

Iran's Foreign Ministry voiced its concern about the US move to test a medium-range cruise missile weeks after Washington withdrew from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty with Russia, according to the ministry's website.

### Rouhani: Iran eager to broaden ties with Ukraine

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani offered his congratulations to Ukraine on its Independence Day, hoping for the expansion of ties between Tehran and Kiev.

In a message to his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Saturday, Rouhani congratulated Ukraine's people and government on the 28th anniversary of the East European nation's independence, according to President's official website.

Highlighting the "strong and friendly" ties between Iran and Ukraine, Rouhani expressed hope that mutual cooperation at the bilateral and international levels would grow to serve the interests of the two nations.

Ukraine celebrates its independence on August 24.

Before 1991, Ukraine was a constituent republic of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In August that year, after a failed coup in Moscow, Ukraine declared its independence. About 90 percent of Ukrainians voted for their country's independence in December 1991.

## US sanctions obstructing Iran's efforts to fight transnational organized crimes

US unilateral and illegal sanctions against Iran are obstructing Tehran's efforts to fight against transnational organized crimes, such as drug trafficking, an Iranian official said. Addressing the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Iran's permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations Kazem Gharibabadi underlined the importance of international unity to uproot the organized crimes trespassing international borders, according to IRNA.

Referring to the emergence of new aspects of organized crimes such as cybercrimes and transnational crimes as a major challenge, the Iranian official highlighted the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach towards the issue. "In this sensitive era that multilateralism has been en-

dangered due to illogical and adventurist policies of a certain government, strong and coordinated international cooperation is necessary under supervision of the United Nations," he said.

The Iranian envoy referred to the efforts made by Iran to fight drugs trafficking through adopting extensive approaches and policies and minimizing the negative consequences of narcotics consumption.

He stressed the fact that the illegal sanctions imposed by the US on Iran in its most cruel forms are the biggest threat to achieve sustainable development agenda in the country and other neighboring states.

The sanctions have hindered international cooperation and implementation of regional and bilateral initiatives, the Iranian official said, adding that those who imposed sanctions are directly responsible for the disastrous consequences of creating disturbance in fighting narcotics, organized crimes and terrorism.



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### Tusk: US JCPOA withdrawal caused no positive effect



REUTERS

#### National Desk

European Council President Donald Tusk said on Saturday the US withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement had not brought about any positive effect.

Speaking at the G7 summit in Biarritz, he took the US President Donald Trump to task for abandoning the nuclear deal with Iran.

Despite the US withdrawal, Europe is still supporting the nuclear agreement which was signed between Iran and P5+1 group of countries - Russia, China, the US, Britain, France and Germany.

Tensions between the two countries have increased following the US pullout from the agreement in 2018 and reimposition of sanctions against Tehran as part of a "maximum

pressure" campaign aimed at forcing it to renegotiate a new deal that addresses its ballistic missile program and regional influence as well.

Tensions deteriorated after Iran shot down a US surveillance drone on June 20 following its violation of Iranian airspace.

Several oil tankers were also targeted near the Persian Gulf last month, with Washington and its ally Saudi Arabia quickly blaming Iran for the suspicious attacks.

Tehran has rejected the accusations of its involvement as baseless.

The United States has engaged in significant regional military buildup, including by sending an aircraft carrier, a bomber task force, an assault ship, and around 1,500 additional forces to the Middle East.

### IRGC chief: Iran test-fires new missile



FARS

The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said that Iran has test-fired a new missile.

"Our country is always the arena for testing a variety of defense and strategic systems and these are nonstop movements toward the growth of our deterrence power," Major General Hossein Salami said on Saturday, Press TV reported.

"And yesterday was one of the successful days for this nation," he added without providing any further details about the missile launch.

Salami's remarks came a day after Iranian Deputy Defense Minister General Qassem Taqizadeh said that Iran possesses "very accurate missiles which we have not publicized."

"We manufacture missiles limited to [what is needed to address] threats, and for now, we know that they are within 1,800 km of us. We have, however, increased their precision. Long gone is the time when we were making Shahab 1 missiles," he said.

The Shahab 1 missile is among Iran's first indigenously-made missiles, laying the foundation of Iran's long-range missile program.

