



Ayatollah Rafsanjani:
Future Talks Subject to Mutual
Trust

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Iran Today

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Ayatollah Rafsanjani: Future Talks Subject to Mutual Trust

Italian official: Ayatollah Rafsanjani's Stances Appreciated Worldwide

Chairman of the Expediency Council Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said, "Mutual trust and respect and commitment to interim agreements are conditions for the continuation of negotiations."

He made the remark in a meeting with the Chairman of the Italian Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee in Tehran, according to hashemirafsanjani.ir.

He said: "European and Americans imparted distrust against Iran to their people for years. Now, it is a test for them (Geneva agreement) and they should approved that they are trustable as well."

The Chairman of the Italian Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee said that the world maintains that Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani's stances in the past 35 years have been proper and accurate.

Addressing the Ayatollah in a meeting held at the office of State Expediency Council, he said: "The entire world is well aware that you have always been looking for a way to have respectful

relations with other countries," according to hashemirafsanjani.ir.

The chairman of the Expediency Council referred to spread of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and Iraq with the support of the United States, saying: "This virus (terrorism) will not stay in the place it was produced and fostered, and the first opportunity in gets, it will spread everywhere."

He added that interaction and dialog are wise solutions to any political problem.

"The US cannot claim it has kept its geography immune from the threat of terrorists because the bodies of the American soldiers that are delivered to their families, are the result of a seed planted by extremist US governments in Iraq and Afghanistan," he said.

The Italian senator, for his part, commended Iran for taking a positive stance on negotiations with the six powers and making efforts to win the international confidence.



Head of State Expediency Council, Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, known as the Architect of Reconstruction, is once again playing a crucial role in major decision-making processes.





Chairman of Iran Expediency Council Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (R) meets former United Nations Secretary General and head of a group of ex-global leaders known as the Elders Kofi Annan in Tehran on January 27, 2014.

Elders Asked to Help Quell Violence in World

A top Iranian official has described the achievement of a world without violence as a humanitarian duty, calling on the internationally renowned and reputable figures to realize their potentials and help contain violence in the world.

"Efforts aimed at institutionalizing peace in a world gripped by regional conflicts are praiseworthy and upright," Iran's Expediency

Council Chairman Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said in a meeting with former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in Tehran.

Annan is visiting Iran as the head of a group of former global leaders known as the Elders. It is the Elders' first visit to Iran as a group.

Rafsanjani censured bloody conflicts across the world, particularly in the Middle East, and stated that global arrogance and colonial powers play a dominant role in the outbreak of such incidents.

"Through injustice, they first make people reach the end of their tether and then deceitfully turn them against each other," the senior Iranian official commented.

The chairman of the Expediency Council also held arrogant powers accountable for the rise of terrorist groups in the world.

"The fire that these powers have ignited will one day inflict upon



themselves as we can see that such a thing has already happened in many countries,” Rafsanjani noted.

Annan, for his part, appreciated Iran’s role in the establishment of tranquility in the Middle East, stating that whoever overlooks the Islamic Republic’s role in the establishment of regional peace will achieve nothing.

When asked by Rafsanjani why he quit his mediation efforts to bring an end to Syria’s crisis, Annan stated that the UN measures fell short because many of the countries that had initially made commitments reneged on their pledges.

Turning to ongoing conflicts in some parts of the African continent, the former UN chief said attempts will be made to prevent African people from falling prey to ethnic and sectarian violence.

Annan arrived in Tehran early on Sunday along with Martti Ahtisaari, former president of Finland and Nobel Peace laureate, Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town and Nobel Peace laureate, and Ernesto Zedillo, former president of Mexico.

Brought together by South African anti-apartheid icon Nelson Mandela in 2007, the Elders are twelve independent global leaders who use their collective influence and experience to promote peace, justice, and human rights worldwide.

According to the group’s website, the purpose of their visit to Iran is “to encourage and advance the new spirit of openness and dialogue between Iran and the international community, and to explore what could be done to enhance cooperation on regional issues.”



Italy Has Suffered Due to Sanctions

Former Italian prime minister Massimo D’Alema said that his country has suffered great loss due to the international sanctions imposed on Iran.

He made the remark on December 17 in a meeting with the Chairman of State Expediency Council Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The diplomatic talks at any level will lead to a more fundamental understanding, he added.

Ayatollah Rafsanjani said that the West should respect the world public opinion.

He underlined that the scientific status of Iran has been improved despite the unfair international sanctions imposed on the country, IRNA reported.

He reiterated that technology and weapons do not bring power, urging the big powers to admit that the regional public opinion would not welcome the Zionists.

D’Alema: Geneva Deal, Turning Point in Iran Ties with Europe

Earlier Massimo D’Alema said that Iran’s first step agreement with the Group 5+1 was a turning point in Tehran’s ties with Europe and other world states.

He made the remarks while addressing a gathering at the Foreign Ministry Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) in northern Tehran.

D’Alema expressed hope that the P5+1 (US, Britain, France, Russia and China plus Germany) would continue moving on the right track in their future talks with Iran.

D’Alema, who was prime minister of Italy from 1998-2000, added reaching an agreement with the sextet was the result of wisdom and intelligence of the Iranian negotiating team.

He stressed that they would successfully accomplish the talks and reach a final agreement.



By Azam Hosseini (PhD)

Iran and P5+1 members reached a preliminary accord on November 24 over Tehran's nuclear program, the biggest breakthrough in a decade-old standoff.

The deal was announced after the intense nuclear talks between Tehran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—plus Germany.

Iran agreed to halt some of its nuclear activities, but retain the right to uranium enrichment in return for lifting of US and EU sanctions and no new UN Security Council and EU sanctions. Iran will also receive about \$7 billion (£4.3 billion) in sanctions relief.

US President Barack Obama welcomed the deal. President Hassan Rouhani said the deal recognized Iran's nuclear rights.

In a nationwide broadcast, he also said that his country would never seek a nuclear weapon.

Tehran denies baseless claims by Western governments that it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons. It insists it will retain its natural right to enrich uranium to use in power stations.

The deal came just months after Iran elected Dr. Hassan Rouhani – regarded as a moderate – as

Iran, P5+1 Clinch Historic Deal

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its new president.

It has also been backed by the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said the agreement would make the region safer for its allies.

But the Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet it was a 'historic mistake' and that his country reserved the right to defend itself.

The comments from the Zionist regime came as it was revealed that the US

and Iran had held a series of face-to-face talks over the past year that were kept secret even from their allies.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said it was an opportunity for the 'removal of any doubts about the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program'.

He also insisted that Iran had not given up its right to enrich uranium.

"We believe that the current agreement, the current plan of action as we call it,

in two distinct places has a very clear reference to the fact that Iranian enrichment program will continue and will be a part of any agreement, now and in the future," he said.

UK Foreign Secretary William Hague said the agreement was 'good news for the whole world'.

This deal may be the most significant agreement between the world powers and Iran for a decade, said the BBC's James Reynolds in Geneva.

UK: Israel Must Avoid Undermining Deal

He called on world leaders to give a chance to the Geneva agreement, stressing the importance of trying to understand those who opposed the deal.

The UK urged Israel not to undermine the interim deal.

Speaking to parliament on November 26, Britain's Foreign Secretary William Hague urged Israel to avoid undermining the interim deal.

"We would discourage anybody in the world, including Israel, from taking any steps that would undermine this agreement and we will make that very clear to all concerned," Hague said.

He called on world leaders to give a chance to the Geneva agreement, stressing the importance of trying to understand those who opposed the deal.

