



# IRAN TODAY & TOMORROW

## WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

The Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran (CSRI), a 501(c)(4), 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 's nuclear threat

### U.S. 'deeply disturbed' by Iran nuclear reports

**REUTERS**

**February 9, 2008-WASHINGTON** - An Iranian rocket launch and reports that Iran is testing an advanced centrifuge are "deeply disturbing" and strengthen the case for a third U.N. sanctions resolution against Tehran, a top U.S. official said on Friday. Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns made the comment as he sought to spur the U.N. Security Council to approve fresh sanctions on Iran for failing to suspend uranium enrichment, which can produce fuel for nuclear weapons or power plants. "There have been two developments this week that are deeply disturbing. The first was the attempted rocket launch by the Iranians the other day. The second were these press revelations -- and we'll see if they are true or not -- about a new Iranian research into an advanced centrifuge," Burns told Reuters.

### US warns Iran over nuclear centrifuges



**February 8, 2008-VIENNA** - A top US envoy warned Iran Friday that its pursuit of more advanced uranium enriching technology would intensify the long-running international standoff over its disputed atomic drive. "Any Iranian attempt at a more advanced centrifuge would be an escalation of Iran 's ongoing non-compliance with its obligation to suspend all enrichment-related activities," the US ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Gregory Schulte, told AFP. It would constitute a "further violation of Iran 's international commitments, further reason why we are concerned about the nature of Iran 's nuclear programme and the intentions of its leaders, and further reason for the Security Council to act," he said.

### Experts: Iran has faster centrifuges

**AP** Associated Press

**February 7, 2008-VIENNA, Austria** - Iran has developed its own version of an advanced centrifuge that churns out fissile material much faster than other machines and has started testing them, diplomats and experts said Thursday. Few of the IR-2 centrifuges were operating and testing appeared to be in an early phase.

### Moscow Suspicious of Iranian Rocket

**REUTERS**

**February 7, 2007** - Russia said Wednesday that Iran 's test launch of a rocket raised suspicions about the real nature of the country's atomic program, in what could signal a hardening of its stance toward Tehran. Iran launched a rocket Monday designed to carry its first locally made research satellite next year, showing the country's advances in ballistics at a time when Western powers are already wary that it may be developing a nuclear weapon. "Any movement in terms of creating such a potential weapon naturally worries us and

others," Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyuko told journalists, Interfax reported. "All the more so since it creates suspicion toward Iran about its possible desire to create a nuclear weapon." "Rockets of such range are one of the components of such a weapons system. Of course this raises concern," he added  
Russia has previously said there is no evidence that Tehran is trying to make nuclear weapons.

### **Intelligence Official Revives Iran Doubts**



**February 6, 2008** - The senior US intelligence official on Tuesday stressed that a recent report on Iran had concluded that Tehran had halted only one part of its alleged nuclear weapons programme. Admiral Michael McConnell, director of national intelligence, said the November national intelligence estimate had concluded that Tehran had ceased only efforts to covertly enrich uranium and design nuclear warheads. "The only thing that they've halted was nuclear weapons design, which is probably the least significant part of the programme," he told the Senate intelligence committee. Adm McConnell said Iran continued to develop uranium enrichment technology and longer-range ballistic missiles.

### **Iranian test shows need for Europe-based missile defense: Pentagon**

**Deutsche Presse Agentur, February 6, 2008-Washington** - Iran's test of a research rocket could aid in the development of ballistic missile technology that could threaten Europe, and shows the need to follow through on plans to deploy a US missile-defense system to Poland and the Czech Republic, the Pentagon said Tuesday. 'As they advance in that programme, Europe becomes more and more threatened by it,' Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said. 'And, to us, it makes all the more clear the need for a missile defense programme to protect our allies in Europe , as well as ourselves.' The United States is negotiating the construction of a missile- defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic to thwart the Iranian threat despite strong skepticism from some circles in those countries and Western Europe .

