IRGC to unveil first surface-to-surface ballistic missile

POLITICS TEHRAN — Days after Washington approved help for an EU missile program under re-elected President Hassan Rouhani, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps said it will unveil its first surface-to-surface ballistic missile some time in the future, without elaborating.

“The ground-based ballistic missile to be unveiled in the future will be named ‘Dehli,’” Fars news agency quoted Amirali Hajizadeh, head of the Guards’ aerospace division, as saying. Hajizadeh is a proponent of placing restrictions on the city of Dehli, southwestern Iran, which is said to have come under first ground-to-ground missile attack by the United States in 1981, hence, named “the city of missiles.”

The commander further said “Iran’s tried underground factory has been built by the Guards in recent years,” and “we will continue to further develop our missile capabilities forcefully.”

In October 2016, Iranian state TV showed the first footage of a secret underground missile base with ready-to-fire missiles on the back of trucks, said to be 100 meters (3,000 feet) underground and protected by the “military and paramilitary coefficients” of the Guards’ military might.

Are they lucky enough to win Iran oil deals?

After the implementation of Iran’s landmark nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in January 2016, the Iranian oil sector seasoned a first upsurge of foreign companies willing to participate in different projects ranging from the first of the global oil market, Iran, once OPEC’s second-largest producer, has an agenda to pump up crude production especially from the hope of policy with its neighbors.

In this line, boosting production in West Karoun fields (five fields of the country stretches with the west- ern part of Iran’s southwestern region of Khorasan) by 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) to reach 300,000 bpd is the first among 13 prioritized programs that First Vice-President, Eshagh Jahangiri has recently tasked the Oil Ministry with implementing by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018).

The priority is also attached to the gas fields, especially South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf. The field contains a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world reserves.

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‘Beautiful military equipment’ can’t buy Middle East peace

As President Trump was being feted in the palaces of the Saudi royal family after concluding a historic arms deal, Iraqis were celebrating the outcome of a hard-fought election.

The vote manifested the determination of Iraqis electorate to continue on the path of moderation and constructive engagement based on mutual respect that brought the world the nuclear deal in 2015.

If past performance is an indicator of future success, another $10 billion worth of weapons will neither reduce “the burden” on the American military nor support “the long-term security of Saudi Arabia” as the State Department argues.

The last time the Saudis spent that kind of money was when they provid ed billions to the Iraq dictator Saddam Hussein in the 1980s to arm its war of aggression against Iran. Look what that bought them and the world.

At best, Mr. Trump is extorting our Saudi neighbors, milking them for as long as they do not have. At worst, he could be turning the United States into Saudi Arabia’s missionary in the Middle East, a rather ignominious position for America considering where 31 of the Sept. 11 hijackers came from.

Trump gives special prominence to his family and friends: Daniel Pipes

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Pipes also says, “Trump is the unusual American politician who can largely do whatever he wants.”

Following is the full text of the interview.

What persons and interest groups have the most influence on Trump?

A: It is said that there are three political parties in the United States: Democrats, Republicans, and the Trump party. Trump is the unusual American politician who can largely do whatever he wants. That said, he cares intensely about the views of two groups of people: the small one of fellow New York City business leaders and the larger one of his voters. So, they are the effective interest groups.

Steve Bannnon and Stephen Miller were initially called the persons who influence Trump’s decisions. Then, speculation focused on Trump’s son-in-law, Jared Kushner. How does Kushner affect Trump’s decisions? A: Again, and unusually, Trump gives a special prominence to his family and his personal friends, who have a much larger role in his administration than is normally the case for a U.S. president. However, Kushner has not given interviews or written on key issues, so we can only guess at his views.

Who are the people on the backstage of determining Trump’s foreign policy, especially his Middle East policies? A: You are asking the question all Washington is asking. Tehran at state hands says anything. McMaster at the National Security Council is discreet. Kushner, as noted above, is an unlisted. Haley at the United Nations seems to report to no one.

Which think tanks have effect on Trump’s foreign policy?

A: A good question but a conventional president but in this case, there seem to be none, at least so far. Trump has a major role domestically but not in foreign policy. Perhaps a think tank or two will emerge with time.

How effective is the Saudi lobby in influencing Trump’s foreign policy?

A: At this point, it appears that he is eager for a strong alliance with Riyadh against ISIS, in part against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran reprimands attacks on medical workers, humanitarian staff

Iran’s Ambassador to the UN condemned on Thursday attacks on medical and humanitarian staffs and missions of transport throughout the world especially in Palestine, Afghanistan and Syria.

“These attacks are taking place in various places around the world, but in terms of frequency and ferocity such attacks in the Middle East are more prevalent” Gholamali Khoshroo told a UN Security Council open debate on protecting civilians and health centers in armed conflicts. Following is a full text of his speech published by IRNA.

‘Allow me to begin by thanking the Ukrainian Presidency for convening this open debate. I would also like to express my gratitude to the briefers for their valuable inputs in this debate. I align myself with the statement by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Venezuela on behalf of NAM. Unfortunately, the issue of the protection of civilians, including their healthcare, in armed conflicts continues to be a recurring tragedy in our time. Mindful of the special significance of medical facilities and the danger their destruction or damage during conflict, the Security Council adopted resolution 2286 (2016) in response to concerns about attacks and threats against hospitals and other medical facilities, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel. Attacks on medical workers and facilities as well as the humanitarian comings delivering medical supplies, have increased since the adoption of the resolution. Only in 2016, UNAMSIL monitored 89 incidents in 22 countries under these conditions. [See full text of tehrantimes.com]’

Muslims clean mosques in run-up to Ramadan

A few days prior to the fasting month of Ramadan, many nation got into the rit ual of cleaning and dusting community mosques to welcome the holy month. As cleaning is broadly seen in Iran, cleaning religious stagers and mosques begins around 30 days prior to Ramadan. Community members pitch in waiting rugs, cleaning the walkways, water to the sacred jaffa prepared for the fasting month. The month of Ramadan is highly regarded among Muslims and is seen a special time for renewing bonds with family as well as to promote the spirit of close cooperation in the community.