



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.

January 14, 2005

No. 138

Meddling In Iraq

Iran-backed groups arrested



Al-Arabiya television, Jan. 10 - Excerpts of press conference by PM Ayad Allawi: On relations with Iran, Allawi said, "There are some groups that are supported by Iran. We have arrested them and will soon publish their names." He also said, "We want things done legally not formally. As for the individuals that we arrested, we will put them on trial."

Insurgent leader was liaison between terrorists in Iraq and Iran

Dow Jones Newswires, Jan. 10, Baghdad -- Allawi said security forces had detained Mohammed Zangawin, described as a liaison between "terrorist organizations in Iraq and Iran." Another man who performed a similar role, Salman Abdullah el-Shiek, was also detained.

Diyala border police to take full control of borders - Diyala Police Chief

Al-Sabah Al-Jadid, Jan. 9, Iraq – Diyala Police Chief, Brigadier General Nazem Sharif Hamd, said the Diyala border police will take full control of the area in its mission. He said the Diyala Border Forces were successful in arresting more than 60,000 Iranians and Afghans who intended to infiltrate Iraqi territory last year and handed them over to Judicial officials and the police.

Pro-Tehran parties attempt to whitewash their bonds with mullahs



VOA, Jan. 9 - Dr. Sadr Javad Kondil, deputy chief of staff of SCIRI, says any government that is formed in Iraq will be different from the Islamic regime of Iran. He said, "No one, no political force, neither Mr. Abdul Aziz Hakim, nor the United Iraqi Alliance, want to form a Shiite government in Iraq. Even the Shiites do not want a Shiite government formed in Iraq. The government that is formed in Iraq will be completely different with Iran."

Powell worried about post-election Iraq

AFP, Jan. 9, Washington - US Secretary of State Colin Powell admitted Sunday he is worried about the future of Iraq but said the United States could consider its mission there accomplished once a representative government and an Iraqi security force are in place.



Asked if he was concerned about elections deepening the conflict in Iraq, Powell said: "I think we all are worried about what's going to happen after the elections. But the elections are a necessary next step."

The January 30 vote will neither end the insurgency nor heal divisions between Shiite and Sunni Muslims, but "those dangers don't go away by postponing or

putting off an election," Powell said, according to an advance transcript of an interview with ABC's "This Week" program.

Iran plays a role in Iraq vote

Los Angeles Times *The Los Angeles Times, Jan. 9, Baghdad* — As Iraq lurches toward elections this month, its neighbor Iran is emerging as one of the hottest campaign issues. Iraq's outspoken defense minister fired one of the first salvos last month, charging that the front-running slate, the Shiite Muslim-dominated United Iraqi Alliance, was controlled by Tehran and was determined to "build an Islamic dictatorship and have turbaned clerics rule in Iraq."... "It's both electioneering and there is a real concern. The debate is to what extent these [Iraqi political parties] truly are a fifth column for Iran," said a high-ranking Western diplomat in Baghdad, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Iran obviously has influence here. They have all sorts of people running around here doing all kinds of things, most of which we heartily disapprove of."... Interim Iraqi President Ghazi Ajil Yawer, a Sunni who is heading his own slate of candidates, raised the specter of a Shiite-dominated geopolitical "crescent" stretching from Iran through Iraq to Lebanon. Rival candidates, both Sunni and Shiite, claim that Iran is secretly pumping millions of dollars into the leading Iraqi Shiite parties. U.S. troops guarding the Iraqi border recently confiscated nearly \$200,000 reportedly being smuggled from Iran.... (Sheik Jamal Din, a Shiite cleric who is running against the alliance says,) "But everyone knows that the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq has been raised and nourished by the Iranians. They are 100% in the pockets of Iran."... In southern Iraq, links between Iran and the Shiite parties are undeniable. Supplies ranging from motorcycles to shortwave radios have been flowing across the border to help with election planning and preparation. Iranian intelligence officials openly roam the hallways at party offices and Persian is sometimes the preferred language. Pictures of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, hang on party office walls and even in government offices. On a recent visit to the offices of the Basra governor, interim Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi reportedly quipped, "Am I in Basra or Iran?"

