

U.S. Imposes New Sanctions on Iran
 WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- The United States imposed sanctions on Wednesday on individuals and entities over accusations that they engaged in cyber and ransomware activity.
 The sanctions were part of a joint response by several U.S. agencies, including the departments of Justice and State, the U.S. Treasury said in a statement. The U.S. Treasury said it imposed sanctions on 10 individuals and two entities over the cyber activities.

FM Warns IAEA Board Against Anti-Iran Statement
 TEHRAN -- Iran's Foreign Minister Hussein Amir-Abdollahian said Wednesday any "unconstructive statement" by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors will be "futile".
 His warning during a telephone conversation with his Omani counterpart Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi came as the IAEA board met for a meeting. Amir-Abdollahian stressed that any possible statement against Tehran at the IAEA's 35-nation Board of Governors will be "unconstructive" and "unproductive."

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Divine Wisdom of the 40-Day Period

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"Indeed the earth laments over the death of a true believer for a period of 40 days." (Prophet Muhammad - SAWA)

The Seal of Messengers never says anything by himself, and whatever he speaks are Divinely-inspired words, as testified by the Holy Qur'an in the opening Ayahs of Surah Najm.

So, if the earth mourns for forty days for an ordinary believer, then how about the lamentation for the Prophet's younger grandson and his 3rd Infallible Heir, Imam Husain (AS), who refusing to pay allegiance to a tyrant, courted immortal martyrdom on the battlefield, along his dear and near ones, including sons, brothers, nephews and male companions, in order to keep alive Islam and all humanitarian values?

The answer is provided by the Martyr of Karbala's grandson, Imam Muhammad Baqer (AS), who as a 4-year boy was present in Karbala on the bloodcurdling day of Ashura (10th Muharram 61 AH). He has informed us of the aggrieved state of the sky as well for this same number of days, following Imam Husain's (AS) Great Sacrifice (Zibhin Azeem):

"Indeed the sky lamented over the death of al-Husain for a period of 40 days."

For the skeptics, it should be pointed out that there is Divine Wisdom in the figure of 40, as could be gleaned from the following two Ayahs of the Holy Qur'an, where God Almighty says:

"And when We made an appointment with Moses for forty nights..." (Holy Qur'an 2:51)

"And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights, and completed them with ten [more]; thus the tryst of his Lord was completed in forty nights..." (Holy Qur'an 7:142)

These Ayahs refer to the Divinely-commanded seclusion in worship on Mount Sinai of Prophet Moses.

Those still in doubt regarding the wordings of the Final and Universal Revelation of God for all mankind (the Holy Qur'an) are advised to browse through the Old Testament, where despite the havoc of interpolation over the past three millenniums, it seems certain facts still remain:

"Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights." (Exodus 24:18)

Interestingly, the New Testament also seems to have retained some of the truth in spite of the additions and deletions of the past two millenniums, when it says:

"And when he (Jesus) had fasted forty days and forty nights, he felt hungry." (Mathew 4:2)

Regardless of the fact that the above sentence from the Gospel is a firm refutation of the Christian claim of Jesus being a godson (who should neither have the human appetite to eat nor the need to fast and feel hungry afterwards), it again proves the dynamism behind the figure of forty.

Peace upon you O Aba Abdullah al-Husain (AS). Peace upon the 20-million odd pilgrims converging on your holy shrine in Karbala from all over the world to commemorate your Arba'een on Safar 20 - the 40th day following the anniversary of your martyrdom on the Day of Ashura (Muharram 10).

At a time, when none of the self-acclaimed followers of the Qur'an, the Evangel, and the Torah, have any idea of the Divine Wisdom behind decreeing a 40-day period for sacred missions, each year your mourners, despite the plots of the US, the poisonous propaganda of the Zionists, the sedition of the traitors, and the threats of the dastardly takfiri terrorists, have kept alive God's fixing of this specific period.

Your devotees, to whatever creed they belong, are proud to pay homage to you at your Holy Shrine in what could be called the largest assembly on Planet Earth.

So why do the Zionists, the Salafists, the imperialists, and the Takfiri terrorists, are opposed to our commemoration of the tragedy of Karbala, when the earth and the sky lament for the martyrdom of the grandson of the Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger?

Didn't Imam Husain (AS) by courting martyrdom, rather than acknowledging the illegal rule of a Godless libertine, taught humanity how to stand firm in the face of injustice, moral decadence, and attempts to distort the laws of God?

Isn't the 40-day period for Divine causes, specifically mentioned in the heavenly revealed scriptures?

The answers are obvious. The distractors are against truth, justice, peace, moral virtues, and humanitarian values.

A brief newspaper column cannot do justice to Imam Husain (AS), who along with his elder brother, Imam Hasan (AS), was hailed by the Prophet as "The Two Leaders of the Youths of Paradise" - as confirmed by the authoritative works of even our Sunni brethren.

As the Successor of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), of Imam Ali (AS) and of Imam Hasan (AS), the son of the Noblest-ever Lady Fatema Zahra (SA), he could not endorse Yazid's illegal and ungodly rule, because this would have thrown cold water on not just Islamic teachings but the legacy of the prophets of the past, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

In view of these facts, Imam Husain (AS) had written a lengthy letter to the Omayyad usurper of the caliphate, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan, warning him in advance of the consequences of nominating Yazid as successor in violation of the letter and spirit of the Holy Qur'an and the ethereal teachings of Islam.

Here I cite only one single paragraph from this historic letter that also exposes Mu'awiyah in his true heathen colours:

"O Mu'awiyah! Be prepared for Divine retribution and be sure of the accountability before Allah. Know that the scroll of deeds has a record of every small and big sin. Nothing is omitted from it. Allah will never excuse your act of arresting people on mere suspicion. You wrongly accused the saintly people with baseless allegations and slaughtered them. You made them abandon their houses to be homeless in strange lands. You forcibly extracted allegiance from the people for your drunkard and dog-loving son."

