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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 confirms plan to resume uranium conversion



The International Herald Tribune, August 7 - Iran on Sunday reiterated plans to resume uranium conversion this week and said it was unconcerned about referral of its nuclear case to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions. "Although we think referral of Iran's case to the Security Council would be unlawful and politically motivated, if one day they refer Iran's case...we won't be worried in the least," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi...

Tehran's bullying: Monday, deadline to unseal Isfahan's UCF, Natanz next in line



IRNA, August 7 - The UN watchdog should unseal Isfahan uranium conversion facility (UCF) until the end of Monday, said MP Manouchehr Mottaki on Sunday. Unsealing UCF of Isfahan must be done with or without the presence of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Head of Foreign Policy Committee of Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Manouchehr Mottaki said. "After unsealing of Isfahan's UCF, we should announce our readiness to negotiate with European partners to unseal Natanz facility and restart fuel cycle work", he told reporters on the sidelines of Majlis opening session.

New president warns Iran will not submit to other nations



AFP, August 7 - New President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran would...not accept "submission" to any other nation, as he took the oath of office before parliament Saturday. "We will not accept anything that violates our nation's rights, it's an inviolable principle of our policies," said the hardliner who takes over as head of state. "Our country will never sacrifice its dignity...we will not adopt a policy that runs counter to our interests."

Tehran's rejection of EU nuke plan 'Confrontational' - Schroeder



AP, August 6 - Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on Saturday said Iran was taking a "confrontational course" by rejecting European Union proposals for its nuclear program and forecast the matter will go to the U.N. Security Council unless Tehran backs down, according to excerpts from a television interview. "I'm very worried about the confrontational course which Iran appears to be taking," Schroeder was quoted as saying in an interview with ARD. "One has to expect that it (the IAEA) will put it before the Security Council, if Iran doesn't come round".

Fischer warns Iran not to escalate nuclear crisis



AFP, August 5 - German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer called on Iran to renounce plans to resume sensitive nuclear activities and warned the Islamic Republic not to escalate the crisis, in an interview set to appear Saturday. Speaking with daily newspaper *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, Fischer said Germany, France and Britain took Iran's intentions to break the seal on a uranium conversion facility in Isfahan very seriously. Such a step, said

Fischer, would "constitute a unilateral renunciation of an agreement taken together. Iran must not make such an error in calculation. It would be a very serious development," warned Fischer.

Canada threatens Iran with UN action on rights record

AFP, August 5, Ottawa - Canada threatened Friday to introduce a UN resolution on Iran's human rights record as it called on the Islamic republic's new government to improve its human rights record and change its position on nuclear proliferation. Canadian Foreign Minister Pierre Pettigrew urged new Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to "usher in an era of change" to repair relations hurt by the killing of a Canadian journalist in Tehran... "We are extremely concerned over the deterioration of the human rights situation in Iran," Pettigrew said.

EU playing into Iran's hands: opposition



AFP, August 5 - The European Union's "policy of appeasement" towards Iran is only strengthening Tehran's ruling clerics, the main Iranian opposition group said Friday as it urged UN Security Council action on Tehran's nuclear program. The exiled National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), based in Paris, said it had sent a letter to EU foreign ministers and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana warning them that Europe was playing into Iran's hands. "By taking advantage of Europe's policy of appeasement, the clerical regime is today putting on a show of force and challenging Europe itself," the body's "chairman of the foreign affairs committee", Mohammed Mohaddessin, said in the letter. He said Tehran was intent on obtaining nuclear weapons, "considered by the clerical leaders as the sole strategic guarantee for their regime's survival", and also wanted "greater economic, political and security concessions from Western countries." He added that the European Union should move to "abandoning the futile negotiations with Tehran, referring the mullahs' nuclear file to the United Nations Security Council and removing the unjust terrorist tag against the People's Mujahedeen."

Terrorism and meddling in Iraq

Assad visits Tehran to draw up joint plans for Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, etc.



Kuwait News Agency, August 7 - The visit Sunday of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad to Tehran is of great importance as it coincides with significant developments in the region, whether in Iraq, Lebanon or Palestine, a political source told KUNA. The source said that in addition to getting to know the new Iranian president closer, the visit comes to stress continuation of good relations between the two capitals. Since relations have not ever been through any tension, the talks are expected to focus on the US pressure and demands of the two states concerning Iraq, the source predicted. The talks in Tehran would also

discuss the situation regarding UN Security Council resolution 1559 and how it affects and applies to Hizbollah, the source said. The issue of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza is also to get priority amid considerable rift in Israel in opposition of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. This visit comes amid close if not shared views on many issues between Damascus and Tehran.

