

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- A senior Iranian official on Friday said no date has been agreed upon yet for French President Emmanuel Macron to visit Tehran.

"Macron's visit is on the agenda but the date has not been decided," Deputy Chief of Staff of Iran's Presidential Office Majid Takht Ravanchi said, adding it will be fixed in the upcoming negotiations between the two countries. The official, meantime, dismissed the rumors that Macron has cancelled his visit to Iran because of recent protests in some Iranian cities.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Tehran's provisional Friday Prayers Leader Hojjatoleslam Kazzem Seddiqi hit out at Washington and Tel Aviv for orchestrating recent riots in Iran, saying the U.S. and the occupying regime have been plotting against the Islamic Republic for a long time.

"The riots were plotted by the U.S. and Zionists, executed by the terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization and financed by Saudi Arabia," he told worshippers here. The senior cleric also called for vigilance among the people and officials about the enemies' conspiracies.

**Viewpoint**  
By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer  
**Trump's Racism Exposes to Its Roots the Usurped Land of US**

**ICRO to Host 1st Conf. of Asian Cultural Dialogues**



**Sadeqzadeh Wins Iran's Pahlavani Wrestling Cup Title**



**'Unauthorized Foreign Presence on Syria Soil Unacceptable'**



## New U.S. Sanctions on Iran Despite JCPOA

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) — U.S. President Donald Trump was set Friday to decide whether to jeopardize the 2015 Iran nuclear deal by re-imposing American sanctions on an agreement European leaders say is working just fine.

Washington agreed to sanctions relief under the terms of the landmark agreement reached between Tehran and six world powers — an accord Trump has denounced as one of the worst of all time.

U.S. officials expected Trump to grudgingly sign the sanction waivers once again before they start to expire this weekend — though he was also likely to impose new sanctions on Tehran over non-nuclear issues.

But the angst in Berlin, Brussels, London and Paris underlined what was at stake: the mercurial U.S. president is quite capable of sabotaging the agreement.

Trump argues that his predecessor Barack Obama gave away too much to Iran in sanctions relief, without forcing the Islamic Republic to end its ballistic missile program and support for resistance groups.

"The president still strongly believes this is one of the worst deals of all time," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders told reporters as Trump's meeting started.

Trump has already declared that he thinks the Iran nuclear deal is no longer in the United States' national interest.

By thus "decertifying" the arrangement, he opened a window for Congress to reimpose sanctions, but to date, it has not done so — leaving the issue of the waivers.

So far, Trump has continued to follow Obama's lead in regularly signing sanctions waivers so that U.S. economic measures against

Tehran do not "snap back." The deadlines for a number of these waivers to be renewed will fall over the coming week, and Trump on Friday was obliged to decide whether to maintain sanctions relief.

European capitals had pressed Washington to accept that the deal was an international agreement and that Iran has abided by its terms.

Russia spoke out strongly Friday in favor of the accord, ahead of the announcement of Trump's decision, calling it "the result of a consensus among many parties," in the words of Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

The accord, he added can be considered "either good or bad but it is the only one that reflects this consensus," Peskov added at a press conference.

French President Emmanuel Macron called Trump on Thursday and stressed France's determination to see "the strict application of the deal and the importance of all the signatories to respect it."

In any event, the White House was expected to impose new sanctions on Iran over alleged human rights abuses and support for resistance movements.

"I think you can expect there will be more sanctions coming up," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told reporters on Thursday.

In Brussels, the European Union and the foreign ministers of Britain, Germany and France presented a united front after talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif.

"The deal is working, it is delivering on its main goal which means keeping the Iranian nuclear program in check," EU foreign

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## Italy Inks \$6 Billion Credit Deal With Iran

ROME (Dispatches) -- Italy and Iran on Thursday signed a framework credit agreement to fund investments worth up to 5 billion euros (\$6.02 billion) in Iran, Italy's Economy Ministry said.

The deal was signed between two Iranian institutions, Bank of Industry and Mine and Middle East Bank, and the investment arm of Italian state-owned holding Initalia, the ministry said in a statement, confirming a Reuters report on Wednesday.

The money will be used for projects carried out jointly by Italian and Iranian companies in sectors including infrastructure, construction, oil and gas, electrical energy, and the chemical, petrochemical, and metallurgical industries. Iran's government will provide a

sovereign guarantee, the statement added.

The accord will open lines of credit to two Iranian banks namely Khavar Mianeh (Middle East) Bank and Sanat va Madan Bank (Bank of Industry and Mine) by Initalia Global Investment, an Italian state-owned holding, in order to finance investment projects by Italian companies.

According to a Farsi report by IRNA, it is also possible that other Iranian banks would join the agreement.

Iran described the agreement — which it said was the biggest with a European bank — as a yet another sign of Europe's determination to expand economic bonds with the Islamic Republic.

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# Trump's Obscene Comments Spur Global Anger



Activists protest a visit by Donald Trump to an African-American church in Detroit, Michigan, on September 3, 2016.

JOHANNESBURG/LUSAKA (AFP) -- Africans reacted angrily Friday after Donald Trump reportedly referred to their nations as "shithole countries", with many lashing the U.S. president for racism and ignorance.

