

## Iran's response to nuclear deal today

**Tehran Times Political Desk**  
**TEHRAN** — Iran's envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, announced here on Wednesday that Iran will respond to the uranium draft deal presented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) today.

The Iranian chief nuclear negotiator left Tehran for Vienna yesterday in order to meet IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei.

An informed source announced that Iran in its response has accepted the general framework of the proposal drafted by ElBaradei in Vienna, but some modifications have been made.

Under the draft deal, a large consignment of Iran's enriched uranium would be shipped out of the country for processing into fuel rods with a purity of 20 percent, which would be used by a research reactor in Tehran that manufactures medical radioisotopes.

The details of the modifications have not been revealed yet.

Iran insists its nuclear program is completely peaceful and that it has the right to enrich uranium.

Western states believe it is attempting to develop a nuclear weapons program, although the IAEA has never found evidence that Iran's civilian nuclear program has been diverted to weapons production.

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council (Britain, China, France, Russia, and the U.S.) and Germany -- which are collectively known as the 5+1 group -- plan to hold a new round of wider-ranging nuclear talks with Iran in Geneva next week.

## Atmosphere of distrust in nuclear talks ebbing way: MP

**Tehran Times Political Desk**  
**TEHRAN** — MP Hossein Ebrahimi says the atmosphere of the nuclear talks between Iran and the major powers has greatly improved.

"Current international circumstances suggest that the atmosphere of distrust in the ongoing nuclear talks is diminishing," Ebrahimi, who is a member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, told the Mehr News Agency on Wednesday.

Commenting on International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Mohamed ElBaradei's latest proposal, which calls for shipping a large consignment of Iran's low enriched uranium to foreign countries, where it would be further enriched to 20 percent purity and processed into fuel rods, the MP said that it is "beneficial" for the Islamic Republic, "because Iran's right to produce enriched uranium would be recognized."

"If we choose this option, we can continue enrichment and gradually increase our ability to produce uranium that is more enriched to supply our power plants and reactors in the future," Ebrahimi added.

# Younger generation's vigor guarantees national progress: Leader



**Tehran Times Political Desk**  
**TEHRAN** — Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has said that the younger generation's vigor guarantees national progress.

"The political insight and religious principles and concepts in the depth of the thoughts of the youth show that today's younger generation cannot be stopped, and this pure reality is the guarantor of the continuation of the country's progress," he said in a meeting with university students and instructors in Tehran.

Ayatollah Khamenei said science

and research are the key factors for the progress and strength of the country and that is why foreigners have targeted the country's universities.

The foreigners are aware of this and are thus seeking to disrupt Iran's scientific activities in any possible way through their plots, but intelligent young people should prevent the enemy from attaining their goal, he stated.

He went on to say that intelligent educated young people who have a sense of responsibility toward their country will create a bright future for Iran.

Commenting on the June 12 presidential election, he said the election itself and the high voter turnout were the main points and other issues were secondary matters, but certain people ignored this fact.

"The day after the election, some called that great election a lie without any reason or justification. Is it a minor offence?"

The enemy took advantage of this unfair reaction, and some people in the country who were not in favor of the revolution from the beginning took advantage of the situation and certain incidents ensued, he added.

## Erdogan meets high-ranking officials

**Tehran times political Desk**  
**TEHRAN** — Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki here on Wednesday.

Two sides expressed satisfaction over the growing trend of mutual relations in political, economical, and cultural spheres. They also discussed the regional and international issues and reviewed the opportunities for expanding ties.

Mottaki pointed to the cultural agreement between Iran and Turkey, which was signed 50 years ago, commenting that strengthening cultural relations will lead to better mutual understanding.

Mentioning the wrong approaches adopted by the Bush administration in the region especially in Afghanistan, Mottaki said if in the new era the previous policies continue, the same results will entail.

The countries in the region should increase their cooperation in order to settle disputes and enhance welfare in the region, he added.

Mottaki highlighted the constructive role of Turkey in resolving problems facing Palestinians.

The bilateral commercial transitions have risen drastically over the recent years and there is still capacity for building up economic exchanges, he stated.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan also stressed the need to maintain comprehensive ties with Iran especially in the economical and commercial areas.

