



MIDDLE EAST DAILY BULLETIN

GÜNLÜK ORTADOĐU BÜLTENİ

Domestic Policy in the Middle East Countries

Bölge Ülkelerinde İç Siyaset

The Restructuring Proces of Iraq

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04 OCTOBER 2012

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1. IRAQ

- **Talabani meets Iraqi Communist Party Delegation.**

Baghdad / NINA / President Jalal Talabani met, at his office in Baghdad, a senior delegation from the Iraqi Communist Party headed by Hamid Majid Moussa, the Secretary General of the party and the delegation accompanying him.



A presidential statement said that Talabani listened to the perceptions and opinions of the Iraqi Communist Party about the path of the current political crisis and the party's proposals to find a way out.

The statement added that "Talabani pointed , during a meeting with the communist party, to his meetings with the parties and political blocs, stressing the importance of the teamwork and coordination between everyone to narrow the spaces and the disputes and expand the positive understanding in order to

save the political and security situation and service from deteriorations further more."

For his part, the delegation of the Communist Party confirmed its support for the efforts of President Talabani to bring the views and work to dismantle the elements of the current crisis to reach a solution to the controversial issues.

http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GDLGMM

- **Al-Jaafari urges the Iraqi Islamic Party to play a role of bring the views close between Iraqiya and State of Law.**

Baghdad / NINA/ MP, for the Iraqiya coalition, Salim al-Jubouri discussed with the head of the Iraqi National Alliance Ibrahim Jaafari, the repercussions of the political crisis among the parliamentary blocs and the need to build bridges between the political parties in order to serve the interest of the country.

A statement from the Islamic Party said that al-Jubouri stressed the need for coordination with all the political blocs in order to get out of the dilemma that the political process has been reached in Iraq, expressing his coalition's concern of the

continuation of the current crisis, which will be followed by crises if it remains as it is.

For his part, al-Jaafari called on the Iraqi Islamic Party to play a role of bring the views close between the blocs of Iraqiya and the state of law.

Al-Jaafari stressed "the need for dialogue among all the parties, in addition to support the initiative of the President Talabani to gathering the leaders of political blocs at one table to put the problems and differences to be solved in stages and timetable.

http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GDLGMJ

- **Al-Jaafari meets Iranian Defense Minister.**

BAGHDAD / NINA / Ibrahim al-Jaafari, head of the Iraqi National Alliance discussed with the Iranian Defense Minister, Ahmad Wahidi the security situation in the region.

A statement from Jaafari's office said that both sides discussed the security situation in the region, and the need to develop the cooperation between the two countries to

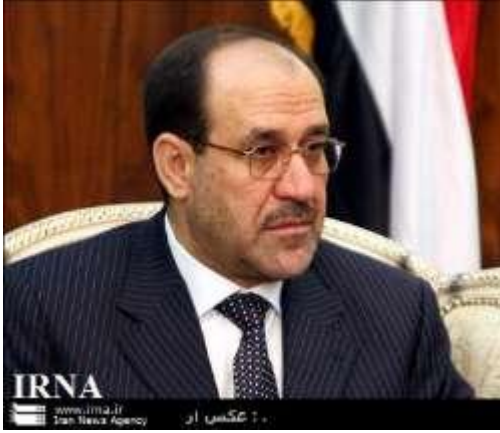
support stability and security, and counter-terrorism to eliminate it for the benefit of the two neighbors, and the whole region, adding, the Iraqi Acting Defense Minister Saadoun al-Dulaimi and Iranian Ambassador, Hassan Dnaih attended the meeting

The statements noted that the two sides stressed the necessity of activating the mutual visits between the two sides and enhance security relations to suit the nature of the circumstances surrounding Iraq and Iran.

http://www.ninanews.com/english/News_Details.asp?ar95_VQ=GDLGLD

- **Development of Iran-Iraq defense ties will contribute to regional peace, stability: Iraqi premier**

Tehran, Oct 3, IRNA – Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said on Wednesday that expansion of Tehran-Baghdad defense cooperation is the main contributor to peace and stability of the entire region.



He made the remarks in a meeting with the Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier-General Ahmad Vahidi who is currently in Baghdad.

Vahidi's Iraq visit is the first by an Iranian Defense Minister since the victory of the Islamic Revolution 1979.

Expressing pleasure over Vahidi's trip to Iraq, Maliki called for further development of Tehran-Baghdad defense cooperation.

"Given the regional situation, promoting bilateral ties in the field of defense will contribute a lot to regional peace and stability," he said.

Hailing Iran's achievements in the various sectors, he appreciated Iranian participation in Iraq's reconstruction.

Vahidi, for his part, lauded Iraq's regional policies as being based on peace and friendship and serving interests of regional states.

He said that the two countries' defense ties can serve as a role model for the other regional states to follow suit.

"Given the fact that Iran has undertaken leadership of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Iraq has taken over the periodical presidency of Arab League, they can jointly play a crucial role in settling crises and curbing regional conflicts," Vahidi said.

He appreciated the Iraqi government's efforts to expel the terrorist MKO members from Iraq and said that regional states are able to eradicate terrorism and insecurity in the region through cooperation and joint efforts.

<http://old.irna.ir/News/Politic/Development-of-Iran-Iraq-defense-ties-will-contribute-to--regional-peace,-stability,-Iraqi-premier/80353957>

- **Iraq steps us its rhetoric on Turkey**

TEHRAN, Oct. 3 (MNA) - The recent violation of Turkish warplanes into Iraqi airspace generated swift criticism inside Iraq, especially from members of the Iraqi parliament's committee on defense and security. The incident has opened up a new chapter in the war of words between Turkey and Iraq.

Relations between the two neighboring countries have been strained due to Ankara's refusal to extradite Iraq's fugitive vice president Tariq al-Hashemi, who has been sentenced to death in absentia on terror charges by an Iraqi court. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's surprise visit to the Iraqi semi-autonomous Kurdistan region was also met with ire in Baghdad.

However, observers describe Turkey's support for the extremist groups inside Iraq and Syria as the main reason for cooling of relations between the two countries. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's rhetoric about change, coupled with his arming of Syrian rebels, has disappointed the Arab street. Turkey maintains its support for Sunnis in Iraq and Salafis in Syria, demonstrating its sectarian plans for the region.

According to the Turkish parliament, the military is authorized to conduct operations inside Iraq's airspace under the pretext of targeting hideouts of Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants. These operations have intensified after the withdrawal of the United States from Iraq, which is not yet capable of securing its airspace. Turkey was even pulling the same trick in the time of Saddam Hussein.

