

In the Press

A weekly account of Iran in the International Press

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A lot of meddling in Iraq



Iran engaged in meddling in Iraq

Agence France Presse, Oct. 4, New York - Iran is sending money and arms into neighboring Iraq to try to influence the outcome of elections there in January, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Monday. Iran, as a predominantly Shiite country that fought a war with Iraq in the 1980s, has a big interest in what happens in Iraq, he said. But it is engaged in "a lot of meddling," Rumsfeld said in a talk at the Council on Foreign Relations, a non-partisan foreign policy group here.

"They clearly want to affect the outcome of the election, and they are aggressively trying to do that," he said. "They're sending money in. They're sending weapons in. And they're notably unhelpful."



Iran gives shelter to al Qaeda

The Washington Post, Oct. 5, New York - Rumsfeld said Iran is doing "a lot of meddling" in Iraq and is clearly intent on affecting the upcoming elections. "They're sending money in, they're sending weapons in, and they're notably unhelpful," he said.

He also spoke of Iran serving as a haven for al Qaeda operatives, although he described the relationship between the country and the terrorist network as "a funny one." He noted that "a lot of" senior al Qaeda members have moved in and out of Iran "over a period of time" and some apparently are there now.



Iraqi PM's party paper adopts a sharp tone on Iran

Baghdad daily, Oct. 7, Iraq - The Iranian government creates doubts about Zarqawi's presence via its media (Al-Alam and Sahar TV channels). This is itself a crime after another crime. It is clear that Khamenei and his group try fruitlessly to mislead the Iraqi people, especially Shiites, on the fact that Zarqawi is their enemy, and not the US...

This regime is not backed by the Iranian people. They want to preoccupy the Iranian people with imaginary enemies beyond the borders, to distract their attention from domestic problems such as poverty and the administrative corruption.



Revolutionary Guards occupying Iraqi territory

Al-Manar Al-Yawm daily, Oct. 6 - The Guards Corps meddles in Iraq through the activities of the Qods Force. In recent months, [the Qods Force] has transferred its camps, which were formerly located in the capitals of Iran's border provinces, to places on the border. These include an important camp for the regime's infiltration located in Mehran. This garrison is in charge of command of Amara, Kut and parts of Baghdad...

In addition, the Iranian regime's military forces have infringed on Iraqi soil in the border regions of Zein Al-Qos - Seif Sa'ad and Amara. They take advantage of the lack of presence of Iraqi border guards to occupy parts of the country.

The Iranian regime extensively works to set up libraries, video clubs, centers advertising the Quran, book displays, and free hand outs of books on fundamentalism. These activities are organized by GC elements like Qassem Soleimani and other high-ranking fundamentalist elements such as Tashhiri.



Kharrazi justifies insurgents' right to "resist"

The Washington Post, Oct. 4 - Iran's foreign minister, Kamal Kharrazi, who was at the United Nations last week, sat down with Lally Weymouth of Newsweek and The Post to discuss U.S. concerns over Iran's nuclear program, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Excerpts:

Q. Would you like to see the coalition forces leave Iraq?

A. Yes. Insurgents say that since their land is occupied, they have to resist. So, the best way [out] is to maintain security by Iraqi forces and let the multinational forces leave.

Q. What is your assessment of the current security situation in Iraq?

A. ...Coalition forces are unable to secure Iraq, and the government is facing many problems. The people of Iraq are delighted Saddam Hussein is gone, but they are not happy with the presence of foreign troops. That was America's mistake....

Tehran accused of backing separation of southern provinces

As-Siyada daily, Oct. 2, Iraq – Members of the provincial council of Basra, which is considered the biggest southern province (of Iraq), have had meetings with officials of the two nearby provinces for erecting a united federalism such as the one the Kurds have in the north. The region consists of Basra, Meysan and Ziqar provinces, which comprises 80% of Iraq's oil...

Officials close to the interim government say that Iran has a role in encouraging these regions to break away.

Calls for removal of PMOI from terror list



Iraqi jurists urge government to recognize PMOI

Al-Zaman daily, Oct. 3 - Iraqi legal experts and lawyers urged the interim government led by Dr. Ayad Allawi to recognize the legal status of the People's Mojahedin Organization based in Camp Ashraf as political refugees.

The final resolution of the seminar demanded removal of the organization's name from the list of terrorist organizations. 1,200 legal experts and lawyers have signed the statement.



Support for Iranian opposition

Al-Safer semi-weekly, Oct. 6 – Mark Reyman, member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly, stressed in a statement: "Supporting the Iranian Resistance is essential to fighting terrorism. Naturally, removing the name of the main Iranian resistance movement, the People's Mojahedin, from the European Union's terror list is an obligation for all those who struggle for democracy in Iran. The EU's failure to discern the political situation in Iran is a genuine scandal that must be revealed immediately and powerfully."

No light at the end of tunnel



Cheney: US to ask for tougher sanctions on Iran

Dow Jones, Oct. 5, Washington - U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney said during the vice-presidential debate Tuesday night that the U.S. may seek sanctions against Iran through the United Nations Security Council...

