

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Moscow and Tehran have been discussing joint development of Caspian Sea hydrocarbon projects, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies on Tuesday.

Novak has been on a two-day visit to Iran. On Monday, Iran and Russia signed a memorandum of understanding over cooperation in the energy sector, the Iranian oil ministry's Shana news agency reported. The preliminary agreement covering oil, gas, petrochemicals, electricity and nuclear power was signed in Tehran by Iran's deputy oil minister, Amir Hussein Zamaninia, and his Russian counterpart.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) -- Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu plans to pay an official visit to Iran on Thursday in a bid to boost bilateral relations between the two neighboring countries in various areas, Turkish media said.

Cavusoglu is about to attend the first meeting of the Iran-Turkey Strategic Planning Joint Commission due to take place in Iran's central city of Isfahan on Friday. Turkey's embassy in Tehran told Anadolu that Cavusoglu has been invited by his Iranian counterpart Muhammad Javad Zarif to attend the joint meeting.

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Arab-Israeli Plot Against Islam Decisively Defeated at Ohad

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"What befell you on the day when the two hosts met, was by Allah's permission, so that He may ascertain the faithful; And ascertain the hypocrites. [When] they were told: 'Come, fight in the way of Allah, or defend [yourselves], they said, 'If we knew any fighting, surely we would have followed you.' That day they were nearer to unfaith than to faith. They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts, and Allah knows best whatever they conceal." (Holy Qur'an 3:166-167)

Today the 15th of Shawwal reminds us of the crucial day to which God Almighty has referred in the above-mentioned ayahs, regarding an armed encounter between Muslims and Arabs. It is the anniversary of a major milestone in the history of Islam. It is the day on which was thwarted an intricate plot of the Arabs in tandem with the Israelites, and the hypocrites posing as Muslims but serving as the 5th column, to kill Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) and wipe out Islam.

In the year 3 AH, when news reached of a powerful army of Arabs moving towards Medina, the Messenger of Mercy had no other choice but to defend Islam and the honour and dignity of Muslims by mobilizing those who claimed to be his followers.

Though deserted at the last moment by Abdullah ibn Ubayy and his band of 300 hypocrites (*munaafiqeen*) which until now had pretended to be Muslims, the Prophet, along with a modest force of 700 armed Muslims, marched towards Mount Ohad to confront the well-equipped 3,000-strong invading Arab army led by Abu Sufyan who had concluded a pact with the ever-rebellious Israelites to wipe out Islam.

Thus, as the wordings of the above-mentioned ayahs indicate, the result of the Battle Ohad was a setback for the neo Muslims, in whose ranks were many of weak faith, who failed the test as defenders of faith.

If vain pride against mingling with the supposedly lower classes had prevented the idolatrous Arab aristocrats of Mecca from accepting the Prophet's call of universal brotherhood, it was racism on the part of the Israelites of Hijaz (whose forefathers had migrated from Syria to await the Last and Greatest Messenger mentioned in the Torah), that made them spurn the heavenly message of the Peerless Scion of Abraham's firstborn son Ishmael.

On the eve of the Battle of Ohad, Abu Sufyan and the Banu Nadheer Jew, Ka'b al-Ashraf wasted no time in forging the unholy Arab-Israelite alliance against Islam - which continues to persist till this day under supervision of the US in the form of the Zionist-Wahhabi alliance.

The Prophet was the least perturbed by the joint Arab-Israelite-Hypocrite plot, and as commanded by God, resolved to hold his ground so that the heat of the battle against overwhelming odds will be a further test of faith for those remaining with him, in order to determine who really are the true believers and who really are the weak of faith - if not outright hypocrites.

As the battle ensued, the Prophet's valorous cousin and son-in-law, Imam Ali (AS), made short work of several Arab warlords, and so did the Prophet's uncle, the equally brave Hamza (AS). However, when the enemy had been scattered, the guards posted by the Prophet at the mountain pass left their positions to join in the loot of the war booty, thereby allowing the infidel commander Khaled bin Waleed to attack the Muslims from behind and turn a virtual victory into a near defeat.

The result was the fleeing of almost all the neo Muslims from the battlefield on the assumption that the Prophet had been killed (refer to the holy Qur'an 3:144 & 153), while 70 steadfast believers attained martyrdom, including Hamza (AS), whose liver was ripped from his body by the Abyssinian Wahshi to be chewed by his mistress Hind bint Utbah (wife of Abu Sufyan, mother of Mu'awiyya and grandmother of Yazid), who was dancing and singing in lewd tones to inspire the pagans (future Muslims and unfortunately 'Salaf' for today's deceived Muslims).

No wonder, the Takfiris unabashedly indulge in the same cowardly, faithless, violent and cannibalistic ways of their progenitors by eating raw the bodily organs of their Muslim victims. All books of hadith and history state that the lone person standing beside Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) and warding off the repeated assaults of the Arabs was Imam Ali (AS). Later some 13 other Muslims returned to the battlefield after being assured the Prophet was alive.

The famous Sunni Muslim scholar Hakem an-Nisabouri in his book "*al-Mustadrak as-Sahihayn*" has recorded the following hadith on the merits of Imam Ali (AS):

"Ali has four distinctions which no one share with him: He was the first male who prayed with the Messenger of God. He was the bearer of his banner in every battle and he was the one who stayed with him at the Battle on the day of al-Mihras (the Battle of Ohad), and he is the one who washed his blessed body and laid him in his grave."

Later, the Prophet while praising the faith and swordsmanship of his dear cousin, said that on the Day of Ohad Archangel Gabriel could be heard chanting:

"La Fatha illa Ali, la Saif illa Dhu'l-Feqar (there is no braver youth than Ali and no sharper sword than Dhu'l-Feqar).

