Islamic Revolution Leader: No carefree time as long as US lingers - 4 /Jan/ 2009

Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei noted the visiting Iraqi Premier Nouri al-Maliki Sunday that the survival of Iraq rests in the solidification of mutual bonds between the Iraqi government and different sects and denominations in the country as well as expansion of relations with its neighbors.

"The Iraqi government must consider the faith, bravery and dignity of its people as a large asset," Ayatollah Khamenei added.

Ayatollah Khamenei assured Maliki that the IRI seeks the dignitiy, independence, tranquility and progress of Iraq and would spare no effort in this regard.

The IR Leader said the presence of American and British forces inside the country was the key source of problems including terrorism and internal schism, adding that the Iraqi people would have no carefree time as long as US lingers in Iraq.

Ayatollah Khamenei touched on the US history of deceitful diplomatic efforts aimed at pillaging other countries' resources and said there were some concerns about a security agreement reached between America and Iraq.

"Americans are gravely treacherous. They even avoid having genuinely friendly ties with their close regional allies so that none of their vows is worth trust," Ayatollah Khamenei alerted.

The IR Leader said the only way to counter complex US and UK ploys in the country was prudent resistance, adding that the Iraqi people must grow confident that their government was not ready to relinquish national Iraqi interests in the face of enemy intimidation.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the American government was seeking to secure a fixed base within the region and set the stage for a long-term presence.

In the meeting, also attended by Parviuz Davoudi, IRI's first vice president, Nouri al-Maliki described his meeting with Ayatollah Khamenei as highly fruitful for the Iraqi people.

The Iraqi Premier described the two countries' relations as brotherly and progressive, adding that the expansion of bilateral ties between IRI and Iraq in economic and political arenas could present a model to the whole region.