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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 nears bomb production with nuclear trigger capacity: opposition group



February 3, by Hugh Schofield Thursday PARIS - Iran has obtained the materials and expertise to make the triggers for an atomic bomb, bringing closer its goal of acquiring nuclear weapons later this year, the main Iranian opposition grouping said in Paris Thursday.

Citing secret sources inside Iran's nuclear development programme, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) said that Tehran has produced or bought from abroad quantities of polonium-210 and beryllium -- two elements required for building a "neutron initiator".

It has also developed the know-how to make a "neutron generator" which is another key part of the neutron initiator, the NCRI said. A neutron initiator starts the chain reaction that leads to nuclear fission, and along with the nuclear fuel and the delivery system is an essential part of an atomic bomb. "Tehran has already succeeded in using beryllium in conjunction with polonium-210 for large-scale laboratory testing purposes, and is getting very close to the point of industrial production," Mohammad Mohaddessin, the NCRI's foreign affairs committee chairman, told a news conference. In recent months the NCRI has produced evidence purporting to show that the Islamic republic is well advanced in its production of enriched uranium fuel and in the development of a missile capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

"All these activities have been hidden from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) ... They reflect an unrelenting effort to obtain nuclear weapons ... Tehran is advancing toward critical stages in its quest for a nuclear bomb," Mohaddessin said. In September the NCRI said that Tehran hoped to develop a nuclear bomb "in the first half of 2005". After protracted negotiations with the European Union, the Iranian government agreed in November to suspend its programme of uranium enrichment. Tehran says the programme is for civilian purposes, but the United States suspects Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons. Based in a northern Paris suburb, the NCRI is the political face of the People's Mujahedeen (PMOI), which has been branded as terrorist in both the US and the EU. The NCRI contests the label, which it says was imposed by governments seeking to curry favour with Tehran. Mohaddessin cited the names of senior officials in Iran's defence ministry and Atomic Energy Agency who he said were responsible for acquiring the two elements. They include deputy defence minister Seyyed Ali Hosseini Tash -- "the official in charge of producing weapons of mass destruction".

In 2004 Iran secretly imported 20 kilograms of beryllium from a foreign country, and it now has enough to "produce initiators for a dozen nuclear Bombs," Mohaddessin said. He refused to name the supplying country but said all its information had been passed on to the IAEA and interested governments. The beryllium was imported by a front company -- named as the San'at Gostar Majd Company -- which was set up "to justify any possible revelations and inquiries by the IAEA ... and lend support to (the government's) claim that the work is for peaceful purposes," Mohaddessin said. The polonium-210 was being produced by irradiation of the metal bismuth, the NCRI said. "Tehran has lied to the IAEA that it has not produced polonium-210 in the last 12 years," said Mohaddessin. The NCRI also produced maps showing

a complex called Lavizan II, which is situated in a military zone about 25 kilometres (17 miles) northwest of Tehran city centre. According to Mohaddessin, Lavizan II is being used by the Iranian government to produce beryllium needed for the nuclear initiators, but also to enrich warhead uranium "via laser technology". "The main problem holding the regime back is that it still has an insufficient quantity of enriched uranium. This is their main priority now -- getting enough uranium," he said. The NCRI, which is headed by Maryam Rajavi, accuses European governments of running a "policy of appeasement" towards Tehran. "Calling us terrorist is a gift to the mullahs," said Mohaddessin.

US warns Iran may be violating nuclear freeze: diplomats



AFP, February 3, By Michael Adler VIENNA - The United States has complained to the European Union about centrifuge-related work by Iran that could be used to make nuclear weapons and may violate a uranium enrichment freeze Tehran agreed with the EU, diplomats said Thursday.

Washington's top non-proliferation official, Under Secretary of State John Bolton, wrote on January 28 to the foreign ministry political directors of Britain, France and Germany about "maintenance" work on centrifuge piping at an enrichment plant at Natanz in southern Iran, a Western diplomat told AFP. Bolton also said in his letter that Iran had done work on uranium conversion, the first step in the enrichment process, at a facility in Isfahan without notifying the UN nuclear watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in advance. Britain, France and Germany struck an agreement with Iran in November to suspend all uranium enrichment-related activities in return for talks on trade, security and technological bonuses for the Islamic Republic. The talks began in Brussels in December, then moved to Geneva in January and are continuing with a third round in Geneva next week.

