

**T** (Contd. from p. 1)

## 'Tide ...

The Syrian foreign minister also called for the expansion of ties between the two countries.

**T** (Contd. from p. 1)

## Persian ...

"The existence of common enemies that threaten the Islamic Ummah and the people of the region is one of the several reasons behind the close relations between the two countries."

Ayatollah Khamenei reiterated that the enemies highlight minor issues by sidelining major issues. "Using a certain tactic, they go after Muslim countries one after the other. Therefore, all the regional countries should develop a deep understanding of this issue and expand their relations."

For his part, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani thanked Iran for its positions toward Arab and Islamic issues, especially the Palestine issue.

The Qatari emir pointed to the two countries' common stance towards regional issues, saying "Through resisting against the divisive acts of foreigners, all the regional countries should prepare the ground for further stability, security, and cooperation in the region."

**T** (Contd. from p. 1)

## Larijani ...

In addition, Larijani and Maleki stated that all the members of the terrorist group Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) should be expelled from Iraq.

### Talabani calls for expansion of ties

Iraqi President Jalal Talabani called for the expansion of economic and political relations between Iran and Iraq during a separate meeting with Larijani on Friday.

The expansion of parliamentary ties between Iran and Iraq will prepare the ground for boosting ties in other areas, he added.

Larijani stated that the two countries should have regular consultations on technical, political, and economic issues.

### Iraqis should be wary of plots

The Iranian Majlis speaker also held a meeting with former Iraqi prime minister Iyad Allawi on Friday and formally invited him to visit Iran.

Larijani told Allawi that Iraqis should be wary about the plots of foreigners.

The two officials also highlighted the need to utilize the two countries' full potential to strengthen bilateral ties.

### Iraqi committee to visit Iran to discuss dust storm issue

In a meeting between Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi and the Iranian Majlis speaker, the two sides agreed that an Iraqi committee should visit Iran to study the issue of dust storms.

In July 2009, an unprecedented dust storm enveloped more than half of Iran, affecting the provinces of Qazvin, Kermanshah, Hamedan, Qom, Isfahan, Fars, Markazi, Khuzestan, and Tehran.

Many ponds which were once located in the arid and desert regions stretching from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea to Iran have gone dry over the years. This ongoing desertification process has greatly increased the number of dust storms in the region.

Experts say heavy dust storms descend on Iran from the deserts and dried-up ponds of Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

### Iran has a strategic view of Iraq

Larijani stated that Iran's outlook toward Iraq is strategic not tactical.

However, some countries are pursuing their own interests in Iraq and have hatched various plots there, he added.

"(But) we will not become involved in such dirty games, and our outlook toward relations with Iraq is not tactical but is strategic," he said.

Larijani also stated that certain countries are worried about the fact that Iran and Iraq play strategic roles in the region and they are devising plots to sabotage their relations.

**T** (Contd. from p. 1)

## The avalanche ...

That is bad news because 450 parts per million is where we are hoping to halt the rise in CO2 in the atmosphere this time around. (We are currently at 390 ppm.) All the world's major governments have agreed in principle that the warming must never be allowed to exceed 2 degrees C, because beyond that we risk runaway warming – and it was thought that 450 ppm would let us stop at that point.

Not so, it would appear, or at least not for long. The leader of the JOIDES research team, Aradhna Tripathi of the University of California at Los Angeles, put it bluntly: "What we have shown is that in the last period when CO2 levels were sustained at levels close to where they are today, there was no icecap on Antarctica and sea levels were 25-40m higher."

Suspensions that the 450 ppm target is much too high have been growing for some time. Late in 2007 James Hansen, the director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York, made a public appeal at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union to move to a 350 ppm target.

Hansen's study of ancient climates had led him to the conclusion that the first time permanent ice appeared on the planet, after a complete absence for tens of millions of years, was when the amount of carbon dioxide fell to 425 ppm some 35 million years ago. His calculations had a possible error of plus or minus 75 ppm, so for safety's sake he settled on 350 ppm as the long-term target for human stewardship of the atmosphere.

