

**Zionist Commander: Iran's Might Has Grown 'Hundred-Fold'**

LONDON (Dispatches) -- A high-ranking former Israeli military commander on Wednesday acknowledged Tel Aviv's inability to carry out acts of military adventurism against Iran's peaceful nuclear program, saying the Islamic Republic's military might has grown "hundred-fold". Major General Yitzhak Brick was cited by the Arabic-language Rai al-Youm newspaper as saying that the Zionist military had decided in 2009 to launch a strike on Iranian nuclear facilities after the regime allocated a four-billion-dollar budget for the aggression.

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# Kayhan International



**U.S. Urges Turkey to Ratify Sweden's NATO Membership**

WASHINGTON (AFP) -- The Pentagon on Wednesday urged Turkey and Hungary to quickly ratify Sweden's NATO membership bid, which has been blocked for months due to a series of disputes with the two nations.

Highlighting the U.S. support for Sweden on a visit, Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin said the U.S. had increased its military presence in the Scandinavian country. Ending two centuries of neutrality and military non-alignment, Sweden and neighboring Finland announced bids to join NATO in May 2022. But while Finland managed to become the 31st member of NATO on April 4, Sweden's bid still faces opposition.

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## Viewpoint

### The Reason Behind US Hatred of the Iranian Nation

### Army, IRGC Reiterate Solidarity to Protect Iran



### Iran Futsal Team Beats Uzbekistan for 2nd Time



### Islamic Jihad Warns Zionists Against Letting Hunger-Striking Palestinian Prisoner Die



## The Glories of Eid al-Fitr

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

"O people! Indeed this day of yours is the day when the righteous are awarded and the wretched are losers. It is a day which is similar to the one on which you shall be standing (before your Lord). Therefore, when you come out of your homes to go to places of your prayer, remind yourselves about the day when you (your souls) shall come out of your bodies to go to your Lord. When you stand on places of your prayer, remind yourselves of your standing in presence of your Lord (on the Day of Judgment). And when you return to your homes (after prayer), remind yourselves about your returning to your homes in Paradise."

The above passage is part of a famous sermon on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, which the faithful celebrate at the end of the blessed fasting month of Ramadhan as thanksgiving to the Lord Most High for having given yet another opportunity to partake of the spiritual delights of the Divine Banquet.

It was delivered during the Special Eid al-Fitr Prayer by no less a personality than the Barometer of Belief, the Leader of the Pious, the Epitome of Eloquence, the Gateway of Wisdom, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS), the Divinely-Designated Heir of the Almighty's Last and Greatest Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (SAWA).

Eid al-Fitr is indeed the icing to the cake of Ramadhan, and no one understands this better than those who in obedience to God's commandment in the holy Qur'an and as practically shown by the Prophet and his Infallible Household, had not just fasted in this month, by giving up food, drinks and other lawful pleasures during the daylight hours, but engaged themselves in acts of welfare and charity amongst families and friends, as part of efforts to build morally upright societies.

Perhaps, those who had indulged in the cardinal sin of not fasting during Ramadhan in spite of being able to do so, and never cared to repent and seek forgiveness in the court of the All-Merciful Lord, may turn a deaf ear to these bezels of wisdom and consequently bear the dire consequences of their folly when their tarnished souls leave their wretched bodies.

The faithful, however, whatever the circumstances, including the adversities of harsh weather and economic difficulties, never give up fasts during the brief life of the transient world, and as a result, are rewarded with the bliss of paradise.

Imam Ali (AS), whose immortal aphorism that "whenever a person hasn't committed a sin it is a day of Eid (rejoicing) for him/her," has further said in his Eid al-Fitr sermon:

"O Servants of Allah! Indeed the minimum reward for those men and women who fasted (during Ramadhan), is an angel, who calls out to them on the last day of the month of Ramadhan (saying): O Servants of Allah! Rejoice at the glad tidings that all your previous sins have been forgiven."

