



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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Iran's Nuclear Crisis

Iran to resume nuclear work at suspended plant today - official



Iran Focus, August 3 - Iran announced on Wednesday that it planned to re-start frozen nuclear activities at its Uranium Conversion Facility; a move that could provoke a major international crisis. "We will, God willing, remove the seals and resume activities today," Ali Aghamohammadi, the spokesman for Iran's Supreme National Security Council, told reporters in Tehran. Aghamohammadi...rejected a request by the UN's nuclear watchdog to allow a week for the transfer and installation of cameras and other surveillance equipment at the site. "One week is not acceptable to Iran for the installation of equipment", SNSC spokesman Ali Aghamohammadi said. "Iran is hoping we will be able to resume activities today".

EU-3 gets tough on Iran



Washington Post, August 3 - Britain, France and Germany took a tough line yesterday in response to Iran's announcement that it has decided to resume work at a key nuclear facility. In a letter to Tehran, foreign ministers from the three European countries said such an action would end two years of negotiations, and left open the possibility of taking the issue up with the U.N. Security Council, something the Bush administration has advocated and Iran has sought to avoid... "Were Iran to resume currently suspended activities, our negotiations would be brought to an end and we would have no option but to pursue other courses of action," said yesterday's letter to Iran's chief negotiator, Hassan Rowhani. "We therefore call upon Iran not to resume suspended activities or take other unilateral steps." ..."I think this Iranian affair is very serious and that it could be the start of a major crisis," Douste-Blazy told reporters in Paris.

Iran must honor commitment to suspend all nuclear activities - French PM



AFP, August 2 - Iran must abide by a deal with the European Union to suspend its nuclear program or face UN Security Council retribution, French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin said Tuesday. "Iran must honor the commitments it has made. These commitments are commitments suspending all activity, conversion, treatment and enrichment of uranium," Villepin told Europe 1 radio. If Tehran refuses, "the international community will be forced to draw up consequences... with consensus, with dialogue," he said.

Germany's Schroeder says West united over Iran's nuclear program



AFP, August 2 - German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder warned Iran on Tuesday against resuming sensitive nuclear activities, saying the West would not be divided in its opposition to Tehran building an atomic bomb. Schroeder said the Iranian government could not pit European countries against each other over the issue and urged Iran not to make any "unilateral

arrangements" during its ongoing negotiations with Germany and its EU partners Britain and France... He warned that Iran would be making a mistake if it doubted the West's firm resolve to prevent Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Rice received European pledge to support Security Council action if talks with Iran fail



The Washington Post, July 31, interview with U.S. Secretary of State Rice -- On Iran, Rice agreed to offer incentives -- allowing the Islamic republic to apply for eventual membership in the World Trade Organization and buy badly needed spare parts for aging passenger aircraft -- in exchange for a European pledge to support U.N. Security Council action if talks fail.

U.S. reiterates position to take Tehran to UN Security Council

Daily Press Briefing, August 1 -- Tom Casey, acting spokesman for U.S. State Department: Our policy on this has been clear. If Iran does follow through on its threat to break the suspension, we'll be working with the EU-3 and others as a first step and we'll be consulting with the IAEA Board of Governors after that. But as you know, our position has long been that should that occur, that Iran should then be reported to the UN Security Council...

I just want to reiterate the point that we do view this issue very seriously and we do believe as the UK Foreign Office said yesterday, that resuming any kind of conversion work would be an unnecessary and damaging step...

But again, our longstanding position has been: Should that occur, the next step ought to be that Iran should then be reported to the Security Council.

In letter to IAEA, Tehran announces resumption of activities at UCF in Isfahan

Fars news agency, July 30 -- After submission of Iran's letter to the IAEA because of Europe's breach of the Paris Accord, the activities of Isfahan's UCF nuclear site will be resumed this week. An informed source announced this news and said, "According to the decision of the country's top officials and in light of Europe's lack of cooperation in at least considering the issues Iran is concerned about in its proposal, Iran submitted its letter to the IAEA, announcing resumption of the activities of Isfahan's UCF nuclear site by the end of Khatami's term in office.

Larijani: Iran will not forsake nuclear program for trade concessions

The Financial Times, July 30 - Recent Iranian statements have stoked European fears that Tehran could be about to resume activity at its uranium conversion plant, with a preliminary role in the nuclear fuel cycle... "Such a step would be a breach of the Paris agreement [underpinning the talks]..." said a British spokeswoman... There is widespread expectation that Ali Larijani, former head of state broadcasting, will take over as Iran's leading nuclear negotiator. Mr Larijani once said Iran would exchange "a pearl for a candy" if it gave up its nuclear program in return for trade concessions.

