



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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Alternative Iran Policy

Group calls on U.S. to adopt "regime change" policy in Iran

Associated Press, Feb. 10, Washington - A group of former senior government officials called on the Bush administration Thursday to adopt an "official policy of regime change" in Iran on grounds that it poses a threat to U.S. National Security.

The Iran Policy Committee, formed a month ago in an effort to influence government policy toward Iran, said in a statement that Tehran's Islamic government "is not likely to be turned from its threatening behavior by policies that emphasize negotiations."

Tancredo: Maryam Rajavi's movement, main policy option against Tehran's threat

Excerpts of message by Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-CO), Feb. 10 -- I have been impressed with Iran's true movement for democracy and equality, which is led by a Muslim democratic woman, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi. I know of thousand courageous women of Iran, in the city of Ashraf, who have risen to defy and denounce the Islamic fundamentalism and system of violence and misogyny in their homeland. Iran will be liberated by its own men and women. Unfortunately, the west policy towards Iran in the past has been unproductive to the Iranian people and their democracy movement. We have to speak in one voice against the Iranian regime and support the cause of freedom and democracy in Iran by declaring Mrs. Rajavi's movement as the main policy option against Tehran's threat. The blacklisting of her movement at the request of Tehran holds no legitimacy with Iranians and undermines America's attempt to develop a sincere policy in support of democracy in Iran. US should pursue a policy of regime change in Iran by relying on the will of Iranian people and their legitimate opposition... This is the only way Tehran will take the US and the international community serious, and the only sure way of ending Iran's nuclear threat.



A Third Option for Iran

UPI, Feb. 11, Washington -- President George W. Bush, in his State of the Union address issued a not-so veiled warning to Iran, for pursuing its nuclear weapons program. Earlier this week, Condoleezza Rice also warned Iran while on her first European tour as secretary of state. A number of Washington think tanks are jumping into the fray, calling either for dialogue or more muscle to be applied. The Iran Policy Committee, a new Washington group of former Middle East experts, offers a third alternative to negotiations, which they say are getting nowhere, or the military option, which they view as adventurous. The IPC supports regime change in Tehran, though they advocate doing so by supporting and empowering the Iranian resistance form within. More specifically, the IPC want the U.S. government to support one particular group, the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq...IPC's view is that Iran's theocracy "poses a threat to U.S. national interests and ideals." They outline six threats: Drive to acquire nuclear weapons; Continuing support for and involvement with terrorist networks; Publicly stated opposition to the Arab-Israel peace process; Disruptive role in Iraq; Expansionist radical

ideology; Denial of basic human rights to its own population.... The Washington experts caution against "a nightmare scenario" with nuclear weapons capability in the hands of an aggressive and repressive regime in Tehran. They go on to say that it raised the possibility that it could and would collaborate with transnational networks to carry out nuclear terrorism....The middle option, as presented by the IPC, "encourages a campaign of destabilization," to weaken the grip of the ruling regime over the Iranian people sufficiently that Iranian opposition groups inside the country and abroad are empowered to change the regime. IPC recommends backing the MEK, whom they say enjoys "indisputable support" as it is the largest and most organized Iranian opposition group. It claims there are nearly 3,800 of its members in Camp Ashraf, 60 miles north of Baghdad...

Bill supporting freedom for Iran introduced

WorldNetDaily.com, Feb. 11 - Sen. Rick Santorum, R- Pa., has introduced a bill in the U.S. Senate that would tighten the screw on Iran's Islamic regime and give millions of dollars to groups fighting for freedom from the ruling mullahs. Introduced Wednesday, the Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2005 codifies existing sanctions, controls and regulations in place against Iran; expands the list of entities that can be sanctioned under the Iran-Libya Sanction Act; and authorizes \$10 million in assistance to pro-democracy groups opposed to the current Iranian regime...Jerome Corsi is the author of "Atomic Iran" and founder of the Iran Freedom Foundation, a new nonprofit group that educates the American people about the urgency for supporting regime change in Tehran. Corsi told WND: "What Senator Santorum is trying to do is to stimulate the development of opposition groups within Iran in the hopes that changes can occur in a peaceful way within the country, to have regime change occur so the mullahs are no longer in control." The author mentioned a large majority of Iranians do not support the ruling mullahs and that Santorum's bill calls for a referendum on the current regime by the people there.

Nuclear proliferation

Transcript: Bush Announces New Intel Chief

February 17, Washington - President Bush named veteran diplomat John D. Negroponte to the new post of national intelligence chief.

BUSH: Thank you very much. I appreciate you coming here. I'm pleased to announce my decision to nominate Ambassador John Negroponte as director of national intelligence.....

