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In the Name of the Most High

Viewpoint

Iraq, Iran Further Cement Fraternal Ties to US Detriment

By: S. Nawabzadeh

We had said earlier – on several occasions – in the columns of this newspaper that in West Asia there are no countries as close to each other in terms of a shared history geography, religion, politics, culture, economy, trade exchanges, ecology, types of food, etc., as Iran and Iraq.

This commonality, or in other words friendship and fraternity, was emphasized yet once again on Saturday in Tehran by Iraqi president, Barham Salih, an ethnic Kurd familiar with both the Arabic and Persian languages, during his meeting with his Iranian host, Hojjat al-Islam Dr. Hassan Rouhani – and reciprocated by Iranian officials.

The newly elected Head of State of the Land of the Two Rivers also made it quite clear that Iraq is looking forward to further expansion of neighbourly ties with Iran and on no account will allow any enemies or outside forces to try to disrupt relations with the Islamic Republic, to whom the Iraqi people feel highly indebted for its timely help.

Such stating of the basic facts regarding Iran's help are not limited to the recent routing by Iraq's popular forces of the Saudi-created and US-supported takfiri terrorists who had planned to seize the whole country, but are also indicative of the assistance that the Islamic Republic, as part of its principled foreign policy for peace and stability in the region, has continued to provide to its brethren in Iraq (Arabs, Kurds, Shi'as, Sunnis, and Christians) since the reign of terror of Saddam of the repressive Ba'th minority regime and throughout the American occupation.

Salih's realistic remarks may have maddened Trump and his team of thugs in Washington who are trying in vain to meddle in Iraq in a bid to distance it from Iran. His statement, coupled with the wise words of senior Iranian officials, especially the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, have certainly struck the seditious Saudis like a slap in the face, but there is nothing the region's unrepresentative tyrannical regimes and their American masters can do.

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who warmly received Barham Salih and gave him brotherly advice on how to stand firm like a mountain in the face of enemy plots and attempts to meddle, did not mince words when he said: "The way to overcome problems and frustrate enemy plots is to preserve national unity in Iraq, properly recognize friends from foes, stand up to the brazen enemy, rely on youths and maintain and strengthen links with the (religious) authorities."

Thanking President Salih for Iraq's hospitality towards Iranian pilgrims during the recent commemoration of the Arba'een anniversary in holy Karbala marking the traditional 40th day of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (AS) – grandson and 3rd Infallible Heir of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) – he said in a clear tone: "certain ill-wishing regimes now seek to deprive Iraqis of the sweet taste of their great achievement of gaining independence as part of their plot to prevent restoration of peace in Iraq and the entire region."

This means that in contrast to the Arab world's collective submission to Israel, American pressures against Iraq will never succeed including the abortive attempt to disband the popular mobilization units (PMU – Hashd ash-Sha'bi).

Iraq is part of the Solid Chain of Resistance linking Iran to Syria and Lebanon, and Tehran will take every necessary step to further strengthen ties with Baghdad, including the connecting of the railway networks of the two countries in order to facilitate trade and travel.

The present volume of annual trade exchanges between Iran and Iraq stand at 12 billion dollars, and as President Rouhani told his smiling counterpart during talks, efforts are being made to increase this amount to at least 20 billion dollars yearly.

In view of these undeniable facts, including the miserable failure of the US plot of the 1980s to create bad blood between the brotherly peoples of the two countries through Saddam's 8-year war, it is but natural for the Iraqis – both Arabs and Kurds, whether Shi'a or Sunni – to stand beside their Iranian brethren, fully knowing that in addition to their overseas enemy, the US, their chief regional enemy is the Wahhabi cult of the spurious entity called Saudi Arabia, which used to fund to the tune of tens of billions of dollars, the genocide of Shi'a Arab Muslims and the ethnic Kurds by the Ba'thist regime.

It should be noted that the Iraqi people are too mature to be swayed either by Washington's propaganda tirade to endorse the illegal sanctions against Iran, or the bribes of Riyadh in building a football stadium and a power plant in Basra, as well as the doling out of a few million dollars of the stolen oil wealth of the deprived people of Qatif, to some suspicious elements.

Iraq and the Iraqi people, along with their Iranian brethren, fully know that Trump's state terrorism of economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic is only a passing phase in the glorious history of the people of the region, while the future appears brilliantly bright with the fast approaching end of the American client regimes in the region, such as the Aal-e Saud, the Aal-e Khalifa, the Aal-e Nahyan and Aal-e Sayhoun (Zionists).

MPs to Discuss Halting Additional Protocol



A general view of Iran's parliament in session.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – A senior lawmaker said Saturday the parliament plans to discuss withdrawal from the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and resuming heavy water production.

The measure is Iran's response to U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement with Tehran and his decision to reimpose all sanctions lifted under the deal on the Islamic Republic, MP Mojtaba Zonnour told Tasnim news agency.

"When Donald Trump announced that he was going to walk away from the JCPOA, a number of MPs and I drafted a plan to counter this move by the U.S. president, and presented it to the presiding board of the parliament

with 86 signatures," he said.

