

BEIJING (Dispatches) -- A senior Chinese official has said Beijing needs to focus on withstanding "color revolutions," as part of a broader strategy by President Xi Jinping, who warned that the country must do more to resist "Western" influence. Chinese Public Security Minister Zhao Kezhi told the ministry's annual national meeting Thursday that police must "stress the prevention and resistance of 'color revolutions' and firmly fight to protect China's political security." He also urged police to "strike back against all kinds of infiltration and subversive activities by hostile foreign forces."

PARIS (Dispatches) -- President Emmanuel Macron says France will keep its forces in Syria and remain "militarily engaged" in the Middle East despite U.S. plans to withdraw from the Arab country.

Addressing military officials at an army base near the city of Toulouse, Macron said "the fight (in Syria) is not over" and that "any rush to withdraw would be a mistake." He also criticized U.S. President Donald Trump's call for an alleged troop withdrawal from the war-torn country.

**U.S. Begins Prosecution of Press TV Journalist**



**Iranian Short Films Compete at Brussels Festival**



**Iran Seal Top Spot in Group D, to Face Oman in Knockout Stage**



**'Zionist Regime Behind Crises in Middle East'**



## China Offers Iran \$3 Billion Development of Yadavaran

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- China's state-run energy giant is making a new approach to clinch a \$3 billion deal for more development of an Iranian oil field, seeking to take advantage of waivers allowed under U.S. sanctions, the Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday, citing people familiar with the matter.

The offer made by the China Petroleum & Chemical Corp (Sinopec) is part of an existing contract to operate the Yadavaran oilfield in southwest Iran on the Iraqi border.

The Chinese believe the offer wouldn't violate a U.S. ban on signing new development deals with Iran because the Yadavaran contract goes back to 2007, the newspaper said.

Sinopec has told its Iranian counterpart, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), it wants its share of the field's production to be granted under the U.S. waiver allocated to China, one person told the Journal.

If implemented, the deal offered by China would double production at Yadavaran to more than 200,000 barrels a day (bpd) within six months.

China National Petroleum

Corp (CNPC) and Sinopec have invested billions of dollars in Yadavaran and North Azadegan oilfields.

Yadavaran is one of the world's biggest undeveloped oilfields with reserves of 31 billion barrels of light and heavy crude oil, while North Azadegan is estimated to hold 5.7 billion barrels of reserves.

Yadavaran was launched with a production of up to 115,000 bpd and around \$2 billion of investment by Sinopec in November 2016. CNPC brought online the first phase of North Azadegan with 75,000 bpd in early 2017.

The United States gave waivers to eight major clients of Iranian oil - China, India, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Greece, Taiwan and Turkey - after restoring energy sanctions in November.

On Friday, Reuters said the United States is likely to extend those waivers but will reduce the number of countries receiving them to placate top buyers China and India.

The news agency cited U.S.-based analysts at Eurasia Group as saying that China, India, Japan,

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## U.S. Assessment: Pressure on Iran Not Working



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during the Missile Defense Review announcement at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, Jan. 17, 2019.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- The Donald Trump administration conducted a preliminary internal assessment of its Iran "maximum pressure" policy this month and determined that it is not working, according to a new report.

Such an assessment could drive administration efforts to try to provoke Iran to leave the nuclear deal, possibly by urging a potential inspections crisis at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), some experts said.

"So far, there is little evidence that the administration is meeting any of its possible goals," the International

Crisis Group writes in the new report, "On Thin Ice," on the third anniversary of the Iran nuclear deal.

"A preliminary internal assessment by the administration described by Crisis Group purportedly concludes that the U.S. approach has yet to curb Iran's behavior or entice Tehran back to the negotiating table," the ICG report says, citing in a footnote an interview conducted by the group with a senior U.S. administration official this month.

The reported Trump administration assessment that Iran may be able to wait out its maximum pressure campaign may convince ad-

ministration officials that they need more European buy-in to the policy to succeed, said Ali Vaez, director of the ICG Iran Project and co-author of the report. But Europe is currently trying to entice Iran to stick with the nuclear deal after the U.S. exit last year and reimposition of harsh sanctions on Iran's oil and banking sectors.

"If you look at the range of ultimate objectives different people (in the administration) have in mind, from protests that pose an existential threat to the system, to change of behavior, to the Iranians coming back to the negotiating table, none

of that is happening," Vaez told Al-Monitor in an interview.

In short, the policy is not working, he said.

Some members of the Trump administration may be trying to provoke some kind of crisis between the IAEA and Iran in order to get Iran to leave the deal, said former U.S. Iran nuclear negotiator Richard Nephew.

"Everyone (in the Trump administration) is upset that the Iranians keep being able to cite that the IAEA has said once again they are in full compliance," Nephew, now with Columbia University, told Al-Monitor.

Some members of the Trump administration such as hawkish national security advisor John Bolton very much want the Iranians to withdraw, Nephew said. "Part of this crew truly wants the crisis."

