



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.

January 7, 2005

No. 137

Meddling In Iraq

Prominent Shiite cleric reveals details of Iranian schemes in Iraq

Al-Arabiya television, Jan. 4, Iraq – Excerpts of an interview with Shiite Iraqi cleric and politician, Ayad Jamaledin: Iraq will not turn into an Islamic Republic. It will be dominated neither by Iran nor by others, regardless of which list ultimately wins (the elections). The (United Iraqi Alliance) is an Iraqi political force that has strong relations with Iran. Their code of practice stresses that the leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran is also the leader of their movement. This issue is a cause of concern...We cannot give priority to Iran's interests over our own with this excuse that Shiism or Islam is in danger. Iran is not concerned about the interests of Shiites and Islam. Iran pursues its own interests. Iran is particularly the first pragmatic country that exploits all of the holy names for its own interests. It takes advantage of the names of Islam, Shiism, Palestine and etc. for its own interest. So, yes there is meddling by Iran... Iranian interference is obvious. Iran's political propaganda since the fall of Saddam is an undeniable proof. The Al-Alam television, Al-Manar television, Sahar channels and other Iranian channels that broadcast in Farsi are all engaged in a propaganda war to spread despair and disappointment among the people of Iraq and especially among the Shiites...

In addition, there is 1,200 kilometers of common border between Iran and Iraq. Iran has taken advantage of the soaring international price of oil to send money into Iraq and spread its rule and influence... If the Shiites in Iraq feel threatened by Iran, I think the Iranian leadership is the party to lose... It is a lie that Khamenei's pictures are posted in people's homes. The worst television channel that might give such an impression, especially to the Iraqi Shiites, is the Al-Alam...

Iran wants to dominate Iraq - Shaalan

Al-Sharq Al-Awsat daily, Jan. 4, Iraq – After a meeting with Ahmed Abu Al-Qaiz in Egypt, Shaalan reiterated his remarks against Iran and Syria on interfering in Iraq's domestic affairs....

In response to a question on the chance of bilateral negotiations with Iran and Syria after Neighboring Countries' Conference failed in preventing meddling in Iraq's internal affairs, Shaalan said, "Iran is not satisfied with bilateral negotiations because it wants dominance over Iraq."

Naqib warns about main threat to Iraq

Al-Shahed Al-Mostaqel, Jan. 4, Iraq – In a dialogue with the Sheikhs delegation, Fallah Naqib warned of the threats that threaten Iraq in this period and said topping those was interference in Iraq's internal affairs by Iran and fundamentalist and terrorist groups.

DM Shaalan: Iran seeks to dominate Iraq



Iranian state-run Mehr news agency, Jan. 3 – The Interim Iraqi Defense Minister Hazem Shaalan today said, "If the Sunnis do not

participate in the elections, he would support postponement of the elections..." Shaalan again accused Iran and Syria of meddling in Iraqi affairs and said he does not believe negotiating with Iran is worth it. He said: Bilateral talks with Tehran are not sufficient. What they want is to gain control and dominance over Iraq. This is their main goal." The Iraqi official announced, "Iraq does not have any instrument to control its long borders with Iran and doubts the Iraqi neighbors' conference in Jordan. Unfortunately, other ignorant and self-interested groups are exploiting the reality of the situation in Iraq."

Shiite Coalition rejects Iranian-style government

Iran state-run Mehr news agency, Jan. 3 – In a surprise press conference in Baghdad, the leaders of the Shiite Political Coalition which is predicted to win the Iraqi national election, tried to ease concerns about being under the secret influence of Iran or seeking to establish an Islamic government led by clerics...Ahmad Chalabi, chairman of the National Congress Party, said, "We have rejected the idea of forming a sectarian regime and believe that Iraq belongs to all the people of Iraq. "Having recently returned from Iran, he said that he had told Iranian leaders that they must not interfere in Iraq's election. In an interview, Chalabi said that he stressed on three issues in talks with top Iranian leaders including Hashemi Rafsanjani. First, we do not want any interference in the Iraqi elections. Second, this Coalition does not want to establish an Islamic Republic or a government led by clerics. This group seeks to establish a government based on democracy and pluralism. And third, we need the U.S. military to create a predictable future in Iraq.

Tehran sending money to influence election

Hambastegi Melli website, Jan. 3 – The Revolutionary Guards Qods Force has recently poured large sums of money into Al-Amara, Iraq, to influence the Iraqi elections. Iranian regime's agents, Abu Vafa, Abu Ayat and Abu Motaz, have brought a large sum of money to Iraq via Dehloran border. The agents who are members of the 9th Badr Corps have divided the money among Tehran's favored candidates in different provinces.

