



IRAN TODAY & TOMORROW

WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

The Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran (CSRI), a 501(c)(4), 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

February 5, 2007

No. 227

Iran's nuclear threat

Iran installs 328 centrifuges at atomic site



February 5, 2007 -- Iran has installed two cascades of 164 centrifuges each in its underground nuclear plant, laying a basis for full-scale enrichment of uranium and upping the stakes in a standoff with the West, European diplomats said on Monday.

The cascades were to be test-run shortly, without uranium feedstock inside, and fuel material would then be added if the tests were successful, they said.

The 328 centrifuges would be the vanguard of 3,000 planned for installation in the coming months.

Iran recently finished installing piping, electrical cables and other equipment needed to begin so-called "industrial-scale" enrichment in the vast subterranean complex, which is fortified and ringed by anti-aircraft guns in the central Iranian desert.

Firing up the cascades would dramatically sharpen Iran's confrontation with Western powers that pushed through limited U.N. sanctions on Tehran six weeks ago to try to curb what they suspect is a disguised effort to assemble atomic bombs.

"Iran is heading in the opposite direction from that sought by the Security Council," said the first EU diplomat.

Iranian media have repeatedly quoted hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as saying February 11 will be a day to "prove the Iranian nation's obvious right" to nuclear technology.

Iran official says no plans to halt atomic work



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Iran Installs Equipment for Large-Scale Uranium Enrichment



February 2, 2007-- International nuclear investigators have confirmed that Iran is beginning to install equipment in the large underground chamber in Natanz, the center where Iranian officials have said they will move to industrial-scale enrichment of uranium, according to foreign diplomats and American officials. Nonetheless, the move signals a continued defiance of the United Nations Security Council, which demanded last summer that Iran suspend all uranium enrichment. At the White House on Friday, the spokesman for the National Security Council said, "This clearly demonstrates that Iran is not moving to meet the U.N.'s mandate."

Iran's meddling in Iraq and Lebanon

Tehran Goes Latin

Newsweek International, February 5, 2007 issue--U.S. officials fear that Iran might one day help its terrorist proxy, Hezbollah, set up shop throughout the United States' backyard. Indeed, Latin America could be emerging as a quiet new front in the war on terror. The lawless tri-border region, where Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay meet, has long been a suspected locus for Hezbollah fund-raising. Last month U.S. Treasury officials issued a statement describing in detail how an established Hezbollah network, based in Ciudad del Este in eastern Paraguay, has sent millions of dollars to the terrorist group over the past two years. The region is no stranger to terror operations allegedly bearing Tehran's stamp. In November, an Argentine judge issued arrest warrants for Iran's ex-president, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, and eight of his associates for complicity in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people.

Iran winning in Iraq?



February 3, 2007--What is Iran's strategy in Iraq? "The Iranian government sees an unprecedented opportunity to bring Iraq into its sphere of influence and prevent it from re-emerging as a threat to Iranian interests," the Defense Department said in its November report, "Measuring Security and Stability in Iraq." "Iran seeks to ensure that the Coalition bears political, economic and human casualty costs to deter future U.S. regional intervention. To achieve these objectives, Iran continues to pursue a dual-track strategy of supporting Shia unity and a stable government in Iraq -- either a functioning, unified Shia-dominated government or a federated one -- on one hand, while facilitating militia activities in Iraq on the other.".... Iran, in fact, is allied with Iraqi Shi'ites who are part of the Iraqi government. The Iranian-backed militias in Iran are affiliated with components of the United Iraqi Alliance, the Islamist-dominated Shi'ite coalition to which Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Call to Islam Party belongs.

Iran's Gaza Goons Caught at Helm of Bomb Factory

New York Post, February 3, 2007--In a sign of growing Iranian meddling in the Middle East, an Iranian general and six others were seized by Palestinian security officers at a Hamas-controlled university where they ran a bomb factory in the school's chemistry labs, officials said yesterday. At least six people were killed in the shootout at the Islamic University after it was stormed by forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Iran has been known to finance Hamas, but the raid on the Gaza City University offered the first evidence that Iranian officials were taking an active, on-the-ground role in helping the Hamas terrorists.

