

Iran

“Iran’s Leader Says Sanctions Won’t Alter Policies”

Associated Press

July 25, 2012

<http://www.chron.com/news/article/Iran-s-leader-says-sanctions-won-t-change-policy-3733085.php>

Western-led sanctions and diplomatic pressure will not force Iran to halt its nuclear program, Iran's Supreme Leader said Wednesday. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say on all state matters in Iran, voiced confidence that the Islamic Republic can beat the latest punitive measures aimed at blocking the country's vital oil and banking industries over the disputed program.

“Sanctions To Shut Indian-Iranian Shipping Company”

Associated Press

July 25, 2012

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/sanctions-shut-india-iran-shipping-company-16851516>

An Iranian-led shipping venture that predates the 1979 Islamic Revolution is now unraveling as one of the most high-profile blows from international sanctions and U.S.-driven efforts to drive wedges between Tehran and its key trading partners.

The impending collapse of the Irano Hind Shipping Co. — created in 1974 with India's state-run maritime firm — is likely to be noted in Washington and among allies as evidence of the deepening wounds from the diplomatic and economic onslaught over Iran's nuclear program.

“What Iran Sanctions Can And Can't Do”

Wall Street Journal

July 24, 2012

http://professional.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443437504577546900721442644.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEFTTopOpinion&mg=reno64-wsj

[Opinion]

Ordinary Iranians are having to tighten their belts since the European Union's oil embargo came into force on July 1. The decades of economic mismanagement by Iran's authoritarian leaders have culminated in five years of increasingly stern sanctions that are crippling Iran's economy. And notwithstanding the regime's defiant dismissal of their impact, sanctions have left many Iranian families with empty bank accounts and hollow stomachs.

“Iran Returns Sanction Fights To Gulf Shipping Lanes”

Bloomberg Businessweek

July 23, 2012

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-07-23/iran-returns-sanction-fight-to-gulf-shipping-lanes>

When Pentagon officials announced plans to send U.S. Navy minesweepers and warships into the Gulf for exercises, they carefully tried to avoid framing it as a direct show of force against Iran. Tehran took care of that. Iranian commanders and political leaders — facing an increasing squeeze from international sanctions — have sharply stepped up threats and defiant statements in recent weeks over the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint at the mouth of the Gulf that is the route for one fifth of the world's oil.

“More Pressure Sharpens Iran’s Choice”

Voice of America

July 20, 2012

<http://www.voanews.com/policy/editorials/More-Pressure-Sharpens-Irans-Choice--163204156.html>

The United States is imposing additional sanctions on Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile proliferation networks and is taking further steps to prevent the evasion of sanctions by publicly identifying a group of Iranian front companies and banks.

The moves are part of the U.S. government's dual-track approach of increasing pressure to convince Iran to engage seriously and address the international community's concerns about its nuclear program.

“Private Firms Tout Iran Oil Cheap To Beat Sanctions”

Reuters

July 20, 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/20/iran-oil-traders-idUSL6E8IIHDN20120720>

Obscure private firms are offering Iranian crude oil at steep discounts to European oil traders as Tehran seeks ways to restore oil export flows hit by Western sanctions. Traders who buy crude for European refineries say they are getting daily calls offering Iranian crude, sometimes accompanied by the promise of fake paperwork to disguise it as oil from a different origin.

“U.S. Says Iran Ships Using Foreign Flaps To Evade Sanctions”

Reuters

July 19, 2012

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-07-19/news/sns-rt-us-usa-iranbre86i1fx-20120719_1_iran-ships-iranian-crude-imports-iranian-ships

The United States warned the maritime industry on Thursday that Iranian ships were still using other country's flags in an attempt to evade Western sanctions against the country. Sierra Leone is the latest country to revoke its flag for a vessel controlled by the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL), which is on the U.S. blacklist for its involvement in Iran's weapons program.

