

OCCUPIED GOLAN HEIGHTS (Dispatches) – The occupying regime of Israel said on Tuesday it would name a new community on the occupied Golan Heights after U.S. President Donald Trump as an expression of gratitude for his recognition of the Syrian land as Israeli territory.

“All Israelis were deeply moved when President Trump made his historic decision,” Zionist PM Benjamin Netanyahu said in a video statement made on the Golan. He added that after the Jewish Passover festival, he would bring a resolution calling for a new community on the occupied Golan Heights “named after President Donald J. Trump.”

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Tuesday the U.S. decision to intensify its economic pressure campaign against the Iranian people reveals its “panic” and “desperation,” a day after Washington moved to stop other countries from buying Iranian oil.

“Escalating #EconomicTERRORISM against Iranians exposes panic & desperation of US regime — and chronic failures of its client co-conspirators,” Zarif said in a tweet.

Iran’s Defense Minister Urges World to Counter Trumpism



Fajr Festival Crystal Simorgh Goes to Ali Akbar Sadeghi



Freestyler Reza Atri Wins Gold at Asian Wrestling Championships



‘Terrorists Preparing Chemical Attack in Syria’s Idlib’



U.S. Cannot Force Iran Oil Exports to Zero

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- The U.S. decision on Monday more than failing to snuff out Iran’s oil exports will disrupt markets and complicate Washington’s relations with Beijing and even its own partners, industry analysts say.

Observers expressed serious doubts after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington’s aim was to bring Iran’s crude exports to zero as he announced an end to the waivers which allowed imports from the Middle Eastern powerhouse.

“It’s difficult to imagine all exports being cut off, especially since China is still a major buyer of Iranian crude oil,” Jim Burkhard, vice president for oil markets at IHS Markit, told Associated Press.

Last month, Iranian exports of crude oil and condensate surged to levels near before sanctions to 1.70 million barrels per day (bpd), surprising market watchers.

As Iran’s largest oil buyer, China has defied the Trump administration’s demand that it gradually bring the imports to zero, increasing its purchases instead.

India is Iran’s second largest oil importer, with Turkey, Japan, South Korea also buying significant volumes.

All these countries have robust trade, diplomatic and security relationships with the U.S. which is careful not to jeopardize it. By retracting its oil exemptions, the Trump administration is encroaching on their energy security.

‘Energy Dominance’

Theoretically, it may not be difficult to source oil from other countries, but the move involves enormous financial expenses which none of these customers want to pay for no good reason.

To source from alternative sources, they mostly have to refit their refineries which are adjusted to process Iranian grades. And that is apparently what the profit-centric administration of President Donald Trump is pushing for.

The United States is now the world’s biggest oil producer, pumping more than 12 million bpd with exports topping 3 million bpd.

Pompeo is the pointman to push Trump’s “energy dominance” agenda that seeks to advance diplomatic and policy objectives through rapidly expanding U.S. oil and gas exports.

Last month, the U.S. secretary of state met with top oil executives to press them on following the Trump administration’s policy of reducing Iran’s oil exports to zero.

According to Reuters, executives from major companies including Chevron, Total, Royal Dutch Shell, ConocoPhillips and Occidental Petroleum had been invited to the closed-door meeting in Houston.

On Monday, Bloomberg said some of the biggest beneficiaries of sanctions aimed at crippling Iran are oil companies on the other side of the world.

Drillers based in Texas, Oklahoma and California added billions of dollars in market value after Pompeo announced that the U.S. will no longer give Iran’s customers a pass on sanctions, the financial news and information provider said.

The United States is reportedly pushing its fast-growing condensate, and also naphtha, on South Korea which a key buyer of the ultra light oil from Iran.

However, alternative supplies from the U.S. would entail higher pricing for refiners because they require longer haulage period.

According to traders, voyage period for import of crude from Middle East is about two weeks, whereas this period for U.S. crude will be about a month.

“If there is a sharp fall in the oil price between the purchase and delivery period, refiners will lose out money. So, there is a pricing risk involved in longer hauled crude,” K Ravichandran, senior vice president at ICRA Ltd, told Bloomberg.

The U.S., however, is projecting its energy putsch against Iran in a political light, saying it is aimed at undercutting Tehran power across the Middle East.

Trump said on Monday Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates would ensure an “appropriate supply” of oil along with the U.S.

“Saudi Arabia and others in OPEC will more than make up the Oil Flow difference in our now Full Sanctions on Iranian Oil,” he said on Twitter.

It was first in July when Trump said Saudi Arabia had assured him to raise oil production if needed, but the U.S. president ultimately had to issue waivers for Iranian exports in order to help cool down prices.

Industry analysts say the kingdom can barely raise output by 1 million bpd to 11 million bpd and even that would be difficult.

The Saudis and the UAE have tried to give the confidence to Trump to

(Continued on Page 7)

Majlis Approves: CENTCOM, a Terrorist Organization



Iranian lawmakers - all wearing IRGC uniforms in support of the force - pose for a picture at the parliament in Tehran on April 9, 2019.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran’s parliament on Tuesday overwhelmingly passed a law designating United States Central Command (CENTCOM) as a terrorist organization in retaliation for the U.S. blacklisting of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Lawmakers approved the bill by 173 to 4 votes, with 11 abstentions at an open parliamentary session.