### **U.S. spy chief retreats on Iran estimate**

**The New York Sun, February 6, 2007-WASHINGTON** - The director of national intelligence is backing away from his agency's assessment late last year that Iran had halted its nuclear program, saying he wishes he had written the unclassified version of the document in a different manner. At a hearing yesterday of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the intelligence director, Michael McConnell, said, "If I had 'til now to think about it, I probably would change a few things." He later added, "I would change the way we describe the Iranian nuclear program. I would have included that there are the component parts that the portion of it, maybe the least significant, had halted." Mr. McConnell was referring to the specific Iranian program to design potential nuclear warheads, which the December estimate said had halted in 2003. But in his opening testimony, Mr. McConnell noted that two other components of the nuclear program were moving ahead — the enrichment of uranium, which he said was the most difficult part of making a bomb, and the development of long-range missiles capable of hitting North Africa and Europe .

### **Russian alarm over Iranian missile test**

**Guardian, February 6, 2008** - Russia has raised rare public doubts about Iran 's nuclear programme when Moscow questioned the test launch of a rocket earlier this week. The Russian deputy foreign minister, Alexander Losyukov, was quoted today by Russian news agencies saying the research rocket fired on Monday was as a cause for concern. "It adds to general suspicions of Iran regarding its potential desire to build nuclear weapons," Losyukov said. "Long-range missiles are one of the components of such weapons. That causes concern." Iran said on Monday that the test rocket was intended to launch research satellites into space, but the US state department said the launch was a "troubling" display of a technology that could be used to fire longrange ballistic missiles. Russia 's stance is especially significant because President Vladimir Putin has previously supported Tehran against what it regards as America 's hardline stance and has defended Iran 's right to pursue a peaceful nuclear programme.

### **Russia demands Iran end uranium enrichment**



**IRAN FOCUS February 5, 2008-London** - Russia called on Iran on Tuesday to freeze uranium enrichment until the UN nuclear watchdog gets to the bottom of key issues over its controversial nuclear program, the Russian news agency RIA Novosti reported. In an interview posted on the Russian Foreign Ministry's official website, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak said Iran should freeze enrichment activity until all of its nuclear program's "complicated points have been worked out".

## **Human rights violations**

**Declaration by the Presidency on Behalf of the EU Concerning Death Sentences in Iran**

**EUROPA, February 7, 2008** - The EU condemns the increasing recourse to death sentences and executions in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The EU also reiterates its longstanding opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances. The EU is in favor of the universal abolition of the death penalty and urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to abolish the death penalty, if necessary by initially establishing a moratorium on executions, in line with the UN General Assembly resolution adopted in December 2007 on a Moratorium on the use of the death penalty. The EU is particularly concerned at the threat of imminent execution facing Ms. Zohreh Kabiri, Ms. Azar Kabiri and Mr. Abdollah Farivar, who have been sentenced to death by stoning. Despite the moratorium on stoning, which the EU was informed of by the Iranian side during the second round of the EU-Iran human rights dialogue in 2003, these punishments remain on the statute books in the Islamic Republic of Iran and sentences are still handed down by judges and carried out in practice.

### **Iran: Scores of young Kurds arrested**

**Adnkronos International, February 7, 2008-Tehran** - Two Kurdish students have been arrested in Iran for unknown reasons, increasing the number of arrested Kurdish students to 11. Jamshid Bahrami and Salam Nabati, art and psychology students respectively, were reportedly taken away by agents belonging to Iran 's Intelligence Ministry from their house in Mariwan, in western Iran . The Iranian government considers the minority Iranian Kurds as potential enemies.

### **Detained Filmmaker Found Evidence of Killings in Iran**

**The Gazette, February 6, 2008** -When filmmaker Mehrnoushe Solouki returned to her native Iran, she discovered in a Tehran suburb what she believes is disturbing evidence of multiple killings. There, in the Khavaran cemetery, she said she found signs that some of the 6,000 opponents of the Islamist regime who disappeared in 1988 might be buried in mass graves. Just returned to Montreal , the Canadian resident, 38, reflected on her 30 days in an Iranian jail and more than a year in which she was prevented from continuing her filming or leaving the country. "I left behind me a year of trial and suffering, with all the bad and good that entails," the thin-looking Solouki said, sometimes haltingly. She was aware of the risks before she left and thanked Reporters Without Borders for publicizing her plight, adding she felt French diplomats should have spoken out publicly to hasten her release from jail and the return of her passport.

