

# U.S. AND IRANIAN STRATEGIC COMPETITION:

Iran's Perceptions of its External Relations and  
their Implications for Strategic Competition with  
the U.S. in the Gulf, Sept. 2010 – May 2011

By Alexander Wilner

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The Burke Chair has compiled a series of chronological reports with the assistance of Adam Seitz of the Marine Corps University that focus on Iranian perceptions of national security and assess Iran's intentions concerning competition with the US.

The latest version of these reports is entitled "U.S. and Iranian Strategic Competition: Iran's Perceptions of its Internal Developments and their Implications for Strategic Competition with the U.S. in the Gulf," and is available on the CSIS website at <http://csis.org/publication/us-and-iranian-strategic-competition-3>. Previous versions include: "U.S. and Iranian Strategic Competition: Iran's Perceptions of its Ballistic Missile Program and Competition with the US in the Gulf, Sept. 2010 – Feb. 2011," <http://csis.org/publication/us-and-iranian-strategic-competition-2>, and "U.S. and Iranian Strategic Competition: Iranian Views of How Iran's Asymmetric Warfare Developments Affect Competition with the US in the Gulf, Sept. 2010 – Feb. 2011," <http://csis.org/publication/us-and-iranian-strategic-competition-1>.

The Iranian government's statements and diplomatic activity provide valuable insight into the country's strategic competition with the US. They help show how the regime perceives its relationship with the international community and responds to external pressure. The regime's multifaceted engagement with its Arab neighbors in the Gulf, Afghanistan, and the South Caucasus as well as its burgeoning diplomatic activity in Africa and Latin America provide key insight into the Iranian government's outlook and strategic goals.

On April 17, 2011, the head of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of the Iranian Parliament, Alaeddin Boroujerdi, made statements regarding how Iran perceives its role in the Gulf in response to the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) assertion that Iran has meddled in Bahrain's social unrest:

"The [P]GCC should not put the blame for the ongoing developments in Bahrain on Iran. The Islamic Republic seeks peace in the region."

"Iran's policy on Arab countries in the Persian Gulf has not changed and we still believe in good relations with these states."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is the most influential country in the region which tightens regional security and has played a valuable role in defusing crisis and establishing security."<sup>1</sup>

The articles in this report provide a far more detailed picture of how such statements reflect Iran's view of diplomatic developments since Sept. 2010 and the general outlook and priorities of the regime. They highlight an increasingly assertive and confrontational approach to Iran's engagement with the international community – particularly with the US and American regional

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<sup>1</sup> "Iran MP Urges PGCC to Stop Blaming Iran." PressTV. 19 April '11

allies. Additionally, they help provide insight into Iran's foreign policy goals, its actions abroad, and how it perceives competition with other states.

These articles also reflect Iran's efforts to counter US and Western diplomatic influence in the face of mounting international criticism and pressure concerning the country's nuclear program and human rights abuses. Iran has sought to do so by engaging regional states that maintain historic cultural, linguistic, and religious ties with Iran, courting post-colonial developing countries in Africa with anti-colonial rhetoric, and seeking to boost ties with other diplomatically-isolated regimes in Latin America such as Venezuela and Bolivia. These developments indicate Iran's increasing defiance regarding the concerns of the international community, and reflect a pattern of Iranian diplomatic engagement aimed at circumventing US influence and diplomatic reach.

This collection of statements also reflects that two central themes relevant to Iran's competition with the US have come to dominate its foreign policy and diplomatic developments since Sept. 2010:

- Growing concern over and rhetoric regarding the WikiLeaks revelations that Gulf Arab nations are increasingly alarmed about Iran's nuclear program as well as massive US arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE aimed at containing Iran.
- Efforts at cultivating partnerships with regimes in Latin America that are ideologically hostile toward the US such as Venezuela and Bolivia.

### **Gulf Region**

The US presence in the Gulf and the US relationship with Iran's Sunni-dominated Arab neighbors in the region have long ranked as some of Iran's top foreign policy concerns. As one of the oldest nations in the world and the largest, most populous state in the region, Iran sees itself as a natural and legitimate power in the Middle East. For example, Alaeddin Boroujerdi made the following statement on April 17, 2011:

“The [P]GCC should not put the blame for the ongoing developments in Bahrain on Iran. The Islamic Republic seeks peace in the region.”

“Iran's policy on Arab countries in the Persian Gulf has not changed and we still believe in good relations with these states.”

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is the most influential country in the region which tightens regional security and has played a valuable role in defusing crisis and establishing security.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “Iran MP Urges PGCC to Stop Blaming Iran.” PressTV. 19 April '11

Additionally, on April 30, 2011, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Major General Hassan Firouzabadi, allegedly made similar claims of historical Iranian regional dominance when speaking on Iran's "National Day of the Persian Gulf:"

"The Arab dictatorial regimes in the Persian Gulf are unable to contain the popular uprisings."

"Instead of trying and failing to open an unworkable front against Iran, these dictators should relinquish power, end their savage crimes and let the people determine their own future."

"The Persian Gulf has always, is and shall always belong to Iran."

"With the arrival of the British and later the Americans in the region, plots were hatched to try and change the name with fake identities... to distort the history and identity of the Persian Gulf."<sup>3</sup>

Iranian news outlets later denied that General Firouzabadi made these statements.<sup>4</sup>

The US and its regional allies, however, have sought to counter Iran. For example, on Oct. 20, 2010, the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) notified Congress of a 60 billion \$US arms sale to Saudi Arabia.<sup>5</sup> The deal includes 84 F-15 Saudi Advanced (SA) fighter aircraft, upgrades for the existing fleet of Royal Saudi Air Force F-15S multi-role fighters, 70 AH-64 Apache attack helicopters (24 of which will be equipped with the Longbow Fire Control Radar system), 72 UH-60M Blackhawk utility helicopters, 36 AH-6I "Little Bird" light attack helicopters, and 12 MD-530F light turbine helicopters, among other weapons systems.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the US and the UAE announced a 5 billion \$US arms sale on Nov. 8, 2010 that included the sale of 60 AH-64D Apache helicopters.<sup>7</sup> On Oct. 21, 2010, the UAE also opened a new naval base at Al Fujairah near the eastern entrance to the Strait of Hormuz.<sup>8</sup>

The establishment of the base came after repeated Iranian affirmations that the country would close the Strait of Hormuz or otherwise disrupt world petroleum shipments if it were attacked or threatened. Less than two months later on Dec. 10, 2010, the commander of the IRGC navy, Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi, stated that his forces "are in complete control of the Strait of Hormoz and the Sea of Oman."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "Gulf 'Belongs to Iran': Top Military Officer." Associated Free Press. 30 April '11

<sup>4</sup> "Iran Says Remarks of Top Army Officer on Persian Gulf Quoted Falsely." Iranian Students' News Agency. 3 May '11

<sup>5</sup> Wasserbly, Daniel. "US Reveals Details of \$60bn Sale to Saudi Arabia." Jane's Defence Industry. 28 Oct. '10

<sup>6</sup> Wasserbly, Daniel. "US Reveals Details of \$60bn Sale to Saudi Arabia." Jane's Defence Industry. 28 Oct. '10

<sup>7</sup> Gelfand, Lauren. "US Agrees \$5bn Boeing Apache Deal with UAE." Jane's Defence Weekly. 9 Nov. '10

<sup>8</sup> "UAE Opens New Strait of Hormuz Naval Base." Jane's Intelligence Weekly. 25 Oct. '10

<sup>9</sup> "IRGC May Change Its Agenda in Persian Gulf, Says IRGC Commander." Fars News Agency. 10 Dec. '10

The arms deals also come at a time when WikiLeaks has revealed regional fears of Iran's regional designs and burgeoning nuclear program. According to the classified diplomatic cables released by the group, the leaders of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE voiced their concerns to US diplomats regarding Iran's nuclear program. For example, the UAE's Crown Prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, has warned US officials since 2006 that they needed to deal with Iran's nuclear program, and Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz has urged the US government to "cut off the head of the snake" in reference to Iran's nuclear program.<sup>10</sup>

Iran's response rarely lashes out at its Sunni neighbors directly, but rather tends to blame the US for plotting to spread "Iranophobia" and fear of Shiism to manipulate its allies into buying military hardware. On Dec. 13, 2010, Iranian Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi responded to US Defense Secretary Robert Gates' assertion that "Iran's combative policies cause everyone to worry," stating,

"It is the warmongering and interventionist American leaders who try to harm good relations between the countries of the region by designing false matters and creating divisions."<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, Vahidi went on to state that the US' Iran "scenario" is intended to create an "excuse for its illegitimate presence and the sale of weapons in the region," and claimed that "the region's people are not afraid of Islamic Iran," but rather are worried about the "warmongering American regime... which has sacrificed millions of people for its transgressive policies."<sup>12</sup> Additionally, on Sept. 22, 2010, Vahidi was quoted by the IRNA as stating that,

"There is no reason for regional countries to fear our weapons and military equipment... We have announced that whatever we have belongs to all regional nations, and we are even ready to supply... [Iranian-made weapons] to these countries."<sup>13</sup>

In light of these statements and others like it, it seems that the Islamic Republic seeks to play up the US presence in the region as a malfeasant and unnecessarily divisive force. Offers to share arms and military technology with neighboring countries can also be seen as an Iranian attempt to both fulfill a sort of leadership role in the region, as well as provide a counterweight or regional alternative to US or Saudi patronage.

This characterization of the US and its alliances is scarcely new. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran has consistently sought to build credibility both regionally and domestically by haranguing US regional "imperialism" and support for Israel. Consequently, such rhetoric as

<sup>10</sup> Kitfield, James. "Iran Nuclear Crisis Forges Coalition for Containment." National Journal. 17 Dec. '10

<sup>11</sup> "Defense Minister Hits Back at Gates, Says US Policies Make Region Unsafe." Islamic Republic News Agency. 13 Dec. '10

<sup>12</sup> "Defense Minister Hits Back at Gates, Says US Policies Make Region Unsafe." Islamic Republic News Agency. 13 Dec. '10

<sup>13</sup> "Defense Minister Says US Arms Sales to Regional States a Plot Aimed at Iran." Islamic Republic News Agency. 22 Sept. '10

well as Iran's tendency to blame the US for regional instability and mistrust between itself and neighboring Gulf Arab states make potential Iranian efforts at cooperation or improving relations with the US unlikely to materialize.

Lastly, the regime's rhetoric is indicative that it sees itself as a regional hegemon. Iranian officials' claims that Iran is the most influential country in the region, insistence that the Gulf be referred to as "Persian," and affirmations that the country is in control of the Strait of Hormoz and the Sea of Oman are revealing in terms of how Iran sees itself as entitled to a leadership role in the Gulf. Given this sentiment, hostility toward the US and efforts to undermine US regional interests can be seen as a natural or perhaps expected response to the US diplomatic and military presence in the Gulf. As such, Iran will almost certainly continue to compete vigorously with the US in the Gulf region.

### **Latin America: Venezuela and Bolivia**

Venezuela and Bolivia do not share a common system of government or religious values with Iran, but they make similar statements criticizing the US and other "imperialist" forces. The governments of Venezuela and Bolivia under Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales, respectively, have also deepened their economic and diplomatic ties with Iran with the stated purpose of opposing US global "imperialism;" during a two day visit to Iran, both Chavez and Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced they would deepen their "strategic alliance" against US "imperialism."<sup>14</sup> Likewise, at a joint press conference with Morales on Oct. 27, 2010, Ahmadinejad stated that "Iran and Bolivia have common enemies, interests, and views about resolving international issues."<sup>15</sup>

Although neither Bolivia nor Venezuela directly influence events in the Gulf, both nations possess large uranium deposits and provide diplomatic support for Iran's nuclear program. As both nations provide diplomatic support and potentially material support to Iran's nuclear program, their relationship with Tehran is relevant to Iran's strategic competition with the US.

Iran's deepening diplomatic and economic relationship with both countries has potentially far-reaching implications for US competition with Iran. During a three-day state visit to Iran in Oct. 2010, Bolivian president Evo Morales accepted an Iranian offer to assist Bolivia in constructing a nuclear power plant, and stated that Bolivia and Iran "have expressed interest in developing cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy."<sup>16</sup> In Nov. 2010, the manager of the vanishing resources division of Bolivia's Mining Ministry, Luis Alberto Echazu, followed up on Morales' announcement by affirming that Bolivia did indeed have a uranium deposit in Cotaje, Potosi.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "Iran and Venezuela Deepen 'Strategic Alliance.'" BBC. 20. Oct. '10

<sup>15</sup> "President Urges Iran-Bolivia Close Cooperation in Fighting Common Enemies." Fars News Agency. 27 Oct. '10

<sup>16</sup> "Iran to Help Bolivia Build Nuclear Power Plant." Tehran Times. 31 Oct. '10

<sup>17</sup> Mahjar-Barducci, Anna. "Iran Helping Bolivia Build Nuclear Power Plant." Hudson New York. 3 Dec. '10

Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez' hostility toward the US and ties to Iran have been consistent. In a meeting with David Velasquez Caraballo, Venezuela's ambassador to Iran, Ahmadinejad stated the following:

“Expansion of Iran-Venezuela ties in all domains helps peace, stability, and security in the world... Independent and justice-seeking nations and governments have been vigilant against Imperialism's plots and would not be deceived by them.”<sup>18</sup>

In response, Caraballo stated that,

“The Islamic Republic of Iran's Revolution and the Venezuelan Revolution can put imperialism aside and design the clear future for the whole of humanity.”<sup>19</sup>

Such announcements may be little more than rhetoric, but Venezuela's uranium deposits, direct trade with Iran, and declared strategic partnership with Iran against the US could turn the country into a very real proliferation threat. Venezuela's uranium reserves are estimated at nearly 50,000 tons, and the country's unencumbered shipping and direct flights to and from Iran could permit the Chavez regime to supply Tehran with virtually unlimited quantities.<sup>20</sup>

Many countries have large uranium deposits, but Venezuela and Bolivia are particularly attractive to Iran in a diplomatic sense in that both maintain a confrontational approach to international law and norms as well as maintain ideological hostility towards the US. While these South American nations have almost nothing in common with an Islamic theocracy such as Iran, their common strategic goals and interests make them natural, albeit unexpected allies.

### Conclusions

Tehran's aggressive rhetoric regarding US relations with its Sunni Arab neighbors in the Gulf region as well as its continued insistence that it is a regional leader indicate that the regime intends to continue its intense competition with the US. Indeed, the Islamic Republic has historically sought to maintain its credibility as an Islamic, revolutionary, and anti-imperialist state by seeking to undermine the US and its interests in the region. Iran's rhetoric and actions since Sept. 2010 do not provide any indication that the regime intends to discontinue this behavior today.

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<sup>18</sup> “Iranian President Underlines Further Expansion of All-Out Ties with Venezuela.” Fars News Agency. 16 March ‘11

<sup>19</sup> “Iranian President Underlines Further Expansion of All-Out Ties with Venezuela.” Fars News Agency. 16 March ‘11

<sup>20</sup> Hirst, Joel D. “Venezuela's Troubling Nuclear Ties.” CFR Expert Brief. 28 Oct. ‘10

Additionally, Iran's willingness to engage and cooperate with states with fundamentally different revolutionary ideologies and social outlooks to attack US positions highlight the pragmatism of its strategic outlook. The socialist governments of both Venezuela and Bolivia are diametrically opposed to Iran's state ideology which is based on the notion of revolutionary Shiism.

Additionally, it may be no accident that both states are extremely hostile to the US and have vast mineral and energy wealth, as well as untapped uranium deposits that have potential implications for nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. Iran's eagerness to actively expand ties with two such avowedly anti-American states in a region historically seen as the US' sphere of influence indicates Tehran's continued willingness to compete with the US.

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\* **Indicates Iranian news source**

## Iran says remarks of top army officer on Persian Gulf quoted falsely \*

Service: Foreign Policy  
**1390/02/13**  
05-03-2011  
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### **ISNA - Tehran**

Service: Foreign Policy

TEHRAN (ISNA)-Iranian charge d'affaires to Kuwait Mohammad Shahabi said remarks of Iranian top military officer have been quoted distortedly and falsely.

"Remarks of Chiefs of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces, General Hassan Firouzabadi on Persian Gulf have been quoted falsely," Shahabi said in a statement.

"There is no word in speech of Firouzabadi suggesting that Persian Gulf belongs to Iran," the Iranian diplomat added in the statement.

He then highlighted the necessity of respecting countries' right of sovereignty and avoiding interference in countries' domestic affairs.

Some media have recently claimed that Firouzabadi had said that, "Persian Gulf has belonged to Iran forever."

Some Arab states and the US have recently accused Iran of meddling in affairs of certain states including Syria and Bahrain.

Iran strongly denies the baseless allegations and insists that it keeps out of countries' internal issues.

Iran has strongly criticized Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait's military intervention in Bahrain aimed to help crack down on a Shiite-led uprising there.

Iran says it gives "moral support" to Bahrainis but is not involved in the protests there.

## Gulf 'belongs to Iran': top military officer

(AFP)

April 30, 2011

TEHRAN — A top Iranian military officer on Saturday denounced what he called an "Arab dictatorial front" and claimed that the "Persian Gulf has belonged to Iran for ever", media reports said.

"The Arab dictatorial regimes in the Persian Gulf are unable to contain the popular uprisings," General Hassan Firouzabadi, the chief of staff of Iran's armed forces, was widely quoted as saying by Iranian media on Saturday.

"Instead of trying and failing to open an unworkable front against Iran, these dictators should relinquish power, end their savage crimes and let the people determine their own future," Firouzabadi said.

He also denounced "plots" by the Gulf Arab petro-monarchies to "carve out an identity for themselves by rejecting the identity of others," referring to Iran.

"The Persian Gulf has always, is and shall always belong to Iran," the general said.

Firouzabadi, speaking on the annual "National Day of the Persian Gulf", also condemned the regional Arab monarchies for refusing to call the waterway between Iran and its Arab neighbours by its "historical name."

"With the arrival of the British and later the Americans in the region, plots were hatched to try and change the name with fake identities... to distort the history and identity of the Persian Gulf," Firouzabadi said.

Relations between Iran and its Gulf Arab neighbours have deteriorated sharply, with the latter accusing Tehran of seeking to destabilise Arab regimes in favour of popular unrest that has erupted in many Arab countries.

Shiite-dominant Iran has strongly criticised Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Sunni-ruled Bahrain aimed to help crack down on a Shiite-led uprising there.

Iran says it gives "moral support" to Bahrainis but is not involved in the protests there.

Bahrain and Kuwait have in turn expelled Iranian diplomats, accusing them of espionage.

Iran has in the past claimed Bahrain as part of its territory, and it controls three islands in the southern Gulf that are also claimed by the United Arab Emirates.

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## Iran, Venezuela stress expansion of ties \*

Service: Foreign Policy

**1390/02/03**

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### **ISNA - Tehran**

Service: Foreign Policy

TEHRAN (ISNA)-Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi and his Venezuelan counterpart Nicolas Maduro stressed expansion of mutual ties.

"Iran and Venezuela can complete each other's role in the Middle East and Latin America for sure," said Salehi in a meeting with Maduro in Tehran on Friday evening.

Nicolas Maduro arrived in Tehran on Friday for talks with Iranian officials.

Salehi then called for the international community to consider regional realities as criticizing unfair policies and adoption of dual-track policy by the West on regional developments and particularly on Libya and Bahrain.

He also stressed ending bloodshed and killing of innocent people as well as stopping interference of foreign troops in Libya and Bahrain and keeping national unity, sovereignty and independence of the countries.

Maduro on his part expressed satisfaction on Tehran-Caracas close relations said violent crackdown on people in Persian Gulf states and North Africa is the West's policy to control oil and wealth of regional states.

He also stressed further bilateral cooperation between Iran and Venezuela in international scenes.

## Iran, Kuwait seek expansion of ties \*

Tue Apr 19, 2011 10:26AM



Iran's Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani (L) and Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Jassem al-Kharafi

Senior Iranian and Kuwaiti officials have called for cooperation to clear up existing misunderstandings and to maintain amicable relations.

In a telephone conversation with Kuwaiti National Assembly speaker Jassim al-Kharafi on Monday evening, Iran's Parliament (Majlis) Speaker Ali Larijani asked for promotion of diplomatic ties between Tehran and Kuwait City. He also lashed out against fiendish plots to disrupt relations between the two Muslim nations, Mehr news agency reported.

Al-Kharafi, for his part, said that certain states do not welcome further expansion of brotherly ties between Kuwait and Iran. He expected the two states to reinforce their sense of intimacy much more than before.

On April 9, the Islamic Republic of Iran expelled three Kuwaiti diplomats in retaliation for the Persian Gulf emirate's decision to expel three Iranian diplomats.

A week earlier, Kuwait had expelled three Iranian diplomats of the Iranian Embassy in Kuwait City, alleging that they had links to a spy network.

Kuwait claimed that a number of its officers have been gathering information about the US military bases in Kuwait and passing it on to Iran, an allegation that the Islamic Republic has rejected as baseless.

Tehran says earlier claims that a spy network linked to Iran was operating in the country were dismissed by a number of Kuwaiti officials, including the parliament speaker, a year ago and the fact that the issue has been brought up again after a year raises questions.

A member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis), Hossein Naqavi Hosseini, said in early April that Kuwait's claim that it has dismantled an Iranian spy cell is a US plot devised to legitimize the current crackdown on popular movements in the region.

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have deployed troops to Bahrain to assist Bahraini forces in their crackdown on anti-government demonstrations.

Scores of protesters have been killed and many others have gone missing since the beginning of the Bahraini revolution.

## Iran MP urges PGCC to stop blaming Iran \*

Tue Apr 19, 2011 8:30AM



Head of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) Alaeddin Boroujerdi

A senior Iranian lawmaker lashes out at the recent statement by the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council about Tehran's meddling in other countries' internal affairs, urging the body to stop blaming Iran on Bahrain.

In a statement on Sunday, the council accused Iran of interfering in the internal affairs of Persian Gulf states.

“The [P]GCC should not put the blame for the ongoing developments in Bahrain on Iran. The Islamic Republic seeks peace in the region,” Head of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) Alaeddin Boroujerdi told IRNA on Monday.

“Iran's policy on Arab countries in the Persian Gulf has not changed and we still believe in good relations with these states,” he added.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is the most influential country in the region which tightens regional security and has played a valuable role in defusing crisis and establishing security,” he reiterated.

Boroujerdi emphasized that Iran is trying to end the ongoing crisis in Bahrain and maintain the independence of a member country of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations.

The Iranian lawmaker rejected the PGCC claims and noted that the council's statement has put the blame for Saudi Arabia's "historic mistake" of deploying troops into Bahrain on Tehran.

He said an attack on a small country like Bahrain and the killing of innocent people do not display military might but are an indication of the weakness of a country which claims to serve the interests of Muslim nations.

"The Saudi Arabia is expected to display its power against the Zionist regime's (Israel) crimes against defenseless Palestinian people," Boroujerdi pointed out.

People in Bahrain have been protesting since February 14, demanding an end to the rule of the Al Khalifa dynasty.

Demonstrators maintain that they will hold their ground until their demands for freedom, constitutional monarchy as well as a proportional voice in the government are met.

In March, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait deployed their troops in Bahrain to reinforce the brutal armed clampdown against mass protests.

Scores of Bahraini protesters have been killed and many others gone missing in the harsh crackdown since the beginning of the revolution in the Middle Eastern country.

### **Iran Ready To Join Other Countries in Landmine Removal Efforts \***

On the occasion of the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on 4 April, Minister of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Ahmad Vahidi offered to share Iran's experience in landmine removal following the Iran-Iraq war, Fars News reported. According to his statements, as reported, Iran suffered from approximately 20 million mines and explosives spread over 4.2 million hectares in western Azarbaijan, Kurdistan, Kermanshah, Ilam, and Khuzestan [provinces]. After an investment of \$6 billion to \$8 billion, about 70,000 hectares still remain to be cleared. Vahidi said Iran's offer to help other countries learn from its experiences is an appropriate initiative in the year of "economic jihad" as proclaimed by the Supreme Leader. [Fars News Agency - hardline pro-Ahmadinezhad news agency; headed as of December 2007 by Hamid Reza Moqaddamfar, who was formerly an IRGC cultural officer; [www.fars.ir](http://www.fars.ir)]

## Iran-Venezuela ties under US scrutiny

**Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad this week pledged to 'expand ties' with Venezuela, which is under US scrutiny for shipping oil allegedly in violation of sanctions.**

By [Jasmina Kelemen](#), Correspondent / March 18, 2011

Caracas, Venezuela

All the attention [Libya's](#) Muammar Qaddafi has received in recent weeks from [Venezuela's](#) Hugo Chávez seems to have left his other best friend forever, [Iran's](#) Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, feeling a bit left out.

This week the Iranian president met with Venezuela's ambassador in Tehran to stress his eagerness for even closer relations, according to [Iran's Fars News Agency](#).

"Expansion of Iran-Venezuela ties in all domains helps peace, stability, and security in the world," said Mr. Ahmadinejad.

The two "brother" nations promised to strengthen their state-run news coverage of each other but did not mention, at least publicly, the billions of dollars worth of energy agreements inked last year that are now under scrutiny by the US State Department.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently told the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee that the US would consider punitive actions if it was determined that Venezuela, America's [fifth-largest oil supplier](#), had violated sanctions against Iran.

Venezuelan exports to Iran in question

Ms. Clinton's comments were in response to documents submitted by Rep. Connie Mack (R) of Florida that allege Venezuelan national oil company PDVSA is sending gasoline to Iran in violation of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010 (CISADA).

Mr. Mack is among America's most vocal critics of Venezuela. Earlier this year, he referred to President Chávez as a "thugocrat," calling for nothing less than a "full-scale economic embargo."

Venezuela did export millions of barrels of gasoline and gasoline blending components in 2009 and 2010 to Iran. But PDVSA President and Energy Minister Rafael Ramirez has consistently denied the allegations of sanctions busting, saying the shipments occurred before CISADA was tightened in July 2010 to prohibit activities supporting the development, production, and exportation of Iran's petroleum and refined petroleum resources.

What then to make of Chávez's ninth visit to Iran last October? Of the 11 agreements signed during the visit, one laid out plans to set up a joint oil shipping company, construct two petrochemical plants, and tap Iran's South Pars natural gas field.

The agreements were more symbolic than substantive, some analysts say, and so do not violate sanctions. No action has been taken, and Chávez has a history of failing to follow through on similar accords.

Look out for Obama's reaction to Chávez

"We believe the State Department's response so far suggests an effort to buy time and use diplomatic channels rather than such a blunt tool as sanctions to limit any Venezuelan support for the Iranian regime – which at this point seems more symbolic than substantive in our view," JP Morgan Research wrote in a recent note to investors.

Clinton said the US would require a relatively high burden of proof to take action, which some say the documents presented by the Republican-chaired Foreign Relations Committee fail to meet.

"[The documents] don't appear to be genuine or are at least old, prior to sanctions," says Russ Dallen, a bond trader at Caracas-based BBO Financial Services. "Doesn't mean it hasn't happened, just looks like these are not the smoking guns needed to prove it."

The less-than-airtight evidence is unlikely to deter Chávez's most vehement critics north of Havana. And with US elections rapidly approaching, the pressure to censure him could grow.

JP Morgan told its investors not to rule out some sort of move against Venezuela as the administration courts Latino voters in southern Florida where opposing Cuba's Fidel Castro, and his ideological heir Chávez, is a way of life.

"...With US elections also approaching (and with Florida still an important battleground state), we believe the Republican-controlled House of Representatives will likely continue to press the administration for being 'too soft' on the Chávez administration, and we can not rule out some carefully crafted reaction by the Obama administration before 2012."

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## **Iranian President Underlines Further Expansion of All-Out Ties with Venezuela \***

**TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in a meeting with Venezuelan Ambassador to Tehran David Velasquez Caraballo stressed Iran's eagerness to further develop relations with Caracas in all fields.**

3-16-2011

"Expansion of Iran-Venezuela ties in all domains helps peace, stability and security in the world," Ahmadinejad said on Tuesday.

During the meeting, he also said independent nations and governments would not be deceived by Imperialism's plots.

"Independent and justice-seeking nations and governments have been vigilant against Imperialism's plots and would not be deceived by them," Ahmadinejad added.

The Venezuelan ambassador on his part stressed boosting the bilateral ties, and said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran's Revolution and Venezuelan Revolution can put imperialism aside and design the clear future for the whole humanity."

Since taking office in 2005, the Iranian President has expanded Iran's cooperation with many Latin American states, including Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba.

But the strong and rapidly growing ties between Iran and Venezuela have raised eyebrows in the US and its western allies since Tehran and Caracas have forged an alliance against the imperialist and colonialist powers and are striving hard to reinvigorate their relations with the other independent countries which pursue a line of policy independent from the US.

The US Department of State has announced that it would closely monitor the recent energy agreements between Venezuela and Iran.

The US State Department's announcement came after Chavez, on a visit to Iran, signed a number of agreements focused on energy cooperation with Ahmadinejad.

Among the agreements signed were pacts for the formation of a joint oil shipping company

and joint construction of petrochemical plants, as well as Venezuela's participation in the exploitation of Iran's South Pars gas field.

Under the shipping agreement, PDV Marina, Petroleos de Venezuela SA's shipping subsidiary, and Iran's IRISL Group, plan to create a maritime oil transport firm that will enable Caracas to sell more than 500,000 bbl of crude in Europe and Asia.

The two sides also reaffirmed an earlier agreement to build a refinery in Syria, Iran's main ally in the region. An agreement to build the refinery was first signed in 2007 with Iran, Venezuela, and Malaysia as partners.

## **Top Iranian, Bolivian FM Officials Discuss Reinvigoration of Ties \***

**TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Behrouz Kamalvandi and his Bolivian counterpart Juan Carlos Aldurralde in a meeting in La Paz conferred on the latest developments in the bilateral relations between the two countries, and explored ways to bolster mutual cooperation.**

3-13-2011

The talks took place within the framework of the second meeting of Iran-Bolivia political-consultative committee headed by Kamalvandi and Aldurralde.

During the meeting, the two sides also reviewed the different aspects of political, economic and cultural ties between the two countries, and also Tehran-La Paz cooperation on regional and international issues.

The two sides also studied ways of implementing the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed earlier by the two states.

At the meeting, Kamalvandi referred to the good relations between the two countries, and underlined that existence of a mechanism for consultations indicates that the two states are rigid about deepening and strengthening their relations.

Iran has in recent years expanded friendly ties with Latin America, specially in economic, trade and industrial fields.

Since taking office in 2005, Ahmadinejad has expanded Iran's cooperation with many Latin American states, including Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba.

He visited Bolivia late 2009 and inaugurated an Iranian Red Crescent hospital as well as several more projects implemented and completed by Iranian technicians and experts in the country, including a milk factory and a petrochemical complex.

## Minister Renews Iran's Resolve to Boost Ties with Bolivia \*

**TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian Minister of Industries and Mines Ali Akbar Mehrabian in a meeting with the visiting Bolivian President of the Chamber of Deputies, Hector Arce, stressed that Tehran is resolved to further boost its ties with the Latin American state.**

3-4-2011

During the meeting held here in Tehran on Friday, Mehrabian stressed that bilateral ties between Iran and Bolivia are currently at the highest level.

"Bolivia's independent stance in the international scene has transformed it into an effective country in the Latin America and the world," Mehrabian stated.

Referring to the agreements reached between the officials of the two countries, he called for Bolivia's parliament's support to their implementation.

Arce, for his part, said that the parliament will support the implementation of the industrial and economic projects in a bid to help strengthen political ties between the countries.

Political convergence will be strengthened when it turns to the economic and Industrial convergence, he said.

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## Iranian, Venezuelan Presidents Review Important Regional Developments \*

**TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his Venezuelan counterpart Hugo Chavez in a phone conversation conferred on the latest regional and international developments, and stressed the necessity for the two states to keep vigilant and increase their bilateral consultations.**

2-27-2011

"The two countries should make efforts to strengthen their interactions and coordination and keep vigilant against the conspiracies hatched by the imperialism so that these developments are channeled in the interests of regional nations," Ahmadinejad said on Sunday.

"Iran and Venezuela have always stood beside each other and will defend the rights of nations," he added.

During the conversation, Chavez underlined Iran and Venezuela's identical stances on regional and international developments, and said that the two countries' increased consultations in this ground can be effective in the management of the developments.

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## IRANIAN-ARAB RELATIONS IN LIGHT OF WIKILEAKS DISCLOSURES

**Chelsi Mueller**

As Arab leaders' private statements about Iran began to pour forth from Wikileaks, Iranian leaders strove to counter the Islamic Republic's depiction as an isolated and feared Middle East bully. The leaked diplomatic cables suggest that the leaders of Arab states including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, view Iran's nuclear program as a threat. One released cable reportedly describes a meeting between Saudi King 'Abdullah and US General David Petraeus in which the Saudi King, referring to Iran, urged the US to "cut off the head of the snake." In another leaked cable, UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed reportedly stated that an Iranian nuclear bomb would be more dangerous than al-Qaeda. And in reference to Iran's nuclear program, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak reportedly said, "we are all terrified."

President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad alleged that the release of the documents was part of a US "psychological warfare" campaign (Press TV, November 29, 2010). Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast stated that the release of the documents was a calculated move aimed at fomenting discord among states in the region and called upon the regional states to exercise vigilance in the face of these American tactics (Press TV, November 30, 2010).

If to move beyond the accusation that the leaks were intentional on the part of the US and analyze the statements of these Iranian leaders, some important developments can be seen in Iran's perceptions of Middle East security, the American role in the region, and the current state of relations between Iran and its Arab neighbors.

Iran, since the rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi, has viewed itself as the most legitimate security provider in the Gulf, and since the Islamic Revolution, has aspired to be the leading Islamic power in the Middle East region. Presently, Iran's primary foreign policy goals are to reduce and weaken the US presence in the region, particularly in the Persian Gulf and to strengthen its own position. President Ahmadinejad and others close to him are persuaded that regional dominance is Iran's right and destiny and they are convinced that the Arab states eventually will accept—and have already begun to accept—Iran's assumption of its rightful leadership role.

The largest obstacle to Iran obtaining its long sought position in the Gulf has been the reliance of the Arab Gulf states on the protection of a hegemonic foreign power, the British until 1971, and now the Americans. Presently, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE and Oman all host US bases or military installations. While the Arab Gulf monarchies view American

forces in the Gulf as a guarantor of their own security, Iran views the American presence as a menace and an obstacle to its regional ambitions.

Throughout the 1990s, President Clinton's "dual containment" of Iran and Iraq aimed at isolating Iran and diminishing its regional influence. But, the removal of Saddam Hussein from power in 2003, and the chaos that followed the American invasion, constituted an unprecedented strategic opening for Iran to gain influence in a major oil-producing Arab Gulf state and challenge American supremacy in the region.

Iran seized the opportunity to create a zone of influence in Iraq, cultivating its cultural, religious and commercial ties with the Iraqi Shi'i majority, supporting Shi'i militias in their sectarian fighting against Sunnis in particular and supporting resistance to the American occupation in general (see Iran Pulse no. 39). Likewise, Iran found war ravaged Afghanistan to be fertile ground for the promotion of its interests.

Encouraged by its successes, Iran did not stop with Iraq and Afghanistan, but continued to project its power throughout the region—bringing its influence to bear on factional and sectarian fighting from Lebanon to Gaza and Yemen. In each of these arenas, governments and factions supported by Sunni Arab states and aligned with the West found themselves mired in bloody sectarian conflicts with factions supported by Iran. Analysts began to speak of an Arab-Iranian "cold war" in the Middle East.

Casting an image of itself as the only state capable of leading the Islamic resistance against Western and Zionist forces in the region, Iran continued to thumb its nose at the West on the issue of its nuclear program. Iran has gained a significant degree of sympathy among the Arab publics who favor a strong Iran, even a nuclear Iran, as an Islamic counterweight to Israel and the US. Iran's popular appeal undermines the legitimacy of the Arab leaders, who are portrayed as capitulating to Western powers.

