

VIENNA (Dispatches) -- The Iranian economy is functioning normally despite the decrease in oil export due to Washington's sanctions, Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said here on Wednesday.

"Everything is normal. Our economy is feeling good. For the first time in our modern history, it continues development without using oil. And this is thanks to the U.S. sanctions," Araqchi told reporters.



SANAA (Dispatches) -- Yemeni forces on Wednesday shot down a Saudi drone flying over a mountainous region in the kingdom's southwestern border region of Najran, a military source said.

The drone was on a reconnaissance mission over Al-Sawh area, 844 kilometers south of the capital Riyadh, when it was hit by a Yemeni surface-to-air missile on Wednesday evening.

Viewpoint

Coronavirus Conquered by Iran Despite American Propaganda

Iranian-Afghan Production Goes to Czech Republic



Iran, Serbia Sign MoU on Sports Cooperation



Russia: White Helmets Funded by Western Spy Agencies



In Memory of the Magnanimous Martyr

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

*"There is no armour against the fate:
"Death lays its icy hands on kings.
"Sceptre and crown must tumble down,
"And in the earth be equally made,
"To the labourer's scythe and spade,
"No fortress on the mountain peak,
"Could save the kings from the jaws of death
"Their pomp and power proved too weak,
"The cold earth asks them in contempt:
"Wither is thy robe, crown, and throne?!"*

These verses which are a clear pointer to the perfidious place in the bowels of the earth for all puffed-up potentates, whether kings, emperors, presidents, prime ministers, and caliphs, were not composed by a professional poet.

This was in fact an extempore, on the spot composition, by an Infallible Heir of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), when pressed by a dissolute ruler of a vast empire stretching from Central Asia to North Africa, to recite some verses at his drinking party in Samarra, Iraq.

The Man of God, who was forcibly brought to such a depraved gathering, tried to excuse himself, but the tyrant who styled himself as 'caliph' - although legally and religiously he was not - was intent upon humiliating the person whom he regarded as the gravest danger to his un-Islamic rule.

Imam Ali al-Hadi (AS), the 10th divinely-designated successor of the Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger to all mankind, felt he had no choice, especially since the imposter, Mutawakkil al-Abbasi, was destroying the very principles of Islam and the commandments of God, through his wanton life and misrule. Promptly he expressed in the most eloquent Arabic the above-mentioned verses that stunned the whole debased assembly and made the usurper tremble at the thought of the fate awaiting him.

Mutawakkil, about whom the Commander of the Faithful, the Prophet's Vicegerent, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS), had prophesied two centuries earlier as the **"most infidel of rulers"** amongst the Abbasid usurpers, dismissed the gathering and respectively permitted Imam Hadi (AS), to leave.

The so-called caliph, who had forced the Imam to leave Medina and come to Samarra, so as to be under virtual house arrest under the watchful eyes of his guards, did not feel any remorse. Neither he repented of his immoral ways and crimes against humanity, nor did he ever think of serving Islam and Muslims. The satanic caliph, who in 236 AH had blasphemously destroyed the holy shrine of the Prophet's grandson, Imam Husain (AS), in Karbala, and forbidden pilgrimage, had more devilish plans in his evil mind, but before he could carry them, he was killed by his own son Muntasir and dispatched to hell.

For the Tenth Imam, who is also famous as **"an-Naqi"** or the Spotlessly Pure because of his peerless personality, it was a temporary relief.

Born in Medina in 112 AH (828 AD), Imam Hadi (AS), who at the tender age of 8 years had been entrusted with Imamate or the leadership of mankind - similar to God's granting of book and wisdom to Yahya (John the Baptist) in childhood, and prophethood to Jesus (AS) while still an infant in the cradle - strove throughout his 42-year fruitful life that was cut short this day on 3rd Rajab (254 AH), for the glory of Islam and guidance of Muslims.

Despite the hardships, he trained many scholars and rationally handled contentious issues, especially by pseudo jurists, such as the Mu'tazalite ideologue Yahya ibn Aktham, who decades earlier had been defeated in a memorable debated by his father Imam Muhammad at-Taqi al-Jawad (AS).

It happened that when Ibn Aktham tried to test the God-given knowledge of Imam Hadi (AS) through a list of complicated questions, he was again astounded to receive logical answers beyond his ken.

Here is one of these irrefutable answers that confirm not just the Prophets' clear naming of their successors, but also expose the caliphate as a dubious and illegal institution that violated Prophet Muhammad's (SAWA) historical declaration of Imam Ali (AS) as his successor on the express commandment of God at Ghadir-Khom on the 18th of Zilhijja 10 AH in front of a huge gathering of 120,000 people.

Imam Hadi (AS) told Yahya ibn Aktham: "Regarding your question about God's saying in the holy Qur'an (27:40): **"The one who had knowledge of the Book said, 'I will bring it (the throne of Queen Sheba from Yemen) to you (in Palestine) in the twinkling of an eye,"** it was Asef bin Barkhiya. Prophet Solomon (AS) was not in need of the knowledge of Asef, but he wanted to introduce him as his successor before his nation that included mankind and jinn. The knowledge of Asef was only a part of Solomon's knowledge that he delivered to his successor according to God's instructions so that the nation would not conflict on the question of the Prophet's succession. (You should also recall) During the lifetime of Prophet David (AS), God had instructed Solomon to solve a problem so that people would recognize his leadership after his father..."

Alas, on this day, the 3rd of Rajab, the cowardly Mu'taz had the Tenth Imam martyred through a fatal dose of poison in Samarra. Today, there is no trace of the graves of the Abbasid caliphs, let alone their palaces, while Imam Hadi (AS) continues to rule the hearts of those endowed with Iman or true faith. His glorious shrine in Samarra stands to this day to welcome pilgrims from all over the world.

