

Weekly report on Iran

Business and Politics in the Muslim World

Weekly Report on Iran

Report # 124

12 June,2010, to,19June,2010

Presentation 23June, 2010

M Rashid

Summary.....

Political News.....

Iran Denounces UNSC Resolution 1929

Brazil Blasts U.S., UNSC for Making All Decisions for World

Iranian Pleads Guilty in Illegal Exports Sting

Gates: Iran Could Fire “Hundreds” of Missiles at Europe

Medvedev Criticizes Iran Sanctions

Jannati Condemns UNSC Anti-Iran Resolution

Ahmadinejad: Iranians, Symbol of Global Justice-Seeking

Iran Urges Plan for Global Nuclear Disarmament

Larijani Cautions EU Against Hostile Stand on Iran

Iran to Retaliate Ship Inspection in Open Seas

Vahidi: Sanctions Lead Youth to Self-Sufficiency

Iran Warns U.S. Possible Inspection of Iranian Shipments

U.S. Aims to Widen Iran Sanctions Scope

Economic news

Iran to Import More Turkmen Gas

EU Firms Main 'Losers' of Iran Sanctions

Armenian-Iranian Business Forum Kicks Off in Yerevan

Iran's Daily Oil Exports Reach 2.3m Barrels

Official: Russia Main Trade Partner of Iran's Northern Provinces

Iran, Myanmar to Promote Economic Cooperation

BMI: Iran' Consumer Electronics Market to Worth \$8b in 2010

Iran Resets Car Import Tariff to 90%

Oil Minister Meets Turkmen President

Pakistani Traders Welcome IP Pipeline

Social News

Iranian Director Rafi Pitts Selected for Edinburgh Festival Jury

Minister: 2 MKO Terrorist Teams Disbanded

Summary

Political News

Iran Denounces UNSC Resolution 1929

Iran says the June 9 UN Security Council resolution was issued based on “false accusation” and contrary to global community expectations.

The subject of the resolution, contrary to all expectations, is on the peaceful nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have been turned around on the basis of false accusation,” read a declaration, issued by Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) in response to the UN Security Council resolution 1929, passed on June 9, 2010. The full text of the Declaration is as follows: “In the name of God, the most Gracious and the most Merciful “Islamic Republic of Iran’s Declaration in Response to the United Nations Security Council’s resolution

Brazil Blasts U.S., UNSC for Making All Decisions for World

Brazil's Foreign minister, Celso Amorim, in rebutting criticism of Brazil and Turkey for the nuclear agreement with Iran, and asking that the emerging powers should be heard in international affairs, accused the United States, China, France, Britain and Russia of thinking they are in charge of the world.

Iranian Pleads Guilty in Illegal Exports Sting

An Iranian national has pleaded guilty to charges of attempting to illegally export U.S. fighter jet parts to Iran, which he purchased from a US undercover agent, the Department of Justice has said. Omid Khalili was charged in January along with a co-conspirator still at large identified only as Masun. He was arrested in March on arrival in Miami -- presumably from Iran -- and pleaded guilty in a U.S. District Court in Alabama. For his nine-count indictment on conspiracy, money laundering, smuggling and violations of U.S. laws banning sensitive exports to Iran, Khalili faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a one million dollar fine if convicted, the Justice Department said.

Gates: Iran Could Fire “Hundreds” of Missiles at Europe

U.S. intelligence has shown Iran could launch an attack against Europe with "scores or hundreds" of missiles, prompting major changes to U.S. missile defenses, Pentagon chief Robert Gates said on Thursday. President Barack Obama in September cited a mounting danger from Iran's arsenal of short and medium-range missiles when he announced an overhaul of U.S. missile defense plans. The new program, called the "phased adaptive approach," uses sea and land-based interceptors to protect NATO allies in the region, instead of mainly larger weapons

designed to counter long-range missiles."One of the elements of the intelligence that contributed to the decision on the phased adaptive array was the realization that if Iran were actually to launch a missile attack on Europe, it wouldn't be just one or two missiles or a handful," Gates told a senate hearing.

Medvedev Criticizes Iran Sanctions

Russia and the United States should "act collectively" to coax Iran back to international talks on its nuclear program, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev told The Wall Street Journal in an interview published on Thursday. The Journal quoted Medvedev as complaining about additional sanctions against Iran imposed by the United States and European Union just after Russia backed a carefully negotiated package of U.N. sanctions last week. "A couple of years ago, that would have been impossible," Medvedev said, referring to Russia's support of the U.N. sanctions designed to pressure Tehran to return to talks on its uranium enrichment program. The EU adopted tighter sanctions against Iran on Thursday, including measures to block oil and gas investment and curtail its refining and natural gas capability.

Jannati Condemns UNSC Anti-Iran Resolution

Substitute Friday prayers leader of Tehran, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, has condemned the UN Security Council's June 9 anti-Iran resolution and said Iran will turn the resolution threats into an opportunity. "Under wise leadership of the Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and through people's backing, we will, God willing, turn the threats into opportunity, thus bringing the U.S. disgrace," said Ayatollah Jannati in his second sermon to this week's Friday prayers congregation at Tehran University campus. He said Iranians are accustomed to sanctions and are not scared of it.

Ahmadinejad: Iranians, Symbol of Global Justice-Seeking

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said here Wednesday Iranians are symbol of "global justice seeking nations, pioneer of idol breakers, breaker of world idols, and path openers of well being for entire world nations". Ahmadinejad made the comment in a meeting with the families of Charmahal-o-Bakhtiari Province martyrs, war disabled veterans and missed in action (MIA) combatants in provincial capital city, Shahr-e-Kord during his 3rd provincial tour atop his cabinet. Ahmadinejad added, "The fact that Iran's name and fame is widespread around the globe today is a sign of the Iranian nation's grandeur, otherwise the United States and the western countries' moves weigh next to nothing."

Iran Urges Plan for Global Nuclear Disarmament

Iran has called on Geneva Disarmament Conference to begin serious disarmament talks, asking for devising a chronological plan for total global nuclear disarmament. Iran's Ambassador and permanent representative Mohammad-Reza Sajjadi made the comment at Geneva Disarmament Conference on Tuesday, June 15th. He added, "The nuclear arsenals of certain countries pose the greatest threats to the world peace and security today." Sajjadi said, "It is a pity that two decades after the end to the Cold War, its malicious heritage is still exerting its weigh against the

international community. Nuclear weapons are still stockpiled at the arsenals of a limited number of countries, and the military doctrines on their usage keep getting updated.”

