



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.

December 17, 2004

No. 134



Friends of a Free Iran

Maryam Rajavi at European Parliament

Call for abandoning appeasement, removal of terror tag on PMOI

December 15, 2004

On the invitation of Friends of a Free Iran, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, the Iranian Resistance's President-elect, visited the European Parliament and spoke to many MEPs from different parliamentary groups and their assistants.

At 11:45 am, Mrs. Rajavi was received by Mr. Alejo Vidal-Quadras Roca, first vice president of the European Parliament and Messrs Mr. Paulo Casaca and Struan Stevenson, co-presidents of Friends of a Free Iran. She met with a number of MEPs in Mr. Vidal-Quadras' office.

Mrs. Rajavi and the accompanying delegation sat in the VIP section, where the EP's plenary session was being held.

At 14:00, Mrs. Rajavi spoke at a meeting, entitled, "Iran's future, oppression or democracy," held at room N 1.4 in the Parliament. Over 150 people attended the meeting, including a number of European legislators, such as the Rt. Hon. Lord Slynn of Hadley and Morten Høglund, member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Norwegian Parliament.

In her speech, Mrs. Rajavi said, "The theocracy ruling Iran has reached new frontiers in abusing human rights at home and - by virtue of increasing meddling in Iraq and pursuit of nuclear weapons - has emerged as the greatest challenge to the international community. Responding to this challenge is vital not only for our people but for global peace and tranquility. Tehran's mullahs and those with vested interests in the status quo argue that any serious change requires intervention and a foreign war and, therefore, there is no alternative but appeasement. Today, however, I have come to say that there is a third option: Change by the Iranian people and the Iranian Resistance. If the obstacles created by outside forces are removed, the Iranian people and Resistance have the capability and the readiness to realize this change. This would be the only way to prevent another war."

Mrs. Rajavi added, "European appeasement provided ample opportunity to the mullahs to inch closer to the nuclear bomb. The Tehran agreement last year between the EU-3 foreign ministers and the mullahs was violated. Nuclear programs continued. WMD-capable missiles have Eastern and Southern Europe within range and could reach Western Europe if not stopped."

In conclusion of her speech, Mrs. Rajavi said,

1. The existence of the clerical regime is entwined with suppression and the export of terrorism and fundamentalism. It cannot retreat from any of them.

2. By installing a puppet Islamic regime in Iraq, the mullahs seek to play the role of the hegemon in the Islamic world.

3. The mullahs are secretly continuing their nuclear weapons project in breach of their commitments.

4. Bringing an end to this tyranny by the Iranian people and resistance is within reach. The policy of appeasement emboldens the clerical regime to continue its policies, and would ultimately impose a war on Western countries.

5. The terror label against the PMOI lacks legal credibility and was part of a deal with the mullahs. It is a political obstacle to change in Iran by the Iranian people and resistance. Removing this unjust label is necessary for change and the creation of democratic Iran.

6. The clerical regime is an impediment to the realization of peace and tranquility in the region and especially in Iraq. A regime change in Iran and the establishment of freedom and popular sovereignty in that country is key to peace, stability and coexistence in our region.

Paulo Casaca & Struan Stevenson
Co Presidents of the Friends of a Free Iran
European Parliament

Nuclear proliferation

Iran Exile Leader Accuses EU of Appeasing Tehran



December 15, STRASBOURG, France - An exiled Iranian opposition leader accused European Union states on Wednesday of appeasing Tehran and urged them to support regime change in Iran. Maryam Rajavi, the self-styled president-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, the political wing of the People's Mujahideen guerrilla movement, was speaking at a private meeting in the European Parliament. "European appeasement provided ample opportunity to the mullahs to inch closer to the nuclear bomb," she said, referring to Iran's clerical rulers. Rajavi was speaking two days after the foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana opened talks with Iran on a long-term agreement on nuclear, economic and security cooperation after Tehran agreed to suspend uranium enrichment activities which could help it make an atom bomb. Both the United States and the EU consider the People's Mujahideen to be a terrorist organization. Rajavi urged the EU to remove the group from its list of outlawed terrorism organizations, since it was an obstacle to political change in Iran. Rajavi was hosted by Alejo Vidal-Quadras, a vice-president of the European Parliament, and two MEPs who co-chair a group called Friends of a Free Iran, Paulo Casaca of Italy and Struan Stevenson of Britain.



