

MANAMA (Dispatches) -- Bahrain's opposition party, the Islamic Action Society, on Monday called on voters to sign up to a popular petition and boycott the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Deputy Secretary-General of the party Sheikh Abdullah Saleh demanded the formation of a constituent assembly in a bid to draw up a national constitution that stems from the will of the people and would strive to fulfill their ambitions. The statement then urged Bahraini people to "sign a popular petition as it is a clear form of resistance in the face of the Khalifah regime's dictatorship and their foreign masters."

MOSCOW (Dispatches) -- Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov on Monday rejected a new U.S. claims that Iran is not abiding by the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention, stressing that Tehran has been "fully" compliant with its commitments under the treaty. "We are quite confident that Iran is fully and without any deviation abiding by the Chemical Weapons Convention as it is honoring its commitments under the JCPOA," Ryabkov told reporters. The new allegation raised by Washington is aimed at increasing political pressure on Tehran, he stressed.

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Islamic Unity, the Need of the Hour

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

The Ummah is passing through one of the crucial phases of its history. Islamic unity is the crying need of the hour, yet those styling themselves Muslim leaders and claiming to be custodians of Islam's holiest shrines, are not just the promoters of sectarian terrorism of the worst ever kind, but shamelessly worshipping at the altar of the ringleaders of Islamophobia. Today, while Muslims worldwide are making sincere efforts to foster unity, the enemies of the Ummah, such as the US and the Zionist entity, have not stayed silent and are busy trying to sow seeds of disunity, as is evident by their hold over the Arab reactionary regimes to create divisions. We are, however, confident they will not succeed in their nefarious efforts, and Islamic unity will prevail all over the world, thanks to the foresight of the Father of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA), in focusing on the significance of the birth anniversary of the Seal of Messengers, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), to knit the ranks of the Ummah. His farsighted move in bridging the slight gap between the two dates of the month of Rabi al-Awwal which are regarded as the birth anniversary of the "Mercy unto the creation" (holy Qur'an 21:107) was a dynamic move to bring on a single platform Muslims of all denominations, who are unanimous in their belief in the indivisible unity (monotheism) of the One and Only God, face the holy Ka'ba as the focal point for the five-times-a-day ritual prayers, adhere to the one single holy Qur'an as the Revealed Word of God (unlike Jews, Christians, and others, whose sects have differing versions of their sacred texts), fast in the same month of Ramadhan, perform Hajj on the same days of the month of Zi'l-Hijjah, believe in the Day of Resurrection, and before that of the advent of the Mahdi from the progeny of the Prophet to establish the global government of peace, prosperity and justice. Rabi al-Awwal 12 is considered to be that blessed date by Sunni Muslims on the basis of the narrations of the Prophet's companions, who had no acquaintance with him before his formal declaration of his universal mission of Islam at the age of 40. Shi'a Muslims, however, attach more importance to accounts of the Prophet's birth from the Prophet's family and regard 17th Rabi al-Awwal as the date of birth of the Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger. Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iran has spared no efforts in fostering Islamic Unity through promoting practical interaction among scholars of the different schools of jurisprudence, holding joint congregational prayers, and forbidding factors that create disunity. This is the reason Global Arrogance and its clients in the Muslim World are insipid with rage at Islamic Iran, to the extent the policies and names of Imam Khomeini and his worthy successor, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, are abhorred by these forces of darkness. Their efforts, however, are bound to fail in view of the glorious personality of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), whose genuine legacy the Islamic Republic of Iran endeavours to spread and regarding whom God Almighty says in ayah 21 of Surah Ahzaab: "In the Prophet of Allah there is certainly for you a good exemplar, for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah greatly." Indeed, the Prophet removed all ethnic, lingual, colour and class barriers, saying there is no difference between a Qurayshite nobleman and a black African slave. He appointed Bilal the Abyssinian as the Muezzin or official caller to the daily prayers, even though this non-Arab Muslim couldn't correctly pronounce certain Arabic alphabets. If the Roman refugee Suhayb had the honour of becoming his companion, he hailed the Iranian Salman as "Minna Ahl al-Bayt" (from us the people of the house) - an honour no Arab companion ever achieved. He next initiated bonds of brotherhood amongst 740 of his close companions, pairing together every two of them on the basis of their characteristics, sharing of habits (whether good or bad), and above all their natural inclinations and friendship towards each other. For instance, Salman Farsi and Abu Zar Ghffari were paired as brothers, while another pair was Meqdad ibn Aswad and Ammar ibn Yasser - because of their lofty degrees of faith and firm adherence to the path of truth which would become manifest both during his lifetime and after him when these four would stand firmly beside his divinely-decreed vicegerent. Of the others paired together were Zubair and Talha; Abu Bakr and Omar ibn Khattab; and Osman ibn Affan and Abdur-Rahman ibn Auf, etc. The brotherhood accord was so firm and binding that when one such pair was martyred in a battle the infidels had imposed upon Muslims, he instructed the two to be buried in a single grave. This pairing was on the commandment of God, and after it was over, he grasped the hand of his dear ward and cousin, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS), in his own hands and declared him his brother in this world and in the hereafter. Then years later, before his departure from the mortal world, after completion of his 23-year mission on earth, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) spelt the supreme formula for a monolithic Muslim ummah by saying: "I am leaving among you the two weighty things; the Book of God (Qur'an) and my progeny the Ahl al-Bayt. Hold fast to them and you will never go astray for the two will never part with each other even when they return to me at the Pool (of Kowsar on Judgement Day)." What a wonderful legacy did the Prophet leave behind! It is now for us to do some real soul-searching and find out whether we have remained loyal to the instructions of our Prophet; and if not, what has made us drift away from either the holy Qur'an or from the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt.

