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In the Name of the Most High Viewpoint

Iran, India All Set to Break New Ground in Bilateral, Regional Ties

BY: Kayhan Int'l Staff Writer

Where there is a will there is a way, goes a famous adage, and if all goes well, Iran and India are set to break new ground for cooperation in the region to the benefit of the two ancient friendly countries and also in the interests of the rest of Asian states.

The recent entrusting by the Islamic Republic of part of the jetties of the strategic port of Chabahar on the Gulf of Oman to India which has offered to develop harbour facilities in addition to building the railway track to the border of Afghanistan, is being hailed as a landmark agreement for the promotion of trade and economic development.

India, which considers Iran as the safest and surest land bridge to not just the landlocked Central Asian countries but beyond them to Russia and the Caucasus states, stands to reap commercial bonanza through this connection.

Iran also stands to gain through this south-north trade corridor that in the long run will provide a vital link between the European Union and ASEAN (Southeast Asian states) in an economical way by substantially cutting the costs of the long, circuitous and cumbersome sea route.

The Iranphobia policy of the US, especially the obsession of Donald Trump regarding the Islamic Republic whose iron-resolve policies have disturbed the sleep of the American president and are causing him nightmares, despite his breach of the international nuclear accord and imposing of illegal economic sanctions on Iran, is turning out to be a blessing in disguise for Tehran.

With the European countries showing hesitancy in continuing their promised trade deals with Iran and lacking the will to match their words with practical steps for circumventing the US sanctions, Iran, which is definitely not short of friends and trading partners, has decided to give more attention towards independent countries like Russia, China and India.

The dividends are indeed paying off. These countries have entered into vital trade agreements with Iran and by deciding to drop the American dollar – and to a certain extent the euro – have opted for transactions in their respective currencies.

This means, Iran can sell its products including oil – which the stupid Trump had vowed to completely cut off from the world market – to not just the above mentioned countries, but also other states ignoring America's extraterritorial pressures, such as Turkey, Iraq, etc.

It is interesting to note that even Turkey and Russia have decided to conduct trade deals in their respective countries by negating the US.

This means, the larger the amount of commercial transaction amongst these states, including Iran, the greater the loss for the US dollar, which, in other words, is being phased out of the international monetary system.

We certainly hope for the day when the American dollar will not be worth a dime and will be viewed by the whole world as a useless paper fit for the trashcan.

Meanwhile, the current visit to New Delhi of Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has been hailed by the Indian media which sees Iran as a reliable supplier of oil and other products required by the Indian market.

The Islamic Republic also expects the Indian government to stand firm to its commitments, regardless of American pressures, since the US is nothing but a backstabber, which longs for nothing but hegemony, and the more any country buckles under Washington's unjust demands, the tighter become the tentacles of Uncle Sam.

FM Zarif Tells Indian TV: Afghanistan Needs Taliban Role, Albeit Not Dominant



Iran's Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif, right, and Indian Union Minister Nitin Gadkari speak to reporters in New Delhi, Jan. 8, 2019.

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) -- The Taliban must have a role in Afghanistan in future, Iran's foreign minister said on Wednesday, but added that the hardline group should not have a dominant role.

Efforts for a negotiated settlement of the 18-year war in Afghanistan have gathered pace in recent weeks after reports that U.S. President Donald Trump plans to withdraw thousands of U.S. troops from the war-torn country.

U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad has held three rounds of talks with the Taliban, but on Tuesday, the militants canceled a fourth round, which had been due in Qatar this week.

The militants said they called off the talks because of an "agenda disagreement", especially over the involvement of officials from the Western-backed Afghan government as well as a possible ceasefire.

Iran has long been wary of the Taliban which it holds responsible for the massacre of Iranian diplomats at the country's consulate in Mazar-i Sharif in 1998. Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi stressed this month that Iran's recent talks with the Taliban are not a reason for Tehran to forget the militant group's killing of 10 Iranian diplomats and an IRNA correspondent.

But Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif said on a visit to India that Iran has had intelligence contacts with the Taliban because it needed to secure border areas controlled by the Taliban on the Afghan side.

"I think it would be impossible to have a future Afghanistan without any role for the Taliban," Zarif, who is in New Delhi for talks with Indian leaders, told NDTV in an interview. "But we also believe that the Taliban should not have a dominant role in Afghanistan."

The Taliban, who are fighting to oust all foreign forces and defeat the government, want to reimpose its own strict interpretation of Islamic law in Afghanistan after their 2001 ouster.

Zarif said it was up to Afghans to decide what role the Taliban should have but Afghanistan's neighbors would not want them to be in overall control.

"Nobody in the region believes that a Taliban dominated Afghanistan is in the security interests of the region. I believe that is almost a consensus."

