

Business and Politics in the Muslim World

Weekly Report on Iran and Article review

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Article review for week 121

Distant Relations:

Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years.

EDITED BY H. E. CHEHABI.

In this article the Middle Eastern Politics and relation of Iran with Lebanon mentioned specially ties with Hezbollah. Hezbollah which is contain almost on Shiite Personals has very close relation with Iran which turn towards Shiites conservative regime. The author mentioned specially the Iranian cleric Musa al Sadr that he played the crucial role and first the Amal and then the Hezbollah emerged the prominent arm force in Lebanon. But the ties are not limited to that the Shiite scholar of Lebanon in the conversion of Iran from Sunnism to Shiism in the sixteenth century, although it not remain for long. Very few clirics moved from each country. The relation will might be strong in modern time because of the uncertain condition of Middle East and interest of Iran.

Summary

Political News

Brazil, Turkey: Iran Nuclear Pact Meets UN Demands

An accord for exchange of low-grade nuclear fuel reached recently among Iran, Brazil and Turkey satisfies requirements for avoiding United Nations security council sanctions against Iran, the leaders of Brazil and Turkey said Thursday. Following a meeting in the Brazilian capital, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said security-council members should end resistance to the accord in the interest of promoting a peaceful resolution to a long-running diplomatic conflict.

Soltanieh: Iran Proposals Constructive to UN NPT Conference

Iran's IAEA envoy Ali-Asghar Soltanieh said here Thursday that Iran has provided the UN NPT Review Conference with constructive proposals. Soltanieh said that the NPT Review Conference has since three weeks ago been the scene of challenges between countries possessing nuclear arms and the countries lacking such weapons, especially the Non-Aligned Movement member states. He said that during the Conference the countries possessing nuclear arms tried to shrug off commitments and responsibilities, though were forced by international community public opinion to accept some of the offers.

Russia Backs Iran's Nuclear Fuel Swap Deal

A day after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called on the United States and Russia to accept a nuclear fuel swap-deal that Tehran signed with Brazil and Turkey last week, Moscow reiterated its strong support for the agreement. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told mediapersons Thursday in Moscow the deal would be an important breakthrough in resolving the crisis on Iran's controversial nuclear program.

Pakistan, Iran Postpone Pipeline Agreement Signing Date

The Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline agreement signing scheduled on Friday has been postponed due to the delayed arrival of the Iranian delegation as a result of the bad weather in the city, disclosed a local official. The plane carrying the Iranian delegation had to be diverted to Lahore, a city about 400 km southeast of Islamabad, said the official

who asked to remain anonymous, adding that the new date of the signing ceremony would be announced later.

Merkel Urges Iran to “Carefully Consider” Nuclear Deal

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Thursday called on Iran to "carefully consider" an international offer on its nuclear program, and also expressed concern over instability in Yemen. "Iran must carefully consider the offer of the international community" on its program of uranium enrichment, Merkel said in a speech at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha.

Russian Security Council Welcomes Tehran Declaration

Secretary Council of Russian Federation (SCRF) has underlined Moscow's will for expansion of cooperation with Iran. Nikolai Patrushev, in a telephone call with Secretary of Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Saeed Jalili on Thursday afternoon, said that the political approach of the Russian leaders is based on consolidation of relation with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran to Open Burundian Embassy in Tehran

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has voiced Tehran's readiness to open Burundian embassy in Tehran. In a meeting with Burundi's foreign minister on Thursday, President Ahmadinejad said Tehran is fully prepared to enhance its cooperation with the African country in such different fields as trade, mines, agriculture and international affairs. "Iran is also willing to expand public and governmental ties with the country," President Ahmadinejad's official website quoted him as saying.

Iran to Load up Bushehr Plant With Real Fuel Soon

An Iranian official announced that the country's first nuclear power plant in the southern city of Bushehr is scheduled to receive real fuel after the termination of thermal test. The thermal testing of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran will soon be over, paving the way for loading its reactor with nuclear fuel, an official with the Bushehr plant Ali Roustasaid on Thursday. The plant will be ready for launch after fuel rods are introduced into the system, enabling it to produce 1,000 megawatts of power, the official told a group of visiting parliamentarians.

Iran, Russia Discuss Energy Cooperation

Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Mahmoud Reza Sajjadi and Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko on Thursday discussed ways to expand energy cooperation between the two countries. The two sides also conferred on boosting bilateral ties and mutual economic cooperation. Russia helped build the Bushehr nuclear reactor in southern Iran, and has voiced readiness to assist in future nuclear projects.

Iran Navy Detects U.S. Nuke Sub in PG

Iranian naval forces have detected a U.S. nuclear submarine in the Persian Gulf waters, amid growing concerns over the safety of one of the most important energy routes in the world. An Iranian patrol on Thursday spotted the nuclear-armed and -powered submarine in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, which allows the passage of 90 percent of the oil produced by Persian Gulf states to Asia, the U.S. and Western Europe.

Ahmadinejad Slams Russia's New Stance

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad strongly criticized Russia for its recent stance over Iran's nuclear issue. Addressing Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Ahmadinejad said Iran and Russia are two friendly countries, but the friendship requires mutual respect for the rights and joint efforts to defend those rights adding that it was the least that one could expect from a neighboring country.

Iran Does Not Recognize 'Parliamentary Election' in Karabakh

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mihman-Parast says Iran does not recognize 'parliamentary election' in Nagorno-Karabakh. According to the report of Foreign Ministry Media Department, the spokesman, who was answering a question concerning Tehran's viewpoint on holding 'parliamentary elections' in Nagorno-Karabakh, said that Iran does not recognize the action. He denied news concerning attendance of Iranian observers in the 'election' and underlined that nobody has attended the 'election' as observer from Iran.

Iranians About to Lose Trust in Russians

A parliamentarian said here yesterday that there is a sort of distrust in Russia among Iranians and Moscow's alliance with Tehran is shrouded in ambiguity. Member of Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, Mehdi Sanaie, said that all variables point to the distrust of the Iranian people and officials in Russia's alliance with Tehran. Sanaie, who is also member of Iran-Russia parliamentary friendship group, said some segments of Iranian society believe that all-out relations with Russians is costly for Iranians, so Tehran should think twice about expanding ties with Moscow.

