



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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Terrorism

Majlis deputy calls on Sunni, Shiite leaders to rise up

Fars news agency, May 10 – The deputy for Boien Zahra and Avoj called on Shiite and Sunni *ulema* (scholars) and the heads of Islamic countries to rise up against the atrocious measures of the American and British occupiers in Iraq... He said: "I urge the Shiite and Sunni ulema to rise up against the crimes of the occupiers and compel the heads of Islamic countries to hold extraordinary conferences in order to ally the Iraqis

Kuwait's foreign ministry criticizes Iran

Radio Farda, May 9-Kuwait's foreign ministry criticized on Sunday a meeting held at the Iranian embassy in Kuwait. In the meeting, the representative of Kuwaiti Shiites met and talked with an envoy from the Islamic Republic. The Kuwait news agency reported that Khaled Al-Jarallah, Kuwait's deputy foreign minister, expressed his government's protest and discontent by summoning the Iranian embassy's charge d' affairs to Kuwait's foreign ministry. He said this kind of relations is not in the interest of bilateral relations between the two countries and demanded an explanation from the Iranian government. Local Kuwaiti newspapers wrote that the Iranian side in the talks was Khamenei's delegate.

Link between Tehran nukes and Iraq

Al-Ahram weekly, May 5-At the outset, resistance against the US-led occupation seems a purely Iraqi concern, just as the nuclear question seems purely an Iranian concern. But the two issues are intrinsically linked. The Iraqi resistance and its toll on US occupation forces have been growing in tandem with international pressure on Iran over its alleged possession and production of weapons of mass destruction... .In Iraq, the Mahdi Army's actions are serving Iranian interests, at least in the short term, by diverting attention away from the Iranian nuclear issue. Seen against this background, one can understand in part why, in his Friday sermon two weeks ago, Hashemi Rafsanjani described the movement as "heroic". Rafsanjani's pronouncement came only a few days after IAEA Director Mohamed El-Baradei declared that, "the patience of the international community towards the Iranian nuclear programme is nearing an end."

Mullahs' nuclear deception condemned

Tehran urged to quit NPT

AFP, May 9, Tehran-A former representative to the United Nations atomic watchdog said Iran should consider quitting the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), the Shargh newspaper reported Sunday. "The time has come for the Islamic Republic to take a final decision and get out of the NPT, if the US and European pressures and games continue," Mohammad Kiarashi said in the report. "Current circumstances could result in Iran's nuclear case



being sent to the UN Security Council, giving the US legitimacy to take action against Iran," warned the former representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). "The more obligations we accept, the deeper we sink into this quagmire," Kiarashi warned.

Iran 'must come clean' on atomic plans

Reuters, May 6 - The head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog has warned Iran the world will not wait forever for it to divulge the full extent and nature of its nuclear program... "Iran also has to understand that the world is not going to wait forever for them to come clean," International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Mohamed El Baradei told a foreign relations committee of French Parliament. Western diplomats who follow the IAEA say the number of questions about Tehran's nuclear program is increasing. "There is suspicion that things are not completely right," a European Union diplomat in Brussels told Reuters... "I'm pretty confident there will be more revelations down the line," another diplomat said. Mr. El Baradei has called the P2 revelation a "setback" in Iran's cooperation with the agency, but used softer language in describing Iran's cooperation to French parliamentarians... The IAEA has been investigating Iran's atomic program ever since a group of Iranian exiles broke the news in August 2002 that Tehran was hiding a massive uranium enrichment plant and a heavy-water plant. Iran later declared these to the IAEA.

House condemns Iran's nuclear program

The Associated Press, May 6, Washington - The House on Thursday accused Iran of "continuing deceptions and falsehoods" involving development of nuclear weapons and said that Europe, Japan and Russia should cut commercial and energy ties until Iran permanently end such activities.

The resolution states that despite Iran's promises to the International Atomic Energy Agency to end uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities, "it is abundantly clear that Iran remains committed to a nuclear weapons program." Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., said Iran "has engaged in a systematic campaign of deception and manipulation to hide its true intentions and keep its large scale nuclear efforts a secret." The resolution said that Iran's Natanz fuel enrichment facility could, when completed, produce enough highly enriched uranium for as many as 25 to 40 nuclear weapons a year. It says that until Iran verifies it has ended its weapons program, the European Union should break off trade talks, Japan should not proceed with the development of Iran's Azadegan oil field and Russia should not conclude a nuclear fuel supply agreement for an Iranian reactor.

