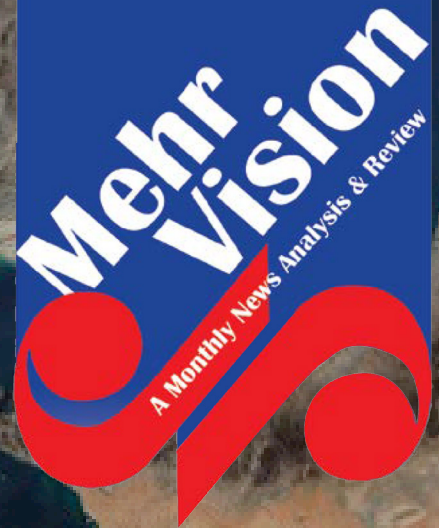
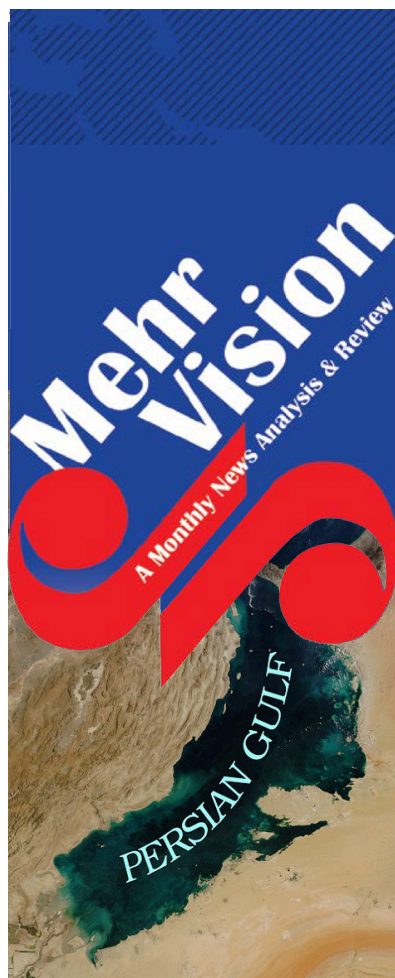


Mehr Vision | No. 16 | September 2019



PERSIAN GULF

# **US Fails in Forming Anti-Iran Alliance in Persian Gulf**



## Contents

### Cover Story

Despite differences PG states able to preserve regional dynamics: Turkish expert	3
Any initiative for PG security must be proposed by regional states: Chinese amb.	5
Israelis playing with fire if join US coalition in Persian Gulf	6
Persian Gulf states in charge of ensuring security in region: Indonesian ambassador	7
Solution to providing sustainable security in Persian Gulf: transition from coalition logic	7
Persian Gulf security in need of no foreign forces: Pres. Rouhani	8
US arms sales make Persian Gulf into 'tinderbox ready to blow up': Zarif	8
US maritime coalition to compromise Middle East security	9
Foreign forces sowing insecurity in region: Iran's UN envoy	9

### Politics

Indonesia interested in exchanging information, defense equipment with Iran	11
Failure in Yemen to be 'death sentence' of Saudi monarchy: Prof. Cavell	12
UAE is talking to Iran because it wants to withdraw from Yemen debacle: Askari	13
Message behind release of Iranian oil tanker	14
'Israel's policies complicate achieving peaceful solutions'	14
Trump at point below zero	15
Top Iranian security official hails retaliatory attack by Hezbollah against Israel	15

### Dossier

It is difficult to expect Iran to renew its commitments: Falk	17
How plans for restraining Iran backfired	18
Will Democrats' return revive JCPOA?	19
If Europe fails to abide by commitments, Iran will further reduce JCPOA commitments	19
U.S. should honor nuclear deal if it wants talks: FM Zarif	20
Iran to firmly take third nuclear step if EU fails again: FM spox	20
Iran to use more advanced centrifuges in third step: nuclear cmte. chief	21
U.S. attempts to find Amano's replacement to serve its interests: Cartalucci	23
Who has the main lead on Amano's death?	23
Was foul play behind IAEA Chief Yukiya Amano's death?	24

### Economy

Will Iranian economy resuscitate from doldrums?	26
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### Culture

21st Iran Cinema Celebration names winners: 'The Warden' picked as Best Film	29
Falak-ol-Aflak: More than just a castle	30
China mulling over facilities for Iranian tourists: amb.	30
Difficult but worthwhile ascent	31
MIKTA-Iran concert stuns symphony audience with surprise setlist	31
Makhunik, Iran's ancient village of dwarves	33
Muharram: In mourning of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Shia Imam	34

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# Despite differences PG states able to preserve regional dynamics: Turkish expert



**Interview by Payman Yazdani**

*Emphasizing significance of the role of regional countries in ensuring the Persian Gulf security, Dr. Bilgehan Alagoz says Despite all the problems between Iran and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, this region has always been able to preserve its own unique dynamics.*

Tensions between Iran and the US in the Persian Gulf region has resulted in recent logical moves and measures of the Persian Gulf littoral states which are based on their national interests and logic of costs and benefits. If the counties' tendency toward getting closer to Iran is not just a short term tactic, this will pave the way to end disastrous war in Yemen and avoid more destruction and massacre in the region.

We reached out to Dr. Bilgehan Alagoz, Lecturer at Marmara University Institute for Middle East Studies, Istanbul to shed more light on the issue.

Following is the text of our interview with her:

**Recently we have seen tensions in the Persian Gulf such as attacks on Japanese ships and etc. Some experts make a relation between the tensions and the US efforts to contain its global economic rivals especially China, Japan and EU. What do you think of this?**

I agree with the opinion that there is a direct connection between the tension in the Persian Gulf and the US efforts to contain its global rivals. In a speech to the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2018, Trump gave the key points of his foreign policy approach, which he called "Principled Realism". In his address to the UN, Trump put special emphasis on China and Iran. Thus, Trump's China and Iran policies are interconnected. Trump's main goal is to contain China, which he regards as the greatest rival for the world economy. In this context, China's

dependence on the Persian Gulf oil is noteworthy. China meets most of its oil needs from both Iran and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. Therefore, the United States has increased its influence in the Persian Gulf through pressuring Iran in order to implement a policy of containment of China. Iran's threat of closing down the Strait of Hormuz and the rise in oil prices are unfavorable developments for China when Beijing enters into the negotiation process with the United States. For this reason, it is necessary to evaluate Trump's successive decisions on Iran and Persian Gulf within framework of this background.

In addition, there is also rivalry between the United States and other actors, namely Japan and the EU regarding Persian Gulf. Trump is critical of the EU's failure to comply with its harsh policy against Iran. Particularly critical of France and Germany on the issue. Finally, French President Macron invited Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif to the G7 meeting, which is being held in France. Considering the fact that, the United States has recently added Zarif in the sanction list, this move of France means a clear difference between France and the US regarding Iran. Japan has a similar attitude with the EU, too. Japan maintains positive ties with Iran but also appease the US.

Therefore, I can say that global actors, China, Japan and the EU, have not yet met the US policy on Iran.

**Accusing Iran of being behind recent tensions in the Persian Gulf, the US has asked for formation of a coalition to maintain security of shipping lines in Hormuz Strait which even many of its close allies have rejected. How successful the US initiation can be? What can be the consequences of such an act while Iran believes the security of the region should be provided by the regional countries without presence of foreigners?**

Despite all the problems between Iran and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, this region has always been able to preserve



its own unique dynamics. Iran and the Arab countries have mostly succeeded in keeping diplomacy active in the Persian Gulf.

During the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the 2003 Iraqi War, or during the period of the highest tension that occurred in 2006-2007, diplomacy has always been the main instrument in the region.

Therefore, I do not believe that the military coalition that the US is trying to form will be accepted by the regional dynamics.

**How successful the US policy of maximum pressure on Iran have been? How diplomatic is the US approach that asks for talks while is sanctioning Iran and even Iran's foreign minister?**

I think at this point we should examine Trump's Principled Realism doctrine in details. The starting point of this approach is based on the refusal of globalization.

The idea of institutionalism that emerged with the concept of globalization is what Trump opposes most.

According to Trump, multilateral agreements involving the US through regional and global organizations operate against the interests of his country.

Therefore, on the axis of Principled Realism, the era of bilateral agreements to which the United States is a party must begin and the US should be a superpower that focuses on protecting its national security and economy, rather than being the country that establishes the security of other states.

This is the core point of his approach towards Iran.

Trump believes that the JCPOA, which is a multilateral agreement, is contrary to the interests of the United States. Thus he aims to make a bilateral agreement with Iran through maximum pressure strategy.

I believe that Iran and the United States will start bilateral negotiations. Trump has repeatedly stated that he does not seek a regime change in Iran, and he mentioned that the only issue he wants to talk about is Iran's nuclear program.

I think this will finally create an opportunity for the two countries to run diplomatic channels.

Next year there will be parliamentary election in Iran and presidential elections in the United States.

So I don't know if the two countries start talking before or after the elections. However, I believe that the talks between the two countries will not be a long way away.

**What could be the message of downing of the US drone and seizure of the UK's oil tanker by Iran for some Arab kingdoms of Persian Gulf?**

We witness a demonstration of power policy between Iran and the USA. It is clear that both actors act as rational as possible. However, the use of hard power instruments creates a risk to regional stability.

Oil sales constitute the most important income of the countries in the region.

It is clear that a serious problem in the Persian Gulf will prevent this. Therefore, it is possible to say that the countries of the region are worried about any conflict between Iran and the USA.

I believe that the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf do not welcome tension between Iran and the USA.

As a matter of fact, the recent increasing diplomacy between Iran and the regional actors confirms that regional actors are

open for dialogue rather than conflict.

**How do you evaluate the Russia's plan for security of the Persian Gulf while Iran insists on providing the security by the regional states?**

Russia has shown a very active foreign policy in recent years. The annexation of the Crimea, its military presence in Syria and the Caspian Agreement signed last Thus he aims to make a bilateral agreement with Iran through maximum pressure strategy.

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Russia has shown a very active foreign policy in recent years. The annexation of the Crimea, its military presence in Syria and the Caspian Agreement signed last year show that Russia has an increasing role in the region.

In this context, relations between Russia and Iran are noteworthy. Throughout the history, Iran has been Russia's gateway to the Persian Gulf.

For this reason, the fact that Russia has security plans for the Persian Gulf directly concerns Iran.

Although the two countries are cooperating on many issues, I believe that it would not be appropriate for Iran to see Russia showing more military presence in the region.

Despite the fact that Russia's involvement appears to be a factor balancing the US military presence, Iran is aware that Russia's security plans for the Persian Gulf will create instability in the region.

For this reason, it would be a more appropriate strategy for Iran to increase contact with the regional actors and to emphasize that the security of the region should be provided by the countries of the region.

# Any initiative for PG security must be proposed by regional states: Chinese amb.



**Interview by: Marjohn Sheikhi**

Chinese ambassador to Tehran, Chang Hua, told Mehr News on Tue. that any projects and initiatives that aim to strengthen security in the Persian Gulf must be proposed and carried out by the regional countries themselves.

The United States has been ramping up pressure against Iran, which has mostly led to escalating tension in the Persian Gulf, following tanker and drone incidents.

On July 19, the US Central Command issued a statement claiming it was "developing a multinational maritime effort, Operation Sentinel, to increase surveillance of and security in key waterways in the Middle East."

On July 30, the US officially asked Germany, Britain and France to participate in a naval coalition to further interfere in the Persian Gulf.

The request was declined by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas a day later, who stressed that there was no military solution to the ongoing standoff in the region.

The call was answered by the UK, how-

ever, whose tanker, 'Stena Impero' has been detained by Iran due to violation of maritime rules and regulations.

Meanwhile, Russia has countered the US proposal for the maritime coalition, saying it is a pretext for Washington to further pressure Tehran and destabilize the Persian Gulf region.

Speaking to Mehr News correspondent on Tuesday while visiting the MNA HQ, the Chinese ambassador to Tehran, Chang Hua, said briefly that "the Chinese side, as President Xi Jinping has said, is hopeful that the Persian Gulf will remain a region of peace and security."

Asked to comment about China's position toward the US' call for the anti-Iran coalition in the Persian Gulf, the ambassador maintained that any projects and initiatives that aim to strengthen security in the Persian Gulf must be proposed and carried out by the regional countries themselves, particularly the Persian Gulf littoral states, through talks and negotiations.

"The Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz are the most critical channel and gateway in the world for transferring energy;

therefore, they are significant for the world's policy-making, security and economy," Mr. Chang Hua added.

He further stressed that the Chinese side is willing to play its part in strengthening the security in the Persian Gulf.

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# Israelis playing with fire if join U.S. coalition in Persian Gulf



**By: Mohammad Ghaderi**

The Zionist regime's recent interest in joining the United States self-proclaimed maritime coalition is expected to stir up tensions in the Persian Gulf region.

Following Washington's proposal to create a military coalition in the Persian Gulf under the pretext of safeguarding the strategic waters, and after the refusal by its allies except for the UK, now the Israeli regime has announced readiness to join the coalition.

Shortly after the announcement, Iran warned the Israeli regime over the consequences of such decision.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi said the Islamic Republic considers possible Israeli presence in a US-led coalition in the Persian Gulf as a clear threat to its national security and reserves the right to counter it within the framework of the country's deterrence and defensive policy. «The US regime and the illegitimate Zionist regime are responsible for all the consequences of this dangerous move,» he added. Israeli foreign minister Israel Katz said on August 7 that the regime would be part of the US-led coalition to "protect the security of the Persian Gulf".

