

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari on Wednesday warned that any act of aggression against Iran will draw a crushing response from the country's armed forces.

"Anybody thinking about invasion and aggression against our country will receive such a response that would make them regret it," Sayyari said. Highlighting the push to boost Iran's defense capabilities, the senior commander said that the country's defense power contributes to regional security.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran on Wednesday dismissed recent comments by Turkish president accusing Iran of meddling in the region.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan appears to have made the comments in Bahrain in excitement and in an emotional atmosphere, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said. "Mr. Erdogan himself knows better than any other regional leader what a constructive and stabilizing role Iran has played in the region, particularly in Iraq," the spokesperson added.

Viewpoint

By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

Bahrain at a Tipping Point

Iranian Researchers Find Way to Treat Long Bone Nonunion



Iran Defeat Poland in Persian Beach Soccer Cup



Amnesty Warns of Human Rights Catastrophe in Bahrain



President Rouhani in Oman: Iran Seeks Better Ties With Persian Gulf States

MUSCAT (Dispatches) -- President Hassan Rouhani said Iran sought good relations with its Persian Gulf Arab neighbors as he began a one-day trip to Oman and Kuwait on Wednesday, his first since taking power in 2013.

"The basis of the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is always good neighborly relations with neighbors and the security of the Persian Gulf," Rouhani said, according to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA). Rouhani also said there should be greater unity between Shias and Sunnis, saying they had "co-existed side by side peacefully for hundreds of years."

Omani state news agency ONA reported that the country's ruler, Sultan Qaboos, welcomed Rouhani with a 21 gun salute when he arrived at the Al-Alam Palace in the capital Muscat. Omani media showed Qaboos receiving Rouhani outside the palace, the sultan's second public appearance since he returned from medical checks in Germany in April last year.

The agency said the two sides discussed ways for enhancing bilateral cooperation but gave no further details. Qaboos became the first Arab head of state to visit Iran after Rouhani took office.

In 2013, the two countries signed an agreement to supply Iranian gas to Oman through a pipeline to be built under the Persian Gulf in a deal valued at \$60 billion.

Saudi Arabia and Bahrain cut diplomatic relations with Iran in January 2016 after protesters attacked the Saudi embassy in Tehran. Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates recalled their envoys in a show of solidarity with Riyadh, but Oman only expressed regret over the attack, highlighting its better ties.

Rouhani was due in Kuwait later on Wednesday for talks with the emir, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, expected to include efforts to ease tensions between Tehran and Riyadh.

Kuwait's foreign minister made a rare visit to Tehran in late January and called for frank dialogue between Iran and its regional neighbors.

In his talks with the Omani king, Rouhani said the common enemies of Islam and the regional Arab countries have been propagating Iranophobia while Tehran's power has always served peace.

harbinger of the settlement of problems and differences through dialogue, and Iran's military might is solely defensive and supports regional security," he said.

The Iranian president stressed that the region's security could be guaranteed only through cooperation among regional countries.

"Therefore, regional countries need to stand by each other and cooperate for the sake of lasting stability and security in the region," he added.

Describing Iran and Oman as the "guardians of the Strait of Hormuz," Rouhani underlined the two countries' role in safeguarding the security of the region and the strategic route for international trade.

He also welcomed the expansion of ties between Iran and other countries of the region.

Iran has come to the help of regional countries whenever they were entangled in challenges, including terrorism, and will continue to render assistance to them if they demand it, the Iranian president added.

Rouhani described Muscat-Tehran relations as "friendly and deep-rooted," and welcomed the promotion of ties in different sectors, including economy, transportation, energy and trade.

Touching on the conflicts in the region, including in Yemen, the Iranian president described the situation in the impoverished Arab state as "very grave" and called for serious action to address the issue.

"The Muslims countries of the region are all duty-bound to take... measures to help the oppressed people of Yemen," Rouhani said.

The establishment of a ceasefire, the delivery of humanitarian aid and intra-Yemeni talks are the key to ending the crisis in the country, he added.

Sultan Qaboos, for his part, welcomed the expansion of ties between his country and Iran in the political, economic and cultural sectors.

He praised Iran's resolve to hold amicable ties with its neighbors and promote regional cooperation, saying such a policy would serve the region's peace and security.

The Omani ruler added that the countries of the Persian Gulf region had a "prime responsibility" to restore regional security through "consultations."

Leader: Claims of War Are Sheer Lies



Ayatollah Khamenei addresses a group of visitors from East Azarbaijan in Tehran, Feb. 15, 2017.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Wednesday slammed U.S. threats of military action against Iran as a ploy to distract attention from the economic war against the Islamic Republic.

