

Ahmadinejad, Assad meet Nasrallah in Damascus

Contributed by Administrator
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In a high-level trip to Damascus, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad met with Syrian President Bashar Assad and Hizbullah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah on Thursday and both presidents voiced support for Lebanon's unity and its right to reclaim all occupied territories.

The two presidents met privately before officials from both sides joined their talks, state news agency SANA reported.

Afterward, they issued a statement saying it "is necessary to consolidate national unity and harmony among all Lebanese to assure the stability and security of Lebanon." They expressed their "support for all decisions taken by all Lebanese."

The statement also referred to the "right of the Lebanese people to resist repeated Israeli aggressions ... and to recover land occupied" by Israel, calling on the international community to force a halt to Israeli aggressions.

Ahmadinejad told Nasrallah during their meeting Thursday that Israel was "becoming weaker every day," Iran's state news agency IRNA reported.

At a joint news conference with Assad, Ahmadinejad voiced support for Hizbullah, alluding to the summer 2006 war between Lebanon and Israel.

"We hope that the hot weather of this summer would coincide with similar victories for the region's peoples, and with consequent defeat for the region's enemies," Ahmadinejad said. "The enemies of the region should abandon plans to attack the interests of this region, or they would be burned by the wrath of the region's peoples."

Syria's secular government has been reinforcing links with the Islamic Republic as the two countries try to counter US-led efforts to isolate them.

The joint statement said the two leaders were "comfortable with the fine way ties between Syria and Iran were going and careful to continue cooperation in all fields."

"The relation with Syria is progressing daily and in every field and along all lines," Ahmadinejad told reporters, adding the two countries have common stands on regional issues and face common enemies.

Assad said: "This visit takes on an added importance with the circumstances changing rapidly in the region. The Iranian-Syrian relation is a long-term one."

The Syrian leader said they also discussed "ways of restoring dialogue among all Palestinian factions." Syria also backed Iran's right to pursue a nuclear program and the two called for the "departure of all occupation forces" from Iraq.

Ahmadinejad also met Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal and members of the Palestinian group's politburo-in-exile in Syria during his one-day visit.

"Ahmadinejad promised to keep up the support for the Palestinian people, Hamas and the efforts to initiate a Palestinian dialogue after the latest events in Gaza," senior Hamas official Izzat al-Rishq said.

Ahmadinejad, accompanied by a high-level delegation, was greeted at Damascus airport by Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem before the official reception by Assad at the People's Palace. Assad was sworn in Tuesday for another seven-year term.

Ahmadinejad's visit posed a snub to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who has called on Syria to cut its relations with Iran as a precondition to restart peace process, deadlocked since 2000. Syrian officials have shunned Olmert's demand and stressed that Syria's relations with Iran are a matter of sovereignty.

In an Israeli peace overture, Israeli President Shimon Peres Thursday called on Syria to open direct peace talks with Israel, urging Damascus to drop its demand that negotiations take place through mediators.

Peres said direct talks would send an important message that Syria is serious about peace. In a speech this week, Assad

said he is ready to resume talks, but only through a third party.

"If Syria wants true peace, there is no substitute for direct negotiations between it and Israel which will open with a meeting between the leaders and will symbolize mutual recognition, at the opening stage," Peres said at a meeting with China's Mideast envoy.

Miri Eisin, spokeswoman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, said Olmert had no problem with Peres' comments. "What he says specifically is the prime minister's stance," she said.

Assad said Tuesday an unidentified third country offered to mediate. Israeli media speculated that he was referring to Turkey, but officials at the Turkish embassy in Israel said they had no knowledge of the matter.

On Wednesday, the only Muslim minister in Olmert's Cabinet, Raleb Majadele, offered to go to Syria "as a messenger of goodwill and good intentions." Olmert's office had no comment on the offer.

State-run Syrian newspaper, Tishrin, raised doubts Thursday about Israel's desire to make peace with Syria, saying recent calls by the Jewish state for renewed talks were simply public relations. - Agencies

Compiled by Daily Star staff
Friday, July 20, 2007

More information for complete research:

Syria: Ahmadinejad, Nasrallah Meet
STRATFOR, July 19, 2007 21 47 GMT

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad met with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on July 19 while on official visit to the Syrian capital of Damascus. During the meeting, Ahmadinejad hailed Hezbollah's performance against Israel in the summer 2006 conflict and called for another such "victory" this summer. He added that Iran would continue its support of Hamas, and of initiating inter-Palestinian dialogue between rival Palestinian factions in the interest of the Palestinian people.

