



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.

August 20, 2004

No. 118

Nuclear proliferation

Iran threatens US with preemptive strike

AFP, August, 19 Iranian Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani warned today that Iran might launch a pre-emptive strike against US forces in the region to prevent an attack on its nuclear facilities. "We will not sit (with arms folded) to wait for what others will do to us. Some military commanders in Iran are convinced that preventive operations which the Americans talk about are not their monopoly," Shamkhani told Al-Jazeera TV when asked if Iran would respond to an American attack on its nuclear facilities.



"America is not the only one present in the region. We are also present, from Khost to Kandahar in Afghanistan; we are present in the Gulf and we can be present in Iraq," said Shamkhani, speaking in Farsi to the Arabic-language news channel through an interpreter.

"The US military presence (in Iraq) will not become an element of strength (for Washington) at our expense. The opposite is true, because their forces would turn into a hostage" in Iranian hands in the event of an attack, he said. Shamkhani, who was asked about the possibility of an American or Israeli strike against Iran's atomic power plant in Bushehr, added: "We will consider any strike against our nuclear installations as an attack on Iran as a whole, and we will retaliate with all our strength. "Where Israel is concerned, we have no doubt that it is an evil entity, and it will not be able to launch any military operation without an American green light. You cannot separate the two." A commander of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards was quoted in the Iranian press earlier today as saying that Tehran would strike the Israeli reactor at Dimona if Israel attacks the Islamic republic's own burgeoning nuclear facilities. "If Israel fires one missile at Bushehr atomic power plant, it should permanently forget about Dimona nuclear centre, where it produces and keeps its nuclear weapons, and Israel would be responsible for the terrifying consequence of this move," General Mohammad Baqer Zolqadr warned.....

Israel's reactor will be destroyed if it attacks Iran's

The Associated Press, Aug. 18, Tehran - Accompanied by a warning that its missiles have the range, Iran on Tuesday said it would destroy Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor if the Jewish state were to attack Iran's nuclear facilities. "If Israel fires a missile into the Bushehr nuclear power plant, it has to say goodbye forever to its Dimona nuclear facility, where it produces and stockpiles nuclear weapons," the deputy chief of the elite Revolutionary Guards, Brig. Gen. Mohammad Baqer Zolqadr, said in a statement. Bushehr, a coastal town on the Persian Gulf, is the site of Iran's first nuclear reactor. Built with Russian assistance, it's due to come online in 2005.



US: Iran Says Can Have Nuclear Weapons in 3 Years

Reuters, Aug 19, WASHINGTON - A senior U.S. official said on Thursday Iran has conceded to European powers it could build nuclear weapons in three years as Washington turned up the heat on Tehran to abandon what it says is a drive to acquire them...."Iran has told the EU three (Britain, Germany and France) that it could possess nuclear weapons within three years," U.S. Under Secretary of State John Bolton told Reuters. "The Iranian assertion gives the lie to the public contention that their nuclear program is entirely civil and peaceful in purpose."....U.S. officials with access to intelligence estimates say Iran can achieve a bomb in three to five years...."We do not believe that anyone will be dissuaded by these thinly veiled Iranian threats, made by Iran in an effort to avoid being reported to the U.N. Security Council," Bolton said.



Mullahs may get uranium from S. Africa

Ha'aretz, Aug. 18 - Iran and South Africa signed a memorandum of understanding on Tuesday on bilateral cooperation. The deal paves the way for the two countries to expand trade ties, and may include South Africa selling uranium to Tehran. The memorandum was signed by South African Defense Minister Mosiuoa Lekota and his Iranian counterpart Rear-Admiral Ali Shamkhani. This was the first such visit by a South African defense minister to Tehran since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee urges to "Get very tough with Iran"

UPI, Aug 15, 2004. WASHINGTON - chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee urged the United States Sunday to get "very tough" to prevent Iran from making a nuclear bomb. "We're going to have to get very tough" said Sen. Dick Lugar, R-Ind., when asked how to prevent Iran from making nuclear weapons. Iran denies working a nuclear-weapons project, but says it will continue its program to enrich uranium to produce electric power. The United States rejects the Iranian argument, saying an oil-rich country such as Iran does not need nuclear technology to produce electricity. In an interview with Fox News Sunday, Lugar said: "The Iranians are moving toward weaponization of the uranium experiment that they have. And they've been clearly doing this. I suspect to begin with economic sanctions on Iran ... but not ruling out at the end of the day military sanctions against Iran." Asked would the United States support a preemptive strike, such as Israel's against Iraq in 1981, to end Iran's nuclear program, Lugar said, "I'm not going to speculate for a moment on a preemptive strike or any specific action."

