

Business and Politics in the Muslim World

Weekly Report on Iran
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Summary

U.S. Downplays Iran Threat in Latin America

U.S. military officials said Tuesday that Iran is trying to expand its influence in Latin America but that Tehran's presence there doesn't yet pose a military threat to the United States. The Pentagon last week released a 12-page report that identified an "increased presence" by Iran's elite military force in Latin America, particularly in Venezuela.

Leader Calls for Enforcement of Article 44 of Constitution

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said yesterday that the general principles of the Article 44 of the Iranian Constitution should be fully implemented. Addressing thousands of laborers on the occasion of "Labor Week" the Supreme Leader advised officials to closely watch out suspicious activities of those seeking to break.

Mottaki: Iran Has Friendly Ties With SAARC Members

Foreign Minister upon his arrival in Bhutan said the Islamic Republic of Iran has friendly relations with all SAARC members. "Iran has always had a constructive role in resolving international crises and can play the same role in SAARC together with other members," Manouchehr Mottaki said.

Iranian opposition not "dissidents" says opposition clergy

A senior Iranian opposition clergyman said Saturday that the country's opposition leaders were neither dissidents nor wanted to overturn the Islamic government system. 'We are neither dissidents nor agents of foreigners planning to topple the Islamic system,' Mehdi Karroubi, head of the reformist party Etemad Melli (National Trust), said in his latest statement carried on opposition websites.

Iran opposition leaders are not regime 'topplers': Karroubi

Iranian opposition leader Mehdi Karroubi said on Saturday that he and fellow opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi were not "topplers" of the country's Islamic regime, an opposition website reported. "We are neither topplers (of the regime) or lackeys of foreigners," said Karroubi who has continued to launch his tirades against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his government.

Iran won't agree to fuel swap'

Iran will never agree to exchange its low-level enriched uranium for nuclear fuel rods enriched abroad, a top adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Friday.

"We would be very naive to trust the West," Ali Akbar Velayati, Khamenei's senior adviser on international affairs, told state news agency IRNA. "Why do they insist on moving the uranium abroad? This is proof of their diabolical intent."

Congressmen: Block Ahmadinejad From Entering the U.S.

Ahead of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's intended visit to address a UN conference on nuclear non-proliferation next week in New York, several U.S. Congressmen on Friday demanded to deny his entry into the country.

China Not to Back Iran Sanctions

China will not support sanctions against Iran, a senior foreign affairs ministry official has said. According to Ugandan Ambassador James Mugume, the chief technocrat at the

ministry, Chinese officials had intimated that they would not be supporting sanctions. He did not say if China would veto attempts to punish Iran over its alleged nuclear program.

Missile System Not Aimed at Iran

Poland has clarified that its missile cooperation with the United States has nothing to do with Washington's allegation of a possible missile threat from Iran. If Tehran "has a target list we believe we are quite low on it," Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said in an interview with the American magazine Foreign Policy during his trip to Washington on Thursday.

Minister Blames Britain for Arab Claims on Persian Gulf

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyed Mohammad Hosseini said that the recent claims raised by a number of Arab states over the identity of the Persian Gulf were the result of British inspirations.

Larijani: West Seeks to Tarnish Image of Clerics

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani says the western countries from early stages of the Islamic Revolution have been trying to tarnish the image of clerics and Velayat-e Faqih. He made the remarks in the first ever gathering of councils in charge of mosque affairs in Tehran yesterday.

Nuclear Fuel Swap Must Happen in Iran

An advisor to the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution says Tehran cannot trust a Western offer on exchanging its nuclear fuel outside the country. Ali-Akbar Velayati, a foreign policy advisor of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, said on Friday that the West has a record of breaking its promises to Iran.

Navy Ready to Safeguard Iran's Territorial Waters

The Navy is fully prepared to safeguard the country's territorial waters, the Persian Gulf in particular, a senior commander underlined yesterday. "We can say with great honor that the Islamic Republic of Iran's Navy is now at the highest level of defensive preparedness to provide security in our country's waters," Lieutenant General of the Navy Hossein Ashrafi said.

Official Lauds Strategic Ties Between Tehran, Jakarta

A senior Iranian official yesterday praised the close cooperation between Tehran and Jakarta in all the bilateral, regional and international arenas, and described the two countries' age-old relations as "strategic".

Iran's Scientific Production Rises 30 Times

Production of scientific articles have increased 30 times during years after victory of the Islamic Revolution, deputy Minister of Science, Research and Technology Mahdi Nejad Nouri announced on Saturday.

Mottaki Urges U.S. to Fulfill Obligations as UN Host

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki yesterday reminded Washington that the U.S., as a UN hosting country, is obliged to issue visas for the Iranian officials to attend the meetings of the world body.

Petrochemicals Output Reach 34m Tons

Iran has produced 34 million tons of various petrochemical products in the last Iranian year (March 2009-March 2010), oil deputy minister Abdol-Hossein Bayat said. "Last year, Iran produced 34 million tons of various petrochemical products, of which 16 million tons was exported to many countries in the world," Bayat said.

Economic Front

Indonesia Eying Iran as Potential Tourism Market

Indonesia will soon direct the focus of its tourism promotion efforts on the Iranian market, a tourism ministry official said here Tuesday. "Probably next year, we will begin to canvass the tourism market in Iran, a Persian Gulf country with a high income per capita figure," I Gde Pitana, director of overseas promotions at the Culture and Tourism Ministry, said.

Japanese Co. Ready to Extend Oil Field Share in Iran

Japan's INPEX Corp says it is eager to extend its current 10 percent share in the Azadegan Oil Field in the south of Iran. Speaking on the sidelines of the 15th International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (April 23-26), the general manager of INPEX Corp's Tehran Office, Taizo Uchimura, said that in case of its agreement with the Iranian government, it is ready to extend its share from current 10 per cent.

Iran, Cuba to Boost Trade, Economic Ties

During the visit of an Iranian high-ranking diplomatic delegation to Cuba, the two countries agreed to boost ties in transportations and biotechnology, Cuban Foreign Ministry reported.

Iran to Open Copper Wire Factory in Belarus

Iran has planned to inaugurate copper wire factory in Belarus in the presence of Iranian Minister of Industries and Mines Ali-Akbar Mehrabian next week. Iranian private sector has spent \$8m on completion of the project.

