

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Saturday warned Iran not to ramp up its nuclear program after Washington's withdrawal from a landmark agreement. "I hope they understand that if they begin to ramp up their nuclear program, the wrath of the entire world will fall upon them," he said in an interview broadcast on MSNBC. "When I say wrath, don't confuse that with military action. When I say wrath, I mean the moral opprobrium and economic power that fell upon them. That's what I'm speaking to. I'm not talking to military action here. I truly hope that that's never the case. It's not in anyone's best interests for that."

TEHRAN (Tasnim) -- Despite the lack of diplomatic ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, around 85,000 Iranian pilgrims are going to make the Hajj pilgrimage this year, an Iranian official said on Saturday.

While Iran and Saudi Arabia have no diplomatic relations, they have agreed to deal with the issue of Hajj regardless of political differences, representative of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in Hajj and pilgrimage affairs Ali Qazi-Askar said. According to the official, some 85,000 Iranian will go to Hajj after the Saudis undertook to respect them.

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Viewpoint

Hodeidah Heroics Rip Off Fig Leaf of UN Hypocrisy

Tehran's Azadi Tower Holds Traditional Doll Exhibition



Queiroz Steers Iran to New Heights



Iraq Bombs Daesh Ringleaders' Meeting in Syria, 45 Killed



MbS, Netanyahu Secretly Met in Amman: Maariv

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman (MbS) and the occupying regime of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a secret meeting in Amman recent, the Israeli newspaper Maariv has reported.

It cited Jacky Hugi, the political analyst of the newspaper, as saying that bin Salman waited for Netanyahu at the Royal Palace during his visit to Amman on Monday.

"A close friend told me about the incident, claiming that there were direct contacts between the two parties, both Saudi and Israeli, under the auspices of King Abdullah II of Jordan," Hugi said.

The secret meeting was held on the sidelines of Jared Kushner's visit to Amman. During the visit, U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law was accompanied by Jason Greenblatt, the U.S. president's Middle East envoy, the report said.

Bin Salman reportedly met on Wednesday with Kushner to discuss Trump's plan for the Middle East "peace" deal, or what he calls the "deal of the century".

Amman also played host to another meeting between King

Abdullah and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, during which the two sides reportedly discussed issues of mutual interest, especially the security challenges of Western Asia.

The details of Pompeo's talks in Amman have not been released, but Iran is usually a key focus of talks between American officials and the regional Arab rulers.

A historic meeting between Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and King Abdullah in May had raised hopes of a warming in relations between the two Muslim states.

Riyadh has been supporting the U.S. initiative purported to resolve the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Saudi crown prince recently sparked controversy by telling the Palestinians that they should either accept peace proposals or "shut up."

"It's about time that the Palestinians accept the offers, and agree to come to the negotiating table — or they should shut up and stop complaining," Israel's Channel 10 news quoted Salman as saying during a trip to New York in March.

Zionist-Backed Terrorists on the Ropes: Syrian Troops Make First Advances in South



This file photo shows army vehicles retreating from Daraa in 2011.

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Syrian forces on Saturday made their first gains on the ground against foreign-backed terrorists in the southern province of Daraa after several days of intensified bombardment, a London-based monitor said.

Since Tuesday, government troops have been ramping up shelling on terrorist-held ar-

reas in Daraa's eastern countryside ahead of an apparent military offensive against the terrorists there.

"Government troops made their first advance in the area since the military escalation on Tuesday, seizing the villages of Al-Bustan and Al-Shumariya in the eastern part of Daraa province," said the so-called Syrian Observatory

for Human Rights.

The shelling and clashes are currently focused on a wedge of militant territory between Daraa's eastern countryside and the western part of the neighboring province of Sweida.

The army seems to want to split that wedge into a northern and southern section, Observatory head Rami Abdel

Rahman said, "to facilitate their operations and increase the pressure on rebel factions, allowing it to advance more quickly."

Syrian state news agency SANA also reported the advance, saying army units edged forwards against terrorists in Daraa's east.

After securing the capital Damascus, Syrian troops have turned to the country's south, where foreign-backed militants still hold a majority of the provinces of Daraa and Sweida.