Did that word "stewardship" throw you? Many people instinctively recoil from any direct human intervention in the atmosphere, on the grounds that we don't know enough to get it right. But when we have already been changing the atmosphere unintentionally for two centuries, since the start of the industrial revolution, it's a bit late for such qualms. We have already destabilized it, and only we can reverse the changes we have caused.

Hansen even thought that 350 ppm might still be too high, because the "normal" level of CO2 during the 10,000 years of human civilization, before we began burning fossil fuels, was only 280 ppm. Now JOIDES has given us a more accurate measure of ancient climate, from closer to the present.

By 20 million years ago, almost all the ice on the planet had been lost again, due to a prolonged period of volcanic activity in the Columbia River basin of North America. The carbon dioxide emitted by that activity had raised the average global temperature to 3-6 degrees C above the current level, and all the melted ice had raised the sea level by 25-40 meters. But the actual level of CO2 that caused all that was only 400 ppm.

We will be there in five years, but we must not stay there for very long or history will repeat itself. In reality, we are going to go to at least 450 ppm, and more likely 500 ppm, before we get our emissions under control, and then we will have to commence the long and arduous task of getting the CO2 in the atmosphere down to a level that will preserve our present climate over the long term. That may have to be as low as 300 ppm.

And all through that time, we must prevent the warming from exceeding 2 degrees C, which means that a resort to various methods of geo-engineering to keep the heat down is almost unavoidable. That is what these numbers are telling us, and we would be wise to listen.

**T** (Contd. from p. 1)

## Abbas ...

in the West Bank, then telling Arab leaders that the United States wants to see this construction stopped

"forever."

After Abbas' speech Thursday, Clinton praised his leadership in working toward the creation of a Palestinian state next to Israel. She didn't say whether she would try to persuade Abbas to stay on. "I look forward to working with President Abbas in any new capacity to help achieve this goal," she said.

Abbas' decision aside, it is not clear elections will be held at all. Abbas' West Bank government does not control Gaza, which the Islamic militant group Hamas seized in June 2007. Hamas has said it would not participate in elections.

Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said Abbas' reluctance to run for re-election was "a message of reproach to his friends, the Americans and the Israelis."

**T** (Contd. from p. 1)

## UN ...

On Monday, the UN special advisor on the central African Great Lakes region, Howard Wolpe, said that civilians paid an "unacceptable price" in the conflict zones and added that in his view, military action alone could not solve the FDLR problem.

The same day, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said the Congolese army "deliberately killed" more than 500 civilians in operation Kimia II and reported a previous massacre of 198 people during the earlier joint operation with Rwanda.

"Human Rights Watch conducted 21 fact-finding missions in North and South Kivu from January to October 2009, and found that Congolese army soldiers had deliberately killed at least 505 civilians from the start of operation Kimia II in March through September," a statement said.

Also Monday, the UN deputy secretary general for peacekeeping operations, Alain Leroy, who was visiting the DR Congo, announced the suspension of UN logistical support for an FARDC unit, the 213th Brigade, because it reportedly killed "at least 62 civilians."

"This is an important step, but it's not enough, because there are other units involved," said Anneke Van Woudenberg, an HRW researcher who said that MONUC "should immediately suspend its support for any military operation, unless it runs the risk of being implied in new atrocities."

"On the ground, human rights officials with MONUC say that the situation is catastrophic, very worrying, and that the consequences for civilians of army operations are heavy, with massacres, and that the image of MONUC will be associated with all that," said a diplomat who asked not to be named.

The diplomat said that MONUC rights personnel had been protesting for weeks, but they claimed that nobody listened.

In spite of the atrocities, on October 16 in New York, the UN special envoy to the DRC opposed the suspension of operation Kimia II and said that it was vital to fight the rebels, while avoiding atrocities.

Doss said that to reinforce that policy, the 17,000-strong MONUC "will withdraw support from battalions that show a blatant disregard for international humanitarian law."

He conceded that despite efforts by the FARDC and MONUC to improve and extend protection of civilians, "it is obviously not possible to protect everyone, everywhere, all of the time in the Kivus, an area the size of California with a population of eight million."

**T** (Contd. from p. 1)

## Pakistani ...

Soldiers have been advancing into the militant heartland from three directions and had entered the Taliban headquarters in the town of Makeen, the army said.

