



IRAN TODAY & TOMORROW

WEEKLY NEWS BULLETIN

The Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran (CSRI), a 501(c)(3), non-profit and independent group, is committed to advance change in Iran through an internationally monitored referendum as the only peaceful means to bring democracy and establish a secular and representative government in Iran.

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Nuclear proliferation

Iran still producing uranium metal

Associated Press, Dec. 22, Vienna -- Iran is still converting uranium in a process that can be used to make nuclear weapons as it exploits a loophole in a recent deal it made to freeze such activities, diplomats said Tuesday. The diplomats told The Associated Press that Tehran is still turning tons of raw uranium into uranium metal and has said it would continue to do so until February. The metal is a precursor of uranium hexafluoride -- a substance that can then be used to produce weapons-grade uranium....The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency agreed to police the agreement and has placed seals on feed points at Iran's enrichment plant at Isfahan, meant to prevent new material from being introduced into the facilities. Speaking on condition of anonymity, a senior diplomat familiar with Iran's nuclear dossier said those seals remained in place Tuesday, meaning Iran was only converting raw "yellowcake" uranium already in the pipeline into uranium metal. Introducing new material into the plant is banned under the freeze. But the diplomat said that Tehran's activity was allowed under the terms of the agreement reached between the Europeans and Tehran, which permits Iran to process all of the 37 tons of yellowcake that was already being converted when the deal was struck into a "stable state." Much of those 37 tons was in the form of a liquid, and the immediate next step would be to turn it into the more "stable state" of uranium metal, said the diplomat. "All of it was already in the pipeline," he said....Nuclear experts say that when fully processed, the 37 tons of yellowcake can theoretically yield more than 200 pounds of weapons-grade uranium, enough to make five crude nuclear weapons. The issue of enrichment is extremely sensitive as the international community tries to determine if Iran is using its nuclear program for peaceful purposes only, as Tehran insists, or trying to make weapons.



We will defend nuclear facilities with all our might – military chief

Iran daily, Dec. 22 – Major General Mohammad Salimi, commander general of the Islamic Republic of Iran's army said, "Right now we are protecting the nuclear facilities with all our power, including ground forces, anti-aircraft equipment, tactical radars, command stations, guards and moving vehicle and on-foot guards. Attacking these facilities will not be easy." Major General Salimi also downplayed the importance of reports about foreign forces practicing attacks on models similar to Iran's nuclear power plant. He stressed, "Reaching the destinations and carrying out the plans will not be easy for the enemy. The Air Force has been ordered to protect the air space of nuclear facilities with all its might."

Moussavian: Nuclear fuel cycle to be preserved despite Security Council referral

Iran daily, Dec. 22 – Seyyed Hossein Moussavian, chair of the foreign policy committee of the Supreme National Security Council said, "The administration's decision is to keep the fuel cycle even if it is at the cost of being referred to the Security Council. The other pest is whether the US will or will refuse to negotiate. If the Americans want to oppose the Europeans' procedure, they will create problems for us because Europe's guarantees cannot be put into practice without US consent."... He added, "The board of governors can never deprive Iran of the fuel cycle."

Iran readies uranium for nuke enrichment – diplomats

Reuters, Dec. 21, Vienna - Iran will continue preparing raw "yellowcake" uranium for enrichment, a process that can be used to make nuclear weapons, until the end of February, despite a recent pledge to freeze all such activity, diplomats said. "The Iranians have decided to continue UF4 (uranium tetrafluoride) production until the end of February," a diplomat told Reuters....When Iran made the suspension pledge to the EU big three last month, it agreed not to convert any uranium that was not already inside the conversion facility. However, Tehran changed its plan and decided that none of the 37 tonnes of uranium would be left in raw yellowcake form, the diplomats said. "This goes beyond the agreement to only convert what was absolutely necessary," one diplomat said.

Tehran taking advantage of loophole in agreement with Europe

Reuters, Dec. 21, Vienna - Iran's decision to keep preparing raw uranium for enrichment, a step on the way to making nuclear weapons, breaks the spirit though not the letter of its pledge to freeze all such activity, diplomats said on Tuesday.