Furthermore, Arab leaders fear that a nuclear weapon will enable Iran to assert hegemony in the Gulf and dominance in the region. The Gulf Cooperation Council, for example, issues frequent statements in support of Iran's "right to possess nuclear energy technology for peaceful purposes," while also urging Iran to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Much speculation about a possible American or Israeli strike against Iran's nuclear facilities has prompted Iranian leaders to threaten retaliation against American bases hosted by the Arab Gulf states. In June 2007, 'Ali Shamkhani, defense advisor to 'Ali Khamene'i, described a "retaliation plan" against strategic targets in the Gulf states, as well as oil refineries and power stations. Fearful of such a confrontation, Arab Gulf states have sought to appease Iran on the matter of its nuclear program. In May 2006, Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Sabah told journalists: "There is no room for concerns about peaceful nuclear activities of Iran," and in February 2007 Bahrain's foreign minister, Sheikh Khalid, articulated his country's support of Iran's sovereign right to a "peaceful nuclear program" (*Gulf States Newsletter*, June 23, 2006; arabicnews.com, February 26, 2007).

As sectarian violence escalated in Iraq and factional fighting broke out in the Lebanese and Palestinian arenas in 2006, Saudi leaders became more intrepid in their willingness to blame Iran and its clients for creating instability in the region. Saudi Arabia has the most to lose from Iran's pursuit of hegemony in the Gulf. Saudi Arabia's most strategic area of activity is the Gulf basin, owing to its vast oil assets in the Eastern Province and its need to ensure that oil tankers can travel safely in and out of the narrow Gulf waterway. Given that Iran has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, and given the history of tense Saudi-Iranian relations, Saudi Arabia would rather not see a situation where its shipping is dependent on Iran's good will. What's more, the Saudi royal family is suspicious of Iran's support for radical movements and its promotion of revolutionary ideology because of their potential to destabilize the Kingdom. Given these deep-seated fears, Saudi leaders initially contemplated the US proposal of isolating Iran.

But Iranian leaders calculated that the gradual erosion of American power in the region would increasingly cause the Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, to acknowledge Iran's expanding role. The Americans were unable to lower the temperature of the sectarian and factional violence that raged across the region and the Sunni Arab states, namely Saudi Arabia, feared that the repercussions of these conflicts would be disastrous for their regimes. In addition, the Americans were neither able to arrest Iran's growing regional influence nor stop its nuclear progress without barreling down a crash course toward a military confrontation in the Gulf.

The acknowledgment that Iran sought from regional powers was finally realized in January 2007 when Saudi King 'Abdullah broke with the Americans' policy of isolating Iran and welcomed Iranian chief negotiator 'Ali Larijani to Riyadh. He opened negotiations with Iran with the aim of reducing the sectarian and factional fighting in Iraq, Lebanon and among the Palestinians. It was the beginning of a series of exchanges. Khamene'i, sent a letter to King 'Abdullah asking him to help mediate between the US and Iran on the issue of Iran's nuclear program. By the end of that year, the Saudi King had invited Ahmadinejad to become the first Iranian President to take part in the *hajj*, an invitation that was highly symbolic of the new *détente* between the two countries.

Iranian leaders were satisfied to see that King 'Abdullah also cooled his relations with Washington: In March 2007 'Abdullah depicted the American war in Iraq as an "illegitimate foreign occupation," took a back seat at the November 2007 American-sponsored Annapolis Middle East Peace Conference, and cancelled a state dinner that Washington had planned to hold in his honor. His statements and his behavior gave Iranian leaders the impression that Saudi Arabia would not pose a serious obstacle to Iran's nuclear ambitions. Furthermore, a 2007 study commissioned by Iran's Majlis concluded that "improving relations with Saudi Arabia can increase Iranian diplomacy's negotiating power against the West" (BBC Monitoring, April 16, 2007).

But the Saudis' engagement of Iran fell short of being a comprehensive rapprochement. In fact, the Saudis were pursuing a nuanced strategy aimed at both engaging and containing Iran, and trying to roll back its influence in the region while not ruling out the possibility of the American military option. As Wikileaks has shown, Saudi and other Arab leaders

secretly fear an Iranian nuclear weapon, while publicly, they issue statements in support of Iran's "right to peaceful nuclear energy."

Iran, for its part, often emphasizes the public statements of the Arab leaders. The public statements, and as far as Iran is concerned—the official statements—strive to portray mutual harmony between Muslim neighbors. In the wake of the most damaging Wikileaks press coverage, Ahmadinejad responded to the charge that Iran is feared and hated in the Arab world, saying, "The countries in the region are like friends and brothers and these acts of mischief will not affect their relations" (IRNA, November 30, 2010). Simultaneously, Iranian media outlets issued quotations from Arab leaders echoing Iran's view—that Wikileaks was part of a US government conspiracy to undermine the close ties between Muslim countries.

Iran's official position has been and continues to be that the Persian Gulf in particular and the Middle East region in general will be more secure when the US withdraws its military forces and Muslim states assume responsibility for the region's security. The Arab Gulf states suspect that such a scheme would merely be a temporary phase that would eventually lead to Iran's domination of the Gulf. In the aftermath of the Wikileaks disclosures, Iran's recently dismissed foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, sought to persuade Arab Gulf leaders that a more powerful Iran is nothing to fear. Speaking at a Gulf security conference in Bahrain, he said, "Our power in the region is your power and your power in the region is our power...Our growth will only pave the way for others to grow" (al-Jazeera, December 4, 2010). In light of Wikileaks disclosures of the Arab leaders' deep-seated fears, it is not surprising that Iran's oft-repeated proposal—US withdrawal and the creation of a regional security framework—has not attracted any takers from among the Arab Gulf states

## Iran's nuke tour without major powers, key allies

(AP) – 5 hours ago

VIENNA (AP) — A weekend tour of Iran's nuclear sites appears set to go ahead without Russia, China, the European Union or key allies Turkey and Brazil, blunting Tehran's attempts to gain support from major powers ahead of crucial talks on its atomic activities.

On the eve of the visit, Iranian envoy Ali Asghar Soltanieh said Friday that representatives of nonaligned nations, developing countries, the Arab League, Venezuela and Syria had accepted invitations to visit Iran's central Natanz enrichment facility and its still-unfinished heavy water reactor at Arak.

"This trip will offer the most transparency" regarding Iran's nuclear program, Soltanieh told The Associated Press, adding that the diplomats would be able to see "everything they wanted."

He declined to discuss which other nations had been invited or their responses. But China and the EU have in recent days publicly declined. And diplomats familiar with the issue said Russia, Switzerland, and Turkey and Brazil had also either turned down invitations or had not responded with less than a day to go before the departure from Vienna, where Soltanieh represents Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The diplomats — all accredited to the IAEA, which is tasked with probing Iran's nuclear activities — spoke on condition of anonymity because their information was privileged.

Switzerland, which has attempted to mediate between Iran and the international community, later confirmed it was not going.

"We declined the invitation," President and Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey said in answer to a question from the AP. "All the like-minded (countries) declined the invitation."

With crucial talks between Iran and six world powers in Istanbul just a week away, the timing of the nuclear tour and the choice of nations invited appeared a possible attempt to weaken unity among Iran's interlocutors.

Moscow and Beijing are part of the talks. At the same time, they are generally opposed to attempts by the other four — the United States, Britain, France and Germany — to sharpen U.N. sanctions on Iran over its refusal to stop activities that could be used to make nuclear weapons.

Neither the U.S. nor the three other Western nations were invited to Iran's weekend tour.

The United States and its allies fear that Iran is trying to make nuclear weapons, not nuclear energy, while Tehran asserts it is enriching uranium to make nuclear fuel and not weapons and says it will not negotiate over its right to enrich for peaceful uses.

Brazil and Turkey have recently emerged as important allies for Tehran in backing attempts to restart negotiations on a deal that would see Iran ship out some of its low-enriched uranium in exchange for fuel rods for a small reactor making medical isotopes.

Those talks stalled more than a year ago and the West considers them increasingly irrelevant as a way to slow Tehran's ability to make nuclear weapons by removing some material that could be enriched into weapons grade uranium.

While willing to talk about the deal at the Istanbul talks beginning next Thursday, the six powers want the discussions to focus on broader aspects of Iran's nuclear program, including its refusal to freeze enrichment despite four sets of U.N. sanctions.

Soltanieh denied the tour had been timed to sow division among the six powers, saying the visit and the Istanbul talks "had nothing to do" with each other.

"We simply created an opportunity ... to see our nuclear facilities but we respected their decision if they are not interested," he said.

In Tehran, acting Foreign Minister Ali Salehi, Iran's nuclear chief, said the invitations were intended as a trust-building measure, contending that — outside of his nation — no other country has put its nuclear facilities on display for others.

"All this is an indication of the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities," he told the ISNA news agency.

The offer comes more than three years after six diplomats from developing nations visited Iran's uranium ore conversion site at Isfahan, which turns raw uranium into the gas that is then fed into enriching centrifuges. Participating diplomats told reporters then they could not assess Iran's nuclear aims based on what they saw there.

The U.S. has mocked Iran's latest offer, calling it a "magical mystery tour" and saying it is no substitute for Iran fully cooperating with the IAEA — the U.N. nuclear watchdog — to prove that its nuclear program is strictly for peaceful purposes.

While Iranian officials deny that sanctions have hurt their nation's economy, the invitation may be a sign that Tehran is looking to ease the burden of the U.N. penalties.

Tehran's decision to return to talks could reflect some readiness to compromise on Security Council demands. Still, hopes are modest. The Istanbul meeting follows on a first round last month in Geneva that ended with little progress other than a decision to meet again.

*Associated Press writers Nasser Karimi in Tehran and Frank Jordans in Geneva contributed.*

### Iranian 'Destroyer' Returns From Sri Lanka \*

Iran's Alvand "destroyer" [a frigate-class ship] returned after participating in a parade formation that marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Sri Lanka's navy, the Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA) reported on 23 December. Rear Admiral **Gholamreza Khadem-Bigham**, the deputy commanding officer of the Islamic Republic's navy, at a meeting with the chief of the general staff of the Sri Lankan military, said his forces are ready to receive a military delegation from the South Asian island nation and to demonstrate Iran's military technology. Earlier in his remarks, **Khadem-Bigham** said that Iran's advancement in training military personnel is in line with "universal standards," while stressing that Iran's navy has made strides in indigenizing the repair of its equipment [Tehran Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA) in Persian - conservative news agency that now generally supports government policy; it had previously provided politically moderate reporting; linked to University Jihad, a state-backed student organization; URL: [www.isna.ir](http://www.isna.ir) ].

**Official: Arrival of IRGC Naval Fleet in Qatar Shows Failure of West's Policy \***

IRNA on 23 December reported that Major General Masha-Allah Pursheh, the military attaché at Iran's embassy in Doha, said the arrival of Iran's naval fleet in Qatar shows that the plots of World Arrogance [the US] to spread "Iranophobia" throughout the region have failed. The Iranian official said America is reinforcing an atmosphere of Iranophobia in an effort to keep Iran as the most important issue in the foreign policy of regional states in order to build broad coalitions in the Middle East and throughout the world against Iran's nuclear program. Earlier in his remarks, Pursheh also said that the IRGC's observatory visit to military installations in Qatar begins a "new chapter" of relations between the two countries.

### **Iran Ready To Hold Military Maneuvers With Qatar, Says Commander \***

During a meeting with Commodore Mohammed Nasser al-Mohanadi, Qatar's top naval officer, IRGC Navy Captain Mahmud Shiari said Tehran is ready to hold joint training and combat exercises with Doha. He also called on Qatar to send delegations and naval task forces to Iran in order to become better acquainted with the Islamic Republic's capabilities, ISNA reported on 22 December.

### **Defense Minister: US Using Iran Threat To Sell Arms in Middle East \***

The *Borna News* website on 22 December cited Iranian Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi as saying that the United States is using Iran to frighten regional countries into buying arms from it. He dismissed comments by Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who said on 18 December that the US is "very ready" to respond to a threat from Iran. "The activities of the Americans in this framework are in reality intended as marketing for the sale of weapons and alienating [other] countries from Iran," Vahidi said. The Iranian official said that Mullen has not made any official statements on this topic lately but, he added, "every now and then they [the US] reach a tight spot ... and some of their agents say amateurish things, which, in our opinion, have no real operational value" [Internet *Borna News* in Farsi - conservative news website; URL: [www.bornanews.ir](http://www.bornanews.ir)].

### IRGC Naval Fleet Departs for Qatar \*

The Mehr News Agency on 20 December cited Rear Admiral **Alireza Tangsiri**, second-in-command of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), as saying that the IRGC's navy has sent a fleet of ships (consisting of three missile-equipped PT boats and two support vessels) to Qatar on a naval observatory mission. Speaking at the departure ceremony, **Tangsiri** said Qatar formally invited the fleet after its military officials observed Iran's Great Prophet 5 military exercise in April 2010. During their three-day visit, which is intended to provide the basis for expanded cooperation, Iran's naval personnel will inspect military centers in Qatar, he added. Cultural, linguistic, and geographic ties as well as the need to keep energy transports secure have turned cooperation between the two states into an important matter, the IRGC official said, but in a veiled reference to the United States, he added that "supra-regional enemies" are trying to keep regional states from forming the grounds for cooperation. **Tangsiri** concluded his remarks by saying that regional states have the solemn responsibility of establishing security in the "sensitive and strategic" Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman and can do so through unity, without assistance from hegemonic powers [Tehran Mehr News Agency in English - conservative news agency; run by the Islamic Propagation Office, which is affiliated with the conservative Qom seminary; URL: [www.mehrnews.com](http://www.mehrnews.com)].

- On 22 December *Asr-e Iran* reported that Brig. Gen. Abdul-Rahman al-Saliti, the deputy commander of Qatar's navy, joined Iran's top diplomat in his country, Ambassador **Abdollah Sohrabi**, and the Iranian mission's military attaché, Brig. Gen. **Masha-Allah Pursheh**, to welcome the IRGC's naval task force at the harbor in Doha. The three officials held discussions with IRGC Captain **Mahmud Shiari** and Fleet Commander **Alireza Naseri**, the website reported. Speaking to the Iranian crew, al-Salimi said he hoped to see an increase in military cooperation between the two countries, particularly between the naval forces. **Sohrabi**, for his part, noted that, during the last year, the commander-in-chief of Qatar's armed forces visited Iran, Iran's defense minister met his counterpart in Doha, and the two countries signed memorandums of understanding on defense cooperation. He also said that the arrival of the naval fleet in Qatar one day after that country's head of state met with Iranian Supreme Leader **Ali Khamene'i** is a "good omen" [*Asr-e Iran* - news website; URL: <http://www.asriran.com/>].

### **Khamene'i Says America Encourages Lax Security Attitude in Persian Gulf \***

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah **Ali Khamene'i** said during a 20 December meeting in Tehran with Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, that some Persian Gulf states are not aware of the high importance of regional security and added: "Unfortunately, the Americans and Zionists encourage their attitude and ignorance of the importance of security in the region," ISNA reported the next day. Earlier in his remarks, **Khamene'i** said there can be no "discrimination" when it comes to security in the region because the security status of one country will affect that of the rest. In an apparent reference to the recent terror attacks in Chabahar, which targeted a Shiite mosque, the Supreme Leader said that unity among Shiites and Sunnis is very important and that regrettably there are "fanatic bullies" in both communities who insist on creating societal conflict based on ideological differences. From an ideological and a security perspective, this matter must be controlled, **Khamene'i** stressed.

## Al-Jazirah Discusses Mullen's Remarks on Iran's Relations With Arab Gulf States

GMP20101219648001 Doha [Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television](#) in Arabic 1830 GMT 19 Dec 10

Doha Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television in Arabic, an independent television station financed by the Qatari Government, at 1830 GMT on 19 December broadcasts live a 26-minute episode of its "Behind the News" program. This episode discusses Iran's relations with the Arab Gulf states in light of US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mike Mullen's statement that Washington continues to support the Arab Gulf states in their concern over Iran's policies. Moderator Muhammad Kurayshan hosts in Al-Jazirah studio in Doha Dr Ibtisam al-Kitbi, a researcher in Iranian affairs and political science professor at the United Arab Emirates University, and Dr Mahjub al-Zuwayri, a professor of contemporary Iranian and Middle Eastern history at Qatar University.

Kurayshan introduces the program as follows: "For decades, Arab-Iranian relations remained swinging and unstable. On the one hand, the [Arab] Gulf states are cautious because they know that maintaining the balance of power in the region requires the constant presence of the US ally. On the other hand, Iran did not offer these states enough assurances to build bridges of confidence with them. Washington found in this situation an easy gateway to entrench this fluctuation in relations and feed the Arab fears from Iran."

This is followed by a three-minute report over video by Umar Ghanim. The report notes that in his first statement after taking office, new Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said that Iran will give priority to its relations with the neighboring countries, especially Saudi Arabia. It refers to recent WikiLeaks revelations that the Gulf states are so concerned over Iran's nuclear power that they urged the United States to attack the Iranian program. The report also cites Mike Mullen's statements in Bahrain: "The United States takes very seriously its security commitments in the Gulf region. From my perspective I see Iran continuing on this path to develop nuclear weapons, and I believe that achieving this goal would destabilize the region. The American forces are very ready to confront any Iranian move in the region." The report says: "Mullen's remarks are not the first of their kind. Senior US political and security officials visit the region with a clear intention: entrenching Iran's image as an imminent threat to the region because of its nuclear program." The report says the nuclear file is only one aspect of the differences between Iran and the Arab Gulf states. "There is also a clear power struggle that looks like a cold war between Tehran and Riyadh, with Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, and Yemen as its arenas, a struggle in which interests intertwine with implicit sectarian differences." The report also notes Iran's problems with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. It says some Gulf countries, like

Qatar and Oman, however, maintain "more cordial" relations with Tehran. It also points out that economic relations between Iran and the Gulf states are "much better" than political relations, with trade between the two sides reaching \$12 billion.

Kurayshan then asks Al-Kitbi if it was a coincidence that Mullen talked about the Iranian threat immediately after the new Iranian foreign minister spoke about efforts to improve the ties with the neighbors, especially with Saudi Arabia. Al-Kitbi says: "No, it is not a coincidence. It [the United States] does not want to give Iran a chance. But Salehi's statement entailed an attempt to undermine or divide the Gulf ranks. Why only Saudi Arabia? It is true that Saudi Arabia is an important country in the Gulf, but why didn't he talk about relations with the Gulf states as a whole?" She expresses here belief that the Iranian foreign minister was "not innocent" when he talk about Saudi Arabia to the exclusion of the other Gulf states. "The aim is to divide the Gulf ranks."

Told that the Gulf states do not adopt one position toward Iran, she says this is true but Iran should have addressed its message to all the Gulf states. She admits that the divided Gulf position "weakens the position of the Gulf states in the negotiations with Iran." She says if Iran has good intentions and a desire to turn over a new leaf, however, it should not ignore, for example, the United Arab Emirates, with which it has a direct dispute.

Dr Al-Zuwayri expresses his belief that the new Iranian statements "are linked to the domestic situation in Iran." Noting social and political "tension" in Iran, he says the Iranian government is trying to "cool the political climates." He puts the replacement of the Iranian foreign minister in this context. Also, he says, Iran was "sending a message to the United States saying that Iran is alert to the US attempts to frighten the region from Iran." He says the new Iranian foreign minister can use fine and diplomatic words but cannot really change the US foreign policy, which is drawn up by higher Iranian establishments.

On the fact that the Gulf states maintain good economic relations with Iran despite their political skepticism, Al-Zuwayri notes three areas of concern among the Arab Gulf states when it comes to Iran: Iran's interference in domestic affairs, Iran's regional influence, and the Iranian nuclear program. "Iran portrays itself as a victim of these obsessions. It wants to compensate for this by a kind of economic cooperation. By the way, economic cooperation dropped to about \$8 billion last year because of the economic sanctions on Iran." He expresses his belief that the Gulf states' position toward Iran "will remain unchanged because, first, Iran is not ready to give the guarantees that these states expect, and, second, because Iran identified what it calls its national interests in the region while the other side has still not identified these interests in a correct way that enables it to tell Iran: if you fulfill these interests we can reach an accord." In light of this situation, "I believe that the crisis will likely continue."

Asked if she believes the US statements are meant to prevent any rapprochement between Iran and the Gulf States, Al-Kitbi says "the foreign factor increases the tension between the Gulf states and Iran." She says the United States is "playing on two parallel lines: on the one hand it frightens people from Iran and on the other it rushes to negotiate with and woo Iran." She adds: "The Americans, like the Iranians, play on two parallel and conflicting lines." She says the Iranians keep sending conflicting messages, which makes the Gulf states "confused."

On the possibility of a deal between Iran and the United States at the expense of the Gulf states, Al-Zuwayri rules out a US-Iran deal because of the "substantial contradiction" between the interests of the two countries in the region. "There was an opportunity in Iraq. We saw how many meetings they held in Baghdad to address the so-called Iraqi security file. But they failed to reach accord because the issue also has a domestic dimension. In other words, if we assume that Obama wants to reach understandings with Iran, there is a Republican dimension that rejects this. At the same time, some groups within the Iranian political system reject accord with the United States."

Asked how confidence between the Gulf states and Iran can be built, Al-Kitbi says the problem is that Iran is "selective; it wants to address certain issues but not others." She notes Tehran's refusal to discuss the issue of the three disputed islands with the United Arab Emirates. "Whether we like it or not Iran is our neighbor, but the problem is that it is a neighbor difficult to deal with." She suggests that Iran looks "arrogantly" at the Gulf states and wants to impose conditions on them.

Al-Zuwayri says "the foreign factor further complicates the crises" in Iranian-Gulf relations. He adds: "Iran created a number of facts on the ground. At the same time, it is assured that the other side, the so-called Arab Gulf states, does not have a united position." This, he says, makes it less likely that the two sides will reach an agreement. "The Gulf states do not make a united front that tells Iran 'these are my conditions and this is the minimum I accept.' I believe this is the essence of the problem."

Told that Iran has its own concerns over the Gulf states' relations with the United States, Al-Kitbi says Iran itself cooperates with the United States when its interests so require, as happened in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Ahmadinezhad visited the Green Zone in Iraq under the protection of the marines. The American card is also used by the Iranians." She agrees that the problem basically "lies with the Gulf states, not Iran" because of the lack of a united Gulf position. "But this does not justify Iran's ambitions in the Gulf and the Iranian hegemony in the Gulf." She says Iran is not really giving signals that it wants good relations with the Gulf states. She cites the Iranian military drills and the Iranian weapon programs, "which drive the Gulf states toward an armed race."

Asked if an Iranian-US agreement would end the Gulf-Iranian differences, Al-Zuwayri says: "I do not think so because the Arab-Iranian issues are more complicated. Any kind of settlement between the United States and Iran might push many files under the carpet but the fire will remain under the ashes."

[Description of Source: Doha Al-Jazirah Satellite Channel Television in Arabic -- Independent Television station financed by the Qatari Government]

## Iran Nuclear Crisis Forges Coalition for Containment

Friday, Dec. 17, 2010

By James Kitfield

*National Journal*

WASHINGTON -- Soon after his custom 747 jet cleared the airspace of the United Arab Emirates last week, Defense Secretary Robert Gates walked back to the press cabin to describe his just-completed visit to the Middle East and his “productive” and “successful” talks with Arab leaders. No one had to guess the main topic of conversation (see [GSN](#), Dec. 10).



(Dec. 17) - Members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard march in a September armed forces parade in Tehran. The United States and Arab nations could respond to Iran's disputed nuclear work in part with sanctions focused on the elite military group (Atta Kenare/Getty Images).

“Obviously, we talked about Iran and the importance of sanctions in keeping diplomatic and economic pressure on,” Gates said, noting widespread support in the region for continued pressure to force Iran to abandon its suspected nuclear weapons program. “There clearly is also concern not just in this region but elsewhere about Iran’s aggressive behavior in respect to Hezbollah in Lebanon and other places. That is a broadly shared concern.”

U.S. officials are always cautious in describing what one termed the “delicate dance” of U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East—private cheek-to-cheek relations with Arab autocrats, shielded from the public because of America’s unpopularity on the Arab street. WikiLeaks recently lifted the veil obscuring that embrace, however. The antisecrecy group released secret State Department dispatches showing the kings, crown princes, and sultans of Arabia closely allied with the United States against Iran (see [GSN](#), Nov. 29).

In the UAE, Crown Prince Sheik Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan has been privately warning American officials since 2006 that they needed to deal with Iran’s nuclear program “this year or next.” Last year, he argued against appeasing Iran: “[Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad is Hitler.” In 2009, the king of Bahrain urged the United States to stop Iran’s nuclear program “because the danger of letting it go on is greater than the danger of

stopping it.” Referring to Iran’s nuclear ambitions, Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz likewise implored Washington to “cut off the head of the snake.”

The sum of those regional fears has created a historical anomaly. The fractious Arab nations are uniting in their opposition to a common enemy in a way arguably not seen since the pan-Arab nationalism of the 1950s and 1960s led by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Besides privately urging the United States to attack a fellow Muslim neighbor, Persian Gulf royals have channeled their fear into a very public buying spree of advanced weapons, most of them U.S.-made, that collectively will top an estimated \$120 billion in the next few years.

Hoping to turn that fear into an opportunity and to leverage close bilateral relationships in the region, the Pentagon and U.S. Central Command have been quietly urging more multilateral security cooperation among Gulf States in areas such as maritime security, counterterrorism, early warning, and missile defense. The long-elusive goal is to establish a de facto U.S.-led coalition in the Gulf as a counter to Iran’s dreams of regional hegemony.

“In the past, there haven’t been a lot of avenues for multilateral security cooperation among the Gulf countries because there’s a lot of mutual suspicion among them,” a senior defense official said. “Starting from the point that we all increasingly see common threats, most notably from Iran, we are trying to stitch together the efforts of all these countries into a regional security architecture.”

Recent Middle East trips by Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton suggest that the United States continues to assemble the pieces of that new security architecture. The effort is in its relative infancy, and major components are still missing. The administration has yet to even articulate an overarching strategy for the informal alliance. Yet if the United States were intent on laying the foundations for the containment of a nuclear-armed Iran, a close inspection of its actions in the region has convinced some experts that this is what it might look like.

Kenneth Pollack is the director of the Brookings Institution’s Saban Center for Middle East Policy, who was a senior Persian Gulf expert at both the National Security Council and the CIA. “As a result of Iranian provocations, in recent years we have seen a sea change in the perspective of GCC nations in terms of their willingness to cooperate militarily with the United States,” he told National Journal, referring to the six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates). The Arab states are now taking actions, he noted, that Washington has urged for 20 years. “So we are quietly creating a military architecture in the Middle East for a common defense against Iran that clearly could form the foundation of a containment strategy if we find ourselves confronting a nuclear-armed Iran,” Pollack said. “That’s a very important development.”

### ***Containing Iran***

Formally adopting a Cold War-style strategy to contain Iran remains a controversial idea. Traditionally, containment has been the United States' option of last resort in dealing with an adversary, such as the former Soviet Union, when there is no realistic prospect of changing that regime by force of arms. Some observers thus view containment as equivalent to *détente*, or accommodation, with a regime they find abhorrent. To others, a formal containment strategy would concede nuclear arms to Iran and thus devalue the threat of military action to destroy its nuclear facilities. Still others believe that a perceived strategy of containment would work against President Obama's attempts to engage Iran and would instead lock the two long-time adversaries into a state of perpetual antagonism.

Yet if the Obama administration ultimately decides that the negative blowback of a military strike against Iran would outweigh the upside, the U.S. must intensely focus on containment strategies, particularly because decades of sanctions have so far failed to dissuade Tehran from pursuing nuclear weapons. Because Iran has dispersed and buried much of its nuclear infrastructure, U.S. intelligence analyses predict that a military strike might set the program back only one to three years, and an attack could strengthen Tehran's hand by splintering the broad international coalition now lined up behind tough economic sanctions.

As the 1991 Persian Gulf War and subsequent attempts to "contain" Saddam Hussein with sanctions and "no fly" zones showed, constructing a containment regime on the fly has serious drawbacks. In the case of Saddam, stringent sanctions produced such suffering among the Iraqi people that the strategy eventually became unsustainable.

Moreover, failure to anticipate and counter a nuclear-armed Iran could encourage its neighbors to pursue their own nuclear weapons, leading to a long-feared cascade of proliferation in the tinderbox of the Middle East. "I know Arabs, and they are not going to simply sit by and watch their archenemy, Persia, hold them hostage with nuclear weapons and establish regional hegemony," said a senior U.S. military commander in Iraq who is long familiar with the Middle East. "So, despite the fact that Arab nations have almost never played well together in the past, their fears of terrorism and the Iranian threat have laid the groundwork for an informal alliance that the United States could fashion into a containment strategy if we show skill and leadership."

Indeed, a number of experts believe that constructing a credible containment architecture that anticipates Iranian intimidation, clearly lays out America's red lines, and denies Iran the advantages of nuclear weapons could be the single most important factor in deterring Tehran from pursuing its ambitions.

"The best threat is a credible threat we are willing to follow through on, which is why the United States should threaten Iran with an effective and enduring containment regime that will deprive them of any benefit of acquiring nuclear weapons," said James Dobbins, director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the Rand think tank, speaking recently at the United States Institute of Peace. "We need to elaborate how a containment regime would work to deter Iran over an extended period, both to demonstrate to our threatened allies that there are alternatives that protect their security,

and to persuade the Iranians we are serious. And the earlier we make that threat of a containment regime concrete and overt, the more likely we are to affect the debate inside Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and, especially, inside Iran.”

### ***Laying The Foundation***

As Gates’s convoy crisscrossed palm-tree-lined boulevards past the gilded edifices of Abu Dhabi last week, the fabulous oil wealth that has given the tiny emirate and its Persian Gulf neighbors some of the world’s highest levels of gross domestic product per capita was on clear display. That the source of that wealth is within easy range of Iranian missile batteries just across the Gulf bespeaks the acute sense of vulnerability among the royal families of the Arabian Peninsula.

Last year, the tiny UAE thus became the United States’ single largest customer in foreign military sales. Its purchases have included advanced F-16 fighter aircraft; Blackhawk helicopters; long-range surface-to-surface missiles; and mine-resistant, ambush-protected ground combat vehicles. The UAE is also planning to buy the Theater High-Altitude Air Defense system, one of the most effective antimissile weapons in the Pentagon’s arsenal.

Like its neighbors Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain, the UAE already boasts U.S. Patriot air-defense missile batteries. It also plays host to U.S. Air Force supporting operations in Afghanistan, although the local media rarely takes note. In May, Kuwait signed a \$245 million deal with the United States for three KC-130 midair refueling aircraft, with plans to buy five more, considerably extending the range of its strike aircraft. Not to be outdone, Saudi Arabia recently announced its intention to buy \$60 billion of advanced U.S. weaponry, including advanced F-15S strike aircraft, attack helicopters, and missile systems. If completed, the purchase would mark the largest single arms deal in American history.

Largely through the Gulf Security Dialogue established by the Bush administration in 2006, the United States has tried to leverage its close bilateral relationships in the region and all that high-end weaponry to promote multilateral cooperation among the GCC states in maritime security, counterterrorism, shared early warning, and missile-defense operations.

Earlier this year, Gen. David Petraeus, then-head of U.S. Central Command with responsibility for the Middle East, described the nascent security structure that the U.S. envisions. “The architecture is literally being fleshed out through a process we sometimes call ‘bi-multilateralism,’ which means, you make bilateral arrangements that are then integrated to achieve multilateral effects,” Petraeus said at the Institute for the Study of War in Washington.

As a test case, the United States is trying to develop a shared early-warning system for the Persian Gulf by combining the various air-defense radars in the GCC countries into a common operational picture. If successful, such a system could facilitate an integrated missile-defense system in the region. Central Command is also increasingly using joint military exercises and training to develop common tactics to take advantage of the Gulf States’ growing arsenals of U.S. weaponry.

“I don’t personally think that the concept of a NATO-like organization is realistic in the near term, because, to put it mildly, there is friction among a number of these countries,” Petraeus said. “But Iran is clearly seen as a very serious threat by those on the other side of the Gulf, and it has been a catalyst for the implementation of the security architecture that we envision and have been trying to implement. The best recruiting officer for that effort has been Iranian President Ahmadinejad, through his rhetoric, his actions, and his continued missile- and nuclear-development programs.”

### ***Wizards Of Armageddon***

The Obama administration believes that its dual-track strategy of outreach and pressure is working. A new round of U.N. sanctions adopted earlier this year was followed by a host of unilateral sanctions by individual nations that, collectively, have severely limited Tehran’s access to international financial markets, arms purchases, and even the insurance required for passengers to disembark from its ships and civilian aircraft when traveling overseas.

“There’s no doubt that the severity of the sanctions surprised Iran, which is feeling the effect on its business and financial activities and ability to gain needed technological expertise to develop its economy,” said Dennis Ross, a special adviser to Obama and the senior director for the Central Region on the National Security Council, speaking at the U.S. Institute of Peace. Iran’s central bank had to intervene to stabilize its currency earlier this year, he noted, after it plummeted in value. “Our willingness to engage with Iran made it easier to rally the international community behind those sanctions. Unfortunately, to date, we have not seen the Iranians prepared to change the path or trajectory they are on, and to embrace a policy of transparency and peace. In fact, we’ve seen quite the opposite.”

Barring a sudden change in Iran’s trajectory, sometime in the next few years the United States will almost certainly confront the question of what happens the day after it launches a military strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities, or the day after it decides not to launch one. Either way, the United States will need a strategy -- for containing the blowback from a strike or, conversely, the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran.

What would an overt, long-term containment strategy for Iran look like? Almost certainly, it would include just the kind of nascent security coalition with Arab states that Central Command is starting to piece together. Tailored investment sanctions could focus more narrowly on regime hard-liners and the activities of the Revolutionary Guard, taking the place of trade sanctions that broadly punish the Iranian people and are difficult to sustain. The United States might deepen its support for the opposition “green movement” inside Iran. Almost certainly, a robust strategy to contain a nuclear-armed Tehran would also involve the U.S. extending its umbrella of nuclear deterrence to cover the GCC states.

“I support the Obama administration’s two-track approach of carrots and sticks, and they’ve succeeded beyond most people’s hopes in implementing tough sanctions, but it’s not clear that strategy is sustainable or that Iran will ever really compromise on its nuclear program,” Pollack said. “That’s why I think we need a triple-track approach, with a fallback containment regime in case the first two tracks fail. If that ground is not prepared in

advance, we will pay a heavy price for trying to cobble a containment regime together in a rush.”

Already, the time grows short. Israel’s leaders have stated repeatedly that a nuclear-armed Iran that calls for its annihilation represents an existential threat, and they estimate that Tehran could acquire a “breakout” capability as early as next year. After lying dormant for most of the post-Cold War era, the agonizingly complex calculations of nuclear showdown and deterrence are once again in play in the international arena.

“It’s almost as if the wizards of Armageddon have a new lease on life,” said Petraeus, who called the potential ramifications of an Iranian nuclear weapon or an attack to destroy Iran’s nuclear infrastructure “enormous -- not just for the region but for the entire world. At some point over the course of this year or next year, there’s going to have to be some very, very hard decisions made on these issues.”

## Official Says American Intelligence Backed Terrorist Attack on Chabahar Mosque \*

**Ali Abdollahi**, Iran's deputy interior minister for security, said that those responsible for the terror attacks in the Iranian port city of Chabahar received "backing and logistical support" from the intelligence service of regional states and America, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported the same day. Between 13:00 and 13:30 GMT on Wednesday, 15 December, two attackers targeted a Shiite mosque after a local procession of mourners marking the religious holiday of Tasu'a arrived there, the ministry official said [Tehran IRNA in Persian - pro-Ahmadinezhad official news agency, controlled by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance; URL: [www.irna.ir](http://www.irna.ir)].