Iranian Envoy Confers with Belarus Official

Iranian Ambassador to Belarus Abbas Hosseini has held talks with Belarus First Vice Premier Vladimir Semashko on issues of mutual interests. In a meeting in Minsk yesterday, Hosseini called for expanding mutual ties in all arenas. The two officials also discussed issues consistent with the upcoming visit to Tehran of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

Iran Unveils 2nd Humanoid Robot

The second humanoid robot was unveiled in Iran. The Iranian students in Mazandaran University have designed the robot, nicknamed "Mazand 1". Mazandaran University Chancellor said making Mazand 1 took two years. Designer and producer of the robot, Reza Nourzad said the robot does not need computer for control and decision making, is 27 kg in weight and 173 centimeters in height. Mazand 1 could automatically find directions, move its hands separately by using four joints and walk, Nourzad said adding the robot has the capability to talk and answer questions smartly. He concluded that the humanoid robot's capabilities could be expanded

Turkey Ready to Store Iran Enriched Uranium

Turkish Energy & Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz said on Tuesday that the center in Turkey was ready to store Iran's nuclear energy. There is no technical problem in Turkey about the issue, Yildiz told reporters regarding uranium swap deal of Iran. Yildiz said that Turkey undertook its responsibilities about the issue, adding that Turkey was very determined to restore peace in its region and the world.

Iran Warns Russia Over S-300 Missile Sale

Russia's reputation will be hurt if it fails to fulfill a contract to deliver S-300 advanced air defence missiles to Iran, Tehran's ambassador to Moscow said Tuesday, quoted by Russian news agencies. "Refusal to deliver the S-300s will strike a blow to Russia's reputation as a reliable arms supplier," Mahmoud Reza Sadjadi was quoted as saying. "It would compel us to question Russia's reliability at such sensitive moments." Iran's desire to acquire the S-300 surface-to-air missiles, which the West fears will help it guard against possible future air strikes, is at the heart of the crisis over the Iranian nuclear drive.

U.S. to Expand Covert Operations in Iran, Middle East

U.S. has expanded its covert military operations in the Middle East, Central Asia and East Africa to break Al Qaeda and other militant networks as these groups spread their bases in the region, away from their traditional safe havens in Afghanistan-Pakistan region. Top U.S. Commander Gen David H Petraeus has signed a secret directive ordering that 'Special Operations' troops be sent to countries such as Iran for reconnaissance, a move that may lead to possible strikes against Tehran, if tensions over its nuclear ambitions escalate.

Economic News

Iranian Experts Develop New Method to Excavate Oil, Gas

Iranian technicians have successfully tested a new method for oil well perforations through percussion drilling at an oil well near Iran's western city of Dehloran. Director of the National Iranian Drilling Company Heidar Bahmani announced on Thursday that the Iranian engineers carried out a major standard oil and natural gas excavation technique which was formerly employed only by Western countries. The cited method has been exclusively practiced by North America and certain European countries up until now.

Gas Exploitation in SP to Reach 290b Cubic Meters

With the implementation of all phases of South Pars Gas Field, the capacity of gas exploitation in the region will reach 290 billion cubic meters per year, said managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company. Ali Vakili said currently more than 200 million cubic meters of gas is exploited from South Pars reservoir, adding that the amount will rise to 275 million cubic meters by September 2010.

Arab Daily Proposes Iran Membership in PGCC

Al-Quds al-Arabi daily wrote although Iran and Arab countries have common history, religion and traditions, unfortunately, they have not achieved a common understanding. The Arab newspaper recommended the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) to propose Iran to get the membership of the council via even indirect negotiation with mediation of Syria or Turkey. It believes that the Islamic Republic of Iran could be an active and effective member of the PGCC.

Iraq Considers Natural Gas and Oil Ties to Iran

Iraq has held numerous high-level meetings with Iran over the past months as it moves toward final-stage agreements with its hydrocarbons-rich neighbor on oil and gas pipelines. A top official in Iraq's Electricity Ministry has confirmed the buzz that Iraq may import natural gas from Iran to meet the fuel demand of the country's struggling power plants. In addition, the two countries have revived and altered a two-year-old plan to build an oil pipeline from Iraq to Iran, with discussions on the financing of the project ongoing, according to an official close to the talks.

China Welcomed to Invest in Iran's Construction Market

Iran welcomes China to invest in the construction industry market, the deputy head of Iran-China Chamber of Commerce said yesterday. Speaking at the economic and commercial cooperation meeting between Iran and Guangdong province of China in Tehran, Majid-Reza Hariri said Iran's facilities and technologies in construction industry

and the condition of neighboring countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan have paved the ground for China to invest in the country and construct a building material factory.

Iran, Syria to Set Up Joint Bank

Iran and Syria have signed agreements to boost trade and cooperation in the spheres of banking, industry, technology, and energy. Economic delegations from both countries met in the Syrian capital, Damascus on Tuesday and signed memorandums of understanding to improve such ties. The creation of a joint Iran-Syria bank was at the top of the agenda. Iran will own 60 percent of the bank that will be established by an initial capital of 30 million dollars.

Iran Khodro Boosts Production by 26%

Iran's giant car-manufacturer, Iran-Khodro Company (IKCO), announced that it has increased its production rate by 26% since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2010). IKCO produced 62,278 units of different passenger cars in the second month of the Iranian calendar year (April 21 to May 20, 2010).

European States Remain Iran Main Trade Partners

The latest statistical figures showed that despite the United States' growing pressure on European firms to cut trade with Tehran, EU countries have remained among the first ten large trade partners of the Islamic Republic. Figures showed that six out of the 10 largest trade partners of the Iran were European in the first month of the current Iranian year (March 21-April 21).

India, Iran Discuss Building Underwater Gas Pipeline

India and Iran are discussing building a gas pipeline between the two countries along the bed of the Arabian Sea to bypass Pakistan, a board director of the company developing the project said on Tuesday. The carrying capacity of the gas pipeline's first leg will total 31 billion cu m annually, with the cost of construction estimated at \$4 billion," T.H.P. Pao, a member of the board of directors and head of the supervisory board of South Asia Gas Enterprise Private Ltd. (SAGE), said.

U.S. Bill Takes Aim at Iran Oil Partners

A U.S. House committee has proposed barring the Pentagon from buying fuel from companies that do business with Iran's energy industry—a stance that is a long shot for becoming law but that underscores U.S. lawmakers' continuing dissatisfaction with international efforts to slap tough sanctions on Tehran.

Iran to Construct 23 Special Trade Zones

Iran will construct 23 new special trade zones according to Ja'far Ahangaran, executive advisor of the Free Trade Zones of Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization. Ahangaran made the announcement on the sidelines of a gathering of economic experts of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managers of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization. He said at present 6 special trade zones were active in the country. He also noted that the government will construct an equipped hospital close to Dogharun border line to offer more services to medical tourists.

Iran Carpet Exports, \$493b

The deputy commerce minister Feysal Mardasi says that Iran exported 493 billion dollars worth of hand-woven carpets to other countries during the past Iranian calendar year of 1388 (March 2009-March 2010). Mardasi made the remarks while talking to IRNA on the sidelines of the provincial hand-woven carpets festival in the northwestern province of Ardebil.