He, however, urged Israel and others to confine their criticism to rhetoric.

Hague said Britain would be 'on its guard' although it had seen no bid by any opposing country aimed at disrupting the nuclear deal 'in any practical way'.

The British foreign secretary hoped that a comprehensive nuclear agreement could be reached with Tehran within a year.

Hague defended the deal when he spoke in the Commons, and said: "The fact we have achieved for first time in nearly a decade an agreement that halts and rolls back Iran's nuclear program should give us heart this work can be done and that a comprehensive agreement can be attained."

Obama Supports Iran Deal, Criticizes Opponents

US President Barack Obama forcefully defended the temporary agreement between the P5+1 and Iran over Tehran's nuclear program on November 26, pushing back the skepticism voiced by members of the Congress and some American allies.

During a fundraising event in San Fran-

cisco, Obama, without giving names, swiped at those who have questioned the wisdom of engaging with Iran, Fox news reported.

"Tough talk and bluster may be the easy thing to do politically, but it's not the right thing to do for our security," he said.

Bipartisan skepticism in the Senate about the deal could

mean a renewed push for tougher sanctions, which would present a problem for the Obama administration, since the deal signed with Iran and five other nations guarantees no new sanctions for six months.

Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, one of the fiercest opponents of the six-month deal, called it a 'his-

toric mistake' and announced he would be dispatching a top envoy to Washington to try to toughen the final agreement negotiators will soon begin hammering out.

Senior Israeli officials, including Netanyahu, have been hard at work in recent weeks trying to discredit Washington's strategy with Tehran.



Crowds hailed Zarif as a hero and an 'ambassador of peace' while holding flags and flowers. "No war, no sanctions, no insults and no submission," they chanted.

Iran Hails Zarif as Hero after Nuclear Deal

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his accompanying negotiating team were given a hero's welcome upon arrival from Geneva said on November 24.

Zarif said Iran is ready to begin talks for a final resolution with world powers on its nuclear program as of next day, Mehr News Agency reported.

He was speaking after crowds in Tehran cheered the negotiators on Sunday evening on their arrival at Mehrabad airport from Geneva.

"We are prepared to begin negotiations for a final resolution as of tomorrow,"

he said at the airport.

Zarif said his country would begin implementing the nuclear agreement struck with world powers in the next few weeks, as hundreds of supporters welcomed him and his negotiating team home.

The foreign minister said Iran was prepared to take the necessary steps to keep the deal on track.

Many Iranians expressed joy at the biggest breakthrough in a decade-old standoff.

Crowds hailed Zarif as a hero and an 'ambassador of peace' while holding flags and flowers. "No war, no

sanctions, no insults and no submission," they chanted.

Some held aloft posters of President Hassan Rouhani, the architect of Iran's initiative in striking the nuclear deal.

"In the coming weeks – by the end of the Christian year – we will begin the program for the first phase," Zarif said in a live interview at the airport.

A raft of illegal sanctions has been imposed on Iran in recent years, by the UN, the US and the European Union over its absolutely peaceful nuclear program, which is under the supervision of International Atomic Energy Agency.

*It says a pause
in the push
to impose
new penalties
would give
negotiators
flexibility in
talks now
underway to
resolve the
dispute over
Iran's nuclear
program.*



Obama Admin Seeks Pause in New Iran Sanctions Push



The Obama administration is asking Congress to hold off on enacting new sanctions against Iran.

It says a pause in the push to impose new penalties would give negotiators flexibility in talks now underway to resolve the dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

The White House and State Department said the administration wants lawmakers to wait on new sanctions legislation to give

the negotiations time to get traction.

Some lawmakers have argued that now is not the time to ease pressure and that pursuing new sanctions will give the U.S. additional leverage in the talks.

But, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said it was the consensus of the administration's national security teams that a pause "would be helpful in terms of providing some flexibility while we see if these negotiations will move forward." She said the position was delivered to lawmakers and congressional aides at a White House meeting.

"We have conveyed that any congressional action should be aligned with our negotiating strategy as we move forward. So while we understand that Congress may consider new sanctions, we think this is a time for a pause, as we asked for in the past, to see if negotiations can gain traction," Psaki told reporters.

She noted that additional sanctions can always be imposed later if required, and she stressed that no existing sanctions are being lifted.

At the White House, National Security Council spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden said the negotiations would not last indefinitely without progress and movement from Iran.

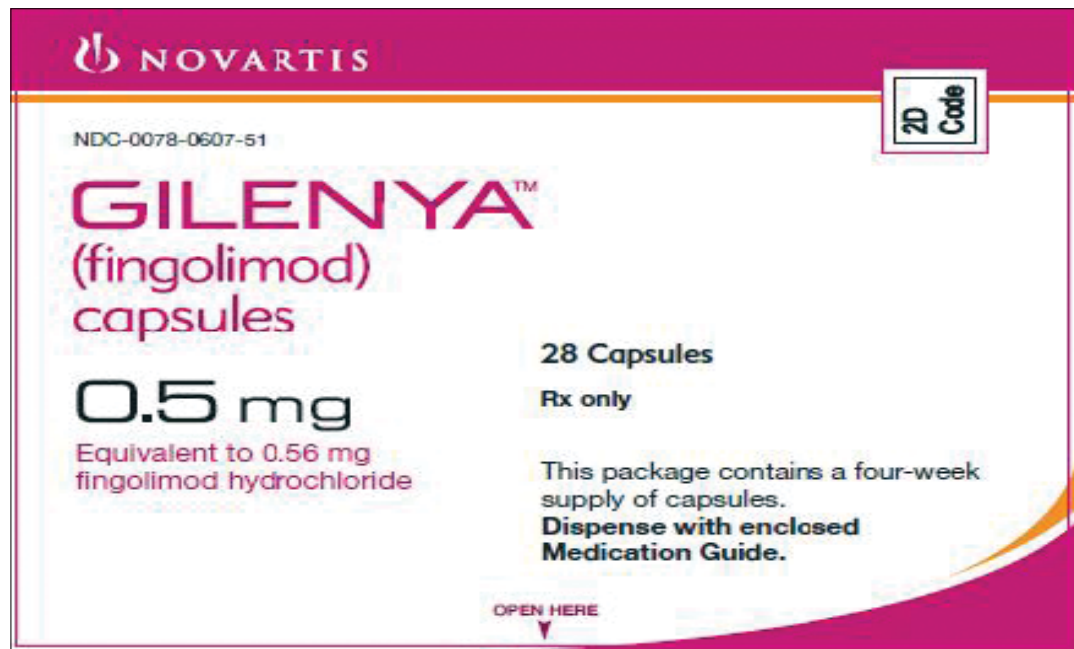
"The window for negotiation is not open-ended, and if progress isn't made, there may be a time when more sanctions are, in fact, necessary," Hayden said. "We have always said that there would be no agreement overnight, and we've been clear that this process is going to take some time."

Bipartisan pressure in Congress to ramp up sanctions on Iran has been rising for some time and hit a new high last week after negotiators from the United States, the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany met with Iranian officials in Geneva.

The chief U.S. negotiator, Wendy Sherman, told Congress before those talks that the administration would support tougher sanctions on Iran if it didn't come to the Geneva talks with "concrete, substantive actions" and a verifiable plan to scale back its nuclear program.

"We have conveyed that any congressional action should be aligned with our negotiating strategy as we move forward. So while we understand that Congress may consider new sanctions, we think this is a time for a pause, as we asked for in the past, to see if negotiations can gain traction," Psaki told reporters.