- On 17 December, Press TV's English-language service quoted Iranian Interior Minister **Mostafa Mohammad-Najjar** as saying: "The Iranian nation must be vigilant because these blind moves are carried out by the enemy with the intention of targeting national cohesion and dividing Shi'a and Sunni Muslims." Holding Israel responsible for the Chabahar attacks, the official added: "Zionist criminals mastermind such dreadful crimes, and the Iranian nation needs to exercise more vigilance." On the same day, Iranian President **Mahmud Ahmadinezhad** vowed that the attacks will not affect the unity of his country's people, and Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah **Ali Khamene'i** referred to the significance of the Tasu'a-Ashura holiday [which commemorates the death of Mohammad's grandson Huseyn and his followers who rode against supporters of the Umayyad Caliph in 680 CE]. The attack showed that the enemy is afraid of the lesson that the historical event teaches Muslims, **Khamene'i** said [Tehran Press TV Online in English - website of Tehran Press TV, 24-hour English-language news channel of Iranian state-run television officially controlled by the office of the supreme leader; [www.presstv.ir](http://www.presstv.ir)].

## Iran to Stay the Course After Sacking Top Diplomat

Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2010

Iran said today its nuclear posture would remain the same following the dismissal of Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, Agence France-Presse reported (see [GSN](#), Dec. 13).

"Iran's major international policies are defined in higher levels and the foreign ministry executes these policies. We will not see any changes in our basic policies," Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast told reporters.

"I don't think there will be any changes in the nuclear policy and the talks" with leading U.N. states on Iran's atomic efforts, he added.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad yesterday replaced Mottaki with Atomic Energy Organization head Ali Akbar Salehi. While there was no formal explanation for the decision, Mottaki is believed to have been critical of Ahmadinejad's leadership and close to one of the president's rivals.

The move came a week after Iranian diplomats met for the first time in more than a year with representatives from U.N. powers China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The two-day session focused on Tehran's contested nuclear activities; further talks are scheduled for late January.

The United States and allied nations suspect that Iran's uranium enrichment program is aimed at producing nuclear-weapon material. The Middle Eastern state says its atomic operations are strictly civilian in nature (Agence France-Presse I/[Spacewar.com](#), Dec. 14).

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said yesterday she does not believe the Iranian diplomatic shuffle would cause trouble at the next round of talks in Istanbul, Turkey, Reuters reported.

"Whether one person or another is foreign minister is not as important as ... what the policy of the Iranian government is in dealing with the international community on this very important matter," she said.

The meeting last week in Geneva "was a good start to a return to serious negotiations," Clinton said during a trip to Canada.

The Obama administration's lead diplomat suggested the six nations would maintain pressure to halt Iran's suspected nuclear-weapon activities. Tehran has indicated it has no intention of discussing uranium enrichment at the upcoming session.

"We remain committed to pursuing every diplomatic avenue available to us and our international partners to persuade Iran to forgo a nuclear weapons program," she said (Reuters/[Haaretz](#), Dec. 13).

European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, who led talks for the U.N. side, signaled yesterday she hoped the talks would move ahead as scheduled in the wake of Mottaki's dismissal, RIA Novosti reported ([RIA Novosti](#), Dec. 13).

Acting Foreign Minister Salehi, a sitting vice president and Tehran's former envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency, "is much smarter and smoother than Mottaki, and may prove more effective at creating divisions in the international community," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace analyst Karim Sadjadpour told *Newsweek*.

His selection could increase the difficulty for the U.N. powers at the next session, according to the magazine.

"Ahmadinejad wants the foreign policy of Iran to be united with the nuclear policy," said Iranian defector and former diplomat Mohammad Reza Heydari (Babak Dehghanpisheh, *Newsweek*, Dec. 13).

Meanwhile, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak met yesterday in Washington with U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, AFP reported.

"This was their sixth meeting this year, and today's talks touched on everything from the recent wildfires in Israel to ongoing peace process efforts to the challenges posed by Iran," according to Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell.

The meeting addressed "a range of bilateral and regional security issues," he said.

Barak also planned sessions with CIA Director Leon Panetta and Obama administration national security adviser Tom Donilon (Agence France-Presse II/[Yahoo!News](#), Dec. 13).

### **Defense Minister Hits Back at Gates, Says US Policies Make Region Unsafe \***

IRNA on 13 December published a response from Iranian Defense Minister **Ahmad Vahidi** to US Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who reportedly said during his visit to the Persian Gulf region that "Iran's combative policies cause everyone to worry." Rejecting Gates' statement, **Vahidi** said Iran's policies are directed at creating peace and stability in the region. The Islamic Republic has "good and constructive" relations with neighboring states, the Iranian defense minister said, adding: "It is the warmongering and interventionist American leaders who try to harm good relations between the countries of the region by designing false matters and creating divisions." **Vahidi** went on to say that America's Iran "scenario" is intended to create an "excuse for its illegitimate presence and sale of weapons in the region." The region's people are not afraid of Islamic Iran; rather, he added, they are worried about the "warmongering American regime ... which has sacrificed millions of people for its transgressive policies" by invading Iraq and Afghanistan and giving its unconditional support to the Zionist regime.

### **IRGC May Change Its Agenda in Persian Gulf, Says IRGC Commander \***

The Fars News Agency on 10 December cited Rear Admiral **Ali Fadavi**, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps navy, as saying that his forces are in "complete control" of the Strait of Hormoz and the Sea of Oman. He also hinted that the IRGC may change its tactics in the Persian Gulf, saying that IRGC naval units "can carry out their plans in a different way than [they have in] the past." Speaking at a memorial ceremony for student Basij "martyrs" at Azad University in Bandar Abbas, **Fadavi** declared that America is "incapable" of confronting Iran, adding that the foundation of US power rests on a "false premise." At first glance, **Fadavi** said, America seems to be a highly capable superpower that no one can confront, but upon closer inspection we find that this is a façade. Iran's capability to defend itself against the enemy means that any action against that country is "unjust," **Fadavi** stated, adding that the Islamic Republic's quarrel with the US is not only about economic, societal, and cultural issues.

## Strengthening Opposition Movement Is the Enemy's Priority, Says Commander \*

Basij News on 10 December quoted Commander **Yaddollah Javani**, the head of the IRGC's political office, as saying that "the first priority of the enemy is to create a strong opposition" against the government. Speaking at a gathering of cultural offices from the IRGC's provincial branches, **Javani** said the IRGC is "in a condition of war and struggle" and its cultural officials should be mindful that the enemy's aims range from regime change to changing the behavior of the Iranian government. The enemy's focus is on diplomacy and dialogue, through which it pursues specific aims, **Javani** said, adding that the Islamic Republic's greatest challenge is the "sedition that remorseful and worn revolutionaries stir up." He also warned that Iran's enemies have concluded that the same people who brought the Islamic revolution to fruition can destroy it [Basij News Agency in Persian - website of the Basij, or paramilitary forces; as of June 2008, Basij forces merged with those of Pasdaran or the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and came under the latter's control; URL: <http://www.basijnews.ir> ].

### **Official Says US Will Use WikiLeaks as Basis for Hostile Action \***

Seyyed **Mas'ud Jazayeri**, the deputy for culture and defensive propaganda at Iran's Armed Forces General Command Headquarters, said in an 8 December interview with the Fars News Agency that the information from recent WikiLeaks disclosures will be the basis for "America's belligerent action" against "targeted" countries, including Iran. He characterized the leak of classified US documents as a "medium-term strategy" and a psychological operation, the roots of which can be seen in the American government. **Jazayeri** said that, without a doubt, these documents have been tampered with, and he added that, while they may contain real information, they are "past their expiration date" and are no longer useful to the Americans. But, he speculated, they may have been released to win the public's trust so that America can "agitate" people at a time of its choosing.

### Iran Displays 'Destroyer' at Naval Parade in Sri Lanka \*

An Iranian "destroyer" [frigate-class ship] will participate in maneuvers in Sri Lanka, which is holding a five-day celebration to mark the 60th anniversary of the formation of its navy, the Fars News Agency reported on 8 December. Admiral **Gholamreza Khadem-Bigham**, the deputy commander of Iran's Navy, who headed the Islamic Republic's delegation to the South Asian island, will meet with the chairman of Sri Lanka's joint chiefs of staff and the commanding officers of each branch of that country's military before attending a meeting at which delegates from 22 countries will discuss ocean security [Tehran Fars News Agency in Farsi - hardline pro-Ahmadinezhad news agency; headed as of December 2007 by Reza Moqaddamfar, who was formerly an IRGC cultural officer; URL: <http://www.farsnews.ir/>].

## Gulf leaders to meet as Iran nuclear fears loom

(AP) – 1 day ago

Dec. 7, 2010

CAIRO (AP) — The leaders of six U.S.-allied Gulf Arab nations come together Monday for talks expected to span from Qatar's surprise selection to host the 2022 World Cup to the region's deep concerns about Iran's nuclear program.

The two-day meeting in Abu Dhabi will be the first gathering of Gulf leaders since U.S. diplomatic memos released by WikiLeaks revealed the urgency of their fears about Iran's nuclear ambitions — including appeals by some Gulf rulers for the U.S. to launch a military strike.

The leaked memos give a sense of drama that is normally absent from the annual summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council, or GCC, a six-nation bloc that typically focuses on economic issues and prefers behind-the-scenes dealings to address disputes in their own backyard.

But the group, dominated by powerful Saudi Arabia, may now feel pressure to publicly clarify its views on Iran. The leaked memos drove home that Saudis and other Gulf states with close ties to Washington view Tehran's nuclear program and its support of militants in the Middle East with serious alarm.

"The Gulf leaders know they are on the front lines against Iran. They make their fears known in private," said Sami Alfaraj, head of the Kuwait Center for Strategic Studies. "The summit in Abu Dhabi could give some clue if they are now willing to take a harder line in public."

The meeting also comes after a diplomatic blitz through the Gulf with Iran as the central theme.

In Bahrain, U.S. Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton told a security conference Friday that Iran must prove to the world that its nuclear program is peaceful. A new round of nuclear talks between Iran and world powers, including the U.S., are scheduled to open Monday in Geneva.

The day after Clinton's speech, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki assured the same Bahrain conference s a pivotal moment for the region, which is investing heavily in sports, hotels and international commerce to move beyond its role as simply an oil spigot for the world.

"That Qatar now stands to host the most popular sporting event on Earth is an indication of how far that country, and indeed the region, has come in the last decade," said an editorial

in Abu Dhabi's state-backed newspaper The National. "Such a scenario would have been unthinkable just a few years ago."

Efforts at greater economic integration for the Gulf states, however, have faced hurdles.

Proposals for a common Gulf currency are now stalled. But this week's meeting could bring some headway in other fronts, including possible approval for unified rules on foreign investment and the green light for a \$20 billion rail network linking the six nations.

Still, the toughest decisions could be how — or even whether — to respond to the contents of the U.S. diplomatic cables on WikiLeaks.

The blunt language in the memos — including a call from Bahrain's king for the U.S. to "terminate" Iran's nuclear program "by whatever means necessary" — is in stark contrast to the carefully chosen words Gulf monarchs and their top officials use in public.

"The essence of much of the contents of the memos was already known," said Amr al-Shobaki, an Egyptian analyst. "But they add spice and details to what everyone already knew on relations between Gulf Arab nations and Iran."

Offering a hint that the public tone could be changing among Gulf leaders, Bahrain's foreign minister, Sheik Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, said Friday that the Middle East "can never live with" a nuclear-armed Iran.

## Gulf leaders want Iran to respond to peace efforts

Dec. 7, 2010

(AP) – 2 hours ago

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Leaders of six U.S.-allied Gulf Arab nations said Tuesday they were monitoring with "utmost concern" developments in Iran's disputed nuclear program and issued a thinly veiled warning to their Persian neighbor not to meddle in their internal affairs.

A communique issued by the six leaders at the end of a two-day summit in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, said they wanted the dispute over Iran's nuclear program to be resolved through "peaceful means" and make the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction.

The gathering of leaders from the Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman followed the publication of leaked U.S. diplomatic memos that revealed deeper concern among Gulf Arab leaders over Tehran's nuclear program than had previously been known — including a desire by several of them to see the United States destroy Iran's nuclear facilities.

The six are grouped in the Gulf Cooperation Council, a loose political, military and economic alliance established in 1981 partly in response to Iran's Islamic Revolution two years earlier and the fear that it would export its militant brand of political Islam to them or foment unrest among fellow Shiites there.

"The council followed developments in the Iranian nuclear file with the utmost concern and stresses again the importance of commitment to the principles of international legitimacy and the resolution of conflicts through peaceful means," said the GCC communique.

The annual GCC summit coincided with a new round of nuclear talks between Iran and world powers in Geneva. The West suspects Iran's nuclear program is designed to produce nuclear weapons, a charge Tehran denies, insisting its objective is to generate electricity.

Another round of talks with Iran is now scheduled for early next year.

"It is important that Iran is committed to the basis of good neighborly relations, mutual respect and noninterference in internal affairs, resolving disputes peacefully and not resorting to force or making threats to use it," said the communique.

The statement did not elaborate, but it was alluding to concern among Gulf Arab leaders about the growing influence of Shiite Iran in Iraq, a Shiite majority nation which neighbors GCC member states Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Some GCC states, according to the leaked U.S. diplomatic memos, also complain of Iranian meddling in their own countries.

Bahrain, for example, is majority Shiite and Iran is widely suspected to be fomenting unrest among Shiites there who complain of discrimination by the nation's Sunni ruling family.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia also have large Shiite minorities.

According to the leaked memos, several Gulf Arab nations are also concerned by Iran's influence in Lebanon, where its Shiite ally Hezbollah has the nation's strongest military force. They also complain that Iran's support to the militant Islamic Hamas group in Gaza is hindering efforts to reach a Palestinian-Israeli peace accord.

The memos also speak of the belief held by some Gulf Arab leaders that Iran was behind an on-and-off rebellion by Shiites in Yemen, an impoverished but strategically located Arab nation at the southern corner of the Arabian Peninsula.

The communique also expressed the six leaders' "regret" about what they said was Iran's lack of response to efforts to resolve a dispute between the Persian nation and the Emirates over three strategically located Gulf islands controlled by Iran.

Both nations claim ownership of the tiny islands, but the communique said the six nations consider the islands "an integral part of the Emirates."

## Iran 'dominant player' in Iraq politics: leaked memo

(AFP) – 1 day ago

Dec. 7, 2010

PARIS — Tehran is a "dominant player" in Iraq using "all means of diplomacy, intelligence and economy" to get a pro-Iranian regime there, leaked US diplomatic cables published by Le Monde newspaper Sunday said.

"Iran is one of the dominant players in Iraqi electoral politics," US ambassador to Baghdad Christopher Hill wrote on November 13, 2009, according to Le Monde's translation of the WikiLeaks cable.

Tehran "uses all the means of diplomacy, security, intelligence and economic tools to influence its allies and its Iraqi detractors to establish a more pro-Iranian regime, in Baghdad as well as in the provinces," Hill wrote.

To achieve this Iran "has understood that it needs to show great operational, and sometimes ideological, flexibility."

It is "not rare" for Iran "to finance and support Shiite or Kurdish rivals -- and sometimes even Sunni -- with the aim of developing financial dependence," Hill wrote.

"Exact figures are unknown but Iranian financial assistance to those who accept it is estimated to be 100 to 200 million dollars (75 to 150 million euros) a year."

Hill said that Iran's main political obstacle in Iraq "remains the dominant authority and the religious credibility incarnated by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who, while an Iranian national, is a critic of the 'Wiliyat-i-Faqih' (Guardianship of Islamic Jurists) doctrine in power in Iran."

In another cable dated September 24, 2009, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki says that Iran reportedly "envisaged launching long-range missiles" at the Ashraf refugee camp north of Baghdad.

The camp is home to around 3,500 supporters of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, principally the People's Mujahedeen of Iran that advocates the overthrow of the Islamic regime in Tehran.

## **Defense Minister Says West, Israel are 'Participants' in Assassination of Scientists \***

Speaking on 4 December after the funeral ceremony of assassinated nuclear scientist Majid Shahriari, Iranian Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi said the US and Israel are "participants" in the matter, IRNA reported. "These are the terrorist acts of the Zionist regime and the Westerners from behind the curtain," he said, adding that these powers want to keep the Islamic Republic from gaining scientific and technological capabilities. "These people talk of fighting terrorism but they do not condemn such a blatant instance of it," Vahidi complained, adding that "without a doubt" those who do not condemn these crimes and assassinations are themselves participants in it [Tehran Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) in Persian - pro-Ahmadinezhad official news agency, controlled by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance; URL: [www.irna.ir](http://www.irna.ir) ].

## Iran Helping Bolivia Build Nuclear Power Plant Bolivia Sending Uranium to Tehran

by [Anna Mahjar-Barducci](#)

December 3, 2010 at 4:30 am

<http://www.hudson-ny.org/1692/bolivia-iran>

Bolivian President Evo Morales went to Tehran on October 24 for a three-day state visit. During it, [Iran offered to help Bolivia](#) establish a nuclear plant, but the two presidents did not discuss anything concerning uranium. Bolivia apparently wants to do studies, analyses and investigations before being able to speak about the subject. The manager of the vanishing resources division of the Mining Ministry, Luis Alberto Echazu, said there is a uranium deposit in Cotaje, Potosi; and that small quantities of the radioactive element were extracted from there in 1974.

[According an Israeli government report](#), Bolivia, along with Venezuela is supplying Iran with uranium for its nuclear program. The document stresses that Venezuela and Bolivia are violating the United Nations Security Council's economic sanctions with their aid to Iran, concluding that "Since Ahmadinejad's rise to power, Tehran has been promoting an aggressive policy aimed at bolstering its ties with Latin American countries with the declared goal of 'bringing America to its knees.'"

Less than two months ago, Tehran extended La Paz a credit line of about \$287 million as development aid, particularly for mineral exploration and the textile industry. In 2007, Iranian President Ahmadinejad became the first Iranian chief executive to visit Bolivia. During the trip, the two countries [signed an agreement](#) on conducting joint projects worth \$1.1 billion over the next five years. The amount of money is significant for a country like Bolivia, whose annual GDP barely reaches \$9 billion.

### From the Iranian Press:

- Iran will help Bolivia industrialize its lithium mines
- Bolivia possesses about 70% of the world's lithium; Iran is one of Bolivia's main partners in the lithium production
- Iran to help Bolivia build nuclear power plant
- Bolivian Minister expresses regrets for opposition efforts reports to describe relations with as a threat to world peace
- Iran and Bolivia to establish joint bank and open credit lines
- Ahmadinejad: "Iran and Bolivia have common enemies"
- Ahmadinejad: "Iran and Bolivia share the same enemies, the same interests"
- Ahmadinejad: Iran will win its battle against Imperialism
- Photos of Morales and Ahmadinejad playing football
- Iranian President Ahmadinejad and his visiting Bolivian counterpart Morales play football
- Iran and Bolivia boost resistance front against Imperialism

**November 10, 2010**

**Iran will help Bolivia industrialize its lithium mines**

Iranian Minister of Industries and Mines Ali-Akbar Mehrabian says Iran will help Bolivia industrialize its lithium mines and produce lithium batteries. [...] Iran will render technical and engineering assistance for the projects and will also cooperate with Bolivia in producing other lithium products [...]. During the Bolivian president's visit, Tehran and La Paz inked five memoranda of understanding [...].

Iran signed a deal with Bolivia last year to help the Andean nation conduct research on the exploitation of lithium in the Salar de Uyuni desert. Iranian experts, Brazil's Ministry of Science, and researchers from companies such as France's Eramet SA and Bolloré SA conducted a joint study on Bolivia's lithium reserves.

**Bolivia possesses about 70% of the world's lithium; Iran is one of Bolivia's main partners in the lithium production**

Bolivia possesses about 70% of the world's lithium and should thus be able to supply the international market for the next 500 years and reduce the world's reliance on dwindling fossil fuels, experts say.

Lithium has wide applications in the production of rechargeable batteries in cell phones, laptops, and electric cars. Lithium can also be compounded with aluminum for use in the production of light bodies for airplanes and cars. The Bolivian government plans to eventually produce 30,000 tons of lithium per annum. Iran is one of Bolivia's main partners in the area of lithium production and has inked a number of agreements on the exploitation of the country's lithium mines. **Press TV (Iran)**

**November 1, 2010**

**Bolivia dismisses media reports on the launch of joint projects with Iran to exploit uranium**

Bolivia says it has no plans for joint uranium exploitation and exploration projects with Iran, although the two countries have agreed to build a nuclear plant in the South American country. "The uranium issue is not on the agenda, neither in any agreements. We have not decided on anything about uranium and still we do not have conditions to do it. We do not have any plan for this issue," [said] Arce [...].

Arce dismissed media reports that Bolivia had launched joint projects with Iran to exploit uranium, saying during the recent visit by Bolivian President Evo Morales to Iran, the two countries held no talks on uranium because Bolivia has no studies or research in hand regarding what its reserves of that substance might be.

## **Bolivian Minister expresses regrets for opposition efforts reports to describe relations with as a threat to world peace**

"We still have not talked about uranium. I think that we are still not in shape to do so. We have to make studies, analyses and investigations to be able to speak about uranium," the minister said. The Bolivian minister expressed his country's regret for efforts by certain politicians from the opposition and some media reports to describe relations between Iran and Bolivia as a threat to world peace.

The remarks came after President Morales confirmed [...] that Bolivia plans to build a nuclear plant with Iran's help, stressing the facility would be for peaceful purposes. "There is nothing to lie about: One of the things we are working on with Iran is of course to have a nuclear plant, to generate energy," Morales said. [...] During his meetings with Iranian officials, Morales invited Iran to establish a stronger presence in Bolivia. The two countries also signed five memoranda of understating following the talks. [...] **Press TV (Iran)**

**October 31, 2010**

### **Iran to help Bolivia build nuclear power plant**

Bolivian President Evo Morales said on Friday that Bolivia and Iran will work together to build a nuclear power plant in Bolivia. Bolivia and Iran "have expressed interest in developing cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy", [said] Morales [...]

Iran has offered to set up a joint venture with Bolivia on lithium battery and nuclear electricity production [...]. Bolivia has the right to develop peaceful use of nuclear energy, and no one has the right to interfere, he added. **Tehran Times (Iran)**

**October 31, 2010**

### **Bolivia to buy warplanes and helicopters from Iran**

Bolivia will buy military airplanes and helicopters from Tehran under an agreement signed during the visit of President Evo Morales to Iran [...].

"We have expressed ... our interest in buying some airplanes and helicopters of Iranian manufacture, which are basically for training," Economy and Finance Minister Luis Arce told state media. The airplanes include the FAJR-3, S-68 and the Iran-140, of which Arce said only that the third can transport 52 people, and the helicopters will be four-seat versions. He added that all the aircraft will be used to train Bolivian Air Force pilots.

Included in the same agreement, the minister said, is a provision for Iranian technicians to come to Bolivia to perform maintenance on the military aircraft. Bolivia's current fleet of military aircraft comes from the United States.

**Latin America Herald Tribune**

**October 28, 2010**

**Iran and Bolivia to establish joint bank and open credit lines**

Iran and Bolivia signed five memoranda of understanding in Tehran [...], based on which they will establish a joint bank and open credit lines. Senior officials from the two sides inked the related documents. [...] The two countries will expand relations in consular, banking, mining and industrial fields as well.

Bolivian President Evo Morales referred to Iran as a great and developing nation and added that expanding all-out ties with Iran is of high importance for his country. The agreements will guarantee the transfer of technological know-how from Iran to Bolivia in agriculture, dairy and textile industries, he added. [...]

Managing Director of Tabriz Tractor Manufacturing Company Abolfath Ebrahimi Monday said in Tabriz city that the company is ready to set up a tractor production line in Bolivia [...]. "We are also prepared to train Bolivian experts and transfer necessary technology to that country," Ebrahimi was quoted as saying.

The Bolivian president called for transfer of Iran's tractor producing technology to his country. Morales also ordered to purchase some 1,000 tractors from Tabriz Tractor Manufacturing Company. [...]

In 2007, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad became the first Iranian chief executive to visit Bolivia. During the trip, the two countries signed an agreement on conducting joint projects worth \$1.1 billion dollars over the next five years [...].

**Tehran Times (Iran)**

**October 27, 2010**

**Ahmadinejad: "Iran and Bolivia have common enemies"**

"Iran and Bolivia have common enemies, interests and views about resolving international issues," President Ahmadinejad said at a joint press conference with his Bolivian counterpart Evo Morales [...].

Ahmadinejad stressed that Iran and Bolivia are on a same independent and justice-seeking front, and added, "Each of us enjoys capabilities that are useful for the other side. In other word, we are more successful when we stay together."

Ahmadinejad further underscored that Tehran and Sucre [the second capital of Bolivia] are well aware of their enemies' plots and take astute and vigilant steps to defuse enemies' moves. [...] Morales, for his part, said that the agreements made between the two sides will ensure transfer of industrial and technological knowledge to Bolivia. He also pointed to

Iran's experience in the mining sector, and said that his country intends to use Iran as a partner in this field. [...] **Fars News Agency (Iran)**

**October 27, 2010**

**Ahmadinejad: "Iran and Bolivia share the same enemies, the same interests"**

"Iran and Bolivia share the same enemies, the same interests, and the same outlook on how to resolve global crises," Ahmadinejad [...]. Speaking at a joint press conference with his visiting Bolivian counterpart Evo Morales, Ahmadinejad said Tehran and La Paz could tap into each other's potentials and expertise to flourish and counter their "enemies."

"We are quite acquainted with our enemy and its schemes, so [we] tread wisely," IRNA [Islamic Republic News Agency] quoted the Iranian chief executive as saying on Wednesday, hours after the two countries inked five new memoranda of understanding. "All countries must be able to claim equal rights like the right to independence, respect and progress," Ahmadinejad added, echoing his remarks at a United Nations summit last month.[...]

**Ahmadinejad: Iran will win its battle against Imperialism**

In a speech to the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) [...], Morales also said he was certain his country would win its battle against "imperialism." "Imperialism dominated our country in all economic and human fields for years, but at the beginning of my presidency I tried to make fundamental changes and nationalize gas and oil for the interest of my nation," the visiting Bolivian president told Iranian lawmakers. **Press TV (Iran)**

**October 26, 2010**

**Iran and Bolivia boost resistance front against Imperialism**

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his Bolivian counterpart Evo Morales stressed boosting resistance front of independent and freedom-seeking nations against Imperialism."Imperialism is in the position of weakness," the two presidents emphasized in a meeting in Tehran [...].

"No doubt that enhancing independent nations' front is beneficial to the world peace and security and it weakens capitalism more," Ahmadinejad said. "The situation is changing in favor of independent nations and it (the opportunity) should be used tactfully."

Evo Morales on his part pointed to his visit of Iran's industrial achievements and expressed satisfaction over the country's gains. "Independent countries' close cooperation can lessen their vulnerability to Imperialism," he added. **ISNA (Iran)**

**MIDDLE EAST/AFRICA**

Date Posted: 03-Dec-2010

Jane's Defence Weekly

**Documents reveal Arab allies urged US to tackle Iran**

**Lauren Gelfand** *JDW Middle East/Africa Editor*  
Nairobi

**Key Points**

- Documents revealed through Wikileaks show that some Gulf states have pushed the US to deal with Iran's nuclear programme
- Among those who pushed hardest were the largest clients for US military systems

Arab allies of the US, who have spent billions of dollars on advanced US military systems, would prefer that Washington was more aggressive towards Iran, according to leaked US Department of State documents.

A data dump by the website WikiLeaks showed that, beneath a public face that warned against any US military activity, Gulf neighbours of the Islamic Republic would prefer not to have to confront Iran themselves.

Among the revelations contained in the stolen documents, which have been published in fits and starts since 28 November, were suggestions from Egypt that the US use its influence in Iraq to install a dictator there to confront the spreading influence of Tehran within the security forces and government.

Egypt insisted that Iran "pay the price for its actions and not be allowed to interfere in regional affairs", intelligence service head Omar Suleiman - an aide to President Hosni Mubarak - was quoted as saying in an April 2009 cable that gave details of his meeting with Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Far from resisting any US 'meddling' in the region, which it has criticised in the past, Egypt instead offered its co-operation, with Suleiman noting: "It would take a big burden off our shoulders."

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, implored the US to "cut off the head of the snake" and strike hard against the hidden and revealed nuclear installations in Iran: a remark from Saudi head of

state King Abdullah that was in sharp contrast with his more conciliatory public statements.

Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) suggested that the Iranian nuclear programme should be halted by any means necessary, with the crown prince of Abu Dhabi assessing that "the logic of war [dominated]" in any interaction with Tehran.

All three countries have recently increased their orders for advanced US systems - including air defence systems - in a strategy that seems designed to confront or at least deter any threat from Iran.

In the largest arms deal in its history, Saudi Arabia will seek to acquire some USD60 billion in aircraft over the next 10 years, giving it a capability that will far outmatch the Iranian air force, which is primarily reliant on outmoded aircraft. In late November Riyadh also signalled its intent to purchase Javelin anti-tank guided missiles.

Meanwhile, Bahrain and the UAE requested the sale of Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) T2K Unitary missiles: a powerful offensive capability.

All three countries already operate the advanced Patriot missile defence system - strategic purchases that were negotiated with the previous US administration.

Other US allies were more temperate but no less firm in their calls for a swift and robust response to Iran's increasing aggression and defiance of international sanctions and requests to curtail Tehran's nuclear development, which it maintains is civilian and peaceful.

In a cable describing a meeting in Amman, the US ambassador to Jordan said that most of the coterie surrounding King Abdullah II likened Iran to "an octopus, whose tentacles reach out insidiously to manipulate, foment and undermine the best laid plans of the West and regional moderates".

Engagement with Tehran was seen in Jordan as "[rewarding] regional hardliners while undermining Arab moderates, without convincing Iran to cease its support for terrorism, end its nuclear programme or drop its hegemonic aspirations".

## In Arab states' fears, Israel sees impetus for action against Iran

By Janine Zacharia  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Tuesday, November 30, 2010; A15

TEL AVIV - Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu expressed hope Monday that U.S. diplomatic cables revealing that several Arab states share his country's concern about Iran's nuclear weapons program could build momentum for tougher international action against the effort.

"More and more states, governments and leaders in the Middle East and the wider region and the world believe this is the fundamental threat," Netanyahu said, referring to disclosures in [cables released by the Web site WikiLeaks](#). According to the cables, some leaders, including Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, have advocated using military action to stop the Iranian nuclear program.

"There's a gap between what they say privately and publicly," Netanyahu said at an annual gathering of the Tel Aviv Journalists' Association. Regional leaders read publicly from one "script" that says the "greatest threat is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," Netanyahu said. "But in reality, leaders understand that this narrative is bankrupt. There is a new understanding."

Israeli analysts responded as enthusiastically as Netanyahu.

The leaked documents show that "the entire world, not just Israel, is panicked over the Iranian nuclear program," wrote Sever Plocker, a commentator for the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth.

The leak, he said, "strengthens the main message" of the United States and Israel that "Iran poses the greatest clear and present danger to the stability of the world, and the world has to act to remove this malignant tumor."

In Washington, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the cables show that other countries reached the same conclusion about Iran that the United States did when it moved to impose sanctions: "that we must do whatever we can to muster the international community to take action to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state."

### 'The right proportion'

Some Israeli experts suggested that the WikiLeaks storm would distract the Obama administration from negotiations with Israel on a new settlement freeze that the United States hopes will reinvigorate peace talks with the Palestinians.

Zalman Shoval, a former Israeli ambassador to the United States and an adviser to Netanyahu on Israeli-U.S. relations, said the notion that the United States could not take tougher action on Iran without first moving forward on the Israeli-Palestinian front was undermined by the WikiLeaks disclosures.

"It puts matters in the right proportion," Shoval said.

At a news conference in Tehran, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad dismissed the cables as "an intelligence game, a propaganda war" orchestrated by the United States, and he predicted they would have no effect.

"Iran is a friend of the region, and all nations are brothers," he said. "This will have no impact on regional relations."

Iran has repeatedly denied that it is pursuing nuclear weapons. But Ahmadinejad acknowledged for the first time Monday that Iran's uranium-enrichment program - which the country says is for civilian energy purposes - had been [the target of international sabotage](#), an apparent reference to the Stuxnet computer worm.

Israel and the United States are seen as the most likely sources for such cyberwarfare, but officials in both countries have declined to comment on the matter.

Ahmadinejad said Iran's enemies "had been successful in making problems for a limited number of our centrifuges, with software they had installed in electronic devices." The problem has been resolved and cannot be repeated, he said.

Also Monday, [a prominent Iranian nuclear scientist was killed](#) and a second was seriously wounded in bomb attacks in the Iranian capital. Iranian authorities blamed agents of Israel and the United States for the killings, saying they want to cause chaos in the country.

"It's not our practice to confirm or deny allegations of this sort," said Mark Regev, a spokesman for Netanyahu.

While U.S. Republican lawmakers and Netanyahu have pressed the Obama administration to make more direct threats of military force against the Islamic republic, the United States and its partners have tried to stymie Iran's nuclear program through U.N. and unilateral sanctions.

After months of negotiations on the structure of a new round of talks, the United States and other major powers appear to have agreed to [meet with Iran](#) on its nuclear program next week in Geneva, sources said.

### **Silence in the Arab world**

Although Netanyahu spoke at length about the WikiLeaks release, the Arab world was largely silent on the matter.

Reporting on the cables in Arabic-language newspapers, Web sites or news TV channels was largely limited to straight, brief reports without many details or commentary.

The silence from Saudi Arabia was predictable, as King Abdullah was convalescing in a New York hospital after an operation for a blood clot and a slipped disk.

Abdullah, according to an April 2008 cable, repeatedly pressed the United States to "cut off the head of the snake" by launching military strikes to destroy Iran's nuclear program.

"The Iranian issue will embarrass many of the politicians in the Arab region," Mustafa Hamarneh, director of the University of Jordan's Center for Strategic Studies, told the pan-Arab satellite channel Al-Jazeera.

But in Turkey, Akif Beki, a former spokesman for the Turkish prime minister, told TV 24: "I'm not sure the Iranians are surprised by the Saudis' stance. It is not a secret for anyone in the region the way the Saudis feel about Iran."

*Correspondent Thomas Erdbrink and special correspondent Samuel Sockol contributed to this report. Erdbrink reported from Tehran, Sockol from Jerusalem.*

## Iran invests time and effort in Africa

**Despite the diplomatic advances Iran's foreign policy has made in Africa in the past few years, an African triumph for the Islamic Republic is still far from a lasting reality. *Alex Vatanka* examines the Islamic Republic's recent approach towards the continent and asks whether it has been successful in its objectives.**

The second half of 2010 witnessed a flurry of interaction between Iranian diplomats and their African counterparts. Not all the buzz has been beneficial to Tehran, as was most recently demonstrated by the Republic of the Gambia's 22 November decision to break its ties with Iran, but the overall activity nonetheless reflects the increasing emphasis Tehran is putting on closer relations with countries on the continent.

This approach is meant to help the Islamic regime in Tehran achieve the kind of global role it envisages for itself by augmenting its political clout in regions of the world such as Africa and Latin America, where it evidently believes it can compete with Western powers for influence.

The recent climax of activity was arguably the two-day Iran-Africa Forum that was held in Tehran in early September. According to state-run Iranian media, government and public sector representatives from 40 African countries were in attendance and heard President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declare at the opening ceremony on 13 September that there were "no limits in the way of Iran-Africa co-operation". The pro-regime Fars News Agency argued in an article at the time of the summit that the Ahmadinejad administration has "striven hard to maximise relations with the African continent" and that as a result, the African Union (AU) now considers Iran as one its "strategic partners". However, despite the unquestionable diplomatic headway Tehran has made on the African continent in the past few years, an African triumph for Iran is still far from a lasting reality.

### Limited historical ties

If one listens to the official Iranian description of the country's associations with Africa, the impression given is one of enduring and solid ties. This portrayal, which is politically motivated and reflects Iran's current need to break free of its diplomatic isolation, is an exaggeration. Aside from Persian conquests in Africa in antiquity and limited migration by Iranian people to parts of Africa, such as the Shirazi migrants who settled in present-day Zanzibar, the overall interaction has been limited.

