

Beirut Blast May Repeat in Yemen's Aden

SANA'A (Press TV) – Thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate, a highly explosive chemical compound which recently caused a massive explosion in Beirut, are being stored in the Yemeni port city of Aden by Saudi-Emirati occupation forces, a top official warns.

The governor of Aden governorate in southern Yemen says the chemical compound has been stored in Aden since three years ago without finding any immediate solution for use or any measure to keep citizens and their belongings away from possible danger.

Salam warned that the amount of ammonium nitrate stored in Aden is almost twice the amount that blew up the Lebanese capital of Beirut on Tuesday.

Yemen's Al Masirah TV quotes Tariq Salam as saying that the chemicals have been confiscated by the Saudi-led coalition forces and stored in the Aden port, but have been abandoned and now



This file photo shows the building where storing large quantities of ammonium nitrate, a flammable chemical, were kept and caused a massive explosion on Tuesday.

endanger the lives of citizens in case of explosion.

"The forces deployed in this port are responsible for storing this dangerous cargo, which is estimated to include 4,900 tons of ammonium nitrate stored at 130 shipping containers," he

warned.

The storage of such a huge ammonium nitrate cargo in Aden port is much more challenging and dangerous than Beirut, as it is being stored close to residential areas, and that Aden is currently a scene of infighting

among coalition forces.

The Beirut blast, which killed at least 154 and injured over 5,000 others, was caused by almost 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate. The explosion turned Beirut into a "disaster city", and has been described as the second biggest explosion after the atomic bomb that hit Hiroshima, Japan.

The highly explosive material, commonly used in both fertilizer and bombs, had been confiscated by the Lebanese government from the abandoned ship MV Rhosus and stored in the port without proper safety measures for six years.

The blast was detected by the United States Geological Survey as a seismic event of magnitude 3.3, which reached Turkey, Syria, occupied territories, and parts of Europe, and was heard in Cyprus more than 250 km (160 mi) away.

The Lebanese government declared a two-week state of emergency.

In the long term, Foreign Policy said, Iran's strategic proximity to China implies that Tehran is adapting the so-called "Look East" policy in order to boost its regional and military power and to defy and undermine U.S. power in the Persian Gulf region.

"For China, the pact can help guarantee its energy security. The Persian Gulf supplies more than half of China's energy needs. Thus, securing freedom of navigation through the Persian Gulf is of great importance for China."

Saudi Arabia, a close U.S. ally, has now become the top supplier of crude oil to China, as Chinese imports from the kingdom in May set a new record of 2.16 million barrels per day. According to the U.S. magazine, this dependence is at odds with China's general policy of diversifying its energy sources and not being reliant on one supplier.

China's other Arab oil suppliers in the Persian Gulf region have also close security ties with the United States.

"China fears that as the trade war between the two countries intensifies, the United States may put pressure on those countries not to supply Beijing with the energy it needs. A comprehensive strategic partnership with Iran is both a hedge and an insurance policy; it can provide China with a guaranteed and discounted source of energy," Foreign Policy said.

According to the magazine, Chinese-Iranian ties will inevitably reshape the political landscape of the region in favor of Iran and China, further undermining U.S. influence.

"Indeed, the agreement allows China to play a greater role in one of the most important regions in the world. The strategic landscape has shifted since the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq."

Regional developments in recent years, the magazine said, have consolidated Iran's influence and China grasps Iran's position and importance as a regional power in the new Middle East.

China's apolitical approach to the region, it said, aims to utilize Iran's regional power to expand economic ties with nearby countries and establish security in the region through what it calls developmental peace.

U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran in 2018, and the subsequent introduction of the maximum pressure policy, was the last effort by the U.S. government to halt Iran's growing influence in the region. Although this policy has hit Iran's economy hard, it has not been able to change the country's regional and military policies yet, the publication said.

"As such, the newfound strategic cooperation between China and Iran will further undermine U.S. leverage, paving the way for China to play a more active role in the Middle East."

On July 16, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced that Jask Port would become the country's main oil loading point. By placing a greater focus on the development of the two strategic ports of Jask and Chabahar, Iran is attempting to shift its geostrategic focus from the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman, Foreign Policy said.

This would allow Tehran to avoid the tense Persian Gulf region, reduce the journey distance for oil tankers shipping Iranian oil, and also enable Tehran to close the Strait of Hormuz when needed, it said.

"The bilateral agreement provides China with an extraordinary opportunity to participate in the development of this port. China will be able to add Jask to its network of strategic hubs in the region. According to this plan, regional industrial parks developed by Chinese companies in some Persian Gulf countries will link up to ports where China has a strong presence. This interconnected network of industrial parks and ports can further challenge the United States' dominant position in the region surrounding the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz."

A strategic partnership between Iran and China will also affect the great-power rivalry between the United States and China. While China remains the largest trading partner of the United States and there are still extensive bilateral relations between the two global powers, their competition has intensified in various fields to the point that many observers argue the world is entering a new cold war.

