead. Pictures posted on a Facebook account of the Tataouine movement showed dozens of young men at a metal fence near the station and a small group of troops lining up to

protect it.

The protests in Tataouine are challenging Prime Minister Youssef Chahed as he seeks to implement austerity reforms. The protests already forced two foreign energy companies to halt production or remove staff as a precaution.

Around 1,000 protesters have been camped out for weeks in the Sahara in a region where Italy's ENI and Austria's OMV have operations. But government offers of jobs and development have so far failed to end the standoff.

Six years after its uprising ended Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali's autocratic rule, the North African state is still struggling to address the needs for jobs and economic opportunities in marginalized southern regions like Tataouine.

Social unrest is common to demand work and development. In the past protesters have targeted Tunisia's strategic phosphate production. But the economy is just recovering from the impact of two major militant attacks on tourists in 2015.