Iran, Bosnia Sign Agreement on Cooperation

The Iranian and Bosnian finance ministers inked an agreement on economic cooperation yesterday. The agreement was signed by Iran's Shamseddin Hosseini and Bosnia-Herzegovina's Nikola Spiric in the Bosnian capital city of Sarajevo.

Guinean FM Urges Expansion of Economic Ties with Iran

Foreign Minister of the Republic of Guinea Bakary Fofana yesterday underlined his country's eagerness to further develop economic and industrial relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran Exports \$18.5b of Industrial, Mineral Goods

Iran exported over 18.5 billion dollars worth of industrial and mineral goods to different countries during the last Iranian year of 1388 (March 21, 2009-March 21, 2010). According to a report released by the Ministry of Industries and Mines, the industrial and mineral goods constituted over 84 percent of Iran's non-oil exports which were exported last year.

320 Projects for Iranian Expatriate, Foreign Investors

Details of 320 projects have been gathered to be presented to Iranian investors residing abroad and foreign investors at a conference which will be held in Shiraz on May 22. The conference will introduce investment opportunities in different provinces of Iran to foreign-based entrepreneurs, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting reported yesterday.

Tehran, Minsk Discuss Ways to Remove Trade Obstacles

Head of the Institute of Standard and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI) Nezamoddin Barzegari and Belarusian Ambassador to Tehran Victor Rybak attended a meeting here yesterday to explore ways to remove trade barriers.

Ukraine Exports 400,000 Tons of Coke to Iran

Ukraine's Donetskstal Company announced that it will export more than 400,000 tons of coke to Iran by the end of 2010.

Iran Oil Exports to Japan Reach 442,000 bpd

Iran's oil exports to Japan exceeded 2 million kiloliters in March, Dow Jones reported. Japanese oil refiners and trading companies imported 2.18 million kiloliters of crude oil in March, or about 442,000 barrels a day, from Iran, down 6.4% from a year earlier and up 21% from February, data from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry showed.

Iraq Wants to Import Gas from Iran

Iraq has requested for importing 300-500 million cubic feet of Iranian natural gas, the Oil Deputy Minister Hossein Noghrekar Shirazi said. Referring to the negotiations held last week between Iranian and Iraqi officials in Tehran, Noghrekar Shirazi said that the negotiations were based on supplying Iraq with natural gas demands in border provinces especially in power stations.

Social Front

1 Ton of Drugs Seized in Fars

Commander of the Fars province's anti-narcotic police squad said his forces have seized large amounts of illicit drugs across the southern Iranian province in several operations. "After conducting a series of intelligence operations, our forces identified a drug gang that transported large amounts of narcotics from Iran's eastern regions to Fars province and stored them in a village near the town of Darab," Fars News Agency quoted Mohammad Esmail Mesri as saying on Wednesday.

Noise Pollution Afflicts Tehran Hospitals

Close to 95 percent of Tehran hospitals are exposed to noise pollution. A professor from UK's University of Sheffield, who has traveled to Iran for the second time, said this is an extraordinary figure, urging Tehran Municipality to find a solution for it by completing the sound level map, Mehr News Agency wrote.

Ahmadinejad Hails Those Active in Divine Philosophy

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has hailed the personalities who are active in the field of divine philosophy. In a ceremony held here yesterday, the fifth in its kind, President Ahmadinejad appreciated them on the eve of Teachers Day in Iran (May 2) to commemorate the martyrdom of Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, one of the most famous Iranian personalities in this field.

Political News

U.S. Downplays Iran Threat in Latin America

U.S. military officials said Tuesday that Iran is trying to expand its influence in Latin America but that Tehran's presence there doesn't yet pose a military threat to the United States. The Pentagon last week released a 12-page report that identified an "increased presence" by Iran's elite military force in Latin America, particularly in Venezuela.

Washington has accused Iran of aiding militant groups like Hezbollah and trying to destabilize the Iraqi government.

It also prompted accusations of war mongering by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who on Monday called it "totally false." Chavez suggested the U.S. was looking for an excuse to attack his country.

Air Force Gen. Douglas Fraser, who oversees U.S. military operations in Latin America as head of U.S. Southern Command, told reporters on Tuesday that he personally hasn't seen an increase in Iran's military presence in the region.

"It's a diplomatic, it's a commercial presence. I haven't seen evidence of a military presence," Fraser told reporters.

But Fraser said he didn't think his assessment contradicted the Pentagon report. He said he sees "an increasing presence of Iran in Latin America" but that he didn't "have all the details."

Leader Calls for Enforcement of Article 44 of Constitution

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said yesterday that the general principles of the Article 44 of the Iranian Constitution should be fully implemented. Addressing thousands of laborers on the occasion of “Labor Week” the Supreme Leader advised officials to closely watch out suspicious activities of those seeking to break.

There are some corrupt people engaged in illegal economic activities such as purchasing factories and their equipment which are the root cause of unemployment in society, said the Supreme Leader.

Attaining all-out development requires collective contribution, perseverance and endeavors of all people from various walks of life, said Ayatollah Khamenei.

Islam regards laborer as the one entity who struggles in the path of God and attach importance to his position while the materialistic world consider laborers as mere instruments, pointed out the Supreme Leader.

Islam attaches importance to the status of laborers, said Ayatollah Khamenei.

Over the past 30 years the enemies have tried to make use of laborers as a political lever to exert pressure on Islamic system but to no avail, said the Supreme Leader.

“By the grace of God we are now witnessing scientific breakthrough in society but we should keep in our mind that we are at the beginning of the road,” said Ayatollah Khamenei.

“We are now witnessing remarkable development in various fields such as technical and engineering services, construction of dams and power houses and launching production lines in foreign countries but there are much to do to compensate our backwardness,” said Ayatollah Khamenei.

To attain more successes and development, all should take action to handle the affairs, the Supreme Leader said.

“By relying on its pious and committed youths, the country will powerfully conquer peaks of success and development,” Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Iranian scientists have proved their capabilities and despite UN sanctions and by relying on their own expertise they managed to manufacture the second and third generations of centrifuges for peaceful nuclear activities, something that stunned the whole world, said the Supreme Leader.