"Given the geopolitical and economic importance of the Middle East, the deal with Iran gives China yet another perch from which it can challenge U.S. power," the magazine said.

Meanwhile, Tehran is going to take advantage of ties with Beijing to consolidate its regional position.

"Last but not least, while the United States has been benefiting from rivalry

and division in the region, Chinese-Iranian partnership could eventually reshape the region's security landscape by promoting stability through the Chinese approach of developmental peace," the publication said.

Nagasaki...

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He also urged Japan's government and lawmakers to quickly sign the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

After taking part in the ceremony, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe criticized the treaty for not being realistic. None of the nuclear states has joined, and it is not widely supported even by non-nuclear states, he said.

Abe has repeatedly refused to sign the treaty. He reiterated that Japan's approach is not to take sides but to serve as a bridge between nuclear and non-nuclear states to encourage dialogue to achieve a total nuclear ban. Survivors and pacifist groups say Japan is virtually siding with the U.S. and other nuclear states.

While Tokyo renounces its own possession, production or hosting of nuclear weapons, as a U.S. ally Japan hosts 50,000 American troops and is protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. The post-WWII security arrangement complicates the push to get Japan to sign the treaty as it beefs up its own military to deal with threats from North Korea and China, among others.

An aging group of survivors have expressed a growing sense of urgency to tell their stories, in hopes of reaching younger generations to continue their effort toward establishing a nuclear-free world.

"There is not much time left for us survivors," said Shigemi Fukabori, 89. He was a 14-year-old student mobilized to work at a shipyard when Nagasaki was bombed.

"I'm determined to keep telling my story so that Nagasaki will be the last place on Earth to have suffered an atomic attack."

Fukabori, who almost instantly lost four siblings, said he never forgets the pile of charred bodies, bombed-out street cars and the badly injured desperately asking for help and water as he rushed back to his house in the back of the Urakami Cathedral, which was also nearly destroyed.

Arab...

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Council is set next week to roundly reject the U.S. resolution to extend an Iranian arms embargo, setting up a lengthy showdown with repercussions for the Iran nuclear deal.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Wednesday that the United States would put forward its long-awaited resolution despite ardent opposition from Russia and China as well as its own European allies.

But UN diplomats say opposition to the resolution's current form is so widespread that Washington is unlikely even to secure the nine votes required to force Moscow and Beijing to wield their vetoes.

Diplomats fear the resolution threatens the nuclear agreement. Iran says it has the right to self-defense and that a continuation of the ban would mean an end to the nuclear deal.

The United States has threatened to try to force a return of UN sanctions if the embargo is not extended by using a controversial technique called "snapback."

Pompeo has offered the contested argument that the United States remains a "participant" in the nuclear accord as it was listed in the 2015 resolution — and therefore can force a return to sanctions if it sees Iran as being in violation of its terms.

European allies have been skeptical on whether Washington can force sanctions and warn that the attempt may delegitimize the Security Council.

U.S. ...

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The terrorist group had planned to carry out several high-profile attacks across Iran. They included blowing up Sivand Dam in Shiraz, detonating cyanide-laden bombs at Tehran International Book Fair, and carrying out explosions during mass gatherings at the Mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini.

Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said after the arrest that Sharmahd enjoyed "serious support" from U.S. and Israeli intelligence services. The Intelligence Ministry, he said, had succeeded in foiling 27 operations planned by Sharmahd and his group.

Italian Court Tells RAI TV:

'Jerusalem is Not Capital of Israel'

ROME (Dispatches) – Flavio Insinna, host of the popular Italian TV show "L'Eredità" will have to deliver this statement next time he goes on the air: "International law does not recognize Jerusalem (al-Quds) as the capital of the of Israel."

This official order has been dictated by the Rome Court (Tribunale di Roma) which, on August 5, ruled in favor of two Italian pro-Palestine organizations against Italian national public broadcasting company RAI, according to The Palestine Chronicle.

The story goes back to May 21,

when a TV game show contestant was asked what the 'capital' of the Zionist regime is. The answer "Tel Aviv" was deemed wrong. The right answer, the contestant was told, is "Jerusalem (al-Quds)."

The incident sparked a public debate in Italy. Italian foreign policy remains consistent with international law, which does not recognize al-Quds as the so-called capital of the Zionist regime.

On June 5, the host of the show, Insinna, tried to dampen the controversy, delivering a statement that read in part that "there are

different views on the issue".

However, Italian lawyers Fausto Gianelli and Dario Rossi, representing "Associazione Palestinesi in Italia" and "Associazione benefica di solidarietà con il popolo Palestinese" respectively, decided to take the case to court.

After deliberation, judge Cecilia Pratesi conveyed the much-anticipated ruling: "The Italian State does not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital."

