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In the Name of the Most High

Viewpoint

Joining Hands With SCO

By: Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

Ali Akbar Velayati, an advisor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, says Tehran and Moscow have agreed on efforts for the promotion of Iran's status at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

After a meeting with a meeting in Moscow as a special envoy for President Hassan Rouhani, the top Iranian official gave Ruouhani's message to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The meeting, which lasted more than an hour, focused on bilateral political and economic ties as well as Tehran's nuclear talks with the Sextet of world powers.

The SCO groups China and Russia with the four Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Iran has observer status. The country, which received observer status at the SCO in 2005, eyes the body's upcoming meeting in the Republic of Bashkortostan next summer, where new membership will be discussed.

The Iran-SCO ties have been on the up since President Rouhani's first international trip to the 2013 SCO Summit in Kyrgyz capital Bishkek and a 2014 one in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. Iran's 2008 application for full membership has so far been blocked due to sanctions imposed over its nuclear program.

Iran says it is ready to join the SCO as a permanent member, which has always been welcomed by the member states. Its full membership is set to give a new lease of life to the Organization and reinforce the Tehran-Beijing and Tehran-Moscow ties.

The Iran-Asia trade is symbolized by numerous energy sales and contracts, which are now conducted in euros, yen and national currencies, and none in the US dollar.

This clearly translates into the fact that it is Washington, and not Tehran, which is getting boxed into a corner in the current standoff over Iran's civilian nuclear program.

To make a proof, it suffices to state that three largest customers of Iranian oil are now China, India and Japan, while the former has surpassed Germany as Iran's biggest trading partner. Also the main market for Iran's gasoline purchases has now switched to Singapore and the main investors in Iran's energy sector are all Asian.

According to many Western pundits, Iran's rediscovery of Asia and its turn away from Europe is the most important and perhaps least expected consequence of the network of illegal sanctions.

Indeed, Iran's relations with the regional Organization, which is dominated by Russia and China, represent the most extensive diplomatic ties Tehran has ever shared since 1979.

What's more, China and Russia consider cooperation with Iran and Syria in their national interests. Their financial gains from cooperation with Tehran and Damascus stand to be very considerable, and this may be just a beginning of future cooperation.

Just as importantly, there is a significant angle of economic competition over Iranian resources and access to its lucrative market. Russia continues to believe that Western 'concerns' over 'nuclear proliferation' merely reflect their hidden commercial agenda to drive Russia out of Iran's competitive market.

For instance, in an interview with Western journalists, President Putin once said: "According to our information, many European and American firms cooperate with Iran either directly or through intermediary organizations."

Conceivably, that explains why the Asian giants have moved towards upgrading their relations with Tehran through the SCO at all levels, for the most part, through joint ventures in energy, transportation and trade.

Rouhani's Envoy Meets Putin in Moscow

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- Senior Iranian official Ali Akbar Velayati has held a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin as a special envoy for Iran's President Hassan Rouhani.

Velayati, an advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, gave Ruouhani's message to the Russian president in Moscow, IRNA reported.

The two sides agreed on efforts for the promotion of Iran's status at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), according to the Iranian embassy in the Russian capital.

The meeting, which lasted more than an hour, also focused on bilateral political and economic ties as well as Tehran's nuclear talks with the Sextet of world powers.

Velayati also met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak.

The Iranian official said cooperation between the Islamic Republic and Russia over Syria has borne fruit.

"Iran-Russia regional cooperation over Syria has yielded positive results," he said.

The senior official also described as "very fruitful" Tehran-Moscow cooperation in providing military aid to Damascus against terrorists.

Iran-Russia cooperation over Syria can set a good example, paving the way for trilateral and multilateral cooperation involving Tehran, Moscow and other countries where Iran has influence, from Lebanon to Iraq to Yemen to Central Asia and the Caucasus, he said.

Majlis Vows Swift Response to U.S. Bill



This file photo shows Iran's parliament in session.

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- The first vice speaker of the Iranian parliament (Majlis) has warned that Tehran will scale up its nuclear program should Capitol Hill impose further sanctions against the Islamic Republic over its civilian atomic work.

"If the U.S. Congress makes the slightest move to ratchet up sanctions against Iran, Majlis will instruct the government to take measures to further advance its nuclear objectives and increase uranium enrichment for peaceful purposes as much as needed by the country," Muhammad-Hassan Aboutorabi-Fard told reporters on Thursday.

He said that Majlis has so far worked out the necessary strategies, advising Washington to "learn lessons" from its experience over the past few years.