Iranian opposition leader urges EU policy change on Iran



BRUSSELS, Belgium December 15 -The leader of an Iranian exile group on Wednesday criticized the European Union's decision to negotiate a long-term agreement with Tehran on stopping its alleged nuclear weapons program, saying it would not deter Iranian authorities. Speaking to EU lawmakers at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, Maryam Rajavi, co-leader of the exile People's Mujahideen, said Iran's "clerical regime ... poses the greatest challenge to the international community."

Rajavi said the negotiations, launched earlier this week by Britain, Germany and France, were a "European appeasement (which) provided ample opportunity to the mullahs to inch closer to the nuclear bomb."

The EU has offered Iran aid to build up its civilian energy program and a trade deal in return for a definitive commitment that it abandon its alleged weapons program.

Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Hassan Rowhani, said he was confident a deal could be reached which would go a long way to addressing fears in the West that Tehran was developing nuclear weapons.

Rajavi urged the EU to change its policy on Iran, saying "constructive engagement and human rights dialogue will not change anything," and urged the 25-nation bloc to take the People's Mujahedeen off the EU terrorist list.

The People's Mujahedeen has been based in France shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution toppled Iran's shah.

The group insists it is a peaceful umbrella movement of exiled opponents of the Iranian regime, and calls itself the National Council of Resistance of Iran.

A total of 16 people, including Rajavi, were put under investigation last year before being a Paris appeals court ordered their release.

Top French counterterrorism judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere opened an investigation into possible terrorist links by the group in 2001.

The group, however, has garnered strong backing from numerous EU lawmakers and members of the United States Congress, who all want the group to be taken off the terrorist lists.

Rowhani says will quit nuclear talks, if no progress made

AFP, Dec. 12, Tehran - Iran's top nuclear negotiator Hassan Rowhani warned Sunday that the Islamic Republic would abandon key talks with the European Union on its nuclear programme if it was clear no progress was being made....

"The end of these three months of negotiations will indicate to us which point we have reached," added the cleric. Tehran not planned for permanent freeze

AFP, Dec. 12, Tehran - Iran said on the eve of crucial talks with Britain, France and Germany that it was not prepared to accept a permanent freeze of its controversial nuclear fuel work. "The permanent suspension of enrichment is not on our agenda. A short-term freeze is what we are stressing," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters.



Tehran to resume enrichment "definitely" after 3 months

Jam-e Jam Television, Dec. 11 - Agha-Mohammadi, head of the Supreme National Security Council's information committee, said, "Based on what we agreed upon in Paris, suspension is only for a three-month period and then we will evaluate the progress made. As I said, however, we are not going to allow others drag (the suspension) from months to years. If they cancel this basis, in fact the agreement is cancelled in whole... If an agreement is not reached through talks, Iran's decision to resume its work and to restart enrichment is definite."

Powell urges close eye on Iranian nuclear activities

AFP, Dec. 9, Washington - US Secretary of State Colin Powell said Thursday that the international community must keep a close eye on Iran's nuclear activities to ensure it does not violate a hard-won deal to suspend uranium enrichment. He told French television that while the United States accepted the accord struck by Iran and the European Union, it would not drop its guard. "We are concerned it is only a suspension and a suspension can be revoked," he said on France 3 television in an interview from Brussels. "And so we believe Iran has been moving toward the development of a nuclear weapon, and that concerns us." ...