International front against fundamentalism

Conference says democratic election is vital to women in fight against fundamentalism

Al-Iraq Al-Yoom daily, Jan. 1, Iraq – The Association of Future Women of Iraq held its first conference today at Baghdad's Al-Alawiya club. The meeting was entitled, "Women and their role in the future democratic Iraq."...

The conference discussed Iraq's upcoming elections, stressing the need to establish a democratic rule in Iraq to secure women's rights in the country's future constitution. They emphasized the danger of fundamentalism as the main threat to security and democracy and as the main enemy of women in Iraq. The conference also condemned all forms of abuse of the Islam to deprive women of their rights. Also discussed was the impact of foreign meddling on the process of Iraqi elections.



The conference also discussed the need to learn from the experience of progressive organizations, including the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, in their fight against fundamentalism to achieve women's rights. They said the people and democratic forces of Iraq especially women consider the PMOI as their partner and ally. The PMOI advocates a democratic and tolerant Islam and women play a major role in its leadership. Therefore, supporting the presence of this organization in Iraq as a legitimate resistance movement is an important factor in blocking fundamentalist infiltration and guaranteeing Iraq's democratic future.

Support of terrorism

650 tons of TNT stolen in Karbala

Al-Mada daily, Jan. 3, Iraq - 650 tons of highly explosive TNT and the necessary equipment and fuel for missiles stored in an ammunition warehouse called Al-Fat'h located near Karbala has fallen into the hands of unidentified individuals. Three intact and functional incinerators ready to process these materials have also been stolen. An engineer who worked at the site said, "The facility's experts went to Iran and Syria and a number of others are working for terrorists in Iraq."

Iranian terrorists kidnapping Iraqis in southern province

Iran Focus, Jan. 2, Baghdad – Iranian agents are systematically kidnapping Iraqis for ransom in the southern Iraqi province of Missan, local residents say. "Iranian terrorist agents kidnap Iraqis on the Ozeys route and take them to Iran, demanding large ransoms for their return", a local Iraqi said. Citing a recent example, another local said, "20 passengers of a bus were abducted and taken to Iran. Afterwards, the kidnappers posing as middlemen offered to help the victims' relatives, asking for large sums of money as rewards". Both sources, who wished to remain anonymous because of security concerns, said that truck drivers traveling on the Ozeys route were becoming regular targets.

Iran smuggles illegal chemical substance used in drugs to Baghdad

Al-Sabah daily, Jan. 2, Iraq – Special security squads in Kefri have arrested five individuals accused of smuggling dangerous chemical substances used in drugs. This substance was being smuggled from Iran to Baghdad. An informed security source explained that the arrested individuals include three Iraqis who reside in Kefri's suburbs and an Iranian man and a woman from Yazd, Iran. These people carried 1,250 kg of a narcotic substance which is used in preparing internationally banned, hazardous drugs. They intended to smuggle this substance to Baghdad and make drugs with it.

Nuclear proliferation

Bush to undertake Tehran nuclear matter in Germany

Mehr news agency, Iranian state-run, Jan. 3 – US president George Bush is considering a visit to Germany on February 23, to hold talks with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. Iran's nuclear activities will be one of the main issues of Bush-Schroeder talks. Underlining the unconventional nature of Iran's nuclear activities, Bush demanded halting of all nuclear programs of Iran.

GCC concerned by Tehran's nuke

United Press International, Jan. 3, Saudi Arabia -- Officials of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council said Monday they see no justification for Iran's nuclear program and are skeptical about it. GCC Secretary-General Abdel Rahman Attiya was quoted in the Saudi daily al-Watan as saying, "Saudi Arabia and the other GCC countries can't find any justification for such nuclear activity which poses great dangers for all the peoples in the Gulf region."..."In view of the existing imbalance of powers in the region, certain GCC countries have worked out security arrangements with outside parties to restore a certain balance with neighbors who appear to have regional ambitions," he said in an obvious reference to Iran.

Iran produces cladding for uranium rods

Middle East Newline, Jan. 2, Nicosia -- Iran has achieved the capability to produce a key component for its nuclear program....Mansour Habashizadeh, director of Isfahan's Research and Fuel Production Center, asserted that Iranian scientists could produce cladding for uranium rods, a process that would ensure the operations of nuclear reactors. Habashizadeh said zirconium would be used as the casing for nuclear fuel in reactors. In remarks reported by

Iranian state television, Habashizadeh said Iranian scientists could produce 99.99 percent pure manganese, a metallic element used to strengthen steel alloys. Neither Habashizadeh nor the television report elaborated.