Official Holds Talks With Lebanese Leaders

BEIRUT (Dispatches) -- Visiting Iranian official Alaeddin Boroujerdi Friday underlined the need for stronger ties among Saudi Arabia and other Middle East countries to boost regional stability.

"The more fraternal relations among countries in the region are reinforced the more stability takes root," Boroujerdi told reporters following talks with Lebanese Prime Minister Tammam Salam.

He said developments in Riyadh were discussed with Salam and stressed Iran's policy aims to build good ties with regional countries, including foe Saudi Arabia.

Iran's fundamental policy "is based on creating the best brotherly relations with regional countries in general and with neighboring countries, including Saudi Arabia, in particular," he said from the Grand Serail in Downtown Beirut.

Boroujerdi, the chairman of the Iranian parliamentary committee for national security and foreign policy, said he also had a lengthy discussion with Salam about security issues and stability in the region.

"We believe that political developments in the region will help to some extent ease the security tension and promote stability in Lebanon."

Iran, he said, "pays special attention to Lebanon's security, stability and peace".

"We consider brotherly Lebanon, despite its small population and geographic size, to play a significant, prominent and extraordinary role in terms of political developments not only at the regional level but also at the level of the whole world."

Boroujerdi said "examining the best ways to improve bilateral relations" was the focus of discussions with Salam.

"Given the vital and important role of the Islamic Shura Council in the current political system in Iran, we assured the prime minister of our full readiness to play a serious, essential and constructive role in the support of everything that would promote and boost bilateral relations between Lebanon and Iran at various levels, especially in the economic and trade fields," he said.

From the Grand Serail, Boroujerdi headed for talks with Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

"We are keen on Lebanon's unity and building balanced relations with all the influential political movements in the Lebanese arena," he said from Berri's residence in Ain al-Tineh.

(Continued on Page 7)

The Holy Qur'an

If you do not go forth, He will chastise you with a painful chastisement and bring in your place a people other than you, and you will do Him no harm; and Allah has power over all things.

The Holy Qur'an (9.39)

PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	12:17
Evening (Maghreb)	17:49
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:39
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	07:05

P5+1 group of world powers fail to lead to an agreement by a self-imposed deadline.

U.S. President Barack Obama administration has warned that the new Iran sanctions proposed by the U.S. Congress would spoil the ongoing talks.

Obama has also threatened to veto further sanctions.

Earlier this month, spokesman for the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of Iran's Majlis, Seyyed Hussein Naqavi Husseini, said that legislators are working on a motion under which the government would be obliged to step up uranium enrichment using new-generation centrifuges.

He said that the move is in reaction to recent announcements by U.S. lawmakers that Congress mulls more sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Press Digest

Iraq Reconciliation

ABRAR: National reconciliation is a job for the Iraqi people - perhaps with a little help from their neighbors. Terrorism and foreign interference are obviously the reason why the country is in such a mess. Political inclusion is a fundamental right for every ethnic group and community but it shouldn't come at the expense of the nation's destruction. After all, political parties win elections by simply promising to better the lives of the ordinary citizens. Those who have taken up arms should ask themselves whether this has been the case for them.

Containing Iran

AFTAB YAZD: The United States and associates are counting on two important factors in their ongoing containment strategy for Iran. The first factor in the Iran containment strategy (to stop Iran from dominating the Mideast region) is that its peaceful nuclear research activities be stopped as quickly as possible and by any means at all. The second factor is to sow seeds of discord among its different ethnic groups and communities. In fact this is what the Americans have been after over the past three decades or so. They have never kept it secret that the only way for them to succeed in dealing with Iran is through interfering in its domestic affairs.

American Democracy

KHORASAN: The recent developments in Iraq and the region are further proof that the policies of American generals, strategists, military planners, and corporate CEOs have been unable to turn the Middle East into the so-called democratic region dominated by the U.S. military power - which is to say, by the threat of state violence and terrorism. As a consequence, the United States is in the dark, confused and lost amid a self-made chaos.

Market Prices

DNYAYE EQTESAD: The present situation in the real estate market has come as a direct consequence of unfounded rumors and speculations on the part of black market profiteers, real estate developers and certain political currents, as well as inefficient policies and plans devised and implemented. The sad part of the scenario is that despite the ongoing nationwide projects and efforts, the new government is being blamed for the dire consequences of all these inefficient policies and ambiguous practices that, by the way, have been an integrated part of this particular market for years.