

Tudeh News



International Bulletin of the Tudeh Party of Iran—Nov. 2007 - No. 248

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Pressures of Imperialism, Internal Policies of the Ruling Despots, and the Workings of Oil and Gas Agreements

(Abridged from "Nameh Mardom", Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran No. 775, 13th October 2007)

Finally after 28 years of negotiations between Iran and India on the construction of a main pipeline to transport natural gas, last September the Indian Ministry of Petroleum announced...that they have decided to stop pursuing the project...The Indian Ministry of Petroleum has reiterated that it was due to unresolved issues between Pakistan and India that they did not participate in the seventh round of talks among the three countries involved.



(Iran-Pakistan-India Peace Pipeline – TN)

Some media reports indicate that the reason behind India's refusal could be the issue of negotiations for an agreement on nuclear energy with the United States.

Following India's absence in this important meeting with strategic aspect over the region's socio-political makeup, Iran announced that plans would go ahead with Pakistan's involvement. On October 1, Keyhan newspaper reported that "...the agreement will be signed by the end of this October, and Pakistan has invited Iran to attend a meeting in mid-October in Islamabad to go over the details of the agreement and make the necessary revisions. Thus the agreement will be finalized over the next month." Additionally, on September 29, Iran's Sarmayeh newspaper wrote..."Iran may replace China with India in the \$7.4 million pipeline project. The Iranian energy and economic consul in India said 'how long could we [Iran] wait for India?' On the other hand, and at the same time as India's withdrawal from the talks, the US deputy secretary of state made an official comment that "the countries around the Caspian Sea have the largest and most important natural gas reserves on the planet and this gas can get to Europe through corridors other than Iran and provide part of the energy needs of this continent." He also added that "Iran is not the most reliable source of providing energy and the United States expects Turkey and other countries to respect the virtue of Security Council resolutions against Iran which have been ratified without a single opposing vote."

This posturing shows the interventionist nature of Imperialism in regional issues, especially on methods of transporting oil and gas to other regions of the world. The US disagreement with Iran's plans for gas pipelines to Europe through Turkey is meant to put our country under pressure and to affect the political arena of our nation. In general, for transportation of oil and gas from the Caspian Sea basin, central Asia, and the Caucasus to Europe and other parts of the world, imperialism supports a plan called "Nabucco" that has been masterminded by large petroleum conglomerates like Shell, Amoco, British Petroleum, and Texaco.

According to this plan, to subjugate Russia, Turkey has been turned into the central hub for transporting natural gas to Europe, and in

addition to the Baku-Jihan pipeline, the "Nabucco" main pipeline will also carry some of the natural gas from Iran and Turkmenistan through Turkey to central Europe and the Mediterranean coast. The opposition of the United States to the agreement between Turkey and Iran to construct a 3,500 km pipeline is precisely along the plans of imperialism to exert pressure on Iran and against any investments in Iran's energy industry. This could be a temporary measure and its continuation depends on the type and level of relations and the resolution of issues between Iran and the United States in future. In fact, the US is using this resentment as a leverage to press forward its plans for Iran and the region.

Meanwhile, the important matter of the contents of such agreements must not be ignored and neglected. Considering the pressures from imperialism and the policies of the ruling despots, are the national interests of Iran being considered in them? After the recent changes in the key Ministry of Petroleum and assigning a new superintendent for it, the subject of signed and upcoming contracts and agreements about exports and transportation of oil and gas became the topic of discussions in that ministry...The head of the ministry had stated that "Ministry of Petroleum will take a new approach with regards to oil and gas agreements"...He then added..."Iran is prepared to give expansion contracts for any oil fields without formalities. We are ready to consider sourcing out the Southern Pars field without any legal formalities." The surrender of rich oil fields to foreign countries and companies, as outlined by the superintendent, is clear in the initial agreement of transportation of Iranian gas to Turkey. According to this agreement, Turkey will become Iran's partner without bidding, and will be present in three phases of the Southern Pars field project. Donyaie Eqtesad writes "Turkey will take over all three phases. Turkey has put its foot into the natural gas heaven. Turkey's oil company (TPEO) will produce 20 billion cubic meters of gas in these 3 phases. Phases 22, 23, and 24 of the Southern Pars field will be given directly to Turkey without any bidding auction." With this plan and the signed agreement, Turkey will act as a major energy dealer in the region and will sell Iran's natural gas to European customers!!

