

## Macron Trying to Appease Trump on Iran: MP

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- An Iranian lawmaker says France is trying to keep U.S. President Donald Trump satisfied by calling for extensive monitoring of Iran's missile program, which is a red line for Tehran. Referring to recent statements by French President Emmanuel Macron, who called for international monitoring of Iran's missile program, Iranian MP Ezzatollah Yousefian Molla said, "In the same statements, Macron called for maintaining the nuclear accord and stated that it is a strong international treaty."

## Rouhani: U.S. Would Regret Violating Nuclear Deal

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) -- Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said Saturday it would adhere to commitments under its 2015 international nuclear agreement, signed with six world powers to limit its nuclear program.

"We will adhere to our commitments made," Rouhani said at an event in New Delhi. "After signing a contract, haggling with it is ridiculous." Rouhani said, "If the U.S. violates this agreement... you will see that America will regret this decision."

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### Viewpoint

By: S. Nawabzadeh

## 2 New Era for Iran-India Ties

## WHO Appoints Iran Health Min. As Commissioner on NCDs



## Iranian Cyclist Wins First Gold at Para Asian Track Championships



## Turkey Denies Reports of Using Chemical Weapons in Syria's Afrin



## Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov: U.S. Playing 'Dangerous Game' With Kurdish Issue

MOSCOW (Dispatches) -- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said the United States is playing a dangerous "game" with the Kurdish issue, which could lead to great problems in countries with Kurdish populations.

Lavrov told Euronews that it was necessary to think about ensuring equal rights for the Kurds in current borders of the countries where they live, not "try to disturb this region, which is what our western colleagues have been doing in the past century."

"Playing a game with the Kurdish issue, in terms of a narrow understanding of own geopolitical intentions only in one part of this region, as the United States is doing now, is very dangerous. It could lead to big problems in a whole range of other countries where the Kurdish issue exists and where there is a Kurdish population," he said.

The Russian foreign minister called the current conflict between the Kurds and Turkey in northern Syrian district of Afrin a sign of short-sightedness of the U.S. policy in the region.

"These events once again point out the short-sightedness or even malice of the United States. For two-three years, the U.S. special units are permanently illegally operating in Syria without any request of Damascus or a mandate issued by the UN Security Council. From the very beginning the United States bet on the Kurds ignoring the Turkish

concerns," Lavrov said.

The minister pointed out that Ankara had always openly expressed its position on the Syrian Kurds calling their organizations affiliated with the Turkish-based Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is outlawed in Turkey.

"Despite that the United States persistently and massively provided the Kurdish units with weapons ignoring the Turkish position," Lavrov added.

Washington, he said, plans to keep its forces in the Arab country "forever." Lavrov warned that "the international presence of the U.S. doesn't decrease, but rather grows."

"It is clear that the U.S. probably has such a strategy to settle in Syria forever, with its armed forces, just as they want to do in Iraq and Afghanistan, despite all promises made," he said.

He warned that the U.S. was attempting to create a "quasi-local authority" with the help of Syrian Kurds.

"And so when they settle forever in Syria, which they are already doing now, and despite all promises, they isolate a huge piece of the Syrian territory, in infringement of the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic, and create there some kind of quasi-local authority, and in every possible way try to create there an autonomous unit with the support of the Kurds."

(Continued on Page 7)

# India Clinches Deal on Leasing Iranian Port



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, right, and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani pose with documents during a signing ceremony in New Delhi, Feb. 17, 2018.

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) -- India and Iran on Saturday signed agreements including Tehran leasing to New Delhi operational control of part of the Iranian east coast port of Chabahar for 18 months.

The \$85 million project creates a transit route between India, Iran and Afghanistan. India is trying to develop Chabahar as a way to gain access to the markets of central Asia as well as Afghanistan.

But progress is slow because of concern that President Donald Trump's administration in Washington may eventually scrap the Iran nuclear deal.

A leasing agreement giving operational control to India of Shahid Beheshti port - phase one of the Chabahar port - was signed

in the presence of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

Later, addressing a joint press conference with the Iranian president, Modi said both countries wanted to expand bilateral ties and cooperation in economic development.

"We will support the construction of the Chabahar-Zahedan rail link so that Chabahar gateway's potential could be fully utilized," Modi said.

"We want to expand connectivity, cooperation in the energy sector and the centuries-old bilateral relationship."

Other agreements included a double taxation avoidance treaty, extradition, and cooperation

in the farm sector. Another agreement envisaged the pooling of technical, scientific and human resources between the two countries.

Rouhani, who arrived in the southern city of Hyderabad on Thursday, later addressed industrialists.

Both sides deliberated extensively on intensifying cooperation in the oil sector and agreed to move beyond traditional "buyer-seller" relationship and develop it into a long-term strategic partnership.