Social News

Royan Institute Tasked to Clone Drug-Sniffing Dogs

The Royan institute has undertaken the project to clone 4000 police dogs capable of sniffing out drugs, announces Mohammad-Hossein Nasr-e Esfahani, director of the Royan research center in Isfahan. The Royan Institute for Reproductive Biomedicine, Stem Cell Biology and Technology is a leading Iranian research center involved in embryonic stem cell technology and regenerative medicine. "Being able to clone animals is an honor for Iran; several years ago we couldn't imagine to make such achievements" Nasr-e Esfahani said in Qom in a meeting with Qom governor general on Thursday.

Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran Top World Disaster Risk Rankings

Bangladesh, Indonesia and Iran are the countries that are the most vulnerable to natural disasters, according to a study released. Asia's twin giants, China and India, join them in the 15 countries that, out of 229, are rated as "extreme" risk. The Natural Disasters Risk Index (NDRI) is compiled by a British risk advisory firm, Maplecroft, on the basis of disasters that occurred from 1980 to 2010. The countries least at risk are Andorra, Bahrain, Gibraltar, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, Qatar, San Marino and the United Arab Emirates.

War Novel "Da" Presents True Picture of Iranian Women

U.S. translator Paul Sprachman believes that the Iranian bestseller "Da" offers a true picture of Iranian women to the world. Sprachman was invited by the Center for Creation

of Literary Works of the Art Bureau to Iran to visit the narrator of the Persian novel on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and he is now here in Tehran. "During my travels to Iran, I saw Iranian women active in society, and I even believe that Iranian women are stronger than men," he mentioned in a press release by the Art Bureau on Saturday.

Detailed News

Political News

Brazil, Turkey: Iran Nuclear Pact Meets UN Demands

An accord for exchange of low-grade nuclear fuel reached recently among Iran, Brazil and Turkey satisfies requirements for avoiding United Nations security council sanctions against Iran, the leaders of Brazil and Turkey said Thursday.

Following a meeting in the Brazilian capital, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said security-council members should end resistance to the accord in the interest of promoting a peaceful resolution to a long-running diplomatic conflict.

"All the deadlines and dates are being met," Lula said. "We carried out everything they asked for."

Earlier this month, Brazil and Turkey struck a deal that would allow Iran to swap lightly enriched uranium for more highly enriched supplies. Under the deal, Iran would agree to ship 1,200 kilograms of low-enriched uranium for storage in Turkey and receive fuel rods from 20-percent enriched uranium.

The agreement, while providing low-grade fuel for Iranian medical research, wouldn't prohibit Iran from maintaining its domestic uranium-enrichment program.

The deal was greeted with skepticism, meanwhile, by the U.S. and other nations, which have insisted on the possibility of U.N. economic sanctions against Iran. The proposed sanctions could including a freeze of Iranian assets, travel bans and unannounced inspections of international cargo shipments to and from Iran.

Also speaking on the matter Thursday, Erdogan said the countries rejecting the agreement for the uranium fuel swap were being obstructionist.

"The accord with Tehran was a diplomatic victory and those countries that criticize us are merely envious," Erdogan said.

Both Turkey and Brazil hold temporary seats on the U.N. security council.

The comments from the two emerging-market leaders came after U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Thursday highlighted the U.S.'s strong disagreement with Brazil's approach to the matter.

"Certainly we have very serious disagreements with Brazil's diplomacy vis-a-vis Iran," Clinton said at an event in Washington.

U.S. authorities have suggested that Iran is seeking to buy time with the deal in order to develop nuclear weaponry with high-grade enriched uranium.

Speaking at a news conference in Rio de Janeiro on Thursday, United Nations Secretary-general Ban Ki-moon called upon the Iranian government to offer clarification on its nuclear plans.

"The United Nations welcomes recent Brazilian and Turkish diplomatic efforts to curb Iran's nuclear program," said the U.N. chief at a news conference in Rio de Janeiro. "But Iran still needs to clarify that its nuclear program is for peaceful and not for military purposes."

Soltanieh: Iran Proposals Constructive to UN NPT Conference

Iran's IAEA envoy Ali-Asghar Soltanieh said here Thursday that Iran has provided the UN NPT Review Conference with constructive proposals.

Soltanieh said that the NPT Review Conference has since three weeks ago been the scene of challenges between countries possessing nuclear arms and the countries lacking such weapons, especially the Non-Aligned Movement member states.

Weekly report on Iran and Article review

He said that during the Conference the countries possessing nuclear arms tried to shrug off commitments and responsibilities, though were forced by international community public opinion to accept some of the offers.

He added that during the New York Conference three major proposals were raised by the NAM states, including Iran.

He noted that in the meeting, Iran proposed setting a deadline for removal of nuclear arms, which was fortunately included in the NAM final document.

The NAM raised the issue in a written form in the meetings it had with other countries and different committees, he added.

The Iranian envoy noted that countries possessing nuclear arms are concerned whether to accept a timetable of commitment as they have announced their willingness for gradual dismantlement and reduction of arms, especially within framework of such agreements as SALT and START.

The second point proposed to the meeting, said Soltanieh, was that possessors of nuclear arms will provide necessary guarantees not to attack the states lacking such weapons.

He said countries wanted an unconditional and legally binding guarantee for non-invasion. The case was seriously raised by Iran and the NAM states, he added.

The third point, however, was the need for resumption of talks about the Convention on Nuclear Disarmament, said Soltanieh, adding that though there were many opposition, efforts were made to force the meeting to take the move into consideration.

Besides the three key points, such issues as the problem with transfer of nuclear arms from such countries as the U.S. to countries lacking nuclear arms, was raised, said the Iranian envoy, adding that the point was included in the draft document.

As for the nuclear free Middle East, the meeting decided to force Israel to join NPT and put all its nuclear arsenals and facilities under the IAEA supervision, he said, adding that of course some Arab states favored holding a conference under the UN supervision to follow up the issue.

“We say a deadline should be set for Israel’s joining NPT and that the Zionist Regime should not find any chance to upgrade nuclear technology, being forced to bow to international community demand.”

On certain powers’ attempts to restrict fuel cycle right, Soltanieh said western states tried to contain the fuel cycle right but failed to do so as they faced resistance of such developing states as Iran, Brazil, Egypt and other countries.

Russia Backs Iran's Nuclear Fuel Swap Deal

A day after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called on the United States and Russia to accept a nuclear fuel swap-deal that Tehran signed with Brazil and Turkey last week, Moscow reiterated its strong support for the agreement.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told mediapersons Thursday in Moscow the deal would be an important breakthrough in resolving the crisis on Iran's controversial nuclear program.

"Russia welcomes this move... The arrangement serves the interests of settling the Iranian nuclear problem, and, therefore, we believe everything should be done to implement it," he said.