Iran seeks Syrian cooperation against U.S. pressure

Reuters, August 7 - Iran's new president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, called on Sunday for closer cooperation with Syria in the face of pressure on both countries from the United States. "The existence of common threats requires more cooperation between Tehran and Damascus," Iran's official news agency IRNA quoted Ahmadinejad as saying at a joint news conference with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad... "There is no limit for Iran and Syria's cooperation ... Boosting the ties can protect the Middle East region from possible aggressions," Ahmadinejad said.

Assassinations bring fear to Sunni minority in Basra, Iranian involvement suspected

Knight Ridder News Service, August 7, Basra, Iraq - Scores of assassinations have marred the relative peace and prosperity of Iraq's southern port of Basra... About 950 people have been killed since April 2003, according to Majid al Sari, the Defense Ministry advisor for the southern region... "Daily we find bodies, and 90 percent of them are political crimes." Many of the killings are attributed to men in police patrol cars who kidnap and kill or commit drive-by shootings... There are also suspicions of Iranian involvement in the killings. "It is clear that there are international groups seeking to provoke sectarian war here," said Dr. Jamal Khazaal, a leading member of the Basra branch of the Iraqi Islamic Party, the largest Sunni political party in the country.

Some bombs used in Iraq are made in Iran, U.S. says



New York Times, August 6, Washington -- Many of the new, more sophisticated roadside bombs used to attack American and government forces in Iraq have been designed in Iran and shipped in from there, United States military and intelligence officials said Friday, raising the prospect of increased foreign help for Iraqi insurgents. American commanders say the deadliest bombs could become more common as insurgent bomb makers learn the techniques to make the weapons

themselves in Iraq. But just as troubling is that the spread of the new weapons seems to suggest a new and unusual area of cooperation between Iranian Shiites and Iraqi Sunnis to drive American forces out - a possibility that the commanders said they could make little sense of given the increasing violence between the sects in Iraq... Since they first began appearing about two months ago, some of these devices have been seized, including one large shipment that was captured last week in northeast Iraq coming from Iran. But one senior military officer said "tens" of the devices had been smuggled in and used against allied forces, killing or wounding several Americans throughout Iraq in the past several weeks. "These are among the most sophisticated and most lethal devices we've seen," said the senior officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the delicate intelligence reports describing the bombs. "It's very serious." Pentagon and intelligence officials say that some shipments of the new explosives have contained both components and fully manufactured devices, and may have been spirited into Iraq along the porous Iranian border by the Iranian-backed, anti-Israeli terrorist group Hezbollah, or by Iran's Revolutionary Guard. American commanders say these bombs closely matched those that Hezbollah has used against Israel. "The devices we're seeing now have been machined," said a military official who has access to classified reporting on the insurgents' bomb-making abilities. "There is evidence of some sophistication."... Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and the new United States ambassador in Baghdad, Zalmay Khalilzad, complained publicly this week about the Tehran government's harmful meddling in Iraqi affairs. "There is movement across its borders of people and matériel used in violent acts against Iraq," Mr. Khalilzad said Monday...

Lebanon's Nasrollah confers with Iran's Rowhani

IranMania, August 5 - Lebanese Hizbollah Secretary General Seyyed Hassan Nasrollah in a meeting here Wednesday with Iran's Secretary of Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Hassan Rowhani said, "Hizbollah has a national objective which is supporting Lebanon's sovereignty against Israel threats", according to IRNA... Referring to the common interests of the two countries' nations and governments, Rowhani said Hizbollah is the only power in the region which resists against occupying policies of Israel and has gained victory. SNSC secretary

referred to US and Israeli efforts to separate people from Hizbollah and its disarmament and added sacrifice in confronting with enemies is a clear character of this popular movement.

Protest in Iran

Female textile workers attacked



Green Left Weekly, August 10th issue - On July 27, a 100-strong protest of mostly women textile workers in the south-eastern province of Kerman was brutally attacked by security forces. The workers at the Asia Wool-Spinning Company are owed up to 3 million Tomans (about \$3500) in unpaid wages. The workers blocked the main road outside the factory to highlight their protest. A pregnant woman was dragged on the road and kicked in the back. Another worker had her leg injured when it

was caught under the wheel of a vehicle, which had been ordered to move by the security forces.