Detailing Iran's doctrine of deterrence, Taqizadeh said, "The Americans know well that we don't have to go to New York and confront them."

"Today there are tens of thousands of Americans in the region and due to this, the Leader said that they will not engage in war with us," he added.

#### 'Persian Gulf security in our hands'

IRGC Chief Commander Salami also addressed recent developments in the Persian Gulf, saying, "Security in the Persian Gulf is in the powerful hands of the Islamic Republic of Iran and our enemies will not be able to scar it in any way."

He described US sanctions targeting the country as an "opportunity" for independent development in the country. "The enemy believed that the sanctions could disable our economy and drag us to the negotiating table, but it was the opposite which occurred," he said.

The US had pledged to impose a campaign of "maximum pressure" and reduce Iran's oil exports to "zero" as part of sanctions reinstated after leaving the 2015 landmark nuclear deal last year.

Tensions have since escalated, with the US military announcing the deployment of additional military forces in the region in early May, citing alleged "threats" from Iran.

Several oil tankers have been targeted near the Persian Gulf region in the past months, with Washington and its ally Saudi Arabia quickly blaming Iran for the attacks.

Tehran has rejected any involvement, saying the incidents appear to be false flags meant to frame the Islamic Republic.

### Arasbaran Forest fire dies after four days

#### National Desk

Firefighters on Friday night put out extensive fire in Arasbaran Forest in East Azarbaijan Province, after four days of campaign.

Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami

on Friday ordered the dispatch of three helicopters to northwest of the country to assist in extinguishing the wildfire in the Arasbaran Forest.

Hatami assigned the Defense Ministry's Engineering Unit and the Aerial Firefighting Control and Logistical Support Center of Iran to deploy three choppers to the forest in coordination with the Red Crescent Society of Iran and the Army Ground Force's Airborne Unit, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Two copters were used to airlift forces and equipment, and the other firefighting helicopter, equipped with a 4000-liters water tank, helped contain the wildfire.

Regional military forces had

already begun efforts to extinguish the fire in Arasbaran, located in Iran's northwestern region and covering an area of more than 160,000 hectares.

Fire in Arasbaran Forest is nothing new, IRNA wrote, add-

ing that since the beginning of the current Iranian year—March 21, the forests caught fire 24 times.

But the latest fire was unprecedented, it started on the deep steep slopes and shoulders of mountains.

The height of the region and

known plants in Iran.

In April, 2017, UNESCO approved Arasbaran's dossier, which was submitted in January of the same year, paving the way for Iran to implement measures to ensure the forest meets the UN agency's criteria for inscription.



IRNA

### Zarif heading to Asia in push...

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During a joint press conference with Finland's Foreign Affairs Minister Pekka Haavisto on Monday, Zarif emphasized that the nuclear deal is not open to renegotiations.

"Iran is not interested in negotiations with the United States to clinch a new nuclear accord," Iran's top diplomat said.

"We had detailed negotiations with the United States and it was not us who left the negotiating table," he added.

On Friday, Zarif said he had held "constructive" negotiations with French President Emmanuel Macron on ways to salvage the nuclear deal without the US.

In a post on Twitter, he said "despite US efforts to destroy diplomacy," he met Macron,

Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and had interviews with the media in Paris.

Iran and its arch-foe, the United States, have been at loggerheads since last year when President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the deal under which the Islamic Republic agreed to rein in its nuclear activities in return for an easing of sanctions.

Twelve months on from the US pullout, Iran began reducing its commitments by surpassing a uranium enrichment cap and exceeding a limit on its reserves.

The situation has threatened to spiral out of control, with ships attacked in the Persian Gulf, a US drone downed and oil tankers seized.

During his visit to France, Zarif told AFP in an interview

that he was pleased with Macron's efforts to defuse the crisis.

"President Macron made some suggestions last week to President Rouhani, and we believe they are moving in the right direction, although we are not definitely there yet," Zarif said.

Macron has been seeking to roll back some of the US measures imposed as part of Trump's campaign of "maximum pressure" on Iran, which insists its nuclear program is peaceful.

French diplomats have raised the idea of US waivers on sanctions affecting Iranian oil exports to India and China, or a new credit line for Tehran that could help the struggling economy.

AFP and Press TV contributed to this story.