"This summer will see Muslim victories in the region and the defeat of our enemies!" – Ahmadinejad in Damascus
Debkafile, July 20, 2007, 1:25 AM (GMT+02:00)

The Iranian president trumpeted Iran's intentions for the Middle East when he arrived in Damascus Thursday, July 19. DEBKAFI's Middle East sources reveal that behind the braggadocio, his conversation with Iran's closest ally, Syrian president Bashar Assad, was acrimonious. In fact, he warned Assad he had better stop signaling his willingness for peace talks with Israel because this behavior was hampering Iran's plans for a war this summer.

Ahmadinejad reminded Assad that Tehran had spent almost a year on detailed preparations for a summer war and would not tolerate the Syrian ruler sabotaging this effort. Assad was reminded of his huge debt to the Islamic Republic. In the last few months alone, Iran put up hundreds of millions of dollars for Syria's arms purchases from Russia; Syria gets its oil gratis and raw materials and finished goods at subsidized prices.

Assad replied that with all due respect and appreciation for his Iranian brother's assistance, he is obliged to look after his country's interests, while of course cherishing his friendship with Tehran. Ahmadinejad pointed out that the Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert's condition for talks was the severance of Damascus' ties with Tehran.

Far from pleasant too was the Iranian president's conversation with Hizballah's secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah, who drove to the Syrian capital from Lebanon in a heavily secured convoy. Nasrallah, who lives in fear of any Israel attack, rarely leaves his bunker hideout. Ahmadinejad asked Tehran's protégé to try and understand that his government was financially squeezed by its preparations for war and was therefore unable at the moment to remit the one million dollars promised to repair the war damage suffered by South Lebanon last year.

The Hizballah leader said that, while he fully understood Tehran's difficulty, he too was weighed down by the heavy cost of his pledges to the inhabitants of southern Lebanon.

Ahmadinejad had an easier time with the heads of eight of the nine Palestinian terrorist leaders hosted in the Syrian

capital. With them he was upbeat.

Israel is a lot weaker than it pretends, he said, and a concerted struggle with Syria could easily bring down the Zionist state. He recalled Hizballah's "victory" last year as demonstrating that the Palestinians would be able to crush Israel without recourse to a large army. The coming months, he boasted, would see him marching into Israel shoulder to shoulder with the Palestinian brothers.

After meeting the group, the Iranian president held face to face interviews with each of the hard-line Palestinian leaders and heard their requests for armaments and funding. Before flying home, he left a group of Revolutionary Guards al Qods Brigade officers with instructions for the missions to be assigned to each of the Palestinian terror chiefs in the forthcoming summer war.

From Syrian Press

President al-Assad Meets Ahmadinejad, Holds Joint Press Conference
Thursday, July 19, 2007 - 10:50 PM

DAMASCUS, (SANA)_ President Bashar al-Assad and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran held a binary meeting followed by a plenary one. The Plenary meeting was attended by members of the Syrian and Iranian official delegations.

Following the meeting Presidents al-Assad and Ahmadinejad held a press conference.

" I would seize the opportunity to congratulate President Bashar al-Assad on the occasion of his inauguration and taking the constitutional oath as President of the Syrian Arab Republic for a second term of office." Ahmedinejad said in a joint press conference with President al-Assad.

The Iranian President called on enemies of the region who try to trouble it to abandon their hostile schemes.

" The enemies of the region should abandon plans to attack the interests of this region, or they would be burned by the wrath of the region's peoples, " he said

He went on to say: " We hope that the hot weather of this summer would coincide with similar victories for the region's peoples, and with consequent defeat for the region's enemies,"

Ahmadinejad depicted the Syrian-Iranian relations as "cordial, excellent and extremely deep," adding that "the two countries share common stands on regional issues and face common challenges."

President al-Assad welcomed his Iranian counterpart and the accompanying delegation and said: " this visit comes in the framework of the continuous coordination between Syria and Iran indeed, and we see that ties between the two countries are developing more and more,"

He added: " what makes this visit more distinguished than the previous ones between me and President Ahmadinejad or between us as officials at the two countries is the quick and urgent changing of circumstances surrounding us even between this meeting and the previous meeting last February in Tehran,"

President al-Assad added "what distinguishes this visit and the atmospheres today is the big satisfaction due to the wide range vision of the Syrian-Iranian policy which proved its correctness more than before, saying that" atmosphere of comfort, optimism and confidence prevailed all axis of the talks,"

President al-Assad pointed out that talks with his Iranian counterpart covered Iraq's situation, latest developments on the Palestinian arena, means of re-holding dialogue among the different Palestinian factions." Discussions also covered Lebanon and the way of keeping Lebanon's stability in addition to Syrian &Iranian consultations with the active countries in the region regarding these issues." President al-Assad added.

