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Weekly Report on Iran
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Summary

Political News

Diplomats Say U.S., Russia, France Dismiss Iran Deal

The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency says U.S., Russia and France have replied to a proposal by Iran to swap some of its enriched uranium for reactor fuel. Three diplomats familiar with the replies say they contain a series of questions that in effect stall any negotiations on the issue. The replies came hours before an expected U.N. Security Council vote Wednesday on new sanctions against Iran. The U.S., Russia and France have said the swap proposal negotiated by Brazil and Turkey would leave Iran

with enough material to make a nuclear weapon. And they note that Iran intends to continue a new program of enriching uranium to a higher level.

Ahmadinejad Slams Capitalism Over World Water Shortage

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said yesterday that materialistic views and capitalism are the root causes of water shortage and pollution around the world. The Iranian President made the remarks in the World Water Conference in Dushanbe. Capitalism and those countries pursuing materialistic policies should amend their wrong approaches in dealing with natural resources, said the Iranian president. The Iranian president also outlined some of the problems in the water sector as inappropriate consumption, climate change, occupation, injustice, trampling upon rights of others, recycling, water conservation and protection of water resources.

Six Accused in Scam to Sell Satellites to Iran

A Maryland man and five Iranian citizens are accused of violating the trade embargo against Iran by conspiring to sell technology used to launch a telecommunications satellite. Federal prosecutors say the hardware and technology sold in the \$10 million scheme enabled the launch of the Iranian-owned satellite from Russia in 2005. Prosecutors say 49-year-old Nader Modanlo of Potomac and his conspirators brokered an agreement between a Russian-owned company and a customer in Iran to build and launch satellites. The six men are accused of setting up shell companies that concealed Iranian involvement.

Clinton: Iran Sanctions Will Be Toughest Ever

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on Tuesday called the proposed new U.N. sanctions against Iran's suspect nuclear program the toughest ever, a day before the U.N. Security Council was expected to vote on the measure. Clinton told reporters in Ecuador's capital that there is strong support for a fourth resolution penalizing Iran for its refusal to prove its nuclear program is peaceful and defying international demands to halt uranium enrichment.

Vienna Group Delivers Response to Iran Fuel Swap Letter

Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi says Vienna Group has provided the country with its reply to Iran's fuel swap letter. The U.S., Russia and France delivered their reply separately at 1:00 pm Tehran local time, he told ISNA. Concerning content of the three letters, he said, "The three countries raised questions about Iran-Turkey-Brazil declaration for fuel swap."

Mottaki Meets Irish Deputy PM

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki yesterday met and conferred with Irish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Marie Gáragáin. In the meeting the two sides

talked about expansion of bilateral relations and studied the latest regional and international developments, IRIB reported from Dublin. Mottaki also is due to meet and confer with his Irish counterpart Michel Martin.

Issuing Resolution against Iran “Big Mistake”

Iran’s Ambassador and permanent representative in UN says three western countries’ efforts to approve a new resolution against Iran at Security Council would be a big mistake and their hasty action would deviate interaction road from its natural route. He stressed that such a move indicates that the other sides have chosen the confrontation approach, so in this case, Iran has no other alternative except facing a second choice. Mohammad Khazaee said that during last two days, some permanent members of the Security Council had been actively trying to convene council’s meeting to issue a resolution against Iran.

Soltanieh: Iran Won't Give up Nuclear Rights

As a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran has once again highlighted its indisputable right to peaceful nuclear know-how. "Iran will not compromise on its inalienable rights under the NPT and the IAEA's Articles of Association", Iranian Ambassador to the IAEA Ali-Asghar Soltanieh said in a speech to the agency's Board of Governors in Vienna on Wednesday. At the same time, he added, Iran will continue its cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog.

Ash’ari in Georgia to Take Part in Conference

Manager of Iran’s National Library and Archives Organization Ali Akbar Ash’ari arrived in Tbilisi, Georgia, yesterday to attend a conference on Iran-Caucasus, historical and cultural relations. Ash’ari is visiting the state at the invitation of his Georgian counterpart. He is to deliver a speech at the conference. The two officials are also to sign three cooperation agreements on the issues related to the national libraries. At a ceremony, the Iranian manager is due to submit a number of books to Georgia’s national library.

Envoy: Iran's Scientific Progress Irreversible

An Iranian diplomat yesterday blasted the UN Security Council for its discriminatory approach towards progress in the field of civilian nuclear technology and its pressures against Tehran's peaceful nuclear activities, but meantime stressed that sanctions cannot hinder Iran's scientific progress. "This is the path picked up by the Iranian nation and government for its scientific and technological advancements and it is irreversible," Iran's Ambassador to Oman Hossein Noushabadi said in a press conference in Muscat.

Ahmadinejad: No Talks After Anti-Iran Sanctions

Visiting President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran said yesterday that the U.S. could not think of adopting anti-Iran resolutions and trying to hold talks with the country simultaneously. "If cooperation is expected to be made, it should be made in all fields. The U.S. and its allies would be mistaken if they thought they can adopt resolutions against Iran on one hand, and then try to conduct talks with the country on the other," said the President at a press conference here which was also being broadcast live by the CNN.

