



IRAN TODAY & TOMORROW

WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

The Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran (CSRI), a 501(c)(3), non-profit and independent group, is committed to advance change in Iran through an internationally monitored referendum as the only peaceful means to bring democracy and establish a secular and representative government in Iran.

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Iran Policy: Third Option

US Capitol Hill briefing denounces Iran's meddling in Iraq

Iran Focus *May 11 Washington*, A briefing was held in the United States Congress yesterday entitled "Iraq's Future: The Iranian Impact" on the initiative of the Iran Human Rights and Democracy Caucus in the House of Representatives, co-chaired by Congressman Thomas Tancredo (R-Col) and Congressman Bob Filner (D-Cal). The panel included, Dr. Sa'd Abdullah Al-Jabouri, the former governor of Iraq's Diyala province, which borders Iran and is where the main Iranian opposition People's Mojahedin (PMOI) are based. Other panellists at the event included Lt. Colonel Thomas Cantwell, the commander of the U.S. Military Police 324th Battalion, who served in Iraq for more than a year and was responsible for guarding Camp Ashraf, where the PMOI are based; Captain Vivian Gembara, attorney in JAG forces of the U.S. military for 4 years and deployed in Iraq for 12 months from April 2003 where she was part of the negotiating team to negotiate a ceasefire between Coalition Forces and the PMOI; and Dr. Kenneth Katzman, a specialist in Middle East affairs for the Congressional Research Service. The panellists said that Tehran was keen to use Iraq as a springboard to foment Islamic fundamentalism throughout the entire Middle East, adding that there was plenty of evidence that Iran's money, weapons and agents were "fanning the flames of insurgency in Iraq". Al-Jabouri, told the briefing session, held in the Rayburn House Office Building, that 2.8 million Iraqis had signed a petition in support of the PMOI, calling on the U.S. and Europe to remove the group from the list of terrorist organisations. On April 16, during a conference in Baghdad, leaders and representatives of 11 Iraqi political parties and groups unveiled a petition signed by 2.8 million Iraqis, sharply criticising neighbouring Iran's rising meddling in Iraq, warning of the spectre of "Islamic fundamentalism's stealthy domination" of their country, and offering strong support to the PMOI. Iraqi signatories included ethnic Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmen, from different religious backgrounds, including Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims, Christians, and people of other faiths. The Iraqi statement said that the PMOI was fighting a "legitimate struggle against an unjust dictatorship", adding Iran's meddling was the biggest cause of instability in present-day Iraq. During the briefing session, Katzman brought to light new information regarding Iranian meddling inside neighbouring Iraq, adding that the Iranian regime had many Iraqi mercenaries on its payroll. Al-Jabouri, referring to allegations that the PMOI took part in the suppression of Iraqi Kurds and Shiites, added, "The MEK [PMOI] had no presence in Shiite-dominated regions or southern Iraq during the first Gulf War in 1991". Cantwell told the briefing that during his service in Iraq, he had spoken to many heads of Iraqi tribes, particularly in Diyala province, and that the majority supported the PMOI. Gembara said that as a military officer and attorney, after having dealt with the PMOI, she was convinced that they should be removed from the U.S. list of Foreign Terrorist Organisations. Dozens of think tank representatives, Middle East experts and foreign embassy staff took part in the briefing session.

Nuclear proliferation

Iran threatens to break negotiations with EU



AFP, May 7, Tehran - Iran threatened Saturday the possibility that it might break off negotiations with the European Union over its sensitive nuclear activities if the talks do not bear fruit. "We told the Europeans that, if the negotiations did not bear the expected results, their continuation was useless," Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi was quoted by state television as saying. He was speaking in New York on the sidelines of the UN conference on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Kharazi pointed to an agreement reached in November with the Europeans, adding that "if the negotiations did not bear any results at the end of three months, it would be stopped, and today we are at this stage."...



