

Social Security Organization Chief Dies in Car Crash

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- The managing director of the country's social security agency and his deputy have been killed in a car crash in northern Iran.

Taqi Nourbakhsh and his deputy, Abdolrahman Tajeddin, were injured in a car crash in northern Golestan Province and both died later in a hospital. The Social Security Organization is a non-governmental organization that provides retirement, disability and unemployment insurance for wage-earners and salaried workers as well as self-employed persons who voluntarily pay in to the organization. The organization takes care of millions of people in Iran.

Kayhan International



U.S. Spent \$6 Trillion on Mideast Wars: Study

WASHINGTON (Time) -- The United States has spent nearly \$6 trillion on wars that directly contributed to the deaths of around 500,000 people since the 9/11 attacks of 2001. Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs published its annual "Costs of War" report Wednesday, taking into consideration the Pentagon's spending and its Overseas Contingency Operations account, as well as "war-related spending by the Department of State, past and obligated spending for war veterans' care, interest on the debt incurred to pay for the wars, and the prevention of and response to terrorism by the Department of Homeland Security."

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Viewpoint

The Debacle in Hodeidah

Vatican Lauds Iran's Cultural Richness



IOC Faces 2026 Winter Games Conundrum as Cities Flee



'Saudis Paused Raids on Yemen's Hudaydah to Buy Time'



A Very Auspicious Day

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"And We desired to show favour to those who were abased in the land, and to make them Imams, and to make them the Heirs;" (Holy Qur'an 28:5)

Heartiest felicitations to you on a very auspicious day! Today is the blessed 9th of the month of Rabi al-Awwal, a day of happiness after over two months of mourning for the Chief of Martyrs, Imam Husain (AS), in the months of Muharram and Safar in commemoration of history's most heartrending tragedy. We celebrate the start of the imamate or divinely-designated leadership of the 12th and Last Infallible Heir of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), after having paid tributes of tears yesterday on the 8th of Rabi al-Awwal to his martyred father, Imam Hasan Askari (AS).

We have firm faith in the promise of God Almighty that on his reappearance, Imam Mahdi al-Qa'em will end corruption and oppression on Planet Earth by establishing the global government of peace, prosperity and justice, as the holy Qur'an refers to: *"Certainly, We had written in the Psalms, after the Reminder (Torah), Indeed My righteous servants shall inherit the earth."* (21:105).

He will announce his advent at the holy Ka'ba in Mecca with the words: *"Ala ya ahl al-alam! An-al-Imam al-Qa'em"* (O' people of the world, know that I am Imam al-Qa'em).

He will then say: *"Ala ya ahl al-alam! Inna Jaddi al-Husain qatalu atashanan,* (Know O' people of the world! Indeed my ancestor [Imam] Husain [AS] was slain in the state of acute thirst).

"Ala ya ahl al-alam! Inna Jaddi al-Husain tarahuho uryanan, (Know O' people of the world! Surely, my ancestor [Imam] Husain [AS] lay bare without a shroud or burial).

"Ala ya ahl al-alam! Inna Jaddi al-Husain sahuho uryanan, (Know O' people of the world! The bare body of my ancestor [Imam] Husain [AS] was trampled [by the Omayyad horsemen]).

God's promise is true. Whatever the arrogant and the ignorant do, with all their material and military power, they cannot belie it.

Today, the Pharaohs, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Achaemenians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Omayyads, the Abbasids, the Ottomans, the British and all other empire-builders have long vanished from the world scene.

Tomorrow, it will be the turn of the United States of America – so far the most satanic of world powers – which is all poised to fall into the dustbin of history, despite its arsenal of doomsday weapons and its monopolization of global economy. According to Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS), the Gateway of the City of Wisdom and Knowledge, the above cited ayah that God Almighty revealed to His Last and Greatest Messenger, refers to the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), whose rights were usurped and the day will come when the 12th and Last Infallible Heir of the Seal of Messengers, will appear to establish the global government of peace, prosperity and justice.