"Today security forces have entered Makeen. A large part of the town has been cleared," the army

said, referring to Makeen as the "base headquarters of terrorists."

There was no independent verification of the report as journalists are not allowed into the area except on an occasional trip chaperoned by the military.

A senior military official in the region said troops had met little resistance.

"Our troops are now clearing mines and IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and moving forward," said the official, who declined to be identified.

Analysts say many militants appeared to have melted away, perhaps into neighboring North Waziristan where allied militant factions are based, from where they could strike back.

The military said 21 militants had been killed in Makeen, where Pakistani Taliban chief Baitullah Mehsud was killed in an attack by a U.S. missile-firing drone aircraft in early August.

Mehsud's house had been razed, the military said.

### Drive-by attack

Foreign al-Qaeda fighters are believed to be hiding in South Waziristan along with thousands of Pakistani insurgents. As the army squeezes militants out of their strongholds they have retaliated with bomb attacks and shootings in urban areas.

In the latest such attack, gunmen opened fire on a vehicle in Islamabad, wounding a brigadier and his driver. Dawn television said the brigadier worked for a military intelligence agency.

A brigadier and his driver were killed in a similar shooting on October 22. Days later gunmen opened fire at a military vehicle but the occupants escaped unharmed.

The violence has unsettled trade on Pakistan's stock market and the main index was 1.32 percent lower at 8,991.82 at 5:12 a.m. EST.

"Ahead of the long weekend, investors are very cautious because of political uncertainty and security fears," said Mohammed Sohail, chief executive at Topline Securities. "Nobody wants to take any risks."

Monday is a public holiday in Pakistan.

Separately, police killed two militants in a clash after they refused to stop their vehicle at a checkpoint in the town of Mansehra, 90 km (56 miles) north of Islamabad.

Two policemen were wounded. Police recovered bomb-laden jackets normally used by suicide bombers, along with detonators and explosives, said senior police official Waqar Ahmed.

**T** (Contd. from p. 1)

## Delegates ...

Nations would agree to stick to their promises while negotiating the details of the treaty, taking as long as another year.

"Governments can deliver a strong deal in Copenhagen, and nothing has changed my confidence in that," de Boer said.

While he said he could not guarantee promises would not be broken, it would be difficult for developed countries "to wiggle out of their commitments" as laid out in a Copenhagen deal.

The deal may take the form of consensus decisions including an overarching statement of long-term objectives, along with a series of supplemental decisions on technology transfers, rewards for halting deforestation and building infrastructure in poor countries to adapt to global warming, delegates said.

De Boer said he was looking to the United States to announce a clear emissions target for 2020. "A number from the president of the United States would have huge weight," de Boer said.

The Copenhagen deal now expected would carry the authority of world leaders who would sign off on it. De Boer suggested 40 heads of government would be attending the Copenhagen summit, though

the Danish government said that number was not yet confirmed.

The head of the bloc of developing nations criticized rich nations for failing expectations after two years of tough negotiations for a legal treaty.

"Nonperformance, nondeliverance and noncommitment by the developed countries is acting as a break for any meaningful progress," Sudanese delegate Lumumba Di-Aping said.

"We need a real change of heart and mind by the developed countries," which he accused of seeking to "relieve themselves of the commitment by asking the poorest of the world and the most vulnerable and the most underdeveloped to subsidize their high standard of living."

Di-Aping also complained that rich nations so far were offering too little in emissions cuts. Scientists say industrial countries should reduce emissions by 25 to 40 percent from 1990 levels to avoid climate catastrophe. Di-Aping said their pledges amounted to 11-15 percent.

The head of the Indian delegation, Shyam Saran, said Copenhagen's success would depend on rich nations presenting significant reduction targets, but that an agreement by all 192 nations could still be binding.

"We don't share view that it is no longer possible. If it were no longer possible, we would rather pack up and go home," Saran said.

The delegate from Sweden, which holds the EU presidency, downplayed the tumult in negotiations and said a serious deal can still be reached next month.

"We are going to change the fundamentals of industrial civilization, so it's no wonder there is a lot of activity going on in a negotiation like this," Anders Turresson said.

