

Spanish PM Defends Congress Decision on Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia

MADRID - Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez on Wednesday defended the decision taken by the Spanish Congress to maintain arms sales to Saudi Arabia in the light of the case of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Although he told the Spanish Congress that his government "defended human rights, peace and freedom," and expressed his "repulsion" over Khashoggi's death, Sanchez said Spain would also continue to sell arms to the Saudis as it was in "Spain's interests" to do so. "I defend the interests of Spain and I assume the international obligations," said Sanchez in Wednesday's appearance in the Congress.



"I have to concede interests from one perspective that others don't have, and have a long term view," commented the Prime Minister, adding he had to think about "what most interests society" and the need to "care for judicial security and contractual obligations." (Xinhua)

Thai Government Orders Price Hike Curb in Midst of Rising Oil Prices

BANGKOK - Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak on Wednesday instructed the Commerce Ministry to monitor and curb unreasonable consumer product price hikes while continuing to boost grassroots economy.

Somkid said there were tendencies where certain businesses resort to the high price of fuel as an excuse to hike consumer product prices.

"The Commerce Ministry will collaborate with all provincial commerce offices to ensure that prices of goods are still affordable," said Somkid.

"Because oil prices continue to rise, the Department of Internal Trade



(DIT) will have to implement an operation plan to deal with expected increases in product prices," he said. Somkid, who heads the national economic portfolio, said provincial com-

merce offices are expected to also assume a crucial role in implementing the government's policy in stimulating the economy at the grassroots level and boosting tourism. (Xinhua)

(1) Ghani Asks...

for ensuring security. Ghani urged Kandahar people to widely participate in Wolesi Jirga elections in order to honor the soul of Gen. Raziq. Deputy Governor Abdul Hanan, provincial council chairman Haji Syed Jan Khakrez and some influential figures said the people of Kandahar were strongly supporting the government and were always ready to render sacrifices on the regard. (Pajhwok)

(2) Energy Minister...

we enjoy the capacity to export 2,000mw of electricity."

Iraq, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Armenia and Nakhchivan are the neighboring countries whose electricity networks are linked with that of Iran.

A senior energy official announced in 2017 that Iran exported 10 billion kilowatts of electricity to the neighboring states in 2016.

"Iran's export of electricity has exceeded its imports in recent years with a difference of 6 billion kilowatts," Deputy Energy Minister Houshang Falahatian said.

"We exported 10 billion kilowatts of electricity last year while our import of the same commodity was only 4 kilowatts," he added.

The official reiterated that Iran is willing and has the capacity to meet the demands of neighboring countries for electricity. (FNA)

(3) CEO and US Envoy...

at the Council of Ministers meeting Abdullah said that it has been a very hard struggle, but people have proven that they reject the sound of violence, terror and the return to the dark days of the past.

Abdullah said that the Taliban did everything they could, but despite knowing about the threats the people came out to vote.

"The Taliban wanted to build a blood stream, but the Taliban were defeated and the Taliban's thoughts and ideas were rejected," said Abdullah. (Tolo news)

(4) CEO and US Envoy...

"The Afghan institutions become stronger each day and their capacity is developed, I hope that the ministry of foreign affairs is not treated politically, there is capacity in the ministry of foreign affairs," said Karzai.

Iranian and US ambassadors to Afghanistan also attended the ceremony where they highlighted the achievements made by Karzai regarding Afghanistan's national interests and peace.

"We will continue to do everything we can to support the efforts of this government. Everyone in society who is committed to realizing the future in Afghanistan in which all of the Afghan citizens can live in peace and dignity. So thank you very much for your great collaboration and your professionalism and dedication to the cause of peace," said US envoy Bass.

"Whenever we talk about different issues, one of the outstanding features that he (Karzai) kept was balance when it comes to Afghanistan's foreign policy," said Iranian envoy to Kabul Mohammad Reza Bahrami.

Karzai stepped down from his post on Wednesday morning citing 'differences on foreign policies' with the leadership of the National Unity Government.

In his resignation letter, Karzai said he had worked for peace and stability in the country under the framework of the country's foreign policy to keep the balance in relations between Afghanistan and neighboring countries, the region and powerful nations. He said he has launched "a mechanism to gain peace."

