

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Yemeni Foreign Minister in the National Salvation Government, Hisham Sharaf Abdullah, says former U.S. President Donald Trump has probably received huge sums of money from Saudi Arabia for blacklisting the Houthi movement. "I think the Trump administration's decision was something paid for. You would see in the near future," he told Press TV in an interview aired Thursday. Abdullah also said, "If the peace process fails, we are ready for all circumstances. Our choices are wide open. We can exert our effect and do whatever we want. We are so strong to the point that we can change the whole scenario. Nevertheless, we will not do such a thing for the sake of Yemeni people."

WASHINGTON (Reuters) -- The United Arab Emirates confirmed that it signed agreements with the United States on former President Donald Trump's last full day in office to purchase up to 50 F-35 jets, 18 armed drones and other defense equipment in a deal worth \$23 billion.

The UAE embassy in Washington said in a statement on its website that the letters of agreement had been finalized on Tuesday confirming terms of purchase, including costs, technical specifications and anticipated delivery schedules. The deal, however, could now be reviewed as the new Biden administration has said it will re-examine the agreements for the sale.

**Viewpoint**

## Is the Change of Guard in Washington Beneficial to Iran?

## U.S. to 'Lengthen Nuclear Constraints' on Iran



## Olympic Leaders, Japan Prime Minister Deny Report About Tokyo Games Cancellation



## Syria Wants U.S. Troops to Leave Immediately



# Don't Ask Tehran to Meet New Demands

By: Muhammad Javad Zarif\*

As a candidate for president in 2016, Donald Trump pledged to stop wasting American blood and treasure on wars in West Asia. During his time in office, Trump instead further trapped the United States in the region and inflamed divisions to the point where a minor incident might quickly spiral out of control and lead to a major war.

The new administration in Washington has a fundamental choice to make. It can embrace the failed policies of the Trump administration and continue down the path of disdain for international cooperation and international law—a contempt powerfully evident in the United States' decision in 2018 to unilaterally withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, that had been signed by Iran, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the European Union just three years earlier. Or the new administration can shed the failed assumptions of the past and seek to promote peace and comity in the region.

U.S. President Joe Biden can choose a better path by ending Trump's failed policy of "maximum pressure" and returning to the deal his predecessor abandoned. If he does, Iran will likewise return to full implementation of our commitments under the nuclear deal. But if Washington instead insists on extracting concessions, then this opportunity will be lost.

Some Western policymakers and analysts continue to speak of "containing" Iran. But they would do well to remember that as a powerful player in the region, Iran has legitimate security concerns, rights, and interests—just as any other nation does. They must recognize those concerns rather than subscribe to the tired delusion that Iran should not enjoy the same rights as every other sovereign nation. We have always made it abundantly clear that we will respond positively to any initiative for regional dialogue advanced in good faith. To us, goodwill begets goodwill.

### In Search of a New Paradigm

The last two decades of U.S. military involvement in our region have caused untold damage while achieving little. According to the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, the wars that followed the 9/11 attacks have directly claimed at least 800,000 lives—and indirectly, many more. Since 2001, at least 37 million people in the region have been forced from their homes.

Thanks to U.S. invasions and arms sales, Iran's neighborhood has become the most militarized region in the world. Saudi Arabia, a country with a native population of only 27 million, is the world's top arms importer, mainly buying from the United States. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), another leading purchaser of U.S. weapons, has no more than 1.5 million citizens but is the eighth-largest arms buyer on the planet. These countries have used the weapons they have bought to rain death and destruction on civilians in Yemen, and the White House gave them first a green light, under President Barack Obama, and then carte blanche, under Trump, to do so.

During the Trump presidency, Washington took its predilection for conflict directly to Iran's door. Last January, the United States assassinated General Qasem Soleimani, making an already fraught situation in a region plagued by terrorist violence all the more unstable. The murder removed a leading commander in the fight to push the so-called Islamic State (or ISIS) and other militant groups back from Iraq and Syria—and it added an unforgivable crime to the already long register of U.S. transgressions against Iran.

Pressure against Iran has time and again produced the exact opposite of its intended result.

The United States cannot easily undo the damage its actions have caused. But a new administration can address one major blunder of its predecessor, and that is Trump's withdrawal in 2018 from the Iran nuclear deal. The U.S. president tried to torpedo a major multilateral diplomatic achievement and then initiated a campaign of blunt economic warfare targeting the Iranian people, in effect punishing Iran for its adherence to a UN-endorsed agreement. The sanctions that the Trump administration imposed and reimposed have made it nearly impossible for Iran to import even the items required to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. But these hardships have not forced us to surrender, nor have they collapsed our economy or changed our strategic calculus.

Rather, pressure against Iran has time and again produced—and will always produce—the exact opposite of its intended result. In 2005, for instance, the United States and its allies demanded that Iran relinquish the right to enrich uranium and unjustly imposed sanctions through the UN Security Council. Despite that economic pressure, between 2005 and 2012, Iran increased its number of centrifuges from 200 to 20,000

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# \$3.4 Billion Facility Hailed as Symbol of Nation's Resistance

## Iran Opens World's Third Associated Gas Refinery



The Persian Gulf Bidboland refinery has a daily capacity to process 56 million cubic meters of associated gas.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran on Thursday inaugurated the \$3.4 billion Persian Gulf Bidboland gas refinery to process associated gas from crude oil production, rather than burn it through flaring.

