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In the Name of the Most High

Viewpoint

Venezuela May Turn Out to Be Another Syria for the US

By: Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

The quixotic US president, Donald Trump, and his thuggish administration are making frenzied efforts to undermine the peace of independent countries and change their system of government, but without success.

latest target is Venezuela, where they have illegally endorsed the controversial National Assembly Chairman, Juan Guaido, as president, which is not only a blatant meddling into the internal affairs of an independent country, but follows a pattern in US foreign policy whereby leaders not readily pliable to American corporate interests get replaced in an uprising generously sponsored and minutely directed from Washington.

As observers point out, due to the abrasive nature of Trump's administration, true US motifs are coming into the open: it is all about money, since Venezuela is one of the richest countries in terms of oil, which the American companies are intent upon looting by replacing the legitimate government of Nicolas Maduro.

As US National Security Adviser, the bespectacled bozo John Bolton, who is one of the most devilish opponents of democracy and human rights, recently said: "It will make a big difference to the US economy if we could have American oil companies invest in and produce the oil capabilities in Venezuela."

For Bolton and people who propelled him into his current position, Venezuela regime change is a "big business opportunity".

In this regard, Guaido, the self-proclaimed "president," in view of his slavish attitude to the US, has already become a traitor to his own nation as is evident by his endorsement of the new round of the illegal US sanctions to cripple Venezuela's economy, thereby harming the livelihood of ordinary people.

The US sanctions against the Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA is meant to squeeze out Rosneft – Russia's main investor in the Venezuelan petroleum sector. At the same time, the \$50 billion that China has lent to Venezuela through oil-for-loan agreements will also be jeopardized.

The US arrogantly admits that regime change attempts in Venezuela are part of a bigger strategy to exert greater US influence over Latin America. It means Nicaragua and Cuba are next on the list of American state terrorism.

The Venezuelan military, however, is loyal to Maduro and the independent countries of the world, including the Islamic Republic of Iran ready to help the legal government of Maduro.

Russia is resolved that the US will not succeed, and so is China. This means Venezuela may well become the next Syria, if not Vietnam for the US.

Interestingly, Washington is facing another debacle and hopefully it will prove to be the last nail in the coffin of the US.

U.S. Backs 'Dictators, Butchers, Extremists': Zarif



U.S. President Donald Trump (L), Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz (C), and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi holding a glowing orb in a darkened room in Saudi Arabia.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- The United States supports "dictators, butchers and extremists" in the Middle East, Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif said in a Twitter post Wednesday in a response to U.S. President Donald Trump's State of the Union speech.

Tensions have ramped up between Iran and the United States since Trump pulled out of a multilateral nuclear deal last May and reimposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

"U.S. hostility has led it to support dictators, butchers & extremists, who've only brought ruin to our region," Zarif wrote in the Twitter post.

During his speech, Trump said his administration had acted deci-

sively to confront Iran, adding it of doing "bad, bad things".

"We will not avert our eyes from a regime that chants 'death to America' and threatens genocide against the Jewish people," he said.

Zarif responded by saying that Iran, including its Jewish community, was commemorating progress as it prepares to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution on Monday.

"Iranians—including our Jewish compatriots—are commemorating 40 yrs of progress despite U.S. pressure, just as @realDonaldTrump again makes accusations against us @ #SOTU2019" Zarif wrote on Twitter, referring to the State of the Union address.

Iran is home to an estimated

20,000 Persian Jews. Jews are protected under Iran's constitution and are free to worship in Iranian synagogues.

Iranian Jews cited in media reports describe feeling safe and comfortable practicing their faith in Iran.

Top Iranian officials, including President Hassan Rouhani, have said that the Islamic Republic is facing its toughest economic situation in 40 years, at least partially due to the U.S. sanctions.

Iran is currently celebrating 40 years of the Islamic Republic, commemorating the Islamic Revolution of 1979 when protestors overthrew the Western-supported monarch, Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi.

Salehi: Iran May Modernize Arak Reactor By Itself

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi has said the country may redesign its heavy water reactor in Arak by itself.

Salehi told Lebanon's Al Mayadeen TV in an interview that should the parties tasked with modernizing the reactor drag their feet, Iran will turn to many of its options which are on the table.

Iran, he said, is now capable of designing nuclear facilities, not just reverse engineering, noting that Tehran can now assist Iraq in building research reactors.