Talented Iranian youths also scored success in medical sciences, launching of satellites as well as design and manufacture of sophisticated missiles, said the Supreme Leader.

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The global arrogance can not witness such remarkable progress made by the Iranian society and that is why they try to mastermind various plots to hinder the country's development but to no avail, said the Supreme Leader.

In the meeting, the minister of labor and social affairs briefed the Supreme Leader on the activities of his ministry.

Mottaki: Iran Has Friendly Ties With SAARC Members

Foreign Minister upon his arrival in Bhutan said the Islamic Republic of Iran has friendly relations with all SAARC members. "Iran has always had a constructive role in resolving international crises and can play the same role in SAARC together with other members," Manouchehr Mottaki said.

He spoke of SAARC as a means to mingle with Asian countries adding that Iran had submitted a request to become an observing member of the SAARC which was accepted in the Delhi meeting.

Mottaki said Iran could act as link between ECO members and the SAARC.

He added that ECO members had invested a lot in their infrastructure and could establish relations with other economic units in Asia and Europe.

Foreign Minister Mottaki asserted that Asia ranked first in Iran's foreign relations and the trade with Asian countries made for 60 percent of Iran's foreign trade.

SAARC stands for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

Sanctions squeeze Iranians in trade hub Dubai

Asian workers in a Dubai port load an Iran-bound ship with sacks of sugar. U.S. and U.N. sanctions over Tehran's nuclear work do not bar such goods, but Iranian traders based here are feeling the heat all the same.

Morteza Masoumzadeh, shipping agent for the 3,300-tonne cargo, says punitive international measures against Tehran are increasingly hurting Iranian businessmen in Dubai.

The Gulf emirate is a vital economic link for the Islamic Republic, but as many as 400 Iranian businesses in Dubai might have closed over the last year or so, said Masoumzadeh, who is also vice president of the local Iranian Business Council.

This was partly because of Dubai's property downturn and the global economic slowdown, but the sanctions had also made life more difficult by restricting access to credit.

"We can feel it. The sanctions on the financial sector are badly affecting traders in this

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country dealing with Iran," he said in his 14-storey office in downtown Dubai, with the sea glittering in the distance.

"It is obvious that the future is dark," said Masoumzadeh, who moved to Dubai nearly three decades ago to transport rice, timber, home appliances, cars and other items to his native country a short distance away across the Gulf.

With Iran facing growing Western pressure, its close economic and other ties with Dubai have drawn scrutiny from the United States, which is pushing for a fourth round of U.N. sanctions on Tehran for refusing to halt its atomic activities.

Washington and its allies suspect Iran, the world's fifth-largest crude exporter, of seeking a nuclear weapons capability. Iran says it only aims to generate electricity.

Highlighting the kind of sanctions-busting transactions Washington is trying to clamp down on, a U.S. judge last year jailed an aviation company owner for 17 months for conspiring to ship military aircraft parts to Iran via Dubai.

U.S. authorities said numerous procurement networks use suppliers around the world to obtain and ship American-made military products to Iran, in violation of a U.S. embargo.

IRANIAN SHIPS "CHANGE FLAGS"

Dr Theodore Karasik, research director at the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis, said there were "forces in Iran" that were using the United Arab Emirates to circumvent the sanctions. Dubai is one of seven emirates in the UAE.

"Iranians have been very crafty at going around sanctions," Karasik said. "Overall sanctions don't work in this regard."

But he suggested most trade between Iran and Dubai was legitimate, saying a "few bad apples" spoilt things for others.

The Institute for Science and International Security, a U.S.-based think-tank, said in a 2009 report that countries of "transit concern," such as the UAE, should step up action to help prevent Iran acquiring items for its nuclear program.

Roughly 80,000 Iranians live in Dubai, a regional trade and financial hub which is also home to some 8,200 Iranian businesses, Masoumzadeh said.

Last year Dubai's re-exports to Iran -- goods originally coming from Europe, Asia or elsewhere and then sold on to Iran -- rose 4.8 percent to 21.3 billion dirhams (\$5.8 billion).

U.S. brands such as Motorola mobile phones, Dell computers and Apple iPhones can also be found in shops in Tehran, despite a U.S. ban on most trade with the Islamic state.

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"There is a lot of trade going to Iran," said Mahboob Arshad, the Pakistani captain of the M.V. Monoxylon, a Russian-built vessel preparing for the 300-mile (480-km) voyage to the Iranian port city of Bushehr carrying raw sugar.

"These general cargoes have no problems," he said on board the vessel in Dubai's Hamriya Port, when asked whether the sanctions had any impact on his work.

But in a sign of the sensitivities involved, Arshad said he had noticed in the last six months how some Iranian ships had changed their flags and names to avoid attracting attention.

U.S. officials regularly travel to the UAE to urge vigilance against Iranian banks and businesses based in the Arab country.

Stuart Levey, U.S. Treasury undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, said during a visit in March that Washington wanted to "affect the decision-making" of the Iranian government and did not target ordinary people.

"We have no desire to harm the Iranian people economically or otherwise," he told The National, an UAE newspaper.

"This is not an area where you can always be 100 percent surgically precise, but we try to do the best we can."

A U.S. draft for new U.N. sanctions proposes more curbs on Iranian banking, a full arms embargo, tougher measures against Iranian shipping, moves against Revolutionary Guards members and a ban on new investments in Iran's energy sector.

"THOUSAND SPOTLIGHTS"

Nicole Stracke, a researcher at the Gulf Research Center, said measures against Iran could also hit Dubai. "A new round of sanctions would deepen the problems in Dubai and make it more difficult for the economy to recover," she said.

Sanctions based on U.N. Security Council resolutions would "have more legitimacy and their implementation would find more acceptance in Dubai and the rest of the Gulf," than separate steps by the United States and the European Union.

Masoumzadeh rejected any idea that Dubai was a center for illicit trade with Tehran, saying Iranian traders were innocent victims in the long-running nuclear standoff.

In 2007, Washington imposed sanctions on two Iranian state banks with branches in Dubai, Bank Melli and Bank Saderat, making it harder for clients to obtain trade finance.

