

# Larijani Warns West

**PRETORIA, South Africa, Feb. 25-** Secretary of Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani warned the West that Iran will react to countries intending to aggravate Iran's nuclear issue.

He made the statement during a short briefing at Johannesburg airport on Sunday, without naming any particular country, IRNA reported.

Larijani said such approaches cannot be unilateral and will certainly be confronted by Iran.

Underlining the political nature of Iran's nuclear issue, he said, "The matter is not very complicated. Iran is ready to solve the issue through constructive talks."

Larijani, who is visiting South Africa in response to the invitation of

President Thabo Mbeki, said Iran is willing to end concerns about the country's nuclear issue through talks.

He added that negotiators should avoid irrational issues and should rather seek a reasonable solution.

Turning to his recent negotiations with the European heads of states and the International Atomic Energy Agency Chief Mohamed ElBaradei, he said, "Those who are sufficiently smart are aware that harsh and stressful approaches will delay a political solution."

In reaction to the deputy foreign ministers' meeting of the United Nations Security Council's permanent members scheduled in London for Monday, he hoped that they will learn

a lesson from their past misbehavior and stop their hostile anti-Iran stance.

Larijani stressed that Iran's participation in regional developments can be effective and declared the country's readiness to play a "constructive" role in revising the trend of current developments.

Elsewhere in his statement, he said that in his talks with President Mbeki, Iran-South Africa cooperation in political and economic fields topped the agenda of talks.

He pointed to bilateral ties as "sincere" and said South Africa's presence in the UNSC can strengthen its role in solving Iran's nuclear issue to an extent.

Larijani noted that the two countries will continue to exchange views on the issue.

# Region Can Protect Own Security

**ISFAHAN, Feb. 25-** The presence of foreigners in the Persian Gulf has given rise to many crises in the region while its stability is based on the domination of regional states, a senior Foreign Ministry official said on Sunday.

Addressing the International Conference on Persian Gulf and Iran's Peaceful Nuclear Capability in Isfahan, deputy foreign minister for education and research affairs, Manouchehr Mohammadi, stressed that major powers have entangled the security of Persian Gulf with their presence and domination of oil resources, IRNA reported.

"The Islamic Republic is of the opinion that security for Persian Gulf littoral states can only be materialized by regional nations without the presence and interference of foreigners," he said.

Mohammadi added that the world arrogant powers have focused on Persian Gulf due to its geopolitics, rich oil resources and the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"More than 70 percent of the world's energy reserves are in the Persian Gulf," he said, adding that enemies are opposed to the first nuclear power plant in the southern part of Iran, near Persian Gulf.

The official said a special department has been set up in the Foreign

Ministry to theorize policies of the Islamic Republic within the framework of the 2025 Vision.

"Iran is not a threat to the region but is playing a positive role in ensuring security in the region," Mohammadi said.

The two-day international conference on Persian Gulf aims to analyze current conditions and relieve concerns of neighboring states concerning Iran's nuclear program.

# Iran Favors Iraq Stability

**PARIS, Feb. 25-**Iran's Ambassador to France Ali Ahani on Saturday dismissed US allegations on Tehran's interference in Iraq, stressing that Iran has always favored establishment of peace and stability in Iraq.

Ahani, who was speaking on Algiers Radio, said the US faced numerous problems in Iraq and wants to put the blame on others.

According to IRNA, he added that restoration of stability and peace in Iraq would be in Iran's favor too.

"Iran has good relations and deep cooperation with the Iraqi government. It was among the first countries that officially recognized the Iraqi government and will continue bilateral cooperation," he said.

Ahani stated that the presence of foreign and US forces is the main cause of Iraqi insecurity, dismissing claims by the US officials that Iran supplied weapons to Iraq.

"These are just unfounded allegations," he said. Pointing to economic sanctions against Iran and their impact on economic ties with European states, he said, "Undoubtedly, the economic punishment of Iran will not be in favor of European companies."

"Everybody knows that disputes over Iran's peaceful nuclear case will not be settled through economic sanctions. It should be resolved through negotiations," he said.

Asked about the recent remarks of French President Jacques Chirac that Iran's possession of one or two nuclear bombs would pose no serious threat, the envoy said, "Chirac is well aware of the region's complications and sensitivities. His remarks showed his concerns over further complications in the region, which result from the American and Israeli propaganda to portray Iran as a threat to the region."

Commenting on Moscow's cooperation in promoting Tehran's peaceful nuclear activities, Ahani said Iran has deep-rooted cooperation with Russia and the two countries have common interests in the region.

# Complains About Police Conduct



Baroness Emma Nicholson

**TEHRAN, Feb. 25-** Some 80 percent of public complaints against police pertain to the bad behavior of police officers, a police official said.

