

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday said Iran is ready to share the experiences it has gained in its fight against terrorism with friendly countries, including Tanzania.

Speaking at a meeting with Tanzanian Foreign Minister Augustine Mahiga here, Rouhani also said Iran is willing to promote bilateral relations and cooperation with Tanzania in all areas. Mahiga, for his part, underlined that his country is resolved to promote relations with the Islamic Republic in all areas.

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi on Wednesday condemned Somalia for opening fire on an Iranian fishing boat and killing the captain of the vessel and injuring another sailor.

"Iran has conveyed its protest to Somalia in this regard through relevant channels," Qasemi told ISNA. He said Iran's Foreign Ministry is seriously following the issue. Last week, Somali regional officials said the Iranian captain of a fishing boat was killed and another sailor was injured after security forces opened fire on the vessel during an operation in the Indian Ocean, according to reports.

Viewpoint
By: S. Nawabzadeh
Trump on Suicidal Course Against Iran

'Light Sight' Scoops Up 8 Int'l Awards

Iran Crush Germany, Advance to FIFA U-17 World Cup Quarters

U.S. Continues to Demonize Hezbollah

Russia Details Findings: U.S. Letting Daesh Operate 'Under Its Nose'

MOSCOW (Dispatches) -- Russia accused the United States on Wednesday of allowing Daesh to operate "under its nose" in Syria, saying Washington was letting the terrorist group move about freely in an area abutting a U.S. military base.

The allegations, made by Russia's Defense Ministry, center on a U.S. military base at Tanf, a strategic Syrian highway border crossing with Iraq in the south of the country.

Russia says the U.S. base is illegal and that it and the area around it have become "a black hole" where Takfiri militants operate unhindered.

The United States claims the Tanf facility is a temporary base used to train partner forces purportedly to fight against Daesh. Pentagon spokesman Colonel Robert Manning on Tuesday said Washington remained committed to killing off Daesh and denying it safe havens and the ability to carry out strikes.

But Major-General Igor Konashenkov, a spokesman for the Russian Defense Ministry, said Mos-

cow wanted to know how around 300 Daesh militants in pickup trucks had passed through the U.S.-controlled area and tried to block the highway between Damascus and Dayr al-Zawr used to supply Syrian forces.

He said the U.S. had not yet given an explanation.

"We suggest the American side also explain about another incidence of their 'selective blindness' towards militants operating under their nose," Konashenkov said in a statement.

He said about 600 militants based in a refugee camp in the U.S.-controlled area had driven en masse to a former customs post called Tafas on the Syrian-Jordanian border earlier this month and seized food and medical supplies meant for locals.

"You don't need to be an expert to now forecast an attempt to rupture the peace agreement in the southern de-escalation zone," said Konashenkov.

"We issue a warning. All responsibility for sabotaging the peace process will lay exclusively with the American side."

Nation United Behind IRGC



This file photo shows Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei attending a graduation ceremony of IRGC cadets at Imam Hussein University.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran will react sharply to any U.S. move against the nuclear deal with global powers, Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif told the Iranian parliament Wednesday, according to a parliamentarian who attended the session.

The comments were the latest in a series of warnings by Iranian officials, showing a united front among all political groups as U.S. President Donald Trump prepares to harden policy towards Tehran this week.

"In the closed session Zarif emphasized that if the Americans take any steps against the nuclear deal that the Islamic Republic of Iran will give them a more crushing response," Shahbaz Hassanpour, a lawmaker representing the city of Sirjan, told the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

Another lawmaker, Behrouz Nemat, said the foreign minister discussed specific steps Trump and the U.S. Congress might take, and Iran's plans for reciprocal action to each anticipated U.S. move. Nemat did not say what actions Zarif had described.

Trump is expected this week to "decertify" the landmark 2015 deal under which Iran agreed with global powers to accept curbs on its nuclear program in return for the lifting of sanctions.

"Decertification" would not by itself withdraw the United States from the agreement, but would pass that decision on to Congress, requiring lawmakers to decide within 60 days whether to re-impose sanctions.

Trump is also expected to declare Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) a terrorist organiza-

tion.

The threat of increased U.S. pressure has been met by a united front of criticism from within Iran, with members of the faction that seeks greater interaction with the West showing their support for the IRGC.

Zarif on Tuesday met with IRGC chief Major General Muhammad Ali Jafari.

During the meeting with Zarif, parliament members expressed their support for the Guards, Hassanpour said. Zarif also noted during the session that European countries will continue backing the nuclear deal regardless of what actions the U.S. may take, Hassanpour told IRNA.

Rouhani: IRGC in the Heart of People

Meanwhile, President Hassan Rouhani gave a full-throated de-

fense of the IRGC on Wednesday during a cabinet meeting shown on state television, saying U.S. action against the Guards would be a "mistake beyond mistakes."

"They think that the Guards are a military entity. The Revolutionary Guards are not a military entity. They're in the heart of the people. The Revolutionary Guards, in all the days of danger, have defended our national interests," he said.

"We're one society. We're Iran. There are no differences between different factions in confronting the plots of our enemies," he added.