Reuters, May 7, Tehran - Iran warned on Saturday it could pull out of nuclear negotiations with the European Union if progress is not made soon and said its threat to resume some enrichment-related work was not an empty one. "The Iranian nation will never give up its rights ... we cannot accept any more time killing," Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi told state television from New York..."The Islamic Republic has the capability to cope with crises and threatening Iran with political and economic crises will not stop us from seeking our rights," he said. "Our threats are not empty ones, but decisions which will be made (in due time)... We are now at this stage, we are waiting to see what the policy-makers decide, and will act accordingly."

Putin calls on Iran to place nuke program under IAEA control



AFP, May 7, Paris - In the wide-ranging interview with France 3 television foreign affairs editor Christian Mallard, Putin also said that Russia's sale of nuclear technology to Iran was being monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and that he hoped Iran was not building a nuclear program for military ends.

"I call on Iran to place its entire program under the control of the IAEA and I think that it would be right to freeze all (uranium) enrichment programs which could lead to the creation of nuclear arms."

Iran ready to accelerate nuclear activities: official



AFP, May. 6, Tehran - Iran is ready to accelerate its nuclear activities if agreement is not reached quickly with the European Union over the Islamic republic's controversial nuclear programme, a chief negotiator said Friday. "A long-term suspension or an end (to uranium enrichment) is stupid, bad and irrational," Cyrus Nasseris was quoted as saying by student news agency ISNA... If negotiators from Britain, France and Germany "use threats, the response in terms of threats is perfectly ready", said Nasseris. "If we see that an agreement with the European three is not possible, we will accelerate our (nuclear) activities."... "If the Europeans don't do anything, we will go to the next stage in little time," he said, referring to Tehran's plan to resume enrichment activities at its Isfahan plant.

Iran says it will keep its nuclear program



Washington Post, May. 4, UN - A defiant Iran said Tuesday that it is determined to hold on to all aspects of its nuclear program, including uranium enrichment, and lashed out at the United States and Europe for trying to limit its efforts.

The comments, made by Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi at a conference on the future of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, came as officials in Tehran indicated that they are ready to end a suspension of some of their nuclear programs.

"We will definitely restart some activities," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters.

Rice reiterates Iran should not seek nukes



AFP, May 3, Washington - US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that Iran should not seek to develop nuclear weapons under the pretenses of developing a civilian nuclear program. "There needs to be a very clear commitment from the Iranians to live up to their international obligations and not to seek nuclear weapons under cover of nuclear civilian power," Rice told reporters after meeting here with EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana. Solana for his part said Iran knew the "consequences" if it did not issue certain guarantees about its nuclear aims, hinting the issue could be brought before the UN Security Council.

Terrorism and Meddling in Iraq

Iran's ex-Foreign Minister hints at official role in terror abroad

Iran Focus, May 4, Tehran - In an interview with a government-run website, Ali-Akbar Velayati, Iran's former Foreign Minister and a senior adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who is also a candidate in the forthcoming June 17 presidential elections, hinted at official responsibility for terrorist operations abroad against its opponents.

In an interview with the Baztab website yesterday, Velayati referring to the events in the 1990s, said, "Relations with Europe, through much work and the use of diplomatic techniques over a long period, were such that it maintained our national honour and dignity, however with the chain of events, such as the murder of Bakhtiar, the Mykonos case, and the events in Austria and Belgium, these initiatives suffered a setback." Shahpour Bakhtiar was murdered in Paris in August 1991, while in September 1992 four Iranian Kurdish opponents of the regime were killed in a Greek restaurant called Mykonos in Berlin. Abdolrahman Ghasemlou, head of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan was murdered in Vienna in 1989. Velayati's allusion to the Belgian "event" refers to the discovery of three huge 320-mm mortars inside an Iranian ship in the port of Antwerp in Belgium in 1996. Consequent investigations by Belgian police determined that the regime's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) was planning to use these mortars to attack the residence of Maryam Rajavi, the President-elect of the National Council of Resistance (NCRI), north of Paris. Following a three-year review, a Berlin court announced in 1997 that a special committee, made up of Khamenei, former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Velayati, and Ali Fallahiyan (then Intelligence Minister), was directly responsible for the terrorist activities by the Iranian regime abroad and issued an international warrant for these individuals' arrest. Velayati's acknowledgement was greeted with alarm by Iran's state-run media, with one news outlet stating that the admission would have dire consequences for the regime.