Larijani Cautions EU Against Hostile Stand on Iran

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani on Thursday advised the European Union not to adopt hostile stands on Iran. Speaking to reporters in Qom, he said, “If the enemies dare to hurl stones at us, they should be watchful that the soil of Iran will go into their eyes.” Larijani made the comment in reaction to the news about the EU attempt to approve sanctions on Iran. “In the past ten years, the U.S. urged the Europeans to adopt hostile stand on Iran to attain its sinister goals and push them to take a leading role to this end, but to no avail,” he said. Larijani said that the European leaders exercised vigilance and examined the situation as they share common interests with Iran and the region.

Iran to Retaliate Ship Inspection in Open Seas

Rapporteur of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Kazem Jalali said Thursday that Iran would retaliate any possible inspecting of its ships in the high seas. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the Majlis open session, Jalali said, “Those who launch any attack against Iranian ships, must measure consequences of their moves from very this moment.” “The Islamic Republic of Iran will strongly rise for its rights,” Jalali said, stressing that Iran enjoyed many factors of being a powerful country including the possession of the strategic waterway of the Hormuz Strait in the Persian Gulf region. “One of these factors is that one of the most sensitive points of the world, the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, belongs to Iran,” the MP said.

Vahidi: Sanctions Lead Youth to Self-Sufficiency

Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Ahmad Vahidi says Iran had become self-sufficient regarding military equipments whose sale was banned by sanctions, adding that Iran was able to export such equipment to other countries. “Under the recent resolution, the arrogant powers prohibited armament sale to Iran, but not only doesn't Iran need such equipments but it is able to export such weapons,” Vahidi said. Vahidi said Iran is self-sufficient in engineering and manufacturing artillery, armored vehicles, tanks, gun ships and battleships, adding that recent sanctions against Iran revealed the UN Security Council and the arrogant powers deep hatred and malice toward the Iranian nation as well as their poor understanding of international issues.

Iran Warns U.S. Possible Inspection of Iranian Shipments

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani yesterday warned the U.S. and some adventurous countries that if they were tantalized to inspect Iranian planes and ships, Iran would retaliate the act in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea.

U.S. Aims to Widen Iran Sanctions Scope

U.S. lawmakers are seeking to include international banks in sanctions legislation on Iran, as part of a push to widen its scope and bring in more targets. People close to negotiations on Capitol Hill say discussions are intensifying about introducing measures into the final text – such as sanctions against Iran’s Revolutionary Guard and those involved in the crackdown on the country’s opposition as well as measures in the financial sector. Matthew Levitt, a former U.S. Treasury official now at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said measures on banks that did business with designated Iranian financial groups would take sanctions in the sector to “another level”.

Economic News

Iran to Import More Turkmen Gas

Iran will increase gas imports from Turkmenistan to 40 million cubic meters, said Iranian Deputy Oil Minister on Thursday. avad Oji, also managing director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), said Iran plans to increase its gas imports from neighboring country Turkmenistan by January next year. In July 2009, Iran and Turkmenistan agreed to review the formula of Turkmenistan's gas import to Iran once in every three years. The increase will be transported via a new pipeline from the Dolatabad field to Iran, though Dolatabad had previously been reserved exclusively for deliveries to Russia. Iran currently imports a total of 25 million cubic meters of gas from Turkmenistan from two different routes.

EU Firms Main 'Losers' of Iran Sanctions

Amid efforts by European states to impose unilateral sanctions on Iran, a senior official warns that confrontational policies will bear no fruit. "The policy of imposing sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program will not help to settle the disputes but will inflict the most damage to the European firms," Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Ahani said in a meeting with State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office, Wolf-Ruthart Born on Thursday. He dismissed the dual-track policy of diplomacy and sanctions as "deceitful and useless" and urged the European countries to end their confrontational approach towards Iran. "The European Union will face an appropriate and firm response from Iran should it pursue the policy of imposing sanctions," Ahani said.

Armenian-Iranian Business Forum Kicks Off in Yerevan

Armenian-Iranian business forum kicked off in Yerevan yesterday. Some 83 companies from different countries and 108 entrepreneurs from Iran are participating in the forum. As the General Manager of Haykaz Development Agency Robert Harutyunyan said at the opening ceremony, the Iranian delegation will be in Armenia on June 17-24. "This is the biggest forum ever in the history of the Armenian-Iranian economic relations," he said, highlighting that Armenian

businessmen attended a forum in Tehran in February this year. He said, relations with the neighboring country are on high level and the entrepreneurs are facing a task to maintain economic ties on the same level.

Iran's Daily Oil Exports Reach 2.3m Barrels

Iran's oil exports to different world countries have reached 2.3 million barrels per day and the country exported more than 844 million barrels of oil in the last Iranian year (ended March 20). The exports included around 259 million barrels of light crude and more than 473 million barrels of heavy crude oil. The remaining 112 million were other types of crude. Japan, China, South Africa, Brazil, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Spain, India and the Netherlands are the main importers of Iran's crude oil. Iran ranks third in the world in oil reserves and second in natural gas reserves. Iran is one of the leading members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF). Oil income accounts for 80 percent of Iran's foreign currency revenues and 60 percent of the nation's overall budget.

Official: Russia Main Trade Partner of Iran's Northern Provinces

Russia is the main trade partner of Iranian northern provinces with 900 million dollars worth of goods exported to the country every year from these provinces, an Iranian official said.

Secretary of sub-committee on economic cooperation of the Iranian northern provinces and Russia Hossein Kavousi said that foodstuffs, construction materials, petrochemicals, transportation, glass ware and carpets as the main items exported to this country.

Iran, Myanmar to Promote Economic Cooperation

The Islamic Republic of Iran and Myanmar will work to promote economic cooperation through the establishment of bilateral consultations between the foreign ministries of the two countries, said the official newspaper New Light of Myanmar yesterday. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the establishment of bilateral consultations was reached during a three-day visit to Myanmar by Iranian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Ali Fathollahi, the report said. Besides meeting with Myanmar Foreign Minister U Nyan Win during his visit, Fathollahi discussed with Myanmar Energy Minister U Lun Thi to cooperate in oil and gas sectors and held a bilateral meeting with his Myanmar counterpart U Maung Myint, exchanging views on mutually beneficial cooperation, the report added.

