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Pompoe's 'Hypocritical Absurdities' About Iran's Missiles

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran on Thursday urged the United States and its allies to stop their "absurd" accusations about Iranian missile tests, a day after Washington urged the UN to adopt punitive measures against Tehran.

"U.S. & allies should cease their hypocritical absurdities about Iran's missiles," Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif wrote on Twitter.

"Facts speak for themselves. It's they who sell \$100s of billions in arms to butcher Yemenis," he added, referring to the devastating Saudi war backed by the West against Yemen.

Beneath the text, Zarif published a graphic detailing arms exports to Saudi Arabia from 2013 to 2017 using figures from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The U.S. accounted for 61 percent of those arms sales to Riyadh, Britain made up 23 percent of sales, and deals from France accounted for four percent, according to the chart.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday urged the UN Security Council to take punitive action against Iran to limit its ballistic missile program, which Washington says poses a threat to the region and beyond.

A day earlier, Iran confirmed it had carried out a missile test and reiterated its intention to keep up ballistic activities despite Western condemnation.

Paris and London said Tehran's test was "provocative" but called for dialogue with Iran rather than sanctions as demanded by the U.S.

Iran limited some aspects of its nuclear program under a landmark 2015 deal with major powers, which the U.S. walked away from in May, but has continued to develop its ballistic missile technology.

UN Security Council Resolution 2231 adopted after the agreement calls on Iran to refrain from testing missiles capable of carrying a nuclear weapon, but does not specifically bar Tehran from missile launches.

Tehran says it has no intention of acquiring atomic weapons and that its missile development programs are purely defensive and comply with the resolution.

On Thursday, Zarif hits out at Pompeo for making another "mockery" of the UN Security Council by taking the podium there to brag about Washington's violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

"In latest mockery of UN Security Council, Secretary Pompeo

bragged about violating Resolution 2231; outlined plans for more violations; confirmed that U.S. and allies rely on defunct Resolution 1929 provision on missiles; turned an isolated U.S. into 1st permanent Security Council member to PUNISH other countries for COMPLYING," he wrote.

Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia also took a swipe at Pompeo as he denounced attempts to "fan anti-Iranian hysteria."

"There is no proof that the ballistic missiles can carry a nuclear load," Nebenzia told the council.

Nebenzia added that some council members were using Wednesday's meeting "to discuss the so-called regional behavior of Iran, which they depict as though it were the only source of all the woes in the Middle East."

"What they do not voice is any kind of a substantive proposal on this topic and sometimes we're left with the impression that the only goal is to further escalate anti-Iran hysteria and to demonize Iran," he said.

Iraq's Nujaba Rejects U.S., Saudi Claims Against Iran

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, a major Shia resistance group in Iraq, rejected U.S. and Saudi claims that Iran is interfering in the internal affairs of the Arab country, saying Tehran has always sided with the Iraqi nation.

"We have not forgotten that most of the terrorist operations in Iraq were carried out by Saudi citizens," the group's spokesman Hashem al-Moussavi told Iran's Tasnim news agency on Friday.

"The Saudis have always belittled Iraq and held it in contempt, while Iran has supported us at the highest levels of leadership, government, and nation and in all respects," he added.

Salehi: Iran Not Bluffing About Enrichment



In this Feb. 3, 2007 file photo, an Iranian technician works at the Uranium Conversion Facility just outside the city of Isfahan.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran's nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi said Thursday Tehran is not "bluffing" when it says it is ready to resume the 20-percent uranium enrichment if the Europeans fail to save the 2015 nuclear accord.

Salehi said that under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Iran accepted to curb its nuclear program as part of its confidence-building measures, but those measures would not obstruct the peaceful activities of Iran's nuclear industry.

"Now I'm emphasizing once again that if the establishment wants, we can easily return to the 20-percent enrichment, and meet the country's needs at any level and volume," he said during a tour of the Fordow nuclear facility.

Officials say Iran has the

technological knowhow to immediately begin higher-level uranium enrichment and has refrained from doing so in a bid to preserve the nuclear deal.

Iran in June reopened a nuclear plant idle for nine years after U.S. President Donald Trump pulled Washington out of the 2015 nuclear accord.

It came after Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei ordered the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) to start preparations to upgrade enrichment capacity in case the Europeans fail to save the nuclear accord.