Iraqi Intelligence arrested an Iranian spy network

Addustour daily, Jan. 9, Iraq -- An informed source in the Iraqi Intelligence said the agency's officers have arrested a network of spies that worked for the Iranian Intelligence Ministry in Iraq. This network carried out plans against Iraq and the People's Mojahedin Organization which enjoys a legal status. In the confessions of the members, which have been registered by the investigative judge, one by the name of Hassan Jom'eh has admitted that officers of the Iranian Intelligence Ministry assigned him to conduct espionage and gather intelligence in Iraq. These confessions follow those of an Iraqi named Nesh'at Al-Husseini, who said he was engaged in intelligence and espionage operations. Hassan Jom'eh has also confessed that he was supported and briefed by officers of the Iranian Intelligence Ministry who worked at the Iranian Embassy in Iraq. The names of these intelligence officers in the Iranian Embassy are Tavakolian and Hamdi. The source said members of this network who committed major crimes are detained.

Military unable to stop Iran influence in polls

Gulf Daily News, Jan. 8 - Iran-Iraq border: Security forces across Iraq are failing to stop Iranian involvement in the elections - handing Tehran a potentially decisive say over its neighbour's government. Military officials in Basra charged with policing the border say there is "no doubt" Iranians are illegally entering Iraq and trying to exert political influence. They also warn the "Iran factor" is now a key concern, alongside battling the insurgency. Colonel Juke Spolestra, the Dutch officer in charge of security sector reform in southern Iraq, said: "The Iranians will try whatever they can to influence the people over here. They want people like them to be elected". Others serving on the front lines were also adamant Iran was directly trying to push victory into the hands of extremist Shi'ite political parties. Captain Kevin Price, the top intelligence officer with the Duke of Wellington Regiment in Basra said: "Tehran has a vested interest in shaping the political environment". At Al Faw, a base used by the Welsh Cavalry on the Iran-Iraq border, Iraqi police



and British soldiers said they were unable to stop people crossing from Iran because Iraqi forces are still under-developed. In contrast, they said Iranian security services had a tight control of their own border but failed to exercise it. Lt Rob Coleridge said: "Frankly the border is very porous in our direction, and it's easy for anyone to cross from Iran into Iraq if someone in Iran decides side let them" "He reported that boats run by people smugglers, carrying up to 70 illegal passengers, were frequently crossing the Shat Al Arab waterway during the night. Lt Coleridge said: "This illegal crossing is of huge importance to the elections - this is a major concern. "If there are pilgrims, unfortunately there are also bound to be other types, including insurgents, fighters and extremists. "Our suspicions are that Iranian officials are coming across to influence the election. We need to find out who is coming across, why, and we need to put a stop to it. Reports of corrupt Iranian border guards are also a concern to us".



Iraq too can play eye for an eye

Al-Jazeera television, Jan. 8 – The Iraqi Defense Minister warned Iran and Syria that his country possesses means by which it that could transfer the violence on Baghdad streets to Tehran and Damascus. In a conference with journalists in Baghdad, Shaalan said that Baghdad has information that Iran and Syria back armed groups...

The Iraqi Defense Minister demanded that Iran and Syria refrain from interfering in Iraq's affairs because Iraq does not want conflict with them, or else according to his interpretation, it will be an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

Allawi: Neighboring regimes fear democratic Iraq



AFP, Jan. 8, Dubai - Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said in remarks published Saturday that he would use all available means to defend Iraqis against neighboring states harboring "terrorists."..."Some neighboring countries host terrorist elements that make plans to undermine (Iraqi) national security from inside these countries," Allawi said...

In the interview with Al-Bayan, Allawi charged that neighboring regimes feared a democratic Iraq would make it impossible for them to survive in office if their peoples demanded similar democracy.

He said his government wanted two things of its neighbors: "Control their borders with Iraq and prevent infiltration (of insurgents), and stop media mobilization campaigns ... whereby terrorism is called 'resistance'."

Iraqi militants met Khamenei and received financial support



The Associated Press, Jan. 7, Baghdad -- An Iraqi militant suspected of involvement in beheadings and other bloody attacks told Iraqi authorities that his group has links with Iran and Syria, according to a tape aired Friday by an Arabic TV station funded by the U.S. government.

Moayad Ahmed Yasseen, leader of Jaish Muhammad, which is Arabic for Muhammad's Army, was captured nearly two months ago in Fallujah, the former guerrilla stronghold west of Baghdad. Al-Hurra television, which has its headquarters in Washington, said the tape of his purported confession was made Dec. 24 and provided to the station by Iraq's Ministry of Defense... On the tape, Yasseen, a colonel in Saddam Hussein's army, said two other former Iraqi military officers belonging to his group were sent "to Iran in April or May, where they met a number of Iranian intelligence officials." He said they also met with Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. He said Iranian officials provided money, weapons "and, as far as I know, even car bombs" for Jaish Muhammad.

