

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said Monday the policy followed by the United States across the world is based on creating chaos and insecurity no matter where in the world it is present. Ali Shamkhani said in a meeting with the visiting head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR), Abdullah Abdullah, in Tehran that destructive policies pursued by the United States in the West Asia region have had no other result for regional nations but war, destruction and backwardness. "The basis of U.S. policy is to foment chaos and insecurity, and it makes no differences whether this policy is implemented in Afghanistan or Iraq," he said.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) -- Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Saeed Khatibzadeh on Monday denied reports of blocked Iranian assets in China.

Speaking at a weekly press conference, Khatibzadeh rejected the "untrue" reports about relations between Tehran and Beijing, saying, "No money is blocked in China." He said, "Many reports are incorrect. We are in constant talks with the Chinese." There are resources in China that are being used for Iran's economic cycle, the spokesman said, adding that those resources are different from the frozen Iranian assets in Japan, Iraq and elsewhere.

Viewpoint

Time for Palestinian Leaders to Recognize Real Friends

Iran's Animation Crowned Best in Polish Festival



Azmoun Chosen AFC National Team Player of Week



Hamas: U.S. Forces Arabs to Stop Supporting Palestinians



Anti-U.S. Party Pulls Off Stunning Comeback in Bolivia

LA PAZ, Bolivia (Dispatches) -- Evo Morales' party claimed victory in Bolivia's bitter presidential election, after the right-wing, U.S.-backed interim president, Jeanine Anez Chavez, conceded defeat.

Sunday's vote, a do-over of last year's questionable contest, proceeded peacefully. That vote ended with longtime socialist President Morales forced out of power into exile in a move akin to a military coup.

Morales, banned from running this time, watched from Argentina as his former finance minister, front-runner Luis Arce, 57, raced to the top of exit polls. Arce is likely to win more than 50 percent of the vote, enough to avoid a November runoff and claim outright victory.

"I congratulate the winners and I ask them to govern thinking in Bolivia and in our democracy," Anez said on Twitter. "We've recovered our democracy," Morales said in brief remarks from exile in Argentina. "Lucho will be our president."

The authorities have up to five days to declare an official winner.

Arce, meanwhile, appealed for calm in the bitterly divided nation saying he would seek to form a government of national unity under his Movement Toward Socialism party.

"I think the Bolivian people want to retake the path we were on," Arce declared around midnight surrounded by supporters, some of them in traditional Andean dress in honor of the country's Indigenous roots.

Arce, who oversaw a surge in growth and a sharp reduction in poverty as Morales' economy minister for more than a decade, will face an uphill battle trying to reignite that growth.

The boom in prices for Bolivia's mineral exports that helped feed that progress has faded, and the new coronavirus has hit the impoverished, landlocked Bolivia harder than almost any other country on a per capita basis. Nearly 8,400 of its 11.6 million people have died of COVID-19.

Anez's government tried to overturn many of Morales' policies and wrench the country away from its leftist alliances. Newly installed electoral authorities barred Morales from running in Sunday's election, even for a seat in congress, and he faces prosecution on what are seen as trumped-up charges of terrorism if he returns home.

Few expect the sometimes-irascible politician to sit by idly in a future Arce government.

Bolivia, once one of the most politically volatile countries in Latin America, experienced a rare period of stability for 14 years under Morales, the country's first Indigenous president.

A boyhood llama herder who became prominent leading a coca grower's union, Morales had been immensely popular while overseeing an export-led economic surge.

He competed in the October 2019 presidential vote, which he claimed to have narrowly won outright. But protests followed, leading to the deaths of at least 36 people amid claims of fraud which he dismissed as baseless.

When police and military leaders suggested he leave, Morales resigned and left the country, along with several key aides. Morales called his ouster a coup.

All seats in the 136-member Legislative Assembly were also being contested, with results expected to echo the presidential race.

Morales led Bolivia from 2006 until 2019 and was the last survivor of the so-called "pink wave" of leftist leaders that swept into power across South America, including Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez.

Arce's victory is bound to reenergize the left, whose anthem of economic justice has broad appeal in a region where poverty is expected to surge to 37% this year, according to the United Nations.

New Ceasefire Unravels as Karabakh Clashes Rage

BAKU/YEREVAN (Dispatches) -- A new ceasefire in the mountain enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh was in jeopardy on Monday with Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenian separatists reporting shelling and heavy fighting in some areas.

Azerbaijan said it had "neutralized" a missile fired by Armenian forces at an oil pipeline in Azerbaijan on Sunday, several hours after the ceasefire went into force.

