



Ali Asghar Soltanieh

## IAEA Meeting Technical

Iran's representative in the International Atomic Energy Agency Ali Asghar Soltanieh described Monday's negotiations with the agency's delegation in Tehran as "completely technical, non-political and non-legal".

The talks are aimed at answering the UN nuclear watchdog's pending questions on the threshold of IAEA Chief Mohamed ElBaradei's report.

Talking to Mehr News Agency, Soltanieh also said it is likely that such meetings will continue in the coming weeks.

"Since the Board of Governors will hold a meeting on June 2, ElBaradei is duty-bound to present his report regarding various issues on IAEA's agenda until mid-May. Furthermore, given the fact that the report on Iran's activities must be finalized, he has spoken about Iran's cooperation to remove all ambiguities until mid-May," he said.

Commenting on IAEA Deputy Head Ollie Heinonen's last week negotiations in Tehran, he said, "Iran has answered all the agency's questions within the framework of the modality plan. This has actually been verified in ElBaradei's reports while Iran is always prepared to cooperate with IAEA like all other member-states."

The Iranian official noted that it is a norm in the agency to raise questions about the activities of all member-states and it is also a norm that Heinonen visit various capitals to receive answers to questions.

Soltanieh said last week's negotiations were constructive and held by experts.

The visiting IAEA delegation is headed by Heinonen.

## Tehran to Host Islamic Confab

Secretary-General of the World Assembly for Proximity Among Islamic Schools of Thought Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri said Iran is to host the 21st International Conference on Islamic Unity during May 4-6. Talking to reporters on Monday, he added that 850 thinkers and intellectuals from 45 countries, including Oman, Sudan, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Germany, the US, Tunisia, Syria, Saudi Arabia, France, Morocco, India, Algeria, Hong Kong, Qatar, Britain, Denmark, Iraq, Turkey, Gambia, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and the United Arab Emirates, are to attend the conference, IRNA reported.

The official said preparing the ground for unity and solidarity of the Muslim world and bringing cultural and scientific views closer are major goals of the conference.

"The participants will also discuss peaceful coexistence and removal of obstacles, including the enemies' plots and secular thoughts," he said.

Over 100 foreign and domestic articles have been sent to the secretariat of the conference, 70 of which have been selected for presentation.

Taskhiri further said the Islamic Unity Charter has been compiled, pointing out that over 2,000 Muslim thinkers and scholars have so far signed the charter.



# Ahmadinejad Wraps Up Islamabad Talks

## Chinese Participation in IPI Welcome



Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf (r) shakes hands with Iranian counterpart Mahmoud Ahmadinejad upon his arrival in Islamabad on April 28.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his Pakistani counterpart Pervez Musharraf on Monday cleared all hurdles over a gas pipeline to India and agreed to sign a deal soon.

Ahmadinejad discussed the 7.5-billion-dollar project to transport Iranian gas across the subcontinent while making a short stop-over in Islamabad on the first leg of a whirlwind tour of South Asia, AFP reported.

"The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the resolution of all issues that had delayed a final agreement," Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was quoted as saying by the Associated Press of Pakistan.

Qureshi added that the Iranian and Pakistani presidents had tasked their foreign ministers to agree on a "mutually convenient date for signing the agreement" after their hour-long talks in Islamabad.

The two leaders held wide-ranging talks and vowed to promote bilateral ties.

Ahmadinejad paid a short visit to Pakistan on the first leg of his tour of South Asia which will also take him to Sri Lanka and India.

Referring to the multibillion Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline, the Iranian president hoped that work on the project will start after the signing of an agreement soon.

"The pipeline will not only pave the way for regional development but will also promote peace and friendship," said.

Ahmadinejad also said IPI reflects friendly relations among the three countries, saying that the project is a source of frustration for those who are bent upon creating instability in the region.

He said the three countries would soon ink a formal agreement on IPI, adding that the signing of the agreement would mark the implementation of the long-awaited project. He welcomed the Pakistani proposal to invite China to join the IPI.

The Iranian president described Pakistan's nuclear program as peaceful and said imperialist forces are on the verge of elimination.

Touching upon ongoing events in Afghanistan, he said Iran wants peace and stability in Afghanistan, saying peace in the war-ravaged country is in the interest of the region.

Ahmadinejad invited President Musharraf to visit Iran, who accepted the invitation.

Iran, meanwhile, agreed to provide 1,100 MW of electricity to Pakistan to help overcome a recent power shortage, particularly in areas adjoining Iran.

He expressed satisfaction over the agreement to get electricity from Iran and called for getting more power from Iran.

Highlighting the importance of IPI, he said Pakistan attaches great importance to the project, adding that the project would promote peace and friendship among the

three nations. Musharraf said the IPI would also pave the way for removing misunderstandings between Pakistan and India, hoping that all matters about IPI would soon be finalized.