Under a deal Iran reached with three EU nations to freeze all enrichment activity as of Nov. 22, preparing "yellowcake" uranium for enrichment is strictly prohibited. But the accord allowed Iran to finish some limited uranium conversion work that it had already begun before the suspension took effect. But Iran will now continue enrichment-related work until February, Western diplomats told Reuters. Continuing the work that long "would certainly violate the spirit of the agreement," a Western diplomat said. "Iran has a legal basis for doing it, but it will not inspire much confidence in them," another diplomat said. Iran's chief delegate to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency said separately that Iran would press ahead with its nuclear program. Western diplomats said this would include work broadly but not explicitly covered by last month's suspension accord. "The Iranians have decided to continue UF4 (uranium tetrafluoride) production until the end of February," one diplomat told Reuters. UF4 is a precursor to uranium hexafluoride (UF6), the gas that is fed into centrifuges which spin at supersonic speeds to purify it for use as fuel in civilian nuclear power plants or in atomic weapons. Two other diplomats confirmed the report. One said Iran appeared to be exploiting a loophole in the promise it made to France, Britain and Germany to freeze enrichment activity. "It shouldn't be a surprise to anyone," said one Western diplomat. Whenever there is a loophole in an agreement, the Iranians find it and use it to their advantage, he said... Earlier on Tuesday Hossein Mousavian, Iran's chief delegate to the IAEA, told the official IRNA news agency that it was natural for Iran to continue with its nuclear program.



Condemnation of human right abuse in Iran

Norwegian protest to Iran

The Norway Post, Dec. 21 - Norwegian Foreign Minister Jan Petersen has condemned the planned execution of the mentally retarded 19 year-old Leila M in Iran. Among other things, the girl has been accused of prostitution. Norway has sent a formal protest to Iran about the matter. A representative from the Iranian embassy in Oslo was on Monday summoned to the

Foreign Office to receive the Norwegian protest. Petersen says the planned execution is totally unacceptable.

U.N. condemns Iran human rights violations

AP, December 20, UNITED NATIONS -- The U.N. General Assembly on Monday approved a U.S.-backed resolution criticizing Iran for human rights violations, citing new restrictions on freedom of expression and the persecution of political and religious dissenters. The measure, which is not legally binding but reflects global opinion, was approved 71-54 with 55 abstentions. The world body said there is a "worsening situation" regarding freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of the media, "especially the increased persecution for the peaceful expression of political views, including arbitrary arrest and detention without charge or trial. "It cited "crackdowns by the judiciary and security forces against journalists, parliamentarians, students, clerics and academics; the unjustified closure of newspapers and blocking of Internet sites." It also criticized the disqualification of large numbers of candidates and harassment of opposition activists in the run-up to parliamentary elections in February. On a positive note, the General Assembly welcomed the Iranian government's invitation to some human rights investigators, a recommendation by the head of the judiciary that judges not propose stoning as a punishment, and the judiciary chief's announcement in April of a ban on torture. It urged Iran to abide by its human rights obligations and to fully implement the ban on torture, expedite judicial reform, eliminate religious discrimination, end cruel and degrading punishments such as amputation and flogging, eliminate stoning, and institute prison reforms. The resolution, which was co-sponsored by 34 countries, deplored Iran's execution of children under the age of 18 in violation of international statutes. It protested continued restrictions on free assembly and forcible dissolution of political parties, the absence of due process of law, and the use of national security laws to deny individual rights. It cited "the systemic discrimination against women and girls in law and in practice, despite some minor legislative improvements," the continuing discrimination against Christians, Jews and Sunnis, and the increasing discrimination against the Bahais.

EU urges Tehran to improve rights record, stop support for terrorism

AFP, Dec. 17, Brussels - EU leaders are ready to intensify their political and economic ties with Iran if Tehran allays concerns over terrorism and human rights, they said in a draft text Friday at a summit in Brussels.... Moreover, they "confirmed the Union's readiness to explore ways to further develop political and economic cooperation with Iran, following action by Iran to address other areas of concern," the draft text said. Those areas were "the fight against terrorism, human rights and Iran's approach to the Middle East peace process," it added.

Meddling In Iraq

Iranian meddling in Iraq

Boston Globe, Dec. 22, GLOBE EDITORIAL - When campaigning began for elections scheduled for Jan. 30 in Iraq, the first hot-button issue raised by Iraqi politicians was the specter of Iranian influence. US officials as well as Arab leaders are breaking no new ground when they warn in public about Iranian meddling in Iraq. They are fearful of Tehran for geopolitical reasons. They don't want Iranian-style theocracy to spread beyond Iran's borders... Campaigning for the new National Assembly alongside Prime Minister Iyad Allawi last Wednesday, Iraq's interim defense minister, Hazem Shaalan, suggested that parties represented on the electoral list of the United Iraqi Alliance -- a list compiled primarily by religious Shi'ites loyal to Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani -- might be soft on national security because they are in thrall to Tehran...The political spin of the minister's accusation shows that many people in Iraq harbor profound fears of Iranian influence. That fear has less to do with ethnic or sectarian animosity than with Tehran's political system. According to Shaalan, the Iranians "are fighting us because we want to build freedom and democracy and they want to build an Islamic dictatorship and have turbaned clerics to rule in Iraq."...

