

Economic Sanctions portray West's Duplicity on Iran

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As Iran refuses to bow down to the illegitimate demands of the United States, Israel and their European allies to abandon its peaceful nuclear program, the inhumane economic sanctions against Tehran are being intensified, putting an excessive and unjustifiable pressure on the ordinary Iranian citizens who are unquestionably the victims of the West's hostility and antagonism toward the Islamic Republic.

Since Iran ended its voluntary suspension of uranium enrichment in August 2005, the United States and its European allies have made several efforts to put huge economic and political pressure on Iran and force it into giving up its nuclear rights. Before August 2005, Iran for two years had temporarily suspended uranium enrichment as a confidence-building measure in return for assurances by the representatives of EU that it can keep up with its civilian nuclear program while the negotiations between the two sides were underway. But the EU three bloc members consisting of France, Germany and the UK retreated from their commitments and demanded that Iran should halt its uranium enrichment program permanently. In this juncture, Iran found out that the European negotiators have been insincere in their stance and that it should revise its cooperation with them.

Now, it has been more than seven years that Iran is under lethal international pressure to discard its nuclear program while no single page of evidence has been put forward indicating that Iran is after producing atomic weapons as the United States and EU members claim. Ironically, Israel, the sole possessor of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, has not been asked even once to open its doors to the inspectors of UN's nuclear watchdog and allow them to monitor its underground, illicit nuclear facilities.

During the course of past seven years, the United Nations Security Council passed seven anti-Iranian resolutions and imposed four rounds of economic sanctions on Iran under the intimidation and coercion of the United States and its cronies. These sanctions range from ban on the sales of "dual-use" technologies to travel restriction for hundreds of individuals who are involved in Iran's nuclear program. These sanctions also penalize banks which transfer monies needed for the progress of Tehran's nuclear program. Interestingly, some of these sanctions also include a ban on the sale of medial equipments and pharmaceutical products to Iran.

The fact that Iran should fall victim to the unfair sanctions of the West over its nuclear program portrays the duplicity and dishonesty of the United States and its European allies. They have stated that they need guarantees showing Iran will never deviate from the peaceful path of its nuclear program. Iran has provided them with these guarantees again and again, but they have never taken any positive step to build trust and ease the tensions. They have stepped up their pressure, doubled the sanctions and caused more troubles.

Albeit it should be kept in mind that Iranian people are not unfamiliar with the tough economic sanctions and hostilities of the West. Since the Islamic Revolution toppled the U.S.-installed Shah of Iran in 1979, a number of Western states imposed a set of multifaceted sanctions on Iran, directly affecting the lives of innocent citizens and deteriorating their living conditions. These immoral sanctions, for example, targeted Iran's aviation industry as the U.S. and European states refused to sell newly-produced civilian aircrafts to Iran and the country's fleet set about to age gradually. Now that Iran is unable to buy first-hand, safe aircrafts as a result of the sanctions, tens of Iranians die every year in painful air crashes of the country's outdated, obsolete airplanes.

Unfortunately, the international human rights activists have never spoken a single word in condemnation of the restrictions surrounding the sale of civilian aircrafts to Iran which is directly related to the safety and lives of thousands of Iranians who use Iranian airlines' fleet. Only recently, the dexterous Iranian pilot and peace activist Captain Hooshang Shahbazi delivered a speech before the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and called on the international community to pay attention to the cause of Iranian people and persuade the U.S. President and other Western officials to end the ban of civilian aircrafts for Iran. "Unfortunately sanctions imposed by the Western countries on civilian airlines in Iran have caused a considerable number of plane crashes and led to the death of hundreds of passengers, which according to the aviation statistics is above the average death toll from such unfortunate accidents in the world... Civil aviation and people's lives have nothing to do with military issues. The principle of using equal air transportation facilities and services all around the world is undoubtedly a right. It isn't fair for ordinary people to be victims of political tensions and lose their lives to such issues," said Capt. Shahbazi in parts of his speech.

At the end of his speech, Capt. Shahbazi addresses the U.S. President and challenged his sincerity in talking of friendship with the Iranian people: "Mr. Obama! How am I supposed to believe your sincerity when you send your message of fraternity and friendship to Iranian people during the Persian New Year, Nowrouz, yet the next day move to endanger the lives of my countrymen by extending the sanctions on selling civilian airplane spare parts?"

Now, after 33 years since the victory of Islamic Revolution, the sanctions remain in place and are even being strengthened. The foreign ministers of European Union have recently reached an agreement over imposing an inclusive oil embargo on Iran and cutting their imports from the country. They are also traveling to different Asian and African countries and lobbying to persuade the other trade partners of Iran such as Japan, India, South Korea and South Africa to join their sanctions regime. In their own calculation, they are intended to isolate Iran and convince the Iranian authorities that their nuclear program will be costly and damaging for them. However, they're most probably intentionally overlooking the fact that these sanctions and pressures first of all harm the very people for whom they express sympathy and toward whom they extend a fake hand of friendship.

They are the Iranian people who are facing trouble finding foreign medicine needed to cure their diseases as a result of the sanctions. They are the Iranian people who face discrimination and limitation in traveling to other countries as a result of the sanctions. They are the Iranian people who face problems in their industrial occupations and cannot import accouterments and devices needed for their work as a result of the sanctions. They are the Iranian people who should grapple with the inflation stemming from the sanctions which force the government to buy the goods and products with a tripled price from third parties.

The economic sanctions of the West against Iran clearly violate the principles of human rights and by no means can be justified. If the West is afraid of a nuclear Middle East, the disaster has already taken place. Israel possesses up to 200 nuclear warheads and can shoot them to wherever it wishes at any time. The problem with Iran, as Noam Chomsky once said, is that "Iran is too independent and disobedient."

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