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## Zarif Raps India for Submitting to U.S. 'Bullying'

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) -- Iran's foreign minister has upbraided India for adhering to far-reaching U.S. economic sanctions against the OPEC member, saying that the Islamic Republic had expected its long-standing ally to be "more resilient" in the face of what he called Washington's bullying.

Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif also voiced concern about slow progress on the regionally strategic Chabahar Port, Chennai-based The Hindu newspaper reported on Saturday. India is developing the first phase of the Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar in cooperation with Iran.

"India has certainly taken a stance against the sanctions... so that's been encouraging, but of course, we expected our friends to be more resilient vis-a-vis U.S. pressure," Zarif told a group of visiting journalists from New Delhi, the paper reported.

U.S. President Donald Trump last year quit an international nuclear pact with Iran and imposed sanctions lifted under the 2015 accord. India, the world's third-largest oil consumer, ceased buying Iranian oil this May in the wake of the sanctions and its refiners now are purchasing more crude from suppliers like Mexico, and have signed contracts with U.S. firms. India had been Iran's top oil customer after China.

Zarif, a career diplomat, said he understood why India "did not want to agitate" the U.S. by being a sanctions spoiler. "People want to be on the right side of President (Donald) Trump" but the problem is "he hasn't got a right side," he said.

The foreign minister said in agreeing to abide by the sanctions, India had placed itself "on the receiving end" of "bullying" by Washington.

"You're already being bullied by the U.S. because they're telling you not to buy oil from us" and "if you can't lift oil from us, we won't be able to buy Indian rice," Zarif said to members of the Indian Women's Press Corps.

India being "a great democracy, a huge country... can't become the subject of bullying as China is," he said. Still, he expressed confidence that centuries-old ties with India wouldn't be affected by U.S. actions.

Zarif said imposition of the U.S. sanctions had been a "huge psychological shock" for Iran and had imposed "immense suffering on our population."

Aside from throttling oil exports,

the sanctions also cut off Iranian banks' ties to the international financial world, affecting how it finances global trade. But the economy is now recovering, he said, noting the country's currency has rebounded 40 percent against the U.S. dollar after initially sliding 70 percent.

The minister's comments were supported by the IMF's latest forecast that Iran's economy will shrink in 2019-20 by 9.5 percent, but that it will recover next year to post flat growth.

Iranian officials say the country is surviving the sanctions by boosting exports of non-oil goods like food, textiles and petrochemicals and through bartering and back-room deals. "Even with the toughest sanctions we won't be destroyed," Zarif said, noting Iran's vast natural resources and educated population.

"Iran will continue to sell its oil and countries will continue to buy it. But the nature of this new business" is that one of the "biggest victims" is transparency and "one of the biggest gainers is corruption," Zarif said. "Corrupt people make a lot of money because transactions will always be conducted. Iranian oil always has customers. The only difference is a bunch of people will make a lot of money buying oil at a discount and selling it to others" at higher prices, he said.

Zarif expressed worry that progress on the strategically key Chabahar Port "hasn't been as fast as we'd all wanted" and warned about implications for regional stability if it's not completed. India,

Iran and Afghanistan signed an agreement three years ago involving setting up a transport corridor using Chabahar as a regional transport hub for goods and passengers.

"Chabahar is much greater than India and Iran. Chabahar affects regional stability. Afghanistan's future means the future of law-and-order in this region, freedom from terrorism," he said, adding that Daesh terrorists were regrouping in Afghanistan, creating greater hazards for the region.

Daesh's shift to Afghanistan "is the source of common concern between India, Iran and Pakistan", Zarif said.

Zarif said though Chabahar is exempt from U.S. sanctions, the slowdown is a "natural" consequence of the coercive measures. India is developing the first phase of the Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar in cooperation with Iran.

He said China also wanted to

(Continued on Page 7)

Deputy Defense Minister:

## Iran Acquires Laser Air Defense Technology



Bina, an Iranian laser guided dual-capability surface-to-surface and air-to-surface missile, is on display in 2014.

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Iran's deputy defense minister said Saturday the country is producing a laser air defense system and plans to increase the range and precision of its cruise missiles.

"We have acquired laser air defense technology that can be used against small aircraft and quadcopter drones," General Qasem Taqizadeh said.

The system has undergone testing and is now under production, he added.

The deputy defense minister also said that new mapping and digital systems were being used to increase the range and precision of cruise missiles as part of a project that would see its testing stages concluded in the near future.

Speaking about Iran's ballistic mis-

sile capabilities, Taqizadeh said Iran has almost completed a project seeking to upgrade all surface-to-surface missiles with pinpoint-striking capability.

The deputy defense minister further said Iran's Qaher F-313 stealth fighter aircraft is undergoing continued tests. The Qaher F-313 project was unveiled in 2013 and has since been undergoing different development and testing stages.

Iran has taken great strides seeking to attain self-sufficiency in producing essential military equipment and defense systems in the face of decades-long sanctions and arms embargoes on the country.

The country consequently produces a wide variety of advanced weapons systems and equipment based on its own technological capabilities.

