

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Tehran’s Friday prayers leader Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami slammed the idea of creating an “Arab NATO” proposed by President Donald Trump, saying members of the alliance would be only “servants” of the U.S.

The cleric also pointed to the hostilities of the U.S. and some Arab countries in the region toward Iran and said it has been 38 years since the Arab NATO has formed in practice, but it has not been able to make a move against the Islamic Republic.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif says a recent U.S. arms deal with Saudi Arabia will fail to guarantee lasting security for Saudi Arabia as claimed by the U.S. Department of State.

“If past performance is an indicator of future success, another \$110 billion worth of weapons will neither reduce ‘the burden’ on the American military nor support ‘the long-term security of Saudi Arabia’,” Zarif said in an opinion piece published on the New York Times on Friday.

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By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

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Iran’s Defensive Power to Grow Further:

Third Underground Missile Plant



An image grab shows missile launchers in an underground tunnel in Iran.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran has built a third underground plant to manufacture ballistic missiles, head of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)’s aerospace division General Amir-Ali Hadjizadeh said on Thursday.

“Step by step, we are developing our defensive capability and I announce today that in recent years we have built a third underground factory for the manufacture of missiles,” Gen Hadjizadeh said.

“We are going to develop our ballistic power. It’s normal that our

enemies, that is to say the United States and Israel, are angry when we show off our underground missile bases because they want the Iranian people to be in a position of weakness,” he added.

In October 2015, national television aired footage for the first time of a base that Gen Hadjizadeh said was 500m underground and stocked with a range of different missiles.

Armed forces spokesman General Masoud Jazayeri said earlier this month that Iran had a number of

such underground silos which were an “important deterrent factor against the sworn enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran”.

The Trump administration imposed fresh sanctions on Iran following a missile test in late January. It added more last week at the same time as

it renewed a waiver of sanctions related to Iran’s nuclear program.

In Saudi Arabia last Saturday, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson urged newly re-elected Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to end ballistic missile testing.

On Monday, Rouhani retorted that Iran did not need U.S. permission to conduct missile tests and that they would continue “if technically necessary”.

Reaction to Tillerson’s remarks, Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Friday Iran will maintain its missile work with utmost determination, and will not pay heed to “empty” interventionist statements about the program.

“Such remarks are void, groundless, fallacious, and deceitful,” Qassemi said, adding Iran’s missile work falls within the country’s national policy and defensive programs.

Iran’s defense program, he said, is a deterrent endeavor, which contributes to the regional stability and security and the fight against terror.

“We will continue this program with utmost strength and sternness, and will not allow others to pass comments on it,” Qassemi said.

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U.S. Lawmakers Adopt New Iran Sanctions Bill

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved on Thursday the most sweeping sanctions against Iran since the United States and five other nations reached a nuclear agreement with Tehran in 2015.

Because Iran has complied with the nuclear accord, the Senate committee had to find other reasons to impose the sanctions, and linked Iran to terrorism and accused it of human rights violations.

But the timing of the long-planned punishment was awkward, coming right after President Hassan Rouhani won a re-election on a pledge to improve ties with the West.

The Trump administration has supported new sanctions against Iran,

which were approved 18 to 3 by the committee and could receive a full Senate vote as early as next month, U.S. media reported.

During the presidential campaign Trump called the Iran nuclear deal a “disaster” and promised to scrap the accord. Should he do so, Iran would be free to resume the production of uranium and plutonium, which are sharply limited under the existing agreement for the next 13 years.

Senator Bob Corker noted that the committee had waited to take up the sanctions bill until after the Iranian election, at the request of some members.

Many of the Democrats on the committee voted for the sanctions.

U.S. Airstrikes Kill 115 Civilians in Syria

LONDON (Dispatches) -- A U.S. airstrike on the eastern Syrian town of Mayadeen early on Friday killed at least 80 relatives of Daesh terrorists, including 33 children, a monitoring group told AFP.

