

# Zionist Nuclear, Chemical Arsenal Biggest Threat to Mideast Peace: Syria UN Envoy

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – The Zionist regime poses the biggest threat to peace and stability in the Middle East by possessing chemical and nuclear weapons in its arsenal, Syria's permanent representative to the United Nations says.

At a meeting of the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security on Friday, Bashar al-Ja'afari, called on the international community to force the regime into opening its nuclear sites to the UN atomic watchdog's inspectors.

"The Israeli occupying regime's arsenal of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons is the biggest threat to the Middle East peace and security. Such armaments have posed a great challenge to global efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation over the past decades, and continue to do so," Ja'afari said.

The Syrian envoy also said the international community has to put pressure on the occupying regime to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors into its nuclear sites.

The Zionist regime is believed to have the Middle East's only nuclear



This picture taken on September 8, 2002 shows a partial view of the Dimona atomic center in the southern Negev desert.

arsenal with 200 warheads. Ja'afari said Syria calls on all UN member states to support attempts aimed at declaring the Middle East a region free from weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological munitions.

"Everyone knows that Syria is a signatory to the Non-Proliferation

Treaty since 1968, and signed the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 1972 as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 2013 respectively. Syria has also welcomed bids and initiatives seeking to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Middle

East," the Syrian diplomat noted. "Back in 2003, Syria submitted a draft resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The U.S. delegation, however, threatened at the time to cast a veto to block the resolution," Ja'afari said.

## Trump... (Continued From Page One)

"I'm going to say, I lost to the worst candidate in the history of politics. I'm not going to feel so good. Maybe I'll have to leave the country, I don't know."

Political action committee The Lincoln Project, which aims to prevent Trump from being re-elected, shared footage of the president's claim, saying: "Promise?"

A record 23 million Americans have already voted with less than three weeks to go until the election.

Trump and Biden are set to battle over several key swing states – Arizona, Georgia, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin – on November 3.

Biden is leading in all of the battleground states, according to polls – but this doesn't guarantee a victory for the Democratic candidate. The 2016 election polls predicted a win for Hillary Clinton over Trump, but she was defeated in the electoral college.

## Russia... (Continued From Page One)

On August 14, the UN Security Council almost unanimously refused to support a U.S.-sponsored draft resolution on extending the arms embargo against Iran, which is due to expire on October 18 under the JCPOA.

During the 15-member Security Council vote, the U.S. received support only from the Dominican Republic for its anti-Iran resolution, leaving it far short of the minimum nine 'yes' votes required for adoption.

The following month, Washington suffered another embarrassing loss as it failed to trigger the so-called snapback provision in the JCPOA aimed at re-imposing all UN sanctions against Iran.

The UN Security Council member states challenged U.S. rationale that it was still a participant state to the nuclear accord, citing its unilateral withdrawal in May 2018.

Speaking during a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the country will be free to trade weapons as of Sunday after the United States failed in its attempts to secure an extension of the embargo.

An Iranian diplomat said Friday the country has "many friends" and partners to start trading in armaments with them in line with its national interests.

"Iran has many friends and trading partners, and has a robust domestic arms industry to ensure its defense requirements against foreign aggression," Iran's UN mission spokesman Alireza Miryousefi told Newsweek.

Miryousefi added, "It is abundantly clear that the UN—and the overwhelming majority of its member states—reject the U.S.' so-called maximum pressure policy on Iran," and that "its attempts to even further violate the JCPOA and UNSCR 2231 have led to its isolation."

Although Iran has not yet formally announced any specific country to start trading arms, Miryousefi said Tehran had options beginning on Sunday.

Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali also said Tehran will use "with prudence" the opportunity that will be provided by the expiration of a decade-old United Nations arms embargo.

"Iran will definitely cooperate with interested countries in the technical-military field and in the procurement of equipment it needs," he told Russia Interfax news agency.

"There will be no limitation for us and we will use this issue with prudence," he added.

The Iranian diplomat emphasized that the country has devised plans for military cooperation, which would be implemented at an appropriate time.

Iran, he said, has suffered hardship in obtaining weapons and military equipment over the past decades, including the time when former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein imposed a war on the country in the 1980s.

"This is the reason that we have increased our capability in the fields of producing military armaments and war equipment and we are completely self-sufficient in many industries."

## Morales... (Continued From Page One)

Morales, Bolivia's first Indigenous president, held office for 14 years and ushered in an era of unprecedented stability and growth in the South American country.

