



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

Uranium extraction to begin in Iran

Jaam-e Jam Television, Dec. 4 - Iran's first uranium rock will be extracted next year in the city of Yazd. Aqazadeh, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization, said, "Tunnels deep inside the ground have been excavated to access uranium mines." He added, "There are uranium resources and rocks in Iran and these resources were discovered in a region after search operations. To excavate uranium stone in Yazd, two holes 300 meters long and 4 meters deep have been excavated. Equipment and humans enter from one hole and mineral rocks are taken out from the other."

Watchdog 'bowed to pressure from Iran' on bomb materials

The Telegraph, Dec. 5 - The world nuclear watchdog dropped a claim that Iran bought large quantities of a metal used to trigger explosions in atomic weapons after bowing to objections from Teheran. The International Atomic Energy Agency at first accepted Western intelligence reports that the Islamic republic had bought "huge amounts" of beryllium from "a number of nations", but removed the claim from its final report on Iranian compliance with nuclear non-proliferation rules, published 10 days ago...Jacky Sanders, the American ambassador to the IAEA, however, said that Iran's assertions that it has never acquired or used beryllium were no longer reliable. The climb down by the IAEA reflected Teheran's insistence that it had never acquired or used beryllium, and helped Iran escape immediate referral to the UN Security Council over its nuclear ambitions....Western intelligence agencies have intercepted documents suggesting that Iran purchased equipment for delivery to the Parchin military base and a second facility at Lavisan. Satellite photographs suggested that weapons are being tested at the sites.

EIBaradei rejects charges of collaboration with Iran

Al Jazeera.com, Dec. 5 - International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General Mohamed EIBaradei angrily rejected allegations that he had collaborated with Iran before releasing investigation reports on Tehran's nuclear program. "We never show a report to any single member" of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), "not the least of course an inspected country," EIBaradei said on Saturday.

EIBaradei was responding to allegations that he had met Iran's demands to dismiss IAEA requests to inspect the Parchin military site and the Islamic republic's use of

the strategically sensitive metal beryllium in a report he submitted to the IAEA board on September 1.

100 nuclear bases across Iran

Mehr News Agency, Dec. 6 - The Saudi Arabian *Al-Watan* daily cited European diplomats as saying, "Iran's nuclear program has been spread to over 100 bases... A large number of these nuclear bases are not controlled or supervised by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"The facilities are made up of three groups. The first are the identified nuclear facilities which are under heavy protection. The second are the clandestine nuclear bases which are deep under ground and accessing them is very difficult, so much that only very advanced missiles can infiltrate such highly protected sites. The third group are nuclear bases which are among rural facilities and factories. Investigation on what truly goes on inside them is difficult and officials usually do not allow IAEA inspectors to inspect the facilities or factories."

IAEA invites Tehran into fuel cycle group

Channel 1 Television, Dec. 6 – The head of the Iranian negotiating team in the board of governors said the IAEA has formally invited the Islamic Republic of Iran to join the expert group on the nuclear fuel cycle. Mr. Nasser said EBaradei's formal invitation was submitted to Iran's representative office in Vienna and Iran will soon introduce its representative for participation in the group.

Tehran altering ballistic missile

Jane's Defence Weekly, Dec. 6 - As the controversy over whether Iran is conducting a secret nuclear weapons programme gathers momentum, new details are emerging about Tehran's ballistic missiles likely to carry such weapons. The most likely delivery system, a liquid-fuelled medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM), referred to in the US as the Shahab 3A, has been flight-tested several times in the past few months. The Paris-based Iranian opposition group, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), in London on 2 December, claimed that Tehran, under what it alleged to be a "wider clandestine programme," is developing a new medium-range ballistic missile called the Ghadr-101. US intelligence officials believe the Ghadr 101 is the same as the Shahab 3A. ...The missile has a modified nose section allowing it to hold a larger warhead and thus provide additional room for a nuclear device. Israeli officials have said the larger nose section is capable of separation. Such extra room is vital as Iranian nuclear engineers would face major technical challenges in making the country's first nuclear weapon light enough and small enough to fit on its existing missiles, particularly without benefit of having conducted full-scale nuclear weapons tests.



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Already achieved fuel cycle tech – Rowhani boasts

News Network Television, Jam-e Jam 1, Dec. 7 – Hassan Rohani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said, "From the technical aspect, we have gained full access to fuel cycle. We are now able to produce yellow cake and process that into UF4 and UF6. We can also enrich UF6 by 3.5%. The Islamic Republic of Iran will not easily let go of this technology."

