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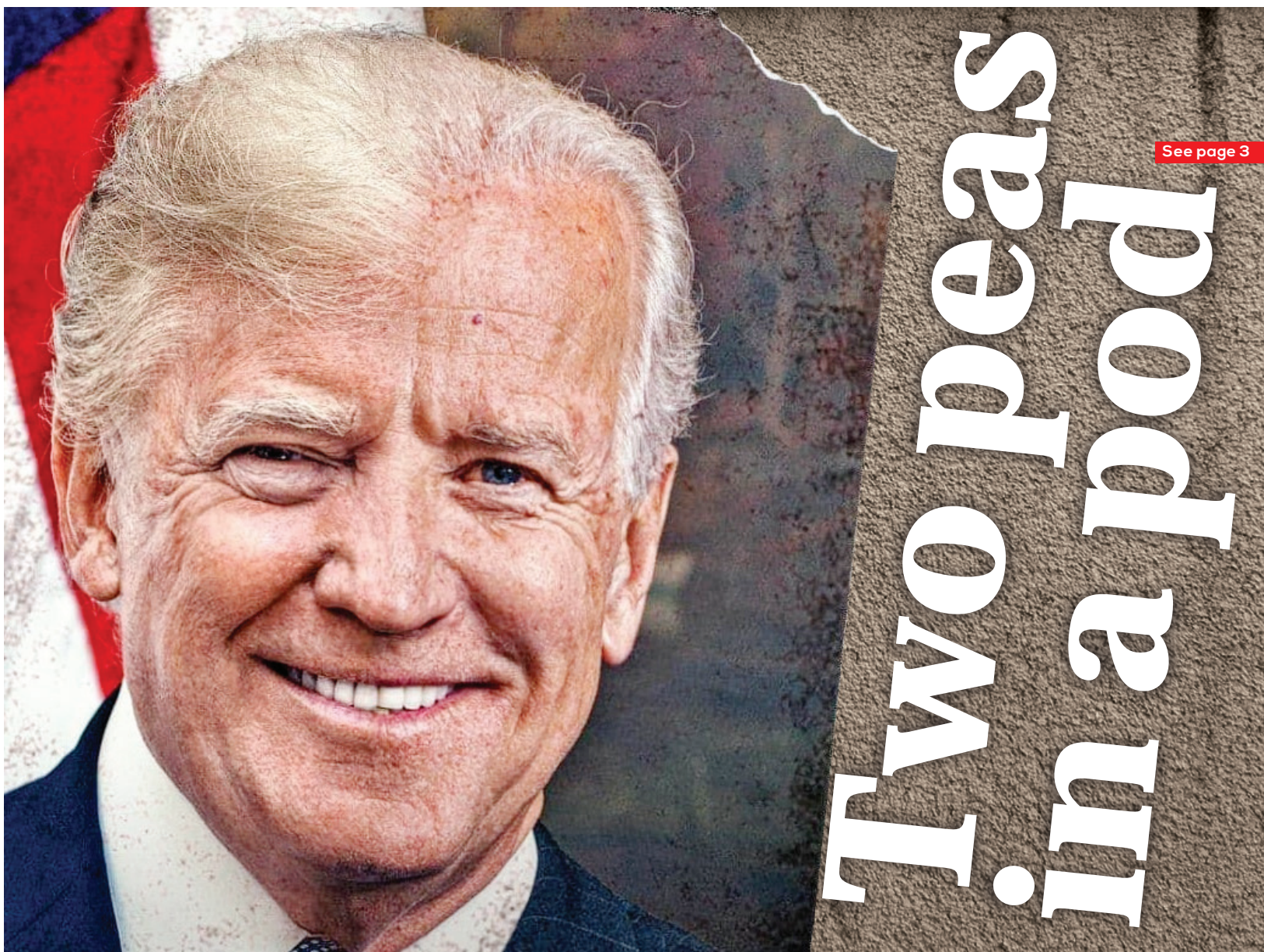
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## Tehran is going to stop implementing Additional Protocol if the West doesn't act: MP

**BY ALI A. JENABZADEH**  
TEHRAN – A senior member of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) says lawmakers are very serious to enforce the “strategic action to lift sanctions” law.