Turkey also serves as a conduit for the transfer of terrorist groups to Syria and Iraq. Terrorist elements from various countries including Pakistan, Chechnya, Morocco, and Tunisia are infiltrating into Syria and Iraq in huge numbers. This has created many security challenges for the central government in Baghdad and is regarded as one of the main points of dispute between Iraq and Turkey.

Turkey must extradite the fugitive vice-president and stop fueling sectarian conflict in Iraq. Turkish officials should also change their approach towards the political developments in the region. Otherwise, the prospect of Ankara's relations with the Arab world, especially with Iraq, may become all the more grim.

Seyyed Asadollah Athari is a senior research fellow at the Institute for Middle East Strategic Studies in Tehran and an expert on Turkey.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1711265>

2. IRAN

- **Police in Iran clash with currency protesters**

Police have reportedly fired tear gas to disperse demonstrators as they protested against the collapse of rial.

Iranian riot police have clashed with protesters in the capital Tehran over the collapse of the rial, the country's currency, which has lost a third of its value against the dollar in a week.

Police on Wednesday reportedly fired tear gas to disperse demonstrators, including currency exchange dealers.

It was the first sign of public unrest over the plunging currency.

The fall of the rial, which has now lost more than 80 per cent of its value compared with a year ago, with 17 per

cent of its value shed on Monday alone, has been largely blamed on Western sanctions imposed over the country's nuclear programme.

The rial slipped another four per cent on Tuesday to close at 36,100 to the dollar, according to exchange tracking websites.

Hundreds of police in anti-riot gear stormed the capital's currency exchange district of Ferdowsi, arresting illegal money changers and ordering licenced bureaus and other shops closed, witnesses said.

Several arrests were seen, carried out by uniformed police or plain-clothes security officers.

A protest in Tehran's historic Grand Bazaar - a complex of shops vital to the city - also took place but was quickly put down by police.

"We closed because we don't know what is going to happen" in terms of the currency market, one shopkeeper said.

Economic 'war'

Khalil Helal, a police commander, was quoted by the Mehr news agency as saying that police were going to take action against shopkeepers who closed their businesses, for "disturbing" the situation.

The head of the national police, Esmail Ahmadi Moghadam, was quoted by the Fars news agency as saying a special unit comprised of police chiefs and government economic officials had been created "to combat those perturbing the currency market."

He added that many people were keeping stashes of foreign currency and gold at home, "which is having a negative effect on the economy".

The protests came after Mahmoud Ahemedinjad, Iran's president, said that his country will press on with its nuclear programme despite the problems caused by Western sanctions, including a dramatic slide in its currency's value.

"We are not a people to retreat on the nuclear issue," he told a news conference in Tehran on Tuesday.

"If somebody thinks they can pressure Iran, they are certainly wrong and they must correct their behaviour," he said.

Ahmadinejad said the currency plunge was part of an economic "war" waged by the West on the Islamic republic and "a psychological war on the exchange market."

Iran, he said, had sufficient foreign currency reserves.

Those reserves were estimated at around \$100bn at the end of last year, thanks to surging oil exports.

'Enormous pressure'

The White House said Tuesday that Iranians blamed their leaders for the rising deprivation caused by US and international sanctions over Tehran's nuclear program.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said the fast-deteriorating economic situation in Iran, which has also sparked price hikes in basic foods, was a sign the government in Tehran was under "enormous pressure".

"The Iranian people are aware of who is responsible for the circumstances that have befallen the Iranian economy as a result of the regime's intransigence in its refusal to abide by its obligations."

The US Treasury estimates Iran's foreign earnings have been cut by \$5bn a month under the Western economic measures.

In his media conference, Ahmadinejad backtracked on hints he had made during a visit to New York at the UN General Assembly that Iran could consider direct negotiations with the United States on the nuclear issue.

"Direct negotiation is possible, but needs conditions, and I do not think the conditions are there for talks. Dialogue should be based on fairness and mutual respect," he said.

"I think that this situation cannot last in the relations between Iran and the United States."

Government critics

Hardliners in Iran criticised Ahmadinejad on his return for opening the door to the possibility of talks with the US. That also fuelled criticism that his government has mismanaged the economy.

The chairman of Tehran's chamber of commerce, Yahya Ale-Eshagh, was quoted as saying by the Mehr news agency that "part of this (currency) tumult is due to sanctions."

But he also said "the person who is not able to manage in a time of crisis should not continue working in his post."

Mohammad Bayatian, a member of parliament on an industry and mines commission, said, according to the parliamentary website icana.ir, that "a petition has been prepared to question the president."

He said the petition was "due to the government not paying attention to the parliament's remarks over its management of the forex market."

The parliament's presiding board was to decide whether to admit the petition. If it goes ahead, it would only be to hear

Ahmadinejad speak on the issue, and it would not involve a confidence vote or other serious procedure.

Mehdi Mohammadi, a figure close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, wrote in a piece for the Vatan Emrouz newspaper on Tuesday: "Is the currency situation in the market due to sanctions? No ... The problem is not a lack of (foreign) currency."

He blamed the government, and unidentified "mafias" he said were profiting from the currency volatility.

Mohammadi also said holding talks with the US was not an option.

"Past experience shows that speaking of negotiations in these conditions only sends a signal of weakness. The enemy only makes concessions and takes you seriously when you're strong," he wrote.

On the prospect of a military conflict breaking out over the nuclear issue, Ahmadinejad reaffirmed that he was "not very concerned" about persistent threats from Israel.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012103113527747494.html>

- **Islamic Union of the Bazaar condemns suspicious moves at Tehran Bazaar**

TEHRAN, Oct. 3 (MNA) -- The Islamic Union of the Bazaar issued a statement on Wednesday condemning the efforts by some individuals to close shops in parts of the Grand Bazaar of Tehran.

It said the people who brought some parts of the Tehran Bazaar to a standstill have been identified and will be held accountable for their suspicious activities at the proper time.

"...(we) condemn such treasonous acts and declare that despite some criticism about the performance of the administration in the economic sphere and the president, we will defend the honor of the system and the country to the last drop of our blood and will not allow the enemies, especially the munafeqin (hypocrites), to achieve their goals," part of the statement said.

On Wednesday, a number of people held a demonstration near the Grand Bazaar of Tehran, using the sharp fall in the value of the Iranian rial as a pretext.

According to reports, businessmen are unhappy about the performance of the administration in regulating the foreign exchange market, saying it has caused instability in prices.

Ahmad Karimi Esfahani, the chairman of the Islamic Union of the Bazaar, said shopkeepers did not open their businesses because they were “worried about security,” but added that he expected them to reopen on Thursday.

<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1711812>

3. SYRIA

- **Turkey renews shelling of Syrian targets**

Retaliation follows mortar attack from Syrian territory that killed family of five in border town of Akcakale.

