

MOSCOW (Dispatches) – Brazil’s minister of defense, in a meeting with his Iranian counterpart that marked the first such get-together in 40 years, on Wednesday called for close cooperation with Iran in the fight against terrorism.

Defense ministers of Iran and Brazil met for the first time in about 40 years here on the sidelines of the Moscow Conference on International Security (MCIS) in Russia. Hailing the relations between Tehran and Brasilia as “historic”, Brazilian Defense Minister Raul Belens Jungmann Pinto called for expansion of ties in all fields.


TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday dismissed as unimportant recent remarks by U.S. President Donald Trump on the possibility of Washington not remaining in the July 2015 nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet session here, Zarif rejected Trump’s comments on JCPOA and said, “Do not pay much attention to Trump’s words.” In comments published Sunday, Trump said it was “possible” that the US would not remain in the nuclear deal.

Viewpoint


By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

America’s Afghan Imbroglia

Iran Among Top 10 Countries in Science of Stem Cells



Iran Taekwondo Crowned at Kazakhstan Open



Turkey Censured Over Air Raid in Northern Iraq



The Observances of Sha’ban & Its Virtues

By: Seyyed Ali Quli Qara’i

English translator of the holy Qur’an, who has now rendered into English the prayer-supplication manual, “*Mafatih al-Jenan*” or Keys of Paradise, compiled by the Late Shaikh Abbas Qomi.)

Sha’ban is a month of great merits. It is associated with Prophet Mohammad (SAWA), who used to fast throughout this month. He would say: “*Sha’ban is my month, and whoever fasts a day of this month of mine will surely be admitted into paradise.*”

The best supplication during this month is “*istegfar*” or seeking forgiveness in the Divine Court. One should say 70 times every day “*Astaghfirullah, wa as’aluhut-tawbah!*” (I plead to Allah for forgiveness and beseech Him to accept my repentance!)” Another recommended act for this month is “*sadaqa*” (charity), even if it be as little as half a date, so that God may make immune one’s body from the fire of hell. A highly recommended act is to offer a 2-raka’ah prayer on every Thursday of Sha’ban with recitation of **Surat al-Hamd** once, followed by **Surat at-Tawhid** 100 times in each raka’ah, and after salaam Salawat to be recited 100 times. It is said God Almighty fulfills all needs pertaining to the world and the Hereafter of those who perform this. It is also meritorious to fast on this day, and as per a hadith the heavens are adorned every Thursday of Sha’ban and the angels plead with God to forgive those who fast on it and to answer their supplications. In the book “*Kalimat at-Tayyibah*”, once, on the 1st of Sha’ban, the Commander of the Faithful – Imam Ali (AS) – was passing by a group sitting in one of the mosques and engaged in a debate concerning such matters as pre-destination and similar controversial issues. They were debating hotly with raised voices. The Imam stopped and greeted them. They answered his greeting and stood up reverently, asking him to join them. He declined, saying:

“O people who venture into matters that neither concern them nor are of any benefit to them! Don’t you know that there are servants of God who have been urged to maintain silence, not because they are incapable or dumb, but because of their trepidation? For indeed they are the most eloquent, intelligent and wise, who have knowledge of God. But when they remember the greatness of God, their tongues fail, their hearts cave in, their minds are perplexed, and their intellects are confused in front of God’s might, majesty and glory. When they recover from this state, they approach God by the means of pious deeds, counting themselves among wrongdoers and the erring, even though they are exempt from the faults of laxity and negligence. But they are not satisfied with their little service of God, nor do they regard as plenty the works they have done for the sake of God. They do not flaunt their works before Him, and whenever you see them you will find them overcast with sorrow and awe, fearful and apprehensive. So where do you stand, O band of mavericks, in relation to them? Don’t you know that the most knowledgeable of people concerning predestination are those who are the most reticent concerning it, and that the most ignorant of people concerning predestination are those who are most glib about it? O band of mavericks! Today is the first of Sha’ban, named so by our Lord because of the ramification and branching forth of His blessings during it. To be sure, in it your Lord has flung open the gates of His paradise and presented to you the spectacle of its palaces and good things, attainable at the cheapest of prices, in exchange for the easiest of works, and yet you decline them. The accursed Satan too has presented to you the branches of his multifarious evils and afflictions, and you catch hold of the offshoots sent out by Satan, and turn away from the branches of good, whose gates have been laid open for you.”

