

Nations' Vigilance Making US Retreat

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"The US and the Zionist regime, which are opposed to independent states seeking to adopt unified stands, are now trying to trigger ethnic and political conflicts in Africa," he said.

Referring to the Eritrean people's struggle and their solidarity with the Iranian nation, the leader said Iran is ready to broaden all-out ties with African and Asian states, particularly regional and neighboring states.

The Eritrean president, for his part, thanked the Iranian people for their support and referred to the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran as a turning point for the freedom of regional nations.

"The victory of the Islamic Revolution has broken the prestige of the world arrogant powers," he said.

Noting that Iran and Eritrea share many common views on regional and global issues, Afeworki called for expansion of his country's relations with Iran.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was also present in the meeting.

Int'l Anti-Terrorism Drive Needed

Lawmaker Alaeddin Boroujerdi called for international cooperation for restricting terrorism worldwide.

Boroujerdi made the remark in the inaugural ceremony of the International Conference of Kalkan in Tehran on Tuesday, which is Interpol's anti-terrorism initiative in Central Asia, IRNA reported.



Alaeddin Boroujerdi

Noting that unilateral or bilateral efforts by particular countries are not sufficient in this respect, the lawmaker said, "If the phenomenon of terrorism is considered an international challenge, political and governmental means needed for dealing with it."

Kalkan is the name of a plan for fighting international terrorism and 20 to 22 countries from North Africa, Middle East and Central Asia participate in it. "Although there are efforts to fight international terrorism by governments and global organizations, the responses to the ominous phenomenon are insufficient," he said.

Pointing to the establishment of conventions for fighting terrorism, he mentioned that more efforts and planning are needed to confront the phenomenon in line with the growth of international terrorism and its role in the world.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has been a victim of terrorist acts, but the terrorist groups have been given safe haven in western countries," he said.

Boroujerdi further said current developments in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan are obvious examples of terrorism and organized crimes, and that Israeli state terrorism targeted the Palestinian activists as well. "Terrorism is not limited to national and trans-national borders, because it has increased alongside globalization," he said, adding that no government or region is immune from the threat of sabotages and terrorist acts.



No Evidence of Nuclear Weapons Program



Mohamed ElBaradei

The international community has no evidence to confirm Iran's nuclear program has military nature, the head of the UN nuclear agency Mohamed ElBaradei said on Monday.

Addressing the Middle East World Economic Forum in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm El-Sheik, ElBaradei said the international community should trust Iran's commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, IRNA reported.

He also stressed the need for continued talks between Iran and critics of its nuclear program.

"We haven't seen indications or any concrete evidence that Iran is building a nuclear weapon and I've been saying that consistently for the last five years," he asserted, noting that the issue of Iran's nuclear standoff with the West is a problem of trust.

The IAEA chief referred to a December 3 joint assessment by 16 US spy agencies, which conceded that Tehran is not running a nuclear weapons program, and said the US intelligence report agreed with his agency's assessment on Iran's nuclear program.

ElBaradei also criticized US President George W. Bush's remarks at the forum and suggested that the US hold direct talks with Iran to resolve the long drawn-out standoff over the country's nuclear

program.

"If you need to resolve an issue, you need to see where people are coming from," he said. "We should have learned from now that dialogue, not isolation, is the way to move forward."

Iran has repeatedly stated that as a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is entitled to enriching uranium, which will provide fuel for the country's under-construction nuclear power plant.

However, the US president's flagrant disregard for international reports on Iran indicates his determination to drum up support for an act of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

"I have said Iran is dangerous, and the NIE estimate doesn't do anything to change my opinion about the danger Iran poses to the world—quite the contrary," Bush said in response to the release of the US National Intelligence Estimate.

Meanwhile, Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheith said in his address to the forum that no one even referred to the Israeli stockpile of nuclear arms while everyone kept talking about Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

"The presence of US and Israeli warships stationed in the sea near the Arab states have destabilized the region," Abul Gheith said.

Gov't to Cooperate With New Majlis

The government is ready to cooperate with the upcoming Majlis, said the government spokesman on Tuesday.

"The government needs Majlis to help tackle problems," Gholamhossein Elham told reporters in Tehran, IRNA reported.

He added that the government will deal constructively with all MPs from different factions and parties.