As indicated by the word "Fitr", the Eid starts with the giving of special alms to the poor known as "Fitr" or "Fitriyah" - made up of 3-and-a-half kg of staple diet, such as wheat, rice, barley or date; or its equivalent in money. This is another wonderful example of the spirit of universal brotherhood in Islam, which strives to uplift the status of the poor sections of the society, so that the message of Eid could equally be enjoyed by all classes of people.

In Tehran and other cities, boxes for collecting this special alms are placed at major intersections so as to enable the faithful to fulfill this obligation, before or at the time of the Special Eid al-Fitr Prayer.

In Iran, which unlike the highly flawed systems of monarchy, military rule or liberal democracy, is governed by the dynamic laws of Islam, the Eid al-Fitr Prayer is led in the capital Tehran, by the country's highest religious and political personality, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. As a humble servant of the Prophet and the Infallible Imams, he is blessed with a deep insight and is fully aware of the domestic, regional and international issues. He delivers his sermons to awaken public conscience at home and abroad, and the audiences listen with rapt attention.

The Eid al-Fitr Prayer Sermons of the Leader and other qualified ulema, are thus a golden opportunity for the masses to strengthen their faith or rectify their behaviour by returning to the path of God, and at the same time become better aware of the dangers threatening the homeland and the Muslim Ummah, in view of the plots of the Great Satan, the US, and its devilish hordes, including the illegal Zionist entity.

Unfortunately, this year's Ramadhan witnessed bitter and tragic incidents in the Zionist usurped Muslim land of Palestine, where sanctity of the sacred al-Aqsa Mosque was desecrated by forces of the Israeli regime and murderous gangs of Jews from other parts of the world who have illegally migrated to the occupied Islamic holy city of Bayt al-Moqaddas.

These faithless forces attacked the fasting Muslims praying and supplicating to God Almighty in the blessed month of Ramadhan inside the premises of Islam's third holiest site. As a result scores of Palestinian men and women, including the elderly were injured and hundreds of other were detained and imprisoned. These barbaric acts of racism and terrorism are openly supported by the US.

In Nigeria during the peaceful rally on the occasion of World Qods Day on April 14 in the capital Abuja, the military forces instead of supporting the protests for liberation of Palestine, fired upon their own citizens, martyring some innocent persons and injuring several others, much to the delight of the US and Israel.

Let us pray to God Almighty to deliver Muslims from such calamities and the satanic plots of the Americans, the Zionists, and their devilish agents, who are destabilizing the whole world. Amen.

To end the column here is what Imam Ali (AS) has said in the concluding passage of his famous Eid al-Fitr sermon:

"Remember Allah so that He may re-member you, for indeed He remembers those who re-member Him, and beseech Allah for His mercy and grace, for indeed He does not disappoint those who supplicate to Him."

## Terrified Sudanese Flee Homes as Fighting Rages



Smoke billows above residential buildings in Khartoum on April 16, 2023.

HARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — Terrified Sudanese who have been trapped for days in their homes by fighting in the capital of Khartoum fled on Wednesday, hauling out whatever belongings they could carry and trying to get out of the city, after an internationally brokered truce failed. Explosions shook the city as the army and a rival paramilitary force battled for a fifth day in the streets.

The swift failure of the 24-hour ceasefire, despite pressure from the United States and regional powers, suggested that

Sudan's two top generals were determined to crush each other in a potentially prolonged fight for control of the country. It also underscored the inability of the international community to force a stop to the violence, with millions of people caught in the crossfire.

Residents of multiple neighborhoods in Khartoum told The Associated Press they could see hundreds of people, including women and children, leaving their homes, carrying luggage, some leaving by foot,

others crowding into vehicles. Residents had been desperately holding out in hopes for a halt in the mayhem on their doorsteps, but with food and other supplies running low and no sign of respite, it appeared many had decided to risk making an escape.

"Khartoum has become a ghost city," said Atiya Abdalla Atiya, secretary of the Doctors' Syndicate, who is still in the capital.

Nearly 300 people have been killed in the past five days, the UN health agency said, but the

toll is likely higher, since many bodies have been left in the streets, unreachable because of clashes.