Rafsanjani says Iran committed to making nuclear fuel cycle

Reuters, May 5, Tehran - Iran will continue efforts to develop a full nuclear fuel cycle, despite U.S. pressure on Tehran to abandon a program it fears may be used to make atomic bombs, a senior Iranian official said on Wednesday. A senior U.S. official expressed surprise at the statement and said it would help Washington pass a tough resolution on Iran at a key meeting of the U.N. nuclear watchdog next month. Iran has said it is trying to build a complete atomic program comprising all facets of the nuclear fuel cycle from uranium mining to processing and enrichment... But many Western governments fear some material or equipment could be diverted to a military program to make bombs. "Running a nuclear fuel cycle is our nation's right," influential former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was quoted as saying by the official IRNA news agency. "The Americans, with their evil intentions, confront Iran because they do not want Islamic countries to have modern technology," he said.

Iran's nuclear weapons are almost here

Strategy Page, May 5 - Despite promises to halt nuclear weapons development, Iran's Islamic conservatives are moving ahead secretly, attempting to develop a working nuclear bomb as quickly as possible. With what is now known of Pakistani weapons experts secretly selling nuclear weapons technology to countries like Iran, it's quite possible that Iran will have an atomic bomb within a year, if not a few months... The Islamic conservative leadership in Iran, who still have veto power over the government, access to billions in cash,

and control of the armed forces, still believe in exporting the (Shia) Islamic Revolution. It's an export that no one wants.

Teachers' strike and protests

Peik-e Iran website, May 2 – Over 2,000 teachers in Shiraz gathered Sunday morning outside the education department of Fars province on Mo'addel Avenue. The anti-riot police and the special units of the State Security Forces were stationed in the intersections leading to the location and had positioned three security rings around the area. All of the school teachers in Khomein are on strike and have gathered in front of the Department of Education.

Iran National TV, May 3 - Protest rallies were held in all of Tehran's 19 educational districts. One of the protests was held outside the Department of Labor. The head of the 2nd district's education department and his deputies were present among the teachers in the rally. Hundreds of teachers and school principals attended the sit-in in that district. The State Security Forces had swarmed the area of the teachers' demonstrations in districts 8, 10, 17 and 19 and the plain clothes agents had everyone under their scrutiny. They went to the highest floors of the buildings to take footage of the teachers. There were more than 200 teachers in each district. A number of school students were also present who said that if the SSF clashes with the teachers, we will help the protestors. In Hamedan, Shushtar and Shahin Shahr, teachers gathered outside the departments of education. All of the schools in Shushtar and Shahin Shahr were closed on Sunday, May 2.

1,000 women in Tehran protest mullahs' misogynist policies



Iran National TV, Apr. 30 – A conference was held at the Journalists' Professional Association on Tehran's Keshavarz Boulevard with over 1,000 women participating on the invitation of the Women's Cultural Society. In the conference, which had been announced beforehand and was intensely controlled by the State Security forces and intelligence agents, the Iranian regime's misogynic policies and their backward propaganda against women were protested. The Tehran women participating announced in a statement at the end of the conference: We, the signatories of this resolution hereby express our strong protest

to the television and radio's misogynic acts and will continue our protest in various ways until our demands are met. According to eye witnesses, three women participating in this meeting were detained by agents of the intelligence ministry at the end of this gathering and transferred to an unknown location.

40,000 workers march on Labor Day in Tehran

Iran National TV, Apr. 29 – On the occasion of International Labor Day, 10,000 men and women workers began a march at Mokhber o-Doleh on 9 am Friday, April 29, and gathered in Baharestan Square. Every 30 people carried a large placard expressing their protests, and chanted slogans against the Minister of Labor. They strongly oppose the labor laws.

The state security forces were stationed, fully equipped and with minibuses, in Baharestan square and on any street or alleyway in the vicinity of the march. In Safi Ali Shah Ave., 3 state security force agents were stationed every 50 meters. A crowd of more than 40,000 people gathered in Baharestan.



5,000 Iran Khodro workers go on strike

Peik-e Iran website, May 7 – 5,000 workers of Iran Khodro (car company) staged a labor strike on Thursday May 6 and refrained from going to work. The workers' strike was because of low wages and bonuses, and because the production division is being handed over to the contractors.

