

Russia Sanctions to Stay Until Truce Implemented: Merkel, Obama

ELMAU CASTLE (Germany) - US President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Sunday that Western sanctions must remain in place against Russia until it complies with a ceasefire deal with Ukraine. "The two leaders discussed the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and agreed that the duration of sanctions should be clearly linked to Russia's full implementation of the Minsk agreements and respect for Ukraine's sovereignty," the White House said in a statement released on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Germany.



Obama and Merkel held private talks ahead of the summit and the US president earlier urged his fellow G7 leaders to stand up together against "Russian aggression in Ukraine". Peace talks on Ukraine resumed in Minsk on May 6 as clashes have intensified on the ground in a conflict that has killed more than 6,400 people since April 2014. The negotiations are aimed at enforcing the implementation of a peace deal reached in Minsk in February, leading to an extremely fragile ceasefire that is regularly breached across the eastern conflict zone. (AFP)

Syrian Army Regains Ground against IS

AMMAN - The Syrian army said on Sunday it had repulsed a major offensive by Islamic State militants in the northeastern city of Hasaka and driven out fighters who had taken over key installations on the southern edge of the city. The northeastern corner of Syria is strategically important because it links areas controlled by Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. Syrian Kurds have also sought to expand their territorial control over a region stretching from Kobani



to Qamishili they see as part of a future Kurdish state. The militants, approaching from their stronghold the city of Shadadi, south of Hasaka city, made lighting advances this week after conducting around a dozen suicide attacks using explosives-laden trucks at army check-

points in the city. But Syrian state television, quoting an army source, said in a news-flash they had taken back an electricity station, a juvenile prison and two villages almost two kilometers (one mile) south of the city that had been occupied by militants. (Reuters)

EU's Tusk Says will only Discuss Tougher Sanctions on Russia

KRUEN, Germany - The only possible discussion about sanctions towards Russia over Ukraine can be about strengthening them, European Council President Donald Tusk said ahead of a summit of Group of Seven (G7) leaders on Sunday. "My intention is that today we reconfirm G7 unity on the sanctions policy," Tusk said. "So let me state clearly given the current situation, if any one wants to start a discussion about changing the sanctions regime, it could only be about strengthening it." EU economic sanctions



on Russia, imposed over the Ukraine conflict, are due to expire in July. EU leaders agreed in March that the sanctions would stay until the Minsk

ceasefire agreement is fully implemented, effectively extending them to the end of the year, but a formal decision has yet to be taken. (Reuters)

U.S., Japan Say First Test of Raytheon's New SM-3 Missile A Success

WASHINGTON - The United States and Japan on Sunday announced the first live fire test of Raytheon Co's new Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IIA missile that is being jointly developed by the two countries for a combined cost of around \$2 billion. Rick Lehner, spokesman for the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, said the test conducted on Saturday from the Point Mugu Sea Range off the coast of

California was a success. The SM-3 IIA is a 21-inch variant of an earlier SM-3 missile, which works with the U.S. Aegis combat system built by Lockheed Martin Corp to destroy incoming ballistic missile threats in space. Riki Ellison, who heads the non-profit Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, said the two countries would spend about \$1 billion each to design, test and eventually pro...

Troops Advance against IS in Key Refinery Town: Iraq

BAGHDAD - Iraqi troops backed by Shiite militias recaptured key parts of the northern refinery town of Beiji from the Islamic State group on Sunday, a general said. The commander of the Interior Ministry's Quick Reaction Forces, Brig. Gen. Nassir al-Fartousi, told state TV that the Iraqi flag was raised over a local government building in Beiji and that troops were advancing to other areas, without elaborating.

The spokesman of Joint Operations Command, Brig. Gen. Saad Maan Ibrahim, said the security forces "are now controlling" the downtown Beiji area, describing the advance as an "important victory." "The enemy has suffered a defeat and has sustained heavy losses and we hope that the whole city will be cleared within few days," Maan told The Associated Press in a brief interview, saying "dozens" of IS militants had been killed. (AP)

45 Dead in Saudi-Led Raids on Yemen Capital

SANAA - Twenty civilians were among at least 45 people killed in Saudi-led air strikes on the rebel-held armed forces headquarters in the Yemeni capital early on Sunday, a medic said. The raids on the army headquarters in central Sanaa came a day after the kingdom's air defences shot down a Scud missile fired from the war-torn country. They also followed the UN confirmation of June 14 as the start date for peace talks between warring Yem-

en factions in Geneva, which both the country's Shiite Huthi rebels and its exiled government said they will attend. "At least 20 civilians and 25 soldiers and officers were killed" in four raids that hit the headquarters in the Tahrir residential neighbourhood in central Sanaa, the medic said. The raids hit residential buildings, including five houses that were completely destroyed, witnesses said. The rebel-controlled ...

Neighbour News

Hungary First European Country to Sign Up for China Silk Road Plan

BEIJING - Hungary has become the first European country to sign a cooperation agreement for China's new "Silk Road" initiative to develop trade and transport infrastructure across Asia and beyond, China's foreign ministry said late on Saturday. The countries' foreign ministers signed a memorandum of understanding for what is formally known as the "One Belt, One Road" project in Budapest, according to a statement on the Chinese foreign ministry website. China welcomes more European countries to look East, and strengthen cooperation with China and other Asian countries,

and participate in the "One Belt, One Road" in various ways, said Wang Yi, China's foreign minister, according to a separate statement on the website. President Xi Jinping said earlier this year he hoped annual trade with the countries involved in Beijing's plan to create a modern Silk Road would surpass \$2.5 trillion in a decade. Hungary hopes to closely cooperate with China and push on with the Hungarian-Serbia railway and other major construction projects, Hungary's President Janos Ader was quoted as saying by the Chinese foreign ministry. China is helping fund and build a railway connecting Hungary and Serbia. (Reuters)

Iran Strongly Fighting Maritime Terrorism: Navy Cmdr.