World Worried About Iran Nuclear Aims" says Rumsfeld in Azerbaijan

AFP, August 12, BAKU - Iran's nuclear ambitions remain a major worry for the world amid fears that states possessing weapons of mass destruction might cooperate with terrorist organizations, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said here Thursday. Speaking to reporters after talks with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Rumsfeld noted that Iran had been on a list of countries that the United States describes as terrorist states for many years. "One of the gravest concerns the world faces is the nexus between a terrorist state that has weapons of mass destruction and terrorist networks," he said. "So it's understandable that nations, not just in this region but throughout the world, are so deeply concerned about what's taking place in Iran." Rumsfeld said he had discussed his concern over Iran's nuclear program with Aliyev, who recently hosted a visit by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami. The Iranian leader told reporters in Tehran on Wednesday that his country had made "a lot of progress" in developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and "will not seek permission from anyone" to continue its program. Rumsfeld's comments came at the end of a

brief visit here during which he thanked the Azeris for providing troops to US-led coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan.....

Meddling in Iraq

Tehran aims to prolong its own rule by sponsoring Sadr

Asharq Al-Awsat daily, Aug. 17 – Moqtada Sadr became bold after visiting Iran...

The rule of clerics (in Iran) faces a lethal crisis and they are trying to find a way out, similar to the Iran-Iraq war which prolonged the lives of both regimes...

Iran's rulers found what they sought for creating unrest and chaos in Iraq under the acceptable yet deceitful slogan of freeing Iraq from US Forces, in Moqtada Sadr...

Presently, the Iranian government's only asset is in increasing its presence, that means preventing construction in Iraq and destabilizing its security.

Iran can see opportunity across border

USA TODAY, Aug 17 By Barbara Slavin- Iran's increasing support for insurgent Shiites in Iraq is giving the fighting in Najaf the appearance of a proxy war between Iran and the United States, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Iran denies charges by Iraqi officials that it is interfering in Iraq but has protested U.S. efforts to remove the forces of rebel cleric Muqtada al-Sadr from Shiite Muslim shrines. Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi urged the United Nations to intervene to stop the fighting. "Americans once again made a grave blunder in calculating developments in Iraq and provoked the sentiments of the Iraqi people through resorting to the use of force," Kharrazi told U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, according to Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency. U.S. officials say that for most of the year, they have been watching with alarm a buildup of Iranian spies and militants in Iraq. "We are aware that the Iranians have been engaged in some activities in southern Iraq," White House spokesman Sean McCormack said Monday. "We have encouraged Iraq's neighbors to engage in constructive activities that help Iraq on its pathway to development." Iran, the largest Shiite Muslim nation, sees an opportunity to extend its influence in Iraq, where Shiites are also a majority, and to undermine the Bush administration, which has called Iran part of an "axis of evil." Washington is trying to rally international opinion to force Iran to give up its nuclear program. The fighting in Najaf, a city revered by Shiites, could also help Iran's Islamic government increase its popularity in Iran. "There's been a more aggressive Iranian pursuit of all options in Iraq," says Judith Yaphe, a Middle East expert at the National Defense University in Washington and a former analyst for the CIA who monitors developments in Iraq and Iran. "They are helping a number of elements within Iraq," including al-Sadr's Mahdi Army, she says. Hazem Shalan al-Khuzaei, Iraq's interim defense minister, accused Iran last month of being Iraq's "No. 1 enemy" and trying to "kill democracy" in Iraq by sending spies and weapons into the country. Last week, Iraqi security officials arrested more than two dozen Iranians in the southern Iraqi town of Kut and said they intercepted two trucks filled with weapons on the Iran-Iraq border last Wednesday. Iran has had close ties to southern Iraq because Shiites predominate in both places. But Saddam Hussein, a Sunni Muslim, launched an eight-year war against Iraq in 1980 and suppressed Iranian influence in Iraq until his overthrow last year. Since then, tens of thousands of Iranians have entered Iraq claiming to be religious pilgrims. An unknown number have remained. Iran has retained ties to the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, an anti-Saddam group that was based in Iran until Saddam's ouster. Iran also has links to the Dawa or Islamic Call party, another important Iraqi Shiite group, and to Ahmad Chalabi, a Shiite exile leader who has fallen out of favor with the Bush administration over allegations that he provided U.S. intelligence information to Iran. Iran has established clinics and schools in Iraq as part of a campaign of economic aid that competes with U.S. assistance. Juan Cole, a Middle East historian at the University of Michigan, says Iran is "behaving like a Washington lobbyist who gives money to all the major candidates" to ensure that whoever emerges in power in Iraq is not hostile to Iran's leaders. Iran's hopes of seeing a friendly government