He described the upcoming 21st meeting of the Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Commission as an important



move to boost the economical transitions up to \$20 billion.

The access to the nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is the inalienable right of all countries, he noted.

Two sides also examined other important issues such as the transit of gas from Turkmenistan to Turkey via Iran and the problems in the transportation of goods and passengers through the common ground border checkpoints.

### Iran, Turkey's regional role

Turkish Prime Minister also met with Ali Larijani, Iranian Parliament Speaker on Wednesday.

Two sides called the role of Iran and Turkey in the regional developments "strategic and complementary."

Highlighting the importance of Turkish Premier's trip to Tehran, Larijani expressed hope that this trip will open a new chapter in the friendly bilateral ties.

Larijani pointed to the rich cultural background of the two great civilizations, saying, "This aging cultural background has resulted in a stable and firm relationship."

The role of Iran and Turkey in the region is strategic and the bilateral cooperation can lead to sustained peace and security in the region, he added.

Erdogan said that Iran and Turkey have a significant responsibility in the region to establish peace and stability.

Pointing to the developments in the Gaza and the stance taken by Turkey against Israel, he said that the cancellation of joint military exercise with Israel was based on the humanitarian grounds.

Erdogan also called for boosting parliamentary cooperation between two countries.

## Flu claims 6 more lives in Iran

**Tehran Times Social Desk**  
**TEHRAN** — Six people have died of H1N1-A virus over the past week across the country, director of the Infectious Diseases Department of the Health Ministry Mohammad-Mehdi Guya announced here on Wednesday.

According to Guya, a total of 22 Iranians have lost their lives due to the disease since the disease emerged in the Islamic Republic on June 22.

"444 people have been diagnosed with H1N1-A virus, commonly known as swine flu, over the past seven days, bringing the country's total number of H1N1-A infected cases to 1,638," Guya explained.

According to Guya, 17,150 people have been sick with swine flu so far in the East-Mediterranean region, and 111 swine flu deaths have been confirmed in the region.

People aged between 7 and 24 have the highest rate of the disease, Guya stated.

Stressing the importance of sanitation, Guya advised to cover the mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, use a tissue, throw the tissue away quickly and carefully, wash hands regularly with soap and water, and clean hard surfaces (like door handles and remote controls) frequently with a normal cleaning product to prevent the further spread of the disease.

According to Seyyed Ali Yazdikah, an official at Tehran



GUYA

Education Ministry, at least three Iranian schools were closed on October 26th as a precaution against the spread of the swine flu among students.

Iranian authorities had earlier cancelled the Umrah (the minor pilgrimage) in the holy month of Ramadan with the aim of containing the H1N1-A virus.

Iran's first swine flu case was a 16-year-old Iranian-American boy, who tested positive for the disease on June 22, upon his arrival in Tehran.

The disease has become epidemic in 177 countries around the world. A total of 449,000 people around the world have been infected with swine flu and 5000 others have died from the virus since the disease burst onto the scene in Mexico in April.

Earlier a Health Ministry official, Dr. Mojtaba Bourbour, told IRNA that two million doses of A-H1N1 flu vaccine will be shipped to Iran in April. According to the official Iran requested to buy flu vaccine from American, British and French companies later than other countries, hence the vaccines will arrive next year.

Bourbour said it is impossible to domestically produce the vaccine this year ending March 21, 2010. He added that those who suffer from lung and heart diseases, and those over 65 will get the top priority for vaccination.



## Pros & Cons of subsidy removal

By Salman Ansari Javid

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared in June that his administration intends to cut the expensive subsidies and plans to redirect them to the poorest segments of the society. On October 11, the conservative parliament overwhelmingly gave its seal of approval for the introduction of steep cuts in energy and food subsidies.

The government plans to increase energy and utility prices and compensate low-income families with direct cash payments.

Some analysts have criticized Ahmadinejad for the planned subsidy cuts, claiming it will result in soaring inflation. However, his plans have been supported by pundits who believe that redirection of the subsidies to the poor will help close the gap between the rich and the poor segments of the society.