The talks are deadlocked as the EU is now calling on Iran to totally dismantle its nuclear fuel program in order to guarantee it does not seek atomic weapons, according to confidential reports obtained by AFP. Iran insists its nuclear program is a strictly peaceful effort to generate electric power but an Iranian resistance group said in Paris Thursday that Tehran has obtained the materials and expertise to make the triggers for an atomic bomb. Iran refuses to halt uranium enrichment definitively as it insists that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty guarantees its right to such activities when they are peaceful. Iran said Monday its enrichment freeze would be short-lived. "The length of the suspension will . . . be valid for the duration of the negotiations (with the EU) and only on the condition that the negotiations make progress," top nuclear negotiator Hassan Rowhani told Hamshahri newspaper in Tehran.

In the enrichment process, uranium ore is converted into a gas and then refined in cascades of rapidly spinning centrifuges into what can be fuel for nuclear power reactors but also the explosive core of atomic bombs. A Western diplomat said Washington was "concerned that Iran never declared the tunnels (where conversion takes place) at the Isfahan uranium conversion facility to the IAEA before they began construction, as well as concerned about some suspicious activity at Natanz." The letter from Bolton had said: "Iran has undertaken construction activities at the uranium conversion facility that under Iran's Subsidiary Agreement with the IAEA should have been the subject of prior notification to the IAEA," according to the diplomat. The maintenance work on the centrifuge piping may have been mundane, the diplomat said, but still could be seen as enrichment-related activity since work on centrifuges is banned by the freeze. Bolton had asked his EU colleagues in the letter: "We would be interested in your assessment of these activities." A European diplomat confirmed the letter and said such interference was not helpful as the Europeans are in the early stages of negotiating with the Iranians. "The Americans are actively working to torpedo the process," the European diplomat said. The diplomat said an eventual military confrontation would be in no one's interests. The diplomat said the Europeans needed, in fact, to have the United States join in the talks since trade incentives, such as helping Iran join the World Trade Organization (WTO), were impossible without US backing. The Western diplomat said the Europeans wanted to be able to give Iran "enough near-term incentives to keep the process, and the suspension, going through the Iranian June (presidential) election." The Western diplomat said Washington "had no definite answer" to the Europeans request for help. The diplomat said the Europeans have not yet answered the letter and might be waiting to discuss the matter when new US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrives in Europe this week on her first visit this week as Washington's top diplomat.

Exporting terrorism and Meddling in Iraq

16 trucks carrying weapons en route from Iran discovered in Iraq



Iran Focus, Feb. 04, Baghdad, – 16 trucks carrying weapons and large sums of money from Iran were discovered over the past few days en route to Iraq, according to an Iraqi Defence Ministry source. Speaking to the Iraqi daily Al-Mashreq, the source said that the weapons included rifles, mortar rounds, and explosives. He said that those arrested admitted to being agents of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), and said that lodging had been provided for them in Samara, Balad, Najaf, and Latifiyeh.

The individuals revealed that they work working on behalf of the MOIS in conjunction with Iran's Fajr Forces. During interrogation the Iranian agents also revealed the names of a number of Fajr commanders and MOIS agents whom they worked for.

Bush says Iran "primary state sponsor of terror"



Reuters, February 3, WASHINGTON - U.S. President George W. Bush, who three years ago said Iran and North Korea were part of an "axis of evil," has emphasised diplomacy in dealing with the two countries. Bush called Iran the "world's primary state sponsor of terror" and reiterated his accusations that the country is striving to develop nuclear weapons, a charge denied by Iran. He also promised to "stand with" the Iranian people in their quest for liberty, a veiled jab at the republic's ruling clerics. But Bush, addressing Congress in his annual State of the Union address, talked of multilateral efforts to settle the differences with Iran.

"We are working with European allies to make clear to the Iranian regime that it must give up its uranium enrichment program and any plutonium reprocessing, and end its support for terror," Bush said. Last month, Vice President Dick Cheney said Iran was at the top of the Bush administration's list of world trouble spots and said Israel might "act first" to eliminate any nuclear threat from Tehran. On North Korea, Bush referred to the administration's aim of restarting the stalled nuclear talks involving the United States, North and South Korea, China, Russia and Japan. "We are working closely with governments in Asia to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions," Bush said. Iran and North Korea were included in the "axis of evil" by Bush along with Iraq in his State of the Union address of 2002, only months after the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington. The United States invaded Iraq a year later and has been trying to put down an insurgency there ever since.

