

France Summons Pakistan Envoy for Criticizing Bill

PARIS (Dispatches) – The French government has summoned Pakistan's envoy to Paris to protest remarks by Pakistani President Arif Alvi criticizing a piece of French legislation considered discriminatory against Muslims.

France's foreign ministry said it had called in Pakistan's charge d'affaires to mark "our surprise and our disapproval (of Alvi's remarks), given that the bill contains no discriminatory element." The bill, which rights advocates consider discriminatory against Muslims, has prompted protests in France.

Kayhan International

Biden's Nominee Vows Tough Policy on China

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – Wally Adeyemo, President Joe Biden's nominee for the No. 2 job at the U.S. Treasury, on Tuesday said Washington should work with allies to hold China accountable to international rules to ensure a level playing field for companies in the United States and elsewhere.

"China is our top strategic competitor," Adeyemo told a confirmation hearing before the Senate Finance Committee. "Where China is not willing to play on a level playing field, it's important that we hold them accountable in the international system," Adeyemo said.

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Viewpoint

Leader's Clear-Cut Emphasis on Iran's Nuclear Rights

Zionists to Pay for Any Miscalculation vs. Iran



Iran, Syria Friendly Match Confirmed



Backlash Against Egypt's Sisi Over Removal of Qur'an From School Textbooks



The Day the Ka'ba Came Alive

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"Indeed the First House to be set up for mankind is the one at Bakkah; blessed and (means of) guidance for all nations." (Holy Qur'an 3:96) Built by the Father of mankind, Adam, as the first-ever structure on Planet Earth in order to serve as the focal point of worship of the One and Only Creator, the Ka'ba or the cube-shaped edifice in Mecca is the world's holiest spot, towards which the hearts of all Muslims are attracted from all around the globe.

Not a single moment passes of the minutes, hours, days, nights, weeks, and months that make up the years on the basis of the orbit of the Earth around the Sun as it spins on its axis, when people in any part of the Planet are not turned towards the Ka'ba in ritual prayers.

Indeed, this is one of the wonders of monotheist worship that proves beyond doubt God's decreeing of Islam as the religion of all mankind. Yet, the Ka'ba is not the residence of any prophet or a priest; neither is its sacred interior a place of rest for anyone; nor should it be used as storeroom for stacking of grains and goods, let alone any object or image.

So what is the logic behind venerating this very simple building, devoid of any decoration, equipment, and architecture, as the Symbolic House of the Unseen but Omnipresent Lord Who is far too glorious to have form, shape, or the limitations of place and time?

The answer is obvious. Definitely there was Divine Wisdom in its making by Adam; in its rebuilding by Prophet Abraham and his firstborn son Prophet Ishmael after the damage it had suffered during the great deluge of the days of Prophet Noah; and its revival as the Supreme Symbol of Monotheism by the Last and Greatest of all Messengers – despite the defilement of its sacred precincts for a brief period in its long history by the pagan Arabs.

Thus, with the emergence of the universal message of Islam in the full limelight of history, the House of God had to be cleansed of the filth of idols.

Although the final purification of the Ka'ba occurred with the surrender of Mecca to the Muslims in Ramadhan 8 AH (630 AD), when the Seal of Messengers lifted on his shoulders his cousin, son-in-law, and Vicegerent to deliver the final blow to idolatry in Arabia by pulling down the chief Arab deity, Hubal from atop the roof of the Holy House, those watching the grand spectacle of the triumph of monotheism, especially the middle-aged and the elderly, recalled two instances in their own lifetime when the gods crafted by their hands, bit the dust to their horror:

The first instance when the idols came crashing to the ground was the birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) on Rabi al-Awwal 17 (570 AD) – the year of the miraculous destruction (by a flock of small birds carrying pebbles in their beaks and claws) of the elephant-led army of Abraha, the Abyssinian governor of Yemen, who tried in vain to storm the Holy Ka'ba.

The second purification came thirty years later on the 13th of Rajab when idols fell headlong as the wall of the Ka'ba miraculously parted and then sealed, to allow the monotheist Hashemite lady, Fatema bint Asad (SA), to enter the "sancta sanctorum" for the blessed birth of Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS).

To the utter bewilderment of the pagan Arabs, assembled around it and engaged in the sordid practice of the worship of idols – now broken and scattered around to their dismay – the locks of the door of the Ka'ba held fast as they tried in vain to break them with iron bars.

Here, it would not be out of context to relate what Ibn Qaa'nab, who was present on the scene has narrated: "I was sitting with a group of Abdul-Ozza clansmen when we saw Fatema bint Asad (SA), the wife of Abu Taleb, approach the walls of the Ka'ba. She was obviously in labour, and was heard reciting:

"O Allah! I believe in You; I believe in what You sent to Your Messengers; I believe in Your scriptures; I believe in the message of my ancestor Abraham al-Khaleel. I beseech You by the right of one who built this House and by the right of the baby that I am carrying, to make childbirth easy for me."

"Then we saw the wall of the Ka'ba suddenly open from the rear and Fatema bint Asad (SA) step inside it, as the wall closed behind her. We tried to break open the door of the Ka'ba but failed. We understood that this was a miracle."

