

President: Iranians Back Gov't

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – President Hassan Rouhani said on Sunday that the vast majority of Iranians back his administration's approach in nuclear talks. "All polls indicate more than 80% support for the administration's nuclear approach," the president said. He also stressed "the seriousness" of the country's negotiators in the talks with the Group 5+1 over Tehran's peaceful nuclear energy program.

MPs Plan Bill of Sanctions on Europe

TEHRAN (Fars) -- Iranian MPs are planning to prepare a bill to impose energy sanctions on the European countries, a lawmaker announced on Sunday. "The lawmakers have put this issue on their agenda in line with Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's position that called for the Islamic Republic action deterrent measures against the sanctions," MP Abdolvahid Fayyazi said. He noted that Iran has a major share of the global gas market, and said, "Russia has cut its gas exports to Europe since June 2014 and Iran is the only route for exporting gas to Europe."

Viewpoint
By: Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer
Time for Nuclear Weapons Convention Is Now

Ahvaz Named Iran's Book Capital

Peaceful Anti-Regime Protests Held in Bahrain

Iraq Removes ISIL Siege on Area in al-Baghdadi

Salehi: U.S. Can Quit Talks As It Wishes

GENEVA (Dispatches) -- A senior Iranian official here on Sunday responded sharply to warnings that Washington is ready to quit nuclear talks unless Tehran agrees to a deal. Ali Akbar Velayati said staying or leaving "depends on the Americans". Velayati was responding to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. Kerry said President Barack Obama was "fully ready" to pull the U.S. out before agreeing to a deal. Earlier, Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif said Iran will accept either an overarching nuclear agreement or no agreement at all. Zarif said Tehran would not approve of an "incomplete and vague" nuclear accord, but rather a "complete agreement". "No other deal will be reached before a complete agreement is clinched," said the top diplomat. Zarif also referred to the discussions at the deputy ministers level between the Islamic Republic and the United States in Geneva on Friday. "The deputies had good discussions, but no particular agreement has been made on the issues." Zarif and Kerry were scheduled to join the talks on Sunday and hold discussions for two days. Kerry said there are still "significant gaps" in negotiations, adding Obama was not prepared to extend them further. Negotiators are working against the clock ahead of a March 31 deadline for agreement on the political framework of a deal. "There are still significant gaps, there is still a distance to travel," Kerry told a press conference at the U.S. Embassy in London. "President Obama has no inclination whatsoever to extend these talks beyond the period that has been set out." He added that Obama was "fully prepared to stop these talks" if necessary. U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz flew in to snow-covered Geneva on Saturday to take part in the talks for the first time, and at Kerry's request. But Kerry played down any suggestion that this meant the talks were on the verge of a breakthrough. "I would not read into it any indication whatsoever," he said, adding that Moniz was present because of the "technical" nature of

the talks. Salehi arrived Saturday morning with Zarif and Hussein Fereydoun, the brother and special aid to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, to help coordinate the talks, Iranian media reported. Iranian officials have voiced unhappiness with separating the political and technical aspects of an agreement. "We won't have a two-stage deal," Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said. "After a year of negotiations, we must tackle the details and all the more so as we want to have both the general framework and the details in the final agreement." A key stumbling block in any final deal is thought to be the amount of uranium Iran would be allowed to enrich, and the number and type of centrifuges Tehran can retain. American conservative political columnist Pat Buchanan said Iran is not developing nuclear bombs or intercontinental ballistic missiles. "There is no bomb program going on, according to our intelligence...I don't believe there is an intercontinental ballistic missile being developed by Iran."

Turkey Launches Ground Incursion: Syria Denounces Turkish 'Aggression'



Turkish army's armored vehicles and tanks drive in Syrian town of Kobani as they return following an incursion allegedly to relocate the Ottoman tomb in Syria.

ANKARA (Dispatches) -- Turkish soldiers launched an overnight incursion into neighboring Syria, evacuating dozens of besieged troops guarding an Ottoman tomb and moving the crypt Sunday back to Turkey. The raid at the tomb of the grandfather of the founder of the Ottoman