U.S. Doubts Iran Has "Benign" Intentions for Gaza

The United States on Monday questioned the Iranian Red Crescent's decision to send aid ships to Gaza, saying Tehran's intentions toward the Palestinian territory were not "benign." "I don't think that Iran's intentions vis-a-vis Gaza are benign," said State Department spokesman Philip Crowley. "We certainly are looking ourselves at trying to find ways of increasing the amount of assistance that goes to the people of Gaza," he said.

Putin Opposed to "Excessive" UN Resolution on Iran

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin feels that a UN Security Council resolution on Iran should not prove excessive in character. He made the point following his meeting with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul, in the framework of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia. Putin said the resolution was almost agreed.

President Lauds CICA Crucial Role

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad yesterday lauded the timely reaction of CICA in dealing with regional and global developments and offered 7 key proposals to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) started its work in Istanbul Tuesday with the participation of a number of regional heads of state including President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran.

Supreme Leader Calls for Close Cooperation Between Gov't, Majlis

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said yesterday that sincere cooperation between government and Majlis should go beyond political inclinations. The Supreme Leader made the remarks in a meeting with Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani, Majlis presiding boards along with Members of Parliament.

Israel Won't Allow Iran Ships to Gaza

After Iran announced it would send ships loaded with humanitarian aid to Gaza, Israel said it would not allow any Iranian ships to enter the coastal sliver. Iran's Red Crescent Director Abdolraoof Adibzadeh said Monday that two Iranian aid ships carrying "food and medical supplies" for the people of Gaza will set sail for the coastal sliver in the coming week.

Economic News

Iran, China to Foster Railroad Cooperation

Iran's Minister of Road and Transportation Hamid Behbahani in a meeting with Chinese Minister of Railways Liu Zhijun called for expansion of railroad cooperation yesterday. The two ministers also conferred on ways to deepen bilateral relations in various fields. Behbahani elaborated on a development project of the Chinese railways to Europe via Iran.

Official: Iraqi Market Vital to Iran

The Iraqi market enjoys abundant potentials which should be used by Iran and other neighboring countries, Chairman of Tehran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines (TCCIM) Yahiya Al-e Eshaq said, describing Iraq as a vitally important market for Iran.

Tehran, Madrid Set to Build Croatian LNG Terminal

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and Spain's Gas Natural SDG S.A. are planning to build a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal for central Europe near Rogotin in southern Dalmatia, Croatia. The project is expected to cost 700 million euros, and the two companies would enter the project after the formation of a group including Berber from Zagreb, a company that specializes in business project development according to Croatian Times.

250 Foreign Companies to Attend Iran Plast 2010

Iran's 7th International Trade Fair for Plastic and Rubber (Iran Plast 2010) will be held on June 23-26 at Tehran Permanent International Fairground, director of the fair Hadi Zonoozi Asl said. Announcing the above, Zonoozi added some 250 foreign companies from Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands, India, South Korea, Turkey, Taiwan,

China, Portugal, Pakistan, Spain, Scotland, France and United Arab Emirates will attend Iran Plast 2010, Zonoozi added.

India, Iran Discuss Underwater Gas Line Bypassing Pakistan

The prospect may not have sounded feasible initially, but India is now coming round to the idea of having an underwater gas pipeline with Iran which would allow it to bypass Pakistan. As India's participation in IPI pipeline remains bogged down by concerns over security and pricing, official sources said New Delhi has already discussed building a pipeline under Arabian Sea with Tehran.

Ahmadinejad to Attend Iran's Exclusive Day in China

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will attend Iran's National Day in Shanghai World Expo set for June 11, announced Commerce Minister Mehdi Ghazanfari yesterday. Addressing a news conference in Tehran, Mehdi Ghazanfari said several officials from Iran and foreign countries as well as Iranian expatriates living in China will attend the ceremony. Mehdi Ghazanfari said the pavilion fully embodies traditional Islamic architecture and reveals its glorious ancient art and colorful contemporary lives.

Hosseini: Sanctions, Economic War Against Country

The minister of economic affairs and finance said yesterday that economic sanctions on Iran are in fact an "economic war" against the country. Shamseddin Hosseini made the remarks in a meeting with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) officials and staff. Hosseini opined that an "economic war" is more hidden than a political war or even a cultural one.

Iran's Mineral Exports Hit \$530m

Iran exported more than 534 million dollars worth of various mineral products in the first month of new Iranian year (started March 21), said a report released by Ministry of Industries and Mines. According to the report, mineral fuels, oils and wax and tarry substances with 417 million dollars, metal ore and ash conglomerate with 72.7 million dollars, salt, sulfur, plaster and cement with 44.6 million dollars were the main products exported in the mentioned period.

Social News

Police Seize Large Opium Cargo in Central Iran

Iran's police squads seized over half a ton of opium in an operation in the country's central province of Isfahan, a provincial police chief announced yesterday. Commander of Naen's Law Enforcement Police Mohammad Ali Yousliani told FNA that his forces at Naen's Shaheed Sherafat passage stopped a truck carrying onion from one of the southern provinces of Iran to the northern city of Karaj in the vicinity of Tehran.

Iran to Speed up Construction of Town at Afghanistan Border

A member of Majlis (Iranian parliament) said that Iran plans to speed up the trend of infrastructures construction at a town due to be built along its shared borders with Afghanistan. "Together with the other deputies of the province at the parliament, we are following up on the construction of the industrial zone in the region," representative of Sarbisheh at the Parliament Mohammad Reza Sabberri said Tuesday night.

