



Written by on October 15, 2009

## China to Strengthen Trade Ties With Iran

According to Xinhua News, the Chinese government's official press agency, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao told visiting First Vice President of Iran Mohammad Reza Rahimi on October 15 that China will maintain economic cooperation with Tehran and foster "close coordination in international affairs" with the Middle East nation. Rahimi was visiting Beijing to attend a forum of Central Asian states.



Wen, quoted by Xinhua, said China is willing "to maintain high-level contacts with Iran, encourage mutual understanding and confidence, promote practical cooperation between the two sides and close coordination in international affairs."

The Chinese leader added: "China is willing to continue playing a constructive role in promoting peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue."

China's economic ties with Iran have "witnessed rapid development, as the two countries' leaders have had frequent exchanges, and cooperation in trade and energy has widened and deepened," Wen reportedly told Rahimi. An AP report cited Rahimi's statement that Iran values its relations with China and wants to increase its cooperation with the Asian economic giant on international issues.

The Middle East-based al Jazeera news network observed that oil exports account for nearly half of Iran's revenues and that because of economic sanctions imposed by the West Iran exports most of its oil to Asian countries, with a large percentage of that going to China. In return, notes the report, China is investing billions in Iran's gas and oil fields.

Reuters news service reported that Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin was also in Beijing, attending a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and on the day before Wen's comments, had warned the West against intimidating Iran. He also said that talk of imposing sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program was "premature," Reuters reported.

Putin's remarks came after U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to Russia, during which she failed to secure any specific assurances from Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and President Dmitry Medvedev to support U.S.-led sanctions against Iran.

According to a CNN report citing Chinese state media, Putin held talks with Wen Jiabao on October 13, as the two countries agreed to bilateral economic and trade deals worth \$4 billion.

"Russia and China have become genuine and comprehensive strategic and cooperative partners in recent years," Putin was quoted by Xinhua.

Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan, who met with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander at a joint economic forum earlier on the 13th, told reporters that a joint China-Russia oil pipeline project was going smoothly and that the loan China pledged to Russia had been implemented, Xinhua said.



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The construction on the Chinese section of an oil pipeline from Siberia started in May. The 640-mile pipeline runs from Skovorodino, Russia, to the city of Daqing in northeastern China. It is expected to go into operation by the end of 2010 and will carry 15 million tons of crude oil annually from Russia to China from 2011 to 2030, Xinhua added.

October 15 was a busy day in Beijing as Premier Wen also met with Tajikistani Prime Minister Akil Akilov, who had come to China to attend the eighth prime ministers' meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states. At the meeting, the two discussed expanding economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

According to Xinhua, Akilov praised the support given to Tajikistan's infrastructure from the Chinese government. The Tajikistani leader expressed hope in expanding the cooperation with China in developing water and electricity, mining, textiles, and other resources. He said he hoped that more Chinese companies would invest in Tajikistan and that bilateral trade would be expanded.

With such close cooperation between the two Asian nations, it is worth briefly reviewing Tajikistan's status. In "[Communism Still Stands in the 'Stans](#)," his article for *The New American* online for August 5, Thomas R. Eddlem noted:

Tajikistan is dominated by Soviet-era Communist Party functionary Emomali Rahmon, who publicly converted to Islam in 1997. The U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights calls his regime "authoritarian" and observed: "The government has not substantially altered the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) since the Soviet period, and the criminal justice system failed to protect individuals from arbitrary arrest or detention. There were few checks on the power of prosecutors and police to make arrests."

The State Department stresses that Soviet-era socialism continues unabated, with "property law ... weighted against private property holders." Tajik government officials seize private property at a whim under secret proceedings, and without advance notice "notified residents that they must leave their property and offered very little compensation. If residents did not comply, city officials took them to court; court hearings generally resulted in an eviction order. Property owners who challenged evictions in the courts generally were unsuccessful and were subject to retribution — some were charged with criminal violations."

What is apparent from all of this is that while the United States and its allies continuously harp about the threat of "Islamic terrorism," engage in military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and impose sanctions against Iran, we continue to ignore the far greater potential threats from the nuclear-armed giants — Russia and China. Yet when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met on October 13 with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and President Dmitry Medvedev, she was unable to obtain an agreement from Russia to impose tougher sanctions against Iran. Meanwhile, Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin was in China meeting with Wen and calling the West's call for greater sanctions against Iran "premature."

Do our government's officials really believe that communism is dead in Russia and softening in China? It is impossible to answer that question with certainty, but it seems unlikely. One thing is certain, however — China and Russia neither share our alarm about Iran's "threat," nor are they inclined to put pressure on that nation. China, in particular, is as thoroughly committed to trading with Iran as our nation is committed to trading with China.

As journalists such as *The New American's* William F. Jasper have repeatedly reminded us, "Islamic"



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terrorism is in actuality just a continuation of the old KGB-directed communist spy network, dressed up in Middle Eastern garb. Our government may not admit this, and most Americans may not be aware of this, but the Russians and Chinese certainly are aware of who is on their payroll. For the United States to exaggerate the danger of the hired guns while ignoring the danger of those hiring them is ludicrous.

Therefore, legislation such as H.R. 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009 that the House of Representatives passed on October 14 by a 414-6 vote, makes little sense. The bill permits U.S. states, local governments, and pension funds to end investments in firms that have 20 million dollars or more invested in Iran's petroleum or natural gas operations. While the legislation does not directly impose sanctions on Iran, it shields states and local governments from lawsuits if they pull their money out of such businesses.

The six independent-thinking representatives who voted against H.R. 1327 are an interesting group who give new meaning to bipartisanship, since there are three Democrats among them (Maurice Hinchey, N.Y., Dennis Kucinich, Ohio, and Jim McDermott, Wash.) and three Republicans (Jeff Flake, Ariz., Walter Jones, N.C., and Ron Paul, Texas).

Apparently, these half-dozen congressman have not been sufficiently impressed by our government's propaganda machine to believe that there is an Iranian terrorist under every bed.

*Photo of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao: AP Images*



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