



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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Nuclear proliferation

Iran ups the ante with nuke demands

AP, August 10, VIENNA-- Iran is demanding that Europe's leading powers back its right to nuclear technology that could be used to make weapons, dismaying the Europeans and strengthening Washington's push for U.N. sanctions, a European Union official and diplomats said yesterday. Declining to respond to a list of demands presented by Iran last week -- the contents of which were made available to the Associated Press -- the Europeans are urging Tehran to instead make good on a pledge to clear up suspicions about its nuclear ambitions. But diplomats said Iran's demands undermine the effort by France, Germany and Britain to avoid a confrontation. They had hoped to persuade Tehran to give up technology that can produce nuclear arms, but now are closer to the Bush administration's view that Iran should be referred to the U.N. Security Council for violating the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the diplomats said. The Iranian list, presented during talks in Paris, includes demands that the three European powers: 1-Support Iran's insistence that its nuclear program have access to "advanced technology, including those with dual use," which is equipment and know-how that has both peaceful and weapons applications. 2-"Remove impediments" -- sales restrictions imposed by nuclear supplier nations -- blocking Iran's access to such technology. 3-Give assurances that they will stick by any commitment to Iran even if faced with "legal (or) political ... limitations," an apparent allusion to potential Security Council sanctions. 4-Agree to sell Iran conventional weapons. Commit to push "rigorously and systematically" for a non-nuclear Middle East and to "provide security assurances" against a nuclear attack on Iran, both allusions to Israel, which is believed to have nuclear arms and which destroyed Iraq's nuclear reactor in a 1981 airstrike to prevent it from making atomic weapons.

Nations 'worried' by Iran's nuclear effort, Rice says

Philadelphia Inquirer, Aug. 9, Washington - With Iran stepping up its nuclear program, White House national security adviser Condoleezza Rice said yesterday that the world was "worried and suspicious" over the Iranians' intentions and was determined not to let Tehran produce a nuclear weapon.

World cannot afford to wait long

The New York Times, Aug. 11, letter to editor, Senator Jon Kyl - It is now as clear as it has been since Hitler rolled into Czechoslovakia that a purely diplomatic, let's-make-a-deal, sanctions-free approach is ineffective in dealing with countries ruled by tyrants. Iran's mullahs have followed in the footsteps of Saddam Hussein and countless others in using the vacillation of free countries to buy time and build power. But as your editorial noted, "The world cannot afford to wait long."

US mulling 'many means' to keep nukes out of Iran

AFP, Aug. 8, Washington - White House national security adviser Condoleezza Rice on Sunday said the United States could not rule out taking covert action against Iran to disrupt its nuclear weapons program. "We will use many means to try to disrupt these programs," Rice told NBC television. "The president will look at all the tools that are available to us."

"For a long time ... we were the only ones who seemed to think that Iran really did have an aggressive program to try to develop nuclear weapons," she said.

"We are now getting stronger (International Atomic Energy Agency) action against them. We believe in September we will get a very strong statement out of the (IAEA) board that Iran will either be isolated or it will submit to the will of the international community."

Iran threatens tough measures, terrorism in event of sanctions

Financial Times, Aug. 8 - The diplomatic poker game over Iran's nuclear programme is intensifying, with warnings by the Islamic Republic that it would take tough measures in response to any attempt by the US to block its development through the United Nations Security Council... "You don't expect a country like Iran to be pushed around and take it sitting down," said Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's UN ambassador, who said it was an issue of national dignity. "What is important is that our integrity is not to be bargained or up for sale. We react very strongly when we see people trying to undermine our national integrity."...

A second Iranian official, who asked not to be named, told the Financial Times in Tehran the situation "was on the verge of something drastic". "If there is more criticism in September, Iran will remove the [IAEA] cameras [at nuclear sites] and start injecting the gas [the final stage of uranium enrichment]," he said... The official, a regime insider, said "radicals" were now thinking of "stupid things against the US and even Europe". He recalled the days when Iran "carried out assassinations" in Europe and recalled that bombings in Madrid this year changed the course of a general election. Europe, he said, had long been aware that Iran sought nuclear weapons and had earlier supplied dual-use technology.

Diplomacy fails to slow advance of nuclear arms

The New York Times, Aug. 8 - American intelligence officials and outside nuclear experts have concluded that the Bush administration's diplomatic efforts with European and Asian allies have barely slowed the nuclear weapons programs in Iran and North Korea over the past year, and that both have made significant progress.

In a tacit acknowledgment that the diplomatic initiatives with European and Asian allies have failed to curtail the programs, senior administration and intelligence officials say they are seeking ways to step up unspecified covert actions intended, in the words of one official, "to disrupt or delay as long as we can" Iran's efforts to develop a nuclear weapon.

