

## Mehdi Hashemi Sentenced to 15 Years in Jail

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Mehdi Hashemi has been handed down three jail sentences amounting to 15 years on corruption and security charges, Iran's chief prosecutor told state media on Sunday. The Tehran Revolutionary Court handed down sentences of seven, five and three years for three separate offences including one "security issue", and Hashemi has 20 days to appeal, Gholamhussein Mohseni-Ejei said. Hashemi is a 45-year-old businessman and has previously been detained on corruption charges, including last year and in 2012. He was accused of involvement in protests that followed Iran's presidential election in 2009.

# Kayhan International



## Rial Strengthens Against Dollar

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iran's exchange market on Sunday witnessed an unprecedented appreciation of the Iranian rial against the U.S. dollar. Media reports say the exchange rate for the U.S. dollar that was 35,700 rials two weeks ago has declined to as low as 31,800 rials at the end of the trading on Sunday. This marks a fall of around 11%. The decline of the rate of the dollar against the rial has been recorded at three percent over the past 24 hours.

VOL NO: LV 9719 TEHRAN / Est.1959 Monday, March 16, 2015, Esfand 25, 1393, Jamadi al-Awwal 25, 1436, Price 10000 Rials

### Viewpoint

By: Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

## U.S. Crying Wolf Over Venezuela

## Quran Translations Distributed in Dutch Parliament



## Iranian Athletes Win Golds in Dutch Open Taekwondo C'ship



## Zionist Troops Target Palestinian Boats Off Gaza Coast



## Time: Bibi Cancelled Intel Briefing on Iran

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- The occupying regime of Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu tried to cancel a January briefing for U.S. Senators by the Zionist intelligence service that warned Congress could damage nuclear talks with Iran, according to sources familiar with the events.

Tennessee Republican Bob Corker, the head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had requested the Jan. 19 briefing for six of his colleagues traveling to Occupied Palestine so that the intelligence agency, Mossad, could warn them that a Senate proposal might inadvertently collapse the talks. After Netanyahu's office stripped the meeting from the trip schedule, Corker threatened to cut his own Occupied Palestine trip short in protest.

Netanyahu relented after the personal intervention of Israeli ambassador to the U.S., Ron Dermer, and allowed the briefing to go forward, sources say. Attending were Corker, Republican Senators John McCain, Lindsey Graham and John Barrasso, Democratic Senators Tim Kaine and Joe Donnelly, and Independent Senator Angus King.

At issue was the fate of a Nov. 2013 agreement between Iran, the U.S. and five other international powers. That temporary agreement promised no new economic sanctions on Iran in exchange for a freeze of Iran's nuclear program, new international inspections of Iran's nuclear sites and the removal of nearly all medium-enriched uranium from Iran's possession. Both sides have stuck to the interim deal while talks on a long-term deal have dragged out.

The controversial bill proposed by Republican Mark Kirk and Democrat Robert Menendez would have imposed new sanctions on Iran if it didn't agree by June 30 to a long-term deal. U.S. intelligence officials had concluded that the Kirk-Menendez bill risked collapsing the talks and taking with it the 16-month-old agreement, according to a report by Eli Lake and Josh Rogin of Bloomberg View. Corker wanted the Mossad briefing to bolster the U.S. assessment.

During the Mossad briefing, the agency's chief, Tamir Pardo, warned that the Kirk-Menendez bill would be like "throwing a grenade" into the U.S.-Iran diplomatic process. After some of the contents of the briefing were first reported by Bloomberg View, Pardo released a statement saying he had used the phrase not to oppose new sanctions, but "as a metaphor" to describe the ef-

fect derailing current talks might have.

A spokesman for Netanyahu declined to say why he acted to prevent the Senators from receiving the briefing from Pardo. Since the Mossad briefing, Corker has rallied support for an alternative measure to replace the Kirk-Menendez proposal, support for which has faded. Corker's bill, which has broad support and potentially could receive enough votes for a veto-proof majority, would only impose new sanctions if Iran walked away from the Nov. 2013 agreement.

U.S. and Iranian officials entered a tense phase of negotiations in Switzerland this week as they attempt to reach a political deal to extend and expand the Nov. 2013 agreement for at least 10 years. As the challenges of reaching the longer-term deal have increased, some in the U.S. are trying to ensure the interim agreement isn't undermined in the process.

Some members of the Senate oppose the ongoing talks with Iran. Freshman Republican Senator Tom Cotton last week issued an open letter with 46 other GOP Senators warning Iran that Congress could reverse parts of any deal the talks produce. Corker did not sign that letter; his bill provides for partial Congressional approval of a deal.

Cotton has said that rather than negotiate with Iran, the U.S. should adopt a policy of regime change and should arm the occupying regime of Israel with bombers and bunker busting bombs with which it could attack Iranian nuclear sites. Authorities in both parties, including Obama's first Defense Secretary Robert Gates, have worried that a Zionist attack could draw the U.S. into a military confrontation with Iran on unfavorable terms.

Supporters of Kirk-Menendez argue it would increase pressure on Iran to make concessions.

Netanyahu is seeking re-election in a tough vote Tuesday, with his Likud Party trailing his strongest competitor, Zionist Union, by four points in recent polls.