BMI: Iran' Consumer Electronics Market to Worth \$8b in 2010

Iran's consumer electronics devices market, defined as the addressable market for computing devices, mobile handsets and video, audio and gaming products, is forecast to be worth around 8 billion dollars in 2010, Business Monitor International announced in its Iran Consumer Electronics Report Q3 2010. The figure is expected to increase to 10.7 billion dollars by 2014, driven by the growing popularity of flat-screen television sets and notebook computers and

ongoing expansion of the retail sector. Latest banking sector data support BMI's view that the economy is on the road to recovery, with signs of a pick-up in real credit growth.

Iran Resets Car Import Tariff to 90%

The 70 percent tariff rate for imported cars by the Iranian Parliament during the endorsement stage of the annual budget bill, will be reset to 90 percent by the government, Mehr News Agency reported yesterday.

The parliament approved a bill in March to reduce car import duties by 20 percentages to 70 percentages, aiming to boost competition among domestic car manufacturers as well as persuade them to improve quality of their products. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad issued a decree on Tuesday for the augmentation of industrial products in Iran especially automotive products. According to the administration's official website, the Ministry of Industries and Mines has three-month time to devise a plan for automakers in a bid to improve the overall quality of the vehicles they produce.

Oil Minister Meets Turkmen President

Iranian Oil Minister Masoud Mirkazemi met with Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov in Ashkhabad yesterday. During the meeting, he discussed issues of mutual interests of the two countries especially in energy, oil and gas sectors. Mirkazemi has travelled to Turkmenistan following an invitation by Turkmenistan minister of energy. He is scheduled to separately meet with Turkmenistan's deputy prime minister and minister of energy later yesterday. A Memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed with Turkmen deputy prime minister on bilateral cooperation in the energy sector.

Pakistani Traders Welcome IP Pipeline

Pakistan's businessmen have welcomed the finalization of 7.5 billion dollars Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project according to which Iran will start supplying gas to Pakistan from 2014, Daily Times reported. The businessmen at a meeting held in Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) expressed hope for completion of the project in the near future which will greatly help Pakistan overcome its power deficiency and improve energy supply, particularly to the manufacturing and industrial sectors. Chairing the meeting, ICCI President Zahid Maqbool termed the finalization of the project a landmark achievement as it will not only contribute effectively in averting Pakistan's growing energy crisis, but will also strengthen relations between the two countries.

Iranian Director Rafi Pitts Selected for Edinburgh Festival Jury

Former Bond girl Britt Ekland, director Mike Hodges, New York's Museum of Modern Art's senior film curator Laurence Kardish are the other members. The quartet will judge for the Michael Powell Award. Inaugurated in 1993, the award is named in homage to the U.K. filmmaker. The prize aims to reward imagination and creativity in British filmmaking and 2009 award went to Duncan Jones for his debut film "Moon". The Edinburgh International Film Festival will open June 16 with Sylvain Chomet's "The Illusionist" and runs until June 27. Rafi Pitts "Hunter" is among the festival's participants. The film is about a young man who randomly kills two police officers in an act of vengeance. He escapes into a forest, where he is arrested by two other officers.

Minister: 2 MKO Terrorist Teams Disbanded

Iranian intelligence ministry announced that its forces have disbanded two teams affiliated to the anti-Iran terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) before they could stage their planned sabotage and terrorist operations in the capital city of Tehran. "The terrorist teams aimed to plant bombs in a number of squares in Tehran," Iranian Intelligence Minister Heidar Moslehi said on Tuesday, adding the security forces arrested them in a surprise operation before any the terrorists could make a move. Earlier on Sunday, an Iranian official had announced that several members of the MKO were arrested in Tehran on Friday, while they were seeking to spark tension in the Iranian capital on the anniversary of the last year's presidential election.

Political News

Iran Denounces UNSC Resolution 1929

Iran says the June 9 UN Security Council resolution was issued based on "false accusation" and contrary to global community expectations.

The subject of the resolution, contrary to all expectations, is on the peaceful nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have been turned around on the basis of false accusation,"

read a declaration, issued by Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) in response to the UN Security Council resolution 1929, passed on June 9, 2010.

The full text of the Declaration is as follows:

“In the name of God, the most Gracious and the most Merciful

“Islamic Republic of Iran’s Declaration in Response to the United Nations Security Council’s resolution

“The United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1929 on 9 June 2010. Contrary to the expectation of the international community that the Security Council’s resolution would be on condemnation of the attack on Gaza Freedom Flotilla that took place less than 10 days before the adoption of the resolution and imposition of punitive measures against the perpetrators of this attack, the international community saw pledging of formal commitment by the United States in support of the Zionist regime. This support for the atrocious crime prevented the Security Council from, taking any action. The resolution was also no response to the final declaration of NPT Review Conference that was adopted just 15 days earlier by 189 countries. This declaration required the Zionist regime to accede to NPT. The international community had not also seen any resolution by the Security Council in proliferation activities of the Zionist regime. Never has the Security Council shown any intention of finding out who has provided nuclear weapons to the Zionist regime.

“The reason is clear. Some of the permanent members of the Security Council are the principal suspects in this proliferation. The subject of resolution 1929 is not about the concern over production, manufacturing, proliferation and testing of new generation of nuclear weapons by permanent members of the Security Council and there is no reference to 11 proposals by the Islamic Republic of Iran at the NPT Review Conference concerning disarmament and non-proliferation; the same proposals that were welcomed by the international community. The subject of the resolution, contrary to all expectations, is on the peaceful nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have been turned around on the basis of false accusation. The accusations that have not been proven. On the contrary, the last report by the Director General of IAEA, published only one day before the Resolution, reiterated for the 22nd time that our activities show no diversion from peaceful objectives.

“Those behind the adoption of this resolution are exposing themselves to the judgment of the international community under circumstances that the world witnessed adoption of Tehran Declaration. This was a declaration that openly and clearly called for peaceful nuclear cooperation and avoiding confrontation with the rights of sovereign nations. The United States encouraged Brazil and Turkey to interact with Tehran while one month after the adoption of Tehran Declaration and the welcome it was accorded by the statement of 120 members of the Non-Aligned Movement members began to stand against it.

The adoption of resolution 1929 in light of Tehran Declaration and the attack on Gaza Freedom Flotilla has proven the righteousness of the viewpoints of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

"1. It proved that the Security Council is not a proper forum for maintenance of international peace and security and a body to secure the rights of nations. It proved that as long as the United States formally regards itself committed to the security of the Zionist regime and continues to support its atrocities, the Security Council will not adopt any resolution condemning the crimes by the Zionist regime.