Empire saw hundreds of troops backed by tanks cross the border near the frontier town of Kobani once besieged by ISIL terrorists. Turkey was widely criticized for not intervening for months in the Kobani battle, which finally saw Kurdish fighters push out the ex-

remists. "We had given the Turkish armed forces a directive to protect our spiritual values and the safety of our armed forces personnel," Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said in televised remarks. Nearly 600 Turkish soldiers on

some 100 tanks and armored personnel carriers crossed into Syria on Saturday night, as drones and airplanes flew reconnaissance missions overhead, Davutoglu said Sunday. One group traveled to the tomb, some 35 kilometers (22 miles) from Turkey on the banks of the Euphrates River in Syria's embattled Aleppo province, he said. Another group seized an area only 200 meters (yards) from the Turkish border in Syria's Ashma region to be the new home for the tomb, according to a statement from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's office. One soldier was killed in an "accident" during the operation, Turkey's military said, without elaborating. The U.S.-led coalition forces were informed of the Turkish operation after its launch to prevent any casualties, Davutoglu said. U.S. officials offered no immediate comment. Syria's Foreign Ministry denounced the Turkish operation, calling it a "flagrant aggression". In a statement carried by the state news agency, it also suggested that the mission indicated a close relationship between Turkey and ISIL. The ministry said Ankara informed the Syrian Consulate in Istanbul ahead of the operation but did not wait for approval from Damascus. Turkey's foreign minister, Mevlut (Continued on Page 7)

American Congressman: Anti-Iran U.S. Allies Back ISIL

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- A Congress member has disclosed that certain U.S. allies, which oppose Iran, are supporting the ISIL Takfiri terrorists in Syria and Iraq. "There is support going to ISIS from people who are our friends who don't like Iran, this is not something we want to play in or tolerate," said Congressman Jim Himes. Himes made the remarks in re-

sponse to questions asked by employees from the Deloitte, one of the largest professional services networks in the world. Throughout the years, the American leaders have made mistakes with regard to national and international crises because of fear, Himes said. He suggested that the U.S. should do "what only we can do", not-

ing Washington actions "are making this worse by tolerating our so called 'friends' playing a double game". The Democratic lawmaker was referring to "Saudi Arabia" and some other Persian Gulf states. He went on to say that the U.S. budget is facing "profound challenges" primarily caused by huge spending in the Middle East.

The U.S. financial problems result from "the decision to spend a trillion [or so] dollars in the Middle East", asking "should we be spending another \$500 billion in Iraq and Syria?" A senior Turkish official says ISIL is still receiving significant financial support from Arab sympathizers outside Iraq and Syria, enabling it to expand its war effort.

Fuad Hussein, the chief of staff of the regional Kurdish president Masoud Barzani, told The Independent on Sunday: "There is sympathy for Da'esh in many Arab countries and this has translated into money – and that is a disaster." He pointed out that until recently financial aid was being given more or less openly by Persian Gulf states (Continued on Page 7)

Scientists Warn: Terrorists May Use Ebola As Weapon

LONDON (Guardian) -- Scientists at the top-secret military research unit at Porton Down, Wiltshire, have been assessing the potential use of Ebola as a bioterrorism weapon, according to confidential documents. A three-page memo, marked 'UK secret UK eyes only', reveals that the unit, where chemical, radiological and biological threats are analyzed, was tasked with evaluating whether terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and ISIL could use the deadly virus to attack western targets.

The heavily redacted document, which has been released under the Freedom of Information Act, reveals that the unit was asked last October to provide "guidance on the feasibility and potential impact of a non-state actor exploiting the Ebola outbreak in west Africa for bioterrorism". It goes on to explain that non-state actor threat assessments are "provided by the joint terrorism analysis center", while threats to "UK deployed forces are provided by defense intelligence". The memo

outlines three possible scenarios under which terrorists might seek to exploit the Ebola outbreak, which so far has killed more than 9,000 people in the three most affected countries, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The first scenario outlined is completely redacted, illustrating the acute sensitivity about the issue. The second scenario is heavily blacked out but, according to the memo, "would be both logistically and technically challenging for a non-state group to undertake". It

observes: "Clearly there are practical issues involved with such a scenario that of themselves are often not insurmountable but taken together add enormously to the complexity of successfully undertaking this attack." A third, also heavily redacted, scenario "constitutes the most technically challenging of the scenarios considered here". Concerns that terrorist groups might look to "weaponize" Ebola have been raised by several think-tanks and politicians. Last year

Francisco Martinez, Spain's state secretary for security, claimed that Isis fighters were planning to carry out "lone wolf" attacks using biological weapons. Martinez said that his belief was informed by listening in to conversations uncovered in secret chatrooms used by terrorist cells. The claim has since been played down by others. Jeh Johnson, the U.S. department of homeland security secretary, said last October that "we've seen no specific credible intelligence that (Continued on Page 7)