



Iran: Trump playing 'very dangerous game', risking 'devastating war'

2

IRAN DAILY



Jahangiri hails reduction of Iran's dependence on oil revenues

4

Number 6196 • Wednesday May 15, 2019 • Ordibehesht 25, 1398 • Ramadan 9, 1440 • Price 5,000 Rials • 12 Pages • www.iran-daily.com • newspaper.iran-daily.com

Iranian FM Zarif warns about 'suspicious acts of sabotage' in region

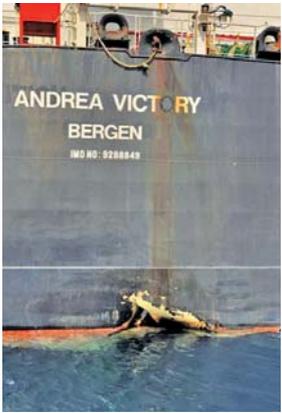


Iran envoy: US putting out 'fake intelligence'

Yemen's Houthis attack Saudi oil infrastructure with drones

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Zarif warned about "suspicious acts of sabotage" in the Middle East, following recent incidents involving oil tankers off the coast of the United Arab Emirates. Zarif made the remarks following a meeting with his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj in the capital, New Delhi, on Tuesday. He said that during the meeting the pair discussed "regional issues, dangers posed by the policies pursued by hardliners inside the US administration and the region and the concerns about the suspicious acts of sabotage that are taking place in our region" with the aim of fueling tensions. Ahead of the talks with his Indian counterpart on Monday, Zarif expressed regret that "the United States has been escalating the situation unnecessarily. We do not seek escalation but we have always defended ourselves."



The UAE said on Sunday that four commercial vessels were sabotaged near Fujairah emirate, one of the world's largest bunkering hubs lying just outside the Strait of Hormuz. It did not describe the nature of the attack or say who was behind it. Saudi Arabia said on Monday that two of its oil tankers were among those attacked off the coast of the Emirates and described the incidents as "acts of sabotage", a "criminal act" and an attempt to undermine the security of crude supplies.

Neither Saudi Arabia nor the UAE gave details on the nature of the attacks or accused anyone of responsibility. Iran has described the incidents "worrying and dreadful" and asked for a thorough investigation. Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi on Monday "warned against plots by ill-wishers to disrupt regional security" and "called for the vigilance of regional states in the face of any adventurism by foreign elements". Spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's Presiding Board Behrouz Nemati said on Tuesday that the tanker attacks were "Israeli mischief". Asked whether Washington believed Tehran played a role, Brian Hook, the US special envoy for Iran, declined to comment, saying only US authorities would be assisting the investigation at the UAE's request. A team of US military experts was sent to investigate the damages at the request of the UAE, but American officials have not provided any details about what exactly happened or any proof as yet about the possible Iranian involvement in the explosions.

Houthi drone attacks

Also on Tuesday, Saudi Arabia said drones attacked one of its oil pipelines as other assaults targeted energy infrastructure elsewhere in the Arab kingdom. Yemen's Houthi fighters, whom Saudi Arabia has been fighting against since March 2015, said they launched a series of coordinated drone attacks on the kingdom, across the border from Yemen. "This is a message to Saudi Arabia, stop your aggression," Mohammed Abdel-Salam, the spokesman of the Houthis, said. "Our goal is to respond to the crimes they are committing everyday against the Yemeni people," he added.

'Bad mistake'

Without accusing Tehran, US President Donald Trump warned that Iran would "suffer greatly" if it does "anything". "I'm hearing little stories about Iran," Trump said at the White House. "If they do anything, it would be a very bad mistake. If they do anything they will suffer greatly." On May 5, the United States announced it was deploying the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the Middle East in response to a "credible threat" from Iran, sparking fears of possible military clashes. Britain warned of the danger of conflict

erupting "by accident" in the Persian Gulf. US National Security Adviser John Bolton has said Washington's military buildup was "a clear and unmistakable message" to Iran that "any attack on United States interests or on those of our allies will be met with unrelenting force".

US 'fake' intelligence



Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht-Ravanchi told CNN on Tuesday that President Trump's claim of intelligence suggesting Iran will attack US interests overseas is fake that is based on "narrow-minded agenda" pursued by hawks in Washington and the region.

The New York Times reported Monday that US Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan presented an updated military plan to the Trump administration last week that would send as many as 120,000 US troops to the Middle East in the event that Iran strikes American forces in the region or speeds up its development of nuclear program. Takht-Ravanchi rejected the report as "psychological warfare", saying Iran is not in business of creating a conflict in the region. Spain's Defense Ministry said Tuesday the country has recalled a frigate accompanying the US aircraft carrier to the Middle East because of rising tensions between Washington and Tehran.