"2. It proved that the United States has never been as discredited and distrusted in the world as it is now and that not even the slogan of "change" could restore the US administration's long-lost credibility. The international community clearly witnessed the US President's willingness to spend the credits of other countries under false pretenses. The statements made by the Honorable President of Brazil and the Honorable Prime Minister of Turkey are now available to the international community to pass judgment on.

"3. It has proven the United States is the principal offender in using, proliferating, producing and testing nuclear weapons, and poses the greatest threat to the international community and mostly its own people. How can a regime that is not able to contain the oil well be trusted by the world to contain its arsenal of nuclear weapons that jeopardize global security.

"4. It has proved that the United States tries to distract and redirect world public opinion from the real threats by concocting made-up and fictitious threats. The real threats are the direct results of flawed policies by the American regime in stockpiling nuclear weapons and supporting state terrorism.

"5. It has proven that certain monopolist governments are determined to deprive other nations of peaceful nuclear technology and having access to fuel cycle which are clear examples of the "right to development," "right to natural resources" and the "right to self-determination."

"Using the opportunity provided to the public opinion of the world in order to prove the above-mentioned viewpoints, the Islamic Republic of Iran declares:

"1. Entry of the Security Council into the subject relating to peaceful activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran is illegal, unwarranted and contrary to the article 39 of the Charter. It also fully contravenes the organization and safeguard requirements of IAEA. The Council needs to take prompt action in redressing and putting right its past mistakes.

"2. The Islamic Republic of Iran openly and clearly declares that any action against the lawful and legitimate right so people of Iran will be responded by reciprocal lawful actions of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"3. Disappointment of the U.S. administration in receiving the unanimous vote of the members of the Security Council, despite all the unconventional pressures exerted and contacts established by the President, and the fact the international community in the declaration of the Non-Aligned chose not to go along with the will of certain big powers clearly demonstrate the beginning of a new era of international relations to ensure the rights of nations based on justice and respect

"4. We are pleased to see that "Peaceful Nuclear Energy for All, Nuclear Weapons for None", as

a human goal, has turned into an opportunity to forge greater cooperation among independent governments and consider it an auspicious phenomenon for defending the fundamental rights of nations. Therefore, we believe that insistence of the U.S. administration on continuing on the same flawed path is costly, useless, and will only result in uncovering the unjust and faulty mask of the Security Council at their own cost and will strengthen the resolve of nations to have fair international relations.

"5. The Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes again the importance of Tehran Declaration as a good foundation for greater solidarity of independent nations in countering the excessive demands by big powers and forging stronger relations of peace, justice and happiness for humankind," concluded the SNSC Declaration.

Brazil Blasts U.S., UNSC for Making All Decisions for World

Brazil's Foreign minister, Celso Amorim, in rebutting criticism of Brazil and Turkey for the nuclear agreement with Iran, and asking that the emerging powers should be heard in international affairs, accused the United States, China, France, Britain and Russia of thinking they are in charge of the world.

In a direct reference to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the Brazilian foreign minister said "it remains the prerogative of a small number of countries to make all the decisions for the world."

"Global decisions are made by a handful of traditional powers. The permanent members of the Security Council had (and still have) the privilege of giving the letters on issues of international peace and security," said Celso Amorim.

"It's time to listen to emerging countries, such as Turkey and Brazil, but also others such as South Africa, Egypt and Indonesia, in the serious questions of peace and war," stressed the minister.

According to Amorim, including Brazil, Turkey, South Africa, Egypt and Indonesia in the great global debates "will open the doors to a better world." The Brazilian minister also said that "world decisions cannot continue to be made without hearing more voices."

Celso Amorim went on to say, "the insistence to adopt sanctions against Iran confirms the perception of analysts who denounce that the traditional centers of power will not share their privileged status."

The situation contrasts with the changes in recent years on the international scene, such as trade and climate change, which opened to large developing countries.

"The financial crisis has highlighted the emergence of new actors, replacing the Group of Eight (G8) as the primary forum for discussions and decision-making on the world economy," explained Celso Amorim.

"The discussions on trade, finance, climate change and inclusive global governance began to be open to developing countries," said the Foreign Minister while concluding that "without the presence of countries like China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico, no tangible results would be reached.

Iranian Pleads Guilty in Illegal Exports Sting

An Iranian national has pleaded guilty to charges of attempting to illegally export U.S. fighter jet parts to Iran, which he purchased from a US undercover agent, the Department of Justice has said.

Omid Khalili was charged in January along with a co-conspirator still at large identified only as Masun. He was arrested in March on arrival in Miami -- presumably from Iran -- and pleaded guilty in a U.S. District Court in Alabama.

For his nine-count indictment on conspiracy, money laundering, smuggling and violations of U.S. laws banning sensitive exports to Iran, Khalili faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a one million dollar fine if convicted, the Justice Department said.

According to court documents, Khalili and Masun, while "actively working with the Iranian government to procure military items," last year paid the undercover agent more than 70,000 dollars as a downpayment for military aircraft "parts to be shipped to Iran."

The parts were for an aircraft sold to Iran before the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution which is currently only in service with Iran's Air Force, the Justice Department said, apparently referring to the F-14 Tomcat.

Designated as "defense articles," the parts are on a U.S. list of items banned for export without a license from both the State and Treasury Departments due to the U.S. trade embargo on Iran.

"The defendants had not obtained the required US government export licenses for such exports," the Justice Department said.

Gates: Iran Could Fire "Hundreds" of Missiles at Europe

U.S. intelligence has shown Iran could launch an attack against Europe with "scores or hundreds" of missiles, prompting major changes to U.S. missile defenses, Pentagon chief Robert Gates said on Thursday.

President Barack Obama in September cited a mounting danger from Iran's arsenal of short and medium-range missiles when he announced an overhaul of U.S. missile defense plans.

The new program, called the "phased adaptive approach," uses sea and land-based interceptors to protect NATO allies in the region, instead of mainly larger weapons designed to counter long-range missiles.

"One of the elements of the intelligence that contributed to the decision on the phased adaptive array was the realization that if Iran were actually to launch a missile attack on Europe, it wouldn't be just one or two missiles or a handful," Gates told a senate hearing.

"It would more likely be a salvo kind of attack, where you would be dealing potentially with scores or even hundreds of missiles."

Top U.S. generals have said the new anti-missile system was meant to guard against a potential salvo of missiles from states such as Iran or North Korea.

Gates made the comment when asked by Republican Senator Saxby Chambliss if he supported deploying improved missile defenses, including plans for an upgraded SM-3 missile by 2020, even if Russia objected.