During the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi (1941-1979), Iran did have close ties with Egypt and the Shah also had a close personal friendship with a number of African heads of states, such as Ethiopia's Haile Selassie, but at no point before the 1979 Iranian revolution did Tehran consider Africa a continent of strategic importance to its needs.

This reality continued with the arrival of the regime in Tehran, despite its emphasis on what it called 'third worldism' and solidarity with movements such as the African National Congress in South Africa. The 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War meant Tehran had to prioritise its foreign dealings with states that could be of immediate use in its war effort against the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein and Africa simply did not figure significantly in this equation.

Africa, however, was in theory an ideal arena for Iranian overtures based on the guidelines stipulated in the post-monarchy constitution that was adopted in 1979. In Iran's post-revolution constitution, four categories of states are specifically highlighted as preferred foreign partners. In order, they are: Iran's immediate neighbours, Muslim states, Third World countries and states that can benefit the political, economic and military needs of Iran.

While Iran's foreign policy aims and behaviour have certainly not been limited by constitutional specifications, clearly many African states meet at least two of the above mentioned criteria: being Muslim and considered developing or Third-world nations. Accordingly, the number of Iranian embassies across Africa has doubled since 1979 to presently stand at 22 in total.

The first phase of Iranian outreach towards African states that began almost as soon as the Iran-Iraq war ended produced a mixed record.

Iran and Egypt had already severed ties in 1980, and by 1993 Algeria and Zambia broke ties over suspicion of Iranian support for opposition groups. Elsewhere, as Tehran established closer ties with Khartoum, it made Sudan's rival neighbours Ethiopia and Kenya anxious about Tehran's regional footprint. In West Africa, Tehran fared better, as it centred its ties early on to states such as Mali, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal on trade and economic development assistance.

With the arrival of the reformist President Mohammad Khatami in 1997, an overhaul of Iran's foreign policy meant that Tehran began to pursue détente across a number of regions and this had a reassuring impact on African states, and as examples both Algeria and Zambia re-established ties with Iran in 2000 and 2001 respectively.

### **Rivalling the West**

Ahmadinejad's emergence as president in 2005 and the rise of the far right in Iranian politics has meant that Africa has become a key ideological battleground for officials in

Tehran who believe that Iran can contest Western influence in regions where the West has left a void.

Accordingly, a deputy foreign minister was assigned to oversee and promote Tehran's relations across Africa. Iran has since become an observer member in the AU and has subsequently often touted itself as a "strategic partner" of the alliance. In September, Ahmadinejad repeatedly expressed Iran's willingness to host a summit for all the heads of state from the AU.

One of the key themes that Iranian officials repeat in their message to their African counterparts is the notion of a mutual interest in combating "global injustice" and "colonial exploitation". This sort of anti-Western language, which is evidently deemed to resonate with African elite and populations, is by no means limited to Ahmadinejad, who is renowned for his diatribes.

On 9 November, Ali Larijani, the speaker of the Iranian parliament and a political rival of Ahmadinejad, told his Djiboutian counterpart, Edris Arnato, that "the Islamic Republic of Iran has a special look at the African continent and, of course, the strategy of the Islamic Revolution is based on fighting colonialism and arrogance as well as defending the oppressed, specially the African nations". On 3 November, Fars News quoted Larijani to have told his Comorian counterpart, Burhan Hamid, that the "presence of the colonialists in different parts of the world has always been a cause of tension" and that "resistance against the colonialist powers is the sole way to reach independence and economic progress."

Meanwhile, in July Ahmadinejad was reported by Iran's Ettelaat newspaper to have told a group of Malian clergymen: "God's promise will soon come true and his child will arrive to bring justice to the world." This sort of political rhetoric is certainly meant to give Tehran an advantage over Western powers that have historically been most influential in Africa. However, Tehran's long term ambitions to become a regional power with reach in distant Africa and Latin America aside, Iranian officials are also clearly concerned with the short term need to maximize diplomatic support from the 53 African states at the UN as Tehran struggles to prevent further international resolutions against it.

### **Pragmatic calculations**

One of the key diplomatic preoccupations of the Iranian government in recent years has been to argue its case and defend Tehran's human rights record at international bodies such as the UN. In this context, African support for Iran appears to have been a key objective aimed at reducing international censure. Mohsen Qomi, a researcher at Iran's Foreign Ministry, argued in a 2009 paper that "African states have played an important positive role" in the way votes have been cast on resolutions dealing with Iran's human rights record.

According to Qomi, "[A total of] 11 African states are at any given time members of the 53-member strong UN commission on human rights." This has so far been a factor in Iran's

favour. As an example, a 2006 Canadian-sponsored resolution against Iran received no support from African states. The same logic and pursuit of African votes at international bodies has been evident in relation to Iran's nuclear standoff at the IAEA and the UN.

However, domestic critics of the Ahmadinejad's government say that the increasing reliance on African diplomatic support for Iran is short sighted at best and that African states will by and large only support Tehran's positions at international forums on tactical matters and when their pro-Iran votes are unlikely to upset the West. Such critics argue that there is no signs that African states are emerging as a bloc that will defy international consensus on Iran, and point to Nigeria and Uganda both voting in favor of more sanctions against Tehran in June at the UN despite heightened Iranian overtures that included a last-minute trip to Kampala by President Ahmadinejad.

### **Danger of blowback**

While visiting that country, Ahmadinejad stated in September 2010: "Iran and Zimbabwe can change the global order." Back in Iran, Javed Qorban Oqli, a former Iranian ambassador to South Africa under President Khatami, wrote on the opposition website "Iranian Diplomacy" that empty slogans by Iran's leaders in Africa could easily result in a blowback that could seriously undercut any headway that Tehran might have made across Africa in recent years.

In reference to Ahmadinejad's statement, Oqli noted that "Zimbabwe is a failed economy and state" and that sloganeering was no substitute for rooted policy when in reality "Iran has had no real economic or political successes in Africa". He also warned that Iranian leaders should not freely make promises of economic co-operation and aid in Africa as failure to deliver would only turn African opinion against Tehran.

Warnings about Ahmadinejad's African mirage grew louder in October and November following Nigeria's seizure of a cargo of Iranian arms and the Gambia's decision suddenly to break ties with Tehran. Iran maintained that the arms were a legal transshipment of weaponry sold by a private company in Iran to a customer in the Gambia but Lagos still reported the incident to the UN given that Tehran is under an arms exports embargo. The Iranian Foreign Ministry first sought to downplay the incident as a misunderstanding, but later alleged that it was American pressure on the Gambians that had led to their decision to sever ties with Tehran.

Islamic Republic News Agency, controlled by the government of Ahmadinejad, quoted Alaeddin Borujerdi, the chairman of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, as saying that Washington was seeking to "undermine Iran's ties with African states whenever it can". Borujerdi at once said that the Ahmadinejad administration has acted pro-actively in reaching out to Africa but then played down Iran's relationship with the Gambia saying that "relations were not on the highest level" and that Iran did not even "maintain an embassy there".

This attempt at a public relations spin, however, was clearly not proving sufficient for the government's critics. Opposition outlets jumped at the issue as another example of how the Ahmadinejad government is hurting Iranian interests. The news agency Fararu quoted a reformist parliamentarian, Qodratollah Alikhani, who called the Gambia's actions against Tehran an "insult" and said: "These problems are created by a government that gives significance to African states [as it wants to challenge the West], while these African countries do not respect Iran's dignity." Alikhani urged the government to learn from their mistakes and "act expediently in the future." Both opposition Rah-e Sabz and Kaleme websites carried the issue as a significant news item and reminded their readers that only a year ago Ahmadinejad had visited the Gambia where he had spoken of "brotherly and close ties".

There is little doubt that the recent seizure of Iranian weapons by Nigerian security forces and subsequent diplomatic setbacks that Tehran has faced with the Gambia is an embarrassment for Iran's diplomatic standing on the African continent. Still, this does not necessarily mean that the tide has turned and that Iran will relinquish its hopes for a stronger footprint in Africa. Ahmadinejad's administration has made significant political investments in relations from Zimbabwe to Senegal and from Sudan to South Africa, and by most accounts remains committed to deeper ties.

Meanwhile, as has been the case from the outset, domestic critics of Ahmadinejad will continue to argue that Tehran's overtures toward Africa are hasty and feeble and can easily be undermined by Iran's rivals, a situation that will damage Iran's long term standing as Ahmadinejad seeks to score tactical points against the West.

## WikiLeaks' Impact on U.S. Efforts Against Iran's Nuclear Program

November 29, 2010 | 2242 GMT

STRATFOR

The latest documents released by WikiLeaks included numerous U.S. State Department cables illustrating the extent to which Gulf Arab leaders would support U.S. military action against Iran. This will enhance credibility problems these Arab governments have with their respective populations. The cables also call into question U.S. and Israeli confidence as to how long they have before a conventional strike would no longer suffice to cripple Iran's nuclear program, and how much time Washington has left to pose a meaningful military threat against Iran without Tehran calling its bluff.

### Analysis

The Iranian nuclear issue has figured prominently in the release by WikiLeaks of classified U.S. State Department cables. A number of Persian Gulf Arab leaders, most notably from Saudi Arabia, have urged the United States to deal decisively with the Iranians. Though Arab apprehensions over Iran are certainly not new, the candor revealed in these cables sheds light on the level of regional support the United States could build in planning a military strike on Iran. As the cables with Israeli officials expose, however, the United States has not been able to get around the basic complications surrounding such a strike. And the limitations on a conventional strike on Iran continue to grow with time.

### Arab Enthusiasm

The WikiLeaks release of classified U.S. State Department cables includes a number of blunt statements by Arab leaders urging the United States to take decisive action against Iran. Among the more colorful statements include Saudi King Abdullah allegedly telling U.S. officials on more than one occasion to "cut off the head of the snake" in reference to Iran while recounting a discussion with Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki in which the king told him, "you as Persians have no business meddling in Arab matters." When Mottaki invited the Saudi king to visit Iran, Abdullah allegedly replied, "all I want is for you to spare us your evil" and gave the Iranian government a one-year deadline (now passed) in March 2009 to improve ties and "after that, it will be the end."

King Abdullah's statements closely track those of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in the diplomatic cables, who allegedly referred to the Persians as "big, fat liars" whose acts of "sabotage and Iranian terrorism" were spreading throughout the region. Other leaders revealed a more cautious approach, with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed asking a U.S. lieutenant general whether it would be possible to "take out" all locations of concern in Iran via airpower and the Saudi foreign minister advocating a harsher sanctions approach while keeping the military option on the table and participating in a [U.S. plan to build up Arab defenses in the Persian Gulf](#).

The statements, while not groundbreaking, are telling of the Arab states' deep-rooted apprehension over the spread of Iranian influence in the region. The main challenge these leaders face in the weeks ahead, particularly in the face of the energized Arab media outlets now dissecting these cables, lies in answering to the Arab street. The cables make it that much more difficult for the Arab states to conceal their potential complicity in U.S.-Israeli military plans against the Iranians and clash with these states' overt rhetoric decrying such action.

Potential Arab complicity could entail anything from intelligence sharing to usage of air space in coordinating an attack, and it incurs the risk of backlash by Iranian-backed proxies in the event of an Israeli-U.S. attack on Iran. Meanwhile, the Iranians can use the leaks to illustrate their oft-repeated charge of Arab hypocrisy in dealing with "resistance" movements like Hamas. Indeed, in one cable, Mottaki justifies Iranian support for Hamas in saying "these are Muslims," to which King Abdullah allegedly retorted, "No, Arabs." In another cable, the U.S. ambassador to Egypt describes how the Egyptian leadership views a powerful and well-armed [Hamas as a national security threat](#), one in the same as the threat posed by Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, and how Egyptian-Israeli intelligence sharing must continue to contain the group. Players as diverse as Iran, al Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood can use these statements to erode these Arab governments' legitimacy on the Arab street.

The diplomatic tension between the Arab states and Iran is also likely to complicate the already-difficult processes under way to establish power-sharing agreements between Shiites and Sunnis in regional hot spots like [Lebanon](#) and more important, [Iraq](#), where the United States faces a pressing need to follow through with a military drawdown.

### **U.S. and Israeli Uncertainty**

While there is evidently popular desire for a strike against Iran among Arab leaders, the diplomatic cables also reveal the [severe limitations](#) of such a strike. In a June 2009 State Department report, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak allegedly warned that Iran would not opt for an open, relatively low-threshold test like North Korea. "Rather, Iran will seek ways to bypass the NPT while ensuring its program is redundant and well-protected to prevent an irreparable military strike. Barak estimated a window between 6 and 18 months from now in which stopping Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons might still be viable. After that, he said, any military solution would result in unacceptable collateral damage."

In reading Barak's statement closely, it appears the Israelis are referring to the limited window the United States and Israel have to carry out a successful conventional strike on Iran's military and nuclear capabilities. The Iranians are well known to have spent considerable effort on concealing and hardening their nuclear sites, making it reasonable to assume that Iran's adversaries have sought to monitor Iran's progress in this regard closely. Rather than warning that Iran will find the means to develop an actual nuclear device within a six to 18 months, Barak is warning that Iran's progress in protecting its

nuclear sites could end up rendering a conventional strike ineffective. At that point, military contingency plans involving nuclear weapons would have to be considered. But the collateral damage from a nuclear strike could be considered too great — meaning Iran might manage to develop a military nuclear capability after the window closes.

This naturally raises the question of how much progress Iran has in fact made in its attempts to harden the most likely targets of a U.S./Israeli military strike. The timeline Barak mentioned might have been a bluff. Still, in the intervening 17 months the Iranians will undoubtedly have built up their defenses against a military strike.

Other (often contradictory) timelines have since been thrown out for public consumption, including a September 2009 statement by Ephraim Sneh, Israel's deputy defense minister until 2007, who said Israel and the United States had until the end of 2009 before Iran would have the capacity and the delivery capability for nuclear weapons, while U.S. Gen. James Cartwright claimed in April 2010 that Iran would be able to develop a nuclear bomb within a year. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence said in February 2009 that Iran would not realistically be able to get a nuclear weapon until 2013. Mossad Chief Meir Dagan was more cautious, saying in October 2009 that it would take the Iranians until 2014 to reach this stage.

The most accurate answer depends on the [quality of intelligence](#) collected by Iran's adversaries on the progress of the Iranian nuclear program. Gathering such intelligence has proven challenging, however. Iran may be lacking in conventional military strength and faces considerable internal political and economic troubles at home, but it is also quite adept at [denial and deception techniques](#). This raises the costs of action, whether military- or covert intelligence-related, for those who would target Iran's most prized assets.

The unusual case of [Shahram Amiri](#), an alleged Iranian defector who the United States claimed provided valuable intelligence on the Iranian nuclear program, is one of several cases in point. After ["defecting" in June 2009](#), Amiri safely showed up in July 2010 in Tehran claiming that Farsi-speaking CIA operatives had kidnapped him. This created great uncertainty among U.S. intelligence agencies as to the quality of intelligence they had gleaned from Amiri and points to the broader intelligence problem Iran's adversaries continue to face.

The [Nov. 29 assassination attempts against two nuclear scientists in Tehran](#) may be part of a concerted covert action campaign to cripple the Iranian nuclear program, but these scientists' [importance within the program](#) remains in question. More sophisticated approaches like the [Stuxnet computer virus](#), (which Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad acknowledged Nov. 29 had impacted Iran's nuclear program) could help compensate for, but not resolve, some of these critical weaknesses. This would allow attackers to bypass Iranian security barriers to disrupt Iran's nuclear efforts from within, and at least spread enough fear within the Iranian government that its nuclear plans could be compromised.

The biggest questions STRATFOR is thus left asking in reviewing these diplomatic cables are what is the current level of U.S. and Israeli confidence in a conventional strike on Iran, and how much time Washington has left to pose a meaningful military threat against Iran without Tehran calling its bluff.

### Defense Minister Says WikiLeaks Aims To Divide Middle East \*

In late November [ 28 November] Iranian Defense Minister **Ahmad Vahidi** told the Fars News Agency that the West "must explain its intrusive efforts" with regard to the WikiLeaks documents. Implicitly rejecting the validity of the released diplomatic documents, some of which show that Iran's neighbors in the Gulf may favor military action against the Islamic Republic, **Vahidi** said: "Some of the WikiLeaks documents that are concerned with our region are aimed at creating ... division" in the Middle East.

## Iran a focal point of documents

By: Laura Rozen

POLITICO

November 28, 2010 05:58 PM EST

Sensitive diplomatic discussions on how to deal with Iran's nuclear program are among the more-than-250,000 classified U.S. diplomatic cables news organizations **obtained from WikiLeaks** and reported on Sunday.

But while there are some surprises in the raw cables reviewed so far — U.S. anger at Armenia's alleged weapons transfers to Iran that were implicated in the killing of U.S. forces in Iraq; the Saudi king allegedly urging the United States to deal with Iran militarily - one is struck overall that the classified diplomatic discussions on Iran revealed in the cables are not all that different from what one would expect from following the public comments senior U.S. officials have made on the Iran issue the last several months.

In a February 2010 meeting with Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini, for instance, Defense Secretary Bob Gates "emphasized that a [U.N. Security Council] resolution was important because it would give the European Union and nations a legal platform on which to impose even harsher sanctions against Iran," a Feb. 8, 2010 Secret/No Foreign cable written by Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Alexander Vershbow relayed.

"SecDef pointedly warned that urgent action is required," the cable continued. "Without progress in the next few months, we risk nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, war prompted by an Israeli strike, or both. SecDef predicted 'a different world' in 4-5 years if Iran developed nuclear weapons."

While the cable offers an insider's notes on the meeting, its account of Gates' message to the Italian foreign minister is hardly different from what Gates has said publicly on the issue at many points.

In contrast, some of the cables reported on by the Guardian on Sunday suggest the U.S. has come under more concerted Arab pressure behind closed doors, including from Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, to deal with Iran militarily than public statements would suggest.

Saudi King Abdullah has "frequently exhorted the U.S. to attack Iran to put an end to its nuclear weapons programme," **the Guardian cited** one U.S. cable.

"He told you [Americans] to cut off the head of the snake," said Adel al-Jubeir, the Saudi ambassador to Washington, according to a report on Abdullah's meeting with Gen. David Petraeus in April 2008.

While senior Saudi Arabian officials have publicly expressed skepticism that international sanctions would be sufficient to curtail Iran's nuclear program and its alleged efforts to

destabilize regional states, they have mostly refrained from publicly calling for military action against Iran — although such views have been described as having been privately expressed to senior American officials by the Saudis and other Arab states, Washington Iran watchers have said.

"Sanctions are a long-term solution" for Iran's nuclear program, Saudi Foreign Minister **Saud Al Faisal said** in a joint news conference with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Riyadh in February 2010. "But we see the issue in the shorter term."

The cables also report in detail on U.S. diplomatic consultations with Turkey, including over its relations with Iran, Syria, and Israel.

William Burns, the U.S. under-secretary of State for Political Affairs, "strongly urged [Turkish Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Feridun] Sinirlioglu to support action to convince the Iranian government it is on the wrong course," according **to a February 2010 cable** written by then U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Jim Jeffrey.

"Burns acknowledged Turkey's exposure to the economic effects of sanctions as a neighbor to Iran, but reminded Sinirlioglu Turkish interests would suffer if Israel were to act militarily to forestall Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons or if Egypt and Saudi Arabia were to seek nuclear arsenals of their own," the Jeffrey cable continued. "'We'll keep the door open to engagement,' [Burns] stressed. A visibly disheartened Sinirlioglu conceded a unified message is important. He acknowledged the countries of the region perceive Iran as a growing threat: 'Alarm bells are ringing even in Damascus.'"

**A 2008 cable** – transmitting a letter from then-Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte to senior Armenian officials -- reveals that the United States was furious at Armenia for allegedly transferring arms to Iran that the U.S. said were used in attacks that killed U.S. forces in Iraq.

"Secretary [of State Condoleezza] Rice, Assistant Secretary [Daniel] Fried, Deputy Assistant Secretary [Mathew] Bryza, and Ambassador Yovanovitch have raised with you our deep concerns about Armenia's transfer of arms to Iran which resulted in the death and injury of U.S. soldiers in Iraq," Negroponte warned. "Notwithstanding the close relationship between our countries, neither the Administration nor the U.S. Congress can overlook this case. ... If sanctions are imposed, penalties could include the cutoff of U.S. assistance and certain export restrictions."

The New York Times, England's The Guardian, Spain's El Pais, France's Le Monde and Germany's Der Spiegel were the news organizations that - either directly or indirectly - got an advanced look at the cache of U.S. diplomatic correspondence, that includes State and Defense Department communications with some 270 embassies and consulates dating back to 2008.

The State Department's top legal adviser, Harold Koh, condemned the leak in a letter to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on Saturday, saying the exposure of the cables threatens

the lives of innocent individuals, including journalists, human rights workers, and soldiers.

The Defense Department also warned Sunday that the latest WikiLeaks exposure threatens the inter-agency communication the United States has tried to increase in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

“The 9/11 attacks and their aftermath revealed gaps in intra-governmental information sharing,” Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said in a statement to reporters Sunday. “Departments and agencies have taken significant steps to reduce those obstacles, and the work that has been done to date has resulted in considerable improvement in information-sharing and increased cooperation across government operations.”

“However, as we have now seen with the theft of huge amounts of classified data and the Wikileaks compromises, these efforts to give diplomatic, military, law enforcement and intelligence specialists quicker and easier access to greater amounts of data have had unintended consequences – making our sensitive data more vulnerable to compromise,” Whitman said.

**Iran Democracy Monitor No. 107, November 27, 2010**  
**American Foreign Policy Council, Washington, DC**

**Editor: Ilan Berman**

**AHMADINEJAD TAKES AIM AT THE EXPEDIENCY COUNCIL**

In a sign of deepening divisions within the Islamic Republic's labyrinthine political system, one of the regime's most powerful bodies has come under fire from the administration of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. An aide to Ahmadinejad has publicly criticized the Expediency Council, a powerful advisory committee appointed by the Supreme Leader and charged with adjudicating disputes between the country's parliament (*majles*) and the Council of Guardians, the clerical body tasked with advising the Supreme Leader and interpreting the country's constitution. In a comment widely seen as being endorsed by Ahmadinejad himself, press spokesman Ali Akbar Javanfekr has said that members of the Expediency Council "should definitely change" the way they do their job and bring their conduct in line with the country's constitution. (*Radio Free Europe*, November 11, 2010)

[Editor's Note: The charge leveled at the Expediency Council is, by all accounts, politically motivated. The body is chaired by Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a former president of the Islamic Republic and a key rival of Ahmadinejad for political influence today. Under Rafsanjani's direction, the Expediency Council has positioned itself as a vocal critic of Ahmadinejad's handling of domestic and foreign affairs.]

**THE S-300 BY OTHER MEANS?**

Russia may have reneged on its 2007 contract to supply Iran with advanced air defenses, but Tehran may succeed in obtaining the systems by other means. That's the warning from Israeli defense officials, who are increasingly worried about the Islamic Republic's efforts to harden its nuclear program against external attack. The most likely culprit to aid Iran's air defense ambitions? The regime of Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez, with which the government of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has developed a burgeoning strategic partnership over the past half-decade.

In the wake of the UN's passage of the fourth round of multilateral sanctions against Iran this past June, Russia announced it would not deliver units of the S-300 system to Iran as originally pledged three years ago. But Moscow's deals to sell the S-300 to other countries – including Venezuela – are still ongoing, and observers worry that Iran could end up acquiring the S-300 after all if the Chavez regime or some other sympathetic source opts to pass along the advanced technology. "This is a real possibility, considering the close ties between Venezuela and Iran," according to one Israeli official.

Iran, meanwhile, is hard at work on a substitute of its own for the S-300. Officials with Iran's Defense Ministry have announced that testing for an indigenous "long range" air defense capability – modeled off of the Mersad and Shahin missiles – will begin in the near future. (*Jerusalem Post*, November 1, 2010; Tehran *IRNA*, November 10, 2010)

**AN IRANIAN RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT**

After years of deepening strategic ties with regimes in the Western Hemisphere, the Islamic Republic is poised to orchestrate what is perhaps its most ambitious joint project to date there. The regime of Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega is said to be in the process of creating a “Nicaragua Canal” linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. When completed, the passageway – conceived of by Ortega and Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, and reportedly bankrolled by Iran – will serve as an alternative to the strategically-vital Panama Canal, a key economic passageway for Latin America. (Tel Aviv *Ha’aretz*, November 11, 2010)

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## **ANALYSIS / Iran's African adventure could end badly at the UN**

**A botched attempt to smuggle arms to Gambia has caused anger in West Africa, where two nations hold seats on the UN Security Council.**

Haartz.comBy [Barak Ravid](#)Tags: [Israel news](#) [Iran nuclear](#)

The exposure of an attempt to smuggle weapons into West Africa has embroiled Iran in a diplomatic crisis that could have repercussions as far as the United Nations.

On Tuesday, the government of Gambia, one of the destinations arms seized last month in Nigeria, formally cut diplomatic ties with Iran, closing its Tehran embassy and ordering its ambassador to return home within 48 hours.

This despite claims by the head of Iran's parliamentary foreign affairs committee, Alaeddin Boroujerdi, that the shipment was part of a legal arms deal and that the Gambians had broken off relations only under American pressure.

Over the past two years, Iran has upped its efforts to court new allies in Africa as the United Nations and Western countries, backed by allies in Asia and South America, have ramped up sanctions against over its contentious nuclear program, which the West says masks designs on an atom bomb.

Iran quickly identified Africa's weak regimes and flagging economies as an opportunity to win influence in exchange for financial aid. Both Nigeria and Gambia have been targets of Iran's Africa policy. But the charm offensive backfired when in late October, Nigerian special forces seized 13 containers packed with weapons including rockets, grenades and explosives.

An Israeli security says the raid was the result of a tip-off from a Western intelligence agency.

It has now emerged that the containers left the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas aboard a ship which called at Mumbai in India, taking on extra cargo before arriving in Lagos on July 10. After unloading the arms, the ship sailed again several days later.

All 13 containers stood idle in a Lagos dockyard for over three months until a few weeks ago, when the Iranian merchant who dispatched the cargo asked to have it transferred to Gambia, some 2,000km to the west along the coast.

It was then that Western intelligence sources contacted their Nigerian counterparts to alert them to the shipment, apparently a breach of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747, which bans all imports or purchases of weapons from Iran.

Realizing that the cargo was about to be impounded, Iranian officials tried to bribe Nigerian security forces to release it – without success.

A Nigerian investigation soon led to two officials at the Iranian embassy in Abuja, the Nigerian capital – one a diplomat and the other appointed on the recommendation of a Nigerian Muslim cleric. According to a German press report, both are members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard and have ties to the arms smuggling trade.

The two remained holed up in the embassy until the Iranian foreign minister, Manouchehr Motakki, arrived in Nigeria to resolve what he described as a "misunderstanding". It was agreed that the diplomat would return home with Motakki's, while the second official would remain in the embassy after agreeing to undergo questioning by Nigerian police.

But the deal did not stop the Nigerians from delivering a detailed inventory of the weapons consignment to the United Nations' sanctions committee. Nigeria says it has clear evidence that Iran was behind the smuggling attempt.

Nigeria's response won praise from Israel, which has campaigned internationally for a tough line on Iran.

"They made almost no concessions to the Iranians and acted with great determination," an Israeli security source told Haaretz.

And while the full diplomatic fallout of the incident has yet to be measured, the implosion of Iran's West African enterprise could have direct results at the UN. Nigeria has a non-permanent Council seat until the end of 2011, as does another West African neighbor, Gabon.

If Iran fails to repair the damage, that could spell danger in any new sanctions vote.

## Iran Will Target Neighboring States' Military Bases If Attacked, Says Commander \*

IRGC Air Force Commander **Amir-Ali Hajizadeh** has warned that Iran would consider all military bases used by an invading country to be part of that country's soil. Therefore, countries that give America access to their military bases must pay "precise" and "serious attention" to the fact that Iran's military forces would consider them to be potential targets, the Fars News Agency reported on 19 November. **Hajizadeh** also said Tehran is among the "few" world capitals that are protected by "anti-cruise missile" systems, adding that the IRGC is responsible for protecting the capital, while Iran's traditional military forces are charged with protecting "sensitive" sites in the rest of the country.

## Iran's Double-Edged Sword

By [Michael Singh](#)

*ForeignPolicy.com*

November 18, 2010

In a four-day journey at the beginning of November that took him through Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, and Benin, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki asserted that the United States was "displeased with the expansion of relations between Iran and African countries," and opined that while the U.S. had a "thirst for power," Iran practiced the subtler "power of logic." He described his top priority in Africa as "the exportation of technical and engineering services."

Less than two weeks later, Mottaki had to hastily return to West Africa to deal with the exposure by Nigerian authorities of another, more nefarious export: rocket launchers, grenades, and other illicit arms disguised as building materials and accompanied, apparently, by two members of the elite "Quds Force" unit of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

The contrast between Iran's public campaign to drum up diplomatic support and build economic ties to stave off increasing isolation and its shadowy network of arms smuggling, support for terrorism, and subversive activities serve as a stark reminder of the nature of the Iranian regime and the dangers it poses well beyond its own borders, and well beyond the nuclear issue.

This latest revelation of Iranian malfeasance is hardly without precedent. Whether using the Quds Force -- described by the U.S. Department of State as "the regime's primary mechanism for cultivating and supporting terrorists abroad" -- or proxies such as Hezbollah, the regime since its founding in 1979 has sought to project its power and influence far afield, often with lethal results.

The examples are manifold. In January 2009, Israeli forces bombed a convoy in Sudan allegedly containing Iranian arms bound for Hamas fighters in Gaza. That same year, at least three cargo vessels were found to be carrying weapons from Iran, likely bound for terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, in violation of UN sanctions prohibiting Tehran from exporting arms. In 2007, a derailed train in southern Turkey was found to be carrying Iranian arms, also likely destined for Hezbollah arms caches. And for several years, the Quds Force has been supplying militants in Iraq and Afghanistan with weapons, training, and funding.

Iran's activities are not limited to arms smuggling. Earlier this year, Kuwaiti authorities uncovered an alleged Iranian "sleeper cell," souring what had been one of Iran's calmer regional relationships. Morocco in 2009 severed its diplomatic ties with Iran amid accusations that Iran was engaged in subversive activities there. The same year, Egyptian authorities broke up a Hezbollah cell reportedly planning attacks against tourism and infrastructure targets.

The list goes on, geographically and chronologically. U.S. authorities have targeted Hezbollah networks in West Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere. INTERPOL has issued warrants for high-ranking Iranian officials -- one of whom ran for Iran's presidency in 2009 -- in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish cultural center in Argentina. And Iran's complicity in assassinations in Europe and the 1996 terrorist attack on U.S. servicemen in Riyadh stymied EU and U.S. initiatives to repair relations with Tehran in the 1990s.

These activities, taken together with Tehran's refusal to cooperate with the IAEA on its nuclear activities and callous violations of its own people's human rights, paint a picture of a regime which pursues its own security by flouting international rules and norms of acceptable behavior. The recent revelations of Iranian arms smuggling are not an isolated incident, as the list above makes clear, but part of a consistent strategy utilizing terrorism, intimidation, and destabilization to enhance the regime's own power and influence.

As the United States and its allies try to restart negotiations with Iran, the regime's support for terrorism and other troubling activities counsel vigilance and realism. It calls for vigilance, because even as Western officials seek new points of pressure and avenues for outreach to bring Iran to the negotiating table, existing sanctions designed to constrain Iran's ability to sow violence and instability beyond its borders must be vigorously enforced. And it calls for realism, because it demonstrates that even a resolution of the nuclear issue would only begin to address the far broader concerns about the regime and its activities, making a true U.S.-Iran reconciliation far away indeed.

*[Michael Singh](#) is a visiting fellow at The Washington Institute and an adjunct fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.*

## NATO's Iran 'threat' conundrum

By Kaveh L Afrasiabi

**Nov 17, 2010**

*Asia Times Online*

Ahead of its much-anticipated summit in Lisbon this weekend, the 28-nation military alliance North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is in a conundrum - to name or not to name Iran as a threat. Either way, there will be unwanted side-effects.

On one hand, not identifying Iran as a threat, as requested by some Iran-friendly nations such as Turkey, which reportedly is primed for a NATO missile defense system "eyeing Iran", would make it harder to justify locating missiles pointed at the Islamic republic. It would also increase the suspicion of the Russians, who are attending the summit like a solicitor general with a long list of questions to settle before Moscow can nod to what it continues to portray as a "strategic threat" to Russia.

On the other hand, NATO, which is about to adopt the costume of a new "conceptual doctrine" that, in fact, reeks of Cold War thinking thinly disguised by its self-promoting noise of a "new NATO", must manufacture new enemies in need of containment/deterrence or it is doomed to the illogic of a Cold War anachronism.

Turkish President Abdullah Gul has warned against fingering Iran. "Mentioning one country, Iran ... is wrong and will not happen. A particular country will not be targeted ... We will definitely not accept that."

With its traditional foe, the Warsaw Pact, dissolved into history, NATO continues to struggle with fashioning a new identity, a *raison d'etre*. But to date it has come up short, thus the incoherence of its architecture of a "new concept" for the 21st century that turns out to have a great deal of continuity with the "old" alliance, nuclear-based, concept - this at a time when a clean break with the defunct past is called for.

Taking a step forward in the form of a direct liaison with the United Nations, while two steps backward by maintaining the nuclear posture and rejecting bids to globalize itself, the Western alliance is seemingly unaware of the perils of the defective steps it is about to "institutionalize" in the coming days. The biggest of these is institutionalizing "emerging threats", to borrow from a new NATO report by a high-level group of experts led by former US secretary of state Madeleine Albright.

United Nations member states, particularly from the developing nations, ought to resist the UN's infection by NATO until it eschews the present aggressive posture that is threatening to the [security](#) interests of many non-NATO nations. Despite lip-service to the UN charter, NATO's nature as an alliance and its current flurry of "out-of-area" operations - such as anti-piracy in open seas, training in Iraq, and counter-insurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan - have clear sub-groupist connotations that rub against the grain of the UN's spirit of collective [security](#).

"NATO may be 'eyeing' Iran, but almost all Russian experts agree that its real target is Russia - considered to be too big for its own sake by some NATO specialists who say that today's Russia covers nearly 80% of the former Soviet Union," says a Tehran University political science professor who specializes on Iran's foreign affairs. Russia "has already named NATO as its biggest [security challenge](#) and that perception will not melt away in [Lisbon](#) because of some diplomatic niceties."

To return to the subject of NATO's conundrum, its Afghanistan policy, which calls for luring Tehran toward greater cooperation in support of Kabul and against the Taliban, collides with its European policy of missile defense. This policy has the enthusiastic backing of new members from the former Soviet bloc, who dread Moscow's power and have no qualms about NATO's prioritizing of "energy [security](#)" at the Lisbon summit.

Clearly, the NATO leadership wants to have it both ways, enlist Iran on regional [security issues](#) - above all Afghanistan - while assigning it to functional enemy status, whereby the required rationalization for a US-dominated missile defense system in close proximity to Russia can materialize, thus the (small) carrot of getting Moscow involved in the Afghan theater.

If Russia under the fiercely pro-Western President Dmitry Medvedev plays into the hands of NATO strategists, then it may soon discover that the pay-off has been too low and the side-effects, such as the unraveling of the (anti-NATO) Shanghai Cooperation Organization, are too high.

On a smaller scale, Turkey, a NATO member that is asserting a bigger role as a vital bridge to the turbulent Middle East, faces a similar dilemma. While it is opposed to Iran being singled out as a "threat", if it agrees to NATO's plan for installing an anti-missile defense system, then Ankara's heavier weight might translate into greater diplomatic leverage to demand more forcefully its insertion into the Iran nuclear talks, in light of the decision by the European Union to reject Iran's proposal to hold the next round of talks in Turkey.