Lavrov said Russia was talking with Brazil and Turkey, as well as with the U.S. and France, on ways to successfully see the swap deal through.

However, he cautioned the success of the deal would depend on how Iran would honor its commitments. If it strictly abided by them, his country would actively support the scheme proposed by Brazil and Turkey, he added.

But Lavrov gave no indication of Russia's stance on a U.S.-drafted resolution in the U.N. Security Council calling for Iran to be punished with a fourth round of sanctions. He also brushed off the criticism Wednesday by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Russia's alleged double standards as "an emotional outburst".

Separately, the Russian foreign ministry said that Lavrov had discussed Tehran's nuclear program and the uranium-swap agreement in a telephonic conversation with his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki later Thursday.

"Russia expressed its readiness to actively support the advancement of the process of negotiation aimed at resolving the situation surrounding the Iranian nuclear program," the statement said.

Lavor's comments came two days after U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton dismissed the nuclear swap deal as a "transparent ploy" to ward off new Security Council sanctions.

Pakistan, Iran Postpone Pipeline Agreement Signing Date

The Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline agreement signing scheduled on Friday has been postponed due to the delayed arrival of the Iranian delegation as a result of the bad weather in the city, disclosed a local official.

The plane carrying the Iranian delegation had to be diverted to Lahore, a city about 400 km southeast of Islamabad, said the official who asked to remain anonymous, adding that the new date of the signing ceremony would be announced later.

Under the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline agreement, a 2,755- kilometer gas pipeline which will cost a total investment of 7.5 billion U.S. dollars will be built between the two countries to alleviate the energy shortage problem in Pakistan.

Merkel Urges Iran to “Carefully Consider” Nuclear Deal

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Thursday called on Iran to "carefully consider" an international offer on its nuclear program, and also expressed concern over instability in Yemen.

"Iran must carefully consider the offer of the international community" on its program of uranium enrichment, Merkel said in a speech at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha.

Merkel, who was in the Qatari capital as part of a four-nation Persian Gulf tour, said that "the dispute with Iran must be resolved diplomatically and peacefully, and Germany will contribute to such a settlement."

"But we believe that Iran will not show the necessary transparency to the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is why we are working to strengthen sanctions in the (UN) Security Council," Merkel said.

Qatar, however, supports the Turkish-Brazilian initiative, the country's prime minister and foreign minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr al-Thani, said in a statement to the official QNA news following talks with Merkel.

"The agreement for exchanging nuclear fuel between Iran and the West, mediated by Turkey and Brazil, is important and good and Qatar will continue supporting it," Sheikh Hamad said in the statement.

Russian Security Council Welcomes Tehran Declaration

Secretary Council of Russian Federation (SCRF) has underlined Moscow's will for expansion of cooperation with Iran.

Nikolai Patrushev, in a telephone call with Secretary of Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Saeed Jalili on Thursday afternoon, said that the political approach of the Russian leaders is based on consolidation of relation with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"Russian federation evaluates outlooks of cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran as positive."

He welcomed Tehran's declaration for nuclear fuel swap and hoped for expansion of Iran's cooperation with Turkey and Brazil on the basis of Iran's initiative.

Jalili for his part, referred to the cooperation fields for between Iran and Russia and said, "The joint interests and threats require us to expand friendly ties between the two countries in all fields."

Jalili pointed to a joint declaration between Iran-Turkey-Brazil in Tehran and said, "Tehran declaration created fair grounds for friendly countries to block illogical behaviors of some countries."

Representative of Leader underlined that nuclear fuel swap is a forward step for cooperation and reiterated, "Tehran's declaration was a positive step which should be completed with positive steps of the Vienna group."

Iran to Open Burundian Embassy in Tehran

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has voiced Tehran's readiness to open Burundian embassy in Tehran.

In a meeting with Burundi's foreign minister on Thursday, President Ahmadinejad said Tehran is fully prepared to enhance its cooperation with the African country in such different fields as trade, mines, agriculture and international affairs.

"Iran is also willing to expand public and governmental ties with the country," President Ahmadinejad's official website quoted him as saying.

The president expressed delight at Burundi's state of peace and stability, expressing the hope the country would move forward with its process of development.

Burundian Foreign Minister Augustin Nsanze, for his part, voiced his country's interest in boosted ties with Iran, in trade and commerce, in particular.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran favors enhanced ties with African states. Iran comes on top of the list of the countries with whom we would like to have broadened ties," Nsanze said.

The foreign minister also conveyed Burundian president's message to President Ahmadinejad.

Iran to Load up Bushehr Plant With Real Fuel Soon

An Iranian official announced that the country's first nuclear power plant in the southern city of Bushehr is scheduled to receive real fuel after the termination of thermal test.

The thermal testing of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran will soon be over, paving the way for loading its reactor with nuclear fuel, an official with the Bushehr plant Ali Roustasaid on Thursday.

The plant will be ready for launch after fuel rods are introduced into the system, enabling it to produce 1,000 megawatts of power, the official told a group of visiting parliamentarians.

He also referred to the regular inspection of the plant by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors and noted that the site is continually checked for its safety.

The state-of-the-art safety systems of Bushehr plant will protect it from natural disasters including strong earthquakes and potential impact of airborne objects such as a crashing aircraft, Roustasaid concluded.

Russia has been building the nuclear facility in Iran since 1994. The start-up of the station, originally scheduled to be completed in 1999, has been delayed on several occasions.

Iran, Russia Discuss Energy Cooperation

Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Mahmoud Reza Sajjadi and Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko on Thursday discussed ways to expand energy cooperation between the two countries.

The two sides also conferred on boosting bilateral ties and mutual economic cooperation.

Russia helped build the Bushehr nuclear reactor in southern Iran, and has voiced readiness to assist in future nuclear projects.

"Under a decree by (Russian) Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, the Bushehr power plant will become operational this summer," Shmatko said during the meeting.

The official went on to add that he was preparing to officially invite Iranian Oil Minister Masoud Mir Kazzemi for energy talks.

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Iran Navy Detects U.S. Nuke Sub in PG

Iranian naval forces have detected a U.S. nuclear submarine in the Persian Gulf waters, amid growing concerns over the safety of one of the most important energy routes in the world.

An Iranian patrol on Thursday spotted the nuclear-armed and -powered submarine in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, which allows the passage of 90 percent of the oil produced by Persian Gulf states to Asia, the U.S. and Western Europe.

There are currently 48 logistic and 18 combat U.S. vessels in the Persian Gulf waters, among them the USS-Eisenhower aircraft carrier.

Experts say aside from the risk of ecologically disastrous accidents, the presence of a nuclear submarine in a narrow waterway also poses a threat of nuclear pollution.

