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Nasrallah: U.S. and Israel behind Iran protests

January 4, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah declared on Wednesday that his group would not hesitate to give weapons to Palestinian Arabs.

Speaking with the Lebanon-based Al-Mayadeen TV network, Nasrallah boasted, 'The Israeli attacks on the organization's positions have not stopped and will not stop the supply of our weapons.'

Relating to the protests in Iran over the past week, the Hezbollah chief played them down, insisting they were not rooted in the same issues which spurred huge numbers to demonstrate in 2009 and predicted they would end soon.

'In Iran there is nothing to worry about and the issue is being taken seriously ... The size of the protests is not large,' he told the Lebanese network, adding, 'What is happening in Iran is being well contained and is not comparable with what happened in 2009 ... The problem in Iran now is not political like what happened in 2009.'

Nasrallah then accused the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia were behind the recent wave of protests in Iran.

He also accused Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Donald Trump of dragging the region into a war 'that can break out at any moment in Gaza, Syria or Lebanon.' Nasrallah then threatened that in such a war, the organization would have 'an historic opportunity to reach even further than the Galilee.' ..."

Pakistan Warns US to Avoid 'Collision Course

January 4, 2018 voanews.com reported: "Voice of America News reports: "Pakistan is rife with uncertainty and speculation on steps the United States may possibly take in the wake of President Donald Trump's New Year's Day tweet about slashing the country's aid for treating U.S. leaders 'as fools' and giving safe haven to the terrorists battling American forces in Afghanistan.

Islamabad denounced the comments as 'completely incomprehensible' and has reiterated its resolve to work together with Washington to fight terrorism and stabilize Afghanistan. Pakistani leaders insist the United States is scapegoating their country for its Afghan 'failures.'

However, Trump's twitter outburst has set off a war of words, fueling concerns about a breakdown in historically fragile relations between the United States and Pakistan.

Pakistani ambassador to Washington, Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, while speaking to VOA, called for the two countries to remain engaged with each other and avoid steps that could create tensions and destabilize the region.

'We should not be on the collision course. That's the point we want to make because, I think, if we move in that direction both countries will drift apart and I do not think that it is in the interest of either state to drift apart. I think we have got to find ways, more creative ways to build each other's trust to work together. That's the direction that we think that we should be going to,' noted Chaudhry.

He said national security forces have cleared Pakistani soil of all terrorist groups and recalled Islamabad's "unmatched" contribution in U.S.-led international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and promote a peaceful settlement of the conflict there." ..."

'The Palestinians have lost the support of the Arab world'

January 3, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Middle East expert and senior lecturer at Bar Ilan University, Arutz Sheva weekly columnist Dr. Mordechai Kedar says that the Palestinian Authority is losing support in the Arab world, claiming that former allies are growing 'sick of the Palestinians,' as they find support for PA efforts against Israel contrary to their national self-interest.

Interviewed by Channel 20, Kedar says that the Arab world is increasingly impressed by 'Israel's internal stability, its democracy – which even allows all sorts of thugs to say they don't want to enlist – and the fact that Israel is comprised 20% of Arabs, and not one of them is fleeing. They even know that the Palestinians, who live under Israeli 'occupation,' live much better than all the other Arabs in the Middle East. They understand that Israel is something that doesn't mesh with what they were taught about it – it is something different.'

Kedar explained that the Arab world was growing annoyed with PA efforts against Israel in light of US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

'What happened was that Trump warned that he would stop funding countries that voted against the US – in Egypt, nobody wants to lose their food just because the Palestinians want Jerusalem. Therefore, in this matter the Palestinians have succeeded in annoying many Arabs in the Middle East, to the extent that people say, 'Why do we have to be held captive by the Palestinians in the peace process with Israel? If it's in our interest to have peace with Israel, let's get on with it, and let the Palestinians break their backs with Israel.' ..."

Kim's Olympic gambit pushes Trump's button

January 3, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "US President Donald Trump is not one to hold back when it comes to indulging in nuclear and diplomatic brinkmanship with North Korea's leader whom he calls "Little Rocket Man."

True to form, after Kim Jong-Un boasted that he could launch a devastating strike on the US mainland from his desk, Trump took to twitter.

