



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

Outdated nuclear treaty is threat to all, warns Annan

The Independent, May 3 - Kofi Annan, the United Nations secretary general, warned yesterday that the cornerstone international treaty curbing the spread of nuclear weapons was in urgent need of repair, if it was to keep pace with globalization and the advance of atomic technology. Mr. Annan delivered his bleak warning as delegates from more than 180 countries began a conference at the UN in a bid to strengthen the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The month-long review comes at a time of rising tensions, spurred by North Korea's suspected development of a nuclear weapon, and Iran's apparent pursuit of such arms.... For Iran, engaged in delicate and fitful negotiations with the EU to freeze its uranium enrichment programme, Mr. Annan had the message that it should "not insist" on manufacturing nuclear fuel domestically, but acquire it from multilaterally controlled agencies. All countries, he said, must work "towards a world of reduced nuclear threat." But his words may fall on deaf ears. The conference began without an agreed agenda, while Iran and the US were on a collision course, as Tehran prepared to reject demands to dismantle its nuclear power programme, arguing its purposes were peaceful.

Iran shouldn't resume nuke enrichment - ElBaradei



Reuters, May 2, United Nations - The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog urged Iran on Monday not to follow through on its threats to resume sensitive nuclear activities that could be used to produce atomic weapons. "I would hope that the Iranians would not take a unilateral decision to initiate any activities that now are currently suspended," International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei told reporters after a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi.

Iran uranium enrichment would lead to end of EU talks: Germany



AFP, May 2, United Nations - A resumption of Iran's uranium enrichment activities would lead to an end of its nuclear talks with the European Union, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said Monday. "This would lead to a collapse of the talks," Fischer told reporters on the sidelines of a conference on non-proliferation at the United Nations in New York. "It is the foundation of the talks that the uranium enrichment remains suspended," Fischer said..

Khamenei: Iran won't abandon nuke program



AFP, May 1, Tehran - Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday in comments apparently directed at the United States that the Islamic republic's nuclear programme was "none of your business". In a speech carried on state television, the all-powerful Khamenei also said that the June presidential

election would not bring any change to Iran's determination to press on with its controversial atomic activities. "The shameless arrogance and rudeness has gone so far that it has given rise to such comments that Iran does not need nuclear technology. This is none of your business," he told a gathering in the southern city of Kerman...His comments came the day after Iran said it was unhappy with the progress of nuclear negotiations with Britain, France and Germany, and warned it may resume uranium conversion activities next week in defiance of a key agreement...

"The spokespersons of the arrogant power say they are waiting for Iran's elections to be carried out and then they will decide on the issue of peaceful nuclear energy in Iran. But what have Iran's elections got to do with you?" Khamenei said...

"What the US says is 'submit to our domination, our intervention, our presence and our grip over your country and resources, and if not, we will accuse you of terrorism and of being against human rights,' Khamenei said. But he added that Iran "will stand against anyone who threatens our independence, identity, national interests... and will punch them in the mouth."

Tehran to inject uranium gas into centrifuges at Isfahan facility

WorldNetDaily TM **World Net Daily, May 1** - Top Iranian nuclear negotiator Hassan Rowhani was quoted as saying Tehran expects to restart enrichment activities injecting uranium gas into centrifuges at its uranium-conversion facility in Isfahan. "It's unlikely that uranium enrichment ... which takes place in Natanz, will be resumed, but it's likely that some activities at Isfahan Uranium Conversion Facility will restart next week," Rowhani said today. The central cities of Natanz and Isfahan house the heart of Iran's nuclear program. The Isfahan conversion facility reprocesses uranium ore concentrate into gas, which is then taken to Natanz and fed into the centrifuges for enrichment.

Iran ready to ignore US nuclear countdown

The Observer, May. 1 - Iran says it is part of a peaceful nuclear energy programme, but it has been built underground in case of air attacks. The Iranians' worries are not far fetched.

In the minibus, the United Nations' nuclear inspectors swap stories of Iran's reaction to their presence. 'Whatever we do, they're behind us trying to record our movements and it's disturbing,' says one of the most senior inspectors, Chris Charlier. 'It's all part of the game.'