The motion is still on the agenda and will be raised at an open session of the parliament, the lawmaker said.

According to the motion, if the Europeans fail to provide the necessary guarantees after the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, the Iranian administration should stop voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, he added.

Zonnour said the Iranian government is also obliged to continue uranium enrichment and heavy water production as required and consider leaving the NPT whenever needed.

A report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said on Monday that Iran has con-

tinued to implement all its commitments under the nuclear deal despite the U.S. sanctions.

Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran said last October that the Islamic Republic would remain committed to its obligations under the Additional Protocol as long as the nuclear deal was respected.

Iran in 2006 ended voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty that allowed for short notice IAEA inspections of its nuclear sites, after being referred to the UN Security Council.

The country resumed implementing the protocol under the nuclear agreement with the West as well as China and Russia.

Iranian Troops Ready for Anti-Terror Op in Pakistan

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- The Iranian Interior Ministry announced on Saturday that the country's security forces are ready for anti-terror operations on the Pakistani territory.

To guarantee the security of common borders, Tehran is prepared for counter-terrorism operations on Pakistani land under the supervision of Pakistani forces, Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said.

The minister made the remarks in response to the abduction of 12 Iranian border guards by a Pakistan-based terrorist group in October.

Iran has refrained from any operation against the terrorists on the other side of its border "because we wanted to respect Pakistan's sovereignty," he said.

Rahmani Fazli said that Iran expected the Pakistani government to enhance security measures along the common borders.

Twelve Iranian border guards were kidnapped by Jaish al-Adl terrorists in Mirjaveh in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province and were taken to Pakistan on October 16.

On Thursday, five of the abducted border guards were freed in Pakistan.

"As the interior minister and the person responsible for the country's internal security, I announce that we are ready to conduct operations in areas where terrorists are present in Pakistan, under the Pakistani side's supervision and with their permission," Rahmani Fazli said on Saturday.

Envoy Urges UN to Take Stance Against U.S. Violations

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) -- Gholam-Ali Khoshroo, Iran's outgoing ambassador to the United Nations, has called on the world body to take an official stance against what he described as America's evasion of the international law.

Khoshroo made the call in a meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, urging Guterres to take an adequate position toward Washington's move to restore sanctions against Iran, IRNA reported.

Apart from the sanctions, the Iranian envoy said the UN needed to take action against America's move to unilaterally withdraw from its 2015 nuclear deal with Iran even though it had been approved by the

UN Security Council.

Khoshroo called it unprecedented in the world body's history that a permanent member of the UN Security Council - like the U.S. - would seek to punish other UN members - like Iran - for remaining committed to a Security Council resolution.

He further denounced U.S. efforts to threaten other nations with "secondary sanctions" if they breached the sanctions against Iran.

"The international community should stand up to these arbitrary and extra-judicial actions," Khoshroo was quoted as saying.

He also described the Saudi-

led attacks on Yemen as a "profound humanitarian catastrophe," and called for efforts to help end the war and begin the process of political reconciliation among the concerned parties.

Guterres, for his part, emphasized the need for "multilateralism" in the face of international issues, and hoped that the war on Yemen come to an end and the resulting humanitarian catastrophe be stemmed soon.

The meeting was concluded by the outgoing Iranian envoy's presenting the UN chief with a hand-woven tapestry featuring the latter's portrait to be displayed at the world body's permanent exhibition.

The Holy Qur'an



Will ye not fight people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Messenger, and took the aggressive by being the first (to assault) you? Do ye fear them? Nay, it is Allah Whom ye should more justly fear, if ye believe!
The Holy Qur'an (9:13)

PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	11:49
Evening (Maghreb)	17:15
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:16
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	06:43

Araqchi: Iran Has Own Mechanisms in Case

MADRID (Dispatches) -- A senior official said Saturday Iran has not lost hope in Europe yet about contingency plans to bypass U.S. sanctions on Tehran but it has devised its own mechanisms for any possible scenario.

Deputy Foreign Minister for Abbas Araqchi told IRNA here that Tehran had devised all necessary preparations in different sectors and would carry out required measures in due time.

Several working groups are studying all ideas and ways to counter the U.S. sanctions, he said without elaboration.

The senior diplomat said the Americans are threatening Europe with sanctions if it cooperates with Iran in countering the U.S. sanctions.

"This is against the sovereignty of European countries and I think the Europeans must decide whether they intend to safeguard their sovereignty and credibility or not," Araqchi said.

Iran has said the remaining signatories of the 2015 nuclear agreement have to work to offset the negative impacts of the U.S. withdrawal if they want Tehran to stay in the deal.

Araqchi said on Friday the U.S. sanctions primarily violated Europe's sovereignty, security and credibility rather than target Iran's economy.

"We are waiting to see how Europe will defend its sovereignty against Washington's pressure," he said.

On Tuesday, Araqchi told director general for political affairs at the Dutch foreign ministry Andre Haspels that a possible collapse of the nuclear agreement would certainly add to political complications in the Middle East.