

Atomic Know-How Enhances Strategic Depth

TEHRAN, Oct. 17--A top nuclear negotiator said on Wednesday Russian President Vladimir Putin had a special message about Iran's nuclear program.

Ali Larjani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, also told the gathering of army's clerics that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said in his meeting with the Russian president that Iran would study the Russian proposal.

On details of the Russian president's views, he said it would be made public at an appropriate juncture, ISNA reported.

Larjani pointed out that nuclear know-how can enhance Iran's strategic clout.

He maintained that reinforcing Iran's scientific strength is very important for improving the economic conditions.

"Today's hue and cry over Iran's nuclear activities is apparently over A-bomb. However, the main challenge is to deprive Iran of superior technology. They want us to produce mineral water and not superior technology," he said.

Larjani stressed that reinforcing the armed forces is another parameter that can boost the country's development.

Referring to the US attitude according to which it is able to predict the next moves of other countries, Larjani said it is a dangerous savagery in today's world that some want to confront other countries for offenses that have not been committed.

He opined that Americans realize that the present time is the best opportunity for them to institutionalize their power in the world.

"This is why they have set up 70 military bases throughout the world from Africa's Horn to Turkey and from Pakistan and Afghanistan to Iraq and the Persian Gulf littoral states," he said.

He pointed out that the US has 11 military bases only in Iraq.

"The Americans want to justify their improper performance under the pretext that they are endangered by terrorism. This is while everything is related to the US global hegemony," he said.

Referring to the recent statements of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who said the Middle East is presently giving birth by referring to the Greater Middle East Initiative, he said she is unaware of the fact that a normal delivery requires at least nine months and pressure will lead to abortion.

Commenting on Iraqi conditions, Larjani said the ground reality does not match Washington's claims.

"The US has 146,000 soldiers in Iraq and a total of 150,000 security companies in the Arab country," he said.

Larjani opined that the Americans believe their own version of democracy should be established at any cost and by force.



Ali Larjani

Leader: Iran-Russia Ties To Benefit Both

Call for Effective Caspian Cooperation

TEHRAN, Oct. 17--Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said Tehran welcomes expansion of ties with Moscow and believes that the move will benefit the two governments and nations.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remark when he received Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that as the presence of an independent Iran benefits Russia, the presence of a powerful Russia would benefit Tehran.

Referring to the US expansionist policies, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Washington is against any nation that resists its illegitimate interests and wants to act independently, but nations cannot be defeated by such policies."

Voicing Iran's readiness for full confidence-building, the leader said, "Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a logical and proper policy that will be continued. Tehran is determined to become self-sufficient in the area of nuclear energy, therefore it seriously pursues the issue of enrichment."

For his part, the Russian president assessed his meeting with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as "serious and good", noting that expansion of all-out relations between the two countries, particularly in the fields of energy and transportation, was reviewed in the compact meeting.

The Russian president referred to the prospects of Tehran-Moscow relations as very bright.

"Russia respects Iran's stand regarding nuclear energy and believes that pursuance of peaceful nuclear energy is Iran's legitimate right while it is against any kind of imposition against Tehran," he said.

Welcoming Iran's cooperation with the IAEA, Putin announced his country's support for the Iranian initiatives.

In a meeting with Azeri President Ilham Aliyev on Tuesday, Ayatollah Khamenei said the five Caspian Sea littoral states would develop economic cooperation that would benefit all parties.

For his part, President Aliyev described the outcome of the Caspian Summit in Tehran as "very satisfactory".

In the meeting with Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamadov on Tuesday, the leader said there are ample grounds for expansion of economic cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan, mainly in the gas sector.

The Turkmen president, for his part, said his government has made all-out efforts to broaden ties with Tehran.

On Monday, the leader met with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and said the Caspian Summit would prepare the ground for developing cooperation among the regional states.

The Kazakh president said his country is willing to develop cooperation with Iran, "because Iran is a great and strong country in the region".