Katz claimed that Israel was determined to stop "Iranian entrenchment" in the Middle East region and strengthen Tel Aviv's relationship with Persian Gulf countries.

The Zionist regime's possible presence in the coalition comes with multiple goals, hence brings various consequences:

1. Containing Iran; one of the main reasons behind the Israelis' interest in joining the coalition is to seize the opportunity to make their wish come true to contain Iran in the Persian Gulf.

2. Accompanying the US in its anti-Iran policies to boost such hostilities.

3. Ensuring the Arab countries' security under the US protective umbrella; although the Israeli regime does not have any navy, the so-called coalition would give it the opportunity to claim its protective role for the Persian Gulf's Arab states.

4. Normalizing ties with Arab countries. Former Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion had once said he was afraid of Arabs' all-out invasion, wishing to normalize the Zionists' relations with them. In the same vein, Katz has expressed hope that the Zionists manage to sign agreements on complete normalization of ties with the Persian Gulf littoral

Arab states as the regime's first step.

5. the possible presence of Europeans, including France and Germany in the coalition will be equal to the violation and complete death of the Iran nuclear deal.

6. The Israelis' presence in the Persian Gulf will foment the tensions and add to the volatility of the region, and will be considered as an element threatening Iran's security; however, Iran has warned that it reserves the right to defend itself against the Zionists' threats.

7. The presence of the mentioned coalition, just like any other trans-regional coalition, is basically against the United Nations Charter. Besides, creating a military coalition against a member-state of the UN will need the organization's permission. According to the UN Charter's Article 52, the international body recognizes establishing regional arrangements to maintain international peace and security. But, firstly the US-proposed coalition is not a "regional" organization since the trans-regional states play the major role in it; and secondly, under the UN Charter's Article 53, the UN Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority, and no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Council.

8. By joining the coalition, the Israelis seek to show Iran as the main threat in the region; that is somehow the Zionists' way of projection to divert the attention from their occupation, which is in fact the main reason behind the region's conflicts.

9. Linking the Persian Gulf security to that of the Bab-el-Mandeb in line with the Saudis' plans is aimed at curbing Iran's regional policies and engaging other international players in the regional developments. This is while the Persian Gulf legal status must be determined by its states, as the right to ensure the safety of vessels in the international waters is reserved for the littoral countries.

10. Establishing a coalition with the leadership of the United States basically means the provision of the grounds for triggering a war in the region and will bring multiple consequences with it.

11. Although the Arab front that had worried Ben-Gurion has been eliminated due to some Arab ruler's parallel policies with the Israelis, the Resistance Front is still making the regime lose sleep.

12. Israelis presence in this coalition will be a clear declaration of war against the Islamic Republic, and any offensive against the Zionist regime in the Persian Gulf will be within the UN Charter's frameworks in order to defend Iran's integrity and security.



# Persian Gulf states in charge of ensuring security in region: Indonesian ambassador



**Interview by Payman Yazdani**

*Indonesian Ambassador Octavino Alimudin in an exclusive interview with Mehr News Agency said his country believes that the littoral states of the Persian Gulf are the main countries to ensure security in the region.*

Following recent tensions between Iran and the US in the Persian Gulf, US Secretary of State Pompeo said that China, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea are heavily dependent on Persian Gulf energy and must defend their own interests in the region. Have the US and Britain invited Indonesia to join the US-led coalition in the Strait of Hormuz?

## What is Indonesia's position in this regard?

When we talk about the security of the region, basically we prefer that the littoral states of the Persian Gulf to be the main, important countries/parties to ensure security in the region. So we expect that the Persian Gulf states to sit together and discuss the issues, including the possibility of foreign countries or organizations to be present and help the littoral states to ensure security in the region.

That is our position and I don't think that we got the invitations to join the coalitions because it is still on the early stage needs discussions. But in the Security Council we also discussed this issue. But again we bring the attentions of all member countries of the Security Council to make sure that region will remain safe. That is the most important thing.

## Solution to providing sustainable security in Persian Gulf: transition from coalition logic

**By: Farid Haeri**

The security of the Persian Gulf region is provided in sustainable form only when solutions to the logic of play with zero algebraic output are put aside.

Following recent unrest in the Persian Gulf, the United States, claiming to establish security in Strait of Hormuz (the largest oil artery in the Persian Gulf), has sought to establish a military alliance in the Persian Gulf to allow precise monitoring of the flow of traffic of oil tankers from different countries around the world.

On that basis, the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, traveled to Saudi Arabia in June to discuss military alliances with Saudi leaders and asked them for help to form a military alliance.

Furthermore, Pompeo named Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as the strategic partners, describing the purpose of forming a military alliance in the Persian Gulf as strict monitoring of oil tankers traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, and that the alliance against Iran should extend beyond the countries around the Persian Gulf, i.e. in Asia and Europe. Shortly after the British oil tanker was seized, US President Donald Trump officially called on the international community to join the US military coalition, but the request has not yet been met.

The Secretary of State, Pompeo, in response to a worldwide negative reaction to this request, personally pursued the matter from each of countries around the Persian Gulf and Europe to convince the international community to join the US military alliance against Iran in the Persian Gulf.

The US request was met only with the slight agreement of countries such as Britain, Australia,



Bahrain and the Zionist regime, and many countries are now unwilling to cooperate with the United States and are proceeding quite conservatively.

Moreover, Some European countries stated that they are not willing to participate in the coalition alone, but that if the European Union is present they will participate. Japan, one of the strongest countries in Asia, has announced that it will personally provide security of its own tankers. These countries are reluctant to break off their relations with Iran and put their policies under the policy of maximum pressure that serves the interests of the United States.

Now the question that comes to mind is whether or not the United States will succeed in this coalition. Certainly the United States, as a global power with the support of Israel, Britain, Bahrain and Australia, will strive to make the Persian Gulf's security "more internationally".

The United States seeks to show Iran as a threat to the world and to enter various countries into the

coalition under the pretext of this matter and thus has invited its allies to join the alliance. Most countries, however, are reluctant to participate in the American puzzle against Iran and do not want to break off their relationship with Iran.

Countries such as Japan, New Zealand and the Netherlands that have economic ties with Iran have responded to the US request ambiguously; these responses indicate that their leaders are not looking for being enemy with Iran.

An important point to note here is that Pompeo, for the first time during his visit to Saudi Arabia, discussed the issue of a military alliance in the Persian Gulf and named Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates as two reliable supporters and strategic partners.

In spite of this matter, none of the two countries accepted to join the coalition. It seems that these two countries are afraid of jeopardizing their interests vis-à-vis Iran and are unwilling to join the coalition.

# Persian Gulf security in need of no foreign forces: Pres. Rouhani



*The aim of US measures in the region is nothing but to plunder the assets of Muslim countries, said President Rouhani, stressing that the Persian Gulf littoral states are capable of preserving the security of their own region.*

In a cabinet meeting, President Hassan Rouhani said the US' calls for forming a new coalition in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman are "superficial" and "impractical", adding "no doubt, no matter how much of these calls is put into practice, it will do nothing to help the security in the region."

The US recently announced plans to form the coalition force to protect shipping in the Strait of Hormuz from what it calls an Iranian threat. The move comes amid Washington's attempts to undermine Iran's oil exports after Trump pulled the US out of the Iran nuclear deal and re-imposed sanctions on Tehran.

The US has officially asked Germany, Britain and France to participate in the coalition, a request that was declined by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas. Japan has also refused to join the force, and France has expressed reservations. However, the UK and the Israeli regime said they would join the coalition.

Rouhani went on to add that "the Islamic Republic of Iran, alongside other Persian Gulf littoral states, is ready to guarantee the security in this region."

"Regional countries, through unity and dialogue, can preserve their own security, and the US' measures and claims won't benefit them in the least," Rouhani stressed.

The president then turned to the claim by the Israeli regime to join the US' coalition in the Persian Gulf, saying "Israelis had better take care of the security of where they are if they can! Although, wherever they had a presence, they brought about nothing but insecurity, slaughter and terror. The main perpetrator of terrorism, war and slaughter in the region is the occupying regime of Israel."

The president then cautioned regional countries against falling into the trap of these claims.

## US arms sales make Persian Gulf into 'tinderbox ready to blow up': Zarif

*Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif has warned against an arms race in the Middle East, saying recent US weapons sales have turned the Persian Gulf region into a "tinderbox ready to blow up".*

Speaking to Aljazeera on a visit to Qatar, Mohammad Javad Zarif also said that more warships in the Persian Gulf would only lead to more insecurity.

"The US [sold] \$50bn worth of weapons to the region last year. Some of the countries in the region with less than a third of our population spend \$87bn on military procurement," Zarif said.

"Let's make a comparison; Iran spent last year \$16bn on all its military with almost one million people in the army.

The UAE with a total population of one million spent \$22bn, Saudi Arabia spent \$87bn," he continued.

"If you are talking about threats coming from the region, the threats are coming from the US and its allies who are pouring weapons in the region, making it a tinderbox ready to blow up."

Zarif's comments come after the United States announced it is working to form a military coalition in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hor-



muz.

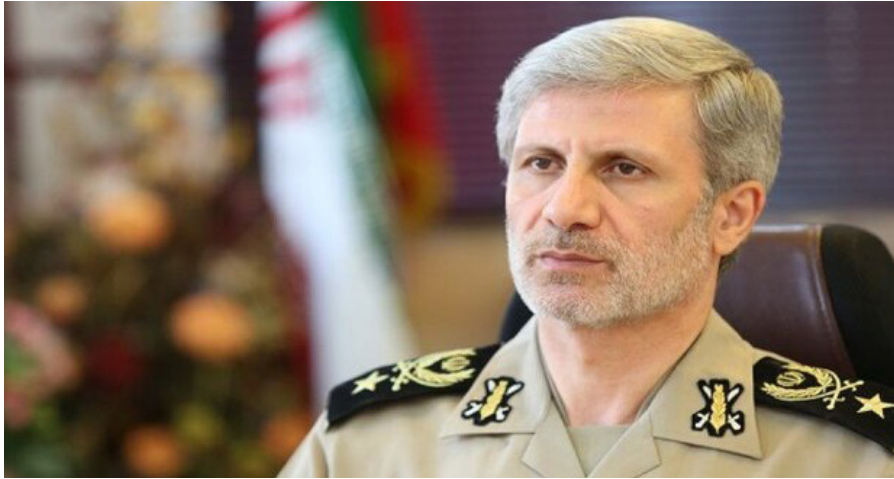
"This is a tiny body of water and the more foreign naval vessels you have in this body [of] water the less secure it is for everybody. Based on experience, the presence of US and foreign naval fleet in the Persian Gulf has never produced se-

curity," he said.

"We believe the best the Americans can do for the protection of maritime navigation is to just leave people alone. Don't interfere, this is a hostile act against Iran and I don't believe any other impact other than insecurity," Zarif added.



# US maritime coalition to compromise Middle East security



*Iran's defense minister criticized the United States' plan to create a military coalition under the pretext of safeguarding strategic waters in the Persian Gulf region, saying such a move would only contribute to undermining the region's security.*

Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami, in separate phone conversations with his Qatari, Omani and Kuwaiti counterparts, discussed the latest developments in the region, especially the US' provocative moves regarding the Persian Gulf security.

During the separate talks, Hatami highlighted Iran's continuous efforts to maintain the peace and security all over the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz.

The Iranian minister stressed that the region's security should be provided by the regional states, calling for a constructive dialogue between the neighboring countries to boost their cooperation regarding the matter.

Noting that the trans-regional powers that have been busy for decades to create rifts between the neighboring countries, Brigadier General Hatami reiterated that the US' so-called coalition, just like its other measures, would bear no result but to increase the tensions in the region.

Washington has developed a plan to create a military coalition escort foreign vessels sailing through the Strait of Hormuz in the strategic Persian Gulf.

However, key Washington allies Germany and Japan have refused to join, and France has expressed reservations about the US' provocative initiative.

## Foreign forces sowing insecurity in region: Iran's UN envoy

Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations says the presence of foreign forces in the region is sowing insecurity and instability in the Strait of Hormuz, reiterating that the responsibility to ensure the security of the Persian Gulf falls upon its littoral states.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks while addressing a UN Security Council meeting on Middle East peace and security challenges in New York on Tuesday.

The Iranian diplomat slammed the deployment of more than 70,000 US servicemen in the region as one the main reasons behind the insecurity and instability in the Middle East, stressing that Washington has an active military presence in all Persian Gulf states except for Iran.

"The number of foreign military installations in the Middle East has jumped from four in 1991 to 41 in 2018.

Nearly all of them belong to the US, which mark the highest concentration of military sites in the world," he said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Takht-Ravanchi referred to the unilateral withdrawal of the US from the 2015 nuclear agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, as another source of instability in the Middle East.

He said the unbridled flow of American weaponry into this region has "turned it into a powder keg."

"The sole beneficiary of weapons stockpiling in the region is the defense industry of exporting countries. We should not ignore the US "divide and rule" mechanism, which seeks to sow seeds of permanent discord among regional states. The Iranophobia remarks by American officials are meant to accomplish such an objective.