Gates said he backed the 10-year plan, despite possible resistance from Moscow, saying the new missile defenses "would give us the ability to protect our troops, our bases, our facilities and our allies in Europe."

Gates, along with other top deputies in the Obama administration, appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to argue for ratification of a new nuclear arms control treaty with Russia, trying to reassure Republican lawmakers the agreement posed no threat to the missile defense program.

Medvedev Criticizes Iran Sanctions

Russia and the United States should "act collectively" to coax Iran back to international talks on its nuclear program, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev told The Wall Street Journal in an interview published on Thursday.

The Journal quoted Medvedev as complaining about additional sanctions against Iran imposed by the United States and European Union just after Russia backed a carefully negotiated package of U.N. sanctions last week.

"A couple of years ago, that would have been impossible," Medvedev said, referring to Russia's support of the U.N. sanctions designed to pressure Tehran to return to talks on its uranium enrichment program.

The EU adopted tighter sanctions against Iran on Thursday, including measures to block oil and gas investment and curtail its refining and natural gas capability.

The measures go substantially beyond those approved by the United Nations on June 10.

The U.S. Treasury on Wednesday also imposed new sanctions on Iran, blacklisting a state-controlled bank, companies that are fronts for the state shipping line and more members of the Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Tehran rejects Western allegations that it wants atomic weapons and says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

In the interview, Medvedev said the United States had nothing to lose by imposing additional sanctions, as it has no ties with Iran, unlike Russia and China.

"We didn't agree to this when we discussed the joint resolution at the U.N.," Medvedev said. "We should act collectively. If we do, we will have the desired result."

Medvedev was interviewed in St. Petersburg before a state visit to the United States next week.

President Barack Obama's administration has made a deliberate effort to improve relations with Russia since Obama took office last year and has engaged Moscow on a range of issues important to U.S. interests.

The newspaper said the Russian leader also voiced optimism he could continue to widen cooperation between Russia and the United States and maintain a "dialogue" he has started with Obama.

In the wide-ranging Journal interview, Medvedev also was quoted as saying he was worried the situation in Kyrgyzstan, could deteriorate further, warning that a Taliban-style extremist government could arise in that country.

Renewed turmoil in Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet republic, has fueled concern in Russia, the United States and neighboring China.

Washington uses an air base at Manas in the north of the country, about 190 miles from Osh -- Kyrgyzstan's second city and the scene of recent deadly ethnic clashes, to supply its forces in Afghanistan.

Russia has objected to the U.S. base, but Medvedev told the Journal that "the future of this base is in the hands of the Kyrgyzstan government.

Jannati Condemns UNSC Anti-Iran Resolution

Substitute Friday prayers leader of Tehran, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, has condemned the UN Security Council's June 9 anti-Iran resolution and said Iran will turn the resolution threats into an opportunity.

“Under wise leadership of the Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and through people’s backing, we will, God willing, turn the threats into opportunity, thus bringing the U.S. disgrace,” said Ayatollah Jannati in his second sermon to this week’s Friday prayers congregation at Tehran University campus.

He said Iranians are accustomed to sanctions and are not scared of it.

He added, “Though putting us in trouble all these years, the sanctions have caused flourishing of talents and progress of the nation.”

He added that many of Iran’s technological and scientific achievements have been due to sanctions.

The Ayatollah then referred to the May 17 Iran-Turkey-Brazil Fuel Swap Declaration and said the declaration disclosed many accusations, lies and libels, showing that the Islamic Republic of Iran is not after production of nuclear weapons.

“Tehran Declaration shows Iran’s preparedness to have peaceful (nuclear) activities. The declaration convinced major portion of the world people. By issuing a new resolution, they also disgraced themselves.”

On parts of the anti-Iran resolution, which call for inspection of Iranian ships and airliners, Ayatollah Jannati said architects of the resolution have, by including the segments on the inspection, intended to humiliate Iran.

He then termed as “courageous” recent stances of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in support of Iran’s nuclear program and said such a kind of approach has been unprecedented in Iran’s history.

“Iranian people are prepared for sanctions. Negotiation under your stick will be meaningless for us and we will ourselves set conditions for the talks.”

As for the arson attack of the Zionist regime of Israel on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, the Ayatollah said though the UN Security Council refused to condemn the brutal measures, the global community denounced them. “This shows that Israel will get further isolated day by day,” he added.

He hoped that noble Quds and innocent Palestinian people will get rid of the Zionist regime and superpowers as soon as possible.

Ahmadinejad: Iranians, Symbol of Global Justice-Seeking

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said here Wednesday Iranians are symbol of “global justice seeking nations, pioneer of idol breakers, breaker of world idols, and path openers of well being for entire world nations”.

Ahmadinejad made the comment in a meeting with the families of Charmahal-o-Bakhtiari Province martyrs, war disabled veterans and missed in action (MIA) combatants in provincial capital city, Shahr-e-Kord during his 3rd provincial tour atop his cabinet.

Ahmadinejad added, “The fact that Iran’s name and fame is widespread around the globe today is a sign of the Iranian nation’s grandeur, otherwise the United States and the western countries’ moves weigh next to nothing.”

The president said, “The United States and the western countries try to loot the entire world, from Iraq and Afghanistan, to the other parts of the world, but wherever they strengthen their presence they notice they are faced with Iran that disrupts their plans!”

Referring to the confessions of the famous arrested Iranian bandit Abdolmalek Rigi, President Ahmadinejad said, “According to him, the Americans had declared that they are merely after dealing blows against Iran, assuring Rigi’s outlawed group of receiving as much weapons as they might need in order to accomplish that mission.”

The president said, “The Americans assume they can isolate Iran issuing a single resolution, while referring to anywhere in the world they would realize that Iran is not isolated at all, but it is them that are in fact isolated.”

Referring to the viewpoints of certain well known western thinkers in the west, Ahmadinejad said, “The westerners have lost hope in their own leaders and are hoping that Iran would do something for the well being and perfection of the mankind.”

He reiterated, “That is the reason why Iran is in the agenda of the world work plans, but all the same it is moving towards well being and perfection like a roaring river.”

The president said that the issuance of the recent resolution against Iran was not a sign of the United States might, or that of the other issuers of it, but a reminder of the Iranian nation’s power and grandeur that have worried all of them and fully disrupted their plans.”

Ahmadinejad said, “If the United States had provided true information about the world developments for its own nation and the Americans would get to know about the crimes committed by their leaders in Iraq and Afghanistan, they would have got rid of their leaders themselves.”