He said, "In the agreement with Europeans, we explicitly told them that negotiations will continue only so long as we do not feel our time is being wasted."

Iran, EU nuclear talks to begin next week

AFP, Dec. 7, Tehran - Iran's top national security official and nuclear negotiator Hassan Rowhani said the first round of the dialogue was likely to involve himself, the foreign ministers of the EU's "big three" -- Britain's Jack Straw, France's Michel Barnier and Germany's Joschka Fischer -- as well as EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana...He also said the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohamed ElBaradei, had asked to take part in the meeting.

Support of terrorism

New Iranian terrorist group

World Net Daily, Dec. 4 - A newly established Iranian group known as the Organization to Defense Iran's National Interests has threatened to take action against any state that attacks Iran's nuclear facilities. The official IRNA news agency said the group, known by the acronym ODINI, issued a communiqué last week stating it would take action if economic sanctions were imposed on Iran for its failure to abide by international nuclear controls. The group stated Iran's national defense should be increased and should include "maintaining national solidarity behind the leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei to safeguard Iran's national interests" and "launching aggressive-defensive attacks against enemy's most vital interests in case of being attacked."

Israeli Arab Charged With Spying for Iran

Associated Press, Dec 7 - An Israeli Arab has been arrested on charges of spying for Iran, a police spokesman said Tuesday, underscoring growing Israeli-Iranian tensions. Authorities believe Mohammed Ghanam came into contact with Iranian agents during one of his frequent trips to Saudi Arabia, where he facilitated the visits of Muslim pilgrims from Israel, police spokesman Gil Kleiman said....A police statement said Ghanam had been introduced to an Iranian agent named Abu Osma in August 2003. The introduction was carried out by Nabil Mahzouma, an activist from the militant Islamic Jihad group whom Ghanam met in 1973 while serving a term in an Israeli prison for assaulting a soldier and stealing his weapon. Osma promised to pay Ghanam for enlisting young Israeli Arabs to carry out anti-Israeli missions after undergoing training in Jordan. "In his interrogation ... Ghanam said he understood that the purpose of recruiting the young people was to carry out terror attacks, but he claimed that Osma did not specify the place or framework of the attacks," the statement said. ...



Egypt to try Iranian and Egyptian on spy charges

Dec.7- - Egypt will try an Iranian diplomat in absentia and a captured Egyptian on charges of spying and plotting to carry out attacks at home and abroad, the public prosecutor said on Tuesday. Public prosecutor Maher Abdel Wahed said Egyptian Mohamed Eid Mohamed Dabbous supplied information to Iranian diplomat Mohammad Reza Hosseindoust that helped to orchestrate an attack on a petrochemical site in the Saudi oil city of Yanbu in May, which killed five Western engineers. A wing of the militant group al Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attack. Dabbous was in Saudi Arabia at the time he provided the information, but is now detained in Egypt. Hosseindoust worked at the Iranian interests office in Cairo,

but fled to Iran, the prosecutor said. Abdel Wahed said the two plotted a range of attacks that were designed to "result in the severing of political relations between Egypt and Saudi Arabia". Iran has not had official diplomatic ties with Egypt since the Iranian revolution in 1979, when Tehran broke off relations because Egypt had agreed a peace treaty with Israel.

Iran gives Al-Qaeda members sentences

AFP, Dec. 7, Tehran - Fugitive members of the Al-Qaeda network detained in Iran have been sentenced by a Tehran court, the semi-official Fars news agency said Monday in a report quoting the capital's top justice official. "Judgments that conform to Islamic law have been pronounced," Abbas Ali Alizadeh told the agency, seen as close to the Islamic republic's judiciary.

Meddling In Iraq

The Washington Post

Leaders Warn Against Forming Religious State

Wednesday, Dec. 8, The leaders of Iraq and Jordan warned yesterday that Iran is trying to influence the Iraqi elections scheduled for Jan. 30 to create an Islamic government that would dramatically shift the geopolitical balance between Shiite and Sunni Muslims in the Middle East. Iraqi President Ghazi Yawar charged that Iran is coaching candidates and political parties sympathetic to Tehran and pouring "huge amounts of money" into the campaign to produce a Shiite-dominated government similar to Iran's.



Jordanian King Abdullah said that more than 1 million Iranians have crossed the 910-mile border into Iraq, many to vote in the election -- with the encouragement of the Iranian government. "I'm sure there's a lot of people, a lot of Iranians in there that will be used as part of the polls to influence the outcome," he said in an interview.