Security tight at Kurdish town on strike in Iran

Iran Focus, August 7 - Iran's State Security Forces and agents of the Ministry of Intelligence and Security have been on heightened alert on Sunday in the Kurdish town of Bukan, northwest Iran, following a general strike in the central bazaar and in many shops, residents reported. The general strike was in protest to authorities' violent crackdown on the restive Kurdish population in western Iran. Security on Sunday was tight and residents reported groups of SSF agents, Revolutionary Guards, Bassijis (paramilitary Islamic vigilantes loyal to the Supreme Leader) and agents of the dreaded Ministry of Intelligence at key locations throughout Bukan.

Ministry accused of withholding information



IranMania, August 7 - A lawmaker from Mahabad, West Azarbaijan province has criticized the Interior Ministry's refusal to release the outcome of a probe into recent unrests in the northwestern city, leaving many injured and causing substantial damage to public property. Ja'afar Aeenparast, a member of the Parliament majority (rightist) faction, told ISNA that an Interior Ministry team dispatched to the area has drawn up a detailed report on the incident

which is still being withheld from the public. Aeenparast said the riots have now spread to other cities and there was a possibility that they could recur in Mahabad, calling for the government's urgent action to subdue any provocative acts.

Iraqi Kurds rally to support Iranian brethren

AFP, August 6, Iraq - More than 400 Iraqi Kurds gathered Saturday to protest recent clashes in neighboring Iran's northwest Kurdish region as police opened fire to disperse the crowd, an AFP correspondent reported. Carrying anti-Iran banners and shouting slogans condemning the Islamic republic, the demonstrators gathered in the centre of the northern Kurdish town of Suleimaniyah, 330 kilometers (205 miles) north of Baghdad. "We condemn crimes against the innocent people of Iranian Kurdistan" read one banner, while another said: "Death to the Iranian Islamic Republic."

Iran sends in troops to crush border unrest

The Guardian, August 5 - The Iranian government has deployed large numbers of troops in cities in the northwestern region which borders Iraq in an effort to quell three weeks of civil unrest that has left up to 20 people dead and more than 300 wounded, according to reports from dissident groups. They said as many as 100,000 state security forces, backed up by helicopter gunships, had moved into the region to crack down on pro-Kurdish demonstrations... Anti-regime demonstrations have erupted in the mainly Kurdish towns of Sanandaj, Mahabad, Sardasht, Piranshahr, Oshnavieh, Divandareh, Baneh, Sinne, Bokerkan and Saqiz. In the worst violence so far, Iranian security forces are reported to have killed at least 12 Kurdish demonstrators and injured more than 70 in a clash in the city of Saqiz on Wednesday. Witnesses said the unrest began just before noon as hundreds of protesters attacked a

paramilitary outpost with sticks and stones. Government buildings, including the governor's office, were also attacked and some were ransacked. Protesters then gathered in the main square, chanting "Down with Khamenei", the country's supreme leader. Witnesses said that security forces responded with live bullets, and some protesters were fired at by helicopters. Kurdsat, an Iraqi-Kurdish satellite channel based in Sulaimaniyah, reported yesterday that police had detained as many as 1,200 people after the incident.

Human rights abuse

Iran rejects European Union call to release jailed journalist



AP, August 7 - Iran rejected a request from the European Union on Sunday to release a jailed journalist whose weeks-long hunger strike has endangered his health... "Iran does not allow foreign ambassadors to intervene in its internal affairs. Some of their comments were not only interventionist but also illegal," said Hamid Reza Asefi, an Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman on Sunday.

Feature

The mullahs' nuclear timeline

FrontPage Magazine, August 5 - It would be accurate to deem Tuesday's Washington Post article - which described the latest, still-classified National Intelligence Estimate concerning Iran - as a bombshell. The NIE, according to the Post, pushes the date for Iranian nuclear ability back a full decade, far beyond other popular estimates ... The Post reports that the 10 year assessment was largely based on "analyzing communication intercepts, satellite imagery and the work of U.N. inspectors who have been investigating Iran for more than two years." I'm sorry, but hasn't much of the 9-11 related criticism of the CIA and other agencies been based on their excessive reliance on spy satellites and high-tech gadgetry?... Iran, the world's foremost sponsor of terrorism, has for 18 years worked covertly on an extensive nuclear project. For historical context, South Africa went from design formulation to weapons testing in 8 years, with far less resources than those available to Iran. Iran has employed dozens of Russian nuclear specialists, while at the same time working hard to frustrate the international community's ability to observe its progress. In addition, we know Iran was a prime player in the A.Q. Khan proliferation network that connected nuclear-capable North Korea and nuclear-capable Pakistan with uranium possessing hopefuls such as Iran and Libya. Still want to wait and see ten years down the road?