



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.

September 24, 2004

No. 123

Iran's Nuclear Threat

Khatami says Iran will pursue nuclear project no matter what



AP Sep 21, TEHRAN - President Mohammad Khatami said yesterday Iran will continue its nuclear development even to the point of ending inspections by the U.N. nuclear agency.

"We've made our choice: yes to peaceful nuclear technology, no to atomic weapons," Khatami told a military parade in Tehran. "We will continue along our path even if it leads to an end to international supervision" of our nuclear activities, Khatami said. The U.N. watchdog, International Atomic Energy Agency, has demanded that Iran freeze uranium enrichment and answer all questions about its nuclear activities within two months. Failure to do so could lead to the IAEA's passing Iran's nuclear file to the U.N. Security Council, which could impose sanctions on the country. "They have to explicitly recognize our natural and legal right (to peaceful nuclear energy) to open the way for greater understanding and cooperation," Khatami said. "We've made our choice. Now it is up to others to make their choice," he added.

Iranian officials have rebuked the IAEA for demanding that Iran cease enrichment, a process that can produce fuel for both nuclear power stations and nuclear weapons.

Key Iranian official lashes out EU Big Three over nuclear projects

DPA, September 21- TEHERAN - In the harshest reaction so far made on the latest resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Iran's nuclear projects, a senior conservative Iranian official on Tuesday called on a revised approach towards the European Union's Big Three - Germany, France and Britain. "Those who are familiar with the history and diplomacy of these countries would never count on their promises and commitments," Ali-Akbar Velayati, the foreign policy advisor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was quoted by the news agency IRNA as saying.



Velayati was referring to Saturday's IAEA resolution, backed by France, Britain and Germany, which backed the resolution, calling on Iran to disclose all details of its nuclear programme by 25 November and back-pedal on its announced decision to restart uranium enrichment activities. "Those who might have forgotten the Europeans political conduct should have finally come to their senses and adopt now a more realistic approach," said Velayati, referring to President Mohammad Khatami's government which had put a lot of hope in the E.U. for confronting harsh measures by the United States. The conservative official accused the three EU member states of hypocrisy and a big lie when they promised Teheran last October with a complete nuclear fuel cycle but eventually decided to please Washington instead. "Resorting to pretexts such as Iran's military nuclear power threat is just an effort to paralyze all our activities and they would not cease such efforts until erasing us from the scene," the former foreign minister said. Velayati, also a potential presidential candidate in next year's elections, said that the US, Israel and the EU were all worried over Iran becoming a regional and even international power. "But if a nation aims at reaching scientific and technological perfection

and embracing high standards in national advancement, there would be expenses it has to accept," he said. Also President Khatami on Monday accused the EU three of depriving independent countries like Iran from technological development. So far Iran has not said clearly whether it will suspend uranium enrichment but just termed the IAEA demand as illegal and beyond the jurisdiction of the United Nations nuclear watchdog.

Iran says that the suspension of uranium enrichment should be raised during political discussions on a voluntary basis and not as an ultimatum in an official UN document or resolution. The Islamic state, however, reiterated its warning that in case the nuclear dossier was referred to the UN Security Council for probable sanctions, Iran would even withdraw from the international nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Time to deal with Mullahs in Iran

It's Iran More Than Iraq

Christian Science Monitor, September 23 Editorial- Two years from now, during either a Kerry or Bush presidency, Iran will probably be much more of a security issue for the United States than Iraq. Yet the campaigns of the two presidential candidates remain focused on Iraq, even though their approaches for stabilizing Iraq are far less different from their solutions for preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons. On Tuesday, Iran announced it would go full steam ahead and make the precursor materials that could be used to produce atomic bombs. Its Muslim leaders defied a warning on Saturday from the 35-nation board of the International Atomic Energy Agency that they not enrich nearly 40 tons of raw uranium into weapons-grade uranium.

The converted uranium could be used for either peaceful nuclear power or for bombs. Under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran has a right to produce such material. But the IAEA says Iran won't need such fuel for 10 years. And it found out last year that Iran broke its treaty obligations by secretly running an enrichment program and clandestinely buying nuclear technology and know-how. IAEA inspectors were purposely fooled - and could be fooled again.

