

BERLIN (Reuters) -- Chancellor Angela Merkel's Bavarian allies suffered their worst election result since 1950 Sunday, bleeding votes to the far-right in a setback that risks widening divisions within Germany's crisis-prone national government.

The Christian Social Union (CSU) won 35.5 percent of the vote, an exit poll for broadcaster ARD showed, losing its absolute majority for only the second time since 1962 - an outcome sure to stoke infighting in the party, already a difficult partner for Merkel in Berlin.

ALGIERS (AP) -- An Algerian television station close to President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's family reported Sunday that five senior Algerian army officers have been jailed after appearing before a magistrate on corruption charges.

Ennahar TV said the major-generals - three former military region heads, a former gendarme head and the Defense Ministry's financial services chief - faced charges Sunday of "illicit enrichment" and "use of a senior officer's function for personal purposes."

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Rouhani: Trump Regime 'Most Spiteful' in Decades

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- The United States is seeking "regime change" in Iran, President Hassan Rouhani said on Sunday, adding that the current U.S. administration is the most spiteful that the Islamic Republic has faced in its four decades.

"They started with a psychological war; their next goal is an economic war and an attempt to portray (the Islamic Republic) ineffective, and their ultimate goal is to delegitimize the system and change it," he said.

Tensions have increased between Iran and America after U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from a multilateral agreement on Iran's nuclear program in May.

"In the past 40 years there has not been a more spiteful team than the current U.S. government team toward Iran, Iranians and the Islamic Republic," Rouhani said.

"There was a time when there was one person who had enmity. The rest were moderate. Now... the worst have gathered around each other," he added in a speech marking the beginning of the academic year at Tehran University.

Rouhani accused the Americans of using psychological and economic warfare and questioning the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic.

"Reducing the legitimacy of the system is their final goal. When they say getting rid of, regime change in their own words, how does regime change happen? Through reducing legitimacy, otherwise a regime doesn't change."

He used the English phrase "regime change" to emphasize his point.

The president said Iran has defeated the U.S. in many arenas before and will thwart all its conspiracies with unity and integrity again.

He touched on Washington's isolation after its withdrawal from a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Rouhani said except for a few regimes, all countries view the move as "illegal" and a "mistake".

"From a political standpoint and a foreign policy perspective, Iran is certainly the winner and

America the loser," in what has so far transpired.

Rouhani said Iran responded to the US withdrawal with "prudence" and refrained from hurriedly walking out of the JCPOA.

Iran, he said, can leave the JCPOA "whenever" it chooses but that national interests and security are what come first.

Washington reintroduced steps against Iran's currency trade, metals and auto sectors in August.

Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri played down the impact of the planned restrictions. Iran has been able to find new partners to buy its oil even though some countries have stopped purchases, Jahangiri said on Sunday, according to Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

"America will certainly not be able to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero," he said.

"America thinks Saudi Arabia can replace this oil. But right now Iran's oil has reached more than \$80 and with half the previous exports we will have the same income as before," he added on comments on the IRIB website.

Leader's Call for Completing Paradigm of Progress



Ayatollah Khamenei has drawn up a roadmap for Iran's progress in the next 50 years.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on Sunday asked Iranian elite and experts for their consultative opinion on various aspects of the "Islamic-Iranian Paradigm of Progress" in order to upgrade the document which defines a roadmap for the next 50 years.

In a letter, Ayatollah Khamenei called on Iranian organizations, scientific centers, the elites and

expert to explore various aspects of the paradigm and offer their consultative opinion in order to modify, complete and upgrade the document.

The Leader also ordered the Islamic-Iranian Paradigm of Progress Center to seek advice and fully study all ideas to introduce an upgraded and finalized version of the document within two years at most.

From the beginning of the 15th

century of the Iranian calendar (2022), the Islamic-Iranian Paradigm of Progress should take effect with the necessary preparations and proper pace and become the pivot on which the country's affairs revolve, Ayatollah Khamenei added.

The Leader also urged Iran's Supreme National Security Council, the parliament, the administration, universities and religious schools to help upgrade the Is-

lamic-Iranian Paradigm of Progress.

Developing an Islamic-Iranian paradigm of progress attracted Iranians' attention after Ayatollah Khamenei's call for such an initiative in December 2010.

In March 2013, the Leader described developing such a paradigm as a great, glorious, long-term and detailed plan, and stressed, "A prerequisite for developing an Islamic-Iranian paradigm of progress and propagating it among the elites is creating a discourse of such a paradigm in society."