Diplomatic Le Monde: "After Baghdad: Is it Iran's turn?"

Radio France Internationale, Jan. 2 – It is good to review an article from the January edition of Le Monde Diplomatic entitled, "Is it Iran's turn after Baghdad?" The article is devoted to the US strategy aimed at revising the current make-up of the Middle East.

The author believes the numerous issues emanating from the war in Iraq do not seem to have dissuaded the US from following up its decision to change the Middle East plan. In this case, America's agenda would be to consider Iran as the new global threat. Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear technology and its likely use of this achievement in the military field provide ample reason for the U.S.

Tsunami disaster

Tsunami 'Core Group' of Relief Nations Disbanded

REUTERS

Reuters, January 6-By Arshad Mohammed

An effort by the United States, Japan, India and Australia to coordinate tsunami relief will be disbanded and folded into broader U.N.-led operations, Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Thursday. The group's creation was announced by President Bush just eight days ago as he tried to dispel criticism that the initial U.S. response to the catastrophe was slow. Some analysts saw it as an effort to appear engaged. But U.S. officials said the group, later expanded to include Canada and the Netherlands, had already served its purpose by jump-starting aid efforts to devastated regions following the Dec. 26 tsunami that barreled into 13 countries around the Indian Ocean and killed close to 150,000. The core group helped to catalyze the international response," Powell told a tsunami relief conference in Jakarta. "Having served its purpose, the core group will fold itself into the broader coordination efforts of the United Nations ."

Tsunami Death Toll Rises to About 160,000

AP

Associated Press

AP, January 5, By MICHAEL C. CORDER,

JAKARTA, Indonesia - World leaders wrapped up a one-day summit on Asia's earthquake and tsunamis, hoping to find the best way to help victims — and to prevent such a catastrophe from happening again. Indonesia reported almost 20,000 new deaths on Friday, pushing the overall toll to almost 160,000. Even as more deaths from the initial effects of the natural disaster were announced, health officials warned that secondary deaths from hunger or disease would push the toll higher without a steady supply of aid to the region. Donors concluded an emergency summit Thursday as relief workers scrambled to move aid to areas of Sumatra, the Indonesian island hit hardest by the earthquake and giant waves that crashed ashore Dec. 26. Volunteers hurled sacks of rice and instant noodles into trucks as U.S. helicopters loaded with other supplies buzzed overhead en route to isolated communities. A new potential danger emerged, this time to the American and Australian military teams assisting the tsunami survivors. A radical Islamic group once headed by an al-Qaida-linked terror chief set up a relief camp in Sumatra. The militants, known for attacking Christians on Indonesia's far-flung islands, insisted they would not interfere with foreign troops — so long as they kept to humanitarian operations.....

Maryam Rajavi contributes to Tsunami victims

Iran National Television, Jan. 3 - On the evening of Saturday, January 1, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, President-elect of the Iranian Resistance, participated in the concert of the first day of the New Year at the Bastille Opera House of Paris where she contributed her aid to the victims of the devastating Tsunamis in Southeast Asia through the World Fund of Physicians' Society.

Feature

Risks of appeasing Iran's mullahs

The Washington Times *The Washington Times, January 5, 2005* By *Struan Stevenson*