Charlier is a Belgian nuclear scientist who has travelled the world inspecting nuclear installations for the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], a nuclear arm of the UN. His conclusion on Iran is this: 'I believe they've tried to conceal their programme and their activities. And may be there are other things they're doing that we couldn't find. And that's why we're getting suspicious.' The UN's suspicions about Iran went into overdrive 18 months ago. The Iranian Vice President, Reza Aghazadeh, had just told the IAEA: 'Complete transparency of my country's nuclear activities is a serious commitment.' Then an Iranian opposition group operating outside the country tipped off the inspectors about Natanz, and other nuclear activities Iran had chosen not to declare. Shortly afterwards, the inspectors asked for access to a nondescript warehouse in Tehran called The Kalay-e Electric Company. At its heart were the highly-engineered centrifuges required to make nuclear fuel. The problem is, once a country has mastered enriching uranium for energy, it's not far off developing weapons grade uranium if it chooses. Which is why the UN inspectors wanted to test for nuclear particles. 'When they opened the door,' says Charlier, 'everything had been changed. There were new tiles to the roof, everything was brand new. It was still smelling of paint.' More dramatic still was Lavizan, a suspected nuclear site on the outskirts of Tehran. It took two months for the inspectors to get access. When they arrived, the buildings, the equipment had gone. The satellite 'before and after' shot shows gleaming silver buildings being replaced by a triangle of rough brown earth. Charlier is frank about what this pattern of behaviour means: 'The way they've been postponing, and trying to gain time, is suspicious. I don't think the IAEA has any facts to support the idea that they have a nuclear weapons programme, but the way that Iran has behaved in all those smaller issues has made the agency suspicious.'....There's a worry that these protracted negotiations with the Europeans are simply handing time to the Iranians to build a bomb. They have the centrifuges required - those they say are for making nuclear fuel - and they have the missile to launch them. So how long have we got before Iran goes nuclear?

Rafsanjani says Iran will pursue nuclear program 'at all costs'



AFP, Apr. 29, Tehran - Iran's powerful former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani insisted Friday ahead of renewed talks with Europe that Tehran would pursue its atomic energy programme including uranium enrichment "at all costs".

"Iran wants to possess all the branches of nuclear technology, including enrichment, and it will do so at all costs," he said at the weekly Muslim prayers in Tehran. "The Iranian nation ... considers itself strong enough to defend its rights, and not to let you (Europeans) impose any permanent suspension on uranium enrichment," said Rafsanjani. "I am telling the Europeans that their current effort of dealing with the nuclear case under US pressure will not bear good results," said Rafsanjani.

Bush questions Iran's nuclear ambitions

Iran Focus, Apr. 29, Washington – United States President George W. Bush said during a press conference yesterday that Iran could not be trusted with enriching uranium as part of its nuclear program, after he was questioned on Russia's decision to sell nuclear fuel for Iranian reactors. "See, what they (Russia) recognize is that -- what America recognizes, and what Great Britain, France, and Germany recognize, is that we can't trust the Iranians when it comes to enriching uranium", Bush said, adding, "they should not be allowed to enrich uranium". Bush said that he "wondered why they need one (a nuclear power industry) since they've got all the oil". Bush also said that Russian President Vladimir Putin understood "the dangers of an Iran with a nuclear weapon".

German crane shipped to Iran for Shahab missiles



AFP, Apr. 28, Washington - The United States has sought clarification from Germany on the reported shipment of a German crane for possible use in Iran's missile program, a senior State Department official said Thursday. ...The weekly

Der Spiegel magazine reported this week that Mizan Machine, a company blacklisted by the German authorities, bought a crane to help in the manufacture of Iran's Shahab missile. It said customs authorities were not told about the deal until the freighter transporting the equipment left Germany. The ship was reported over the weekend to be at the entrance to the Suez Canal.

Terrorism and meddling in Iraq

Former Najaf Governor discloses Iranian meddling

Iraf website, May 2 – Mr. Adnan Al-Zorfi, former Governor of Najaf, disclosed extremely dangerous intelligence and secrets on Iranian interference in Iraq's internal affairs. The most important secrets revealed were the participation of Iranian women from Iran's intelligence system in the war beside Moqtada Sadr's gangs in Najaf during the crisis in Najaf. In addition to Iran's intelligence officers, Iranian women also launched mortars against the Iraqi police and the US military. Iranian intelligence was behind Abdul-Majid Al-Khoii's assassination...

There are many and different Iranian infiltrations in Iraq... Shiite parties – and not Iraqi Shiites – have most of the responsibility towards this. These parties are Iranian intelligence branches in Iraq that because of their beliefs are affiliated with Iran and betray the country with relieved conscience.

Over 35,000 Iranians ready for suicide operations in Iraq

Al-Etjah Al-Akher weekly, May 2 – Iraqi National Border Guards in Badreh arrested a group of Iranian infiltrators to Iraq. A source from the National Border Guards Command confirmed: "National Border Guards obtained documents from the infiltrators that prove their affiliation with armed groups prepared by Iranian Intelligence for destructive operations." The source said: "The infiltrators told Iraqi interrogators that more than 35 thousand Iranian volunteers are ready for suicide operations in Iraq."