Residents said the military was pounding positions of the opposing Rapid Support Forces with airstrikes since early Wednesday, while gunbattles continued to rage outside the main military headquarters in central Khartoum, which the RSF has tried repeatedly to capture.

The army's monopoly on air power has appeared to give it an edge in fighting in Khartoum and Omdurman, enabling it to take several RSF bases over the past few days. But tens of thousands of fighters from the paramilitary force are fanned out across neighborhoods.

The result has been scenes of chaos. Residents have spoken of armed men looting shops and attacking anyone found on the streets.

"They take whatever they can, and if you resist, they kill you," said Mahasen Ali, a tea vendor. She said many in her south Khartoum neighborhood have left their homes to take refuge in open areas, hoping to be safe from shelling hitting buildings. Others fled the city to stay with relatives elsewhere, she said.

A 24-hour ceasefire was to have been in effect from sundown Tuesday to sundown Wednesday.

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## Russia Calls for Joint Front Against Western Sanctions

CARACAS (Dispatches) -- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called for independent countries to "join forces" against the "blackmail" of Western sanctions, as the longtime diplomat continued his tour of Latin America.

Discussing the war in Ukraine with Venezuelan counterpart Yvan Gil here, Lavrov referred to allies Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua as countries "that choose their own path."

All are, like Russia, the subject of damaging economic sanctions, he said.

"It is necessary to join forces to counter the attempts of blackmail and illegal unilateral pressure of the West," Lavrov said at a joint press conference with Gil.

Russia's top diplomat is on a week-long Latin American tour that started in Brazil and will also take him to Nicaragua and Cuba -- where the leftist governments have hostile relations with the United States.

The White House on Monday -- the same day that President Luiz

Inacio Lula da Silva met with Lavrov in Brasilia -- criticized the Brazilian leader for saying that Washington was "encouraging the war" in Ukraine and that Kyiv shared blame for the conflict.

Lavrov also met with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, who afterward tweeted that it was a "pleasant meeting that strengthened bilateral relations."

At the bilateral level, Russia and Venezuela announced that they have signed agreements regarding oil and mining.

Lavrov later traveled to Cuba whose President Miguel Diaz-Canel visited Russia at the end of November, where he announced he had signed several agreements concerning oil supplies to the island.

Lavrov is expected to make a final stop in Managua, where he will meet with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

Russia and Venezuela reviewed some of their hundreds of bilateral agreements covering the financial, (Continued on Page 7)

## UK Registers Western Europe's Highest Inflation

LONDON (Reuters) -- Britain was the only country in western Europe with double-digit inflation in March after it fell less than expected, official data showed on Wednesday, bolstering bets that the Bank of England will raise interest rates again in May.

Consumer price inflation (CPI) dropped to an annual rate of 10.1%, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said, down from 10.4% in February but well above the 9.8% forecast by economists polled by Reuters and the 9.2% predicted by the BoE in February.

Inflation, which hit a 41-year high of 11.1% in October, continued to eat into the spending power of workers whose pay is rising by less.

Prices for food and non-alcoholic drinks were 19.1% higher in March than a year earlier - the biggest such increase since August 1977 - which the ONS said reflected higher costs for biscuits and cakes, and to a lesser extent chocolate and fruit. Milk and

sugar cost around 40% more than a year ago.

Britain's headline inflation rate is now the highest in western Europe and compares with an average of 6.9% in the euro zone and 5.0% in the United States. Austria recorded a higher inflation rate than Britain in February.

The reading underlined expectations that Britain will suffer high inflation for longer than its peers due to its reliance on natural gas for heating and electricity, and the structure of government subsidies that smoothed out price changes.

The Bank of England also worries that high inflation might lead to a lasting upward shift in wage demands and businesses' pricing strategies, exacerbated by a post-pandemic reduction in its labor force and trade and labor market frictions caused by Brexit.

Core inflation - which strips out volatile energy and food prices - failed to fall as expected and instead (Continued on Page 7)