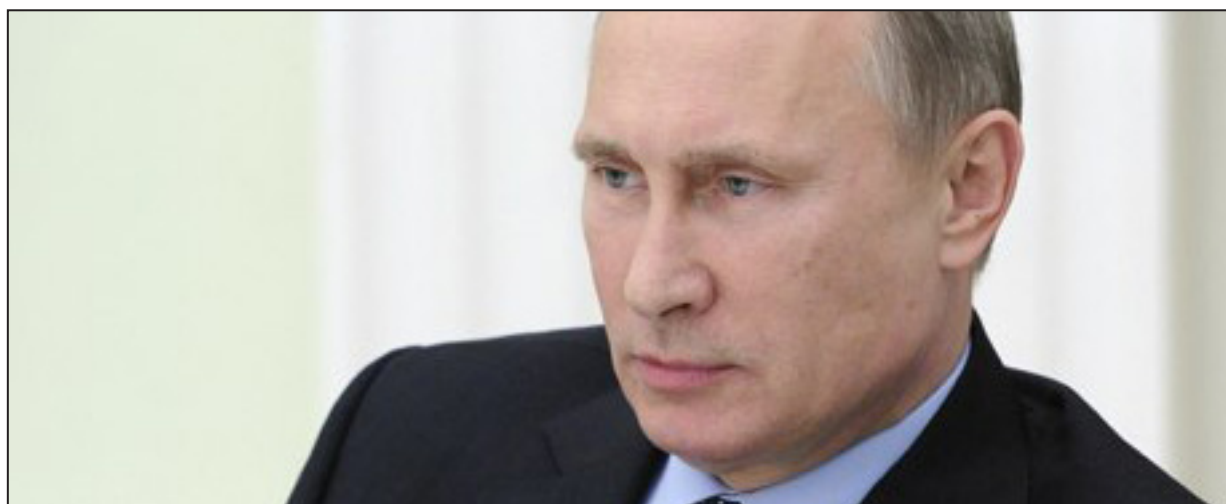


# Russia Urges UN-Mandated Pause in Yemen Air Strikes

NEW YORK - Russia called on the UN Security Council to push for a pause in the air war in Yemen, as a Saudi-led coalition pounded rebels in the country for a 10th day. Yemen's main southern city, a last foothold of supporters of self-exiled President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, has been shaken by more than a week of clashes between Shiite Huthi rebels and loyalist militia. Coalition warplanes and ships bombarded rebel positions in Aden on the 10th night of Operation Decisive Storm. A military source said at least 13 rebel fighters were



killed.

For a second night, the coalition airdropped weapons and ammunition to supporters of Hadi, who fled

to Saudi Arabia last month as the Iran-backed Huthis approached Aden.

"We thank the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and all

the Gulf countries, as well as our brothers in Arab countries, for dropping supplies," said Ahmad Qassem al-Shaawi, a local

militia chief.

"God willing, we will be victorious and bravely carry on fighting as heroes, and fight off any attack."

Russia, meanwhile, presented a draft resolution to the UN Security Council calling for a humanitarian pause in the air campaign to allow for the evacuation of foreigners, diplomats said.

The measure would demand "regular and obligatory humanitarian pauses in the air strikes... to allow all concerned states and international organisations to evacuate their citizens and personnel from Yemen," the draft text said.

Russian Deputy Ambassador Vladimir Safonkov told reporters the pause would ensure that "when we... (More on P4)... (21)

## Russia Boosts Air Defense to Counter any US Threat

MOSCOW - Russia is taking measures to boost its air and missile defense capabilities to foil any potential threat by the US Prompt Global Strike (PGS), top Russian military officials say.

Russia's Aerospace Defense Forces' deputy chief, Major General Kirill Makarov, described the potential threat of the PGS against the Russian Federation as one of the top challenges for the Aerospace Defense Forces, Russia Today reported on Sunday.

The report added that developing an effective air and missile defense system is among Russia's top priorities on account of the threat by the PGS initiative, which is an effort by the US military to develop a system that would allow the Pentagon to deliver precision-guided strikes with conventional weapons at any target in the world in less than one hour.

"It is precisely to combat these aerial assets that we are building the air and missile defense of Russia's system," Makarov stated, adding that Russia's political and military leadership regards this task to be of "paramount importance."

Moscow adopted a new military doctrine in December 2014, which listed the PGS concept as well as NATO's military buildup along the Russian borders as the main security threats against the country. "Russia is capable of and will have to develop a similar system," Deputy Defense Minister Yuri Borisov said last year, referring to the PGS. (Agencies)

## UAE Signs Up as Founding Member of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

ABU DHABI - The UAE has joined the China-led US\$50 billion Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a founding member, the government announced on Sunday.

The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, which has Dh8bn in capital, will represent the UAE government on the AIIB's board of directors. Founding members have the right to create governance and operational rules for the bank.