In 2009, a U.S. Navy Los Angeles-class nuclear-powered submarine collided with a San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock in the strait. The incident caused a spillage of nearly 25-thousand gallons of diesel fuel.

In 2007, a submerged U.S. nuclear vessel collided with a huge Japanese crude tanker in the south of the strait.

The U.S. is yet to comment on the report

Ahmadinejad Slams Russia's New Stance

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad strongly criticized Russia for its recent stance over Iran's nuclear issue.

Addressing Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Ahmadinejad said Iran and Russia are two friendly countries, but the friendship requires mutual respect for the rights and joint efforts to defend those rights adding that it was the least that one could expect from a neighboring country.

Speaking in a gathering of people in the south-eastern Iranian city of Kerman yesterday, he said the Russian government's behavior towards Iran is not understandable to the Iranian nation.

Ahmadinejad advised his Russian counterpart to be more thoughtful and careful when speaking of his country's stance towards Iran.

He said Tehran's nuclear declaration has become a touchstone and those who are committed to justice, law, respect and equal dignity have supported it.

"The Tehran declaration is a touchstone for America, certain European countries and Russia. The so-called advocates, if they are true to their word, should act according to the contents of the declaration. Any nitpicking would obstruct the way for future constructive interactions," President Ahmadinejad said.

Addressing U.S. president, President Ahmadinejad said "Obama should bear in mind that if he does not use this opportunity, Iranians are unlikely to give him a new chance."

Tehran Declaration is a good example to test sincerity of those calling for justice and mutual understanding to resolve the global developments, said President Ahmadinejad.

“If they seek to find pretexts to proceed with hostility, all doors will be closed to them. US president should exercise vigilance to successfully play his humanitarian role for future generations and that the Tehran Declaration will be a golden opportunity to this end.

Iran Does Not Recognize 'Parliamentary Election' in Karabakh

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mihman-Parast says Iran does not recognize 'parliamentary election' in Nagorno-Karabakh.

According to the report of Foreign Ministry Media Department, the spokesman, who was answering a question concerning Tehran's viewpoint on holding 'parliamentary elections' in Nagorno-Karabakh, said that Iran does not recognize the action.

He denied news concerning attendance of Iranian observers in the 'election' and underlined that nobody has attended the 'election' as observer from Iran.

Karabakh, populated overwhelmingly by ethnic Armenians, broke away from Azerbaijan Republic following a three-year war that left some 30,000 dead. A Russian-brokered cease-fire ended the bloodshed in 1994.

The separatist regime held 'election' in Karabakh on May 23.

Iranians About to Lose Trust in Russians

A parliamentarian said here yesterday that there is a sort of distrust in Russia among Iranians and Moscow's alliance with Tehran is shrouded in ambiguity.

Member of Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, Mehdi Sanaie, said that all variables point to the distrust of the Iranian people and officials in Russia's alliance with Tehran.

Sanaie, who is also member of Iran-Russia parliamentary friendship group, said some segments of Iranian society believe that all-out relations with Russians is costly for Iranians, so Tehran should think twice about expanding ties with Moscow.

Russians were expected to support Iranians at sensitive junctures given Iran's constant alliance with Russia, he added.

Repeated delays in commissioning Bushehr nuclear power plant, non delivery of S-300 missile system despite signing of related contract and above all change in the tone of Kremlin towards Tehran are all reasons for majority of Iranians doubting Russia's alliance with Iran, he commented.

Naturally, Iran and Russia share many common interests and their mutual cooperation in guaranteeing regional peace and stability has been effective in promoting both countries' global status, he added.

Concluding his remarks, he advised Russia to try to re-win the trust of the Iranian government and nation and open new pages in bilateral ties by taking proper measures

Iranian Envoy Confers with Belarus Official

- Iranian Ambassador to Belarus Abbas Hosseini has held talks with Belarus First Vice Premier Vladimir Semashko on issues of mutual interests.

In a meeting in Minsk yesterday, Hosseini called for expanding mutual ties in all arenas.

The two officials also discussed issues consistent with the upcoming visit to Tehran of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

Meanwhile, Lukashenko held talks with visiting Iranian Minister of Industries and Mines Ali Akbar Mehrabian in Minsk on May 6.

President Lukashenko said that Belarus is willing to develop industrial cooperation with Iran.

Lukashenko said that Belarus government is interested in enhancing level of cooperation on industry and trade and voiced readiness to carry out joint economic development projects with Iran.

Iran Unveils 2nd Humanoid Robot

The second humanoid robot was unveiled in Iran.

The Iranian students in Mazandaran University have designed the robot, nicknamed "Mazand 1".

Mazandaran University Chancellor said making Mazand 1 took two years.

Designer and producer of the robot, Reza Nourzad said the robot does not need computer for control and decision making, is 27 kg in weight and 173 centimeters in height.

Mazand 1 could automatically find directions, move its hands separately by using four joints and walk, Nourzad said adding the robot has the capability to talk and answer questions smartly.

He concluded that the humanoid robot's capabilities could be expanded

Turkey Ready to Store Iran Enriched Uranium

Turkish Energy & Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz said on Tuesday that the center in Turkey was ready to store Iran's nuclear energy.

There is no technical problem in Turkey about the issue, Yildiz told reporters regarding uranium swap deal of Iran.

Yildiz said that Turkey undertook its responsibilities about the issue, adding that Turkey was very determined to restore peace in its region and the world.

Yildiz said that the nuclear center in Cekmece district of Istanbul was ready for storage of Iran's nuclear energy.

Foreign ministers of Turkey, Iran and Brazil signed a deal on May 17 where Iran committed to give the 1200kg of 3.5 percent enriched uranium to Turkey in exchange for 20 percent enriched uranium it will receive from Western countries to be used as fuel in the nuclear research reactor in Tehran.

Tehran will receive the enriched uranium in Turkey from the Vienna Group, comprising of the U.S., France, Russia and International Atomic Energy Agency.

The deal has to be approved by the Vienna Group to enter into force

Iran Warns Russia Over S-300 Missile Sale

Russia's reputation will be hurt if it fails to fulfill a contract to deliver S-300 advanced air defence missiles to Iran, Tehran's ambassador to Moscow said Tuesday, quoted by Russian news agencies.

"Refusal to deliver the S-300s will strike a blow to Russia's reputation as a reliable arms supplier," Mahmoud Reza Sadjadi was quoted as saying.

"It would compel us to question Russia's reliability at such sensitive moments."

Iran's desire to acquire the S-300 surface-to-air missiles, which the West fears will help it guard against possible future air strikes, is at the heart of the crisis over the Iranian nuclear drive.