Sunni nations concern bout Iran's activities in region

White House website, February 2, 2007—Stephen Hadley: "Nonetheless, Iranian lethal support for select groups of Iraqi Shia militants clearly intensifies the conflict in Iraq." The President has talked about the concerns about Iranian activity in Iraq, first and foremost, because it puts our troops at risk and because it's resulting in the death of Iraqis. That is something that we need to address. There's a suggestion almost that the concern of Sunni nations for Iran's activities comes out of their assessments of what's happening in Iraq. But, of course, if you talk to any of those leaders, their concerns about Iran go much beyond an Iranian role in Iraq. They are concerned about what Iran is doing to destabilize ...Siniora government in Lebanon,.. about Iranian training and support for Hamas and ...about a nuclear-armed Iran because of the current Iran can cause this much disruption, the concern is with a nuclear Iran.

U.S. Warns Iran to Stop Aiding Iraqi Insurgents



February 1, 2007--WASHINGTON - Iran is supplying Iraqi

insurgents with weapons technology used to kill American troops, a senior U.S. diplomat said on

Wednesday, sending another warning to Iran against interfering in Iraq. "We have picked up individuals who we believe are giving very sophisticated explosive technology to Shia insurgent groups who then use that technology to target and kill American soldiers," said Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns.

"It's a very serious situation. And the message from the United States is, Iran should cease and desist."

"They have attacked British soldiers near Basra and they've now begun to mount those operations throughout the country - at least in the Baghdad region as well," Burns said.

General says U.S. has proof Iran arming Iraqi militias

USA TODAY, January 31, 2007--BAGHDAD — Iran is supplying Iraqi militias with a variety of powerful weapons including Katyusha rockets, the No. 2 U.S. general in Iraq said Tuesday. "We have weapons that we know through serial numbers ... that trace back to Iran," Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno said in an interview with USA TODAY. Most weapons supplied by Iran end up in the hands of Shiite extremists, Odierno said. He said the weapons include: The RPG-29, a rocket-propelled grenade that can fire armor-piercing rounds. It is larger and more sophisticated than the RPG-7 more commonly found in Iraq, Katyusha rockets, so large they are generally fired from trucks and Powerful roadside bombs, known as explosively formed projectiles, which can pierce armor. The technological know-how and "some of the elements to make them are coming out of Iran," Odierno said.

Iraqi politicians, Iranian opposition group demand Tehran not interfere in Iraq



January 31, 2007-- Brussels - Several prominent politicians from

Iraq joined forces with an exiled Iranian opposition group Wednesday to demand an end to what they said was interference in Iraq by the Iranian government. It held a joint news conference with a group of visiting mostly Sunni Arab Iraqi politicians who were in Brussels for talks with members of the European Parliament and Belgium Senate. "The intervention of Iran in the affairs of Iraq is not long a secret to anyone," said Adnan al-Dulaimi, leader of Iraqi parliament's largest Sunni Arab bloc. "Everybody knows Iran is meddling." Another Sunni legislator, Khalaf al-Alayan, leader of the Sunni National Dialogue Council, called on the United States "to get rid of the Iranian occupation of Iran."

Centcom Pick Warns of Iran Influence in Gulf Region



January 31, 2007--Iran is positioning its military to deny U.S. access to the Persian

Gulf while acting as a "destabilizing" influence in the region, President Bush's nominee to command U.S. forces in the Middle East told the Senate yesterday. Adm. William J. Fallon said he favors using what one senator called "battleship diplomacy" to deter Iran. "Iranian support for terrorism and sectarian violence beyond its borders, and its pursuit of nuclear capability, is destabilizing and troubling," Fallon said in an opening statement at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee. He warned specifically that Iranian activity "has not been helpful" in Iraq, where he said "time is running out" for action to curb the escalation of violence.

Iranian Opposition Group Says 132,000 Iranian Agents Working in Iraq

Asharq Al-Awsat, January 31, 2007-- London - Spokesperson for Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) in Britain, Dawlat Nawruzi, disclosed that many high-ranking Iraqi Government officials and Iraqi politicians are working for Iran. She said they are among a "list of 132,000 agents who work for Iran

inside Iraq." She added, "The MKO has obtained precise information about the names of the agents, their titles and financial allowances they receive from the Iranian Government."

Iran May Have Trained Attackers That Killed 5 American Soldiers, U.S. and Iraqis Say



January 31, 2007--BAGHDAD — Investigators say they

believe that attackers who used American-style uniforms and weapons to infiltrate a secure compound and kill five American soldiers in Karbala on Jan. 20 may have been trained and financed by Iranian agents, according to American and Iraqi officials knowledgeable about the inquiry. The officials said the sophistication of the attack astonished investigators, who doubt that Iraqis could have carried it out on their own — one reason a connection to Iran is being closely examined. A senior Iraqi official said the attackers had carried forged American identity cards and American-style M-4 rifles and had thrown stun grenades of a kind used only by American forces here. The suspects have also told investigators that "a religious group in

Najaf" was involved in the operation, the Iraqi said, in a clear reference to the Mahdi Army, the militia controlled by the breakaway Shiite cleric, Muktada al-Sadr.