### **Two Women Stoned: Feminists Mum**

**FrontPageMagazine, February 7, 2007** - Two sisters – identified only as Zohreh and Azar – have been convicted of adultery in Iran . They have now been sentenced to be stoned to death. Zohreh and Azar have already received 99 lashes for "illegal relations." Their crime is non-existent, their trials a miscarriage of justice, and their sentencing a barbarity. All those who believe in human rights and human dignity should protest against this sentence. We call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to drop all prosecution of Zohreh and Azar, and to end punishment by stoning. We call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to affirm the equality of dignity of women with men and the equality of rights of all people, women with men, non-Muslims with Muslims, and to implement these principles in their laws. We call upon feminists, including the signers of the statement drafted by The Nation's Katha Pollitt, to join us in protesting this outrage.

### **Iran: Nine minors waiting to be hanged**

**AKI, February 4, 2008-Tehran** - Nine minors condemned to death in Iran are waiting in prison for their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday when they will be executed. The minors - Benjamin Rasouli, Behrooz Shojaii, Morteza Feizi, Massoud Kafishir, Saiid Gazi, Hossein Taranj, Mehdi Azimi, Hamed Pour Heydari and Mostafa Naghdsi - are all minors that committed crimes during their adolescence. All were found guilty by Islamic courts and condemned to death. Although it has signed all the conventions that ban the death penalty for minors, Iran has hanged many young people who at the time they committed their crimes were under 18 years of age.

### **Iranian Man Sentenced to Death for Drinking Alcohol**

**REUTERS  February 5, 2008-Tehran** - An Iranian court has sentenced a 22-year-old man to death for violating the Islamic Republic's ban on drinking alcohol several times, a news agency said on Tuesday. Under Iran 's Islamic sharia law, a person who is caught drinking for a fourth time and confesses faces possible capital punishment, even though legal experts say executions for this offence are very rare. European governments and Western rights groups have criticized Iran for the executions, usually carried out by hanging. Rights group Amnesty International says Iran has one of the highest rates of executions in the world.

### **Iranian sisters face stoning for adultery report Monsters and Critics.com,**

**February 4, 2008** - Two Iranian sisters convicted of adultery charges that were unproven face being stoned to death after the Supreme Court upheld the death sentences against them, the Etemad newspaper Monday quoted their lawyer as saying. Adultery is a capital crime in Islamic Iran. "Branch 23 of the supreme court has confirmed the stoning sentence," said their lawyer, Jabbar Solati.

### **Student's jail 'suicide' riles Iran opposition**

**LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, February 3, 2008-TEHRAN** - The death of a student in the custody of Iranian intelligence officers has provoked outrage among opponents of the regime, who say it is part of a concerted crackdown on dissidents in the run-up to parliamentary elections. Ebrahim Lotf-Allahi, a fourth-year law student, was buried before his family could see his body. They later discovered that the grave had been filled with cement, apparently to prevent his body from being exhumed. His death has angered student activists, who say it is part of a campaign to suppress dissent before the March elections. They say students in the Kurdish part of the country, including Sanandaj, have borne the brunt of the crackdown.

## Iran's deadly interference in Iraq

### Tehran robs Iraq's Oil to fund terror

**FoxNews, February 9, 2008** - Groundbreaking revelations about the Iranian ayatollahs' secret nuclear weapons program are not the only contributions the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), the democratic opposition's parliament-in-exile, has made to peace and stability in the world. Since 2003, the NCRI, relying on the information provided by the personnel of its pivotal member organization, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) — currently in Ashraf City in Iraq — has revealed many dimensions of Tehran's destabilizing campaign in Iraq. Acknowledged by many independent and democratic Iraqi political figures and tribal leaders, as well as U.S. military commanders, these revelations have saved countless Iraqi and American lives and have hugely contributed to putting in place appropriate counter-measures to deal with these threats.