There are also economists who believe that there was no other choice but to cut the expensive subsidies, which cost some \$100 billion a year. The subsidies cover oil, petrol, natural gas, electricity, water, bread, transport, and telephone services.

"Under the current circumstances about a third of the country's income is directly or indirectly paid in subsidies," Shamsoddin Hosseini, the Minister of Economy, told the parliament.

The bill requires Guardian Council's approval before it can be implemented.

### Inflation fears

The government plans to remove the subsidies by Nowruz (March 21, 2010) and expects a jump of 15 percent in prices. Traditionally every Nowruz brings along a hike of 20 percent in prices. Adding the two, at least a jump of 35 percent is expected after Nowruz.

Jam-e Jam Farsi daily, which is affiliated to IRIB, quoted Deputy Energy Minister, Abbas Aliabadi on Oct. 22, saying that the electricity per kilowatt hour costs 45 tomans but with subsidies it is billed to the public at the rate of 7.60 tomans. So if the subsidy is removed the price of electricity will jump six-fold.

Aliabadi added that last year the funds for the electricity subsidy were allocated from the FOREX basket of the country. However, this year "we're not allowed to use FOREX and the Energy Ministry is bound to face budget deficits."

Even though subsidies require the approval of the Guardians Council and the government plans to implement the cuts from Nowruz, but the price of some of the commodities in the market have already soared.

The October 21 issue of Tehran Emrooz daily wrote that the subsidy on the flour used for the Western style sandwich bread was removed on October 23. The previous administration's ministry of commerce had announced this before the Ramadan period. This plan was confirmed by the new Minister of Commerce, Mehdi Ghazanfari.

As a result, the prices of the sandwich bread jumped approximately 100 percent even before the enforcement of the subsidy law. The Tehran Emrooz wrote that the administration has done so without the approval of the Guardian Council. The newspaper added that the demand for the sandwich bread has dropped in other provinces.

### Subsidy cuts long overdue

Speaking to a panel at the Mehr News Agency office, the Chairman of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines, Yahya Al-e Eshaq said that redirection of the subsidies is not a new issue and it was brought up some 20 years ago.

Al-e Eshaq pointed out that the project requires the cooperation of the Majlis (Iran's Parliament), the administration, and other governmental bodies in order to be implemented properly. He warned that if this project is politicized it would turn into the biggest historical blow.

Bringing the price of gasoline to the international level will have several positive impacts. First of all it will reduce the traffic and pollution in the major cities. For many this is the number one complaint.

Secondly, the gasoline prices on a global scale will force the domestic automakers to produce fuel-efficient cars. At present, the average mileage for the domestically manufactured car is over 10 liters per 100 kilometers. In Europe, the average is 6-7 liters per 100 kilometers.

Right now regular rationed gas at the petrol pump can be bought at one cent (100 tomans) per liter with a limit of 100 liters per month per car. If the consumption exceeds 100 liters, then one can buy openly for approximately 4 cents (400 tomans) a liter.

Iran daily reported yesterday the Head of the Fuel and Transportation Management Committee, Mohammed Royanian, saying that there is the possibility for reduction of winter ration gasoline from 100 to 80 liters per month. He said that the new ration would continue until the end of the Iranian year (March 21, 2010). Whether Royanian was preparing the public for the removal of gasoline subsidies or not is open to speculation.

The present gasoline prices do not encourage the auto industry to produce fuel-efficient cars. It also encourages anyone with a car to be able to drive at a very low cost creating traffic jams and hazards.

Those who were in Tehran when the government introduced the gasoline rationing system some two years ago will remember the peace and calm and the fresh air it brought with it. Of course, they will also remember the public reaction to the rationing, which resulted in riots and burning of several gas stations by the angry mob.

In order to avoid confusion and chaos the government should take appropriate measures to redirect the subsidy cuts towards public transportation system.

The real impact of the subsidy cuts will only be felt when it is fully implemented. And we can only evaluate its long term impact after passage of time. In the short term, after implementation it will be the talk of the town, especially during taxi, metro and bus rides.