Iran agents run sectarian war in Iraq's Diyala province



Iran Focus, May 5, Baghdad - Some 30 individuals arrested in the Iraqi province of Diyala have admitted to acting on the orders of Iran's notorious Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) to spur sectarian violence to destabilise the region, according to a senior Iraqi police official.

Colonel Ali Esmail, the head of the investigative unit of Diyala police force, made the comments, while adding that the 30 individuals were from the town of Baladruz, the Iraqi weekly Al'Ittijahol-Akhar reported...

"According to admissions by police personnel, those arrested were former Prisoners of War in Iran, and the Iranian regime requested them to start sectarian fighting and attempt to kill a number of Iraqi social personalities, as planned by the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence", the weekly wrote.

Former Najaf Governor discloses Iranian meddling

Iraf website, May 2 - Mr. Adnan Al-Zorfi, former Governor of Najaf, disclosed extremely dangerous intelligence and secrets on Iranian interference in Iraq's internal affairs. The most important secrets revealed were the participation of Iranian women from Iran's intelligence system in the war beside Moqtada Sadr's gangs in Najaf during the crisis in Najaf. In addition

to Iran's intelligence officers, Iranian women also launched mortars against the Iraqi police and the US military. Iranian intelligence was behind Abdul-Majid Al-Khoii's assassination... There are many and different Iranian infiltrations in Iraq... Shiite parties – and not Iraqi Shiites – have most of the responsibility towards this. These parties are Iranian intelligence branches in Iraq that because of their beliefs are affiliated with Iran and betray the country with relieved conscience.

Over 35,000 Iranians ready for suicide operations in Iraq

Al-Etjah Al-Akher weekly, May 2 – Iraqi National Border Guards in Badreh arrested a group of Iranian infiltrators to Iraq. A source from the National Border Guards Command confirmed: "National Border Guards obtained documents from the infiltrators that prove their affiliation with armed groups prepared by Iranian Intelligence for destructive operations." The source said: "The infiltrators told Iraqi interrogators that more than 35 thousand Iranian volunteers are ready for suicide operations in Iraq."

Human rights abuse

Iran security forces open fire on residents in Kurdish city

Iran Focus, May. 3, Tehran – A young man was injured when Iran's State Security Forces (SSF) opened fire on residents in the Kurdish city of Mahabad (Western Iran) late Saturday evening. The incident took place in the city centre and Ash-Mam Ahmad district, where officials of the SSF were seen to be pursuing unknown people. Rahmat Khakpour, a 23-year-old first year Electronics university student, was injured after being shot at as he was returning home. Khakpour was shot in the right hand side of his neck and was taken to a local hospital, but doctors have not yet been able to remove the bullet from his neck. The shooting caused panic among the city's population and no official responsibility has been taken by the SSF.

5 hanged in Iran cities in one day

Iran Focus, May. 4, Tehran – One man was publicly hanged in the southern Iranian city of Ahwaz, while four other prisoners were executed in the Iranian capital today, charged with armed robbery or murder. Reza H. was hanged in public in Ahwaz in the early hours of the day. On Monday morning another man, only identified as Yaqoub R., was executed in Karoon Prison in the city of Ahwaz, which has been the scene of mass social unrest and clashes between anti-government protesters and State Security Forces.



The four other men identified as Hatam Gorgi, Ali-Reza Hojabri, Mohammad Faranaki, and Ali-Reza Akbarian were all executed in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison.