"So probably the objective here, ... especially with what Bolton is allegedly doing to prompt an inspection crisis, is to try to put the burden of blame around Iran's neck," Vaez said. "Basically, if you can't convince others that the JCPOA is dead, try to persuade them that the deal is already defunct as Iran is violating it by denying access to 'suspect' sites."

Any effort by the Trump administration to politicize the IAEA inspections process would be deeply troubling, said Kelsey Davenport of the Arms Control Association.

"The IAEA clearly states that inspectors have had access to all the sites in Iran they have requested to visit," Davenport told Al-Monitor.

## EU to Snub U.S. Summit Against Iran in Poland?

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) -- European Union countries on Friday appeared ready to snub a U.S. conference in Poland next month over concerns it is part of a U.S. drive to ramp up pressure on Iran.

EU diplomats raised questions about the real agenda of the February 13-14 conference, saying that it was organized at very short notice and noting that Iran does not appear to be invited. An EU official said the bloc's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, has other commitments and will not attend.

The diplomats and officials were briefing reporters on condition of anonymity because the issue has not yet been discussed formally among ministers.

The EU has been battling to keep alive an international nuclear agreement with Iran since the U.S. abandoned the pact last year.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the conference on Iran and the Middle East last Friday.

He made the announcement in an interview during a regional tour aimed at mollifying U.S. allies after President Donald Trump's shock decision to withdraw all American troops from Syria.

"We'll bring together dozens of countries from all around the world," Pompeo told the Fox News

network.

They will "focus on Middle East stability and peace and freedom and security here in this region, and that includes an important element of making sure that Iran is not a destabilizing influence," he said.

The occupying regime of Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu has reportedly been invited to participate.

Tehran has called the conference a "desperate anti-Iran circus", and earlier this week summoned a Polish envoy to the country in protest.

The official IRNA news agency reported on Sunday that Iran had conveyed its protest message to Poland's Chargé d'Affaires Wojciech Unolt, demanding that Warsaw not go along with the "hostile move" by the United States against Tehran.

The statement quoted an unnamed Iranian official as saying that if the summit goes ahead, Iran will resort to unspecified "counteraction" toward Poland.

Responding to Pompeo's announcement, Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif said last Friday on Twitter that the conference would bring shame on the Polish government and invoked how during World War II Iran saved Polish lives.

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### Arab Media Reports:

## Private Jet Takes UAE FM, Intel Chief to Tel Aviv

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Emirati and Zionist officials travelled together on a direct flight from Abu Dhabi to Tel Aviv late on Thursday, Al-Khaleej Online reported.

The private jet marked 9H-VCL flew from Abu Dhabi airport through Saudi airspace, without stopping in Jordan as is customary, and landed in Ben Gurion airport.

The occupying regime of Israel's security figures were returning from a secret trip to Abu Dhabi to prepare for "a surprise visit" of the United Arab Emirates' foreign minister Abdullah bin Zayed to Tel Aviv, high-level sources told Al-Khaleej Online.

This was to be followed, the sources said, by a visit to Abu Dhabi by Zionist PM Benjamin Netanyahu to Abu Dhabi.

The sources added that a Saudi "green light" was given to the

UAE for these visits, as Riyadh is keen to normalize ties with Israel officially and is preparing a meeting in Washington that would gather Netanyahu with U.S. President Donald Trump and the Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman.

Kamal Khatib, deputy head of the Islamic Movement in Occupied Palestine, told the Arabi 21 news site that two Emirati officials were allegedly on the plane: the foreign minister and head of UAE intelligence Tahnoun bin Zayed.

Earlier this week, Netanyahu revealed during a retirement celebration for Gadi Eisenkot, who has served as the 21st chief of the Zionist military's general staff since 2015, that the outgoing head of the army met the commanders-in-chief of several Arab armies during his four-year term.

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## Official Report: Thousands More Children Separated at U.S. Border

WASHINGTON (AFP) -- Thousands more children were forcibly separated from their parents after illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexico border from 2017-2018 than originally admitted by President Donald Trump's administration, an official report said Thursday.

The inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which was given responsibility for the children, said the total number separated under the administration's "zero-tolerance policy" toward illegal immigrants remains unknown.

But the department said that so far it has identified 2,737 separated children placed in its care before the controversial policy was officially declared over in May 2018, a number not previously divulged.

After the zero-tolerance announcement was made and before the policy was halted under po-

litical and legal pressure, another nearly 3,000 minors were separated from their parents or adult guardians who illegally crossed into the United States.

The policy was declared amid White House frustration over a resurgence of illegal immigration in the first half of 2018 following a decline the previous year.

Border officials were told to strip children from their parents to be sent to camps run by HHS' Office of Refugee Resettlement, eventually to be placed in U.S. relatives' homes.

Meanwhile, their parents were to be arrested and charged with illegal entry into the country.

Many parents then later spent months searching for their children.

The policy outraged immigrant and children's advocates and was

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