"Now we have a new agreement with the European Union," he said. "That's all well and good. But we should never take our eye off this problem." In separate remarks in Brussels on the sidelines of a NATO meeting, Powell said he hoped international pressure would oblige Iran to make its suspension permanent. "I hope... the spotlight and heat lamp that have been put on Iran will make it difficult for them to move forward with this programme. "Hopefully they'll come to the realisation that the international community will do everything to keep such a programme from achieving a level of success, meaning the development of a nuclear weapon," he told a news conference.

Support of terrorism

Iranian diplomat charged in Egypt

AFP, Dec. 7, Cairo - Egypt said on Tuesday it has charged an Iranian diplomat and an Egyptian national over a plot to assassinate an unidentified public figure. Egyptian Mahmud Aid Dabbus is accused of being paid 50,000 dollars by Iran's Revolutionary Guards to kill the unnamed target and of spying for the Islamic republic, charges that carry a possible 25-year prison term. Dabbus was also accused of providing Iran with details on a petrochemical facility at the Saudi port of Yanbu.

Meddling In Iraq

Forging election tickets

Al-Sabah daily, Dec. 12 – Abdol Razaq Habib Dabis, resident of Kirkuk who currently works as director of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq office in Souq Sheikhs regions has taken to Iran a large number of election tickets that the High Commissioner on Elections had not distributed. He has distributed these forms with other cards such as IDs and birth certificates among families who were previously in Iran and are affiliated with the SCIRI and Badr Corps...Other unidentified groups collect a considerable number of election tickets then tell the locals that there have been mistakes in the tickets and they will soon be corrected and returned. But they take them and never return.

Operations to take over Iraqi elections

Al-Manar Al-Yawm daily, Dec. 11 – Why are the agencies of some Iraqi parties involved in importing and distributing drugs and fatal diseases for Iraqis? Some of them have begun to buy election tickets from citizens for 100 to 300 dollars. Don't these people intend to distance citizens from elections then share the results of the elections in a clear scam?

The source of all insulting treatment of Iraqis is entirely the neighboring countries, especially the regime ruling Iran which does not spend a moment without interfering in Iraqi affairs and harassing Iraqis.

Iran's attempt to influence Iraqi elections clear to US – Erel

U.S. Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, Dec. 8 - Question: The King of Jordan is suggesting that Iran is taking a rather avid interest in the election to the point where he suggests send hundreds of thousands of people across the border as possible voters. Is that something the United States has observed or has any observation about? Adam Erel, Deputy Spokesman: It's fairly clear to us that Iran is attempting to exercise influence in Iraq on a number of fronts in a number of ways, without getting into specific numbers and activities, et cetera, et cetera. That's, I guess, a level of specificity I just can't confirm. But clearly, there is a concern on our part about Iran's intentions and Iran's activities as they relate to Iraq's internal affairs and those include interference in the electoral process.... I would also point out that on November 23rd, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Iran signed on to the final communiqué, which committed those states to supporting democracy, to supporting stability and supporting territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Iraq. So you can't have it both ways.

White House says Iran, Syria should not meddle in Iraq

AFP, Dec. 8, Washington - The White House on Wednesday urged Iran and Syria not to meddle in Iraq's January polls, following accusations that Iran was interfering with the electoral process and that Syria was sheltering insurgents. "We've made it very clear that Iran needs to play a constructive and helpful role in Iraq. That's what they need to do," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said. "They know what our views are." McClellan said Syria and Iran signed a communiqué at a conference on Iraq held in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh late last month... "They were signatories to the communiqué coming out of Sharm el-Sheikh saying that they would act responsibly and live up to the commitments made in that communiqué," McClellan said. "And that's what we expect to happen."