...Now after the signing of this agreement... Turkey not only receives the natural gas at a discounted price, but also has turned into an exporter of gas to Europe and Israel...On August 18, Etemad newspaper said in a controversial report that "3 German, French and Swiss companies have expressed interest in

buying natural gas from phases whose control have been given to Turkey. These companies have entered negotiations with Turkey to work on this project (and purchase of gas)."

Does the Southern Pars field belong to Iran or French Total, Shell (British-Dutch) or Turkish companies? Why have high ranking authorities of Islamic Republic gone silent on the terms of these agreements and are not informing the public?

Considering the pressures exerted by Imperialism and the chaos in the oil and gas industries, which groups, institutes, or factions are busy plundering the natural resources of our nation and signing agreements against the rights and interests of Iranian people?

The government of Ahmadinejad had given special privileges to foreign parties and especially Pakistan in the agreement nicknamed "The Peace Pipeline". The chief negotiator in this project described the new round of talks...: "the signing of this agreement is not a great achievement, because with this agreement, Iran is forced to sell its natural gas at a cheap price for 25 years."



The question is why after India pulled out of the talks, the government of Ahmadinejad is willing to sell Iranian gas to Pakistan at a discounted price?...A member of the parliamentary commission on energy says "...One of the reasons of this agreement was to resolve the problems between India and Pakistan, but if India drops out of the talks the topic of peace will be a moot point...Unfortunately, the economy of our country has taken a huge blow from the cheap sales of our raw resources. And how is that while our domestic industries need to be fed, we are selling gas to other countries [Turkey and Pakistan] at a much discounted price just to have exports?"

About the agreement with Pakistan, it is noteworthy to point out that since Pasdaran [Revolution Guard Corps] had a direct hand in the building of the pipeline to Pakistan, and is active in the expansion of the Southern Pars fields, the cheap export of gas to Pakistan is extremely lucrative for them. Thus, there is a reason why this repressive organ is one of the main backers of the signing of the agreement... Therefore, as the deputy chair of the French Total company pointed out some time ago, Iran's oil and natural gas agreements are "under geopolitical pressures" and countries such as Turkey and Pakistan are making the most of the situation and increasing their influence in the region.

Due to the current atmosphere in the international relations and our country's weak position as a result of the actions of the ruling reaction, the oil and natural gas agreements and contracts negotiated by the Supreme Leader [Velayat-e Faqih] regime do not observe or protect the rights of our people and national interests. The signing of such agreements will undoubtedly be against our nation's interests at this historically critical moment!

More Language of Tension and Confrontation, and the Dangers that Threaten Our Nation and the Region

(Abridged from "Nameh Mardom", Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran No. 776, 27th October 2007)

On Thursday Oct 25 Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State, announced in a press conference that the US will expand its sanctions against Iran. The new wave of sanctions is aimed at punishing those organs within the Iranian regime that according to the Bush administration "are engaged in building nuclear and ballistic missiles and support paramilitary extremist groups in other countries in the region." According to these reports, the new sanctions include more than 20 individuals and companies that are under the control of Revolutionary Guard Corps (Pasdaran). Also the elite Quds Force – the extraterritorial unit of Pasdaran – has been declared by the US administration as a terrorist organization due to

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its activities in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Near East. In addition, a number of companies affiliated to Pasdaran, as well as ... banks are also included in these sanctions.

