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Iran lays out nuclear deal red lines

May 24, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: Following Washington's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, the Islamic republic's supreme leader has laid out his country's conditions for upholding its side of the landmark accord with world powers. The following excerpts from an address by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to Iranian officials, published on Thursday, outline Iran's demands of Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany if the deal is to survive:

"The US withdrawal is a violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (establishing the nuclear deal). The Europeans need to table a resolution against the US to protest this action."

"The heads of the three European nations must promise not to raise any objections to Iranian missiles or Iran's presence in the region. Everyone should know that the Islamic Republic of Iran will never give up elements of its power, especially concerning questions of defence."

The US has levied sanctions against Tehran for its ballistic missile programme and labels Iranian regional proxy groups such as Hezbollah as "terrorist" entities.

"If the US succeeds in disturbing Iranian oil sales, the Europeans must promise to buy whatever quantity we wish to sell."..."

Putin's 'Unlimited Range' Nuclear Missile Flew Just 22 Miles Before Crashing

May 23, 2018 Breitbart.com reported: "In March, Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed to have developed an 'invincible' nuclear cruise missile with 'unlimited range.' It turns out that Putin's vaunted super-missile has yet to fly more than 22 miles without crashing.

'I want to tell all those who have fueled the arms race over the last 15 years, sought to win unilateral advantages over Russia, introduced unlawful sanctions aimed to contain our country's development: all that you wanted to impede with your policies have already happened. You have failed to contain Russia,' Putin boasted in March.

'No one in the world has anything like that. It may appear someday, but by that time we will develop something new,' he declared, after showing off computerized mockups of missiles and submersible drones that move too quickly to be intercepted.

'No one has listened to us. You listen to us now,' Putin said.

On Monday, CNBC cited anonymous sources who said Putin's super-missile was tested four times between November 2017 and February 2018, and it crashed every time: The U.S. assessed that the longest test flight lasted just more than two minutes, with the missile flying 22 miles before losing control and crashing. The shortest test lasted four seconds and flew for five miles..."

Expert: China's Navy Will Be Double the Size of U.S. Navy by 2030

May 22, 2018 Breitbart.com reported: "China's navy is on track to be double the size of the United States' by 2030, which puts U.S. interests at risk in the Asia Pacific and around the world, a U.S. military expert testified at a recent congressional hearing.

'The future size of the [People's Liberation Army] Navy will be about 550 warships and submarines by 2030. That is twice the size of today's U.S. Navy,' said Retired U.S. Navy Capt. James Fanell at a House Intelligence Committee hearing on Thursday.

'As such, it's clear the U.S. Navy is at great risk. We simply are not adequately sized or outfitted to meet our national security commitments in the Indo-Asia Pacific, let alone around the globe,' said Fanell, former director of intelligence and information operations for the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet.

Fanell said the Chinese navy, or PLAN, currently consists of about 400 warships — at least 330 surface ships and 66 submarines. Meanwhile, he said the U.S. Navy has 283 warships — 211 surface ships and 72 submarines. While the U.S. Navy aims to grow to 355 ships by 2030, it is hotly debated whether it can be achieved..."



Air force chief: Iranians fired 32 rockets at Golan on May 10

May 22, 2018 The Times of Israel reports: "The head of the Israeli Air Force revealed on Tuesday that Iranian forces fired significantly more rockets at military positions on the Golan Heights in an attack earlier this month than the army had previously claimed.

According to Maj. Gen. Amikam Norkin, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' al-Quds Force launched 32 rockets at Israeli bases on May 10, not 20 as the army had initially said. Though the air force chief amended the number of rockets fired, he maintained that the result of the Iranian attack was the same as previously reported: Four of the rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system, while the rest fell short of the border and landed in Syria.

The Lebanese Hezbollah terror group, a close ally of both Iran and Syrian dictator Bashar Assad, said last week that Israel had lied about the extent of the Iranian attack.

'Israel said that only 20 rockets were fired, some of which were downed, but the truth is that 55 rockets some of which were of heavy caliber were fired at a number of military posts, creating huge explosions that forced all residents in the Golan and some in northern Israel to scramble to bomb shelters in panic,' said the group's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, according to Naharnet..."

Venezuelans buy bus tickets out after Maduro wins re-election

May 22, 2018 Reuters reported: Betsabeth Casique saved for eight months for bus tickets out of Venezuela for herself and her three children. At 1.4 million bolivars each, they are worth what she earns in a month working as a nurse. It is less than two dollars at the black market exchange rate.