“The Majlis is very strenuous and serious about implementing the ‘strategic action to lift sanctions’ law and is pursuing its implementation by the government,” Abolfazl Amouei, the spokesman for the Iranian Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, tells the Tehran Times.

“There is an overwhelming consensus among all of Iran’s institutions about moving forward with the nuclear law, especially among the government and the (Supreme) National Security Council,” Amouei emphasizes.

On December 1, Iranian lawmakers overwhelmingly voted in favor of a bill called “Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Safeguard Interests of the Iranian People.”

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## Denmark eager for co-op with Iran in geology, mining

TEHRAN – Denmark’s new Ambassador to Tehran Jesper Vahr has expressed his country’s willingness to cooperate with Iran in geology and mining areas, IRNA reported.

Vahr made the remarks in a meeting with Alireza Shahidi, the head of Geological Survey and Mineral Explorations of Iran (GSI) on Monday.

According to the GSI Office of Public Relations, in the mentioned meeting the two sides discussed the development of bilateral cooperation and stressed the need to strengthen scientific and research relations in the fields of geology and mining exploration.

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## 36th Fajr Music Festival launches online today

TEHRAN – The 36th Fajr Music Festival will kick off today with streaming performances on fajrmusicfestival.com, nay.ir, and tiwall.com after canceling the in-person edition in Tehran due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Austrian duos Vila Madalena is one of the groups, which are scheduled to give their performance on the very first day of the festival, the organizer announced

in a press release published on Monday. ISTAM Ritual Groups, Respina String Quartet, Namad String Quartet and Jav Ensemble are among the Iranian participating musicians on the first day.

The organizers of the 36th edition of the festival decided to stream the performances online this year due to the pandemic and coronavirus restrictions.

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## Ex-Esteghlal midfielder Mehdi Fonounizadeh optimistic over the team’s future

**BY FARROKH HESABI**  
Former Esteghlal and Iran national team midfielder, Mehdi Fonounizadeh, believes that inconsistency has been the major problem in Esteghlal in these weeks.

The Blues suffered a 2-0 defeat against Sepahan in Isfahan’s Foolad Shahr Stadium on Saturday. Mahmoud Fekri’s side gave their place at the top of the Iran Professional League (IPL) table to Sepahan and their rivals Persepolis’ as overtook them in the table.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Fonounizadeh talked firstly about Saturday’s match.

“I think Esteghlal’s performance against Sepahan it’s not bad as it seemed. However, the problem was with the first line-up of the team. We saw again the line-up had been changed a lot comparing the previous matches. Moreover, the formation of the team has been changed from 4-4-2 to 3-5-2. Playing with three defenders was a risky decision made by Esteghlal technical staff,” he said.

Esteghlal did not create enough chances to win the game and Fekri must not be pleased with his team’s performance.

“It’s not good at all for a team in Esteghlal’s caliber that they don’t know their main line-up and every week Mahmoud Fekri makes a number of new changes to his squad. It’s definitely a negative point after 15 weeks passed from the season.

“Normally, most of the teams will recognize their main squads after four or five weeks of the league. The tactical confusion that is obvious in Esteghlal’s games is due to the lack of consistency in their line-up. When you use a player like Aref Gholami, who is center-back, in a different position, it makes some problems for the team and it was exactly what happened for Esteghlal in Tehran’s derby against Persepolis. The mistake is being repeated in the match against Sepahan and in some other matches as well,” Esteghlal former player added.

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## Biden’s foreign policy toward Iran: Speak softly but carry a big stick!

**BY MYLES HOENIG**  
Biden’s foreign policy towards Iran will likely not change very much from what Trump was doing. Biden is from the old school of ‘speak softly but carry a big stick’, yet without the soft speaking. Regardless of who the president is, the foreign establishment does not change with new administrations. They look at the geopolitics and make their policies accordingly. As it is now, Iran is a rival to their oil spigot (Saudi Arabia) and to Israel, which holds a tight grip on foreign policy decision making in the U.S.

Biden is making overtures to returning to the nuclear deal but the conditions he’s setting are only setting things up for failure, a goal that the foreign establishment for now, encourages. The U.S. government should be returning to the table without conditions, except perhaps conditions

placed on them, as it was they who abrogated the agreement initially.