Unfortunately, the enmity towards Imam Ali (AS) increased in the hearts of the hypocrites, whose ranks would greatly increase in the next few years as Islam spread through Arabia, and the pagan Arabs, including those that had fought Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), felt no other choice but to pay lip service to Islam, while their breasts brimmed with hatred, in order to conspire with the Israelites against the Blessed Ahl al-Bayt after the passing away of the Seal of Messengers.

Rouhani: Iranians Will Ultimately Win Battle

Iran, Russia, China Blast U.S. Bullying



President Hassan Rouhani and his aides use an escalator during the inauguration of a new terminal at Imam Khomeini International Airport in Tehran, June 18, 2019.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- **The United States faced criticism from Russia, Iran and China Tuesday after the Pentagon announced it was sending 1,000 more troops to the Middle East.**

Iranian security official Ali Shamkhani, at a security issues conference in the Russian city of Ufa Tuesday, hit out at the U.S. for "illegal bullying" through economic sanctions and called on other world leaders to resist joining them.

"If a wide range of countries decide to stand up to the illegal U.S. blackmail and bullying, we can make the U.S. retreat and adopt a

rational and responsible behavior in the international system," Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told reporters that the U.S. is trying to start a war with Iran.

"For quite a while, we have been witnessing the United States' continuous attempts to increase political, psychological, economic and military pressure on Iran," Ryabkov said. "I think that such actions are rather provocative and cannot be considered as anything other than a deliberate policy to instigate

a war."

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Tuesday Tehran isn't seeking war with any nation, but would be the winner of any battle.

"We will not wage war with any nation, those facing us are a group of politicians with little experience," he said.

"The entire Iranian nation is unanimous in confronting" U.S. pressures, Rouhani said. "The end of this battle will see victory of the Iranian nation."

He added that despite the U.S. withdrawal last year from Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal world powers,

Iran had remained loyal to its commitments and international agreements.

On Monday, Iran's nuclear agency announced it will surpass the uranium stockpile limits set by its 2015 nuclear deal in the next 10 days, raising pressure on Europeans trying to save the accord a year following the U.S. withdrawal.

Hours later, the Pentagon announced it was sending about 1,000 additional American troops to the Middle East in the face of what U.S. officials claimed was a growing threat from Iran.

The announcement by Iran's nuclear agency marked yet another deadline set by Tehran. Rouhani already has warned Europe that a new deal needs to be in place by July 7 or the Islamic Republic would increase its enrichment of uranium.

The developments indicate Iran has begun its own maximum pressure campaign after facing one from President Donald Trump that deeply cut into its sale of crude oil abroad. Europe has so far been unable to offer Iran a way around the U.S. sanctions.

Rouhani said, "Despite all of the Americans' efforts in the region and their desire to cut off our ties with all of the world and their desire to keep Iran secluded, they have been unsuccessful."

The escalation follows apparent attacks last week near the Strait of Hormuz on oil tankers, assaults that Washington has tried to blame on Iran but the effort has fallen flat

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Ousted President's Final Moments: Morsi Told Judge He Had Secrets to Share

LONDON (Middle East Eye) -- **In the final moments of his life, Muhammad Morsi urged a judge to let him share secrets which he had kept even from his lawyer, according to an account obtained by Middle East Eye.**

Morsi said he needed to speak in a closed session to reveal the information - a request the deposed president had repeatedly appealed for in the past but never been granted.

Standing before the court, the man whose presidency ended in a bloody military coup said he would keep the secrets to himself until he died or met God. He collapsed soon after.

While Middle East Eye cannot independently verify the account, details have been corroborated by other reports of the court session seen by MEE and sources familiar with Morsi's case.

As Morsi spoke, the judge cut him off, asking the shackled man if he was going to start preaching, and declared that the next hearing would be on Tuesday.

Morsi's health had reportedly deteriorated over the course of his nearly six-year incarceration, according to the findings of a panel of British politicians and lawyers who warned last year that could die prematurely as a result of inadequate medical treatment.

Egypt's first freely elected leader had been imprisoned since his defense minister, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, seized power in a 2013 military coup. Sisi is now president, and has outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood group from which Morsi hailed.

The ex-president was one of 60,000 political prisoners estimated

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UK: \$1.6 Billion Dispute With Bank Mellat Settled

LONDON (Dispatches) -- **The British government has settled a £1.25 billion (\$1.6 billion) damages claim brought by Iran's largest private bank in an 11th-hour, out-of-court deal following a dispute over sanctions, Reuters reported.**

Bank Mellat, which is 20% owned by the Iranian government and 80% privately held, said on Tuesday the legal row had been resolved for an undisclosed sum on the first day of a trial to assess its damages at London's High Court.

That comes six years after the UK Supreme Court ruled that sanctions imposed on the bank in 2009 were unlawful and that the government had been "irrational" and "disproportionate". It referred the case back to the High Court.

Bank Mellat had argued that sanctions had damaged its reputation and goodwill in Britain and internationally, and caused significant loss.

The government's Treasury department issued a brief statement, saying: "Bank Mellat's claims have been concluded on terms confidential to the parties."

Sarosh Zaiwalla, a lawyer and founder of London-based Zaiwalla & Co, the law firm representing Bank Mellat, said the case spoke volumes for the independence of the British judiciary.

In its litigation, the Iranian bank had said the UK government also lobbied other international authorities to impose financial restrictions, leading to "copycat" sanctions being introduced by the United Nations, the European Union and others.

Several high-profile UK government figures were expected to appear before the court, including Alistair Darling who was the chancellor of the exchequer at the time of the freeze.

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