Iran causes disaster in Iraq

Al-Jazeera, Jan. 7 – Interview with the Iraqi Minister of Power, Ithem Sameraii: Q: Some Iraqi officials talk of Iran's infiltration and meddling, how can it be stopped and what are the forms of this infiltration?

Sameraii: "I believe the Iranian regime agents are everywhere. It is in their interest to drag the war into Iraq. They believe that if the US withdraws from the war in Iraq and leaves, it would be in their interest to have a political regime



like their own in Iraq. However, the Iranian regime must know that if Iraq is not stable, there would be no stability in Iran, either. When Iraq doesn't have stability, its sparks will hit Iran as well."

International front against fundamentalism

PMOI, genuine barrier against Islamic fundamentalist meddling in Iraq

Al-Safeer, Jan. 8, Iraq, Abdul Rahman Amer Al- Zaydi, Lawyer – In an article published by Al-Safeer, No. 122, December 20, Mr. Abbass Al- Maleki accused [the People's Mojahedin of Iran] of being involved in one of the National Guard's units and fighting against Iraqi people in Kurdistan and other Shiite cities. We are certain that Mr. Maleki's remarks are baseless and echo the charges made up by Iran's Intelligence Ministry, because this Organization has effectively created a barrier against Iran's rulers... Solidarity with (Iran's) legitimate resistance leads to the creation of a formidable barrier against infiltration of the religious fundamentalism in Iraq. The Multi-National Forces has recognized the organization as legitimate when it granted a status under the Fourth Geneva Convention. As for the Iraqi government, however, it is inhumane to hand over refugees to be executed in Iran. As Iraq is an independent country, it can accept any one on its soil and no other country has the right to interfere in its affairs. We don't know why some people turn a blind eye to the negative role Iran plays, while Iraqi officials are crying out loud to condemn Iran's role.

Nuclear proliferation

Tehran wants uranium enrichment in March

Reuters, Jan. 10, Tehran - Iran may resume uranium enrichment -- which can be used to make atomic bombs -- in March if talks with the European Union fail to yield satisfactory progress, a senior Iranian security official said Monday. Even if the talks go well, Hossein Mousavian told Reuters Tehran was only prepared to extend until June the enrichment freeze it began in late November in an effort to disprove U.S. accusations it is seeking nuclear weapons. "The outcome of the talks will have a great impact on Iran's decision," said Mousavian, a member of Iran's nuclear negotiating team with the EU and head of the foreign policy committee on the Supreme National Security Council.

"If the talks end without any result, March itself could be the date for resuming enrichment."...



Tehran denies permitting probe of military site

AFP, Jan. 9, Tehran - Iran said Sunday it has given the UN's atomic watchdog permission to take so-called environmental samples from a suspect military site in order to disprove US allegations of secret weapons-related activities.

"The question is not of a visit to the military installations of Parchin. The agency had asked to take samples from the green areas of Parchin because the Americans and others have made accusations," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters.

"To demonstrate that we have nothing to hide and that the Iranian nuclear program is peaceful, we have authorized the agency to take these samples," he added.



Deteriorating conditions of human rights

European Parliament condemns rights abuses in Iran and urges Foreign Affairs Committee to review EU's terrorist list

Friends of Free Iran, Jan 14, by Paulo Casaca & Struan Stevenson In resolution adopted today by a majority vote, the European Parliament denounced the continuing and flagrant violations of human rights in Iran. The Iranian regime had dispatched several diplomats to the EP headquarters in Strasbourg to prevent the adoption of this resolution. But effort failed in the face of overwhelming support for the resolution by the members. The resolution condemned strongly "death sentences against and/or the execution of juvenile offenders, pregnant women and mentally handicapped persons," by the Iranian regime. It also expressed deep concern over "the worsening situation with regard to freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the media, especially the increased persecution for the peaceful expression of political views, including arbitrary arrests and detention without charge or trial." Pointing to the fact that "Iran is still not a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Parliament recently rejected draft legislation on gender equality," the resolution called on Iranian authorities to "give evidence that they do implement their declared moratorium on stoning and demands the immediate implementation of the ban on torture." The EP resolution also censured "the campaign by the Judiciary against journalists, cyber journalists and webloggers leading to the closure of publications, imprisonment and according to reports widespread torture and forced false confessions." The resolution also noted with concern the finding by the United Nations Special Rapporteur Ambeyi Ligabo that "the Iranian Press and Penal Code do not conform to the permissible restrictions listed in the Article 19(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights." In view of the overwhelming sentiment among MEPs for the removal of the leading Iranian opposition group, the People's Mojahedin (PMOI) from the European Union's terrorist list, the resolution also called on the EP's Committee on Foreign Affairs and on Public Liberties to "examine the way in which the Parliament may become involved in the process of regular updating of the Council's Common Position relative to the application of specific measures to combat terrorism, taking into account developments from 2001 onwards." In this regard, a number of MEPs, including Messrs Struan Stevenson (PPE), Erik Meijer (United Left) and Paulo Casaca (Socialist), addressed the parliament, underscoring the unjust nature of the terror tag against PMOI and emphasizing the need to review the EU's terrorist list. The MEPs reiterated their support for the leading Iranian opposition leader Maryam Rajavi's call, made during her speech at the EP last December, that neither appeasement nor foreign military intervention were viable solutions to deal with Tehran's growing threat to regional and global peace and security and that the only practical and prudent option to bring about democratic change in Iran was to rely on the Iranian people and organized resistance.

