

200 MPs in a statement strongly criticized the recent remarks by Vice President Esfandiar Rahim-Mashaie on Iran's friendship with the Israeli people.



Beyond Diplomatic Clichés

By Mohammad Ebrahimi

The visit of Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) was rather unexpected. A glance at CBI history shows that apart from a few exceptions, political figures at the level of head of state(s) of other countries did not express much interest in going to an institution like the CBI. So, the key question for CBI officials, including its governor, was: What was the Algerian leader looking for?

Bouteflika's queries posed to CBI officials in his three-hour tour were rather unexpected. He asked a variety of questions.

Why are private banks authorized? Would a foreigner be allowed to purchase equity in Iranian banks? What is the difference between a financial and credit institution and a bank? To what degree are regulations of international financial institutions acceptable? If you were in my place would you sell 51 percent of the stocks of your biggest bank to the private sector?

Interestingly enough, Bouteflika did not visit the CBI's world famous Museum of Gold and Jewelry. One CBI official opined that the museum shows the past wealth of Iranians while Bouteflika was more interested in the CBI's present programs and future direction.

This is perhaps why the Algerian chief executive spent three hours at the top bank and preferred to see the CBI's Information Center instead of the world famous Koul-e Nour diamond.

Bouteflika's tour, which was beyond the common diplomatic clichés, ultimately emerged as a training workshop. This is something that he did not mind.

In his visit, Bouteflika heard from the CBI chief Tahmaseb Mazaheri that he could sell over 50 percent of the stocks of the top bank even to foreign buyers provided the monetary and economic regulations of the country are amended.

The Algerian president who displayed great interest in banking was informed about the law for banks' working capital, which demands that the working capital of a bank should not be less than a certain designated minimum.

He asked his economy minister why issues of the sort were not brought to his attention earlier. Bouteflika was also briefed on the challenges and opportunities of e-banking and expressed interest in encouraging Algerian banks to cooperate with their Iranian counterparts.

It is apparent that that monetary and fiancé are not the priorities of only executive officials, but also have a special status in the economic plans of other developing countries.

Bouteflika's CBI tour showed, among other things, that the Iranian banking system has learnt a lot and its valuable experience can be shared with other Muslim states.

Navy Prepared

Commander of the Islamic Republic Navy General Habibollah Sattari said Wednesday that Iran's naval forces are prepared to safeguard the Persian Gulf more effectively than before.



"The forces, serving under the command of the Commander-in-Chief, will protect the country's land and sea borders with full strength and power," he said in a talk with reporters on the sidelines of his visit to a naval base in the provincial city of Sirjan, IRNA reported.

Sattari said faith, unity and integrity of the armed forces guarantee the strength of the Islamic establishment and success of the armed forces.

The naval forces are vigilant and monitor all movements in the strategic region, he told the reporters.

Leader Advices Intelligence Officials



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Wednesday said that Intelligence Ministry should move forward strongly and not be disrupted by political upheavals.

"The Intelligence Ministry is one of the best and most loyal institutions established after the victory of the Islamic Revolution. Due to its painstaking efforts and its silent endeavors, the ministry has been helping safeguard the Islamic Revolution, Islamic values, and is protecting the people against the enemies. All the people should be grateful for this," Fars news agency quoted him as saying.

In a meeting with officials and staff of the key ministry, the leader referred to the spiritual award for the silent and selfless endeavors of its personnel in the divine court of justice and said the prerequisite for silent endeavor is praising God and improving the ability of self-restraint and piety.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the people have a positive impression of the ministry despite their

abhorrence of the former regime's feared security apparatus commonly known as the SAVAK.

Corresponding Move

"One strong point of the Islamic system is the Intelligence Ministry, which should strive to enhance bonds with the people and use their help (on different issues)," pointed out the leader.

He referred to the extensive activities of the intelligence apparatus and spy agencies of enemies and said, "the Intelligence Ministry should organize moves and effective innovations that correspond with the moves of the enemies."

Meanwhile, Intelligence Minister Gholam Hossein Mohseni-Ejeie briefed the leader on the performance of his ministry in the past three years.

He said by virtue of its activities the ministry on the one hand has made the atmosphere pretty unsafe for criminals and opponents of the establishment, and on the other made the ambiance calm and peaceful for the common people and officialdom.

US Announces New Sanctions

America imposed unilateral sanctions on Wednesday on five more Iranian organizations over their alleged links to and support for Iran's nuclear program.

The US Treasury Department accused the Iranian entity of providing materials to Iran's nuclear program and banned American companies from conducting business with those institutions, Presstv reported.

The new sanctions would also freeze any assets that the Iranian companies might have in the United States.

The five entities have been identified as the Nuclear Research Center for Agriculture and Medicine in Karaj, the Isfahan Nuclear Fuel Research and Production Center, Safety Equipment Procurement Co. and Jaza Industrial Co. and Jaber Ibn Hayyan.

The organizations are active in nuclear research, education programs, laboratory services for nuclear fuel production and establishment of industrial units related to civilian nuclear energy.

"These five nuclear and missile entities have been used by Iran to hide its illicit conduct and further its dangerous

nuclear ambitions," said Stuart Levey, the Treasury Department's undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence.

The West has so far imposed three rounds of sanctions against Iran, threatening the country with a fourth round should it refuse to halt uranium enrichment.