He continued:

“This is the first day of Sha’ban. The branches of its goods are prayer, fasting, zakat, bidding what is right and forbidding what is wrong, kindness towards parents, relatives, and neighbours, resolving conflicts between people, and giving charity to the needy and the poor. You burden yourself with a task of which you have been spared, and venture to probe Divine mysteries, an exercise from which you have been forbidden, as those who try to explore them perish. But if you come to know what our Lord, the Almighty and Glorious, has prepared on this day for His obedient servants, you will cut short what you have been engaged in and start doing what you have been told to do.”

They said to him, “O Commander of the Faithful, what is it that God has prepared for the obedient on this day?” He replied,

“I will not recount for you anything except what I have heard from the Prophet of Allah. Once the Prophet of Allah dispatched a company of troops towards a people who were staunch infidels; the enemy made a sudden attack at night on Muslims. It was a pitch dark night and the Muslims were fast asleep. No one among them was awake that night except four: Zayd bin Harethah, Abdullah bin Rawahah, Qatadah bin Nu’man and Qays bin Asim Minqari. Each of them was engaged in prayer and reciting the Qur’an at one of the sides of the camp. The enemy rained arrows on the Muslims who could not shield themselves from the assailants, as they did not see because of darkness. Such was their predicament when they suddenly saw lights burst forth from the visages of these four men, which illuminated the battlefield for the Muslim warriors. This gave them strength and morale. Drawing their swords they gave a good fight, killing the attackers, wounding some of them and taking others captive. On their return when they related the incident to the Prophet, he told them that those lights came from certain acts of theirs performed on the first of Sha’ban. Then he described the acts that each one of them had performed.”

“Thereafter he (the Prophet) said, ‘When the first day of Sha’ban arrives, Satan spreads out his troops throughout the corners of the earth and its horizons, asking them to try to attract some of God’s servants toward themselves. Indeed God Almighty and Glorious also scatters his angels throughout the earth’s quarters and horizons, telling them ‘Guide My servants and show them the right way, whereat all of them will attain felicity through you, except such of them as refuse and are arrogant and rebellious; these join the party of Satan and enter his hosts. On the advent of the first of Sha’ban, God, Almighty and Glorious, commands the

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U.S. Pushes Korean Peninsula to Brink of War



A U.S. military vehicle which is a part of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system arrives in Seongju, South Korea, April 26, 2017.

SEOUL (Dispatches) -- The U.S. military started moving parts of a missile system to a deployment site in South Korea on Wednesday, triggering protests from villagers and criticism from China, amid tension over North Korea’s weapons development.

The earlier-than-expected steps to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system was also denounced by the front-runner in South Korea’s presidential election on May 9.

South Korea’s defense ministry said elements of THAAD were moved to the deployment site, on what had been a golf course, about 250 km (155 miles) south of the capital, Seoul.

“South Korea and the United States have been working to secure an early operational capability of the THAAD system in response to North Korea’s advancing nuclear and missile threat,” the ministry said in a statement.

The battery was expected to be operational by the end of the year, it said.

The United States and South Korea agreed last year to deploy the THAAD to counter the alleged threat of missile launches by North Korea. They say it is solely aimed at

defending against North Korea.

But China says the system’s advanced radar can penetrate deep into its territory and undermine its security, while it will do little to deter the North, and is adamant in its opposition.

“China strongly urges the United States and South Korea to stop actions that worsen regional tensions and harm China’s strategic security interests and cancel the deployment of the THAAD system and withdraw the equipment,” Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a briefing.

“China will resolutely take necessary steps to defend its interests,” Geng said, without elaborating.