The U.S. has government has been punishing Iran with sanctions for the misdeeds of the U.S., leaving the agreement. Secretary Blinken should return to the negotiating table without preconditions on Iran. If anything, it is the U.S. which cannot be trusted as it has shown repeatedly over the years, and not just regarding Iran. The sanctions against the Iranian government and its people are crimes against humanity, but short of war with a country that can fight back, the U.S. often uses sanctions as their go-to weapon of choice.

*Myles Hoenig is an American political analyst. He was a 2016 Green Party candidate who sought election to the U.S. House to represent the 7th Congressional District of Maryland.*

## China-Iran energy cooperation depends on the development of bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership

**BY PROFESSOR FAN HONGDA**  
Recently I was invited to participate in a conference on “Perspectives of Iran-China Economic Cooperation in the energy sectors”. Indeed, energy cooperation should be one of the basic factors promoting the development of contemporary China-Iran relations. But this is not the case now.

The rapid development of China’s economy for decades has been supported by the huge consumption of energy. The changes in Chinese lifestyles, such as the popularization of family cars and gas, also require huge amounts of energy such as oil and natural gas. China’s oil and natural gas imports surpassed the United States and Japan in 2017 and 2018 respectively, becoming the world’s number one importer.

Over the years, China’s imports of oil and natural gas have continued to rise. According to data from China Customs, in 2020 China

imported 542.386 million tons of crude oil and 101.661 million tons of natural gas. However, Iran, which has the world’s fourth largest oil reserves and the largest natural gas reserves, did not appear in the list of China’s top ten oil and gas imports in 2020. This must be something wrong.

**U.S. sanctions limit China-Iran energy cooperation**

There is no doubt that the sanctions against Iran initiated by the United States have had a very negative impact on China-Iran energy cooperation. Moreover, energy cooperation in international exchanges is often not just an economic behavior, it is also a political issue in many cases and often affected by the international situation. This is very obvious in the energy cooperation between China and Iran.

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## Archaeologists start survey at Bronze Age site southeast Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian archaeologists have commenced a survey at Konar Sandal, a Bronze Age site, which is situated in Jiroft plain of Kerman province, southeast Iran.

A team of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts have started to dig [exploratory] trenches across Konar Sandal under the supervision of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Fereidoun Fa’ali, the provincial tourism chief, announced on Monday.

“The demarcation project is aimed to deter-

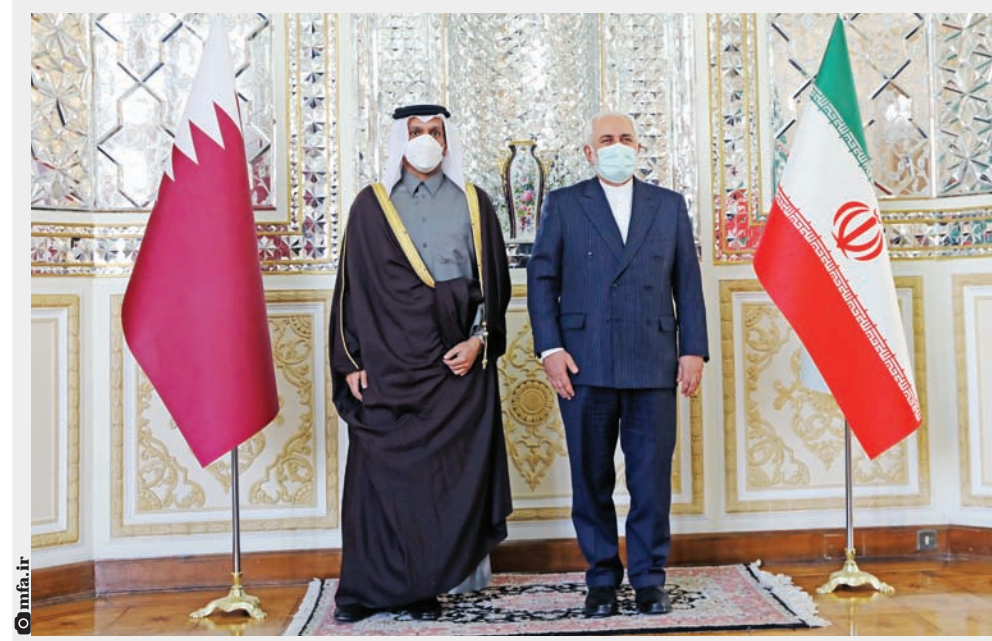
mine the legal boundaries of the prehistorical site, which is situated in Jiroft plain.... The globally-magnificent site of Konar Sandal was once one of the most important Bronze Age cities in Southwest Asia,” the official explained.