Four days later on the Rajab 17 the same miraculous scene was repeated when the Lady who had raised the orphaned nephew of her monotheist husband as her own son, stepped outside with a radiant boy in her arms, while nearby stood in expectation the newborn's 30-year old first cousin, along with the infant's father.

Fatema bint Asad (SA) said: **"I have higher status than all of the"** (Continued on Page 7)

Iran Stops Implementing Additional Protocol



IAEA inspectors at Iran's nuclear power plant in Natanz on January 20, 2014.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran confirmed it had begun implementing new restrictions on inspections by the UN nuclear agency Tuesday after the United States failed to lift economic sanctions by a weekend deadline.

Officials announced plans to cease implementation of the so-called "Additional Protocol," a confidential agreement between Tehran and the IAEA reached as part of the landmark nuclear accord. The agreement grants the UN inspectors enhanced powers to visit nuclear facilities and watch Iran's program.

The changes to the IAEA's monitoring and inspection re-

gime, which were ordered by Iran's parliament last year, are the latest in a series of retaliatory measures Iran has adopted in response to then U.S. president Donald Trump's 2018 withdrawal from the agreement.

"The implementation of the law began this morning," Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif told the official IRNA news agency.

Recordings from monitoring equipment that the IAEA installed at Iran's nuclear sites to verify its compliance will now be withheld by Tehran until President Joe Biden has lifted the inhuman sanctions

imposed by Trump.

Iran's "voluntary transparency measures", including snap inspections of sites not under regular monitoring, are also suspended.

Zarif said the changes would have no major immediate impact on the work of the IAEA inspectors.

"The crux of this deal is that the data recorded on our nuclear program ... will be stored and not handed over to the IAEA," Iran's top diplomat said. The data "had never been supplied to the IAEA in real time but had been handed over on a daily or weekly basis," he said.

After Government Announces Agreement: South Korea Casts Doubt on Release of Iran Assets

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran expressed hope on Tuesday that South Korea and Japan would agree to release about \$1 billion of Iranian funds frozen in the two countries because of U.S. sanctions, but South Korea said it still needed to discuss the matter with the United States.

Iranian Government spokesman Ali Rabiei said central bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati had reached preliminary agreements with the ambassadors of Japan and South Korea on the fund releases.

"He (Hemmati) has said that it seems that, in a first step, about \$1 billion of foreign exchange resources of the Central Bank of Iran will be provided to us," Ra-

biei told a news conference streamed live on a government website.

Rabiei said talks are also underway with Iraq and Oman to release Iranian funds stuck in those countries.

But in Seoul, a South Korean foreign ministry official told reporters: "The actual unfreezing of the assets will be carried out through consultations with related countries, including the United States."

The comment suggests Washington - which is insisting Iran move first in the nuclear standoff - will have a de facto veto on any transfers.

Iran has repeatedly demanded the release of about \$7 billion of its funds frozen (Continued on Page 7)

If talks on a U.S. return to the nuclear deal drag on, that will change, however.

The Iranian Atomic Energy Organization has said that under the new law, if there is still no lifting of U.S. sanctions after three months, it will start erasing the recordings.

If the sanctions are not "fully lifted in the next three months", the data will be "destroyed for good", it said.

Biden has claimed he is ready to revive the nuclear deal but insists Iran first return to all its nuclear commitments. Tehran demands Washington take the first step by scrapping the sanctions because it was the U.S. which first abandoned the nuclear deal.

Over recent weeks, Iran has started enriching uranium up to 20% purity. It is also using advanced centrifuges and producing uranium metal, a component for power generation.

Cabinet spokesman Ali Rabiei outlined further developments in Iran's nuclear program on Tuesday. Over the last three weeks, he told reporters, Iran has installed and started feeding gas into an additional 148 high-tech IR2-m centrifuges at its Natanz nuclear enrichment facility and its fortified nuclear complex at Fordo, bringing the total number of centrifuges to up to 492. Another set of 492 centrifuges will be installed in the coming month, he said.

He added that Iran has installed (Continued on Page 7)

UK, Arab Royals Have Met 200 Times Since 2011

LONDON (Middle East Eye) – Members of Britain's royal family have met with Middle East monarchies over 200 times since the suppression of the Arab Spring pro-democracy protests began a decade ago.

New research by the website Declassified UK shows that there have been a total of at least 217 encounters - almost one a fortnight over the last 10 years.

The Bahraini royal family has had the greatest number of meetings, according to the news website, followed by the House of Saud.

All official meetings are undertaken at the request of the British government, and often overlap with ministerial engagements.

Mutual interests such as horse racing are used to enhance bi-

lateral relations, the website concluded.

However, some of the meetings have been with individuals accused of serious human rights abuses.

The king of Bahrain's son, Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, for example, who has been accused of involvement in the torture of pro-democracy activists, has met members of the British royal family up to seven times, including at one of their homes, Windsor Castle.

Declassified UK says it has identified six occasions in which pro-democracy activists in the Middle East or their relatives have been punished after speaking out against the British royal family's support for autocratic monarchies. (Continued on Page 7)