

Ilhan Omar:

# Saudi, Zionist Regimes Have Too Much Influence on U.S.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – United States Representative Ilhan Omar has said that the country’s foreign policy has been highly and disproportionately influenced by foreign actors such as Saudi Arabia and the Zionist regime, and that money has been a key factor in that influence.

Omar made the comments in an interview earlier this week with the British newspaper the Sunday Times, given ahead of the publication of her book – “This Is What America Looks Like: My Journey from Refugee to Congresswoman” – saying the two foreign actors have used financial means and their lobbies to prevent criticism against their “destructive” policies.

“We know the amount of money and influence and connection that the Saudis have with the administration is re-



U.S. Muslim Congresswoman Ilhan Omar

ally the reason that everything destructive they do is nullified,” Omar stated. “And that really is no different to what’s happening with Israel.”

Throughout U.S. President Donald Trump’s presidency, the Zionist regime and Saudi Arabia have been seen to use their financial leverage and their relationship with his ad-

ministration to significantly impact his foreign policy, resulting in the U.S. overlooking certain actions such as the Zionist regime’s continued building of settlements in the occupied West Bank and Saudi Arabia’s role in the killing of columnist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018.

She added: “There’s an alarm-

ing connection to the really destructive policies Israel is proposing and how much of it is being rubber stamped by this administration. And how much of it is being urged by Americans who have connection and influence with this administration.”

Omar has long been demonized for her criticism of the Zionist regime and the Israeli lobby in U.S. politics, which has increased significantly within the administration of Trump. As a result, she has come under much backlash, having received death threats and heard a Republican candidate calling for her to be hanged.

In the interview, she likened her criticism of the Zionist regime to her criticism of Saudi Arabia, saying: “I talk about Saudi blood money and them being bloodsuckers and no one says ‘This is Islamophobic.’”

## Hezbollah Against Changes to UNIFIL Mandate



UN peacekeepers are on the Lebanese border in the southern village of Kfar Kila, Lebanon, Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2018.

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Leader Lebanon’s Hezbollah resistance movement has expressed his rejection to any change to the mandate of the UN Interim

Force in Lebanon (UNIFL) in Lebanon, Al Noor radio channel has reported.

“The Americans and Israelis have always wanted to make

the UNIFIL operate in Lebanon without coordination and cooperation with the Lebanese army,” Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said during an interview with Al Noor.

“We will not allow any violation of Lebanon’s sovereignty,” Nasrallah added.

The Zionist regime’s envoy to the UN said earlier this month that the Zionist regime wants UN peacekeepers to have access to all sites, adding the UN Security Council must be immediately informed of any block of their freedom of movement.

Meanwhile, Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab emphasized on Wednesday the urgent need for the UNIFIL in south Lebanon, the National News Agency reported.

“Lebanon is in dire need for the presence of the UNIFIL in south Lebanon amid continuous violations by Israel for Lebanon’s sovereignty,” Diab said during his visit to the UNIFIL’s headquarters in Naqoura.

“We are keen on maintaining high cooperation between the UNIFIL and the Lebanese army to create a secure atmosphere for people in south Lebanon,” he added.

The prime minister said Lebanon won’t accept any modifications to the mandate of the UNIFIL in the country.

“The United Nations must force Israel to withdraw from Lebanese occupied territories,” he said, adding that “Israel continues to violate Lebanon’s sovereignty by air, land and sea.”

### As COVID-19 Outbreak Continues

## UN Warns Food Crisis in Middle East, North Africa to Worsen

DOHA (Dispatches) – An ongoing food crisis in the Middle East and North Africa is set to deteriorate further as the COVID-19 outbreak continues to disrupt food supply chains and humanitarian aid efforts, four UN regional directors said in a joint statement on Wednesday.

“Countries in the region already facing food crisis are hit hardest by the pandemic. The pandemic has further exacerbated challenges in Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen in the quantity, frequency and diversity of the food children and families consume,” the statement, which was signed by the regional directors of UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Food Programme, and the World Health Organization, read, World News reported.

According to the United Nations, nearly 40 million people in Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen were impacted by food shortages in 2019,

and the COVID-19 outbreak may exacerbate existing crises or create new ones. Consequently, the UN is calling on the international community to help efforts to ensure food supplies in the region.

“We call on governments, international development partners, donors and the private sector to address the availability, access and affordability of safe and nutritious foods and to protect the nutrition of the most vulnerable families, children, pregnant and lactating women across the region, while implementing the necessary health, prevention and control measures,” the statement added.

Based on data from 2019, the World Food Programme estimated in an April report that 183 million people in 47 countries were at risk of facing a crisis in food availability if another societal, political, or economic shock were to occur.

cused Washington of violating the Syrian sovereignty, urging the international community to pressure the United States to withdraw its troops from Syria.

In another development, terrorists from the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group attacked a settlement in the Syrian province of Idlib, Rear Admiral Oleg Zhuravlev, the head of the Russian Defense Ministry’s center for Syrian reconciliation, said on Tuesday.

He noted that no attacks by Turkey-controlled armed groups had been recorded and that Russian military police units had continued patrolling several routes in the

provinces of Aleppo and Hasakah.

