

# Deployment of US, NATO Forces in Ukraine Dangerous

MOSCOW - The planned deployment of a large number of troops from the United States and its NATO allies to Ukraine is a "dangerous process," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin says.

"We know that hundreds of US and NATO military servicemen are planning to go to Ukraine to train the National Guard. Training camps are being set up not only in western Ukraine but also in other districts of the country. This is a dangerous process," Karasin said in an interview published in the Wednesday issue of the



Russian daily Rossiyskaya Gazeta.

"We will work to make sure that all foreign and illegal armed units leave

Ukraine," he added.

The Russian official also stated that the US should take a constructive approach toward resolv-

ing the conflict in eastern Ukraine, saying, "It is clear that everyone is interested in Washington's having a constructive effect on

Kiev." The remarks come amid increasing tensions between Washington and Moscow over the crisis in Ukraine. The US accuses

Russia of supporting the pro-Russia forces fighting against the Ukrainian government in the eastern part of the country, an allegation denied by the Kremlin.

The United States and its European allies have been conducting a military drill, called Operation Atlantic Resolve, near Russian borders since the crisis in Ukraine.

The US Navy sent the guided missile destroyer USS Jason Dunham to the Black Sea on April 3 to join the drill.

The amphibious command ship Mount Whitney, ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

## Neighbor News

### Tajikistan Ratifies CIS Information Security Agreement

DUSHANBE - The Majlisi Namoyandagon (Tajikistan's lower chamber of parliament) on Wednesday ratified an agreement on cooperation among the CIS nations on providing information security.

Presenting the document, the deputy head of the State Committee for National Security (SCNS), Suhrob Panoyev, noted that the agreement was

signed by the CIS heads of government in St. Petersburg, Russia on November 20, 2013.

The agreement was reportedly signed Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

The document provides for carrying out joint concerted events to provide information security in the signatory countries. *(Asia-Plus)*

### US Approves \$952 Million Sale of Helicopters, Missiles to Pakistan

WASHINGTON - The US State Department has approved sale of \$952 million worth of attack helicopters, missiles and other defence equipment to Pakistan to help Islamabad with its counter-terrorism operations in South Asia.

Notification for the proposed sale of the AH-1Z Viper Attack Helicopters and AGM-114R Hellfire II Missiles and associated equipment, training and logistical support has been sent by Defence Security Cooperation Agency to Congress.

"This proposed sale of helicopters and weapon systems will provide Pakistan with military capabilities in support of its counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations in South Asia," the agency said in a statement.

The agency, however, said that the sale of the equipment and support will "not alter the basic military balance in the region."

The deal would also contribute to the "foreign policy and national security of the United States by helping to improve the security of a country vital to US foreign policy and national security goals in South Asia."

Pakistan had requested 15 AH-1Z Viper Attack Helicopters, 32 T-700 GE 401C Engines (30 installed and 2 spares), 1000 AGM-114 R Hellfire II Missiles in containers, 36 H-1 Technical Refresh Mission computers, 17 AN/AAQ-30 Target Sight Systems, 30 629F-23 Ultra High Frequency/Very High Frequency Communication Systems, 19 H-764 Embedded Global Positioning System/Inertial Navigation Systems among other defence equipment.

The proposed sale includes a "precision strike, enhanced survivability aircraft" that Pakistan can operate at high-altitudes. *(ndTV)*

### Iranian FM in Islamabad; Meets Sartaj Aziz

ISLAMABAD - Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif arrived in Pakistan on Wednesday for talks over the Yemen crisis.

Zarif's two-day visit to Pakistan comes amid heightened regional diplomacy over Yemen. Soon after arrival, Zarif met adviser to the Pakistani Prime minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and shared details of the Iran-Turkey talks held in Tehran on Tuesday.

The Iranian foreign minister is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today.

Zarif reached Islamabad from Oman, where he had gone for consultations on "the humanitarian plight in Yemen and regional developments", according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

The Iranian foreign

minister is leading a 22-member delegation, which includes Deputy Foreign Minister Ibrahim Rahimpour, DG West Asia Affairs Ra-sool Islami and a media adviser.

In Islamabad, besides the Yemen crisis, Mr Zarif will also discuss the state of bilateral ties, particularly the old sore spot in the relationship - the cross-border terrorism allegedly by Pakistan-based groups in the Iranian province of Sistan-Balochistan.

The killing of eight Iranian guards on Monday along the border with Pakistan has renewed Iranian concerns.

"The visit will be in the framework of strengthening bilateral relations, surveying the regional and international devel- ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

### China to Eliminate Random Official Fees for Firms within Six Months

BEIJING - The Chinese government will eliminate random government fees for firms within six months in the latest efforts to reduce enterprises' burdens and boost market vitality.

The campaign will target administrative fees and government funds that force enterprises to pay for approval, market supervision and entry, and guild membership, a statement released after an executive meeting of the State Council presided over by Premier Li Ke-qiang said on Wednesday.

China scrapped more than 600 enterprise-related fees last year and vowed to continue to conduct structural tax

reductions and reduce fees across the board this year.

The government will inspect the effects of fee reductions made last year to make sure all the reforms are implemented timely and efficiently, especially those targeting small businesses, the service sector, government-subsidized housing and college graduates.