Russia has agreed the sale of the S-300s with Tehran but delayed delivery amid pressure from Israel and the United States -- neither of which have ruled out military force in the standoff over Iran's nuclear program.

"We strongly hope the Russian government will fulfill its obligations," the Iranian diplomat said in Moscow. "It would be irrational for Russia not to abide by its commitments."

The comments came after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad voiced disappointment in Russia, which has long enjoyed close ties with Tehran, for its backing of a new round of UN Security Council sanctions.

Western diplomats have said Russia would be unable to deliver the S-300 missiles under the new sanctions resolution being discussed.

But top Russian lawmakers have said the sanctions would have no effect on the S-300 sale as the contract has already been agreed.

The United States last week lifted sanctions against three Russian firms implicated in boosting Iran's nuclear program, commending Moscow's "good example" in suspending supply of the S-300s.

U.S. to Expand Covert Operations in Iran, Middle East

U.S. has expanded its covert military operations in the Middle East, Central Asia and East Africa to break Al Qaeda and other militant networks as these groups spread their bases in the region, away from their traditional safe havens in Afghanistan-Pakistan region.

Top U.S. Commander Gen David H Petraeus has signed a secret directive ordering that 'Special Operations' troops be sent to countries such as Iran for reconnaissance, a move that may lead to possible strikes against Tehran, if tensions over its nuclear ambitions escalate.

"The move is to" penetrate, disrupt, defeat or destroy" Al Qaeda and other militant group bases in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and other regions, 'New York Times' reported quoting Pentagon documents.

Economic News

Iranian Experts Develop New Method to Excavate Oil, Gas

Iranian technicians have successfully tested a new method for oil well perforations through percussion drilling at an oil well near Iran's western city of Dehloran.

Director of the National Iranian Drilling Company Heidar Bahmani announced on Thursday that the Iranian engineers carried out a major standard oil and natural gas excavation technique which was formerly employed only by Western countries.

The cited method has been exclusively practiced by North America and certain European countries up until now.

The method applies focused pressure through special 'perforator guns' to penetrate layers of the ground in order to dig both modern 'deflected' and older horizontal wells.

Through this method, the heavy cost of oil well casing will be reduced and the excavation sites' safety will improve.

The casing of oil wells is a supplementary procedure in drilling operations which helps boost the well's half-life.

Gas Exploitation in SP to Reach 290b Cubic Meters

With the implementation of all phases of South Pars Gas Field, the capacity of gas exploitation in the region will reach 290 billion cubic meters per year, said managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company.

Ali Vakili said currently more than 200 million cubic meters of gas is exploited from South Pars reservoir, adding that the amount will rise to 275 million cubic meters by September 2010.

He added phases 15 and 16 with 45 percent, phases 17 and 18 with 40 percent and Phase 12 with 30 percent of gas production are the most active projects.

He went on to say that the company has signed an agreement with Khatam Al-Anbia to implement the phases 22-24.

He added Phase 19 will be assigned to Petropars Company and phases 20 and 21 will be implemented by Oil Industries' Engineering and Construction (OIEC).

A consortium consists of Khatam Al-Anbia, Sadra Company and Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company (IOEC) will implement phases 13 and 14.

He said that at least ten stages were coming into operation.

Pars Oil and Gas Company was assigned to develop North Pars, South Pars, Golshan and Ferdowsi oilfields.

The main missions of Pars Oil and Gas Company are reservoir evaluation, technical and economic assessments, engineering studies, executive contractors' appraisal and selection, and management of implementation of South Pars fields' development projects and other gas reservoirs in the Persian Gulf.

Arab Daily Proposes Iran Membership in PGCC

Al-Quds al-Arabi daily wrote although Iran and Arab countries have common history, religion and traditions, unfortunately, they have not achieved a common understanding.

The Arab newspaper recommended the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) to propose Iran to get the membership of the council via even indirect negotiation with mediation of Syria or Turkey.

It believes that the Islamic Republic of Iran could be an active and effective member of the PGCC.

If Iran joins PGCC, the council's power and influence in the world and region will be considerably increased, and Iran as a member of the PGCC would certainly consider the council's stance in its decisions, the London-based daily wrote.

Al-Quds al-Arabi added examining the issue would be harmless because Iran's membership in the council would be in line with regional and international interests and help stability of the region.

PGCC is a political and economic union involving the six Arab states of the Persian Gulf including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates with many economic and social objectives.

Iraq Considers Natural Gas and Oil Ties to Iran

Iraq has held numerous high-level meetings with Iran over the past months as it moves toward final-stage agreements with its hydrocarbons-rich neighbor on oil and gas pipelines.

A top official in Iraq's Electricity Ministry has confirmed the buzz that Iraq may import natural gas from Iran to meet the fuel demand of the country's struggling power plants.

In addition, the two countries have revived and altered a two-year-old plan to build an oil pipeline from Iraq to Iran, with discussions on the financing of the project ongoing, according to an official close to the talks.

Ra'ad al-Haris, Deputy Electricity Minister of Iraq, said studies are ongoing about the natural gas pipeline, which would enter Iraq by Diyala province, north of Baghdad.

"It needs discussion and approval" by the cabinet, Haris said. "We will build the project inside Iraq; they will build it inside Iran; and that's it."

The Electricity Ministry has come under fire in recent weeks as electricity use has soared and power outages have become more frequent and lasted longer. While several projects

are underway to boost capacity, the ministry has fired back, blaming the Oil Ministry for not supplying enough fuel.

Iraq's power plants especially need natural gas – a feedstock which provides a desirable combination of efficiency and cleanliness. Iraq has slowly increased the amount of natural gas being processed from the south, although a massive amount of gas produced as part of the oil extraction process – about 700 million cubic feet per day – is still lost to flaring.

The Iran gas pipeline would flow at 500 million cubic feet per day, said Haris.

The meetings on both of the proposed pipelines have been composed of technical teams and delegations led by deputy ministers.

The oil line was first proposed at least two years ago as a dual line, with Iraq exporting crude and Iran returning refined products. That return line has been dropped, according to numerous officials engaged in or familiar with the talks, who spoke on background because they aren't authorized to discuss the meetings.

Details like prices are not yet determined.

As part of the negotiations, Iran is offering to loan Iraq the money for construction of the pipeline, but only if an Iranian company receives the Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC) contract, one official said.

The pipeline would start at 150,000 barrels per day (bpd) and increase to 500,000 bpd.

China Welcomed to Invest in Iran's Construction Market

Iran welcomes china to invest in the construction industry market, the deputy head of Iran-China Chamber of Commerce said yesterday.

Speaking at the economic and commercial cooperation meeting between Iran and Guangdong province of China in Tehran, Majid-Reza Hariri said Iran's facilities and technologies in construction industry and the condition of neighboring countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan have paved the ground for China to invest in the country and construct a building material factory.