"We have to pay in cash for whatever goods we require to import ... it makes it very

difficult and it has reduced the size of our business," Masoumzadeh said.

In December, Standard Chartered Bank told Masoumzadeh it would close his account, which he had held for over 10 years. It gave no reason. A bank spokesman said it did not comment on individual clients, but that it had suspended business with Iran and parties in the country in 2007.

Masoumzadeh said it was like he had become a "criminal" overnight. But if Iran wanted to import nuclear-related or other sensitive items, it could do so directly and not via Dubai, where the authorities checked the transports, the trader argued

Iranian opposition not "dissidents" says opposition clergy

A senior Iranian opposition clergyman said Saturday that the country's opposition leaders were neither dissidents nor wanted to overturn the Islamic government system. 'We are neither dissidents nor agents of foreigners planning to topple the Islamic system,' Mehdi Karroubi, head of the reformist party Etemad Melli (National Trust), said in his latest statement carried on opposition websites.

Karroubi, a former parliament speaker, is leading opposition to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, together with ex-premier and head of the Green Movement, Mir-Hossein Moussavi and the two former presidents: Mohammad Khatami and Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

The four have accused Ahmadinejad of fraud in last June's presidential election and refused to acknowledge his victory.

The pro-Ahmadinejad wing has accused the four of becoming 'dissidents' and especially blame Karroubi and Moussavi for provoking the people to hold demonstrations against Ahmadinejad's government.

'We have held key positions in this system and the government should not fight its own people,' Karroubi was cited as saying.

After a meeting last week, Karroubi and Moussavi both called on renewed protest demonstrations on the June 12 anniversary of the election that gave Ahmadinejad a second term.

The two decided to apply for permits from the Interior Ministry to hold public demonstrations.

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Any political gatherings without the ministry's permission are considered illegal and demonstrators may be arrested. Since the start of the protest movement last year, the ministry has rejected all requests by reformist organizers.

Scores of demonstrators were killed and thousands arrested in the political unrest after the disputed election.

More than 100 dissidents are reportedly still in prison, some of them serving long sentences on charges of propaganda against the Islamic establishment.

At least 10 people have reportedly been sentenced to death and are currently going through the appeals process.

Two members of monarchist groups were hanged in January for conspiring to topple the Islamic establishment

Iran opposition leaders are not regime 'topplers': Karroubi

Iranian opposition leader Mehdi Karroubi said on Saturday that he and fellow opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi were not "topplers" of the country's Islamic regime, an opposition website reported. "We are neither topplers (of the regime) or lackeys of foreigners," said Karroubi who has continued to launch his tirades against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his government.

"I and Mr. Mousavi have held positions within the regime, but do not consider ourselves as the owners (of the regime), but soldiers of the revolution and the Islamic republic," he was quoted as saying on Rahesabz website.

Karroubi, who along with Mousavi has remained steadfast in rejecting Ahmadinejad's re-election, warned that the regime had been distanced from the masses and its promises made 30 years ago.

"What we are saying today is that we have distanced a lot from the slogans and promises that were made to the people in the early stages of the revolution," the reformist cleric who had lost to Ahmadinejad in June 2009 presidential poll told a group of reformists, the website said.

Karroubi said the regime was "confronting" its own forces now, something that was warned about years ago and if it "continues on its current path, then nothing will remain, but only a name."

He reiterated that the opposition movement planned to hold a demonstration on June 12, the anniversary of last year's poll, where "a demand to hold a free election will be made."

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The June 2009 election of Ahmadinejad triggered one of the worst political crises in the Islamic republic's history, with widespread protests erupting in Tehran and other cities against the hardliner.

Dozens have been killed in these protests, while hundreds of reformists, political activists and journalists faced trials and sentenced to prison terms for their alleged role in the post-election unrest.

Iran won't agree to fuel swap'

Top Khamenei adviser says West has proven its "diabolical" intents.

Iran will never agree to exchange its low-level enriched uranium for nuclear fuel rods enriched abroad, a top adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Friday.

"We would be very naive to trust the West," Ali Akbar Velayati, Khamenei's senior adviser on international affairs, told state news agency IRNA. "Why do they insist on moving the uranium abroad? This is proof of their diabolical intent."

Iran will never trust the West with its uranium, he said.

Meanwhile the European Union's foreign affairs chief said Friday that China was willing to discuss sanctions on Iran as long as they were carefully targeted and bolstered efforts to curb the Iranian nuclear program.

EU Foreign Affairs High Representative Catherine Ashton said her discussions with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao show that China's position has evolved from agreeing in principle to discuss sanctions to recognizing that targeted sanctions play a role.

"We weren't discussing whether or not. We were discussing what sort" of sanctions, Ashton told reporters. She said that Wen wants to make sure that the sanctions are not so broad as to affect large segments of the population, but rather are targeted.

As a permanent UN Security Council member with veto power and a major customer for Iran's oil and gas, China occupies a pivotal position in efforts to curb the Iranian nuclear program. Publicly, China has given no sign that it is moving beyond its stated position that dialogue rather than sanctions offer the best chances for success. Ashton said that she too supports a negotiated settlement but not endless talk.

A sign of whether the threat of sanctions is making Teheran more amenable could come next week. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will address a UN conference to review the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in New York on Monday. Ashton and representatives of the other countries involved in the Iran nuclear negotiations — the

United States, Russia, Britain, France, Germany and China — will also be at the conference

Congressmen: Block Ahmadinejad From Entering the U.S.

Ahead of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's intended visit to address a UN conference on nuclear non-proliferation next week in New York, several U.S. Congressmen on Friday demanded to deny his entry into the country.

Over a dozen Republican Senators wrote a letter in this regard to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and about half a dozen Congressmen from both the Republican and Democratic Party in a statement demanded that the U.S. must not allow Ahmadinejad to travel.

"This is preposterous, and allowing it to happen will make a mockery of the effort to stop the spread of nuclear weapons to rogue states and terrorist groups. There is simply no compelling reason for Ahmadinejad to be allowed to enter the U.S.," the Senators wrote.

"As such, the U.S. Government has the legal authority to deny Ahmadinejad's request and bar his entry-even if he is transiting only to the UN. We ask that you exercise that authority," demanded the Senators.