Ex-enemy Iran may be biggest winner in Iraqi poll

Daily Telegraph, Dec. 21 - Iraqi officials fear that the big winner from next month's historic election will be its powerful neighbour and former enemy, Iran... "There is a real concern that

the interference we are seeing from Iran at the moment is just the beginning, and that Baghdad could be slowly slipping into the orbit of Teheran," said Safa Rasul, chief of staff of Iraq's National Security Council...

In the Kurdish-controlled north officials say they have intercepted a steady stream of fighters from the terrorist group Ansar al-Islam, which they say Teheran has sheltered since the US-led invasion to topple Saddam. "Iran is continuing to work with Ansar," said one senior Kurdish official, who believed there were 1,500 members working in Iraq for the Ansar group, an affiliate of al-Qa'eda....

Privately, [US] officials concede that Iraq is likely to take "an Iranian turn" after the election, a notion unimaginable before the invasion, when neo-conservatives in Washington believed they could create the Middle East's first secular democracy. Now many grudgingly accept that the elections are likely to usher in an Islamic state.... Asked what level of influence Iran has over the parties, one western diplomat replied: "Vast. In the south of the country the whole idea of Iraqi nationalism has broken down. There's a strong sense of community with Iran."



41 Iranians arrested by Diyala police

Al-Iraqiya Television, Dec. 21 – Diyala's police chief announced that it has arrested 41 Iranians and Afghans who had entered Iraq from the Mandali border. He said most of them are Iranians and there are some Afghans among them.

Tehran meddles in Iraqi elections – Naqib

Radio Farda, Dec. 21 – Iraqi interior Minister Fallah Naqib accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of interfering in Iraq's elections and said, "Iran funds certain Iraqi Shiite groups so they would win in the country's elections." He added, "A group of Iranians have been able to obtain Iraqi ID papers so they can participate in Iraq's elections." He told Asharq Al-Awsat, "Iran hopes to direct the elections towards its own interests through these people."

Made-in-Iran bombs discovered in Baghdad hospital

Al-Iraqiya TV, Dec. 17 – An explosives' expert in Baghdad's Police Center in Masbah said they had neutralized two hand made bombs which had been made in Iran. The two bombs which had a wire connected to them had been planted in a room at a private hospital on Nedhal Ave.

US commander: Iran is long-term threat to Iraq

The Washington Post, Dec. 17 – "The Iranian government's influence on Iraq needs to be watched," [Gen. George W. Casey Jr., the U.S. commander in Iraq] said, but does not appear to pose a major problem in affecting next month's elections... "I don't see substantial Iranian influence on this particular government that will be elected in January," he said. "I see Iran as more of a longer-term threat to Iraqi security..."

Deteriorating conditions of human rights

Smugglers face death sentences

Iran Focus, Dec. 22, Tehran – Two antique smugglers had their death sentences upheld yesterday by an Islamic revolutionary court in the southern town of Jiroft...

Following the verdict, the cleric announced to "all thieves and smugglers nearby" that the courts in Jiroft will no longer tolerate their crimes and that they would face a similar fate to the two men if they did not abandon their practices.

Leila's sentence to be upheld

Radio Farda, Dec. 22 – Mohammad Hossien Pourian Mehr, a member of the Islamic Republic Judiciary system admitted that a young woman accused of prostitution has been sentenced to execution in a court in Iran. The member disproved of the woman's mental illness...

Leila Mafi, a very young Iranian woman, whose sentence to execution has been upheld today, suffers a mental age of eight. It is not clear how many other women suffer in the same way as Leila does and are awaiting executions.

Death sentence of three men

Iran daily, Dec. 20 – A man by the name of Mostafa has been sentenced to execution by the court in Mashhad province.

Woman to be stoned to death in the next five days

Amnesty International, Dec. 17 -- An Iranian woman charged with adultery faces death by stoning in the next five days after her death sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court last month. Her unnamed co-defendant is at risk of imminent execution by hanging... According to reports, Hajieh Esmailvand was sentenced to five years imprisonment, to be followed by execution by stoning, for adultery with an unnamed man who at the time was a 17 year old minor. Although the exact date of her arrest and trial are not known, it is reported that she has been imprisoned in the town of Jolfa, in the north west of Iran, since January 2000.

Feature

Iran: Judiciary Uses Coercion to Cover Up Torture

“If there are any credible charges against these journalists, the judiciary should hold fair trials instead of forcing them to appear on television and say their torturers treated them well.”