“The toll includes 33 children. They were families seeking refuge in the town’s municipal building,” said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Earlier on Friday, the UN human rights chief called on all air forces operating in Syria to take greater care to distinguish between legitimate military targets and civilians in their escalating airstrikes.

A separate U.S. airstrike late on Thursday evening killed at least 35 civilians.

“The rising toll of civilian deaths and injuries already caused by airstrikes in Dayr al-Zawr and Raqqa suggests that insufficient precautions may have been taken in the attacks,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein said in a statement.

Airstrikes in mid-May killed nearly two dozen farmworkers, most of them women, in a village in eastern Raqqa and at least 59 civilians in residential areas of Dayr al-Zawr, Zeid said.

A U.S. military spokesman told Reuters that American forces had conducted strikes near Mayadeen on 25 and 26 May and were assessing the results.

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Takfiri Terrorists Kill Worshipers in Egypt

CAIRO (Dispatches) -- Masked gunmen attacked a bus carrying Coptic Christians on a visit to a monastery south of the Egyptian capital on Friday, killing at least 26 people including many children, officials said.

The assailants in three pick-up trucks attacked the bus as it carried visitors to the Saint Samuel monastery in Minya province, more than 200 kilometers (120 miles) from Cairo, before fleeing, the interior ministry said.

It was the latest attack on Copts

after Daesh terrorists bombed three churches in December and April, killing dozens of Christians.

Pictures of the bus aired by state television showed the vehicle riddled with machine-gun fire and its windows shot out.

State television quoted a health ministry official as saying a “large number” of the victims were children. “They used automatic weapons,” Minya governor Essam el-Bedawi told state television.

Bedawi said police were fanning out along the road where the attack took

place and had set up checkpoints. Health ministry spokesman Khaled Megahed said 26 people were killed and another 25 wounded.

The latest attack came after Takfiri extremists had threatened more strikes against the Copts, who make up about 10% of Egypt’s 90-million population.

In a statement on its spokesman’s Facebook page, the Coptic Church called for “measures to be taken to prevent the dangers of those incidents that tarnish Egypt’s image”.

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The Prophet’s Sermon on the Advent of Ramadhan

(In the book “*Uyoun Akhbar ar-Reza*”, compiled over a thousand years ago by the famous Iranian theologian, Shaikh Sadouq, Prophet Muhammad’s (SAWA) 8th Infallible Heir, Imam Reza (AS), relates on the chain of authority of his illustrious ancestors from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (AS), that once on the advent of the blessed month of Ramadhan, the Prophet addressing the people delivered the following sermon).

“O People! The month of Allah has come with its mercies, blessings and forgiveness. Allah has decreed this month the best of all months; its days the best of all days, its nights the best of all nights and its hours are the best of all hours. It is the month in which He has invited you (to fast and pray); He has honoured you in it. Every breath you take in it has the reward of tasbih (praise of Allah); your sleep is worship, your good deeds are accepted and your invocations answered. Therefore, you must invoke your Lord in right earnest with hearts that are free from sin and evil, and pray that Allah may help you to keep fasts, and to recite the Qur’an. Indeed, miserable is the one who is deprived of Allah’s forgiveness in this great month. While fasting, remember the hunger and thirst on the Day of Judgement. Give alms to the poor and the needy. Pay respect to your elders, have sympathy for your youngsters and be kind towards your relatives and kinsmen. Guard your tongue against unworthy words; your eyes from scenes not worth seeing (forbidden sights); and your ears from sounds that should not be heard. Be kind to orphans so that if your children were to become orphans they will also be treated with kindness. Do repent to Allah for your sins and supplicate with raised hands at the times of prayers as these are the best of times, during which Almighty Allah Looks at His servants with mercy; Answers if they supplicate; Responds if they call; Grants if they ask; and Accepts if they entreat.”