For some people, MS is characterised by periods of relapse and remission while for others it has a progressive pattern. Symptoms range from loss of sight and mobility, fatigue, depression and cognitive problems. There is no cure and few effective treatments.



Iran Mass Producing Fingolimod MS Drug

Iran has launched the production line for fingolimod medicine (rINN, trade name Gilenya, Novartis), which is used for treating multiple sclerosis (MS) patients, the second country to do so after the US.

"Decoding the formula of fingolimod medicine, which is used for treating and controlling the process of MS disease, took place a few months ago by our country's pharmacologists and the Iranian version of the drug has been tested on 309 MS patients in various cities, with fine feedback," Osweh Drug Company's pharmacologist expert Dr. Babak Yazdani

told Tasnim News Agency.

He said that the tests on MS patients had been conducted in full collaboration with the Health Ministry and the MS Patients Association, adding, the license for mass production of fingolimod medicine has been obtained from the Iranian Food and Drug Administration and a number of doctors have been offered training courses.

Fingolimod would be of use to some but not all sufferers and would offer an alternative to the current treatments of injections and hospital infusions.

MS is the most common disabling neurological

condition affecting young adults, which is the result of damage to myelin - the protective sheath surrounding nerve fibres of the central nervous system - which interferes with messages between the brain and the body.

For some people, MS is characterised by periods of relapse and remission while for others it has a progressive pattern. Symptoms range from loss of sight and mobility, fatigue, depression and cognitive problems. There is no cure and few effective treatments.

Symptoms include mobility problems, lack of bladder and bowel control

and and blurred vision.

Fingolimod (rINN, trade name Gilenya, Novartis) is an immunomodulating drug, approved for treating multiple sclerosis. It has reduced the rate of relapses in relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis by over a half. Fingolimod is a sphingosine 1-phosphate receptor modulator, which sequesters lymphocytes in lymph nodes,

preventing them from contributing to an autoimmune reaction.

On September 22, 2010, fingolimod became the first oral disease-modifying drug approved by the US Food and Drug Administration to reduce relapses and delay disability progression in patients with relapsing

forms of multiple sclerosis. Novartis announced on March 10, 2011 that it had received a notice of compliance from Health Canada and that the drug would be available April 1, 2011 at pharmacies.

On March 17, 2011, the European Medicines Agency approved the drug for use in the European Union.



164 Newborns Every Hour in Iran

The head of the population and immigrant statistics at the Census Organization says that every hour 164 children are born in Iran or 3,947 in 24 hours.

In an interview with the ISNA news agency published, Ali Akbar Mahzoun announced a 2.5 percent jump in birth rate in the first six months of the year (starting March 21 in the Iranian calendar)

compared to that of last year.

Mahzoun added that for every 100 girls, 106 boys are born in the country.

In terms of death rate, he said death number has spiked by 2 percent and for every 100 women, 130 men get death certificate.

He added that every 24 hours 971 people die which means every hour the number comes to 40 nationwide.

In an interview with the ISNA news agency published, Ali Akbar Mahzoun announced a 2.5 percent jump in birth rate in the first six months of the year (starting March 21 in the Iranian calendar) compared to that of last year.



Official: Iran Designing 150-Seat Passenger Jet

The first IRAN-140 aircraft was introduced by Iran in 2003. Five domestically-manufactured IRAN-140 planes were completed in October 2008 to increase the country's transportation capacity and upgrade the Iranian passenger fleet.

A senior aviation official announced that Iran is designing a passenger jet which can accommodate 150 passengers.

"The Iranian Armed Forces Aviation Industries Organization, Iranian Aircraft Manufacturing Company, Sharif University of Technology, Amir Kabir University of Technology, University of Science and Technology and Isfahan University under the supervision of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization are designing a 150-seater passenger jet, a move which is first not just in the country but also in the Middle-East," Head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization Hamid Reza Pahlevani said.

He explained that the heavy plane will be equipped with a turboprop double-engine capable of competing with all other jets in its class, Mehr News Agency reported.

Pahlevani had announced earlier this year that a number of home-made passenger planes, capable of carrying 80, 100 and 150 passengers, will join the country's air fleet soon.

The Islamic Republic plans to manufacture three domestically-designed passenger planes by 2026, Pahlevani said in January.

Iran aims to fly its first Antonov-158 jointly built with the Ukrainian company as early as 2013.

The new air vehicle with a

seating capacity of 100 passengers will be the next generation of Iran-140 airplane.

After purchasing the production license for the Antonov-140 from Ukraine in 2000, Iran built its first Iran-140 passenger plane in 2003.

The first IRAN-140 aircraft was introduced by Iran in 2003. Five domestically-manufactured IRAN-140 planes were completed in October 2008 to increase the country's transportation capacity and upgrade the Iranian passenger fleet.

The IRAN-140 is a double-engine turboprop aircraft which can fly almost 1,865 miles before refueling and its passenger model seats 52 people.



Two Iranians Named Green Talents Award Winners

Two Iranian scholars have been named as winners of the 2013 edition of Germany's Green Talents Award.

Ali Kharrazi and Tayeb Zinati-Shoa are among the 25 winners announced in this year's list.

Kharrazi, PhD in Sustainability Science, has built up an impressive academic track-record, moving from economics to sustainability.

Zinati-Shoa, studying MA Water Resource Engineering, also made efforts to improve and help to further sustainability in an often overlooked, but important, sector: Water Resource Management.

The designated Green Talents 2013 started their "International Forum for High-Potentials in Sustainable Development" on October 28.

Some 430 scholars were invited to this year's competition to share their experiences during a two-week workshop.

Acting as ambassadors for sustainable development in their home countries, these researchers were judged by a high-ranking jury of German experts.

While Germany already produces 25% of its energy from renewable resources, it is one of the most advanced countries in Sustainability Research.

Organized by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Green Talents Award as an incentive for cross cultural exchange is one of the goals of the Ministry to ensure international progress towards sustainability.

Iran Acquires Technical Know-how for Antimony Production

"Due to the efforts made by Iranian experts and engineers, Iran has acquired the technical know-how necessary for the production of antimony ingot," IMIDRO Chairman of Presiding Board Amir Amini said.

The Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced that the country's experts have gained access to the technical know-how needed for the production of the strategic metal of antimony.

"Due to the efforts made by Iranian experts and engineers, Iran has acquired the technical know-how necessary for the production of antimony ingot," IMIDRO Chairman of Presiding Board Amir Amini said.

He noted that Iran plans setting up an industrial unit for annual production of about 180 tons of antimony ingot.

"Iran needs about 100 tons of antimony ingot every year and the remaining will be exported," he added.

The strategic metal of antimony is used in hi-tech industries, aerospace, electronics and chemical industries.

Iran's antimony mines are located in the vicinity of Nahbandan city in South Khorassan province.



Iran to Send New Satellites into Space

Director of Iran Space Agency (ISA) Hamid Fazeli said the country plans to launch two new satellites into orbit.

Speaking on the sidelines of the opening ceremony for the World Space Week in Tehran, Fazeli told reporters that two new satellites, dubbed Tadbir (Prudence) and Zafar (Triumph), are to be sent into space in the future.

Tadbir satellite, he said, should undergo a series of prelaunch tests to validate its operational readiness, adding that such tests will take 2 to 3 months.

Afterwards, the indigenous satellite will be ready for blast-off, Fazeli announced.