When socialist President Nicolas Maduro won re-election to a six-year term on Sunday in a vote the opposition and foreign governments called illegitimate, Casique decided to leave, first for the western city of San Cristobal and from there to Cucuta, Colombia.

"That was the straw that broke the camel's back, what pushed me to do it faster," Casique, 29, said while charging her cell phone outside the Aeroexpresos Ejecutivos terminal in Caracas, where she was planning to buy tickets for a bus leaving on Tuesday.

Ninety-nine people bought tickets on Monday morning for that trip, said Greberli Rojas, a passenger who displayed a handwritten wait-list she was keeping to avoid disputes between passengers trying to fit on the bus."...The United Nations has estimated that nearly 1 million Venezuelans the country left between 2015 and 2017.

Over the past weekend, migrants streamed across the border, skeptical that their votes would change anything in an election many thought would be rigged. Mainstream opposition called for a boycott and turnout was 46 percent compared with 80 percent in 2013's presidential election."..."

West Virginia 7th-graders told to declare submission to Allah

May 21, 2018 WND.com reported: "Seventh-graders at a West Virginia public school were asked to write the Islamic declaration of faith in Arabic calligraphy in a social-studies class, drawing outrage from a Christian parent.

Parent Rich Penkoski contacted Principal Ron Branch at Mountain Ridge Middle School in Gerrardstown about the assignment, which was part of a world-religions unit, the Christian Post reported. The assignment was included in a packet sent home with students of information about the history of Islam, the prophet Muhammad and the five pillars of the religion.

But Penkoski, the Christian Post said, was most upset with a worksheet that instructs students to practice calligraphy by copying by hand the Arabic form of the Shahada. The Shahada is the Islamic profession of faith that declares Allah is the one true god and Muhammad is his messenger.

'I saw the assignment of writing the Shahada in Arabic. Their excuse was calligraphy,' Penkoski told the Christian Post. 'I was like, 'Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!' First of all, calligraphy was invented in China 3,000 years prior to Muhammad. The fact that they were trying to get my daughter to write that disturbed me.'..."

Tehran rejects Russian call for Iranian forces to eventually leave Syria

May 21, 2018 timesofisrael.com reported: "In a rare show of public disagreement, Iran on Monday appeared to reject remarks from Russia's leader saying the Islamic Republic should pull its forces out of Syria after a political settlement is reached in the war-torn country.

'No one can force Iran to do anything,' Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Bahram Qasemi said, according to the Tasnim news website.

'As long as terrorism exists and the Syrian government wants, Iran will have presence [in Syria],' Qasemi said. 'Those who have entered Syria without the consent of the Syrian government should leave.'

On Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said following a meeting with Syrian President Bashar Assad that the next step after a political settlement in Syria should be foreign countries and groups pulling their troops out of Syria..."

Muslim leaders accuse Israel of murdering Gazans

May 20, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "A summit of Muslim leaders in Istanbul on Friday, chaired by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, called for an international force 'to protect' the Palestinians in the wake of the deaths of dozens of Gazans on the Gaza border. The final communique issued by leaders of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a copy of which was obtained by AFP, accused Israel of carrying out the 'willful murder of at least 60 civilians' when Palestinian Arabs protested on the Gaza border Monday.

It called 'for the international protection of the Palestinian population including through dispatching of international protection force. The statement also angrily lashed out at the United States, saying that Washington was complicit in the actions of Israel against the Palestinians. It denounced the 'savage crimes committed by the Israeli forces with the backing of the U.S. administration.'..."

Iranian president: US more hated than ever in Muslim world

May 18, 2018 The Islamic Republic News Agency reported: "Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation meeting is a good opportunity for the Muslim world to voice its support for Palestine and condemn the illegal move of US embassy to Quds, describing Washington as being hated more than ever.

Before leaving Tehran on Friday for Istanbul to take part in the extraordinary session on OIC on Palestine, the Iranian president told reporters that 'Defending the Palestinians and the holy Quds, is defending the Islamic values and a civilized nation that is now in a deplorable situation.'

Following the US provocative move in relocating its embassy from Tel Aviv to Quds tens of thousands of Palestinians protested the move that were suppressed brutally by the Israeli forces. At least 60 Palestinians were killed and some 3,000 others injured by live fire or other lethal means. Turkey as the rotating president of OIC has invited the heads of states and foreign ministers of the Muslim countries to the meeting to discuss the latest status of the occupied territories.

'This is not a new crime perpetrated by the Zionists because they have committed such crimes over the past 70 years; in fact, the killing and wounding Palestinians on the Nakba Day is the latest instance of the 70-year-long record of crimes of the Zionist regime against the oppressed Palestinian people,' Rouhani said..."