Some delegates warned, however, that a watered-down deal could face trouble at Copenhagen.

"The Africans do not intend to say 'yes' to a weak deal," said Tove Ryding from environmental group Greenpeace. "Failure is still an option on the table."

A bloc of 43 island nations urged leaders of the world's industrial nations to double efforts toward concluding a legally binding pact during the December summit.

"Weak political declarations are not the solution," said a statement by the chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States, Grenada delegate Ambassador Dessima Williams.

A Copenhagen deal would hinge, however, on decisions that can only be taken at the top political level. They include: carbon emission reduction targets by 2020 from industrial countries; firm plans by developing countries to reduce the growth of their emissions; specific short- and long-term financial commitments to poor countries to adapt to climate change; and a mechanism for distributing the funds that will be controlled by the developing countries.

Even an interim deal would clear the way to mobilize funds to help poor countries. The EU has said euro5 billion to euro7 billion (\$7.4 billion to \$10.4 billion) would be needed in the next three years for developing nations to begin planning their first steps toward controlling their emissions and protecting themselves against the effects of climate change.

By 2020, the EU says, \$150 billion (euro101 billion) a year is needed to fight climate change in the developing world.

The delay in brokering a legally binding document is significant. The only instrument for controlling carbon emissions, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, expires in 2012. Unless a new treaty is in place by then, no regulations will exist, threatening chaos among industries relying on predictable rules for their business development.

**T** (Contd. from p. 1)

## Turkey ...

Barely a month after the general elections, the Turkish parliament, dominated by the AKP, refused to grant the U.S. military a launching-pad to attack Iraq. That decision was followed by hectic diplomacy led by Gul to prevent the use of military force against Iraq. Gul's regional tour started in Damascus, where he received warm official and popular welcomes. Turkey was praised by Syria for developing independent policy that stemmed from its own interests, rather than those of others.

In the following years, Turkey rejected several U.S. requests to join efforts to isolate and destabilize the Syrian government. This position was highly appreciated in Damascus, paving the way for Turkey to play a key role in the resumption of indirect peace talks between Syria and Israel.

In the spring of 2008, Gul and his closest foreign policy advisor Davutoglu succeeded in holding the first round of indirect peace talks between Syria and Israel. When he served as a foreign minister from 2004-2008, Gul led two years of silent diplomatic efforts, culminating in the resumption of indirect negotiations between Damascus and Tel Aviv. When he was elected president of the Turkish Republic in 2008, Gul entrusted Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan with this responsibility.

### Seize the opportunity

Following Erdogan's angry reaction to Israel's aggression on Gaza last year, Gul retained interest in brokering a peace treaty between Syria and Israel. Gul and Davutoglu believe that Turkey can take advantage of the Obama administration's apparent interest in reviving the Middle East peace process. To facilitate the efforts of Washington on this front, Arab countries, Davutoglu asserts, should help to bring the national reconciliation process in Palestine to a successful end. To realize this objective, Ankara recognizes that a rapprochement between Damascus and Cairo is a prerequisite. The Turks have hence been trying to arrange a visit by President Bashar al-Assad to Cairo, but have so far failed. They have succeeded nevertheless in easing Syrian-Saudi tensions, which have torn the Arab world apart in the past five years.

Syrian-Turkish cooperation was not limited to the Middle East peace process or solving intra-Arab conflicts, but has also covered Iraq, wherein the two countries have much at stake. For the past few years, Damascus and Ankara have been quietly working to facilitate a rapid and smooth pullout of U.S. forces from Iraq, preserving its Arab identity and territorial integrity and preventing partition along ethnic or sectarian lines. This agenda has drawn Damascus closer to Ankara.

Turkey's quite diplomacy in dealing with a range of Middle Eastern problems has made it an acceptable broker for most players in the region. Its soft power approach, devised by Davutoglu, has transformed its regional role, making it indispensable to regional security and stability. Within a few years, Turkey has moved from the sidelines to occupy centre stage in regional politics. It will indeed have the final say in deciding the future of a region that extends from the Caspian Sea to the Balkans through the Middle East.

*Dr. Marwan Al Kabalan is a lecturer in Media and International Relations at Damascus University.*

(Source: Gulf News)