"Lady Ashton [the EU's foreign policy chief] vetoed a seat for Turkey by signaling her

preference for an alternative location in either Vienna or Geneva," says the Tehran professor. He was alluding to Turkey's role in the April 2010 "Tehran Declaration" signed by the leaders of Iran, Turkey and Brazil that foresaw the direct participation of Turkey in the "nuclear swap deal" for a Tehran reactor.

A number of Tehran's foreign policy experts have wondered aloud why President Barack Obama, who sanctioned a mediating role for both Turkey and Brazil this year, has turned cold toward what is clearly a successful third-party mediation?

Inevitably, some Tehran editorials have complained that the US's real intention is to drag out the nuclear standoff, which benefits the US's [strategy](#) of lucrative arms sales to Persian Gulf states and to justify its and NATO's "protective role" against the perceived Iranian menace.

The chief problem with this "enemy perception of Iran" is that it tends to view Iran through the Cold War lens of a zero-sum game, whereas in reality Iran and the West have substantial shared interests, such as with respect to combating drug trafficking and terrorism, Iraq's and Afghanistan's stability, etc, denoting a partial strategic overlap.

Unfortunately, in their move to rationalize the European ballistic defense system, NATO's heads are now on the verge of sacrificing those shared interests.

***Kaveh L Afrasiabi***, PhD, is the author of *After Khomeini: New Directions in Iran's Foreign Policy* (Westview Press). For his Wikipedia entry, click [here](#). He is author of [Reading In Iran Foreign Policy After September 11](#) (BookSurge Publishing, October 23, 2008) and his latest book, [Looking for rights at Harvard](#), is now available.

## Afghan Foreign Minister Says Iran Should Play 'More Visible' Role in Establishing Security \*

In a meeting with **Sa'id Jalili**, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Afghan Foreign Minister Rassoul called on Tehran to play a "more visible" part in establishing security in his country, the website Omid-e Watan reported on 15 November. **Jalili** said national unity is the only way to bring lasting security to Afghanistan, adding that Iran's eastern neighbor "needs tractors not tanks." The several-fold increase in Afghan narcotics production is a sign that foreign forces are unable to "realize their professed slogans," the Iranian official claimed [Mashhad Omid-e-Watan in Dari - independent news agency that analyzes Afghanistan's political, security, and economic affairs. The website also reports about US casualties in Iraq and is critical of the Israeli occupation of Palestine; root URL as of filing date: <http://www.omidevatan.com>].

### **Afghan Foreign Minister To Attend Economic Meeting in Tehran \***

Afghan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul will attend a 15 November meeting of the Joint Economic Cooperation Committee in Tehran, IRNA reported on 11 November. The expansion of political, economic, and cultural ties between the two countries and the status of Afghan refugees and prisoners in Iran as well as "rumors" about the execution of some Afghans on charges of drug dealing will be discussed on the sidelines of the event, IRNA quoted the Afghan official as saying. A delegation made up of officials from Afghanistan's ministries of justice and refugees will soon travel to Tehran to discuss the status of refugees in Iran, Rassoul said, adding that he hopes the two countries can cooperate to repatriate Afghan prisoners to their homeland. Experts say that some 4,000 Afghans are currently being held in Iranian jails, AVA reported the same day.

### Iran Says Negotiating with 'Extremists' Will Not Bring Afghan Stability \*

In an interview with Italy's *Il Manifesto* newspaper, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister **Ali Ahani** said that he did not believe negotiations with "extremists" are the solution to Afghanistan's problems, IRNA reported on 10 November. The Taliban will not be "content" with any offers and will demand "complete control," the diplomat said. The West lacks a "realistic" strategy in Afghanistan, and it is unclear why multinational forces continue to follow this strategy after nine years of "failure," IRNA quoted **Ahani** as saying in a separate interview with Germany's *Jung Welt* newspaper. Drawing up a timetable for troop withdrawal and forming "working groups" made up of representatives from Afghanistan's neighbors can be a "step forward" in stabilizing that country, the official said.

**MIDDLE EAST/AFRICA****Date Posted: 09-Nov-2010**

Jane's Defence Weekly

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**US agrees \$5bn Boeing Apache deal with UAE****Lauren Gelfand** *JDW Middle East/Africa Editor*  
Nairobi

The administration of US President Barack Obama is continuing with its strategy of arming and equipping Gulf Cooperation Council states to deter any threat emerging from [Iran](#) by offering new unitary missiles and helicopters to the [United Arab Emirates \(UAE\)](#) and [Bahrain](#).

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) notification released on 8 November follows the announcement of arms sales to [Saudi Arabia](#) worth USD60 billion over 10 years, should all the options be fulfilled.

The UAE has signalled its intention to purchase 60 Boeing AH-64D Apache helicopters in a deal worth USD5 billion. A first tranche of 30 will be remanufactured from the Block II lot 10 configuration to Block III, while the second 30 are Block III variants.

Previous *Jane's* reporting showed that the UAE Army currently operates 30 AH-64A Apache helicopters as air support for its ground troops. First deliveries were made in 1993.

The new helicopters will assist the [UAE](#) to "fulfill its strategic commitments for self defence, with coalition support, in the region", according to the DSCA notification.

The order would represent a significant upgrade for the [UAE](#); in comparison, [Saudi Arabia](#), whose armed forces are vastly larger than those of its smaller neighbour, recently ordered 70 of the same helicopters to provide air support within the Saudi Arabian National Guard's aviation command. The Apaches will also represent the first aviation complement of the Saudi Arabian Royal Guard.

The Block II variant is currently in service. A contract was signed on 22 October with the US Army to begin low-rate initial production (LRIP) of the Block III variant, the first eight of which are bound for Army operations. It is anticipated that the Middle East orders will proceed from that LRIP, with 51 to be produced for deliveries beginning in October 2011.

The Block III variant enhances the AH-64D Apache with 26 new technologies, the centrepiece of which is a network-centric capability. Of particular note is the Lockheed

Martin/Northrop Grumman Longbow Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Tactical Common Data-Link Assembly (UTA) insertion that allows for Level 4 UAS control from the helicopter.

In addition to enhancing the aircraft's communications capability, the Block III upgrade will see the Apache fitted with new avionics, more powerful General Electric T700-GE-701D engines and composite main rotor blades.

The UAE helicopters will be equipped with modernised Target Acquisition and Designation Sight/modernised pilot night vision sensors; Fire Control Radars with radar electronics units; infrared jammers; radar signal detecting sets; radar jammers; Common Missile Warning Systems; 30 mm automatic weapons; improved counter-measure dispensers and communication and support equipment.

Additionally, in a contract worth USD140 million to prime contractor Lockheed Martin, the [UAE](#) is seeking to acquire 100 Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) T2K Unitary missiles and 60 Low Cost Reduced-Range Practice Rockets. Associated equipment, training and logistical support will be included in the package should it receive Congressional approval.

According to the notification, the intended use of the missile systems is "to modernise [the UAE's] armed forces and expand existing army architecture to counter threats posed by potential attack". A similar but smaller-scale procurement has been requested by [Bahrain](#) for 30 of the ATACMS systems in a package worth USD70 million.

A stockpiled ATACMS fired in Texas in late February destroyed a target 175 km away, Lockheed Martin said in April.

*Jane's* reported in 2007 that the US Army's ATACMS production line was to be shut down by the end of Fiscal Year 2007. However, a spokesperson for Lockheed Martin told *Jane's* on 8 November that production continues "for international customers".

The spokesperson added: "Future sales will consist of newly produced ATACMS unitary missiles, not refurbished units."

### **Afghan, Iranian Officials Discuss Refugees \***

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA) chief Seyyed Isa Hoseyni-Marza'i met Mohammad Ajami, the director general of Iran's Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs, to discuss measures that would limit the "negative impact" of Iranian subsidy reforms on refugees, AVA reported on 9 November. The Iranian government is slated to implement economic reforms that will reduce and eventually eliminate subsidies on food, fuel, and other commodities, which some fear will drive up the rate of inflation and hurt the poor. The two officials also discussed efforts to address problems that Afghan students face when registering at schools in Iran, as well as the matter of issuing work permits for refugees, the report indicated without further clarification [Kabul Afghan Voice Agency - independent news agency with a pro-Iranian bias reporting on the political and security situation inside Afghanistan and region in Farsi, Pashtu and English. URL: <http://www.avapress.com>].

- Hoseyni-Marza'i on 11 November met Abdoljamil Parwani, the head of Afghanistan's consulate, in the eastern Iranian city of Mashhad, AVA reported the same day. During the meeting, Hoseyni-Marza'i said that, as Iran prepares to implement subsidy reforms on food, fuel, and other commodities, the international community and the UN are responsible for the livelihood of Afghan refugees in that country. For his part, Parwani warned the Iranian government of the potentially negative effects of the reform plan on refugees.

**Afghan Foreign Minister Calls Iranian Cash Assistance Reports 'Exaggerated' \***

According to a 7 November report by the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Afghan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul said "the issue of Iran's assistance has been exaggerated by some." Speaking at a news conference after a meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Rassoul said that Iranian financial assistance to Afghanistan is "transparent" and that "too much attention" is being paid to the issue [Tehran IRNA in Farsi - official state-run news agency. URL: <http://www.irna.ir>].

### **Danish Envoy Reportedly Calls for Iranian Cooperation on Afghanistan \***

Denmark's newly appointed envoy to Iran, Anders Christian Hougard, met with the chairman of the Majles Foreign Policy and National Security

Committee, **Ala'eddin Boroujerdi**, and asked for Tehran's "cooperation on [resolving] the Afghanistan crisis," the Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA) briefly noted in a wide-ranging 6 November report [Tehran Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA) in English - conservative news agency that now generally supports government policy; it had previously provided politically moderate reporting; linked to University Jihad. URL: [www.isna.ir](http://www.isna.ir)].

## **The White Army against Iran: The Saudi Weapons Deal, Part 2**

INSS Insight No. 218, November 2, 2010

Shapir, Yiftah

More than two months after a huge arms deal in the making between the United States and Saudi Arabia became public, the administration officially informed Congress of the deal. The announcement does not come as a big surprise, since the main points of the plan were published previously. The deal includes F-15SA fighter jets, AH-64D Apache heavy attack helicopters, AH-6i light attack helicopters, MD-530 light reconnaissance helicopters, and UH-60 transport helicopters. However, a close look at the details of the announcement reveals several interesting points.

### **Fighter Jets**

The deal approves the sale of 84 F-15SA multi-purpose fighter jets. This is a new model built specifically for Saudi Arabia, and it is an improvement over the F-15S already in Saudi Arabia's possession. In addition, all 70 of Saudi Arabia's F-15S planes will be upgraded to the F-15SA standard. The new model will be equipped with both improved AN/APG-63(V), which is advanced AESA radar, and with improved engines.

The deal also includes a wide range of advanced munitions, including modern navigation/targeting pods, photo-reconnaissance pods, air-to-air missiles, and guided bombs.

Assuming the deal is completed in full, the Saudi air force will have 154 of the very advanced F-15SA attack planes, in addition to some 80 F-15C/D interceptors purchased in the early 1980s, for a total of 234 planes.

The Saudis today are in possession of an array of British-made planes: 72 Typhoons (which are currently being absorbed), and some 100 fighter jets from the various models of the Tornado (which were also purchased in the 1980s; some are now being refurbished to extend their life span). These add about another 170 planes to the Saudi air force.

### **Helicopters**

The helicopter deal was presented to Congress as three separate deals, and the announcement revealed the details of the helicopter models (not all of the details were publicized previously). The big surprise in the announcement was that the largest of the deals was for the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG), not the air force or the army. According to the announcement, SANG will receive 36 Apache AH-64D helicopters, though only 20 of them will be equipped with Longbow radar. In addition, it will receive 30 AH-6i light attack helicopters, another twelve MD-530F light reconnaissance helicopters (the

attack helicopter and the reconnaissance helicopter are different models of the same helicopter), and 72 medium-size UH-60M transport helicopters – the newest model of the old Black Hawk.

A separate announcement was made about the sale of 24 AH-64D helicopters to the Saudi Arabian land forces (only ten of them equipped with Longbow radar), and a third announcement was made about the sale of ten AH-64D helicopters to the Saudi Arabian royal guards (seven of them equipped with Longbow radar).

### **Additional Comments**

- a. The deal is part of an overall American policy with roots in the Bush administration to strengthen the Gulf states as a force positioned against the increasing strength of Iran. All the official statements that accompanied the announcement emphasized the need to strengthen Saudi Arabia in the face of the threats it faces, and American spokesmen have not hesitated to specify Iran (even though they were quick to note that Iran is not the only threat). At the same time, the announcements emphasized that the systems that were sold are similar or identical to weapon systems in the possession of the United States, other Gulf states, and additional coalition forces. As such, the deal contributes to these forces potential for cooperation, and envisions a military force that is as united and coordinated as possible.
- b. The designation of the deal as against Iran also reflects statements by American spokesmen that they do not expect opposition to the deal (which was also expressed in the official announcement to Congress). That is, they do not expect Israel to object to the deal (as it objected to weapons deals with Saudi Arabia in the past) because they believe that Israel too sees the need to strengthen the forces standing against Iran.
- c. The package, nearly all of which involves offensive weapon systems, indicates the intent to boost the Saudis' deterrent capability and not their defensive capability. The absence of air defense and missile defense system purchases is particularly striking, in sharp contrast to the purchases of Saudi Arabia's Gulf neighbors, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The deal also does not contain a naval component, although it appears that a large deal for the purchase of ships is in the initial stages of negotiations.
- d. The announcement to Congress does not mean that the deal is final. The sides will now enter detailed negotiations, and it will take several years before contracts are signed. Their execution will take many years (according to American spokespeople, from fifteen to twenty years). Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the deals will be executed in full, if at all.
- e. The division of the weapons between the various branches of the Saudi armed forces is intriguing, particularly the helicopter package for SANG. It was not previously known that SANG operates any air assets whatsoever (even though this could have been expected of a force that is trained according to American military

doctrines). SANG is a separate force from the army, and is based on recruitment of members of tribes loyal to the royal house. Sometimes it is called “the white army” because of the white robes worn by the members of these tribes. Its functions include, inter alia, protecting the royal house against domestic threats and protecting oil facilities and other strategic facilities. In recent years, SANG has undergone a process of expansion on the basis of extensive arms deals of light armored vehicles, anti-tank missiles, and self-propelled artillery. Nevertheless, the purchase of the air fleet dwarfs all previous deals, and will place the organization on an equal footing with the regular army, or perhaps even a superior footing.

Another force to receive helicopters is the royal guards, a regiment whose formal mission is to protect the royal house. It was incorporated into the regular army in the 1960s, but it maintains its own organizational structure. Nevertheless, this unit has never used fighter helicopters either, and it is not clear what the connection is between these helicopters and its official mission.

In addition to strengthening Saudi Arabia’s deterrent capability against external threats, the weapons deal also likely bespeaks internal power struggles. SANG is dear to King Abdullah’s heart, who served as its commander for nearly thirty years. It is not inconceivable that he sees the strengthening of the organization as a way to strengthen his branch of the royal family against other branches of the family in future power struggles.

## Bolivia Offers Uranium to Iran in Return for Help With Nuclear Program

EUP20101101017001 Berlin [Welt Online](#) in German 1058 GMT 31 Oct 10

[Unattributed report: "Ahmadinezhad and Morales Plan Nuclear Coalition"]

Bolivia's President Morales wants to supply other countries, including Iran, with uranium. In return, he expects help in building nuclear power stations.

Bolivia wants to build a nuclear power station with the help of Iran. This is one of the areas in which both countries want to cooperate, said President Evo Morales during a visit to a mining region in the south of his country. The project would solely serve the purpose of electricity production, the Bolivian president emphasized. His country is not seeking to build an atomic bomb.

Morales had visited Iran for three days at the start of the week. By Friday [ 29 October] he was already praising the Islamic Republic's progress in nuclear power production "for peaceful purposes." Now Morales has said that Bolivia could also use its reserves to supply uranium to other countries with nuclear power stations.

Morales is a close political ally of the internationally divisive Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinezhad. Israel suspects the leftwing governments in Bolivia and Venezuela of supplying uranium to Iran for its controversial nuclear program. Western countries want to force Teheran to renounce its uranium enrichment program. They suspect the Iranian leadership of secretly trying to build nuclear weapons. This is denied by Teheran.

[Description of Source: Berlin Welt Online in German -- Website of Die Welt, a major right-of-center daily; URL: <http://www.welt.de>]

**MARKET INTELLIGENCE****Date Posted: 28-Oct-2010**Jane's Defence Industry

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**Saudi Arabia looks to latest-generation weaponry to bolster military capability****Gareth Jennings** *Jane's Aviation Desk Editor*

The recent announcement by the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) of a series of possible arms deals to [Saudi Arabia](#) would, if fully realised, see the kingdom dramatically enhance its capability as the Gulf's foremost military power.

The proposed deals, notification of which was released in late October, should be regarded in the context of the US government's unstated policy of arming its regional allies to contain [Iran](#) and Saudi Arabia's recent border clashes with Yemeni insurgents.

If they come to fruition, the DSCA notifications would see the Saudi government pay nearly USD60 billion for the latest high-end aircraft, weaponry and systems, some of which has yet to enter service with the US military.

According to the notifications, Riyadh has requested the sale of the most up-to-date variant of the Boeing F-15 Eagle combat aircraft - the F-15SA (Saudi Advanced) - and the upgrade of its existing 70 F-15S (Saudi) aircraft to F-15SA standard.

While the procurement of these advanced Eagles and the upgrade of the F-15S fleet to a common standard would appear to be aimed specifically at deterring Iranian military ambition in the region, a DSCA notification of additional helicopters would seem to be borne out of the Saudi military's recent experience battling Yemeni insurgents in late 2009.

During this conflict, the lack of adequate rotary-wing air mobility and fire support was exposed as the Royal Saudi Land Forces sought to regain control of territory in the south of the country that had been seized by rebel forces operating out of [Yemen](#).

If the provisions outlined in the DSCA notification are all realised, [Saudi Arabia](#) will buy significantly more helicopters than it currently operates across all three branches of its armed forces.

Although not mentioned in the DSCA notification, it is worth noting that [Sikorsky](#) is looking to sell its MH-60R Seahawk multimission maritime helicopter to [Saudi Arabia](#). This latest-

variant Seahawk has a potent anti-submarine warfare capability and can also be fitted with anti-ship missiles to engage surface vessels.

These new helicopters would be operated by the Saudi Royal Land Forces, the Saudi National Guard and the Saudi Royal Guard.

When taken in the context of Saudi Arabia's other recent military procurement developments - such as the introduction into service of the Eurofighter Typhoon, the upgrade of the country's Patriot missile defence batteries and the procurement of the Saab 2000 Erieye airborne early warning aircraft - the DSCA assertion that these proposed sales would "not alter the basic military balance in the region" is only true up to a point.

For while the nearly USD60 billion of hardware will not in itself change the regional military hierarchy or balance of power, the state-of-the art nature of much of this equipment will go a long way to bolstering not only Saudi Arabia's national and border security, but more importantly will act as a counter to the increasing threat that both the kingdom and the US see coming from [Iran](#).

## US says Syria, Iran, Hezbollah endanger Lebanon

By EDITH M. LEDERER

The Associated Press

Thursday, October 28, 2010; 2:14 PM

UNITED NATIONS -- The United States on Thursday accused the militant group Hezbollah and its allies [Iran](#) and Syria of attempting to endanger [Lebanon's](#) stability and undermine its independence, and a U.N. envoy warned that the Mideast is at "an extremely critical juncture."

U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice singled out Syria for displaying "flagrant disregard" for Lebanon's sovereignty and political independence, citing its provision of increasingly sophisticated weapons to Hezbollah and other militias in violation of a U.N. resolution and issuance of 33 arrest warrants for senior Lebanese officials and foreigners.

"Hezbollah remains the most significant and most heavily armed Lebanese militia," she said. "It could not have done so if not for Syria's aid, and facilitation of Syrian and Iranian arms."

The strong U.S. stance on Syria appears to be a shift in strategy. The United States began reaching out to Syria soon after President Barack Obama took office, to try to lure Damascus away from its alliance with Iran and militant groups such as Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas.

The administration has made repeated overtures to Damascus this year, including nominating the first U.S. ambassador to Syria since 2005 and sending top diplomats to meet with President Bashar Assad. But Syria has continued to strengthen ties with outspoken critics of Washington, such as Iran and [Venezuela](#), and the U.S. overtures have not yielded any tangible results yet.

Rice delivered the statement on behalf of the Obama administration to reporters outside the U.N. Security Council, where members were holding a closed-door meeting Thursday on Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's latest report on Lebanon.

She said the United States welcomes Ban's report, which stressed the continuing threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and security posed by Hezbollah and other armed militias.

"We continue to have deep concerns about Hezbollah's destructive and destabilizing influence in the region as well as attempts by other foreign players, including Syria and Iran, to undermine Lebanon's independence and endanger its stability," Rice said.

Syria's U.N. Ambassador Bashar Ja'afari said Rice "gave credibility to wrong facts, wrong information," pointing out that the secretary-general's report says senior Lebanese officials

confirmed to the U.N. Secretariat that no weapons smuggling took place across the Syria-Lebanon border.

U.N. envoy Terje Roed-Larsen said the United Nations has "no independent means" to look into weapons smuggling.

He told reporters that naming Hezbollah, Syria or Iran would not help the situation in Lebanon, which needs to be de-escalated, not inflamed, but he added: "These weapons, of course, are not coming from the moon."

Looking more broadly at the Mideast, Roed-Larsen warned that if Lebanon is destabilized, "it will have rippling effects across the region" and internationally.

He said he told the Security Council that "this is the most critical issue of international peace and security today."

"The Middle East is at an extremely critical juncture," Roed-Larsen said.

Roed-Larsen, who deals with implementation of a 2004 Security Council resolution calling for Hezbollah and all other militias operating in Lebanon to be disarmed and demobilized, said that's why all parties in Lebanon, the region and beyond must stop "irresponsible and reckless rhetoric" and why all militias must be eliminated.

Hezbollah, which boasts Lebanon's strongest armed force and is a partner in a unity government with parties supporting Prime Minister Saad Hariri, commands widespread support among Shiites and virtually runs a state-within-a-state in Shiite areas of the country.

Iran, whose ties to Hezbollah date back nearly 30 years, funds the militant group to the tune of millions of dollars a year and is believed to supply much of its arsenal.

Many Lebanese fear that if the U.N. tribunal investigating the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri - the current prime minister's father - accuses members of Hezbollah in his killing, the government could collapse and clashes could erupt between Shiite fighters and Hariri's mainly Sunni allies.

Hezbollah and Syria have mounted a campaign to try to undermine the tribunal by raising questions about its neutrality. Earlier this month, Syria's judiciary issued arrest warrants against 33 Lebanese officials and foreigners for allegedly misleading the investigation, among them figures close to Saad Hariri and the first U.N. chief investigator, Detlev Mehlis.

Rice said Hezbollah is not accountable to Lebanon's democratic institutions.

"The United States urges all friends and neighbors of Lebanon to play a constructive role in supporting the Lebanese government in good faith," she said. "We remain firmly committed

to a sovereign, stable and independent Lebanon with strong Lebanese institutions. This is the only way to secure the best interests of the Lebanese people and the region as a whole."

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Associated Press Writer Elizabeth Kennedy contributed to this report from Beirut.

## Venezuela's Troubling Nuclear Ties

[Joel D. Hirst](#), International Affairs Fellow in Residence

[Jonathan Pearl](#), Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow

October 28, 2010

Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez returned to Caracas last Sunday after completing a whirlwind tour of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Iran, Syria, Libya, and Portugal. Chavez's goal was to advance agreements "to accelerate the fall of imperialist (read American) hegemony and the birth of the new world of equilibrium and peace," as [he stated in Damascus](#). While the rhetoric is familiar, the initiatives pursued on this trip could pose major challenges to the Obama administration. Washington must develop sensible policy options, particularly when it comes to Venezuela's cooperation with Iran and Chavez' own nuclear ambitions.

Starting his tour in Moscow, Chavez finalized negotiations for Russia's state nuclear power company, Rosatom, to supply Venezuela with [two 1,200 megawatt \(BBC\)](#) nuclear power reactors and a smaller research reactor. This deal is the successor to a [general agreement on nuclear cooperation](#) signed in November 2008. Though completion of these reactors may take more than a decade, the possibility of an increasingly autocratic Chavez gaining access to nuclear technology should raise concern for Washington and its allies. The reactors may be of limited direct proliferation threat, but Venezuela's close ties with Iran and its significant untapped deposits of uranium--which might total as much as [fifty thousand tons](#)--raise questions about whether Caracas could pose a proliferation risk in the future.

U.S. policymakers seem unsure of how to respond to the deal. As Chavez will be the first to remind Washington, Venezuela is well within its rights under the 1968 [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty](#) to access nuclear technology for civilian purposes. Administration officials likely fear that vocal opposition to the deal could provide Chavez with a propaganda windfall at a time when President Barack Obama is seeking to [reduce bilateral tensions \(BBC\)](#). There may also be a concern that attempts to derail this deal could impede future progress with Moscow on arms control, missile defense, and other important issues.

The Obama administration's response to the reactor deal has so far been limited to affirming Venezuela's right to peaceful nuclear power while [urging \(AFP\)](#) on October 19 that Caracas "[act responsibly](#)." Chavez retorted [two days later \(AFP\)](#) that "President Obama has started a war by spreading doubt with his words" about Venezuelan nuclear intentions.

### Appointment in Iran

Following his visit to Russia, Chavez made his ninth visit to Iran. While in Tehran, Chavez and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad continued to deepen their relationship,

calling for the creation of a "new world order" and signing eleven different agreements. Iran and Venezuela have already signed over [two hundred different memoranda of cooperation \(EUniversal\)](#). When it comes to uranium, cooperation might be a two-way street, with [Iran helping Venezuela \(NYT\)](#) locate deposits and [Venezuela helping Iran \(FP\)](#) acquire some portion of them.

Venezuela's close ties with Iran and its significant untapped deposits of uranium--which might total as much as fifty thousand tons--raise questions about whether Caracas could pose a proliferation risk in the future.

According to an Iranian energy sector official, one of the bilateral agreements between Caracas and Tehran would see Venezuela's state oil company Petroleos de Venezuela SA (PDVSA) [invest \\$780 million \(SydneyMorningHerald\)](#) in Iran's South Pars gas field. Should this agreement be implemented, it would raise questions as to whether PDVSA or its wholly owned subsidiary, CITGO Corporation, would be punished under the current sanctions regimes against Iran.

Washington should also take note of [Chavez's language with respect to Iran \(Reuters\)](#). "We will always stand together," said Chavez before departing Tehran for Damascus. "We will not only resist, we will also stand victorious beside one another." This is not the first time Chavez has declared his allegiance with Iran. In the past, Chavez's representatives have said that Venezuela will [violate U.S. and EU sanctions](#) and sell gas to Iran "should they request it."

### **Syria and the Bolivarian Alliance**

From Tehran, Chavez flew to Damascus, where he continued his push for closer Venezuelan-Syrian relations. The highlight of the trip for Chavez was likely Syria's formal acceptance of his invitation to sit as an observer state in the Venezuela-sponsored Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA). The ALBA is an anti-United States pact of eight member countries including Ecuador, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Bolivia, whose stated goal is to reduce U.S. influence in the world. Coming at a time when Syria is [stonewalling International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\) efforts](#) to determine whether it was clandestinely building a plutonium-producing reactor at Dair al Zour with North Korean help (the facility was destroyed by an Israeli bombing raid in September 2007), and when Obama is attempting to woo the Syrian leadership away from Iran and Hezbollah, this largely unnoticed development indicates that, at the least, U.S.-Syrian relations have a long way to go.

## Yemeni Navy Impounds 'Illegal' Iranian Vessel off Socotra

GMP20101029059003 Sanaa [26 September.net](http://www.26september.net) in English 28 Oct 10

[Unattributed Report: "Navy Impounds 'Illegal' Iranian Ship Off Socotra"]

The Yemeni Navy backed by first marine brigade today managed to impound an Iranian vessel, which reportedly entered Yemeni waters illegally as it allegedly has no requisite papers from competent authorities.

A source in the leadership of the navy and coastal defense said in an exclusive statement to "26 September Net" that the boats of the Navy spotted at dawn a foreign vessel entering into the heart of the territorial waters of Yemen, adding the vessel was followed directly via joint navy patrol from the First Marine Brigade and a number of navy boats.

The source went on to say, the ship was seized with its 21 crew believed to be all Iranian citizens.

The source confirmed that the ship's crew tried to flee but they were chased by navy boats forcing them to surrender.

The Yemeni Navy today managed to impound an Iranian vessel, which reportedly entered Yemeni waters illegally as it allegedly has no requisite papers.

[Description of Source: Sanaa 26 September.net in English -- Yemeni Armed Forces' official news website; URL: <http://www.26sep.net/>]

## Vice-Speaker Stresses Iran, Bolivia's Key Role in Campaign against Hegemony

\*

**TEHRAN (FNA)- Vice-Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Hassan Abutorabifard lauded Bolivia's stances against the hegemonic powers, and called for closer cooperation between the two states in the global campaign against the imperialist powers.**

10-27-2011

"Definitely, the two countries' ties can play a key role in boosting the anti-arrogance fronts and confronting the hegemonic system," Abutorabifard said during a visit to the Iranian parliament by Bolivian President Evo Morales on Wednesday.

The Bolivian president, who is in Iran on a three-day visit, took part in an open session of the parliament here in Tehran on Wednesday and addressed the Iranian deputies.

The visit by Morales is aimed at consolidating the bilateral ties and boosting Iran's investment in the South American country.

On Tuesday, Morales met with his Iranian counterpart Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and underlined the importance of cooperation and coordination among independent states in the confrontation against the imperialist powers and in defusing enemies' plots.

"Close cooperation and coordination among the independent states would decrease vulnerability in the confrontation against the imperialist system," Morales said on Tuesday.

During the meeting, President Ahmadinejad stressed that imperialism is weak and it is now the best time for the independent nations to form and strengthen their united front.

"Undoubtedly, reinvigoration of the independent nations' front would serve global peace and security and would further weaken the capitalistic system," the Iranian president noted.

## President Urges Iran-Bolivia Close Cooperation in Fighting Common Enemies

\*

**TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Wednesday called for Iran and Bolivia's tight cooperation in fighting their common enemies, saying that the two countries can play complementary roles for each other.**

10-27-2011

"Iran and Bolivia have common enemies, interests and views about resolving international issues," President Ahmadinejad said at a joint press conference with his Bolivian counterpart Evo Morales after the two countries signed five Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on cooperation here in Tehran today.

Ahmadinejad stressed that Iran and Bolivia are on a same independent and justice-seeking front, and added, "Each of us enjoys capabilities that is useful for the other side. In other word, we are more successful when we stay together."

Ahmadinejad further underscored that Tehran and Sucre are well aware of their enemies' plots and take astute and vigilant steps to defuse enemies' moves.

Elsewhere, the Iranian president described his talks and meeting with Morales as "good", and expressed the hope that implementation of the agreements signed between the two sides would remarkably promote the level of Iran-Bolivia economic, political and scientific ties.

"In addition to these agreements, we have reached agreements during the Bolivian president's visit to Iran on macro-scale cooperation and drawing of a road-map" for future cooperation, Ahmadinejad noted.

Morales, for his part, said that the agreements made between the two sides will ensure transfer of industrial and technological knowledge to Bolivia.

He also pointed to Iran's experience in the mining sector, and said that his country intends to use Iran as a partner in this filed.

Before the press conference, the two countries' officials signed five Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on mutual cooperation in a number of areas.

During the ceremony, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and his Bolivian counterpart David Choquehuanca Cespedes signed a memorandum of understanding

(MoU) on the two states' cooperation in consular affairs.

Iranian Minister of Economy and Finance Shamseddin Hosseini and his Bolivian counterpart also signed two MoUs, one for the establishment of a joint bank and another one for opening a credit line.

Iranian Minister of Industries and Mines Ali Asqar Mehrabian and Bolivia's Minister of Mining and Metals signed two agreements for industrial cooperation and establishment of a joint company for exploration and exploitation of Lithium in the Latin American state.

The Bolivian president is in Iran on a four-day visit. The visit by Morales is aimed at consolidating the bilateral ties and boosting Iran's investment in Bolivia.

## US accuses Syria, Iran over Lebanon tensions

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) – The United States on Thursday accused Syria and Iran of fuelling tensions in Lebanon with arms supplies and other support for the Hezbollah militia in contravention of UN resolutions.

US ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, singled out Syria for sharp criticism, saying it has shown "flagrant disregard" for Lebanon's independence.

She said Syria and Iran were seeking "to undermine Lebanon's independence and endanger stability."

Rice said Hezbollah remains the most heavily-armed militia in Lebanon but could not do so "if not for Syria's aide and facilitation of Syrian and Iranian arms" in violation of UN Security Council resolution 1747.

The ambassador read a US government statement as the UN Security Council debated new tensions in Lebanon and an attack in Beirut on Wednesday on UN investigators.

Rice said that Syria, Iran and Hezbollah "believe that escalating sectarian tensions will help them assert their own authority over Lebanon. However these actors serve only to destabilize Lebanon and the region.

"Syria especially has displayed flagrant disregard for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Lebanese government.

"Syria continues to provide increasingly sophisticated weapons to Lebanese militias, including Hezbollah" despite UN resolutions banning such supplies, Rice said.

The Security Council debated Lebanon after a group of women attacked on Wednesday investigators from a UN probe into the murder of ex-premier Rafiq Hariri at a Beirut gynaecology clinic, snatching a briefcase but causing no injuries.

## **Bolivia Asks for Independent States' Cooperation in Defusing Enemy Plots \***

**TEHRAN (FNA)- Visiting Bolivian President Evo Morales underlined the importance of cooperation and coordination among independent states in the confrontation against the imperialist powers and in defusing enemies' plots.**

10-26-2011

"Close cooperation and coordination among the independent states would decrease vulnerability in the confrontation against the imperialist system," Morales said in a meeting with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad here in Tehran on Tuesday.

He also underlined the need for Tehran and Sucre to boost their international cooperation to confront the imperialist powers and defuse their plots.

The Bolivian president further expressed pleasure in Iran's industrial progress, and noted, "Achievements of the independent and revolutionary states can serve the progress and welfare of the nations."

During the meeting, President Ahmadinejad stressed that imperialism is weak and it is now the best time for the independent nations to form and strengthen their united front.

"Undoubtedly, reinvigoration of the independent nations' front would serve global peace and security and would further weaken the capitalistic system," the Iranian president noted.

President Ahmadinejad has repeatedly underlined that the "oppressive and unfair system of capitalism" has reached the end of the road and the world needs fundamental changes in political and economic management.

To this end, Iran has in recent years expanded friendly ties with Latin America, specially in economic, trade and industrial fields.

Since taking office in 2005, Ahmadinejad has expanded Iran's cooperation with many Latin American states, including Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba.

He visited Bolivia late 2009 and inaugurated an Iranian Red Crescent hospital and other projects completed by Iranian technicians and experts in the country, including a milk factory and a petrochemical complex.

## Iran Says It Continues Help To Afghanistan \*

IAP20101026950038 Tehran [Iranian Students News Agency](#) in English 0915 GMT 26 Oct 10

[Computer selected and disseminated without OSC Editorial intervention]

TEHRAN (ISNA)-Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said on Tuesday that the country continues help to Afghanistan. Concerning claim of New York Times daily that Afghan President's chief of staff Umar Daudzai has been receiving regular cash payments from Iran, Mehmanparast said, "Iran has helped Afghanistan to build the country and prepare economic infrastructures and it continues to assist Afghanistan in future." "We believe that countries must help to pave the way to prepare economic infrastructures of Afghanistan," he told reporters in his weekly press conference. "The Islamic Republic of Iran as a neighboring country to Afghanistan has helped much for reconstruction of the country, unlike countries which spent great deal of money to kill Afghan people under the excuse of 9/11 and destabilized the region." Also regarding documents released by WikiLeaks website and allegations raised by the website against Iran, Mehmanparast said, "there are serious doubts against goals of the website, contents of its texts are ostensibly published independently, but pursue doubtful aims." The website has already claimed that three US nationals arrested last July following an illegal entry into Iranian territory were in Iraq's soil at the time of the of the arrest. "Iraq's election and formation of Iraqi government in near future are among goals of the documents," Mehmanparast noted. He said WikiLeaks documents and claims are no more confirmed by Iranian authorities. Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman then warned, "we will confront such misconducts and we will not confirm them anymore."