Iran's increasing meddling in Iraq and its defiance in its nuclear weapons program pose the greatest challenge to peace and security in Iraq and the whole Middle East, as we enter 2005. By sending thousands of Revolutionary Guards and intelligence agents into Iraq, as well as spending hundreds of millions of dollars to recruit mercenaries and enlist support among destitute and impoverished Iraqis, Tehran is hell-bent on steering the Jan. 30 elections in its favor. Its proxies in that country, including the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), have put forward a united slate, hoping to gain a majority in the newly elected parliament, whose primary task is to draft Iraq's future constitution. The Iranian clerics have never been so close to realizing their decades-old dream of erecting a sister Islamic Republic in Iraq. On the nuclear issue, the recent agreement brokered by France, Germany and the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union, has given Tehran all that it wanted and more. The Iranians have committed themselves to virtually nothing permanent. Reports this week indicate Tehran has prepared large quantities of uranium yellow cake for enrichment, which diplomats say breaks, if not the letter, the spirit of the Nov. 15 pact with the EU big three. In return, Iran received a host of incentives, including a light-water reactor as well as the promise of European technological expertise to advance its "peaceful" nuclear program. More importantly, it demanded and received a commitment from its European interlocutors not only to keep Tehran's arch-nemesis, the Iranian People's Mujahedeen, on the EU terror list, but also to fight its activities. The EU's lack of spine in dealing with Tehran has emboldened the mullahs to step up repression in Iran. A resolution just adopted by the U.N. General Assembly censured Tehran for "failure to comply fully with international standards in the administration of justice, the absence of due process of law, the refusal to provide fair and public hearings, and right to counsel, the continuing executions, in particular the execution of persons below 18 years of age, the arbitrary arrest and detention without charge or trial, the use of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, in particular the practice of amputation and flogging as well as the systemic discrimination against women and girls." The deterioration of human rights in Iran has revealed new depths of barbarity, where pregnant women and children are routinely executed and floggings and amputations are an almost daily public spectacle. The ban on the moderate Khatami faction from standing for election last February reduced the so-called democratic process to a sham. In place of those moderates, the Legislature now has 40 new deputies who were former Revolutionary Guards commanders and who have formed a hard, extremist right-wing majority to drive increasingly repressive judicial and executive measures. These stark realities, however, have not deterred the ever-shrewd and business-minded Europeans. Claiming any attempt at firmness toward Tehran would be tantamount to starting an Iraqi-style war, the EU and its allies on the other side of the Atlantic argue conciliation is the best approach. This deliberately obscures the fact that facing up to the Iranian challenge need not involve a choice between war and appeasement. As the exiled opposition leader Maryam Rajavi said during an address to the European Parliament on Dec. 15, "No concession is going to dissuade the mullahs from continuing their ominous objectives. ... The equation of 'either a military invasion or appeasement' is an exercise in political deception. A third option is within reach. The Iranian people and their organized resistance have the capacity and ability to bring about change." As Iran inches closer to acquiring a nuclear bomb and developing, with North Korea's help, the missiles to deliver them, the civilized world can ill-afford to be at the mercy of these turbaned tyrants. The bitter, costly experience of Iran's people in the past quarter-century should serve as an example. Appeasement is not the way to contain or change this evil regime. Nor is it the path to avoid another war. A nuclear-armed fundamentalist regime will not spare the EU, either. Iran's missiles already can reach southern Europe. The mullahs are now rushing to develop a third-generation missile system able to reach Paris, London and Brussels. By putting the People's Mujahedeen in its terror list, however, the EU has handcuffed itself. The EU should end the blacklisting of this antifundamentalist group, which provided some of the most critical information on Iran's nuclear weapons program and its intervention in Iraq. For once, we should side with the millions in Iran whose cry is for freedom and regime change. A modern,

secular and democratic Iran would not only be the key to regional peace and security, but also a long-term ally as we try to spread democracy across the Middle East and the world.

Struan Stevenson is a Scottish Conservative member of the European Parliament and co-chairman of the Friends of Free Iran Intergroup in the European Parliament.

Iran making the best of Iraqi elections

Chicago Tribune, Jan. 2, Washington - The Bush administration, already facing a relentless insurgency in Iraq, is preparing to confront what could be an equally daunting political challenge - the possible emergence from the Jan. 30 election of a pro-Iranian government dominated by Shiite fundamentalists. Despite issuing warnings to Tehran for months, some administration officials and outside experts say little can be done to limit the political influence in Iraq of Iran... U.S. officials say Iran has given strong support to the two leading Shiite political parties in the United Iraqi Alliance, the electoral slate that most analysts expect to garner the greatest share of Iraqi votes in elections for a new national government. Tehran's support includes an estimated \$20 million for the current election for candidates from those parties - the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and the Dawa Party - according to a State Department official who spoke on the condition of anonymity....

Although an increase in strife after Shiite ascendancy would obviously affect the United States, the potential longer-term implications of an Iranian-leaning government installed in Baghdad are also weighing heavily on some American policymakers. While the United States spent years and millions of dollars backing Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress in the hope of eventually shaping Iraq's post-Saddam Hussein future, Tehran did the same for al-Hakim and the Supreme Council under the guidance of Iran's hard-line Islamic Revolutionary Guard, according to U.S. officials. The State Department official who spoke about the issue suggested the only significant question now is how close to Iran a new Iraqi government will lean. "When you pay for something, you expect to get something in return," this official said of Iran's \$20 million. But this official and others also pointed hopefully to evidence that most Iraqis, including Shiites, have a pronounced sense of nationalism and are uneasy about the prospect of a strong alliance between Tehran and Baghdad, who were bitter enemies in a war fought from 1980 to 1988. U.S. officials also take solace in the results of an October poll showing that about 45 percent of Iraqis ranked Iran first when asked which foreign country was most likely to cause upheaval in Iraq... Nonetheless, leading members of the Iraqi interim government, including President Ghazi al-Yawar and the chief of staff for Iraq's National Security Council, publicly fretted last month about excessive Iranian influence in Iraq's political process.