New Iran-Iraq policy

Gates, Pace: U.S. Won't Tolerate Iran's Interference

US Defense website, February 2, 2007-- The United States has no plans to go to war with Iran, but it won't tolerate Iranian activities that are endangering U.S. troops in Iraq, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates told reporters today during a Pentagon news conference...He said, the United States is working "to counter what the Iranians are doing to our soldiers," most significantly their activities related to explosively formed projectiles, or EFPs, that are killing U.S. troops. EFPs are far more lethal than more traditional improvised explosive devices. Pace called it "instructive" that twice during the last month to 40 days, while "going after the networks, we have picked up Iranians."

Choice for No. 2 at State Dept. Defends Bush's Stance on Iran

The New York Times ON THE WEB **January 31, 2007--WASHINGTON** — John D. Negroponte, nominated as deputy secretary of state, defended the Bush administration's more confrontational policy with Iran in a Senate confirmation hearing that was peppered with demands from both sides of the aisle that the United States show restraint in dealing with Tehran. In a sign that the debate over Iraq is increasingly becoming a debate over Iran, Mr. Negroponte maintained that an emboldened Iran could harm American interests in the region. "We don't believe that their behavior, such as supporting Shia extremists in Iraq, should go unchallenged," said Mr. Negroponte, who is now the director of national intelligence. The United States has refused to hold direct talks with Iran over the two major issues of contention: its nuclear programs and its stance toward Iraq. Instead, the Bush administration has increased pressure on Iran.

US takes new steps to isolate Iran



January 31, 2007-- The United States took new steps to isolate Iran Tuesday, announcing a freeze on the sale of all F-14 fighter parts and warning that an attempt by Tehran to block the flow of Gulf oil could be turned against it. Countering Iran has emerged as a prime objective of US policy as Washington struggles to stabilize Iraq and regain its footing in a region rife with both anti-American and sectarian tensions.

Bush 'Spoiling for a Fight' with Iran

Guardian, January 31, 2007-- officials in Baghdad and Washington are expected to unveil a secret intelligence "dossier" this week detailing evidence of Iran's alleged complicity in attacks on American troops in Iraq. "The al-Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards is stepping up terrorism and encouraging sectarian violence in Iraq," Alireza Jafarzadeh, a US-based Iranian dissident who has been linked to the Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MeK) resistance group, told the Washington Times this month. Mr Jafarzadeh is credited with revealing the existence of Iran's secret nuclear sites in Natanz and Arak in 2002.

Feature

Gates all but rules out strike on Iran



washingtontimes.com February 3, 2007 By Rowan Scarborough Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates yesterday all but ruled out military strikes on Iran, declaring "we are not planning for a war with Iran." Mr. Gates, who has called military action against Iran an absolute last resort, made the denial during a flurry of press and Internet blogger speculation that President Bush is preparing to order strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities. In announcing a new strategy for Iraq on Jan. 10, the president said U.S. troops would target Iranian agents inside the country who are aiding the deadly insurgency. The administration said Iran is supplying Shi'ite insurgents with powerful improvised explosive devices whose explosions penetrate armor and result in multiple casualties. Mr. Bush also ordered an increase in the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf by deploying Patriot anti-missile batteries and a second aircraft carrier in the region. Those twin moves stirred speculation that a war was in the offing. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has threaten to destroy Israel and refuses to stop enriching uranium, as the United Nations has demanded. Administration officials say the buildup was done to mollify Persian Gulf Arab states who fear attacks from

Iran, and to put pressure on Mr. Ahmadinejad. Mr. Gates explained it this way: "What we are trying to do is, in Iraq, counter what the Iranians are doing to our soldiers, their involvement in activities, particularly these explosively formed projectiles that are killing our troops and we are trying to get them to stop their nuclear enrichment. We are doing the latter strictly through the diplomatic process. ... The diplomatic process is working and I think that that's where we are relying." At the White House, where officials released a new intelligence estimate on the Iraq war's path, National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley said he has delayed release of a "white paper" detailing Iran's transgressions in Iraq. Mr. Hadley told reporters the draft paper was "overstated, and we sent it back to get it narrowed and focused on the facts." Mr. Gates said the briefing is being compiled by the U.S. command in Baghdad. He said Cabinet officials "want to make sure that the briefing that is provided is absolutely accurate and is dominated by facts -- serial numbers, technology and so on."