Rice blasts Iran's nuclear weapons program and rights violations



Iran Focus, Feb. 4, London– In a conference in Whitehall with British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, the newly-appointed United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice criticised Iran's human rights violations and accused the clerical state of running a nuclear weapons program under the guise of civilian nuclear activities. "Iran should not use the cover of civilian nuclear

power development, an opportunity granted to it by NPT membership, to sustain a programme that could lead to a nuclear weapon, and indeed we and the EU Three have been in very close consultation about the efforts that the EU Three is making to get the Iranians to live up to their international obligations, and frankly the Iranians ought to take the opportunity that is being presented to them to show that they want to live up to their international obligations" she said. Rice also hinted for a possible referral of the Iranian regime's nuclear case to the United Nations Security Council and said, "The prospect of an Iranian nuclear weapon is deeply destabilising, it is de-stabilising to Iran's neighbours, for very good reasons, it would be de-stabilising for peace and security internationally. That is why there has been I think now very strong international consensus that Iran cannot be allowed to go down that route". She however insisted that a U.S. military attack on Iran was "simply not on the agenda at this point in time". Rice also talked about Iran's support for terrorism, saying, "Iran engages in activities that are destabilising to the region in which it lives, particularly when it comes to support for terrorism which is aimed directly at destabilising and frustrating the Palestinian-Israeli peace which we all seek". Referring to Iran's human rights violations, Rice said "We have all been concerned about

the abysmal human rights record of the Iranian regime. There are very recent examples of just how abysmal that human rights record is, and we know that this is an Iranian population with a flourishing history and culture and civil society that frankly deserves better than to have an unelected few frustrate their aspirations".

Suspected Iran spy says planned "president's" killing in Egypt



Reuters, 3 Feb By Amena Bakr



CAIRO - An Egyptian accused of spying for Iran said Iranians paid him for information about a road often used by President Hosni Mubarak and he planned an assassination there, according to a video shown in court on Thursday. Mahmoud Eid Mohamed Dabbous said in the video he was going to plant bombs on the road in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh and had checked out the site in preparation for the assassination of a man he called only "the president". The video was recorded by prosecutors as part of the investigation, but in court Dabbous said he had made the statements under pressure. He and the Iranians have denied allegations that he spied for Iran's Revolutionary Guard. The video showed Dabbous reenacting his reconnaissance mission on the road between the airport and the hotel area in Sharm el-Sheikh, where Mubarak likes to stay. He said he had sent the Iranians messages describing the place and had received \$10,000 for his work. He had then asked the Iranians for a further \$1 million to plan and carry out the killing. Asked if he meant Mubarak would have been the target, he simply repeated: "The president." In the opening session of the trial last week, Dabbous sent a message to the Iranians in Farsi through the media, describing the charges as a conspiracy against Iran, which he called the last bastion of Islam. He said the accusations were baseless and accused Egyptian intelligence of torturing him while in custody. Iran has not had formal diplomatic ties with Egypt since the Iranian revolution in 1979, when Tehran broke off relations because Egypt had agreed a peace treaty with Israel. Cairo and Tehran have said they are moving closer to restoring ties. But Iran has yet to change a Tehran street name which honours the assassin of former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, the man who made peace with Israel. In the same case, Egyptian authorities have charged in absentia Iranian diplomat Mohammad Reza Hosseindost with giving Dabbous money for information about a petrochemical complex in the Saudi port city of Yanbu. Witnesses said the court authorities played the one-hour videotape on a small television set at the front of a crowded and noisy courtroom, so it was difficult to make out details. But two witnesses who caught parts of it said it showed Dabbous riding around Sharm el-Sheikh in a minibus and standing on the airport road in the company of a prosecutor. In other parts of the video Dabbous, a former Koran teacher, said the Iranians had recruited him when he went to Iran seeking a scholarship. They sent him to Saudi Arabia, where they paid him \$50,000 for his work, he said. At the request of the defence, the trial was postponed until February 26.