In April 2016, Ayatollah Khamenei said there are deep deficiencies in the common paradigms of development in the modern world, calling for the formulation of an indigenous model on the basis of Islamic and Iranian values.

The Leader had also explained that the common paradigms were fundamentally wrong and based upon humanist and non-divine principles, saying they have failed to keep pledges of supporting values such as freedom and justice.

Signs of failure of the common paradigms of progress can be seen in some countries that follow those models, including their governments' huge financial debts, unemployment, poverty and severe social inequality, Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out.

Saudi Arabia Defiant as Khashoggi Pressure Mounts

LONDON (Dispatches) -- Britain, France and Germany called on the Saudi and Turkish authorities Sunday to mount a "credible investigation" into the disappearance of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, saying they were treating the incident with "the utmost seriousness."

"There needs to be a credible investigation to establish the truth about what happened, and - if relevant - to identify those bearing responsibility for the disappearance of Jamal Khashoggi, and ensure that they are held to account," foreign ministers from the three countries said in a joint statement.

"We encourage joint Saudi-Turkish efforts in that regard, and expect the Saudi Government to provide a complete and detailed response. We have conveyed this message directly to the Saudi authorities," the statement by British foreign minister Jeremy Hunt, France's Jean-Yves Le Drian and Germany's Heiko Maas said.

Hunt later told British television, referring to the disappearance, "I don't want to get drawn into hypotheticals because we don't know the facts yet, but we have been very, very clear that if these stories are true, that would be totally appalling and we would have to think about the appropriate way to react in that situation."

Saudi Arabia said it will retaliate against any sanctions imposed over the disap-

pearance of Khashoggi, as the Riyadh stock market had its biggest fall in years.

A host of western companies have distanced themselves from the Persian Gulf state following the journalist's disappearance, imperiling Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman's purported efforts at economic reform.

Khashoggi has been missing since he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on 2 October and is presumed to have been murdered.

Donald Trump has threatened the U.S. ally with "severe punishment" if Khashoggi, who has been critical of bin Salman, has been killed.

Riyadh vowed to hit back against any action. "The kingdom affirms its total rejection of any threats and attempts to undermine it, whether through economic sanctions, political pressure or repeating false accusations," it said.

"The kingdom also affirms that if it is (targeted by) any action, it will respond with greater action." The statement also pointed out that the oil-rich kingdom "plays an effective and vital role in the world economy".

The Saudi response came after the Tadawul exchange in Riyadh dropped by 7% at one point on Sunday, the week's first day of trading in Saudi Arabia, with

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Trump Suggests Mattis May Depart Pentagon

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- President Donald Trump on Sunday signaled there are more changes to his Cabinet to come with Defense Secretary James Mattis on the chopping block.

"General Mattis is a good guy. We get along very well. He may leave. I mean, at some point, everybody leaves," Trump told CBS' News Lesley Stahl in an interview for "60 Minutes" to be broadcast Sunday evening.

He criticized his Pentagon chief, who he used to call "Mad Dog" Mattis, as being a Democrat. "I think he's sort of a Democrat if you want to know the truth," he said in a clip of the interview released by CBS.

Mattis has been rumored to be on the way out for more than a month amid reports relations between the two men have deteriorated to the point that Trump now calls him "Moderate Dog."

The speculation also increased after the publication of Bob Woodward's book "Fear" that portrayed Mattis privately disparaging Trump to associates.

Woodward wrote Mattis told close associates the president acted like - and had the understanding of - "a fifth- or sixth-grader."

The U.S. president also indicated more people will exit his Cabinet - likely after the election. "Other people will go for sure," he told CBS.

But the clip released was short on specifics - no other names were mentioned as on the chopping block and no word on who could replace them.

The name game - Washington D.C.'s favorite parlor game of guessing who is out and who could replace them - has already begun for several top administration positions as it looks increasingly like several jobs in the Trump administration will be available following November's election.

U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley announced last week she would leave her post at the end of the year, which could be the first hint of a major Cabinet turn over.

Another person expected to go is Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who Trump has long expressed his frustration with.

Trump has been furious the way special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of Russia's role in the 2016 election has been handled. Sessions recued himself from overseeing Mueller.

The president has questioned Sessions' handling of the Justice Department publicly in both interviews and his in his tweets.

And while he didn't name specific names in his interview with '60 Minutes,' he did say there are some people in his Cabinet he is not happy with.

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