Four Iranian web-loggers protest being forced to confess

AFP, May 2, Tehran - Four Iranian web-loggers arrested during a crackdown last year have written to the judiciary head to complain of having been subjected to "physical and moral pressure" that forced them to confess, the official news agency IRNA said Monday. "During our detention, (we were) subjected to physical and moral pressure and all of our confessions were false and have no legal value," wrote Mahbubeh Abbas-Golizadeh, Fereshteh Ghazi, Massud Ghoreyshi and Hanif Mazruwi...

Four young men hanged, sentenced to death

Iran Focus, May 2, Tehran - A young man was hanged in public in the northeastern Iranian town of Bojnourd for "acting against the state", according to the state-run daily Iran. Hadi Safdari was accused of creating public disorder and acting against the state. Iran's authorities have recently stepped up executions and death sentences for political prisoners, despite international condemnation. On Monday morning another man, only identified as Yaqoub R., was executed in Karoon Prison in the southern Iranian city of Ahwaz, which has been the scene of mass social unrest and clashes between anti-government protesters and State Security Forces. He was accused of murder. Separately two other men were sentenced to death by a

Tehran court, accused of murder. A 21-year-old man was sentenced to execution while another young man was sentenced to five times execution in public.

Feature

Iranian influence

The Washington Times [Washington Times May 12- By James Morrison](#) He

survived 14 assassination attempts as governor of Iraq's Diyala province and is ready to risk his life again as a candidate in the parliamentary elections expected in December. Dr. Abdullah Rasheed al-Jabouri, a dentist by profession, also learned about dirty politics when his opponents on the provincial election commission blocked him from running in the January elections by leaving his name off the ballot. Dr. al-Jabouri, who made enemies among Islamic extremists by governing as a secular leader, only learned about the stunt on election day when the ballots were made public.

"There was cheating and deception. It was not a fair election," he said over lunch yesterday at The Washington Times. His one-year term ended in March, and he returned to England to resume his dental practice. However, he is already planning his political comeback, and he plans to travel to Iraq soon to open his campaign. Dr. al-Jabouri was in Washington to talk about the threat facing Iraq from its old enemy, Iran, which shares a border with Diyala province, and to urge the United States to remove the Iranian resistance from a blacklist of terrorist groups on which they were included during the Clinton administration. "There's question today that Iran is behind many terrorist attacks, especially against civilians and anti-fundamentalist politicians," he told a congressional hearing this week. "In Diyala province ... we managed to capture many Iranian agents or Iraqi and foreign nationals who were on Iran's payroll and had received training in terrorist activities." Dr. al-Jabouri told the Iran Human Rights and Democracy Caucus in the House that the United States made a mistake in 2003 when U.S. forces bombed the camps of the military wing of the resistance, the People's Mojahedin, which had operated from Diyala since 1986. He said they provided security against Iranian infiltration. "I believe the bombing of the Mojahedin camps at the outset of the war was a major blunder, even more so was the U.S. decision to disarm them," he said. "This left the entire province wide open to Iranian meddling and interference." Also at the Tuesday hearing, two Army officers who dealt with the Mojahedin testified about their cooperation and professionalism. The officers pointed out they were offering their personal opinions. Lt. Col. Thomas Cantwell, who commanded a military police battalion, guarded the Mojahedin at Camp Ashraf, where all of the resistance fighters were consolidated. He called them "cooperative" and "very disciplined, as a paramilitary force should be." Capt. Vivian Gembara, the Army lawyer who negotiated the Mojahedin disarmament agreement, said the United States should make "maximum use of the assets and potentials of this ally." "As a soldier and a lawyer," she said, "I believe it's time to change their classification as a terrorist organization."