Tehran to Hold Ecotourism Seminar

The Center for Strategic Research is to hold a seminar on "Development, Challenges and Strategies of Ecotourism in Iran" on June 14, 2010 in Tehran. Since there has been a considerable development in the tourism over the last few decades, ecotourism became

Detailed News

Political News

Diplomats Say U.S., Russia, France Dismiss Iran Deal

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Weekly report on Iran

The U.S., Russia and France have said the swap proposal negotiated by Brazil and Turkey would leave Iran with enough material to make a nuclear weapon. And they note that Iran intends to continue a new program of enriching uranium to a higher level.

The diplomats spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because their information was confidential.

Ahmadinejad Slams Capitalism Over World Water Shortage

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The Iranian President made the remarks in the World Water Conference in Dushanbe.

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Prosecutors say 49-year-old Nader Modanlo of Potomac and his conspirators brokered an agreement between a Russian-owned company and a customer in Iran to build and launch satellites. The six men are accused of setting up shell companies that concealed Iranian involvement.

Modanlo is an American citizen who was born in Iran. He was arrested Tuesday morning, and electronic court records did not list an attorney for him. His five Iranian conspirators remained at large.

Clinton: Iran Sanctions Will Be Toughest Ever

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on Tuesday called the proposed new U.N. sanctions against Iran's suspect nuclear program the toughest ever, a day before the U.N. Security Council was expected to vote on the measure.

Weekly report on Iran

Clinton told reporters in Ecuador's capital that there is strong support for a fourth resolution penalizing Iran for its refusal to prove its nuclear program is peaceful and defying international demands to halt uranium enrichment.

"I think it is fair (to say) that these are the most significant sanctions that Iran has ever faced," Clinton said at a news conference with Ecuador's president. "The amount of unity that has been engendered by the international community is very significant."

She declined to predict the outcome of the vote in the 15-member Security Council, but U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates in London said the measure would pass and pave the way for tougher additional measures by the U.S. and its allies.

"The strategy here is a combination of diplomacy and pressure to persuade the Iranians that they are headed in the wrong direction in terms of their own security, that they will undermine their security by pursuit of nuclear weapons, not enhance it," Gates said.

In the final version of the U.N. resolution, obtained Monday by The Associated Press, sanctions would be tougher than previous penalties but still far short of crippling economic punishments or an oil embargo.

The sanctions would ban Iran from pursuing "any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons," bar Iranian investment in activities such as uranium mining, and prohibit Iran from buying several categories of heavy weapons including attack helicopters and missiles.

Annexes to the resolution, agreed to Tuesday, would target 40 new Iranian companies or organizations, including 15 linked to Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard.

One person was added to the previous list of 40 Iranians subject to an asset freeze, Javad Rahiqi, who heads the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran's Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center.

The sanctions list also includes 22 companies or organizations involved in nuclear or ballistic missile activities and three entities linked to the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines. If the resolution is approved, the number of entities under sanctions would more than double from 35 at present to 75.

The Security Council held a private meeting Tuesday afternoon on Iran to meet some of the concerns of Brazil and Turkey, which had called for an open "political debate" on the broader Iranian nuclear issue first.

Neither Brazil nor Turkey is one of the five veto-holding permanent members of the council, although both are currently non-permanent members of the 15-member body. They recently announced a fuel-swap agreement with Iran aimed at addressing concerns that it may be enriching uranium for nuclear weapons.

Weekly report on Iran

After Tuesday afternoon's council meeting, U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice predicted the resolution would be adopted by "a strong majority."

"It is a strong, broad-based resolution that will impose meaningful and significant new sanctions on Iran," she said. "Our aim remains to persuade Iran to halt its nuclear program and negotiate constructively and in earnest with the international community."

Vienna Group Delivers Response to Iran Fuel Swap Letter

Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi says Vienna Group has provided the country with its reply to Iran's fuel swap letter.

The U.S., Russia and France delivered their reply separately at 1:00 pm Tehran local time, he told ISNA.

Concerning content of the three letters, he said, "The three countries raised questions about Iran-Turkey-Brazil declaration for fuel swap."

"We will explore the questions," Salehi added.

In reference to the U.S. and its allies' attempts in New York to approve another resolution against Iran, he said, "Vienna Group's response is in contradiction with its measures in New York."

He said their efforts in the Security Council showed they were not willing for fuel swap from the beginning.

Iran has already sent a letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and formally notified it of its response to the nuclear fuel swap deal, under which it would ship some low enriched uranium to Turkey in return for higher grade fuel for a Tehran research reactor.

The U.S. and its allies made an attempt in the UN Security Council early this week for another resolution against Iran.

Last month the U.S. introduced a draft UN Security Council resolution to impose tough new sanctions on Iran over its peaceful nuclear work.

The draft reportedly would expand an arms embargo and measures against Iran's banking sector.

Western powers accuse Iran of developing nuclear weapons; Tehran denies the charge, saying its nuclear issue is aimed at peaceful energy use.

Mottaki Meets Irish Deputy PM

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki yesterday met and conferred with Irish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Marie Gangland.

In the meeting the two sides talked about expansion of bilateral relations and studied the latest regional and international developments, IRIB reported from Dublin.

Mottaki also is due to meet and confer with his Irish counterpart Michel Martin.