A brief look at Karzai's achievements

While at the Ministry, he chaired several national and international processes/forums including Heart of Asia- Istanbul Process, Regional Economic Cooperation Conference for Afghanistan (RECCA), and International Contact Group (ICG) among others.

He led the Afghan delegation for talks with the Taliban in July 2015 and at the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and United States) meetings with a focus on creating an enabling environment for the Afghan peace process.

Prior to his current appointment, he was the Founding Director of Afghanistan's Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies and under his leadership, CAPS become one of the leading research and advocacy centers in Afghanistan.

In addition to the main office in Kabul, CAPS have regional branches in Kandahar, Khost, Parwan and Helmand.

Karzai has been engaged in various national processes with particular emphasis on the Peace Process and Youth Empowerment.

In 2009, he set up a major initiative titled: Trust Building and Paving the Road for Reconciliation. As a result of his effort, CAPS provided pro-bono legal assistance to thousands of security detainees throughout the country. (Tolo news)

(5) Balkh Disabled...

She urged the government to provide them education and textbooks. The government is required by the disabled law to provide job opportunities and education to disabled and blind people. (Pajhwok)

(6) U.S., Gulf States...

support to the Taliban," Mnuchin said. "Iran's provision of military training, financing, and weapons to the Taliban is yet another example of Tehran's blatant regional meddling and support for terrorism."

Mnuchin said Iran's support to the Taliban "epitomizes the regime's utter disregard for fundamental international norms."

The assets of those on the blacklist are to be frozen in the United States and the six Gulf states that are members of the TIFC.

Two officers of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps's Quds Force -- Muhammad Ebrahim Owhadi and Esmail Razavi -- were designated on the list.

Six senior members of the Afghan Taliban on the blacklist are Abdullah Samad Farooqi, Mohammad Daoud Muzzamil, Abdul Rahim Manan, Naim Barich, Sadr Ibrahim, and Hafiz Majid.

Businessman Abdul Aziz, described by the U.S. Treasury Department as "a Pakistan-based narcotics trafficker," was blacklisted on allegations of setting up international firms to carry out illegal smuggling operations that finance the Pakistan-based Taliban -- including the Quetta-based leadership of Afghan Taliban known as the Quetta Shura.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain on October 23 added Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and senior officers from its Quds Force to their lists of people and organizations suspected of involvement in terrorism.

Saudi security services said Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force, was on the list together with Quds Force officers Hamed Abdollahi and Abdul Reza Shahlaei.

In 2011, the U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions on the three amid allegations that Soleimani, Abdollahi, and Shahlaei were linked to a failed plot to assassinate Saudi Arabia's former ambassador to the United States, Adel Al-Jubeir.

Jubeir is now the Saudi Arabia's foreign minister.

Iran at the time dismissed the accusations as false and demanded an apology from Washington.

The terrorist listing of the three IRGC officers is separate from the blacklisting of nine individuals on October 23 by the United States and six Gulf countries in the TIFC. (RFE/RL)

(7) Pakistan Must...

that you can't have a safe harbour for Taliban, for Haqqani, and for others inside of Pakistan," Pompeo said.

The Pakistani government knows that "that's our review and this administration has already made significant efforts to hold them accountable and we hope that they'll achieve the goal that we have set out for them, the Secretary of State said. He indicated that there has been no change in the Trump administration's policy with regard to suspension of security aid to Pakistan unless it takes satisfactory measures to eliminate safe terrorist safe havens.

Early this year, US President Donald Trump had suspended USD 300 million in security aid to Pakistan. India, too, had asked Pakistan to stop supporting and glorifying terrorists and terror activities against India and its other neighbours. (Agencies)

(8) Helmand IECC...

IEC Head Hasham Durrani said the election process was hampered by technical issues but the commission employees never involved in favoritism.

He said low turnout during elections showed the level of rigging was low in Helmand where 317,000 persons had registered as voter out of which only 53,000 casted their votes. (Pajhwok)

(9) Decades of...

him, scraping shards of glass -- mixed with copper or iron powder to create a blue or green tint -- into a bubbling pot of molten liquid inside the furnace. Sakhi sticks an iron blowpipe into the fiery mixture, gently spinning it like a honey twirler. After extract-

ing the rod, he swings, blows and rolls the molten glass into shape before firing it in a kiln.