" We shortly spoke on the bilateral relations and we will continue our talks about these ties , " he said, adding: " Syrian-Iranian relations are swiftly and continuously developing and we are very optimistic of the visit 's axis, outcome and of the region's future too .

Concluding the press conference, the Iranian President greeted all the Syrian people for their good election, saying that Syrian people's opinion was for dignity sake.

Later, Vice President Farouk al-Shara met with Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki with the presence of Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem and Assistant Vice President in addition to Syria's ambassador in Tehran.

President al-Assad gave a dinner banquet in honor of President Ahmedinejad and the accompanying delegation. The banquet was attended by members of the two delegations.

Thawra/ Ghossoun

Joint Statement on Presidents al-Assad and Ahmadenejad Talks Is Issued
Thursday, July 19, 2007 - 09:30 PM

DAMASCUS, (SANA)_ A joint statement was issued in Damascus on Thursday evening on talks of President Bashar al-Assad with his Iranian counterpart Mamoud Ahmadenejad.

The statement said that in the framework of boosting and developing the existing fraternal relations between the Syrian Arab Republic and at invitation of President Bashar al-Assad and on the occasion of taking the oath for a new seven-year term, the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadenejad, heading a high ranking delegation, paid an official visit to Syria.

During the visit the Iranian President congratulated President al-Assad on re-electing him for a second seven-year term and held talks with him on the bilateral relations and regional and international developments.

Both Presidents stressed that all meetings held during the visit, were convened within a friendly, cooperative and constructive atmosphere where the political, economic and trade relations between the two countries were touched upon.

Iran has reiterated support for Syrian people's right to restore the occupied Syrian Golan to the 4th of June line 1967, the joint statement said. Syria and Iran expressed satisfaction over the high level of bilateral relations between them and stressed care for developing and enhancing the existing fraternal ties. They also expressed relief over steps were taken for implementation of the agreements and recommendations of the higher governmental committee's last meeting held in Tehran late February.

On the Palestinian issue, Syria and Iran underscored rights of the Palestinian people to liberate their lands, their rights to return home and to establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. They urged all Palestinian parties to come back to dialogue and reconciliation to preserve unity of the Palestinian people.

Syria and Iran also condemned the Zionist sacrilegious act in destroying parts of Al-Aqsa Mosque in an attempt to demolish its Islamic and historical identity, calling for a serious move by the international organizations, particularly the Organization of the Islamic Conference OIC, to prevent such aggressive violations to holy places

Syria and Iran stressed the necessity of preservation of the Iraqi unity of land, people, sovereignty, independence in addition to keeping its Islamic Arab identity and condemned all the terrorist acts targeting the Iraqi citizens and establishments, demanding the occupation troops to pullout of Iraq.

Regarding Lebanon, Syria and Iran underlined significance of boosting the Lebanese national unity and reconciliation and expressed support to all what the Lebanese agree upon to guarantee security and stability in Lebanon, touching upon the Lebanese people's right to resist the repeated Israeli aggressions and to restore the still occupied Lebanese lands.

Both sides called on the responsible international circles to take the required procedures to halt the repeated daily Zionist aggression against Lebanon's sovereignty.

The demanded leaders of the Islamic world to face the attempts aiming at planting sedition and targeting all the Islamic nation, calling for unifying efforts to face the dangers threatening the Islamic world. On the Iranian nuclear file , both sides underlined the firm right of member states of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in peaceful usage of nuclear energy ,announcing that any discrimination regarding developing countries 'practicing of this right is unacceptable matter ,as resolutions and policies of member sates in this treaty must be respected .

President al-Assad and his Iranian counterpart Ahmadinejad expressed firm conviction that the Iranian peaceful nuclear activities file must be dealt at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and in this regard, they expressed satisfaction over the current negotiations 'course between Iran and (IAEA) , and they are content with the necessity of handling this issue by diplomatic means and unconditionally through dialogue .

The joint statement expressed steady convection on the need to free the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction and as they are drawing the international community 's attention to dangers of the Israeli nuclear weapons on the international and regional peace and security. Both sides asserted necessity of the responsible international institutions to take swift steps in order to face this threat.

Thawra / Ghossoun

President al-Assad Meets Iranian Counterpart
Thursday, July 19, 2007 - 02:40 PM

DAMASCUS, (SANA)_ President Bashar al-Assad and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran held a binary meeting followed by a plenary one. The Plenary meeting was attended by members of the Syrian and Iranian official delegations.

Earlier, The Iranian President arrived in Damascus on Thursday on a short visit to the Syrian Arab Republic.

At Damascus International Airport, Ahmadinejad was received by Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem, Ministers of Economy and Trade, Awkaf (Religious Endowments) and Syria's ambassador in Tehran, Iranian ambassador in Damascus in addition to the embassy staff.