The agency's board also warned Iran it might refer the issue to the UN Security Council in November for possible sanctions. Adding to this tension was Wednesday's news that the US is selling 4,500 smart bombs to Israel, where some officials warn of strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities if the Islamic republic appears close to making an atomic weapon. John Kerry says he would open talks with Iran on a host of issues, and offer to supply Iran with peaceful nuclear power if it gave up any intentions or abilities to produce nuclear weapons. President Clinton tried that approach with North Korea, but the deal failed when the North was caught resuming its weapons production. President Bush tried to engage Iran but gave up last May and is now seeking a confrontational approach, although he has let Britain, Germany, and France take the lead on negotiations. Mr. Kerry has said Iran is a bigger issue than Iraq. And he's been more upfront in clearly distinguishing his stance on Iran than he has been on Iraq. Perhaps he should return to the issue and again offer a clear choice to voters, who have as much stake in whether Iraq can become peaceful and democratic as they do in whether Iran, a supporter of terrorism, has nuclear weapons.

Exporting terrorism and Meddling in Iraq

Clerical body calls for 'Islamic' Iraq

The Washington Times **THE WASHINGTON TIMES, September 21-** Iran's Assembly of Experts, the body of powerful Muslim clerics that chooses the country's supreme leader, opened its 12th session Sunday calling for an Islamic republic in Iraq. In his opening speech, the assembly's speaker, Ayatollah Ali Meshkini, urged Iraqi leaders to unite to expel foreign troops in Iraq and establish a government based on the principles of Islam similar to the one in Iran, according to reports in the Tehran Times

yesterday. The Iraqi leadership must "expel the occupiers and establish an Islamic government," the ayatollah said. He also said that the United States and Britain were responsible for "the ruthless massacre of the Iraqi people and must be punished by a competent court." The export of Iran's Islamic fundamentalist revolution, which was led by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, has been a goal of the mullahs in Tehran since they forced Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi into exile in 1979. The United States, as a counterweight to Iran's radical Islamic theocracy, supported the secular Ba'athist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein through the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. It broke with Saddam after his invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The United States still views an emerging democratic Iraq as a counterbalance to Islamic radicalism in the region. In an interview at The Washington Times last week, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said Iran was "providing support" to the insurgents in Iraq, but it was not clear to what extent. He also emphasized that most of the insurgency in Iraq was "self-generating" and homegrown. "I don't think there's any doubt that the Iranians are involved and are providing support. How much and how influential their support is, I can't be sure, and it's hard to get a good read on it," Mr. Powell said. "There is a practical limit to how much influence the Iranian [Shi'ites] will ever have on the Iraqi [Shi'ites]," he said. Michael O'Hanlon, an Iran specialist at the Brookings Institution, said yesterday's declaration in Tehran could "backfire" in Iraq. "Iraqis do not want to be seen as pawns of Iran," Mr. O'Hanlon said. "If Iran pushes too much, that is likely to turn Iraqis off, even if they are [Shi'ites] and share some of the same goals." Mr. O'Hanlon said Iraqis, who are Arab, very nationalistic, but majority Shi'ite, carry some resentment that historically Iraq was the center of Shi'ite scholarship, but that Iranians, who are Persian, have usurped that position in Muslim intellectual circles.

"We need to be vigilant, but there is a natural law here that pushes Iraq and Iran apart, the more Iran tries to meddle," he said. Michael Ledeen, at the American Enterprise Institute, has been a critic of Iran's government and the goals of the mullahs for years. "They have wanted an Islamic republic next door all along," Mr. Ledeen said yesterday. Asked whether in trying to attain that goal, Iran was supporting the insurgency in Iraq, he answered, "yes," but added that no one knows the extent of the support. "They believe that if there is a successful, stable democratic government in Iraq, they are doomed. ... They will go to any length to ensure their survival."

Deteriorating conditions of human rights

Gender segregation in school transport

Iran Focus, September 23- Tehran, Sep. 23 – As millions of school children headed back to school at the beginning of the new academic year, government officials in Iran announced new measures aimed at further segregation of boys and girls. School transport authorities across the country have been instructed to allocate separate buses for boys and girls. Davoud Shabani, head of public transport in Karaj, announced that school buses will operate "for approximately 40 minutes on 55 routes in the suburbs of Karaj after schools close." "Girls and boys will be taken on separate buses," he said. Thousands of teenage boys and girls have been arrested over the summer holidays for taking part in mix-sex parties. Some have been flogged in public.

Iranian woman wants only to be beaten once a week



Reuters Sep 22- TEHRAN - An Iranian woman, beaten every day by her husband, asked a court to tell him only to beat her once a week, a newspaper said on Wednesday. Maryam, the middle-age woman, said she did not want to divorce her husband because she loved him, the Aftab-e yazd daily said. "Just tell him to beat me once a week ... Beating is part of his nature and he cannot stop it," Maryam told the court. The Tehran court found the man guilty and

banned him from beating the wife, the paper said. "If I do not beat her, she will not be scared enough to obey me," the husband said.