Turkish armed forces have launched artillery attacks on a Syrian area near its border in response to a mortar attack which killed five members of the same family in southeastern Turkey.

Turkish state media has said that Turkey has resumed cross-border artillery strikes at Syrian targets on Thursday morning.

There are unconfirmed reports that several Syrian troops were killed as a result of overnight Turkish shelling across the border in Tal al-Abyad.

The government in Ankara is expected to ask the parliament on Thursday to authorise cross-border military operations in Syria, according to Turkish media reports.

'Violation of international law'

In a statement on Wednesday, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's prime minister, said the attacks, carried out following radar tracking, were within the rules of engagement.

Separately, Bulent Arinc, the deputy prime minister, said: "There has been an attack on Turkey's mainland and its citizens lost their lives. There is definitely a response to it in international law ... We are not blinded by rage, but we will protect our rights to the end in the face of such an attack on our soil that killed our people."

Al Jazeera's Andrew Simmons, reporting from Antakya on the Turkish-Syrian border, said Arinc's mention of "certain responsibilities" contained within NATO treaty articles, could mean that Turkey responded without consulting international bodies first.

Turkey has also asked the United Nations Security Council to take "necessary action" to stop Syrian aggression, calling the mortar attack "a flagrant violation of international law".

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said: "Several shells from the Turkish side of the border fell on Syrian military positions near the village of Tal al-Abyad".

Western officials, from Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the NATO secretary-general, to Hillary Clinton, the US secretary of state, quickly condemned the initial attack from the Syrian side of the border, which struck a house in the border town of Akcakale.

Omran Zoabi, Syrian information minister, said Damascus was looking into the origin of the deadly cross-border shelling.

In a statement reported by state television, Zoabi said: "Syria offers its sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to our friends the Turkish people".

US 'outraged'

Clinton said the White House was "outraged" by the "very dangerous situation" created by the attack.

Turkey agreed to convene an urgent meeting of NATO members in Brussels to discuss the shelling.

The meeting of NATO ambassadors fell under Article 4 of the NATO charter which provides for consultations when a member state feels its territorial integrity, political independence or security is under threat.

At the meeting, Turkey was expected to argue it was "fully entitled to respond" in the manner in which it did, Al Jazeera's Simmons said.

Witnesses said policemen were also injured in the Akcakale shelling, which originated only kilometres away from the Syrian border.

Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkey's foreign minister, briefed Ban Ki-moon, the UN chief, on the situation shortly after word of the attack reached Ankara.

Though this, the mortar attack, marks the third instance of Syrian gunfire or artillery reaching Turkish territory, it is the "first time Turkey has actively become involved" in the situation, our correspondent said.

Calling it a "very serious escalation", he said the last time there was such tension between the neighbouring countries was when a Turkish war plane was downed in June.

However, Turkey did not retaliate in that instance.

Aleppo explosions

Earlier on Wednesday, four blasts struck a government-controlled district close to a military officers' club in the northern

Syrian city of Aleppo, killing dozens and wounding more than 100, opposition activists said.

"A medical source said that at least 40 people were killed and 90 injured," the UK-based watchdog group SOHR said.

"Most of them were regime troops."

Meanwhile, official television channel Al-Ikhbariya said 31 people were killed and dozens more wounded.

The attacks within minutes of each other struck the main Saadallah al-Jabiri Square near a military officers' club and a hotel.

Syrian state television reported of "terrorist explosions" in the city.

Al Jazeera's Rula Amin, reporting from Beirut in neighbouring Lebanon, said there was still no clear claim of responsibility for the attacks.

"Fighting between the government forces and the rebels continue, but no one is making any progress. The civilians are paying the price for it," she said.

Aleppo, Syria's commercial hub and largest city, has seen intensified fighting between regime forces and rebels trying to oust President Bashar al-Assad, especially after the fighters launched a new offensive last week.

Aleppo-based activist Mohammad Saeed said the explosions went off minutes apart at one of the city's main squares.

He said the blasts appear to have been caused by car bombs and were followed by clashes and heavy gunfire.

Possible suicide bombings

In a statement, the SOHR said the explosions went off following a clash between guards at the military club and armed men, suggesting the attacks may have been suicide bombings.

Suicide and car bombings targeting security agencies and soldiers have become common in Syria, particularly in the capital, Damascus, during the course of the 18-month-uprising against Assad.

But such bombings have been rare in Aleppo, which was spared the mayhem

that struck other Syrian cities during the first year of the revolt.

Then, in February, two suicide car bombers hit security compounds in Aleppo's industrial centre, killing 28 people.

Nationwide, at least 104 people were killed on Tuesday, 57 civilians, 26 soldiers and 21 rebels, the SOHR said.

The uprising against Assad, that erupted in March 2011, has gradually morphed into a bloody civil war.

The conflict has killed more than 30,000 people, activists say, and has devastated entire neighbourhoods in Syria's main cities, including Aleppo.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/2012103181110169706.html>

- **Turkey urges U.N. to take action on Syrian 'threat'**

Turkey on Wednesday asked the U.N. Security Council to take the "necessary action" to stop Syrian aggression and ensure that the government there respect Turkish territorial sovereignty after Syrian shells hit the Turkish town of Akcakale on

Wednesday, killing five civilians, including a mother and her three children.



“This is an act of aggression by Syria against Turkey,” Turkish U.N. Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan said in a letter to the president of the 15-nation Security Council, Guatemalan Ambassador Gert Rosenthal.

“It constitutes a flagrant violation of international law as well as a breach of international peace and security,” said the letter, which was obtained by Reuters.

U.N. diplomats said the 15-nation council was hoping to issue a non-binding statement later on Wednesday that would condemn the mortar attack and demand an end to violations of Turkey's territorial sovereignty.

“Turkey kindly requests for the Security Council to take necessary action to put an end to such acts of aggression and to ensure that Syria respects Turkey's

sovereignty, territorial integrity and security,” Apakan wrote.

It was unlikely that the council would do anything more than issue a statement for the time being. The Security Council has been deadlocked on Syria's 18-month-long conflict for more than a year.

Meanwhile on the same day, NATO in an emergency meeting backed Turkey in its military response to the incident and called on Syria to abide by international law.

NATO ambassadors met under the alliance's article 4, for consultations when a member state feels its territorial integrity is under threat.

“The Alliance continues to stand by Turkey and demands the immediate cessation of such aggressive acts against an Ally and urges the Syrian regime to end flagrant violations of international law,” a statement said after the meeting was called at Ankara's request.

Turkey on Wednesday bombed Syrian targets in response to Syrian mortar shelling, the prime minister's office said.

“Our armed forces in the border region immediately retaliated against this heinous attack... by shelling the targets spotted by radar,” Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan’s office said in a statement.

Syria said it is looking into the origin of the deadly attacks.