Tehran pouring a lot of money, people into election campaign in Iraq

The Washington Post, Dec. 8 - The leaders of Iraq and Jordan warned yesterday that Iran is trying to influence the Iraqi elections scheduled for Jan. 30 to create an Islamic government that would dramatically shift the geopolitical balance between Shiite and Sunni Muslims in the Middle East. Iraqi President Ghazi Yawar charged that Iran is coaching candidates and political parties sympathetic to Tehran and pouring "huge amounts of money" into the campaign to produce a Shiite-dominated government similar to Iran's. Jordanian King Abdullah said that more than 1 million Iranians have crossed the 910-mile border into Iraq, many to vote in the election --



with the encouragement of the Iranian government. "I'm sure there's a lot of people, a lot of Iranians in there that will be used as part of the polls to influence the outcome," he said in an interview. The king also charged that Iranians are paying salaries and providing welfare to unemployed Iraqis to build pro-Iranian public sentiment. Some Iranians, he added, have been trained by Iran's Revolutionary Guards and are members of militias that could fuel trouble in Iraq after the election. "It is in Iran's vested interest to have an Islamic republic of Iraq...and therefore the involvement you're getting by the Iranians is to achieve a government that is very pro-Iran," Abdullah said. If pro-Iran parties or politicians dominate the new Iraqi government, he said, a new "crescent" of dominant Shiite movements or governments stretching from Iran into Iraq, Syria and Lebanon could emerge, alter the traditional balance of power between the two main Islamic sects and pose new challenges to U.S. interests and allies. "If Iraq goes Islamic republic, then, yes, we've opened ourselves to a whole set of new problems that will not be limited to the borders of Iraq. I'm looking at the glass half-full, and let's hope that's not the case. But strategic planners around the world have got to be aware that is a possibility," Abdullah added.... "Unfortunately, time is proving, and the situation is proving, beyond any doubt that Iran has very obvious interference in our business -- a lot of money, a lot of intelligence activities and almost interfering daily in business and many [provincial] governates, especially in the southeast side of Iraq," Yawar said in an interview with Washington Post editors and reporters.

Deteriorating conditions of human rights

8-year-old sentenced to death

Sharq daily, Dec. 12 – An 18-year-old boy named Bahram was sentenced to death by Judge Nurollah Aziz Mohammadi.

43 carton-sleepers died on Tehran streets

Khorassan daily, Dec. 11 – Forty-three people who sleep on cartons in Tehran's streets have died due to cold weather in the past 21 days.

4,000 girls spend nights on Tehran streets

Radio Farda, Dec. 11 – Every night in Tehran, 4,000 girls spend the night on the streets and most of them become victims of violence. The head of Iran's Social Charity Society says, "Official sources have announced this figure and yet the actual number of girls who sleep on the streets is not known." Dr. Mostafa Eqlima said the most important cause of girls running away from home is poverty.

Over a million children live under poverty line

ISNA, Dec. 11 – The representative of the United Nations children's fund in Iran announced: "500,000 and over one million Iranian children live under the one dollar and two dollar per day poverty line respectively."

Women's activist arrested in Iran after being deported from Canada



Vancouver Sun, Dec. 10 -- An Iranian woman deported from Vancouver was arrested within minutes of her return to Tehran, but was released after spending many hours in detention. Haleh Sahba, 30, now faces charges of leaving Iran illegally.

Sahba lived in the Vancouver area for three years after fleeing her home country, where she had been jailed for defending women's rights. She told Immigration Canada that she feared for her life if she was forced to return to Iran, but was refused refugee status and deported on Tuesday. Sahba's family has now sent letters to every MLA in the province asking for their support to win her return to Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Iranian asylum seekers begin hunger strike in Australian detention centre

AFP, Dec. 8, Australia - Six Iranians held at an outback immigration detention centre north of here have begun a hunger strike, some with their lips sewn together, in an attempt to have their plea for asylum reviewed, officials said Wednesday. The six are members of a group of 70 Iranian men who have been held, some for years, at the Baxter detention centre, near Port August in South Australia after their applications for refuge were turned down by Australian authorities. In a statement published on a refugee advocates' website they said their protest was a "desperate plea to draw the attention of the Australian people to our situation."