The Leader rejected as "sheer lies" claims that a military confrontation with Iran would have been imminent had it not been for the nuclear deal that was signed between Tehran and the P5+1 group of states in July 2015.

"Why do they mention the war? In order to divert minds from the real war," the Leader said during a meeting here with a group

of people from the northwestern province of East Azarbaijan.

The Leader explained that economic pressures and sanctions are the "real war" against Iran.

The threat of a military action has been used as a strategy in dealing with the Islamic Republic by both the previous and current U.S. administrations, Ayatollah Khamenei said.

He pointed to enemy plots to pile up economic pressure against Iran to spread disappointment among the public, calling on state officials to redouble their efforts to address economic woes, including unemployment and infla-

tion. Iran's president must do more to improve the economy, Ayatollah Khamenei said, adding unemployment, recession and inflation all remain major problems.

"I have asked the honorable president to advise his executive managers that management must take place with transparency, supervision and follow-up," the Leader said.

"Otherwise if managers say 'This should take place' and another person says 'Of course' there will be no progress and no visible work will get done."

In the speech, Ayatollah Khamenei

also said calls for national reconciliation were "meaningless" since there is no quarrel among the Iranian people.

Despite some natural differences on certain political issues, the Iranian people are united and integrated when it comes to Islam, Iran, and independence, the Leader underscored.

He said the enemies have failed in their attempts to portray the Islamic establishment in Iran as inefficient and such attempts amount to beating the air.

Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the nation's support for the establishment despite all shortcomings, saying the enemies are vainly attempting to portray the Iranian establishment as ineffective.

"The enemy is trying to ignore developments and major achievements in the past 38 years and demoralize the people," he said, adding that some of the accomplishments and breakthroughs made over the past four decades are usually impossible to make in even a century.

Ayatollah Khamenei further lauded the Iranian people's massive turnout in nationwide rallies that marked the 38th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

On February 10, people from all walks of life rallied in different cities and towns across the country to celebrate the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which toppled the former U.S.-backed regime and set the stage for the

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China Warns U.S. Against New Naval Patrols

BEIJING (Reuters) -- China's Foreign Ministry Wednesday warned Washington against challenging its sovereignty, responding to reports the United States was planning fresh naval patrols in the disputed South China Sea.

On Sunday, the Navy Times reported that U.S. Navy and Pacific Command leaders were considering freedom of navigation patrols in the busy waterway by the San Diego-based Carl Vinson carrier strike group, citing unnamed defense officials.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said tension in the South China Sea had stabilized due to the hard work between China and Southeast Asia countries, and urged foreign nations including the U.S. to respect this.

"We urge the U.S. not to take any actions that challenge China's sovereignty and security," Geng told a regular news briefing Wednesday.

The United States last conducted a freedom of navigation operation

in the area in October, when it sailed the guided-missile destroyer USS Decatur near the Paracel Islands and within waters claimed by China.

Dave Bennett, a spokesman for Carrier Strike Group One, said it did not discuss future operations of its units.

"The Carl Vinson Strike Group is on a regularly scheduled Western Pacific deployment as part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet-led initiative to extend the command and control functions of the U.S. 3rd Fleet," he said.

"U.S. Navy aircraft carrier strike groups have patrolled the Indo-Asia-Pacific regularly and routinely for more than 70 years," he said.

China lays claim to almost all of the resource-rich South China Sea, through which about \$5 trillion worth of trade passes each year.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also claim parts of the waters that command strategic sea lanes and have

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German Police Finally Admit: Reports of Sex Assaults by Refugees Fabricated

BERLIN (Dispatches) -- Reports of a mass sexual assault by refugees in Frankfurt on New Years Eve were fabricated according to German police.

The right-wing newspaper Bild reported last week that 900 drunk refugees had been involved in the mass sex attack and quoted a number of witnesses and victims' testimony.

"I can be happy that I wore sheer tights. They (the refugees) grabbed me under the skirt, between my legs, my breasts, everywhere," one alleged victim, Irina, was quoted as saying.

Another witness, a local pub owner, said that his pub had been "full with a group of around 50 Arabs."

"They did not speak German, drank our guests' drink and danced towards them. The women asked me for help because they were being attacked. The mood changed

completely." The quotes were also used in the right-wing British tabloid Daily Express.

However, on Wednesday German police said that the accusations were "without foundation" and that they were investigating those who had made the alleged comments.

"The interrogations of the witnesses, guests, and staff have created considerable doubts about the portrayal of events," the police told the press.

"A person allegedly affected by the actions was not in the city at all when the crime occurred."

Following this, Bild removed the story from their website and their online editor-in-chief apologized for running it.

Fears over the influx of migrants and refugees into Europe have led to the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment

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