Issuing Resolution against Iran “Big Mistake”

Iran’s Ambassador and permanent representative in UN says three western countries’ efforts to approve a new resolution against Iran at Security Council would be a big mistake and their hasty action would deviate interaction road from its natural route.

He stressed that such a move indicates that the other sides have chosen the confrontation approach, so in this case, Iran has no other alternative except facing a second choice.

Mohammad Khazaei said that during last two days, some permanent members of the Security Council had been actively trying to convene council’s meeting to issue a resolution against Iran.

The Tehran Declaration was issued thanks to collaboration of two member countries of the Security Council and was going to open a new path for interaction and to create a broader ground for constructive cooperation in international and regional level.

The ambassador said that in Iranian government and nation's view such hasty actions deviate the path towards interaction from its natural route and indicate that the other sides have chosen the confrontation approach, so Tehran has no other alternative but to choose an appropriate way to face the second way.

He added that unfortunately the recent acts, especially by Britain, Washington and Paris show that they are not honest in their dialogues with other members of the Security Council and in fact the exchange issue was just a pretext.

Khazaei continued that this is a big mistake and it should be condemned by the international society.

Do not forget that these countries and the Security Council could not take a decision against obvious attack of the Zionist regime against the international Freedom Flotilla.

And this is a double standard which will not be forgotten in the historical memory of the Iranian and other world nations.

The ambassador argued while the U.S. and a few other permanent members of the Security Council got angry hearing the request of 192 UN member countries from the Zionist regime to join the NPT and to destruct its own nuclear weapons, in case of Iran, which is a member of NPT and has no nuclear weapon, why should they adopt such harsh stands?

He argued, "The other members of the council, too, should ask themselves the same question, before voting for the controversial resolution.

Soltanieh: Iran Won't Give up Nuclear Rights

As a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran has once again highlighted its indisputable right to peaceful nuclear know-how.

"Iran will not compromise on its inalienable rights under the NPT and the IAEA's Articles of Association", Iranian Ambassador to the IAEA Ali-Asghar Soltanieh said in a speech to the agency's Board of Governors in Vienna on Wednesday.

At the same time, he added, Iran will continue its cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog.

Soltanieh further said Iran has not denied IAEA inspectors access to its nuclear facilities, nor has it withdrawn from the NPT, despite the unfair approach adopted by the UN Security Council vis-à-vis the country.

"Iran will not allow the few nuclear-armed countries on the UN Security Council to use their right of veto to let New York dictate to the IAEA what it should do", added the Iranian permanent representative to the UN nuclear agency.

Soltanieh reiterated that IAEA reports on Iran have all verified that there has been no diversion in the nation's peaceful nuclear activities.

He said the UN Security Council's illegal intervention has politicized and further complicated a "technical issue" which falls within the jurisdiction of the IAEA.

He called on the few Western countries which 'always politicize and polarize the IAEA' to change their approach from confrontation to cooperation.

Ash'ari in Georgia to Take Part in Conference

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Ash'ari is visiting the state at the invitation of his Georgian counterpart. He is to deliver a speech at the conference.

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Envoy: Iran's Scientific Progress Irreversible

An Iranian diplomat yesterday blasted the UN Security Council for its discriminatory approach towards progress in the field of civilian nuclear technology and its pressures against Tehran's peaceful nuclear activities, but meantime stressed that sanctions cannot hinder Iran's scientific progress.

"This is the path picked up by the Iranian nation and government for its scientific and technological advancements and it is irreversible," Iran's Ambassador to Oman Hossein Noushabadi said in a press conference in Muscat.

Commenting on the current debates at the UNSC on a draft sanctions resolution against Iran, Noushabadi blasted the "unconstructive measures and efforts made by a number of international community members" to impose further pressures on Iran to make it give up its inalienable rights.

He warned that insistence of such countries on the adoption of the path of sanction and confrontation is a kind of biased behavior that would leave destructive effects on the constructive atmosphere of interactions.

Ahmadinejad: No Talks After Anti-Iran Sanctions

Visiting President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran said yesterday that the U.S. could not think of adopting anti-Iran resolutions and trying to hold talks with the country simultaneously.

"If cooperation is expected to be made, it should be made in all fields. The U.S. and its allies would be mistaken if they thought they can adopt resolutions against Iran on one hand, and then try to conduct talks with the country on the other," said the President at a press conference here which was also being broadcast live by the CNN.

"Anyone who thinks of talking to Iran in a language of force, it is already clear what would be the response to such a language," President Ahmadinejad stressed.

He went on to say that nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran are considered as the country's legal right based on the justice and the global regulations.

He told reporters that any attempt to impose anything whatsoever on the justice-seeking nations including the Islamic Iran will be doomed to failure.

Weekly report on Iran

Asked about the Vienna group's reaction to Tehran Declaration on the nuclear fuel swap, Ahmadinejad replied: "We're waiting for response from the Vienna group; whenever we receive the reply, we will review it."

The Iranian president reiterated that the world nations and governments supported the Tehran Declaration that was recently issued by Iran, Turkey and Brazil.

He added the international support for the issue indicates that the global nations and governments are in agreement with access to peaceful nuclear energy and removal of the atomic weapons worldwide.

Ahmadinejad hoped the Tehran Declaration would set the stage for strengthening a new system of the world affairs in the future.