It is well known that on December 21, 2017, Italy voted in favor of a UN General Assembly Resolution rejecting the U.S.

decision to recognize al-Quds as the so-called capital of the Zionist regime, according to the judge.

"It is also well known that the UN itself repeatedly issued its opinion, condemning the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and East Jerusalem (al-Quds), and denying any legal validity to Israel's decision to turn Jerusalem into its capital," she added.

"UN Resolutions", the verdict continued, "have to be considered as conventional law, directly applicable in our legal system."

Zionist Tanks Fire Shells at Gaza Strip

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime's tanks have fired shells at Palestinian resistance sites in the central parts of the besieged Gaza Strip, Palestinian reports say.

On Sunday afternoon, the occupying regime's tanks fired several rockets toward positions belonging to Palestinian resistance movements in the eastern border area of Deir al-Balah City in central blockaded Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Information Center reported.

The regime's military claimed in a statement that the aggression displayed after an alleged shooting attack conducted from the blockaded enclave at Israeli troops stationed in the vicinity of settlement of Kissufim. No injuries were reported in the aggression and the alleged shooting attack from Gaza.

The Zionist regime every so often launches strikes against positions in

the blockaded enclave, accusing the resistance groups there of launching rockets.

Gaza has been under land, air and sea blockade by the occupying regime since June 2007, after Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, which has vowed to resist the Zionist regime's occupation, rose to power in the enclave, where two million people live.

Since then, the regime has been launching incessant aerial attacks on the territory for, what observers call, self-serving reasons. Since imposing the siege, it has also brought Gaza under three wholesale wars, killing thousands of Palestinians in each.

The crippling Gaza blockade has caused a sharp decline in the standard of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty in the strip.

backlash, with many Twitter users denouncing what they deemed as interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon.

While the United States has said it did not rule out an attack, the occupying regime of Israel which has fought several wars with Lebanon, has been at pain to deny any role.

The explosion, however, came in the wake of the Zionist regime's recent military provocations at the Lebanese border and its shelling of villages.

Some Lebanese have touched on comments by Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu shortly before the blast.

After touring a military base in the occupied Zionist city of Ramle on Tuesday, Netanyahu warned, "We will do what is necessary in order to defend ourselves."

Tuesday's catastrophic explosion killed 158 people and injured more than 6,000, destroying parts of the city and compounding months of political and economic meltdown.

The explosion hit a city reeling from economic crisis and the coronavirus pandemic. For many it was a dreadful reminder of the 1975-1990 civil war that tore the nation apart and destroyed swathes of Beirut, much of which has

since been rebuilt.

Iran ...

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since the agreement and its implications go beyond the economic sphere and bilateral relations: It operates at the internal, regional, and global level," it added.

Internally, the agreement can be an economic lifeline for Iran, saving its sanctions-hit economy by ensuring the sale of its oil and gas to China, according to Foreign Policy. In addition, Iran will be able to use its strategic ties with China as a bargaining chip in any possible future negotiations with the West, it said.

"While there are only three months left before the 2020 U.S. presidential election, closer scrutiny of the new Iran-China strategic partnership could jeopardize the possibility of a Republican victory. That's because the China-Iran strategic partnership proves that the Trump administration's maximum pressure strategy has been a failure," it added.

Coup...

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With the U.S. government keeping a tight lid on the flow of the greenback to Lebanon, protesters have repeatedly attacked banks and torched them in Beirut and other cities after they ran out of cash in the face of customers who wanted to convert their deposits to dollars.

President Macron was hosting U.S. President Donald Trump and other political leaders on Sunday for a donors' conference by video to raise emergency relief for Lebanon.

Political analysts have already cast serious doubt on real intentions of the conference. The French leader on Thursday tied any aid to Lebanon to a "new political order" as he paid an uninvited visit to Beirut - as if to a protectorate.

Macron said funding is available for Lebanon, but its leaders first have to implement the kind of reforms which are on the minds of Western leaders.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun dismissed Macron's call for an international probe, stating that such attempts are meant to "dilute the truth."

"There is no meaning for any verdict if it takes too long to be issued and the judiciary must be swift, because belated justice is not justice then," Aoun told a press conference.

Aoun said he personally asked Macron to provide Lebanese officials with any aerial images that would determine whether there were aircraft or missiles in Lebanon's airspace before the catastrophic port blast.

"If the French do not possess such images, we will request them from other nations," Aoun added.

Macron has been accused of trying to reconquer Lebanon rather than help it in the wake of the devastating explosion.

The virtual international donor conference on Sunday was held by the very countries which have brought Lebanon to its current destitution.

Lebanon's Al-Mayadeen television said Macron, in a meeting with President Aoun, threatened Lebanese leaders with sanctions if they do not submit to reforms and a "political change".

"I will be back on September 1, and if they can't do it, I'll take my political responsibility," said Macron.

The remarks sparked an immediate