"They have leveled unfounded accusations against Iran in order to justify their regional policies, and prevent the country from performing



its role in the region," Takht-Ravanchi said.

"While we are not seeking confrontation, we cannot and will not remain indifferent to the violation of our sovereignty.

Therefore, in order to secure our borders and interests, we will vigorously exercise our inherent right to self-defense," the Iranian envoy added.

Takht-Ravanchi highlighted that Tehran will continue to ensure the security of maritime navigation in the Middle East, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz, adding that the United States' attempts to set up a military coalition in the Persian Gulf to counter what it calls the "Iran threat" will fail.



# politics





# Indonesia interested in exchanging information, defense equipment with Iran

*Indonesian Ambassador Octavino Alimudin in an exclusive interview with Mehr News Agency said Indonesia is interested in exchanging information and defense equipment with Iran to fight terrorism.*

Following is the text of the interview:

**How do you evaluate the current level of economic, political, and cultural relations between Iran and Indonesia? And what steps do you think you have taken to develop relations between two countries during your mission in Iran?**

The two countries are really in good level of cooperation. During the last one year, the vice president of Iran visited Indonesia and also Indonesian Minister of Health and Minister for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection came to Iran.

The two countries have a very steady and developing cooperation in the fields of youth, women's empowerment and health sectors. In general, both countries support each other, and share almost same views regarding to human rights and also multilateral forums since Indonesia currently sits as the non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

We have sent several messages to the international community that we are very close to each other for example we showed our solidarity with Iran in UN security council after terrorist attacks in Sistan and Baluchistan province. Similar to Indonesia, Iranian President H.E. Hassan Rouhani sent many congratulatory or sympathy messages on any notable events happened in Indonesia.

So this year, we are very happy because the Islamic Republic of Iran supported and helped us when we held our election in Iran. Almost 280 or 290 Indonesian people casted their votes in Tehran and Qom successfully because of the support of Iran.

In cultural fields, many Indonesian feel some inheritance of Persian cultures in Indonesia brought by many traders to Indonesia and we have many things in common.

Mayor of our Bengkulu city visited Iran this year and realized that Ashura commemoration is also organized in Bengkulu city. So we plan to invite some Iranian cultural centers to attend the event.

For the first time I landed in Tehran in 2016, we organized some paintings exhibitions. We participated in food festival in Zanjan. We will do cultural events again again this year hopefully by October. We hope we can organize it in a big place.

On the other hand Iran is very good in promoting its movie industry in Indonesia. It organized film festival and cultural exhibition in Jakarta. Iranian embassy in Jakarta is very active in



promoting Iranian culture in Indonesia.

With same efforts by both embassies, we could expect more Iranians and Indonesians know each other about their countries.

We are happy to have participated in Quran Exhibition and Quran reciters competitions this year. It's very difficult to compete with Iran but finally we could win.

We learnt more from Iran and hope in turns you also learn from us and how we deal with some issues for example mitigations of some calamities and natural disasters. We also came to Kish Island and participated in many events in dealing with the catastrophe or mitigation. So we hope we can share our knowledge and experience in many aspects of cooperation.

**How do you see the impact of the US unilateral withdrawal from JCPOA and imposition of new sanctions on Iran and its efforts to halt Iranian oil sales on the trade relations between Tehran and Jakarta?**

When the US withdrew from JCPOA, we didn't get the impact directly. We just get the impact recently. During the first quarter of the 2019, our trade volume could not reach the same level as last year. Right now because of tightening of the unilateral sanctions against Iran, it started to make our entrepreneurs and business community to use third countries. So when we talk about our products, basically the markets are still here. But the way we send or deliver commodities made so longer paths. It is so inconvenience. So we expect the two countries have direct connections in terms of shipment. We will try to find some ways to connect. But at this time, we still use third countries to bring our goods.

**Indonesia is the largest economy in South-east Asia and among the top 20 economies in the world that supplying 38% of its energy consumption from oil and 15% from gas, what is the role of the Persian Gulf energy resources and its importance for the Indonesian economy?**

Basically Indonesia relies on Persian Gulf energy, for example in terms of LPG or crude oil which fit with our requirements. So we need to make sure the Persian Gulf is safe and good for maritime transport and also secure because our fishermen also are hired by some Iranian vessels.

So we need to make sure that the security and safe passage of the Persian Gulf to bring our imported goods or also exported goods. Because we bring our exported good to some countries for example, Oman and Dubai. If we have some conflicts in the region, of course it will affect our distributions.

**Recently a high ranking Indonesian parliamentarian visited Iran and he expressed that Indonesia and Iran are ready to boost the cooperation in the fields of combating terrorism and extremism. What can two countries do to this end?**

We share the same values when we talk about the terrorism. Right now the most important thing is how we defeat the ISIL. It's good that you could combat most of them. So we need to talk about how to avoid the elements, the operatives who are now maybe becoming passive to return to our countries. So we need to share information. On the other hand, we can also see in Indonesia that terrorists are not only from ISIL, we also have some local disturbances, particularly those who are interpreting the Islamic values and Islam in radical ways. We can also disseminate the information and the moderate way of Islam. We have to cooperate to promote Islamic values and peaceful Islam to this end we can arrange some events and seminars together. We have already done some of these activities through our universities.

And we have also talked about the ways to exchange our technology in defense equipment. We are very much interested in remote sensing aeronautical industries in Iran and we also see good opportunities to collaborate in Iran's radar and electronic industries.

**How do you see the future of the US 'Deal of Century' for Palestine? Do you think it will be successful or not?**

We did not participate at Bahrain Summit and we think for the Deal of the Century we have to differentiate firstly the political solutions and secondly the economic solutions. Indonesia thinks similar to Iran in this regards. When we talk about the economic cooperation and assistants we render to our brothers in Palestine, you don't need the Deal of the Century. We contribute to our brothers without showing to everybody that we sent how many million dollars to Palestine. The most important thing is about the political solution. This is the first and foremost target or objective that we need to show. We hope the political solution would be prior to all. We need to make sure that the issue of occupations, illegal occupation should be resolved. The recognition of Jerusalem, capital city of Palestine should be admitted. I think these issues are more important than the Deal of the Century. We do our part and if some other countries want to contribute more, it's OK but political issue should be prior to all.



# Failure in Yemen to be 'death sentence' of Saudi monarchy: Prof. Cavell

**Interview by Mohammad Ali Haqshenas**

*In an interview with Mehr News Agency, Colin S. Cavell, full professor of political science at Bluefield State College in Bluefield, West Virginia, pointed to different aspects of Saudi-waged war against the Yemeni people and Western's countries' continued support for the aggression despite human rights concerns.*

He noted that "Saudi Arabia is bogged down in a quagmire which it will be difficult to extricate itself from but instead will eventually call into question the continued existence of the Kingdom itself."

"Failure on the part of Saudi Arabia to reassert its hegemonic control over Yemen will be a death sentence on the continuation of the Saudi monarchy. A Yemeni victory in their war of independence from Saudi Arabia will provide hope and inspiration for the captive population of Saudi Arabia to rise up and install a legitimate peoples' government."

He also noted that "disparate economic interests" of various countries, including US, UK and France, are why the UN Security Council "cannot agree to stop this devastating war on the people of Yemen." He added that "morality for Trump consists in whether US industries are profitable despite resulting in unparalleled death and destruction."

Here is the full text of the interview:

**UN Secretary-General António Guterres issued a report on Friday, July 26, 2019 noting that the Saudi-led coalition has killed 729 children in 2018 in the Yemen war, deciding to blacklist the coalition for the third year for child-killing crimes. Despite all these human rights reports, we see that western countries are still providing the coalition with weaponry. Why all these reports have failed to stop arms sales of the western countries, especially the Trump administration, to the Saudi-led coalition?**

Currently, there are 193-member states of the United Nations, an International Governmental Organization (IGO) set up in 1945 to prevent another world war from killing millions of people as WWII did. While these 193 members are technically sovereign states, in truth, save for a handful of nations, most members are subservient to other, larger, more powerful states. The UN is a three-tiered organization with the 15-member Security Council able to set policy for the entire organization with the five permanent members of this Council—the United States, China, Russian Federation, France, and the United Kingdom—having a veto on all procedural issues, with ten non-permanent members who serve on the Council for two-year terms (five elected each year), with these ten non-permanent members elected by the third-tiered General Assembly of nations that comprise the majority of the UN. Given this organizational structure, and given the current differences between the five permanent members and their veto power, it has been



near impossible for this international body to agree on stopping the reckless and deadly Saudi-UAE war on the people of Yemen.

The truth-seeking citizen will thus inquire why these five permanent members cannot agree to stop this devastating war on the people of Yemen, and the answer lies in the disparate economic interests of the various states. Specifically, the western states, led by the United States, perceive that their national security interests, require that they have secure and reliable access to energy resources to fuel their industries, and they believe that by politically controlling the energy resources of Iraq and Iran (the two nations of the Middle East with the largest stores of such reserves) will satisfy their national security objectives. Lacking such political control, then the US and its allies wish to deny the viability of these and other large-energy reserve countries—like Venezuela—from being able to function properly.

Given this perspective, it matters not to current US President Donald J. Trump, a quintessential representative of the capitalist economic system and default leader of the western coalition of states, whether the countries leading this assault on the Yemeni people, namely Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, are engaged in a systematic genocide against the Yemeni people, whether their attacks exhibit any sort of proportionality or strategic logic, whether supporting such odious unelected and undemocratic regimes serves long-term US interests, or even whether US aiding and abetting this calamitous war is in violation of international law, given that the US, the UK, and France—all US allies on the UN Security Council—can prevent the UN from stopping this war. However, what does matter to the US president is whether and how this conflict being waged by its two close allies in the Middle East, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and which is urged on and assisted by Israel, the US's closest ally in the Middle East, can benefit the United States economy. President Trump has concluded that the US will benefit if it is able to sell as many weapons and military equipment as possible to these warring parties and thus profit US military industries, which, in turn, will fatten the campaign coffers of President Trump and his Republican Party members of Congress.

In March of 2018, Trump effusively welcomed

the heir-apparent to the Saudi throne and the architect of the Saudi-UAE-led war on Yemen, Mohammed bin Salman (MbS), on his first visit to the White House and promised to push through Congress arms deals worth billions of dollars in investment and additional jobs to the United States. As Trump said at the time, "Saudi Arabia has been a very great friend and a big purchaser of equipment and lots of other things."

Thus, morality for Trump consists in whether US industries are profitable despite resulting in unparalleled death and destruction. Such a moral compass reflects a pole shift in direct contradiction to the morality espoused by either the Koran, the Bible, the Torah, or any other religious text or philosophical code. It is the morality of capitalism, an economic system which currently dominates much of the world and is centrally directed from the United States.

On July 28, 2019, a gunman killed three non-white people attending an annual festival in Gilroy, California. Earlier in the day, he posted on his Instagram account references to a fascist white supremacist manifesto from the nineteenth century which challenges the basis of all Abrahamic religions that call on us all to serve each other, to lift up the weak, the impoverished, the neglected and instead argues for the rights of the strong, the mighty, the wealthy, the powerful. Spurred on by the cultural degeneration of President Trump, what now reigns as morality for US leaders is bullying, arrogance, bragging, excessive pride, and denigration of all those who are not white, wealthy, male, and powerful.

Given this diametrically opposed system of values, it is impossible to for the interested states to mutually recognize what the problem is, much less how to resolve the problem.

**What were the main aims of Saudi Arabia in the Yemen war? And are these aims achieved up to now?**

The Yemeni people rose up in January of 2015 after decades of existing under foreign rulers installed by their neighbor Saudi Arabia and forced then-President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi to resign. When Saudi Crown Prince MbS decided to intervene into Yemen in March of 2015 in an attempt to restore their puppet, Hadi fled the country to the Saudi city of Riyadh, as the Saudi bombs rained down upon the Yemeni revolutionaries forcing them to organize against the imperial intervention that has killed over 70,000 people in the last four years. Seeking to reassert their hegemony over the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia denies the Yemeni people have any legitimate grievances and instead wants the outside world to believe that the Yemeni people are activated and instigated by the country of Iran from across the Persian Gulf. The United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, and other western powers have traditionally relied upon Saudi Ara-

bia as a guarantor of reliable oil and natural gas for western industries and have utilized the Saudi monarchy as a cash machine to bail out their economies from time to time, to launder their ill-gotten gains, and to police the Middle East to serve western hegemonic interests. With thousands dead, Yemen's infrastructure destroyed, financial costs to the Saudis now well over \$100 billion, with its international reputation in tatters even amongst its allies, with MbS's leadership credibility a running joke, with the Yemeni people stronger and more united than ever, Saudi Arabia is bogged down in a quagmire which it will be difficult to extricate itself from but instead will eventually call into question the continued existence of the Kingdom itself.

**Reports indicate that the UAE is planning to withdraw forces from Yemen in several stages. Do you think this withdrawal is a real one or just a tactical strategy? Why has the UAE made this decision, and what are the consequences of such a move on the future of Yemen?**

The United Arab Emirates is very worried that its participation in the Saudi invasion of Yemen will open itself up as a target of Yemeni attacks, just as Saudi Arabia is now being regularly attacked by Yemeni fighters, Yemeni missiles, and Yemeni drones. But, as a junior partner in the Saudi-led axis war against the Yemeni people, it is, in reducing its direct troop involvement in the war, following orders from the imperial directors of this organized carnage situated in Washington and London who are orchestrating the unfolding of this imperial drama. Thus, it appears, at present, to be solely a tactical disengagement from direct fighting in Yemen.