He added, “The future is quite bright and Iran has been moving towards changing the unjust status quo, which will take place for sure in the future by grace of God and the world would move towards embracing justice, and all such developments are indebted to the selfless and devoted efforts of the Iranian nation.”

The president reiterated, “The Iranian nation, too, feels dully indebted to the entire war disabled veterans, martyrs and missed in action combatants, as well as their dear families, whom we wholeheartedly appreciate hereby.

Iran Urges Plan for Global Nuclear Disarmament

Iran has called on Geneva Disarmament Conference to begin serious disarmament talks, asking for devising a chronological plan for total global nuclear disarmament.

Iran's Ambassador and permanent representative Mohammad-Reza Sajjadi made the comment at Geneva Disarmament Conference on Tuesday, June 15th.

He added, "The nuclear arsenals of certain countries pose the greatest threats to the world peace and security today."

Sajjadi said, "It is a pity that two decades after the end to the Cold War, its malicious heritage is still exerting its weigh against the international community. Nuclear weapons are sill stockpiled at the arsenals of a limited number of countries, and the military doctrines on their usage keep getting updated."

He criticized the usage of nuclear weapons, particularly against the countries that do not posses them, arguing, "The world cannot wait for good to see whether the countries that possess the nuclear weapons are willing to annihilate them, or not; therefore, it is necessary for the international community to adopt serious and immediate measures in the field."

He said that in line with Iran's basic policies for the annihilation of the entire nuclear weapons, Tehran and the NAM members proposed a time schedule for the full annihilation of the world nuclear weapons by the year 2025 at the NPT Review Conference."

Expressing regret that the said conference failed in answering the international community's expectations in that respect, he proposed that the Disarmament Conference would not remain indifferent about it, proposing that "Let everyone do their best to make that dream come true."

The other speaker at the session, Brazil's Foreign Minister Celso Amorim, referring to Tehran Trilateral Communiqué, called it a diplomatic success.

He added, "That communiqué was issued in a way to both ensure Iran's natural nuclear rights and to assure the international community about the peaceful nature of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Larijani Cautions EU Against Hostile Stand on Iran

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani on Thursday advised the European Union not to adopt hostile stands on Iran.

Speaking to reporters in Qom, he said, "If the enemies dare to hurl stones at us, they should be watchful that the soil of Iran will go into their eyes."

Larijani made the comment in reaction to the news about the EU attempt to approve sanctions on Iran.

"In the past ten years, the U.S. urged the Europeans to adopt hostile stand on Iran to attain its sinister goals and push them to take a leading role to this end, but to no avail," he said.

Larijani said that the European leaders exercised vigilance and examined the situation as they share common interests with Iran and the region.

He said that the U.S. draws attention of the Europeans to the so-called threat posed by Iranian missiles but in fact these missiles have nothing to do with the EU.

The Europeans should be vigilant and not to be trapped by the old tricks of the .S. and the Zionist regime, he said. "They should not assume that they must follow the resolution of the United Nations Security Council by devising sanctions, because these futile attempts cannot create any obstacle to the national nuclear program."

Iran to Retaliate Ship Inspection in Open Seas

Rapporteur of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Kazem Jalali said Thursday that Iran would retaliate any possible inspecting of its ships in the high seas.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the Majlis open session, Jalali said, "Those who launch any attack against Iranian ships, must measure consequences of their moves from very this moment."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will strongly rise for its rights," Jalali said, stressing that Iran enjoyed many factors of being a powerful country including the possession of the strategic waterway of the Hormuz Strait in the Persian Gulf region.

"One of these factors is that one of the most sensitive points of the world, the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, belongs to Iran," the MP said.

He stressed that Tehran would not tolerate inspection of its ships by other countries under the pretext of a new resolution adopted by the United Nations Security Council against Iran for its peaceful nuclear activities.

Under severe pressures exerted by the U.S. and Zionist regime, Resolution 1929 was adopted on June 9 by a vote of 12 in favor to two against (Brazil, Turkey), and one abstention (Lebanon).

It urged other countries to inspect "vessels on the high seas with the consent of the flag State."

The resolution also called upon all States to cooperate in such inspections.

Vahidi: Sanctions Lead Youth to Self-Sufficiency

Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Ahmad Vahidi says Iran had become self-sufficient regarding military equipments whose sale was banned by sanctions, adding that Iran was able to export such equipment to other countries.

"Under the recent resolution, the arrogant powers prohibited armament sale to Iran, but not only doesn't Iran need such equipments but it is able to export such weapons," Vahidi said.

Vahidi said Iran is self-sufficient in engineering and manufacturing artillery, armored vehicles, tanks, gun ships and battleships, adding that recent sanctions against Iran revealed the UN Security Council and the arrogant powers deep hatred and malice toward the Iranian nation as well as their poor understanding of international issues.

Vahidi said sanctions would not affect the strong will of Iranians and would produce the reverse of what they had expected.

He added that imposing sanctions on civilian companies involved in road or dam construction would encourage the youth to move towards self-sufficiency with more haste.

Iran Warns U.S. Possible Inspection of Iranian Shipments

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani yesterday warned the U.S. and some adventurous countries that if they were tantalized to inspect Iranian planes and ships, Iran would retaliate the act in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea.

He added the retaliation is part of defending the Iranian national rights.

Addressing the open session of Majlis, he added according to news after issuing the late disgraced resolution against Iran, the EU and American Senate and Congress have committed another measure to complete the Security Council's adventurous cycle and have prepared more resolutions against the nation.

He said as other countries do not observe NPT regulations and have not provide the needed fuel for Tehran research reactor, Majlis calls on the government to enrich uranium to 20 percent.

Larijani pointed to the issuance of a recent resolution by the United Nations Security Council backed by the U.S., the EU and the American Congress and said the Parliament wanted the government to put the base of its enrichment productions on 20-percent level.

He reiterated that America and the Zionist regime could not cover their crimes they have committed against the Freedom Flotilla by such framings.

The top parliamentarian added the issue of breaking the Gaza siege and preventing judaization of Beit ul-Moqaddas are the brilliant campaign of the world of Islam against Zionists.

U.S. Aims to Widen Iran Sanctions Scope

U.S. lawmakers are seeking to include international banks in sanctions legislation on Iran, as part of a push to widen its scope and bring in more targets.

People close to negotiations on Capitol Hill say discussions are intensifying about introducing measures into the final text – such as sanctions against Iran’s Revolutionary Guard and those involved in the crackdown on the country’s opposition as well as measures in the financial sector.