President al-Assad officially welcomed the Iranian counterpart at the People's Palace. During the official ceremony, the national anthems of Syria and Iran were played and the two presidents reviewed the honor guard. Additionally, 21 salvos were fired in honor of the Iranian President.

Ahmadinejad shook hands with Vice President Farouk al-Shara, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Foreign Minister and Ministers of Economy and Trade, Awkaf and Deputy Vice President, Deputy Foreign Minister and a number of senior officials and Syrian ambassador in Tehran.

President al-Assad also shook hands with the official delegation accompanying the Iranian President comprising of Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and Minister of Housing and Urban Development Mohammad Saeedi Kia.

Ghossoun /

From Iranian Press

Iran president may visit Syria: daily Beirut,
July 7, IRNA, 15:53

Iran-Syria-Ahmadinejad

A Lebanese news source on Saturday predicted that Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad would pay a visit to Syria and Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal would visit Iran.

The Lebanese `As-Safir' newspaper said developments in Lebanon would be discussed during the two visits.

The daily quoted certain diplomatic sources as saying President Ahmadinejad might visit Damascus within the next few days to express his felicitations to his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad on his second seven-year term as Syria's President.

Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, who has been appointed as official in charge of pursuing the Lebanese case with Saudi officials, would accompany Ahmadinejad in his Syria visit.

The daily also quoted informed Lebanese sources as saying al-Faisal would visit Tehran next week in line with Iran-Saudi efforts to find a solution to Lebanon's political crisis.

It added the Saudi foreign minister would hold talks with senior Iranian officials on Lebanon crisis.

Sensitive regional status necessitates Ahmadinejad's Syrian visit - Syrian diplomat Damascus,
July 17, IRNA, 00:57

Ahmadinejad-Syria-Visit

Head of Syrian Foreign Ministry's Strategic Studies Center said here Monday "extremely sensitive" regional status makes President Ahmadinejad's upcoming visit of Damascus quite necessary.

Samir al-Taqi further emphasized in an exclusive interview with IRNA correspondent in Damascus, "The situation in the region is quite alarming today and in need of close consultations and full harmony among allies in order to confront the crises and challenges with which regional countries are faced with."

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is scheduled to leave Tehran for Damascus on Thursday this week atop a high ranking delegation to congratulate the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on the occasion of his being re-elected as his country's leader for a second term.

Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and Housing and Rural Development Minister Mohammad Saeidi-Kia would be among the Iranian President's accompanying delegation during the day-long official visit.

President Bashar al-Assad would on Tuesday officially begin his second seven years in office after taking an oath to abide by the Syrian Arabic Republic's Constitution.

Al-Taqi reiterated, "The great significance of Ahmadinejad's second visit to Damascus is in the timing of this visit, keeping in mind the US role in Lebanon's internal affairs, the Arab World conflict with Israel, the chaotic conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Iran's nuclear issue, that are hand in hand driving the region into a great explosion.

The Syrian political analyst added, "Regarding Iraq, by refusing to confess to defeat, the United States has led that war torn-country into a full fledged civil war, having achieved none of its declared objectives."

According to him the United States is currently in one of the worst possible conditions, thinking about another adventurist move to rid itself of the quagmire in which is caught in Iraq.

The Syrian official reiterated, "That explains the reason why the United States is mounting pressure against Syria and Iran once again."

Al-Taqi predicted that the countless shared interests of Iran and Syria, the ever increasing perils of the lingering Lebanese political crisis, and the tense situation in occupied Palestine and Iraq would encourage the United States to expand the dimensions of its militarist moves in the Persian Gulf region.

The Arab political strategist reiterated, "With such a perspective of the regional status, constant consultations and full harmony between Syria and Iran in order to confront effectively the challenges and threats is a bare necessity."

Samir al-Taqi expressed hope that Ahmadinejad's Syrian visit would also be a step toward further strengthening the two countries' close regional alliance, adding, "The two countries' officials should also see into full implementation of the reached agreements in various political and economic fields."

2329/1771

Assad's Second term of presidency begins Damascus,
July 17, IRNA 18:42

Syria-Assad-Presidency

Syria's Bashar Assad takes an oath in the People Assmby at the begining of his second term of 7-year presidency.

Iran, Syria review regional developments Damascus,
July 17, IRNA, 20:01

Iran-Syria-Developments

Iran's Ambassador to Damascus Mohammad Hassan Akhtari conferred on Tuesday with Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Mouallem on expansion of mutual relations along with regional developments.

The visit took place on the threshold of the upcoming visit of the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Syria.

At the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on bilateral, multilateral as well as regional developments.

