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Saudis using terrorism instrumentally, Tehran says

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari said on Monday that Saudi Arabia has been using terrorism as a tool to achieve its objectives.

Saudi Arabia's policy is providing the terrorist groups with "logistical, financial, spiritual and ideological" support, he said in a press conference.

However, he said the spread of terrorism will pose threats against Saudis and all other countries that support terrorism.

Saudi Arabia is using terrorism instrumentally and problems in the Middle East region is result of this "wrong policy", he noted.

Jaber Ansari also said that Iran and Saudi Arabia have held no official talks.

He also said that the Saudi government prevented the Iranians to participate in Hajj which will be held during the last month of the Islamic calendar called "Dhu-Hijjah" (i.e. "The Month of Hallowed").

On why Iran does not take the issue of Hajj to the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, Jaber Ansari said unfortunately the OIC has somehow become part of the Saudi foreign ministry and filing a complaint at the body will bear no result.

Rouhani declares compensation law, fighting back U.S. \$2b seizure

POLITICAL TEHRAN — On Monday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani declared implementation of the legislation that would propose the Supreme Ministry for demanding compensation from the U.S. for inflicting "spiritual and material damage" on Iran in years before and after the 1979 Revolution.

The law comes after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in April that almost \$2 billion in frozen Iranian assets must be turned over to American families of people killed in the 1983 bombing of a U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Beirut and other attacks allegedly blamed on Iran.

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Iran's OTC sees big jump in foreign investment

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran's OTC market, known also as Fara Bourse, has attracted two billion rials (about \$27 million) in foreign investment so far in the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20), while the figure is equal to the total investment made during the past calendar year, OTC Managing Director Amir Hamooni told IRNA on Monday.

However, foreign investors are attracted via investment funds or foreigners purchasing shares and securities in OTC market, Hamooni said.

The official noted that following the implementation of the nuclear deal with the world powers, OTC has witnessed a rush of foreign applications for buying Islamic Treasury bills and is ready to facilitate foreigner's presence and activities in domestic market.

\$288m of Islamic Treasury bills to be offered next week

Hamooni elsewhere announced that the administration will take the final steps of issuing ten trillion rials (about \$288 million) of Islamic Treasury bills, which were introduced last summer on the way to repay its overdue contracts.

According to him, the incumbent administration is guarantor to the issued Islamic Treasury bills as well as the offered sukuk al-islam.

In the wake of the lifting of economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic in January, the government is rolling out a series of initiatives to develop the country's financial market and reduce local firms' reliance on loans from a debt-laden banking sector.



COMMENT

By **Horan Yehya**
political expert

The glorious month of Ramadan

The Islamic world is once again rejoicing at the arrival of the glorious month of Ramadan. Marked by daylong fasting, Ramadan rekindles the spirit of solidarity and brotherhood in the Muslim community and strengthens their spirituality. Despite positive developments in recent months, it is clear the Islamic community is in dire need of brotherhood and Ramadan is a beautiful way of bringing back this lost spirit of fellowship.

As our readers will recall, when Iran's former President Ahmedinejad came to Turkey, he famously prayed in a mosque with a Sunni imam. In a similar display of solidarity, President Erdogan grabbed the headlines with his words, "We have no religion called 'Sunni' or 'Shiite', only Islam". These statements coming from the two top officials were extremely important.

Tehran to host Intl. Holy Quran Exhibition

ART TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic of Iran is promoting the 24th International Holy Quran Exhibition, titled "Understanding the Holy Quran", to be held in the first Iranian city of Mecca today, the first day of the holy month of Ramadan.

A wide range of programs and cultural activities have been arranged during the exhibition, which is due to run until June 26 at the Public Relations Office of the Mosaicia announced in a press release published on Monday.

OPEC 'friends' dumping crude oil: Zanganeh

Iranian oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh accused its regional neighbors of trying to take away its customers by offering cheaper oil, but said despite not offering much of a price discount, Iran had managed to retake 1 million bbl/d.

Zanganeh said India, China, South Korea, Europe (including Turkey) and South Africa were primary markets but that Iran "should look more in Europe and Africa".

This is especially the case for plans to invest in refineries in other countries, with 1.3-1.4 million bbl/d to be exported as feedstock to overseas refineries, but cautioned that finance could be an issue.