Matthew Levitt, a former U.S. Treasury official now at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said measures on banks that did business with designated Iranian financial groups would take sanctions in the sector to “another level”.

The move to toughen up the unilateral legislation follows a delay of almost six months, in which Congress agreed to help the Obama administration to build an international consensus on United Nations sanctions on Iran.

With sanctions agreed at the UN, many politicians argue that delays – and what they see as the relative weakness of UN resolutions – mean there is more reason to proceed with tougher sanctions legislation than was envisaged.

John McCain, the former presidential nominee, has called for “very stiff sanctions” at the congressional level, while leading Democrats have urged their colleagues to pass the strongest possible Iran sanctions legislation promptly.

The legislation is designed to discourage sales to Iran of the refined oil on which its economy depends, by imposing measures both on oil traders and insurance companies underwriting the shipments.

It has been backed overwhelmingly by both houses of Congress, but is awaiting agreement on a final text and votes in both chambers.

The Democratic leadership of both the House and the Senate – including Chris Dodd, the Senate banking committee chairman – say they are “fully committed” to passing tough sanctions by the end of this month.

Officials and staffers say that one of the central topics of negotiation is the latitude President Barack Obama would be granted over the sanctions. But the addition of fresh targets, though still not certain, is also becoming a focus of attention.

Such measures could affect banks from east Asia and the Persian Gulf, since many European banks have pulled out of Iran or cut down business in the country in recent years.

Economic News

Iran to Import More Turkmen Gas

Iran will increase gas imports from Turkmenistan to 40 million cubic meters, said Iranian Deputy Oil Minister on Thursday.

Javad Oji, also managing director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), said Iran plans to increase its gas imports from neighboring country Turkmenistan by January next year.

In July 2009, Iran and Turkmenistan agreed to review the formula of Turkmenistan's gas import to Iran once in every three years.

The increase will be transported via a new pipeline from the Dolatabad field to Iran, though Dolatabad had previously been reserved exclusively for deliveries to Russia

Iran currently imports a total of 25 million cubic meters of gas from Turkmenistan from two different routes.

After the new phase of Turkmenistan's second gas pipeline becomes operational, gas imports from Turkmenistan will increase up to the level of 40 million cubic meters per day, Oji said.

In October 2009, Iranian Oil Minister Masoud Mirkazemi announced that Iran will increase its import of Turkmen natural gas from 25 million cubic meters to 33 million cubic meters daily beginning in mid December 2009.

EU Firms Main 'Losers' of Iran Sanctions

Amid efforts by European states to impose unilateral sanctions on Iran, a senior official warns that confrontational policies will bear no fruit.

"The policy of imposing sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program will not help to settle the disputes but will inflict the most damage to the European firms," Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Ahani said in a meeting with State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office, Wolf-Ruthart Born on Thursday.

He dismissed the dual-track policy of diplomacy and sanctions as "deceitful and useless" and urged the European countries to end their confrontational approach towards Iran.

"The European Union will face an appropriate and firm response from Iran should it pursues the policy of imposing sanctions," Ahani said.

He pointed to the new resolution passed by the UN Security Council on June 9 imposing the fourth round of sanctions on Iran and said the new sanctions against Iran are counterproductive.

The deputy foreign minister added that countries which voted for the recent UN resolution only aim to undermine the interactive approach of the Tehran nuclear declaration.

Based on the declaration, issued by Iran, Brazil and Turkey on May 17, Tehran announced readiness to exchange 1,200 kg of its low enriched uranium on Turkish soil for fuel for its medical research reactor.

Born, for his part, said that Germany and the EU will pursue their diplomatic efforts to lift sanctions imposed on Iran.

Armenian-Iranian Business Forum Kicks Off in Yerevan

Armenian-Iranian business forum kicked off in Yerevan yesterday.

Some 83 companies from different countries and 108 entrepreneurs from Iran are participating in the forum.

As the General Manager of Haykaz Development Agency Robert Harutyunyan said at the opening ceremony, the Iranian delegation will be in Armenian on June 17-24.

“This is the biggest forum ever in the history of the Armenian-Iranian economic relations,” he said, highlighting that Armenian businessmen attended a forum in Tehran in February this year.

He said, relations with the neighboring country are on high level and the entrepreneurs are facing a task to maintain economic ties on the same level.

Goods turnover is increasing every year between the two countries and both states still have a wide range of potential.

He expressed hope that the forum will bear positive results and new agreements will be signed.

Trade volume between Iran and Armenia decreased to 200 million dollars in 2009.

Both countries enjoy cultural and historical ties that go back thousands of years. Also the two states have cooperated in various areas particularly in energy, transportation, sports, and tourism.

Iran's Daily Oil Exports Reach 2.3m Barrels

Iran's oil exports to different world countries have reached 2.3 million barrels per day and the country exported more than 844 million barrels of oil in the last Iranian year (ended March 20).

The exports included around 259 million barrels of light crude and more than 473 million barrels of heavy crude oil. The remaining 112 million were other types of crude.

Japan, China, South Africa, Brazil, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Spain, India and the Netherlands are the main importers of Iran's crude oil.

Iran ranks third in the world in oil reserves and second in natural gas reserves.

Iran is one of the leading members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF).

Oil income accounts for 80 percent of Iran's foreign currency revenues and 60 percent of the nation's overall budget.

Official: Russia Main Trade Partner of Iran's Northern Provinces

Russia is the main trade partner of Iranian northern provinces with 900 million dollars worth of goods exported to the country every year from these provinces, an Iranian official said.

Secretary of sub-committee on economic cooperation of the Iranian northern provinces and Russia Hossein Kavousi said that foodstuffs, construction materials, petrochemicals, transportation, glass ware and carpets as the main items exported to this country.

Kavousi cited Russia as the main trade partner of the Iranian northern provinces, Gilan province in particular.

He added that the Iranian northern provinces export the commodities to Astrakhan and south of Russia.

Iran, Myanmar to Promote Economic Cooperation

The Islamic Republic of Iran and Myanmar will work to promote economic cooperation through the establishment of bilateral consultations between the foreign ministries of the two countries, said the official newspaper New Light of Myanmar yesterday.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the establishment of bilateral consultations was reached during a three-day visit to Myanmar by Iranian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Ali Fathollahi, the report said.

Besides meeting with Myanmar Foreign Minister U Nyan Win during his visit, Fathollahi discussed with Myanmar Energy Minister U Lun Thi to cooperate in oil and gas sectors and held a bilateral meeting with his Myanmar counterpart U Maung Myint, exchanging views on mutually beneficial cooperation, the report added.