During the talks, it was agreed to continue and increase the pace of negotiation for reaching appropriate results in energy cooperation, including on Farzad-B gas field. Officials in

the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said both the sides were for reaching a conclusion on the Farzad-B gas field issue soon.

Farzad-B was discovered by ONGC Videsh in the Farsi block about 10 years ago. An Indian company has proposed drilling wells in Persian Gulf to produce gas, transport it to onshore via sub-sea pipeline and build a plant to liquefy the gas under a \$11 billion development plan but Iran says the terms are not profitable.

"The Iranian side welcomed the investment of Indian side in setting up plants in sectors such as fertilizers, petrochemicals and metallurgy in Chabahar free trade zone on terms mutually beneficial to the concerned parties," a statement said.

With a view to fully utilize the potential of Chabahar Port and its connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asia, India conveyed its readiness to support the development of Chabahar-Zahedan rail line, it said.

### Cooperation on Afghanistan

India and Iran also said that they would step up cooperation in combating extremism, terrorism and drug trafficking in Afghanistan in an effort to restore peace and stability to the war-ravaged country.

Modi said the two countries would also make efforts to improve energy security and regional connectivity to reach landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia by developing Chabahar Port and road and rail routes.

(Continued on Page 7)

## Pakistan MPs Slam Troop Deployment to Saudi Arabia

KARACHI (Dispatches) -- Pakistan is sending troops to ally Saudi Arabia on a "training and advise mission," the military said, three years after it decided against sending soldiers to join the kingdom's military aggression in Yemen.

The exact role the troops will play was unclear, but a statement from the army's press wing on Thursday stressed they "will not be employed outside" the kingdom.

Pakistan's retired army chief, General Raheel Sharif, commands the so-called Saudi-led coalition attacking Yemen, though it was not immediately clear whether the new troops would participate in that coalition.

Saudi Arabia had asked Pakistan to provide ships, aircraft and

troops for the Yemen campaign.

Pakistan's parliament voted to remain neutral to avoid being pulled into a regional power struggle, in part because the country shares a border with Iran and has a sizeable Shia minority.

There are already about 750-800 Pakistani servicemen in Saudi Arabia, in part to guard Islamic holy sites, but they are not combat troops.

Several Pakistani lawmakers on Friday blasted the new decision to deploy troops to Saudi Arabia, saying the move violated the parliamentary resolution that urged neutrality in the war on Yemen.

Senator Farhatullah Babar warned of "grave consequences" for Pakistan regarding the troop deployment to Saudi Arabia.

Pakistani Senate chairman Raza

Rabbani summoned the country's foreign minister to explain the reasons for the deployment of the troops to Saudi Arabia.

Shireen Mazari, a member of the National Assembly of Pakistan, also slammed the government decision and sought clarifications to make sure that the initiative would not "contravene" the country's neutrality outlined in the parliamentary resolution.

"Mr. Speaker, as you know, Saudis themselves are embroiled in the war and it is not reaching any conclusion," she said, demanding the government explain the terms of the security pact with the Saudis and the type of missions Pakistani troops will undertake in the kingdom.

(Continued on Page 7)

## Haiti President: Oxfam Sex Scandal 'Tip of Iceberg'

PORT-AU-PRINCE (Dispatches) -- The president of Haiti has revealed that the sex scandal surrounding Oxfam staff in Haiti is the "tip of the iceberg" amid claims that staff from Medecins Sans Frontier were repatriated from his country for "misconduct".

President Jovenel Moise said other charities should be investigated for covering up sex abuse in the wake of the earthquake that ravaged his country in 2010.

"The Oxfam case is the visible part of the iceberg," he said. "It is not only Oxfam, there are other non-governmental organizations in the same situation, but they hide the information internally."

Referring to Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) as Doctors

Without Borders, the name it is known in the Caribbean, he added: "There should be an investigation into other organizations that have been working here since 2010. For example, Doctors Without Borders had to repatriate about 17 people for misconduct which was not explained."

The charity said it was looking into his comments, adding that it was not clear whether the president was referring to a specific year or in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti.

MSF has revealed that it responded to 24 cases of sexual harassment or abuse last year leading to 19 employed being sacked.

The charity, one of the world's largest aid organizations, did

not say in which countries or what departments instances of harassment and abuse took place, or whether local law enforcement agencies were informed. MSF, which specializes in bringing medical aid to conflict zones, has 40,000 permanent staff in more than 70 countries.

A spokeswoman for the charity said: "MSF has longstanding grievance and abuse reporting procedures and takes any reports of staff misconduct seriously. We are seeking to clarify the questions raised by these remarks."

The Haitian president's comments came as Oxfam continued to try to recover from one of the worst crises in its 75 year history.

(Continued on Page 7)