The first archaeological excavation on the site was conducted some two decades ago by a team of international experts under the leadership of Iranian archaeologist Yousef Majidzadeh, he said.

The survey resulted in the discovery of a Bronze Age settlement in Halil-Rud valley,” Fa’ali added.

Based on previous archaeological investigations, the site consists of two mounds a few kilometers apart, called Konar Sandal A and B with a height of 13 and 21 meters, respectively. At Konar Sandal B, a two-story, windowed citadel with a base of close to 13.5 hectares was found. Tablets with scripts of unknown nature were reportedly discovered at the site.

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## Qatari, Iranian FMs hold talks in Tehran

Qatari FM Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani held talks with his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif in Tehran on Monday afternoon. According to the Foreign Ministry media office, Zarif elaborated on Tehran’s opposition to the policy of bullying and compulsion. He also insisted on the need for cooperation between regional states to settle problems to reach security arrangements.

In addition, Qatar has already announced it is ready to mediate between Iran and the U.S. to revitalize the JCPOA. “The State of Qatar is working on de-escalation through a political and diplomatic process to return to the nuclear agreement,” the Qatari chief diplomat said.

## S. Arabia trying to approach Shia groups in Iraq to undermine Iran: Iraqi analyst

**BY MOHAMMAD MAZHARI**

TEHRAN – An Iraqi political analyst says that Saudi Arabia is trying to approach Shia parties in Iraq to restrain Hashd al-Shaabi and undermine Iran.

“In the recent period they (Saudis) have approached some Shia political groups, especially the Islamic ones, to influence the Iraqi political decision,” Ali Fahim tells the Tehran Times.

These attempts “were clearly reflected in the political positions of these (Iraqi) figures and blocs, with regard to the future of the Hashd al-Shaabi, confronting terrorism and the position on the October movement as well as other issues that may affect Saudi Arabia, the main suspect in supporting Daesh,” Fahim explains.

The following is the text of the interview:  
**How do you see America’s record when it comes to fighting terrorism in Iraq?**

We must first know America’s view towards the concept of terrorism before we talk about its strategy in confronting this phenomenon. We will not need much effort to clarify this.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump summed it up when he said, “We will protect America from extremist Islamic terrorism.”

It is an abstract of philosophy of Huntington, the American philosopher who put forward the theory of the Clash of Civilizations through which he nominated Islam as a potential enemy before Western civilization in response to Fukuyama’s theory of “The end of history” which heralded the victory and hegemony of Western civilization after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

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## Biden and JCPOA: Racing against the clock

By Azin Sahabi

**TEHRAN** — The Atlantic Council and the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft have published analyses in two different fields. While the former believes in a “rebirth” in sanctions team at the U.S. Department of State, the latter recommends that Biden’s administration “must be willing to take some political heat” to break the current standoff between Iran and the United States. The think tank warns Biden that the Oval Office should race against the clock to escape the so far dangerous game between Iran and the U.S.

Daniel Fried and Robert E. Hunter, have commented on the issues, respectively.

### Atlantic Council: Guidelines for new sanctions team

In an analysis published on Feb 12, 2021, Daniel Fried, a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council sheds light on “re-birth of the State Department’s Office of Sanctions Coordination” and puts forward some guidelines for the new team who holds the promise of substantially increasing the effectiveness of U.S. sanctions policy.



The author, who was the first and so far the only State Department coordinator for sanctions policy, describes sanctions as “increasingly a tool of first resort in U.S. foreign policy”. But he says there is no “disciplined process” to coordinate sanctions policy not only within the State Department itself, but also with the U.S. allies.