The two sides expressed their desire to further expand the ties of friendship and economic cooperation as well as to increase cooperation in the regional and international forums such as the United Nations and Non-Aligned Movement, it said.

The two sides also agreed to increase contacts between Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Mines of the two countries in order to promote trade and economic cooperation, the report added.

In March this year, Myanmar Deputy Foreign Minister U Maung Myint visited Iran and held a bilateral meeting with his Iranian counterpart on enhancing friendship and cooperation.

BMI: Iran' Consumer Electronics Market to Worth \$8b in 2010

Iran's consumer electronics devices market, defined as the addressable market for computing devices, mobile handsets and video, audio and gaming products, is forecast to be worth around 8 billion dollars in 2010, Business Monitor International announced in its Iran Consumer Electronics Report Q3 2010.

The figure is expected to increase to 10.7 billion dollars by 2014, driven by the growing popularity of flat-screen television sets and notebook computers and ongoing expansion of the retail sector.

Latest banking sector data support BMI's view that the economy is on the road to recovery, with signs of a pick-up in real credit growth.

Iran's steadily increasing population will support private consumption growth, while spending on consumer electronics will also be driven by new technologies and expanding internet and mobile telecoms penetration.

Computer hardware accounted for around 46 percent of Iranian consumer electronics spending in 2009.

BMI projects Iranian domestic market computer sales including notebooks and accessories of 3.7 billion dollars in 2010, up from 3.5 billion dollars in 2009.

Computer hardware compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for the 2010-2014 periods is forecast at about 7 percent, with notebooks and net books accounting for about 50 percent of sales.

AV devices accounted for around 28 percent of Iranian consumer electronics spending in 2009. Iran's domestic AV device market is projected at 2.3 billion dollars in 2010.

The market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 5 percent during 2010-2014 to a value of 2.8 billion dollars in 2014.

Mobile handset sales accounted for around 26 percent of Iranian consumer electronics spending in 2009. Iranian market handset sales are expected to grow to 3.1 billion dollars in 2014, as mobile subscriber penetration reaches 132 percent.

Iran Resets Car Import Tariff to 90%

The 70 percent tariff rate for imported cars by the Iranian Parliament during the endorsement

stage of the annual budget bill, will be reset to 90 percent by the government, Mehr News Agency reported yesterday.

The parliament approved a bill in March to reduce car import duties by 20 percentages to 70 percentages, aiming to boost competition among domestic car manufacturers as well as persuade them to improve quality of their products.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad issued a decree on Tuesday for the augmentation of industrial products in Iran especially automotive products.

According to the administration's official website, the Ministry of Industries and Mines has three-month time to devise a plan for automakers in a bid to improve the overall quality of the vehicles they produce.

The plan should include directions on how to decrease gas consumption and meet required safety and pollution standards in both vehicles and spare parts they produce.

In addition, after-sale services should be improved and made international competition in world markets.

After the plan is prepared, it should be submitted to the Cabinet for final approval.

Oil Minister Meets Turkmen President

Iranian Oil Minister Masoud Mirkazemi met with Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov in Ashkhabad yesterday.

During the meeting, he discussed issues of mutual interests of the two countries especially in energy, oil and gas sectors.

Mirkazemi has travelled to Turkmenistan following an invitation by Turkmenistan minister of energy.

He is scheduled to separately meet with Turkmenistan's deputy prime minister and minister of energy later yesterday.

A Memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed with Turkmen deputy prime minister on bilateral cooperation in the energy sector.

Turkmenistan, Central Asia's biggest gas producer, is seen as one of the key suppliers for the planned Nabucco pipeline from Turkey to Austria, designed to ease Europe's dependence on Russia for gas supplies.

Iran and Turkmenistan have 1,260 kilometers common borders including in land and waters in the Caspian Sea. The neighboring countries have expanded their bilateral relations recently.

In January 2010, the presidents of Iran and Turkmenistan inaugurated the first phase of the second pipeline transferring Turkmenistan's gas to Iran.

Iran sits atop the world's second-largest natural gas reserves after Russia and has long sought to promote itself as a transit route for oil and gas from Central Asian.

Pakistani Traders Welcome IP Pipeline

Pakistan's businessmen have welcomed the finalization of 7.5 billion dollars Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project according to which Iran will start supplying gas to Pakistan from 2014, Daily Times reported.

The businessmen at a meeting held in Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) expressed hope for completion of the project in the near future which will greatly help Pakistan overcome its power deficiency and improve energy supply, particularly to the manufacturing and industrial sectors.

Chairing the meeting, ICCI President Zahid Maqbool termed the finalization of the project a landmark achievement as it will not only contribute effectively in averting Pakistan's growing energy crisis, but will also strengthen relations between the two countries.

Social News

Iranian Director Rafi Pitts Selected for Edinburgh Festival Jury

jury at the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

Former Bond girl Britt Ekland, director Mike Hodges, New York's Museum of Modern Art's senior film curator Laurence Kardish are the other members.

The quartet will judge for the Michael Powell Award. Inaugurated in 1993, the award is named in homage to the U.K. filmmaker.

The prize aims to reward imagination and creativity in British filmmaking and 2009 award went to Duncan Jones for his debut film "Moon".

The Edinburgh International Film Festival will open June 16 with Sylvain Chomet's "The

Illusionist” and runs until June 27.

Rafi Pitts “Hunter” is among the festival’s participants. The film is about a young man who randomly kills two police officers in an act of vengeance. He escapes into a forest, where he is arrested by two other officers.

“Revolving around his magnetic central performance, the film is a powerful thriller that lingers in the mind long after the last gunshot rings out,” the festival’s website described the movie.

Minister: 2 MKO Terrorist Teams Disbanded

Iranian intelligence ministry announced that its forces have disbanded two teams affiliated to the anti-Iran terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) before they could stage their planned sabotage and terrorist operations in the capital city of Tehran.

"The terrorist teams aimed to plant bombs in a number of squares in Tehran," Iranian Intelligence Minister Heidar Moslehi said on Tuesday, adding the security forces arrested them in a surprise operation before any the terrorists could make a move.

Earlier on Sunday, an Iranian official had announced that several members of the MKO were arrested in Tehran on Friday, while they were seeking to spark tension in the Iranian capital on the anniversary of the last year's presidential election.

"Based on the information received (thus far), a number of MKO members are among the individuals who were arrested by the people (civilians) yesterday," Governor-General of Tehran Morteza Tammadon said.