Signatories to the letter addressed to Clinton were John Cornyn, John Barrasso, James Inhofe, David Vitter, John Ensign, Richard Burr, Bob Bennett, Sam Brownback, Johnny Isakson, James E Risch, Jon Kyl, Roger Wicker, George LeMieux, and Jim DeMint

China Not to Back Iran Sanctions

China will not support sanctions against Iran, a senior foreign affairs ministry official has said. According to Ugandan Ambassador James Mugume, the chief technocrat at the ministry, Chinese officials had intimated that they would not be supporting sanctions. He did not say if China would veto attempts to punish Iran over its alleged nuclear program.

Uganda, a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, is weighing its options after being lobbied by pro-sanction countries and Iran. Mixed signals have emerged over the position of China with American officials, keen for Chinese cooperation, suggesting that Beijing was warming to the idea of sanctions.

A Chinese spokesperson said this week China would maintain its old position that sanctions are unwelcome.

This is consistent with what Chinese officials have apparently shared with Uganda. "We have received assurances that the Chinese are still against sanctions," said Mr Mugume in

a phone interview on Wednesday. The ambassador also explained that Uganda is against nuclear weapons but not nuclear programs for peaceful purposes.

Officials at the Ugandan Mission in New York, who are working on the proposed Iran sanctions, told this newspaper that their team was in consultations with other African countries. Its stand on Iran is a sticky diplomatic point because of its traditional ties to both America and Britain

Missile System Not Aimed at Iran

Poland has clarified that its missile cooperation with the United States has nothing to do with Washington's allegation of a possible missile threat from Iran. If Tehran "has a target list we believe we are quite low on it," Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said in an interview with the American magazine Foreign Policy during his trip to Washington on Thursday.

The minister noted his country's agreement to host part of the facilities required for a planned U.S. missile system in Europe is way to build ties and boost their credentials within NATO.

"Our part of Europe has so far very few NATO installations," he said. "This is the game that seems to be the next project, so we decided to get involved."

Washington's plans to deploy missile interceptors in Poland was announced under former U.S. President George W. Bush's administration, who insisted the system was vital to protect Europe against what it called threats of long-range missile from Syria, Iran and North Korea.

The plan, strongly opposed by Russia, underwent some changes under the administration of incumbent US President Barack Obama, employing a "phased adaptive approach" that will use smaller, more mobile systems to intercept short and medium-range missiles.

Tehran has repeatedly condemned the U.S. allegations as a plot to align the rest of the world against the Islamic Republic.

Iranian officials stress the country's missile capabilities are to serve defensive purposes and are not aimed at any nations.

Iran, however, says it reserves the right to make use of all its military power to defend its sovereignty in the event of a foreign aggression.

Minister Blames Britain for Arab Claims on Persian Gulf

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyed Mohammad Hosseini said that the recent claims raised by a number of Arab states over the identity of the Persian Gulf were the result of British inspirations.

"The issues raised over the Persian Gulf in the last few years are rooted in the Britons' inspirations and the extremist attitude of a number of uninformed leaders of the neighboring states," Hosseini said in a ceremony in Iran's southern port city of Bandar Abbas to commemorate the National Persian Gulf Day on Friday night.

He said that the arrogant powers are angry at the Iranian nation for they have never allowed any colonialist power to gain control over the country throughout the history.

Hosseini meantime blasted the arrogant powers for their attempts to forge the name of the Persian Gulf, and stated, "The Iranian nation has proved that it never gives in to any power.

Larijani: West Seeks to Tarnish Image of Clerics

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani says the western countries from early stages of the Islamic Revolution have been trying to tarnish the image of clerics and Velayat-e Faqih. He made the remarks in the first ever gathering of councils in charge of mosque affairs in Tehran yesterday.

The western countries are now masterminding various scenarios to harm prestige of religious figures and "for this reason we shoulder a heavy responsibility in dealing with this seriously," he said.

Lauding the invaluable services of martyr Morteza Motahari, he said late Motahari was in a constant struggle with western intellectuals on the real status of clerics.

Motahari's views were against injustice, despotism, dependency, and dictatorship, he said.

History testifies that religious figures and clerics were the vanguards in the fight against despotism and bullying powers, he said.

That is why the westerners are too sensitive to clerics and religious figures and spare no efforts to tarnish their image, he said.

Religious figures play a leading role in promoting cultural and educational issues, Larijani said.

The government should not interfere in the affairs of theological schools but rather should support them, he said.

Highlighting the significant role of Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, he said the wise leadership of the Supreme Leader in connection with regional, international and domestic issues is a source of blessing for the Iranian nation.

“If the U.S. had scored success in Iraq or Lebanon, the status of world Muslims would have changed dramatically,” he pointed out.

Velayat-e Faqih (governance of supreme jurisprudent) has successfully managed to reveal the real image of the U.S. for world nations, he underlined.

Nuclear Fuel Swap Must Happen in Iran

An advisor to the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution says Tehran cannot trust a Western offer on exchanging its nuclear fuel outside the country. Ali-Akbar Velayati, a foreign policy advisor of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, said on Friday that the West has a record of breaking its promises to Iran.

He noted that it would be naïve to believe they would keep their promise to implement the deal to exchange fuel outside Iranian territory.

Velayati stated that Iran is ready to exchange its 5 to 5.3 percent enriched uranium for 20 percent enriched uranium, but the swap must take place inside the country.

The former foreign minister added that the West's insistence on the matter is highly suspicious since it would be illogical to conduct the fuel swap outside of Iranian territory.

The swap deal has been proposed to provide fuel for the Tehran research reactor, which produces radioisotopes for medical treatment

Navy Ready to Safeguard Iran's Territorial Waters

The Navy is fully prepared to safeguard the country's territorial waters, the Persian Gulf in particular, a senior commander underlined yesterday. "We can say with great honor that the Islamic Republic of Iran's Navy is now at the highest level of defensive preparedness to provide security in our country's waters," Lieutenant General of the Navy Hossein Ashrafi said.

Ashrafi also reiterated that the Iranian Navy with all its power is ready to defend and safeguard the identity of the Persian Gulf and confront those seeking to change its Persian identity.

