

LONDON (Reuters) -- Britain said Wednesday that U.S. sanctions against Iran have a clear impact on third-party countries and are making it difficult for firms to assess the risks of doing business there. "It is clear that there is extraterritorial reach to some of these sanctions," Rona Fairhead, a trade department minister in parliament's upper chamber, said, adding that Britain was working with the United States to make sure trade ties could still exist. She said firms always had to assess financial, commercial and legal risks when doing business, but that the U.S. sanctions were making that process more difficult.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) -- A special envoy of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has traveled to Ankara for talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Iranian president's Chief of Staff Mahmoud Vaezi would convey the Iranian president's message to Erdogan. Back in 2017, high-ranking officials from Iran and Turkey signed a roadmap for the development of cooperation between the two neighboring countries in various security fields.

Viewpoint

Ball in The US Court for Talks With North Korea

West Asia's First Stem Cell Production Plant Opens



Esteghlal Advance Into 2018 AFC Champions League Quarterfinals



Syrian Terrorists Pull Out of Last Besieged Area



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 tasbeeh (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)

Europe Refuses to Give Guarantees to Iran



From left to right: French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, Iran's Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif and Britain's Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson take part in meeting in Brussels, May 15, 2018.

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) -- European powers vowed to keep the 2015 nuclear deal alive without the United States by trying to keep Iran's oil and investment flowing, but made no commitment on providing the guarantees Tehran seeks.

British, French and German foreign ministers, along with the EU's top diplomat, discussed the next steps with their Iranian counterpart, a week after U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the pact he branded "the worst deal ever" and reimposed U.S. sanctions on Iran.

"We all agreed that we have a

relative in intensive care and we all want to get him or her out of intensive care as quickly as possible," EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini told reporters after the 90-minute meeting.

She said all sides had agreed to find practical solutions over the coming weeks. Those included continuing to sell Iran's oil and gas products, maintaining effective banking transactions and protecting European investments in Iran.

"I cannot talk about legal or economic guarantees but I can talk about serious, determined, immediate work from the European

side," Mogherini said.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the meeting had been a good start, but he wanted to see guarantees materialize. "We are on the right track ... a lot will depend on what we can do in next few weeks," he said.

Highlighting just how difficult it will be, the U.S. Treasury announced on Tuesday more sanctions, including on Iran's central bank governor, just minutes before the Brussels meeting was due to begin.

Zarif said the latest U.S. decision was "illegal".

Britain's Foreign Minister Boris Johnson was blunt about the chances of avoiding U.S. sanctions that also seek to prohibit foreign companies from doing business with Iran.

"We have to be realistic about the electrified rail, the live wire of American extraterritoriality and how (it) can serve as a deterrent to business," Johnson told reporters.

The Europeans and Iranians have now tasked experts to come up with measures quickly and will meet again in Vienna next week at a deputy foreign minister level.

Measures could include retaliatory sanctions, allowing the European Investment Bank to invest in Iran and coordinating euro-denominated credit lines from European governments.

European commissioners were to discuss sanctions-blocking measures on Wednesday, opening the way for European leaders to discuss the issue at a summit in Sofia later that day.

While the focus of Tuesday's talks was on salvaging the nuclear deal, EU diplomats said they needed some time to clarify the U.S. policy on sanctions, but also generally towards Iran.

"One of the questions that we need to ask the Americans is whether their final objective is to make the Iranians yield on its nuclear program or to get rid of the regime," said a senior French official, acknowledging that Paris was concerned by the ideological shift in Washington since John Bolton

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May Reconsider Talks With Washington North Korea to U.S.: We Are Not Libya

SEOUL (Dispatches) -- North Korea threw next month's summit between Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump into doubt Wednesday, threatening weeks of diplomatic progress by saying it may reconsider if Washington insists it unilaterally gives up its nuclear weapons.

The North's official KCNA news agency said earlier Pyongyang had called off high-level talks with Seoul, which had been due Wednesday, in the first sign of trouble after months of warming ties.

Citing first vice minister of foreign affairs Kim Kye Gwan, KCNA later said the fate of the unprecedented U.S.-North Korea summit, as well as bilateral relations, "would be clear" if the United States spoke of a "Libya-style" denuclearization for the North.

"If the U.S. is trying to drive us into a corner to force our unilateral nuclear abandonment, we will no longer be interested in such dialogue and cannot but reconsider our proceeding to the DPRK-U.S. summit," Kim Kye Gwan said, referring to the North by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Trump and Kim are scheduled to meet in Singapore on June 12.

The vice minister specifically criticized U.S. national security adviser John Bolton, who has called for North Korea to quickly give up its nuclear arsenal in a deal that mirrors Libya's abandonment of its weapons of mass destruction.

North Korea clashed with Bolton when he worked under the Bush administration, calling him "human scum" and a "bloodsucker."

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Condemn Slaughter of Gazans Iranians Protest Outside Former U.S. Embassy

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranians rallied here Wednesday to voice their outrage at the occupying regime of Israel's recent killing of dozens of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the U.S. embassy relocation to the occupied city of Jerusalem Al-Quds.

The demonstration took place outside the former U.S. embassy building in the Iranian capital, with protesters holding flags and placards which expressed support for the Palestinian resistance.

They also carried signs which read, "Down with USA" and "Down with Israel."

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani censured certain Arab and Muslim countries, saying some of them have simply chosen to turn a blind eye and some others even stated that the Zionist regime "legitimately defended itself."

Israeli troops killed more than 60 Palestinians and wounded

over 2,700 more on Monday near the fence separating Gaza from the occupied territories, as the U.S. celebrated the inauguration of its embassy in the occupied Jerusalem Al-Quds.

Rouhani said legitimate defense is only the right of a country or a nation that owns a land, adding the Zionist regime has no such right because it is occupying the territories of the Palestinians.

"On this land, 'legitimate defense by the Zionists' makes no sense," Rouhani said, noting that it is instead the Palestinian nation that is fighting for its land there.

"The Zionist regime and the United States assume that by exerting more pressure, they can deny the Palestinian nation its legitimate right or can separate the world's Muslims from their land of Al-Quds, but they are making a great mistake."

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