Iran also launched its domestically-built Navid-e Elm-o Sanat (Harbinger of Science and Industry) satellite into orbit in February

2012.

Fazeli further explained that Tadbir enjoys more advanced systems compared to Navid satellite, making it possible to capture images with higher precision.

The Iranian official also noted that Zafar satellite will be sent into space in the next Iranian year (starts on 21 March 2014), on a satellite carrier, known as Simorgh (the Roc).

Also in September, Chancellor of Sharif University of Technology Reza Roustazad told Tasnim that Iran was ready to send a home-made satellite, called Sharifsat, into orbit by an indigenous satellite carrier.

"The satellite will be sent into space on board 'Safir B-1' satellite carrier to provide aerial photography and colorful imagery of the Earth," he said at the time.

He also said Sharifsat,

which weighs less than 50 kilograms, has been designed and constructed by more than 100 students, alumni and professors of Sharif University of Technology.

Iran sent a monkey into space aboard an indigenous bio-capsule code-named Pishgam (Pioneer) in January 2013.

The country successfully launched its first indigenous data-processing satellite, Omid (Hope), into orbit in 2009.

As part of a plan to develop its space program, Iran also successfully launched its second satellite, dubbed Rassad (Observation), into the earth's orbit in June 2011. Rassad's mission was to take images of the earth and transmit them along with telemetry information to ground stations.

The Iranian official also noted that Zafar satellite will be sent into space in the next Iranian year (starts on 21 March 2014), on a satellite carrier, known as Simorgh (the Roc).



Iran Plans Production of Oral Drug for **AIDS**

Iran announced plans to manufacture the oral medicine of its anti-HIV injection drug, Imod.

"Until now, Imod has been used in the country for most HIV-infected patients and its effectiveness has been confirmed," Head of Iran's AIDS Research Center Minoo Mohrez told FNA.

Noting that Imod has been tested on over 4,000 patients in Iran, she said the drug improves the patients' immune system and increases their energy.

"Iran's AIDS Research Center also seeks to pro-

duce the oral medicine of Imod and its production operations will start soon," Mohrez said, expressing the hope that the oral medicine would prove as effective as its injection form.

Iranian scientists in 2007 found a safe and effective cure for the dreaded virus, AIDS. Imod made up of herbal and chemical components works to build immunity and enhance the quality of life of both AIDS and HIV-positive patients with no proven side effects.

In 2012, a senior official of Iran's Red Crescent Soci-

ety announced that HIV-infected patients in Mali have shown positive reactions to the Iran-made AIDS curing drug, Imod, in the course of their treatment.

"We have been witnessing highly positive results of Iran-made Imod drug on AIDS patients in Mali during the last two years," Deputy of RCS for Health, Treatment and Rehabilitation Abdolreza Shahrezayee told FNA at the time.

He underlined that HIV-positive patients are being cured by Imod in RCS's polyclinic.

"We have been witnessing highly positive results of Iran-made Imod drug on AIDS patients in Mali during the last two years," Deputy of RCS for Health, Treatment and Rehabilitation Abdolreza Shahrezayee told FNA at the time.

Iran Beats Russia, Wins Beach Soccer Cup

In the second period, Mostafa Kiani scored a goal, which was made up for by the Russians near the end of the second period that finished 2-2.

Iran has defeated Russia to win the championship of the Samsung Beach Soccer Intercontinental Cup in the United Arab Emirates.

The Iranians beat the two-time defending Intercontinental Cup champion 4-3 in the final match of the tourney in Dubai.

Mohammad Ahmadzadeh struck the opener by a flick header on a magnificent delivery from Iranian goalie Peiman Hosseini one minute into the game.

Minutes later, Andrey Bukhlitskiy gained the equalizer for the Russians and the first period ended 1-1.

In the second period, Mostafa Kiani scored a goal, which was made up for by the Russians near the end of the second period that finished 2-2.

Ahmadzadeh took the lead for Iran again in the 11th minute of the third period and captain Ali Nadiri scored Iran's fourth of the day minutes later, but an own goal by Kiani in the last period made the match end 4-3.

Fifteen seconds before the end, the Russians were awarded a penalty kick, which could have equalized the game but Dmitrii Shishin unexpectedly kicked the penalty wide.

The head coach Marco Octavio's team had beaten Russia 5-3 in a penalty shootout followed by a 2-2 draw.

Iran Women Wushu Athletes Shine in World Contests

Iranian women wushu practitioners have shown an excellent performance at the 12th World Wushu Championships in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, and captured three gold medals.

Iranian women wushu practitioners have shown an excellent performance at the 12th World Wushu Championships in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, and captured three gold medals.

Elaheh Mansourian recorded impressive victories in her march to the final at Kuala Lumpur Badminton Stadium, and collected the gold medal in the women's 52-kg category of the Sanda section after she defeated her South Korean competitor. Maryam Hashemi overpowered her French rival in the women's 65-kg class of the Sanda section, and was awarded the gold medal, Fars News Agency reported.

Shahrbanou Mansourian beat her Canadian opponent in the final match of women's 75 kg category of the Sanda section and won the gold medal. The 12th World Wushu Championships started at the Kuala Lumpur Badminton Stadium on October 28, and will wrap up on November 6. The athletes are competing in Sanda and Taolu sections. Sanda (sometimes called Sanshou or Lei tai) has all the combat aspects of wushu, but includes many more grappling techniques.

Iranian Greco-Roman Wrestlers Win Title in 2013 World Military Championship



In the 120-kg weight class, Bashir Babajanzadeh of Iran won the gold medal after overwhelming Kazakh sportsman Damir Kozembayef.

Iranian Greco-Roman Wrestlers Win Title in 2013 World Military Championship

Iran's national team won the title of the 28th edition of the World Military Greco-Roman Wrestling Championship Tournament in Tehran.

23-year-old Iranian wrestler Saeed Abdevali displayed remarkable wrestling skills at the second hall of the Wrestling House in Tehran, and overcame his Chinese, Finnish and Brazilian opponents in his march to the final bout of men's 74-kg weight category.

He defeated Dolat Zhadyrayf from Kazakhstan

in the final, and collected the gold medal.

The bronze medal went to Ukrainian Greco-Roman wrestler Johan Byshakof, who overpowered Vali Kari Somnyn from Finland.

In the 120-kg weight class, Bashir Babajanzadeh of Iran won the gold medal after overwhelming Kazakh sportsman Damir Kozembayef.

Poland's Lucas Banak defeated Chinese wrestler Mvlaty Bickei Chen, and received the bronze medal.

The Iranian team was the top-ranked squad with 64 points.

Kazakhs amassed 54 points and landed in the second place, while third-

place Ukrainians bagged 47 points. Armenia stood fourth with 46 points.

Freestyle wrestling competitions will be held on October 26 and 27.

The 28th edition of the World Military Wrestling Championship opened in the Iranian capital on October 22, and will wrap up on October 28.

The event has brought together more than 300 athletes from 17 countries.

Military wrestlers from Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Egypt, Finland, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Pakistan, Poland, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine are competing in the tournament.



◀ "The Syrian people and some peoples in the region know how serious the threat posed by Wahhabism is, and everyone must contribute to the confrontation against it and to eradicating it from the root," said Assad.

Iran's Taekwondo Team Bags Gold Medal in World Combat Games in Russia

The National Iranian Taekwondo team grabbed the title in the second Sport-Accord World Combat Games in Russia.

The Iranian team, comprising Mohammad Kazemi, Behnam Asbaghi, Alireza Nasr-Azadani, Massoud Hoji-Zavareh, Farzad Abdollahi and Koroush Rajoli, overpow-

ered the American squad 17-12 in their final match.