With his trademark haphazard capitalization and punctuation, Trump demanded: "Will someone from his depleted and food starved regime please inform him that I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger & more powerful one than his, and my Button works!"



But Kim's New Year speech had not been limited to similar bluster. He also suggested Pyongyang send a Winter Games team to South Korea -- and Seoul, in turn, reciprocated by suggesting high-level talks.

Trump's earlier response to this idea was more cautious: "Perhaps that is good news, perhaps not -- we will see!"

Perhaps he was more ambivalent about the talks plan because, on the face of it, the North's 34-year-old dictator may be calling the bluff of an antagonist he has dismissed as the "mentally-deranged US dotard."

Trump's "maximum pressure campaign" was designed to plunge Pyongyang into such international isolation that it is forced to give up its nuclear program. Instead, Kim is making overtures to Washington's ally South Korea.

South Korean President Moon Jae-In's party came to office promising smoother ties with its neighbor, only to see Kim test-fire missiles and Trump threaten "fire and fury."

Xi Jinping in New Year's Eve Speech: China Is 'Keeper of International Order'

January 2, 2018 Breitbart.com reported: "Chinese communist leader Xi Jinping assured listeners in his New Year's Eve speech that 'China has something to say' on international issues in 2018, promising that under his regime, Beijing will be a 'keeper of international order.'"

In a speech Chinese state media hailed as 'encouraging' and 'inspiring,' Xi promised to eradicate all poverty from China by 2020 and touted the nation's 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) intercontinental infrastructure plan.

His assurances that China will be a powerful player on the international stage follow renewed criticism of China's ties to North Korea after President Donald Trump accused Beijing of selling oil to the rogue regime illegally. Trump's administration recently branded China a 'strategic competitor' and accused China of economic dishonesty, regional belligerence, and contributing to the U.S. opioid epidemic.

'Reform and opening-up is the path we must take to make progress in contemporary China and to realize the Chinese dream,' Xi asserted in his speech Sunday. 'Only three years are left to 2020. Every one of us must be called to action, do our best, take targeted measures to secure victories one after another,' he said, promising an end to poverty by 2020..."

In late-night vote, Knesset passes law to hinder East Jerusalem withdrawal

January 2, 2018 timesofisrael.com reported: The Times of Israel reports: "Lawmakers approved a bill in the early hours Tuesday that requires a special two-thirds majority vote in the Knesset to relinquish any part of Jerusalem to the Palestinians under a future peace accord.

The bill passed its second and third readings by a majority of 64 in favor, 51 against, and one abstention.

The law, which was proposed by Jewish Home MK Shuli Moalem-Refaeli and had the coalition's backing, is designed to make it much harder to divide the city, which Israel claims as its undivided capital. The Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future state.

The legislation, an amendment to the Basic Law on Jerusalem, requires 80 of the 120 MKs to support relinquishing any part of the city.

Before, the Jerusalem Law, passed in 1980 and amended in 2000, stated: 'No authority that is stipulated in the law of the State of Israel or of the Jerusalem Municipality may be transferred either permanently or for an allotted period of time to a foreign body, whether political, governmental or to any other similar type of foreign body.'..."

Report: Iranian regime panicked over anti-government protests

January 2, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "A leaked report of meetings recently held by Iranian leadership indicates how pressured the regime feels from the latest wave of protests that have swept the country.

According to Fox News, the report was given to the National Council of Resistance of Iran from 'high level sources' within the regime, and covered meetings up to December 31 between Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, political leaders and security heads over how to suppress the current wave of protests.

The meeting notes, excerpts of which were published by Fox News, concluded that the unrest 'threatens the regime's security. The first step, therefore, is to find a way out of this situation.'

'Religious leaders and the leadership must come to the scene as soon as possible and prevent the situation (from) deteriorating further,' the report said.

'God help us, this is a very complex situation and is different from previous occasions.'

The report also said that protesters had 'started chanting the ultimate slogans from day one. In Tehran today, people were chanting slogans against Khamenei and the slogans used yesterday were all against Khamenei.'

'Security and intelligence forces must constantly monitor the situation on the scene and conduct surveillance and subsequently report to the office of the leadership.'

The report also noted the regime's trepidation over sending Revolutionary Guard or Bassij forces to counter the protests, lest the efforts 'backfire' and further 'antagonize the protesters.'..."



Israeli Knesset