

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran's government has no plans to remove Oil Minister Bijan Zangeneh from his post, a government spokesman said on Sunday, according to the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA). "There is no change in the government's work program. Zangeneh has always been active and is one of the key ministers of the government," spokesman Ali Rabiei said. "Zangeneh's name has always been mentioned for impeachment but I hope Zangeneh continues his role in the government. Zangeneh's role at this time is important and parliamentarians have to help."

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- Yemen's Houthi fighters recently shot down a U.S. government-operated drone with assistance from Iran, the U.S. military claimed in a statement on Sunday.

Lt. Col. Earl Brown, a spokesman for the U.S. Central Command, said the altitude at which the MQ-9 drone was shot down on June 6 marked "an improvement over previous Houthi capability," a fact that led the military to conclude the rebel group had help from Iran.

### Viewpoint

## Assange's Arrest, an Assault on Independent Journalism

## Russian Maestro Performs in Tehran for First Time



## Iran Retain Asian Sitting Volleyball Championship Title



## Ansarallah Warns of Major Battle in Saudi Territories



# Iran Moves to Cast Off Western Restrictions

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran will announce further moves on Monday to scale back compliance with an international nuclear pact that the United States abandoned last year, the Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday.

"Iran's Atomic Energy Organization tomorrow at the Arak heavy water site will announce preparatory steps that have been taken to further decrease Tehran's commitments under the deal," Tasnim said.

The organization will announce moves to increase stocks of enriched uranium and production of heavy water at Arak, it reported.

Iran stopped complying in May with some commitments in the 2015 nuclear deal that was agreed with global powers, after the United States unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018 and re-introduced sanctions on Tehran.

Iran said in May it would start enriching uranium at a higher level, unless world powers protected its economy from U.S. sanctions within 60 days.

On Saturday, Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi stressed that Iran's 60-day deadline would by no means be extended.

Speaking at a meeting with Secretary General of the Euro-

pean External Action Service (EEAS) Helga Schmid, Araqchi said that Tehran would proceed with the next steps -- i.e. enter the second phase -- unless the JCPOA parties met Iran's demands.

"Obviously, Iran cannot stick to this agreement unilaterally," President Hassan Rouhani told Russian, Chinese and other Asian leaders at a conference in Tajikistan.

"It is necessary that all the sides of this agreement contribute to restoring it," he said, adding that Iran needed to see "positive signals" from other signatories to the pact, which include Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany.

Tehran said in May that Iran would start enriching uranium at a higher level, unless world powers protected its economy from U.S. sanctions within 60 days.

Tehran has said its nuclear program is peaceful and will not be stopped, says its missile work is for defense and accuses the United States of destabilizing the region.

France and other European signatories to the nuclear deal have said they wanted to save the accord, but many of their companies have canceled deals with Tehran, under pressure from the United States.

# Pompeo: U.S. Doesn't Want War With Iran



Mike Pompeo, U.S. secretary of state, speaks during a press briefing at the State Department in Washington on June 13, 2019.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- The United States does not want to go to war with Tehran, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Sunday even he repeated his accusation that Iran was responsible for the attacks on two tankers last week.

In an interview with "Fox News Sunday", Pompeo said, "President Trump has done everything he can to avoid war. We don't want war." The top U.S. diplomat claimed that Washington will guarantee free navigation through vital shipping areas.

"The United States is going make sure that we take all the actions

necessary, diplomatic and otherwise that achieve that outcome," Pompeo said.

U.S.-Iran tensions are high following accusations by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump that Tehran carried out attacks last Thursday on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman, a vital oil shipping route. Iran has denied having any role.

"The intelligence community has lots of data, lots of evidence. The world will come to see much of it," said Pompeo, who headed the Central Intelligence Agency before becoming secretary of state.

Pompeo said he did not want to discuss possible next steps the United State might take in response to last week's developments.

Iran's parliament speaker hinted that Washington could be behind the "suspicious" tanker attacks in the Gulf of Oman to pile pressure on Tehran.

"The suspicious actions against the tankers... seem to complement the economic sanctions against Iran considering that (the US) has not achieved any results from them," Ali Larijani told MPs.

He backed his claim by saying there had been a precedent "during

World War II, when Americans targeted their own ships near Japan to create an excuse for hostility".

A non-belligerent state at the beginning of World War II, the U.S. went to war after Japan's surprise attack on the American Pearl Harbor base in Hawaii on the morning of December 7, 1941.

A Japanese-owned tanker, the Kokuka Courageous, and a Norwegian-operated one, the Front Altair, were attacked on Thursday and left ablaze as they were passing through the Gulf of Oman

The Japanese government has been requesting the United States for concrete evidence to back its accusations against Iran, government sources said Sunday.

The Japanese ship operator on Friday disputed the U.S. claims, saying its sailors on board the Kokuka Courageous saw "flying objects" just before the attack, suggesting the tanker wasn't damaged by mines.