BUSH: As you know, the Iranian issue hasn't even gotten to the Security Council yet. And so there's more diplomacy, in my judgment, to be done. And we'll work very closely with our European friends and other nations. As I mentioned before, we're an active member of the IAEA board, which will give us an opportunity to continue to say to the Iranians, "You've got to be transparent with your program and adhere to protocols that you have signed". Remember, this all started when they -- we found them enriching uranium in an undeclared fashion. And it happened because somebody told on them. It was an Iranian group that brought forth the information. And it was clear that they were enriching, and yet they hadn't told anybody, which leaves you to wonder why they hadn't told anybody. And so you can understand our suspicions...

Rice: Iran will not remain committed to its obligations

Fars News Agency, Feb. 12 – In an interview with a French newspaper, the U.S. Secretary of State said the US wants Iran to comply with its international commitments and stop developing its nuclear arsenal under civilian pretexts. Condoleezza Rice told *Le Figaro* that Iran's [development of nuclear arsenal] is dangerous because whenever its suspicious activities come to light, everyone including the Europeans, who are trying today to persuade Iran to comply with its commitments, will realize that a big problem has emerged. Rice stressed: Europeans are trying to convince Iran to abide by its commitments but Iran will not do so. Iran must not be allowed to set new conditions.

Kissinger: US must not allow Iran to acquire nuclear technology

Iranian state-run Television, Channel 1, Feb. 12 – American analyst Henry Kissinger declared that the US must not allow Iranians to acquire nuclear technology. In an article entitled "Iran's Real Danger", published in the Italian *La Stampa* daily, he wrote: Iran is a major oil producer with a growing population that is moving in the direction of becoming an industrial power. This former White House official added: Washington must never allow Iranians to acquire advanced nuclear technology, not only at present but also in years to come.

Rafsanjani: Not hesitated for a moment about enrichment

AFP, Feb. 11, Tehran -- Iran intends to hold on to its sensitive nuclear fuel cycle technology but is committed to make confidence-building measures to reassure the world it is not seeking nuclear weapons, top cleric Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said on Friday... "We will guard this technology. You will see in the future that Iran will have all the achievements of nuclear science at its disposal," he added. "Iran has not hesitated for a moment about its decision to continue enrichment."



Meddling In Iraq

Religious dictatorship unacceptable for millions of Iraqis

Al-Arabiya television, Feb. 12 – *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat daily writes*: For millions of Iraqis who went to vote and courageously stood up against the terrorists, it is unacceptable that another dictatorial regime take power, even under the name of religion. They do not make a mistake in analyzing the election results: It is a mistake for the [pro-Iran] Alliance and its affiliated groups to assume themselves as winner of the elections. They are new autocrats, using the name of religious authorities and seminaries, who consider themselves winners even before the election results are announced. Their mottos about democracy and freedom have no place in the religious system that they have in mind. They know well that this was the Iraqi people's problem with the former dictatorship, and they want to impose the same suppression and dictatorship even before taking office.

Iranian agent arrested with 'dozens of fake passports'

Al-Mada daily, Feb. 12, Iraq – Al-Amara's police arrested two people who claimed to be Afghans. A police member in Al-Aziz, southern Meysan Province, said the two were interrogated and it was determined that their ID cards are suspicious. After investigations, it was found out that they had dozens of passports with them, most of which were counterfeit. One of the two was Iranian and the other was a Saudi national, but they had Afghan and Jordanian passports.

Sponsor of terrorism

After Iraq, Iran the new threat as Bush heads to Europe

Reuters, February 17, BRUSSELS - When US President George W. Bush comes to town next week, Washington's European allies will be hoping to extinguish the heat of transatlantic rancour over Iraq. But just as one issue gets switched to the backburner for Bush's participation next Tuesday in EU and NATO summits, another in the form of Iran's nuclear ambitions threatens a fresh flare-up. The EU trio of Britain, France and Germany has taken the lead in negotiating with Iran to persuade the Islamic republic to sign up to tough UN inspections of its nuclear facilities. The United States has thus far been content to let the powerful EU countries get on with it, but has of late begun to rattle its sabre a little more loudly. There is talk in Washington of military strikes if the negotiations fail. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice came to Europe to prepare the ground for Bush last week. Her meetings were marked by what both sides agreed was a shared desire to move on from Iraq. But Rice also urged the EU three to take a tough line with Iran, warning Tehran of UN sanctions if it refuses to renounce its suspected nuclear weapons programme. Michael Emerson, a Middle

East expert at the Centre for European Policy Studies, said Iran was the toughest nut on the table for Tuesday "because here you do have a real difference between the Europeans and the Americans". "On the American side, there is a division of views between those who would like to drop bombs on every nuclear establishment in Iran versus the people in Washington who think that that would be a crazy idea," he said. "At this point, we don't know what President Bush thinks."