Putting Tehran on notice

The Washington Times [Washington Times May 11 By Ali Safavi](#) Iranian Foreign

Minister Kamal Kharrazi's defiant proclamation at the United Nations that Iran will press on with its nuclear-enrichment program is yet another ominous sign that ruling mullacracy is hellbent on obtaining the A-bomb. In early April, the Iranian National Council of Resistance revealed Tehran had been digging tunnels close to the Parchin military facility, a suspected nuclear site northeast of the capital, to disguise its nuclear-enrichment activities. There is also ample evidence that Iran's money, weapons and agents are fanning the flames of insurgency in Iraq. Tehran has spent some \$4 billion in Iraq since the ouster of Saddam Hussein and has 40,000 Iraqi operatives on its payroll. The Iranian regime is keen on using Iraq as a springboard to spread its fundamentalist brand of Islam throughout the entire Middle East. Ahmad Jannati, chairman of Iran's powerful, unelected body known as the Guardian Council, said, "It is the duty of every Muslim to stand against the United States and threaten its interests anywhere." Taking heed, hundreds of suicide volunteers marched in Tehran last month, vowing to attack Americans in Iraq and targets in Israel. These developments underscore the need for the world community to meet the Iranian challenge --

head-on and without delay. For more than two decades, the international community has tried to placate the mullahs. While the Europeans, taking the appeasement route, have insisted on an all-carrot approach to tame Tehran's rogue behavior, the United States has offered its own set of incentives, starting with trading arms for hostages in 1985, blacklisting the main Iranian opposition group, the People's Mujahedeen, or PMOI, in 1997, easing the anti-Tehran sanctions in 2000 and bombing PMOI camps during the Iraq war in 2003, despite the group's steering clear of the conflict. This olive-branch policy has only served to solidify the grip of the most anti-Western wing of the ruling theocracy. With President Mohammad Khatami and his camp out of Iran's political future, some Washington pundits have joined the Europeans in urging the United States to join the nuclear talks with the troglodyte clerics, now dubbed pragmatic conservatives. It does not take a rocket scientist, however, to realize that no amount of economic and political concessions would bring Iran's hardline rulers around. The likelihood of a moderate state emerging from the ruling theocracy is as remote as that of a leopard changing its spots. The Iranian regime remains the world's worst abuser of human rights, a terrorist state second to none and unwavering in its pursuit of nuclear weapons. There is a growing consensus that the liberation of Iran is a prerequisite for a nuclear-free Middle East and a stable, democratic Iraq. To achieve this goal, however, there is no need for foreign military intervention. Developments in recent months inside and outside of Iran have made it plain that the corrupt fundamentalists in Iran can be defeated by the men and women they have oppressed for a quarter century. Last month, virtually every city in the oil-rich province of Khuzistan in southwestern Iran was the scene of a six-day uprising that left at least 62 protesters dead and 1,000 wounded when security forces opened fire, according to media reports. Earlier, Iranians turned the Iran-Japan soccer match into an anti-government rally. Five people were killed in the stampede after security forces tried to quell the unrest. And in late March, Iranian youths used the ancient festival of fire celebrations to vent their anger against the clerics. In Washington, several members of Congress addressed delegates, representing Iranian-American communities from 40 states across America, in a national convention for a democratic, secular republic in Iran in DAR Constitution Hall April 14. They voiced support for a third option put forth at the European Parliament last December by the Iranian opposition leader Maryam Rajavi: Democratic change through the Iranian people and the organized resistance. In his State of the Union Address, President Bush told the Iranian people, "As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you." To translate those words into action, the administration should reach out to Tehran's greatest and most feared nemesis, the highly trained People's Mujahedeen. The first step is to end the blacklisting of the group, which a majority in the House and 32 Senators have described as a "legitimate resistance movement." The timing could not be better, considering that the State Department has recognized its personnel as "protected persons" under the Fourth Geneva Convention and 2.8 million Iraqis have backed this anti-fundamentalist group as the most effective bulwark against Iranian-inspired extremism in Iraq. This would put Tehran on notice that Washington means business and assure the millions who are pursuing democratic change in Iran that America is on their side.

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