Defense Minister General Amir Hatami said Saturday the only way to effectively counter sanctions against Iran is to rely on increasing Iran's "power in all essential areas, specifically in the defense sector."

The defense minister said Iran's defense sector has gained a leading role in successfully overcoming sanctions on the country.

Hatami made the remarks during a special summit regarding sanctions targeting the country's defense sector.

The defense minister said Iran has become a regional power due to its influence and resistance in the region, adding that this has not been "possible in any way other than relying on our own domestic strength and developing our defense capabilities."

## U.S. Officials Close File of Iranian Killed by Police

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- U.S. federal prosecutors have decided to close the case of the fatal shooting of unarmed Iranian-born Bijan Ghaisar by two police officers with no charges being filed.

Ghaisar, 25, was shot repeatedly in the head by two United States Park Police (USPP) officers Alejandro Amaya and Lucas Vinyard on the evening of November 17, 2017 after his vehicle was rear-ended in a minor fender bender in the Northern Virginia suburbs.

His family had said Bijan was shot several times in the head and suffered irreversible brain damage from which he died after 10 days on life support.

A witness told The Washington Post at the time that she saw two officers approach the young man's vehicle and open fire at close range.

Amaya and Vinyard were identified almost a year and a half after the shooting took place.

In a statement issued on Friday, U.S. prosecutors said they had concluded that evidence was lacking to prove the officers "willfully" took Ghaisar's life.

Ghaisar's family said in a statement that the U.S. Department of Justice escaped accountability.

"Today's decision was a cowardly act by a Department of Justice that is afraid to hold law enforcement, especially federal law enforcement, accountable when it commits murder," the statement said.

"The Justice Department has given us no answers to why Bi-

jan was killed. Instead, they have broken every promise made to us -- from keeping us informed about the investigation to personally sharing the results before broadcasting it to the world to, most importantly, protecting Bijan."

The Ghaisar family pressed the U.S. Park Police and the FBI for months to get answers about the incident and the officers involved. According to their amended complaint, the family learned the identities after it issued a subpoena to the Fairfax County Police Department, whose officers were at the scene of the shooting assisting the U.S. Park Police.

Rep. Don Beyer, who had helped the family push for answers and sponsored legislation requiring federal police to use cameras, said "this is not justice."

"The Justice Department failed our community for two years by withholding answers about why police killed Bijan Ghaisar, but this final failure is the worst of all."

He said "all available evidence, including video of the event, contradicts" the conclusion that no crime occurred.

Law enforcement agencies across the United States are under scrutiny for extrajudicial killings. U.S. police officers fatally shoot hundreds of people every year, with a disproportionate number of those being black.

Iranians and Iranian-Americans are subject to arrest and detention in the United States under a series

of measures which have hardened during the administration of President Donald Trump.

U.S. media reports said this week the State Department has forced out a career staffer over her ties to the administration of former president Barack Obama, and following reports in conservative media questioning her loyalty to Trump.

They said Sahar Nowrouzadeh, a 36-year-old national security specialist fluent in Persian and Arabic who helped craft the Iran nuclear deal during the Obama administration, was improperly removed from her post in the State Department, despite a career in public service that spanned nearly 13 years. She first entered the federal government in 2005 under President George W. Bush.

U.S. Special Representative for Iran, Brian Hook, removed Nowrouzadeh in April 2017, three months before her one-year appointment, made under former secretary of state John Kerry, was due to run out.

The White House staff believed Nowrouzadeh wept when Trump was elected as president of the United States, which raised questions about her loyalty to Trump.

Hook is in a commanding position over the Trump administration's highly belligerent Iran policy and promotes the White House's sanctions campaign against the Islamic Republic, which has been criticized by the entire world, including Washington's own allies.

The Holy Qur'an



And I follow the religion of my fathers, Ibrahim and Ishaq and Yaqoub; it beseems us not that we should associate aught with Allah; this is by Allah's grace upon us and on mankind, but most people do not give thanks.

The Holy Qur'an (12:38)

### PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	11:49
Evening (Maghreb)	17:16
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:15
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	06:42

## Gen. Salami Tours Quake-Hit Areas in Northwest

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hussein Salami on Saturday outlined relief operations in East Azarbaijan following a strong earthquake which killed five people last week, saying his forces will remain in the affected region to help people as long as necessary.

Speaking in the northwestern city of Mianeh, Salami IRGC forces were dispatched to the area and began rescue operations immediately after the quake hit.

The top commander said the IRGC has deployed 20 heavy vehicles to remove debris.

"Given the experiences we have gained from the past events and disasters in the country, the dear people of this region should be confident that the IRGC will side with the quake-stricken people until the end of the work," General Salami said.

A magnitude 5.9 earthquake shook northwestern Iran on November 8, killing at least five and wounding 518 others. The strong earthquake hit an area near the city of Tark, around 120km from the provincial capital Tabriz.

Iran is crisscrossed by several major fault lines that cover at least 90 percent of the country.

In November 2017, the western province of Kermanshah was hit by a major 7.3-magnitude quake that killed 620 people.