The king also charged that Iranians are paying salaries and providing welfare to unemployed Iraqis to build pro-Iranian public sentiment. Some Iranians, he added, have been trained by Iran's Revolutionary Guards and are members of militias that could fuel trouble in Iraq after the election. "It is in Iran's vested interest to have an Islamic republic of Iraq . . . and therefore the involvement you're getting by the Iranians is to achieve a government that is very pro-Iran," Abdullah said. If pro-Iran parties or politicians dominate the new Iraqi government, he said, a new "crescent" of dominant Shiite movements or governments stretching from Iran into Iraq, Syria and Lebanon could emerge, alter the traditional balance of power between the two main Islamic sects and pose new challenges to U.S. interests and allies. "If Iraq goes Islamic republic, then, yes, we've opened ourselves to a whole set of new problems that will not be limited to the borders of Iraq. I'm looking at the glass half-full, and let's hope that's not the case. But strategic planners around the world have got to be aware that is a possibility," Abdullah added.

Rafsanjani provokes insurgency in Iraq via mullahs' Arabic TV

Al-Alam Television, Dec. 6 – The head of the State Exigency Council Hashemi Rafsanjani said, "The presence of the US in Iraq causes discord in the Middle East to Israel's benefit. Throwing out the US from Iraq is a correct move towards Iraq's historical interests and its riches."

Iranians struggle for freedom and democracy

SSF clashes

Iran Focus, Dec. 3, Tehran - Heavy clashes erupted between Iran's State Security Forces (SSF) and students from the University of Qazvin (western Iran), after SSF agents raided university buildings and attempted to bring to an end a hunger strike that had been organized in protest to poor university conditions.

Australian senator demands removal of PMOI from terror list

Iran National Television, Dec. 5 - Senator John Cherry, member of the Australian Senate from Queensland called for the removal of the Mojahedin's name from the terror list.

In a speech at the Australian Senate on November 29, Senator John Cherry rebuked the European Union's agreement with the clerical regime on its atomic program and said we do not know what price the world will pay for this agreement. He added that one of the prices paid for this agreement with the Iranian regime is that the US, Europe, Australia and even Canada pressure the Iranian regime's opposition forces even more.

Students heckle Iranian president

BBC , Dec. 6 –

Iranian students have interrupted a speech by President Mohammad Khatami to mark Student Day at Tehran university. Students chanted "Shame on you" and "Where are your promised freedoms?" to express their frustration with the failure of Iran's reform movement. A visibly-shaken Khatami defended his record and criticised the powerful hardliners who have closed newspapers and jailed dissidents. He asked students to stop heckling and accused his critics of intolerance.



Students were once some of President Khatami's strongest supporters. But they now accuse him of failing to stand up to the conservatives who won parliamentary elections in February.

Correspondents say Mr Khatami is concluding his second and final term in office as a virtual lame duck - having once been seen as a force for great change in the Islamic republic.

Free speech "My period is going to be over soon but I do not owe anyone," Mr Khatami told the meeting of about 1,500 students in remarks quoted by Reuters news agency. ...

But student leader Abdollah Momeni complained that there was no difference between the president and the authoritarians who thwarted his reform programme. "Students are very disappointed because they paid a heavy price for supporting Khatami, but in return they got nothing," he is quoted as saying by Reuters. A statement distributed by one pro-reform student group at the meeting said: "Unfortunately what Khatami sees as his tolerance was his extreme weakness towards the opponents of democracy".

Students call for struggle against mullahs to achieve freedom

Radio Farda, Dec. 7 – A number of students broke the large gates of Tehran University. In the December 6th ceremony marking the Students Day, a group of students shouted, "Students are conscious, they detest Khatami", "Hail to freedom",

"Unity, struggle, victory", in protest to Mohammad Khatami's presence in the university. The students formed a human chain around the college of law and said they will defend the last bastions of freedom.

Deteriorating conditions of human rights

Execution in public

Kayhan daily, Dec. 5 – A man ,Ababakr Damani, was publicly executed in the city of Zobal.

Tehran rebukes EU for human rights abuses!!!

AFP, Dec. 5, Tehran - Iran responded to fresh EU criticism of its human rights situation by saying it was "seriously concerned" over what it alleged were ongoing violations in Europe and a wave of anti-Muslim sentiment in the Netherlands.

"We are seriously concerned about the human rights situation in Europe," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters.

Student leader arrested

Radio Farda, Dec. 6 – The secretary of the Students Committee in Defense of Political Prisoners, Shiva Nazar Ahari, was arrested outside her residence on the national Students Day.

