


TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani will travel to the Kazakh city of Aktau on August 11 to attend a summit of the five Caspian Sea littoral countries, an official said Wednesday. The president will leave Tehran for the coastal city on Saturday evening to take part in the Caspian summit, Rouhani's deputy chief of staff for communications and information Parviz Esmaili said. He will attend the Caspian summit, sign the meeting's joint statement and also several other "important and strategic documents" on cooperation among the five Caspian states, he said.

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- Iran should entirely "disappear" from the world, Zionist minister of public security Gilad Erdan said Tuesday. Speaking to Israel Radio, Erdan welcomed Trump's decision to impose new sanctions on Iran. "It would be better if the Iranian regime would disappear entirely from this world, but it would also be a blessing to see (former U.S. President Barack) Obama's bad nuclear agreement replaced with a better one," Erdan said.

Viewpoint

Worsening Human Rights Situation in Bahrain

Google Pays Homage to Persian Polymath



Iran's Team Rolls Into 2018 AFC Futsal Club Championship



More Yemeni Civilians Killed in Saudi Air Raid



FM Zarif:

U.S. Should Know Consequences of Curbing Iran Oil

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- A U.S. plan to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero will not succeed, Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif was cited as saying by an Iranian newspaper on Wednesday.

U.S. officials have said in recent weeks that they aim to pressure countries to stop buying oil from Iran in a bid to force Tehran to halt its nuclear and missile programs and involvement in fighting Takfiri terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

"If the Americans want to keep this simplistic and impossible idea in their minds they should also know its consequences," Zarif told the Iranian newspaper.

"They can't think that Iran won't export oil and others will export."

President Hassan Rouhani hinted last month that Iran could block the Strait of Hormuz, a major oil shipping route, if the U.S. attempted to stop the Islamic Republic's oil exports.

Last month, Trump offered to meet with Iran's senior officials. Zarif said that Oman and Switzerland have acted as mediators in talks with America in the past but that there are currently no direct or indirect talks being held with the United States.

He said it was hard to imagine new talks with the U.S. after it lost the trust of the world with its erratic decision-making.

"Imagine negotiating now -- how can we trust them?" Zarif told reporters on state broadcaster IRINN. "America has zig-zagged constantly, so now no one trusts them."

The minister said Iran is now in a much better position than the last time when it was under Western sanctions which were lifted in early 2016 under the nuclear deal.

"There is a big difference this time," said Zarif. "Before nobody supported Iran. But now, all the countries in the world are supporting Iran."

On Tuesday, the Iranian foreign minister said the world is "sick & tired" of Washington's unilateralism in response to a tweet by Trump

warning other countries against doing business with Tehran.

"Tantrums & CAPPED TWEETS won't change the fact that the world is sick & tired of US unilateralism. Stopping U.S. trade and killing 100K U.S. jobs is fine with us, but the world won't follow impulsive tweeted diktats. Just ask EU, Russia, China & dozens of our other trading partners," tweeted Zarif.

Trump tweeted on Tuesday that "anyone doing business with Iran will NOT be doing business with the United States," claiming that he was "asking for WORLD PEACE, nothing less!"

"The Iran sanctions have officially been cast. These are the most biting sanctions ever imposed, and in November they ratchet up to yet another level," the U.S. president wrote.

"Reminder: International relations is not a beauty pageant, with tired clichés about a desire for WORLD PEACE. And it is not the first time that a warmonger claims he is waging war for "world peace," Zarif responded.

Nations Pledge to Continue Trade With Iran



China, Russia, Turkey and Germany reiterate their decision to maintain trade with Iran despite new U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

BEIJING (Dispatches) – China and Germany on Wednesday became the latest country to say it will ignore the United States and continue to conduct business with Iran.

The comments from Beijing and Berlin signaled growing anger from partners of the United States, which reimposed strict sanctions against Iran on Tuesday, over its threat to penalize businesses from third countries that continue to operate there.

"China has consistently opposed unilateral sanctions and long-armed jurisdiction," the Chinese foreign

ministry said.

"China's commercial cooperation with Iran is open and transparent, reasonable, fair and lawful, not violating any United Nations Security Council resolutions," it added in a faxed statement to Reuters.

"China's lawful rights should be protected."

The German government said U.S. sanctions against Iran that have an extra-territorial effect violate international law, and Germany expects Washington to consider European interests when coming up with such sanctions.

The reimposition of U.S. sanctions followed Trump's decision earlier this year to pull out of a 2015 deal to lift the sanctions in return for curbs on Iran's nuclear program.