He was seeking to nationalize the extraction of Bolivia's lithium reserves, but was forced to resign last November under pressure from the military and following the opposition's challenging the victory that he had secured in presidential election a month earlier.

The former president, who believes that he was the victim of an orchestrated coup, sought exile in Mexico back then and is currently residing in Argentina.

Now, a year later, Bolivians will head to the polls again on Sunday to elect a new president.

To avoid a runoff in Bolivia's elections, a candidate would need to secure at least 40 percent of the votes in the first round, and have a 10-percent advantage over the closest competitor.

The leading contenders in Sunday's vote are for-

mer economy minister Luis Arce, of Morales' left-wing Movement for Socialism party (MAS), and ex-centrist president Carlos Mesa. Trailing behind in opinions polls are Luis Fernando Camacho, a conservative protest leader, and Chi Hyun Chung, a Korean-born evangelist.

Elsewhere in his interview, Morales defended Arce, saying, "He is not only one of Bolivia's best economy ministers, but also one of Latin America's best. He has a lot of experience in economic management."

He further touched on an offer by the Organization of American States (OAS) to send observers to the election, saying the body should not be trusted.

## Muslims ... (Continued From Page One)

ignorance, sexual and social discrimination.

He was viewed as the savior who became a beacon of hope for those oppressed by the powerful.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) continues to win the hearts of Muslims across different generations, who remember him as the prophet of mercy.

Muslims say they mourn his passing away, but celebrate his legacy of humanity and equality. They believe in a world gripped by all kinds of crises, teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) can be a source of solace.

Muslims find the spiritual occasion of his demise a chance to pray to God to save humankind from the new pandemic.

## Agency... (Continued From Page 2)

Besides the continued threat of WMDs (weapons of mass destruction) as well as the offensive policies of specific states, new threats including the possible weaponization of artificial intelligence, cyberspace, and outer space are emerging," he said.

Iran's envoy further enumerated impediments to nuclear disarmament, including an arms modernization race and a lack of political will by countries to reject a nuclear weapon option.

"Over 14,000 nuclear weapons, costing \$100 billion annually to modernize, maintain and deploy, remain in the arsenals of the nuclear-armed states, and the possibility of their use can result in a catastrophic impact on humanity and the planet. Fifty years after entry into force of the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), and against the clear obligation of NWS (nuclear weapons states) on nuclear disarmament, that nominal commitment is yet to be implemented," he noted.

Takht-Ravanchi warned that the U.S., which is the largest holder of nuclear weapons globally, keeps modernizing its tremendous arsenal.

Washington's withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as well as its lack of the will to extend the New Start Treaty have caused immense damage to international efforts towards non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, he said.

"Just in 2019, the U.S. spent \$36 billion on its nuclear arsenal and confirmed that the latest variant of a low-yield warhead has been 'fielded.' It uses this arsenal to threaten other non-nuclear-weapon states and irresponsibly lowers the threshold of the use of nuclear weapons."

Referring to Israel's nuclear threat, the Iranian diplomat urged the international community to compel the Zionist regime to promptly accede to the NPT without any precondition and place all its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s full-scope safeguards.

"This regime is the only regional obstacle to the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear weapons, a first-ever proposal initiated by Iran in 1974," he said.

Takht-Ravanchi also cautioned against Saudi Arabia's incomplete implementation of the Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement and Washington-Riyadh nuclear collaboration.

"Failure to implement the IAEA's safeguards could allow the Saudi Arabia to hide certain nuclear activities without being subject to IAEA inspections. However, Washington has reportedly given green light to seven U.S. firms to engage with Riyadh in preliminary work on nuclear power ahead of any deal, without any prior-agreement for enforcing non-proliferation norms," he said.

Iran's UN ambassador further expressed deep concerns about the continuous flow of sophisticated offensive conventional weapons into the volatile Middle East, especially the Persian Gulf region.

"In this context, the U.S. is by far the world's biggest exporter of arms to the region and Saudi Arabia has become the world's largest arms importer in the last five years, with an increase of 192 percent compared with 2009-13. Arms imports by Israel also rose (354 percent) in the same period," he said.

Takht-Ravanchi said it is the sovereign right of any state to acquire, manufacture, import and retain conventional arms for its legitimate security needs, saying, "It is in this context that Iran has developed, based on international law, its home-grown defensive missile capability to deter any threat against our country."

