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British ambassador to Tehran summoned to Foreign Ministry

TEHRAN — British Ambassador Rob Macaire, who was arrested briefly by Iran during demonstrations in Tehran on Saturday afternoon, was summoned to the Foreign Ministry on Sunday afternoon.

The British ambassador was summoned for his "unconventional behavior and presence" in the illegal gatherings, the Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry said he was summoned

to hear Iran's official protest to him and the British government.

The British diplomat was reminded that his presence in illegal gatherings has no conformity with his responsibility as his country's political representative in Iran and that his behavior is in contrast to the 1961 Vienna convention on diplomatic relationship, the ministry said.

It added the British government should provide answers in this regard. **->2**

Iran had no intention to hide causes of plane crash: Shamkhani

TEHRAN — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said on Sunday that Iran had no intention to hide causes of the Ukrainian plane crash on Wednesday.

"From the beginning of the crash, we had no intention to hide its causes," he said during a memorial service for two victims of the crash.

It took time to announce the causes due to necessity to investigate all hypotheses, especially "possible actions of the enemies in jamming", "hack of the systems" and "the issue of infiltration", explained Shamkhani who served as defense minister in the Khatami administration from 1997 to 2005. **->2**

KRG supports Baghdad's decision on U.S. troop pullout from Iraq

The president of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region, Nechirvan Barzani, says the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) supports a decision made by the central government in Baghdad concerning the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from the country.

Speaking in a meeting with Iraq's caretaker Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi in Erbil on Saturday, Barzani highlighted that the KRG throws its weight behind

any decision taken by Baghdad, and that Kurdish officials back the resolution passed by Iraqi lawmakers that calls for the expulsion of foreign forces.

The Iraqi MPs approved the resolution after the United States assassinated Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), and the second-in-command of Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units (PMU). **->10**

EDITORIAL
Mohammad Ghaderi
 Tehran Times editor-in-chief
 @ghaderi62

Trump's terrorist act to derail public opinion

By his wrong calculations, Trump committed a terrorist act against two senior Iranian and Iraqi military officials, and faced the U.S. with another serious challenge.

There are several points regarding the recent terrorist attack that led to the martyrdom of Commander Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, including the timing of the U.S. presidential election and Trump's unfavorable conditions in the domestic arena.

Analyzing Western and Arab media, we come to the conclusion that the U.S. president's terrorist act was purely due to his personal reasons. Since taking office in the White House, Trump has been heavily involved in various issues and cases against himself that have caused a crisis of domestic legitimacy for him and the government.

Some of the cases against the U.S. president are as follows:

The tax evasion case: with some tricks and tax fraud techniques, Trump has been able to multiply the inheritance and wealth left by his father. According to reports, the current U.S. president, along with his brothers and sisters, has hidden millions of dollars of his father's wealth by founding a fake company and has not paid his tax.

The moral corruption case: the case was stated against Trump since the 2016 election, with many people complaining to courts and informing media that they have been sexually harassed by Trump.

According to the reports by Western and American media, many people who have been sexually harassed by Trump were paid hush-money by his lawyers during the 2016 presidential campaign to drop their complaints.

The impeachment case: Trump is the third U.S. president to be impeached among 45 presidents in the country's history.

The House of Representatives reviewed the Trump impeachment inquiry on December 19, 2018 and approved both of the charges of "abuse of power" and "disruption to the investigation process", then submitted the case to the Senate. **->7**

Who is the new Sultan of Oman?

By Farzad Farhadi

TEHRAN — Haitham bin Tariq bin Taimur sworn in as the ninth Sultan of Oman. Haitham bin Tariq was born in 1954 and in some cases served as special envoy to the late sultan Qaboos Bin Saeed.

The new sultan is the cousin of the late sultan and his genealogy goes back to one of the oldest Arab families ruled in the country. He graduated from the Oxford University Foreign Service Program in 1979. The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Political Affairs was among his other executive positions. He was sent to the Arab League Summit in Jordan as Oman's representative during his last mission.

He has previously held various positions, in-

cluding the Chairman of the committee for the future vision of "Oman 2040" and the Minister of Heritage and Culture from February 2002 to January 2020. Haitham bin Tariq also held several posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such as the secretary general and the deputy foreign minister for political affairs. He was the first head of the Oman Football Association from 1983 to 1986.

Unlike the late Sultan of Oman, who had no children, Haitham bin Tariq has four children.

The new sultan was named after request by the Defense Council to appoint Qaboos bin Said's successor.

A few weeks earlier and following the heightened speculations over the worsening physical conditions of Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the Guardian

newspaper released a report on his successor. According to the newspaper, when the physical conditions of the late sultan worsened, he had secretly named his preferred successor in a sealed envelope and submitted it to the royal family council.