A Taliban source speaking about the canceled talks told Reuters that U.S. officials had insisted that the Taliban should meet Afghan officials in Qatar and said "both sides were in disagreement over declaring a ceasefire in 2019".

The Taliban have rejected repeated requests from regional powers to allow Afghan officials to take part in the talks, insisting that the United States is their main adversary.

When asked about Pakistan's continued support to terror groups in Afghanistan, Zarif said Pakistan was trying to play a "positive role".

"We believe that Pakistani position on Afghanistan is evolving and we believe that Pakistan now is trying to play a positive role in getting a peace process underway in Afghanistan," he said.

"I understand that the Pakistanis also do not wish to see an Afghanistan dominated by extremists groups... but for Pakistan it is an existential threat. Extremism in Pakistan and Afghanistan is an existential threat for Pakistan."

Zarif said Iran disagreed with Pakistan in the 90s when they created the Taliban or helped create the Taliban.

"We were the first to offer victims to suffer in the hands of the Taliban - 11 of my colleagues were murdered by the Taliban, but we cannot be prisoners of the past."

"We need to work for a better future (Continued on Page 7)

Bahraini FM Attacks Zarif for Criticizing Zionists

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran's Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif on Monday took to Twitter to mock U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton in the wake of his trip to Occupied Palestine but received a scathing retort by none other than the foreign minister of Bahrain.

In his tweet, Zarif shared a photo of Bolton during his visit to the Western Wall in Jerusalem Al-Quds. In the photo, Bolton and his entourage were seen wearing goggles as they were purportedly attending a virtual reality experience of the history of the Western Wall.

"It's said a picture says a thousand words. This picture, however, says more than a thousand words about decades of failed U.S. policies in our region," Zarif wrote. "In the valley of the blind, even those with VR glasses are still blind," he continued.

In response, Bahrain's Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa tweeted a photo of Iran's former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, wearing sporting goggles during a visit to Iran's Atomic Energy Organization when he was in office.

"This picture says a million words... about decades of ill intentions, hegemonic aims and misrepresentation of a proud nation. Iran is one thing and you guys are another," wrote Khalifa.

The tweet is not the first time that the Bahraini top diplomat has appeared to back the occupying regime of Israel.

Khalifa last month blasted Hezbollah for allegedly digging tunnels from Lebanon into the occupied territory.

"Is the digging if tunnels by the organization not an open threat to the stability of Lebanon? Who bears responsibility when the neighboring countries take upon themselves the task of getting rid of the danger that threatens them?" he wrote in Arabic on Twitter.

A week later, he released a statement in support of Australia's decision to recognize western Jerusalem Al-Quds as the occupying regime of Israel's so-called capital.

"Australia's position does not hamper the legitimate demands of the Palestinians and first and foremost East Jerusalem (Al-Quds) as the Palestinian capital," said Khalifa.

The Bahraini foreign minister's comments follow recent reports that the Zionist regime is working to promote diplomatic relations with Bahrain.

The Holy Qur'an

The Hypocrites are afraid lest a Surah should be sent down about them, showing them what is (really passing) in their hearts. Say: "Mock ye! But verily Allah will bring to light all that ye fear (should be revealed)."

The Holy Qur'an (9:64)

PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	12:12
Evening (Maghreb)	17:29
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:46
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	07:15

Ex-Zionist Minister Gets 11 Years for Spying for Iran

OCCUPIED AL-QUDS (Dispatches) -- A former Israeli minister charged with spying for arch-enemy Iran will serve 11 years in prison as part of a plea bargain with authorities, the occupying regime's so-called justice ministry said Wednesday.

The ministry said Gonen Segev agreed to the deal after confessing to severe espionage and passing information to an enemy. The plea bargain will be brought to a judge next month and no further information was provided.

The announcement capped another stunning turn of events for Segev, who served as energy minister under prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in the mid-1990s and was later imprisoned for trying to smuggle drugs into Occupied Palestine.

Segev was extradited from Equatorial Guinea and arrested upon arrival in Occupied Palestine last May on suspicion of acting as an agent for Iranian intelligence and relaying information about the "energy market and security sites in Israel."

The Zionist regime's Shin Bet security service initially said Segev met with his operators twice in Iran, and also met with Iranian agents in hotels and apartments around the world. A gag order was placed on most of the details.

In August, Iran's intelligence minister commented on state television about his country's successful recruitment of a former cabinet-level official from a "hostile" regime, though he did not mention Segev by name.

An Iranian intelligence official recently said that Zionist PM Benjamin Netanyahu feared other Israeli officials might be spying for Iran.

Segev's arrest grabbed headlines across the world which saw it a big victory for Iran in its ongoing intelligence war with the occupying regime of Israel.

Director-general for the (Continued on Page 7)