The UAE joins fellow AIIB founder members Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Egypt and Jordan, as well as 29 other countries from Asia and Europe, including the UK, Germany and Russia. "In the light of joint strategic ties between the UAE and China, and their mutual interests in fuelling growth and infrastructure development in developing countries, both countries have partnered to set up a strong international platform to actively drive development efforts," said Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Minister of State.

"Being a founding member of AIIB will boost the prime economic role played by the UAE regionally and internationally, by focusing efforts on development projects with great socio-economic benefits."

The AIIB, which was proposed by the Chinese president Xi Jinping in late 2013, will support infrastructure and development projects across Asia. China is expected to hold around a third of the voting power in the AIIB's governing council.

Widely regarded as a competitor to the IMF and World Bank, analysts regard the new bank as a Chinese attempt to wrest control of the world's global economic institutions from the West. (Monitoring Desk)

## Iran-P5+1 Agreement Seeks Removal of Sanctions, Not Suspension: Rouhani

*Iran's President Hassan Rouhani says a recent agreement reached with the P5+1 group on Iran's nuclear program seeks removal of all anti-Iran sanctions, not their suspension*

TEHRAN - "We have never negotiated the suspension of sanctions and if it were the case, there would be no agreement," Rouhani said in a meeting with a group of senior Iranian officials in Tehran on Sunday.

He added that both Iran and six world powers are seriously determined to reach a final agreement on Tehran's nuclear program, stressing that the world has no option but to reach an agreement with the Islamic Republic.

"The world knows that there



is no way but to [reach] agreement and understanding with Iran because the great, courageous and resistant Iranian people have stood by their ideals despite hardships," Rouhani noted, stressing that the world has come to a realiza-

tion that the Iranian nation will never "yield to pressure and sanctions."

According to a landmark agreement reached between Iran and the P5+1 countries in Switzerland on April 2, all previous... (More on P4)... (22)

## Turkish Minister Urges Europe to Do Justice to Muslims

BAD KREUZNACH - Turkey's EU minister has urged European countries to do justice to Muslims living in Europe and voiced concern over rising Islamophobic incidents in the West.

"Europe is not just a place for Christians," Volkan Bozkir said late Saturday and reiterated the fact that millions of Turkish Muslims live in Europe.

Bozkir made the remarks during his address at a special program on Prophet Muhammad organized by the Turkish Islamic Union of the Institute for Religion in Bad Kreuznach, Germany.

Also, the minister strongly criticized those who blamed Islam for terrorism.

Referring to the recent Germanwings plane crash in France that killed over 150 people, where preliminary investigations indicate the co-pilot deliberately brought the aircraft down, he asked: "Why is a German co-pilot, who caused the incident, not called a Christian terrorist? Why is Islam always linked to terrorism?"

Islam is the only religion that has determined the law and moral principles needed for people to live in peace and tranquility, he said.

"Islam does not accept murders, and we will keep telling this until all the Western people fully understand it," he added.

He pointed out that from Anatolia to Andalusia, and from Africa to Asia, Islam created societies in which different nations, cultures, and religions lived together in harmony, including in places like Jerusalem, Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordoba, and Istanbul. Voicing the need to fight against Islamophobia, Bozkir noted an increase in hate speech and discrimination policies against Muslims in the West. (Trend News Agency)

## Australian Questioned after Helping Fight Islamic State

SYDNEY - A former unionist and Australian political figure was Sunday questioned on his return from the Middle East where he is believed to have helped those fighting against the Islamic State group, reports said.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation said it understood that Matthew Gardiner was stopped by customs officials early Sunday after flying in to the northern Australian city via Sweden and Singapore.

The Australian Federal Police confirmed that its officers "spoke to a Darwin man today following his return to Australia".

A police spokesman said the man, who was not named, was released without charge. "Enquiries relating to his activities while overseas are ongoing and as such it is not appropriate to comment further at this time," he added.

Gardiner, a former trade unionist and ex-president of the Northern Territory branch of the opposition Labor Party, reportedly left Australia early this year to join a Kurdish militia fighting IS. (AFP)

## Nieghbor News

### Yemen War will Backfire on Saudi Arabia: Iran MPs

TEHRAN - Iranian lawmakers have unanimously denounced Saudi Arabia's military aggression against Yemen, warning that the adverse consequences of the ongoing war on Sana'a will undoubtedly backfire on Riyadh.

"The Al Saud regime should know that the fire rekindled [in Yemen] will engulf it and will impose heavy costs on the Muslim world," a group of 262 legislators said in a statement on Sunday.

"The formation of a fabricated coalition will further complicate problems in the Muslim world and the [Middle East] region," the statement read, adding that support of the US, the Israeli regime and their allies for Saudi Ara-

bia's blatant violation of an independent nation's sovereignty runs counter to international conventions.

Saudi Arabia's attack on Yemen and the killing of Muslim and innocent people in the country proved that Al Saudi is serving the interests of enemies of Islam instead of reinforcing unity and dignity among Muslims, it pointed out.