Terrorism and meddling in Iraq

Iran shipping Iraqi rebels powerful bombs, NBC says

UPI- August 3, Iran is shipping more powerful and sophisticated military-caliber bombs to Iraqi guerrillas for use against U.S.-led coalition forces, NBC News reported yesterday. Citing U.S. military and intelligence officials, the network said U.S. soldiers intercepted a large shipment of high explosives last week, smuggled into northeastern Iraq from Iran.

"The officials say the shipment contained dozens of 'shaped charges' manufactured recently. Shaped charges are especially lethal because they're designed to concentrate and direct a more powerful blast into a small area," NBC reported.

"They'll go right through a very heavily armored vehicle like an M1-A1 tank from one side right out the other side," retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey told the network.

Military officials said insurgents in Iraq began using shaped charges to kill U.S. forces three months ago. Recent weeks have brought a spate of deadlier roadside-bomb attacks on U.S. forces.

In one attack earlier this week, 14 U.S. Marines were killed inside a 28-ton armored vehicle that would be immune from most improvised explosive devices, but vulnerable to shaped charges, which were developed by militaries worldwide specifically to pierce armor. Intelligence officials believe the explosives were shipped into Iraq by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard or the terrorist group Hezbollah, most likely with the consent of the Iranian government, NBC reported.

Bolton warns Iran, Syria over Iraqi border



Reuters, UNITED NATIONS August 4, By Irwin Arieff - U.S. Ambassador John Bolton, in his debut in the U.N. Security Council, pressed Syria and Iran on Thursday to do more to stem the flow of terrorists, arms and funding into neighboring Iraq. His comments came as the 15-nation council unanimously adopted a U.S.-drafted resolution condemning a recent surge in violence in Iraq that has killed hundreds, including Algerian diplomats, U.S. Marines and a Sunni Arab helping to draft a new Iraqi constitution. Russia used the vote to criticize the media for glorifying terrorists after Moscow said it would bar ABC News from working in Russia when the U.S. television network aired an interview with Chechen rebel leader Shamil Basayev. Bolton urged all nations "to meet their obligations to stop the flow of terrorist financing and weapons, and particularly on Iran and Syria." "We think this is very important, obviously, to help bring stability and security to the people of Iraq and to permit the constitutional process to go forward. It's the highest priority for the people and government of Iraq, and for the United States as well," he said, speaking after the council vote.....

Tehran officials meet with Hezbollah leader; denounce calls for disarmament of group



News agencies, August 2 - Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told the visiting leader of Lebanese Hezbollah that the United States has been "genuinely weakened in the region, as shown by its defeat in Iraq and the failure of their plans for Lebanon and Iran", the official Iranian news agency reported on Tuesday.

"The region is now in a new situation, which means a correct appreciation of the situation, appropriate decisions, and timely actions are going to be very decisive", Khamenei told Lebanese Hezbollah chief Sheikh Hassan Nasrollah... In an earlier meeting on Monday, Iran's hard-line President-elect Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told the Hezbollah chief that the Islamic Republic would continue to support the Shiite group... Nasrollah also met with outgoing President Mohammad Khatami who reassured him of Iran's unflinching support for the Lebanese group. Khatami denounced calls for Hezbollah to disarm as "a conspiracy on the part of the enemies of Islam."

U.S. Ambassador blames Tehran for backing violent acts against Iraq

Press release, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad, August 1 -- Some of Iraq's neighbors are engaged in unhelpful activities... Iran is working along two contradictory tracks. On the one hand, Tehran works with the new Iraq. On the other, there is movement across its borders of people and materiel used in violent acts against Iraq. We welcome good relations between Iraq and all its neighbors, but activities inconsistent with such relations must stop.



Media rebuke Iran's influence on drafting of constitution

Sawt Al-Iraq, August 2 – Shwan Ottoman Baban: We happily said that our country Iraq will become a land of democracy in the Middle East, but the winds from Iran's desert lands have blown against the direction of Iraqi ships. This land of dreams has turned into a target for Iran to expand its darkness. We thought the Coalition has prepared us freedom; we did not know that what they would call the permanent constitution would be a permanent Iranian yoke around the necks of Iraqis. Preachers rule over Baghdad which was one day the center of world's civilization. Bassij forces reign over Basra, the Jewel of the Gulf, sewing mouths and restricting women from moving around...

Shiite clergy: Iran will not stop unless it devours Iraq

Al-Hurra TV, August 2 – Ayad Jamaledin, Iraqi Shiite clergy, says: "Iran will not be convinced unless it dominates the entire Iraqi territory from north to south and devour the whole country."