“O people! You have made your conscience the slave of your desires. Make it free, by invoking Him for forgiveness. Your back is breaking under the heavy load of your sins; so prostrate before Him for long intervals and make it lighter. Do understand fully well that Allah has promised in the Name of His Majesty and Honour that He will not take to task such people who perform the prayers and the prostrations, and that He will guard their bodies against the fire of hell on the Day of Judgement.

“O people! If anybody from amongst you arranges for the iftar (food for ending of fast after sunset) of any believers, then Allah will give him the reward as if he had set free a slave, and He will forgive his previous sins.”

When the audience asked: “But everybody amongst us does not have the means to do so,” the Prophet replied: *“Keep yourself away from the fire of hell (by providing iftar), though it may consist of only half a date or even some water if you have nothing else.”*

The Prophet, in continuation of his sermon, said:

“O people! Anybody who in this month cultivates good manners will walk over the siraat (the bridge leading to Paradise via the rim of hell) on the day when feet will tend to slip. Anybody who in this month may take light work from his servants, Allah will make easy his accounting, and anybody who does not annoy others in it, Allah will keep him safe from His wrath on the Day of Judgement. Whoever respects and treats an orphan with kindness in it, Allah shall look at him with kindness on that Day. Anyone who treats well his kinsmen in it, Allah will bestow His Mercy on him on the Day of Judgement, while anybody who maltreats his kinsmen in it, Allah will deprive him of His Mercy. Whoever offers recommended prayers in it, Allah will save him from hell; and whoever observes in it obligatory acts of worship, his reward will be sevenfold for such acts compared to other months. Whoever repeatedly recites salawat (blessings) on me in it Allah will keep the scales of his good deeds heavy (on Judgement Day) whilst the scales of others would be tending to lightness. In this month whoever recites an ayah of the Qur’an, his reward will be that of reciting the whole Qur’an in other months. O people! The gates of Paradise remain open in this month, do pray to your Lord that they may not be closed for you; while the gates of hell are closed, do pray to your Lord they may never be opened for you. Satans have been handcuffed, so invoke your Lord not to let them dominate you.”

Imam Ali (AS) says: I asked: “O Messenger of Allah, what are the best deeds in this month?” He replied: *“O Abu’l-Hasan, the best of deeds in this month is to be far from what Allah has forbidden.”*

The Imam seeing the Prophet visibly in grief, said: “O Messenger of Allah what makes you weep?” In reply the Prophet foretold the tragedy that was to befall Imam Ali (AS) decades later in Ramadhan:

“O Ali, I weep for that which will befall you in this month. (visualizing myself) to be in your place when you will be praying to your Lord, and the most wicked person of all times, like the one who chopped off the feet of the camel of (the tribe of) Thamoud (which was proof of Prophet Saleh’s mission) will strike you on your head and your beard will be dyed in blood.”

On being informed of his martyrdom, the first thought that occurred to Imam Ali (AS) was not about the life of this mortal world but about his faith, and he asked: “O Messenger of Allah, will my faith be secure?” The Prophet replied: *“Yes, your faith will be secure.”*

The Prophet went on, as his companions listened, in amazement and disbelief: *“O Ali! Whoever kills you has (in fact) killed me; whoever annoys you has annoyed me; and whoever slanders you has slandered me, because you are to me like my soul. Your spirit is my spirit, and your nature is my nature. Surely, Allah the Praised and the Glorious created me then you; chose me then you; and selected me for Prophethood and selected you for Imamate. Whoever denies your Imamate has (in fact) denied my Prophethood.*

“O Ali! You are my legatee and father of my (grand)children, and husband of my daughter, and my Caliph (vicegerent) over my ummah both in my lifetime and after my death. Your bidding is my bidding, and your forbidding is my forbidding. By the Power that granted me Prophethood and made me the most excellent of creation, you are the Hujjat-Allah (Proof of Allah) over His creatures, and His Trustee over mysteries and His Caliph over His creatures.”

(Courtesy: al-Balagh Foundation)