**There are also other reports outlining that Saudi Arabia may have plans to wrap up the Yemen war by the end of 2019. Since Mohammad bin Salman strongly supported aggressive policies of Saudi Arabia, such as in Yemen, do**

**you think that a Saudi defeat in Yemen will change the political fate of bin Salman and Saudi Arabia?**

Failure on the part of Saudi Arabia to reassert its hegemonic control over Yemen will be a death sentence on the continuation of the Saudi monarchy. A Yemeni victory in their war of independence from Saudi Arabia will provide hope and inspiration for the captive population of Saudi Arabia to rise up and install a legitimate peoples' government. Losing its reliable source of energy and financial launderer in the Middle East is why the western hegemonies are so intent on excusing the Kingdom of its crimes from the death and dismemberment of journalist Jamal Khashoggi to the financing of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC.

Born and raised in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Colin S. Cavell earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Louisiana State University in 1982, his Masters of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of New Orleans in 1987, and his Doctorate of Philosophy degree in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Massachusetts in February 2001. Dr. Cavell is a tenured Full Professor of Political Science at Bluefield State College in Bluefield, West Virginia, having previously served as Chair of the Department of Social Sciences. Dr. Cavell is also an Adjunct Professor of Political Science at Holyoke Community College in Holyoke, Massachusetts and has taught at the University of Bahrain in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Junior Statesman Foundation Summer Program at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, Merrimack College in North Andover, Massachusetts, the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Massachusetts, as well as at the University of New Orleans in New Orleans, Louisiana.

## UAE is talking to Iran because it wants to withdraw from Yemen debacle: Askari

Interview by Javad Heirannia

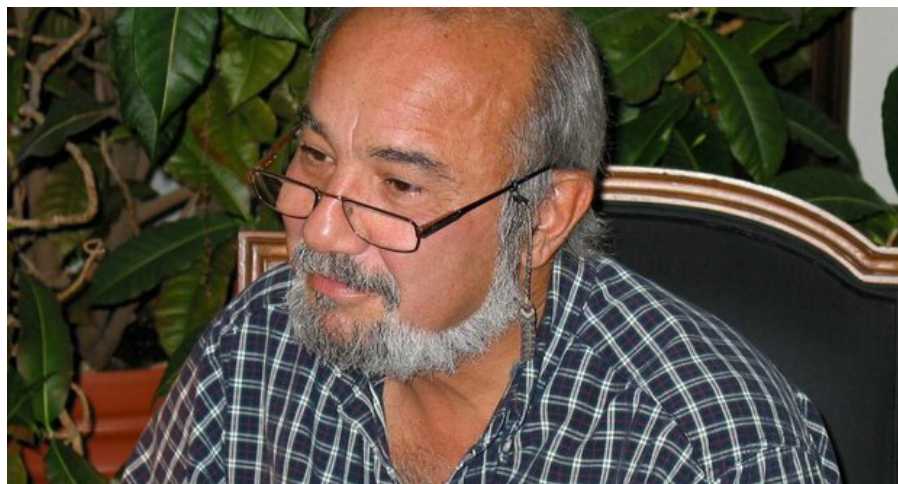
*Professor Hossein Askari, an expert on Saudi Arabia who also teaches international business at the George Washington University, believes that "I think the UAE is talking to Iran because it wants to withdraw from the Yemen debacle and slowly reduce its collaboration with MBS."*

*"If Saudi Arabia is talking with Iran, I think that it is a Saudi initiative," Hossein Askari, who served as special advisor to Saudi finance minister, tells the Tehran Times. Following is the text of the interview:*

There are reports of talks between the UAE and Iran and Saudi Arabia's willingness to talk with Iran on behalf of the US. These reports refer to the recent agreement between Tehran and Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia's willingness to negotiate with Iran. Is this initiative designed by the US?

I think the UAE is talking to Iran because it wants to withdraw from the Yemen debacle and slowly reduce its collaboration with MBS. But if Saudi Arabia is talking with Iran, I think that it is a Saudi initiative.

They don't want to be seen as talking with Iran so they may be saying it is on behalf of the US. I think it would be very dangerous for the US, and indeed for the region, if Saudi Arabia was so designated by the US. Saudi leadership is out of control and they represent the personal interest of MBS. They could say and do things that bring



the region into armed conflict.

Following the US embargo on Iran's oil, some have speculated that the market vacuum is being mainly supplied by Aramco. Can Aramco replace Iranian Oil?

Yes, I believe Saudi Arabia could conceivably ramp up to make up for Iranian oil. But today, I believe that this is also being done by US shale, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi. That is why oil prices have not spiked.

How do you assess the future of the Saudi economy, given that the Saudi economy is heavily dependent on oil?

Well, you are right. Saudi Arabia is still an oil economy—crude oil, some refined products and petrochemicals. They need to diversify. MBS

thinks his 2030 plan will do it but it will not be easy. The Saudi work force has to readjust to no handouts or subsidies but instead education and hard work. But how can you ask the average Saudi to adjust so when the Al-Sauds and their cronies take what they want and live in obscene luxury?

What are the structural weaknesses in the Saudi economy that could threaten its economic outlook?

It is an oil economy with a population that has been raised on subsidies. You can only change things and ask people to change if the Al-Saud and the Saudi elite are willing to change and give up their preferred access to government or public resources.



# Message behind release of Iranian oil tanker

**By: Mohammad Ghaderi**

*The Gibraltar court ordered the Iranian oil tanker Grace 1 to be released. The tanker was seized by the British Royal Marines about a month ago.*

This verdict was the ending of an elaborate game designed by John Bolton National Security Advisor of the United States and Mike Pompeo, carried out by the Britain government.

With seizing the tanker, Bolton was trying to put psychological and political pressures on Iran and force other countries to form a consensus against Iran, but he couldn't fulfill any of these goals.

Iran's firm, logical and wise answer to the seizure of Grace 1 (like making solid legal arguments) and the seriousness of our country's armed forces in giving a proper response to Britain's contemptuous act, made the White House lose the lead on reaching its ends.

Washington imagined that the



seizure of Grace 1 will become Trump's winning card against Iran, but the release of the tanker (despite disagreement of the US) became another failure for the White House in dealing with Iran.

Obviously, London was also a total loser in this game. It is worth noting that US was so persistent about keeping the oil tanker in custody that John Bolton traveled to London and insisted on British officials to continue the seizure of the ship. Their failure, however, clearly shows that the White House and its traditional ally, Britain,

have lost a big part of their power in their relations with Iran.

Clearly, the illegal seizure of the Iranian oil tanker by Britain proceeded by the seizure of a British tanker by Iran and the following interactions between the two countries is not the whole story and there is more to it that will be revealed in coming days.

What we know for sure is that London has to pay for its recent anti-Iran plot in order to satisfy Washington; the smallest of these consequences was that Britain lost some of its legal credibility in international

arena as it illegally captured an Iranian oil tanker.

The order of the Gibraltar court revealed that London had no legal right to seize the Iranian oil tanker and nobody can defend this unlawful action. Surely, Iran will take all necessary legal actions to further pursue the matter.

In this situation, the Islamic Republic of Iran is firm on its position that it doesn't have to follow the sanctions imposed by the European Union on other countries (including Syria).

No entity can undermine this argument as it is based on legal terms; therefore, Iran will keep supporting Syrian nation and government to fight terrorism. This is the strategic policy of the Islamic Republic and will not be changed under the pressure or influence of any other third country.

Finally, it should be noted that the release of Grace 1 oil tanker was not only a legal and political failure for Washington and London and their allies but it was also a strategic failure. Undoubtedly, the vast consequences of this failure will be revealed in near future.

## 'Israel's policies complicate achieving peaceful solutions'

**US Democrat Elizabeth Warren:**

Elizabeth Warren, an American Democratic politician, in an exclusive interview with Mehr News criticized Israeli policies for making it more difficult to achieve peaceful solutions.

Elizabeth Warren, an American Democratic politician from Massachusetts, talked to Mehr News correspondent on the approach of Netanyahu's government toward the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"My first trip abroad as a Senator was to Israel and the West Bank. I believe that it is in the interest of Israel, the Palestinians, and the United States to find a two-state solution with a Jewish, democratic state of Israel existing alongside a state for the Palestinian people," she told MNA.

"Diplomacy between Israelis and Palestinians should determine the final status of Jerusalem," she stressed. "The United States can and should play an active role in promoting a diplomatic resolution that is agreed to by the parties, but neither the United States nor any other outside power can impose a solution."

She said that she had consistently supported a strong US-Israel relationship and US aid to Israel, and she believed that Israel had a right to defend



itself from Hamas and hostile states like Iran.

She went on to add, "At the same time, I have criticized Israeli government policies that make it more difficult to achieve a peaceful solution, from its settlement activity in the West Bank to its use of force in Gaza resulting in civilian casualties."

Accusing the Palestinian leadership of diverting the US assistance, she added, "While the Palestinian people deserve their own state and a viable economy, I believe that the Palestinian leadership

must be held accountable for any US assistance that is diverted to terrorists, and that terrorism and inciting violence are unacceptable."

"I oppose the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. However, I believe that penalizing or outlawing protected free speech activity violates our Constitution," she stressed.

"I remain committed to America's leadership role in helping Israelis and Palestinians achieve a just and lasting peace," Warren maintained.



# Trump at point below zero

By: Hanif Ghaffari

*U.S. President Donald Trump is having a hard time. He lost the trade war with Beijing after three years of trying. Failure to align US businesses, farmers and citizens with Trump policies, along with warnings from US analysts and economists have led the US president to defeat his main economic competitor.*

If the trend continues until next year's presidential election, Trump will surely lose the election. Polls in the states of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Florida, Michigan and Ohio show that the US president has little chance of winning in those states. Even in some US states, like Texas, Trump has little chance of winning.

Undoubtedly, one of the main factors that have reduced Trump's power is his economic defeat against Beijing. The President of the United



States of America is now backing below zero, even before Year 2016. America's trade deficit with China has grown from \$ 346 billion (2016) to \$ 419 billion (2019).

On the other hand, by the end of the 2018, we saw a 7 percent in-

crease in Chinese imports to the United States.

The Chinese have undoubtedly suffered the worst blow to Washington with the clever devaluation of the yuan and its important decision not to buy American agricultural prod-

ucts. However, Beijing has not yet entered US assets in China (worth over a trillion dollars)!

At present, the United States is trying to use all its means to fight China: from insuring Taiwan to interfering with Hong Kong protests and consulting with Tibet! Even the United States is trying to pressure China in the face of the crisis in North Korea. Essentially one of the main reasons for the US's negative and deterrent intervention in the Korean Peninsula, as well as Washington's blocking of direct talks with Pyongyang and Seoul, is confrontation with Chinese power in East Asia.

Finally, the United States will definitely lose the game to Beijing! The cost of a defeat for Donald Trump will be very heavy, and even that could be one of the major reasons for the failure of the US president in next year's presidential election.

## Top Iranian security official hails retaliatory attack by Hezbollah against Israel

*Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani praised the Lebanese Hezbollah movement for its retaliatory attack in response to recent Israeli aggression.*

Rear Admiral Shamkhani described the Hezbollah's retaliatory attack against the Zionist regime of Israel as the manifestation of 'Never to Humiliation' slogan at the start of the mourning month of Muharram.

The top Iranian security official also described the Hezbollah operation in the north of occupied Palestinian lands, during which an Israeli military vehicle was destroyed, as the show of Resistance Front's will to confront rising threats and warmongering policies of destabilizers (US, Israel and their regional allies).

He further described Hezbollah as an authentic, smart and popular movement which acts in defense of Lebanon's national interests.

After the aggression in Lebanon and Syria against Hezbollah forces on September 1, the leader of the Resistance movement Hassan Nasrallah vowed that the aggression would not go unanswered.

Lebanon's al-Mayadeen television re-



ported that Hezbollah militia had destroyed at least one Israeli regime's military vehicle near the border area. Hezbollah said the strike "killed and wounded those inside" the vehicle.

Israeli regime's military confirmed the report saying that several anti-tank missiles were fired from Lebanon, scoring hits, and Israeli forces were responding.

"A number of anti-tank missiles were fired from Lebanon towards an Israel De-

fence Forces base and military vehicles. A number of hits have been confirmed. The Israel Defence Forces is responding with fire towards the sources of fire and targets in southern Lebanon," the IDF said in a statement.

Tensions between Israel and Lebanon began escalating after Beirut accused Tel Aviv of carrying out a drone attack against the media headquarters of political party and paramilitary group Hezbollah.

The image is a close-up, slightly blurred photograph of the Iranian flag. The flag features three horizontal stripes of green, white, and red. In the center of the white stripe is the national emblem, a stylized red sword. Along the borders of the green and red stripes are bands of white Arabic calligraphy. Overlaid on the bottom right of the image is a green rectangular box with rounded corners. Inside this box, the word "Dossier" is written in large, white, sans-serif font. To the right of "Dossier", the letters "JCPOA" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

# Dossier

JCPOA



# It is difficult to expect Iran to renew its commitments: Falk

**Interview by Javad Heirannia**

*Richard Anderson Falk, professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University, says "Both Iran and the United States have rather firm positions."*

Former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights says "It is difficult to expect Iran to renew its commitments, much less strengthen them, under JCPOA, unless the US agrees to roll back present sanctions on Iran in a convincing manner."