## Final Round With Untrustworthy Duelers



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, left, listens to Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif as they walk in the city of Geneva on Jan. 14.

LAUSANNE (Dispatches) -- Iran and the United States on Sunday started high-level technical talks over Tehran's nuclear program here as the two sides are working to put their differences to rest.

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi and U.S. Energy Secretary

Ernest Moniz presided over the meeting.

The meeting was also attended by Iranian and American experts as well as Iran's Deputy Foreign Ministers Abbas Araqchi and Majid Takht-e Ravanchi and the AEOI spokesman, Behrouz Kamalvandi.

U.S. Under Secretary of State for

political affairs Wendy Sherman joined the technical discussions.

Heading the Iranian nuclear team, Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif arrived here Sunday for fresh talks with the American delegation, led by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry later in the day.

Speaking to reporters, the Iranian

chief nuclear negotiator said technical aspects and lifting of sanctions will be the two most important issues that will be discussed in the upcoming round of talks with the P5+1.

Zarif said Iran and the P5+1 countries can reach a deal if the other side shows the same political will as Iran.

"In my view, if the opposite side has the same political will as the Islamic Republic of Iran, reaching a solution will not be difficult," he said upon his arrival.

Zarif said technical aspects and the lifting of sanctions will be the two most important issues that will be discussed in the upcoming round of talks with the P5+1.

"There are two issues that need to be highlighted in this round of talks. One is regarding the issues which have not been resolved yet or those for which there are solutions but the details of which have not been fully discussed," he said.

He said the two sides may require more elaborate discussions about certain technical topics.

"The second issue pertains to the sanctions and the commitments of all parties...it should be made clear how the sanctions will be removed and what guarantees are provided for the agreement," Zarif stated.

The Iranian foreign minister underscored the importance of working

(Continued on Page 7)

## CIA Confirms Outsourcing Torture

WASHINGTON (The Intercept) -- In rare remarks about a sensitive issue, the director of the CIA confirmed that the U.S. government works with foreign intelligence agencies to capture and jointly interrogate suspected terrorists.

"There are places throughout the world where CIA has worked with other intelligence services and has been able to bring people into custody and engage in the debriefings of these individuals...through our liaison partners, and sometimes there are joint debriefings that take place as well," said John Brennan, the CIA director, speaking at the Council on Foreign Relations in

New York.

Brennan's remarks confirm what journalists have long reported: that the Obama administration sometimes helps other countries do the dirty work of snatching and interrogating terror suspects—keeping the U.S. at arm's length from operations that are ethically and legally dubious.

During a question-and-answer session, it was Fox News' Megyn Kelly who questioned Brennan about "capturing terrorists".

"Are we still doing that?" she asked. "And where are we keeping them and how are we interrogating them?"

Brennan responded that the U.S. is able to work with "partners" to "identify individuals and to have them captured... although there are not a lot of public pieces on Fox News about somebody that might be picked up in different parts of the world".

In one of his first moves after taking office in 2009, President Obama famously shut down the CIA's Black Site program, which was begun under President George W. Bush. After 9/11, more than 100 alleged terrorists were captured and sent to secret CIA-run detention centers where they were tortured and interrogated by agency operatives.

Although the Black Sites have been shut down and no new prisoners sent to Guantanamo Bay, detentions of terrorists—and attacks against them—remain a murky issue. The administration has brought several alleged terrorists to face trial in the United States, and it has killed thousands more in drone strikes, along with hundreds of civilians. Obama has also maintained the authority as President Bill Clinton did in the 1990s to render people to third countries, where laws are looser.

The Intercept's Jeremy Scahill and others have detailed cases during

(Continued on Page 7)

## Iran, Turkey Discuss Closer Cooperation

TEHRAN (Tasnim) -- Iranian First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri on Sunday underlined that closer ties between Tehran and Ankara can play a major role in resolving the problems facing the region.

"Expansion of cooperation between Iran and Turkey is a step toward resolving the Muslim world's issues which can thwart the Zionists' plot to spread Islamophobia in

the world," Jahangiri said in a meeting with Turkish Development Minister Cevdet Yilmaz here.

He also pointed to historical bonds and commonalities between the two neighbors, saying Iran sees no limits to promotion of relations with Turkey in any field.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Jahangiri stressed the need for enhancing bilateral trade relations, saying Teh-

ran is willing to remove obstacles on the way of joint cooperation in various spheres, including energy as well as transportation. Yilmaz, for his part, described expansion of Tehran-Ankara ties as "vital" for the establishment of peace in the region, saying the two neighbors' relations can serve the interests of regional nations.

Jahangiri also announced that

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will pay an official trip to Tehran in the near future.

"I hope that during the trip, a major part of obstacles facing trade relations between the two countries will be removed," Jahangiri said in.

Iran and Turkey have plans to hike up the volume of their trade exchange to \$30 billion by 2015.

Iran, which owns the world's larg-

est natural gas reserves, is Turkey's second biggest gas supplier after Russia. Turkey uses a significant portion of its imported Iranian natural gas to generate electricity.

Turkish exports to Iran are mainly machinery, motor vehicles, iron and steel products, boilers, electric devices, tobacco products. Crude oil and natural gas dominate Iranian exports to Turkey with 90%.