“At the same time, we have registered one attack on the settlement of Maaret Moukhos in the Idlib province from the positions of Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist organization”, Zhuravlev said.

On 5 March, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, agreed on a ceasefire in Idlib, which started at midnight. The sides also agreed to create a security corridor six kilometers (3.7 miles) north and south of the M4 highway in Syria, which connects the provinces of Latakia and Aleppo.

### New ...

(Continued From Page One)

“I hope that in the year that remains for this government we will be able to cooperate and work together,” Rouhani said in the address before the newly formed parliament.

Iran held a legislative election on February 21 and is scheduled to hold a presidential poll in around 12 months.

The 11th legislature since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 opened as the country’s economy gradually returns to normal from the virus outbreak.

In a sign that the fight against the virus is still far from over, however, a seat was left vacant between each deputy.

Rouhani, who is in the final year of his second and final term, called on MPs, collectively and individually, to place the “national interest above special interests”, “party interests” or “constituency interests”.

“The new parliament seeks engagement with the government until the end of its final year while also trying its very best for an improved economic situation,” MP Muhammadreza Ahmadi-Sangar told the Tasnim news agency.

The president defended the performance of his government, which has faced criticism over the handling of the country.

In his speech, Rouhani again denounced what he called the “psychological war” and “economic and medical terrorism” that he said the United States was waging against his country.

But he said the Iranian nation had stood up against “the enemy” and that its resistance had won.

The president praised his government’s performance in dealing with the coronavirus outbreak as a source of “great pride”, adding that Iran was “among the countries that have succeeded”.

Iran’s Health Ministry said on Wednesday that the death toll in Iran had reached 7,564 with 141,591 confirmed cases. All 268 lawmakers who attended the opening ceremony had tested negative for the coronavirus.

“We are among the countries that have been successful in their fight against this dangerous virus,” Rouhani said.

Because of the outbreak, the lawmakers postponed a traditional visit to the mausoleum of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, IRNA news agency reported.

After 69 days, Iran reopened holy sites and shrines across the country but pilgrims have to respect social distancing regulations when entering.

Dozens of Iranian officials have died of the coronavirus, including two lawmakers elected in February.

### South Korea...

(Continued From Page One)

South Korea sent a delegation to Tehran last November and explained that the country would cooperate with the U.S. to successfully complete transfer of the payment, it added.

State news agency Yonhap said last month South Korea had won U.S. approval for the resumption of humanitarian exports to Iran under a special license program, with shipments likely to begin the following month.

But to export medicine, Yonhap cited the strings attached, stating that medical equipment and other humanitarian products, companies and related financial institutions should undertake “enhanced due diligence” to ensure the exports would go to Iranians in need rather than being diverted by the Tehran government.

Yonhap said last week the Unit-

ed States “positively” viewed South Korea’s push to forge a payment mechanism to conduct humanitarian trade with Iran without fears of violating U.S. sanctions on Tehran.

However, Etemad was downbeat. “Despite the promising news, Seoul is still stonewalling the way for Iran to collect the debt,” the paper said.

“According to several informed sources familiar with negotiations between Iran and South Korea, Iran has announced that in order to facilitate the work, it intends to use the financial resources available in South Korea to buy agricultural items as well as medicine – goods which the U.S. Treasury has cleared for purchase,” it said.

However, “South Korea has tied Iran’s hands in choosing how to collect the debt for at least three year, most recently claiming that Iran can use the funds only to buy Korean-made goods for fighting the coronavirus,” the paper added, citing an informed source.

The South Korean proposal, Etemad said, comes while Iran is now fully stocked up on these items and is even exporting medical goods used in fighting the coronavirus.

“According to an informed Iranian source, currently there is need in Iran for medicines to fight special diseases, but South Korea has not agreed to supply them by using the blockaded funds,” it added.

Last month, Iran’s Health Ministry said South Korea had rejected a SWIFT payment request by Tehran for purchase of coronavirus testing kits over the U.S. sanctions.

Under the U.S. pressure, billions of dollars of Iran’s oil money and other funds are held up in several countries.

South Korea was among Iran’s major trade partners before falling in line with U.S. guidelines after Washington withdrew from an international nuclear deal with Tehran in 2015 and imposed unilateral sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Iran was South Korea’s third biggest export market in the Middle East and companies such as Samsung and LG Electronics were among popular brands for TV sets, air conditioners, telecommunications equipment and washing machines.

Last month, South Korea’s Industrial Bank of Korea (IBK) said it had submitted to the U.S. demand to pay \$86 million in fine for processing Iranian transactions.

### Boeing...

(Continued From Page One)

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been greater in the U.S. than on any other country in lives and jobs lost. As the U.S. approaches the grim milestone of 100,000 fatalities from the virus, statistics tell a tragic story of how the virus has disproportionately hit older people, people of color and those with lower incomes.

Almost twice as many men as women are dying of Covid-19, various studies show, including data from New York City’s health department.

Almost three times as many black people are dying of the virus compared to white people and at least 20,000 African Americans have died, according to Amp Research Lab. The virus is twice as deadly for black and Latinos than white people in New York City, preliminary data suggests.

African Americans are 70% of all coronavirus cases in Chicago, which is 30% black, and more than half of the state’s deaths, by early April.