The plant in the southwest province of Khuzestan has a daily capacity to process 56 million cu m/d of associated gas, including 13.5 million mt/year of sour gas and 2.25 million mt/year of sweet gas. Construction began in 2015.

"In full capacity, around 60% of our flaring gas will be taken care of by Bidboland and won't be burned," Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zanganeh said in a televised

video ceremony from the plant. "Around 15% of the flaring gas will be taken by a project in Marun (Oil and Gas Co.) and in 2023, our flaring gas will near zero." Production from the plant could generate \$1.5 billion of revenue, of which \$700 million come from exports, he said.

Iran had the world's fourth largest gas flaring volume in 2019, according to a July 2020 report by the World Bank. Of the top 10 largest flarers, Iran was the only country to show a decline from 2018.

Iran shares the world's biggest natural gas deposit with Qatar in

the Persian Gulf, and should be using its nearly 32,000 billion cm to become a bigger player in the global market, President Hassan Rouhani said in a televised inauguration ceremony.

"We are behind in gas exports. We should be one of the top five gas exporters in the world," Rouhani said. "The world is in need of Iran's oil and gas. We can become the region's hub in production and exports of electricity or gas."

Bidboland will also produce 10.4 million mt/year of methane, which will be injected into the national gas grid, and 1.5 million mt/year of ethane that will be fed into

several petrochemical plants in Mahshahr and Gachsaran. It will also export annually 1 million mt of propane and 500,000 mt of butane. Some 900,000 mt of acid gas produced each year will also be injected into oil wells of Aghajari fields in the Khuzestan province to boost crude production. It will also yield 600,000 mt/year of gas condensates.

The project was financed by the National Development Fund through a consortium of banks.

"This refinery is capable of collecting the whole associated gas in three provinces of Khuzestan, Kogilouyeh-Boyerahmad and Bushehr," Mahmoud Aminnejad, managing director of Bidboland, said in the televised ceremony.

In the first phase, associated gas of the East Karun oil fields will be collected in bid to clean the environment from flare gas, Aminnejad said, and in the second one, those of the West Karun will be processed in Bidboland. The plant is currently the third such facility in the world, he added.

Aminnejad said that 500,000 mt of pentane plus, a natural gas liquid, will also be produced at the plant.

Zanganeh said that a "mini refinery" could be built to produce 15,000 b/d of gasoline using the pentane plus output.

### Oil Exports Rise 'Significantly'

Iran's oil exports have climbed in recent months and its sales of petroleum

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## At Least 32 Killed in Blasts at Crowded Market

# Suspicious Terrorist Bombings Hit Baghdad

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Daesh has claimed responsibility for a deadly terrorist attack in Baghdad, making the announcement early on Friday via the takfiri group's Amaq news agency on its Telegram channel.

Two men blew themselves up in a crowded Baghdad market on Thursday, killing at least 32 people and wounding 110, in Iraq's first big terrorist bombing since 2018, authorities said.

Officials described it as a possible sign of the reactivation of the group. It came after recent reports said the U.S. military had transferred Daesh prisoners to the Iraqi-Syrian border.

American forces used helicopters to relocate the Daesh inmates from prisons in Hasakah province in northeast Syria to the Iraqi border, Lebanon's Al Mayadeen TV quoted local sources as saying last week. The first attacker drew a crowd

at the bustling market in the capital's Tayaran Square by claiming to feel sick, then detonated his explosives belt, the interior ministry said.

As more people then flocked to the scene to help the victims, a second suicide bomber set off his explosives.

The open-air market in the Bab al-Sharqi area of the capital, where second-hand clothes are sold at stalls, had been teeming with people after the lifting of nearly a year of Covid-19 restrictions across the country.

Following the Daesh claim of responsibility, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi said on Twitter: "Our people have proven their resolve in the face of Daesh's terrorism. The will to live among our people as they face terrorism in the scene of the heinous crime at Bab al-Sharqi was a message of defiance and unparalleled courage." (Continued on Page 7)

## Covid Lockdown May Continue Into Summer

# British Hospitals Likened to War Zones

LONDON (Dispatches) – British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Thursday raised fears that tough Covid restrictions could continue well into the spring and beyond as ministers refused to be drawn on plans for any potential easing of lockdown.

With 1,290 more UK coronavirus deaths recorded on Thursday, fears that infection rates in England might not even be falling, and the continued spread of the new, more infectious variant of Covid-19, Johnson was notably more cautious about lifting lockdown than he previously has been.

"I think it's too early to say when we'll be able to lift some of the restrictions," he told reporters during a visit to flood-hit Didsbury in Greater Manchester, when asked about the mid-February target.

While previously Johnson has appeared keen to talk up early exits

from restrictions, No 10 officials have become much more cautious in recent days because of continued high levels of new infections, hospitalizations and deaths.

There is also pressure from scientists to maintain robust restrictions because research suggests vaccination alone may not be enough to shrink the coronavirus epidemic.

England's third national lockdown has seen bars, restaurants and schools mostly closed, with Johnson attributing a steep rise in cases at the end of last year to a more transmissible variant of the coronavirus first detected in England.

Medics said they are "throwing everything" at patients to help them recover from the horrific virus, but said "it just doesn't seem to be working".

Staff at Milton Keynes University (Continued on Page 7)