“The concerned parties are currently studying the origin of the fire against Turkey,” Information Omran Zoabi said. said in a statement reported by state television.

“Syria offers it sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to our friends the Turkish people,” he added.

The United States condemned the “depraved” Syrian shelling and said it was monitoring the tense situation closely.

“This is yet another example of the depraved behavior of the Syrian regime, and why it must go,” Pentagon spokesman George Little said.

“We regret the loss of life in Turkey, a strong ally, and continue to monitor the situation closely.”

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton voiced American outrage at Syria’s shelling of Turkish territories and described the situation as “very dangerous.”

“We are outraged that the Syrians have been shooting across the border. We are very regretful about the loss of life on the Turkish side,” Clinton told reporters after Syrian shells hit the Turkish town of Akcakale.

She added it was a “very, very dangerous” situation, and would be talking later with Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu about “what the best way forward would be.”

“This also comes down to a regime that is causing untold suffering to its own people solely driven by their desire to stay in power,” Clinton said after talks in the State Department with Kazakh Foreign Minister Yerlan Idrisov.

The United States has long insisted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad should step

down and end a 19-month rebellion that has claimed some 30,000 lives.

Damascus is “aided and abetted by nations like Iran that are standing firmly by the Assad regime regardless of the loss of life, the damage that is happening both inside Syria and now increasingly across Syria’s borders with their neighbors,” Clinton added.

All “responsible nations need to band together” to persuade the Assad regime to agree to a ceasefire and begin a political transition, she said.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said earlier that the cross-border shelling was a clear violation of Turkey’s sovereignty.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/03/241702.html>

- **Ahmadinejad: No one can decide on behalf of Syrian nation**

Tehran, Oct 4, IRNA – President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said here Wednesday ending Syrian crisis basically is possible thru national understanding, adding, “No one can decide on behalf of Syrian nation; we

must all try to provide for national understanding and free elections there.



According to the IRNA Wednesday night news service, President Ahmadinejad made the remark in an interview with Qatar’s Al-Jazeera news TV on the sidelines of his recent New York visit, in which he elaborated on the difference observed in the tone and contents of his UN General Assembly address this year with those of the previous seven years, arguing, “This year’s address was the sum up of my previous years’ lectures with a glance at the prevailing realities.”

The president reiterated, “Throughout the previous years the collection of my addresses at the UN General Assembly were on justice, human prestige, freedom, negation of occupation, unilateralism, and need for respecting equal rights for entire world nations.”

He added, “This time, too, the context of my address was in the same framework, and only instead of elaborating on the problems with the ruling system over the world, the apparatus and method of replacing it with the new world order was discussed.”

Ahmadinejad said, “This year’s address was not contextually different with those of the previous years, but its framework was inclined towards the new world order and the things to be done to lead to the establishment of that order.”

Regarding the threats made by the racist Zionist regime against Iran, the president reiterated, “Today one of the major problems with the current world order is that some regimes permit themselves to threaten the other independent nations, and this point was included in my this year address at the UN General Assembly.”

Emphasizing that the Islamic Republic of Iran basically does not consider as serious talk the Zionist regime’s threats, Ahmadinejad reiterated, “The Zionists see the end of their days near at hand and that is the reason why they try to create crises hoping to find a way to save

themselves, but today some American officials have come up with the conclusion that the world is in need of reforms and the Zionist regime’s hands must be kept fast tied by the American administration.”

The president pointed out that the Iranian officials believe the current world order cannot continue, adding, “Can anyone claim that this world order is sustainable? Of course the meaning of what I say is not that the oppressors would be overthrown tomorrow; I rather mean the end of a historical era is near at hand and a new era is going to begin, in which the current oppressors would no longer be able to influence the global equations.”

Ahmadinejad added, “Although there was no need to refer to the Zionist regime’s threats independently during the UN address, but I condemned occupation, threatening the independent nations, aggression, and unilateralism in my entire addresses.”

In response to a question on the possible future of the Syrian crisis, the IRI president reiterated, “The3 Syrian developments are quite significant events which have become very complicated due to the role

playing of various factors. I have many times expressed my viewpoints regarding the need for respecting the prestige of the entire nations, justice and freedom for choosing, and I believe Syria, too, like the other countries in the world is in need of reforms.”

Ahmadinejad said, “My argument is over the method of applying the reforms and we believe war and armed engagements are not appropriate ways for solving the existing problems in Syria.”

The president pointed out that he personally believes it is not possible to remain indifferent about the human beings, emphasizing, “When I wrote to the former US president I did it merely as a kind move, because I had thought maybe this move would attract his attention towards the realities and that it would open his eyes towards new horizons. Now I have the same idea regarding Syria and getting killed of any human being at any side of the engagements deeply saddens me.”

Ahmadinejad noted that there are currently two viewpoints regarding the Syrian problems, arguing, “Some people

believe that the problems should be solved resorting to war and in this line they encourage the opponents of the government; although these people might achieve success in the short run, but in the long run they would achieve the reverse effect, because achieving power by war waging is not possible in any place, particularly in Syria, where the tribal system is ruling and this method would be quite perilous for the future of that country.”

The president focusing on the second way out of the Syrian crisis spoke about national understanding, adding, “I believe this way is to the benefit of Syria today and tomorrow; no one can decide on behalf of the Syrian nation, but we are obliged today to spend efforts aimed at providing the path for national understanding and holding free and fair elections in that country.”

In response to a question on stepping down of Bashar Assad from power in Syria, Ahmadinejad reiterated, “Do you suppose that Assad asks for permission from Iran for doing what he does? Such talks do not solve any problem. We must all do our best for achieving national

understanding and holding quite free elections in Syria and to urge the engaged sides to accept this solution, because I believe this is both a logical and an Islamic way.”

Ahmadinejad said, “Iran and Syria have had historical ties and have broad cooperation in economic and other comprehensive fields; but if anyone thinks that Iran decides over the fate of Syria, they are definitely wrong, because such a thing is absolutely impractical.”

The IRI president added, “unfortunately some people are after taking personal revenge in Syria with each other, and particularly after taking revenge from Iran, but we have always announced our stands clearly and openly regarding the regional developments and those in Syria, in Tunisia, in Egypt, in Libya, and in the other countries.”

Ahmadinejad said, “Iran was not agreed with military interference in Libya and I wish an independent group comprised of Islamic countries would have been established and managed the developments in Libya so that so many people would not have got killed in that

country and so much destroying of infrastructure facilities would not have occurred there; contributing to solving disputes and to the establishment of righteousness and justice among the Muslims is the strict order of the dear Prophet of Islam (P), which has unfortunately been mainly ignored.”