The Syrian minister called the upcoming visit between the two sides heads of states as very 'important' which would be held in a very sensitive time.

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is to pay a day-long visit to Syria on Thursday to congratulate President Bashar al-Assad on his second seven-year term in office as Syria's president.

President al-Assad took an oath on Tuesday for his second term in office.

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and Minister of Housing and Urban Development Mohammad Saeedi-Kia will accompany President Ahmadinejad on his Syria visit.

Ahmadinejad is to review expansion of Tehran-Damascus political and economic cooperation as well as the latest regional and international developments with his Syrian counterpart.

According to informed sources, the Iranian president will probably hold meetings with several senior Syrian officials.

President Ahmadinejad due in Damascus Tehran,
July 18, IRNA, 19:14

Iran-Syria-Ahmadinejad

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is scheduled to leave for Syria on Thursday.

The one-day visit takes place at the invitation of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

President Ahmadinejad would be accompanied by a high-ranking political and economic delegation, including ministers of Foreign Affairs Manouchehr Mottaki and of Housing and Urban Development Mohammad Saeedi-kia.

The visit coincides with inauguration of Syrian president's second term. Al-Assad took oath for the second term after his re-election to the office.

The two presidents will discuss issues of mutual interest, including ways to expand mutual cooperation and bilateral, regional and international issues.

The Iranian president will also pay pilgrimage to holy shrines of Hazrat Zeinab (SA), the noble grand daughter of holy prophet of Islam, and of Hazrat Roqayyeh (SA).

President Ahmadinejad departs for Syria Tehran,
July 19, IRNA, 12:19

Iran-Syria-Ahmadinejad

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad left Tehran for Damascus, Syria, Thursday morning heading a high-ranking political and economic delegation.

The president's day-long visit to Syria takes place at the invitation of his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad.

President Ahmadinejad was seen off at the airport by a number of senior Iranian officials including the First Vice-President Parviz Davoudi.

He is accompanied by ministers of Foreign Affairs Manouchehr Mottaki and of Housing and Urban Development Mohammad Saeedi-kia.

The visit coincides with the inauguration of al-Assad's second term as the president of Syria.

The two presidents will discuss issues of mutual interest, including ways to expand mutual cooperation and bilateral, regional and international issues.

The Iranian president is to return home later on Thursday after paying pilgrimage to holy shrines of Syria.

1394/1414

President Ahmadinejad arrives in Damascus Damascus,
July 19, IRNA, 15:06

Iran-Syria-President

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad arrived in Damascus on Thursday and was welcomed by Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Mouallem.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is to officially welcome his Iranian counterpart within hours.

Ahmadinejad's one-day visit takes place at the invitation of the Syrian president.

President Ahmadinejad is accompanied by a high-ranking political and economic delegation, including ministers of foreign affairs Manouchehr Mottaki and of housing and urban development Mohammad Saeedi-kia.

The visit coincides with inauguration of the Syrian president's second term in office. Al-Assad took oath for the second term in office after his re-election to the post.

The two presidents will discuss issues of mutual interest, including ways to expand mutual cooperation as well as bilateral, regional and international issues.

The Iranian president will also pay pilgrimage to holy shrines of Hazrat Zeinab (SA), the noble grand daughter of holy prophet of Islam, and of Hazrat Roqayyeh (SA).

1430/1412

Syrian president officially welcomes Iranian counterpart Damascus,
July 19, IRNA, 17:57

Iran-Syria-Ahmadinejad

Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad accorded an official welcome to his Iranian counterpart President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at Ash-Shaeb Palace in Damascus on Thursday.

The national anthems of the two countries were played and the two presidents reviewed a guard of honor while a 21 gun-salute was fired.

After the welcoming ceremony, the two presidents held private talks behind closed doors.

Following their second round of talks, the two presidents are expected to attend a joint press conference, said one of officials accompanying President Ahmadinejad.

Ahmadinejad's one-day visit takes place at the invitation of the Syrian president.

President Ahmadinejad is accompanied by a high-ranking political and economic delegation, including ministers of foreign affairs Manouchehr Mottaki and of housing and urban development Mohammad Saeedi-kia.

The visit coincides with inauguration of the Syrian president's second term in office. Al-Assad took oath for the second term in office after his re-election to the post.

Iranian, Syrian presidents talk behind closed doors Damascus,
July 19, IRNA, 18:49

Iran-Syria-Presidents

Visiting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad on Thursday held the first round of talks behind closed doors at Ash-Shaeb Palace.

Simultaneous with the current talks between the two presidents, the two sides' high ranking delegations held another meeting to discuss issues of mutual interests.

The two sides are to review mutual relations and regional developments.

Following their private talks, the the two presidents are to chair a meeting to be attended by high ranking officials of both

countries.