On his travel to China, Ahmadinejad said he is to visit Shanghai international exhibition.

Asked about his expectations from the CICA Conference in Turkey, President Ahmadinejad answered: "We should not think that the world questions could be solved by just holding a summit or a conference." He also predicted that serious measures will be taken against the Zionists' crimes in the Conference."

He also said nations nowadays are wakeful and they will resist oppressors by showing reaction to world developments.

Pointing to the crimes committed by the Zionist regime against the anti-siege activists who were trying to ship aid to the defenseless Palestinians entangled in the Gaza Strip, he said the world today was grieved by the martyrdom of several members of the Freedom Flotilla.

Ahmadinejad believed the attack opened the eyes of the world nations to realities.

He said the event also indicated that pure and sincere feelings were still present in nations inspiring them to take a role in important humanitarian events.

Ahmadinejad further said that the move taken by residents of the flotilla aimed at not merely defending the people in Gaza who have been deprived of the most basics for their daily lives but in reality was to defend the dignity of human beings and their human rights.

The attack also disclosed once again the brutal nature of the Zionist regime, highlighting the fact that it holds no values for freedom of people and their rights, he added, saying that the Iranian nation has for the past three decades cried out the fact that the Zionist regime was originally established to kill while the world got the chance to see it first hand for itself during the latest Zionist crimes against the aid ships.

Weekly report on Iran

On Iran and Turkey relation, President Ahmadinejad said that Tehran enjoys profound relations with Ankara.

He added that Iran-Turkey cooperation in the areas of economy, culture, energy and investment is growing, stressing that there is no obstacle on the way of further expansion of bilateral relations between the two neighboring states.

On the Tehran-Moscow relations, he said Tehran is interested in a boost in its relations with its northern neighbor, Russia.

President Ahmadinejad advised the Russian leaders not to side with the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Islamic Republic is interested in dialogue, he said, adding that governments can solve their problems through dialogue.

Underlining the need for restructuring of the United Nations, he regretted that the Security Council is based on injustice.

He reiterated that world nations are in need of new foundations or fundamental amendments to the UN structure so that justice would be materialized throughout the world.

President Ahmadinejad emphasized that Tehran cannot be indifferent towards other world nations, adding that the Islamic Republic safeguards interests of all people across the globe.

He concluded by saying that the Iranian nation believes in peaceful nuclear energy for all and nuclear weapons for no one.

U.S. Doubts Iran Has “Benign” Intentions for Gaza

The United States on Monday questioned the Iranian Red Crescent's decision to send aid ships to Gaza, saying Tehran's intentions toward the Palestinian territory were not "benign."

"I don't think that Iran's intentions vis-a-vis Gaza are benign," said State Department spokesman Philip Crowley.

"We certainly are looking ourselves at trying to find ways of increasing the amount of assistance that goes to the people of Gaza," he said.

The Iranian Red Crescent announced Monday it would send three ships with humanitarian aid to Gaza, in the latest bid to break the blockade imposed on the Palestinian territory by Iran's arch foe Israel.

Weekly report on Iran

Since Israel's May 31 commando raid on an aid flotilla that killed nine people, the United States has been trying to reconcile sending more humanitarian aid for Gaza.

Crowley said the United States was discussing "a number of different ideas" on the subject with the European Union, United Nations and Israel.

"I'm not willing to sharing those ideas at this point," he quickly added.

Putin Opposed to "Excessive" UN Resolution on Iran

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin feels that a UN Security Council resolution on Iran should not prove excessive in character.

He made the point following his meeting with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul, in the framework of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia. Putin said the resolution was almost agreed.

Moscow is certain that the new sanctions should not place the people of Iran in a predicament that would raise barriers in the way of developing nuclear power production for peaceful purposes, the Russian Prime Minister said.

In this context he reiterated that the Bushehr nuclear power plant would be commissioned in August. Putin also said that he was prepared to meet President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, who is currently in Istanbul, to take up Iran's nuclear problem.

President Lauds CICA Crucial Role

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The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) started its work in Istanbul Tuesday with the participation of a number of regional heads of state including President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran.

In the meeting, President Ahmadinejad said that the Islamic Republic of Iran still remains committed to Tehran Declaration and hopes for the Vienna Group to seize the historical opportunity and prove its commitment to legal rights of world nations.

The world is now faced with various challenges and problems which have left crucial impacts on world nations, he said.

Capitalism was a bitter experience for world nations, he said and referred to growth of unemployment, poverty, bankruptcy and economic meltdown which have brought devastating social consequences.

Weekly report on Iran

Security as the most essential needs of humanity is at risk, underlined President Ahmadinejad, adding "Nuclear threats have cast shadow over the entire globe. People in the region suffer from military presence of aliens, millions of people have been killed or sought refuge and economic meltdown caused by the presence of aliens has hit Iraq, Afghanistan as well as other parts of the region."

Meddling in the affairs of other nations through militarism or bullying policies have caused big problems for the international community, he said.

Political instability has roots in incapability of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) which through its dilapidated and outdated structure tries to pursue expansionist policies, he said.

The Zionist occupiers are the root cause of instability in the world, triggering some big devastating wars, he said, adding that the fabricated regime with its nuclear arsenals has resorted to state-terrorism and posed serious threats to countries of the region.

