IR Leader receives Afghan President - 28 /May/ 2006

Tehran, May 27 - Islamic Revolution Leader, His Eminence Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, told visiting Afghan President Hamed Karzai that deep cultural, religious and historical bonds between the two nations of Iran and Afghanistan provide an appropriate ground to further consolidate bilateral ties.

Ayatollah Khamenei viewed expansion of Iran-Afghanistan ties as conducive to national and mutual benefits of the two countries, adding that neighboring countries are beneficiaries of each other's progress, development, stability and security.

"The two countries' official must practice acumen by utilizing deep and broad cultural, ideological and linguistic commonalities of the two nations of Iran and Afghanistan to expand bilateral cooperation," the IR Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to cooperation in issues like Hirmand water as well as Iran's independent and active participation in Afghan reconstruction as keys to foster bilateral relations, urging the visiting President for standing up to pretensions of dominance seekers which oppose regional countries' cooperation and defusing their plots of sowing discord.

Referring to heavy losses the Iranian nation and government have sustained from drug trafficking, the IR Leader asserted that the dignity of the Afghan nation calls for a serious campaign against the cultivation of opium poppy in the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei described a rise in the size of opium poppy plantation in Afghanistan as indicating that America's claims that it combats against drug cultivation in Afghanistan are unfounded. The Leader asserted that dominance seeker never care about interests of nations.

Ayatollah Khamenei expressed pleasure with the progressive process of the establishment of government bodies in Afghanistan, noting that Afghanistan has suffered huge backwardness during the recent decades due to foreign interventions or corrupt ruling systems.

"However, the Afghan nation is capable to cover the path of progress, provided that Americans and Europeans hand off the country."

Ayatollah Khamenei underlined that the assistance provided by the Iranian nation and government to Afghanistan was due to a feeling of responsibility. The Leader expressed hope that the two countries' relations would be further consolidated by materialization of the aims of the Afghan President's visit to Iran.

The Honorable Ayatollah Khamenei also urged further consolidation of bonds among the three Persian speaking nations of Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan and described it as beneficial to the three countries.

Hamed Karzai, for his part, expressed gratitude and heartfelt thanks for the assistance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, adding that the Afghan nation will never forget the help of the Iranian brothers.

"We are proud that we enjoy a friend like the Iranian nation and government," he affirmed.

The Afghan President viewed historical and cultural commonalities, Iran's solid understanding about Afghan issues and Afghan nation's aspirations for expansion of tie with the Iranian nation as among keys to consolidation of bilateral ties.

"We consider our future tied to cooperation with you. We call for the best of cooperation and ties with you," he told Ayatollah Khamenei.

Meanwhile, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was also attending the meeting.