[Description of Source: Tehran Iranian Students News Agency in English -- conservative news agency that now generally supports government policy; it had previously provided politically moderate reporting; linked to University Jihad; [www.isna.ir](http://www.isna.ir)]

### 'Mottaki Will Be Asked To Brief MPs About Afghanistan Aid' \*

IAP20101026950114 Tehran [Mehr News Agency](#) in English 1625 GMT 26 Oct 10

[Computer selected and disseminated without OSC Editorial intervention]

TEHRAN, Oct. 26 (MNA) MP Jamshid Ansari said on Tuesday that Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki will be asked to attend the Majlis to answer questions about a rumor that Iran's ambassador to Kabul had given a bag of money to a senior Afghan official.

On Tuesday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said the financial aid to Afghanistan is intended to help reconstruct the neighboring country, adding Iran will continue its assistance to Afghanistan.

According to the New York Times, Iran's ambassador to Afghanistan, Fada Hossein Maliki gave Umar Daudzai, Afghan president's chief of staff, a large plastic bag bulging with packets of euro bills during a trip to Iran last August.

On Monday, President Hamid Karzai dismissed the way the story was covered by the NYT, saying the Iranian money was used to pay expenses in his office and that he had instructed Daudzai to accept the money.

The money is given "to help the presidential office and to help dispense assistance in various ways to the employees here and to people outside," Karzai said.

He added that the United States, just like Iran, gave him cash.

"They do give us bags of money. Yes, yes they do. It's all the same. So let's not make this an issue."

However, Ansari said the news has fanned the flames of rumors how the money is spent in Afghanistan.

Mottaki should explain about the veracity of the report and also the amount of the money, the MP added.

He also stated that Mottaki should brief lawmakers how the money is spent in Afghanistan.

Although Iran has provided some aid to Afghanistan, the assistance has never been in the form of cash and that Iran has never directly given money to the Afghan president's chief of staff, the lawmaker noted.

So far, seven parliamentarians from the Majlis minority faction have called for an inquiry in this regard.

[Description of Source: Tehran Mehr News Agency in English -- conservative news agency; run by the Islamic Propagation Office, which is affiliated with the conservative Qom seminary; [www.mehrnews.com](http://www.mehrnews.com)]

**MIDDLE EAST****Date Posted: 25-Oct-2010**

Jane's Intelligence Weekly

**UAE opens new Strait of Hormuz naval base****EVENT**

The United Arab Emirates opened a new naval base at Al Fujairah, near the eastern entrance to the Strait of Hormuz, local media sources reported on 21 October.

The base, located on the Arabian Sea, was formally opened on 20 October and will guard the eastern approaches to the Strait of Hormuz, through which 60 per cent of the world's oil supplies pass. The base is the first major naval facility to be built in the Al Fujairah area - the UAE's other naval bases are all situated on its Persian Gulf coast - and has been chosen specifically because of its strategic location close to the Strait.

The opening of the Strait of Hormuz base coincides with the announcement of two pipelines, one oil and one gas, linking Abu Dhabi with Al Fujairah. This indicates that despite its announced intention to maintain cordial relations with Tehran, the [UAE](#) is making contingency plans in the event of possible military action against [Iran](#) and any move by [Iran](#) to close the Strait of Hormuz.

The base is also probably a response to Iranian moves in the last few years to upgrade facilities at its Chah Bahar naval base in the far southeast of the country, to allow the potential forward deployment of its ageing, but still effective, Russian-built Kilo-class submarines.

Owing to the huge damage it would do to the Iranian economy, any attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz, even after a possible attack against its nuclear facilities, would be considered an act of last resort on the part of Tehran. Nevertheless, as one of the world's major maritime chokepoints, keeping the waterway open is a matter of international concern. Moreover, as a failed alleged terrorist attack on a Japanese tanker in July proved, [Iran](#) is not the only threat to maritime security in the region.

**FORECAST**

The opening of this facility is part of a wider effort by Gulf oil states to increase their contingency options in the event of a conflict scenario with [Iran](#). This is evidenced by the two pipelines to Al Fujairah and Saudi plans to increase pipeline capacity to its Red Sea ports. This may lessen dependence on the Strait of Hormuz as a maritime chokepoint in the

long term, but it will not eliminate more immediate concerns that it remains safely navigable.

### Officials Claim Iran is in Midst of Soft War \*

**Yahya Rahim-Safavi**, senior adviser to Supreme Leader **Ali Khamene'i** and a former commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, stressed that Iran enjoys different capabilities for defusing the soft plots of its enemies and can transform such plots into opportunities, the Basij News Agency reported on 25 October. Speaking at the National Forum on Soft War in Tehran, **Rahim-Safavi** claimed that the Islamic republic's enemies are committed to regime change in Iran by creating discord between the Iranian people and leadership, undermining the nation's Islamic values, creating a negative view of the future, and creating tension in society. Commenting on possible ways to confront such a complex plot, **Rahim-Safavi** expressed confidence that the country can change the enemy's soft war into an opportunity. "The proper use of our assets, including Islamic ideology, the Leader's power and influence, and the nation's loyalty to the leadership and government" are the country's most important weapons, he said. **Rahim-Safavi** also called for using psychological operations as a way to confront the soft war and emphasized the important role the country's radio and television, artists, and media can play in this regard [Basij News Agency in Persian - website of the Basij, or paramilitary forces; as of June 2008, Basij forces merged with those of Pasdaran or the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and came under the latter's control. URL: <http://www.basijnews.ir>].

- Speaking in an interview with the Fars News Agency on 28 October, Armed Forces Deputy Chief **Jazayeri** stated that "the Islamic Republic of Iran is currently engaged in an all-out war that pits pure Mohammadan Islam against the materialistic cultures, at the top of which is American liberal democracy and global Zionist ideologies."

## Al-Arabiyah 24 Oct on Syrian, Iranian Roles Highlighted in WikiLeaks Documents

GMP20101024693004 Dubai [Al-Arabiyah Television](#) in Arabic 0500 GMT 24 Oct 10

[For assistance with multimedia elements, contact the OSC Customer Center at (800) 205-8615 or [OSCinfo@rccb.osis.gov](mailto:OSCinfo@rccb.osis.gov).]

***Dubai Al-Arabiyah Television in Arabic is observed in its newscasts from 0500 GMT through 2000 GMT on 24 October to report on the disclosure of secret documents on the war in Iraq posted on WikiLeaks. The reports mainly highlight the "Syrian role in supporting and training armed groups to launch attacks inside Iraq." The channel also notes that "Iran is the main supporter of violence in Iraq," and talks about the Iranian role in recruiting Iraqi police members in order to carry out assassination operations in Iraq.***

Following a news report and a telephone interview with the channel's correspondent in Sanaa on a "Yemeni forces' operation in which the forces were able to thwart a plan by an armed group to launch attacks in Aden," Dubai Al-Arabiyah Television in Arabic, at 0706 GMT, carries the following announcer-read report:

"The United Nations and Amnesty International have called upon the US Administration to open an investigation into the secret documents posted on the WikiLeaks website, which gave details on the war in Iraq. These documents said that Iran supports certain parties that are involved in planning and funding operations to liquidate their opponents. Moreover, the documents said that the Syrian border guards cooperated with gunmen, some of whom launched suicide attacks inside Iraq." The announcer-read report also talks about "Al-Maliki's arrest squads" and about "abuses committed against Iraqi prisoners."

Afterward, the channel notes that "Jawad al-Bulani, Iraqi minister of interior, vowed that he will take the accusations that came in the WikiLeaks documents into consideration. Moreover, he stressed that all those involved in human rights violations will be held responsible if these accusations are proven correct."

The channel shows Al-Bulani condemning the violations and saying: "No one is above the law and all those involved will be held responsible."

In its 1200 GMT newscast, the channel carries the same announcer-read report and adds that "Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has condemned the disclosure of secret military documents on the war in Iraq by the WikiLeaks website, saying that it threatens the lives of many people and provides valuable information for the enemies."

Afterward, the channel carries a two-minute video report by its correspondent, Nivin al-Afyuni, reviewing some of the information and figures published by the WikiLeaks website. It highlights "accusations against Syria and Iran of feeding violence in Iraq," and adds that

"Syria supported the suicide bombers and facilitated their infiltration through the border to Iraq."

The report also says that "the Syrian forces helped the suicide bombers in creating explosive uniforms to be used in Iraq that look like US military uniforms," and also help them "in planning and executing the bombings."

At 1314 GMT on 24 October the channel repeats the report by Nivin al-Afyuni. The same video report by Al-Afyuni is repeated within the 1400 and 1500 GMT newscasts.

At 1703 GMT, the channel carries the following announcer-read report:

"The Iraqi human rights minister has said that the government will reopen the file of torture if it finds evidence proving the credibility of the WikiLeaks documents."

This is followed by an interview with Wijdan Mikha'il, Iraqi human rights minister, who says: "No action was taken in several incidents because there was not enough proof. The Human Rights Ministry and the Iraqi Government will examine the posted documents for any new information that might condemn the US party or other individuals who tortured or committed violations against Iraqi citizens. If this information is proved correct, it will certainly be used as a basis for reopening the file of violations."

The channel also carries a report by Injy al-Qadi, in which she speaks about "Azhar al-Dulaymi, a Sunni who adopted the Shiite ideology, while studying in Najaf." The report adds that "Al-Dulaymi received training in Qom at the hands of trainers affiliated with the Lebanese party, Hizballah, and under the supervision of Iran's revolutionary guard [Islamic Revolution Guards Corps]." The report then gives details about an attack launched by gunmen in Karbala, in which four US soldiers were kidnapped."

Highlighting "Iranian involvement in training Iraqi militias," the channel, at 1824 GMT, carries a repeat of the video report by Injy al-Qadi, in which she speaks about "Azhar al-Dulaymi, who was trained in Qom and was involved in kidnapping US soldiers in Karbala."

At 2010 GMT, the channel notes that "Iran took up the lion's share of the WikiLeaks document." It further notes that "Iran is the main supporter of violence in Iraq."

This is followed by a video report by Nivin al-Afyuni, who cites WikiLeaks documents on the Iranian role in Iraq, saying that "Iran organized and trained gunmen to kill Iraqi officials." The report also states that, according to the WikiLeaks documents, "Iran planned to attack the Green Zone using chemical rockets and weapons."

Also quoting the WikiLeaks documents, the video mentions "the direct support by Iran's revolutionary guard for assassination operations in Basra." It adds that "Iraqi police members were recruited by Iran in order to carry out these operations."

[Description of Source: Dubai Al-Arabiyah Television in Arabic -- Saudi-funded pan-Arab satellite news channel, with a special focus on Saudi Arabia]

## **Jazayeri Says NATO on the Decline, Charges US With Human Rights Violations \***

Iranian Armed Forces Joint Staff Deputy Chief for Cultural Affairs and Defense Publicity **Mas`ud Jazayeri** stated on 24 October that the US plan to establish a new ballistic missile defense shield in Turkey is part of Washington's efforts to promote Iranophobia in the region and charged the United States of continued human rights violations. Speaking in an interview with the Mehr News Agency, he said the US proposal, made at a meeting of NATO members the previous week, is being considered by Turkey in an "intelligent" manner and stated that NATO's power is on the decline. **Jazayeri** charged that the United States is fabricating lies about Iranian threats to the region to sow discord between Islamic countries as a way to "expand its hegemony." **Jazayeri** charged Washington with continued violations of human rights inside and outside the United States and said White House officials should be placed on trial in an international tribunal for their criminal deeds. "The American human rights crimes are so horrible that one feels ashamed of even retelling them," he said. **Jazayeri** claimed that thousands of women and children in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are being massacred in their own countries by the US military, and he stated that, if former president George W. Bush had been tried in an international tribunal for his war crimes, the Obama administration would have committed fewer crimes.

**MIDDLE EAST/AFRICA****Date Posted: 22-Oct-2010**

Jane's Defence Weekly

**US plans major sale worth \$60bn to Saudi Arabia****Daniel Wasserbly** *JDW Staff Reporter*  
Washington, DC**Key Points**

- The US has officially proposed a sale to [Saudi Arabia](#) that includes 84 F-15SA fighter aircraft as well as upgrades for 70 more fighters to the F-15SA configuration
- Attack helicopters and ordnance are also part of the sale, which could total as much as USD60 billion

The US government has released details of a major pending arms sale that would send up to USD60 billion worth of aircraft and weapons to [Saudi Arabia](#).

The massive weapons deal is largely viewed as arming the Saudis to hedge against [Iran](#), but officials downplayed that association during a 20 October press briefing at the Department of State.

Andrew Shapiro, Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, told reporters that the focus was not solely on the Persian state and suggested the systems would help [Saudi Arabia](#) to function in "a dangerous neighbourhood".

The US Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) officially notified Congress on 20 October of the possible sale, which lawmakers must first approve.

Shapiro said the deal may not reach its expected limit of USD60 million. "It will ultimately depend on what the Saudi government decides to purchase and on the outcome of contract negotiations with industry," he added.

The deal includes 84 F-15SA (Saudi Advanced) fighter aircraft as well as upgrades for the existing Royal Saudi Air Force fleet of 70 F-15S multi-role fighters to the F-15SA configuration, according to the DSCA.

Along with the fighter aircraft, [Saudi Arabia](#) would receive improved LANTIRN ER targeting pods (with the FLIR as used in the AN/AAQ-33 Sniper advanced targeting pod), Joint

Helmet-Mounted Cueing Systems, AN/AVS-9 night-vision goggles, AIM-9X Sidewinder missiles, a host of guided bomb variants and more.

According to Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, the Royal Saudi Land Forces would receive 24 AH-64D Apache Longbow Block III attack helicopters and the Saudi Royal Guard would get 10 more Apaches to "protect its borders and vital installations", according to the DSCA.

For protecting "borders and oil infrastructure", the agency said the Saudi Arabian National Guard would get an additional 36 Apaches, 72 UH-60M Black Hawk utility helicopters, 36 AH-6i 'Little Bird' light attack helicopters and 12 MD-530F light turbine helicopters.

During the press briefing Vershbow told reporters: "We foresee these helicopters providing area security for Saudi military forces, protecting the borders and defending critical energy infrastructure sites and installations."

Vershbow said he expected the sale would enable [Saudi Arabia](#) to take on "greater multilateral roles" as well as "to free up US forces in the region".

A package of naval equipment is also expected to be offered as a Foreign Military Sale to the Saudis, although Shapiro said he was not prepared to comment on anything of which Congress had not yet been notified.

New York Times

October 22, 2010

## Leaked Reports Detail Iran's Aid for Iraqi Militias

By *MICHAEL R. GORDON* and *ANDREW W. LEHREN*

On Dec. 22, 2006, American military officials in Baghdad issued a secret warning: The Shiite militia commander who had orchestrated the kidnapping of officials from Iraq's Ministry of Higher Education was now hatching plans to take American soldiers hostage.

What made the warning especially worrying were intelligence reports saying that the Iraqi militant, Azhar al-Dulaimi, had been trained by the Middle East's masters of the dark arts of paramilitary operations: the [Islamic Revolutionary Guards](#) Corps in Iran and [Hezbollah](#), its Lebanese ally.

"Dulaymi reportedly obtained his training from Hizballah operatives near Qum, Iran, who were under the supervision of Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force (IRGC-QF) officers in July 2006," the report noted, using alternative spellings of the principals involved. [Read the Document](#) »

Five months later, Mr. Dulaimi was tracked down and killed in an American raid in the sprawling Shiite enclave of Sadr City in Baghdad — but not before four American soldiers had been abducted from an Iraqi headquarters in Karbala and executed in an operation that American military officials say literally bore Mr. Dulaimi's fingerprints.

Scores of documents made public by WikiLeaks, which has disclosed classified information about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, provide a ground-level look — at least as seen by American units in the field and the United States' military intelligence — at the shadow war between the United States and Iraqi militias backed by Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

During the administration of President [George W. Bush](#), critics charged that the White House had exaggerated Iran's role to deflect criticism of its handling of the war and build support for a tough policy toward Iran, including the possibility of military action.

But the field reports disclosed by WikiLeaks, which were never intended to be made public, underscore the seriousness with which Iran's role has been seen by the American military. The political struggle between the United States and Iran to influence events in Iraq still continues as Prime Minister [Nuri Kamal al-Maliki](#) has sought to assemble a coalition — that

would include the anti-American cleric [Moktada al-Sadr](#) — that will allow him to remain in power. But much of the American's military concern has revolved around Iran's role in arming and assisting Shiite militias.

Citing the testimony of detainees, a captured militant's diary and numerous uncovered weapons caches, among other intelligence, the field reports recount Iran's role in providing Iraqi militia fighters with rockets, magnetic bombs that can be attached to the underside of cars, "explosively formed penetrators," or E.F.P.'s, which are the most lethal type of roadside bomb in Iraq, and other weapons. Those include powerful .50-caliber rifles and the Misagh-1, an Iranian replica of a portable Chinese surface-to-air missile, which, according to the reports, was fired at American helicopters and downed one in east Baghdad in July 2007.

Iraqi militants went to Iran to be trained as snipers and in the use of explosives, the field reports assert, and Iran's Quds Force collaborated with Iraqi extremists to encourage the assassination of Iraqi officials.

The reports make it clear that the lethal contest between Iranian-backed militias and American forces continued after [President Obama](#) sought to open a diplomatic dialogue with Iran's leaders and reaffirmed the agreement between the United States and Iraq to withdraw American troops from Iraq by the end of 2011.

### **A Revolutionary Force**

Established by Ayatollah [Ruhollah Khomeini](#) after the 1979 Iranian revolution, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps has expanded its influence at home under President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#), a former member of the corps, and it plays an important role in Iran's economy, politics and internal security. The corps's Quds Force, under the command of Brig. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, has responsibility for foreign operations and has often sought to work through surrogates, like Hezbollah.

While the American government has long believed that the Quds Force has been providing lethal assistance and training to Shiite militants in Iraq, the field reports provide new details about Iran's support for Iraqi militias and the American military's operations to counter them.

The reports are written entirely from the perspective of the American-led coalition. No similar Iraqi or Iranian reports have been made available. Nor do the American reports include the more comprehensive assessments that are typically prepared by American intelligence agencies after incidents in the field.

While some of the raw information cannot be verified, it is nonetheless broadly consistent with other classified American intelligence and public accounts by American military officials. As seen by current and former American officials, the Quds Force has two main objectives: to weaken and shape Iraq's nascent government and to diminish the United States' role and influence in Iraq.

For people like General Soleimani, "who went through all eight years of the Iran-Iraq war, this is certainly about poking a stick at us, but it is also about achieving strategic advantage in Iraq," [Ryan C. Crocker](#), the American ambassador in Iraq from 2007 until early 2009, said in an interview.

"I think the Iranians understand that they are not going to dominate Iraq," Mr. Crocker added, "but I think they are going to do their level best to weaken it — to have a weak central government that is constantly off balance, that is going to have to be beseeching Iran to stop doing bad things without having the capability to compel them to stop doing bad things. And that is an Iraq that will never again threaten Iran."

### **Politics and Militias**

According to the reports, Iran's role has been political as well as military. A Nov. 27, 2005, report, issued before Iraq's December 2005 parliamentary elections, cautioned that Iranian-backed militia members in the Iraqi government were gaining power and giving Iran influence over Iraqi politics.

"Iran is gaining control of Iraq at many levels of the Iraqi government," the report warned.

The reports also recount an array of border incidents, including a Sept. 7, 2006, episode in which an Iranian soldier who aimed a rocket-propelled grenade launcher at an American platoon trying to leave the border area was shot and killed by an American soldier with a .50-caliber machine gun. The members of the American platoon, who had gone to the border area with Iraqi troops to look for "infiltration routes" used to smuggle bombs and other weapons into Iraq, were concerned that Iranian border forces were trying to

surround and detain them. After this incident, the platoon returned to its base in Iraq under fire from the Iranians even when the American soldiers were “well inside Iraqi territory,” a report noted. [Read the Document »](#)

But the reports assert that Iran’s Quds Force and intelligence service has turned to many violent and shadowy tactics as well.

The reports contain numerous references to Iranian agents, but the documents generally describe a pattern in which the Quds Force has sought to maintain a low profile in Iraq by arranging for fighters from Hezbollah in Lebanon to train Iraqi militants in Iran or by giving guidance to Iraqi militias who do the fighting with Iranian financing and weapons.

The reports suggest that Iranian-sponsored assassinations of Iraqi officials became a serious worry.

A case in point is a report that was issued on March 27, 2007. Iranian intelligence agents within the Badr Corps and Jaish al-Mahdi, two Shiite militias, “have recently been influencing attacks on ministry officials in Iraq,” the report said.

According to the March report, officials at the Ministry of Industry were high on the target list. “The desired effect of these attacks is not to simply kill the Ministry of Industry Officials,” the report noted, but also “to show the world, and especially the Arab world, that the Baghdad Security Plan has failed to bring stability,” referring to the troop increase that Gen. [David H. Petraeus](#) was overseeing to reduce violence in Iraq. [Read the Document »](#)

News reports in early 2007 indicated that a consultant to the ministry and his daughter were shot and killed on the way to his office. The March report does not mention the attack, but it asserts that one gunman was carrying out a systematic assassination campaign, which included killing three bodyguards and plotting to attack ministry officials while wearing a stolen Iraqi Army uniform.

The provision of Iranian rockets, mortars and bombs to Shiite militants has also been a major concern. A Nov. 22, 2005, report recounted an effort by the Iraqi border police to stop the smuggling of weapons from Iran, which “recovered a quantity of bomb-making equipment, including explosively formed projectiles,” which are capable of blasting a metal projectile through the door of an armored Humvee. [Read the Document »](#)

A Shiite militant from the Jaish al-Mahdi militia, also known as the [Mahdi Army](#), was planning to carry out a mortar attack on the Green Zone in Baghdad, using rockets and mortar shells shipped by the Quds Force, according to a report on Dec. 1, 2006. On Nov. 28, the report noted, the Mahdi Army commander, Ali al-Sa'idi, "met Iranian officials reported to be IRGC officers at the border to pick up three shipments of rockets."

A Dec. 27, 2008, report noted one instance when American soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division captured several suspected members of the Jaish al-Mahdi militia and seized a weapons cache, which also included several diaries, including one that explained "why detainee joined JAM and how they traffic materials from Iran." [Read the Document »](#)

The attacks continued during Mr. Obama's first year in office, with no indication in the reports that the new administration's policies led the Quds Force to end its support for Iraqi militants. The pending American troop withdrawals, the reports asserted, may even have encouraged some militant attacks.

A June 25, 2009, report about an especially bloody E.F.P. attack that wounded 10 American soldiers noted that the militants used tactics "being employed by trained violent extremist members that have returned from Iran." The purpose of the attack, the report speculated, was to increase American casualties so militants could claim that they had "fought the occupiers and forced them to withdraw."

An intelligence analysis of a Dec. 31, 2009, attack on the Green Zone using 107-millimeter rockets concluded that it was carried out by the Baghdad branch of Kataib Hezbollah, a militant Shiite group that American intelligence has long believed is supported by Iran. According to the December report, a technical expert from Kataib Hezbollah met before the attack with a "weapons facilitator" who "reportedly traveled to Iran, possibility to facilitate the attacks on 31 Dec." [Read the Document »](#)

That same month, [American Special Operations forces](#) and a specially trained Iraqi police unit mounted a raid that snared an Iraqi militant near Basra who had been trained in Iran. A Dec. 19, 2009, report stated that the detainee was involved in smuggling "sticky bombs"—explosives that are attached magnetically to the underside of vehicles—into Iraq and was "suspected of collecting information on CF [coalition forces] and passing them to Iranian intelligence agents." [Read the Document »](#)

## **A Bold Operation**

One of the most striking episodes detailed in the trove of documents made public by WikiLeaks describes a plot to kidnap American soldiers from their Humvees. According to the Dec. 22, 2006, report, a militia commander, Hasan Salim, devised a plan to capture American soldiers in Baghdad and hold them hostage in Sadr City to deter American raids there.

To carry out the plan, Mr. Salim turned to Mr. Dulaimi, a Sunni who converted to the Shiite branch of the faith while studying in the holy Shiite city of Najaf in 1995. Mr. Dulaimi, the report noted, was picked for the operation because he “allegedly trained in Iran on how to conduct precision, military style kidnappings.” [Read the Document »](#)

Those kidnappings were never carried out. But the next month, militants conducted a raid to kidnap American soldiers working at the Iraqi security headquarters in Karbala, known as the Provincial Joint Coordination Center.

The documents made public by WikiLeaks do not include an intelligence assessment as to who carried out the Karbala operation. But American military officials said after the attack that Mr. Dulaimi was the tactical commander of the operation and that his fingerprints were found on the getaway car. American officials have said he collaborated with Qais and Laith Khazali, two Shiite militant leaders who were captured after the raid along with a Hezbollah operative. The Khazali brothers were released after the raid as part of an effort at political reconciliation and are now believed to be in Iran.

The documents, however, do provide a vivid account of the Karbala attack as it unfolded.

At 7:10 p.m., several sport utility vehicles of the type typically used by the American-led coalition blocked the entrance to the headquarters compound. Twenty minutes later, an “unknown number of personnel, wearing American uniforms and carrying American weapons attacked the PJCC,” the report said.

The attackers managed to kidnap four American soldiers, dragging them into an S.U.V., which was pursued by police officers from an Iraqi SWAT unit. Calculating that they were trapped, the militants shot the handcuffed hostages and fled. Three of the American soldiers who had been abducted died at the scene. The fourth later died of his wounds, the report said, and a fifth American soldier was killed in the initial attack on the compound.

Summing up the episode, the American commander of a police training team noted in the report that that the adversary appeared to be particularly well trained. "PTT leader on ground stated insurgents were professionals and appeared to have a well planned operation," the report said.

**MIDDLE EAST/AFRICA****Date Posted: 22-Oct-2010**

Jane's Defence Weekly

**Israel builds third Arrow battery, courts Greece for exercise****Yaakov Katz** *JDW Correspondent*

Tel Aviv

**Key Points**

- [Israel](#) has begun constructing a third Arrow missile battery in a fresh effort to counter Iran's alleged nuclear weapon programme
- The battery will be situated in the centre of the country and will be armed with Arrow-2 ABM interceptors

The Israel Air Force (IAF) has begun construction of a third Arrow missile battery in central [Israel](#) to enhance the country's missile defence in the face of continued Iranian efforts to pursue a nuclear capability.

Meanwhile, [Israel](#) is also seeking to expand its coterie of regional allies, turning to [Greece](#) as a substitute for [Turkey](#) in the Mediterranean as a partner in aerial exercises to simulate any attack or counter-attack from [Iran](#). The IAF has been searching for new foreign training grounds since [Turkey](#) closed its airspace to Israeli military flights last year due to strained diplomatic ties.

The new battery, which will consist of Arrow-2 anti-ballistic missile interceptors, will work in conjunction with the Super Green Pine Radar, built by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) for the Arrow Weapon System (AWS).

[Israel](#) already has two Arrow batteries. One is located in the IAF's Palmahim Base in the south of the country and the other near the town of Hadera in the north. The current two AWS batteries comprise eight six-round missile launchers.

"The new battery will provide [Israel](#) with an extra layer of defence and more opportunities to intercept targets than we had before," one of the commanders of the new battery told Jane's on 21 October.

Israeli intelligence estimates that [Iran](#) has an arsenal of several hundred operational intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) from the Shahab and Sejil family, both of

which are capable of reaching any target in [Israel](#). The Arrow is also designated to intercept Syria's extensive arsenal of 'Scud' missiles.

The precise location of the new battery has not been disclosed by the IAF, which only confirmed that it was in the centre of the country to "provide the utmost protection for long-range threats".

The new battery will also include the Citron Tree fire-control centre, which can be used to control the other two Arrow batteries deployed throughout the country, IAF sources told Jane's on 20 October.

IAI and Boeing are currently working to develop the Arrow-3: an upgraded version of the Arrow-2 interceptor currently in IAF use. The new interceptor will operate at longer ranges and higher altitudes, but will be compatible with existing AWS launchers. The first flyout test of the Arrow-3 is scheduled for mid-2011 in [Israel](#).

[Israel](#) and the United States signed a pact in July formalising US support for the development of the Arrow-3, which is funded jointly by the two countries under an annual budget of USD150 million. Initial operational capability is expected by 2014.

The IAF is also preparing to deploy the Iron Dome short-range ballistic rocket and artillery protection system by mid-November. Final operational tests of the system were conducted in mid-July. The Iron Dome will be operated by a new battalion recently established in the IAF's Air Defence Division, which also has command over the Arrow.

Israeli defence officials have raised concerns that Palestinian insurgent groups will increase their rocket attacks following the deployment of the Iron Dome along Israel's southern border with the Gaza Strip in an effort to test its effectiveness.

In mid-October the IAF conducted a four-day joint military exercise with the [Greek Air Force](#): the first time since [Greece](#) suspended a drill in May after Israeli Navy commandos killed nine people during a raid on an aid convoy to Gaza.

Eight IAF AH-64 Apache Longbow and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters participated in the drill alongside Greek Apache and AS332 Super Puma helicopters and F-4E fighter jets.

The joint drill in [Greece](#) comes three months after an Israeli Sikorsky CH-53 helicopter crashed during IAF manoeuvres in [Romania](#).

## The U.S. Approach to Managing the Persian Gulf

STRATFOR Geopolitical Diary

October 22, 2010 | 1021 GMT

The day after the U.S. government formally notified Congress of a massive, \$60 billion arms sale to Saudi Arabia, Saudi King Abdullah called Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Thursday to "discuss bilateral relations." Ahmadinejad had earlier phoned the Saudi king, making this the second time in only nine days that Iran has reached out to its Persian Gulf rival.

While the Saudis and Iranians have been nervously feeling each other out, the junior players in the Persian Gulf are also keeping busy. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced Thursday that it has opened a naval base on its eastern coast in the emirate of Fujairah. The base, jutting out into the Arabian Sea, would also house a giant oil-storage terminal that would connect to the oil-rich emirate of Abu Dhabi through a multi-billion dollar oil pipeline now under construction. In following these plans, the UAE appears to be creating an option to circumvent the Strait of Hormuz so that they may continue exporting oil and importing goods should Iran attempt to follow through on threats to blockade the strategic chokepoint.

Just off the Arabian Peninsula, the tiny island nation of Bahrain -- home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet -- is gearing up for parliamentary elections Saturday. To prepare for the polls, the ruling Sunni al-Khalifa family is doing everything it can to ensure the country's Shiite majority doesn't increase its political clout -- and thus provide its Persian neighbor with another stick with which to probe the peninsula.

"With the Persian Gulf in flux, the United States is trying to get back into a position where the natural Arab-Persian divide in the region balances itself out."

Iran is clearly weighing heavily on the minds of the Persian Gulf states. These states don't exactly long for a repeat of Saddam Hussein and his extraterritorial oil ambitions, but they did watch with trepidation as the Sunni pillar in Iraq crumbled under the watch of the United States throughout the course of the Iraq war. Though the United States made the first big attempt to correct this imbalance with the surge and the co-optation of Sunni former Baathists, it is obvious to everyone that Iran is the emerging power in the Persian Gulf, while the United States is more than ready to make its exit from the region.

But the United States also doesn't have the option of clearing out and leaving its Sunni Arab allies in a lurch. Whether or not American Tea Partiers, isolationist pundits or regular taxpayers like it, the U.S. military is spread far beyond its borders, with American boots on the ground in more than 150 countries and the U.S. Navy in the unique position of dominating the high seas. The United States also holds a quarter of the world's wealth in gross domestic product and is responsible for roughly the same fraction of the world's

fossil fuel consumption, a large percentage of which comes from the Persian Gulf. Along with this ubiquitous global presence comes a heavy burden. That burden does not necessarily mean playing the global policeman and putting out fires wherever there is a real or imagined nuclear threat, claims of genocide or otherwise. Instead, it means selectively choosing its military engagement and maintaining various balances of power that allow the United States to sustain its hegemony without getting bogged down in conflicts around the world for dangerous lengths of time.

With the Persian Gulf in flux, the United States is trying to get back into a position where the natural Arab-Persian divide in the region balances itself out. From the U.S. point of view, Iran and Iraq could go on fighting each other for years -- as they did throughout the 1980s -- as long as neither one is capable of wiping the other out. Right now, Iraq is in far too weak a position and is too wedded to the Iranians to rebuild itself as a useful counter to Iran. So that responsibility is increasingly falling to Iraq's neighbors.

Though there is great power in petrodollars alone, the Persian Gulf states are far from warriors. In spite of all the state-of-the-art equipment the United States floods into countries like Saudi Arabia, the Saudi military severely lacks the leadership, ethos, training and doctrine to proficiently and coherently employ these systems. The Persian Gulf states' dependence on Washington is what allows the United States to militarily entrench itself in the region. The \$60 billion arms sale to Saudi Arabia, for example, loudly signals to Iran that a U.S. exit from Iraq is not tantamount to the United States abandoning its interests in the region. But as the United States continues to grow and spread itself across the globe, it will increasingly need to rely on local forces to manage things on their own, with the United States standing close behind. For the Persian Gulf, that means the United States investing the years into shaping the Saudi military into an effective force and encouraging the UAE to reduce its vulnerabilities to Iran, as it appears to be doing with this new export route into the Arabian Sea. These are initiatives that take a great deal of time, money and effort, but they also have the best chance of materializing when a state is confronted by an external threat. For the Persian Gulf states, the threat of Iran dominating the gulf is as good a threat as ever to drive them into action.

## Pentagon plans \$60 billion weapons sale to Saudi Arabia

By Dana Hedgpeth

Washington Post Staff Writer

Thursday, October 21, 2010; 12:58 AM

The Defense Department has notified Congress that it wants to sell \$60 billion worth of advanced aircraft and weapons to [Saudi Arabia](#). The proposed sale, which includes helicopters, fighter jets, radar equipment and satellite-guided bombs, would be the largest arms deal to another country in U.S. history if the sale goes through and all purchases are made.

Congress has 30 days to review the sale before the Pentagon and the weapons makers go into more detailed contract discussions with Saudi Arabia. Congress is expected to review the deal when it is back in session after the elections.

The arms package includes 84 new F-15 fighter jets and upgrades to 70 more F-15s that the Saudis already have, as well as three types of helicopters: 70 Apaches, 72 Black Hawks and 36 Little Birds. Saudi Arabia would also get versions of a satellite-guided "smart bomb" system, plus anti-ship and anti-radar missiles.

The deal could be completed over five to 10 years, depending on production schedules and training needed.

Defense industry analysts said the weapons sale is key to U.S. efforts to boost support among Arab allies and counter any threats from [Iran](#). The deal is also seen as a boon for U.S. defense companies as the Pentagon tightens its budget in ways that could curb contracting opportunities.

Boeing makes the F-15, the Apaches, the Little Birds and some of the other equipment. Raytheon makes some of the anti-radar missiles.

"There's an enormous amount at stake in terms of U.S. foreign policy, credibility in the region, and the health of the aerospace industry," said Richard Aboulafia, an aerospace industry analyst at the Teal Group in Fairfax. "When you sell combat aircraft you're also selling a strategic relationship. It is a symbolic commitment to consult on common defense issues, and when you operate the same equipment, that often means joint training and an ongoing military relationship."

Andrew J. Shapiro, assistant secretary for political military affairs at the State Department, said the administration had looked at the regional balance of power in the Middle East and "concluded it would not negatively impact [Israel's](#) security interests or Israel's qualitative military edge." Israel recently signed a deal to buy 20 U.S. F-35 Joint Strike Fighter jets.