Tuesday's sanctions target Iran's purchases of U.S. dollars, metals trading, coal, industrial software and the auto sector.

European countries, hoping to persuade Tehran to continue to respect the deal, have promised to try to lessen the blow of sanctions and to urge their firms not to pull out. But that has proved difficult:

European companies have quit Iran, arguing that they cannot risk their U.S. business.

Among those that have suspended plans to invest in Iran are France's oil major Total, its big carmakers PSA and Renault, and their German rival Daimler.

Danish engineering company Haldor Topsoe, one of the world's leading industrial catalyst producers, said on Wednesday it would cut around 200 jobs from its workforce of 2,700 due to the new U.S. sanctions on Iran, which made it very hard for its customers there to finance new projects.

The chief executive of reinsurance group Munich Re said it may abandon its Iran business under pressure from the United States, but described the operation as very small.

Turkey, however, said it would continue to buy natural gas from Iran.

China-Iran Trade

Beijing has close economic and diplomatic ties with Tehran. It is Iran's biggest oil customer, taking in more than 650,000 barrels per day from the country.

The world's No. 2 economy is reportedly gearing up to take more and "vacuum up much of the Iranian oil that other nations won't buy because of the threat of US sanctions."

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Ex-Knesset Member: Zionists Plan 'Ethnic Cleaning'

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- A Knesset member who resigned in protest over the Israeli "nation-state" law says the legislation "normalizes and enshrines in law" the superiority of Zionists over their Arab peers, and warned of a limit to what the Arab community in Occupied Palestine will tolerate.

Zouheir Bahloul, 67, a popular sports commentator turned politician who represented the Zionist Union, quit the Knesset on 28 July following the passage of the law last month, which declared the occupying regime to be the "nation-state of the Jewish people".

In an interview with Middle East Eye, Bahloul said that after three years in parliament, he was moved to quit over a law he says institutionalizes the "inferior status" long experienced by Arab citizens of Occupied Palestine.

"My resignation is an outcry that we will not accept laws that chase the Arab presence from this country," he said.

"Our legal status after this law is inferior because the law normalizes and enshrines Arab inferiority and Jewish superiority through a basic law that has the authority of a constitution to which the High Court can hardly object."

The law also describes Zionist settlement building

as being in the Israeli interest and declares Hebrew as the national language, with Arabic granted only a special status.

It makes no mention of equality nor democracy, implying that the Jewish character takes precedent over Palestinians, Druze and Circassians in Occupied Palestine.

Critically, the law is part of the Zionist regime's so-called Basic Laws, which act as a de facto Israeli constitution and would require the regime's high court to be overturned.

Bahloul, who was born in Occupied Palestine into a Muslim Arab family, described the law as "unprecedented" and said it has crossed many red lines for Arab citizens.

He is particularly critical about the absence of the word equality from the law, which he sees as one more attempt in a long history of legislation aimed at expelling Arabs from their occupied country.

"In the past, chasing the Arab minority in Israel was in the form of policies, heated statements and shortages in financial budgets for Arab towns, but it was not a basic law that has a constitutional power," Bahloul said.

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International Aid Groups: Saudi Bombs Hit Sanaa Airport Every Two Weeks

CAIRO (Dispatches) – Aid groups said the international airport in Yemen's capital has been hit with an average of one bomb every two weeks since Saudi Arabia closed it to all commercial traffic two years ago.

The Norwegian Refugee Council and CARE International said the kingdom has carried out 56 airstrikes over the last two years on the airport in Sanaa.

The aid groups cited figures from the Yemen Data Project, which monitors the war.

Johan Mooij, CARE's director in Yemen, said the airport has become a "a symbol of aggression and oppression for a very large population."

Saudi Arabia, which has been at war with Yemen since 2015, controls the impoverished nation's airspace.

On Wednesday, Saudi warplanes have carried out fresh strikes against targets in southwestern Yemen, killing

seven civilians, mostly women and children.

The attacks targeted Amran Province's Harf Sufyan District, Yemen's Al-Masirah television reported, adding that three children and two women were among the victims.

Separately, Yemeni sharpshooters killed five Saudi-backed militants in the kingdom's southwestern border region of Jizan during counter-attacks against the aggressors.

The mercenaries were advancing on the Doud and Dukhan mountains in the region.

Two military vehicles belonging to the militants were also destroyed in missile and mortar attacks by the Yemeni army in Jizan.

Separately, Yemeni forces fired three ballistic missiles at the positions of Saudi-backed militants in al-Jawf and Ma'rib provinces as well as in the country's west coast.