For its part, Europe would like to hear from Bush that the United States will take a more constructive role in the delicate talks with Iran. "I strongly encourage the US administration to actively support the Europeans' diplomatic efforts," German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said Saturday. "Iran will only abandon its nuclear ambitions for good if not only its economic but also its legitimate security interests are safeguarded," he said, calling on the United States to get involved in Gulf security talks. The United States, however, has no diplomatic relations with Iran and not so long ago, Bush was referring to its clerical regime as part of an "axis of evil".

To Europe's relief, that kind of rhetoric has disappeared since Bush took office last month for his second term, to be replaced by talk that now is the time for diplomacy. There are reassuring noises coming even from US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, no slouch at upsetting the Europeans in the past. "There's not much daylight between the approaches of the United States and the Europeans" on Iran, Rumsfeld said in Munich last weekend, arguing that both sides wanted to stop Iran getting the bomb. Where there is disagreement, however, is on how to reach that goal. US officials are champing at the bit for Iran to be hauled before the UN Security Council. The Europeans prefer a carrot-and-stick approach coupling nuclear compliance with the promise of a lucrative new trade accord for Iran. On Iraq, on the other hand, there is more of a meeting of minds now after the transatlantic fireworks of the past two years.

The Rice tour offered both sides the chance to declare a fresh start over Iraq. Successful elections in the restive country last month have helped the healing process as an eventual end to the US-led occupation hoves nearer. Through NATO, even France and Germany have helped douse the flames of transatlantic controversy by agreeing to train Iraqi security forces, albeit outside the country itself. Some questions remain too hot to handle.

Iran seeks long range missiles and remains 'terrorism' backer: CIA chief

AFP, Feb. 16, WASHINGTON - Iran is stepping up efforts to build long range missiles and remains a "state sponsor" of terrorism, Central Intelligence Agency director Porter Goss told Congress on Wednesday. "Iran continues its pursuit of long-range ballistic missiles," Goss said in testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee on the main security threats to the United States. Goss went on to reaffirm US accusations that the fundamentalist Islamic government in Tehran has strong links to militant groups. He said that even after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, "Iran continues to support terrorist groups in the region such as Hezbollah. It is a state sponsor." He said Iran harbours "important members of al-Qaeda, causing further unclarity about Iran's committment to bring them to justice one way or another." Goss added that "Iran reportedly is supporting some anti-coalition activities in Iraq in seeking to influence the future character of the Iraqi state."

Deteriorating conditions of human rights

Hunger strike in Iran prison enters third week



Iran Focus Feb. 17 Tehran, - A hunger strike by seven political prisoners in Iran's Rajaii Shahr prison near Karaj (west of Tehran) has entered its third week. The hunger strike by the prisoners started on January 25 in protest to their confinement in the "dangerous criminals" section. Reports have surfaced that the political prisoners have been faced with assault and intimidation from murderers and other dangerous criminals. The seven prisoners are Hojjat Zamani, Bina Darab-Zand, Arzhang Davoodi, Valiollah-Feyz Mahdavi, Mehrdad Lohrasbi, Dr. Farzad Hamidi, and Jaafar Iqdami. Dr. Farzad Hamidi was assaulted inside the prison by a well-known drug dealer who threatened his life, prior to his hunger strike. He was reportedly transferred to an unknown location within the prison, and his present fate remains unknown.

Hojjat Zamani, a member of the main Iranian opposition group, the People's Mojahedin, was reportedly threatened with imminent execution, as part of the pressure exerted to force him to end his hunger strike. Zamani was reportedly threatened by an intelligence ministry official by the name of Sheykhan that he faced execution by the end of the current Iranian month, unless he both halted and renounced his hunger strike. Bina Darab-Zand was imprisoned for taking part in human rights protests in front of the United Nations office in Iran last October. He was sentenced to five years and three months in prison and 60 lashes. The protests were organised by family members of political prisoners outside the UN building in Tehran calling on the world body to condemn "torture being carried out" on their relatives. The judge found Darab-Zand guilty of participation in an "illegal" demonstration. Last summer many relatives of political prisoners demonstrated outside the UN building and several embassies, calling for foreign governments to stop negotiations with the clerical state. At the time many political prisoners throughout Iran went on hunger strike in protest to the Iranian regime's use of torture against its opponents.

220 women in Iran province committed suicide

Iran Focus, *February 16, Tehran* – Women and teenage girls comprise the majority of people in Iran's Ilam province (western Iran) who committed suicide throughout this year, according to the province's Councillor for Women's Affairs. At least 220 cases of women committing suicide in Ilam have been recorded out of an estimated 400 suicides, Heyran Pournajaf said to a state-run news agency. Iran has the highest suicide rate in the world. The most common form of suicide amongst women in Ilam is self-immolation, which is in protest to society dictating their lives to them", Pournajaf added. The number of attempted suicides is much higher. Pournajaf said that women and girls in particular find it hard to face society where misogyny and discrimination against women have been institutionalized by the clerical regime.