The inhuman and savage behavior of the Zionist regime in dealing with the Freedom Flotilla that tried to break the blockade of Gaza revealed the real image of the fabricated regime, he said, adding that Iran pays tributes to the martyrs of the incident and praises the revolutionary people of Turkey and other nations who honestly follow the path of God.

All these problems have roots in materialistic philosophy, a school of thought which runs counter to spirituality and teachings of holy prophets, he said.

"Our nations do not believe in such a philosophy or school of thought, the culture of our nations are based on monotheism, justice, and love for humanity," he said.

To attain such lofty goals, the Iranian president offered the following proposals:

"It is recommended that a group of intellectuals and minister of cultures draw up a charter of friendship and brotherhood to help promote mutual understanding and ties among countries.

"To promote trade exchange with hard currencies of member states based on barter trades or with major hard currencies.

"It is recommended that foreign ministers or ministers of energy of member states study setting a time table to urge world nuclear powers to disarm themselves, something which was ignored in the NPT review conference in New York.

"Tehran Declaration is a suitable model for the NPT members and it is expected that the Vienna group seizes the opportunity and proves its respect for the legitimate rights of nations."

Weekly report on Iran

It is now clear to all that the international Zionism is the root cause of injustice, discrimination, blackmailing, war and aggressions in the world and is supported by the US and Britain and as long as its inhuman activities are not checked, the world will never experience peace and tranquility, said the Iranian president.

CICA should voice solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people in Gaza Strip who are exposed to atrocities of the Zionist forces and strongly condemn the inhuman move, he said, adding that CICA should underline in its final statement that humanitarian relief from CICA member states should be collected and shipped to Gaza in order to break its blockade.

Supreme Leader Calls for Close Cooperation Between Gov't, Majlis

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said yesterday that sincere cooperation between government and Majlis should go beyond political inclinations.

The Supreme Leader made the remarks in a meeting with Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani, Majlis presiding boards along with Members of Parliament.

Highlighting domestic and international developments, the Supreme Leader thanked the vigilant Iranian nation which enthusiastically follows the path of Late Imam Khomeini and made a massive turnout in ceremonies marking his demise anniversary.

Ayatollah Khamenei also lauded the prominent role of Majlis in domestic and international developments and said the current global situation is very sensitive which requires vigilance of the Iranian nation and officials.

Referring to regional developments in the Middle East and in Palestine in particular, the Supreme Leader said the region and the world are now on the verge of great changes.

It is incumbent upon all people and officials to exercise vigilance and have close cooperation in dealing with ongoing developments in the world, underlined the Supreme Leader.

Massive turnout of the pious Iranian nation in ceremonies marking the demise anniversary of Late Imam Khomeini truly demonstrated the adherence of the nation to the aspirations of the founder of the Islamic Revolution, said Ayatollah Khamenei.

Majlis and the government should get coordinated in dealing with the country's affairs and spare no efforts to meet people's demands, said the Supreme Leader.

Majlis should remove legal obstacles to help government proceed with its development projects, said Ayatollah Khamenei.

Weekly report on Iran

Prior to the Supreme Leader's remarks, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani briefed Ayatollah Khamenei on the performance of Majlis.

Israel Won't Allow Iran Ships to Gaza

After Iran announced it would send ships loaded with humanitarian aid to Gaza, Israel said it would not allow any Iranian ships to enter the coastal sliver.

Iran's Red Crescent Director Abdolraoof Adibzadeh said Monday that two Iranian aid ships carrying "food and medical supplies" for the people of Gaza will set sail for the coastal sliver in the coming week.

"Iran is also preparing to dispatch a navy hospital ship for the people of Gaza, which will have onboard doctors, nurses and all the medical equipment required for emergency surgeries and procedures," Adibzadeh added.

Israel was quick to react to Iran's announcement with an Israeli diplomatic official saying that no Iranian ship will be allowed to Gaza, the Jerusalem Post reported.

"If we didn't let an Irish ship reach Gaza, we are certainly not going to let Iranian ships pass," the official said on Monday.

The official further pointed out that "any shipment from Iran to Gaza would be a major concern," claiming that Iran had a record of supplying Hamas and Hezbollah with weapons.

Iran's decision to dispatch relief supplies comes after Israel's military attacked the Freedom Flotilla in international waters in the Mediterranean Sea early on May 31.

The vessel was carrying thousands of tons of aid supplies and hundreds of humanitarian activists to the coastal strip.

Economic News

Iran, China to Foster Railroad Cooperation

Iran's Minister of Road and Transportation Hamid Behbahani in a meeting with Chinese Minister of Railways Liu Zhijun called for expansion of railroad cooperation yesterday.

The two ministers also conferred on ways to deepen bilateral relations in various fields.

Behbahani elaborated on a development project of the Chinese railways to Europe via Iran.

He further offered Tehran-Beijing cooperation on the project.

The Chinese minister, meanwhile, welcomed the offer as well as expansion of bilateral cooperation in making joint ventures in the third states.

The Iranian road minister traveled to Beijing, China, on June 8 to attend Iran's National Pavilion Day in the Shanghai 2010 World Expo.

Iran and China cooperate in many sectors, including energy, construction, trade, and tourism. China currently helps Iran build dams, shipyards, ports, airports, mine-development, and oil and gas infrastructure.