installed in Baghdad have been shaken by the selection of Ayad Allawi as Iraq's first post-Saddam prime minister. Allawi, although Shiite, is a former member of Saddam's Baath Party, and has backers in the Sunni Muslim countries of Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Allawi was based in Jordan in the 1990s and organized the Iraqi National Accord, an anti-Saddam group, with the financial support of the CIA. "The Iranians are very afraid that the United States will find a way to maneuver an anti-Iranian government into power," Cole says. He says the Iranians fear elections will not be held or that Allawi will shut out pro-Iranian factions.

Allawi to warn Iran on interference in Iraq – Iraqi Interior Minister

Al-Jazeera Television, Aug. 16 – Iraq's interior minister, Fallah Naqib, said: "The recent developments are a conspiracy and a war against Iraq by a foreign country. The incidents Iraq is witnessing, including in Najaf, are conducted according to a plan and with the briefing of an administration with high capabilities. We have arrested a number of Libyans, Afghans and Iranians who were suspected of involvement in terrorist acts." In answer to a question on Iran's role in Iraq, he said: "Yes, the Iranians have infiltrated here, very much. Allawi will raise this issue with the government of that country."

Videotape reveals Iranian interference

Al-Iraqia Television, Aug. 15, Iraq – In a press conference, Va'el Abdul-Latif, minister advisor in provincial affairs, stressed that elements who have named themselves supporters of Muqtada Sadr and intend to cause tension and create crisis in Iraqi cities, as well as many (others), including a number of Iranians and Afghans, have been arrested. He stressed that the government will no longer accept any armed individuals or groups and will counter them. He said, "We have a videotape that is telling of this situation." The videotape showed a number of those arrested, including a 39-year-old Iranian who claimed to be from Mashad. Large numbers of light and medium weight weapons and ammunition with Farsi brands were also visible in the footage.

Sistani to Iran: Leave Iraqi people alone

Al-Etjah ol-Akher, Aug. 14 – Khamenei's representative –who is in charge of the Revolutionary Guards' Qods Garrison and the Information office of Palestine, the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Iraqi affairs office named Nasr–asked Sistani if there was anything he could provide for him. Sistani told him: "Tell the Iranian authorities and officials that the only thing that we need is for them to stop meddling in Iraqi affairs and leave the Iraqi people alone. We will be happy then!" The Iranian authorities had suggested taking Sistani to Iran for treatment but he did not accept.



Rift grows as Iranians caught fighting for Sadr

Guardian, August 13, Baghdad - Security officials in Baghdad were last night urgently investigating the background of 30 Iranians who were caught fighting for a rebel Shia cleric in Iraq, amid mounting concern over the involvement of the Tehran regime in the uprising. The Guardian has learned that the most senior members of the Iraqi government were briefed about the capture of the men yesterday, and also told of other evidence that fighters and equipment have been crossing the border from Iran. The 30 men were captured in the southern city of Kut on Wednesday and officials are trying to establish whether they have any links to Tehran. "We are checking their identities but if they are found to have links to the Iranians then that would be tantamount to a declaration of war by them," said a senior Iraqi source, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The source said members of Iraq's national security committee had yesterday been presented "with revealing information about the extent of Iranian involvement in Iraqi affairs", which was being taken seriously at the "highest echelons of government". There was increasing frustration "at our neighbour's apparent indifference to cross-border security, despite promises of cooperation". The source said two trucks laden with weapons destined for the fighters of the militant cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr, had been stopped at the Iranian border on Wednesday night. Sabbah Kaddim, a senior adviser at the ministry of the interior, declined to confirm the seizure of the two trucks

or the arrest of the Iranians. But he confirmed "there were a number of non-Iraqi elements" captured in Kut. He added: "There has been a continuous stream of vehicles over the last few weeks trying to ferry arms across the border from Iran. "We catch some, others must get through. The trouble is knowing who exactly is behind all this." The violence between US and Iraqi forces and Mr Sadr's supporters has destabilised Shia areas of the capital and several cities across southern Iraq where Iranian influence is at its strongest... Relations between Iran and Iraq, who fought a ruinous war from 1980-88, have plummeted in recent weeks... Foreign diplomatic observers in Baghdad have been alarmed by the "stoking up of tension" between the two neighbours. One senior diplomat said the Iranians were pursuing their activities in Iraq "more aggressively than three months ago, and they were hardly passive then".... One Iraqi diplomat, a former member of the Iraqi opposition who took part in the postwar planning, said: "You know we didn't misread the reaction of the Shia in postwar Iraq, as many analysts have suggested; our big failing was to misread the reaction from our neighbours. They really don't want to give us a chance."