Zanganeh's remarks come in an interview with SAC Global Markets in Vienna Friday the day after OPEC's meeting in the Austrian capital. It follows Saudi Arabia's new oil minister Khalid al-Falih's comment Thursday that there is "no reason to expect that Saudi Arabia is going to go on a flooding campaign", suggesting price moves in crude supply so as not to shock the market. OPEC's largest producer has kept output fairly steady since January at above 10 million bbl/d and OPEC made no change in output policy.

Iran has looked to reclaim market share since nuclear sanctions were lifted in mid-January, with Zanganeh stating that output is currently 3.82 million bbl/d. He predicts Iran will have around 3-6% spare production capacity after reaching 6 million bbl/d by the end of the year.

"We have this proposal but the National Oil Company doesn't have the money to do it. So we proposed that the National Development Fund comes and does the investment, either directly itself or giving loans to non-state sectors and buys (shares) in those refineries in the chosen destination," Zanganeh said.

"I do not think that Saudi Arabia is, at the moment, pursuing nuclear weapons or interested in them in any active fashion," Nephew told the Tehran Times.

"However, I do think that they have it in mind as an option, depending — frankly — on what Iran does," he said.

"I do not think that Saudi Arabia is, at the moment, pursuing nuclear weapons or interested in them in any active fashion. However, I do think that they have it in mind as an option."

Saudis not seeking nuclear arms at the moment: Richard Nephew

INTERVIEW
By **Journal Newsrooms**

TEHRAN — Richard Nephew, who was a top negotiator with Iran up until late 2015, says he does not think that Saudi Arabia is currently seeking nuclear weapons.

"I do not think that Saudi Arabia is, at the moment, pursuing nuclear weapons or interested in them in any active fashion," Nephew told the Tehran Times.

"However, I do think that they have it in mind as an option, depending — frankly — on what Iran does," he said.

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Following is the text of interview with Nephew:

Do you think that Saudi Arabia is interested in nuclear weapons?

What will be the reaction of international community if Saudi Arabia gains access to nuclear weapons?

The total amount of Russia's two loans to Iran will be about \$2.5 billion, Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Storchak told reporters.

According to him, the contracts are very complicated and complex. "Not all risks can be calculated on the development stage. For example, the risks related to railway, tunneling work, in the same mountainous area their cost can increase or decrease. Loan drawing depends on the contract and interest to the contract, which are often signed," he said.

In April, Storchak said that the legal agreements on Russia's loan to Iran had been removed and domestic agreements between different agencies in Russia would be reached quickly.

Earlier, he said that three issues regarding the two loans to Iran (to finance rail and power generation projects) are still open. According to him, these two loans are considered as pilot and are not linked to the loan of \$5 billion that was announced earlier.

In late 2015, First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shchegolev said that the initial amount of public loan from Russia to Iran for the implementation of these projects is \$2.2 billion while the total credit line would be \$5 billion.

Russia's Finance Ministry expects to get the cabinet's permission on granting loans to Iran in two weeks. (Source: Tass)

ARTICLE

By **Journal Newsrooms**
Committee of Iran National Security Council (2009-2010)

Saudi Arabia is Iran's new national security threat

The relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia is the most important in the region. Council countries — a political and economic union consisting of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates — is on a dangerous trajectory and risks leading to direct confrontation.

During a recent visit in a European diplomat who has made the case to officials in Riyadh for Saudi-Iran rapprochement starkly told me that the regional situation was even comparable to pre-World War I Europe. The relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia, he said, has deteriorated to such an extent that both sides and their allies have found themselves at the precipice of a major war.

For years, Iran's primary national security threats have been the United States, Israel and terrorism committed by groups such as the self-proclaimed Islamic State, the Taliban and others in their ideological wars. However, since cutting ties with Iran in January, Saudi Arabia has adopted a more overtly hostile policy towards Iran. It has also managed to convince several other GCC states and a number of nations in the Arab and Muslim world to bandwagon with it against Iran.

This is an unfortunate development, as casting blame on Iran for the regional crisis or seeking to isolate Iran is not the solution to regional crises. The only path to achieving stability in the Middle East is to foster regional cooperation, which can be accomplished through a framework dialogue.

Unfortunately however, Saudi Arabia has for the time being opted for escalating tensions with Iran. The following seven points summarize Saudi Arabia's hostile approach:

The Islamic world is once again rejoicing at the arrival of the glorious month of Ramadan. Marked by daylong fasting, Ramadan rekindles the spirit of solidarity and brotherhood in the Muslim community and strengthens their spirituality. Despite positive developments in recent months, it is clear the Islamic community is in dire need of brotherhood and Ramadan is a beautiful way of bringing back this lost spirit of fellowship.