Rouhani: U.S. Psychological War Doomed to Failure



President Rouhani addresses people at a sports stadium in Iran's northwestern city of Khoy, Nov. 19, 2018.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- **Iran will continue to export oil despite U.S. sanctions, which are part of a psychological war doomed to failure, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday.** By reimposing sanctions on OPEC's third biggest crude producer, Washington wants to force Tehran to drop its ballistic missile programs, further curb its nuclear work and limit its support for resistance movements. "We will not yield to this pressure, which is part of the psychological war launched against Iran," Rouhani said in a speech in the city of Khoy, broadcast live on state television. "They have failed to stop our oil exports. We will keep exporting it ... Your regional policies have failed and you blame Iran for that failure from Afghanistan to Yemen and Syria," he added, to chants of "Death to America!". Rouhani said Washington lacked the necessary international support for its sanctions, and noted that it had granted temporary waivers to eight major buyers of Iranian oil. "America is isolated now. Iran is supported by many countries. Except for the Zionist regime and some countries in the region, no other country backs America's pressure on Iran," he said. The European Union, France, Germany, Britain, Russia and China, participants with the finding ways to work around U.S. sanctions. "If Europe thinks that the JCPOA is important for its sovereignty, security and credibility, it must be ready to pay for it," Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi told ISNA. "The price of losing the JCPOA is greater for Europe than the U.S.," he added. Zarif said Iran will not only survive newly reimposed U.S. sanctions but it will thrive. The Trump administration announced sanctions this month covering banking, oil exports and shipping against Iran. Speaking after meeting Hunt, the Iranian foreign minister said: "We are used to pressure and we are used to resisting pressure. Sanctions always hurt and they hurt ordinary people, but sanctions seldom change policy, and that has been the problem with U.S. sanctions all the time. They do not take people back to the negotiating table. In fact, they (Continued on Page 7)

United States in the 2015 deal that lifted sanctions on Iran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, have been trying to find ways to circumvent the U.S. limitations. In particular, the EU has been trying to establish a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for non-dollar trade with Iran. But this has not stopped foreign businesses ranging from oil companies and trading houses to firms leaving Iran for fear of incurring U.S. sanctions. Iran has threatened to exit the deal if its economic benefits are not preserved, but Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi told a news conference that it remained "hopeful that the Europeans can save the deal". The SPV was conceived as a clearing house that could be used to help match Iranian oil and gas exports against purchases of EU goods, circumventing the U.S. sanctions, which are based on the global use of the dollar for oil trade. The EU wanted to have the SPV set up by this month, but no country has offered to host it, six diplomats told Reuters last week. "We expect EU to implement the SPV as soon as possible," Qasemi said. "Iran adheres to its commitments as long as other signatories honor theirs."

Russia Deploys 5th Generation Stealth Su-57 to Syria

MOSCOW/DAMASCUS (Dispatches) -- The Russian Defense Ministry has released a video showing unique footage of the Su-57 5th-generation fighter jet in its first combat operation in Syria. According to a news release put out by the Russian Defense Ministry, the sorties of modern Su-57 5th-generation fighter jets were carried out in order to prove announced possibilities of the newest aircraft in a real combat environment. "During the flights, pilots checked aircraft performances, smart data management system, operation of on-board systems, including armament at high temperatures, complicated underlying surface and other factors," said in a statement. A Russian Air Force official confirmed that the Su-57, in its first combat operation, was used over Syria during operations against Daesh and other militants. Crews of newest Russian-made Su-57 5th-generation fighter jet made over 10 sorties in Syria. "Su-57 is the Russian advanced air complex of the fifth generation designed for elimination of all types of air, ground and maritime targets. It high maneuverability, supersonic capabilities as well as modern on-board systems and stealth capability provides high efficiency and air superiority," the statement said. In August, the Russian Aerospace Forces Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Viktor Bondarev stated that the Russian T-50 5th-generation fighter had received the index of Su-57. In Syria, At least 25 militants were killed in an "unprecedented" infighting between pro-Turkey groups over influence in Syria's northern town of Afrin, a pro-opposition monitoring group said. The Turkish army and the so-called Free Syrian Army units which are backed by Ankara established full control over Afrin in March after more than two months of battles with U.S.-backed militants. (Continued on Page 7)