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Ahead of Iran-P5+1 Talks

Jalili: West Should Offer Credible Proposals

Iran Demands Nuclear Rights in Entirety

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Saeed Jalili has reaffirmed Iran's determination to defend the entirety of its rights to peaceful nuclear energy.

"Within the framework of the [regulations] of the [International Atomic Energy] Agency (IAEA) and Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), we fulfill all our obligations under the Safeguard Agreement," Jalili said at the annual conference of the managers of Iran's nuclear industry on Saturday, Press TV reported.

"We should enjoy all our rights and we do not accept more obligations and less rights," Iran's top nuclear negotiator pointed out.

The SNSC chief pointed to the next round of comprehensive talks between Iran and the P5+1 (permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) which is scheduled to be held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on February 25 and noted, "If the group has returned to the talks, they should enter this round of negotiations with a new strategy away from earlier mistakes."

"If the P5+1 group seeks to enter constructive talks with Tehran, it should offer credible proposals," Jalili added.

The US, Israel, and some of their allies have repeatedly accused Iran of pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program. Tehran has categorically rejected the allegation. Based on the claim, the US and its European allies have imposed illegal unilateral sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Eurozone To Shrink Again

The eurozone will not return to growth until 2014 and struggling Spain and France will be among those who miss debt-cutting targets as a result, the European Commission said on Friday.

Paris and Lisbon said they would seek more time from Brussels to reach their deficit goals. Madrid has already indicated the same, CNBC wrote.

The EU's executive said the eurozone economy, which generates nearly a fifth of global output, would shrink 0.3 percent in 2013 after a 0.6 percent fall last year, blaming a lack of bank lending and record joblessness for delaying the recovery.

That represented a marked downgrade of the commission's prediction from November that the eurozone would grow this year. The euro slipped on the back of the forecasts. The currency bloc is consolidating its public finances to regain market trust after excessive government spending, real-estate bubbles and lack of competitiveness triggered a sovereign debt crisis.

"The ongoing rebalancing of the European economy is continuing to weigh on growth in the short term," EU Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn said.

Under EU budget rules, sharpened at the peak of the crisis in late 2011, eurozone countries can face fines if they fail to take action to meet deficit targets set by EU finance ministers.



IRGC Begins Major Ground, Air Military Exercise

Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) has begun a major ground and air military exercise covering the eastern parts of the country.

The Great Prophet 8 military exercise began on Saturday. The southeastern areas that the drill covers include the cities of Kerman, Siriz and Sirjan.

In the first stage of the three-day maneuver, the IRGC Ground Forces attacked mock enemy positions, using intelligence provided by surveillance drones, Press TV reported.

Deputy Commander of the IRGC Ground Forces Brigadier General Abdollah Araji said on Saturday that the Great Prophet 8 drill is aimed at exercising various techniques and tactics by implementing principles of passive defense in asymmetric warfare.

The commander added that the IRGC Ground Forces were

improving their defensive capabilities.

The Ground Forces will use the IRGC's latest military innovations in the upcoming stages.

Over the past few years, Iran has held several military drills to enhance defense capabilities of its armed forces and to test modern military tactics and equipment.

The IRGC held a three-day missile drill, dubbed the Great Prophet 7, in the central province of Semnan in July 2012.

In January 2012, the IRGC Ground Forces also held the Shohaday-e Vahdat (Martyrs of Unity) military drill in the eastern province of Khorasan Razavi.

Iran has repeatedly stated that its military might poses no threat to other countries, reiterating that its defense doctrine is based on deterrence.

13 Chadian Soldiers, 65 Rebels Killed in Mali War

Chad suffered the heaviest losses so far in the French-led campaign to drive extremists from northern Mali after a battle in which it said 13 Chadian soldiers and 65 rebels were killed.

News of the battle came after two suicide car bombers targeted ethnic Tuareg forces in the northern town of Tessalit, killing three people.

A US official meanwhile confirmed that Washington had deployed several Predator drones to Niger to fly surveillance missions in support of French forces in Mali.

The clash between Chadian forces and the Islamists took place Friday in the mountainous Ifoghas region of northern Mali, Chad's military command announced.

"The Chadian army destroyed five vehicles and killed 65 jihadists," it said in a statement.

But 13 of its soldiers had been killed and another five wounded, it added.

FBI Report Details Spread Of Employee Misconduct

So widespread are the instances of illegal activities among FBI employees that the bureau has taken the drastic step of issuing a report detailing the spread of misconduct in an attempt to stem the tide.

From sexting to tax fraud, DULs to secret surveillance of colleagues, the lurid and wide range of misconduct by FBI staffers over the past year was revealed Wednesday night in two quarterly reports published by CNN. FBI assistant director Candice Will told CNN that the reports were issued to stem misconduct and that she hopes the newest reports can abate the "rash of sexting cases".

"When you are given an FBI BlackBerry, it's for official use. It's not to text the woman in another office who you found attractive or to send a picture of yourself in a state of undress," Will said. "That is not why we provide you an FBI BlackBerry."

One employee sent nude photographs to "several" employees and was said to have created "office gossip and negatively impacted office operations" and that their conduct "adversely affected the daily activities of several squads".

16 Nuclear Power Plants On Cards

Uranium Deposits Up

Political Desk

Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) announced on Saturday that the Islamic Republic has designated 16 nuclear power sites.

"Following months of efforts, 16 new sites for nuclear power plants have been designated in the coastal areas of the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, [southwestern province of] Khuzestan and northwestern part of the country," the AEOI said in a statement.

It added the projects are in line with Iran's long-term plans to develop electricity generation from nuclear power plants and in accordance with international standards and regulations. The organization also said that Iran has discovered more uranium deposits to further improve its position among countries possessing nuclear technology.

Germany Supports MKO Expulsion From Iraq

Germany's Ambassador to Iraq Britta Wagner said her government supports expulsion of Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) from Iraq.

According to a report by Buratha news website, Wagner praised in a statement the performance of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) in monitoring the transfer of MKO members from Camp Ashraf, the terrorist group's main training camp in Iraq, to the Camp Liberty, a transient settlement facility in Iraq, Fars News Agency reported.

"I would like to express the full support of the German federal government to the UNAMI that has monitored the transfer of Camp Ashraf residents to Camp Liberty," she said. Baghdad also wants the terrorist group out from its soil over its opposition to Iran and ties to former Iraq dictator Saddam Hussein.

The MKO's "presence in Iraq is illegal and illegitimate", Ali Mussawwi, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki's spokesman, told AFP last week. "Their presence is rejected." Saddam allowed the anti-Iran terrorist group to establish a base called Camp Ashraf northeast of Baghdad after he launched the 1980-88 war with Iran, in which the group fought alongside his forces.

According to the US State Department, Saddam armed the group with heavy military equipment and deployed thousands of (MKO) fighters in suicidal, mass wave attacks against Iranian forces near the end of the war.

Following the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, the MKO turned over 2,000 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and heavy artillery', the State Department said.

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