The presidents of the five Caspian Sea littoral states attended the daylong summit on Tuesday in Tehran to exchange views on multilateral, regional and international issues.

The participants also signed a 25-article declaration at the end of the summit to forge stronger cooperation.

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Identification

Published by the Islamic

Republic News Agency

(IRNA)

Address:

Iran Cultural & Press

Institute, #212

Khorramshahr Avenue

Tehran/Iran

Executive Editor:

Editorial Dept. Tel:

88755761-2

Editorial Dept. Fax:

88761869

Advertising Dept. Tel:

88501499, 88737250

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daily.com

Turkish Parliament OKs Iraq Incursion

ANKARA, Turkey, Oct. 17--Turkish Parliament on Wednesday overwhelmingly approved a possible cross-border offensive against Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq, although the government appears willing to give diplomatic pressure on the US-backed Iraqi administration more time to work.

Lawmakers voted 507-19 in favor of empowering the government to order the military to cross into Iraq during a one-year period, Parliament Speaker Koksal Toptan said. They then burst into applause, AP reported.

Turkish leaders have stressed that an offensive against the rebels of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, would not immediately follow the expected authorization.

In Washington, President Bush said the United States was making clear to Turkey it should not send a massive number of troops into Iraq.

Bush said Turkey has had troops stationed in Iraq "for quite a while".

"We don't think it's in their interest to send more troops in."

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan appeared to dismiss Bush's comments.

"What's important is the parliament's decision, not what people say," private NTV television quoted him as saying.

Wednesday's motion--authorizing an attack into Iraq sometime next year--had the backing of all of Turkey's parliamentary parties except a small Kurdish party.

Hours before the vote, Iraq Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki called his Turkish counterpart to say that his government was determined to halt the "terrorist activities" of the PKK on Iraqi territory, and he emphasized the need for the two nations to continue to talk, his office said.

In Paris, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, an ethnic Kurd, called on PKK rebels to stop fighting in Turkey, while also urging the Turkish government not to launch an incursion.

"We consider activities of PKK against the interests of the Kurdish people first, and then against the interests of Turkey," Talabani told reporters during an official visit to the French capital. "We have asked the PKK to stop fighting, to end the so-called military activity."

Turkey has complained about what it considers a lack of US support in the fight against the PKK. It also is frustrated with Washington, after US Congress last week approved a resolution labeling the World War 1-era killing of up to 1.5 million Armenians a genocide.

Iran a Regional Political Hub

By Amir Tajik

TEHRAN, Oct. 17--A prominent lawmaker said an unwritten strategic agreement in the world is being shaped to combat the US hegemony.

Hamid Reza Haji-Babaie, a member of Majlis Presiding Board, also told Iran Daily on Wednesday that this strategic agreement is not in the US interests.

"It has become clear to the US that Iran is the political hub of the region," he said.

Haji-Babaie noted that contrary to the claims of western countries, Putin's visit was not approved by them since it was not in their interests.

"The West apparently showed its anger to Putin and the three other presidents' visit to Iran. It was a proof of Iran's diplomatic stance in the world," he said.

Also in Tehran, the Russian political analyst, Dmitry Kosyrev, told Iran Daily on the sidelines of the Caspian Summit on Tuesday that Iran has a shorter shoreline among other littoral states.

"Iran has only 15 percent of the coastal shores and it is demanding a 20-percent share. It seems that the other four states want a compromise in this regard," he said.

Asked about Russia's military role in the region, he said, "Russia has learnt during the last decade that it should not flaunt its superiority. It now prefers to play the role of mediator and advisor even to its neighboring countries."

Nehad Ismail, British oil and gas analyst, also said in a phone interview that Russia has a clout but it will definitely benefit from cooperation with the four other Caspian states in exporting gas to Europe.

"The business and development of Caspian Sea is, without a doubt, to the advantage of Russia," he said.

He added that Russia should use its influence to pursue negotiations related to its gas pipeline.