Guerilla attacks in southern Iraq is supplied and backed from Iran - British forces

The Independent, July 31 - British forces believe a new wave of guerrilla attacks in southern Iraq is being supplied and backed from Iran. The 1,000-strong Task Force Maysan, stationed south of Amara, has noticed a dramatic change in the "quality" of attacks on them this summer... This year the number of attacks has dropped, but the attackers appear to have had some highly professional training - almost certainly from militias and elements of the Revolutionary Guard across the border in Iran. "Last year terrorists fought pitched battles in the open, with AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades," said Lt Colonel Andrew Williams, commanding the battle group of the Staffordshire Regiment in Maysan. "They have now changed tack, and learned from last year. They've been trained somewhere else, and their weaponry is not locally produced - some of it is state of the art..." An articulated lorry recently stopped by Iraqi border police was full of rockets, grenades and launchers. The arms, and training in their use, are believed to have been provided by local militias and units of the Revolutionary Guard across the border...

Tehran's intelligence ministry runs offices in all Iraqi cities - Iraqi politician

Al-Arab Al-Yawm daily, July 27, Jordan – Excerpts of interview with Sobhi Abdul-Hamid, Secretary General of the Arab Nationalist Movement of Iraq and head of the Administrative Council of Rayat al-Arab newspaper. Abdul-Hamid was Iraq's Foreign Minister in 1964 and its Interior Minister in 1965. Q: There are talks about the role of the Iranian Intelligence Ministry in Iraq; what are the dimensions of this role? A: The dimension of the Iranian Intelligence Ministry's role in Iraq is very extensive. This ministry has agencies and offices in all the cities of Iraq, especially in the south, and they meddle in everything. There are people who say Iraq has been occupied by both the US and Iran...

Protest in Iran

Protesters clash with security forces in Iran's Kurdish town

Iran Focus, August 3 - Violent clashes erupted between young people and security forces in the Kurdish town of Saqqez, northwest Iran, and a prayer hall and vehicles belonging to the police were set on fire on Wednesday, according to witnesses. The windows of several banks were shattered as people threw sticks and stones at agents of the State Security Forces in Saqqez, situated in the province of Kurdistan, a hotbed of anti-government protests... Protestors then split up into small groups attacking various government buildings including the governor's office. The commander of the State Security Forces in Saqqez was also beaten by protestors. Special anti-riot units of the Revolutionary Guards were brought in to put down the unrest and a number of demonstrators were arrested.

Police shoot dead protesters in northwest Iran

Iran Focus, August 2 - Iran's State Security Forces on Monday evening opened fire at a peaceful anti-government demonstration in the Kurdish town of Sanandaj, northwest Iran, killing several people including two children and starting riots throughout the town, eye-witnesses reported. At least 1,000 people had gathered at Esteghlal Park in the evening, peacefully demonstrating in protest to the brutal torture and murder of a young Kurd by police in the neighbouring town of Mahabad... Uniformed and plain-clothed police attacked protestors in Enghelab Square and Sheshom-e Bahman Street and at one point started to shoot live rounds. Eye-witnesses reported that several people were injured or killed. Among the dead are believed to be two children. As demonstrators dispersed, a full-scale riot broke out in Sanandaj. People threw stones to fight off police and burnt car tyres in the streets. Local banks were attacked and had their windows shattered.

Iran Kurds stage new protest as unrest continues

Iran Focus, July 30 - Some 300 Kurdish activists gathered on Saturday at a sit-in outside the governor's office in Iran's western province of Kurdistan following two weeks of unrest that had brought several Kurdish towns and cities to a complete stand-still. The activists gathered to protest against a government crackdown on demonstrations which were sparked by the brutal torture and killing of a young Kurd in the town of Mahabad, West Azerbaijan province, at the hands of Iran's State Security Forces.

Human rights abuse

Iran detains human rights lawyer in top-security prison

Iran Focus, August 1 - An Iranian human rights lawyer arrested on Saturday on charges of nuclear espionage is currently being held in Ward 209 of Tehran's notorious Evin Prison, the head of Tehran Bar Association said on Monday. Mohammad Jandaghi made the announcement following a meeting with Tehran's Public Prosecutor Saeed Mortazavi. Abdolfattah Soltani was representing the family of slain Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi who was murdered inside Evin Prison in July 2003. There were suggestions that Prosecutor Mortazavi was Kazemi's killer and last Monday, Soltani clearly pointed the finger at him for the murder. Mortazavi subsequently issued an arrest warrant for Soltani on charges of being "a nuclear spy" and the human rights lawyer was detained while protesting at the TBA building the actions against him.

Another execution in Iran



AFP, August 1 - An Iranian man convicted of murdering and robbing five men when he was a minor has been hanged in the southern city of Bandar Abbas, the Khorasan daily reported Monday. Farshid Farighi, 21, was hanged at the city prison. His sentence included 74 lashes.