On the other hand, it was in the news that Ahmadi-Nejad has outlined the government's latest position on the escalation of international tensions, the crisis within the government, Laridjani's resignation... in an interview with reporters. ...In answering the question about Iran's stance on nuclear talks, Ahmadi-Nejad mentioned that he is ready to negotiate and "debate" with all parties, including George Bush. He also said: "I have repeatedly said that Iran will not negotiate for its irrefutable rights with anyone. Why should we negotiate about our irrefutable rights? If one wants to negotiate their irrefutable rights one must give up part of them in order to reach a settlement with the other party." He then added: "some tell us that our case is at the Security Council, but we tell them that the case is only a stack of papers. It does not have any validity to us. Some people like to amass sheets of paper, but that does not concern us. Even if the case is one hundred thousand pages it will not have any impact on the political aggregations and decision making process of the Iranian nation."



Photo from: Talkleft.com

Nowrooz news agency – affiliated with reformist Participation Front (Mosharekat) – ... reported that Ansaar (Friends of) Hezbollah published a memo at the conclusion of its 9th annual meeting that proclaimed "Ansaar Hezbollah considers any official agent of the criminal US government a terrorist, and calls on all cells of Ansaar Hezbollah to deal with them heavy-handedly, including capture or killing, and declares its readiness to battle these criminals."

It is clear that the escalation of the language of tension and conflict between Iran and US and its allies, and the recent provocative act of intensifying economical sanctions by the US, has made progressive and freedom-loving forces of the region seriously concerned. Any escalation of political confrontations instead of

moving towards peaceful talks to resolve problems in the current dangerous situation of the region, and while war is ravaging Iran's neighbouring countries, will only worsen the current disaster and spread it wider in other regions of the world.

Putin's recent trip to Iran, for the meeting of the countries around the Caspian Sea, and then the news of Russia's proposal to Iran, and Larijani's resignation as the head of Iran's "National Security Council" and Iran's representative in talks with Javier Solana and the IAEA, has had an extensive reflection in the national and international media. Various speculations on the reasons of the resignation, and the question that whether these moves will result in changes in the foreign policy of the regime and rumours about the upcoming resignation of Mottaki (foreign affairs minister) have prompted many different analyses.

What's clear is that Larijani's resignation was due to his differences with Ahmadi-Nejad... In a press conference, Ahmadi-Nejad told reporters that "the shuffling of bureaucrats is a normal thing. Larijani had asked ...to be allowed to resign multiple times, and it was only natural for the president's office to eventually agree to it." ... Regarding Iran's nuclear policy, Ahmadi-Nejad said: "I have announced the policies and these are the same policies that we have been following for the past two years."

An important point that is often neglected in many of the analyses is that the regime's foreign policy has always been an issue whose main directions were and continues to be drawn by the "Supreme Leader". Such shuffles that can be due to party politics and possible stunts to affect the upcoming presidential elections would normally not bring major changes in the orientations of the policies taken by the regime. As Ahmadi-Nejad has repeatedly pointed out, the policies of his administration are determined, in principle, in close coordination with, and under supervision of Khamenei (the Supreme Leader) himself, and with his permission...Therefore, one should not think that such changes in office will have any significant impacts on the policies of the government and the Supreme Leader (Velayat-e Faqih) regime. The policies taken by the regime in the past two years will continue. The issue that is important to progressive and freedom-loving forces in Iran and the world is that the current trend in a risky one that could easily turn into another horrific disaster in our region due to miscalculations by any one of the parties. Recent incidents in the Middle East, especially Israel's recent aerial attacks on Syria, are serious warnings that should be heeded. The Tudeh Party of Iran has warned in the

recent months about the dangers of escalation of political tensions that could lead to military confrontations. We feel it necessary to repeat our warnings again. In contrast to Ahmadi-Nejad's claims we must take rational policies to prevent Iran's case from being referred to the Security Council [of the UN] and also to prevent further economic sanctions against Iran. The long and agonizing experience of sanctions against the previous government of Iraq showed that under such circumstances it is only the ordinary people that bear the brunt of these sanctions.

Iran can open the negotiations with UAEA to gain international confidence and thwart any excuses for any new military conflicts by warmongering forces in the US and Europe, while pursuing its right to utilize peaceful nuclear energy. Mobilization of the international peace movements would be possible with rational policies and away from adventurism; it is by relying on these great international forces that we can prevent the tragedies of Afghanistan and Iraq from repeating in Iran.

