

In the Name of the Most High Viewpoint

The Afghan Imbrolio

By: Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

US-occupied Afghanistan has again entered an uncertain and embarrassing phase with the two leading presidential candidates declaring themselves winners.

According to the long delayed results of the disputed elections held last September, the incumbent Ashraf Ghani is said to be the winner by the narrowest margin, securing less than 2.5 percent of the nation's votes, since only 1,823,948 people turned out at the ballot boxes, accounting for a mere 5% of Afghanistan's estimated population of 40 million.

Election commission officials after announcing that Ghani had received 50.64% of the votes cast, while Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah had secured 39.53%, tried to flee the country but were reportedly barred from leaving on the orders of the latter who accused them of fraud, saying he was the actual winner.

Ghani, who holds US citizenship, along with his Lebanese Christian wife and a son and daughter living in the United States, was immediately congratulated by the American ambassador to Kabul, Molly Phee, who blatantly meddled in Afghan internal affairs by endorsing the results of the disputed elections, saying "more than 50 percent of the vote precludes any potential runoffs."

Soon, however, Dr. Abdullah appeared in a televised address surrounded by his own supporters, saying: "I ask those who believe in democracy, in a healthy future for this country, and in the citizens' rights to stand up to fraud, to not accept this fraudulent result."

He added that over a hundred thousand votes cast for his chief rival were bogus, and said: "We are the winners based on clean votes, and we declare our victory. We will form the inclusive government."

It means, Abdullah who was also robbed of victory in the 2014 elections by his present rival, whom the American occupiers gifted the presidency and then created for the former the prime-minister-like post of Chief Executive, which he still holds, seems to be determined this time to seriously stake his claim of being the winner by forming a rival cabinet made up of the various ethnic, political, and religious groups of Afghanistan.

This would be a serious challenge to not only Ghani but the entire country reeling under US occupation, wracked by the Taliban insurgency, plagued by the poppy cultivators, and terrorized by the American supported Daesh takfiris.

Meanwhile, the Taliban which is engaged in some sort of so-called peace talks with the US, strongly reacted to the re-election of Ashraf Ghani as the President of Afghanistan, calling the election process as "fake and unlawful".

Its statement said: "Holding elections and announcing oneself a president under occupation shall never remedy the problems of our Muslim Afghan nation just as it has failed to do so over the past nineteen years."

It is obvious that a divided dispensation with various power centres in Kabul would not only jeopardize any efforts for a political settlement, but would make the life of the people miserable.

With its legitimacy under question, the Ashraf Ghani government will fail to administer the country, resulting in chaos and more opportunities for the US occupiers to fish in troubled waters.

Afghanistan which has not seen any peace since the communist coup that killed President Daud Khan in April 1978 and was occupied by the Soviet Union in December 1979, recently on February 15 marked the 31st anniversary of the withdrawal of the Red Army by the courageous decision of Mikhail Gorbachev.

The Americans who are in occupation of Afghanistan since October 2001 are a bunch of cowardly killers, while their president Donald Trump is a dastardly terrorist, who lacks the guts to emulate Gorbachev and withdraw his forces.

This means, unless the various Afghan factions end their dispute and join each other for the common national cause by overcoming their trivial differences, neither they will be able to kick out the American occupiers nor restore peace and stability to their country.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic of Iran as a friendly and fraternal neighbour, sharing religion, history, culture, and language, and hosting millions of Afghans as refugees for the past four decades, is ready to help Afghanistan find solution to its problems and end the American occupation.

Iran Not to Hand Over Black Box to Foreign Sides



An image taken from a video shows a crate containing the two black boxes recovered from the Ukrainian airliner in Tehran.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- The black box of a Ukrainian passenger plane accidentally shot down over Iran last month is damaged but Iran will not hand it over to another country despite pressure for access, top Iranian ministers said on Wednesday.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said last week he had "impressed upon" Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif that a complete and independent investigation into the shooting down of the airliner had to be carried out.

"We have a right to read the black box ourselves. We have a right to be present at any examination of the black box," Zarif said.

"If we are supposed to give the black box to others for them to

read it in our place then this is something we will definitely not do," he said.

Defense Minister Amir Hatami said the flight data recording box had "sustained noticeable damage and the defense industry has been requested to help in reconstructing (it)."

"The reconstruction of the black box is supposed to take place first and then the reading," Hatami said.

All 176 passengers aboard the plane were killed when air defense units fired missiles at the plane after mistaking it for a hostile target.

Iran is in discussions with other countries, particularly Ukraine, about the investigation, Foreign Minister Zarif said.

Under international aviation

rules, Iran had the right to lead the investigation into the downing of the airliner, Zarif said earlier this month. But he said Iran needed software, cables and additional expertise from the U.S. or other Western countries to be able to decipher the information in the black box.