Southern Syria is a particularly strategic zone: it borders both Jordan and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, and also lies close to Damascus.

The Observatory has noted an "ongoing escalation of shelling and clashes in eastern and northeastern parts of Daraa province."

The government has used airstrikes and artillery against terrorists in Daraa province.

Even as the government hints at a looming assault, talks between international brokers may see a negotiated settlement for Syria's south.

U.S. President Flip-Flops Again Trump: North Korea Still 'Extraordinary Threat'

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- Donald Trump has declared that North Korea still poses an "extraordinary threat" to the United States, just days after saying that the country's nuclear program no longer constituted a danger.

In an executive order on Friday, the U.S. president extended for one year the so-called "national emergency" with respect to the nuclear-armed nation, re-authorizing economic restrictions against it.

While expected, the declaration comes just nine days after Trump tweeted: "There is no longer a Nuclear Threat from North Korea," following his summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Singapore.

The order appears to undermine the president's claim. It states that "the existence and risk of proliferation of weapons-usable fissile material" and the actions and policies of

the North Korean government "continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States".

The national emergency has been in place since 2008 and is a sign of the enduring tensions between the U.S. and North Korea that spiked last year as the North moved closer to perfecting a nuclear-tipped missile that could reach American soil, but ebbed with the June 12 summit where Kim agreed to "complete denuclearization" of the Korean peninsula.

The two sides, however, still have to negotiate the terms under which the North would give up its nukes and win relief from sanctions — a goal that has eluded U.S. administrations for a quarter-century.

Trump claimed at a cabinet meeting Thursday that denuclearization had already begun, (Continued on Page 7)

UN Top Court to Hear Iran Lawsuit Against U.S.

THE HAGUE (Dispatches) -- The UN's top court will in October hear a complex case brought by Iran against the United States seeking to recover billions in frozen assets, which U.S. courts say should go to American victims of terror attacks.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) said in a statement it will "hold public hearings in the case concerning Certain Iranian Assets (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America), from Monday 8 to Friday 12 October 2018" at its seat in The Hague.

The hearings "will be devoted to preliminary objections raised by the United States," the statement added, after which judges will decide whether or not they can rule in the dispute.

The case was lodged by Tehran in June 2016 accusing the U.S. of breaking a decades-old bilateral treaty, dating from

the time of the Shah, by seizing Iranian financial assets and those of Iranian companies.

U.S. courts have "awarded total damages of over \$56 billion ... against Iran in respect of its alleged involvement in various terrorist acts mainly outside the U.S.," Iran said.

The case was filed just weeks after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in April 2016 that \$2 billion in frozen Iranian assets should be paid to about 1,000 survivors and relatives of those killed in attacks which Washington attributes to the Islamic Republic without any evidence.

These included the 1983 bombing of a U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia.

But Tehran reacted angrily to the ruling which came almost a year after the landmark nuclear deal with world powers (Continued on Page 7)

Thousands Rally in London to Call for 2nd Brexit Vote

LONDON (AFP) -- Thousands of demonstrators gathered in London on Saturday to call for a second vote on Britain's departure from the European Union.

The anti-Brexit campaigners are to march on parliament to mark the second anniversary of the Brexit vote, demanding a "people's vote" on whether to approve the final deal Prime Minister Theresa May strikes with the EU, if an agreement is struck at all.

"I was in deep tears when the referendum happened, it looked like the future was pretty bad," said Chiara Liduori, a 40-year-old Italian living in London.

"Brexit is awful not only because we want to keep things like it is, but because it is important to be within, in order to make changes."

Emily Hill, 55, told AFP she was "very much in favor of let-

ting the people either confirm they do really want Brexit or say no".

"I think lot of the voting was a protest vote, some people genuinely are not supportive of the EU, but I don't believe it is the majority opinion in this country," she added, European flag in hand.

Britain's Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, who campaigned to leave the European Union, warned May against a Brexit that was "soft, yielding and seemingly infinitely long" like toilet roll.

Writing in The Sun, Johnson urged against a "bog-roll Brexit", British slang for toilet paper, and called on his boss to "fulfill the mandate of the people and deliver a full British Brexit".

May's team is about to enter into the next round of negotiations with EU counterparts, but (Continued on Page 7)