Support grows for UV Showdown with Iran

The Financial Times, Aug. 5 - The US administration is gaining European support for a diplomatic showdown with Iran over its nuclear programme next month, as a first step towards imposing sanctions. US officials and European diplomats said momentum was building after a bad tempered meeting in Paris last week between Iran and France, Germany and the UK - the three governments that negotiated a nuclear deal with Iran last October.

Iran was warned that if it continued to move in the wrong direction, it could not avoid the issue being referred to the United Nations Security Council at the next meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency on September 13... "Why are our politicians persisting in negotiations with the Europeans, who have broken their promises?" blazed an editorial in the conservative Jomhuri Eslami. "Regardless of the content of Iran's nuclear programme, the EU should not address the Iranian nation in this tone. Maybe they don't know who they are talking to".

Hossein Shariatmadari, chief of the conservative Kayhan newspaper, regretted that Iranian negotiators had "not torn up" a European draft that made "colonialist demands."

Iran's nuclear ambitions must be contained

The New York Times, Aug. 4 - Despite its ritualistic denials, Iran gives every indication of building all the essential elements of a nuclear weapons program....Diplomacy can resolve this issue only if both sides ultimately want a deal, and it is not at all clear that Iran's ruling clerics do. They may just be playing for time to develop their enrichment capacity before quitting the nuclear treaty and building bombs. The tone of Iran's dealings with the outside world has changed for the worse since early this year, when hard-line clerics seized control of Parliament ... Since then, Iran has stepped up its meddling in Iraq, stopped trying to improve its abysmal human rights reputation and turned more belligerent in the nuclear negotiations with Europe. ...But the world cannot afford to wait long. Once the new centrifuges are completed, Iran's ambitions will become much harder to contain. If no agreement is reached soon, this apparent drive to build nuclear weapons should be recognized as a threat to international peace and security and taken up by the United Nations Security Council later this year.

Meddling in Iraq

Iran's Internal Divisions Play Out in Iraqi Arena.

Tehran's efforts to gain sway in its fellow Shiite nation are hampered by rivalries, officials say.

LA Times, August 12, By Megan K. Stack, Times Staff Writer

KARBALA, Iraq — Pouring money into political parties, charities and armed organizations in a semi-covert campaign for influence and control, Iran has emerged as a silent and powerful force in postwar Iraq, Iraqi officials and Western diplomats said. As a neighbor, former enemy in war and sometime haven for opponents of Saddam Hussein, Iran has long been a factor in Iraq's political life. Interviews with Western diplomats and Iraqis inside and outside government paint a picture of Iran seeking a new role since the U.S.-led invasion. But Iran's internal divisions have muddied its goals in Iraq. Instead of working toward an overarching end, the Islamic Republic's clerics, political leadership and various military and intelligence branches are pursuing their own agendas.....

Insurgents' weapons made in Iran – Shaalan

Al-Arabia TV, Aug. 9 – Hazem Shaalan, Iraqi defense minister: "The Iranian regime has left signs of its meddling in Najaf which are the weapons found in the hands of the insurgents of this city. These weapons are made in Iran and are brought into Iraq via the Iranian border... Our information indicates that whatever has happened to the Iraqi people has come from its number one enemy."



80 Iranians fight alongside Al-Mahdi army

Az-Zaman daily, Aug. 8 – At a military base near Najaf, Colonel Jerry Johnston, the operation's commander of the US Marines Unit 11, said: "We have information that 80 Iranians fight alongside the Al-Mahdi Army and we have told them to leave the city in 24 hours."

Al-Mahdi's 3 Iranian members arrested

Al-Sharqia TV, Aug. 8 – Najaf police chief: "We have arrested three Iranian members of the Al-Mahdi army and dispatched them to Baghdad. We will follow up on the matter via the Interpol."

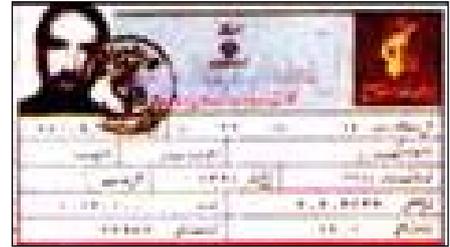
Iraq PM warns Iran against interference in home affairs

AFP, Aug. 7, Cairo - Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi advised neighboring Iran not to interfere in Iraq's affairs, an Egyptian daily reported Saturday amid a growing war of words

between the two countries."I would presume that our brothers in Iran are wise and thoughtful enough not to get bogged down in Iraq's problems and further complicate the situation," he told the government-run Al-Ahram daily. "We want our relations with our neighbors to be based on mutual respect... We do not expect them to interfere in our affairs," Allawi said.