The plant for the production of UF₆, the feedstock for centrifuge machines that enrich uranium, was relaunched and a barrel of yellow cake was delivered there.

The UF₆ factory, which had been inactive since 2009 due to a lack of yellow cake, is part of the Isfahan

uranium conversion facility.

According to AEOI's statement on its website, Iran has imported a huge amount of yellow cake since the nuclear deal in 2015, and has also produced some domestically.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said on June 5 that the AEOI had informed it of "tentative" plans to resume production of UF₆.

The nuclear deal allows Iran to enrich uranium to 3.67 percent and caps its stock of enriched uranium hexafluoride at 300 kilograms (660 pounds).

Salehi said on Thursday, "Enrichment is currently underway, but we would put aside the 300kg limit whenever we wish, and would do the enrichment at any volume and level."

"We currently have 1,044 centrifuges in Fordow, and if the establishment wants, we will restart 20-percent uranium enrichment in Fordow."

Pakistan, Iran Reach New Security Agreement

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- High-ranking officials from Iran and Pakistan have signed an agreement to promote cooperation in securing their common borders nearly two months after terrorists abducted a number of Iranian border guards at a military post.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) on border security was signed following three days of negotiations between Iranian and Pakistani security and political officials in Iran's southeastern city of Zahedan, Tasnim news agency reported Friday.

It called for boosting cooperation on preventing terrorists from crossing joint borders and fuel smuggling as well as human trafficking, it said.

The Iranian side also called on the Pakistanis to secure the release of remaining border guards, who were

abducted by terrorists and taken into Pakistan in October.

On November 22, five of the 14 guards returned home following consultations with Pakistan's diplomatic and military officials.

The so-called Jaish-ul-Adl terrorist group, based in Pakistan, attacked a border post in Iran's Mirjaveh on October 15 and took hostage 14 border guards, local Basij forces, and members of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Iranian military forces along the southeastern border areas are frequently attacked by terrorist groups coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Tehran has frequently asked the two neighbors to step up security at the common border to prevent terrorist attacks on Iranian forces.

The Holy Qur'an

The Hypocrites are afraid lest a Sura should be sent down about them, showing them what is (really passing) in their hearts. Say: "Mock ye! But verily Allah will bring to light all that ye fear (should be revealed)."

The Holy Qur'an (9:64)

PRAYER TIMINGS

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| Noon (Zohr) | 11:59 |
| Evening (Maghreb) | 17:12 |
| Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow" | 05:37 |
| Sunrise "Tomorrow" | 07:07 |

The official expressed hope the remaining parties to the nuclear agreement would deliver on their promises and implement their commitments in order to fill the gap left by U.S. withdrawal from deal.

Otherwise, he said, Iran will have to reduce its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as the nuclear deal is officially called.

"I would like to warn that this is not a bluff; I have kept my word whenever I've said something. Now I'm emphasizing once again that if the establishment wants, we can easily return to the 20-percent enrichment, and meet the country's needs at any level and volume," Salehi said.

The European Union has vowed to establish a mechanism to facilitate non-dollar transactions with Iran.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said Monday, "I will expect this instrument to be established in the coming weeks before the end of the year as a way to protect and promote legitimate business."

General Hajizadeh:

Iran at Cutting Edge of Drone, Missile, Radar Technologies

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)'s Aerospace Force said on Thursday said Iran has obtained the most advanced technical knowhow to make missiles, drones and radars thanks to the tireless efforts of its experts.

Addressing an academic ceremony here, Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said the Islamic Republic has reached

the cutting edge of technology in missile, drone and radar industries despite sanctions.

"Such capabilities have been achieved with the unwavering efforts of the country's young pious generation," he said.

Hajizadeh said sanctions imposed by the enemies, particularly on Iran's missile

industry, have failed and turned threats into opportunities for Iran.

These remarkable military achievements can be used in other spheres, he said. The IRGC Aerospace Force has forged constructive connection with academic and scientific centers and knowledge-based companies, he added.

Last month, Leader of the Islamic

Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei underlined the need to step up efforts in all areas to thwart hostile plots against Iran.

The Leader cited the "young, pious and motivated" human resources in all parts of the country, including in the armed forces, and called for accelerated efforts to channel their capabilities to good use.