

Kayhan Group of Newspapers

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## Most Japanese Oppose Joining Anti-Iran Coalition: Report

TEHRAN (Press TV) - A new poll shows that over half of voters oppose dispatching Japan's Self-Defense Forces personnel to the Persian Gulf to join a U.S.-led coalition in a purported mission of protecting maritime shipping lanes in the Middle East.

According to the survey, 57.1 percent of voters said Japan should not send SDF forces to the Middle East, while 28.2 percent said it should.

The nationwide telephone poll was conducted by Kyodo News. Japanese government sources said earlier this month that the administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is reluctant to participate in the U.S.-led coalition amid concerns about possible damage to Tokyo-Tehran friendly ties.

As a compromise, the sources told Kyodo news agency, Japan is considering sending Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyers and P-3C Orion surveillance

planes to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait between war-torn Yemen and the Horn of Africa.

"We can't just do nothing," a senior Abe administration official said.

The Japanese ships would not be part of the U.S.-proposed mission, though the area of their operations would overlap.

The United States has been trying to persuade its allies into an international coalition with the declared aim of providing "security" for merchant shipping in the Strait of Hormuz — though which about a fifth of all oil consumed globally pass — and other strategic Middle Eastern shipping lanes.

Washington claims Tehran has played a role in two separate attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman in May and June, without providing any credible evidence to support the accusations, which Iran has categorically rejected.

## Larijani Hails North Korea for Standing Against 'Unilateral' U.S. Demands

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian Parliament speaker Ali Larijani in a meeting with visiting Vice Chairman of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly Pak Chol-min in Tehran on Tuesday praised North Korea for exercising vigilance against the U.S.'s "unilateral" demands, stressing that Washington is not after a "true deal" with Pyongyang.

Larijani said that North Korea adopted an "intelligent" decision in the face of Washington's "unilateral demands," adding that "the Americans are not after striking a true deal with North Korea, but they merely want to disarm the country and put pressure on it."

He also denounced the U.S.'s arrogant nature, adding, "North Korean leader Kim Jong-un acted properly during negotiations with the Americans and did not allow them to reach their objectives."

Larijani further hailed North Korea's pursuit of economic independence, expressing Iran's keenness to boost bilateral economic ties with the East Asian country.

The North Korean official, for his part, emphasized that the Islamic Republic, under the guidance of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has stood firm against excessive U.S. demands.

Iran and North Korea, which are both under tough U.S. sanctions, should expand their cooperation in all fields, especially economy, he noted.

The official also complained about illogical and unilateral US demands during talks with North Korea, saying that the Americans threw a wrench in the discussions over the issue of sanctions.

North Korea has been the target of American and international sanctions over its nuclear and missile programs.

# Leader Grants Clemency to Over 1,000 Iranian Inmates



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has granted clemency to 1,070 convicts found guilty by various Iranian courts.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei approved a proposal from Iran's top judge to pardon or commute the prison terms of 1,070 convicts found guilty by various Iranian courts.

The pardon was granted on Monday on the occasion of two Muslim festivals, namely Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Ghadeer, which marks

the appointment of the first Shiite Imam, Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS), by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as his successor.

Iran's Judiciary Chief Hojatolislam Ebrahim Raeisi had sent a letter to the Leader, proposing a list of convicts deserving clemency.

Article 110 of the Constitution grants the Leader the right to pardon or reduce the sentences of con-

victs upon a recommendation from the head of the Judiciary.

The clemency, however, does not apply to several types of convicts, including those who have been sentenced for their role in armed struggle against the country, armed or organized drug trafficking, rape, armed robbery, arms smuggling, abduction, bribery, and embezzlement.

## Iran Planning 3rd Step to Reduce Nuclear Commitments: Spokesman

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi highlighted the continued failure of the European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal to live up to their obligations, and said the Islamic Republic is planning the third step to reduce its nuclear commitments.

"Up to now, consultations on the implementation of the European commitments have failed," Mousavi told reporters during his weekly press briefing on Monday.