Referring to the false information about Iran given by western countries, he invited the Chinese investors to observe the country's conditions and capabilities closely.

He pointed to the economic condition of Guangdong province and said after economic reforms in China, the average per capita income in this province increased to 6,000 dollars, while the average per capita in China is 3,000 dollars.

He added Guangdong province accounted for 11 percent of China economy and also 25 percent of China's export to Iran.

Moreover, the most important ports of China are located in this province, he said.

According to this positive features and also presence of Iranian investors and businessmen in Guangdong province, Iran's consulate will be opened in the near future.

Iran, Syria to Set Up Joint Bank

Iran and Syria have signed agreements to boost trade and cooperation in the spheres of banking, industry, technology, and energy.

Economic delegations from both countries met in the Syrian capital, Damascus on Tuesday and signed memorandums of understanding to improve such ties.

The creation of a joint Iran-Syria bank was at the top of the agenda. Iran will own 60 percent of the bank that will be established by an initial capital of 30 million dollars.

The Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, Babak Afghahi, said on Tuesday that necessary legal infrastructure has been created to facilitate trade between Iran and Syria, IRNA reported.

The implementation of agreements signed between the two countries during the Iranian delegation's visit to Damascus will increase the value of trade between the two countries to 5 billion dollars per year

Iran Khodro Boosts Production by 26%

Iran's giant car-manufacturer, Iran-Khodro Company (IKCO), announced that it has increased its production rate by 26% since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2010).

IKCO produced 62,278 units of different passenger cars in the second month of the Iranian calendar year (April 21 to May 20, 2010).

Peugeot 405 with 20,047 units stood atop the other products. About 10,508 units of Samand, 13,032 units of Peugeot 206, 5,114 units of Peugeot Pars, 8,455, Bardo pick-ups, 3,386 units of Roa, 1390 units of Tondar 90 and 346 units of Suzuki Grand Vitara have been produced in the same period.

IKCO's total production in the first two months of the current Iranian year amounted to around 104 thousand units, 26 percent more than the same period last year.

Iran's state-owned Iran Khodro is the largest carmaker in the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa, with an annual production of more than one million vehicles of various models, including cars, trucks, minibuses and buses.

European States Remain Iran Main Trade Partners

The latest statistical figures showed that despite the United States' growing pressure on European firms to cut trade with Tehran, EU countries have remained among the first ten large trade partners of the Islamic Republic.

Figures showed that six out of the 10 largest trade partners of the Iran were European in the first month of the current Iranian year (March 21-April 21).

The UAE, Germany, China, South Korea, Switzerland, Turkey, Japan, Britain, France and Italy are Iran's first ten trade partners, supplying the Islamic Republic with a majority of its needed imports.

Iran's imports from the UAE stood at \$838.8m in the said month, while imports from Germany amounted to \$276.3b, China \$263.5m, South Korea \$226.3m, Switzerland \$171.8m, Turkey \$143.6m, Japan \$105.1m, Britain \$96.2m, France \$86.3m and Italy \$88.9m in the same period.

The U.S. is seeking to impose a new round of UN Security sanctions against Iran, targeting the country's companies and economic sector. Russia and China have reportedly opposed adoption of any new measure against Tehran.

Washington and its allies accuse Tehran of pursuing a military nuclear program. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), however, has repeatedly said that it has found no evidence supporting the allegation.

India, Iran Discuss Building Underwater Gas Pipeline

India and Iran are discussing building a gas pipeline between the two countries along the bed of the Arabian Sea to bypass Pakistan, a board director of the company developing the project said on Tuesday.

"The carrying capacity of the gas pipeline's first leg will total 31 billion cu m annually, with the cost of construction estimated at \$4 billion," T.H.P. Pao, a member of the board of directors and head of the supervisory board of South Asia Gas Enterprise Private Ltd. (SAGE), said.

The statement came ahead of a visit by Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov to India.

Pao said India and Iran were discussing the delivery of natural gas produced in Turkmenistan with Indian assistance to north Iran while the Islamic Republic will send natural gas from its southern deposits to Indian consumers.

A diplomatic source confirmed to RIA Novosti that Delhi had discussed the project with Teheran and Ashgabat and received their backing.

Under the project being worked on by SAGE, the gas pipeline will be 1,100 km (684 miles) long. The submersible part of the pipeline will start from the Iranian port city of Chabahar and will deliver gas to consumers in the Indian state of Gujarat.

According to SAGE, international investors will also finance the expensive gas pipeline project. In particular, Italian companies have expressed their readiness to join the project.

India, Iran and Pakistan have been discussing the project of building a gas pipeline between the three countries for the past three years. However, the negotiations have dragged on due to the worsening of relations between India and Pakistan.

U.S. Bill Takes Aim at Iran Oil Partners

A U.S. House committee has proposed barring the Pentagon from buying fuel from companies that do business with Iran's energy industry—a stance that is a long shot for becoming law but that underscores U.S. lawmakers' continuing dissatisfaction with international efforts to slap tough sanctions on Tehran.

An amendment to a defense-spending bill, co-sponsored by a Republican and a Democrat and passed with full support in the House Armed Services Committee, would cost some European oil firms billions of dollars in Pentagon contracts if they buy Iranian oil. It would also dramatically escalate U.S. sanctions against Tehran. "The Secretary of Defense may not enter into any contract with an entity that engages in commercial activity in the energy sector of Iran," the amendment says, according to a copy reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

The measure's passage reflects growing frustration in parts of Congress with the failure of diplomacy to rein in Iran's nuclear program.

The bill passed through the committee last Wednesday, a day after the U.S., Russia and China agreed on a new list of sanctions against Iran for what they say is its refusal to abide by the United Nations Security Council resolutions calling for Tehran to halt its uranium-enrichment program.

The U.N. sanctions would crimp trade in Iranian weapons and certain investments. But like existing U.N. and U.S. sanctions, they don't ask international companies to stop doing business with Iran's energy sector. About half of Iran's government revenues come from oil exports.

The Pentagon is the world's single-largest oil consumer, burning around 400,000 barrels a day for its sprawling fleet of aircraft and vehicles, according to Congressional estimates.

The amendment was co-sponsored by Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, a California Republican and Ike Skelton, a Missouri Democrat. The full House is scheduled to vote on the legislation later this week.

Even if the amendment passes the House, it is likely to face stiff opposition in the Senate and at the Pentagon, which would be forced to find alternative suppliers. Iranian oil officials have also said recently that any move by the U.S. targeting its oil exports would be viewed as an "act of war," another reason the Pentagon and the White House are likely to look unfavorably on the House amendment.