Among these revelations were warnings about an elaborate scheme by the clerics in Tehran to rob Iraqis of their oil resources and use the revenue to fund their nefarious meddling in Iraq. According to the London-based Al-Hayat daily, Faraj Moussa, deputy head of the Iraq Commission on Public Integrity, has evidence indicating that the Tehran regime has "seized" at least 15 oil wells in southern provinces neighboring Iran.

### Roadside Blasts Kill 5 U.S. Soldiers In Iraq

**REUTERS**

**February 9, 2008-BAGHDAD** - Five American soldiers were killed in roadside

bombings in Iraq on Friday, the U.S. military said on Saturday. The latest arrests come as the U.S. military aggressively pursues what it describes as rogue elements of anti-U.S. Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's Mehdi Army and other Shi'ite militia which Washington says are supported by Iran. Earlier this month, the U.S. military said attacks using Iranian-made roadside bombs had risen to the highest level in a year in an area of Baghdad that includes Sadr City, a sprawling Shi'ite slum in northeast Baghdad and a Mehdi Army stronghold.

But U.S. forces remain keen to go after Shi'ite militants who U.S. officials say Tehran has supplied with sophisticated, armor-piercing bombs known as explosively formed penetrators (EFPs). On Thursday, David Satterfield, the State Department's Iraq coordinator, said he believed Iran's strategy was still to force a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq at as high a price as possible.

### US sees attacks by Iranian-backed groups up in Iraq

**REUTERS**

**February 7, 2008-WASHINGTON** - Attacks by Iranian-backed groups in Iraq have

increased in recent months; a senior U.S. official said on Thursday, casting doubt on the view Iran might have reduced its support for violence in the war. David Satterfield, the State Department's Iraq coordinator, said he believed Iran's strategy remained to force the United States to withdraw from Iraq at as high a price as possible. Satterfield said he believed Iran still wants U.S. forces out of Iraq to increase its own local and regional influence. "Iran remains, we believe, determined to pursue its goal of departure of U.S. forces under as difficult circumstances as possible, both as a means of securing its ambitions in Iraq per se as well as projecting through and beyond Iraq its broader regional and ... international ambitions," he said. "Iran remains lethally engaged in terms of providing training and equipment to the most radical and the most violent forces in Iraq. Attacks by those forces continue," he added.

### Iraq accuses Iran of stealing oil

**Ap Associated Press**

**February 5, 2008** - The Iraqi Oil Ministry has accused Iran of stealing oil from a shared

field under their common border. Iraq also accuses Tehran of illegally seizing and capping off wells in a second field that Iraq claims lies entirely within its territory. The two adjacent oil fields, Abu Gharb - which Iraq claims in its entirety - and al-Fakkah, the shared field, are among Iraq's richest. Both lie in Maysan province, about 200 miles southeast of Baghdad. After the 2003 US-led invasion, Iran seized six wells in Abu Gharb, claiming they were on disputed territory and should be sealed until the border dispute is settled. The official also accused Iran of pumping oil from their portion of the field at such high rates that nine of the 22 wells in Iraqi territory have been left inoperable. He further said the Iranians are blocking Iraqi repair crews from reaching the nine wells.

**Hundreds of people in Diyala demonstrated chanting: "Down with the sectarians affiliated to Iran"**

**Asharqiya TV, February 3, 2008** - hundreds of people in Diyala province held a demonstration to demand ousting Ghanem al-Qoreishi, the Chief of Diyala police. The demonstrators threatened that if al-Qoreish is not ousted, they will stage a general strike in official institutions of the province. The demonstrators accused al-Qoreish of purging some officers and also torturing prisoners. They also accuse the police forces of abducting the women. The demonstrators chanted: "Down with the sectarians affiliated to Iran "

### Rise in Iran-made bombs in Baghdad district -US

**REUTERS** 

**February 3, 2008-BAGHDAD** - Attacks using Iranian-made roadside bombs in a key part of Baghdad rose in January to the highest level in a year, the U.S. military said on Sunday. Washington has accused Tehran of supplying Shi'ite militias in Iraq with sophisticated weapons, including armour-piercing roadside bombs known as explosively formed penetrators (EFPs), to attack U.S. troops. The military said there were 12 EFP attacks against U.S. forces last month in an area encompassing northern and eastern parts of Baghdad , including the slum of Sadr City , stronghold of the Mehdi Army militia of Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

