

Russia Adopting 'Increasingly Aggressive Posture': Obama

WASHINGTON - US President Barack Obama accused Russia of toughening its battlefield stance Tuesday, as he met with the NATO secretary general to discuss the rolling crisis in Ukraine.

"We had a chance to discuss the situation in Ukraine and the increasingly aggressive posture that Russia has taken," Obama said, after Oval Office talks with Jens Stoltenberg.

Both men stressed the need for parties to respect a largely-ignored February ceasefire agreement, which Stoltenberg



said could still be a "path to peace." The deal, between European powers, Russia and Ukraine

was aimed at ending a 13-month war that has claimed nearly 6,300 lives and left well over a million people homeless. In recent days there has been particularly heavy fighting between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists near the strategic port city of Mariupol. At the same time there has been an uptick in tensions as Russia aircraft and submarines have made provocative forays into European airspace and waters. Obama said this was a "challenging and important time for NATO." (AFP)

No Iran Deal without Full Access to Military Sites: France

PARIS - France's foreign minister said on Wednesday his country would not back any nuclear deal with Iran unless it provided full access to all installations, including military sites.

"France will not accept (a deal) if it is not clear that inspections can be done at all Iranian installations, including military sites," Laurent Fabius

told lawmakers. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last week ruled out international inspection of Iran's military sites or access to nuclear sci-

tists under any nuclear agreement. Iran's military leaders echoed his remarks.

Fabius said he wanted other countries negotiating with Iran in the framework of the so-called P5+1 - also including Britain, China, Germany, Russia and the United States - to adopt France's position.

"Yes' to an agreement, but not to an agreement that will enable Iran to have the atomic bomb. That is the position of France which is independent and peaceful." (Reuters)

France Calls for Tougher Global Mobilization against IS

PARIS - French Foreign Affairs Minister Laurent Fabius called on the international community to strengthen its mobilization against the Islamic State group ahead of an international meeting on Iraq organized next week.

Members of the U.S.-led coalition fighting IS will gather in Paris on June 2, including Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and repre-

sentatives of top international organizations.

Fabius, whose country is engaged in airstrikes against Iraq, told journalists at his ministry's new crisis center Tuesday that "France is taking its responsibilities ... but everybody must do what needs to be done." He didn't elaborate.

He said the situation in Syria, where the IS group also controls large territory, will also be discussed next week. (AP)

US, S.Korea, Japan Seek to Raise Pressure on North's Nuclear Program

SEOUL - The United States and two key Asian allies discussed how to increase pressure on North Korea to halt its nuclear program and will urge China to help bring Pyongyang back to the negotiating table, officials said. The talks in Seoul follows a test of what the North said was a submarine-launched ballistic missile earlier this month, which if true, could mean progress in the reclusive state's military capabilities. "We

held specific discussions on ways to deter North Korea's provocations and increase the effectiveness of sanctions," South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator Hwang Joon-kook told reporters after meeting envoys from the United States and Japan. North Korea has been hit with UN and U.S. sanctions because of its nuclear and missile tests, moves that Pyongyang sees as an attack on its sovereign right to de ... (More on P4)...(20)

Yemen Faces Catastrophe without Vital Supplies: Red Cross

GENEVA - Yemen faces a humanitarian catastrophe unless the Saudi-led coalition allows it to import and distribute vital food, fuel and medicines, the International Committee of the Red Cross said on Wednesday. "Humanitarian agencies can do things, but it will be the tip of the iceberg," said Cedric Schweizer, outgoing head of the ICRC's delegation in Yemen. "Most things are political decisions -- access to fuel, ensur-

ing that the importation of normal medicines for chronic diseases can be allowed, and food because 90 percent of food is imported in Yemen." Saudi-led forces began air strikes on Houthi forces in Yemen two months ago. They are enforcing inspections on ships entering Yemeni ports, saying they want to stop arms reaching Iran-backed Houthis. Commercial fuel tankers must have access to ... (More on P4)...(22)

IS Suicide Attacks in Iraq's Anbar Kill 17 Troops

BAGHDAD - Islamic State extremists unleashed a wave of suicide attacks targeting the Iraqi army in western Anbar province, killing at least 17 troops in a major blow to government efforts to dislodge the militants from the sprawling Sunni heartland, an Iraqi military spokesman said Wednesday. The attacks came just hours after the Iraqi government on Tuesday announced the start of a wide-scale op-

eration to recapture areas under the control of the IS group in Anbar.

Brig. Gen Saad Maan Ibrahim, the spokesman for the Joint Military Command, told The Associated Press the attacks took place outside the Islamic State-held city of Fallujah late Tuesday night. The militants struck near a water control station and a lock system on a canal between Lake Tharthar ... (More on P4)...(21)

Hezbollah Says It Struck Syria Militants with Help of Drone

BEIRUT - Lebanon's Hezbollah group says it has struck a group of al-Qaida militants near the border with Syria with the help of a drone for the first time. The Shiite group's Al-Manar satellite television chan-

nel said the "qualitative operation" was carried out Wednesday against a group of Nusra Front militants in Syria's Qalamoun region. The group has been fighting alongside Syrian gov ... (More on P4)...(23)

U.S. Praises Saudis for Imposing Sanctions on Hezbollah Officials

WASHINGTON - The United States on Wednesday commended Saudi Arabia for imposing sanctions on two senior officials of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah group in Lebanon and designat-

ing them as terrorists. The United States designated the two officials, Khalil Youssef Harb and Mohammed Qabalan, in 2013 for overseeing "violent operations" in the ... (More on P4)...(24)