In May 2009, at a joint economic conference in Tehran, the two countries signed a number of agreements totaling 17 billion dollars in economic cooperation. The agreements stated that China would assist Iran with its construction sector, host joint trade meetings, and develop Iran's railway system.

Official: Iraqi Market Vital to Iran

The Iraqi market enjoys abundant potentials which should be used by Iran and other neighboring countries, Chairman of Tehran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines (TCCIM) Yahiya Al-e Eshaq said, describing Iraq as a vitally important market for Iran.

"At present we are the second exporter to Iraq, and Turkey has more exports to the country and if we are not able to increase our exports, Turkey will gradually seize this market from us," Al-e Eshaq said in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Hassan Kazzemi Qomi on Tuesday.

Noting that the Iraqi market is considered a special trade opportunity for Iran, he reminded that some analyses even describe Iraq as the biggest and best investment

chance in the Middle-East for the next few decades, given the country's abundant potentials and rich resources.

"If Iraq represents a special opportunity to the world, why shouldn't we take the opportunity which has arisen in our neighborhood to start a mutually beneficial, or in other words win-win, relations," Al-e Eshaq added.

Tehran, Madrid Set to Build Croatian LNG Terminal

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and Spain's Gas Natural SDG S.A. are planning to build a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal for central Europe near Rogotin in southern Dalmatia, Croatia.

The project is expected to cost 700 million euros, and the two companies would enter the project after the formation of a group including Berber from Zagreb, a company that specializes in business project development according to Croatian Times.

The EU should accelerate the application of common energy policy rules, and the policy itself must aim to improve competitiveness, security of supply and sustainability, concluded a joint meeting of over 250 Member of the European Parliament (MEP) in Brussels on Tuesday.

Three panels, on energy security, a single energy market and new and renewable energies, presented their reports on Tuesday.

The location of the terminal would be two kilometers of airway from the port of Ploce. It would be built on 25 hectares of land currently owned by the Vebecot Company.

Berber officials have concluded a chain of conversations in Iran and Spain and have invited the Croatian national power company Hrvatska elektroprivreda (HEP Group) and gas transmission system operator Plinacro to join the project. It has been suggested that the Gas Natural SDG would be the holder of the investment, while the Iranian company as a co-investor would guarantee the supply.

Croatian Economy Minister Djuro Popijac has given his support to energy projects that are "economically and environmentally viable."

Also a study of the potential environmental impacts and the project's compliance with the regional plan will be commissioned due to the size of the undertaking.

250 Foreign Companies to Attend Iran Plast 2010

Iran's 7th International Trade Fair for Plastic and Rubber (Iran Plast 2010) will be held on June 23-26 at Tehran Permanent International Fairground, director of the fair Hadi Zonoozi Asl said.

Announcing the above, Zonoozi added some 250 foreign companies from Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands, India, South Korea, Turkey, Taiwan, China, Portugal, Pakistan, Spain, Scotland, France and United Arab Emirates will attend Iran Plast 2010, Zonoozi added.

The number of foreign companies attending the event shows 72 percent growth over the previous fair in 2009, he said adding that the growth takes place among the US-led sanctions and propaganda of the western media against Iran.

The event is aimed at developing domestic plastic and rubber industries, related equipment and machineries and petrochemical downstream industries as well as transferring the modern technologies.

Iran Plast is the largest and most important exhibition in different fields of petrochemical products, materials, machineries and services in Iran and one of the most magnificent expos in the Middle East and Asia held annually in Iran.

India, Iran Discuss Underwater Gas Line Bypassing Pakistan

The prospect may not have sounded feasible initially, but India is now coming round to the idea of having an underwater gas pipeline with Iran which would allow it to bypass Pakistan.

As India's participation in IPI pipeline remains bogged down by concerns over security and pricing, official sources said New Delhi has already discussed building a pipeline under Arabian Sea with Tehran.

According to officials, the underwater pipeline will not just help India evade Pakistan but also allow government to engage Iran in a more fruitful manner. In fact, when Turkmenistan president Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov visited India last month, the two sides discussed the prospect of transporting gas from Turkmenistan to northern Iran with help from India and using the underwater pipeline option to transport gas to India from southern Iran.

The Turkmenistan president was also very keen on initiating work on the proposed TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) pipeline but New Delhi is not very enthused about the project because of the instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The head of the supervisory board of South Asia Gas Enterprise Private Ltd (SAGE), T H P Pao, had earlier said that India and Iran had discussed building this pipeline which would be about 700 miles in length. Because of the high costs involved, the construction of a deep sea pipeline in the past has been considered financially unviable.

With India not participating, Pakistan and Iran have gone ahead with IPI pipeline which will connect South Fars gas field of Iran, home to one of the largest gas reserves in the world, with Balochistan in Pakistan.

The two countries are likely to finalize the agreement this week. Foreign minister S M Krishna, who visited Tehran last month, has maintained that India is still holding discussions with Iran over IPI pipeline. He has also said that India will participate only if concerns over security and pricing are addressed adequately

Ahmadinejad to Attend Iran's Exclusive Day in China

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will attend Iran's National Day in Shanghai World Expo set for June 11, announced Commerce Minister Mehdi Ghazanfari yesterday.

Addressing a news conference in Tehran, Mehdi Ghazanfari said several officials from Iran and foreign countries as well as Iranian expatriates living in China will attend the ceremony.