The succession process involves the opening of sealed letters in the court in Muscat identifying the sultan's choice of successor, if the court cannot agree among itself.

Qaboos has no children and has not publicly appointed a successor but he secretly recorded his choice in a sealed envelope addressed to the royal family council.

The name of the most important successors of the late sultan was also published earlier. **->7**

Trump repeats Syria intention: U.S. troops are taking the oil

U.S. President Donald Trump has once again revealed his intention to take possession of Syrian oil in what is seen by experts as a move that would amount to a war crime.

Defending his decision to leave some American troops in the war-torn country, Trump told Fox News Friday night that "they say he left troops in Syria... do you know what I did? I took the oil."

"The only troops I have are taking the oil, they are protecting the oil," Trump said, prompting the interviewer, Laura Ingraham, to try to correct him by saying the soldiers were there to guard the facilities. But the president cut her off.

"I don't know, maybe we should take it, but we have the oil. Right now, the United States

has the oil. We have the oil."

Trump has before too publicly mused about stealing Syria's oil reserves.

In October, after ordering the withdrawal of American forces from Syria, Trump said he wanted a U.S. oil firm to go to the Arab country to tap its oil.

"What I intend to do, perhaps, is make a deal with an ExxonMobil or one of our great companies to go in there and do it properly," he said back then.

In a major U-turn in the U.S. military policy, the White House announced on October 6 that the U.S. would be withdrawing its forces from northeastern Syria, clearing the path for an expected Turkish incursion into the region.

Three days later, Turkey launched the offensive with the aim of purging the northern Syrian regions near its border of U.S.-backed Kurdish militants, whom it views as terrorists linked to local autonomy-seeking militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

In late October, the U.S. Defense Department confirmed that "mechanized forces" would be redeployed in eastern Syria to protect oil fields there, a clear departure from Trump's earlier order to pull out all troops from the country.

In November, the U.S. president made it clear that his only mission to keep troops in Syria was to take possession of the country's oil.

"We're keeping the oil. We have the oil. The oil is secure. We left troops behind only for the oil," Trump said. **->10**

ARTICLE
Martin Love
 Political analyst from North Carolina

Protesters in Iran may be bolstering U.S. imperialism

From afar it can be upsetting to hear about protests at some universities in Iran, allegedly spawned by anger over the unintentional downing of the commercial aircraft near Tehran. One can understand the anger over the horrible accident of mistaken identity, but let's get real about this tragic event.

The most important to say is that if anyone blames the U.S. for the accident, they most definitely are not alone. In fact, even a candidate for the White House in November, Tulsi Gabbard, a U.S. House representative from Hawaii and a veteran who has consistently opposed U.S. "wars of choice", has stated that ultimate blame must be placed on the U.S. She is not alone in Congress, as if to say, if Qassem Soleimani and others had not been assassinated, the aircraft would never have been hit by a rocket because a rocket would never have been fired. Which is true.

Iran's military would not have been in such a heightened state of alert over possible attacks by U.S. cruise missiles or whatever. That Iran was in such a hair-trigger state of alert says something quite positive about Iran's defenses, except that someone apparently made a grievous error and mistook the airliner for a foreign intrusion near Tehran. In wars or near wars, mistakes are legion. It's just terribly unfortunate THIS mistake occurred, especially after Iran had so carefully calibrated its superb initial response to the U.S. murders in Iraq. It is even possible the radar "signature" of the Ukrainian airliner might have been altered to appear as something different: the Israelis or the U.S. have the technology to do this, it has been suggested.

Protests, simply that they happen, are a healthy sign that a society that has not become so repressive and totalitarian that citizens are cowed by state power and don't express themselves. Anyone who was around and young during the Vietnam War, and also possibly subject to the military draft, engaged in massive protests and demonstrations against that war, and this was all to the good for they were a major factor in ending that monstrous bout of imperialism. **->7**



Iran volleyball qualify for Tokyo 2020

TEHRAN — Iran eased past China in straight sets (25-14, 25-22, 25-14) on Sunday at the AVC Men's Tokyo Volleyball Qualification tournament to book a place at the 2020 Olympic Games as the best Asian team.

Iran's Mohammad Mousavi scored a match-high 16 points and Chuan Jiang scored 13 points for China.

It was a rematch between two Asian giants since Iran had defeated China 3-0 in Pool A on Thursday.

"I am so happy my players played very nice volleyball, they deserved to represent Asia to play in the Olympics," Iran coach Igor Kolakovich said after the match. **->11**