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IRAN DAILY



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Eyre: US will oppose new Iran sanctions

Persian-speaking spokesman for the US secretary of state said Wednesday that Washington would oppose the adoption of fresh nuclear sanctions against Iran based on the Joint Action Plan agreed in Geneva on November 24.

On Iran while it is in line with the implementation of the previous and present sanctions, said the spokesman.

Speaker: Iran-Europe ties help Mideast stability

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani has called for the expansion of cooperation and dialogue between Iran and European countries as a contributing factor to stability in the Middle East.

officials as highly useful and constructive and noted that the negotiations during the visit provided a better understanding of Tehran's views about different issues.

Stable Iraq

In another meeting with head of the National Iraqi Alliance Ibrahim al-Jaafari in on Tuesday, Larijani stressed the importance of bolstering Iran's relations with Iraq, saying a strong and stable neighboring country is important for the Islamic Republic.

"Enemies of the Iranian and Iraqi nations are against their close relations as well as Iraq's economic growth and welfare," Larijani said.

"It is necessary that the two brother and neighboring countries [of Iran and Iraq] move to further increase ties and cooperation," he added.

He stated that Iran and Iraq enjoy religious, cultural and geographical commonalities, noting that common interests and concerns have prepared the ground for more consultation and cooperation between the two countries.

Larijani further pointed to the latest developments in the region, particularly the crisis in Syria, saying that sending terrorists and weapons to the Arab country will only exacerbate regional instability.

"The Syria crisis only has a political solution and well-wishing regional countries should help the Syrian people to resolve their problems through constructive interaction and cooperation," Larijani stated, Syria has been gripped by deadly unrest since March 2011.

Jaafari, for his part, emphasized the significance of his country's ties with Iran and said Tehran has always played a constructive role in the establishment of stability and peace in Iraq.



West to opposition: Assad to stay in power

Western nations have indicated to the Syrian opposition that next month peace talks may not lead to the removal of President Bashar al-Assad and that the Alawites will remain key in any transitional administration, opposition sources say.

The message, delivered to senior members of the so-called Syrian National Coalition at a meeting of the anti-Assad Friends of Syria alliance in London last week, was prompted by rise of Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, and their takeover of a border crossing and arms depots near Turkey belonging to the so-called Free Syrian Army, the sources told Reuters.

"Our Western friends made it clear in London that Assad cannot be allowed to go now because they think chaos and an extremist militant takeover would ensue," said one senior member of the coalition who is close to officials from Saudi Arabia.

Noting the possibility of Assad holding a presidential election when his term formally ends next year, the coalition member added: "Some do not even seem to mind if he runs again next year."

The shift in western priorities, particularly the United States and Britain, from removing Assad towards combating extremist militants is causing divisions within international powers backing the nearly three-year-old crisis, according to diplomats and senior members of the coalition.

Like US President Barack Obama's rejection of air strikes against Syria in September after he accused army forces of using poison gas, such a diplomatic compromise on a transition could narrow western differences with Russia, which has blocked United Nations action against the Syrian government, but also widen a gap in approach with the militants' allies in the Middle East.

Unlike in Libya in 2011, the West has ruled out military intervention, leaving militant groups including Al-Qaeda affiliates to emerge as the most formidable rebel force, raising alarm among Washington and its allies that Syria, which borders Israel and Iraq, has become a center for global terrorism.

Saudi Arabia and Turkey, however, believe that tackling militants is less of a priority, with Riyadh in particular furious at what it considers US appeasement of Assad and his Iranian backers. Riyadh sent only a junior diplomat to the Friends of Syria meeting in London. Also signaling differences with Washington, opposition militants in Syria have said that Turkey has let a weapons consignment cross into Syria to the Islamic Front, the rebel group that overran the Bab al-Hawa border crossing last week, seizing arms and western equipment supplied to FSA.

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Gov't plans to use \$35b in foreign finance

By Farzaneh Shokri & Farzaneh Vanaki

The budget bill for the next Iranian year (to begin March 21, 2014) permits the government to use more than \$35 billion in foreign finance.

Announcing this Mohammad Bagher Nobakht, the government's spokesman, said currently, more than \$15 billion worth of approved projects are ready for implementation.

In response to Iran Daily's question, he said foreign investments are among the resources that help the government resolve economic recession. "This is not related to the Geneva accord. Iran has the potential to attract foreign investments."

Referring to the government's plans to attract more foreign investment and implement the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project, he said, "I will ask the oil minister [Bijan Namdar Zanganeh] about the [construction] of the pipeline and will let you know. However, on the growth in foreign investment, I must say the government is taking serious steps in this respect by facilitating foreign investors' presence in the Iranian market."

He added that the government plans to reduce inflation rate by 10 units in the next year.

He said Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Wednesday's cabinet meeting, presented a report on the status quo in the nuclear talks and announced that European countries have voiced their readiness for the early implementation of the agreements.

On November 24, Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany sealed the six-month Joint Plan of Action to lay the groundwork for the full resolution of the West's decade-old dispute with Iran over its nuclear energy program.

Araqchi: Iran-P5+1 talks today

Political Desk

Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said that Iran and world powers will resume expert level talks in Geneva on December 19.

Araqchi noted that implementing the mechanisms of November 24 deal, will top the agenda of discussions between Iran and the P5+1 group, which includes the US, China, France, Russia, the UK plus Germany, Fars News Agency reported.

The diplomat said that Hamid Baedinejad, a senior official at Iranian Foreign Ministry, will lead the talks with the sextet.

He underlined that negotiations, which are scheduled for two days, might continue until December 22.

Araqchi, a senior member of the Iranian negotiating team, and EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton agreed to resume expert level talks at the earliest.

Iranian negotiators abruptly ended nuclear talks with western powers in Vienna on December 13 just a day after the Obama administration announced tighter sanctions on Tehran.

Iran had threatened that new or tighter sanctions would nullify the recently reached Geneva interim deal, which is not yet in effect.

Indians demand US apology

Protesters outside the American embassy in New Delhi on Wednesday demanded an apology from the US for the action taken against Indian diplomat Devyani Khobragade.

"(The) US should tender an apology to our country and also commit that such things will not happen in future," Jai Bhagwan Goyal, Rashtravadi Shiv Sena president, said.

The group also submitted a memorandum at the US embassy and said they would continue their protest till an apology is received from the US.

The Indian diplomat said US authorities subjected her to a strip search, cavity search and DNA swabbing following her arrest on

visa charges in New York City, despite her "incessant assertions of immunity."

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh described the diplomat's treatment as "deplorable." The case has sparked widespread outrage in India and infuriated the government, which revoked privileges for US diplomats to protest her treatment. It has cast a pall over India-US relations, which have cooled in recent years despite a 2008 nuclear deal that was hailed as a high point in the nations' ties.

In New Delhi, the lower house of Parliament temporarily adjourned Wednesday after lawmakers noisily demanded that it adopt a resolution against the United States.



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