Unapproved, unlawful and inefficient government funds will all be scrapped and redundant ones will be integrated. Meanwhile, no unauthorized fee rises or coverage expansion is allowed and over-charged services should lower their fees, the statement said...*(More on P4)...(24)*

### Netanyahu Wants Iran Deal to Cover Missile Capacity

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu kept up his offensive against the framework nuclear deal with Iran on Tuesday, saying it fails to address Tehran's long-range missile arsenal.

"Why doesn't the framework address Iran's intercontinental ballistic missile programme whose sole purpose is to carry nuclear payloads?" he asked on his official Twitter account.

He said the economic benefits from the easing of sanctions would go to fund Iran-sponsored radicals across the Middle East.

"What is to stop Iran from using the over one hundred billion dollars that will be unfrozen as part of this agreement to fund aggression and terror in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere," he tweeted.

It was the latest salvo in transatlantic sniping on the issue between Netanyahu's office and the White House.

On Sunday, Netanyahu demanded that Iranian recognition of the Jewish state's right to exist be written into last week's agreement.

The following day US President Barack Obama rejected that call in an interview with US radio network NPR.

"The notion that we would condition Iran not getting nuclear weapons in a verifiable deal on Iran recognising Israel, is really akin to saying that we won't sign a deal unless the nature of the Iranian regime completely transforms," Obama said.

"And that is, I think, a fundamental misjudgement."

Ephraim Halevy, a former head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, said Tuesday that the strident Israeli declarations on the emerging deal could run counter to the Jewish state's interests.

"I think we find ourselves in a moment of national paranoia," he told publicly-owned "We are the strongest country in the ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

## EU Re-Imposes Sanctions on Iran's Bank Tejarat, 32 Shipping Companies

TOKYO - America's defense chief said Wednesday that an al-Qaida branch is making "great gains" on the ground amid the chaos in Yemen, and that the U.S. will have to rethink how it prevents the group from launching attacks in the West.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter, in Tokyo to work on deepening the U.S.-Japan alliance, said the collapse of the central government in Yemen makes it harder to conduct counter-terrorism operations against the group called al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula.

"That doesn't mean that we don't continue to take steps to

protect ourselves. We have to do it in a different way, but we do and we are," he said, without offering any specifics.

The group is known to have ambitions to strike Western targets, including the United States.

Carter said that as Shiite rebels advance in Yemen, the al-Qaida branch there is taking advantage of the disorder to seize territory. "You see them making great gains on the ground," he said.

He said the U.S. is providing intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and logistics information and "some resupply of equipment and munitions"

to Saudi Arabia, which has launched airstrikes against the rebels in neighboring Yemen. Carter, who travels to South Korea later this week, is on his first trip to Asia since becoming defense secretary in February.

Japan and the United States are nearing completion of the first revision in 17 years of the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines, an agreement that will "transform" the bilateral alliance, Carter said at a news conference after meeting with his Japanese counterpart in Tokyo. The new guidelines, expected to be formally approved in about...*(More on P4)...(19)*

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## Iran, Turkey Agree Need to Stop Yemen War

TEHRAN - Turkey and Iran agree on the need for a political solution to end Yemen's war, which has raised tensions between them, Iran's president said Tuesday after talks with his visiting Turkish counterpart.

"We talked about Iraq, Syria, Palestine... We had a long discussion about Yemen. We both think war and bloodshed must stop in this area immediately and a complete ceasefire must be established and the strikes must stop" in Yemen,

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said during a joint press conference broadcast by state television.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made no remarks about Yemen, but he talked at length about bilateral relations with Iran.

Iran, which supports the Huthi rebels in Yemen, has condemned air strikes by an Arab coalition led by Saudi Arabia and supported by Turkey. Rouhani said he hoped the two countries, "with the help of other

countries in the region" would contribute to "peace, stability, a broader government and dialogue" between Yemenis.

"We agree on the fact that instability, insecurity and war must cease throughout the region," he said.

Erdogan, a conservative Islamist, denounced at the end of March what he called Iran's will for "domination" in Yemen, calling on Tehran to "withdraw all its forces from Yemen, Syria and Iraq." ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

## U.N. Warns of 'Slaughter of Innocents' in Syria



LONDON - United Nations officials warned on Wednesday of a potential "slaughter of innocents" unless aid and assistance reached a Palestinian refugee camp in Syria where thousands of civilians are trapped up in a vicious battle.

Some 18,000 civilians, including 3,500 children, are caught in the camp outside Damascus just a few miles from President Bashar al-Assad's palace. The camp largely fell under Islamic State control last week and is surrounded by the Syrian army.

The Yarmouk camp, which was home to half a million Palestinians before the conflict began in 2011, has been held by anti-Assad insurgents and besieged by government troops since the early days of the war and many have

already fled. But as fighting intensified in and around the camp, the remaining refugees have been left without food, water and medical supplies prompting aid agencies to call for the warring parties to allow access for aid and evacuations.

"The level of inhumanity that Yarmouk has descended to is frankly unimaginable," Chris Gunness, a spokesman for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a Skype interview from Jerusalem. "The situation is absolutely desperate. We need urgently to have humanitarian access, which is why UNRWA is calling for all parties to EXERCISE influence with their clients on ...*(More on P4)...(23)*



Smoke billows from a Saudi-led airstrike on Sanaa, Yemen earlier Wednesday amid reports Iran has sent a navy destroyer and another vessel to the Gulf of Aden