The ceasefire was agreed on Saturday after an earlier deal brokered by Russia failed to halt fighting that began Sept. 27 - the deadliest clashes in the South Caucasus since the 1990s.

Officials in Nagorno-Karabakh, a breakaway enclave of Azerbaijan that is controlled by Armenian separatists, said Azeri forces were shelling their positions in northern and southern areas of the line of contact that divides them.

They claimed Azeri forces had shelled civilian settlements including the town of Martuni and

Overriding Need of the Hour as Deaths Hit New Record: Countering Coronavirus and Complacency



Iranians, some wearing protective masks, gather inside the capital Tehran's grand bazaar, during the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic crises, on March 18, 2020.

TEHRAN/BRUSSELS (Dispatches) -- Iran on Monday reported 337 deaths from the novel coronavirus in the previous 24 hours, the highest daily tally since February, pushing the death toll in the hardest-hit Middle Eastern country to 30,712.

Health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said that 4,251 new cases were identified in the past 24 hours, bringing the country's total number of identified cases to 534,631.

To fight rising infections, the government has extended restrictions and closures in the capital Tehran, where schools, mosques,

shops, restaurants and other public institutions have been closed since Oct. 3.

Iranian health officials have warned that daily deaths could hit 600 if Iranians failed to adhere to health protocols in public. Mask-wearing has become mandatory in public in Tehran, where the infection rate has been highest and violators would be fined.

Officials plan to impose the same restrictions in other large cities with high infection rates.

"The situation is very critical," said Mino Mohraz, a member of the country's coronavirus task

force who said intensive care units in the capital are full. "There is not an empty bed for any new patient."

On Wednesday, the Health Ministry imposed a travel ban to and from five major cities, including Tehran and the holy city of Mashhad, ahead of a religious holiday.

Iran's health minister called on the police and Basij forces to help enforce virus rules.

Photo enforcement of the mask law has started at traffic lights. In the coming days, Tehran residents caught without masks, who now get off with a warning, may get a cash fine — although at just

500,000 rials, or \$1.60, it remains symbolic.

"Our main goal is not to give tickets but to raise awareness," said Ali Rabiei, the government spokesman.

Europe Tightens Curbs

A raft of European nations including Italy and Belgium took desperate new measures on Monday to try to combat a second wave of coronavirus infections as the worldwide caseload topped 40 million.

The latest global milestone came just hours after the number of people who have died from COVID-19 passed 250,000 in Europe, according to an AFP tally, as the pandemic rampages across much of the continent.

Many governments are seeking to avoid the full-on lockdowns imposed in the first wave as they battle to keep their economies going but in some countries, people are chafing against the new restrictions on daily life.

In Belgium, where hospitalizations rose 100% in just the last week, bars and restaurants were closed on Monday for a month and a curfew will be reinforced overnight.

"Managers, chefs, dish-washers, everyone is suffering," Angelo Bussi said as he put the key in the lock of his Brussels restaurant late Sunday.

"We don't feel like anyone cares. It breaks my heart," he told AFP before shrugging and walking off into

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Abu Dhabi Leader's London Property Empire Exposed

LONDON (Dispatches) -- Abu Dhabi's incapacitated leader has built up what is likely to be the largest property portfolio in the English capital but questions remain as to who currently controls the assets.

The ruler of the UAE presides over a vast London property empire, which could make him one of the UK's richest landowners, a report has revealed.

Documents obtained by the Guardian show that Sheikh Khalifa Al Nahyan's assets range from regular suburban homes to luxury complexes in some of the English capital's most vaunted areas.

The British newspaper says the real estate empire was acquired through the use of a secretive network of shell companies and off-shore accounts, and includes around 170 properties with a total value of an estimated £5.5 billion or \$7.16 billion.

Properties owned by Sheikh

Khalifa include both commercial units, leased to London's hedge funds and banks, as well as luxury blocks in neighborhoods, such as Mayfair, Knightsbridge, and Kensington.

One notable property is home to Ecuador's embassy in the United Kingdom, which was infamously home to whistleblower Julian Assange for years until his eviction and arrest in April 2019.

Sheikh Khalifa's health is the subject of much speculation outside the UAE and there are doubts as to whether the president of the federation has the medical capacity to deal with his personal businesses.

The country's day-to-day running has been handled by the monarch's brother, Crown Prince Muhammad bin Zayed, since Sheikh Khalifa suffered a stroke in 2014. In the rare public appearance he has

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