

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Commander of the Army’s ground forces Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari said on Sunday Iran’s armed forces are 100% ready to protect the security of not only the country but also the region.

“The Iranian Army ground forces are unique in terms of possessing armored and artillery (equipment) and fleets of helicopters and human resources,” he said here.

“We have taken some steps beyond the national capabilities and are ready to export the technology to Muslim countries.”

VLADIVOSTOK (Sputnik) — Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Sunday did not rule out that the United States might have another goals in Syria apart from defeating terrorism, it would be clear after Daesh is destroyed.


“When Daesh is destroyed, and Jabhat an Nusra with them, then it will become clear who is pursuing what goals in Syria,” Lavrov said in an interview with Russia’s NTV broadcaster.

**Viewpoint**

By Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

### Yemen Exposes Saudi Hypocrisy

### Palace of Sun, a Source of Charm in Northeastern Iran



### Iran Greco-Roman Wrestlers Stand 3rd in Military Event



### Saudis Exporting 'Extremely Radical' Wahhabism Worldwide



## IRGC Launches Military Drill in Northwest Iran

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched a military exercise Sunday in northwestern Iran as part of annual events held to mark the beginning of the 1980-1988 war with Iraq.

The maneuvers, centered in the Oshnavieh border region, will include artillery, armored and airborne units, state broadcaster IRIB reported.

They involve practicing of defensive preparedness by infantry, armored, electronic warfare, and rocket units, as well as the ground-operating squadrons of the IRGC.

Iran’s northwest has repeatedly witnessed inroads by terrorist and anti-revolutionary elements and hence constitutes a focus of the IRGC’s counter-terrorism operations. Clashes with PJAK militant groups based in Iraq are a frequent occurrence in the border area.

In Tehran, the IRGC displayed the country’s sophisticated S-300 air defense system for the first time in public.

The show in Tehran’s Baharestan square near the Parliament building square exhibited different missile systems, including ballistic missiles, solid-fuel surface-to-surface Sejil missiles and the liquid-fuel Ghadr.

The IRGC prepared the show for the annual Defense Week, marking the 37th anniversary of the 1980s invasion of Iran by the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Also on Sunday, Iran’s Army unveiled three new achievements in the area of artillery fire, named as Heydar 7, 41, and 44 Projects, in the presence of Brigadier General Kioumars Heydari, the commander of the Army’s ground forces.

Picture taken on September 24, 2017 shows a ceremony featuring the unveiling of achievements made in the area of artillery fire by Iran’s Army. (Photo by IRNA)

Heydar 7 comprises an eight-wheel drive vehicle, equipped with a new turret and a 23-millimeter gun.

Heydar 41 features a 122-millimeter howitzer, fitted with an automatic magazine loader, shorter combat readiness process, and remote activation capability.

Heydar 44 has witnessed a 122-millimeter rocket launcher system being made smart and automated, resulting in sped-up and more precise fire, as well as its becoming interconnected with frontline surveillance drones, suitable for installment on all artillery systems.

## Iraqi Kurdish Leaders' Invitation for Trouble



Pentagon chief Jim Mattis meets with Iraq's Kurdistan region's President Massoud Barzani in Erbil, August 22, 2017.

ERBIL, Iraq (Dispatches) -- Iraqi Kurdistan’s head Massoud Barzani on Sunday defied international calls to forgo a planned referendum on possible secession from the Arab country, plunging the region to fresh uncertainty.

His decision to go ahead with the planned vote on Monday drew prompt reaction from the central Iraqi government and regional countries.

Iran halted flights to and from Kurdish regions in northern Iraq

in the first concrete measure against the plebiscite which is also rejected by Turkey.

Iranian authorities stopped air traffic to the international airports of Erbil and Sulaimaniya, in Iraqi Kurdistan, upon a request from Baghdad, Fars News Agency said.

Turkey, meanwhile, said on Sunday its aircraft launched strikes against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) targets in northern Iraq’s Gara region after spot-

ting militants preparing to attack Turkish military outposts on the border.

“Turkey will never ever tolerate any status change or any new formations on its southern borders,” Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said.

“The KRG will be primarily responsible for the probable developments after this referendum,” he said, using the acronym for the Iraqi Regional Government.