The two presidents are also expected to attend a joint press conference, said one of officials accompanying President Ahmadinejad.

Ahmadinejad's one-day visit takes place at the invitation of the Syrian president.

Ahmadinejad: Iran fully supports resistance of Palestinian nation Damascus,
July 19, IRNA, 19:23

Iran-Syria-Palestine

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Thursday that the Islamic Republic of Iran is duty-bound to fully support the resistance of the Palestinian nation.

He made the remarks in a meeting with the Secretary-General of the Islamic Jihad Movement of Palestine Ramadan Abdullah Shalah in Damascus on Thursday.

At the meeting, the Iranian president underlined that the Palestinian groups should forge unity and continue resistance to attain victory.

The time is now ripe to put up vigilant defence to safeguard genuine Islam, he said.

"Great victories will be attained after hardships," he said, calling on the Palestinian nation as well as resistance and Jihadi groups to forge unity and solidarity.

The Islamic Republic of Iran will spare no efforts to assist the Palestinian nation and will fulfill its grave responsibility to this end, he said.

The Zionist regime has suffered heavy defeats in recent years, he said, adding that the usurper regime was now trying to reconstruct its shattered image and make good on its defeats. For this reason, regional countries, Palestinians and Lebanese should maintain their vigilance.

Some of recent seditious acts and conspiracies in Palestine were masterminded by the Zionist regime, Ahmadinejad said, adding that no doubt that they try to resolve the issue as quickly as possible in order to mastermind other plots in the region.

Unity, solidarity, patience and resistance are the key to success for the Palestinian resistance movement, he said.

The secretary-general of the Islamic Jihad movement, for his part, briefed the Iranian president on the latest developments in Palestine and called on Iran and other Arab and Islamic countries to help end civil war in Palestine and strengthen the Islamic movement.

Ahmadinejad: Iran, Syria will remain united Damascus,
July 19, IRNA, 19:24

Iran-Syria-Ahmadinejad

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in his meeting with his Syrian counterpart Bashar Al-Assad on Thursday that "We are two united brothers who will remain united."

The second round of talks between the two presidents is now underway.

The two presidents are also expected to attend a joint press conference, said one of officials accompanying President Ahmadinejad.

Ahmadinejad's one-day visit takes place at the invitation of the Syrian president.

Iran-Syria-nuclear Tehran, Damascus for diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear case Damascus,

July 19, IRNA, 23:38

Iranian and Syrian governments in a joint communique issued on Thursday said Iran's nuclear issue should be solved through diplomatic channels and negotiations with no strings attached.

The statement was released here while the two countries' presidents were discussing bilateral ties and affairs of common interest.

The joint document underlines the inalienable rights of NPT member states for peaceful use of atomic energy.

Both sides announced that discrimination towards developing countries in this respect is not acceptable and accordingly related decisions and policies of NPT members should be fully respected.

The communique also said that both sides believe that the peaceful activities of Iranian nuclear plants should be considered and discussed in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Underscored the need for eliminating weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, Iran and Syria warned of the danger of the Zionist regime's nuclear arsenal for the region and called for immediate action by international bodies to foil this threat.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, invited by his Syrian counterpart, arrived here Thursday evening heading a high ranking delegation for a one-day official visit.

Iran-Syria-Lebanon President Ahmadinejad: Lebanese nation foils plots through unity Damascus,
July 19, IRNA, 00:32

Visiting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said here on Thursday that the nation of Lebanon can thwart any possible plots through keeping ranks and resistance.

In a meeting with Secretary General of Lebanese Hizbollah Movement Seyyed Hassan Nasrollah, Ahmadinejad said the Lebanese people emerged as a victorious nation in a full-fledged war against them by the Zionist regime and today the calm within the Lebanese society breeds hope for the people while the Zionist regime is more and more weakening.

Ahmadinejad in the meeting congratulated the resistance leader on the anniversary of their victory in the last year Zionist imposed 33-day war in Lebanon.

Pointing to the awareness of the region's people and also those in many other regions of the world about the war-mongering policies of the United States and Israel, he said that one can witness today the general vigilance across the world against which the enemies' propaganda remains futile.

The Hizbollah leader in the meeting briefed Iranian president on the latest developments in Lebanon and said he is against any seditious acts against his country. He added that in light of the bravery and vigilance of the Lebanese youth, his homeland sees calm and stability.

Iranian President Ahmadinejad arrived here Thursday evening for a one-day official visit heading a ranking delegation.

Iran-Syria-Statement Iran, Syria call on regional nations to unity Damascus,
July 20, IRNA, 01:31

Iran and Syria in a joint communique issued here on Thursday evening invited the nations of Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon to unity.