“Path For Iran Nuclear Talks Choked By Tensions”

Associated Press

July 18, 2012

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/07/18/path-for-iran-nuclear-talks-choked-by-tensions/>

In the span of just a few hours, announcements bouncing between Tehran and Washington showed the direction of their showdown: New issues are piling up even as Western envoys try to find a path to move nuclear talks forward. In quick succession last week: Iran said it seeks to build a nuclear-powered submarine, the U.S. unveiled more sanctions and a senior Iranian military official ramped up denunciations of Middle East nations trying to topple the Tehran-allied regime in Syria.

Burma

“No Timetable For Easing Import Ban On Myanmar: U.S. Official”

Reuters

July 23, 2012

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-usa-myanmar-tradebre86m1ee-20120723.0.696767.story>

The United States is encouraged by economic and political reforms underway in Myanmar but needs to see further progress before easing a long-time ban on U.S. imports from the resource-rich Asian country, a top U.S. official said on Monday. Under Secretary of State Robert Hormats, who along with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently met with Myanmar's President Thein Sein, told the Center for Strategic and International Studies he was optimistic the long-isolated country intended to stay on the path of reform.

“Promise, Peril For U.S. Companies In Myanmar”

Washington Times

July 22, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jul/22/promise-peril-for-us-companies/>

It's one of the last unexplored frontiers for American business, but the opening of the once-sealed economy of Myanmar as the country's military makes democratic reforms has both peril and promise for U.S. companies looking to invest there. Obama administration officials announced earlier this month that Myanmar, also widely known as Burma, will be open to U.S. business for the first time since 1997, but

some have concerns about getting involved in the resource-rich country, which has a history of human rights abuses.

“Lawmakers Push Myanmar Sanctions, Africa Trade”

Reuters

July 21, 2012

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-06-21/news/sns-rt-us-usa-africa-myanmarbre85k1pt-20120621_1_myanmar-sanctions-africa-trade-aung-san-suu-kyi

A bipartisan group of senior U.S. lawmakers on Thursday proposed to continue the ban on imports from Myanmar, which is in the midst of uncertain political change, while extending another trade law that has boosted clothing imports from Africa. The unusual combination is driven by the fast-approaching expiration of existing laws and the desire to continue programs generally regarded as successful by lawmakers.

“U.K. Private Equity Firm Cruises Into Myanmar As Sanctions Ease”

Reuters

July 19, 2012

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/07/19/myanmar-investment-idINL6E8IJ95D20120719>

The easing of sanctions in Myanmar is encouraging western portfolio investors to start looking at the previously-restricted economy, with one London-based private equity firm planning to invest in pleasure cruisers there. The country of 50 million people is rich in natural resources such as oil and metals, and its temples and colonial buildings should attract tourists, but Myanmar has major infrastructure needs such as for power generation.

Syria

“Russia: Fresh E.U. Sanctions On Syria ‘Counterproductive’”

Reuters

July 25, 2012

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/25/us-syria-crisis-russia-eu-idUSBRE86O0EC20120725>

Russia on Wednesday said fresh European Union sanctions against Syria were "counterproductive" and said it would not recognize measures it viewed as a de-facto blockade of the country. The Foreign Ministry expressed dismay over measures requiring EU member states to inspect sea and air cargoes headed for Syria from third countries if they suspect weapons may be on board.

“European Union Widens Sanctions Against Syria”

Los Angeles Times

July 23, 2012

http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2012/07/european-union-widens-sanctions-against-syria.html

With the bloody uprising against the regime of President Bashar Assad now at a “critical juncture,” the European Union announced Monday that it was slapping sanctions on more Syrian individuals and organizations and stepping up enforcement of its 14-month-old arms embargo. Starting Tuesday, the EU’s 27-member nations will stop and search any ship or aircraft in their ports, airports and territorial waters if there is reasonable suspicion that the vessels are transporting weapons to Syria. Any item found that could aid Syrian security forces “must be seized.”