A number of Arab and western countries have recently launched attempts to change the Persian identity of the waterway.

While historical documents show that the waterway has always been referred to as the 'Persian Gulf', certain Arab states have recently mounted efforts to remove 'Persian' from the name of the waterway.

Iran designated April 30 as the 'National Persian Gulf Day' to highlight the fact that the waterway has been referred to by historians and ancient texts as 'Persian' since the Achaemenid Empire was established in what is now modern day Iran.

Official Lauds Strategic Ties Between Tehran, Jakarta

A senior Iranian official yesterday praised the close cooperation between Tehran and Jakarta in all the bilateral, regional and international arenas, and described the two countries' age-old relations as "strategic".

Addressing the closing ceremony of a seminar on Iran-Indonesia 60-year-old ties, the Deputy Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance for Cultural Affairs, Mohsen Pak-Ayeen, reminded the positive interactions between the two sides, and stated, "Such interaction could serve as the main capital for planning strategic, deep and all-out ties."

Commenting on the strategic importance of Iran-Indonesia relations, Pak-Ayeen said that the two countries' deep understanding of each other's security sensitivities and concerns as well as the existence of common grounds for mutual cooperation have pushed the Tehran-Jakarta ties into a strategic status.

The Iranian official then described the two countries' stance against unilateralism and their support for strengthening international partnership in resolving the existing problems as among other factors which have given strategic importance to Tehran-Jakarta ties.

Pak-Ayeen also reminded the cultural commonalities of the two great nations and their common stances on international issues as two important factors which have made Iran-Indonesia relations strategic.

He pointed to Indonesia's prominent role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and underlined the importance of Tehran-Jakarta cooperation in enhancing and promoting the status of such international bodies as NAM and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Iran's Scientific Production Rises 30 Times

Production of scientific articles have increased 30 times during years after victory of the Islamic Revolution, deputy Minister of Science, Research and Technology Mahdi Nejad Nouri announced on Saturday.

Addressing a ceremony in al-Zahra University in Tehran, Iran capital, he added during the time number of university students and professors have also increased 20 and 10 times respectively.

Budget of scientific researches has increased from 0.28 to 1 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

Mottaki Urges U.S. to Fulfill Obligations as UN Host

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki yesterday reminded Washington that the U.S., as a UN hosting country, is obliged to issue visas for the Iranian officials to attend the meetings of the world body.

"Issuing visa for the officials and delegations of different countries that want to take part in the UN sessions inside the U.S. is an undertaking, and not a right, for the relevant authorities of the U.S.," Mottaki said in a meeting with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Guinea Bakary Fofana here yesterday.

"The U.S. administration does not have the right to make an instrumental use of visa issuance for the other countries' delegations and should not try to take the UN Security Council and the UN hostage through such an attitude," the minister went on saying.

The remarks by Mottaki came two days after Sen. John Cornyn, R-TX penned a letter Thursday to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asking that Iran's President Ahmadinejad be barred from entry into the U.S.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has applied for a U.S. visa to participate in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference due to be held in New York on Monday.

The Obama administration has indicated that it would grant a visa to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to attend UN conference

Petrochemicals Output Reach 34m Tons

Iran has produced 34 million tons of various petrochemical products in the last Iranian year (March 2009-March 2010), oil deputy minister Abdol-Hossein Bayat said. "Last year, Iran produced 34 million tons of various petrochemical products, of which 16 million tons was exported to many countries in the world," Bayat said.

Iran's petrochemical exports were worth \$6.5 billion in the last year, he added.

He said that Iran aims to export 17.8 tons of petrochemicals in the current year which is predicted to be valued at \$8.7 billion.

Economic News

Indonesia Eying Iran as Potential Tourism Market

Indonesia will soon direct the focus of its tourism promotion efforts on the Iranian market, a tourism ministry official said here Tuesday. "Probably next year, we will begin

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to canvass the tourism market in Iran, a Persian Gulf country with a high income per capita figure," I Gde Pitana, director of overseas promotions at the Culture and Tourism Ministry, said.

He said due to an embargo imposed by Western countries on Iran and certain psychological factors affecting the Iranian people, the Persian Gulf country now seemed inclined to look eastward, including towards the Asian region.

"Besides, Indonesia and Iran already have good bilateral relations. They signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cultural and tourism cooperation in 2006 in Yogyakarta," he said.

Pitana added psychologically, Iran also had been having close historical and diplomatic relations with Indonesia for the past 60 years.

"Therefore, it is a real fact that Iran will be one of Indonesia`s potential tourism markets in the Middle East," Pitana said.

Although the number of Iranian tourists visiting Indonesia so far was not significant enough, Pitana expressed optimism that an immediate tourism promotion effort in Iran would encourage Iranian tourists to make Indonesia their destination.

Pitana said Iranian nationals coming to Indonesia had the right to enjoy the visa-on-arrival facility.

"The visa-on-arrival facility for Iranian nationals is expected to motivate many more of them to visit Indonesia," Pitana said.

He added that starting next year Indonesia would make Iran and 16 other countries the target of its tourism promotion efforts.

Therefore, Pitana said, he would in the near future visit Iran to study the latest conditions in the Persian Gulf country before promoting Indonesia as a tourist destination among the Iranian public.

In addition, the tourism ministry would do its best to get Jakarta and Tehran linked by direct airline flights.

Japanese Co. Ready to Extend Oil Field Share in Iran

Japan's INPEX Corp says it is eager to extend its current 10 percent share in the Azadegan Oil Field in the south of Iran. Speaking on the sidelines of the 15th International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (April 23-26), the general manager of INPEX Corp's Tehran Office, Taizo Uchimura, said that in case of its agreement with the Iranian government, it is ready to extend its share from current 10 per cent.

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He said his company is now cooperating with National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and is satisfied with Iranian market and workforce.

Currently, Naftiran Intertrade (NICO) holds the other 90 per cent share in the Azadegan Oil Field Development Project.

Aside from the Azadegan Field, INPEX is also involved in oil development projects in Azerbaijan, the UAE, and the BTC pipeline project in North Caspian Sea.

INPEX is a worldwide oil and gas exploration and production company based in Japan that ranks high among global independent companies next to Supermajors.