The Day of Arba'een thus refreshes our grief, and renews our aspirations for peace, security, moral virtues and justice when we travel to Karbala, or with faces turned towards this holy city in Iraq, we recite the famous Ziyarah for this day, which is one of the five signs of a true believer. Here is a passage from it.

"And I bear witness that you kept your promise made with Allah, and strived in His way until what was certain came upon you, so curse of Allah be on those who killed you, and curse of Allah be on those who oppressed you, and curse of Allah be on the people who came to know of it and approved (of all of it)."

Iran, Uzbekistan Sign 17 MoUs

President Raisi in Samarkand to Attend SCO Summit



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, left, and his Uzbek counterpart Shavkat Mirziyoyev sign documents for cooperation in Samarkand on Wednesday.

SAMARKAND (Dispatches) -- Iran and Uzbekistan on Wednesday signed a total of 17 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) as the two countries seek to expand bilateral ties.

The documents were signed in a ceremony attended by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, his Uzbek counterpart Shavkat Mirziyoyev and their accompanying delegations of ministers and government officials in the Uzbek city of Samarkand.

Iran's official IRNA news agency said the MoUs would allow Iran and Uzbekistan to boost their cooperation in the fields of trade, cargo transit, cultural exchanges, health and customs issues, among others.

Raisi's website said in a report that Iranian president had hailed the signing of the documents as a major step toward the expansion of economic and trade ties between Iran and Uzbekistan.

He said the two countries can easily increase the size of their bilateral trade by three to four times from a current annual figure of around \$500 million.

The Iranian president has traveled

to Samarkand to attend a key summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Iran applied for SCO membership last year during the bloc's summit in Tajikistan. Reports have said that Raisi will sign a binding document of the SCO membership during the Samarkand summit planned for September 15-16.

The move will pave the way for Iran's full membership in the eight-member bloc, which include Russia and China, in April next year.

During his meeting with Mirziyoyev on Wednesday, Raisi appreciated Uzbekistan's endorsement of Iran's SCO membership bid.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization -- made up of China, Russia, India, Pakistan and four ex-Soviet Central Asian countries -- was set up in 2001 as a political, economic and security organization to rival Western institutions.

The summit set for Thursday and Friday in the Uzbek city is the first entirely face-to-face leaders' meeting since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

"One of the important acts of this summit will be the finalization of SCO (membership) documents and the legal process they will need to take in order to be signed by the foreign ministers of the member countries," Raisi said in Tehran before heading to Samarkand.

Iran, one of four SCO observer states, had applied for full membership in 2008 but its bid was slowed by UN and U.S. sanctions.

At a conference in Dushanbe in September last year, members of the bloc endorsed Iran's future membership.

Tehran wants to "make the most of the economic power and the capacities of the region and of Asian countries for the benefit of the Iranian nation", Raisi said.

The Kremlin said Tuesday that this week's summit in Samarkand will showcase an "alternative" to the West.

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Zionist Officer Killed in Clash With Jenin Fighters

OCCUPIED AL-QUDS (Dispatches) -- Palestinian youths opened fire on Zionist troops near a military checkpoint in the occupied West Bank Wednesday, killing an Israeli army officer, the occupying regime's military said. Palestinian officials said that troops martyred the two gunmen.

The overnight incident was the latest in a string of deadly clashes in recent months in the northern West Bank, where Zionist troops conduct nightly raids. Most of that fighting, including Wednesday's, has taken place near the city of Jenin, which is known as a bastion of Palestinian resistance fighters.

The military said troops spotted the two fighters approaching the occupying regime's separation barrier in the northern West Bank and that it dispatched forces to the area. It said the two men began shooting automatic weapons at troops, who returned fire.

The Zionist army said that Maj. Bar Falah, 30, was killed in the shootout.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported that the occupying regime was holding the

Argentina Releases Iranian in Blow to U.S. Machinations

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) -- Argentine authorities say they have allowed 12 crew members of a Venezuelan plane detained in June at the request of the U.S. to leave.

An appeals court ruled that 11 Venezuelans and one Iranian travelling on board the plane held at Ezeiza airport can depart.

Authorities also called on the judge to conclude investigation into the remaining seven crew within 10 days, local media reports said.

He was ordered to speed up and conclude "all pending proceedings, the definition of the procedural situation and the restrictions imposed on people and things", local daily Perfil reported.

Four Iranians and three Venezuelans will remain prohibited from leaving the country for further investigation of their case, it added.

One of the Iranians prevented from leaving is pilot Gholamreza Ghasemi who had to land his Boeing 747 cargo plane in Argentina on June 8 from Mexico with a shipment of auto parts after unsuccessfully attempting to enter Uruguay.

Both Venezuela and Iran, which signed a 20-year cooperation accord in June, are under draconian U.S. sanctions.

Washington says the sale of the plane to Emtrasur, a subsidiary of Venezuelan state carrier Conviasa, in October 2021 violated U.S. sanctions.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has accused the U.S. of trying "to steal from us a gigantic, modern cargo airplane".

Iran has expertise in flying Boeing 747s because it has a number of them that date from the pre-Revolution era. These older planes are still flying and Iranian pilots have some unique expertise in keeping them aloft and extending their abilities.

The Iranian pilot's son, Hussein Ghasemi, recently said that his father had flown with many airlines in the past, including to Dubai, Damascus, Paris and other cities.

Since the sale of the plane, his father had been assigned by the Iranian Civil Aviation Organization to train Venezuelan pilots.

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