The Iranians routed their American and Venezuelan opponents 26-5 and 28-4 in the first and second matches, before they crushed South Koreans 27-7 in their third encounter.

Later, they overwhelmed the Spanish team 6-5 in the semi-fi-

nals, and advanced to the final.

The bronze medal went to Russians, who defeated the Spanish team 13-12.

The second Sport-Accord World Combat Games opened in the Russian city of Saint Petersburg on October 18, and will wrap up on October 26.

SportAccord World

Combat Games showcase Olympic and non-Olympic martial arts and combat sports, among them Aikido, Boxing, Fencing, Judo, Ju-Jitsu, Karate, Kendo, Kickboxing, Muaythai, Sambo, Savate, Sumo, Taekwondo, Wrestling, and Wushu.

Featuring the best athletes of each sport, the Games are a top-quality sporting event and are about more than just sports. They are accompanied by a rich and entertaining cultural program that reflects the ancient traditions and val-

ues of martial arts as well as well as their contribution to the modern society.

13 sports participated in the first edition in 2010. In 2013, two new sports, Fencing and Savate joined and completed the sports program.

Iran Snatches Two Medals in World Combat Games

Iranian karate practitioners have managed to take a gold and a silver medal at the second SportAccord World

Combat Games in Russia.

Iranian sportsman Zabihollah Poursheib exhibited an impressive performance, and overcame his Russian and Turk-

ish rivals in his march to the final. He clinched a silver medal in the men's kumite +84 kilogram after he conceded a defeat against Atamov Shahin of Azerbaijan.

The bronze medal went to Turkish karateka Enes Erkan.

Saeed Ahmadi claimed Iran's sole gold medal the men's -67kilogram kumite.

The 25-year-old Iranian fighter stood on top of the World Combat Games podium after beating Redouan Kousseksou of Morocco in the final competition. Colombian athlete Jose Guillermo Ramirez Gutierrez grabbed the bronze medal.

The second SportAccord World Combat Games opened in the Russian city of Saint Petersburg on October 18, and will

wrap up on October 26.

Fifteen Olympic and non-Olympic sports are currently on the program: aikido, boxing, fencing, judo, ju-jitsu, karate, kendo, kickboxing, Muay Thai, sambo, savate, sumo, taekwondo, wrestling,

and wushu.

Thirty-two athletes are representing Iran in the competitions. A total of 1,500 athletes from 120 countries are in action across 15 sports.

Iranian sportsmen and women are competing in karate, kickboxing, Muay Thai, sambo, savate, taekwondo, wrestling and wushu.

The World Combat Games, first held in Beijing in 2010, were initiated by SportAccord, the umbrella organization for both Olympic and non-Olympic international sports federations.

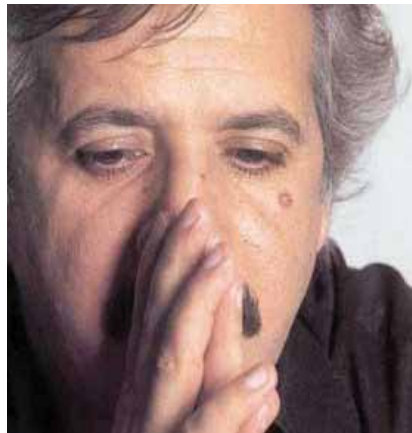


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Majid Majidi, Susan Sarandon Guest of Honor to Indian Festival

Aclaimed Iranian director Majid Majidi and Academy-award winning actress Susan Sarandon have been invited to be the guests of honor of the 44th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), organizers announced.

"The Don Juans" by Jiri Menzel from Czech will be the opening film of the festival, which



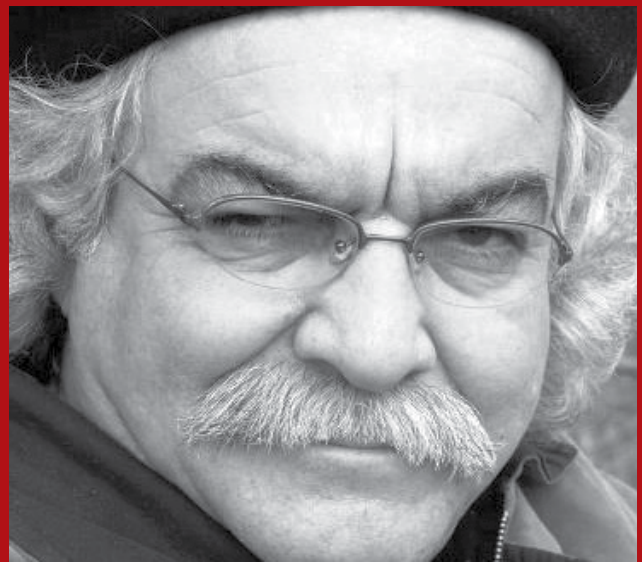
"The Father",
"Song of Sparrow",
"The Children of Heaven",
"The Color of Paradise",
"Baran"
and "The Weeping Willow"
are among Majidi's credits.

will be held in Goa from November 20 to 30.

The festival has received over 600 foreign submissions, 216 of which will be screened at the festival.

"The Father", "Song of Sparrow", "The Children of Heaven", "The Color of Paradise", "Baran" and "The Weeping Willow" are among Majidi's credits.

Majidi's "Children of Heaven" earned Iran's first Oscar nomination in the Best Foreign Language Films category in 1999.



Seyyed Ali Salehi's Poetry Anthology Appears in German

A German translation of Seyyed Ali Salehi's poetry anthology "I Am Boring in a Vague Song" has been published in Germany.

Translated by Majid Mohit, the book has been published by Sujet Verlag in Germany.

The 85-page book, which was designed by Lothar Buharmon, contains a selection of poems composed during the 1990s.

"My books will be translated into English in the near future," Salehi said in a press release.

The Sujet Verlag also plans to publish another of Salehi's collections in 2014.

Miniature Works by Iranian Masters on Show in Caracas

Works of a number of masters of Iranian miniature painting are currently on display at an exhibition in Centro Tolon, a retail and entertainment complex in Caracas, Venezuela.

A collection comprising 32 artworks by Kamaleddin Behzad (c. 1450–1535), Reza Abbasi (c. 1565–1635), Hossein Behzad (1894–1968) and the contemporary painter Mahmud Farshchian has

been put on display at the exhibit.

The exhibit has been arranged by the Iranian Cultural Attaché's Office in Caracas and will continue until October 17, the office has reported in a press release.

The exhibit aims to deepen cultural relations between the two countries and to help familiarize people of Venezuela with Persian art and culture, Iranian Cultural Attaché Saeid Moravvejnia said.

Experts to Review Iranian Cinema in Spain

A number of Iranian and foreign experts will get together at the Complutense University in Madrid to review Iran's cinema in a two-day seminar, which will open tomorrow.

Director of the seminar Francisco Garcia Garcia and university scholar and coordinator Clara Janneth Santos will be giving the opening speeches, organizers have announced on the website.

Iran's Ambassador in Spain Morteza Safari Natanzi is also expected to speak at the opening ceremony.

Abdul Rahim Qazi, director of ImagineIndia, an Indian film festival being held annually in Spain, and Javier Tolentino, director of cin-

ematic programs in several Spanish radio channels are among other scholars to discuss Iran's cinema.

A film screening session has also been arranged during the event in which several Iranian films will be screened.