He says "In contrast, it is difficult to imagine Trump reducing sanctions unless he can point to some sort of victory that places new restrictions on the international regulatory regime governing."

Following is the full text of the interview:

**US President Donald Trump has driven up the pressure against Iran while at the same time suggested he might be willing to talk to Iranian leaders. How serious he is in this offer? Does he really want to engage Iran diplomatically?**

Trump is impulsive, acts inconsistently, and is almost impossible to interpret accurately in advance of his actions. He seems to view foreign policy choices as transactions with a gain/loss transactional connection as measured by his sense of impacts on domestic American politics.

On balance, it would seem sensible for Iranian leaders to test whether Trump is sincere about a willingness to negotiate a way out of present confrontational diplomacy, but without investing their own credibility or political composure by doing so.

A show of receptivity, perhaps with a condition asserted that hostile actions be suspended with respect to Gulf tanker navigation, might be an appropriate way to see whether there exists a potential opening for restorative diplomacy aimed at crisis resolution.

As the 2020 election gesture, it is important for Trump to talk on the phone or in-person with Iranian officials.

In this regard, some experts believe that he should give special concessions such as oil waivers to Iran so that they come to the negotiation table.

**Do you think that Trump is ready to make any kind of concessions?**

As I have indicated, it is difficult to assess what Trump might be prepared to do if he believes there would be a positive payoff in his 2020 electoral prospects by talking peace directly with Iranian leaders.

On the one side, is Trump's pledge back in 2016 to avoid further American involvement in Middle East wars, and presenting himself as someone who has avoided costly and failed international adventures.

On the other side is the appointment of war-mongering and Islamophobic individuals as his principal foreign policy advisors, Bolton and Pompeo.

Also, Trump's belligerent political personality always seeks to project a tough guy, bullying image in dealing with foreign governments with which there are active conflictual

In that event, the further unraveling of JCPOA confronts Trump with a dilemma, either acknowledging the failure of his approach or escalating the tensions by further escalating tensions with Iran, and risking the outbreak of war.

**We are witnessing French President Emmanuel Macron efforts to convince Trump to rejoin JCPOA. How serious should we take these efforts? Shall we think of them as a US coordinated plan?**

There is no firm evidence to support the view that US diplomacy with respect to Iran



relations.

**It seems as if Trump administration wants Iran to withdraw from JCPOA. Will be the US-Israeli interests better provided in case of Iran's withdrawal?**

It seems that the Trump objective is to reach a new agreement on Iran's nuclear agreement that he can claim gives Israel and Saudi Arabia more assurance that Iran will not have the means to cross the nuclear threshold covertly or in a short period of time.

These supposed concerns were his main argument relied upon in repudiating and withdrawing the US from the JCPOA, and reimposing and extending harsh sanctions. These concerns hide to some extent the real motivations that were to please Israel and repudiate a major achievement of the Obama presidency.

Of course, it seems unlikely that Iran would give Trump such a victory in the context of either revalidating JCPOA or reaching a new agreement.

would cooperate with France in overcoming the present impasse.

As my prior responses suggest, Trump would have to be willing to back down if there is a renewal of the US commitment to JCPOA, or deepen the already dangerous crisis.

I suspect that it is possible that the Macron role might give the parties more time to figure out whether they can find a mutually acceptable face-saving compromise.

Both Iran and the United States have rather firm positions.

It is difficult to expect Iran to renew its commitments, much less strengthen them, under JCPOA, unless the US agrees to roll back present sanctions on Iran in a convincing manner.

In contrast, it is difficult to imagine Trump reducing sanctions unless he can point to some sort of victory that places new restrictions on the international regulatory regime governing Iran's nuclear program as a result of the earlier agreement.



# How plans for restraining Iran backfired

By: Mohammad Ghaderi

*Iran's active resistance and strategic patience have nullified all plans of western opponents to restrain Iran.*

In the latest meeting on Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the western countries stepped back from their previously harsh policies.

It seems that Iran has been successful in restraining the west, as the remaining members of JCPOA Committee stopped talking about using the trigger mechanism.

Based on Paragraph 37 of JCPOA, the trigger mechanism can automatically reactivate previous international sanctions against Iran.

In fact, Europe did not do much to offset the damage inflicted on Iran by withdrawal of the United States from JCPOA, as Europeans had wrongly interpreted Iran's strategic patience as being passive.

Europe though it has nothing to worry about; on the one hand, JCPOA seemed like a good block to Iran's nuclear activities and on the other, US was putting pressure on Iran to stop its economic and political progress and weaken its stance in the region.

With the end of Iran's strategic patience, a new chapter was opened and Iran revealed its new strategy that is active resistance.

Tehran announced that it will gradually decrease its commitment to the JCPOA and gives the other side some time to compensate for its former inactivity.

At first, it was hard for Europe to believe such thing as they had grown accustomed to Iran's patience, but with Iran's threats, Europe woke up from its former ignorance and started threatening Iran.

However, these threats did not change Iran's decision, and Tehran took two major steps in its way toward reducing its commitments to the JCPOA.

Tensions over JCPOA coincided with new conflicts in the region.

Americans did not think that Iran will show a reaction after they drove their spying drone into Iran's territory, but Iran seized the drone and changed all former plans of the West powers.

This time, US president who was under a lot of pressure over the negative public opinion, did not show any reac-



tion out of fear of rising war and thanked Iranians for not targeting a passenger flight.

The capture of the American drone and US inability to give a firm response crucially changed Iran's position in the region and gave Iran a winning edge.

After this, Americans tried to impede Iran's progress by using Britain.

London, who was dealing with its own internal elections, seized an Iranian oil tanker to support the US. Following this incident, London received loads of internal criticism for blindly following US in this game, Iran lost a ship, but Britain lost much more because the country claims to be an international influencer.

After this, other players in the region, including some Arab countries became aware of Iran's new strategy of active resistance.

This was a great distress to these countries as they realized if the West puts extra pressures on Iran or attack the country, they will also have to suffer the consequences.

The West political and economic war against Iran was supposed to crush the country, but Iran's active resistance changed all these plans.

West which was trying to restrain Iran, got restrained itself; now they can neither increase tensions by taking the risk of starting a new war nor can they tolerate the humiliation of being passive and having their powerful image ruined.

Recent incidents not only changed the power balance in the region, but it was also a test for the war option.

The capture of American drone showed that the US, contrary to all its advertisements, is extremely afraid of starting a war, especially now that Donald Trump is on the verge of the new round of presidential elections.

The incident also proved another point, that Iran is not afraid of war.

The West policy for restraining Iran backfired on them and put Tehran in a position to restrain the West.

Finally, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has best describe this situation by saying "there will be no war and no negotiations."

The drone incident proved the first part of this statement and Iran's firm stand so far has proved the second part.

# Will Democrats' return revive JCPOA?

By: Majid Rafiee

We Iranians have a proverb, 'the yellow dog is the brother of the Jackal', that implies "none of these two people is better than the other, both of them are bad and vicious".

Its etymology is as follows:

Once there was a mischievous jackal living in a village, he annoyed people so much that they expelled him from there. But he returned again in disguise and as a yellow dog. Since people had a good opinion about dogs, they accepted him and called him "the Jackal's brother" (because he looked like the jackal).

This time the jackal continued his vicious actions in secret so the people couldn't find out the truth; but in a rainy day, the yellow color was washed off the jackal's body and the people found out the truth, so they said "Oh, look! The yellow dog or 'the jackal's brother' is the jackal himself!"

In this proverb, "the yellow dog" is the symbol for a bad person, and "the jackal" is the symbol for a worse one. Although one of them seems better than the other, in fact both of them are horrible and act vicious. So to the people, there is no difference between them in practice. The difference between the Democratic and Republican parties for Iranian people is like the difference between the yellow dog and the jackal as mentioned in the Iranian proverb above.

Both parties are the same against Iranian government and nation.

In other words, both parties have repeatedly shown their hostility towards the Iranian government and nation as soon as they have come to power.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known commonly as the Iran nuclear deal or Iran deal which includes various clauses and a number of legal attachments for both sides was a good benchmark for testing the honesty of the international community, especially the Americans to verify Iran's nuclear behavior. What has happened so far is that the Iranian side has adhered and implemented JCPOA provisions while the other sides have not fulfilled their commitments under the JCPOA.

To understand that how honest the other signatories to the deal have been, we can refer to change of policy in the US after Republicans took office, Trump's unilateral withdrawal from the deal as well as delay of European to implement the JCPOA.



Here is a question.

Will the dimmed JCPOA be revived if Trump's term comes to end and the Democrats return to the White House? The answer is NO. Just look at the debates going on among the Democratic candidates.

They believe in returning to JCPOA with new terms and conditions including expanding of it to more issues like human rights, missile technology, and ultimately putting more pressure on Iran. All these precondition are not acceptable to Iran at all. In short, there is not enough evidence showing that the JCPOA could be revived with Democrats' return. Remarks of some democrats such as Mark Dubowitz, the CEO of the hawkish Foundation for the Defense of Democracies indicate that return of the White House to the JCPOA without preconditions is impossible. He has recently called on building a strong wall of additional sanctions against Iran so that the wall remain firm even after Trump.

Some of these kinds of statements and request have already come true by imposing new sanctions under the pretext of issues such as terrorism, human rights and missile program.

The new sanctions on Iran's iron, steel, aluminum and copper sectors under the pretext of human rights are example of a new American approach.

Considering all these facts, does anybody still believe that the Democrats' return may revive the JCPOA?

## If Europe fails to abide by commitments, Iran will further reduce JCPOA commitments

Rouhani to Macron:

In his most recent telephone conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron on Aug. 31, President Hassan Rouhani said Iran will further reduce its commitments under the JCPOA if Europe does not abide by its obligations under the deal.

In the telephone conversation, President Hassan Rouhani described Paris's efforts to save JCPOA as serious and said that the media and public opinion attached great importance to Foreign Minister Zarif's recent surprise visit to France's Biarritz during G7 summit.

Saying that Iran's approach is to maintain the JCPOA, the Iranian president stressed "fulfilling the commitments by all parties and guaranteeing the security of free shipping in all waterways, including the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, are two of Iran's major goals in the ongoing negotiations."

He criticized the Europeans for not tak-



ing any practical steps to live up to their commitments after the US withdrawal from the JCPOA and re-imposition of sanctions on Iran. The Iranian president said the full lifting of all anti-Iran sanctions would lay the ground for future negotiations, stressing that if Europe fails to fulfill its commitments, Iran will implement the third phase of reductions in its commitments to the nuclear deal.

He, at the same time, stressed that the

third step will be reversible like the two previous steps.

Rouhani also described the JCPOA agreement as unalterable, stressing that all parties must be committed to its content.

The French president, for his part, said that the Iranian and French experts had achieved good results in resolving the problems ahead and that a meeting would be held this week between the French and Iranian economic experts in Paris.

Macron added the decision to continue talks and solving the problems through negotiations is a proper decision.

He warned that the failure of the JCPOA will embolden many hard-liners in the international arena, adding that "we must look for a solution to secure our mutual interests, and in this regard, France will pursue solving political and economic problems on the way of dealing with Iran and resolve tensions."



# U S should honor nuclear deal if it wants talks: FM Zarif

*Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the US will have to return to its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal and stop its "economic terrorism" against Iran if it wants to meet for talks.*

"The United States is engaged in an economic war against the Iranian people and it won't be possible for us to engage with the United States unless they stop imposing a war and engaging in economic terrorism against the Iranian people," Zarif told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

Zarif was in Malaysia as the third leg of his three-nation Asian tour (China, Japan) to consult with senior officials on "bilateral relations, regional cooperation and cooperation in the Muslim world."

"So, if they want to come back into



the room there is a ticket that they need to purchase and that ticket is to observe the agreement," he said, referring to the 2015 nuclear deal from which the US unilaterally pulled out last year.

Tensions started to build up between the US and Iran after President Trump

withdrew Washington from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018, and imposed sanctions against Tehran in a bid to restrict the country's trade transactions with the world. The Trump administration has been making empty calls for talks, but the Islamic Republic stresses that as long as sanctions are in place and the US refuses to return to the JCPOA, negotiations will be meaningless.

Meanwhile, President Rouhani said in recent comments that the key to "positive developments" is in the hands of Washington, saying as long as the US has not taken the first step to return to the JCPOA and lift all sanctions against Iran, the "door will remain locked."

## Iran to firmly take third nuclear step if EU fails again: FM spox

*Iran has warned the European signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal – the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – that it will not hesitate to take the third step in reducing its commitments under the agreement if they once again fail to meet its demands.*

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Mousavi said the diplomatic efforts to save the agreement are underway, however noting that "should the efforts bear no results and the European parties to the deal [the UK, France and Germany] fail to live up to their commitments, Tehran will take the third step in reducing its obligations under the deal more firmly."

The spokesman referred to the Islamic Republic's active diplomacy in the past weeks regarding the issue, saying that parallel with the 60-day ultimatum to the Europeans for saving the deal, Iran has been preparing itself to take the third step if necessary, and it will not hesitate to do so.

However, he said if the European countries take proper action to live up to their own obligations, Iran may cancel its decision to take the third step.

