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On radio "France-Inter"

Iran reaffirms that it has no intention of obtaining nuclear weapons.

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On Thursday 16 February, from 7 to 9 am Paris time (9.30 to 11.30 in Tehran) radio France-Inter came live from Tehran. During this exceptional broadcast, Ali Lakhijani, the general secretary of the Supreme Council for National Security of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the man in charge of the nuclear dossier, and a personal adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khatami the Islamic Republic's "supreme guide", agreed to answer live some questions put by two France-Inter journalists, Stéphane Paoli and Bernard Guetta, questions he had not seen in advance.

He reaffirmed that Iran, a signatory to the NPT unlike states like India, Pakistan and Israel, intends to continue observing its rules while also exercising the right which all signatories have under the Treaty to develop the whole nuclear cycle for non-military purposes.

He went on to recall that Iran, which in the time of the Shah had held 10% of the capital of Eurodif, received from it not a gram of uranium and not a single dollar. Similarly the atomic reactor (for research) built in Tehran by the US, in which Iran has invested 2 million dollars has not received from the Americans the fuel that they promised. Under these circumstances it is comprehensible that Iran should wish to obtain by itself the fuel that others refuse to provide. Iran would be ready to buy it on the international market if there were guarantees of certain supply. For the moment that is not the case.

Unanimously, Iran considers that the right of access to non-military nuclear technology is part of its sovereignty. Iran does not want atom bombs, simply because they are not nowadays an instrument of regional power, and do not make possible the resolution of political problems. Iran is well-disposed to being monitored by the IAEA.

Far from ruling out the pursuit of negotiations with western powers, Mr Lakhijani wished on the contrary to resume talks with the European Union. Military confrontation is not a way to resolve this problem. He recalled also that, as everyone knows, Israel possesses 200 nuclear warheads, suggesting that Israel is not particularly well placed to ask others not to build any.

He declared that Iran, as a responsible state, did not wish to use the "oil weapon" either, since that would destabilise the world economy; but this position could change if a confrontation were to occur.

Stéphane Paoli mentioned the very recent statement (on France 2) for France's Minister of Foreign Affairs Philippe Douste-Blazy, who said for the first time that in his opinion Iran wanted to obtain nuclear weapons. Mr Lakhijani replied thus:

"I have a great respect for M. Douste-Blazy, but I do not understand why he makes such statements... I think that the French have an important place in this affair. In his shoes, I would use the opportunity....I think that France has the ability to come and make peace, but not with such statements... The EU must have its own position. We are ready to (resume) dialogue with the EU. We engaged in dialogue with the EU for 3 years, and for 3 years we suspended our programme for enriching uranium. Iran wants non-military nuclear technology within the framework of the IAEA and the NPT."

He declared that the countries of the EU had their place in cooperation on nuclear programmes, such as the building of the facility at Bushehr, and that their presence within a consortium would be an extra guarantee against any

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diversion of fuel for military purposes.

When asked how one can, today, call into question the existence of Israel or of the Holocaust, as President Ahmadinejad did, Mr Lakhajani distanced himself with declarations about "personalities"... which are "a different question" from Iran's policies. Iran asks only that Israel respect democracy and recognise the right of its Palestinian citizens, whether Christian or Muslim, to take part in Israel's elections.

Other questions were touched on during this mission. A businessman heading an important mineral-water company emphasised that he wanted to develop the participation of western groups, which must be allowed to expand into various sectors of Iran's economy. He declared also that Iranians as a whole approve of access to non-military nuclear technology as a matter of national sovereignty. The France-Inter journalists also made street-interviews of young people (60% of Iranians are under 25), who though critical of the regime seemed to agree on that same point.

Report: ACDN, 16 February 2006

PS:

Iran reaffirms commitment to NPT, IAEA Safeguards

New York, Feb 19, IRNA

Iran-Larijani-Interview

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Larijani said in an interview with French radio that the Islamic Republic of Iran wants to use the peaceful nuclear energy within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has been and continues be committed to its international non-proliferation commitments. Unfortunately certain western countries, contrary to their public statements, have been insisting in the negotiations that Iran should not have any nuclear technology and know-how. This is a double-standard behavior in international system and cannot be acceptable," he added.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, like other nations such as Brazil, Japan and many European countries, would like to exercise its inalienable rights to peaceful use of nuclear technology and play its role in this category of countries in international arena, he said.

Larijani said that the best guarantee for peacefulness of the nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran could include the following measures: "Accepting the current IAEA monitoring and verification systems, Use of modern centrifuges, proposed by some American and British scientists, which permit only limited enrichment, participation of interested countries in Iran's peaceful nuclear activities in the form of a consortium."

Accordingly, there are various ways to ensure that Iran is not pursuing Military nuclear programs, he added.

"Should these guarantees be acceptable, the Islamic Republic of Iran would accept to send the Additional Protocol to the Parliament for ratification."

It has been the consistent policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to employ peaceful nuclear technology for country's economic development, Larijani pointed out.

It would be much more appropriate that rather than simply repeating the positions of the United States, the EU would act independently and propose new ways on the basis of the inalienable rights enshrined in the NPT, he added.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to cooperate with the EU in this regard and it is appropriate to avoid the language of threat and imposition in this process. Therefore, should the EU change its discourse and stand ready to clearly recognize Iran's rights in the framework of the NPT, there will be a complete readiness on Iran's side to cooperate with Europe."

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The Islamic Republic of Iran, he added, is ready to negotiate and with all other countries (except the Zionist regime) on the issue.

The main problem with the European's proposal in August 2005 was its negligence of Iran's inalienable right to peaceful nuclear technology, in contradiction to the provisions of the NPT, recalled Larijani.

"We are of the view that the potentials and capacities of the European Union can be employed to resolve this issue and we stand ready to cooperate with the EU for the longer term as well. In the past, we had the same position, but we have not witnessed appropriate behaviors from the European side.

"The cancellation of the construction of the Bushehr power plant by the Siemens of Germany, the refusal of France's EURODIEF to deliver Uranium and failure of the United State's to honor its commitment to deliver the Uranium for Tehran's research reactor, which had been paid for, are but a few examples of behaviors that are not comprehensible.

"These are some of the reasons which have caused our mistrust towards the West and have encouraged us to go for the completion of our own peaceful nuclear program.

"Should a credible international system for providing nuclear fuel be in place, the Islamic Republic of Iran would be ready to procure its nuclear fuel from that system. However, such a system does not exist at present."

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