On Iran's nuclear program, President Musharraf said Pakistan supports Iran's right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

"We support Iran's quest for using nuclear technology for energy requirements," he added.

After his meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani, President Ahmadinejad said Tehran would welcome Chinese participation in the multibillion gas pipeline.

"The IPI gas pipeline agreement will soon be finalized and my government will also welcome the inclusion of China in the project," he said.

Ahmadinejad said Tehran would extend its cooperation in the food and energy sectors, besides promotion of trade and economic ties.

Congratulating Gilani on assuming office, Ahmadinejad said Iran accords high priority to its relations with Pakistan and would like to further enhance them in all fields, particularly in areas of commerce and trade.

He also extended invitation to the prime minister to visit Iran.

Gilani, for his part, said Pakistan greatly values and is keen to further promote its brotherly relations with Iran as both the countries share religious, historical and cultural commonalities.

"Iran is an important country in the region and we value our cooperation with Iran for promoting peace and stability in the region," he said.

He said Pakistan is keen on promoting bilateral relations with Iran in all fields, stressing the need for enhancing cooperation in the field of energy.

The prime minister said Pakistan is presently confronting the issues of food and energy security and said the two countries should work together to meet these challenges.

"The government of Pakistan is also keen on increasing the purchase of electricity from Iran," he said.

On the issue of terrorism, Gilani said his government is pursuing a comprehensive policy to address terrorism and extremism.

"The government is in the process of evolving a multi-pronged strategy which includes political dialogue, socioeconomic development and security measures to effectively confront these problems," he said.

Ahmadinejad on Monday evening arrived in Colombo for a two-day official visit. He was welcomed at the Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka and Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama.

## Everlasting

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According to IRNA, Kazem Mousavi, the head of Great Islamic Encyclopedia Center, said, "Arrogant world powers have tried to separate Persian Gulf from Iran by using a fake name to fulfill their ominous intentions in the region. However, they must understand that Persian Gulf is an inseparable part of Iran."

Head of Abu Reyhan Research Center Kianoush Kiani said, "Many things have been outlined about Persian Gulf in history and geography books. The reason is that Persian Gulf is among the most sensitive strategic and geopolitical regions of the world. In fact, many archeologists and historians believe that the region is the cradle of civilizations."

Also on Monday, deputy foreign minister for Arab affairs, Mohammad Reza Baqeri, said that based on all international documentations the name of the waterway south of Iran is Persian Gulf.

Addressing a meeting on the occasion of National Persian Gulf Day at Tehran University, he said, "About half a century ago, the plot for distorting the identity of the Persian Gulf was launched. During the reign of Jamal Abdel Nasser over Egypt, although he was a praiseworthy Arab leader and helped spread Arab nationalism, the name 'Arabian Gulf' came to the limelight."

He also referred to his meeting with the incumbent Kuwaiti foreign minister of 24 years ago, Sheikh Sabah, and said, "In his office I saw a map where the name Persian Gulf was used. I told me he deserves praise because of his correct move. He replied that Nasser ordered that the name Arabian Gulf should be used, but even in our elementary school books we have used the name Persian Gulf. Persian Gulf has always been Persian Gulf."

Hamid Ahmadi, a professor of political science and international relations of Tehran University, said, "It is impossible to change the name Persian Gulf. Based on all UN documents, everybody knows Persian Gulf."

## Perspective

### Persian Gulf...

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Over the past five decades the Persian Gulf has turned into a "hot spot" and a seemingly open-ended war zone where arrogant powers desperately seek to expand their influence and interests.

To say the least, regular foreign military and other interference has long added the disturbing word "volatile" to the oil-rich region and transformed into a tinderbox that the world has not known in recent memory.

So, one may ask what role can regional states play to prevent a further deterioration of the already troubling situation? Should they, for instance, continue to depend on the rising price of oil and turn into major consumers of western products?

Undoubtedly, the natural resources in the Persian Gulf are a blessing for its people and the generations to come. We have a duty to protect this wealth and use it wisely and judiciously in the interest of peace and stability.

To this end, a variety of ideas have been floated to keep the Persian Gulf free of tension and promote its stability. Almost all the proposals have failed to produce the desired results due largely to the army of mismanagers and foreign interference.

Iran has presented its proposal which can help resolve some of the more urgent problems. In a proposed collective security plan proposed by Tehran, the Persian Gulf states will create a new body to oversee regional security without foreign interference. The organization will also ensure security of energy supplies to the industrial world and thus remove whatever concerns it may have about its energy needs.

Safeguarding the waterway is a duty of the littoral states. April 29, dubbed the "National Day of Persian Gulf" in the Iranian calendar, coincides with the day Portuguese colonists were forced 400 years ago to get out of the Persian Gulf. May be this event could be a starter for realizing the will of the regional peoples.