

Tehran: Saudi, Israeli anti-Iran remarks not accidental



Iran's Foreign Ministry said the coordinated stances between the Saudi Arabia and Israel against Iran at the Munich Security Conference is not accidental, adding that such attempts to foment Iranophobia reveal coordination between the two regimes to whitewash their failures in the region.

The ministry's spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Monday that there are numerous clues about coordination between the two regimes on regional dossiers, Press TV reported.

His comments came after Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir and Israel's Avigdor Lieberman delivered harsh speeches against Iran in the Munich conference, claiming that Iran is a supporter of "terrorism" and constitutes the "main threat" to the region. The Israeli official even sought to support the Riyadh regime, alleging that Iran had an ultimate objective of undermining Saudi Arabia in the Middle East.

They also attacked Iran's 2015 nuclear agreement with the P5+1 group of states, calling for an international push against the Islamic Republic.

In response, the Iranian spokesman said both the Saudi and Israeli regimes are attempting to "provoke the international atmosphere" against Iran in order to cover up their own defeats and failed policies in the region.

The recurring tone of the Saudi and Israeli officials, whose regimes are collaborating in the suppression of people in the region, demonstrates "painful frustration" and resentment, Qassemi noted.

It's a pity that the occupying regime of Israel has counted on cooperation with an Islamic country - Saudi Arabia - to pursue its anti-Iran policies, the spokesman deplored.

Qassemi finally emphasized that Jubeir's "bogus and ridiculous" allegations of Iran's sponsorship of terrorism could by no means divert attention from the Saudi kingdom's "deep links" with the Takfiri terrorist groups or Riyadh's ideological, financial, and intelligence support for terrorists.

Shamkhani: No substantive change in US rhetoric on Iran

A senior Iranian official said the rhetoric of the US administration of President Donald Trump on the Islamic Republic is substantially no different from that of the former administrations in Washington.

"There has been no substantive shift in the rhetoric of the new US officials [in comparison with] the previous [ones] and various figures and parties in the country have always maintained an aggressive approach toward independent countries," Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani told reporters on Monday, Press TV reported.

He added that the fact-based admissions by President Trump about the chaotic situation in the West and the United States are an issue which had never been publicly acknowledged by other US leaders.

Such confessions show that Washington can no more cover up the tumultuous and confused situation in the US, the top Iranian official emphasized.



Leader calls for swift action on environmental problems

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has called on Iranian officials to immediately address the problems facing residents of the southern Khuzestan Province, who are grappling with difficulties caused by natural phenomena.

On Monday, Ayatollah Khamenei drew attention to the plight of people in southern Iran who are suffering from the aftermath of floods, triggered by heavy downpours, and dust storms, emphasizing that these issues caused by natural disasters "are truly heartbreaking," Press TV reported.

The Leader said the officials are duty-bound to deal with the problems through hard work and solidarity, and redouble their efforts to find a "certain cure" for them.

Ayatollah Khamenei described flooding as a "great calamity," which causes heavy losses for people and their families, saying "it is a duty and a necessity" to provide aid to the flood-stricken.

The government officials, who have people on their minds, cannot remain unmoved and indifferent in the face of such problems, he added.

Last week, torrential rain triggered flooding across the south, from Khuzestan Province near the Iraqi border to Sistan-Baluchestan Province on the border with Pakistan.

Khuzestan had already been reeling from sandstorms, which are said to originate in Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

The recent downpours have washed filaments of dust and sand into power transmission equipment, leading to long outages and affecting water supplies, a situation which has disrupted normal life in Ahvaz, the provincial capital, and other cities in the province.

On Saturday, President Rouhani at-



leader.ir

tended an emergency session of the Crisis Management Center in Tehran, where he tasked his deputy, Es'haq Jahangiri, Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli and Khuzestan Governor Gholamreza Shariati with resolving the crisis at the earliest.

He also expressed sympathy with those

affected and assured local people that the government was determined to address the root cause of the problems and deal with environmental issues.

Iranians in the western and southwestern provinces that border Iraq are facing a growing trend in the influx of fine particles generated by drought-hit marshlands

in neighboring countries. The disruptive dust storms push pollution in those border areas to alarming levels, raising health concerns.