More executions in Iran



AFP, Sep 22- TEHRAN -- An Iranian convicted of murdering his wife and two daughters has been hanged in a prison in the northern city of Qazvin, while an Afghan convicted of kidnapping was executed in the southeastern city of Zahedan, reports said Wednesday. In Qazvin, an unidentified man had reportedly confessed to having killed his wife four years ago with a blow to the head following an argument. He then took his two daughters out of the city and killed them. After being found not to be insane, he was sentenced to three years imprisonment for murdering his daughters and death for murdering his wife. The execution was carried out on Tuesday. In Zahedan, an Afghan identified as Obaidullah Noorzehi was hanged in public on Wednesday, state television reported. He had been convicted of abduction and anti-security acts, and was declared to be "corrupt on earth". Murder, armed robbery, rape, apostasy and serious drug trafficking are all punishable by death in Iran. According to reports in Iran's main newspapers and other media monitored by AFP, at least 68 people have been executed in Iran since January 1. Amnesty International reported at least 108 executions took place in 2003 and 113 in 2002.

Man's fingers amputated: Iran Judiciary

Iran Focus , September 17- Tehran, Sep. 17 - The head of the public relations office of prisons in Hamedan province (western Iran) announced today that the local Department of Justice had amputated the fingers of a burglar. The man had allegedly stolen from 15 different stores. The sentence was carried out near the central Hamedan prison in the presence of Justice Department officials, the security personnel and the Revolutionary Guards. The Iranian regime routinely carries out a variety of inhuman sentences, including limb amputations, eye gouging and stoning to death. Four men were reportedly stoned to death on charges of adultery last year.

Feature

The 1988 Iran massacre: crimes against humanity

The American Thinker, September 22- September 1st is recognized by Amnesty International as the "International Day in Remembrance of the Massacre of Political Prisoners" in light of the massacre of political prisoners in Iran in 1988. In the span of several months, thousands of political prisoners in what is now known as "The 1988 Iran massacre" were brutally murdered. Iranians, including former political prisoners like me, along with many international law experts, believe that this heinous atrocity, one of the most under-reported political mass killings of our times, qualifies the current Iranian leadership as perpetrators of crimes against humanity.

* * *

The roots of the 1988 Massacre go back to the early years of the mullahs' rule when the newly established theocracy began to crackdown on the democratic opposition forces. Soon after the 1979 revolution, the paramilitary forces and state-sponsored fanatic vigilantes regularly attacked political rallies and the offices and publishing houses of opposition groups. Many newspapers were shut down, and Friday prayer sermons became a place to spew out venomous invective against any voice calling for the fulfillment of the promises of democracy and freedom, branding the opposition groups as "hypocrites," "anti-Islam," and "pro-American."

By the early 1981, there was nothing left of the republicanism of the "Islamic Republic." The theocracy was in full swing, and Iran was suffocating under the weight of another dictatorship, this time under the cloak of religion. On June 20 1981, in a major public display of peaceful dissent, nationwide demonstrations organized by the vast network of Iran's main opposition group, the Mujahedeen-e Khlaq organization (MEK), brought several million people

to streets of Iran's main cities. In Tehran alone, half a million people converged in the capital's main thoroughfares, chanting slogans against the regime and demanding political freedoms.

Under direct orders of the criminal Ayatollah Khomeini, the regime's forces moved to crush the march. In addition to machine guns, knives, clubs, cutters, and acid were the weapons of choice for the attackers. Women were particularly brutalized. Many had their faces slashed or burnt by acid. In many intersections, security forces used tear gas and even opened fire on peaceful demonstrators. I was among the protestors in a provincial capital south of Tehran. Right in front of my eyes one of the mullahs' agents stabbed a female protestor in the chest. Another female protester's face was repeatedly slashed with a cutter. A few yards away, several agents were beating two teenage girls to death. I came very close to losing one eye when I was hit by a rock. On that day, hundreds of men and women were killed and wounded on the scene. The next day, the summary trials began. Firing squads were formed and gallows were erected. Khomeini had realized that without an all-out suppression of political dissent, the next nationwide demonstration could possibly bring his regime down. I was arrested in 1982 at the age of 14, on the charge of distributing opposition newspapers and speaking in public against the dictatorship. During my years in prison, I witnessed the execution and torture of hundreds of prisoners, majority of them Muslims and supporters and members of Iran's main opposition group, the Mujahedeen-e Khalq (MEK). Many were my schoolmates and childhood friends.