“Russia, China Veto U.N. Sanctions Resolution On Syria”

Washington Post

July 19, 2012

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/russia-china-veto-un-sanctions-resolution-on-syria/2012/07/19/gJQAJzsvW_story.html

Russia and China on Thursday vetoed a

Western-backed U.N. Security Council resolution threatening the government of Syria with sanctions, leaving the United States and its allies grappling for a new strategy to end the violence at a time of spreading chaos within the country. The council deadlock upended months of U.N. diplomacy aimed at

stemming the crisis, which has engulfed Syria in what some are calling civil war and has left at least 14,000 people dead.

“Treasury Ramps Up Sanctions On Syrian Officials, Businesses”

Wall Street Journal

July 18, 2012

<http://blogs.wsj.com/corruption-currents/2012/07/18/treasury-ramps-up-sanctions-on-syrian-officials-businesses/>

The U.S. Treasury Department said Wednesday it ratcheted up its sanctions regime on Syria, targeting 29 senior officials of the Syrian government, five companies linked to tied to the country’s biological and chemical weapons program and a company owned by a cousin of President Bashar al-Assad.

Assad’s government has repeatedly clashed with opposition forces over the past 17 months, killing at least 17,000 people, according to activists.

Cuba

“Florida Appeals Ruling On Blockade Of Embargo On Business Contracts With Cuba”

Sunshine State News

July 25, 2012

<http://www.sunshinestatenews.com/story/florida-appeals-courts-blockade-embargo-business-contracts-cuba>

Florida will push forward in its attempt to punish companies that do business with Castro’s Cuba and Assad’s Syria. The Florida Department of Transportation on Tuesday filed an appeal of a ruling by U.S. District Judge K. Michael Moore that granted an injunction against Florida’s new anti-Cuba contract law. Coral Gables-based Odebrecht USA claims it violates federal law.

“Cuba: Economic Changes Discussed”

New York Times

July 23, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/24/world/americas/cuba-economic-changes-discussed.html?_r=1

Cuba’s National Assembly gathered on Monday to discuss changes to the nation’s economy and a new tax system. There is speculation that the assembly will take action on long-promised measures like the easing of travel restrictions and increasing private farming on state-controlled land.

Sudan

“Sudan Will Revise Oil Transit Fee Demand In Talks With South”

Reuters

July 25, 2012

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-sudan-ssudan-oilbre86o14w-20120725.0.917491.story>

Sudan will revise its transit fee demand for South Sudan's oil exports when the African neighbors resume talks to end an oil dispute for the first time since border fighting escalated in April, a Sudanese official said on Wednesday. The U.N. Security Council has given the foes until August 2 to end all disputes or face sanctions. The neighbors came close to a war in April when their armies fought for weeks along the disputed border, the worst violence since South Sudan's secession a year ago under a 2005 peace agreement.

“South Sudan Struggles As Foreign Currency Dries Up”

Wall Street Journal

July 22, 2012

http://professional.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444097904577538980303372056.html?mod=google_news_wsj&mg=reno-wsj

A severe foreign-exchange shortage has thrown South Sudan—the world’s newest nation—into an economic crisis a year after it gained independence from Sudan. The country is in danger of running out of U.S. dollars. Long lines have formed outside gas stations because of a shortage of imported gasoline. Consumer-price inflation, riding the rocketing costs of imported food, soared 80% in May from April,

according to the latest government data. Road-building projects that would connect the landlocked economy with the rest of the world have stalled amid the government's emergency spending curbs.

“U.S. Urges Sudan, South Sudan To Talk Or Face Economic Turmoil”

Bloomberg

July 18, 2012

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-18/u-s-urges-sudan-south-sudan-to-talk-or-face-economic-turmoil.html>

Sudan and South Sudan must build on recent talks between their leaders to resolve disputes that brought them to the brink of war this year or face a “rapid downward economic spiral,” the U.S.’s top Africa diplomat said. President Salva Kiir’s meeting with Sudanese President Umar al-Bashir on July 14 in Addis Ababa was a “significant” step toward reaching an accord on outstanding issues including oil- transit fees and disputed territory, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson said in an interview in Ethiopia’s capital yesterday.