Human right violations and protest in Iran

Woman sentenced to stoning, man to execution

Iran Focus Feb. 04, Tehran, – A Tehran court has sentenced a couple to death by stoning



and hanging, according to the state-run daily Etemad. Iran's Supreme Court has reportedly upheld the verdicts and has confirmed that the woman only identified by her first name Massoumeh will be stoned to death and her husband identified by his first name Ismaeil will be hanged to death. The couple were accused of murder. Another unnamed individual also charged with murder separately was handed down an execution sentence in Pakdasht (west of Tehran). Stoning to death is a barbaric punishment used by the Iranian regime, where the victim is buried up to the waist in the ground (women are buried up to the shoulders) and stones are thrown to their heads, with the law stating that the stones must not be big enough to kill the person instantly and not be too small so that the victim feels the maximum amount of pain.

Iran human rights record 'to be loathed' – Rice



AFP, Feb. 3, LONDON - US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stepped up Washington's verbal assault on Iran on Thursday, saying the hardline Islamic regime's treatment of its people was "something to be loathed". "I don't think anybody thinks that the unelected mullahs who run that regime are a good thing for either the Iranian people or for the region," Rice told reporters accompanying her to Europe and the Middle East. "I think our European allies agree that the Iranian regime's human rights behaviour and its behaviour towards its own population is something to be loathed," she said. Rice arrived in London on Thursday evening on the first leg of a tour of Europe and the Middle East, her first trip abroad as chief US diplomat.

Feature

Time to confront Iran Threat

European-Voice, January 20-26, By Paulo Casaca, MEP, Brussels. The West needs a radical new approach to confront the growing threat posed by the theocratic regime in Iran, as it relentlessly pursues its regional and global ambitions. Tehran remains the world's most active state sponsor of terrorism, continues its destructive meddling in Iraq, and tops the list of states bent on nuclear proliferation. There are good reasons to mistrust the hardline ayatollahs ruling Iran. In Iraq, they have organized a "Shiite list" for the upcoming parliamentary elections, counting on terrorism and chaos to derail the democratic process, discredit and defeat the moderate Shiite Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and the secular Kurdish list. Tehran's number one priority is to defeat the "American project" in Iraq by whatever means at its disposal. In a rare display of unanimity, Arab leaders find the prospects of Tehran's proxies dominating Iraqi politics most unsettling and are urging Washington to prevent such an outcome. On the nuclear front, the Paris Pact, signed by Iran and the foreign ministers of the United Kingdom, Germany and France, has been described by the Iranian regime, as Europe's capitulation to Tehran's demands. The Pact has legitimized the ayatollahs' nuclear ambitions, while failing to provide guarantees that Tehran's civilian nuclear program is not merely a cover for a military program. It bears an unsettling resemblance to the Munich Pact in 1938, when well-intentioned leaders of liberal democracies, trying to stop the rapid march of Nazism, ended up appeasing that terrible regime with catastrophic consequences.

What has emboldened the Iranian leaders is a clause in the pact that commits the European side to crack down on Iran's opposition. Tehran considered that a double victory: it received a green light for its campaign of imprisonment, torture and murder of dissidents, and it felt reassured to continue protecting several Al-Qaeda operational branches. Why are European governments going down this path? While almost everyone is opposed to a repeat of an Iraq II scenario, experience has proven that a make-a-deal approach to the clerical regime is not going to save us from this rising threat. Maryam Rajavi, a campaigner for freedom under the Shah and the ayatollahs, told Euro-MPs that there was a viable third option: democratic change brought about by the Iranian people. Mrs. Rajavi, who is president-elect of the dissident coalition National Council of Resistance of Iran, rejected both engagement and war as ways of dealing with the ruling mullahs. She reaffirmed the post-mullah government's commitment to a peaceful and WMD-free Iran, to good neighbourliness and to holding free elections within six months. She denounced western governments' crackdown on the Iranian opposition and said the terror tag against the main opposition group, the People's Mojahedin (PMOI), was the greatest gift to Tehran and a major obstacle to bring about change in Iran. She called for an end to the blacklisting of the PMOI. Let us side with the Iranian people and their aspirations for freedom, democracy and a secular state. Only such an approach could guarantee lasting peace and stability in the Middle East and the wider world.

Paulo Casaca, MEP, Brussels