Iran's judiciary arrests three cultural officials

Reuters, Dec. 9, Tehran - Iran's judiciary has arrested three cultural officials for organising a festival containing a brief display of dancing by a male and female theatre group, the government-run Iran newspaper reported on Thursday. One hardline newspaper said the festival in the southern city of Ahvaz contained "obscene and repulsive scenes of lewdness and ethical violations in the guise of art."... Festival organiser Alireza Ajang, head of the Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry in southern Khuzestan province, and two of his colleagues were arrested on charges of "encouraging immorality". The three were later released on \$19,500 bail... Deputy Culture Minister Mohammad Haqshenas said the incident had been blown out of proportion. "The whole festival should not be questioned due to three minutes out of an Armenian group's 70-minute performance," Iran newspaper quoted him as saying. But the hardline Kayhan newspaper in, an editorial, called for the officials to be sacked. "The dancing of women in revealing gowns under the light of strong projectors, the mixed dancing of men and women, and other ugly scenes ... were just some of the scandalous incidents of that day," the paper said.

Teenager to be executed

Reuters, Dec. 7, Tehran, Feature - Instead of celebrating his 18th birthday at home with friends and family this month, Ali Torabi will be wondering if it will be his last year. Torabi is one of at least 12 juvenile offenders sentenced to death by Iran's hard line courts and held in detention centers until they are deemed old enough to be executed without attracting international criticism, human rights activists say. Although it is a signatory of U.N. conventions which forbid the execution of young offenders, Iran continues to sentence them to death and carry out the verdict when they reach 18. "Ali is my only son, my life. I want to see him grow old. He is too young to die," sobbed his father, Mohammad Torabi.

Seven more executed in public

AFP, Dec. 7 -- Seven drug traffickers have been hanged publicly in a park in the south-eastern Iranian city of Zahedan, the Kayhan evening newspaper reported. It said the men had been found guilty of involvement in international narcotics trafficking and attacks on security forces. They were hanged in Zahedan's Laleh Park. Zahedan, the capital of Sistan-Baluchestan province, is close to Iran's border with Afghanistan and Pakistan and on one of the main international heroin smuggling routes. At least 94 people have been executed in Iran this year, according to reports in Iran's main newspaper. Amnesty International has reported that at least 108 executions took place in 2003 and 113 in 2002.

Feature

US to back Iranian dissidents seeking regime change

Knight Ridder, Dec. 7, Washington -- As 150,000 U.S. troops battle to stabilize Iraq, some officials in the Bush administration are already planning to turn up the heat on another member of the president's axis of evil. Officials in the White House and the Defense Department are

developing plans to increase public criticism of Iran's human rights record, offer stronger backing to exiles and other opponents of Tehran's repressive theocratic government and collect better intelligence on Iran, according to U.S. officials, congressional aides and others. Iran has embarked on a nuclear program that some specialists fear cannot be prevented from producing an atom bomb; is trying to extend its influence in Iraq and remains a prime sponsor of Hezbollah and other international terrorist groups. U.S. intelligence officials also believe some top lieutenants of Osama bin Laden have sought refuge in Iran. However, with the U.S. military now stretched thin by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the new campaign may be intended not to build support for military action against Iran, but to pressure Iran to change its behavior so military action isn't necessary. It's far from clear, however, whether a more aggressive U.S. campaign to condemn the Iranian regime and court pro-Western forces would have any effect. The major Iranian opposition group, the Iraq-based Mujahedeen Khalq (MEK), remains on the State Department's list of foreign terrorist groups, but it's provided much of the intelligence about Iran's weapons programs. The new, more aggressive tack is said to have the backing of secretary of state-designate Condoleezza Rice, Bush's national security adviser. Among the steps under consideration, the officials said, are stronger public condemnations of Iran's human rights practices and treatment of women; increased U.S. broadcasting into the country; and financial backing for pro-Western groups. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they aren't authorized spokesmen and, in some cases, because final decisions haven't been made. Rice previewed some of the ideas during a White House meeting last week with leaders of major Jewish-American groups, according to one individual who was present and others who were briefed on the session. "We have to do more to help the human rights community and the dissidents inside Iran," Rice told the group, according to one participant's notes of the meeting, which also focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. An administration official, asked about Rice's reported comments, said they reflected a "heightened attempt" to expose Iran's behavior. "We're trying to make plain for the international community the strategic challenge that Iran poses," he said... The administration was never able to agree on an Iran policy during Bush's first term. The State Department favored engagement and international action, while officials in the Defense Department and Vice President Cheney's office proposed backing the MEK and considering military action against Iran's nuclear facilities. How to handle Iran is now shaping up as a major foreign policy issue for Bush's second term. But with the bulk of U.S. combat divisions tied down in neighboring Iraq, the president appears to have no good military options against Iran, which is almost four times larger than Iraq and has nearly three times its neighbor's population... However, top Bush administration officials are now hinting that the White House is eager to start withdrawing troops from Iraq by the middle of next year. One rationale, a senior administration official said, is to give the president greater flexibility in dealing with Iran. Calls for supporting Iranian dissidents have been fueled by an accelerating takeover of the country's institutions by conservative clerics...The Bush administration also is considering adding Iran to a broader U.S.-backed program to promote democracy in the region, known as the Middle East Partnership Initiative....