U.S. Official Cheers Virus Spread in Iran

President Rouhani Warns of Corona Conspiracy



A nurse cares for patients in a ward dedicated for people infected with the coronavirus, at Forqani Hospital in Qom, Feb. 26, 2020.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday coronavirus must not become an "enemy weapon" that prevents business in Iran.

"Corona should not be turned into a weapon of our enemies for shutting down work and production in the country," Rouhani said.

His remarks came as Iran girded for a long battle against the coronavirus that has now killed 19 people.

Rouhani said there were no immediate plans to quarantine cities, but he acknowledged it may take "one, two or three weeks" to get control of the virus in Iran.

"We must not let the United States attach a new virus to the coronavirus by stopping our social activities through tremendous fear. This is a conspiracy we see today and you see in foreign propaganda," Rouhani said at a Cabinet meeting.

"They are also suffering from coronavirus. Influenza has killed 16,000 people in the United States, but they are not speaking about themselves. Americans better take care of thousands of flu casualties in their own country," he said.

Mark Dubowitz, an advocate for tougher sanctions on Iran in the U.S. government, said Tuesday coronavirus has halted Iran's non-oil exports, achieving "what American economic sanctions could not".

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi denounced the remarks.

"It's shameful and downright inhuman to cheer for a deadly Virus to spread - and enjoy seeing people suffer for it, but at least @mdubowitz understands that the American economic sanctions were not -- and will not -- as effective as a Covid-19 Virus," he tweeted.

In another outrageous and unfounded claim, Dubowitz said that Tehran has "spread terrorism" in the Middle East and "now it's spreading the coronavirus".

The comments came as Iran tried to come to grips with the problem. In Tehran overnight, mass transit

workers disinfected buses and the capital's subway system, removing overhead handles to try to limit surfaces where the virus could rest. Signs warned Iranians not to touch surfaces in crowded areas.

In Qom that government statistics say has been hit hardest by the virus, photos published by the judiciary's Mizan news agency showed doctors wearing high-end face masks.

Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said 19 people have died from the illness, which is named COVID-19, with 139 confirmed cases in the country. The World Health Organization says the virus has infected more than 80,000 people globally, causing over 2,700 deaths, mainly in China.

Iran's Cyber Police reported that 24 people were arrested and 118 other were warned about "spreading rumors" on the internet about the virus.

"Iran has a relatively robust public health system, although it has been weakened by U.S. sanctions," analysts at the Eurasia Group said.

Rouhani said coronavirus testing kits developed by Iranian experts are undergoing final tests and will enter the mass-production stage in the near future.

All the initial tests on the package have proven to be "positive and credible," Rouhani told a cabinet session, saying the equipment would undergo final examination over the next couple of days.

"Shortly, we will be able to make hundreds of thousands and even millions of these kits, and place

(Continued on Page 7)

Secret Saudi Plan to Wreck Islamic Summit Exposed

LONDON (Middle East Eye) -- Saudi Arabia was so spooked by the prospect of major Muslim nations convening at the Kuala Lumpur Summit in December, outside the control of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) which it chairs, that it prepared a media campaign to belittle its importance, Middle East Eye can reveal.

The Saudi Ministry of Media compiled a series of messages which local media organizations and commentators were "instructed" to issue, as well as targeting newspapers, websites and television channels in countries including Pakistan, Indonesia and several Arab states.

The Malaysia summit on 19 December was attended by the leaders of Iran, Turkey and Qatar, and delegates from 56 countries.

Pakistan's Prime Minister

Imran Khan, the head of the world's second largest Muslim-majority nation, was a notable absentee, after strenuous Saudi efforts were made to stop him from attending.

In February last year the Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman announced a \$20 billion package of investment in Pakistan.

Khan bowed to the pressure, sending his foreign minister in his place, but afterwards regretted his decision.

Speaking at a press conference held earlier this month alongside Kuala Lumpur Summit host Mahathir Mohamad, the Malaysian prime minister who resigned on Monday, Khan said: "Some of our close friends felt that the conference would divide the Ummah, which was not the purpose of the conference."

(Continued on Page 7)

Iranian Firms Grow Under Cloud of Sanctions

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iranian companies have installed a 2,500-tonne offshore platform at phase 13 of the world's largest gas field in the Persian Gulf, a further testimony to their burgeoning ability to carry out tasks which until recently were an exclusive prerogative of international energy giants.

A massive barge, built by Iran Maritime Industrial Company SADR, shipped the topside to the South Pars gas field where a giant floating crane erected and fixed it over a deep-sea jacket substructure.

It was the third of four topsides planned at phase 13 of South Pars, with the final structure to be installed in the coming days, operator of South Pars Phase 13 project Payam Motamed told the Ministry of Petroleum's Shana news outlet. The two remaining topsides'

substructures such as flare booms, bridges and living quarters will also be shipped and installed soon, after which they will be hooked up to gas wells and production will begin, he said.

The operation of the two platforms will add another 28 million cubic meters per day of refined gas to Iran's output and raise overall production from phase 13 to 56 million cubic meters per day, Motamed added.

Gas recovery at the two other platforms began last year. The refined gas produced at phase 13 of South Pars is transferred by two pipelines to onshore processing units, 180 kilometers off the wells.

In addition to 56 million cubic meters per day of refined gas, phase 13 has been designed to produce 1.1 million tonnes per year of liquefied gas, 75,000 barrels per day

(Continued on Page 7)