Under a nuclear deal signed with Russia, China, the U.S., Britain, France and Germany in 2015, "Iran will redesign and rebuild a modernized heavy water research reactor in Arak, based on an agreed conceptual design, using fuel enriched up to 3.67 %, in a form of an international partnership which will certify the final design."

In November 2015, the document on redesigning the heavy water reactor was signed by all parties to the nuclear deal.

But the agreement has been in jeopardy since the election of Donald Trump, who pulled out of the agreement in 2017.

The U.S. has since imposed new sanctions on Iran, targeting its atomic energy organization along with its banks, national airline and shipping companies.

The reactor at Arak, however, remained exempt from

sanctions. But an increased rivalry between the U.S. and China has also raised the pressure on Beijing regarding its engagement with Iran.

Last month, Salehi complained that the Chinese were "reducing the speed of cooperation despite their commitment" to redesign the Arak heavy water reactor.

Salehi told the Islamic Republic News Agency that China feared possible U.S. sanctions on its nuclear-related firms if it continued its cooperation with his country.

He also urged China to re-engage with the project, but insisted that Iran had "alternative choices" if it continued to drag its feet.

Earlier last month, Behrooz Kamalvandi, a spokesman for the AEOI, also accused China of delaying work on the project.

"Redesigning the Arak reactor with China is supposed to be proceeding faster," Kamalvandi told the state news agency.

"Iran and China were supposed to cooperate in installing the equipment in the redesigning process," Kamalvandi said, adding that his county was willing to start the next phase of work on its own if necessary.

James Floyd Downes, a lecturer in comparative politics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, said Beijing may be "concerned about the possible sanctions on Chinese nuclear-related firms if it continues to cooperate with Iran".

Gas Tanker Blown Up in Western Iran

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Gunmen killed an Iranian policeman and wounded a police officer in a shootout Wednesday during which a stray bullet hit a fuel tanker, causing it to explode. Authorities later said five suspects were arrested.

Gen. Muhammad Mahdia, police chief in western Lorestan province where the shootout took place, said the suspects belong to two different groups. He did not elaborate but said an investigation was ongoing.

The report said the shootout occurred near a gas station and that the explosion of the tanker shattered the windows of a nearby building. The

killed policeman was identified as Najmeddin Bavi.

State TV said the wounded police officer, Lt. Jaber Beiranvand, was in ICU at a local hospital. The report said the gunmen initially opened fire on the tanker and then on the police who were patrolling the area. The assailants later fled in a stolen car.

Heavily rural Lorestan has seen occasional tribal-related clashes and many people in the area have private firearms.

In November, authorities confiscated some 150 guns from smugglers in the province.

The Holy Qur'an

And if one of the idolaters seek protection from you, grant him protection till he hears the word of Allah, then make him attain his place of safety; this is because they are a people who do not know.

The Holy Qur'an (9:6)

PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	12:18
Evening (Maghreb)	17:56
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:35
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	07:00

Iran to Boost Range of Land-to-Sea Missiles

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran's Army chief General Abdolrahim Mousavi said on Wednesday Iran plans to boost the range of its coast-to-sea missiles beyond 300 kilometers.

Iran's coast-to-sea missiles can currently hit targets within a range of 300 kilometers, he told reporters here.

"The range of Iran's coast-to-sea missile is going to be extended in the near future," Tasnim news agency quoted him as saying.

General Mousavi touched on the Navy's mighty presence in the Persian Gulf and the international waters, saying Iran's advances in submarine industry and its missile capabilities have greatly boosted the country's deterrent power.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in November urged armed forces to boost their military capabilities and preparedness in such a way that the enemies would not ever dare think of threatening the country.

Iran displayed a new cruise missile with a range of 1,300 km (800 miles) on Saturday during celebrations marking the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iran has expanded its missile program, particularly its ballistic missiles, in defiance of opposition from the United States and expressions of concern by European countries. Tehran says the program is purely defensive.

Later on Saturday, a senior Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) commander suggested that pressure by European countries for talks on curbing Iran's ballistic missiles development could prompt Tehran to expand it beyond current limits.

Amirali Hajizadeh, head of the IRGC's aerospace division, said Iran had overcome initial problems in producing jet engines for cruise missiles and could now manufacture a full range of the weapons.

Meanwhile, Israeli sources said Iran's new Hoveyzeh cruise missile can bypass all existing American and the Zionist regime's defense systems and hit any target in the occupied territories without being detected.