Protesting Iran human rights lawyer arrested



AFP, July 30 - A colleague of the Nobel Prize winning Iranian human rights lawyer Shirin Ebadi, Abdolfattah Soltani, was arrested on Saturday, a fellow lawyer said. A group of men appeared at a legal building where Soltani, already the subject of an arrest warrant, was holding a protest and "put him into a car and took him away," Mohammad Sharif told the student agency ISNA. He was not able to say what service the men belonged to and added that other agents filmed the arrest... Agents from a revolutionary tribunal raided his home while he was away on Wednesday with an arrest warrant, taking away his passport and papers, according to confidants. Earlier Saturday he had told AFP he was holding a protest at the Tehran bar to demonstrate "against the manoeuvres of intimidation aimed at discouraging lawyers from working in political cases." "I will continue my action until the chief justice intervenes and ends the actions of Tehran prosecutor Said Mortazavi that are aimed at stirring up the crisis," he added.

Feature

Can eurocrats stop the Iranian bomb?

The Washington Times **The Washington Times August 4, 2005, EDITORIAL** As the new Iranian president prepares to be sworn into office, the Islamist regime in Tehran has been stepping up its campaign of threats and brinkmanship directed at the European Union. Ever since evidence of Iran's extensive efforts to develop nuclear weapons became public two years ago, the "EU 3" -- Britain, France and Germany -- have labored unsuccessfully to use diplomacy and promises of economic aid to persuade Tehran to bargain away its efforts to produce atomic weapons. On Tuesday, The Washington Post published a front-page story quoting information apparently leaked from a new National Intelligence Estimate as projecting that Iran is a decade away from getting such weapons, roughly doubling earlier estimates. But there is plenty of reason to be extremely cautious about

relying on such estimates when assessing the behavior of a police state. Just as American intelligence agencies overestimated the progress of Iraq's WMD programs, it is entirely possible that they have underestimated the progress made by Iran. If the latter is true, the consequences of basing policy on such a faulty estimate would be catastrophic if it turned out that Iran has clandestinely managed to make greater strides toward developing nuclear weapons than Washington realized, and Tehran obtains the A-bomb. In a July 23 interview, Hassan Rowhani, Iran's point man in negotiations with the EU, said Tehran has bought time for its nuclear program during the past 21 months, while the talks with the Europeans have continued. President Bush has made clear the policy of the United States: Iran cannot be permitted to have such weapons. Although the Bush administration has been skeptical of the European approach, in the spring Washington decided to throw its weight behind the EU's Iran initiative. And, in fairness to the EU, this much is true: If the Europeans, working in tandem with the International Atomic Energy Agency, can put together the right package of incentives to: 1) persuade Iran to peacefully give up its nuclear-weapons programs; 2) get Iran to agree to an inspections regime that is sufficiently intrusive to enable us to verify that disarmament has actually taken place; and 3) agree with the United States on penalties that the Iranian regime will face if it cheats. It would be in our national interest to support this. Unfortunately, the evidence thus far suggests that nothing of the sort is going to happen. In fact, since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won the Iranian presidential runoff in June, Iranian's behavior has become increasingly truculent and menacing. Hardly a day goes by without some new threat or non-negotiable demand from the Iranians. Invariably, the bullying is followed by some statement indicating some vague willingness to negotiate if the Europeans meet some new demands for economic or political concessions. On Sunday, Hadreza Assefi, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of Iran, said his government would send the IAEA a letter of its decision to resume work at its Uranium Conversion Facility in Isfahan. The facility turns uranium ore (also known as "yellowcake") into gas which can be enriched and used as fuel for nuclear weapons. In recent days, the EU 3 has been talking about offering Iran a new package of economic, technological and other incentives to persuade it to maintain a "freeze" on enrichment. But Iran has been saying that it will not give up its nuclear enrichment program. On Monday, Iran announced it had formally notified the IAEA that it is resuming uranium enrichment at Isfahan. That same day, Britain's Foreign Office, speaking on behalf of the of the 25-member EU, promised Iran that it would have a "full and comprehensive proposal" (e.g., new concessions) for Iran. Meanwhile, Washington is hinting that it is prepared to refer Iran to the U.N. Security Council for consideration of sanctions against Iran. Aside from the fact that European support in the Security Council is far from assured (as is the case with Russia and China, either of whom could veto sanctions), it remains to be seen whether sanctions will be sufficient to dramatically alter Iranian behavior. There is no question that sanctions could cause economic pain for the regime, the Iranian military, and even the terrorist groups the government supports. Whether that is enough to persuade the Ayatollah Khamenei and the mullahcrats to jettison nuclear weapons -- a goal they have been pursuing for at least two decades -- is anyone's guess. It is entirely possible that all this will simply allow the dictatorship in Tehran to stall for time while it resumes activities at Isfahan (and continues unimpeded with any covert weapons programs). Right now, Iran sounds increasingly confident, while the Western democracies appear tentative and uncertain. If there is reason for optimism that Iranian nukes can be thwarted by peaceful means, the EU and Washington have been very successful at keeping it hidden from view.