Brigadier Mohammad Taqi Asar, Islamic Republic of Iran Police's deputy for educational affairs, also told reporters on Sunday that 1,800 police officers are undergoing special courses to teach officers of police stations in future.

According to IRNA, he noted that new statistic shows a 50-percent growth in public satisfaction

toward police compared with the corresponding period of last year.

Referring to special training courses for police personnel, he hoped that police behavior will become standardized in the near future.

Last year, the police chief said his forces are not merely required to execute orders, rather they are also responsible for their actions.

Brigadier General Esmail Ahmadi-Moqaddam said, "The main task of the police is to obtain public satisfaction. Extending

social services based on accountability and meeting public demands are the basic tasks of IRIP."

The police chief further said surveys indicate 91 percent of the people are content with the efforts made by the police department.

"Nearly three million calls have been attended to by Police 110 in the past eight months," he said.

Ahmadi-Moqaddam concluded by saying mutual interactions between the police and the public help police discharge their duties better.

The Bahraini foreign minister, for his part, expressed pleasure over good mutual ties and said, "My third visit to Iran indicates my country's serious intention to expand ties with Iran."

Hailing the agreement on preventing double taxation, Sheikh Khalifa expressed hope that such steps can improve Tehran-Manama ties.

Referring to the presence of Bahraini Oil Minister Issa bin Ali Al-Khalifa in the meeting, Sheikh Khalifa said his presence indicates the Bahrain government's intention of expanding cooperation in all energy fields with Iran. Sheikh Khalifa also met with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Saturday.

# Admonished

**HAMSHAHRİ:** Privatization processes normally herald signs of coming prosperity. Seen from the constitutional perspective, macro economic policies such as privatization, downsizing, nationalizing...are the exclusive premise of the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. It is obvious that all senior officials and organizations are obliged to comply by his decrees and recommendations. After the recent complaints of the leader about the slow implementation of policy initiatives regarding Article 44 of the Constitution, which obliges government to downsize, a serious question has come to the fore about the whole business of privatization. What are the main reasons that compelled the leader to publicly voice dissatisfaction with the performance of those in charge of privatization? The question and other important reservations are open to wide debate. But the bitter reality remains that privatization and its need have not been institutionalized in the legal system of our country. And add to this the fact that some company chiefs and their men have an incomplete understanding of such serious economic issues. Most also fear that their positions would be undermined if they start releasing shares of their bloated state organizations to the private sector.

# Role of Councils

**KARGOZARAN:** Decades have passed since authoritative urban management in the developed world has been transformed into participative management. Managing urban affairs in the industrialized nations has been delegated to public and specialized bodies and/or their representatives in the form of local councils or associations. Such entities control developmental affairs in both urban and rural areas are fully abreast of all relevant social and economic specifications. The emergence of local councils, or local governments as they are known in some countries, is the embodiment of democracy that enhances public role in development without the need for intervention of the government or politicians. The record of many nations shows that with the institutionalization of such councils, urban problems are addressed in the best possible manner. However, record of local councils in our country, particularly in Tehran, indicates that developmental work and urban management more often than not are influenced by politicians and their theories that have nothing to do with urban management.

# Middle Class

**QODS:** Parliament is busy these days with the key issue of gasoline prices for the next Iranian year we are to usher in within three weeks. Reports last week said a joint Majlis commission has proposed petrol be sold at the pumps for 1,500 rials a liter. Each liter of fuel presently fetches 800 rials. There is no doubt that any decision on the price of fuel will certainly affect all other sectors of the economy and the social strata, especially at the grassroots level. It is obvious that the lawmakers must focus on the middle class rather than those at the lower-end of the income ladder because the former constitute the bulk of the Iranian society. Our economy is so huge that one person or group cannot alone decide about its direction. The challenge that political pundits and economic experts are now facing is the unpredictable behavior of the grassroots. Top decision makers need to know that their decisions will have a great impact on the majority not the minority.

# Valid Concerns

**ETEMAD-E MELLİ:** Statements last week by former president and present head of the State Expediency Council (SEC), Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani about Iran's economic conditions demand pause for thought. As such, the conditions are alarming. Although political tensions are always harmful when it comes to protecting national interest, conditions specially marking end of the outgoing Iranian year (ends March 20) are not at all favorable. Irrespective of Rafsanjani's concerns and warnings about a whole set of political and economic developments made known during Friday's mass congregation in Tehran, an array of reports by regional and international institutions indicate that conditions guiding the economy are not sustainable. Depriving the enemies of the Islamic Revolution of excuses and provocations is one thing, closing one's eyes to the ground realities is something else. There also are unconfirmed reports about the Russians reportedly planning to file lawsuits against Iran because on measures by our Central Bank to switch foreign transactions from the US greenback to the euro.