Four Iranian "spies" arrested in Baghdad

Agence France Presse, Aug. 7, Baghdad - Four Iranian intelligence officers have been arrested by Iraqi authorities on suspicion of spying and carrying out acts of sabotage in the country, a spokesman for the interior ministry confirmed Saturday. "The investigation is still continuing. We will announce all the developments," Sabah Kadhim said.



Iraqi police arrests 32 Iranians in Karbala

Radio France Internationale, Aug. 7 - Karbala police announced that 32 Iranians and four Afghans, carrying heroin and opium, were arrested in Karbala today. None of these people have passports. A Karbala police official said that in the last 10 days alone, 1,200 Iranians were arrested in Karbala and sent back to Iran across the border.

Unease builds with rise of Iran

The Boston Globe, Aug. 4, Washington - Recently, Iran tried to foster good will with Iraq's new government by offering to host eight-nation talks about how to better protect Iraq's borders from infiltration by foreign fighters. But Iranian opposition groups say that offer comes after thousands of mullahs, informants, agents, and Revolutionary Guards have already crossed the 900-mile border into Iraq, sometimes under the guise of Shi'ite pilgrims. "Members of the Iranian opposition warned repeatedly of the dangers of fundamentalists coming from Iran," said Ali Safavi, a former member of the National Council of Resistance of Iran. "In the chaos following the toppling of Saddam Hussein, the border was left unguarded, and tens of thousands entered Iraq... I think the US could have sealed the Iranian border and prevented them from setting up shop in Iraq." Iranian influence has been an obstacle to planning the national conference to select advisers to Iraq's interim government, according to Sadiq Mussawi, one of the conference organizers. The conference had been scheduled for last Saturday but was postponed because of disagreements over the process of choosing delegates.

Mussawi said that, in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah, the fact that several Iranian ayatollahs hold sway over different sections of the population made it difficult to choose the delegates in democratic elections. "There are powerful hands working over there, and the governor is weak. The police force is divided between the offices of the ayatollahs," Mussawi said. "The policemen have political loyalty to those offices, and that destroys any democratic process."... US officials call the possible election of an Iranian-style theocratic government in Iraq "the nightmare scenario," but say they believe the chances of it are remote. Iraq's popular SCIRI party -- or Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq -- was formed in Iran in the 1980s during Hussein's persecution of Iraqi Shi'ites. Abdul Aziz Hakim, head of SCIRI, has received funding from Iran and met several times with Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei... Iranian exiles, longtime enemies of Tehran, say the situation can only get worse. Safavi and his colleagues have been compiling and circulating a list of what they call Iran's transgressions, including allegations that proxy groups control much of southern Iraq and that translators working for the US military also serve as informants for Iran.

"It is safe to say that the number one beneficiary of the Iraq war unwittingly was the fundamentalist regime in Iran," said Safavi. "It goes without saying that if, in fact, the Iranian clerics succeed in their plan, the whole region will be in a lot of trouble because you would have not one, but two fundamentalist regimes."

Export of terrorism

Rafsanjani warns US

Iranian state TV, Channel 1, Aug. 6 – Addressing the Friday prayer worshipers in Tehran, Rafsanjani, head of the State Expediency Council, said: "How do you (the US) expect that those who have access, refrain from dealing blows to you. They will certainly do. Certainly, there will be people, who are very mad and upset. Some of them are so faithful that they are willing to sacrifice their lives and blow themselves up to eliminate an oppressor. These kinds of people are not few in the world... And then you want to sit securely in your glass castles?... "The enemy's conspiracy to prevent the Islamic Republic from having access to development has failed today. They are watching closely to prevent us from finding access to peaceful nuclear technology, but this has already happened and because of it, the Islamic Republic of Iran is facing a showdown with the 'Arrogants'. "The course the West has undertaken today, will not lead to tranquility. They must revise their policies and work."

Deteriorating conditions of human rights

Journalists start hunger strike to protest closure of papers

AFP, Aug. 8, Tehran - More than 100 Iranian journalists on Saturday launched a 24-hour hunger strike to protest the closure of two pro-reform newspapers.

The journalists staged a sit-in protest in downtown Teheran as Iranian government officials began commemorations marking "Press Day" in Iran, during which journalists are awarded prizes for their work. "We are deprived of our rights without any fair trial," read a banner held by the journalists...

The protesters, some from the two closed papers and others from different papers joining the strike in a show of solidarity, wore black armbands as a sign of mourning for the banned papers. They also displayed pictures of imprisoned journalists.

"The Iranian Press is in a disastrous state and needs the help of international human rights groups," journalists said.