Neighbour News

China Justifies Defensive Military Strategy

BEIJING - A Foreign Ministry spokesperson on Wednesday justified China's concern over Japanese military buildup, after Japan's chief cabinet secretary questioned the rationale of China's defensive military strategy. Following the Tuesday release of China's first white paper on military strategy, Japanese broadcaster NHK reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide

Suga had dismissed concern expressed in the paper about Japan's efforts to enact new security legislation. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said China had suffered long-term aggression by imperialist powers. "History dictates that we must build a national defense force to match up to our economic development and the need of safeguarding national security," Hua said. (Xinhua)

Iranian FM: 'Ready' to Visit Riyadh for Talks on Yemen

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says he is ready to visit the Saudi capital of Riyadh for talks over ways of ending the war on Yemen. Speaking on the sidelines of the 42nd annual meeting of foreign ministers of member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Zarif said Iran seeks good relations with Saudi Arabia and "does not like to see the current measures against the Yemeni people continue since the [military] operation

does not contribute to the resolution of the crisis." "Aerial assault against the Yemeni people is not beneficial for and does not contribute in any way to the resolution of issues and conflicts, and has only resulted in hatred toward Saudi Arabia among the Yemeni people," he noted. The top Iranian diplomat referred to the Islamic Republic's viewpoint regarding the regional developments, saying, "Dialog and understanding with the region's countries is the priority ... (More on P4)...(25)

Budget must not have Unrealistic Targets: Sharif

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif cautioned his economic team on Tuesday against setting unrealistic targets for the next financial year, 2015-16. He was chairing a budget strategy meeting for the upcoming financial year. A participant quoted the PM as saying, "It is advisable to only talk about those things which the government can achieve at the end of the day." He was perhaps referring to lessons learnt from past experiences of unsuccessfully following up on government claims to end

loadshedding within six months of taking over. Throughout the meeting, sources said, the PM kept warning his ministers "if you fail to achieve your targets it will only bring embarrassment to the government, so be careful". For example, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar projected that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate for the next financial year would be 6 per cent. At this, the PM said that 5pc or, at most, 5.5pc was enough because "if we fail to show 6pc growth, the people will criticise us". ... (More on P4)...(26)

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development (MRRD): National Solidarity Program (NSP)

Request for Expressions of Interest (REoI) For
International Individual Consultant: Rural Development Advisor
(Reference # MRRD/NSP III/CN/110)

Country: Afghanistan
Ministry: Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development (MRRD)
Type: Individual (International) Consultant
Project ID: P117103
Grant #: TF 098459-AF or any other NSP grant as may be available
Issue Date: 27th May, 2015
Closing Date: 09th June, 2015

I. The MRRD Mandate Role in Rural Development:

The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) was established to develop and implement programs promoting responsible social and financial growth in rural areas, primarily in the non-farm sector. It has employees in all 34 Provinces of Afghanistan, and delivers a wide range of programs funded both by the Ministry itself and the International Community.

MRRD aims to reduce poverty amongst the approximately 80% of Afghans who live in rural areas by implementing a made-in-Afghanistan "Pro-Poor" growth strategy which calls upon the government and civil society to address the macro economic constraints, the small size of the formal private sector, and the realities of rural poverty in order to implement realistic poverty reduction and development strategies.

II. Specific Roles/ Responsibilities Expected of the Consultant Position:

- 1 Support the Minister and his office through contributing to and drafting policies and advisory notes that reflect successful rural development models and innovative service delivery models, such as Citizen Charters, from across the globe.
- 2 Building on best practices in rural development within Afghanistan and globally from various countries, draft feasibility reports which apply, contextualize, and adapt these examples to Afghanistan.
- 3 Complete ToR is available in ARDS, ACBAR and NSP Website.

Time Schedule

The assignment is expected to start in mid-July 2015 and is for a period of 12 continuous months, with possibility of extension on mutual agreement by both parties and at the same contractual terms.

Academic Qualifications

Post graduate education in Social Sciences, Rural Development, Development Studies, Program Management, or a closely related field.

Work Experience

- Ten years' relevant professional working experience in the area of rural development, with some experience in agricultural, as well as off-farm and non-farm development
- Experience and expertise in policy development and desk-based research in a rural development context. Regional experience will be an advantage.
- Complete ToR is available in above Websites.

Duty Station and Reporting Requirements:

Duty Station: The duty station shall be the Office of the Minister for Rural Rehabilitation and Development located within the MRRD Compound in Darul Aman, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Reporting Requirements: The consultant reports to H.E. Minister for MRRD on all work-related issues.

Submission of Expression of Interest:

Expressions of interest (EoI) must be delivered to the address below or by E-Mail to the ID shown below no later than **09th June, 2015**. The subject line (of the email or the cover letter if submitted in person) should refer to the position being applied both by title and by the reference number stated in this document. Note: No telephone inquiries will be entertained.

Address of Focal Person for Enquires and Submission of EoIs:

Attn: Saleem Suha Sr. Procurement officer, Procurement Department, National Solidarity Program (NSP),
Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Afghanistan
Tashkilat Street, Darul Aman Road, Kabul, Afghanistan
E-mail to: s.saleem@nspafghanistan.org
Website: www.nspafghanistan.org
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