According to Fried, Congress is seeking to make new Office of Sanctions Coordination a permanent fixture at the State Department. He believes that such a move can present the U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, with an opportunity to arrange a policy of sanctions for maximum effectiveness.

Fried emphasizes: “Sanctions will inevitably be an early action item for the Biden administration as it revamps U.S. policies toward Iran, Russia, and China. Establishing the Office of Sanctions Coordination in the first six months of the administration would position the State Department to address these issues as effectively as possible.”

Against the backdrop, the expert proposes several recommendations for the new office to be successful in its “rebirth”. For instance, he underlines it should serve as the central core on sanctions policy and the new team should consist of subject-matter experts on all sanctions issues. Also, in terms of “sanctions diplomacy”, Fried stresses that articulating multilateral sanctions by many countries in parallel, is considerably more effective in comparison to unilateral measures. In fact, such a move consolidates a substantive and political thrust which is much less vulnerable to violation.

While the expert describes the United Nations Security Council as “the best venue for negotiating multilateral sanctions”, particularly in cases of Iran and North Korea, he argues that given Russia and China with veto power have turned more adversarial and both are sanctioned as well, UNSCR may no longer be a viable option to count on.

### No rebirth in practice

Reviewing Fried’s guidelines regarding the “rebirth” of sanctions team at the Department of State, it seems that there are hardly any fundamental changes as indicators of “rebirth”. Obama and Trump’s sanctions teams, and even Bill Clinton’s, worked multilaterally. They included various experts on different kinds of sanctions teams and tried to build close relationships with allies and partners to make sanction policy as effective as possible. In fact, at best, the Office of Sanctions Coordination is another variant of the previous departments just decorated with a new title.

### “Biden must be willing to take some political heat”

In his first network interview on February 7, President Biden told CBS Evening News that the U.S. will not lift sanctions against Iran unless Tehran stops enriching uranium. He affirmed that Washington will not lift sanctions first in order to restart the negotiations with Iran. In addition, in the presidential campaigns, both President Biden and his top officials have been consistent on the requirement that Iran must act first.

Meanwhile, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has declared that “if they want Iran to return to its commitments, America must completely lift sanctions, and not just in words or on paper.”

In this regard, Robert E. Hunter, the U.S. ambassador to NATO during 1990s believes that “Biden must be willing to take some political heat” to break the current standoff between the two capitals.

In an analysis published on February 9, 2021 in Responsible Statecraft, a publication of the Quincy Institute, he points out that due to deep-rooted bad blood between Washington and Tehran, both parties are reluctant to make the first move unless the other take proportionate steps towards confidence building.

In this context, Hunter asks: “So what should the Biden administration do?”

He warns that if the current stalemate continues, the dangerous game of chicken already in place, may lead to some catastrophic results.

Hunter points to the “time” as a constraint and recommends: “The simplest first step would be for Biden, by a stroke of his pen, to reverse President Donald Trump’s May 2018 withdrawal from the JCPOA. That would challenge Iran to de-escalate.”

The expert also clarifies on the U.S. domestic politics, Arab states of the Persian Gulf and Israel as the main factors which complicate Biden’s decision making towards the Iran nuclear deal. Meanwhile Hunter stresses: “It might be possible to take some crisis management steps, such as forging a multilateral agreement on freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz (which is in every country’s interest) or an incidents-at-sea understanding (done either tacitly or quietly at the level of individual ships), as the United States and Soviet Union concluded in 1972.”

Moreover, Hunter believes Robert Malley, the new special envoy for Iran, can contribute effectively to break the inveterate stand-off and writes:

“Assuming that something does become possible with Iran that meets U.S. interests, though not necessarily those of regional partners, Malley must be able to count on President Biden’s willingness to take the domestic political heat.”

# Iran says firm to stop Additional Protocol if sanctions not lifted

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iran reiterated on Monday that it will suspend the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as of February 21 if the JCPOA parties don’t fulfill their commitments to lift sanctions on Iran.

Speaking at a press conference, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh stressed the Iranian government will be required to stop the implementation of the Additional Protocol on February 21 under a parliamentary law.