The growing arrival of new prisoners had forced us to take turns sleeping and sitting. But that was the least of our sufferings. More than the pain of daily lashings and beating we had to endure, the defiant cries of other prisoners under torture tormented us. The stench of infection caused by deep torture wounds was everywhere. Seeing friends saying farewell before their execution and shouting "Down with Khomeini, long live freedom," with fists raised as they walked to the gallows, had become a part of our daily routine.

* * *

Still, the executions and torture were not the only reality of our lives there. Resistance against the clerical regime continued even in the torture chambers. Despite the ever-present watchful eyes of the guards, prisoners sent accounts of the tortures they endured out to the opposition groups. They formed resistance cells in the prison to help other prisoners, particularly the newcomers, to resist the prison conditions and torture sessions, and help out those in dire need of medical attention. Meanwhile, many former political prisoners, with extensive torture marks on their bodies, had made their way out of prison - and eventually Iran - with the help of resistance groups. Worldwide press conferences were held by international human rights organizations and Iranian opposition groups, in which these torture victims told the world about their experience. The international community gradually began to realize the extent of horror behind mullahs' torture chambers. As a result of these revelations, and pressured by the families of political prisoners, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights began to push Iran to allow its representatives visit the prisons. Obviously, the mullahs had a major problem on their hand: their prisons were filled with tens of thousands of unrepentant political prisoners whom the regime had no intention of releasing. They were a living testament to the clerics' barbarism and inhumanity. Allowing free access of the UN to these dungeons and these prisoners was also out of the question. The murderous patriarch Khomeini came up with a solution: Massacre them all. On July 16th 1988, Khomeini had reluctantly accepted a ceasefire in the war with Iraq, describing it as "drinking the chalice of poison." Without the pretext of war to hide behind, and with his health declining fast, Khomeini became more determined to crush the resistance and eliminate every defiant political prisoner. In a shocking fatwa in summer of 1988, Khomeini ordered the following:

"Those who are in prisons throughout the country and remain committed to their support for the [Mujahedeen], are waging war on God and are condemned to execution.... Destroy the enemies of Islam immediately. As regards the cases, use whichever criterion that speeds up the implementation of the [execution] verdict."

A special body, known to political prisoners as the "Death Commission," carried out the fatwa. During kangaroo hearings, prisoners were asked about their ideological and political allegiances. If there were even a slight hint of sympathy with the opposition, particularly the

MEK, the prisoner was sent for execution. The state-run daily *Iran News* on April 9, 2000, referring to the massacre, wrote that "Officials were astonished to see that these prisoners were still insisting on fighting the state and supporting the Mujahedeen." According to testimony of Kamal Afkhami Ardekani, a former prison official in the notorious Evin prison, for most of July and August of 1988, prisoners, including juveniles, were loaded on three forklift trucks and lifted to six cranes and hanged from the cranes in groups of five or six at a time in half-hourly intervals from 7:30 am to 5 pm every day uninterrupted. Within several months, tens of thousands of political prisoners, some having completed their prison terms, were executed. A close friend of mine, Sussan Khoshboee, was among the victims. She was in her teens at the time of her arrest on the charge of handing out MEK leaflets. She was executed along with her sister Sahar. The scale of massacre was so horrifying that Khomeini's designated successor, Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, complained to his mentor in a July 1988 letter:

"... Executions of individuals who have already been sentenced by courts to a lesser sentence, without any precedent and without any new activities [by them], disregard all judicial standards and verdicts... As you presumably will insist on your decree, at least order that women not be executed, especially pregnant women. Ultimately, the execution of several thousand people in several days will not have positive repercussions and is not without mistakes."

The exact number of the victims is not known, given the swiftness and secrecy with which the inhuman fatwa was carried out. Estimates range from several thousand to 30,000. Montazeri's reference to the execution of "several thousand people in several days" confirms the higher estimates. Dr. Donna M. Hughes, an authority on women's human rights and Islamic Fundamentalism, recently told a FrontPage Magazine Symposium on Iran that, *"If one can measure the strength of fundamentalists by the depth to which they suppress women, then maybe one can also measure the strength of a resistance movement by how much the fundamentalists' hate it."* This is so true in understanding the mullahs' atrocities toward the MEK. Although the clerical regime treated all defiant prisoners with brutality, the exceptional hatred of the tyrant mullahs for the MEK was on full display in our prison cells. In the eyes of the mullahs, we were told in the prison, the Mujahedeen were the ideological and political antithesis of their theocratic rule. Thus, these dissidents were condemned for "waging war on God" and subjected to the mullahs' unimaginable savagery