In the document, announced during the current visit of Iranian president to Syria, both sides expressed their satisfaction over bilateral excellent political relations and called for further broadening of relations in various fields notably in economic and technical affairs.

The communique condemns the continued aggressive and oppressive acts of the Zionist regime. Iran underscored the rights of the Syrian people to restore occupied Golan heights up to the June 1967 borderline.

Iran and Syria in their joint statement invited the Palestinian groups to dialogue and keeping national unity and supported the rights of the Palestinian nation for the return of the refugees to their motherland and establishment of an independent

Palestinian state with Ghods city designated as its capital.

The statement also condemned the continued sacrilegious and disrespectful behavior of the Zionists towards the historical sites aimed at obliterating their Arabic and Islamic identities and called for serious action by international circles to prevent such blatant acts of aggression.

On Iraq, both states expressed their support for the Iraqi government, its national unity, integrity and independence so as to bring about withdrawal of the occupying foreign forces and also preservation of its Islamic and Arabic identity.

The statement also supports the efforts of the Iraqi government to realize national conciliation, and to foil seditious acts through national unity.

On the situation of Lebanon, Iran and Syria underlined the need for strengthening national dialogue within the country and supported any agreement among the Lebanese which would guarantee its security, independence and prosperity.

They also underlined their support for the rightful resistance of the Lebanese people against the Zionist aggressions and restoring their occupied lands. They invited the related international bodies to take necessary measures in order to prevent daily incursions of the Zionists against the Lebanon's sovereignty.

Iran and Syria in their joint communique invited the leader of the Muslim world to stand up and make joint efforts against the seditious actions against the Muslims.

The Iranian president heading a ranking delegation arrived here Thursday evening for an official one-day visit and was welcomed by his Syrian counterpart Bashar Assad in the "Al-Shaab" Palace.

Iran-Syria-Ahmadinejad Iranian president seen off by Syrian counterpart in Shaab Palace Damascus,
July 20, IRNA, 01:32

Visiting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was seen off by his Syrian host Bashar Assad in "Al-Shaab" Palace following a banquet in his honor held in the palace.

The Iranian president is to visit and pay homage tonight to the holy shrines of two of the Prophet Mohammad's (SAWA) progeny Hazrat Zeinab (AS) in the Zeinabieh region near Damascus and that of Hazrat Roghayeh (AS) in the city.

Iranian president arrived here Thursday evening heading a ranking delegation on an official one-day visit.

Ahmadinejad back home Tehran, July 20, IRNA
July 20, IRNA, 08:47

Iran-Syria-Ahmadinejad

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad arrived in Tehran early Friday morning after a one-day official visit to Syria.

Vice-President Parviz Davoodi was in the airport to welcome the president and his accompanying delegation.

While in Syria, President Ahmadinejad met with his Syrian counterpart Bashar Assad, Palestinian leaders residing in Syria, including head of Hamas political bureau Khalid Mashal, and Secretary-General of Lebanese Hizbollah Movement Seyed Hassan Nasrallah.

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DEBKAFfile Exclusive: Hizbollah's Nasrallah records war speech from Tehran council of war. Al Jazeera TV bids for tape

DEBKAFfile's Iranian sources report exclusively that the Hizbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah whose fiery oratory is a byword in the Arab world, recorded a speech Sat. July 21, in Tehran. He is there secretly with top leaders of his movement to attend a council of war called by Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, as DEBKAFfile revealed exclusively Friday.

Our sources learn that his themes are Lebanon and the Palestinian question and will most likely also include threats to the United States and Israel. The network to air the speech - the Arabic TV Al Jazeera in Qatar, Tehran's Arabic station, or the Hizballah's Al Manar which broadcasts from Lebanon – is the subject of intense negotiation. We have learned that Al Jazeera is offering an extra-large fee for exclusive use of the tape, keen to preserve its lead as the preferred platform for top-line radical Muslims, such as al Qaeda big shots. Scheduling will be attuned to the timeline for Hizballah's military plans.

From DebkaFile July 21, 2007, 4:57 PM (GMT+02:00)

The Following from DebkaFile

DEBKAfile Exclusive: Ahmadinejad follows up Damascus talks with a council of war in Tehran Friday with Hizballah, Hamas and Jihadi Islami leaders

July 21, 2007, 4:28 PM (GMT+02:00)

Our Iranian and intelligence sources reveal that the Iranian president flew out of Damascus Thursday with this group saying: "I prefer cooler places but this region faces a torrid summer of victories."

Aboard his plane were four Hizballah leaders, Secy-Gen. Hassan Nasrallah, defense chief Imad Mughniyeh, chief of staff Ibrahim Aqil and chief of special operations Unit 1800 Hajj Khalil Harb; and Jihad Islami's Abdallah Ramadan Shalah and operations chief Zaid Nahle.