The tools and techniques used by Sakhi have barely changed in generations, although instead of making glass from quartz, glassblowers now recycle bottles and broken windows, which are "easier to find." "It's not going to last another generation," says Sakhi, whose family have been making Herati glass for "200 or 300 years". - 'Already finished' -

Decades of war have driven away foreign tourists who used to be drawn to Herat, a city steeped in history as a trading hub on the ancient Silk Road and the 15th century capital of the Timurid empire. Most Afghans also prefer cheaper Chinese-made imports over hand-made glassware that breaks easily, says Sakhi. "They think when they buy imports from China they are going to be better quality," he explains.

The only hints of modernity in the smoky workshop are Sakhi's blue Nokia mobile phone lying next to him and an electric fan whirring furiously in the searing heat.

Sultan Ahmad Hamidi, the white bearded owner of the workshop who spends his days lolling on a sofa in his store selling Herati glassware, trinkets and handicrafts, despairs for the future of his business.

"Thirty to 40 years ago people were lining up to buy glass here -- as many as 100 tourists a day," says Hamidi, 78.

His store, which is across a busy street from the city's main mosque, is crammed with Herati glass goblets, vases and bowls that are gathering dust.

With prices starting around \$6, it takes a month to sell 100 pieces, he complains.

As the craft declines, survival becomes a growing challenge for Sakhi and his family.

Habibullah supplements their meagre income from glassblowing by ferrying passengers around the city in a three-wheeled motorbike taxi.

But without government support or tourism, Sakhi fears he could be the last of Herat's glassblowers.

"I'm very sad," he says. "If it stays like this it's already finished." (AFP)

(10) 17 Nangarhar...

The residents claim that all the victims were civilians and that a number of them were children.

"This is bad for us and for our government. The spy who reported this area as a threat should be found and should be executed so that people are convinced, we are convinced, and such incidents are not repeated in the future," said Mawlavi Jalalabadi a religious scholar.

"Five people and a woman as well as two guests were targeted in one house while four children, one woman, one elderly man and two young men were targeted in another house," said Barakallah a resident. However other residents put the death toll at 17.

Meanwhile, Nangarhar local of-

ficials confirmed there had been an operation against insurgents in the area but said they will investigate claims of civilian casualties.

"Last night, a military operation was carried out by the National Directorate of Security's Special Unit in Shaheed Mina area in Rodat district. A delegation has been sent to the area to thoroughly investigate the incident and then the details will be shared after the probe is completed," said Attullah Khogyani, the governor's spokesman.

Earlier this month the United Nations reported that in the first nine months of 2018 at least 8,050 Afghan civilians were killed or wounded across the country.

In a statement, Tadamichi Yamamoto, the head of UNAMA in Afghanistan said: "As there can be no military solution to the fighting in Afghanistan, the United Nations renews its call for an immediate and peaceful settlement to the conflict." (Tolo news)

(11) NPC Approves...

recommendation by ministry of defense for the procurement of 29 medical items for the Chief of Staff medical facility.

Other projects approved during the meeting include extension of fiber optics services in 43 sites for the strategic network of the telecommunications directorate of the Chief of Staff's office of the Afghan military, and procurement of 13 food items for the Afghan police, police special forces, public order police, and 404 Maiwand Zone. (KP)

(12) Taliban Militants...

groups including Taliban militants have not commented regarding the report so far.

Nuristan is among the relatively volatile provinces in East of Afghanistan where the anti-government armed militants including Taliban and other militants belonging to Al Qaeda and ISIS terrorist network are actively operating in some of its districts and often carry out terrorist related activities. (KP)

(13) Baghlan's Doshi...

elections in their district. Governor Abdul Hai Niamati also confirmed many people missed voting in the province. He said if the law allowed, it would be better to conduct the elections again in the province.

Meanwhile, provincial police chief Col. Ikramuddin Sareh told Pajhwok that Baghlan witnessed more attacks than other provinces on the election day.

He said eight polling stations in Kela Gega area were under high security threat and could not be opened on the second day of voting (Sunday).

He said police were ready to provide security if the election commission reopened polling sites for people. In this regard, Independent Election Commission chief for Baghlan Abdul Qahir Wahab said he had shared people's demand with the main office for a solution. In Baghlan, 22 polling stations remained shut on the election day owing to security threats. There were a total of 199 polling stations in the province. (Pajhwok)