FRONTPAGEMAG.COM

The Mullahs' Killing Fields

[December 14, 2004](#)

A former political prisoner and the daughter of two slain parents vowed to make sure the voices of Iranians who have suffered under the Islamic fundamentalist regime heard. The two women said they stand by other activists who continue to be arrested, tortured, and executed in Iran for supporting freedom and democracy.

On the occasion of International Human Rights Day (Friday, December 10), the torture and execution of political prisoners in Iran was the focus of a briefing in New York hosted by the non-governmental organization Women's Freedom Forum. The treatment of women, especially women political activists, was featured.

The walls of the room were lined with documentary posters with names and photographs of men, women, and children who had been killed by the mullahs in Iran. A number of the photographs were family groups – mother, father, and two, three, four, five, even six children - that had been killed by the Iranian regime for their political activism.

The program included videos and photographs of trials, lashings and executions over the past 25 years. Some images were from the early days of the revolution, some from the late 1980s, and one photograph showing the hanging of a group of seven men in Zahedan just three days before the event on December 7, 2004.

The victims are hoisted into the air by a crane in a public place in order to terrorize the population and suppress further resistance to the regime. Another Iranian-American pro-democracy non-governmental organization -The Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran-sends out news clippings on a regular basis that document the executions of men, women, and sometimes children, as the Iranian regime executes minors. There are often two or three pages of listings of sentences and executions. Their most recent report for November 2004 listed 15 executions or sentences for execution. A number of them are punishment for political activity against the regime inside and outside Iran.....

At the briefing, Farangis, a former political prisoner described her experience and treatment by Revolutionary Guards in three different prisons. She was born in 1959 in the southwestern Iranian city of Masjid Suleiman in Khuzistan province. She became a political activist after the revolution when she saw the nature of the regime that Khomeini was constructing. She now lives in the U.S. with her family.....

The event concluded with Hajar, an 18 year old woman, whose father, a medical student, was killed by the Iranian regime when she was two years old and whose mother was killed by the Iranian regime when she was eight years old, saying that although she was a student with exams next week, she needed to be at the event to make sure the voices of her parents are heard. She did not want them to die in vain. She ended by quoting the lyrics of song by Marzieh, one of the most famous singers from Iran, who supports the overthrow of the mullahs' regime in Iran....

*If I take a stand
And you take a stand
Then everyone will stand with us
But if I sit and you sit
Who will stand?
We have to speak
And we have to speak of the pain
We need the world to know what is going on in Iran
That it is wrong and something needs to be done.*

Donna M. Hughes, Professor & Carlson Endowed Chair in Women's Studies at the University of Rhode Island.