"Efforts are underway, of course; French President Emmanuel Macron is making efforts," he said, adding that Iran is waiting for the possible outcomes of

diplomatic efforts before its 60-day deadline set for the Europeans ends.

"The third step is being planned commensurate with the actions of the other side," the spokesman went on to say.

Last month, Iran declared the second step to reduce its commitments by ramping up the level of uranium enrichment to over 3.67 percent.

Iran maintains that the new measures are not designed to harm the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but to save the accord by creating a balance in the commitments.

## Commander: Iran to Win Any Enemy-Imposed War

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian Deputy Army Commander for Coordination Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari on Tuesday stressed that his country does not seek military confrontation against any state but it will gain victory in any possible war imposed by enemies.

"We have never been after any war and will never seek one," Rear Admiral Sayyari said, addressing a ceremony in Tehran.

He underlined that although Iran does not seek war with any state, the nation will be the ultimate winner

of "any potential warfare against the Islamic Republic".

Rear Admiral Sayyari pointed to the Iranian military's defensive developments, saying the military is now more powerful than ever, as the country has boosted the forces' various subcategories and different Army divisions have undergone major structural changes.

He further added the nation's courage and military advances have pushed away the enemies who have been seeking to undermine Iran's integrity.

## Russia, Iran to Open Ferry Route in Caspian Sea

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Senior officials of Iran and Russia have agreed to establish a ferry route in the Caspian Sea to link the ports of the two countries for tourists and passengers.

Iranian Ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanayee, in a visit to Derbent, discussed the development of relations between Iran and Russia's Republic of Dagestan.

During the visit, the two sides discussed the issue of increasing cargo traffic through Makhachkala Commercial Sea Port, as well as the launch of direct passenger and cargo

flights between Makhachkala and Tehran.

Among the issues discussed, there was a plan to set up a direct ferry service linking the two states, with the head of Dagestan's republic, Vladimir Vasilyev, highly optimistic about the prospect.

He said Derbent attracts many Iranians and the ferry service is expected to help facilitate their commutes.

"Tehran is ready to establish sea links with us, and we are ready to cooperate - and everything will work," Vasilyev told

journalists at a press briefing.

He said that Iran's business community had started to take an interest in Dagestan, in particular in Derbent, with a number of international projects already being implemented and set to transform the region.

"International projects are being implemented in Derbent, there are some very interesting solutions there. The city used to have a billion-plus [rubles] annual income, but now it is receiving four billion [rubles] more from investors," Vasilyev stated.

The Holy Qur'an

Is he, therefore, better who lays his foundation on fear of Allah and (His) good pleasure, or he who lays his foundation on the edge of a cracking hollowed bank, so it broke down with him into the fire of hell; and Allah does not guide the unjust people.

The Holy Qur'an (9:109)

### PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	13:08
Evening (Maghreb)	20:06
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	04:57
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	06:27

## Iranian, Swedish FMs Meet on Bilateral Ties

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Swedish counterpart Margot Wallstrom in a meeting in Stockholm on Tuesday discussed ways to further broaden bilateral relations despite the U.S. sanctions.

Zarif, who arrived in Stockholm on a diplomatic tour on Monday evening, met with Wallstrom on Tuesday.

After the meeting, the foreign minister will attend a dinner ceremony hosted by his Swedish counterpart.

Meeting with Swedish Minister of Trade and Head of Joint Commission of the two countries Ann Linde, former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden Carl Bildt and Chairman of the British Company owner of the seized ship in Iran Eric Honel are among the Foreign Minister's plans in Stockholm today.

Zarif, who is on a three-nation tour to Nordic countries to hold high-level talks with the European country's senior officials on a host of bilateral as well as international issues, met with his Finnish counterpart Pekka Haavisto and the Finnish Minister for Development, Cooperation and Foreign Trade Ville Skinnari in Helsinki on Monday. Prior to these meeting, Zarif held talks with Finnish President Sauli Niinisto.

Zarif will also pay a visit to Paris later this week for talks with the French president and his top diplomat.

"I will travel to Paris on Friday to meet French President Emmanuel Macron and Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian," Zarif said during a gathering of Iranians in the Swedish capital of Stockholm late Monday.