The measure is intended to “reciprocate” Washington’s recent labeling of the IRGC a “terrorist” entity, which “undermines regional and international peace and security” and “runs contrary to the prin-

ciples of international law.”

Under the new law, “CENTCOM as well as forces, organizations and bodies under its command, are declared terrorist and providing any assistance - including military, intelligence, financial, technical, educational, administrative and logistical - to these forces in order to counter the IRGC and the Islamic Republic of Iran amounts to collaboration in an act of terror.”

On April 8, the White House labeled Iran “a State Sponsor of Terrorism” and the IRGC a “foreign terrorist organization,” claiming that the elite force “actively par-

ticipates in, finances, and promotes terrorism as a tool of statecraft.”

In a swift response, Iran’s Supreme National Security Council designated the U.S. government a supporter of terrorism and CENTCOM a terrorist organization.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the targeting of the IRGC is rooted in America’s “rancor” against the force, which has been at the forefront of the fight against enemies both inside and outside of Iran.

The parliament’s decision came a day after the U.S. said it was end-

ing waivers which allowed oil imports from Iran in order to zero out the country’s exports.

Iran’s Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zangeneh said on Tuesday the United States has made a bad mistake by politicizing oil and using it as a weapon.

Oil prices on Tuesday hit their highest level since November after Washington announced all waivers on imports of sanctions-hit Iranian oil would end next week, pressuring importers to stop buying from Tehran and further tightening global supply.

Oil in London closed in on the \$75-a-barrel mark for the first time since late October, as Saudi Arabia was said to plan a cautious response to tightened American sanctions on fellow OPEC member Iran.

Zangeneh added that the United States will not be able to reduce Iran’s oil exports to zero.

The U.S. “dream of zeroing out Iran’s oil exports will not be realized and this policy of sanctions will fail with full force,” he said.

“Basically, some regional countries announce their spare capacity more than it really is in order to excite the U.S. and put pressure on Iran and calm down the consumers,” he said, in reference to Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

“The United States and its allies, by politicizing the oil and using it as a weapon, are making a mistake, the impact of which will boomerang on many sides given the fragility of the market,” Zangeneh added.

(Continued on Page 7)

Death Toll Rises to 321 People Daesh Claims Bombings in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (Reuters) - Daesh claimed responsibility on Tuesday for Easter bombings in Sri Lanka that killed 321 people, coordinated attacks on churches and hotels that officials said were believed to be retaliation for attacks on mosques in New Zealand.

The claim, issued through the group’s AMAQ news agency, came shortly after Sri Lanka said two domestic Takfiri groups, with suspected links to foreign militants, were believed to have been behind the attacks at three churches and four hotels that also wounded about 500 people.

Three sources with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters that Sri Lankan intelligence officials had been warned hours earlier by India that attacks by Takfiri terrorists were imminent. It was not clear what action, if any, was taken.

Sri Lanka’s prime minister,

Ranil Wickremesinghe, told a news conference investigators were making progress in identifying the perpetrators. “We will be following up on Daesh claims, we believe there may be some links,” he said.

The government has said at least seven suicide bombers were involved.

In a statement, Daesh named what it said were the seven attackers who carried out the attacks. It gave no further evidence to support its claim of responsibility.

Earlier, junior minister for defense Ruwan Wijewardene told parliament two Sri Lankan Takfiri groups - the National Thawheed Jama’ut and Jamiyyathul Millathu Ibrahim - were responsible for the blasts, which detonated during Easter services and as high-end hotels served breakfast.

(Continued on Page 7)

One Million Species Risk Extinction: UN Report

LONDON (AFP) -- Up to one million species face extinction due to human influence, according to a draft UN report obtained by AFP that painstakingly catalogues how humanity has undermined the natural resources upon which its very survival depends.

The accelerating loss of clean air, drinkable water, CO2-absorbing forests, pollinating insects, protein-rich fish and storm-blocking mangroves -- to name but a few of the dwindling services rendered by Nature -- poses no less of a threat than climate change, says the report, set to be unveiled May 6.

Indeed, biodiversity loss and global warming are closely linked, according to the 44-page Summary for Policy Makers, which distills a 1,800-page UN assessment of scientific literature on the state of Nature.

Delegates from 130 nations meeting in Paris from April 29 will vet the executive summary line-by-line.

Wording may change, but figures lifted from the underlying report cannot be altered.

“We need to recognize that climate change and loss of Nature are equally important, not just for the environment, but as development and economic issues as well,” Robert Watson, chair of the UN-mandated body that compiled the report, told AFP, without divulging its findings.

“The way we produce our food and energy is undermining the regulating services that we get from Nature,” he said, adding that only “transformative change” can stem the damage.

Deforestation and agriculture, including livestock production, account for about a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, and have wreaked havoc on natural ecosystems as well.

(Continued on Page 7)