"The crew told us something came flying at the ship, and they found a hole," President Yutaka Katada of Kokuka Sangyo told a press conference in Tokyo. "Then some crew witnessed the second shot."

Kyodo News on Sunday cited the unnamed sources as reiterating that Japanese government officials remain unconvinced about U.S. accusations. "The U.S. explanation has not helped us go beyond speculation," said one senior government official.

Japan has been seeking more

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## Muslim Congresswoman Ilhan Omar: Trump Has 'Unearthed' Ills in American Society

WASHINGTON (Middle East Eye) -- President Donald Trump has unearthed long-standing racism and bigotry that some people have otherwise tried to white-wash out of U.S. history, American Congresswoman Ilhan Omar has said.

Speaking to Middle East Eye, Omar said Trump has "unearthed a lot of the ills - that we have decided to not speak about in our society - in the ugliest way".

Omar, who has come under attack from Trump himself, as well as by right-wing media organizations including Fox News and conservative commentators like Megan McCain, added that there had been an attempt to erase the deep-seated history of racism in the United States by merely associating it with the Trump era.

"I think we have to be very consistent in calling [this] out regardless of whether it makes

people uncomfortable or not," she said in a telephone interview.

"Because that discomfort will lead us to the kind of changes we want to see. And I think, ultimately, it will lead us to have the kind of America we all deserve," said Omar, a former refugee from Somalia, and one of just two Muslim women ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

Since being elected to Congress in late 2018, Omar has been a frequent target for attacks by Republicans and by right-wing media platforms.

The campaign against her began following a series of tweets that spoke to the use of lobby money in the U.S. support for Israel. She was immediately accused of antisemitism. Omar later apologized for the comments that were seen by some as invoking an antisemitic trope.

Later, following comments about the 11 September 2001

attacks at a gala hosted by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), she was described as trivializing 9/11 and accused of being anti-American.

This culminated in Rupert Murdoch's New York Post publishing a front page that showed a photo of the World Trade Center in flames together with a partial quote attributed to Omar. The newspaper added the text: "Here's your something. 2,977 people dead by terrorism" over the photo.

In response, thousands of Yemeni-American bodegas in New York City launched a boycott of the newspaper, arguing they would not sell a newspaper that incited hate against Muslim-Americans.

"This is a triggering moment in our history as American Muslims, as New Yorkers who saw and felt how deeply wounded our city was and felt the backlash

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## Massive Blackout Hobbles South America

BUENOS AIRES (Reuters) -- Power began to trickle back into the grid by midday after a massive blackout hit Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay early on Sunday, leaving tens of millions without power, authorities said.

Argentina's grid "collapsed" around 7 a.m. local time (1100 GMT), leaving the entire country without power, Argentina's Energy Secretariat said in a statement. The outage also cut electricity to swaths of neighboring Uruguay and Paraguay.

Energy distributors in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, whose populations total nearly 55 million, said power was being restored to major cities, including Montevideo and Buenos Aires.

Argentina's energy agency said in a statement it had begun investigating the causes of the outage, but had not provided further details by midday.

Energy company Edesur Argentina said it had returned service to 450,000 of its clients in the greater Buenos Aires area by noon local time (1600 GMT), but called the outage "exceptional" and said it would likely take the

rest of the day before power was completely restored.

Uruguay power company UTE said on social media that power had returned to parts of Montevideo and the southern coast of Uruguay. In Paraguay, the capital of Asuncion was unaffected by the outage but local providers said they were restoring power to smaller cities and rural areas.

The massive blackout on Father's Day left Buenos Aires dark early this morning, hobbling public transportation, cutting off water supply and crippling phone and internet communications across the city.

Images from social media showed long lines of cars at the few service stations still in operation in Argentina's capital city and traffic lights dark, creating chaos in places even on a normally quiet Sunday.

"The city is a disaster. There are no traffic lights. Stores aren't open. It spoiled Father's Day," said 75-year-old retiree Liliana Comis, of Buenos Aires.

The outage also spilled over into local and national politics.

Alberto Fernandez, a Peronist presidential candidate looking to unseat incumbent Mauricio Macri in this year's hotly contested election, tweeted that "the President should...give an explanation for what Argentines are suffering."

Macri had yet to make a statement on social media as of late morning in Argentina.

Argentina's Energy Secretariat said in a statement mid-morning on Sunday that it expected power to be restored in several hours.

Elsewhere in Argentina, several provinces were forced to temporarily delay local elections slated for Sunday.

Argentine state oil company YPF did not immediately respond to requests for comments on how the outage had impacted its operations. Argentina is home to the Vaca Muerta shale formation, one of the world's biggest reserves of shale gas and oil.

A spokesman for Brazil's power system operator (ONS) said the outage had not impacted the regional neighbor to the north.