Joe Stork, Washington director of Human Rights Watch’s Middle East division

On National TV, Journalists Forced to Deny They Were Tortured

Human Right’s Watch, New York, December 20, 2004 The Iranian judiciary is using threats of lengthy prison sentences and coerced televised statements in an attempt to cover up its arbitrary detention and torture of internet journalists and civil society activists, Human Rights Watch said today. Since September, more than 20 internet journalists and civil society activists have been arrested and held in a secret detention center in Tehran. Most have since been released on bail. In a public letter to President Mohammed Khatami on December 10, the father of one of those detained, Ali Mazroi—who is also president of the Association of Iranian Journalists and a former member of parliament—implicated the judiciary in the torture and secret detention of the detainees. Immediately afterwards, the chief prosecutor of Tehran, Judge Saeed Mortazavi, filed charges against Mazroi for libel. On December 11, Mortazavi ordered the detention of three of the released detainees—Omid Memarian, Shahram Rafizadeh and Ruzbeh Mir Ebrahimi—as witnesses for the prosecution in the case. These three journalists and Javad Gholam Tamayomi, a journalist who has been in detention since October 18, were brought to Mortazavi’s office. Mortazavi threatened the four detainees with lengthy prison sentences if they did not deny Mazroi’s allegations. They were interrogated for three consecutive days for eight hours each day. On December 14, the four detainees were brought in front of a televised “press conference” arranged by Judge Mortazavi, and forced to deny that they had been subjected to solitary confinement, torture and ill-treatment during their earlier detention. That evening, Iran’s government-controlled television news broadcast videotapes that showed the four detainees saying that their jailors treated them as “gently as flowers.” “If there are any credible charges against these journalists, the judiciary should hold fair trials instead of forcing them to appear on television and say their torturers treated them well,” said Joe Stork, Washington director of Human Rights Watch’s Middle East division. Human Rights Watch has obtained detailed information about the torture and solitary confinement of the detainees at the secret detention center. The detainees had been kept at a secret location within one hour of central Tehran, where they were held in solitary confinement in small cells for up to three months. During the entire length of their detention they were subjected to torture—including beatings with electrical cables—and interrogations that lasted up to 11 hours at a stretch. The detainees were denied access to lawyers, and to medical care when they fell ill. They were allowed family visits rarely. They were often threatened with the arrest of family members and friends if they did not cooperate. Their mental stress had reportedly reached such a level that many detainees had become suicidal. The apparent purpose of this torture and mistreatment was to extract confessions that implicate reformist politicians and civil

society activists in activities such as spying and violating national security laws. The detainees were interrogated by the same person, an operative who uses the pseudonym "Keshavarz." The magistrate in charge of these detainees is known as "Mehdipoor." Both the interrogator and magistrate repeatedly delivered messages and threats to the detainees on behalf of Judge Mortazavi. "These detainees had been detained and tortured by secret squads apparently taking orders from Judge Mortazavi himself," Stork said. "Mortazavi obviously has a lot at stake in covering up his role in this affair." Human Rights Watch called on the Iranian government to investigate Judge Mortazavi's role in orchestrating the detention and torture of nonviolent journalists and activists and to end its campaign of repression against free speech.

Help people of Iran win democracy

Atlanta Journal Constitution *December 17, By HEDAYAT MOSTOWFI and MASOUD DOLATI*

On Nov. 15, Iran signed an agreement with France, Britain and Germany to suspend its uranium enrichment program. In return, Europe would provide Iran with a deuterium reactor, help Iran join the World Trade Organization, close Iran's nuclear investigation by the International Atomic Energy Association and, above all, treat Iran's main opposition as a terrorist organization and restrict its activities, to stabilize further the mullah's regime. Two days after this announcement, The New York Times reported the existence of a new secret uranium enrichment site in northern Tehran. The information came from the Iranian opposition group the National Council of Resistance of Iran. This sequence of events demonstrated that Iran would hardly keep its promises in the new deal. For the mullahs of Iran, the deal was only a desperate plan to skip referral to the U.N. Security Council. According to information released previously by the resistance council, the Iranian government has two parallel nuclear programs. One is run by civilian authorities and open to International Atomic Energy Association inspectors, the other is a secret program including various laboratories, and testing sites run by the Revolutionary Guards. These sites are located in military bases all over Iran, working continuously on a direct "fatwa" (order) by the supreme leader, Khamenei, to produce enough enriched uranium for making at least one atomic warhead in 2005. More than two decades of negotiations and appeasement by Western countries have resulted in worsening the human rights abuse in Iran and bolstering the mullahs in their terrorist ambitions. The insurgency in Iraq, fueled by Iran, is an obvious example. All Iran needs right now is more time to finish its nuclear weapons project and silence the Iranian opposition. Iran's nuclear case should be referred to the U.N. Security Council for economic and military sanctions. The power of Iranian people should be unleashed by removing the Iranian main opposition group, the People's Mojahedin, from the U.S. State Department's list of terrorist organizations. Iranians have been struggling against the mullahs' regime for 25 years. Similarly, the world has been subject to the brutality of Islamic fundamentalism emanating from Iran since 1979. Appeasement of Iran will exacerbate the suffering of the Iranian people and lead to a more turbulent region. It is time for a change toward a decisive policy toward Iran. Regime change for a secular and democratic state in Iran should be the focal point of this policy.

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