Incarcerated Saqez workers on hunger strike

Radio Farda, May 7 – The incarcerated workers of Saqez who have been transferred to Sanandaj prison have staged a hunger strike. The workers were arrested by the State Security Forces during a demonstration marking International Labor Day in the city of Saqez in Kurdistan, on charges of activities against the government. Mahmoud Salehi, Mohsen Hakimi, Jalal Hosseini, Mohammad Abdipour are a few of those arrested.

Human rights

A U.N. whitewash for Iran

Associated Press, May 10—When it came to the Iranian government's brutal treatment of its own citizens, the UNHRC stood mute. At this year's session, which concluded in Geneva late last month, the organization declined to rebuke the Iranian government for violating human rights, despite a large body of evidence that it has engaged in summary executions, torture, and arbitrary arrests and detention.

In January, U.N. special investigator Ambeyi Ligabo, a Kenyan diplomat, issued a report documenting the cases of journalists and intellectuals who have received severe punishment for criticizing the Islamist government and clerical leadership that controls the country...

But even though Mr. Ligabo documented these and other cases in his report, the UNHRC has ignored his findings and refused to condemn the Iranian government.



Public hanging

Iran National TV, May 4 – A man was hanged in public at 8 am Sunday, on Naderi Bridge. The people present chanted slogans against the security forces and said: (The government) brings these drugs itself, why do you treat the people like this.



RSF: Khamenei is great enemy of press freedom

Radio Farda, May 3 – The Reporters Without Borders published its annual report on the World Press Freedom Day, calling the year 2003 a dark year for the world press. The organization once again described Iran as the biggest prison for journalists in the Middle East and said Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Republic, is among the 37 great enemies of press freedom throughout the world.

Half a million child laborers in Iran

IRNA, May 3 - More than 500 thousand child laborers exist in Iran. Gholamreza Rezaiifar, deputy director of the Social Harm Prevention Center, said: The number of child laborers in the country is much higher than 500 thousand, because many of the children working in villages or rug weaving are not included in these figures.

Public execution in Khorram Abad

Jomhuri Islami daily, May 2 – Hossein Pirdadeh Piranvand was arrested by the State Security Forces and executed Sunday morning on court order. His execution was carried out in public in Asad Abad Square in the presence of provincial authorities and his family.

Will ban on torture have any effect?

Radio Free Europe, Apr. 29, Prague - Kianoosh Sanjari is an Iranian student activist who has been arrested and incarcerated several times in the last several years. Sanjari told RFE/RL he was subjected to psychological torture while incarcerated. "For a youngster like me who was arrested at the age of 17 and put into prison, solitary confinement for several months was probably the worst psychological torture, and many [who were subjected to the same treatment] wished to die," he said... In its latest report on Iran, Amnesty International said, "torture and ill-treatment, including of prisoners of conscience, continued to be used, usually in cases where judicial or security officials denied detainees access to lawyers and relatives." Human Rights Watch said the "routine lack of respect for basic due process, as well as the frequent use of solitary confinement and prolonged interrogations, heighten the risk of torture and ill-treatment in detention."....

Rights activists in Iran believe there is little hope that the order will actually stop the use of torture. "Prisoners will not be released until such time that the signs of the beatings and harassment fade away. I think the directive serves more a propaganda purpose than a functional one," Aghassi (a lawyer in Tehran) said....Currently, some 20 political prisoners are believed to be in detention in Tehran's notorious Evin prison. Human rights activists say a number of government critics and dissidents are also being held in other cities. Earlier this week, Iran's President Mohammad Khatami for the first time publicly acknowledged that some are being held in the Islamic Republic for their beliefs.

Feature

(This Letter was published in the New York Times, May 14, 2004)

Young Iranians

The New York Times, May 14, 2004 by Hedayat Mostowfi

To the Editor:

Nicholas D. Kristof's May 8 column, "Those Sexy Iranians," goes to show that young Iranians, born and raised after the 1979 Islamic revolution and exposed to systematic fundamentalist indoctrination, have rejected the lifestyle promoted by the ruling clerics. They are using every opportunity to express their disgust with the mullahs. Soccer matches, religious processions, national celebrations and academic grievances in the universities provide the opportunity to wage antigovernment protests. But the young generation demands much more than embroidered jeans and high slits. Ahmad Batebi was only 21 when he was jailed after his picture, holding a bloody T-shirt, appeared in the Western media. Now, five years later, he remains incarcerated. Iranian youths want freedom and democracy and a referendum on regime change. Mr. Kristof was exactly right when he wrote, "Ayatollahs, look out."

HEDAYAT MOSTOWFI

Executive Director, Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran
Washington, May 9, 2004