

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iranian foreign ministry spokesmen said on Monday the U.S. Middle East plan that is set to be presented at a conference in Bahrain this week is "shameful" and "doomed to failure".

"This conference and the sale of Palestine will lead nowhere," Abbas Mousavi was quoted as saying by ISNA news agency. U.S. President Donald Trump's economic vision as part of the wider plan to whitewash the Palestinian cause was unexpectedly released on Saturday.

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Forces of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) have dismantled a four-member gang of terrorists in the country's northwestern border with Turkey. In a statement on Monday, the IRGC's Hamzeh Seyed al-Shohada Base said the clashes with members of the terrorist group, affiliated to the global arrogance, occurred in Chaldoran region in the province of West Azarbaijan Sunday night. It added that the IRGC forces managed to kill one terrorist, injure two and arrest another member of the gang.

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Viewpoint

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Trump Announces 'Hard-Hitting' New Sanctions

Russia Vows to Support Iran Along With Partners

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia and its partners will take steps to counter new sanctions that Washington has said it will impose on Iran, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies on Monday.

In the comments reported by TASS and RIA, Ryabkov did not specify what those steps would be. He said the imposition of U.S. sanctions would aggravate tensions, and Washington should instead be seeking dialogue with Tehran.

It's a "deliberate escalation of the whole situation", Ryabkov said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said new sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran are illegal.

His remarks come as the U.S. and the occupying regime of Israel are working to convince Russia to join them in confronting Iran during an unusual gathering of the three sides' security advisers this week.

According to media reports, both Washington and Tel Aviv would be trying to use the gathering in Occupied Palestine as an opportunity to turn Russia against Iran.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose country is a close ally of Tehran, denied that the U.S. could secure concessions on key issues.

"I don't think anyone is trying to steamroll us on anything - they must understand that is a far-fetched possibility. But we do need the dialogue," he told Russian channel NTV.

President Trump signed off on an order leveling new sanctions against Iran. Trump, calling reporters into the Oval Office Monday morning, described the sanctions order as "hard hitting" and said they will deny Iran access to financial instruments.

"We do not seek conflict with Iran or any other country," Trump told reporters.

"We will continue to increase pressure on Tehran," Trump said as he sat at his desk in the Oval Office preparing to sign an executive order.

The Trump administration already moved this spring to cut off all revenues from Iranian oil exports, the lifeblood of the nation's economy, and the new sanctions are expected to be aimed at shutting down additional sources of income "with the goal of forcing political change in Tehran", the New York Times said.

Trump and his top foreign policy aides are gambling that continuing the squeeze on Iran will compel it to buckle to de-

mands to limit their nuclear program in ways that go beyond the landmark agreement that major world powers forged with Iran in 2015 — and that Trump withdrew from last year, the paper said.

Iran says the Trump administration is waging economic warfare on its nation. The Trump administration has imposed more than 1,000 specific sanctions on Iran since the withdrawal from the nuclear agreement in May 2018, according to the State Department.

The rollout of sanctions and attempt to end all oil exports, along with an insistence by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that Tehran meet 12 expansive demands mostly unrelated to the nuclear program, "set a spark to the escalatory cycle we're seeing today," said Dalia Dassa Kaye, a Middle East expert at RAND Corporation, a research group in California.

Trump is threatening Iran with additional sanctions, but there's not much left for the U.S. to target because most of the Islamic Republic's economy has been hit by earlier penalties, Bloomberg wrote on Monday.

The U.S. is already sanctioning significant sectors including oil, banks and steel, leaving smaller targets including certain exports and government officials. Trump could also hit Iran's central bank with secondary sanctions, at the risk of hurting humanitarian trade, it said.

More than 80% of Iran's economy is under sanction today, Pompeo said Sunday before heading to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to rally a front against Iran. The new sanctions "will be a further effort to ensure that their capacity not only to grow their economy but to evade sanctions becomes more and more difficult," Pompeo said.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said the new penalties won't force the country to negotiate or capitulate.

"Are there any other sanctions left for the U.S. to impose on Iran?" ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said Monday. The Trump administration "knows full well that if pressure and sanctions were the answer, they would have yielded results much earlier."

The U.S. has also revoked waivers that had allowed eight countries including India and China to import Iranian oil despite American sanctions.

The moves so far haven't been enough for at least one Republican

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U.S. Cyber Terrorism Against Iran Fails



Khordad 15, a new surface-to-air missile battery at an undisclosed location in Iran, June 9, 2019.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran said on Monday U.S. cyber terrorist attacks on its military had failed, as Washington sought to rally support in the Middle East and Europe for a hardline stance against Tehran.

The confrontation has escalated since May, when Washington sharply tightened economic sanctions on Iran, ordering all countries to halt imports of Iranian oil, in what the Trump administration says is an effort to force Tehran to open talks on its nuclear and missile programs and influential regional role.