Some of the sponsors of this resolution are:

Mr. Alejo Vidal-Quadras, First Vice president of the European Parliament
Mr. Michael Gahler, Member of the Christian Democrats from Germany
Paulo Casaca, President of the European Parliament delegation to NATO.
Mr. Struan Stevenson, British Conservative
Mr. Andre Brie, United Left, from Germany
Ms. Cecilia Malmström, Liberal from Sweden.
Mr. Alexander Alvaro, Liberal from Germany.

The MEPs also expressed the firm belief that removing the PMOI from the European Union's terrorist list was a critical and necessary step in efforts to realize this change in Iran.

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

Journalists receive death threats after testimony

Human Rights Watch, Jan. 7, New York -- After testifying before a presidential commission about being torture during detention, a group of Iranian journalists have received death threats from judicial officials under Tehran chief prosecutor Saeed Mortazavi, Human Rights Watch said today. Human Rights Watch is extremely concerned about the safety of the journalists, whose testimony to a presidential commission, tasked with investigating mistreatment of detainees, provided detailed information on their torture and mistreatment while they were detained, without being charged, by secret squads operating under the authority of the judiciary. "We want the Iranian government to know that the world is watching what happens to these young

journalists. The Iranian government is responsible for their safety," said Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of Middle East and North Africa Division at Human Rights Watch. "The Iranian authorities should be protecting citizens who testify before presidential commissions instead of sending them death threats."

Iran warns scribes against prisoner abuse allegations



AFP, Jan. 9, Tehran - Iran's hard-line judiciary has threatened legal action against those who alleged that detained journalists and Internet writers were abused to extract confessions and apologies, official media reported yesterday. "We will legally deal with those who have published unrealistic material that corresponds with that of the enemy media and that tries to tarnish the work of the police," said prosecutor office. In recent months the judiciary has been engaged in a fresh crackdown on Press and Internet sites, detaining some 20 reporters. Four of them wrote letters of repentance after being arrested. The government admitted that it was concerned over the confessions.

Two deported from Iran for practicing Baha'i faith

Iran Focus, Jan. 11, Tehran - Two foreigners were deported from Iran for practicing the Baha'i faith according to an Iranian official.

"These individuals, one a European and the other a Latin American, traveled to and from Iran over the past five years posing as traders and tourists, secretly attracting youths to their sect through economic activities", the official said.

He claimed that the group was based in London and that the two individuals were attempting to covertly run a branch of their religion in Iran, appealing to youths to change their religion.