Iranian squads accused of using torture

AFP, Dec. 6, Human Rights Watch said Monday that secret squads operating under the Iranian judiciary have used torture to force detained Internet journalists and activists to write self-incriminatory "confession letters. "The New York-based group said it had evidence confirming that secret squads of interrogators -- primarily former intelligence officers purged in the late-1990s by President Mohammed Khatami forced the detainees to write letters under extreme pressure as a condition for their release on bail."The Iranian government shouldn't think for a minute that anyone will believe in the authenticity of these letters. They're fooling no one," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "With stunts like these, Tehran is rapidly losing its already meager credibility on human rights."

9 executions

News Network Television Dec. 7 - Nine people were executed in Zahedan and Bandar Abbas. Seven of them were executed in Zahedan.

Iran Judiciary's "secret squad" forced journalists to write letters of confession

Radio Farda Dec.7-The New York-based group said its evidence shows that the interrogators were primarily former intelligence officers who were purged in the late 1990s by President Mohammed Khatami. It says the officers now work for the Iranian judiciary. The Human Rights Watch report says the squads forced the detainees to write the letters under extreme pressure as a condition for their release on bail. It says the letters describe detention conditions as

satisfactory, and confess that civil society organizations are part of an "evil project" directed by foreigners and counter-revolutionaries.The group says detainees have



later retracted their statements.No comment on the allegations was immediately available from the Iranian government.

Feature

The New York Times

Iran Hints It Sped Up Enriching Uranium as a Ploy

by Nazila Fathi, Dec.6, TEHRAN, Dec. 5 - Iranian officials have hinted in recent days that they sped up their enrichment of uranium in the past year to put Iran in a better position to negotiate with the West.In a rare admission, Sirous Nasser, a member of Iran's negotiating team with three European countries over its nuclear program, was quoted Sunday in the daily newspaper Shargh as saying that Iran had mastered the nuclear fuel cycle since last year, when it came under international pressure to abandon its uranium enrichment program.

"We are in a better negotiating position for political work than last year," the daily quoted him as saying.

Ali Akbar Salehi, Iran's former ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, told students at Ferdowssi University in Mashhad on Wednesday that the government of President Muhammad Khatami had, for the first time, allocated money and facilities to make "advanced centrifuges" for uranium enrichment, Shargh also reported.

Iran has taken the position that its nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes, though it has pursued technology that could easily be converted to weapons production. The United States has accused Iran of secretly trying to make nuclear weapons and has urged its allies on the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations nuclear monitoring agency, to send Iran's case to the Security Council.

The agency opted for a gentler approach and issued a mildly worded resolution after Iran agreed in talks with the three European nations - France, Germany and Britain - to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. In return Iran expects rewards, including economic benefits, political and security cooperation with Europe and help with nuclear technology.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Sunday that Iran was not obliged to allow United Nations inspectors to visit military sites said to be involved in secret nuclear weapons work, but that it was willing to discuss the issue, Agence France-Presse reported.

"It is not a matter of unlimited commitments and unlimited inspections," said the spokesman, Hamid Reza Asefi. "We will act in accordance with" the nuclear nonproliferation treaty.

Despite statements by Iran's leaders that their nuclear program has wide public support, reaction among Iranians to the agreement to suspend nuclear activities has been muted.

Except for a protest outside the British Embassy in Tehran, for which about 200 members of a militia force were bused in, no noticeable protest has occurred.

Frustrated by more than two decades of isolation and eight years of war with Iraq, many Iranians indicate that they would rather avoid confrontation with other countries. They say their priorities are an improved economy and more political and social freedom.

"The government could spend the \$12 billion it has spent over a nuclear program for development of the country," said Karim Bozorgmehr, 32, an English teacher. An analyst in Tehran, who had done surveys on the subject but who said he feared

retaliation if his name was published, said a majority of people he approached viewed the government's nuclear ambition with skepticism, saying the government was seeking nuclear capacity as a deterrent and as a way to consolidate its power. "The clerics want to get hold of the bomb to rule for another 50 years," said, Reza, 36, a civil servant, who, fearing retaliation, would agree to be identified by only his first name.

News of the United Nations agency's resolution last week helped Iran's economy, in which important sectors like real estate and the stock market had slumped over fears that the nuclear dispute could result in a military confrontation with Israel or the United States.

"People were in a wait-and-see situation," said Saeed Leylaz, a journalist and an analyst in Tehran. "The decline in the economy and the soaring unemployment led to discontent among people. Iranian society is not ready for any kind of confrontation, and this put pressure on the government to reach a deal with Europe."

Iran began its nuclear program before the Islamic revolution in 1979 with aid from the United States, Germany and France. But the world has been suspicious of the nuclear program of Iran's Islamic government.