The EU ratcheted up trade restrictions on Iran Friday, introducing restrictions on public loans and tougher cargo inspection.

Also in late June, the EU agreed to ban Iran's largest bank (Bank Mell) from operating in Europe for allegedly 'providing services to the country's nuclear program.' The EU announced it would exercise vigilance in dealing with all Iranian banks, in particular Bank Saderat.

Bush's America and its European allies accuse Iran of trying to acquire a nuclear weapons capability under cover of its civilian nuclear program. Iran has strongly denied the charges saying its uranium enrichment is geared to producing fuel for nuclear power production. The country is currently facing critical electricity shortages.

Bank Keshavarzi Focus On Micro Credit

Managing director of Bank Keshavarzi, Mohamad Talebi gave word of design of special Islamic financial instruments for some agricultural projects.

Addressing a press meeting after taking office eight months ago, he said promoting micro credits, improving the performance of the bank and playing an effective role in the agro sector are his top priorities.

"The seven year vision of Bank Keshavarzi has been compiled and related strategic plans have been prepared," he added.

At the press conference held concurrent with the annual Journalists' Day, Talebi lauded the efforts of journalists in various arenas.

He referred to establishment of an information system and utilization of the mechanism of "dashboard



management" as among the plans for running the bank.

Talebi also referred to creating a mechanized supervision model in the agro sector and expansion of communications in international banking as his other plans.

He recalled that 90 percent of the bank's loans are below 50 million rials and are known as micro credit in international banking parlance.

"This credit can be used as a tool for entrepreneurship and help generate jobs."

He noted that "Our focus on core banking is serious and currently 100 branches of the bank are subject to this modality.

In the near future, all branches of the bank will join this system. Although implementing core banking is a tough task when it comes in Islamic banking, we have done our best to this end."

Tehran-Ankara Ties Affect the Region

Iran's former ambassador to Turkey, Firouz Dolatabadi, said that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit to Turkey is a historical development.



"Given the sensitivities of the region, the meeting of Iranian and Turkish presidents is important at both the regional and international scale. Cementing mutual relations in all domains can have a major influence on regional equations," he told Iran Daily's Maryam Nabizadeh.

On the nuclear stalemate, he noted, "Strong bonds among regional powers can convince the European Union to be more careful in making decisions. Today the EU knows that if it makes decisions about Iran under the influence of countries like the US, it will not be acceptable to the international community, especially regional states."

Major Strides

He went on to add that "Currently we have a stable climate when it comes to trade with Turkey. The two nations are all set to take major strides in bilateral investment ventures."

Asked about the pressures exerted by Israel to disrupt relations between Tehran and Ankara, the former envoy said, "In view of the recent crises in Israel, including its humiliating defeat in the war in Lebanon in 2006, the financial corruptions of embattled prime minister, Ehud Olmert, it is highly unlikely Israel is in a position to negatively affect Iran-Turkey ties."

Turkey, he recalled, now has a great deal of independence and will not submit to external pressures in its dealings with other countries.

Stances of the two neighbors are similar in many cases, the stressed.

"Meeting of high-ranking officials of the two sides in the fields of economy, politics, security and culture is important. I personally believe that the pivot of such meetings is economic development and promoting regional peace and stability."

On the issue of Turkey's membership in the EU, he noted, "The path to membership in the EU is complicated and tough. Turkey has been seeking membership in the Union for years. At any rate, Turkey's accession to EU will have a clear message for the entire region. Iran as a matter of policy has supported Ankara's drive for membership."

Expressing satisfaction over the fact that Turkey's ruling party, the AK Party, can continue to operate, he said that the Islamic orientation of the two nations can contribute greatly to improving two-way relations.

Ahmadinejad to Speak To CNN Turk

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is due give an interview to CNN Turk prior to his departure to the Turkish capital.

He will speak to the satellite TV network late Wednesday night ahead of his tour of Turkey on Thursday where he will meet President Abdullah Gul and other senior officials to review regional and international developments, Presstv reported.

Iranian and Turkish officials are also expected to explore new vistas for boosting Tehran-Ankara relations, including a boost in two-way commerce.

Analysts say Ahmadinejad's visit to Turkey is significant as it comes at a time when the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) is popular in that country despite heavy odds, has delivered the goods in key sectors, and the country is enjoying decent levels of growth and development.

The Justice and Development Party (AK Party) entered the Turkish political scene on 14 August 2001 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The Party immediately set out to develop its organizational structure and experienced rapid growth. A nationwide network was built in one year. Simultaneously, the Party's Women and Youth branches were set up and began activities all over Turkey.

AK Party entered the general elections of 3 November 2002 despite its infancy. The will of the voters established the party as the predominant political party in the elections. It defeated all other established parties, winning 34% of the vote. AK became the ruling party, marking the end of the era of coalition governments that began in 1991. Almost 34% of the national vote gave AK 363 seats in the 550-seat parliament. After the interim election in the province of Siirt and new participation in the Party, AK's seats rose to 367.

The local elections of 28 March 2004 were an important second test for the AK PARTY. The Party increased its 34% vote in the 3 November 2002 elections to 42%.

Prevailing in 12 of the country's 16 metropolitan municipalities, 46 of 65 provincial municipalities, 425 of 789 county municipalities and 1,216 of 2,250 district municipalities, AK achieved a landslide victory in the local elections.

IRAN DAILY Advertising Dept 8-8-5-0-0-6-1-6--7