Iran's top officials have been busy in the past weeks holding talks with European countries as well as their regional and Asian partners to find ways to salvage the deal, which has been undermined since US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from it in May 2018.

In a telephone conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron on Aug. 31, President Hassan Rouhani said Iran will further reduce its commitments under the JCPOA if Europe does not abide by its obligations under the deal.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif visited a number of regional, European and East Asian countries in the past two weeks to talk with the country's partners to find a way to sal-



vage the deal.

Ever since announcing his departure from the deal, Trump has tried to block trade between Iranian and European companies by imposing sanctions that target a wide range of Iranian exports, including its crude oil.

The European signatories of the deal refused to follow Trump's suit and said they would try to salvage the deal by protecting European businesses through a special payment channel, called INSTEX.

Months after unveiling the Europeans' solution to the sanctions, Iran has yet to reap any benefits from it.

Frustrated with Europe's lack of action, Iran announced earlier this year that it would cut back on its JCPOA commitments using the mechanisms defined in the deal if its demands are not met after a 60-day ultimatum that started in May.

As a first step, Iran increased its enriched uranium stockpile to beyond the 300 kilograms set by the JCPOA. Next, it announced that it had begun enriching uranium to purity rates beyond the JCPOA-limit of 3.76 percent.



## Iran to use more advanced centrifuges in third step: nuclear cmte. chief

*Chairman of Iranian Parliament's Nuclear Committee says Iran is ready to use more modern centrifuges in the third phase of scaling back its nuclear deal commitments.*

"In the third phase, we will have many options, including the adoption of advanced centrifuges," Mohammad Ebrahim Rezaei told Mehr News Agency. "While we are still using the old IR1 centrifuges, the more advanced ones, namely the IR6 and IR8 centrifuges, are ready for implementation," he said, adding that the new domestically-manufactured centrifuge machines have the capacity to increase the capacity to enrich uranium 26 to 48 times more than the existing IR-1 machines.

Tehran has rowed back on its nuclear commitments twice in compliance with articles 26 and 36 of the 2015 deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive



Plan of Action (JCPOA). As a first step, Iran increased its enriched uranium stockpile to beyond the 300 kilograms set by the JCPOA. In the second step, Tehran began enriching uranium to purity rates beyond the JCPOA-limit of 3.76 percent.

Iran has said its reciprocal measures will be reversible as soon as Europe finds practical ways to shield the Iranian economy from unilateral US sanc-

tions which were imposed last year when President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal. This is while, according to Rezaei, European signatories of the JCPOA have so far failed to uphold their commitments. They have expressed vocal support for the deal but failed to provide meaningful economic incentives as required under the nuclear agreement.

Tehran has also warned that it may push forward with 20% uranium enrichment and resume previous activities at the Arak heavy-water nuclear reactor in a third nuclear commitment containment.

Rezaei said the Western countries should be aware that Iran slowed down its nuclear developments and halted some of its centrifuges to fulfill its JCPOA commitments, while such measures are "all reversible" and the country will resume them step by step.

## Sanctions part of US foreign policy since beginning of Republic: Nephew

**Interview by Javad Heirannia**

*Richard Nephew, who served as the lead sanctions expert for the US team negotiating with Iran, is of the opinion that "Sanctions have been part of US foreign policy since the beginning of the Republic."*

The fellow at the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University, says that it is harder to see US pressure on Iran "adding up to a resolution of the problems the United States identified in choosing to impose those sanctions, in no small part because Iran may feel that it is unnecessary to respond to only the concerns of one country and an adversary at that."

Following is the text of the interview:

**What is the history of the using of sanction in US foreign policy?**

Sanctions have been part of US foreign policy since the beginning of the Republic. They've been applied against a range of other states and actors, including countries that are now firm US allies like the United Kingdom. To this end, it is worth noting that sanctions have also been a part of many foreign policies. The difference now, I think, is the degree to which the United States can operationalize its global economic position to implement sanctions. But, arguably, other superpowers – for their time – had similar power.

**What is the importance of sanction in US foreign policy?**

It is an important tool in the conduct of foreign policy for creating leverage to resolve problems. All countries seek to build leverage as they enter into negotiations or deal

with conflicts. Sometimes, the leverage is through sanctions. Other times, it is through violence or building up coalitions of partner countries.

**Which preconditions needed for success of sanctions in US foreign policy?**

In my opinion, the conditions are: 1) a clear, well-articulated strategy with identified objectives; 2) a clear understanding of the target of sanctions, its vulnerabilities, and its interests so that sanctions can be tailored to their purpose; 3) international support and, better, cooperation in implementing sanctions; and, 4) a clear linkage to negotiations so that the leverage generated by sanctions can be applied toward a diplomatic settlement.

**For success of sanctions on Iran, you have emphasized on international support and consensus. Do you think without the international support, US imposing sanctions on Iran will not be successful?**

I think that it is much more difficult. I think the United States can generate pressure on Iran and has already done so. I think it is harder to see this pressure adding up to a resolution of the problems the United States identified in choosing to impose those sanctions, in no small part because Iran may feel that it is unnecessary to respond to only the concerns of one country and an adversary at that.

**Dollar is a useful instrument in imposing sanction by US. what is your opinion about this? Can dollar remain as a useful instrument in imposing sanction by US in the future?**

The dollar is less a useful instrument than



it is a resource that countries, banks, and companies want to use. By threatening to withhold access to the dollar (and, more importantly, access to the United States economy), the United States can make it harder to resist its policy choices. The key factor in its continuing utility is the degree to which people, companies, and banks want to do business in the United States and how ready they are to walk away from that in order to do business with US-sanctioned targets. Thus far, we are not seeing that in large scale. As time moves on, we may.

**Regardless of the result, INSTEX is a try by Iran and other countries for evading the SWIFT and dollar base mechanism's role. Do you think that dollar based mechanism will be weakened in the future?**

It may, but it won't be because of INSTEX. INSTEX may work or it may not, but the value of the dollar – and, again, more importantly, the value of the US economy and access to it – remains high for international business. So long as that remains important to international business, it will be hard for foreign companies, banks, and governments to ignore US policy demands.

**Dossier:**

# **Suspicious death of IAEA chief Yukiya Amano**





# US attempts to find Amano's replacement to serve its interests: Cartalucci

**Interview by Payman Yazdani**

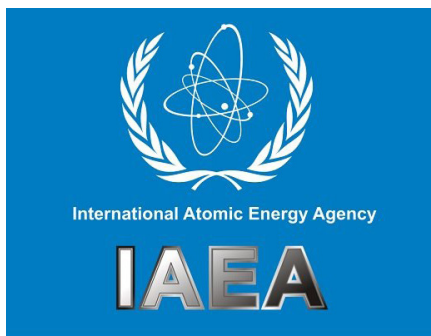
*Referring to Yukiya Amano's death and the US attempts to find a replacement to serve Washington's interests Cartalucci says Tehran must expect the worst and prepare for it while attempting to maintain diplomatic and strategic patience for as long as possible*

Yukiya Amano, who led the International Atomic Energy Agency for a decade and was extensively involved in negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, died at the age of 72. He was heavily involved in the years-long negotiations that led to the landmark Iran nuclear deal.

Under the agreement, reached between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries in 2015, Tehran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions.

United States President Donald Trump, however, withdrew Washington from the landmark agreement last May and decided to re-impose what it described as the "toughest" sanctions ever against Tehran.

The news of Amano's death comes at a time of increasing concerns and escalat-



ing tensions between US and Iran, with Washington and Tel Aviv having failed to create a crisis in Iran's cooperation with the UN atomic agency which has repeatedly confirmed the peaceful nature of the country's nuclear program.

There are some speculations about Mr. Amano's (head of IAEA) death. Some reports say his death and replacement of him by an American close to Trump administration and Israel is very suspicious and can be interpreted in line of Israel and the US efforts to affect IAEA reports on Iran's nuclear activity.

In this regards, Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher Anthony Cartalucci said in an interview with Mehr News Agency that International Atomic Ener-

gy Agency chief Yukiya Amano was advanced in age, so his death was not in and of itself suspicious.

Meanwhile Cartalucci said, "The US and its partners including Israel will undoubtedly attempt to find a replacement that serve their own interests rather than the IAEA's actual mandate."

"However, it should be noted that Washington, London, and Brussels' serial abuse of international institutions like the United Nations and the IAEA have undermined the credibility of both and their efficacy not only to perform their stated missions, but to serve the interests of those trying to abuse them", he added.

He went on to say, "finally, it should be warned that Washington has reached a point of desperation in regards to Iran and other nations it sees as a threat to its global primacy".

Cartalucci added, "Tehran must expect the worst and prepare for it while attempting to maintain diplomatic and strategic patience for as long as possible. Empires do not disappear overnight nor do they usually disappear quietly. The United States and its global network of power and influence is no exception."

## Who has the main lead on Amano's death?

**By: Hanif Ghaffari**

*The sudden death of Yukiya Amano, the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) left many in shock.*

American and Zionist officials are now trying to make his death seem natural, but the sudden appearance of symptoms and his quick death is very suspicious, especially at a time when both Washington and Tel Aviv were quite unsatisfied with him leading the UN nuclear watchdog.

A year before Amano's death, something happened that might lead us to find traces of involvement of American and Zionist intelligence services in this case.

In May 2018, right at the peak of international controversies over the sudden withdrawal of the United States from Iran nuclear deal, the Head of IAEA's Inspection and Supervision Department abruptly announced that he is resigning from his position.

Tero Varjoranta was a Finnish diplomat who worked as Deputy Director-General of the IAEA and was majorly tasked with inspecting nuclear projects.

Varjoranta's sudden resignation did not receive much media cover, as the world news was mostly focused on Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal. However, Varjoranta's resignation came at a time that the Zionist regime was putting heavy pressures on IAEA to start new studies and inspections.

At the time, Amano and other top officials of the IAEA accepted Varjoranta's resignation in less than 24 hours and did not let the media to reveal the reasons of his resignation. Varjoranta himself



also never said anything about the reasons behind his resignation. He seems to be worried that revealing the real reasons that led to his resignation might cost him his life.

Now, the main lead of Amano's death is in the hands of the Finnish diplomat. Varjoranta had 30 years of experience in nuclear energy. He also served as Director of Nuclear Recycle and Safety in Finland for many years.

Since 2013, he also became the Deputy Director-General of IAEA, Head of the Department of Safeguards and Director of IAEA Inspectors who verify countries' compliance with the prohibition of the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Anyway, we don't know if he finally breaks his silence or not, but what we do know for sure is that he knows many things about the lobbies of Americans and the Zionists for taking Amano down.

# Was foul play behind IAEA Chief Yukiya Amano's death?

*American analyst and columnist Stephen Lendman has raised questions about Yukiya Amano's suspicious death.*

Following is the full text of his article:

On Monday, an IAEA statement said the following: "The secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency regrets to inform with deepest sadness of the passing away of Director General Yukiya Amano."

On July 18, he died at age-72 after heading the organization since 2009, no cause of death explained. Was it natural or otherwise? More on this below.

It's believed Amano intended to step down before his third term expired in November 2021.

Reportedly he had health issues from an unspecified illness. Last September, the IAEA said he'd undergone an unexplained medical procedure, no further elaboration given about his health status.

His death came at a time of heightened tensions between Iran and the West because of Trump regime-led hostility toward the country.

During his tenure, he oversaw the landmark JCPOA nuclear deal's adoption by its signatories and Security Council members, making it binding international law.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi paid tribute to Amano following his death, saying:

"My deep condolences...We worked very closely" during JCPOA negotiations. "I commend his skillful and professional performance (that) resulted in complete closure. May the Almighty bless his soul."

Vladimir Putin said he "always admired his wisdom and foresight - his ability to make informed decisions in the most difficult circumstances."

It's unclear who'll succeed him. Deputy Director General Mary Alice Hayward is serving as acting IAEA chief in the interim.

Since Security Council Resolution 2231 adopted the JCPOA, the IAEA affirmed Iran's full compliance with its provisions 15 consecutive times.

No nation is more intensively monitored none more scrupulously in compliance with Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) provisions and its other nuclear obligations.

Last October, in response to Israel's Netanyahu falsely claiming Iran seeks nuclear weapons, citing a (nonexistent) "secret atomic warehouse" in his UN General Assembly address, Amano refuted the accusation, saying:



"The agency sends inspectors to sites and locations only when needed. The agency uses all safeguards relevant to information available to it but it does not take (so-called intelligence) at face value."

Without mentioning Israel or Netanyahu by name, Amano added that "(a)ll information obtained, including from third parties, is subject to rigorous review and assessed together with other available information to arrive at an independent assessment based on the agency's own expertise."

"In order to maintain credibility, the agency's independence in relation to the implementation of verification activities is of paramount importance."

Following Trump's unlawful JCPOA pull-out in May 2018, a week's later IAEA June 8-dated quarterly report said the following:

"Since 16 January 2016 (JCPOA Implementation Day), the Agency has verified and monitored Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments in accordance with the modalities set out in the JCPOA, consistent with the Agency's standard safeguards practices, and in an impartial and objective manner."

"The Agency reports the following for the period since the issuance of the Director General's previous quarterly report:"

"Iran has continued to permit the Agency to use on-line enrichment monitors and electronic seals which communicate their status within nuclear sites to Agency inspectors, and to facilitate the automated collection of Agency measurement recordings registered by installed measurement de-

vices."

