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In the Name of the Most High
Viewpoint

Importance of Tehran-Islamabad Relations

By: Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

It is glad that the new government in Pakistan has been quick to realize the benefits of a functional foreign ministry after four years of inactivity under ousted Premier, Nawaz Sharif, who for some unknown reasons never appointed a foreign minister from 2013 till his sacking by the Supreme Court last July.

It seems new Prime Minister in Islamabad, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, made the right decision to restart the foreign ministry, as is evident by the 4-nation trip of Foreign Minister Khwaja Mohammad Asif, who is currently in Turkey after visiting China and the Islamic Republic of Iran with whom Pakistan shares borders.

During his one-day stay in Iran, Asif, who held fruitful talks with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif and with President Hojjat al-Islam Hassan Rouhani, also flew to Mashhad to pay his respects at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the 8th Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA).

Talks in Tehran centred on improving bilateral relations between the two friendly neighbouring Muslim countries, including the need to confront terrorism both at the regional level and at the joint Iran-Pakistan borders.

Iran has suffered a lot from cross-border terrorism because of the indifference in official circles in Islamabad over the past four years to the US-Saudi backed terrorists operating from Baluchistan.

It is vital to resolve this issue, or else talk of joint efforts to tackle the instability in US-occupied Afghanistan will be meaningless.

Iran believes in a strong and independent Pakistan that is in charge of its own affairs, rather than following the Saudi agenda for the region.

It is in the same perspective the situation in Afghanistan should be viewed, and hopefully Islamabad has awakened to the realities after the accusations labeled against it by the quixotic US president, Donald Trump last August.

In other words, regional problems ought to be solved by regional states and not by outsiders such as the US which for the past 16 years has destroyed Afghanistan and now intends to make life more miserable for Afghan Muslims by increasing the number of its occupation troops.

If regional countries coordinate their policies in cooperation with the Afghan people and government, then neither will the US have any pretext to meddle in the region, nor will the al-Qa'eda, Taleban, Daesh and other terrorist outfits be able to continue their destabilizing campaign in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

To be more precise, on no account should terrorists of any hue and colour, be given sanctuary or allowed to operate against a neighbouring country.

Iran and Pakistan as two important countries of the region have the potential to cooperation in almost all fields, the moment Islamabad realizes the folly the previous government had made in bowing to US pressures to downgrade trade relations with Tehran, especially the vital oil pipeline, regarding which the agreement signed by the then President Asif Ali Zardari in 2013 has been lying dormant.

Leader's Aide: Military Sites Off-Limits to Inspections



Ali Akbar Velayati, a top international adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said no foreigners, including International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors, could ever have access to Iran's military sites.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - A senior Iranian official has vehemently rejected foreign demands for inspection of Iran's military sites under the pretext of implementing the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and the P5+1 group of countries.

Ali Akbar Velayati, senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on international affairs, made the remarks while speaking to reporters on Tuesday in response to earlier comments by Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Yukiya Amano.

Addressing reporters following the IAEA Board of Governors' Monday meeting in Vienna, Amano said the agency did not distinguish between civilian or military sites in its inspections and would ask for access when necessary.

Velayati said previous agreements between Iran and the IAEA did not include any permission to visit Iran's military sites, adding that Tehran would have never signed any agreement with the UN nuclear agency in case of such a request.

"Mr. Amano, his agents and no other foreigners have the right to inspect our military sites, because these sites are among off-limit sites for any foreigner and those affiliated with them," he added.

The senior Iranian official further emphasized that the IAEA chief's claim about the agency's right to inspect Iran's military sites was "his own fabrication," adding that if Amano could make independent decisions, he would exert pressure on the Israeli regime in order to open its nuclear sites to inspection.

"The existence of nuclear weapons

in the occupied territories is the biggest threat to the entire Middle East region," Velayati pointed out.

The IAEA also on Monday once again confirmed that Iran had lived up to its commitments under the 2015 landmark nuclear agreement signed with the P5+1 group of countries, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Separately, in a meeting with former French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine in Tehran on Tuesday, Velayati hailed the relations between the Islamic Republic and the Western European country as "age-old" and said although the relationship has had some ups and downs, it has never been severed.