The 55-nation African Union condemned the remarks while the southern African state of Botswana hauled in the U.S. ambassador to complain.

The comment "truly flies in the face of accepted behavior and practice," said Ebba Kalondo, spokeswoman for AU chief Moussa Faki. "This is even more hurtful given

the historical reality of just how many Africans arrived in the United States as slaves, and also terribly surprising as the United States remains a massively positive example as just how migration can give birth to a nation," Kalondo said.

The comments were "clearly" racist, Kalondo said, but stressed the U.S. was "much stronger than the sum total of one man."

Trump made the remarks on Thursday in a meeting with lawmakers on immigration reform, The Washington Post and The New York Times reported. On Friday,

Trump tweeted an implicit denial, saying "this was not the language used".

The United Nations slammed Trump's reported remarks as "shocking and shameful" and "racist".

"You cannot dismiss entire countries and continents as 'shitholes' whose entire populations, who are not white, are therefore not welcome," Rupert Colville, spokesman for the UN human rights office, told reporters in Geneva.

Botswana summoned the U.S. ambassador to the country to "clarify if Botswana is regarded as a

'shithole' country", according to a foreign ministry statement which called Trump's comments "irresponsible, reprehensible and racist".

This is not the first time Trump has rubbed Africans up the wrong way -- he was widely derided last year after he twice referred to Namibia as "Nambia".

On social media, users across the continent on Friday posted images of modern skylines and beautiful nature from their countries with the ironic hashtag "shithole."

Many Africans reminded the U.S. of its historic role in the continent's woes.

"President Trump, One day, I'll take you to a 'shithole' country called Ghana," wrote Ghanaian Edmond Prime Sarpong on Facebook.

"First stop would be Osu Castle, Elmina Castle, and the over 40 Forts that detained about 30 million slaves, beaten and shipped out like sardine cans and then I will tell you the history of Africa and why people like you made that a 'shithole' continent."

### 'Nothing New'

Prominent Kenyan commentator Patrick Gathara, told AFP that Trump's words were nothing new from a "racist and ignorant" administration, nor from the West at large.

"This is no different from what Hollywood and Western media have been saying about Africa

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## Russia Says 'State' Behind Drone Attacks in Syria

MOSCOW (Dispatches) -- Russia's defense ministry on Thursday displayed a pair of drones that it said were captured following attacks on two Russian military bases in Syria, saying the attack required know-how indicating it was carried out with outside assistance.

Russian President Vladimir Putin accused outside powers he wouldn't name of staging the attack to derail a deal between Russia, Turkey and Iran that is intended to reduce hostilities in Syria.

The defense ministry said Saturday's raid on the Hemeimeem air base in the province of Latakia and Russia's naval facility in the port of Tartus involved 13 drones. It said seven were downed by air defense systems and the remaining six were forced to land by Russian electronic warfare units.

Of the latter, three exploded when they hit the ground and three more were captured intact, the ministry said.

The defense ministry presented

two drones at a briefing, saying they featured state-of-the-art electronics that are less prone to jamming and allow precision strikes.

Maj. Gen. Alexander Novikov, who heads the ministry's drone department, said the drones used in the weekend raid on the Russian bases differed from the rudimentary craft earlier used by rebels in Syria. The attack required satellite navigation data that aren't available on the internet, complex engineering works and elaborate tests, Novikov said.

"The creation of drones of such class is impossible in makeshift conditions," Novikov said. "Their development and use requires the involvement of experts with special training in the countries that manufacture and use drones."

Novikov didn't blame any specific country, but the defense ministry earlier referred to the "strange coincidence" of a U.S. military intelligence plane baraging over the Mediterranean

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## PM Hariri Supports Hezbollah After Saudi Ordeal

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri has reiterated his backing for Hezbollah despite pressure from Saudi Arabia to confront the resistance movement.

Speaking to the Wall Street Journal in his first interview with a U.S. newspaper since he withdrew his resignation in December - Hariri, dared to defy Saudi Arabia, largely thought to be behind his shock resignation from Riyadh in November.

Hezbollah are a potent political force in Lebanon and form part of a political coalition with Hariri, dominating Lebanon's cabinet thought to be the strongest organ of Lebanon's state.

"Hezbollah has been a member of this government. This is an inclusive government that has all the big political parties, and that brings political stability to the country," Hariri said. "My main goal is to preserve this political stability for the unity of the country."

At the same time that reports emerged suggesting that Hariri was being held against his will by the Saudis after a trip to Riyadh in November, the Saudis called for Hezbollah to be disbanded and rebuked them for interference in Lebanon's politics.

This was interpreted as a sign that the Saudis had pushed Hariri to resign as part of a larger plan to weaken Hezbollah - and by extension its ally Iran.

Lebanon's prime ministers, who are Sunni as required by Lebanon's constitution, have traditionally taken the Saudi line on regional issues. But Hariri, keen to avoid becoming embroiled in the regional spat, said that his country will maintain ties with both countries and reject foreign meddling.

"We cannot accept interference from anyone in Lebanese politics," Hariri said. "Our relationship with Iran—or with the (Persian) Gulf—has

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