The Iranian parliamentarians expressed their support for the popular uprising of the Yemeni nation and strongly condemned foreign intervention in the impoverished country, saying the Muslim Yemeni people would undoubtedly resist aggressors with full force. (Press TV)

### China Responds to Pakistan's Call Evacuating its Citizens from Yemen: Hua

BEIJING - Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hua Chunying on Sunday said that China immediately responded to Pakistan's call for evacuating its citizens from Yemen.

At weekly press briefing at the foreign office, he said that it was in accordance with the spirit of our time-tested friendship with Pakistan. The special rescue effort by the Chinese government to evacuate foreign citizens embodies the government's people-first principle and the spirit of maintaining its close cooperation with friendly countries like Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Pakistan welcomed the Chinese help that ensured the safe evacuation of the nationals who had faced with problems to leave Yemen by air. "As all-weather friends,

Pakistan and Chinese cooperation in ensuring safe evacuation of our citizens has also been exemplary," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Tasnim Aslam told Chinese news agency Xinhua.

"To ensure earliest possible evacuation, we enlisted Chinese support, since their ships were already in the region evacuating their nationals from Aden to Djibouti," she said. Senior Pakistani lawmakers also hailed the Chinese cooperation at a time when the stranded Pakistanis had no option to leave Yemen by air and road. Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed said that China's timely rescue of stranded Pakistanis from Yemen proves the old adage that a friend in need is a friend indeed. (Monitoring Desk)

### Uzbekistan Opens Trading House in Riga

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan - Trading House of Uzbekistan (Export and Trading House "Uzbekistan") was opened in the Latvian capital Riga, the ministry of foreign economic relations, investments and trade of the republic told Trend.

Trading House is open to enhance the flow of goods and services between Uzbekistan and the European Union.

An agreement on the opening of the Trading House was reached during the visit of the Latvian President Andris Berzins to Uzbekistan in May last year and the Uzbek-Latvian business forum held within the framework of the visit.

Business circles of Uzbekistan and Latvia have confirmed their mutual interest in increase of volumes and diversification of trade turnover, creation and joint use of shopping malls and transport and logistics centers in Latvia in order to organize a reliable system of long-term and stable supply of exports of Uzbekistan to the markets of the Baltic States.

It is expected that the Trading House of Uzbekistan will allow the Latvian enterprises to import almost any group of products from Uzbekistan using a deferred payment, or consignment.

Latvia is the third largest trade partner of Uzbekistan in the European Union. Some 22 enterprises with participation of investors from Latvia, including five companies with the absolute Latvian capital operate in the republic. Their main activities are the production of finished textile products, furniture, oil refining, printing, logistics and transport services. (TN A)

### Turkmenistan Pledges to Curb Water Use

BISHKEK - The leader of Turkmenistan on Sunday pledged to streamline water use, a huge problem in the isolated desert nation believed to be among the world's top water wasters.

Some 80 percent of ex-Soviet Turkmenistan is covered by the Karakum desert, one of the driest places on earth.

Addressing Turkmen on the Day of Water,

a national holiday, President Gurbangly Berdimukhamedov pledged to curb waste.

The government would oversee the "systematic introduction of conservation technologies in the construction of water facilities and systems, the application of best practices and the latest scientific achievements", he was quoted by state media as saying. (Agencies)

## High Political Stakes for Clinton on Iran Nuclear Agreement

WASHINGTON - Hillary Rodham Clinton can claim a piece of the victory if the U.S. and other world powers ultimately complete a final nuclear deal with Iran.

She will own a piece of the failure if the negotiations collapse or produce a weak deal.

Her statement after Thursday's tentative agreement suggests the soon-to-be Democratic candidate for president knows those are her stakes.

She called the framework "an important step," while cautioning that "the devil is always in the details."

"The onus is on Iran and the bar must be set high," said Clinton, who helped lay the groundwork for the diplomacy with Iran as President Barack Obama's first secretary of state. "There is much to do and much more to say in the months ahead, but for now diplomacy deserves a chance to succeed."

The issue will figure prominently in the foreign



policy debate of the 2016 presidential campaign. Nearly all the expected Republican candidates said the outline agreement was dangerous to U.S. interests.

"This attempt to spin diplomatic failure as a success is just the latest example of this administration's farcical approach to Iran," said Florida Sen. Marco Rubio. He is likely to make foreign policy a centerpiece of his candidacy.

But Clinton occupies a unique space on the nuclear issue because of her role in Obama's Cabinet. She sent a close adviser, Jake Sullivan, to participate in the secret talks with Iran that led to the start of the international negotiations over the

country's nuclear ambitions.

Clinton is also navigating delicate ties with Israel and the American Jewish community, an influential group of voters and donors. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a fierce critic of the Obama administration's outreach to Iran, described the framework deal as a threat to "the very survival" of his nation.

"I don't know how you can maneuver all aspects of this politically," said Ray Takeyh, a senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. "You can be supportive and skeptical. I suspect that's the direction." (AP)