The United States began moving the first elements of the system to South Korea in March after the North tested four ballistic missiles.

South Korea has accused China of discriminating against some South Korean companies operating in China because of the deployment.

The liberal politician expected to win South Korea’s election, Moon Jae-in, has called for a delay in the deployment, saying the new administration should make a decision after gathering public opinion and more talks with Washington.

A spokesman for Moon said moving the parts to the site “ignored public opinion and due process” and demanded it be suspended.

Television footage showed military trailers carrying equipment, including what appeared to be launch canisters, to the battery site.

Protesters shouted and hurled water bottles at the vehicles over lines of police holding them back.

The Pentagon said the system was critical to defend South Korea and its allies against North Korean missiles and deployment would be completed “as soon as feasible”.

More than 10 protesters were injured, some of them with fractures, in clashes with police, Kim Jongkyung, a leader of villagers opposing the deployment, told Reuters.

Kim said about 200 protesters rallied overnight and they would keep up their opposition.

“There’s still time for THAAD to be actually up and running so we

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Iran: U.S. Following a ‘New Form of Fascism’

MOSCOW (Dispatches) – Armed forces of Russia, Iran and Syria are the only ones conducting lawful military operations to defeat terrorism in Syria, Iran’s Minister of Defense Hussein Dehqan said here on Wednesday.

“It is important to see that in Syria, only the Russian Federation, Iran and the legitimate government of the people of Syria are fully engaged in the legitimate fight of terror,” he said during the Moscow Conference on International Security.

He added that policies presented by the United States in Syria were “a new form of global fascism.”

On April 7, the United States launched 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at the Syrian military airfield in Shayrat. U.S. President Donald Trump said that the attack was a response to the alleged chemical weapon use in Syria’s Idlib province on April 4, which resulted in the death of over 80 people, an incident which Washington blames on the Syrian government.

Syria has denied the government’s involvement in the Idlib incident, saying it had never nor would it ever use chemical weapons on either civilians or terrorists operating in the country.

The Russian Defense Ministry said on April 5 that the airstrike near Khan Shaykhun by the Syrian air force hit a terrorist warehouse that stored chemical weapons slated for delivery to Iraq, and called on the UN Security Council to launch a proper investigation into the incident.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on April 6 that groundless accusations in the chemical weapons incident in Syria’s Idlib were unacceptable before the investigation into the matter had been carried out while Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday criticized the U.S. missile attack as a violation of the international law.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei

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Saudis Hire UK Firm to Push Military Alliance

LONDON (Dispatches) – A British public relations firm is facing accusations of complicity in “whitewashing” alleged Saudi Arabian war crimes in Yemen after signing a deal to represent a Riyadh-dominated military alliance dubbed the “Muslim Nato”.

Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman hired Burson-Marsteller last month to wage a charm offensive on behalf of the so-called Islamic military alliance to fight terrorism, online news portal Middle East Eye reported on Wednesday.

On the surface, the coalition contains 41 nations which was established in Riyadh in December 2015.

However, Saudi Major General Ahmed Asiri, a key figure in establishing the alliance who is currently the subject of a preliminary war crimes investigation by British police, told the Wall Street Journal newspaper last week that the operational scope of the alliance could be extended to include fighting against Houthis battling a Saudi invasion in Yemen.

Burson-Marsteller is owned by the London-based WPP, the world’s largest marketing group, and has offices across the Middle East including in Riyadh and Jeddah, according to its website.

But the appointment of the firm has sparked anger among human rights campaigners.

Its previous clients include Argentina’s military governments responsible for killing thousands of people in the so-called “Dirty war” of the 1970s and early 1980s.

U.S. television presenter Rachel Maddow remarked in 2009 that, “When evil needs public relations, evil has Burson-Marsteller on speed dial”. Responding to that comment, then-CEO Mark Penn said Maddow had “significantly mischaracterized the nature of the firm’s past.”

Andrew Smith of the Campaign Against Arms Trade told MEE:

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