## Feature

### IRAN: Mullahs will not take EU seriously unless EU accepts the rule of law on PMOI (MEK)



**NCRI website, February 8, 2008** *By Lars Rise, President of Friends of a Free Iran*

*Committee-Norway* - The majority of the European population has been willing to accept much of the use of terrorism legislation as a means to put an end to terrorist activity. However in recent times, one specific case and one particular piece of this terrorism legislation has come under major criticism from all quarters in Europe . The European Union blacklist has for a number of years now been used as a tool to ban organizations and individuals accused of having links to terrorism. However, the analysis in the case of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI/MEK) is that rather than being listed due to any link to terrorism, this organization was in fact listed simply to further relations with the Iranian regime, one of the main supporters of international terrorism. In order for this blacklist system to remain a credible solution in fighting terrorism, the PMOI (MEK) must be removed from both the EU and UK lists with immediate effect. The rule of law in simple terms must be implemented.

*Mr. Lars Rise is a former member of the Foreign Affairs Committee in Norwegian Parliament and the president of Friends of a Free Iran Committee-Norway.*

### Iran's Majlis elections neither free nor fair



**Global Politician, February 5, 2008** *By Mark Williams - UK Member of Parliament*

- It is with optimism that I usually regard elections. Win or lose, they are an opportunity for the voice of the people to be heard, but an exception to this will be the Iranian "elections" this March. Elections in Iran are neither free nor fair. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's rise to the Presidency in 2005 serves as a striking example. Even by the regime's own pre-poll records, Ahmadinejad was not even close to first place. In a country where freedom of speech or opinion is non-existent, are we really to believe that anyone other than a loyalist would be given the powers to make essential decisions regarding the country's geo-political status and potential to produce a nuclear arsenal. The best solution is real democratic change in Iran . It is after all the people of Iran who have paid the greatest price for years as diplomatic initiatives took place by EU officials with Iran 's ruthless rulers. The PMOI, 120,000 of whose members and supporters have been executed by the regime, was the first to blow the whistle on the mullahs' ominous nuclear projects, exposing key nuclear sites including Natanz, The group, which has several thousand members near the Iranian border in Iraq , has garnered significant support among Iraq 's Shiite, Sunni, Kurdish and even Christian population. It has the support of a large number of Parliamentarians across Europe . The Government must now accept that it was wrong to blacklist the PMOI and remove the group from the proscribed organizations list.

*Mark Williams is a Member of UK Parliament for the Ceredigion constituency from the Liberal Democrat party. He sits on the Welsh Select Affairs Committee, and has been a Shadow Minister for Wales under Menzies Campbell since 2006.*

### **Lift ban on Iran opposition**



**January 24, 2008-LONDON** -By **LORD DHOLAKIA**, Deputy leader of the UK's Liberal Democrat Party the Iranian regime's Interior Ministry announced that more than 2,000 so-called reformists had been disqualified from running in the upcoming parliamentary elections, effectively ensuring that allies of the regime's ultra-conservative president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad would retain and perhaps strengthen their hold on the 290-seat Parliament come March 14. The announcement came less than 48 hours after the U.N. Security Council's permanent five members and Germany reached an agreement to impose new sanctions on the regime over its refusal to abandon its uranium enrichment activities in line with demands by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The international community is right to be concerned about the regime's illegal activities on the global arena, but it should pay an equally warranted level of attention to the mullahs' domestic clampdown on dissent. Over the past 27 years, the theocratic dictatorship has executed more than 120,000 of its political opponents, mostly affiliated with the main democratic opposition movement People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran. It is now time for Prime Minister Gordon Brown's government to admit to their past mistakes and lift the ban on the PMOI. The Iranian people have a right to resist against a regime that refuses to allow the slightest political opposition to its illegitimate rule and which employs more than 170 forms of torture.

*(Lord Dholakia of Waltham Brooks OBE DL is deputy leader of the United Kingdom 's Liberal Democrat Party)*