"Children of Heaven" by Majid Majidi, "So Simple" and "A Cube of Sugar" by Reza Mirkarimi, "Gold and Copper" by Homayun As'adian, and "Age Forty" by Alireza Raisian are among the films to be screened during the seminar.



Kayhan Kalhor to Perform Music Program in Los Angeles

Iranian musician and Kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor along with Silk Road Project members is planning to perform his latest music creation in Los Angeles.

The ensemble is scheduled to perform its various programs on October 22, 2013.

Established in 1998, the Silk Road Project is to promote the study of cultural, artistic and intellectual traditions along the ancient Silk Road trade routes.

Iran's Kamanche maestro, Kalhor has collaborated with the ensemble in several international performances so far.

Kalhor is known for his brilliant performances on the traditional instrument of Kamancheh and creating a unique mixture of classical Persian

music with folk tunes of the Kurdistan region.

He has toured internationally and performed in several countries on numerous occasions. Two of his works were nominated for Grammy Awards in 2004.

He has also held many concerts along with the world-renowned musicians and ensembles such as the string quartet, Brooklyn Rider ensemble, in the US city of Minneapolis in 2012.

Kalhor has composed and performed with Indian sitar player Shujaat Hussain Khan

and Indian Tabla player Swapan Chaudhuri, with whom he formed Ghazal ensemble.

Kalhor also presented joint programs with the veteran Turkish Baglama player Erdal Erzincan at the New York's GlobalFest held at the city's Marlin Room on January 13, 2013.

He also performed a program with a number of world-class Asian musicians at BT River of Music in the British capital of London.

Kamancheh, a Persian bowed string instrument, is related to the bowed rebab, its historical ancestor and also the bowed lira of the Byzantine Empire, ancestor of the European violin family.



Serbian Contest Honors Iranian Cartoonist

Iranian cartoonist Masoud Shojaei-Tabatabai has scooped the top award of the 17th edition of Salon of Antiwar Cartoons in Serbia.

Shojaei-Tabatabai picked up Grand Prix of this year's event for his creative work titled The Peace Messenger.

"Shojaei-Tabatabai's cartoon depicts that war is really devastating and leads everything towards darkness," the director of the exhibition, Miodrag Stojilovic, said during the award ceremony.

Born in 1964, Shojaei Tabatabaei is the current director of Iran's House of Cartoon and a member of the Asian-Pacific Animation and Comics Association.



Shojaei has judged nearly 20 cartoon festivals, including the Aydin Dogan (Turkey, 2005), Guangxi International Cartoon Contest (China, 2007 and 2008), Red Man International Cartoon and Humor Contest (China, 2010) and the 36rd International Piracicaba Cartoon Contest (Brazil, 2009).

The winners were honored during an opening ceremony of the exhibition of their works that was held at the National Museum of Serbia in Kragujevac on October 20. Omer Cam from Turkey received the gold plaque of the event while the silver plaque went to Pawel Kuczynsky from Poland and Serbian cartoonist Aleksandar Blatnik won the bronze plaque.

Iran to Register Traditional Medicine on UNESCO List

Iran offered 'Traditional Persian Medicine' to be registered on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The file is to be reviewed at the eighth session of the committee's meeting which will take place in the Azerbaijan's capital city, Baku, from December 2 to 8,

2013.

The organization's secretariat processed 61 files submitted by the different counties for the 2013 cycle.

Iranian ritual of carpet washing (Qalishuyi) held in Mashhad Ardehal was also registered on the UNESCO's list during last year's session, press tv reported.

The Iranian ritual, held every second Friday of autumn by local men, is said

to commemorate the passing away of a descendant of Shiite Imam Mohammad Baqir (PBUH) named Imamzadeh Soltan Ali.

The ritual takes place at his shrine in Mashhad Ardehal.

Iran's Friday Mosque (Masjid-e Jameh), located in the historical city of Isfahan, and Gonbad-e Qabus tower, situated in the city with the same name, were also inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

The organization's secretariat processed 61 files submitted by the different counties for the 2013 cycle.

Enemies Trying to Deepen Divisions, Spread Islamophobia

Referred to the foiled US bid to launch war against Syria, Rouhani said, the enemies of Islam sought to wage a new war in the region and intended to win the public backing for new occupation, war and bloodshed in a bid to support the Israeli regime.

The Iranian government held close contacts and joined hands with countries opposing a new war in the region and managed to ward off a fresh conflict, the president underlined.

“In cooperation with regional, extra-regional and certain powers, Iran managed to carry out such a big task. If Russia and Syria had not co-



operated, this objective could not have been achieved,” the president said.

Rouhani stressed the importance of improving “dialog and interaction” to end bloodshed and terrorism in the Muslim world, particularly in Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain and Libya.

Syria has been gripped by a deadly conflict since 2011. According to reports, the Western powers and their regional allies—especially Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey—are supporting the terrorists operating inside Syria.

The Iranian chief executive also pointed to the recent nuclear deal between Tehran and six major world powers in Geneva.

“Today, it is clear to the world that the Islamic Republic of Iran has not sought nuclear arms and weapons of mass destruction and will never do so in the future ... and that this nation and country have been a victim of weapons of mass destruction over the past years,” Rouhani stated.

The 27th International Islamic Unity Conference opened in Tehran on January 17, bringing together local and international officials, intellectuals and scholars.

Participants at the three-day event discussed an entire gamut of issues including Muslim unity and the ongoing challenges in the Muslim world.



27th International Islamic Unity Conference

المؤتمر الدولي السابع والعشرون للوحدة الإسلامية

٢٩-٢٧ ربيع الأول ١٤٣٥ • Jan 17 - 19, 2014 • ٢٩-٢٧ ربيع الأول ١٤٣٥



Enemies Trying to Deepen Divisions, Spread Islamophobia

The enemies of Islam and Muslims have always pursued two evil goals: to create and to deepen rifts among Muslims and spread Islamophobia, President Rouhani said in an address to the 27th International Islamic Unity Conference in Tehran on January 17.

“Big and Western powers who are after their own interests in the region and seek to get their claws on the resources of Muslim countries, particularly in the oil and gas sectors, have always followed two ominous goals, namely to deepen divisions and to spread Islamophobia among the world pub-

lic,” the president stated.

It is utterly erroneous to believe that a government can be brought down by proping up terrorists. “If a government thinks that it can topple another government in the region and increase its [own] influence and power by supporting terrorists, it is 100 percent wrong,” he said, according to IRNA.

Rouhani warned that the enemies intend to “justify their military presence and political and cultural dominance over the region and make occupiers, aggressors and Zionists overcome our region.”

Referring to the foiled US bid to launch war against Syria, Rouhani said, the enemies of Islam sought to wage a new war in the region and intended to win the public backing for new occupation, war and bloodshed in a bid to support the Israeli regime.

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Rouhani: OIC Must Help Stop Violence against Muslims

Two Iranian scholars have been named as winners of the 2013 edition of Germany's Green Talents Award.

Ali Kharrazi and Tayeb Zinati-Shoa are among the 25 winners announced in this year's list.

Kharrazi, PhD in Sustainability Science, has built up an impressive academic track-record, moving from economics to sustainability.

Zinati-Shoa, studying MA Water Resource Engineering, also made efforts to improve and help to further sustainability in an often overlooked, but important, sector: Water Resource Management.

The designated Green Talents 2013 started their "International Forum for High-Potentials in Sustainable Development"

on October 28.

Some 430 scholars were invited to this year's competition to share their experiences during a two-week workshop.