INPEX is currently carrying out oil and natural gas projects through its group companies in 26 countries covering the areas such as Indonesia, Oceania, the Middle East, the Caspian Sea, the Americas, Africa, Russian and Japan.

While holding upstream oil and gas business as the core, the INPEX Group aims to become a company which provides diversified energies through establishing a natural gas supply chain and working proactively towards the development of unconventional hydrocarbon resources and new energies.

Iran, Cuba to Boost Trade, Economic Ties

During the visit of an Iranian high-ranking diplomatic delegation to Cuba, the two countries agreed to boost tied in transportations and biotechnology, Cuban Foreign Ministry reported.

Iran and Cuba committed to expand bilateral interactions in various political, cultural and economic fields including trade, biotechnology, transportations joint ventures, etc.

Iran-Cuba annual trade increased from \$22.9 million in 2007 to \$46.4 million in 2008 and above \$50 million in 2009, the report read.

Iran currently exports a great amount of home appliances to Cuba.

Based on the agreements already signed between the two countries, Iran has allotted a \$680-million LC to the Cuban merchants and companies having commercial interactions with the Islamic Republic

Iran to Open Copper Wire Factory in Belarus

Iran has planned to inaugurate copper wire factory in Belarus in the presence of Iranian Minister of Industries and Mines Ali-Akbar Mehrabian next week. Iranian private sector has spent \$8m on completion of the project.

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The unit is projected to produce 12,000 tons of copper wire in the first year which will rise up to 50,000 tons in the second year.

The factory's production will be exported to Russia and Ukraine.

Once the unit comes on stream, Iran and Belarus trade will go up to \$500m each year from the current figure of \$100 million

Iran, Bosnia Sign Agreement on Cooperation

The Iranian and Bosnian finance ministers inked an agreement on economic cooperation yesterday. The agreement was signed by Iran's Shamseddin Hosseini and Bosnia-Herzegovina's Nikola Spiric in the Bosnian capital city of Sarajevo.

It was the first time the two countries were holding a joint economic commission.

During the signing-ceremony, the two sides reached an agreement on holding a joint commission every six months to follow up the process of implementation of the cooperation projects.

The two countries are determined to foster bilateral relations, Iran's minister of economic affairs and finance said during his meetings with top Bosnian officials in that country.

The second Iran-Bosnia joint economic commission is due to be held in Tehran next year.

Guinean FM Urges Expansion of Economic Ties with Iran

Foreign Minister of the Republic of Guinea Bakary Fofana yesterday underlined his country's eagerness to further develop economic and industrial relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"Our mines are open to the friendly countries, specially Iran," Fofana said in a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki here.

"Guinea and Iran enjoy very old relations and the two countries' political cooperation has risen to a very good level, but this cooperation should yet be promoted to reach its appropriate level through economic and humanitarian cooperation," he added.

Referring to the goals of his visit to Tehran, Fofana said that the trip is aimed at promoting mutual cooperation as well as the two countries' cooperation in regional and international organizations.

He also reiterated that the visit indicates solidarity between the two countries and it shows the will of the Guinean nation and government to strengthen cooperation with friendly countries like Iran.

Fofana expressed the hope that the relations between Iran and the Republic of Guinea would turn into exemplary ties and serve as a role model in western Africa.

Iran Exports \$18.5b of Industrial, Mineral Goods

Iran exported over 18.5 billion dollars worth of industrial and mineral goods to different countries during the last Iranian year of 1388 (March 21, 2009-March 21, 2010). According to a report released by the Ministry of Industries and Mines, the industrial and mineral goods constituted over 84 percent of Iran's non-oil exports which were exported last year.

The report said more than 2.3 billion dollars of the goods have been exported to different countries just in the last month of 1388.

Iraq, China, the United Arab Emirates, India and Afghanistan were the countries which imported most goods from Iran within the period

320 Projects for Iranian Expatriate, Foreign Investors

Details of 320 projects have been gathered to be presented to Iranian investors residing abroad and foreign investors at a conference which will be held in Shiraz on May 22. The conference will introduce investment opportunities in different provinces of Iran to foreign-based entrepreneurs, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting reported yesterday.

The director of the Organization for Investment and Technical Assistance of Iran affiliated to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance stated in January that foreign investment in Iran grew by six percent in 2009 year on year despite the global economic downturn.

The Islamic Republic of Iran News Network reported Behrouz Alishiri as saying that although the economic crisis resulted in an average 40 percent decrease in investments in other countries, we were able to sustain the existing growth trend and experience a six percent rise in foreign investments.

According to Press TV, Iran attracted \$1.6 billion in direct investments from abroad in 2008 despite a 20 percent decrease in the global flow of direct foreign investment. The 2025 Outlook Plan has set an investment target of \$3.7 trillion within two decades, of which \$1.3 trillion should be in the form of foreign investment

Tehran, Minsk Discuss Ways to Remove Trade Obstacles

Head of the Institute of Standard and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI) Nezamoddin Barzegari and Belarusian Ambassador to Tehran Victor Rybak attended a meeting here yesterday to explore ways to remove trade barriers.

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During the meeting held at the ISIRI center, the Belarusian envoy pointed to the agreements signed between Tehran and Minsk, and expressed the hope that the discussions would pave a proper ground for increasing trade exchanges between the two sides up to the agreed level.

Rybak also called on Iran to allow imports of Belarusian tractors based on the existing agreements and avoid second tests.

The diplomat further said that his visit is aimed at paving the way for an upcoming visit to Iran by Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko.

During the discussions also attended by Belarusian representatives as well as ISIRI's managers and directors, Barzegari underlined the necessity for further expansion of mutual cooperation between the two sides.

He added that the institute of standard and industrial research of Iran is ready to remove the existing problems within the framework of the law and based on the agreements signed between the two sides.

The official added that Iran will allow import of Belarusian-made goods if they hold EU standard approvals, such as ISO, and other credited international standards

Ukraine Exports 400,000 Tons of Coke to Iran

Ukraine's Donetskstal Company announced that it will export more than 400,000 tons of coke to Iran by the end of 2010.