The United States is expected to announce another round of new

sanctions this week.

U.S. media have reported that Washington launched cyber attacks last week. The Washington Post said on Saturday that the cyber strikes, which had been planned previously, had disabled Iranian rocket launch systems. U.S. officials have declined to comment.

"They try hard, but have not carried out a successful attack," Muhammad Javad Azari Jahromi, Iran's minister for information and communications technology, said on Twitter.

"Media asked if the claimed cyber attacks against Iran are true,"

he said. "Last year we neutralized 33 million attacks with the (national) firewall."

"We have been facing cyber-terrorism for a long time...Last year we neutralized 33 million attacks with the (national) firewall," Jahromi noted.

The attacks came shortly after the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) shot down a U.S. Navy RQ-4A global Hawk drone that had entered Iranian airspace in the Persian Gulf region to gather intelligence.

Azari Jahromi called attacks on Iranian computer networks "cyber-terrorism", referring to

Stuxnet, the first publicly known example of a virus used to attack industrial machinery, which targeted Iran's nuclear facilities in November 2007.

Stuxnet, widely believed to have been developed by the United States and the occupying regime of Israel, was discovered in 2010 after it was used to attack a uranium enrichment facility in the Iranian city of Natanz.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo jetted to the Middle East to discuss Iran with the leaders of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, two Persian Gulf Arab allies that favor a hard line. Pompeo met King Salman as well as the king's son, de facto ruler Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman.

Pompeo said ahead of the trip that he sought to build a "global coalition" against Iran and planned to discuss the available options with his counterparts in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

On Monday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman dismissed the attempts, saying such measures are destined to fail. "The push to form a coalition against Iran is nothing new; these coalitions have failed so far" Mousavi told reporters during regular weekly news briefing.

"Iran is a powerful country neighboring 15 other nations; therefore, forming a coalition against Iran is difficult and they will fail even if they travel to the region every day," the spokesman said.

The U.S. special representative

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Navy Chief: 'Crushing Response' Can Be Repeated

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran threatened additional drone attacks against the U.S. after downing of a sophisticated RQ-4A Global Hawk near the Strait of Hormuz last week.

Iran's naval commander, Rear Adm. Hussein Khanzadi issued a warning to Washington that Tehran is capable of shooting down other American spy drones that violate Iranian airspace. Khanzadi spoke Monday during a meeting with a group of defense officials in Iran.

"We confidently say that the crushing response can always be repeated, and the enemy knows it," Khanzadi was quoted as saying by the Tasnim news agency.

U.S. President Donald Trump initially said Iran had made a "very big mistake" and that it was "hard to believe" that shooting down the drone last Thursday was not intentional. But he also said over the weekend that

he appreciated Iran's decision to not shoot down a manned U.S. spy plane carrying 30 people.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has blamed the United States' "interventionist military presence" for fanning the flames.

The New York Times said American intelligence and military officers are working on additional clandestine plans to counter Iran in the Persian Gulf, pushed by the White House to develop new options that could help deter Tehran without escalating tensions into a full-out conventional war.

According to current and former officials, cited by the newspaper, the goal is to develop operations similar to the cyberattacks conducted on Thursday.

Officials did not provide specifics about the secret operations under consideration by the White House. But they could include

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Reuters: France, UK, Germany Warned Iran

PARIS/BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - France, Britain and Germany have sent an official diplomatic warning to Iran about the serious consequences Tehran faces if it scales back its compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal, two European diplomats said told Reuters on Monday.

Three diplomats said the European signatories to the deal lodged the diplomatic demarche, the term for a formal note, on June 22, with two saying the communication aimed to warn Iran specifically against scaling back its commitments to the accord.

Iran has said it will not give the European powers more time beyond July 8 to save the nuclear deal. It has said it is ready to go through with a threat to enrich uranium to a higher level if Europe cannot shield Tehran from U.S. sanctions.

Iran has put the onus on the Europeans to do more to shield Tehran from the crippling impact of sanctions, but they have failed the country.

"They have made the strategic choice

to blame the Europeans for everything," said one diplomat, according to Reuters. "The more the Iranians do things that potentially violate the accord, the less inclined we are to make efforts to help them. It's a vicious circle."

It was unclear whether Iran had responded to the European demarche, although Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi was quoted by state TV on June 23 as saying it would not back down on its decision to scale back commitments.

The three European powers, along with Russia and China, have been trying to salvage the nuclear agreement since the United States pulled out of it in May 2018 and reimposed sanctions that have hit the Iranian economy hard.

Among the steps Europe has taken is the creation of a limited trade mechanism intended to make it possible for countries to go on trading with Iran outside the scope of the U.S. sanctions. But the mechanism is not yet operational.