In response to the question “Is Iran rally not assisting the present Syrian government?” The president replied, “Do you really think Syria does not have friends to rush to assist it before Iran would do so?”

Ahmadinejad said, “If problems similar to what exists in Syria would occur in countries such as Qatar, Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, or other countries, would war be proposed as the way to solve those crises?”

He added, “Armed engagements inside the Islamic countries is not to the benefit of the Muslims, but only the enemies of the Islamic Ummah would be happy seeing such situations.”

The president clearly responded to the Al-Jazeera correspondent’s claim, who said

that the Syrian people are suspicious and distrustful about the Islamic Republic's stands in Syria, saying, "I love the entire Syrian nation and Iran, in addition to its historical and intimate relations with Syria, and I, not only as the head of government and the official spokesman of the Islamic Republic's stands, declare that Iran is only after harbingering national understanding in Syria."

Ahmadinejad emphasized, "I would never align with the supporters of waging war in Syria; today's conditions would pass and the future generations would analyze Iran's relations and performance regarding Syria. We believe we must also respond to God regarding our stands on Syria."

The reporter said that the King of Qatar has asked for dispatching an Arabic military force to Syria commissioned to end the armed engagements, if this would take place would Iran harmonize with the move?

Ahmadinejad said, "There are other countries that have been waiting for the presence of joint military force of the

Arabs for 60 years; why are they not assisted?"

He reiterated, "Beyond doubt Iran would never support waging war, considering the way to achieve justice in negating armed engagements and halting the massacre of the people, believing that justice cannot be achieved amid bloodshed."

Ahmadinejad reiterated, "If the Arab countries are supposed to interfere in the matter this way, we would have no entry to the initiative; although I am an Iranian, but before that I am a Muslim and a human being, and I believe getting killed of even one person aimed at solving the Syrian problems is unjustifiable."

The president said, "If the entire countries' efforts would be focused on harbingering national understanding in Syria there would be no longer need to spending the oil money for buying weapons and killing the Muslim brethren there; suppose the Syrian government was ousted, would that mark the end of the problems there? No! Answering before God's altar of power would remain."

Ahmadinejad reiterated, “If there would be general agreement that the engaged parties in Syria should be brought to the negotiation table, then it would be possible to propose political solutions so that if one side would refrain from accepting such solutions we would urge it to yield to negotiations; war waging is easy but peacemaking is a tough job, but wars, even the defense wars and not the invasion, should be the last possible solution.”

In response to the possibility of evolutions in Iran-Egypt relations, the president said, “Iran and Egypt are two great nations and the centers of historical developments, which have had brotherly relations as of a remote historical point. They are two great assets for the regional countries, which side by side of each other, if possible, can serve the interests of both their own countries and the entire regional nations, several folds greater.”

Ahmadinejad said, “Just imagine that Iran, Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the rest of the regional countries would stand firm side by side of each other. What would happen then? Would

anybody dare to invade the regional countries any longer?”

The president reiterated, “The two governments of Iran and Egypt cannot keep on existing separate from one another and they would not remain so in the future, and I am sure beyond the political frameworks, they would be side by side of each other with much closer relations.”

<http://old.irna.ir/News/Politic/Ahmadinejad,-No-one-can-decide-on-behalf-of-Syrian-nation/80354261>

- **Information Minister: Authorities Investigating Source of Gunfire That Claimed Lives of Turkish Woman and Her Children**

DAMASCUS, (SANA) – Information Minister Omran al-Zoubi said on Wednesday that the relevant authorities in Syria are investigating the source of the gunfire that claimed the lives of a Turkish woman and her children, offering sincerest condolences on behalf of the Syrian government to the family of the deceased and the Turkish people.

"In case of border incidents that occur between any two neighboring countries,

countries and governments must act wisely, rationally and responsibly, particularly since there's a special condition on the Syrian-Turkish borders in terms of the presence of undisciplined terrorist groups spread across the borders who have varying agendas and identities," the Minister told the Syrian TV, affirming that these groups constitute a threat to Syria's security and regional security.

Minister al-Zoubi stressed that the Syrian-Turkish borders are long and are being used to smuggle weapons, equipment and terrorists into Syria where they committed massacres, the latest such massacre being the one committed by Al Qaeda in Aleppo.

He said that Syria bases its conduct with neighboring countries on good neighborly relations and respecting the sovereignty of countries, and that Syria asks in return that its sovereignty be respected, in addition to cooperating to control borders and prevent militants and terrorists from sneaking across, which is what Syria always does.

<http://sana.sy/eng/21/2012/10/04/445137.htm>

4. ISRAEL-PALESTINE

- **Palestinian UN status likely to be debated in November**

UNITED NATIONS, (Reuters) - The United Nations is likely to hold a debate on whether to upgrade the Palestinians' U.N. status to a sovereign country in mid-November - after the U.S. election, the president of the 193-member U.N. General Assembly said on Wednesday.

Having failed last year to win recognition of full statehood at the United Nations, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said last week he would seek a less-ambitious status upgrade at the world body to make it a "non-member state" like the Vatican.

The Palestinians' current U.N. status is an "observer entity." If Abbas wins, that would change to "observer state."

"Come the middle of November, there's going to be an international debate on the Palestine issue in the General Assembly," U.N. General Assembly President Vuk Jeremic told a news conference.

"There are electoral and political calendars in many parts of the world," he

said in a reference covering the Nov. 6 U.S. election.

"My understanding is the Palestinian Authority leadership is going to engage in extensive discussions ... coming to a conclusion as to what they want to do some time in November."

Upgraded status for a Palestinian state could be uncomfortable for Israel. Being registered as a state rather than an entity would mean the Palestinians could join bodies such as the International Criminal Court and file a raft of complaints against Israel for its continued occupation.

An upgraded status would also anger Israel's close ally, the United States, which argues that a Palestinian state can only be created through direct negotiations.

There have been no direct Palestinian talks with Israel on peace since 2010, when the Palestinians refused to resume negotiations unless the Israeli government suspended settlement building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said last week that the two-state solution was

the only sustainable option for peace. But he said the continued growth of Israeli settlements meant that "the door may be closing, for good."

The so-called two-state solution involves the creation of a state of Palestine to exist peacefully alongside Israel.

<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=31306>

5. AFRICA and EGYPT

• Egyptians divided over Mursi's first 100 days in office

President Mohamed Mursi came to power with ambitious plans to solve the country's woes, but his first 100 days have left Egyptians divided over his achievements so far.



Some say he is off to a good start, others say he has dashed their hopes of tangible change, while still others praise his defiance of the powerful military.

During his electoral campaign, Mursi laid out a detailed 64-point plan to provide quick solutions to the country's chronic problems in a bid ease the daily struggle of millions of Egyptians within 100 days in office. The issues he listed included traffic, security, rubbish, bread and fuel.