Mehdi Ghazanfari said the pavilion fully embodies traditional Islamic architecture and reveals its glorious ancient art and colorful contemporary lives.

The whole pavilion is divided into three parts including Iran of the past, the present and the future. Iran of the past introduces the nation and its civilization, while the 'present' division displays archaeological treasures and cultural heritage of Iran.

The pavilion emphasizes the harmonious development between Iranian urban and rural areas, in accordance with the main theme of the Shanghai World Expo.

He added all the participating countries have showcased their potentials and capabilities which would lead to better competition.

It is expected that nearly 10 million people visit Iran's hall in Shanghai World Expo, he said.

Referring to the Expo's motto "Better City, Better Life", he added based on the motto Iran's hall, with a total area of 2000 square meters, uses the art of Isfahan to represent the Islamic-Iranian architecture.

Live performance of Persian traditional music, weaving a Persian carpet as the symbol of togetherness by visitors, setting Haft Sin table as the symbol of Iranian new year Norooz, laser harp and showing pictures of religious ceremonies are the main parts of the program in the event.

Hosseini: Sanctions, Economic War Against Country

The minister of economic affairs and finance said yesterday that economic sanctions on Iran are in fact an "economic war" against the country.

Shamseddin Hosseini made the remarks in a meeting with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) officials and staff.

Weekly report on Iran

Hosseini opined that an “economic war” is more hidden than a political war or even a cultural one.

Positive news should be released to counter those wars, the minister said.

He further commented that the country today needs those media which give a true picture of the economic realities to the people.

Iran’s Mineral Exports Hit \$530m

Iran exported more than 534 million dollars worth of various mineral products in the first month of new Iranian year (started March 21), said a report released by Ministry of Industries and Mines.

According to the report, mineral fuels, oils and wax and tarry substances with 417 million dollars, metal ore and ash conglomerate with 72.7 million dollars, salt, sulfur, plaster and cement with 44.6 million dollars were the main products exported in the mentioned period.

Moreover, the total export value of metal alloys including cast iron, iron, steel, aluminum and copper alloys stood at 121.6 million dollars over the same time, the report added.

Also more than 476 million dollars of chemical and related products were exported over the same period.

Iran exported above 5 billion dollars of various mineral products in the last Iranian year (March 2009-March 2010).

According to the Ministry of Industries and Mines, Iran's mineral exports valued at 5.334 billion dollars last year.

The country's metal and related products exports were also worth 2.61 billion dollars in the same period.

Social News

Police Seize Large Opium Cargo in Central Iran

Iran's police squads seized over half a ton of opium in an operation in the country's central province of Isfahan, a provincial police chief announced yesterday.

Commander of Naeen's Law Enforcement Police Mohammad Ali Yousliani told FNA that his forces at Naeen's Shaheed Sherafat passage stopped a truck carrying onion from one of the southern provinces of Iran to the northern city of Karaj in the vicinity of Tehran.

"And in the checkpoint control, some 632.5 kg of opium was discovered," Yousliani stated, saying that the cargo was skillfully planted in the truck.

The commander added that the truck driver was arrested and later handed over to the judiciary authorities.

The Islamic Republic has emerged as the leading country fighting drug trafficking after having 85 percent of the world's total opium seizures.

The anti-drug squads of the Law Enforcement Police have intensified their countrywide campaign against drug-trafficking through staging long-term systematic operations in recent months

Iran to Speed up Construction of Town at Afghanistan Border

A member of Majlis (Iranian parliament) said that Iran plans to speed up the trend of infrastructures construction at a town due to be built along its shared borders with Afghanistan.

"Together with the other deputies of the province at the parliament, we are following up on the construction of the industrial zone in the region," representative of Sarbisheh at the Parliament Mohammad Reza Sabberi said Tuesday night.

"Meantime, we are in consultations with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) to speed up the trend of the construction of the 2-lane Sarbisheh-Darah road," he added.

He expressed the hope that the road connecting the town's terminal to Afghanistan's western province of Farah would be completed by September 2011 in a bid to facilitate mutual visits by traders and businessmen.

Weekly report on Iran

Saberi further called on Afghan officials to construct the passage needed at the two countries' official border crossings and stretch the road to Afghanistan's Farah province.

Earlier in April, a provincial official announced that Iran and Afghanistan are building a town along their shared borders in northeastern Iran.

"Iran and Afghanistan are building a joint border town in (Iran's border region of) Sarbisheh, which will have abundant facilities such as airport," South Khorassan Province's Deputy Governor-General for Economic Affairs Mohammad Ali Bijari said.

Tehran to Hold Ecotourism Seminar

The Center for Strategic Research is to hold a seminar on "Development, Challenges and Strategies of Ecotourism in Iran" on June 14, 2010 in Tehran.

Since there has been a considerable development in the tourism over the last few decades, ecotourism became the most attracting branch of tourism around the world.

Through creating several job positions, ecotourism provides the country's people with economic benefits. Thus necessary equipment should be presented for the people related to this industry and also needed funds should be allocated to protect the environment outlook.

As Iran has a diverse climate condition, cultural and historic features, Sustainable Development and Environment Group; Center for Strategic Research; Expediency Council decided to hold the seminar to review and identify the challenges and strategies in ecotourism.

Several policy makers, law makers, professors, researchers and managing directors will take part in the event.