Protests in Iran

Rafsanjani prevented from speaking on May Day in Iran



Iran Focus, May. 1, Tehran – A packed Azadi Stadium in Tehran was today the scene of angry anti-government protests, preventing Iran's powerful ex-President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to call off his scheduled speech at the May Day gathering.

Eye witnesses said that some 20,000 workers gathered in and around the 12,000-seat stadium to mark May Day and chants of "The Majlis (parliament) betrays us, the leaders support them" could be heard throughout the crowd... Rafsanjani, who is also the head of Iran's powerful State Expediency Council, was scheduled to speak at the event but was prevented by chants of "the servant's government should leave us alone" and "abolish slavery in Iran". Rafsanjani occasionally referred to his government as the servant's government. One eye witnesses said that the crowd grew particularly incensed upon hearing the news that Rafsanjani was using the labourers' event as part of an election stunt. A number of times, when the announcer spoke about Rafsanjani, the crowd started to boo. Many chanted "referendum, referendum, referendum, this what our people want"... The area around the stadium was swarming with State Security Forces' patrol cars, ambulances, and fire engines. Security agents arrested many of the protestors and mobile phone signals were jammed inside the stadium. Similar protests occurred throughout the country, particularly in the capital. In Tehran's Jayhoon district May Day demonstrators clashed with security forces.

Human rights abuse

Four Iranian web-loggers protest being forced to confess



AFP, May 2, Tehran - Four Iranian web-loggers arrested during a crackdown last year have written to the judiciary head to complain of having been subjected to "physical and moral pressure" that forced them to confess, the official news agency IRNA said Monday.

"During our detention, (we were) subjected to physical and moral pressure and all of our confessions were false and have no legal value," wrote Mahbubeh Abbas-Golizadeh, Fereshteh Ghazi, Massud Ghoreyshi and Hanif Mazruwi...

Four young men hanged, sentenced to death

Iran Focus, May 2, Tehran - A young man was hanged in public in the northeastern Iranian town of Bojnourd for "acting against the state", according to the state-run daily Iran. Hadi Safdari was accused of creating public disorder and acting against the state.

Iran's authorities have recently stepped up executions and death sentences for political prisoners, despite international condemnation. On Monday morning another man, only identified as Yaqoub R., was executed in Karoon Prison in the southern Iranian city of Ahwaz, which has been the scene of mass social unrest and clashes between anti-government protesters and State Security Forces. He was accused of murder. Separately two other men were sentenced to death by a Tehran court, accused of murder. A 21-year-old man was sentenced to execution while another young man was sentenced to five times execution in public.

Iran liberty Walk

Iran Liberty Walk' Sets 209-Mile Route



WorldNetDaily.com, Apr. 29 -- Organizers of the "Iran Liberty Walk" to promote peaceful, democratic change in Tehran announced today the 209-mile route that will take

hundreds of Americans, including lawmakers, through towns and cities between Philadelphia and the nation's capital. The two-week event, led by Jerome Corsi, founder of the Iran Freedom Foundation, will begin May 16 at the Liberty Bell and culminate with a large demonstration on the Capitol Mall. Corsi, author of the newly released "Atomic Iran," said reports from the walk will be broadcast to Iran via radio, television and the Internet, including live interviews with participants such as Rep. Peter King, R-Iowa. Along with sending a signal for peaceful change, the IFF is calling for civil disobedience from Iranian citizens. Corsi and the IFF urge Iranians to

flood the streets June 17, the date of the presidential vote, and vote "no" in the "sham elections the mullahs are planning."

Feature

A Third Option for Iran

FrontPageMagazine, May 6, By David Johnson -- Washington's Iran problem just got bigger. Over the weekend, Tehran's chief nuclear negotiator, Hassan Rohani, warned that Iran might resume uranium enrichment-related work this week. A day later, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, said the next Iranian president would not relinquish the country's nuclear program. At this point, it's clear that a nuclear Iran would pose a grave threat to American security—so what should Washington do about it ?