Feature

The Iran dossier

UPI International Editor January 10, By Claude Salhani

As soon as President George W. Bush brushes the confetti off his lapels and returns to the Oval Office from his second inaugural parade on Jan. 20, he will find a series of "presidential papers" on Iran, requiring his immediate attention, waiting for him. Well-informed Washington insiders say the nation's top think tanks have been scurrying over the last several weeks to put the finishing touches on comprehensive policy papers, or presidential directives that would help the Bush administration formulate a policy on Iran for the next four years. The abridged version of these exhaustive papers will be along the line of "What the heck do we do with Iran?" Indeed, just a few days after his second inauguration, the president will be driven back up Pennsylvania Avenue to Capitol Hill where he will deliver his State of the Union address to the nation. Iran, most likely, will deserve a mention of note. It was in his 2002 State of the Union speech that Bush placed Iran, along with North Korea and Iraq, in his now infamous Axis of Evil. Now, three years later, it remains unclear what course U.S. policy regarding Iran is likely to follow, but according to more than one analyst, the second Bush administration will delve into the Iran dossier with renewed vigor. The Iran dossier comprises three aspects: first, the Islamic Republic's pursuit of nuclear weapons technology; second, the United States' accusation that Iran supports terrorism; and third, Iran's involvement in Iraq. These are all points that the president will have to address. "U.S. policy will have to shift to the policy of supporting democratic opposition to bring about regime change," Alireza Jafarzadeh, president of Strategic Policy Consulting, told United Press International. Barring a change of regime in Iran, Washington should get used to the idea of a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic, as all indications are that Iran is set to follow its desire to join the nuclear club. However, warns Jafarzadeh, the world cannot afford to allow Iran "to acquire the nuclear bomb as well as erect a sister Islamic Republic in Iraq while suppressing its own population." It was Jafarzadeh who in August of 2002 revealed Iran's Natanz and Arak nuclear sites to the international community. At the time he was the spokesperson in Washington for Iran's National Council of Resistance of Iran, a group otherwise known as the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, or MEK. The United States had designated the MEK as a foreign terrorist organization in 1997. Iran's pursuit of its nuclear weapons program is sure to continue despite periodic disclaimers to the contrary by officials in Tehran. Well-controlled and carefully orchestrated visits by inspectors from the International Atomic

Energy Agency are not about to reveal anything, either, as the Iranians have learned to disperse and camouflage their work. From Tehran's perspective, it makes sense for Iran to push ahead. Iran has always viewed itself as a regional sphere of influence, hoping to sway the region's policies. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution when the Shiite clergy toppled the imperial rule of Shah Reza Pahlavi, Iran's theocratic regime has been trying -- one should add without too much success -- to export its revolution to neighboring countries. Outside of Lebanon, where the Revolutionary Guards found sympathetic ears in the country's largely underprivileged Shiite community, repeated calls from Iran's mullahs to the people of the Middle East to topple their "corrupt leaders" has gone unheeded. However, now for the first time since 1979, Iran is seeing new opportunities open up in neighboring Iraq, a country with a majority Shiite population. Faced with this dilemma, the United States has three options. First, the United States can avoid confrontation and continue to engage Iran in dialogue, hoping that Iran will see logic in diplomacy. This is the European Union's favorite policy. "This option produced a 2004 accord with Iran to freeze some of its nuclear programs that might allow for weapons development," Raymond Tanter, a visiting professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, told UPI. The problem with this option is that it failed to produce concrete results in the past because Iran did not respect prior agreements. "This route is bound to fail," said Tanter, who served on the National Security Council staff and as representative of the secretary of Defense to arms control talks in the Reagan administration. Iran's nuclear aspiration is also worrying other countries in the immediate neighborhood such as Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, each with an important Shiite minority. Furthermore, the speed with which the United States managed to topple Saddam Hussein's regime in Baghdad is yet further incentive for Tehran to arm itself with nuclear deterrence. The second option, Tanter believes, is for Israel or the United States to conduct military strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities. "But because Iran has hidden, hardened, dispersed, and placed its nuclear facilities in populated areas, military strikes are unlikely to be effective and may lead to escalation and expansion of combat," said Tanter.

This leaves the third option -- and the most logical one -- that of regime change. This option fits in with the hard approach preferred by the neo-cons in the Bush administration. Both Tanter and Jafarzadeh believe the Bush administration will opt for beginning a "process of changing the regime in Tehran" sometime soon after the second inauguration. There is one minor snag however, and that is the lack of an organized opposition able to help bring about regime change. One of the main opposition groups, the MEK, remains on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations. To collude with those opposition forces requires the United States to remove restrictions against Iranian opposition groups, argues Tanter. Because the MEK and its associate political umbrella organization, the National Council of Resistance of Iran, have "been instrumental in exposing some of Tehran's key nuclear secrets, President Bush is likely to favor lifting the terrorist designation on the MEK in 2005," says Tanter. "The removal of the MEK's terror designation would be a litmus test for the new administration to adopt a tougher approach toward the Iranian regime," said Jafarzadeh. What the Bush team will learn, however, is that there are no simple answers to the Iranian predicament. Bringing about regime change through the support of democratic forces in the country, while desirable, may prove to be harder than expected. Finally, a word of caution: paraphrasing the secretary of defense, it is true that you underwrite revolutions and foment regime changes with the opposition you have, not the opposition you want. Lessons should be learned, however, from the Ahmad Chalabi affair in Iraq and what happened when too much trust was placed in him and his organization. In dealing with the Mujahedin-e-Khalq one should recommend caution.