As our readers will recall, when Iran's former President Ahmedinejad came to Turkey, he famously prayed in a mosque with a Sunni imam. In a similar display of solidarity, President Erdogan grabbed the headlines with his words, "We have no religion called 'Sunni' or 'Shiite', only Islam". These statements coming from two top officials of Iran and Turkey were no doubt, extremely important. They clearly showed to the world that differences in the way our religion is practiced cannot be an obstacle to our brotherhood and solidarity. Indeed, we have seen a many great examples of this beautiful rapprochement between Turkey and Iran. When Iran was left facing heavy sanctions from much of the world, the helping hand of Turkey came as a breath of fresh air. It is crucial that the two countries continue to take advantage of similar opportunities and make their friendship even stronger. In a similar fashion, President

Rouhani and President Erdogan recently drew attention to the dangers of sectarian divide and emphasized the importance of Muslims' commitment to Islam based on the commandments in the Qur'an.

The change that comes to Iran with Ramadan is almost palpable and can be felt in the air. Our sister nation Iran is extremely devout and committed to the commands of God. Come the time of the iftar dinner, everywhere fills with joy as Muslims gleefully break their fasts with dates, just like our Prophet Mohammed (saas) used to. The Qur'an is recited after dinner and mosques become even more crowded than usual. In other words, spirituality is noticeable and felt everywhere, just like in Turkey.

The Islamic world's salvation depends on encouraging brotherhood and alliance in the Islamic world. It is therefore crucial that the Muslims of the world gather around the Qur'an, no longer consider differences in interpretation as a reason for separation, and find common grounds to unite. When this beautiful spirit comes to dominate the Islamic world, the distances between Muslims will be eliminated, and Islamic Union will come one step closer. This is not only a religious duty but also a responsibility for all Muslims so that the difficult days of the world can come to an end soon.

Almighty God says in the 103rd verse of Surah Al I'mran, *'Hold fast to the rope of God all together, and do not separate'*.

According to the Qur'an, Muslims should not be fragmented as they are today. That's why it is very important that Iran and Turkey reinforce their love and alliance and set a beautiful example to the rest of the Islamic world.

Let's all pray together in this Ramadan to our Almighty Lord that the Islamic world unites in a strong alliance. Let's not forget that solution for every difficulty that Muslims face today is Islamic Union. There is unceasing pain and suffering in the Islamic world from Ethiopia to Somalia, Iraq to Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Chad among others: In these difficult times, Muslims should be talking about nothing but Islamic Union and pray together in mosques and in religious gatherings, especially during Ramadan for Islamic Union. It is crucial that everyone starts talking about and encouraging this beautiful blessing.

Let's work together so that the spirituality and depth that Ramadan lends to our souls extends to the entire Islamic world. Let's make sure that Iran and Turkey become the closest of allies and friends so that the entire Islamic Ummah can see this as a beautiful example and follow suit.

In order for this to happen, it is crucial that leading figures of both countries point to the desirable qualities of the other country and show their support and love for each other. Frequent mutual visits between top leaders and corresponding cooperation agreements on many areas will also help achieve this important goal. They can also act together to solve social and political problems and provide constructive solutions. This attitude will not only empower both countries, but also prompt other Muslim countries to adopt a similar approach. Let's see the month of Ramadan as a great means for achieving these beautiful goals.

Certainly, all these efforts are crucial as practical prayers on the part of Muslims. However, the truth is that only Mahdi can bring about the union and solidarity urgently needed in the Islamic world. It is only Mahdi who can disperse the dark clouds hovering over Muslims. In other words, Mahdi, whom God's Messenger Prophet Mohammed (saas) gave the glad tidings of, of whose name Imam Ali (as) knew about...

Mahdi is a sacred and crucial figure both for Iran and Turkey. This commonality is enough for us to always act in concert and solidarity. Political conjectures, sectarian differences or regional realities cannot overshadow this fact. Our Lord gave the good news of these beautiful days and we will be witnessing them soon. It is crucial that these glad tidings are heard across the Islamic world and inspire hope in people. The sister countries responsible for doing this are, no doubt, Iran and Turkey.

Adnan Oktar's piece in Tehran Times

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/the-glorious-month-of-ramadan>