Life of political prisoners in danger

Voice of America, Aug. 6 – Doctor Farzad Hamidi, spokesman of the Democratic Front of Iran: "The regime has increased its suppression after the hunger strike (which was held in Evin Prison). They have increased the number of prisoners in 'Ward 1 for political prisoners' by bringing addicts and criminals into the ward... "There is a group in Ward 1 for political prisoners comprised of smugglers and criminals who put pressure on political prisoners. Human rights organizations should pay attention to this matter. The lives of political prisoners are in danger and have been threatened by these people who are supported by the regime and we are worried about our friends' safety."

Feature

Get tough with the mullahs, for Iranians' sake The West and Tehran

PARIS, August 12, 2004, Behzad Naziri- As pundits and armchair generals in the United States and Europe debate ways to cope with the growing threat of Iran's nuclear program, it's



worth thinking about the plight of the 70 million Iranians who are ruled by the mullahs' iron fist.

The death by torture last year of the Iranian-Canadian journalist Zahra Kazemi in a prison cell in Tehran was a stark reminder of the cruelty of life in Iran. It also gave me a sense of djũ vu.

Last week, the United Nations rapporteur on freedom of opinion and _expression, Ambeyi Ligabo, called for the dispatch of an international delegation to Iran to investigate Kazemi's death. My experience qualifies me to join that delegation.

Zahra Kazemi, on an assignment to Iran, was arrested in June last year while photographing families of political prisoners who were trying to get some information on their loved ones outside the notorious Evin Prison in northern Tehran.

As a journalist working for the foreign press, Zahra Kazemi was trying to report the flagrant abuses inside the country. She paid dearly for that, with her life. Kazemi died after severe torture while being interrogated in Evin Prison. The Iranian authorities quickly buried her to cover up what they had done.

Under enormous international pressure, a show trial was held to whitewash the crime. As facts in the case started coming out - including testimony by Kazemi's mother about the severity of the torture that resulted in her daughter's death - the court adjourned abruptly. A few days later, the judge acquitted the accused. The official story is now that Zahra Kazemi died of natural causes. Welcome to justice, mullah-style.

I have experienced Iranian justice too. In February 1982, as a stringer in Tehran for Agence France-Presse, I went to Evin Prison to attend a trial. The victim was a 17-year-old supporter of the People's Mujahideen, the main Iranian opposition group.

We were allowed to talk to many prisoners who told us that they had been well treated in the prison. We even saw the prison's pool. But the trial was off-limits, and we were not allowed in. A few days later, I found out that the boy had been executed the same night.

It did not take me long to get a chance to visit Evin again. As I was going to work in Tehran in June 1982, I was detained by Revolutionary Guards. My elder sister Giti, a journalist working for Iranian Television, had been executed in May 1982 on charges of having supported the People's Mujahideen. I ended up in Evin, this time as a prisoner. I was held in Ward 209, the one where Zahra Kazemi spent her last days alive.

The flogging began immediately. While blindfolded, I recognized the voice of my torturer. He was one of the "prisoners" who had earlier told me about how good conditions were in the prison. Little by little I realized that most of the "prisoners" I had met in the previous visit were actually prison guards.

During my first night in solitary confinement, I woke up to the sound of gunfire. It was firing squads executing prisoners in the empty pool I had seen during my first visit.

Like Zahra Kazemi, I was charged with "cooperating with foreign press." I had a trial, too. It took five minutes. No lawyer, no defense. I was luckier than Zahra Kazemi and only sentenced to eight years. I managed to escape in 1985 during a medical test and eventually made it to Paris.

While in exile, I have seen and heard the much-touted "moderate mullah" fantasy over and over. When Mohammad Khatami became president, many in the West thought he was the Cinderella the world was looking for, but his reformist rhetoric has done more to provide

cover for Western trade with Tehran than to improve the lives of ordinary Iranians. The moderate fantasy remains just that, a fantasy.

The mullahs have not changed and are not going to change. In a statement June 20, the European Union said it "continues to be gravely concerned at the continued and numerous violations of human rights in Iran."

For more than a decade, Europe has sought to placate the mullahs by ignoring their egregious human rights abuses, their quest for a nuclear arsenal and their undercutting of Middle East peace. Europe even gave Tehran what it demanded the most by blacklisting the only effective opposition to the fundamentalist rulers of Iran, the People's Mujahideen. This policy has proven to be a dismal failure, serving only to solidify the grip of the most anti-Western and extremist wing of the ruling theocracy.

Meanwhile, the United States has sent mixed signals to Tehran, with President George W. Bush expressing concern over the regime's threat and the State Department pushing to engage the mullahs.

It's time to stop seeing Iran through rose-tinted glasses. The rest of the world should respect the Iranian people's desire for regime change and abandon dialogue with Iran's tyrants. The first step is to take the matter to the UN Security Council to adopt some binding measures against the mullahs. Iran's people will do the rest.

Behzad Naziri, a human rights activist based in Paris, is a member of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, a coalition of Iranian opposition groups