The pledge prompted activists to set up the Mursi Meter website to track the fulfillment of the president's promises.

With the end of the period just round the corner, the site whose Facebook page garnered more than 100,000 "likes", said that Mursi, who ran on the ticket of the powerful Muslim Brotherhood, had fully achieved four points and started work on 24 others since taking office on June 30.

It said 43 percent of respondents in an online survey it conducted were satisfied with his achievements. It did not give details of the poll.

Another survey conducted by a cabinet think tank and published in the state-owned Al-Ahram daily said 37.2 percent of Egyptians had not even heard of the 100-day pledge, while 46.2 percent believe

that he will have achieved only parts of his promises.

Presidential spokesman Yasser Ali said Mursi will announce "all that has been achieved in his first 100 days in office with full transparency and clarity."

On the Egyptian street, reviews were mixed.

"Nothing tangible has changed in the first 100 days," said investment banker Karim Mohammed, as his car rolled slowly in Cairo's notorious gridlock during his one and half hour daily commute to work.

"The traffic crisis has eased in some areas but it is still the same in others," he told AFP.

"It will not be resolved in 100 days, it needs a lot more time, Mursi made a mistake by promising to resolve the daily issues in 100 days," said Mohammed, who voted for Mursi in the second round of presidential elections in June.

As part of his plan, Mursi vowed to rid the streets of the piles of rubbish building up across the country.

“The country could have been managed better than the way Mursi is handling it,” said Ragia Tarek, 22, who works for a dairy company.

She said she still has to walk past garbage on her way to work every day from her home in the working class Imbaba neighborhood.

“Nothing has changed, except for the security situation, but things are still bad,” she added.

In the past three months, Egypt has experienced increased power cuts that sometimes last for hours, while a fuel and diesel crisis has at times paralyzed the country, with mile-long queues forming outside petrol stations. Prices for gas canisters -- used in many homes for cooking and heating -- have spiked.

Housewife Ilham Mustafa said she buys her gas canisters on the black market for 50 Egyptian pounds (nearly eight dollars), a tenfold increase over their official selling price of five Egyptian pounds.

“I buy bread that costs five times more than the government subsidized bread, which Mursi promised to improve because it is not fit for human consumption,” she added.

The Morsi Meter website said the president had failed to address the bread problem and the independent Al-Shorouk daily said that five people were killed in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria as they fought to get to the front of the bread queue.

“I don't see any improvement in any area where he promised reform,” said Mustafa but conceded that “the problems of the past 30 years cannot be resolved in 100 days.”

Fady Girgis, a government employee, said he waits for two hours at a petrol station every time he tries to fill his battered old orange car with diesel.

“Things have not improved since before the revolution” that toppled president Hosni Mubarak last year.

But Girgis, who took part in the protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square, said that despite all

that, Mursi managed to remove military rule.

“That is one thing to his credit,” he told AFP.

On August 12, Mursi forced the leadership of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces -- which oversaw the transition from Mubarak’s rule-- into retirement.

Mursi had been involved in a bitter power struggle with the SCAF, which had issued a constitutional document granting the army sweeping powers. That document was later revoked by Mursi.

“Its’ enough that Mursi rid us of the military council, this was not expected at all,” enthused Essam Abdel Hamid, 48, who owns a mobile telephone shop in Cairo.

Abdel Hamid said the rest of the crises facing Mursi “need people to stand together.”

As for Mohammed Said, 65, who owns a small grocery store, Mursi has dashed people's hopes.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/03/241663.html>

- **Female member runs for chairmanship of Muslim Brotherhood’s party**

Sabah al-Sakkari, a female member of the Muslim Brotherhood’s political wing Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), is running for the first time in the chairmanship elections to replace outgoing chairman of the party Mohammed Mursi, the current Egyptian president.



Sakkari denied allegations that her candidacy aims at embellishing the image of the Brotherhood, frequently accused of discriminating against women.

“I will never accept that the party or the group uses me like a decoration so that people can say the Freedom and Justice was the first party to nominate a woman for chairmanship because this is against my principles,” she told Al Arabiya.

Sakkari stressed that women in the Freedom and Justice Party do play a major role and are not like many claim used as a tool to convey an image of tolerance and modernity.

“We have a political role and we are serving the country through the party exactly like men do. Women in the party are strong and will never allow anyone to strip them of their rights.”

Sakkari said she is taking her nomination seriously and that she will do her best to win through the platform she will offer.

“In my platform, I pay special attention to women and youths, whom I believe should get the chance to occupy the highest positions in the party. Women in particular are very important since the progress of any society is closely related to them.”

Sakkari said that if she becomes the FJP chairwoman, she will not make unilateral decisions and will always consult other members of the party.

When asked whether in case she wins the chairmanship of the party, she can later

run for presidency like what happened with the party’s President Mursi, Sakkari said that Muslim scholars have differed about the presidency of women.

“However, what they all agreed on is that a woman cannot be a Caliph, but there is nothing to prove that she cannot rule over one state within the Muslim nation.”

Sakkari said she didn’t mind running for presidency if members of the Freedom and Justice party agree to her nomination.

“It is also important that the culture of the society changes so that people can accept a female president.”

In response to reports that a woman from the Muslim Brotherhood has to seek her husband’s approval before assuming any political position, Sakkari pointed out the difference between approval and consultation.

“I would never run for or assume any position without telling my husband, but in this case I consult him rather than seek his permission as long as he initially approved my work in politics.”

Sakkari is a graduate of the Faculty of Pharmacy. She is married to a professor at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and is mother to four children. She was chairing of the Women's Committee in the party's Central Cairo branch.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/03/241625.html>

- **U.S. tracking Libya consulate attackers: report**

The U.S. military and intelligence agencies are compiling detailed dossiers on those believed to have attacked the U.S. consulate in Libya ahead of possible retaliation, the New York Times reported.



Citing U.S. officials, the Times reported late Tuesday that the top-secret Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) was collecting information on the deadly attack last month that killed a U.S. ambassador and three other Americans.

U.S. President Barack Obama has vowed to bring those behind the attack to justice, but has faced mounting criticism as officials have struggled to explain how it happened and who was behind it.

The Times said the information now being compiled could be used to launch drone strikes or commando raids against suspects, but that no decision has yet been taken on any potential target.

“They are putting together information on where these individuals live, who their family members and their associates are, and their entire pattern of life,” the Times quoted an American official as saying.

The Sept. 11 attack came just weeks before the Nov. 6 presidential election, in which Obama hopes to secure a second term.

The president has touted his foreign policy achievements, especially the killing of Osama bin Laden in May 2011, but has faced accusations of lax security at the consulate in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi.