# Culture Ministry Not Banning Websites

**TEHRAN, Feb. 25-** Linking the ministry of culture to orders for banning websites is a mistake, said the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

Mohammad Hossein Saffar Harandi also told ISNA on Sunday that a team comprising five members, including rep-

resentatives of the ministries of Communications and Information Technology, Intelligence, Culture and Islamic Guidance, and Justice and Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, oversees websites.

"The decision was made after the Supreme

Cultural Revolution Council ratified that the government should devise a bylaw to oversee websites," he said.

Harandi noted that sections of the government's bylaw deal with the support that the government should give websites and other sections concern their identity and the

information they provide as well as criminal offenses.

According to the bylaw, websites do not require any licenses to operate but need authorization.

"People cannot be allowed to lie or disturb others," he said, warning that they will be confronted if they break the law.

# British MEP to Visit

**BRUSSELS, Belgium, Feb. 25-**Baroness Emma Nicholson, British member of the European Parliament, said she will be traveling to Tehran soon to discuss the peaceful use of nuclear energy with Iranian officials.

"I hope to be in Iran soon to confer with Iranians," Nicholson told IRNA.

She said she personally supports the use of nuclear energy because oil and coal are causing

severe environmental pollution and climate changes.

"We have to find ways to deal with nuclear waste," added Nicholson, who is the vice chairperson of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and a member of the EP's delegation for relations with Iran.

Underscoring the need for a Middle East free of nuclear weapons, she said she wanted to see peace

prevail in the region. Nicholson heads the AMAR charity organization, which provides basic healthcare and education for Arabs in southern Iraq who had sought refuge there because of Saddam's tyranny.

The organization has expanded its activities to emergency relief and medical training in Lebanon and is providing primary healthcare and sanitation projects for Afghan refugees in Iran.

# IAEA Report Proof of Legality

**ALGIERS, Algeria, Feb. 25-**Iran's Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency Ali Asghar Soltaniyeh said the report presented by the IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei on Thursday was the best document prepared by the agency on Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

Speaking on the Egyptian television, Soltaniyeh added that ElBaradei's report stressed that Iran's nuclear program follows no military purposes and is legal, IRNA reported.

He said the IAEA inspectors visited

Iran's nuclear sites and again confirmed the peaceful nature of its activities.

Soltaniyeh stressed that in his report, the IAEA head said Iran has enriched uranium by less than 5 percent, adding that it was the best response to the UN Security Council threats.

He called on the US to end its misleading propaganda on Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

Soltaniyeh stressed that Iran regards continuation of negotiations as the best solution to disputes over its peaceful nuclear activities.

# Bahrain Voices Support

**TEHRAN, Feb. 25-** Visiting Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmad Muhammad Al-Khalifa extended his country's support for Iran's sovereign right on peaceful nuclear program.

According to the Foreign Ministry's Media Department, Sheikh Khalid met with Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki on Saturday and discussed international and regional issues as well as ways of consolidating bilateral relations, IRNA reported.

Mottaki said there are various grounds and potentials to strengthen ties, and regular consultations between the two foreign ministers will open new chapters in mutual relations. "In the fields of oil, petrochemicals and gas, we are ready to expand bilateral cooperation and hold a joint economic commission in April," he said. Iran's foreign minister referred to current bilateral banking relations as

"appropriate" and said the Bashehr Governorate is considering cooperation in the mining sector with Bahrain.

Mottaki elaborated on Iran's capacities in technical and engineering services for implementing projects such as construction, industrial and techni-

cal services.

Referring to the necessity of establishing regional cooperation, Mottaki said, "Strengthening cooperation between Persian Gulf Cooperation Council member-states with Iran can help consolidate ties, expand economic cooperation and make the region-

al security more sustainable."

He welcomed the United Arab Emirates' proposal on trade cooperation between Iran and PGGC.

On Iran's nuclear strategy, the top Iranian diplomat said, "In our nuclear strategy, there is no place for atomic weapons."

# 5.5 Tons of Drugs Seized

**ZAHEDAN, Sistan-Baluchestan, Feb. 25-** Clashes with armed drug traffickers in Bam led to the discovery of 5.5 tons of narcotics.

Deputy Commander of Rasoul-e Akram Headquarters Brigadier Qassem Rezaei told IRNA on Sunday a major drug convoy crossing the central province of Kerman was confronted and 4,630 kilograms of opium and morphine as well as weapons, including missile launchers, were seized.

Six sets of police uniforms were found and three of the drug traffickers were killed during the clashes.

Rezaei added that 365 kilograms of drugs were also seized during two similar operations and five suspects were arrested.

"Screening operations at Mersad Police Station uncovered 406 kilograms of opium concealed in the gas tank of a bus and two suspects were arrested in the case," he said.