At present, the two most widely discussed methods in Washington for dealing with Iran's WMD ambitions are appealing the Iranian regime through economic incentives or taking some form of military action against it. But on April 14, speakers at the 2005 National Convention for a Democratic, Secular Republic in Iran insisted that there is a third option which all Iranians and Americans can rally behind. Hundreds of Iranian-American delegates traveled from across the United States to attend the event, which was held at the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. Speakers included Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders, all of whom encouraged religious tolerance and expressed support for the rights of those fighting against intolerance in Iran. The convention's participants included family members of persons executed by the Iranian government, scholars, scientists, academics, and professionals. Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-CO), joined by Congressmen Bob Filner (D-CA), Ted Poe (R-TX), and Dennis Moor (D-AR), also spoke at the event. In a mood reminiscent of American campaign conventions, the high-energy crowd held placards declaring their aspirations for a democratic and secular Iran; they also made reference to the people and organizations they believe are the ones to make their aspirations reality. A common image at the convention was that of Maryam Rajavi, the president elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), a major Iranian opposition coalition. The NCRI was designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the U.S. Department of State in 1999. State contends that the NCRI is an alias for the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK) that is intensely focused on overthrowing the current Iranian government. The MEK's addition to the terror list coincided with the 1997 election of President Mohamed Khatami, a figure the Clinton administration was depending on to peacefully reform the Iranian regime from within. Many in Washington believe that the MEK's terror designation was a diplomatic concession to Iran. Khatami's term will conclude in August of this year and will leave behind a legacy of disappointment. Sadly, there is no reason for Washington to be optimistic about Iran's next president. Whoever holds the office next will merely serve Iran's theocratic oligarchy at the pleasure of its Supreme Leader. With Washington bewildered as to how to deal with the current Iran crisis, President Elect Rajavi and the NCRI seized what they saw as a golden opportunity. Mrs. Rajavi addressed the convention via a live satellite broadcast from her home in Auvers-sur-Oise, France. Unable to attend the event in person due to her organization's status in the United States, she took full advantage of her virtual presence in Washington to challenge the Bush administration to drop her organization from the terrorist list. Ms. Rajavi pointed out that her organization officially calls for a "referendum for peaceful regime change in Iran and rejects any terrorism, violence and illegal and unjustified taking up of arms" and also "fully respects the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Quoting both President Bush and Thomas Jefferson to emphasize her vision, Mrs. Rajavi developed a strong case for her organization's removal from the FTO list. To be sure, the group consistently advocates for secular democracy in Iran, has made the world safer by revealing Tehran's secret nuclear weapons program and has identified Iranian government agents directly responsible for acts of terrorism in Europe and the Middle East. Its inclusion on the FTO list limits the amount of progress the U.S. might make by partnering with a major Iranian group like the NCRI. Two former U.S. army officers who had recently served in Iraq and are personally familiar with members of the MEK residing in Ashraf city echoed the same concern during their address to the convention. The FTO list has been effective in reducing the activities of the MEK and the NCRI but it has also had some unfortunate consequences. It not only ties the hands of the NCRI, it also limits the amount of progress the U.S. might make by partnering with an Iranian group like the NCRI. It is a group that consistently advocates for a

secular, democratic republic in Iran, and which has made the world safer by revealing Tehran's nuclear weapons program and identifying Iranian agents directly responsible for acts of terrorism in Europe and the Middle East. Regardless of the obvious constraints the FTO list puts on the organization, the NCRI's plans for Iran remain ambitious. Mrs. Rajavi's position as an interim president is planned to last for only six months after the fall of the current Iranian regime. At the end of her interim term, free and monitored elections would be held throughout Iran. In the meantime, Mrs. Rajavi and the NCRI are pursuing what many of the convention's speakers referred to as "The Third Option." The third option as stated by the NCRI suggests that change in Iran should be initiated by the Iranian people and sustained indigenously. This, too, is likely the method that a war-weary American public would prefer. Two recent Gallup polls show that Americans believe the current Iranian government is a significant threat to the United States, but they do not support a military solution to the Iran problem. That said, the third option may be exactly what the American public is looking for—however, it will likely come as a shock to them to learn that the idea came from a group the U.S. government has branded a terrorist organization. The Iranian-Americans who attended the National Convention for a Secular, Democratic Republic in Iran showed sincere enthusiasm for the third option and did not appear deterred by the NCRI's terrorist label. The Iranian-American delegates at this event represented an impressive American subculture that has a clear understanding of the American political process and the situation on the ground in Iran, as well as a definitive vision for the future. Most importantly, they are willing to dedicate their resources to peaceful political activism in the U.S. Policy makers in Washington would be wise to recognize the role of these Iranian-Americans in facilitating democracy in the Middle East. The National Convention for a Secular and Democratic Republic in Iran emboldened and legitimized the democratic process here in the U.S., which is something the religious extremists and terrorists currently running Iran would never do. Policy makers should also keep in mind that if these Iranian-American democrats were to have held their peaceful political event in Tehran, every organizer, speaker and participant would be likely have been sentenced to long prison terms, tortured and possibly executed. The time has clearly come to confront the Iranian threat head on. The third option may be the best option our policy makers have.

David Johnson is a cofounder of the US Alliance for Democratic Iran and its Director of Operations.