Rouhani said, "Today, the president of America has created conditions where Iran is more united than ever. Today, those who oppose the nuclear deal and those who support it are side by side. We all have one voice."

He said Trump was "clearly upset" over the Guards' military successes against Daesh in Syria and Iraq.

"OK, if you want to keep Daesh in this region for 20 years and use it as a tool, then OK, it is your right to be angry with the Revolutionary Guards. Because the Revolutionary Guards, by their planning, and support for the nations of Iraq, Syria and Lebanon have humiliated Daesh," Rouhani said.

The president also said Trump he was opposing "the whole world" by trying to abandon the nuclear agreement.

"If the U.S. wants to take a hostile position regarding an international agreement which is approved by the UN Security Council ... they will oppose not just Iran but the whole world," Rouhani said.

"It will be absolutely clear which is the lawless government. It will be clear which country is respected by

Iran Introduces Investment Plans in Amsterdam

AMSTERDAM (Dispatches) -- Iranian oil and natural gas companies said Wednesday they were among the hundreds on hand in the Netherlands to introduce investment opportunities to the world.

Iranian energy companies are among the hundreds attending an annual offshore energy conference in Amsterdam, which wrapped up Wednesday. The Pars Oil and Gas Co., which helps drive operations at Iran's offshore South Pars natural gas field, said in a statement it was one of a handful of Iranian companies with a pavilion set up at the exhibition.

"Pars Oil and Gas Company, Iranian Offshore Oil Company, Iranian oil Terminals Company, and Petroleum Engineering and Development Company are among active companies in the offshore industry of Iran that have attended this exhibition in order to introduce the opportunities for international investors to participate in Iranian offshore industries," the company stated.

In its first contract in the post-sanctions era, a consortium of French energy company Total, China National Petroleum Corp. and Petropars Ltd., a subsidiary of the state-run National Iranian Oil Co., signed a 20-year contract in early July to help develop parts of the giant South Pars natural gas field in the Persian Gulf, among the largest in the world.

The Total-led deal cleared a path for future investments from foreign energy companies. President Hassan Rouhani's administration set a goal of signing 10 new development deals by the end of the Iranian calendar year, March 20.

However, a tender for developing Iran's Azadegan oilfield has been delayed again, a senior Iranian oil official said, adding that it will not take place in 2017.

Tehran is looking to increase its crude output, and with 37 billion barrels of oil, the Azadegan field is Iran's largest, shared with neighboring Iraq.

Iran said in June that international energy companies including Total, Malaysia's Petronas and Japan's Inpex, have presented technical surveys for the development of the Azadegan field for the tender.

"The companies are still assessing the technical surveys. The tender will not take place in 2017," managing director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), Ali Kardor, was quoted as saying by ISNA news agency.

The tender for developing the Azadegan oilfield, Iran's first such tender since the lifting of sanctions more than a year ago, has been postponed several times for unspecified reasons.

Kardor said the tender has not been affected by U.S. President

'Trump Orders Tenfold Increase in Nuke Arsenal' Russia Launches Military Drill in Southern Siberia

MOSCOW (Dispatches) -- Russia's strategic missile Troops on Wednesday continued military drills in Southern Siberia, nearly a month after testing a long-range intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) amid rising tensions with U.S.

More than 4,000 servicemen and 400 pieces of military hardware, including the Topol-M ICBM mobile launchers, are taking part in the exercise, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

Russian supersonic fighter jets are also participating in the drills, which were expected to fuel an ongoing missile row with the U.S.

The U.S. has accused Russia of violating the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between Washington and the former Soviet Union, which went into effect in 1991 and expired in 2009.

The treaty banned the two sides from deploying more than 6,000 nuclear warheads atop a total of 1,600 ICBMs and bombers.

The deal was replaced by the New SATRT agreement in 2010, under which Russia and the U.S. agreed to reduce by half the number of strategic nuclear missile launchers they had.

Amid rising U.S. inroads into Russia's doorsteps, Moscow test-fired a RS-24 Yars nuclear missile in mid-September, that can deliver multiple nuclear warheads to targets 11,000 kilometers away.

American officials said the Yars missile's deployment amounted to a

breach of both START agreements, because it was an upgraded version of the Topol-M missile. Russia has denied the accusation, saying the missile is a new design.

U.S. President Donald Trump has also been critical of the START agreements, claiming that they favor Russia.

Trump has ordered the Pentagon to review the country's nuclear arsenal and ensure its reliability amid simmering tensions with North Korea.

According to reports, when Russian President Vladimir Putin asked Trump about extending the treaty during their first phone call in February, the American head of state responded by first one of several bad deals negotiated by the (former President Barack) Obama administration."

An avid supporter of nuclear weapons, Trump ordered the Pentagon in April to review Washington's nuclear posture.

Unnamed Pentagon officials told U.S. media on Wednesday that Trump had surprised military commanders by asking them for a tenfold increase in the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

The Pentagon has recently granted contracts to American arms manufacturers to develop new ICBMs and nuclear-capable cruise missiles in a bid to replace the U.S. Air Force's ageing arsenal of strategic thermo-nuclear weapons.

(Continued on Page 7)