Acting as ambassadors for sustainable development in their home countries, these researchers were judged by a high-ranking jury of German experts.

While Germany already produces 25% of its energy from renewable resources, it is one of the most advanced countries in Sustainability Research.

Organized by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Green Talents Award as an incentive for cross cultural exchange is one of the goals of the Ministry to ensure international progress towards sustainability.



Price was a co-author of a letter that garnered the support of 120 U.S. lawmakers in July calling on President Barack Obama to reengage Iran diplomatically over its nuclear program following the election of the Islamic Republic's next president.

Diplomacy with Iran Should be Given a Freer Reign: U.S. Congressman

It would be better not to increase sanctions on Iran to give diplomacy a freer reign in order to resolve the long-running dispute over Tehran's nuclear program, according to U.S. Congressman David Price.

Price made the remarks during an interview with

Fred Petrossians about diplomatic relations between the United States and Iran and U.S. sanctions against Tehran.

Price was a co-author of a letter that garnered the support of 120 U.S. lawmakers in July calling on President Barack Obama to

reengage Iran diplomatically over its nuclear program following the election of the Islamic Republic's next president.

Following are excerpts of the text of the interview:

Q: According to an ar-

article on the Foreign Policy website, “[U.S.] President [Barack] Obama’s administration is facing an unexpected difficulty in its new nuclear talks with Iran -- a sizable block of Democratic lawmakers who have made clear that they will break with the White House and fight any effort to lift current sanctions on Tehran.” Do you agree that such a divide exists between the U.S. government and the U.S. Congress on Iran?

A: I have seen the article about this supposed divide; I think it’s exaggerated. There certainly is a group of senators who are very concerned about Iran and its nuclear program and have been insistent that diplomatic concessions...on the sanctions not be made without very, very tangible signs of diplomatic progress. So there are plenty of people warning that we not be overly optimistic about the possible outcome of negotiations. But I don’t think anybody has declared in advance one way or another about what would be an acceptable set of steps here that would have some calibrated relaxation of sanctions in return for very specific agreements regarding the nuclear program. I certainly think it’s premature to declare that such an agreement is impossible because of the position of the

senators -- I just don’t think that’s the case.

Q: In July, Congressman Charles Dent (Republican-Pennsylvania) and you wrote a letter that some called “historic” in which you asked President Obama to pursue diplomacy with Iran. And 131 congressmen signed this letter. How do you evaluate the dynamism

ocratic caucus to sign that letter. And this letter simply said that with the change in leadership in Iran and the professed desire for a fresh start with the West by the new President [Hassan Rohani], we should test that and see what the possibilities there might be. We shouldn’t have naive expectations; we understand this might not work out. But at the same time, it would be a



of diplomacy between the two countries in recent months?

A: Well, the letter was well-received by members on both sides of the political aisle, Republicans and Democrats, and in fact we got over half of the Dem-

ocratic caucus to sign that letter. And this letter simply said that with the change in leadership in Iran and the professed desire for a fresh start with the West by the new President [Hassan Rohani], we should test that and see what the possibilities there might be. We shouldn’t have naive expectations; we understand this might not work out. But at the same time, it would be a very serious mistake not to try, not to probe, not to see what the possibilities might be. My impression is that the president’s policy -- that the diplomatic efforts that the president has undertaken -- are exactly what we had in mind. It’s exactly the sort of move that we were

Price made the remarks during an interview with Fred Petrossians about diplomatic relations between the United States and Iran and U.S. sanctions against Tehran.



trying to encourage. It's too early, of course, to know what it might amount to, but we feel that we helped create the kind of climate on Capitol Hill that would encourage the administration to undertake this.

Members of Congress sometimes are identified as hawks on this issue who are very pessimistic about the possibility of diplomacy and are mainly just interested in piling sanctions on top of sanctions. I think our letter indicated that although many of us have supported sanctions in the past and understand that they can be an important tool, we still do see them as a tool. The idea is not just to sanction a country or just to punish a country. The idea is to set up a situation where there will be strong incentives for diplomatic agreement -- that's the goal at the end of the day.

Q: Which concrete concessions does the U.S. Congress expect from Iran to lift the current sanctions or just one part of [them]?

A: I don't think any of us are in the position right now to get into that level of detail about what kind of specific concessions might be sought or what kind of incentives, in terms of the calibration of sanctions, might be undertaken either. That's just a level of detail that will await the diplomats who can plan this out. I think what we are talking about ultimately is the removal of Iran's capacity...to develop nuclear weapons, and we are looking for a mix of policies that would range from dismantling some of the capability to agreeing to [an] international presence that would verify the activity or the absence of activity. I think most of the solutions that have been talked about would be some mix of those kinds of measures. But exactly how they would be sequenced and how they would be calibrated in respect to sanctions and so forth, there's no way I or anyone else can get into that level of detail at this distance.

Q: Several senators are seeking an escalation of Iran sanctions after [nuclear] talks. Don't

you think that new sanctions against Iran at this moment can kill all diplomatic initiatives?

A: I would hope that is not the case. I say that having voted in the House against a new round of sanctions at exactly this moment. I was in a minority on that vote. In fact, it passed overwhelmingly the House of Representatives -- this bill imposing a new set of sanctions. The Senate has postponed consideration of this bill, but may take it up. Certainly there are some senators pushing for a new set of sanctions to be enacted. My own judgment is that the timing on that is very poor -- that it would be much preferable to hold that legislation in abeyance (suspend or delay debate). The time may come when a new round of sanctions needs to be enacted, but my own judgment is that it would be better not to do that now, to give the diplomacy a freer reign. Having said that, though, I do not think that passage of this bill would or should wreck diplomacy or kill diplomacy -- certainly I would hope not.

Iran Will Continue Its Nuclear Activities Within NPT Framework, MP Tells French Senators

Alaeddin Boroujerdi, chairman of Iran's Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, held talks with visiting French senators Joelle Garriaud-Maylam and Jean-Yves Leconte in Tehran.

Boroujerdi spoke about Iran's nuclear program, reiterating Tehran's position that the Islamic Republic will continue its peaceful nuclear activities within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and under the inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Boroujerdi added, "Iran believes that the existence of even one nuclear bomb poses a serious threat to the world's peace and security."

Boroujerdi also said that the existence of Israel's nuclear weapon stockpiles reflect the West's double standard policy in campaign against weapons of mass destruction.

The Iranian and French lawmakers also discussed ways to expand bilateral relations, particularly in parliamentary areas.

"The Majlis is fully prepared to help strengthen relations between the two countries based on mutual respect," the senior Iranian lawmaker stated.

MP Hossein Sobhaninia who sits on the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee told that the trip of the French senators will help change the European mindset about Iran.

Boroujerdi also said that the existence of Israel's nuclear weapon stockpiles reflect the West's double standard policy in campaign against weapons of mass destruction.

Bank Mellat to sue UK government

Bank Mellat plans to sue the British government with a damages claim of up to one billion pounds for loss of business caused by illegal sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

The lawsuit, which will be filed by Zaiwala and Co lawyers on behalf of Bank Mellat in the commercial court in London this week, will seek compensation

to restore the bank to the financial position it would have been in, had the business restrictions not been imposed, Press TV reported.

The Iranian bank has been banned from trading with the UK since 2009 over charges of involvement in Tehran's nuclear energy program.

Sanctions against Bank Mellat were overturned by Britain's Supreme Court in June

2013 but have still not been repealed.