"We have asked for help, why haven't the United States helped us? This is a humanitarian issue. Why haven't they given us the software? Why haven't they given us the expertise?" Zarif said.

"There are still a lot of unknowns. That's why we want more than anybody else to know what is in the black box, to know what actually happened." For the moment, "it's just sitting there," Zarif said of the black box.

Officials Confirm Two Cases of Coronavirus in Qom

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranian authorities confirmed on Wednesday two cases of the new coronavirus, the first in the country, the ISNA news agency reported.

The report did not elaborate on the nationality of the two people infected. ISNA quoted an official in the country's health ministry, Kiyanoush Jahanpour, as saying that "since last two days, some suspected cases of the new coronavirus were found."

Jahanpour did not say how many people were suspected of having the virus, which causes the illness that the World Health Organization recently named COVID-19, referring to its origin late last year and the coronavirus that causes it.

He said the two confirmed cases were detected in the central province of Qom.

Deputy Health Minister Qassem Janbabaie said complementary tests on the two patients were underway and final results would come after careful delibera-

tions.

He said a hospital in Qom had been dedicated to receive people suspected of having contracted the virus. The official added that a second hospital in the city was on high alert to respond to any emergency that might arise.

Janbabaie said the two men, now isolated, were living in two separate neighborhoods of Qom, a city of close to one million people, adding that they had never been out of the province let alone to any foreign country.

"How they contracted coronavirus is not clear and the issue is being investigated," said the official in an interview with the IRNA news agency.

Jahanpour said tests on the two men had been carried out by special teams sent from Tehran after reports emerged of a growing number of influenza cases in the city.

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Center Unveils New Version of Humanoid Robot Surena

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Researchers at the University of Tehran's Center for Advanced Systems and Technologies (CAST) have unveiled the fourth version of their humanoid robot Surena. This version has been in the works for four years, and the original version was unveiled over 10 years ago. A new video shows what it's capable of.

The robot is able to balance on one foot, grab a bottle of water, write its name, drill through a wall and more. It even grabs a selfie with onlookers.

Dr. Aghil Yousefi-Koma, a professor of mechanical engineering, led the group that worked on this robot. Yousefi-Koma told IEEE Spectrum what he was hoping

to do with this project.

"Improving the robot's interaction with the environment was one of the main goals of the Surena IV project," he said. Though it might not seem like a huge deal, building a robot that has the kind of dexterity Surena now has is no easy feat. Researchers are constantly working on trying to perfect robotic hands that are capable of what the human hand is capable of. It would seem Surena is getting closer to that point.

Surena IV was unveiled at the end of last year, but the video of the unveiling just came out. Surena can balance better than before, interact with more objects and is generally getting closer to the point of being

able to most things the average person could do.

Robotics is developing in different ways and in different directions. Boston Dynamics is working on the most flashy robots in terms of what they can do, while robots like Sophia are meant to test how far we can take artificial intelligence and make robots look more like us. Surena is more in the world of Honda's Asimo. These robots show how we can develop fine motor skills.

From a design perspective, Surena stands somewhere in between Sophia and Asimo. Like Asimo, there's a clear influence from the 1951 sci-fi classic The Day The Earth Stood Still, where a mysterious

robot named Gort terrifies Earth's armies with his indestructible body and sleek, seamless design. Surena offers a hint of a face, and swirling lines that call to mind the jazzy 1980s squiggles known as Memphis design. Most notably, the portal on Surena's forehead has a distinctly alien feel to it, possibly signaling to human bystanders that the robot will never fully replace them.

Yousefi-Koma told IEEE Spectrum that he sees Surena as a "symbol of technology advancement in the direction of peace and humanity." That's good to hear considering people like Elon Musk keep warning us that A.I. is going to become too advanced and destroy humanity.

Suspect in Petrochem Corruption Flees to UAE: Report

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- One of the primary suspects involved in a massive financial corruption case in Iran's petrochemical sector has fled the country, reports said on Wednesday.

"Former executive director of the Iranian Petrochemical Commercial Company (IPCC), Mehdi Sharifi Niknafs, has fled to the United Arab Emirates (UAE)," the Young Journalists Club (YJC) disclosed.

Earlier this month, the Islamic Republic Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, had appointed Sharifi Niknafs as a member of the board of directors of Esteghlal soccer club.

Nevertheless, immediately after the YJC disclosure the ministry denied Sharifi Niknafs' appointment.

On March 13, 2019, the National Iranian Petrochemical Industries Company (NIPIC) announced that IPCC "has failed to return 500 million euros of debt to NIPIC since 2013."

The statement also asserted that managers of IPCC paid the government for oil exports in local currency instead of euros, pocketing illegal profits in the process. The suspects allegedly kept the foreign currency gained from exports in their

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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)	12:18
Evening (Maghreb)	18:09
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:23
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	06:46