

Upside/Downside

Official: Iran will not compromise with US

A senior military official said Iran will never compromise with the United States.

"In fact, negotiations with the West and the White House should be construed as an ultimatum given to the adversaries of Islamic Republic," Commander of Basij Force Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Naqdi added.

Naqdi was addressing a public demonstration marking the takeover anniversary of the former US embassy in Tehran known as "Den of Espionage", ISNA reported.

Pointing to the resistance of the defenseless Gazans against the Israeli occupiers, Naqdi said Iranians and Palestinians would soon hold prayers in Beit-ul-Moqaddas.

"Both Iranians and Palestinians will perform joint prayers in the occupied land of Beit-ul-Moqaddas," he said.

The high-ranking military official noted that Iranians declared their deep antipathy towards the arrogant world powers following the takeover.

Iranians stage demonstrations nationwide on November 4.

Gas consumption triples

Gas consumption in residential and trade areas tripled after temperatures dropped nationwide.

If the 8-degree-centigrade decline were to prevail, domestic gas consumption will reach 350 million cubic meters daily, which stood at 120 mcm a month ago, Mehr News Agency reported.

Last year, the average consumption of domestic gas exceeded 420 mcm in the fall and winter.

Gas consumption is expected to increase further this year.

Fruit trees missing in Tehran

Although a significant number of streets and highways in Tehran are flanked by trees, fruit trees are not visible in the Iranian capital.

A senior municipality official said planting fruit saplings will pose a health risk to residents, ISNA reported.

"Pollutants such as lead penetrate through fruits and could spell trouble for the human digestive system," Ali Mohammad Mokhtari, the head of Parks and Green Spaces of Tehran Municipality, added.

The official also said to avoid the risk of falling from fruit trees and fruit litter, the municipality only planted such trees in suburban areas.

Mokhtari noted that the municipality plans to supply fruit and non-fruit saplings to homeowners free of charge.

IAEA: Iran implements most of practical measures

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Yukiya Amano said on Monday Iran has implemented most of the practical measures agreed upon under the "Framework for Cooperation" with the UN body.

"Iran has implemented most of the practical measures agreed under the framework, but not all of them," said Amano at a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly's 69th regular session, Xinhua reported.

Iran and the IAEA signed the joint statement on November 11, 2013 to outline a roadmap on mutual cooperation on certain outstanding nuclear issues.



REUTERS

Amano, however, said IAEA the agency is still working to verify the non-diversion of nuclear material declared by Iran under its safeguards agreement.

"However, we are unable to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities," he added.

Noting there have been important developments concerning safeguards for implementation, Amano asked Iran to step up its cooperation by proposing new practical measures in resolving all outstanding issues.

The IAEA safeguards agreement, which is observed by more than 180 states worldwide, is a system of inspection and verification of the peaceful uses of nuclear materials as part of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Iran and the IAEA have been holding talks on the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy program almost simultaneously with discussions between Iran and the P5+1 — the permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany — on the same issue.



Iran rejects reports of uranium shipment to Russia

Iran rejected a Western media report claiming that the Islamic Republic has agreed to send a part of its enriched uranium stockpile to Russia once it signs a comprehensive nuclear deal with the P5+1 group of world powers.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Marziyeh Akhram reaffirmed in a Tuesday statement that Tehran does not confirm the politically-motivated speculations by certain foreign media outlets, Press TV reported.

Akhram further said Iranian negotiators are attending the ongoing nuclear negotiations to safeguard "national interests and the rights of the Iranian people" irrespective of such Western media hype.

Iraq seeks closer security cooperation with Iran

Iraq's Defense Minister Khaled al-Obeidi praised Iran's key role in supporting Baghdad in the fight against terror groups while calling for closer security cooperation between the two neighbors.

In a Monday meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Iraq Hassan Danaifir, Obeidi underscored the significance of Tehran-Baghdad security ties, adding his country was ready to further enhance cooperation with the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian envoy, in turn, expressed the country's readiness to further bolster security cooperation with Iraq.

Danaifir also reaffirmed Tehran's support for Baghdad in its anti-terror battle, and congratulated the Iraqi nation, government and armed forces on their recent victories against the terrorists of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Iraqi army soldiers, who have been fighting the ISIL extremists for nearly six months, are currently conducting mop-up operations against the terrorists in the northern parts of the violence-stricken country.

The Iraqi troops have pledged to make more gains in their battle against the Takfiri group, which has large swathes of land under control in Iraq and Syria.

The ISIL terrorists have threatened all communities, including Shias, Sunnis, Kurds, Christians and Yazidi Kurds, during their advances in Iraq. They have been committing heinous crimes in the areas they have taken, including the mass execution of civilians as well as Iraqi army troops and officers.

The comment came after US newspaper The New York Times, citing officials and diplomats involved in the negotiations, claimed that Tehran "has tentatively agreed to ship much of its huge stockpile of uranium to Russia if it reaches a broader nuclear deal with the West."

"Under the proposed agreement, the Russians would convert the uranium into specialized fuel rods for the Bushehr nuclear power plant," the report said.

Akhram added that such media reports are aimed at influencing the climate of Iran-P5+1 talks ahead of a new round of negotiations on Tehran's nuclear energy program, slated to be held in Oman on November 11.