"For the moment the frigate Mendez Nunez has left the combat group of the USS Abraham Lincoln," a ministry spokesman said. "It's a temporary withdrawal, decided by Defense Minister Margarita Robles, as long as the American aircraft carrier is in this zone," the spokesman added. He said the Spanish frigate had joined the aircraft carrier's strike group for a military exercise. "No possible confrontation or warlike action is envisaged (by Spain) and it is for this reason that the participation is suspended for the moment," he added. Press TV, AP, AFP and Reuters contributed to this story.

INSTEX to have first transactions in few weeks

The European Union has addressed "ways in which we can further advance on the, for instance, operationalization of INSTEX to have first transactions in the, hopefully, next few weeks." EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said in Brussels after a meeting of the bloc's foreign ministers.



The EU official claimed the Brussels meeting saw the ministers addressing ways to conduct financial transactions with the Islamic Republic despite the bans. Mogherini said the EU strongly advises avoidance of any "military escalation" against Iran as the United States keeps piling pressure on the Islamic Republic and trying to force other countries to follow suit. The meeting was crashed by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who reportedly tried to sell Washington's hard line on the Islamic Republic. Mogherini, however, argued that "maximum restraint and avoiding any escalation on the military side" would be "the most

responsible" course of action, Press TV reported. "Pompeo heard that very clearly today from us, not only from myself, but also from the other ministers of EU member states," she added. The top US diplomat had to shave a day off a planned visit to Russia to jet into the summit. "We are living in a crucial delicate moment," Mogherini noted, adding, "We, as you know, as the European Union, always encourage dialogue and diplomatic engagement. This has always been our commitment. This is what we are practicing, including with Iran." Pompeo is the alleged brain behind the administration of US President Donald Trump's policy of "maximum pressure" against Iran. The policy also has National Security Adviser John Bolton as the person trying his best to escalate it into military conflict. Continued on Page 2

Stock markets attempt rebound as trade war flares

Stock markets on both sides of the Atlantic staged a fight-back on Tuesday, paring heavy losses sparked by a raging US-China trade war over the past week. World oil prices bobbed higher on concerns about tensions in the crude-rich Middle East, dealers said, AFP reported. Equities are attempting to claw back some lost ground," noted analyst Chris Beauchamp at trading firm IG, "but the overall atmosphere of caution still prevails".



On Wall Street the Dow gained around 100 points, or 0.4 percent, at the opening bell, having lost a whopping 2.4 percent on Monday when the tech-heavy Nasdaq plunged 3.4 percent. "US stocks are recovering from yesterday's drop in early action, which was the largest one-day fall since January, with the escalated trade tensions between the US and China continuing to be eyed," Charles Schwab analysts said. They added, however, that President Donald Trump's statement that a meeting next month with Chinese President Xi Jinping would be "successful" gave investors some hope for a peaceful resolution of the trade standoff. Earlier Asian markets sank further, in reaction to Monday's US stock plunge, seen after China hiked tariffs on \$60 billion of US imports. That has ramped up sizzling tensions in a trade war between the world's two biggest economic powers. The latest move by Beijing was followed by a warning of further action such as dumping US Treasuries and came days after Washington more than doubled levies on \$200

billion of Chinese goods and Trump said he was looking at more than \$300 billion more. "Asian markets remained under pressure, and while US futures are looking more positive the escalating trade war is still driving bearish sentiment," added Beauchamp. "Ironically of course the tariffs imposed by both sides will hit consumers, so as in all great contests this is turning into a test of endurance, with the US and China each looking to derive the maximum impact from the increased charges in a bid to hit their opponent where it hurts." The China-US trade conflict has sent shockwaves through trading floors, where most dealers had a little over a week ago been confident the two sides were close to a deal. After announcing the higher tariffs, the editor of the Communist Party-owned Chinese newspaper Global Times warned Beijing could also hit the US by offloading Treasuries, ending US agricultural purchases and reducing orders for Boeing airplanes. However, while there is a lot of fear about an all-out trade war, which could batter the world economy, both said talks will continue, though no date has been set for the next round. Also, Trump said he had a feeling talks with China will be "very successful" and that he intended to meet his Chinese counterpart at next month's G20 summit. Elsewhere, oil prices advanced Tuesday as traders eyed Middle East woes, "sabotage attacks" on two Saudi Arabian oil tankers, and a growing crisis in Venezuela. On Tuesday, drone attacks claimed by Yemen's Houthis also shut down one of Saudi Arabia's main oil pipelines. "Supply-side disruptions along with simmering US-Iran tensions have supported oil prices however as market fundamentals remain tight for the current term," said Benjamin Lu, commodities analyst at Phillip Futures in Singapore.