The Abbasid regime, superpower of the days, unable to find any trace of the 5-year old orphan and deeming him too weak to pose any danger to their rule, since his mother had predeceased his father and his uncle Ja'far was also against him, continued their misrule of sins, corruption and oppression for a few more centuries, until another bloodthirsty tyrant, the Mongol Marauder Hulaku Khan, thrust the so-called caliph into several sacks and trampled him under the hooves of horses.

As for the boy-Imam, God Almighty – Who had given wisdom to Yayha (John the Baptist) while still a mere child and entrusted prophethood and the scripture to the infant Jesus with the miraculous power to speak from the cradle when the ever rebellious Israelis tried to slander his virgin mother, Mary – ensured that Imam Mahdi (AS) grows into youth and manhood during the Minor Occultation (*Ghaybat as-Sughra*) before start of the lengthy period of the Major Occultation (*Ghaybat al-Kubra*), guiding the faithful all the time, like the resplendent sun on cloudy days.

Over a century before the birth of Imam Mahdi (AS), Imam Ja'far as-Sadeq (AS), was expounding to a group of faithful the hadith *"the earth has not been devoid of a representative of God, since God created Adam; a representative that was either visible and well-known or invisible and concealed. (Likewise) The earth will not remain devoid of such a representative of God till the occurrence of the Hour (Doomsday), for if it were to remain without God's representative, then God would not be worshipped!"*

A person asked: So how does mankind benefit from an invisible and hidden representative?

The 6th Imam replied: *"Just as they benefit from the sun when the clouds hide it!"* For the past 1178 lunar years, the devotees of the Ahl al-Bayt have continued to benefit from the presence of the Imam of the Age, while eagerly awaiting his reappearance for materialization of God's promise to establish the global government of peace, prosperity and justice.

So firm has been their faith that they have not just weathered the storms of seditions generated by the enemies of Islam and humanity, such as the modern day Wahhabis and Takfiris, but have spread the liberating ideology of God's promise to make the weak inheritors of the earth when the promised Redeemer of mankind reappears – as is evident by the tens of millions of Nigerians who have become devout followers of the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt with readiness to face oppression and martyrdom. No wonder, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) said to his divinely-designated vicegerent:

"O Ali, know that the strangest of the people of faith and the greatest of them in certainty are those people who will be in end times. They will not meet the Prophet. And their Imam will be hidden from them. But they will believe (only) due to black upon white."

Imam Ja'far as-Sadeq (AS) explaining this hadith has said:

"The 'black upon white' means the writings on paper. It means that these people will believe in the Qur'an and the sunnah as recorded in the books, even though they may not see their Imam."

The 6th Imam has also said:

"When the Qa'em shall arise, he will rule with justice, the tyrants of his time shall fear him, the righteous will be safe, the earth shall reveal its treasures, all the truth-seekers will seek his company and no follower of any religion would."

North Korea Tests 'Ultramodern Tactical Weapon'



This undated picture released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency on Nov. 16, 2018 shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervising a "newly developed ultramodern tactical weapon" test at an undisclosed location.

SEOUL (Dispatches) -- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has overseen the testing of a "newly developed ultramodern tactical weapon", Pyongyang's state media reported Friday, a move seen by analysts as a political message to the U.S.

It marked the first official report

of a weapons test by North Korea since it began a delicate diplomatic process with Washington over its nuclear and missile program.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency, quoting an unidentified government source, said the weapon could be a long-range cannon that

the North has been developing for many years.

"Kim Jong Un... visited the test ground of the Academy of Defense Science and supervised a newly developed ultramodern tactical weapon test," said the official Korean Central News Agency.

It said the test was successful but did not specify the type of device involved.

Pyongyang's suspension of testing for atomic weapons and ballistic missiles has been key to this year's rapid diplomatic developments and North Korea-U.S. negotiations.

President Donald Trump and Kim met at a historic summit in Singapore in June, where they signed a vaguely worded document on denuclearization of the peninsula.