Elham also said the arrest of six Bahais in Iran was for security reasons and not for their faith.

"Linking security issues to ideological matters is a mistake, although that is not an ideological issue either," he said.

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He added that the detained Bahais were members of a group working "against the national interest".

"The group is an organized establishment linked to foreigners, the Zionists in particular," he said. He added that putting emphasis on a sect called "Bahaism" was an "old and useless policy".

"Every country must defend its security, and this has nothing to do with ideological issues," he said. Elham stressed that Iran's security organ observed legalities when it arrested the six Bahais and would follow up the case carefully, regardless of their faith.

Najjar Warns of US Deceit, Lies

Defense Minister Brigadier General Mostafa Mohammad Najjar said all governments and nations should confront the lies spread by the US government.

Najjar made the statement during a visit to the Defense Ministry's News Dissemination Network in Tehran on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

"In their eight years of wielding power in America, the neoconservatives have a track record full of lies, deceptions, murders, insecurity, instability, unilateralism, spread of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction as well as violations of human rights and international norms and standards. For many years to come, the adverse consequences of this track record will hurt the people of the world, especially the Middle East," he said. The defense minister emphasized that the ruling neoconservatives are so tricky and deceitful that President George W. Bush has admitted that he was disappointed with flawed information related to the alleged WMDs in Iraq before the start of the war on terror. The brigadier general also said that given its failure in Iraq, the US continues to spread lies against Iran and Syria, and intends to further prolong its illegitimate presence in the region by creating a tense atmosphere and insecurity.

"In his eight years in the Oval Office, Bush has endangered global peace, international security, regional stability and calm, and has been fanning the flames of dispute in the region by making controversial remarks," he said.

Najjar said the world will no longer be deceived by the lies of Bush and warmongers.

West Violating...



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On the recent repeated visits to the region by US officials, he said one of the main objectives of these visits is to create discord among the regional states.

"Promoting the presence of US forces in the region, aiding insecurity and instability in Lebanon and preventing the settlement of the Lebanese crisis are among other objectives of the US officials' visit to the region," he said.

The foreign minister noted that these objectives are aimed at rallying support for the illegitimate Israeli regime.

The two officials also explored grounds for expansion of cooperation in different fields, including oil and gas industries, dam-building, construction of power plant, and car-manufacturing.

Mottaki referred to the signing of preferential tariff agreements, exemption of double taxation and support for reciprocal investments as efforts that can facilitate commercial and industrial relations between Iran and Ghana.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mottaki said the European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, is to arrive in Tehran soon to present the EU's package of incentives to the Iranian leaders.

"Recently, Solana has requested for a trip to Iran to present the EU's package of incentives. The request has been accepted by the Iranian officials," he said.

However, he did not mention the exact date of Solana's visit.

Referring to Iran's package of proposals, Mottaki said the general outlines of the package have been announced and the details will be announced at an appropriate time.

Last week, Iran's Ambassador in Belgium, Ali Asghar Khaji, said Tehran's package of proposals presented to Solana is aimed at resolving the world problems.

Welcoming Iran's package of proposals, Solana promised to study the contents of the package at the earliest and inform the Iranian officials of the result.

The Ghanaian foreign minister, who is in Tehran to take part in the Third Conference of Iran-Ghana Commission, said his country's leaders are determined to expand relations with Iran and call for utilizing Iranians' experiences in industrial sectors.

Assessing the exchange of view with friendly countries on international issues as fruitful and constructive, he said Iran's policy focuses on the expansion of ties with African countries, which can benefit both the Iranian and African nations.

For his part, Osei-Adjei said the African continent is in need of good friends, such as Iran.

He expressed hope that his current visit to Tehran would help open a new chapter in bilateral cooperation.

Praising Iran's valuable experiences in the areas of oil and gas exploration, he voiced his country's readiness to bolster bilateral cooperation with the Islamic Republic in the fields of oil, gas, agriculture and industry.

Perspective

Iran and American Elections

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This explains why Obama has called for "a change" in the US government's plans at home and abroad. Obama has declared that if he becomes president, he will negotiate with Iran's president without any preconditions.

Experience has shown that most US presidential aspirants, after coming to power, forget about the pledges made in their campaigns. Therefore, there are no assurance that Obama will stick to his words about Iran or the Palestinian dilemma if elected.