On December 1, the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) overwhelmingly voted in favor of a law called “Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Safeguard Interests of the Iranian People”. It tasked the government to suspend more commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – the official name



## Iran’s military official consults with Pakistan Navy commander over maritime security

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Second Admiral Amir Arya Shafqat Rudsari met with Pakistan’s Navy Commander Mohammad Amjad Khan Niazi on Monday on the sidelines of the Aman-21 multinational exercise in Karachi to discuss maritime security.

The two military officials discussed the latest cooperation between Iran and Pakistan in maritime security, the participation of the two neighboring countries in holding joint exercises, and sending ships to each other’s ports.

According to Iran Press, Pakistan’s Navy commander praised the presence of Iran’s military delegation as the observer of the Aman-21 international exercise, describing it as a sign of deep friendship between the two countries and their joint vision for maintaining security

and stability at sea.

Pointing to cultural and historical bonds as well as geographical proximity, Admiral Amjad Niazi highlighted the need to increase relations in the sea and exchange experiences between the two countries’ navies.

Admiral Shafqat Rudsari, who headed an Iranian military delegation to Karachi, wished the Pakistani Navy success for holding the Aman-21 multinational exercise.

Members of the Iranian military delegation attended the international maritime conference’s final session on Monday, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi spoke as a special guest at the conference’s closing session.

Pakistan’s Navy began one of the largest naval exercises in the Arabian Sea along with the participation of navies



of 45 countries including the three largest navies, the U.S., China and Russia, which joined the exercise this year.

## Raisi suggests prison inspection between Iran and the West

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi, the head of the Iranian Judiciary, has suggested that if Western countries are sincere in their respect for human rights they can open their prisons

for inspection by Iran and in that situation Iran will be ready to open its prisons to them.

“We are ready to open the doors of our prisons, so pretenders of human rights can visit any Iranian prisoner they want, if they

allow us to visit any prisoner we want in their country,” the top judge remarked.

Pointing to his recent visit to Iraq, Raisi also said, “Iran and Iraq agreed to cooperate on the case related to the assassination of

Major General Qassem Soleimani.”

Raisi stressed that Iran’s relation with its neighbors is a top priority, underlining, “I hope Iran’s international collaboration with Iraq will bear a positive result.”

## Iran hails Qatar’s efforts to revive JCPOA

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Saeed Khatibzadeh, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, on Monday welcomed Qatar for its efforts to revive the 2015 nuclear deal though he made it clear that Washington’s commitment to the JCPOA requires no mediation.

“Iran welcomes the Qatari government’s help in saving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action,” Khatibzadeh told a regular press briefing.

“Qatar is one of Iran’s regional friends and partners. There have been close consultations between Iran and Qatar at different levels,” he remarked.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held talks with his Qatari counterpart, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, in Tehran on Monday afternoon. They discussed a range of issues, including those related to the Persian Gulf region.

Khatibzadeh emphasized, “Tehran hails any effort to reduce the tensions, but the fulfillment of commitments by the U.S. needs no messages.”

Noting the U.S. can easily begin to honor its JCPOA commitments, the spokesman said, “It’s a pity that the current administration has become an accomplice in the previous administration’s violation of commitments. This is not a constructive approach and must end.”

The spokesman criticized the Biden administration for pursuing Donald Trump’s policy towards Iran, noting, “The situation is not any different from before January 20, as Washington has maintained the same ‘maximum pressure and crimes’ against the Iranian nation.”

He described the unchanged policies by the new U.S. administration as a disgrace to the politicians whose election campaign was based on the pledge to reverse Trump’s

policies.

The JCPOA was signed in 2015 between Iran and six world states—the U.S., Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China — and was ratified in the form of Resolution 2231 by the UN Security Council.

However, Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA in May 2018 and imposed the sanctions that had been lifted by the deal and added new harsh ones.

In May 2019, Iran began to scale back its JCPOA commitments after the remaining European parties failed to fulfill their end of the bargain and compensate for Washington’s sanctions.

In remarks on February 7, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said Iran will resume honoring the JCPOA in full only after the U.S. removes all sanctions on the country in a practical and verifiable manner.