Ismail said the US is also making efforts to get a foothold in the Caspian Sea waters and that's why Russia has to play a role here.

"The summit in Tehran produced a legal framework for sharing the resources of the Caspian Sea. This friendly arrangement will cut down the size of American and European companies' involvement," he said.

Presidents of the five Caspian Sea littoral states, namely Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, attended the summit in Tehran on Tuesday.

The summit provided a model for regional cooperation to strengthen economic, political and security ties and an opportunity to introduce measures to maintain peace and stability in the area.

Sarkozy an Ex-Mossad Agent!?

TEHRAN, Oct. 17--A prestigious French daily reported that an email sent to 100 high-ranking police officials claims French President Nicholas Sarkozy is a former agent of the Israeli intelligence services, Mossad.

Le Figaro added that the letter was sent to French police officials late last winter and reiterated that Sarkozy was the fourth high-ranking spy of Israel.

The letter titled "Infiltration of Mossad in France's ruling center-right UMP party" insists that Sarkozy is a spy.

It also writes about widespread corruption in the UMP party.

The letter added that former Israeli prime minister, Menachem Begin, in 1978 ordered the head of his intelligence services to make former French Leader Charles De Gulle's one of Israel's associates.

Fresh Nuclear Talks on Oct. 23

TEHRAN, Oct. 17--Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, and European Union foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, will resume nuclear talks on October 23, a senior national security official said on Wednesday.

Deputy secretary of Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), Javad Vaeedi, also told IRNA that the meeting will be held either in Vienna, Austria, or in Rome, Italy, next Tuesday.

The meeting, which is in continuation of the Lisbon talks, is to be held either in Vienna or in Rome, he added.

Larijani and Solana met in Lisbon, Portugal, on June 23 and also held talks from May 31 to June 1.

They had discussed Iran's peaceful nuclear program in Ankara, Turkey, during April 25-26.

Three rounds of discussions between Solana and Larijani as well as the meeting of Iran's top nuclear negotiator with Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Mohamed ElBaradei caused the two sides to reach an agreement.

The agreement, signed on August 21 by Tehran and the IAEA, will clarify six issues, including plutonium, centrifuges P1 and P2, source of contamination, metal uranium document, polonium-210, and Chegin mine. Of these, the files of plutonium and pollution in Karaj have so far been closed.

Vaeedi said he will meet deputy IAEA chief for safeguards, Olli Heinonen, in late October.

"The issue of P1 and P2 centrifuges will top the agenda of talks with the IAEA deputy," he said.

Iranian and IAEA experts, headed by Vaeedi and Heinonen, earlier met in Tehran during October 9-11 to resolve outstanding issues over the country's peaceful nuclear activities.

UNHCR Tells Europe: Take More Iraqi Refugees

BRUSSELS, Belgium, Oct. 17--The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Antonio Guterres on Tuesday called on Europe to accept more asylum seekers from conflict-torn Iraq.

"Keeping the asylum door open in Europe is absolutely crucial in the present moment," Guterres said before a meeting in Brussels with EU Justice Commissioner Franco Frattini.

The UN official said some two million people are displaced inside Iraq and that another two million had fled the country out of a population of 26 million, AFP reported.

Of those, 1.4 million refugees have found their way to Syria while more than half a million are in Jordan.

"The risk of asylum fatigue in the area is of course enormous," Guterres warned, adding that the level of international support is "totally out of proportion with the impact on their economy" from the refugees.

Sweden has taken in more than half of all Iraqi asylum seekers to Europe, offering shelter to 9,065 refugees from there last year.

Iraqis are drawn to the northern country because of its generous refugee policy, but also because many of their relatives fled there during earlier waves of Iraqi immigration in the 1990s.

The country has between 80,000 and 120,000 Iraqis, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt said last month.

The UNHCR on Tuesday also warned of the increased rate of human smuggling that occurred across the Gulf of Aden over the last month.

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