Iran and the P5+1 — the United States, France, Britain, Russia, China and Germany — are in talks to work out a final deal to end the long-standing standoff over the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy program before the November 24 deadline.

Sources close to the Iranian negotiating team say the main stumbling block in resolving the Western dispute over Iran's nuclear energy program remains the removal of all the bans imposed on the country, and not the number of centrifuges or the level of uranium enrichment.

Tehran wants the sanctions lifted entirely while Washington, under pressure from the pro-Israeli lobby, insists that at least the UN-imposed sanctions should remain in place.

Iran defense might not negotiable

Iran's envoy to the UN says Tehran will continue to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but issues pertaining to the country's defense programs are not negotiable.

"Based on our principled position, we will continue to cooperate with the IAEA on clarifying some of the ambiguities. However, as stated by high-ranking Iranian officials, areas related to our national security such as the defense capabilities are not subject to any negotiations at any level," said Iran's deputy ambassador to the UN, Gholam-Hossein Dehqani, Press TV reported. The senior Iranian diplomat made the remarks in an address to a United Nations General Assembly meeting on Monday.

The Iranian envoy further urged the IAEA to be impartial and respect the country's right to develop peaceful nuclear energy, adding, "Observing full impartiality and conducting the technical mandate of the IAEA is essential for preserving its authority and credibility and member states' trust."

He further said, "The inalienable right of the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) members to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy, including national nuclear fuel cycles for peaceful purposes, must be respected by all."



Dehqani's comments come amid repeated calls by some Western officials, particularly in the United States, who want Iran's missile program to be included in the nuclear talks between Tehran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.

Iran and the P5+1 group — Russia, China, France, Britain, the US and Germany — are in talks on a final deal to end the long-standing standoff over the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy program before a November 24 deadline.

The two sides will open a new round of talks in the Omani capital, Muscat, on November 11.

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OPINION

Good deal possible in a win-win situation

By Mohammad Ali Sobhani

Iran and major world powers have been engaged in talks for over a decade on Tehran's nuclear energy program. Both sides have come to the conclusion that the nuclear dispute should be resolved once and for all and appear determined to toss the case out.

There's been deepening disagreements over Iran's nuclear activities in the course of the talks and the controversy led to a series of anti-Iran sanctions and resolutions by the UN Security Council.

The country would surely be in a better position if the sanctions had not been slapped. Therefore, the current situation necessitates firm steps by Iran by using all its capacities at the talks.

Iran has always insisted that it will never back down from its inalienable nuclear right as a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which allows nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Iran's top nuclear negotiator Abbas Araqchi recently warned that any attempts to publicize political and excessive demands through the media will make the progress toward a final deal before the November-24 deadline rather more complicated. The remarks came in response to comments by US Under-Secretary of State Wendy Sherman.

Experts believe both Iran and the P5+1 are determined to ink a comprehensive and good deal before the deadline and end what Tehran calls a decade-long undue crisis. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has clearly stated that an agreement is within reach. Based on realities, there reasonable grounds for such optimism.

Nuclear talks are secret and all many remarks about them are sheer speculations. There might be some issues which are highlighted in the media whereas in fact they have never been discussed at the negotiating table.

Both sides are set for long and tough talks before the looming deadline. The upcoming meeting seems to be the last during which negotiators are expected to sign a last-minute deal. It appears that most of the job has already been done.

The Islamic Republic has already taken many confidence-building measures regarding its nuclear drive and in return expects the other side to follow suit. Iran has spared no effort to ease the West's concerns and convince it that its nuclear activities have no military dimensions. In a win-win game participants respect certain rules to achieve a favorable result for all parties involved.

Both sides should try to break down the wall of mistrust so that a good deal is made. With such a deal, Iran can secure its nuclear right. Moreover, anti-Iran sanctions will be lifted and the country can have trade and non-trade cooperation without any restrictions. The West, in return, will be assured that Iran will never deviate from its peaceful atomic activities.

There are strong indications that good deal will be sealed to result in a win-win situation.

Ashura commemorated worldwide

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The mourning services have been in place worldwide since the beginning of Muharram. Ashura marks the climax of the mourning process.

The annual Muharram ceremonies symbolize the eternal and unwavering stance of truth against falsehood and humanity's struggle against injustice, tyranny and oppression, the cause for which Imam Hussein was martyred.

Ashura rituals were peaceful in the city of Karbala, 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of Baghdad, as more than 30,000 Iraqi troops were deployed to protect the worshippers.

Tehran condemns attack

But in Saudi Arabia, unidentified gunmen attacked a gathering of Shia Muslims and killed five mourners commemorating Ashura.

The deadly assault was carried out in Al-Ahsa, the largest governorate in Saudi Arabia's restive Eastern Province, leaving more than 30 mourners wounded.

Iran's Foreign Ministry in a statement on Tuesday condemned the attack on mourners in Saudi Arabia.

The incident followed a wave of attacks against Shia Muslims in the neighboring Iraq where over 30 Shia pilgrims lost their lives in a series of bomb attacks across Baghdad.

Iraqi officials usually blame militant terrorist attacks on Takfiri militants and former Ba'athists, who Baghdad says have formed an alliance to destabilize the country.

In Lebanon, where sectarian tensions are high over the conflict in Syria, tens of thousands of supporters of the Shia Hezbollah turned out in the group's stronghold in southern Beirut amid unprecedented security measures.