## In Latest 'Anti-Corruption' Drive

# Saudi Arabia Goes on Arrest Spree Again

RIYADH (Middle East Eye) – The Saudi regime's so-called anti-corruption body, known as Naza, said in a statement that it had begun almost 900 investigations for criminal and disciplinary cases, including probes into "suspicion over corruption, profiteering and influence peddling of public posts".

Those arrested included four army officers and five defense ministry contractors over suspicion of profiteering in a project.

Another 14 people, including two police officers, were detained over alleged embezzle-

ment and bribery. Some were workers in the Saudi ministries of justice, transport, and human resources.

Authorities also seized funds and real estate assets worth \$160m, the statement said.

Previous waves of detention have been widely condemned by critics and rights groups that accuse Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) of utilizing anti-corruption sentiments to purge potential rivals to the crown or anyone deemed a threat to his rule.

Scores of the kingdom's economic and political elites were detained in 2017 at Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton hotel in a crackdown that unsettled some foreign investors.

The royal court said last year it was winding down that campaign after 15 months, but authorities later said they would start going after graft by ordinary government employees.

Still, in a bid to shore up his rule, MbS has levelled corruption and disloyalty charges against several of his rivals in recent

months, including his predecessor Mohammed bin Nayef. He has also arrested his uncle Prince Faisal bin Abdullah al-Saud, the son of the late King Abdullah.

In September, MbS dismissed princes Fahd bin Turki bin Abdulaziz al-Saud and Abdulaziz bin Fahd from their positions and referred the two to the anti-corruption watchdog for investigation.

The crown prince also sacked a number of senior Saudi security commanders in August over graft allegations at tourism projects.

# EU, Arab League Condemn Zionist Settlement Plan

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) – European countries have condemned the Zionist regime's plan to build thousands of more illegal settlement units in the occupied Palestinian West Bank, a joint statement announced.

"The expansion of settlements violates international law and further imperils the viability... to bring about a just and lasting peace to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," revealed the statement signed by the foreign ministers of Germany, France, UK, Italy and Spain.

"As we have emphasized directly with Israel, this step furthermore undermines efforts to rebuild trust between the parties with a view to resuming dialogue," the statement added.

They called for: "An immediate halt to settlement construction, as well as to evictions and demolitions of Palestinian structures in East-Jerusalem (al-Quds) and the West Bank."

Meanwhile, Arab League (AL) Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul-Gheit in a statement condemned resuming the establishment of new units in illegal settlements by the Zionist regime.

Aboul-Gheit opposed the approval of the occupying regime to build more than 2,000 new settlement units.

He added that the resumption of the settlement works contradicts the claims of the current Zionist administration of seeking "to promote peace and security in the region."

The chairman of the pan-Arab body has called on the international community to bear its responsibilities against the attempts by the occupying regime to build more settler homes.

The Zionist regime approved 2,166 new homes in settlements in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday, for the first time since it halted its West Bank annexation plan.

# Saudi FM Hints at Resolving Qatar Blockade

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Saudi Arabia's foreign minister has signaled progress may be underway towards resolving the three-year-old rift with its Persian Gulf neighbor Qatar, following a meeting in Washington with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

In 2017, Saudi Arabia along with United Arab Emirates (UAE) Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic and trade ties with Doha and imposed a sea, land and air blockade on the gas-rich nation.

"We are committed to finding a solution," Prince Faisal bin Farhan said in a virtual discussion hosted by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think-tank.

"We continue to be willing to engage with our Qatari brothers, and we hope that they are as committed to that engagement.

"But we do need to address the legitimate security concerns of the quartet and I think there is a path toward that" with a solution "in the relatively near future," said Prince Faisal.

"If we are able to find a path forward to address the legitimate security concerns... that drove us to take the decisions we took, that will be good news for the region," he added.

The four blockading nations accused Qatar of supporting "terrorism" and meddling in their internal affairs for years. Qatar has vehemently denied those claims.

Several past attempts to end the dispute have failed, as Qatar has rejected the blockading nations' demands that include shutting down Al Jazeera Media Network, lim-

iting ties with Iran and expelling Turkish troops stationed in the country.

Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani has said that his country is ready for dialogue to resolve the diplomatic crisis, but stressed that any solution to the crisis must respect his country's sovereignty.

In June, Kuwait, a mediator between Qatar and its quartet of Persian Gulf Arab neighbors, said there was progress towards resolving the standoff but little progress has been done.

Last December, Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said early talks with Saudi Arabia had broken the impasse but a month later he said that efforts to resolve the dispute were unsuccessful.