Vice President of The Energy Group of Ukraine, Valery Khilkov, said "I've returned from Islamic Republic of Iran last week and we have decided to get involved with providing the country's required coke." Ukraine has started sending 30-40 thousand tons of coke to Iran monthly since January 2009 and it is predicted that it will have exported 400,000 tons of coke to Iran by the end of the current year.

Donetskstal is a company involved in the production of coal and coke in Ukraine.

Coke is the solid carbonaceous material derived from destructive distillation of low-ash, low-sulfur bituminous coal.

Iraq Wants to Import Gas From Iran

Iraq has requested for importing 300-500 million cubic feet of Iranian natural gas, the Oil Deputy Minister Hossein Noghrekar Shirazi said. Referring to the negotiations held last week between Iranian and Iraqi officials in Tehran, Noghrekar Shirazi said that the negotiations were based on supplying Iraq with natural gas demands in border provinces especially in power stations.

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The two sides also agreed to boost bilateral ties in development of joint oil and gas fields, he said.

Referring to Iraqi sides' request for importing 300-500 million cubic meters of Iranian natural gas per day, Noghrekar Shirazi said that "once the contract is finalized, Iran will be ready to supply Iraq's demands."

Iraq will exports 25 billion cubic meters of its natural gas by 2016, he said adding "in future, Iraq's gas will be exported to Turkey and then to Europe via Nabucco pipeline.

Iran Oil Exports to Japan Reach 442,000 bpd

Iran's oil exports to Japan exceeded 2 million kiloliters in March, Dow Jones reported. Japanese oil refiners and trading companies imported 2.18 million kiloliters of crude oil in March, or about 442,000 barrels a day, from Iran, down 6.4% from a year earlier and up 21% from February, data from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry showed.

Iranian crude accounted for 11% of Japan's overall crude oil imports in March, and 10.7% in February, according to METI. Last March, the percentage was 12.5%.

Officials at oil refiners, including Nippon Oil Corp. and Idemitsu Kosan Co. (5019.TO), who asked not to be named, have said the government hasn't been pressuring them with regard to crude imports from Iran.

Japanese energy producer Inpex Corp. (1605.TO) and plant maker JGC Corp. (1963.TO) are on a U.S. government list, released April 22, of companies that may be subject to sanctions in relation to Iranian oil, gas or petrochemical projects they had some connection with during the 2005-09 period.

No Japanese oil importers are on the U.S. list

Social News

1 Ton of Drugs Seized in Fars

Commander of the Fars province's anti-narcotic police squad said his forces have seized large amounts of illicit drugs across the southern Iranian province in several operations. "After conducting a series of intelligence operations, our forces identified a drug gang that transported large amounts of narcotics from Iran's eastern regions to Fars province and stored them in a village near the town of Darab," Fars News Agency quoted Mohammad Esmail Mesri as saying on Wednesday. "Drug agents confiscated 800 kg of opium from the smugglers and arrested 5 members of the gang in their operation," he added. In another development, the anti-drug squad of Zarrin-Dasht in Far province seized 158.7 kg of opium from a passenger car.

Also, police forces in the provincial capital Shiraz seized 79 kg of opium from a drug dealer after conducting a month-long intelligence operation. Iran is located in the corridor between world's number one drug producer Afghanistan and drug lords in Europe. The country has lost over 3,000 of its security forces in anti-drug operations ever since the victory of Islamic Revolution in 1979. Iran is also intensifying security measures along its borders to make it harder for drug traffickers to infiltrate the country's territories

Noise Pollution Afflicts Tehran Hospitals

Close to 95 percent of Tehran hospitals are exposed to noise pollution. A professor from UK's University of Sheffield, who has traveled to Iran for the second time, said this is an extraordinary figure, urging Tehran Municipality to find a solution for it by completing the sound level map, Mehr News Agency wrote. Pointing to his former trip to Tehran, Mohammad Osman Tokhi, said, "I became familiar with the activities of Tehran Municipality for controlling noise pollution for the first time in 2008."

During that time, appropriate projects were under implementation, some of which have been completed, he said. Tokhi, who works in Sheffield University's Department of Automatic Control and Systems Engineering, added, "Following researches I conducted in Tehran Municipality's Air Quality Control Company, I realized that the company has taken effective measures in reducing noise pollution across the capital, which also promotes the health of citizens."

Tehran Municipality started to build noise barriers, some of which have been completed. "During this trip, I offered suggestions to Tehran Municipality for controlling noise pollution in some regions, which will be implemented in the near future," he said. Two years ago, many projects were conducted for controlling noise pollution and its effect on the health of citizens. Tokhi noted that the urban managers of Tehran showed great enthusiasm for implementing these projects. "Any car manufactured in Iranian factories or imported into the country should abide by noise pollution standards," he said, adding that officials must find solutions to reach the standards.

The professor referred to Tehran traffic as a great challenge, noting that Tehran Municipality should find ways of easing traffic to ensure the health of citizens and control air pollution.

"Controlling the traffic plays a big role in reducing noise pollution. In addition, reduction of CO2 level will reduce the citizens' stress and anxiety, and improve urban health." Tokhi said Tehran Municipality started initiatives for controlling CO level, which can play an important role in improving public health. Administrative and financial centers are the leading sources of high noise pollution for hospitals.

According to the professor, the municipality should also expand greenery in these regions.

Human susceptibility to unwanted or objectionable sound varies in terms of intensity, altitude, timbre, personal sensibility, age and history of ear disorder. Noise pollution, which is the result of heterogeneous and uncontrolled development of cities, is one of the serious problems facing large cities of Iran. The best solution to control noise pollution in highways is to install noise barriers because they reduce noise pollution by 10-15 decibels. The barriers need not be made of cement. They can be constructed from a very resistant type of glass with a height of 5-6 meters.

Depending on the type of noise barrier, the cost of installing two kilometers of it on a highway is approximately 700-1,000 million rials.

Ahmadinejad Hails Those Active in Divine Philosophy

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has hailed the personalities who are active in the field of divine philosophy. In a ceremony held here yesterday, the fifth in its kind, President Ahmadinejad appreciated them on the eve of Teachers Day in Iran (May 2) to commemorate the martyrdom of Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, one of the most famous Iranian personalities in this field.

20 prominent Iranian personalities who are active in research and promotion of divine philosophy were granted presents by the president in the ceremony.