An aide to Mr. McKeon said the measure gives the U.S. defense secretary the right to override the measure if he deems it too burdensome for the Pentagon to find alternative fuel suppliers. The aide also said that, at this point, there is no sponsor in the Senate for a similar measure.

European energy companies Royal Dutch Shell PLC and BP PLC have been the Pentagon's top fuel-supply contractors in recent years, according to data from USAspending.gov, an Office of Management and Budget website that tracks federal contracts. It estimates that since 2000, Anglo-Dutch Shell has signed deals with the Pentagon worth about \$8.8 billion. BP PLC has signed contracts worth a total of about \$7.2 billion in the 2000-2009 period and has an estimated \$838 million worth of contracts expected this year with the Pentagon.

Iran to Construct 23 Special Trade Zones

Iran will construct 23 new special trade zones according to Ja'far Ahangaran, executive advisor of the Free Trade Zones of Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization.

Ahangaran made the announcement on the sidelines of a gathering of economic experts of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managers of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization.

He said at present 6 special trade zones were active in the country.

He also noted that the government will construct an equipped hospital close to Dogharun border line to offer more services to medical tourists.

Iran Carpet Exports, \$493b

The deputy commerce minister Feysal Mardasi says that Iran exported 493 billion dollars worth of hand-woven carpets to other countries during the past Iranian calendar year of 1388 (March 2009-March 2010).

Mardasi made the remarks while talking to IRNA on the sidelines of the provincial hand-woven carpets festival in the northwestern province of Ardebil.

Mardasi said the figure has shown 16.8 percent increase in terms of value compared to that of the previous year.

He added carpet exports in terms of weight increased by 2.5 percent during the said period in comparison with the year before.

Social News

Royan Institute Tasked to Clone Drug-Sniffing Dogs

The Royan institute has undertaken the project to clone 4000 police dogs capable of sniffing out drugs, announces Mohammad-Hossein Nasr-e Esfahani, director of the Royan research center in Isfahan.

The Royan Institute for Reproductive Biomedicine, Stem Cell Biology and Technology is a leading Iranian research center involved in embryonic stem cell technology and regenerative medicine.

“Being able to clone animals is an honor for Iran; several years ago we couldn’t imagine to make such achievements” Nasr-e Esfahani said in Qom in a meeting with Qom governor general on Thursday.

He also announced that the Royan institute has a plan to clone ram from the cells of sheep in the near future.

Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran Top World Disaster Risk Rankings

Bangladesh, Indonesia and Iran are the countries that are the most vulnerable to natural disasters, according to a study released.

Asia's twin giants, China and India, join them in the 15 countries that, out of 229, are rated as "extreme" risk.

The Natural Disasters Risk Index (NDRI) is compiled by a British risk advisory firm, Maplecroft, on the basis of disasters that occurred from 1980 to 2010.

The countries least at risk are Andorra, Bahrain, Gibraltar, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, Qatar, San Marino and the United Arab Emirates.

Weekly report on Iran and Article review

It draws on a basket of indicators, including the number and frequency of these events, the total deaths that were caused and the death toll as a proportion of the country's population.

Disasters include earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, storms, flooding, drought, landslides, heatwaves and epidemics.

"Poverty is an important factor in countries where both the frequency and impacts of natural disasters are severe," said Maplecroft's environmental analyst, Anna Moss.

"Poor infrastructure, plus dense overcrowding in high-risk areas like flood plains, river banks, steep slopes and reclaimed land, continually result in high casualty figures."

According to the NDRI's figures, Bangladesh has suffered more than 191,000 fatalities as a result of natural disasters in the past 30 years, and Indonesia a nearly equal number, the vast majority of which were inflicted by the December 2004 tsunami.

In Iran, the big vulnerability factor is earthquakes, which claimed 74,000 lives over this period.

India, ranked 11th, lost 141,000 lives - including 50,000 to earthquakes, 40,000 to floods, 15,000 to epidemics and 23,000 to storms - while the tally in China, rated 12th, was 148,000 lives, of which 87,000 were lost in the 2008 Sichuan quake.

Three G-8 countries are considered "high risk," the next category down from "extreme."

They are France (17th in the overall rankings) and Italy (18th), which were hit by killer heat waves in 2003 and 2006, and the United States (37th), whacked by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Moss pointed to experts' warnings of the impact of climate change on rainfall. Disruption of weather patterns is predicted to lead to more frequent and bigger episodes of drought and flood.

"Our research highlights the need for even the wealthiest countries to focus on disaster risk reduction," she said.

War Novel “Da” Presents True Picture of Iranian Women

U.S. translator Paul Sprachman believes that the Iranian bestseller “Da” offers a true picture of Iranian women to the world.

Sprachman was invited by the Center for Creation of Literary Works of the Art Bureau to Iran to visit the narrator of the Persian novel on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and he is now here in Tehran.

“During my travels to Iran, I saw Iranian women active in society, and I even believe that Iranian women are stronger than men,” he mentioned in a press release by the Art Bureau on Saturday.

Seyyedeh Azam Hosseini penned “Da” according to narrations by Seyyedeh Zahra Hosseini. The book was published in 2008 and soon afterwards became an Iranian best seller.

“Da” contains recollections by Seyyedeh Zahra Hosseini of the time when the Iraqi army captured Khorramshahr in the early days of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. It is a true-to-life story of a teenager who experienced the early days of the war in Khorramshahr.

He has translated the first 100 pages of “Da” already but said that he will omit some parts of the voluminous book. “The translated part should be edited and I hope the work will be complete by the end of 2010.”

“The title of the book will be the same in English and despite the voluminous size of this book, I think that it will be welcomed by American readers,” he said.

He went on to say that he inquired about some Kurdish words found in the book and also asked some questions about the biography of Seyyedeh Zahra Hosseini, all of which were answered during his visit with her.

Books on Iran-Iraq War are published in editions of 1000 copies in the United States and are mainly read by Americans who were in the army in Iraq or Afghanistan, he said.

Sprachman has previously translated Ahmad Dehqan’s “Bearing 270 Degrees,” and Habib Ahmadzadeh’s “Chess with the Resurrection Machine”, two other Persian novels in the Sacred Defense genre.

He told the Persian service of MNA that he would translate satire books which have been written on Iran’s Sacred Defense after completing the translation of “Da”.

“Americans mostly enjoy books for entertainment so that satires will be more readily accepted there,” he added.

Sprachman can read and write Persian, Arabic, German, Hindu-Urdu, French, and Latin. He is also somewhat familiar with Chinese, Russian, and Hebrew.

Mohammad-Ali Jamalzadeh’s “What’s Sauce for the Goose” and “Once Upon a Time”, Ebrahim Golestan’s “Esmat’s Journey”, and Jalal Al-e Ahmad’s “Plagued by the West” are the some of the other Persian books he has previously rendered into English.