Head of Hamas's Damascus HQ Khaled Meshaal did not join the party flying to Tehran to avoid giving his Saudi and Egyptian friends the impression he was in Iran's pocket. Either he flew there earlier, or else assigned a Hamas representative based in the Gulf to represent his moement at the council of war in Tehran.

As for Syria's role, DEBKAfile's military sources reveal that 20 high-ranking Iranian officers were on the Iran president's flight to Damascus, headed by defense minister Mustafa Najar. They did not join Ahmadinejad's talks with Syrian president Bashar Assad. Instead, they were driven to Syrian General Staff headquarters, where they were awaited by Syrian defense minister Gen. Hassan Turkmani, chief of staff Gen. Ali Habib and corps commanders.

Our intelligence sources believe this conference was in fact round one of the council of war which continued in Tehran Friday with Hizballah and Palestinian terrorist chiefs.

The most urgent decision facing the Iran-Syrian alliance concerns Lebanon and how far they can go to get rid of the pro-Western Siniora government in Beirut. Both Iran and Syria understand the United States and France will not stand for its ouster by military or terrorist means. But time is running out. The international tribunal is about to be installed to start hearing the Hariri assassination case and must be stopped before Assad and aides are prosecuted. Tehran and Damascus must decide quickly whether to focus on subversive action inside Lebanon or resort to diversionary tactics such as fomenting trouble against Israel on the Golan, from the Lebanese border or from Gaza.

Before Ahmadinejad and party departed Damascus Thursday night, they visited two important Shiite shrines and prayed for victory in the near future. Witnesses heard the Iranian president sobbing loudly.

DEBKAfile sources refute the Shawq al-Awsat claim Saturday, July 21, that the Iranian president rewarded Assad for abandoning its quest for a peace track with Israel by one billion dollars for arms purchases from Russia and North Korea - plus Iranian backing on Lebanon issues. The arms Iranian-funded arms deals have been in progress since the beginning of this year, long before Ahmadinejad's Damascus visit.

DebkaFile: "This summer will see Muslim victories in the region and the defeat of our enemies!" – Ahmadinejad in Damascus

The Iranian president trumpeted Iran's intentions for the Middle East when he arrived in Damascus Thursday, July 19. DEBKAfile's Middle East sources reveal that behind the braggadocio, his conversation with Iran's closest ally, Syrian president Bashar Assad, was acrimonious. In fact, he warned Assad he had better stop signaling his willingness for peace talks with Israel because this behavior was hampering Iran's plans for a war this summer.

Ahmadinejad reminded Assad that Tehran had spent almost a year on detailed preparations for a summer war and would not tolerate the Syrian ruler sabotaging this effort. Assad was reminded of his huge debt to the Islamic Republic. In the

last few months alone, Iran put up hundreds of millions of dollars for Syria's arms purchases from Russia; Syria gets its oil gratis and raw materials and finished goods at subsidized prices.

Assad replied that with all due respect and appreciation for his Iranian brother's assistance, he is obliged to look after his country's interests, while of course cherishing his friendship with Tehran. Ahmadinejad pointed out that the Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert's condition for talks was the severance of Damascus's ties with Tehran.

Far from pleasant too was the Iranian president's conversation with Hizballah's secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah, who drove to the Syrian capital from Lebanon in a heavily secured convoy. Nasrallah, who lives in fear of any Israel attack, rarely leaves his bunker hideout. Ahmadinejad asked Tehran's protégé to try and understand that his government was financially squeezed by its preparations for war and was therefore unable at the moment to remit the one million dollars promised to repair the war damage suffered by South Lebanon last year.

The Hizballah leader said that, while he fully understood Tehran's difficulty, he too was weighed down by the heavy cost of his pledges to the inhabitants of southern Lebanon.

Ahmadinejad had an easier time with the heads of eight of the nine Palestinian terrorist leaders hosted in the Syrian capital. With them he was upbeat.

Israel is a lot weaker than it pretends, he said, and a concerted struggle with Syria could easily bring down the Zionist state. He recalled Hizballah's "victory" last year as demonstrating that the Palestinians would be able to crush Israel without recourse to a large army. The coming months, he boasted, would see him marching into Israel shoulder to shoulder with the Palestinian brothers.

After meeting the group, the Iranian president held face to face interviews with each of the hard-line Palestinian leaders and heard their requests for armaments and funding. Before flying home, he left a group of Revolutionary Guards al Qods Brigade officers with instructions for the missions to be assigned to each of the Palestinian terror chiefs in the forthcoming summer war.

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