TEHRAN - Iran's Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari says the Islamic Republic's naval forces are strongly fighting maritime terrorism in high seas. Iran's naval forces have been protecting routes used by Iranian vessels over recent years, confronting maritime terrorism and defending the Islamic Republic's economic interests, Sayyari said on Sunday. He added that the naval forces have successfully fought pirates and escorted 2,600 merchant ships and oil tankers in such sensitive regions as Gulf of Aden, Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea. The 34th flotilla of the

Iranian Navy, which comprises the Bushehr logistic vessel and Alborz destroyer, is currently conducting its mission in the high seas, the commander noted. The 34th flotilla left Iran's southern port city of Bandar Abbas for the Gulf of Aden and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait on April 8. Sayyari further said Iran's Navy plans to enhance the strategic power of the naval forces, adding, "We will not hesitate to protect the country's interests and ensure security more strongly than before." In recent years, Iran's Navy has increased its presence in international waters to protect naval routes and provide security for merchant vessels and tankers. (Agencies)

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development (MRRD) National Solidarity Program (NSP) REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (REoI)

For National Individual Consultant Head, Management Information System Department (Reference # MRRD/NSP III/CN/113)

Country: Afghanistan
Ministry: Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development (MRRD)
Type: Individual (National) Consultant
Project: National Solidarity Programme Phase Three (NSP III)
Project ID: P117103
Grant #: ARTF (and/or other grants as may be available)
Issue Date: 07th June, 2015
Closing Date: 20th June, 2015

I. General Introduction:

The National Solidarity Program is the largest of the Afghanistan Government's national priority programmes and is the second largest development programme in the world. The Program is implemented by the Afghanistan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and currently into its 9th year and 3rd phase. NSP consists of four core elements:

- Facilitation at the community level to assist communities establish inclusive community institutions known as Community Development Councils (CDCs);
- Building the capacities of CDC and community members;
- Providing direct block grant transfers to fund approved subprojects; and
- Linking CDCs to government agencies, NGOs, and donors to improve access to services and resources.

NSP proposes to cover an estimated 39,200 rural communities to achieve full national coverage. In addition to its core structure comprising over 800 national employees, the NSP contracts an international firm to serve as its Financial Management Agent (FMA) and other individual international and national consultants to provide technical assistance to its various departments. The NSP also contracts around 30 firms (including UN agencies and NGOs) to serve as Facilitating Partners (FPs).

II. Introduction to the NSP's Management Information Systems Department (MISD)

The MISD exists to provide Information Technology related services to NSP offices both at HQ and field level and ensure advanced and speedy operations of tasks using Information Technology. It is primarily responsible for the following:

- Further enhancement and management of the primary NSP CDC and subproject related database, both in terms of software and the data quality.
- Management of the physical and soft copy archives of the NSP CDC documentation.
- Updating and smooth operation of the various other existing NSP databases including but not limited to the FP management, stock/asset/inventory, fleet management, 5 HR modules, and CDC capacity building databases.
- Designing new database modules as per the requirements on the dynamic NSP operations as required by the NSP management.
- Provision of timely information and data for all quantitative reports of the NSP, and analysis needed for other qualitative reporting as required.

- Development and maintenance of NSP website; and
- Production of GIS Maps related to the NSP.

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

- Ensure that the NSP primary MIS (CDC/ subproject/ block grant related) and its various stand-alone database modules (FP contract management, fleet management, inventory/stock/asset management, HR modules, grievance handling, capacity building etc) respond to the NSP management and implementation requirements in a timely, accurate and easy-to-understand manner.
- Supervise and assist in the development of new software / databases (CASA-CSP, IFAD-CLAP) if required and restructure the existing databases based on new requirements such as for NSP IV.
- Complete ToR is available in ACBAR, NSP and ARDS Websites.

IV. Qualification Requirements:

Education: At a minimum, a bachelor's degree in Computer Sciences, Information Technology and/or related fields is required. Bachelor's degrees in other fields may also be considered if the work experience requirements are fully met. A Master's degree would be preferable.

Work Experience: A minimum of 7 years General work experience at mid or senior levels is required. A minimum of 4 years work experience in a large organization in Government/donor offices is required and a minimum of 3 years managerial work experience in IT/MIS/ software development is required.

Other Skills:

- Strong leadership and staff management skills in multidisciplinary setting.
- Excellent interpersonal communications and mentoring skills.
- Complete ToR is available in above mentioned Websites.

Submission of Expression of Interest:

The NSP/MRRD now invites eligible Individuals-Afghan Nationals ONLY ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Individual Consultant (IC) method set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours 08:00-16:00hrs Saturday to Wednesday.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail) by 20th June, 2015.

Address of Focal Person for Enquires and Submission of EoIs:

Attn: Hassiba Samadi 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: h.samadi@nspafghanistan.org
Website: www.nspafghanistan.org
CC to: a.dahzakwal@nspafghanistan.org