He added that the ties officially date back to 200 years ago and unofficially to at least several centuries ago.

Velayati further emphasized Iran's

The Holy Qur'an



Surely the number of months with Allah is twelve months in Allah's ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth, of these four being sacred; that is the right reckoning.

The Holy Qur'an (9.36)

PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	13:00
Evening (Maghreb)	19:33
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:20
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	06:45

influential role in the Middle East, adding that it can have close cooperation with France on regional issues.

The former French diplomat, for his part, pointed to the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and said after the deal and the presidential elections in the two countries, a more positive atmosphere has been created in the relations between Tehran and Paris.

In another meeting with former foreign minister of Australia and the incumbent chancellor of the Australian National University (ANU) Gareth Evans, Velayati urged cooperation between Iran and Australia in the fight against terrorism and in contribution to regional peace.

Highlighting Iran's role in regional and international developments, Velayati said all nations should exercise diplomacy to contribute to sustainable peace and security.

'U.S. Seeking to Manage, Not Eradicate Daesh'

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani on Tuesday blasted the U.S. claims about fighting the terrorist group of Daesh, and said Washington is only seeking to administer the terrorist group to meet its own interests in the region.

"We have repeatedly received documented reports proving that the U.S.-led coalition had been trying to manage Daesh instead of fighting against it and in cases that the terrorist group's suppression was possible, the U.S. has shown no reaction and even helped it to flee the battlefield," Shamkhani told the Arabic-language al-Vefagh newspaper on Tuesday.

He added that the U.S. has today taken the gesture of fight against Daesh to cover its supports for the terrorist group and prevent implementation of Hezbollah agreement to evacuate the families of the terrorists from Syria.

"What we have so far seen from the U.S. and its allies is bombing the residential areas, massacre of women and children, targeting the positions of the Syrian army and Iraqi popular forces and some limited ineffective operations which have covered dispatch of logistical aid to the terrorists," Shamkhani said.

Iranian VP Urges Strong Banking Ties With Pakistan

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Plans to promote cooperation between Tehran and Islamabad in the banking and transportation industries should be prioritized in the bilateral relations, an Iranian vice president has said.

The most immediate steps in the enhancement of ties between Iran and Pakistan should be taken in the field of banking and transportation industries, Iranian vice president for economic affairs, Mohammad Nahavandian, said in a meeting with Pakistani Foreign Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Tehran on Monday.

Hailing a rise in the volume of trade exchange between the two countries, Nahavandian

called for efforts to reach the 5-billion euro target with closer economic interaction.

For his part, the Pakistani minister called for intensified negotiations to sign a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Iran, and also stressed the need for mutual cooperation in the electricity and gas industry.

Heading a political and economic delegation, Asif visited Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Monday to discuss bilateral ties and regional and international developments.

In the past few years, Tehran and Islamabad have stepped up efforts to boost their relations.

Iran Khodro, Germany's Mercedes-Benz Ink Contract to Launch Joint Venture

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Representatives of Iranian automobile manufacturer Iran Khodro Company (IKCO) and the German automaker Mercedes-Benz signed a contract to launch a joint venture.

According to the contract signed in Germany on Tuesday, the two firms will establish a joint company working in the field of sales and after-sales service of commercial vehicles.

IKCO and Mercedes-Benz, which is a division of the German company Daimler AG, also plan to run a second joint company, whose contract will be finalized next month.

The second company would be in charge of production of various products, including the current and future generations of the Mercedes-Benz Actros, a heavy-duty truck introduced in 1995.

Speaking at the signing ceremony of the deal on Tuesday, CEO of IKCO Hashem Yeke Zare said cooperation between IKCO and Mercedes-Benz would continue in the area of commercial vehicles.

Back in January, Yeke Zare said three cooperation agreements had been signed between IKCO and Mercedes-Benz.

He also said at the time that two more contracts between the two companies were in their final stages and would be finalized in the near future.

Iran's automotive industry is the second largest in the country after its oil and gas industry, accounting for 10% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The industry is expected to grow significantly after Iran and six world powers in July 2015 reached a conclusion over the text of a comprehensive deal on Tehran's nuclear program and started implementing the agreement in January 2016.