Progress since Singapore has stalled as Washington and Pyongyang spar over the document's meaning. A return to testing would cast grave doubts over the future of the process.

There was no immediate indication any such test had been detected by the South.

"We don't see it as a military provocation of any significance", a defense ministry official told journalists without saying what the device was.

Shin Beom-chul, an analyst at the Asan Institute of Policy Studies, said the test was likely aimed at sending "a political message" to Washington about the current stalemate.

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Economic War on Iran Doomed to Failure

By: Richard Dalton*

The U.S. has declared economic war on Iran: after having pulled out of the UN Security Council-endorsed nuclear deal in May, the Trump administration is now unilaterally combating the right of the rest of the world to engage in legal trade with the Islamic Republic.

This policy is based on the claim that Iran is a major security threat to the American people. But that is transparently exaggerated. And the statement by Mike Pompeo that sanctions will be used to ensure Iran "behaves like a normal country" is unintentionally ironic.

The U.S. is not a "normal" country. Complicity in a horrifying aggression against Yemen and supporting the extension of Israeli colonization of Palestine are not acts of normality. The truth is that all who intervene in the Middle East's regional struggles, including Iran, are doing what states always have done – trying to influence outcomes in the direction of their real or perceived interests.

Nevertheless, the U.S. has determined that its stance towards Iran should be a belligerent one. Will that reap any strategic rewards?

As UK ambassador to Tehran in 2005, I received the country's rejection of the first attempt by the West to strike a nuclear deal, alongside my French and German colleagues. Analysts often go wrong because we think that the fights to come will be like the fights of our day, but this is what I believe may happen.

In my view, Iran will remain basically stable despite the surge in inflation and tough recession that the IMF says are coming down the line and Iran's leaders will nevertheless try to weather the storm.

Ayatollah Khamenei is uncompromising. Indeed, all of Iran's leaders are resolute. The economic damage and popular suffering over the next two years is unlikely to be sufficient to make the government move. And, crucially, there is no internationally agreed campaign against Iran this time. The EU, for example, has designed a work-around to achieve some financial flows, though the Iranians are not relying on this ever working.

For his part, Donald Trump has indicated he wants a North Korea-type (Continued on Page 7)

With U.S. Collusion, Saudis Shield Crown Prince

LONDON (Dispatches) -- Saudi Arabia says it will pursue the death penalty for five suspects charged with ordering and carrying out the killing of the Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi, in the latest effort to distance the country's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, from the grisly murder.

The Saudi public prosecutor claimed Saudi agents, including the head of forensics at the national intelligence service and members of Prince Muhammad's security detail, had orders to abduct Khashoggi but decided to kill him when he resisted.

The claim had been contradicted by an earlier Saudi finding that the murder was premeditated.

Prince Muhammad was not implicated in the murder, a spokesman for the prosecutor said.

An intelligence officer was responsible for ordering the murder, the public prosecutor's office said, and Khashoggi was given a lethal injection after a struggle with the extradition team inside the consulate.

Turkey has been formally asked to hand over audio tapes that allegedly capture the journalist's death, he added.

Hours later, the U.S. Treasury said it was imposing sanctions

against 17 alleged conspirators, in an announcement that appeared timed to support the Saudi version of events. The Trump administration has attempted to shield Prince Muhammad from blame, and sponsored the theory that "rogue actors" had carried out the plot without his knowledge.

The announcements follow growing international outcry over the killing of Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist last seen entering the consulate on 2 October to obtain paperwork for his marriage.

Almost seven weeks later, who ordered the exiled journalist's death remains central to the scandal. Turkey believes approval was given by Prince Muhammad himself, and has continued its efforts to isolate the designated heir to the throne through a damning drip-feed of evidence that has placed the conspiracy at the doors of the royal court.

On Thursday Turkey's foreign minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, described the Saudi statement as insufficient and insisted the killing had been premeditated. "The necessary equipment and people were previously brought in to kill and later dismember him," he said.

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