Export terrorism

Inside the Zarqawi network

Weekly Standard, Aug. 16, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Jonathan Schanzer, Soref Fellow - A memo acquired by the

Washington Institute for Near East Policy from Iraqi intelligence sources... provides a first glimpse into the configuration of Zarqawi's Iraqi network, which may be more dangerous than previously imagined. The memo, "Structure of Tawhid and Jihad Islamic Group," details several days of recent interrogations of one of Zarqawi's captured lieutenants. Umar Baziyani, Zarqawi's number four, a member of the Tawhid legislative council, and the "emir" of Baghdad, was captured by U.S. forces in late May 2004. The account of his confessions details the hierarchal structure of Zarqawi's group, its ties to Syria and Iran.... Baziyani explained to his interrogators that the Zarqawi network received a great deal of assistance from Iran. One Tawhid and Jihad militant, Othman, was reportedly responsible for transferring former Ansar al Islam fighters and other jihadis back and forth from Iran to Baghdad once the U.S. occupation was underway. In other words, Iran has been involved in supplying fighters to tangle with U.S. soldiers. This should come as no surprise, given the 9/11 Commission's recent report that Iran was a transit state for 9/11 plotters. Looking back, Sunni-Shia enmity has never been a concern for Iran when it comes to providing logistics to al Qaeda, or even supporting Sunni groups such as Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza. Iran, it is also worth noting, provided assistance to the Sunni and Kurdish Ansar al Islam on the eve of the 2003 U.S. invasion. Tehran allowed Ansar fighters to cross the border to escape the U.S. assault. According to several Ansar prisoners, Iran allowed fighters to remain there, and then later helped them back into Iraq to join the insurgency.



Jonathan Schanzer is a Soref Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and author of the forthcoming Al-Qaeda's Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups and the Next Generation of Terror.

International front against Islamic fundamentalism

PMOI's legal status

Az-Zaman daily, Aug. 17, by Lawyer Aftayyah Khan Ali Al-Ani – The United States decided to declare members of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran in Iraq "protected persons under the 4th Geneva Convention".... Beside all this, the PMOI in Iraq is not a terrorist organization, it is an opposition organization to the regime ruling Iran since 1965 based on democratic principles. It is still an opposition organization loyal to those principles... and is dedicated to a democratic system on the basis of the principles of Islamic law. This issue distances the organization from the connotation of "terrorist" according to their publications

in the press and their publicity across the world. It does this in such a way that they have acquired a clear international status in the world community. Are political opposition groups to ruling regimes terrorist organizations?! The 1949 Geneva Convention rules this out. Therefore, the legal status of the PMOI in Iraq is a clear and correct position.

Deteriorating conditions of human rights

35 arrested in sit-in of political prisoners' families

[Voice of America, Aug. 17](#) - A number of political activists and members of the Democratic Front of Iran were arrested and suppressed outside of the UN office in Tehran. The father of Dr. Farzad Hamidi (political prisoner), Mr. Taqi Hamidi: "It was exactly 4:15 and we were 50 meters away from the United Nations office when two Intelligence agents came in front of us and said we did not have the right to move... Almost 35 people were arrested."



Political prisoners, students kept in horrible conditions

[Rouydad Website, Aug. 17](#) – An informed source told the Rouydad reporter on August 16 that there is a large number of political activists and students in Rajaii Shahr Prison. According to this source, these prisoners are kept together with ordinary prisoners in an unpleasant situation. There is no information concerning the names of this prisoners.

Man sentenced to 5 times hanging in public

[Iran daily, Aug. 15 – Shahroodi](#), head of the Judiciary confirmed the sentence of five times hanging in public of a man in Tehran. This man's name is Alireza.



Hunger strike in prison

[Voice of America TV, Aug. 15](#) – There has been a few scattered hunger strikes including (the hunger strike of) a person named Massouri and another person from the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran. They have been in prison in an undetermined state for years. But until now, the regime has not paid attention to the prisoners' demands in the sense that hundreds of people are in an undetermined state in prison and the judicial system's conduct is distressing.