## American conservative newspaper wants Biden to send any nuclear pact to Congress for approval

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has demanded that the United States lift all economic sanctions before the Islamic republic will dial back its uranium enrichment operations, according to the Washington Times.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif went further, giving the U.S. until Feb. 21 to rejoin the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The conservative newspaper says with Iran seeking to re-engage on the nuclear issue, President Biden has a chance to avoid missteps that doomed the Obama-era agreement with Iran.



Meanwhile, Biden has thus far rejected Iran’s demand, telling CBS News that the sanctions will stay in place until Iran returns to the limits of the original agreement.

Former President Donald Trump described the nuclear pact as an example of West Asia merry-go-round that spent decades endlessly

circling peace but never achieving it. Trump’s administration claimed the deal allowed Iran to evade compliance inspections and, after 15 years, to produce nuclear weapons. Therefore, he withdrew from the agreement in 2018 and chose a new path that circumvented Iran, and he facilitated accords between Israel and Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Sudan and Morocco.

Expectedly, Iran started its uranium enrichment to exceed the agreed limit of 3.67 percent. In January, Iran announced its intention to achieve 20 percent enrichment.

Now, “diplomacy is back,” according to Biden, and he has appointed Robert Malley, a first-string negotiator of the Obama deal,

to lead his rapprochement with Iran. The Washington Times urges the U.S. policy makers to conclude the kind of any deal to weaken the original accord.

According to the newspaper, Biden must ignore Tehran’s deadline and refuse to sit down with the Iranians until they suspend their nuclear-enrichment program and allow international inspectors to freely roam anywhere and anytime to ensure compliance.

At the end, the newspaper recommends Biden’s administration to send any deal to the U.S. Senate for ratification as a bona fide treaty would correct the Obama administration’s failure to fortify the original deal with congressional approval.

## China-Iran energy cooperation depends on the development of bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership

**1 →** China is an emerging power. When China began to seek energy cooperation with Iran, Western powers had already established close energy cooperation relations with Iran. Later, the international sanctions advocated by the United States forced the major Western oil companies to withdraw from Iran, while China continued to pursue a friendly policy with Iran. In this way, China-Iran energy cooperation ushered in an ideal period.

However, with the intensification of the so-called Iranian nuclear crisis, especially the “extreme pressure” imposed by the U.S. Trump administration on Iran, energy cooperation between China and Iran has once again encountered serious difficulties. This is the fundamental reason why Iran was

**There are also voices in China that oppose comprehensive cooperation with Iran. Some Chinese worry that the overall development of China-Iran relations will upset Washington, Arab countries and Israel.**

not among China’s top ten sources of oil and natural gas imports in 2020.

In fact, even without U.S. sanctions, I think it is currently not easy for Iran and China to have deeper bilateral cooperation including energy. If Iran and China really want to deepen their bilateral relations, they must resolve some of their own problems.

### China and Iran need more mutual trust

As far as I know, there are some voices in Iran that oppose the development of comprehensive relations with China. What I want to say is that China is indeed Iran’s ideal partner. Even if Iran’s relations with the United States and other Western countries could be improved, Iran should also attach importance to the development of Iran-China relations from the perspective of national interests. Why?

Iran is in urgent need of large investment in many fields, including the energy sector, and China, which has a huge demand for imported energy, happens to have a stronger willingness to invest abroad. China has made great progress in technology in many fields, and it is no longer appropriate to regard “Made in China” as a low-quality product. More importantly, China has not invaded other countries even in the most powerful period in history. The most popular idea of international relations in China is win-win cooperation. Iranian friends should give China more trust when developing relations with China.

## As far as I know, there are some voices in Iran that oppose the development of comprehensive relations with China.

There are also voices in China that oppose comprehensive cooperation with Iran. Some Chinese worry that the overall development of China-Iran relations will upset Washington, Arab countries and Israel. There are also some Chinese who worry that Tehran’s current hope to establish a good relationship with China is only a “political expedient”. In China, I have always emphasized that Iran has a strong ability to rejuvenate, and the rising China needs the friendship of powerful regional countries like Iran. When developing relations with Iran, China needs more confidence.

Back to the issue of China-Iran energy cooperation. Because of the strategic nature of energy cooperation and the sensitivity of China and Iran’s respective foreign relations, it is difficult for the two countries to have very significant energy cooperation if the development of the bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership can’t achieve major breakthroughs.

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