* * *

By any measure, the massacre of 1988 constitutes a crime against humanity. Many officials presently holding senior posts in the government of Iran were actively involved in conducting this hideous crime, and they must be brought to justice. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, then the mullahs' president and currently the supreme leader, tops the list. Khamenei was present in the meeting of regime's most-trusted top officials where Khomeini ordered the massacre. As the highest ranking executive authority in 1988, Khamenei authorized unlimited governmental resources to be used in implementing Khomeini's edict. Late 1988, in a radio interview, he defended the massacre and said:

"Do you think we should give sweets to a prisoner who has connections with the activities of the Mujahedeen? If his connection with that group is revealed, what should we do to him? He is condemned to execution and we will execute him."

Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, then Speaker of Parliament, and Acting Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, also is on the list. He was present in the infamous meeting with Khomeini. As Acting Commander in Chief and the regime's de facto Number Two after Khomeini, Rafsanjani oversaw the enforcement of Khomeini's edict and reported to him on the progress of the massacre. Several years earlier he had said:

"God's law prescribes four punishments for them (the Mujahedeen). 1- Kill them. 2-Hang them, 3- Cut off their hands and feet 4-Banish them. If we had killed two hundred of them right after the Revolution, their numbers would not have grown this big. I repeat that according to the Quran, we are determined to destroy all [Mujahedeen] who display enmity against Islam."

The mullahs' current president Mohammed Khatami also participated in the meeting during which Khomeini discussed his decision for the massacre. As state-run daily Ressalat has reported:

"This edict was issued and enforced when Mr. Khatami was Director of Cultural Affairs at the Armed Forces General Command and he resolutely defended His Holiness the Imam's decision."

Another state-run daily *Gozaresh*, dated April 9, 2000, reported:

"The Arya daily was closed down on the explicit, personal order of President Khatami... after it carried a story about the massacre of political prisoners in 1988."

About a dozen former officials, many of them still holding official positions, must be added to this list. They include individuals such as Ali Younessi, first deputy to the Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces, and religious judge in 1988, who has been Minister of Intelligence in Khatami's cabinet since 1999. Then there is Seyyed Hossein Mortazavi, Governor of Evin Prison in 1988, who sat on the "death committee" during its sessions in that prison.

Mortazavi is currently the infamous Tehran Prosecutor, implicated in the murder under torture of Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi. The list should also include Morteza Eshraghi, Tehran Prosecutor and chair of the death committee in Tehran. Also, Jaafar Nayyeri, presiding Judge of Revolutionary Tribunal in Tehran and Chairman of the central "death committee" in Tehran. Another implicated party is Mostafa Pourmohammadi, then Deputy Minister of Intelligence and member of the "death committee" in Tehran. And the list also must include Mohammad Moussavi Khoehi, the Chief Revolutionary Prosecutor in 1988 and the leader of the "Students Following the Line of the Imam" who held American diplomats in Tehran hostage in 1979.

* * *

With the 1988 massacre, the mullahs sought to extinguish the flames of resistance against their tyranny. They have not succeeded, but their reign of terror continues. At home, the mullahs murder, torture, rape and maim to silence dissent. Abroad, they offer lucrative deals to their trade partners, or threaten them with terrorism, to coerce them into blacklisting opposition groups. We should not be an unwitting accomplice to Tehran's efforts. Conversely, we must lift all diplomatic or political restrictions from the anti-fundamentalist opposition groups to enable them to fight the mullahs on equal footing. According to human rights organizations, MEK members comprised the vast majority of those massacred in 1988. The State Department has also acknowledged that the MEK members and sympathizers have been the main victims of Iran's brutality. Yet, in a goodwill gesture to the mullahs in 1997, The same U.S. State Department blacklisted the MEK. For 16 months after the war in Iraq, the United States and law enforcement agencies interviewed the MEK members at their main Camp, Ashraf, in Iraq. Senior U.S. administration officials told the *New York Times* in July, *"The United States has found no basis to charge members of an Iranian opposition group in Iraq [the MEK] with violations of American law."* The State Department also confirmed that the dissident group was not a belligerent during the Iraq war. In light of these findings, the pressing realities in the post-war Iraq and the mullahs' rogue behavior, in recent weeks many former senior American officials and policy experts have called on our Administration to take a second look at this designation of MEK, and remove this anti-fundamentalist group from the terror list. Their call must be heeded since it is in the recognition of the same spirit of resistance for which tens of thousands of Iranians gave their lives in the summer of 1988.

Roya Johnson is the Vice president of the US Alliance for Democratic Iran, and a former political prisoner in Iran