The particles, carried by winds, can penetrate the lungs and enter the bloodstream, causing serious diseases such as lung cancer, asthma and heart problems.

IRGC stages military drills in central Iran

Political Desk

Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) launched military drills in Iran's central desert, Dasht-e Kavir.

the IRGC's elite servicemen against potential incursions.

In January, IRGC Ground Forces drilled in western Iran to similarly improve the division's combat preparedness, while chal-



FARS NEWS AGENCY

The three-day maneuvers, codenamed Payambar-e-Aazam (the Great Prophet) 11, got off the ground on Monday with the motto of "demonstration of power and enduring stability."

The war games feature the IRGC's drones as well as its artillery, air defense and infantry units.

The first stage of drills witnessed the launch of state-of-the-art smart and precision-guided rockets against mock enemy targets.

The exercises challenge the intelligence command and defensive preparedness of

linging its prowess in devising new tactics and methods of warfare.

Despite considerable Western and regional rhetoric targeting such exercises, Iran has invariably asserted that its military might and maneuvers serve the purpose of national defense.

Iran's Armed Forces hold routine military exercises throughout the year.

Iran has repeatedly assured other nations, especially neighboring states, that its military might poses no threat to other countries, stating that its defense doctrine is based on deterrence.

Russia eyes Iran gas turbine equipment amid sanctions

Political Desk

Russia hopes to get around European Union sanctions by reaching a deal with Iran for the supply of gas turbine equipment for two power plants in Crimea, the head of Russian state defense conglomerate Rostec said on Monday.

EU sanctions bar European individuals and companies from providing energy technology to Crimea, Reuters reported.

"Yes, we have problems with turbines, because Germany and some other European countries have banned deliveries to Crimea," Sergei Chemezov told reporters during a briefing in Abu Dhabi.

"We are negotiating with Iran, they are manufacturing similar turbines," he said.

Russia is constructing two power plants with a total capacity of 940 megawatts to improve Crimea's energy independence. Crimea already has a power line linking to Russia's Taman peninsula across the Black Sea.

The completion of the first plant is scheduled by the end of 2017, while the other one is expected to be completed in 2018.

Chemezov, who is a close associ-

ate of Russian President Vladimir Putin, is also on a list of Russian individuals and companies sanctioned by the West over Moscow's actions in Ukraine.

The gas turbine contract with Iran should be signed soon, although Moscow and Tehran have yet to agree on price, a source told Reuters on Monday, adding that the first tur-

bine could not be completed and installed until early 2018.

Russia's Energy Ministry said that Rostec had not sought an extension to the deadline and Chemezov said that the project should be completed by the end of 2017.

The commissioning of the power plants was delayed in December after a Russian joint venture majority-owned by Germany's Siemens was subject to export control restrictions imposed after Crimea was reunified with Russia in 2014.



Iran summons Turkish envoy over anti-Iran remarks

Political Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Monday summoned Turkish Ambassador Mevlut Cavusoglu, speaking at the Munich Security Conference on Sunday, also criticized what he called an Iranian "sectarian policy" aimed at undermining Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, saying, "Turkey is very much against any kind of division, religious or sectarian."

The remarks by the Turkish officials came despite the fact that Ankara is widely known as a staunch supporter of terror-

dogan reportedly accused Iran of seeking to destabilize Iraq and Syria.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, speaking at the Munich Security Conference on Sunday, also criticized what he called an Iranian "sectarian policy" aimed at undermining Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, saying, "Turkey is very much against any kind of division, religious or sectarian."

The remarks by the Turkish officials came despite the fact that Ankara is widely known as a staunch supporter of terror-

ists wreaking havoc in Syria, providing them with money and arms as well as free passage through Turkish soil to Syria.

Iran has been providing military advisory support to both Iraq and Syria in their campaign against terrorism at the request of the two countries' governments.

The Islamic Republic was among the first countries to help Iraq when the Daesh terrorist group unleashed a campaign of death and destruction in the northern and western parts of the Arab country in 2014.