The administration has also stumbled in its statements about the attack, initially characterizing it as a violent protest against an anti-Islam Internet video and then calling it a “terrorist” attack linked to al-Qaeda.

The Times said suspicion has fallen on Ansar al-Shariah, a hardline Islamist militia in Benghazi that may have links to al-Qaeda.

The United States could face tough choices as it pursues suspects in Libya, where a NATO air operation helped rebels overthrow and kill longtime dictator Muammar Qaddafi last year.

Pro-American sentiment runs high in Libya -- where newly elected leaders condemned the consulate attack -- but could quickly sour if the United States takes military action inside the country.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/03/241573.html>

6. JORDAN and LEBANON

• Hezbollah men killed in Lebanon blasts

Armed group announces "martyrdom of three fighters" in explosions in weapons depot in country's eastern Bekaa Valley.

Lebanon's Hezbollah has announced the deaths of three of its fighters in a series of blasts at a weapons-storage depot in the country's eastern Bekaa Valley.

A Lebanese security official had previously said that at least nine people were killed in Wednesday's explosions, including four Syrian workers.

"Sources from the resistance [Hezbollah] reported that a blast took place in an arms depot of shells, ammunition and remnants of Israel's shelling in the area," Hezbollah, the powerful Shia Muslim group, said in a statement carried by its television channel, Al-Manar.

"This unfortunate blast led to the martyrdom of three fighters.

"Work is continuing in order to deal with the accident, in co-ordination with the relevant agencies."

Earlier, a Lebanese security official who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity said that a series of blasts killed at least nine people and wounded seven.

Among the wounded, according to the official, were four Syrian workers, though the Hezbollah statement did not mention them.

The Associated Press news agency said three explosions killed two people and wounded two others.

Residents said several people were wounded when an arms stockpile exploded in a building under construction in an uninhabited area between the villages of Nabishit and Khodr.

Dozens of ambulances arrived at the scene as members of Hezbollah surrounded the area, they told AFP.

Hezbollah, which fought a devastating 2006 war with Israel, has a huge arsenal of tens of thousands of rockets, which it says

it needs to retain in case of a renewed conflict.

Hezbollah and its allies, which lead Lebanon's governing coalition, support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in his 18-month battle against rebels seeking to topple him.

The Lebanese opposition is bitterly opposed to the Damascus regime.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/201210314222861555.html>

7. ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF OF BASRA

Saudi Arabia eyes field work guidelines for religious police

Saudi Arabia's Consultative Assembly has urged the kingdom's religious police authority, commonly referred to as the Hai'a, to set up field guidelines for its members and define the cases in which they can intervene to enforce the Islamic law.



Members of the Hai'a, who often patrol the streets to enforce dress codes, gender separation and behaviors believed to be commended by the Islamic Sharia, have come in many cases under controversy for reportedly overstepping their duties to breach citizens' basic civil liberties.

Surah Council member, Khdeir al-Qurashi, told AlArabiya.net that the council's recommendation sought to assist the Hai'a in order to better perform its mission.

"The recommendation was proposed by Maj. Gen. Abdullah Salol, and its goal was to help the Hai'a perform its job as required. All employees have a work guideline that they follow, and it is necessary that the employees of the Hai'a have their own guideline to avoid some of its members doing mistakes.

"In order to avoid exaggerating the small mistakes of the Hai'a and to recognize its

services to the society, the (Shura) Council saw that this recommendation would provide for general guidelines for its work."

Qurashi added that setting up such guidelines would not be difficult because Islam "is clear and its prohibitions are few."

"All matters are allowed unless banned by a clear text, and this is why it would be easy to identify things that are prohibited."

"The new system will set a mechanism for the field work of the committee's men which hands over some of their specializations to other state bodies, such as arrests and interrogations," al-Hayat daily quoted religious police chief Sheikh Abdullatiff Abdel Aziz al-Sheikh as saying, AFP reported.

Agents of the body known as the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice will also be banned from carrying out "searches without prior approval from the governor," he said according to an AFP report.

Okaz Daily also reported that the religious police agents will be prohibited from “standing at the entrances of shopping malls to prevent the entry of any person,” referring to attempts by agents to ban women who do not comply with the Islamic dress code and unmarried couples from entering malls.

Relatively moderate Sheikh, appointed in January as the new chief of the religious police, has raised hopes that a more lenient force will ease draconian social constraints in the Islamic country.

Two weeks into his post, Sheikh banned volunteers from serving in the commission which enforces the kingdom's strict Islamic rules.

In April he went further, prohibiting the religious police from “harassing people” and threatening “decisive measures against violators.”

In June, Sheikh came out strongly against one of his men who ordered a woman to leave a mall because she was wearing nail polish.

The woman had defied the orders as she filmed her argument with the policeman and posted it on YouTube.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/04/241744.html>

- **Yemeni students face shortage of books as school year starts**

Yemen’s school children have begun a new educational year facing a new shortage - school text books.



About five million Yemeni children started the new school year, with 600,000 new students entering the first class of primary school, according to the Ministry of Education.

But for many of those children, their learning is being hampered by a lack of text books.

High school student Ekhlas al-Baidhani says she couldn’t prepare for the New Year.

“Receiving the scheduled books on time is important. I should be receiving the books before I start the school year. In fact, I should receive the books scheduled for the year ahead before the end of the old year so I can establish some background knowledge and prepare myself for the new school year and this would, in return, improve my school work.”

Since last year's revolt against 33 years of rule by Ali Abdullah Saleh, when state control in outlying regions broke down as the army split into pro- and anti-Saleh factions and al Qaeda militants occupied some areas, Yemen has been in turmoil.

The unrest has not only affected the country's political situation, but has also worsened its already weak economic and financial situation. The protests paralyzed the Yemeni government; the humanitarian situation has deteriorated and poverty and food shortages have increased, with up to half of all Yemenis going hungry.

Mother of two school students Um Saddam said that she couldn't supply her children with the textbooks and was worried how it would impact on their educational attainment.

“They have just handed over books to my two children, who are twins, only four books each, and as for the other books we will have to follow-up until we get them. I do not know when we will get them, or when the children will learn. Half term will probably near before children are able to learn anything.”

The Yemeni Ministry of Education aims to provide 50 percent of school textbooks for the majority of schools in the country.

But Sana'a teacher Abdul Kalig al-Suraihi says the lack of books was affecting learning.

“A lot of students use the excuse of having no textbook to justify not doing their homework, they say how can we write the homework, teacher? This is a major problem we suffer from in this academic year.”

Some state schools administrations have tried to reuse textbooks, distributing them again amongst students to cover shortages, but they can't reuse textbooks for elementary school students, which have already been written in.