"The U.S. gets to reinforce a relationship with an important ally," Aboulafia said. "It gets to cement its dominance on the military aerospace export market. And Israel gets a pretty good deal in return."

But some on Capitol Hill are already expressing reservations.

"It seems to be rewarding a country that hasn't been particularly helpful to any of our foreign policy objectives and one that doesn't seem to be well-suited to be a military bulwark against Iran," said Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.). He said he was also "troubled" by the administration's decision to announce the arms deal while Congress is in recess.

"This is too important of a deal to be dropping in the middle of an election recess," he said. "The inescapable conclusion based on the timing is that they did not want Congress to take a hard look at this deal."

Weiner said he plans to work with congressional leaders to try to stop the deal from going through but acknowledged that it would be difficult to block.

Doing so would require approval from the House and the Senate. Defense industry analysts say Congress in the past has only been successful in getting adjustments made to arms sales - not formally blocking them.

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## Venezuela eyes Russian S-300s banned from Iran

**Inigo Guevara** *JDW Correspondent*

Mexico City

### Key Points

[Russia](#) is believed to have offered five of its S-300PMU-1 systems to [Venezuela](#), following the cancellation of a deal with [Iran](#) for the air-defence systems

The South American country is also thought to have purchased Tor-M1 self-propelled air-defence systems and ZU-23 anti-aircraft guns

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez confirmed on 18 October that his country plans to acquire the Russian S-300 air-defence missile batteries recently refused to [Iran](#).

Chavez was speaking to Venezuelan journalists in Kiev, [Ukraine](#). His statement follows the 7 October announcement by [Russia](#) that it would cancel the delivery to [Iran](#) of the S-300 systems that had been ordered in 2005. The cancellation was in compliance with United Nations resolution 1929, which imposes further sanctions against [Iran](#).

Russian President Dimitry Medvedev issued a decree banning delivery of the systems to [Iran](#) on 22 September and has been searching for an alternative buyer.

Chavez said in September 2009 through his presidential press office that [Venezuela](#) had decided to acquire an air-defence system "in the form of a hedgehog, a porcupine, known as the S-300 complex".

While he said that its radar could detect targets 400 km away and destroy up to six incoming threats simultaneously at ranges of up to 300 km, he stated that he had not taken definitive steps toward its procurement.

*Jane's* has learned from Venezuelan sources close to the military that [Russia](#) offered all five S-300PMU-1 systems to [Venezuela](#) at USD800 million.

According to these sources, the S-300PMU-1 (SA-20A or SA-20 Gargoyle) systems would not be offered as part of the USD2.2 billion loan terms granted to [Venezuela](#) by [Russia](#) in September 2009, but would instead have to be paid for upfront.

The same sources indicate that [Venezuela](#) has also acquired 12 Tor-M1 self-propelled air-defence systems and an undisclosed number of ZU-23 23 mm anti-aircraft guns under the September 2009 agreement. However, there is no evidence of their delivery so far.

TEHRAN, Oct. 21, 2010

## **Iran, Venezuela Promise "New World Order"**

### **Hugo Chavez Visits Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Iran; Leaders Tout "Strategic Alliance" to End U.S. "Imperialism"**

(AP) The leaders of Iran and Venezuela hailed what they called their strong strategic relationship on Wednesday, saying they are united in efforts to establish a "new world order" that will eliminate Western dominance over global affairs.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and visiting Venezuelan counterpart, Hugo Chavez, watched as officials from both countries signed 11 agreements promoting cooperation in areas including oil, natural gas, textiles, trade and public housing.

Among the agreements, Venezuela's state oil company Petroleos de Venezuela SA said the South American country was forming a joint shipping venture with Iran to aid in delivering Venezuelan crude oil to Europe and Asia. It said in a statement that the agreement for a joint venture also would help supply Iran "due to its limited refining capacity."

Both presidents denounced U.S. "imperialism" and said their opponents will not be able to impede cooperation between Iran and Venezuela.

Iran's state TV quoted both Ahmadinejad and Chavez as calling their relationship a "strategic alliance" that would eliminate the current global order.

"Iran and Venezuela are united to establish a new world order based on humanity and justice," Ahmadinejad said, repeating his predictions that those who today seek "world domination are on the verge of collapse."

Chavez said this is a time of "great threats" that make it necessary to swiftly "consolidate strategic alliances in political, economic, technological, energy and social areas," according to the state-run Venezuelan News Agency.

Details of the latest accords were not released, and Chavez said some agreements went beyond those put on paper. He said a Venezuelan delegation will soon travel to Iran to follow up on the agreements.

Iran has become the closest Middle East ally to Chavez's government as the left-leaning leader has sought to build international alliances to counter what he sees as U.S. economic and political dominance.

"Imperialism has entered a decisive phase of decline and ... is headed, like elephants, to its graveyard," Chavez said, according to the Venezuelan state news agency.

Chavez has staunchly defended Iran's nuclear energy program, siding with Tehran by insisting it is for peaceful uses and not for nuclear bombs.

U.S. officials have worried Iran may be using its civilian nuclear program as a cover to develop atomic weapons. Four rounds of U.N. sanctions, as well as broader severe U.S. and European Union sanctions have not persuaded Tehran to halt the program.

Chavez also has [plans to develop a nuclear energy](#) program in Venezuela and last week signed an agreement for Russia to help build a reactor.

Without mentioning the countries' nuclear ambitions, Chavez said his government demands respect for Iran's sovereignty and that "those who think they are most powerful and want to impose their will on the world respect Iran."

Chavez's trip to Iran was his ninth as president. Before coming to Tehran, he made stops in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. Later Wednesday, Chavez arrived in Syria, and is due to travel next to Libya and Portugal.

Iran and Venezuela both belong to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. In recent years, the two oil-producing countries have also set up joint ventures to produce cars, tractors and bicycles in the South American country.

20 October 2010 Last updated at 21:14 ET

## Iran and Venezuela deepen 'strategic alliance'

BBC News

The presidents of Iran and Venezuela have promised to deepen their "strategic alliance" against US "imperialism".

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez met Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad during a two-day visit to Iran.

Referring to each other as brothers, the two leaders said no one could stop them strengthening ties.

Mr Ahmadinejad said they would build a "new world order" free of US domination.

Mr Chavez condemned international sanctions and "military threats" against Iran over its nuclear programme.

Both leaders said they were convinced that the age of Western domination was coming to an end.

"Imperialism has reached a decisive phase of decline and is headed, like an elephant, to its graveyard", Mr Chavez said.

"The enemies of our nations will go one day", said Mr Ahmadinejad.

"This is the promise of God and the promise of God will definitely be fulfilled".

The two leaders looked on as officials signed a number of agreements on co-operation in areas including oil and gas, trade and construction.

Venezuela's state oil company, PDVSA, said it was forming a joint shipping venture with Iran to deliver Venezuelan oil to markets in Europe and Asia.

After Mr Chavez visited a new town development outside Tehran, Iranian officials offered to help Venezuela build similar public housing projects.

Opec allies

Mr Chavez has been a regular visitor to Tehran over the past decade.

He and Mr Ahmadinejad have forged a close relationship based on their strong opposition to the US.

Iran and Venezuela are both major oil producers, and they have co-operated closely in the oil exporting cartel, Opec.

Mr Chavez has been a strong opponent of international sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme.

The US and other Western powers believe Iran is seeking to develop nuclear weapons, but Tehran insists its programme is aimed at generating energy and medical isotopes.

Before arriving in Iran, Mr Chavez was in Moscow, where he secured Russian help to build a nuclear plant in Venezuela.

**AMERICAS, THE****Date Posted: 19-Oct-2010**

Jane's Defence Weekly

**Venezuela eyes Russian S-300s banned from Iran****Inigo Guevara** *JDW Correspondent*

Mexico City

**Key Points**

- [Russia](#) is believed to have offered five of its S-300PMU-1 systems to [Venezuela](#), following the cancellation of a deal with [Iran](#) for the air-defence systems
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**IRGC Commander Warns Enemies Against Crossing Iran's 'Red Lines' \***

Brig. Gen. **Hoseyn Salami**, deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), on 19 October warned Iran's enemies against overstepping the "Islamic republic's red lines," ISNA reported the same day. "The enemies of Iran should know the [Islamic] system's red lines and not cross them," he said and added: "Today, the enemies of the [Islamic] revolution and system are disgraced, mortified ... in the face of the Iranian nation's strong unity." Saying Iran has inflicted "crushing defeats" on its enemies in the past, he promised that the nation would do the same again with all those that have evil intentions.

## Allawi Says Iran Destabilizing Mideast

**October 18, 2010**

Associated Press

BAGHDAD -- The leader of the Iraqi bloc that came first in elections accused Iran on Sunday of trying to destabilize Iraq and manipulate the political process as he jeered at rival politicians seeking Tehran's blessing for forming the next government.

Ayad Allawi, a secular Shiite, narrowly won the most seats in the March 7 vote with strong Sunni backing but did not get nearly enough to control the government outright. That allowed his chief rival, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, to sideline the Iraqiya political party that Allawi heads by forming a Shiite-dominated alliance similar to the current government and close to Iran.

"I won't be begging Iran to agree upon my nomination," Allawi told the Al-Arabiya satellite TV channel.

He added that Iran should get out of Iraqi politics and "not impose or support one faction over the other."

Allawi's remarks were a clear jab at al-Maliki, who heads to Iran on Monday as he scrambles for enough Shiite support to keep his job. There were also new indications that al-Maliki's efforts to enlist Sunni allies in the region are falling short. The king of neighboring Jordan pointedly avoided endorsing the Iraqi prime minister for a second term in a statement Sunday.

The developments injected new doubt that Iraq's political mess will be resolved any time soon. It has been more than seven months since parliamentary elections that failed to produce a clear winner and the country is still without a government.

Allawi has threatened to boycott the next government if al-Maliki remains in office, although U.S. diplomats are trying to broker a detente that would give the Iraqiya leader some power and key ministry jobs if he backs down.

Al-Maliki recently clinched support from hardline Shiite political parties close to Iran. With that, and assuming he is backed as expected by a key Kurdish coalition, he will have enough allies to remain in office.

In a second television interview aired Sunday, Allawi accused Iran of fomenting unrest in Iraq, Lebanon and among Palestinians. He said Mideast nations are "falling victim to ... terrorists who are definitely Iran-financed."

"We know that unfortunately, Iran is trying to wreak havoc on the region," Allawi said. "And definitely in Iraq, I can say categorically that Iran is trying even to bring about change

to the political process according to their wishes and requirements," he told CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS."

Al-Maliki will meet Monday with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

But the prime minister dearly wants support from Sunnis too -- in part because of strong pressure from the United States to foster a new government that represents all Iraq's major political factions. He will visit Turkey and Egypt next week.

But his trip Sunday to Amman fell flat after Jordan's King Abdullah II withheld public endorsement for al-Maliki's bid for a second term in office.

A royal palace statement said Abdullah told al-Maliki in a closed-door session that it was "necessary to form a government that would reflect the aspirations of the Iraqi people and would effectively build a better future for them."

But Abdullah clearly sought to remain neutral, emphasizing to al-Maliki that it was up to Iraqis to pick their government.

"Jordan supports anything that would lead to achieving reconciliation between the Iraqi people and would consolidate their national unity," Abdullah added, according to the statement.

Arab states have been deeply concerned about the influence of Shiite power Iran in Iraq and across the Middle East. Jordan's ruler has been a particularly vocal critic of the Shiite-led government in Baghdad. In 2004, Abdullah warned about the emergence of a "Shiite crescent" including Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon.

Ahmadinejad called the Jordanian king last Tuesday. The state media said discussions focused on Iraq and other regional matters, but did not elaborate. Government officials declined to say if Ahmadinejad asked Abdullah to support al-Maliki.

In other developments, a brazen midday heist on three jewelry stores and at least four bombings in Baghdad left nine Iraqis dead and 13 injured in a fresh round of brutal crime that has swept the Iraqi capital over the past year as political violence has ebbed. Iraqi authorities have frequently blamed insurgents for the devastation, saying they are hard up for cash and have turned to crime to raise money for other types of attacks.

Additionally, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad issued a new warning Sunday that Americans and other Westerners who live and work in Iraq -- and especially in Baghdad -- may be kidnapping targets. The statement followed similar warnings on Sept. 14 and Sept. 25 that cautioned U.S. citizens from traveling in Iraq's mostly Shiite south.

The new warning "applies to all parts of Iraq, especially Baghdad," the statement said. It comes a day after an Iraqi Defense Ministry spokesman warned of threats against local and foreign journalists working in Iraq.

Posted 35 minutes ago

## Greek Weekly Views Iranian 'Influence' in Lebanon After Ahmadinezhad Visit

EUP20101026142001 Athens [To Vima tis Kiriakis](#) in Greek 17 Oct 10 p 39

[Commentary by Jean-Marie Colombani: "What Did Ahmadinezhad Want in Beirut?"]

The visit of Mahmud Ahmadinezhad to Lebanon is an event that contributes to increased tension in the Middle East. In Beirut a jubilant crowd cheered the Iranian president and welcomed him by throwing rice and flowers in his path. However, the crowd did not represent all Lebanese. In fact, they were mostly Hizballah supporters, members of this state within a state, who appeared enthusiastic by the visit thus confirming in the most jubilant way that they want to be considered as one of Iran's armed branches in the region. This led a White House spokesman to state that the visit shows that "Hizballah is more interested in looking loyal to Iran than show loyalty to Lebanon."

Interest, if not concern, also arises from the more "visible" part of this visit, which has a strictly economic and bilateral aspect. This, of course, is the issue of the developing relations between the two countries, particularly Iranian investments in Lebanon. After the 2006 Southern Lebanon war against Israel [as printed], Tehran mounted a spectacular and popular operation by funding the rebuilding of the social networks controlled by Hizballah. Today the objective is to broaden the scope of financial assistance in order to include the energy sector. Lebanon is in need of all kinds of equipment, primarily electrical. It also needs the means to proceed with the search for oil and natural gas deposits in an area that, as it has just been discovered, contains significant reserves and which is coveted by both Israel and Cyprus.

Investments in the energy sector in Lebanon form part of a broader strategic objective and Tehran believes that it should also include Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Jordan. The issue of energy in general, especially in this region, is at the heart of every ambitious political project.

Moreover, the Iranians believe that any financial assistance to Lebanon should also cover the equipment of the Lebanese army. Lebanese troops are notorious for their lack of adequate equipment and since 2006 they have been in constant conflict with Israel. That is why the U.S. Congress recently froze a plan to supply them with American weapons. Iran expects to fill this gap in armaments and thus gain influence over the Lebanese military command. Iran merely needs to take just one step, which will be made even easier by the fact that, together with the Hizballah, they already have in place an informal, but heavily equipped, army.

As for the anxiety caused, to this must be added the political meaning of Ahmadinezhad's visit, which is absolutely clear. The Iranian president's ambition is to show Israel that in the event of an attack against Iranian nuclear facilities the response will come through Lebanon and the Hizballah.

Naturally, the Hizballah is not the dominant organization in Lebanon; at least not yet. But it is clear that it relies on Iran's help to attain this role, despite the concerns that such a development would create among the region's Sunni countries. Nonetheless, the warning has been given: the first consequence of any Israeli attack against Iran would mean the immediate establishment of a new front in Southern Lebanon. Under these circumstances, the new course of relations between the United States and Europe, on the one hand, and Syria on the other, is extremely important. This country, which until yesterday was isolated and "flirted" by Iran, is now attracting intense attention from the West and from the Sunnis, who are trying to persuade it not to align itself with Iran. This is equivalent to acquitting the Damascus regime from the charge of assassinating former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri. Henceforth, the charges will be filed against the Hizballah.

The Israeli side appeared to be reserved. Israel has preferred to let others, especially Arab states, criticize the Iranian president's visit to Beirut. Paradoxically, as some experts are saying, "extreme calm" is prevailing on the border between Israel and South Lebanon. This does not mean that the situation is any less dangerous.

Mr. Jean-Marie Colombani is one of the most prestigious European journalists and a former editor of the Le Monde newspaper. This article is written exclusively for To Vima and printed regularly every Sunday.

[Description of Source: Athens To Vima tis Kiriakis in Greek -- Sunday edition of the independent daily, critical of the New Democracy party]

### Iran, Iraq To Boost Border Cooperation \*

Iraqi Interior Minister Jawad al-Bulani met with his Iranian counterpart, Mostafa Mohammad-**Najjar**, in Tehran on 16 October to discuss closer cooperation and intensify the campaign against terrorism and illegal border crossings, the Fars News Agency reported the same day. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Bulani said the two states plan to promote border cooperation by holding regular sessions of joint border committees. "Setting up two committees to be headed by the [interior] ministers of the two countries and attended by their regional authorities, as well as joint cooperation at the regional level, were among the issues discussed in the meeting," he explained. Commenting on the goals of his trip to Tehran, Bulani stated that the visit is part of his government's efforts to boost cooperation in security issues in a way that could serve the interests of both the Iranian and Iraqi nations and the region. He noted that the two sides decided to arrange meetings to activate their joint border committees to study and resolve any problems with regard to their shared borders and the markers delineating the international boundaries. Fars noted that technical teams from Iran and Iraq attended the first joint meeting in February in Qasr-e Shireen in Iran's Kermanshah Province to discuss border problems. Studying and verifying the condition of the border markers and repairing those damaged during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war were on the agenda of the work group. Following introductory meetings in Tehran on 6-7 February on border disputes, Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad **Hassan Kazemi-Qomi** said at the time that the discussions helped "establish the necessary coordination between the two sides." One of the primary issues to be discussed in future meetings is the demarcation of the marine borders along the Arvand Rud [known as the Shatt al-Arab in the Arab world], he said.

ISNA reported on 18 October that Iran and Iraq have signed a memorandum of understanding on improving border cooperation in order to step up the campaign against terrorism and prevent illegal border crossings. The report said that Border Police Commander **Hoseyn Zolfaghari** held talks with his Iraqi counterpart and other Iraqi security officials in Tehran on 17 October, and the two sides agreed to activate joint border committees to study and resolve any difficulties concerning their shared borders. **Zolfaqari** asked the Iraqi officials to prevent terrorist groups from using Iraqi territory to launch attacks against Iran [Tehran Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA) in Persian and English - conservative news agency that now generally supports government policy; it had previously provided politically moderate reporting; linked to University Jihad. URL: [www.isna.ir](http://www.isna.ir)].

### **Russia may sell S-300 missiles to Venezuela, instead of Iran - analyst**

Russia's S-300 air defense systems, which Moscow refused to deliver to Iran following a new round of UN sanctions against the Islamic Republic, could be sold to Venezuela instead, a Russian arms trade expert said on Friday.

Russia signed a deal to deliver five battalions of S-300PMU-1 air defense systems to Iran in 2007 but banned the sale in September, saying the systems, along with a number of other weapons, were covered by the fourth round of sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council against Iran over its nuclear program in June.

"Russia is looking for a buyer of five battalions of S-300PMU-1 air defense systems ordered by Iran, which are worth \$800 million, and Venezuela could become such a buyer," said Igor Korotchenko, head of a Moscow-based think tank on the international arms trade.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who is currently on a visit to Russia, earlier said his country was interested in buying different types of Russian-made air defense systems to create a multilayered air defense network.

Venezuela has already purchased 12 Tor-M1 air defense systems, a number of ZU-23-2 anti-aircraft guns and Igla-S portable short-range air defense systems from Russia.

The S-300PMU-1 (SA-20 Gargoyle) is an extended range version of S-300PMU with a limited anti-ballistic missile capability.

Korotchenko said that if the S-300 deal with Venezuela goes through, Caracas should pay cash for the missiles, rather than take another loan from Russia.

"The S-300 is a very good product and Venezuela should pay the full amount in cash, as the country's budget has enough funds to cover the deal," Korotchenko said.

Moscow has already provided Caracas with several loans to buy Russian-made weaponry, including a recent \$2.2-mln loan on the purchase of 92 T-72M1M tanks, the Smerch multiple-launch rocket systems and other military equipment.

MOSCOW, October 15 (RIA Novosti)

## World Citizen: Arab States Building Arsenal for War With Iran

Frida Ghitis | 14 Oct 2010

While Western diplomats and sanctions-enforcers ply their trade to pressure Iran into stopping its uranium enrichment, much of the Middle East is already preparing for war. Headlines might focus on United Nations resolutions initiated by Western powers, or on fiery speeches delivered by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. But just a few hundred miles from Tehran, the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf have launched a race to arm themselves with an urgency and intensity reminiscent of America's defense build-up prior to its entry into World War II.

The magnitude of the weapons purchases is nothing short of astounding and the speed at which they are accelerating is breathtaking. Consider how fast the orders are growing: Gulf nations, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, bought \$37 billion worth of U.S. weapons in the last four years, with the majority of the purchases coming in just the last two years. And the deals already under negotiation for the next four years are expected to total \$123 billion. Those numbers don't include arms purchases from countries other than the U.S.

By far the largest component of the newly muscular Arab arsenal comes in one package deal for Saudi Arabia, approved by the White House and headed for approval by the U.S. Congress. The Saudi purchase, with an 11-digit price tag of \$67 billion, is the biggest arms deal in history.

The Israelis are watching these developments with mixed feelings. While some have reportedly tried quietly to persuade the U.S. to limit the sales, many are taking comfort from the fact that these purchases are primarily motivated by concerns over Iran, the Arabs' historic Persian rival and Israel's avowed enemy. For weapons-procurement specialists in Israel, the feeling may just be envy. As generous as America has proven toward Israel's military, the Israelis could never come close to ordering weapons with such a price tag.

But uneasiness still fills the air in some Israeli defense circles. After all, the Arab world is not exactly friendly toward Israel. And though the regimes currently going on an arms-buying spree might not consider attacking the Jewish state, they could lose power, leaving the advanced weaponry in the hands of unpredictable zealots. Speaking of Saudi Arabia's massive new fighter jet order, one anonymous Israeli defense source told an Israeli journalist, "Today these planes are against Iran. Tomorrow they might turn against us."

Washington has sought to allay Israeli concerns by reassuring the Jewish state that its

technological superiority will not be threatened. In order to secure that qualitative edge, the U.S. will sell Israel 20 F-35 stealth fighter jets, which are much more advanced than the F-15s going to the Saudis. The Saudis, however, will have more than 150 F-15s.

Washington is happy to oblige its eager, oil-rich Arab customers. After all, the transactions strengthen the links between the U.S. and its Gulf allies in preparation for a possible confrontation with Iran. The lengthy shopping list brings a financial bonanza for U.S. defense contractors and creates employment in job-starved America. For American military planners, the arms build-up acts as something of a stage preparation in case a war with Iran starts. Every piece of modern U.S.-made equipment already positioned across the Persian Gulf from Iran is potentially one less piece the Pentagon has to deploy if there is a war. For diplomats, the arsenals help pressure Iran, potentially helping their efforts to negotiate a settlement. Beyond that, they add diplomatic depth to the relationships between Washington and its arms customers. Most of the weapons -- including helicopters, fighter jets and missile defense systems -- will require training and maintenance with major U.S. participation. This helps reinforce long-term ties in the alliance between the U.S. and members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf.

By some accounts, the buildup has already altered the conventional weapons balance of power. In a speech in Bahrain, U.S. Gen. David Petraeus declared that even without the upcoming deliveries, the UAE "could take out the entire Iranian air force."

While its Arab rivals arm, Iran has worked diligently to upgrade its own arsenal of conventional weapons, even as it pushes ahead with a nuclear program that the West and most of its neighbors believe aims to build atomic weapons. Iran has purchased at least \$5 billion worth of arms from Russia in recent years, but Tehran's patrons in Moscow are getting cold feet about their controversial customer. Last month, Russian President Dimitri Medvedev signed a decree banning sales to Iran of a long list of military equipment. The banned items include tanks, warplanes, helicopters, armored vehicles and, most importantly, missiles.

The decree voided a longstanding contract between Moscow and Tehran that would have provided Iran with S-300 anti-aircraft missiles, a weapon that would pose the greatest threat to an air attack by the U.S., Israel, or even an Arab country against Iran's nuclear installations. Iranian authorities were fuming at the decision. Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Ahmad Vahidi declared that Russia "cannot be trusted." Russia charged back, blaming the decision on Iran and its "flawed foreign policy."

Despite Moscow's limiting of sales to Iran, Russian weapons deliveries to Iran's staunchest allies continue. Syria will receive deliveries of the Russia P-800 Yakhont anti-ship cruise

missile, despite U.S. and Israeli concerns. Israel, in particular, which has vigorously opposed the deal since it was signed in 2007, worries about Damascus passing the weapons to Hezbollah, the Lebanese militia closely allied with Iran. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov offered unpersuasive reassurances, saying that "provisions in the contract specifically bar Damascus from transferring these weapons to a third party."

Perhaps the most direct, explicit, and detailed objection to the massive new wave of American arms sales to the Arab world came from the U.S. government itself. In a recent report (.pdf), the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) accused both the Obama and Bush administrations as well as Congress of being "careless" in approving the sales. U.S. law requires that the government demonstrate the weapons sales advance American foreign policy and defense goals. According to the GAO, no such determination was made in advance of the current sales. The GAO "questioned whether the deals really were in the national interest of the United States."

GAO objections notwithstanding, the arms race in the Middle East has already escalated beyond anything seen in decades. Whether or not Iran ultimately acquires nuclear weapons, the region has already become an infinitely more dangerous place. The last time Iran and one of its Arab neighbors went to war, in the 1980s against Iraq, a million people lost their lives. The possibility of another such war is not theoretical: The Middle East is already preparing for it.

Frida Ghitis is an independent commentator on world affairs and a World Politics Review contributing editor. Her weekly column, World Citizen, appears every Thursday.

## Iran Detains Five on Spying Allegations

Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2010

Iran announced it had detained five individuals for allegedly engaging in espionage on behalf of the nation's "enemies," the Associated Press reported today (see [GSN](#), Oct. 12).

The arrested people provided information including details on Tehran's defense, space and economic activities, state media today quoted top Iranian prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi as saying.

Dowlatabadi did not suggest the detentions were connected to Iran's disputed nuclear program or to the previously announced arrest of multiple individuals referred to as "nuclear spies" (see [GSN](#), Oct. 4). Washington and other governments suspect Iran's nuclear program is geared toward bomb development; Tehran has insisted its atomic ambitions are strictly nonmilitary in nature.

The United States was attempting to acquire details in "all fields" through spying, the prosecutor added (Associated Press/[Google News](#), Oct. 13).

Meanwhile, the office of European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton today dismissed Iran's suggestion that she was dragging her feet in organizing new nuclear negotiations on behalf of the five permanent U.N. Security Council member nations and Germany, Agence France-Presse reported.

"We offered to meet [the Iranians] at different levels, last time in New York (on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly), and our readiness to meet them is still there," Ashton spokeswoman Maja Kocijancik said.

"We haven't received anything in writing in response to our offers in the last weeks," Kocijancik said (Agence France-Presse/[Spacewar.com](#), Oct. 13).

Ashton's office indicated Iran had provided no details on its proposal to organize new talks "in late October or early November," Reuters reported Sunday.

"This is news to us. There has been no official date set for talks, nor has there been any official correspondence received by ... Ashton or her services with regard to a date for talks," a spokesman said.

"If Iran is ready to hold talks, all they need to do is pick up the phone and set a date," U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley added (Kalantari/Mohammed, [Reuters](#), Oct. 10).

Russia yesterday reaffirmed its call for new talks aimed at resolving the nuclear standoff, Interfax reported.

"As far as I understand, signals are being heard from Tehran today that they will be ready for such talks in the near future," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

"We hoped that a year ago, when representatives of the six countries met with their colleagues from Iran, it would happen quite rapidly, but it did not happen," he said, referring to the six nations pursuing nuclear talks with the Middle Eastern nation: China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

"We regret that the Iranian side decided then to take a pause," Lavrov said (Interfax, Oct. 12).

Elsewhere, Iran has reinstated for four years its ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, state media quoted the official as saying yesterday. Ambassador Ali Asghar Soltanieh said Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki had renewed his term.

Iranian Atomic Energy Organization head Ali Akbar Salehi earlier this week said Soltanieh would be replaced by Reza Najafi, an "expert in nonproliferation issues" who "deserves the post," Iran's Press TV reported. Najafi's appointment might not be immediate, Salehi said ([Press TV](#), Oct. 12).

At the United Nations, India and South Africa were elected yesterday to nonpermanent Security Council positions, potentially complicating future U.S. efforts to isolate Iran over its disputed nuclear work, the *Christian Science Monitor* reported.

The Security Council has adopted four sanctions resolutions to date aimed at pressuring Iran to halt elements of its atomic program with military applications. India and South Africa, along with current Security Council state Brazil, have questioned efforts to lean on Tehran over its nuclear activities.

"I would hope the U.S. would take this as an opportunity to say, 'OK, Brazil, India, and South Africa, you are among the rising powers of the world and want to play a bigger role, let's see how responsible you are now,' " said Heritage Foundation expert Steve Groves. "When the question is Iran or North Korea, will they act with international security in mind or follow the same regional and parochial interests? Let's see if they really want the responsibility" (Howard LaFranchi, [Christian Science Monitor](#), Oct. 12).

In Russia, a defense industry source yesterday said the cancellation of a planned delivery of the S-300 air defense system to Iran would harm Moscow's reputation as well as its finances, RIA Novosti reported. Experts expressed concern that the system could help protect Iranian nuclear facilities from potential airstrikes.

Middle Eastern clients would avoid dealing with Russia for 15 years, and “Iran will continue to buy weapons all the same, regardless of Russia’s position,” the source told the Russian Agency of Legal and Court Information.

China is likely to become the primary exporter of armaments to Iran, the source said ([RIA Novosti](#), Oct. 12).

**MARKET INTELLIGENCE****Date Posted: 13-Oct-2010**

Jane's Defence Industry

**Frozen Iran export accord eases Russo-Israeli partnership****Guy Anderson** Jane's Defence Industry Editor**Key Points**

Russia's OPK Oboronprom and Israel Aerospace Industries have agreed to an unmanned aerial systems partnership

The deal appears to have been eased by Russia's September announcement that it will suspend the bulk of defence exports to [Iran](#)

Efforts towards partnership between [Russia](#) and [Israel](#) in the UAV arena have been halting over the last 18 months, largely as a result of Israeli concerns over the transfer of high technology systems to Moscow

Russian defence group [OPK Oboronprom](#) and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) have signed a partnership agreement relating to unmanned aerial systems in a deal that appears to have been eased by Moscow's recent moves to freeze the export of defence materiel to [Iran](#).

It was announced on 13 October that IAI will supply unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) "assembly elements and services" to Oboronprom, which will likely allow local production in [Russia](#). The deal was signed by Oboronprom General Director Andrei Reus and IAI Chief Executive Officer Itzhak Nissan in the presence of Russian Minister for Industry and Trade Viktor Khristenko, and is expected to be implemented in 2011.

The specific nature of the partnership was not disclosed, although in April this year IAI and Oboronprom affiliate Rostekhnologii were considering the establishment of a USD300 million joint venture in the UAV arena. Jane's reported at the time that [Russia](#) was interested in indigenous production of advanced IAI platforms: specifically, the Heron medium-altitude long-endurance and Heron TP high-altitude long-endurance UAVs.

**UAV co-operation - hesitant steps**

The 13 October deal follows a period of wrangling between [Russia](#) and [Israel](#), and hesitant steps towards UAV collaboration.

[Russia](#) and [Israel](#) discussed the purchase of 36 UAVs valued at USD100 million during the signing of a long-term military co-operation agreement on 6 September. [Russia](#) described the September accord as a "foundation stone" that created a legal framework for future, more specific co-operation between [Russia](#) and [Israel](#).

Further, in June 2009 [Russia](#) was preparing to acquire 12 UAVs from [Israel](#) with the goal of studying the technology to produce domestic systems in the future. The USD53 million accord covered I-View MK 150 close-range tactical UAVs and Searcher II long-endurance multirole UAVs, both manufactured by IAI. [Russia](#) stated at the time that it wanted to "take their knowledge and put it to practical use"; Russia's past indigenous efforts to produce domestic high-technology unmanned systems (the dearth of which was exposed during the 2008 conflict with [Georgia](#)) have yielded limited results.

### **Russia - Syria and Iran**

Moves towards Russo-Israeli collaboration stalled in the summer of this year, due to Israeli concerns about the transfer of sensitive technology to Moscow. The concerns were driven by Russian activities in the Middle East defence markets: notably, the supply of materiel to [Syria](#) and [Iran](#).

A major breakthrough appears to have been Russia's 22 September announcement that it had cancelled the contentious S-300 accord with Tehran. The USD800 million deal - signed in 2007 - related to the supply of the Russian S-300PMU1 missile and air-defence system.

Russia's freeze on the deal coincided with a wider agreement, signed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, to suspend the export of armoured vehicles, military aircraft, helicopters and ships to [Iran](#).

Ostensibly this was in compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929 (9 June 2010), although Jane's notes that there was nothing explicit to rule out the S-300 transfer in 1929. Indeed, the rationale behind Russia's moves may have been Moscow's deepening defence industrial and military co-operation relations with the United States and [Israel](#).

## Ahmadinejad begins Lebanon trip

**Iranian president arrives in Beirut to begin a visit that has divided opinion in the Mediterranean country.**

**Last Modified: 13 Oct 2010 13:06 GMT**

Al Jazeera

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian president, has arrived in Lebanon for a visit that has split opinion among Lebanese politicians, highlighting internal divisions and underlining Iran's influence in the country.

Tens of thousands lined the streets around the airport on Wednesday to welcome Ahmadinejad for his first state visit to Lebanon since taking office in 2005, which will include a tour of villages close to the country's volatile border with Israel.

The crowd threw rice, sweets and rose petals for the Iranian leader as his convoy made its way to Lebanon's presidential palace.

But pro-Western politicians in Lebanon's fragile national unity government have protested against Ahmadinejad's visit, accusing him of treating the country as an "Iranian base on the Mediterranean".

Iran's support for Hezbollah, a political party backed mainly by Lebanon's Shia Muslim community and which maintains a large arsenal as well as close links to Iran, is opposed by Sunni Muslim and Christian political parties, who say that the country's sovereignty has been undermined.

Al Jazeera's Rula Amin, reporting from Beirut, said that the visit comes at a sensitive time for Lebanon, where tensions are running high over an investigation into the 2005 killing of former prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

Members of the pro-Western March 14 political bloc have expressed concern over the timing of the visit.

"They don't want to feel that this visit will strengthen Hezbollah," she said. "The country is going through some rough times, and tensions are running high. Some are concerned that the country is sliding towards another round of violence."

### **Hugely popular**

Ahmadinejad is a hugely popular figure among Lebanon's Shia population, which is mainly concentrated in the southern suburbs of Beirut and in the south of the country, and has borne of the brunt of periodic bouts of conflict with Israel.

"The enemies of Lebanon and Iran are terrified when they see the two nations standing alongside one another," Ahmadinejad told parliament speaker Nabih Berri, who greeted

him at Beirut's airport on Wednesday. "Today is a new day for us and I am proud to be in Lebanon," he added.

After a 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel, Iran funded the reconstruction of large swathes of conflict damaged areas in Hezbollah strongholds.

The party's leader, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, said on Saturday that Lebanon should thank Iran for supporting "resistance movements in the region ... especially at the time of the July war in Lebanon", referring to the 2006 conflict. "Where did this money come from? From donations? No, frankly from Iran."

Officials close to Hezbollah say they have spent about \$1bn of Iranian money since 2006 on aid and rebuilding. But the West accuses Tehran of equipping Hezbollah with tens of thousands of rockets to be used against Israel.

As well as meeting Lebanon's president, prime minister and parliamentary speaker, Ahmadinejad will visit towns close to the border with Israel. He is expected to tour towns including Qana and Bint Jbeil, just 4km from the border, which was heavily bombed by Israel during the 2006 war.

The visit has sparked criticism from the US and Israel, which accuses Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons, and has not ruled out military action to prevent Tehran building a nuclear bomb.

But Ahmadinejad has repeatedly insisted his country's nuclear programme is peaceful, and has warned that any Israeli action against it would lead to the destruction of Israel as a political entity.