The report, others preceding and following it, found Iran in full compliance with its JCPOA obligations, stating:

"Iran is implementing its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action."

That status has not changed to this day. The Arms Control Association affirmed Iran's compliance with Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and JCPOA provisions.

Based on Iran's fulfillment of its NPT and JCPOA obligations, no justification exists for imposing nuclear related sanctions on the country — by the Security Council, the only body authorized to impose them, not individual nations on their own.

Unilaterally imposed US sanctions on Iran and other nations constitute economic terrorism. They breach UN Charter Article 41, stating:

The Security Council is empowered to decide what actions may be used to enforce international law — including "complete or partial interruption of economic relations and severance of diplomatic relations," other than use of military force.

When Article 41 steps don't work, Article 42 authorizes Security Council members to "take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security" — by use of "demonstrations, blockade," or military intervention.

The Security Council alone may authorize going this far — not presidents, prime ministers, lawmakers, or judicial bodies of member states.



# Economy

ECONOMY -



# Will Iranian economy resuscitate from doldrums?

By Haniyeh Sadat Jafariyeh

*Inflation rate (the increase in consumer prices besides those of the producer), as one the main economic indices, has skyrocketed during the past recent year, i.e. as of the US withdrawal from the JCPOA, May 8, 2018.*

Prices started their incremental growth after almost two years of economic stability under JCPOA implementation.

As the economic index which is more tangible to common people, inflation rate plays a vital role among other economic indices due to its influence on people's livelihood.

Along with the common people stand the Iranian business activists, producers and investors. Those whose businesses were tied with fluctuating forex rates and their impact on imports of raw materials and could not have a clear vision of the market's future to make safe investments.

No one can deny the positive correlation between forex rates and the inflation index in Iran, the two go hand-in-hand in this country.

During the past one or two months, forex rates have cooled down. Dollar exchange rate stepped down to 118,000 rials in July from its previous level hovering around 144,000 rials in late March and the market seems to be experiencing a stable condition but is not highly predictable yet.

The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Abdolnaser Hemmati has repeatedly announced that the CBI has a good control over forex market and bubble of forex rates is getting smaller. "The illusion about any instability or inflation in domestic foreign exchange market, which was constantly spoken of, is broken for the nth time by the CBI management," Hemmati said on April 24.

Regarding the mentioned direct correlation between forex rates, Iranians expect inflation to warm down, too. 'Now, it is time for the inflation rate to start its downward trend,' people expect.

But nothing is yet felt at supermarkets, chain stores, bazzars, etc. Some not remarkable and periodic reduction in prices of cars and housing units have occurred recently but the markets are facing a kind of recession.

Additionally, based on the latest report of the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), consumer inflation registered a year-on-year increase of 48 percent in the Iranian month ending July 22 compared with the similar month last year. The overall Consumer Price Index (using the Iranian year to March 2017 as the base year) stood at 179.7 in the fourth month of the Iranian year, indicating a 2.8 percent rise compared with the previous month. The goods and services CPI in the 12-month period ending July 22 increased by 40.4 percent compared with last year's corresponding period. SCI had put the inflation rate for the preceding Iranian month, which ended on



June 21 at 37.6 percent.

What is going on then?

As a matter of fact, inflationary impacts of forex rates growth show their face very soon but the reverse process is a lazy to get started i.e. prices are more inclined to move on an uprising trend.

Mehr news agency conducted an interview with Dr. Bahamn Arman, Iranian economist and a university professor to get a better view over the issue.

Minimizing the role of all the governments in determining forex rates, Arman said that in Iran, for years the economists have required administrations to modify inflation rate based on real forex rates but due to political issues the idea has been rejected. "However, in some specific periods, inflation rate sprang forward and skyrocketed to modify itself in accordance with real forex rates," he said. Inflation's jump in the past year can be explained, accordingly, and due to the political conditions of the country in the said time, he added.

The Iranian economist also referred to the role of the international investment banks in designating forex rates and prices of oil and commodities besides capital markets all across the globe, which operate under political demands of their governments. In better words, working under their governments' political demand, the global investment banks control flow of money across the world. "In my opinion, what is going on in Iran, in particular the story about the forex rates, is comprehensively an international political trend which goes along with domestic economic structure of the country," he elaborated. "The put embargo on exports of Iranian oil and other types of the imposed sanctions on the country's economy, those which restrict Iran's relations with international banks or financial markets are all parts of the same puzzle," he added.

"A mixture of both political and economic factors is affecting Iran," Arman said.

In Arman's idea, the inflated forex rates should

not be considered as a means to blame administration since, with previous modified forex rates, imports of various kinds of products were economical while producing them domestically was a costly procedure and non-economical. "The unreal and modified forex rates had made Iran a safe haven for importers and smugglers of the basic goods such as sugar, vegetable oil, and wheat putting a heavy burden on the shoulders of domestic producers" the Iranian economist said.

Any predictions about the future of inflation rate in Iran should be regarding the volume of the attracted investments and the status quo of national currency i.e. its depreciation or reinforcement, Arman underlined.

Furthermore, the Iranian economist underscored the current economic conditions of the US, where the inflation rate is under control, the unemployment is at the lowest rate in the past 50 years and economic growth is at an optimum level. "Dollar should be reinforced under Trump's tenure, his policy of 'America First' and levied tariffs of imported goods, however, the rate is curbed hovering around €1.11 to €1.14. Dollar is intentionally prevented from getting reinforced, since any increase in its value will lubricate imports of goods to the US and put jobs in the US at risk," he said.

"The same story can be true for Iran in some ways," he noted, "Rial depreciation can prosper domestic production and growth." "Iranian farmers prefer to export their products when rial is weak to neighboring countries," he added.

The economist, meanwhile, urges the government to incrementally let the forex rates freely modify themselves and omit what is called in Iran 'official forex rate', which is around 42,000 rials for each dollar (while at the free market the rate stands at around 120,000 rials). "The set governmental forex rate has ignited and facilitated corruption in domestic economy," Arman underlined.



"The official forex rate must be allocated merely for imports of industrial machineries and any other types of required goods must be imported at free market forex rate," he suggested.

"Rial depreciation has had repercussions on Iranian purchasing power but it has paved the way for domestic production of a wide range of products which had been imported previously," Arman said.

He also underscored that "it is vital for the government to make the nations aware of the fact that regarding the conditions of the country, populistic approaches are not efficient nor practical."

"How can it be possible that in a country [Iran], the price of a bottle of mineral water is 2.5 time more than that of a liter of petrol?" he asked highlighting that the situation is neither normal nor realistic.

"To make the economy prosper under the present circumstance, the government should concentrate on those parts of the economy which have no link to the imposed sanction such as the housing sector," he suggested.

"The government can start issuing bonds or establishing new public companies to supply the required liquidity for funding semi-finished development projects in Iran, while Iranian banks cannot fund such projects" Arman said.

"Domestic capital market, which is state-run, can also assist the government with the issue," he said, "however, the capital market is not as powerful as it can be."

"The total value of Iran's capital market is at \$80 billion, while that of Saudi Arabia stands at above \$600 billion, i.e. Iranian capital market can grow much bigger than it is now," the economists added.

"The government should engage domestic private sector in implementation of development projects via attracting their financial resource to the capital mar-

ket," Arman concluded.

In accordance with what Arman said, high liquidity volume is recognized as one of the main factors propelling the forex rates and consequently the inflation rate in Iran. It makes the central bank to print notes and makes the government and other banks borrow from the central bank.

The CBI governor has said that as in the previous year, the main goals of the central bank are controlling liquidity volume and protecting domestic production in the hope for controlling the inflation rate. He has referred to supplying the required liquidity for production units, which incurred losses due to forex rates fluctuations, besides supplying required resources for importing basic goods as other major targets of the CBI.

It should be noted that one of the other challenges of the Iranian administration in the current year is revising its budget deficit, while the US sanctions are set to close the artery of oil revenues. Any decision about the method of supplying budget resources would have a direct influence on inflation rate. In case the government decides to borrow from the central bank, the consequences would be tough on inflation rate in both producer and consumer prices.

Without a doubt, sanctions can be an opportunity for Iran to reduce its reliance on oil revenues and move towards an exports-oriented and indigenous economy. It is vital for the country to get independent from the international bodies restricting flow of money into it and construct new and more tightened ties with regional countries based on mutual cooperation and agreements, which are not vulnerable to US-led sanction. This is for sure a bumpy one but under the aegis of proper planning and management, the country's economy has the chance to revive.



culture



# 21st Iran Cinema Celebration names winners: 'The Warden' picked as Best Film



**By: Marjohn Sheikhi**

*The awarding ceremony for the 21st Iran Cinema Celebration was held on August 30, with Nima Javidi's feature 'The Warden' picked as Best Film and 'The Lost Strait' by Bahram Tavakkoli winning the most awards.*

The awarding ceremony for the 21st Iran Cinema Celebration was held at Milad Tower Conference Hall with many cinéastes in attendance.

As many as 60 titles were being considered in 14 different categories including best film, best director, best actor, best actress, best costume design, and best stage design.

"The Warden" by Nima Javid won the Best Film award. The film had previously won the Special Jury Award of Iran's 37th Fajr Film Festival.

The story of the film is set in the 1960s in southern Iran. It is about Nemat Jahed (Navid Mohammadzadeh), an authoritarian prison warden who is promoted to chief of police, but the timing of the promotion comes as he is assigned the task of transferring prisoners to a new building. While they are evacuat-

ing the old building, which is supposed to be turned into an airport, an inmate goes missing.

This turn of events threatens his promotion and sends him on a wild search to find the missing inmate before his superiors find out.

The full list of winners of the 21st Iran Cinema Celebration is as follows:

Best Short Documentary: "Beloved" by Yaser Talebi

Best Feature Documentary: "It Is Winter", awarded to producer Pirouz Hanachi

Best Animation: "The Sixth String" by Bahram Azimi

Best Short Film: "Dissect" by Siavash Shahabi

Best Visual Effects: "The Warden", awarded to Javad Matouri

Best Field Effects: "The Lost Strait", awarded to Mohsen Rouzbahani

Best Make-up: "When the Moon Was Full", awarded to Iman Omidvari

Best Sound Mixing: "The Lost Strait", awarded to Rashid Daneshmand

Best Sound Editing: "The Lost Strait", awarded to Amir-Hossein Ghasemi

Best Costume Design: "When the Moon

Was Full", awarded to Mohammadreza Shojaei Best Scene Design: "Takhti", awarded to Keivan Moghaddam

Best Score: "The Lost Strait", awarded to Hamed Sabet

Best Supporting Actress: Freshteh Sadr-Erfaei for "When the Moon Was Full"

Best Supportign Actor: Farhad Aslani for "Sheeple"

Best Editing: "6.5 for One Meter", awarded to Bahram Dehghani

Best Cinematography: "The Warden", awarded to Houman Behmanesh

Best Actress: Sara Bahrani for "Axing"

Best Actor: Navid Mohammadzadeh for "The Warden"

Best Script: "Lovely Trash", awarded to Mohsen Amiryousefi

Best Director: Saeid Rousati for "6.5 for One Meter"

Best Film: "The Warden" directed by Yaser Talebi

The Iranian House of Cinema organizes the celebration every year to commemorate Iran's National Day of Cinema, which is September 12. This year's celebration was held a few weeks earlier due to its coincidence with the Muharram.

# Falak-ol-Aflak: More than just a castle

By: Marjohn Sheikhi

*Falak-ol-Aflak Castle is a historical castle located on a stony hill-ock in the midst of the city of Khorramabad. It is one of the world's architectural masterpieces which has always hosted domestic and foreign tourists every year.*

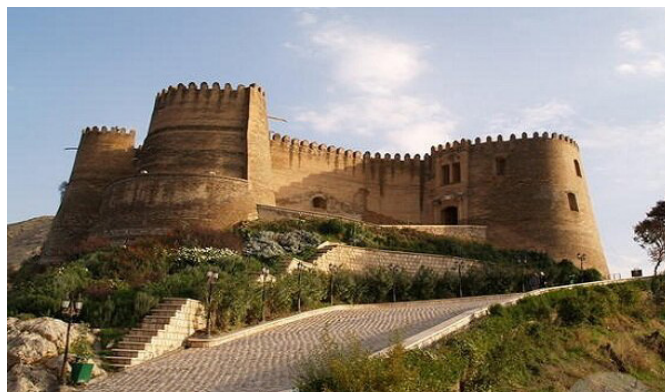
Falak-ol-Aflak is one of the most magnificent castles in Iran. It is located on the top of a large hill with the same name within the city of Khorramabad, Lorestan province, Iran. This splendid castle dates back to the Sassanid era. Shapour-Khast or Sabr-Khast fortress, Dezbaz, Khorramabad castle were the names of this castle since it was built over 1800 years ago.

The first structure of the castle is attributed to the reign of Sassanid Shapur I in century 3 AD. Falak-ol-Aflak Castle was of great importance and Roman prisoners were imprisoned there during the Sassanid era. The castle was rebuilt during Fath-Ali Shah Qajar's reign and was used as a military detachment and political prison in the Qajar era.

This castle was as the seat of government of Hasanawayhids and as the treasurer in Buyid dynasty in the 4th century AH due to its strategic position. Since the 6th century AH when the new city of Khorramabad was built, the castle became also known as Khorramabad. The name of Falak-ol-Aflak might have been given to it in Qajar dynasty.