“We can cover nearly 50 percent of our books shortage, but there are levels that cannot be covered, such as the first and the second and third (primary education), these levels cannot be covered with old books because the new student cannot use an already used book which old students have written on it. Also, it is difficult for young primary students to keep their books in good conditions, they often get ripped,” said Head teacher Inas Taher.

An official at the Yemeni ministry of Education said the political and financial crisis of the past two years has affected educational textbook production.

Abdullah Abu Huriah, the Director General of Press textbook, said the company had printed almost 70 percent of school texts to date and hoped to have the rest ready during October.

“So far, we have processed about 60 to 70 percent of textbooks for this academic year. The rest of the books, God willing, will be printed during the month of October.”

Normal production levels in times of stability were between 45 to 50 million textbook a year, Huriah said. But a lack of power had affected supply over the past 18 months.

“As you know, electricity was out of service at a rate ranging from 70 to 80 percent during the past year and a half and this has, in return, affected our production at our three branches in Sana'a, Aden and Mukalla. It was one of the main obstacles to our printing machine for a long period of time.”

Restoring stability to Yemen has become an international priority due to fears that al Qaeda and other Islamist militants could become entrenched in a country which neighbors oil producer Saudi Arabia and lies on major shipping lanes.

Saleh was forced to stand down in February after over 2,000 people died. Came said there were now 500,000 internally displaced Yemenis after the fight with militants in the south and Saleh's 2009/10 war against Shi'ite Islamists known as Houthis north of Sanaa.

International donors pledged \$1.46 billion in aid to the country of 24 million at a meeting in New York on Thursday (September 27) attended by President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who said the pledge would help Yemen avoid a civil war.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/10/03/241592.html>

8. AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN

- **An Afghan hospital too unsafe to open**

Government cannot afford to run any of the 19 new foreign-funded facilities due to come online in the next two years.

Foreign donors have spent tens of millions of dollars building hospitals in Afghanistan that have never seen a patient.

A total of 19 new foreign-funded hospitals are due to come online within two years, but the government of Hamid Karzai cannot afford to run any of them.

The Chinese-built and funded Jumhoriyat hospital requires \$44m in repair work, but that is almost one-third of the Central Asian nation's entire \$135m annual health development budget.

Al Jazeera's Bernard Smith reports exclusively from the Kabul hospital authorities have deemed too unsafe to open.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/video/asia/2012/10/2012103135950361962.html>

- **Russian FM Lavrov arrives in Islamabad on 2-day visit**

Iskamabad, Oct 4, IRNA -- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov arrived in Islamabad Wednesday evening on a two-day official visit for bilateral consultations, state television reported.



He will hold official talks with his Pakistani counterpart, Hina Rabbani Khar, on Thursday, the Foreign Ministry said.

During his stay in Islamabad besides holding bilateral consultations, Foreign Minister Lavrov is also scheduled to call on the President and the Prime Minister, a Foreign Ministry statement said.

The visit of Foreign Minister Lavrov would provide an opportunity to further expand and intensify the existing mutually beneficial bilateral ties, the Foreign Ministry said.

“Pakistan and Russia enjoy an excellent relationship based on mutuality of interest in enhancing greater bilateral cooperation and convergence of views on various important regional and international issues,” it said.

The two countries also share the common objective of peace and stability in the broader region and attach importance to regional connectivity both in terms of trade and energy cooperation, the statement said.

Recently, the two countries also held their Second Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Islamabad and discussed concrete proposals on various areas of cooperation including Energy, Industries and Production, Bilateral Trade and Investment, Scientific and Technical Cooperation, Agriculture.

Lavrov’s visit was announced day after the Foreign Ministry said that the visit to Islamabad by Russian President Vladimir Putin was postponed, scheduled for this week.

President Putin was scheduled to attend the quadrilateral summit, which was planned to be held in Islamabad from Oct 2-3. Leaders from Afghanistan and Tajikistan were scheduled to attend the summit.

The Russian Foreign Minister's visit coincided with the visit of Pakistan's army chief, General Ashfaq Pervaiz Kayani, who embarked on a four-day visit to Russia on Wednesday.

General Kayani is visiting Russia on the invitation of his Russian counterpart.

<http://old.irna.ir/News/Politic/Russian-FM-Lavrov-arrives-in-Islamabad-on-2-day-visit/80354255>

- **Pakistan army chief says will back political solution in Balochistan**

Islamabad, Oct 4, IRNA – Pakistan’s Army Chief, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, Wednesday announced support to political solution to problem in the

country's volatile southwestern Balochistan problem, the military said.



General Kayani made the comment on his departure to Moscow on a four-day visit to Russia, a brief statement from the army's Inter-Services Public Relations said.

Opposition parties in the province claim that the security forces are behind the killing and kidnapping of the anti-government nationalist groups. The security forces deny the charges.

'Commenting on the current situation in Balochistan on his departure for Russia, the Chief of the Army Staff, said that the army will fully back any solution under the constitution of Pakistan,' the message sent to the media said.

The statement did not offer more comments.

Military sources said General Kayani will hold talks with his Russian counterpart and other top Russian military leaders and will discuss cooperation between the two militaries. It is expected that he will also meet Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The army spokesman, Maj Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa, told the local media last week that it would be the first-ever bilateral visit by any Pakistan army chief to Russia, marking the beginning of a new phase in the otherwise troubled ties between the two countries.

During his visit, Gen Kayani is expected to meet top Russian military and civil leaders to discuss options for expanding military-to-military cooperation between the two countries, according to Gen Bajwa.

General Kayani's visit coincides with the trip of the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov, who is scheduled to arrive in Islamabad on a two-day visit later on Wednesday.

Lavrvo's visit was announced by the Foreign Ministry late Monday just few days after the visit to Islamabad by

Russian President Vladimir Putin was postponed.

President Putting was scheduled to attend the quadrilateral summit, which was planned to be held in Islamabad from Oct 2-3. Leaders from Afghanistan and Tajikistan were scheduled to attend the summit.

There had been strong rumours that General Kayani visit may also be rescheduled in the wake of the postponement of President Putin's visit but the military had earlier indicated that he will proceed with the planned visit.

General Kayani called on Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf a day before his four-day visit to Russia and discussed matters relating to his trip, sources said.

Analysts say Kayani will give a push to Islamabad's efforts to improve relations with Moscow ahead of the pull out of foreign troops from Afghanistan.

<http://old.irna.ir/News/Politic/Pakistan-army-chief-says-will-back-political-solution-in-Balochistan/80354262>

This media summary is prepared by **ORSAM Middle East Research Assistant Sercan DOĞAN. It covers news and commentaries as reported by the national media sources publishing in the Middle Eastern countries. The views expressed are not those of ORSAM and their inclusion does not imply factual accuracy.*

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