The KRG has resisted calls

to delay the referendum by the United Nations, the United States and Britain who fear it could further destabilize the region.

Barzani tried to play down the fallout from his decision, telling a news conference in Erbil that he did not expect conflict with Baghdad following the referendum.

“We don’t expect any kind of military conflict with Iraq,” he told reporters. “That kind of thought doesn’t even cross our mind.”

In a televised speech aired by state TV, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said the poll remains “unconstitutional,” reiterating that Baghdad “will not recognize its outcome.”

“We will never forsake our Kurdish citizens, their security and welfare. We reject the sectarian, racist state,” Abadi said, alluding to the independent state sought by the Kurds.

He said leaderships had the duty of “protecting civilians from surrounding dangers rather than endangering them and implicating them in useless conflicts,” in an obvious repetition of his earlier warning that the vote could spark a civil war.

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## France's State Bank to Fund Projects in Iran

PARIS (Dispatches) -- Bpifrance, the country’s state investment bank, will finance investment projects of French companies in Iran from 2018, granting up to 500 million euros (\$598 million) in annual credits, its CEO said in a newspaper interview on Sunday.

“Excluding a force majeure case, we will be on their side in early 2018. We are the only French bank that can do it without risking U.S. sanctions for a possible breach of remaining embargo rules,” Nicolas Dufourcq told Le Journal du Dimanche.

The deal Iran struck in 2015 with six major powers lifted many sanctions against the country in exchange for restrictions on its nuclear activities and paved the way for international business deals.

But many banks have stayed away for fear of inadvertently breaking remaining U.S. sanctions, which could lead to huge fines.

Because the BPI has no operations abroad, notably in the United States, it is not exposed to possible fines for U.S. sanctions breaches.

U.S. President Donald Trump has created new uncertainties over the U.S. stance towards the

Iran nuclear agreement. Trump told reporters this week that he had made a decision on what to do about the agreement but would not say what he had decided.

Several Franco-Iranian deals were announced during Iran President Hassan Rouhani’s official visit to Paris in January last year. These included a joint venture between carmakers PSA Peugeot Citroen and Iran Khodro as well as plans for Iran to buy Airbus aircraft to update its ageing fleet.

There were also deals in the oil, shipping, health, agriculture and water sectors.

Last week, Iran broke the 15-year spell of not obtaining any finance from European banks by signing major deals with Austrian and Danish banks to secure funding for its development projects.

The first major finance deal worth €1 billion was signed on Thursday between Austria’s Oberbank and a dozen Iranian banks. The Austrian bank thus became one of the first European financial institutions to break the ice in providing loans for Iranian projects following the removal of Western sanctions in early 2016.

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## Monitor: U.S. Jets Have Killed 2,800 Syrian Civilians

LONDON (Dispatches) -- A monitoring group said Monday more than 2,800 civilians have lost their lives in U.S. airstrikes across Syria over the past three years.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that 427 people, including 137 minors and 113 women, were killed in U.S. aerial attacks against civilian areas in the Arab country between May 23 and June 23 this year.

The Britain-based monitoring group added that U.S. air raids also left hundreds of civilians injured, some of whom suffered permanent disabilities and had to have their limbs amputated. U.S. raids also caused massive destruction of residential buildings and civilian infrastructure, it said.

The SOHR went on to say that the civilian fatalities were mostly recorded in the northern provinces of Hasakah, Raqqah, Aleppo and Idlib in addition to the eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr.

The U.S. has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be Daesh targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate.

The U.S. and its allies have repeatedly been accused of

targeting and killing civilians. They have also been largely incapable of achieving its declared goal of destroying Daesh.

The Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, in two separate letters sent to UN Secretary General António Guterres and rotating President of the UN Security Council Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta on August 24, stated that the U.S. and its allies were perpetrating war crimes and crimes against humanity through aerial bombardment of residential neighborhoods.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry also stressed that the military alliance was using internationally-banned white phosphorus munitions in flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the Observatory said Russian airstrikes had killed 45 members of the Takfiri Faylaq al-Sham (Levant Legion) terror group in Idlib province.

The monitoring group said the airstrikes targeted the outskirts of the village of Tal Mardikh.

Russian military aircraft have been targeting terrorist positions in Syria since September 2015 upon a request from the Damascus government.