Considering the fact that the twelve towers resemble the twelve astrological signs of the celestial zodiac, the Falak-ol-Aflak name may have been derived from there. Falak-ol-Aflak literally means the 'sky of the skies'.

Falak-ol-Aflak Castle has an area of 5300 square meters. There were twelve towers in the castle, only eight of them have remained. The height of the tallest wall of this castle is about 22.5



meters from the ground. The height of the entire structure, including the hill, reaches to 40 meters above the surrounding area.

The materials used in the construction of the castle are stone, red brick, clay and mortar plaster and lime. There are four big halls, two courtyards and chambers inside the castle. The entrance gate is placed on the southwest tower with a height of three meters and a width of ten meters.

There are two courtyards in the castle, the first one is surrounded by four towers which two of them are located on the north and northwest and the other towers are placed on the south and southwest.

There is a depth 40 meters water well in the northeast corner of the first courtyard that supplies the water of the inhabitants of the castle. The bath of the castle is also situated on the north side of the first courtyard, near the well.

The second courtyard has a structure same as the first courtyard. It has four towers and also four big halls that are linked together.

## China mulling over facilities for Iranian tourists: amb.

*Chinese ambassador to Tehran, Chang Hua, told Mehr News that China is mulling over ways to facilitate the visit of Iranian nationals to his country.*

The Iranian government recently passed a law lifting visa restrictions for Chinese visitors. The decision came in response to a joint request by the Foreign Ministry and the ICHTO as the country moves to find new sources of revenues amid the unilateral US sanction. Prior to this announcement for visa-free travel, the Chinese needed to obtain visa upon their arrival in Iran. Meanwhile, Iranians still need to receive visas to travel to China.

Speaking to Mehr News correspondent while visiting the MNA HQ, the Chinese ambassador to Tehran, Chang Hua, said that China is also mulling over ways to facilitate the visit of Iranian nationals to the country.

"China is a large country with many complexities; that is why it seldom signs visa waivers

with other sides. But Iran is a friend country to China. Therefore, we will for sure make efforts to create some facilities for the visit of Iranian nationals to China," the ambassador assured.

He noted that in his meeting with the Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, he had stated that he would work as an ambassador for Iran's tourism in China and would make efforts to develop tourism ties between the two countries.

"Iran is home to many tourist attractions. It has 22 cultural heritage sites and two natural sites on the UNESCO list, which has placed the country on the tenth place. But ordinary people in China are not informed of Iran's tourism capacities," said the ambassador. "The Chinese embassy in Tehran is responsible for developing tourism ties between the two countries and introducing Iran's tourist attractions to the Chinese people."

He added that he has a meeting with the head of Iran's cultural heritage organization and



will discuss the issue with him.

He said he began serving as the ambassador to Tehran two months ago, and has already told Foreign Minister Zarif that he hoped he would be able to visit all 31 provinces and 24 UNESCO-inscribed heritage sites of Iran during his mission.

The ambassador also noted that in 2018, about 100,000 Iranians had visited China.



# Difficult but worthwhile ascent

By: Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

*One of the mysterious places in Iran which its location made it impossible army of thousands men to pass, is Babak Fort. It sits attractively on a steep-sided mountain in north-western Iran.*

Babak Fort, also known as the Immortal Castle or Republic Castle, in East Azarbaijan Province is located on top of a mountain with 2600 meter height in the Arasbaran forests, 6 km southwest of Kalibar City in northwestern Iran. It is known as the most glorious stone castle of Iran.

It is a magnificent and beautiful monument that was the stronghold of Babak Khoramdin, a patriot and militant leader against invaders.

Babak Khoramdin was one of the Iranian commanders of Azarbaijan and main Persian revolutionary leaders of the Iranian Khoramdinan, which was a local freedom movement fighting the Abbasid Caliphate. He persisted against Abbasid for 22 years and gave his life for it.

The fort is one of the greatest examples of Iranian architecture. It consists of several stone towers and lodging areas stretched in an area of nearly ten thousand square meters, attributed to the Sassanid-era (224–651).

Babak Fort has a multi-story structure in which the main hall has been surrounded by seven rooms all of them ends up in the hall. It was constructed in two floors and has only one entrance gate. There exists a narrow passage about 100 meters high to reach the main



fort before the entrance. This passage was under control of guardians in the past in order to check all traffic.

There were towers in two sides of the entrance which were the headquarters of guards. The entrance was the only way to enter the fort because of the security issues.

On the eastern side of the fort, there are some reservoirs next to the rooms. The mortar was the materials which were used in building of reservoirs in order to prevent the rain and snow water penetration. In rainy and snowy seasons the tank become full of water that they use it in sum

Most of the western part is now destroyed, but it seems that it was the place where the troops were guarding and monitoring everything. Staircase is the only way to reach the upper floors; it is located in the northwestern side of the fort. The roof of this reservoirs has been established by barrel and rib vault.

The Babak Fort has been refurbished many times over the years, but its complete restoration is not easy given its geo-

graphical location and conditions. Much of the fort's walls have collapsed, and its current appearance is very different from past.

It was recorded in list of national, cultural and historical opuses in 1966 and has been repaired by The Cultural Heritage Organization of Iran.

Iranian archeologists have found many coins and potteries belonging to 13th century in Babak Fort. The objects and tools obtained from the Babak Fortress are carved and glazed potteries that are belonged to early seventh century A.H.

Given that Babak Fort is in a mountainous area, the best time to visit this glorious castle is from April to early June and also from September to October.

Access to fort is challenging and involves one to two hours difficult uphill walk. The hike is not recommended for the infirm, elderly or those afraid of heights.

If you are interested in ancient Iranian history, continue your adventure up the Babak Fort on your journey to East Azarbaijan province.

## MIKTA-Iran concert stuns symphony audience with surprise setlist

By: Marjohn Sheikhi

*The Tehran Symphony Orchestra under the baton of maestro Shahradd Rohani performed a list of multi-national compositions from Iran and MIKTA countries on August 25.*

Tehran's Vahdat Hall played host to the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, which performed a colorful range of classical compositions from Iran and the MIKTA countries (Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia) under the baton of Iranian maestro Shahradd Rohani.

The performance, organized by the MIKTA countries embassies in Tehran, was as much a diplomatic effort as it was a move

for enhancing cultural ties between Iran and MIKTA – an informal consultation and coordination platform among Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia formed in 2013 on the margins of the 68th UN General Assembly.

Before the concert, ambassadors and chargé d'affaires of MIKTA countries present at the event, took to the stage to welcome the audience and highlight their respective countries' efforts to share their cultures with Iran in a bid to further develop friendly relations.

Without further ado, it was time for the much-anticipated concert to steal the hearts and the breaths of the audience of various nationalities present at Vahdat Hall.

The music director and principal conductor of the event,



maestro Shahrdad Rohani, voiced happiness over the opportunity of conducting this "important political and artistic event", and began the performance with two pieces from Turkey: "Rondo Alla Turca", also known as the Turkish March, which is the last movement of Mozart's Sonata No. 11 piano in A major, and the second piece was named 'Esintiler-Finale', a three movement dance suite composed by Ferit Tuzun (1929-1977) – a fine example of contemporary classical music tradition.

The finale part, an allegro vivace, was a fast-paced and joyful composition inspired by local Anatolian folk music.

The performance then moved to Indonesian pieces: "Maju Tak Gentar", composed by Cornel Simanjuntak, which holds a strong "patriotic" and "courageous" meaning for the Indonesian people.

The song is said to have motivated the people during colonialism to fight for the freedom of their country.

The second piece, called "Satu Nusa Satu Bangsa", was an Indonesian national song composed by Liberty Manik, with

a focus on "unity" and "harmony" as the foundation of the nation.

Australia came forward next, with "In Memoriam" and "Elegy".

"In Memoriam", which now stands for all victims of violence, was written by Peter Sculthorpe for the victims of the 1996 Port Arthur massacre in Tasmania.

"Elegy" was composed in 1915 by R. S. Kelly at the Battle of Gallipoli during WWI, in memory of poet Robert Brooke.

But the shock of the event was South Korea's program.

The audience, who were waiting for the next classical composition, were in for a surprise as suspiciously familiar notes of a pop song filled the air instead.

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra worked its magic on a newly-recorded song by the insanely popular South Korean boy band BTS, called "Boy with Luv".

The program introduced the song as the "new face of modern Korean music," adding that it was "all about the wonders of falling in love and finding strength and happiness in every moment and every

detail in each other."

South Korea's next piece was a centuries-old song called "Arirang", introduced as a "national symbol not only of Korea's distant past, but also its turbulent modern history."

The piece was described as the outcome of collective contributions made by ordinary Koreans throughout generations.

Not wanting to be outshined by Korea's startling program, Mexico made a beautiful comeback to the classical with a piece named "Danzon No. 2".

It is a 20th century orchestral composition by Mexican composer Arturo Marquez. Written for full orchestra, "Danzon" was inspired in the traditional ballrooms of tropical music that were popular in mid-19th century, and went on to gain popularity worldwide.

Shahrdad Rohani added the finishing touch to the performance by conducting "Cry in Vain"; it was composed by the maestro himself in the 1980s, when Iraq declared war on Iran.

His piece is dedicated to those who lost their lives while defending Iran against the invasion.



# Makhunik, Iran's ancient village of dwarves



By: Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

*Makhunik is a unique village in a remote corner in Iran's South Khorasan Province which dates back to hundreds of years ago. This mysterious village commonly known as the land of Lilliputians, is one of the seven amazing world's villages by its remarkable architecture.*

Iran is a vast country with many tourist attractions, many of which may have never been heard before and few people are aware of them. One of these tourist attractions is Makhunik which is founded 1,500 years ago. It is located in Doreh rural district of Sarbisheh County, South Khorasan Province, near the Iran-Afghanistan border.

Makhunik is known to LILIPUT land because of its dwarf residents and the tales around them; people who have an Afghan nationality and migrated to the area several hundred years ago. Most of its inhabitants were hardly taller than one meter in the past. However, experts say only a handful of dwarf residents still live there. Researchers believe that marriages between close relatives, poor diet and drinking water laced with mercury had left the inhabitants of Makhunik half a meter short than the average height of that time. Makhunik's residents have inherited short stature disease from their fathers, generation by generation.

It is said that, an Afghan man, along with his family left Afghanistan and came to Iran about 400 years ago. They sought refuge in the Makhunik area in search of a place to live and they settled in this land.

But this is not the only attractive feature. Makhunik is also popular for its ancient-style architecture as well as its unique tradition and culture. The residents of Makhunik built their houses based on architectural styles in the Neolithic Era. The buildings' color once served as camouflage; it was impossible to spot them from the mountains at a distance.

If you walk through the narrow alleys of the village, you will see small adobe houses with very tiny walls and doors. These tiny houses have been built next to each other into the earth hollows on the slopes of the hills. They have been built of stone and soil, and their roof is covered with foliage and a short entrance gate.

Building small houses was not only for lack of height, it meant fewer building materials were required, which was convenient as domestic animals large enough to pull wagons were scarce and proper

roads were limited. Smaller houses were easier to heat and cool than larger ones due to climatic conditions. Firewood was insufficient in the region and the inhabitants had serious problems in warming their homes. They made very small windows to prevent the cold weather from entering the homes. The tiny windows also allowed the day light into the homes.

Inhabitants of Makhunik did not drink tea until 50 years ago, hunt and eat meat because of considering them as guilt. There are also no TVs anywhere, as the villagers believe that they are from the Satan.

The residents of the village mostly depend on pasturing their livestock and also agriculture. Some of them work in a mine near the village. Most of their agricultural products include wheat, garlic, turnip, beetroot, carrot, tomato, onion and saffron.

They speak in Persian with the special accent of the area. Nobody smokes in this village. People of Makhunik consider smoking as taboo and dangerous for the community.

About a hundred years ago people found out about the existence of this village, so that the connection was made and vehicles opened their way to the village. In the past, the lack of animals such as donkeys, cows, and horses in the area did not allow people to travel far to bring materials for building as well as foods. The village now has water, electricity, a health house, a primary school, a bathroom and several shops including grocery stores, butchers and bakers.

The inhabitants are now of average height and children have become taller as life standards improved in the region from the mid-20th century when construction of roads and growing numbers of vehicles have lessened their isolation. They have abandoned their ancient homes and moved into brick houses. The younger people go to nearby cities for work and women do some carpet weaving.

Important parts of Makhunik to visit are Sang Siah (Petroglyph of Makhunik), tower and castle building, Gol Anjir tower, astray house, Nader morde (Nader is dead).

A mummified body measuring 25cm was discovered in 2005. Experts said the mummy belonged to a baby who died about 400 years ago. The mummy showed that previous generations of Makhunik residents were shorter than the average human being.

The best time to visit Makhunik is spring. Summer is quite hot and winter is cold, so they are not good time to visit the village at all.





# **Muharram: In mourning of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Shia Imam**

**Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar, is a sacred month for Muslims.**

**Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and 72 of his companions were martyred in the Battle of Karbala, in southern Iraq, in 680 AD after fighting courageously for justice against the much larger army of the Umayyad caliph, Yazid I.**

**To commemorate the event, people in Iran and various parts across the world take part in Muharram ceremonies.**





