Iran, Venezuela urge for new world order

TEHRAN, — Iran and Venezuela urged for new global order whereby changes could be brought about to the world, the official IRNA news agency reported Thursday.

During a meeting with his Venezuelan counterpart Hugo Chavez on Wednesday, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that both Iran and Venezuela are “determined for overthrowing the unjust ruling system of the world and for the establishment of a new world order based on the rules of justice,” the report said.

“The two countries’ relations have always been important and brotherly, but now after our last rounds of talks in Tehran and the reached agreements they have been improved to a strategic level,” Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying.

Ahmadinejad said that Tehran and Caracas share proximity of stands on international issues.

Chavez, for his part, said that eleven years ago with the victory of the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, Iran and Venezuela began a campaign which was aimed at establishing a new world order, according to IRNA. The agreements reached are of great importance for the two nations, Chavez said, “through such cooperation we are expanding the dimensions of our unified will towards the establishment of a new world order based on justice and equality of all nations.”

On Wednesday, Iran and Venezuela signed eleven memorandums of understanding (MoU) in diverse areas of oil, natural gas, textiles, trade and public housing projects.

Chavez reiterated his country’s support for Tehran in face of West’s imposed sanctions pressures and military threats against Iran over its controversial nuclear program.

Heading a delegation of economists and politicians, Venezuelan President arrived in Tehran late Monday night for talks on diverse areas, especially of energy cooperation, with Iran.

Ahmadinejad thanking Chavez for his stance on denouncing anti-Iran sanctions by the Western countries, Ahmadinejad said, for his part, that Iran is in a good condition and the its influence is growing in the region.

Criticizing the Western policies, Ahmadinejad said that the global imperialism and the hegemonic powers have mobilized their facilities against independent nations, according to IRNA. The independent nations by developing solidarity and strength can change the current global situation to their own advantages, he was quoted as saying. (Xinhua)

Palestinian youths call for lifting Israeli blockade on Gaza Strip

Israel has agreed to lift the longstanding Gaza Strip blockade, the UN chief Ban Ki-moon has confirmed.

The deal was signed on Thursday in New York by representatives of Hamas and the Palestinian Authority.

Palestinian negotiators, led by the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said the agreement would lead to an “immediate and unconditional” lifting of the blockade on Gaza.

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Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (R) greets Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez during a welcoming ceremony in Iran’s presidential mansion in Tehran, capital of Iran, Oct. 19, 2010. (Xinhua)

Afghan Peace Council outlines plan for talks with Taliban

KABUL, — The spokesman of newly formed Afghan High Council for Peace Qayumuddin Kashaf on Thursday said that the body had made its plan to begin talks with the Taliban militants.

“The High Council for Peace, is calling upon government and unhappy brothers (Taliban) to prove the way for negotiations and support the peace process,” he told reporters in his first press conference here.

He said the peace council is calling on armed opponents to denounce the violence and joint the peace process to ensure lasting peace in the war-torn country.

“We would listen to all of their legitimate demands and preconditions,” he stated. He also called on international community and NATO-led troops based in Afghanistan to stand on their promises and support the peace process initiated by Afghan government.

“Taliban” is afraid the war, the peace council’s spokesman said, adding “because we intend to support the Afghan peace process for bringing lasting peace in the war-torn country.”

The 70-member High Council for Peace, is consisted of former Mujahideen leaders including two ex-presidents - Burhanuddin Rabbani and Sibghatullah Mujadadi, former Taliban commanders, parliamentarians, government officials and some women.

However, analysts familiar with the Taliban insurgents’ leaders are on the view that contacts with the Taliban are nothing new and would fail to achieve the goal set for the Taliban insurgents like the past once again expect the offer for talks on the beginning day of formation of the peace council, saying there will be no talks in the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan. (Xinhua)

U.S. announces 60-billion-dollar arms sale to Saudi Arabia

WASHINGTON, — The United States announced on Wednesday a major arms sale deal to Saudi Arabia worth around 60 billion dollars. Officials say the deal is not expected to draw objections from Israel.

The deal, posted on the Department of Defense Security Cooperation Agency, is comprised of F-15SA fighter jets, 70 AH-64D APACHE Longbow Helicopters, 72 UH-60M BLACKHAWK Helicopters, 36 AH-6 Light Attack Helicopters, 12 MD-530F Light Turbine Helicopters, and hundreds of units of engines, weapons and navigation systems.

The package also includes the upgrade of 70 existing F-15S fighter jets in the Saudi Air Force. It is expected to be completed within 15 to 20 years.

The Pentagon said the sale “will not alter the basic military balance in the region.”

“Our close U.S. ally, traditionally opposes U.S. arms sales to Arab countries in the region. The Pentagon said the sale “will not alter the basic military balance in the region.”

Andrew Shapiro, the State Department’s assistant secretary for political-military affairs, told reporters the U.S. government does not anticipate any objections from Israel, a close U.S. ally. He added that the U.S. government will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

Hezbollah says UN report “interferes Lebanon’s domestic affairs”

BEIRUT, — Lebanese Shi’ite armed group Hezbollah issued a statement on Wednesday criticizing UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon’s report on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 which calls for free and fair elections and to end foreign interference in the country, saying it interferes in Lebanon’s domestic affairs.

“It seems that Ban did not realize that Hezbollah has been at the core of Lebanese politics, through its representation in the parliament and cabinet,” the statement said.

The UN chief said in his report that Lebanon has been hit by a new climate of uncertainty that could cause instability across the region, adding that Hezbollah’s military strength “creates an atmosphere of intimidation and poses a key challenge to the safety of Lebanese civilians and to the government.”

Ban has forgotten what Lebanese President Michel Suleiman addressed at the United Nations last month, the statement added.

Suleiman told the UN Security Council that “Lebanon has the right to use all means to liberate its territory” during his visit in New York to attend the 65th session of the UN General Assembly. (Xinhua)