### **Caught in the middle**

With powerful backers in both the US and Iran, Lebanon has found itself caught in the middle of the row, with both sides seeking to bolster their allies in the country.

The US has given aid and training to Lebanese security forces with a view to eventually disarming Hezbollah, which it considers a terrorist group. But Lebanon's fractious relations with Israel have complicated this support, and US military aid to the country was frozen earlier this year after Lebanese troops became embroiled in a cross-border clash with Israeli soldiers.

Iran has offered to step in and give Lebanon its own military aid, but diplomats say that weapons sent to Lebanon from Iran would violate UN sanctions imposed over Tehran's nuclear programme.

Ahmadinejad is, however, expected to sign an agreement for a \$450 million loan to fund electricity and water projects, as well as an accord on energy co-operation, in what has been perceived as a sign that Tehran is seeking to reinforce its influence in Lebanon.

**INDUSTRY BRIEFING****Date Posted: 12-Oct-2010**Jane's Defence Industry

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**Briefing: Iran turns to Azerbaijan following Russia's cold shoulder****Guy Anderson** *Jane's Defence Industry Editor*

**An apparent Russian freeze on the export of military systems to [Iran](#) comes as Tehran and Baku look to strengthen military co-operation. *Jane's Defence Industry* editor Guy Anderson considers the drivers and implications.**

[Iran](#) and [Azerbaijan](#) are discussing moves towards stronger military co-operation during Iranian Defence Minister Ahmad Vahidi's visit to Baku this week.

The prospect of stronger ties between the Caspian states comes against a backdrop of Russia's formal cancellation of the 2007 agreement to supply the S-300PMU1 missile and air-defence system to Tehran and suspend other military exports; the deepening of energy ties between [Iran](#) and [Azerbaijan](#); and the wider trend towards peer-to-peer "partnerships of equals" on the global defence landscape.

News of the meeting in Baku was carried by Azerbaijani information service APA, which reported that regional security was on the agenda. APA added that Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Iranian parliament speaker Ali Larijani were expected to visit [Azerbaijan](#) later this year.

**S-300 and the Russian rationale**

Russia's decision to terminate both the S-300 accord after more than three years of procrastination is likely to have driven [Iran](#) to shore-up strategic alliances elsewhere. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed an order on 22 September to cancel the contract and to suspend the export to [Iran](#) of armoured vehicles, military aircraft, helicopters and ships.

This was ostensibly in compliance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929 (June 9, 2010), although *Jane's* notes that there was nothing explicit in 1929 to rule out the S-300 transfer. Indeed, the rationale behind Russia's moves appear to be Moscow's deepening defence industrial and military co-operation relations with both the US and [Israel](#).

**Russia and Israel**

[Russia](#) and [Israel](#) signed a long-term military co-operation agreement on 6 September that will - in the words of Russian defence minister Anatoly Serdyukov - "provide a fresh impetus to bilateral relations". Moscow looked towards access to advanced Israeli technologies (notably in the field of unmanned air systems), while [Israel](#) appeared to view closer relations as part of an effort to level Moscow away from its existing commitments in the Middle East: notably sales and support of materiel for [Iran](#) and [Syria](#). It is evident, however, that joint progress in the UAV arena appears to have stalled given Israeli concerns over Russian exports of materiel to [Syria](#).

## **Russia and the US**

Relations between Moscow and Washington have also warmed. A military co-operation agreement was signed in mid-September, which included notable steps such as the establishment of a joint defence relations working group with the countries' respective heads of defence as joint chairmen. The principal deal during Serdyukov's visit to Washington was a general memorandum of understanding concerning defence co-operation that replaced a comparable document signed 17 years ago.

It is also notable that US sanctions against bodies such as Russian military exporter [Rosoboronexport](#) (imposed under the [Iran](#), [North Korea](#) and Syria Nonproliferation Act) last applied in 2008 appear to have lapsed over the last year.

Given Iran's reliance on Russian material (70 per cent of Tehran's military imports came from [Russia](#) between 2005 and 2008), the longer-term implications of such moves are likely to be significant. [Iran](#) does not appear to have abandoned hopes of warmer relations with Moscow, however: it was reported by the Iranian government news agency IRNA on 10 October that Iranian Minister of Economy Shamseddin Hosseini was calling for further expansion of Tehran-Moscow economic relations.

## **Peer-to-peer alliances**

Fears concerning the strategic risks associated with narrow reliance on a major arms supplier - and the implications of the imposition of sanctions - have been strong drivers of alliances in the wider world over the last five years.

[Pakistan](#) and [Indonesia](#) are notable examples. Both were subject to US sanctions (subsequently rescinded in 2001 and 2005 respectively) but have sought alliances with nations that have comparable defence industrial and military capabilities as a hedge against the reintroduction of measures that would stem the flow of materiel.

It is worth noting that, beyond recent discussions with [Azerbaijan](#), [Iran](#) signed defence co-operation accords with [Syria](#), [Belarus](#) and [Indonesia](#) between 2006 and 2009.

## **Relations - Baku and Tehran**

[Iran](#) and [Azerbaijan](#) last discussed military co-operation in 2004, when a comparable visit to Baku by Iran's then-minister of defence, Ali Shamkhani, led to a declaration of a "new level of collaboration". Prior to this, the countries had signed a security co-operation agreement in 2001 in Baku.

Despite such accords, relations have been tempestuous at times. [Azerbaijan](#) claimed in 2001 that [Iran](#) was attempting to destabilise its government through the sponsoring of local radical Islamic sects. That year also saw a stand-off concerning the development by [Azerbaijan](#) of the disputed offshore Araz-Alov-Sharg oil field in the Caspian Sea, while in 2007 Iranian helicopter gunships were alleged to have entered Azerbaijani airspace. Despite this, the depth of cultural relations should not be discounted. Azeris or Iranian Turks are the largest non-Persian population in [Iran](#).

Currently, relations appear on a steady footing: not least because of mutual energy interests. The State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR) and the National Gas Export Company signed a contract for the supply of Azerbaijani gas to [Iran](#) in January 2010, for example. [Azerbaijan](#) had previously looked to [Iran](#) following the suspension of imports of Russian natural gas in 2006 following a series of price hikes.

### **Defence industrial co-operation?**

Details of the nature of the military co-operation envisaged by [Iran](#) and [Azerbaijan](#) were scarce. It appears discussions will centre - initially at least - on security matters of common interest in the Caspian region.

Moves to develop a degree of defence industrial co-operation would be plausible given the external pressures on [Iran](#), although it is difficult to see what capabilities [Azerbaijan](#) could bring to such a partnership. Azerbaijan's defence production capabilities remain limited: efforts to restore co-operative ties and contracts with Russian, Ukrainian and Pakistani defence manufacturers in recent years have yielded limited results. It was notable, however, that [Azerbaijan](#) established a Ministry of Defence Industries in 2005 in order to expand its rather moribund indigenous defence production capabilities.

### Defense Minister Visits Republic of Azerbaijan \*

Defense Minister Vahidi characterized his visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan as very successful and said it helped promote military cooperation between the two countries as well as strengthen regional stability, the Defense Ministry web site reported on 12 October. Speaking to reporters at the end of a two-day visit to Baku, Vahidi said his meetings with senior Azeri officials would serve to enhance cooperation on a range of issues. On his first day in Baku on 11 October, Vahidi met with Azerbaijan's president, Ilham Aliyev, who stated that relations between the two countries "have reached the highest level due to the religious and cultural commonalities of the two nations as well as their independent stances. ... We want Iran and Azerbaijan to become powerful in all fields, including defense." In a meeting with Yavar Jamalov, Azerbaijan's minister of defense industries, later in the day, Vahidi said expanding indigenous military industries in regional countries would enhance security and reduce the presence of foreign forces. He also visited factories producing military weapons and equipment [Ministry of Defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran web site in Farsi. URL: <http://mod.ir/>].

- The Mehr News Agency reported on 11 October that **Vahidi** met earlier in the day with his Azeri counterpart, Safar Abiyev, and that the two sides signed a document to expand military cooperation between the two countries. **Vahidi** said Iran and Azerbaijan are both influential countries in "the management and engineering of the security, development, and economic growth of the region" [Tehran Mehr News Agency in Persian and English - conservative news agency; run by the Islamic Propagation Office, which is affiliated with the conservative Qom seminary. URL: [www.mehrnews.com](http://www.mehrnews.com)].
- IRIB reported that **Vahidi** met with Elmar Mammadyarov, the foreign minister of Azerbaijan, on 12 October and stated that expansion of relations with Baku was a top priority for Tehran. Mammadyarov described **Vahidi**'s visit to Baku as a "turning point" in bilateral ties and stressed that security in the Caspian Sea region should only be provided by its littoral states: Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan [The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) -- state-run radio and television network - online in Farsi. URL: <http://www.iribnews.ir/>].

### Iran Says US To Blame for Israeli Possession of Nuclear Weapons \*

Defense Minister **Vahidi** on 12 October blamed the United States for providing Israel with nuclear weapons, *PressTV* reported the following day. "US officials should provide global public opinion with an explanation about arming the Zionist regime," **Vahidi** stated on arriving back in Tehran following a two-day visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan. [See "Defense Minister Visits Republic of Azerbaijan" below.] "Issues with the Israeli regime will not be resolved through the purchase of weapons since the regime has problems with its core nature that are rooted in its illegitimacy," he stated. **Vahidi** also criticized the proposed sale of US-made F-35 warplanes to Israel and claimed that the sale was intended to prevent future Israeli failures, such as suffered by the Jewish state in wars in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. Dismissing charges that Iran's domestic production of defensive weapons threatens its neighbors as baseless propaganda, he said: "We have always announced that we are ready to offer products manufactured by our defense industry to all neighboring Muslim countries and regard ourselves as a protector of security in the whole region" [Tehran *PressTV* Online in English - website of Tehran Press TV, 24-hour English-language news channel of Iranian state-run television officially controlled by the office of the supreme leader. URL: [www.presstv.ir](http://www.presstv.ir)].

- IRNA reported on 13 October that **Vahidi's** allegations about US responsibility for arming Israel with nuclear weapons were made a day after Supreme National Security Council Secretary **Sa'id Jalili** said Iran would provide evidence proving that Israel received nuclear material enriched by the United States. "We will soon publish documents on how American-enriched nuclear material was provided and transported to the Zionist regime," he told reporters on 12 October. **Jalili** called on Washington to answer what he termed was an important question in the Islamic world, "How did the Zionist regime acquire these weapons?" [Tehran IRNA in Persian and English - pro-Ahmadinezhad official news agency, controlled by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. URL: [www.irna.ir](http://www.irna.ir)].

### **Defense Minister Attacks West for Spreading Fear of Iran, Islam \***

Defense Minister **Vahidi** on 12 October dismissed the West's negative propaganda regarding Iran's growing military capabilities and stressed that Tehran is rigidly adhering to a defensive military strategy, the Fars News Agency reported the following day. Speaking to reporters at the conclusion of a two-day visit to Baku, **Vahidi** stated: "We have always announced that we are ready to equip all Muslim neighboring countries with whatever [military weapons] we are producing. ... We consider ourselves a defender of regional security." He further denounced what he termed "the West's media hype and propaganda efforts to portray Iran as a threat to regional states" and noted: "All the measures adopted by the hegemonic system in this regard are meant to promote Islamophobia, Iranophobia" and fear of Shiites.

### **Defense Minister Criticizes US Arms Sales to Persian Gulf States \***

Defense Minister **Vahidi** denounced the proposed sale of weapon systems by the United States to Arab states of the Persian Gulf. He said such a large-scale transfer of weapon systems would spark a regional arms race, IRNA quoted the Iranian minister as telling Azerbaijan's Trend News on 11 October. Asked if the proposed \$60 billion arms deal between the United States and Saudi Arabia represents a threat to Iran, **Vahidi** said Tehran does not feel threatened by other Persian Gulf states. He charged that the United States seeks to trigger an arms race in the region and claimed that Washington "seeks to secure maximum profits and use through the arms race, while maintaining the Israeli regime's arms superiority over the Arab and Muslim states." He also claimed that, regardless of any weapon systems the United States sells to Arab countries, it will never allow them to reach parity in military equipment and capability with Israel. **Vahidi** claimed that American arms sales to Arab states also strengthen Washington's "control over the defensive capabilities of the regional states through arms dependence." He said Iran believes that "the best approach for achieving stability, security, and tranquility would be cooperation among the regional states through security convergence and economic cooperation."

### **Iranian DM To Visit Azerbaijan in October \***

Defense Minister **Vahidi** is scheduled to visit Baku on 11 October, announced **Mohammad-Baqer Bahrami**, Iran's ambassador in the Republic of Azerbaijan, on 19 September and reported by the Fars News Agency the same day. The two-day visit is intended to strengthen and expand bilateral relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, especially in the field of defense, he said.

## S-300 Contract With Iran Cancelled, To Give Refund

CEP20101007950129 Moscow [Interfax-AVN Online](#) in English 1105 GMT 07 Oct 10

[Computer selected and disseminated without OSC Editorial intervention]

S-300 contract with Iran cancelled, to give refund (Part 3) (07.10.10 15:00:50)

S-300 contract with Iran cancelled, to give refund (Part 3) (07.10.10 15:00:50)

NICOSIA. Oct 7 (Interfax) - Russia has cancelled its contract with Iran on the sale of S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems and is holding talks to return payments already made by Tehran, Russian Technologies general director Sergei Chemezov said.

"S-300 [deliveries to Iran] are banned. There are the UN Security Council resolution and the presidential order banning the delivery of these missile systems to Iran," he said.

"We have repealed the contract on the basis of the UN decision and the presidential decision, and are holding negotiations to compensate Iranian expenses," Chemezov said.

Documents are being drafted to return the Iranian prepayment. The total sum of the contract is about \$800 million.

"As a rule, 10% to 25% of the contract sum are paid in advance," a source in a Russian arms exporting organization told Interfax-AVN. "Hence, \$80 million to \$200 million may be returned to Iran," he said.

In June 2010, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1929 introducing sanctions on deliveries of conventional arms, including missile and missile systems, tanks, combat helicopters, aircraft and vessels.

On September 22, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed a decree banning deliveries of S-300 missile systems to Iran.

The decree in particular bans the transit across Russia, including by air, the removal from Russia to Iran, and the transfer to Iran outside Russia of all types of combat tanks, armored personnel carriers, large-caliber artillery systems, warplanes, helicopter gunships, warships, missiles or missile systems, as defined in the UN Register of Conventional Arms, S-300 surface-to-air missile systems, or materiel, connected with the above, including spare parts.

The decree also bans the transfer of knowledge to Iran, or rendering it technological assistance, connected with nuclear capable ballistic missiles, including launches with the use of ballistic missile technology.

It also denies Iranians entry to Russia that are working or formerly worked in sensitive branches in terms of nuclear proliferation, or developed nuclear weapons, or were involved in activities connected with ballistic missiles. In some instances this ban will not be applied.

The bill imposes a ban on the opening in Russia of new branches or representative offices of Iranian banks, and of joint ventures with Iranian banks; on the disposal of stakes (shares) of banks, or the establishment and maintenance of correspondence with them, for the purpose of preventing the extension of financial services, if Russia has information suggesting that this may facilitate proliferation of Iran's sensitive nuclear activities, or the development of nuclear weapon delivery means by Iran.

Iran's defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi criticized the Russian authorities for their decision banning the deliveries of S-300s to Iran.

However, the United States and Israel favored Russia's decision on S-300 shipments to Iran.

The contract with Iran reportedly worth \$800 million was signed several years ago but deliveries have never been made.

The mobile multi-channel missile system S-300 is produced by NPO Almaz-Antey. It is capable of hitting modern and prospective aircraft, strategic cruise missiles and other targets flying at a speed of up to 2,800 meters per second. The system is intended to defend facilities from strikes with all types of airborne attack means in the entire range of their practical application.

[Description of Source: Moscow Interfax-AVN Online in English -- Website of news service devoted to military news and owned by the independent Interfax news agency; URL: <http://www.militarynews.ru>]

### **Officials Continue Criticism of Russia Over Cancellation of S-300 Contract \***

Defense Minister Vahidi on 6 October claimed that Iran is still involved in talks with Russian officials to receive the S-300 missile defense system, the sale of which to Tehran has been officially banned by Moscow, ISNA reported the same day. "Russia's refusal to hand over the missile system goes against the agreement signed by the two countries," Vahidi told reporters in response to questions about Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's decree prohibiting the shipment of the S-300 air defense missile systems and other major weapons to Iran. Commenting on US sanctions imposed on eight senior Iranian officials on 29 September, the defense minister claimed the move "demonstrates the weakness of American diplomacy" and is an attempt to conceal the failure of Washington's foreign policy [Tehran Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA) in Persian and English - conservative news agency that now generally supports government policy; it had previously provided politically moderate reporting; linked to University Jihad. URL: [www.isna.ir](http://www.isna.ir)].

- The Mehr News Agency on 8 October quoted Iranian Ambassador to Russia **Reza Sajjadi** as saying he was surprised by Moscow's decision to ban the sale of the S-300 system to Iran. Speaking in an interview with the Azeri Salam news network, he said Moscow should have gone through with the sale considering the fact that the system is defensive and could not be used to attack other countries. He cited other reasons for his surprise over the Russian move, including the two nations' commonality of interests and similarity of views on a broad range of topics, from Afghanistan to the Caucasus region.

### Official Emphasizes Military Assistance to Lebanon \*

Iranian Foreign Minister **Manuchehr Mottaki** on 4 October restated Tehran's readiness to provide "unlimited" economic and military support to Lebanon, IRNA reported on 4 October. "Stability and peace in Lebanon is a gift that benefits all countries," he said, adding: "Iran is ready to provide unlimited economic and even military support for the Lebanese government and people." **Mottaki**'s statement comes in the wake of announcements by Minister of Defense **Vahidi** in late August that Tehran is ready to provide any weapon system the Lebanese Army needs. Speaking in an interview with the Syrian daily Al-Watan, **Mottaki** also claimed that "rumors" concerning the threat Iran's nuclear program represents to Arab states are nothing more than US propaganda. He added that the Middle East has reached "political maturity" and that "American mischief to create discord in the region remains futile" [The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) - state-run radio and television network - online in Farsi. URL: <http://www.iribnews.ir/>].

## Lebanese Sources: Iran Aims to Make Lebanon 'Defense Frontline' Against Israel

GMP20101005092001 Kuwait [Al-Watan Online](#) in Arabic 04 Oct 10

[Unattributed Report from Sofia: "Lebanese Sources to Al-Watan: Iran 'officially' Declares Lebanon as First Defense Frontline Against Israel and the West"]

Lebanese political sources have said that "Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinezhad's visit to Lebanon --which the Lebanese officials tried to delay as much as possible considering its sensitive nature -- is related more to the Iranian agenda than to the Lebanese. The visit entails a number of messages which Ahmadinezhad intends to address to the Lebanese. One of the messages is that Lebanon is the first defense frontline in the confrontation with Israel and the West, and that the Iranian umbrella over Hizballah will stand in the face of whatever may confront it."

The sources stressed that "this applies to Syria as there is information that, despite all affirmations of Syria's strong relations with Hizballah, the Syrians are exerting pressures on the party."

According to what the sources told Al-Watan over the phone, "Al-Asad will not abandon his alliance with Iran or his support to the party, but will keep all the cards in his hands in order to use them according to the current interests of the ruling regime." They pointed out that "at the moment, the ruling regime is paying more attention to Saudi Arabia than it used to in the past years, which requires keeping in check the party's movement in the Lebanese internal battle."

The sources said that in accordance with what was stated, "Ahmadinezhad's message on protecting Lebanon and Iran's status in Lebanon is a message to Syria as much as it is to the West, the Lebanese, the Arabs, and even to Turkey which was able recently to steal the Palestinian glow from Iran during the Freedom Flotilla incident."

The sources considered "the other Iranian message to be embodied in the affirmation of the Iranian presence in Lebanon and consequently in the Lebanese equation in a way that it cannot be ignored despite the sensitivities this particular issue raises inside Lebanon and outside; whether in the Arab world or in the West."

The sources expressed "their fear and concern that the visit would raise sensitivities inside Lebanon among the factions that have already rejected Iran's view of Lebanon as its main defense frontline in its conflict with the West and Israel. There are also fears of the emergence of an uncomfortable situation during the reception of Ahmadinezhad in the south which is the work area of the international [UN]forces which recently seem to be

going through a difficult time." The sources added that "the situation is complicated enough inside Lebanon without having regional elements getting directly involved."

[Description of Source: Kuwait Al-Watan Online in Arabic -- Website of popular, independent, centrist daily with close ties to the ruling family; publishes a range of political views; URL: [www.alwatan.kuwait.tt](http://www.alwatan.kuwait.tt)]

### **IRGC Commander: US Has Not Withdrawn Combat Troops From Iraq \***

Brig. Gen. **Hoseyn Hamedani**, commander of the IRGC's Mohammad Rasoul ul-Allah Corps in Tehran, on 3 October dismissed Washington's announcement of a complete pullout of US troops from Iraq, the Fars News Agency reported the same day. Claiming that Washington has come to the oil-rich country to stay for a long time, he stated: "Today, Americans are siphoning off Iraq's oil and its wealth, and therefore they will not withdraw from the country." Speaking at a gathering of clerics, **Hamedani** rejected reports that the last American combat troops left Iraq in August, and he added that the United States military "has built bases [in Iraq] much larger than a town, and they have built them forever" [Tehran Fars News Agency in Persian and English - hardline pro-Ahmadinezhad news agency; headed as of December 2007 by Hamid Reza Moqaddamfar, who was formerly an IRGC cultural officer. URL: [www.farsnews.com](http://www.farsnews.com)].

### **Chinese Warplanes Fly Over Iran To Participate in Turkish Aerial Maneuvers \***

Iran has allowed the passage of Chinese warplanes through its airspace to participate in joint military maneuvers in Turkey's central Anatolia region, *PressTV* reported on 3 October. Ankara and Beijing conducted the drills in Turkey's central Anatolia region in late September. The report noted that the war games, codenamed "Anatolian Eagle" and previously carried out with air forces from the United States and other NATO members, as well as Israel, were the first involving China. US-made F-16 Fighting Falcons of the Turkish Air Force and Chinese Su-27 and MiG-29 fighter jets took part in mock dogfights during the drills. The report observed that the maneuvers preceded a planned visit by Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao to Turkey and noted that Turkey and China took their first step in military cooperation in the late 1990s with joint missile production [Tehran *PressTV* Online in English - website of Tehran Press TV, 24-hour English-language news channel of Iranian state-run television officially controlled by the office of the supreme leader. URL: [www.presstv.ir](http://www.presstv.ir)].

*Asr-e Iran* reported on 7 October that the United States and Israel are worried about the emergence of a new China-Iran-Turkey military cooperation axis. The site claimed that the passage of Chinese warplanes through Iranian airspace en route to Turkey is significant since it signals China's replacement of Israel in the Anatolian Eagle exercises and may indicate an important shift in regional military alliances [ *Asr-e Iran* in Persian - pro-reform website. URL: [www.asriran.com](http://www.asriran.com)].

## Reforms prompt stronger ties in Middle East

**Offset reform in Middle East states has attracted the attention of international defence contractors, given the impact on regional business. The growing prognosis for strong defence ties within the region itself are worthy of greater attention, writes Guy Anderson.**

The likelihood of strengthened defence industrial ties among emerging Middle Eastern nations, such as the [United Arab Emirates](#), [Saudi Arabia](#) and [Jordan](#), is strong.

The principal drivers are likely to be a combination of more-cordial relations between states, local defence industrial capabilities that have followed comparable development paths over comparable timelines, and shared regional concerns.

Nascent links between the [UAE](#) and [Jordan](#) include Advanced Industries of Arabia (a [UAE](#) land systems company) currently operating development facilities within Jordan's [King Abdullah II Design and Development Bureau](#) (KADDB) Industrial Park. More of this type of arrangement is highly plausible.

### Developing capabilities

Both Jordan and the [UAE](#), in particular, have pursued similar defence industrial strategies and have shown similar ambitions.

Both states began efforts in earnest in the mid-1990s towards the creation of meaningful indigenous defence industrial capabilities with a narrow focus on a limited range. Both used partnerships with advanced foreign defence corporations (typically from the Western world) to kick-start local activity. Both have also seen national champion organisations gain a degree of traction and have benefited from increased national wealth over recent decades, making defence industrial ambitions feasible. In addition, both states refocused national defence industrial objectives onto high-tech domains since 2000.

In the [UAE](#), a step change came through the creation of Abu Dhabi Ship Building in 1995. It was created as an offset-related joint venture with Newport News of the US (now part of Northrop Grumman). Subsequently listed as an independent entity, it is currently a USD316 million-per-annum profitable venture (albeit backed by substantial domestic contract activity).

[Jordan](#), meanwhile, anchored its domestic capabilities in 1999 through the establishment of the King Abdullah Design and Development Bureau. An independent government agency within the Jordanian armed forces, KADDB is meant to manage and co-ordinate research, analysis and development of defence systems. There has been a two-fold strategy: on one hand, the engagement in joint venture partnerships with foreign companies to build indigenous capability, and on the other a focus on local efforts in niche areas with the potential for sustainable returns.

KADDB's use of international partnerships has been notable, and has included accords with Jankel of the [UK](#) (in light vehicle manufacturing); and NP Aerospace of the [UK](#) (in the realm of personal protection systems); and Widely Guns (for small arms).

### **Development - timelines**

It is notable that the local industries of the [UAE](#) and [Jordan](#) kept the development of local capabilities on a narrow path during the 1990s. KADDB, for example, initially focused on automotive and armoured vehicle programmes (specifically, upgrades, surveillance and fire control systems and light armoured vehicle programmes). So, too, was the case in the [UAE](#), given that it was not until 2004-05 that the step change towards high-technology areas came.

The UAE's high-technology defence industrial push reflected wider economic priorities - specifically, the creation of meaningful, high-value, non-labour-intensive local employment and national capabilities to reduce reliance on oil revenues.

In the [UAE](#), the emphasis was put on such areas as unmanned aerial systems, defence electronics, electronic warfare, night-vision systems and military communications.

There was also, incidentally, a push from this time into the service sectors (from land systems maintenance and training to logistics and information technology services). It is significant that the more advanced [UAE](#) defence companies in terms of capabilities all launched between 2006 and 2007: C4 Advanced Solutions (a military communications operation), Al Yah Satellite Communications (a space-based communications firm and the bedrock of local moves towards network-centric capabilities); Abu Dhabi Autonomous Systems Investments (unmanned aerial vehicles, ground and naval systems).

Jordan's strategy of expanding its range of indigenous defence industrial capabilities began in earnest in 2006. KADDB encapsulated its strategy in the Vision 2010 document of that year. The company said at the time that it would, over five years, "expand upon our [then] existing land systems portfolio and broaden our range of programmes to include manned and unmanned aerial surveillance platforms, information management, [and] communication and data distribution systems required to support emerging C4ISR requirements, as well as combat and combat-support systems appropriate to rapid intervention and force protection".

Again, the development of KADDB and the [UAE](#) industries hinges on continued partnerships - at present - with advanced defence materiel producers.

### **Relationships and defence spending**

While comparable ambitions and parallel development have put the [UAE](#) and [Jordan](#) in a strong position to develop the kernel of a regional partnership, it is strong defence spending growth in both states, as well as warmer relations among key countries in the region, that have provided the means.

It is notable that relations were strengthened by the 2004 marriage of King Abdullah's sister, Princess Haya bint Hussein, to Sheikh Muhammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai and current prime minister and vice-president of the [UAE](#).

Relations between [Saudi Arabia](#) and [Jordan](#), meanwhile, are on a cordial footing, given that past strains of the Gulf War are now largely in the past. An example is the willingness of both [Saudi Arabia](#) and the [UAE](#) to provide [Jordan](#) with free oil for a three-month period when its supply of discounted Iraqi oil was terminated by the US-led invasion of 2003.

### **Regional defence industrial clusters - wider examples**

Should defence industrial relations among Gulf states further solidify, it will be another example of a global trend towards peer-to-peer defence industrial alliances among emerging materiel producers.

Such "partnerships of equals" have - in many cases - been driven by aspirations of greater military industrial self-reliance, economic growth, and fears of sanctions and strategic weak points emerging through narrow reliance on major suppliers.

Such clusters have been particularly notable in Southeast Asia, where the creation of the Southeast Asia Defence Industry Council (envisaged as developing along the lines of the European Defence Agency) was first mooted in 2009. In South America, meanwhile, tentative ties have been noted among countries such as [Argentina](#), [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#), [Peru](#) and [Uruguay](#).

**Guy Anderson** *Jane's Defence Industry editor, London*

### **Military Ponders Replacement for Canceled Russian S-300 Missile System \***

Defense Minister **Vahidi** on 26 September said the Iranian military is undecided on how to replace the S-300 aerial defense system that was canceled by Russia. The Fars News Agency quoted **Vahidi** as saying that Iran plans to manufacture a similar defense system, "but some of our experts do not believe in [manufacturing] the Russian S-300 missile system." Responding to the issuance of a decree by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev banning the sale of the S-300 as well as tanks, aircraft, and naval vessels to Iran, the Iranian defense minister stated: "We will not build [an Iranian version of the] S-300 air defense system but will manufacture a long-range defense system similar to the S-300 in range." The Mehr News Agency quoted **Vahidi** as saying that a majority of Iranian experts defend developing a long-range anti-aircraft system to replace the Russian-made S-300 missile system. **Vahidi** also charged that Moscow's decision not to deliver its vaunted S-300 defense system to Iran has tarnished Russia's credibility as a reliable supplier of weapon systems to the world. "They showed through this act that they are not reliable and trustworthy, which, of course, we already knew," **Vahidi** said, adding: "This was a big scandal for them as they showed that they are not able to maintain their independence even when dealing with a simple issue."

### **Navy Admiral Says Iran Will Now Allow UAE To Inspect Its Ships \***

Navy Commander Rear Admiral **Habibollah Sayyari** stated that Iran would never allow the United Arab Emirates to inspect Iranian ships, the *Tehran Times* reported on 26 September. Referring to a statement by UAE Ambassador in Washington Yousef Al-Otaiba saying his country has interdicted dozens of shipments that violate sanctions against Iran and has inspected hundreds of Iranian vessels, **Sayyari** stated: "We'll never allow such a country to inspect our ships, and, actually, the UAE will not dare to inspect Iranian ships." Saying such remarks were nothing more than propaganda, he stated: "The Islamic Republic of Iran's Navy is in complete preparedness to defend the country's interests in all waters," and he warned that Iran would reciprocate if its ships were inspected by the UAE [Tehran *Tehran Times* online in English - website of conservative English-language daily published by the Islamic Propagation Organization. URL: [www.tehrantimes.com](http://www.tehrantimes.com)].

### **Defense Minister Says US Arms Sales to Regional States a Plot Aimed at Iran \***

Defense Minister **Vahidi** criticized the United States for the planned sale of weapon systems to Persian Gulf countries and said the measure is part of a wider plot hatched by Washington to sow discord among regional countries, IRNA reported on 22 September. Speaking to reporters at the Sacred Defense Week parade, the defense minister dismissed allegations that the purchase of military equipment by regional countries was in response to Iran's recent military advancements. **Vahidi** explained: "There is no reason for regional countries to fear our weapons and military equipment," and he claimed that the United States is spreading fear of Iran among the Arab states. Reassuring regional nations of the defensive nature of Iran's military power, he said: "We have announced that whatever we have belongs to all the regional nations, and we are even ready to supply ... [Iranian-made weapons] to these countries" [Tehran IRNA in Persian and English - pro-Ahmadinezhad official news agency, controlled by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. URL: [www.irna.ir](http://www.irna.ir)].

## Ahmadinejad Underlines Iran-Bolivia Resistance against Arrogant Powers

**TEHRAN (FNA)- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reiterated that Iran and Bolivia are in the same front in their resistance against the expansionist policies of the arrogant powers.**

9-22-2011

"The two countries stand and resist alongside each other in the same front," Ahmadinejad said in a meeting with Bolivian President Evo Morales in New York on Tuesday.

Pointing to the friendly and brotherly relations between Iran and Bolivia, he stressed, "Today the ties between the two countries have their roots in the bottom of the two nations and officials' hearts and are expanding intensively."

During the meeting, Morales described Iran as a role model for the Latin American states, specially Bolivia, and said the two countries share common views in international issues.

He also underlined that promotion of the level of ties between Tehran and La Paz serves the interests of the two nations and the two regions.

Iran has in recent years expanded friendly ties with Latin America, specially in economic, trade and industrial fields.

Since taking office in 2005, Ahmadinejad has expanded Iran's cooperation with many Latin American states, including Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba.

He visited Bolivia late 2009 and inaugurated an Iranian Red Crescent hospital and other projects completed by Iranian technicians and experts in the country, including a milk factory and a petrochemical complex.

### **Khamane`i Adviser Calls for Collective Cooperation To Ensure Regional Security \***

**Rahim-Safavi** called on neighboring states to form a united front in a bid to enhance security in the region, the Fars News Agency reported on 22 September. "Our recommendation is based on the fact that Iran, which has a 2,000-kilometer [ 1,242-mile] coastline on the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf, can guarantee the security of this sensitive region through all-out cooperation in the political, economic, and military fields with the Persian Gulf littoral states, from Iraq to the six member states of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council," he said. **Rahim-Safavi** reiterated Iran's policy of cooperation to ensure the security and stability of the Gulf and the Middle East region and blamed the United States and Israel for fomenting instability and creating insecurity in the region. "The Israelis, by their 60-year-long occupation of Palestine, and the Americans, by occupying Iraq and Afghanistan, are the main elements behind instability in the region," he claimed.

## **IRGC Officer Claims US and Israeli Forces Involved in Mahabad Terrorist Attack \***

Brig. Gen. **Mohammad Pakpur**, commander of the IRGC Ground Force, claimed that American, Israeli, and Iraqi intelligence agencies were involved in the 22 September terrorist bombing that killed 12 women and children and wounded more than 80 others in Mahabad, West Azarbaijan Province, ISNA reported on 26 September. He made the statement while announcing that the main elements behind the bombing were tracked down and killed in a firefight with security forces on 25 September. "The investigations showed that the Zionist regime's [Israel's] spy agency Mossad was behind this terrorist act ... in collaboration with some American agents and some elements of the Iraqi Baath Party, [who] sent a terrorist team to Iran in order to perpetrate this heinous crime," he stated. "After several days of diligent efforts, the IRGC forces managed to track the terrorists and surrounded them in a border area" near Turkey, **Pakpur** said. He also claimed that the perpetrators were joined by other counter-revolutionary forces and that IRGC troops intercepted them before they could escape into Turkey [Tehran Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA) in Persian and English - conservative news agency that now generally supports government policy; it had previously provided politically moderate reporting; linked to University Jihad. URL: [www.isna.ir](http://www.isna.ir)].

## Iran loans 200 million euros to Bolivia \*

### PressTV

Wed Sep 1, 2010 11:28AM

Iran has extended a credit line of more than 200 million euros to Bolivia to help the industrial development of the South American country.

The agreement included the transfer of technology to Bolivia, Iranian Minister of Industries and Mining Ali Akbar Mehrabian said at a joint press conference with Bolivian President Evo Morales in the capital city of La Paz on Monday, the state-run ABI news agency reported.

The loan could fund mineral exploration and the development of the textile industry, although its use has no restrictions, Mehrabian said.

Morales said the loan was a sign of friendship and given without any conditions, adding that Iran's aid was only the result of the two countries' increased ties.

"We have an international relations policy with all countries and such a policy will continue strengthening our diplomatic, financial and cooperative relations in which we can acquire unconditional loans and credit," he said.

Iran's relations with Bolivia have greatly improved during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government.

In August 2007, Iran pledged to invest 1.1 billion euros in Bolivian agriculture, industry, energy and humanitarian affairs.

The growing ties between Iran and Latin American countries, including Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and Bolivia, have raised concerns in Washington, which has been trying to isolate Tehran over its nuclear program.