The highest British court ruled that the UK government was wrong to have imposed sanctions on the Iranian bank in 2009, and that the Treasury's directive in this regard was 'irrational' and 'disproportionate'.

Western countries have taken a wide range of steps against Iranian companies and banks in recent years includ-

ing freezing their assets, blocking trade and preventing them from doing business with western banks.

At the beginning of 2012, the US and the European Union imposed sanctions on Iran's oil and financial sectors with the goal of preventing other countries from purchasing Iranian oil and conducting transactions with the Central Bank of Iran.

The two top diplomats also exchanged views on the latest developments concerning the nearly three years of crisis that has beleaguered Syria

Iran, Russia Stress Need to Confront Terrorism, Extremism

The Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia have stressed the need for regional cooperation to counter terrorism and extremism.

During a meeting between Iranian Ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanaei and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov in Moscow, Sanaei stated that extremism and terrorism have nothing to do with Islam and its teachings, and noted that such scourges are rooted in politics, poverty and injustice.

The Iranian ambassador also termed terrorism and extremism as among the major threats to the international community.

Sanaei further stated that the Islamic Re-

public of Iran views Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territories and the dangerously radical policies of the Tel Aviv regime as the root causes of terror and violence in the Middle East.

The two top diplomats also exchanged views on the latest developments concerning the nearly three years of crisis that has beleaguered Syria, and discussed the outcomes of the recent talks on the crisis dubbed as Geneva II.

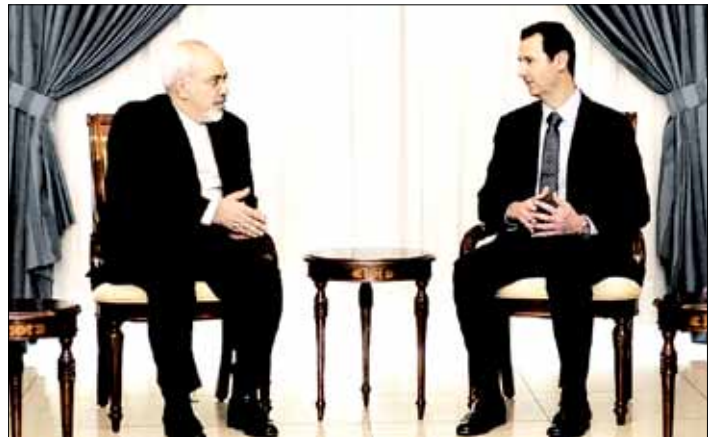
The Geneva II conference, aimed at finding a political solution to the Syrian crisis, ended on January 31 with no concrete results.

Zarif Discusses Peace Talks with Assad, King Abdullah

Syrian President Bashar Assad and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Damascus held talks about United Nations conference aimed at trying to resolve the three-year deadly conflict.

Zarif once again renewed Iran's support for a political solution to the ongoing crisis in the Muslim country, Fars News Agency reported.

"We should move towards a solution for the Syrian crisis through political dialogue and on a realistic basis," Zarif said.



The foreign minister described the upcoming Geneva II meeting a political and international capacity for the resolution of the Syr-

ian crisis, and said, "Success in holding the meeting can prevent continuation of the massacre of the innocent people and also extremism."

Zarif also underlined Iran's readiness to expand economic, political and cultural cooperation with Syria.

The Syrian president, for his part, thanked Iran for its stable stances in supporting the Syrian people. President Assad also briefed Zarif about the measures taken by the Syrian government in its campaign against violence and extremism.

Extremist Ideology Slammed

Assad also warned that Saudi Arabia's political and religious ideology is "a threat to the world".

He was referring to extremist Wahhabism, an ultra-conservative sect which is predominant in Saudi Arabia, a key backer of the terrorist measures against the Syrian government.

"The Syrian people and some peoples in the region know how serious the threat posed by Wahhabism is, and everyone must contribute to the confrontation against it and to eradicating it from the root," said Assad.

Earlier, SANA had quoted Zarif as saying the purpose of his visit "was to help ensure that the international Geneva II conference on Syria brings about results that are in the interests of the Syrian people".

Zarif arrived from Jordan, where he had been as part of a regional tour that also included a visit to Iraq

and Lebanon.

Zarif discussed issues of mutual interest in a meeting with Syrian Prime Minister Wael Nader Al-Halqi.

Jordan Visit

The Iranian foreign minister in Amman held different meetings with senior Jordanian officials, including the country's king, King Abdullah II, on bilateral ties.

During the meeting, King Abdullah and Zarif discussed on bilateral ties and regional developments.

They also conferred on the latest developments in the Middle East, especially Syria and efforts to achieve peace in the region.

King Abdullah reiterated Jordan's support for a comprehensive political solution to the Syrian crisis that stops the bloodshed and preserves Syria's people and territorial unity.

On peace efforts, the King stressed the importance of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict according to the two-state solution, international legitimacy resolutions and the Arab peace initiative.

The Iranian minister stressed his country's keenness on coordinating and consulting with Jordan on various challenges facing the Middle East to arrive at solutions that guarantee the region's security and stability.

He commended the

King's endeavors to promote dialogue, understanding and coexistence between different cultures and peoples, referring to a number of royal initiatives, notably the Amman Message.

Zarif also had a meeting with Jordanian Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour during which they discussed boosting bilateral ties especially in economic fields.

Ensour said King Abdullah II was one of the first leaders who emphasized the importance of a political solution to the ongoing crisis in Syria to preserve its people and territorial unity.

The Iranian minister pointed out that King Abdullah II plays an important role in promoting security and stability in the region, commending Jordan as voice of moderation in the region.

Following a meeting with his Jordanian counterpart Nasser Judeh, Zarif reiterated the Syrians are the only people who should shape their political destiny and future.

Zarif said it is very important for all countries in the region to work to avoid sectarian conflict.

He also touched on the issue of Palestine, calling for the recognition of the Palestinians' rights.

The Iranian minister and his Jordanian counterpart also exchanged views on how to improve bilateral relations between the two countries.

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SCO Official Underlines Iran's Vital Role in Settlement of Regional Crises

Head of the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Zhang Xinfeng stressed Iran's influential role in ending regional crises, and hoped for the promotion of the country's position at the SCO.

Speaking at a meeting with Iran's delegation on the sideline of the SCO meeting in Tashkent, Zhang Xinfeng underlined the importance

of Iran's position in preventing regional crises as well as confronting the negative impacts of the disputes, including in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

The SCO official expressed the hope that Iran's position would promote from an observer member to a permanent member in near future.

He expressed interest for cooperation and collaboration between the organization and the observer members, in-

cluding Iran, considering Syrian development, the outlook of departure of foreign military forces from Afghanistan in year 2014 and possibility of expansion of violence and extremism and terrorism in the region.

Late in March, a senior official of the SCO called on Iran to play a more effective role in trade interactions with SCO member states.

The issue was raised by SCO's Business Council Chairman

Marat Sharshkeev at the time.

Sharshkeev pointed to Iran's active role in several international organizations, and stressed the need for benefiting from Iran's experiences in SCO business council.

In December, former Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi said the country is ready to play a constructive role in bolstering the SCO's activities and performance.

The SCO Business Council was established in June 2006.

It is a non-governmental body, which brings together the most influential members of the business communities of the six member states of the SCO (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan).

Boosting economic cooperation in the framework of the SCO, establishing direct links and dialogue among business and financial circles of the SCO member states are some of the main objectives of the SCO Business Council.

Iran along with Afghanistan, India, Mongolia, and Pakistan are observer states of the SCO.