Cheney said, there are currently sanctions against Iran, and the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency is slated to meet in November to decide whether Iran is "living up to their commitments and obligations."

If Iran is not, Cheney said, "We may well want to go to the U.N. Security Council and ask for even tougher sanctions."



ElBaradei urges Iran to suspend enrichment activities

Reuters, Oct. 7, Tokyo - The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog, Mohamed ElBaradei, said Thursday he hoped Iran would fully suspend its uranium enrichment-related activities and that his agency was working with it to do so.

Iran said Wednesday it had processed several tons of raw "yellowcake" uranium to prepare it for enrichment -- a process that can be used to make atomic weapons -- in defiance of the U.N. watchdog.



"Well, they are doing conversion but they are not enriching uranium," ElBaradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), told reporters after a meeting with Hiroyuki Hosoda, Japan's chief cabinet minister and top government spokesman.

"I am calling on them obviously to fully suspend all enrichment-related activities as a confidence-boosting measure," he added.

DOW JONES

White House warns Iran to stop pursuing nuclear weapons

Dow Jones, Oct. 6, Washington - In the wake of a report that Iran has converted uranium to a gas which is a critical step in the enrichment process, the Bush administration Wednesday again warned Iran to stop pursuing nuclear weapons.

"We've made it very clear what Iran needs to do. And Iran needs to come clean and fully comply with its international obligations. Iran needs to stop its pursuit of nuclear weapons," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said.

He added that unless Iran stops its work, the U.S. may press for further action by the U.N. Security Council. "If they continue in the direction that they are going, then we will have to look at what additional action may need to be taken, including looking to the United Nations Security Council," McClellan said.

On Tuesday evening, Vice President Dick Cheney said the U.S. may have no choice but to seek tougher international sanctions on Iran over the issue of nuclear weapons. Cheney made the comment during the vice presidential debate.

U.N., EU is oblivious as Iran goes nuclear

Arizona Daily Star, Oct. 6 - Here's how the deal works, or rather how it doesn't: Iran continues to play games with the International Atomic Energy Agency, which continues to pass resolutions demanding that Iran end its nuclear program - resolutions that Iran continues to ignore.

In the latest round of play, the mullahs have announced that they won't honor an earlier promise to suspend their nuclear programs. Is anybody really surprised? ...

How long before Iran joins North Korea as a full-fledged member of the Lunatic League of Nuclear Powers? Iran's ayatollahs have often mused about nuking Israel. The Israelis might be able to retaliate in kind, but what are millions of casualties compared to wiping out the whole Jewish state with a single strike? ...

Let's hope somebody in Washington is drawing up plans for a response to this danger more effective than U.N. resolutions. The alternative to confronting Tehran is to awaken one morning to a radioactive Middle East. Or maybe a nuclear blasts a lot closer to home.

AP Associated Press

Iran moves toward nuclear enrichment

The Associated Press, Oct. 6 - Iran has produced "a few tons" of the gas needed to enrich uranium, a top nuclear official said today, confirming the country has defied international demands and taken a necessary step toward producing nuclear fuel - or nuclear weapons.

Uranium hexafluoride gas is the material that, in the next stage, is fed into centrifuges used to enrich uranium...

"We have converted part of the raw uranium we had and produced a few tons of uranium hexafluoride gas," said Hossein Mousavian, Iran's chief delegate to the International Atomic Energy Agency told The Associated Press in an interview. Mousavian was clear Wednesday that Iran had produced the actual gas...

"Referring Iran to U.N. will not change the nuclear capability we already possess. The victim will be the additional protocol and NPT (nonproliferation treaty), not Iran," he said.

THE Daily Telegraph

Iran won't surrender nuclear capability

The Daily Telegraph, Oct. 3 - Iran has said that it would be "irrational" to surrender its capability to produce its own nuclear fuel in exchange for receiving supplies from overseas.

Hamid Reza Asefi, the Iran foreign ministry spokesman said: "We have the technology and there is no need for us to beg from others. This suggestion is good for countries that do not have this technology, but we do not need their generosity and help."

Asefi was responding to US Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, who has suggested providing Iran with nuclear fuel to generate electricity if Iran agreed to give up its controversial work on the sensitive nuclear fuel cycle.



Majlis signs for continued nuclear activities

Radio Farda, Oct. 4 – 238 deputies presented to the Majlis a plan that will oblige Khatami's government to continue nuclear activities. Ala'eddin Borujerdi, chairman of the Majlis Security Committee announced this, adding, "These many signatures have been unprecedented in the Majlis history." Borujerdi added, "The bill will be examined Tuesday in the Security Committee and will definitely be approved with many votes in the open session of Majlis."



Keeping the spotlight on Iran

U.S. Department of State briefing, Oct. 1, excerpts of the interview by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage with journalists from NATO countries - When asked about the possibility of a preemptive U.S. strike on Iran, Armitage replied that the president "always has all options on the table and it would be bad business to remove any options."

He added, however, that the United States is "very content with the pace" of discussions with Iran. The U.S. policy, he said, is to "keep the international spotlight, led by our European friends, on Iran and the need for Iran to come clean with their program, or else we have the ability to refer this to the [United Nations] Security Council for a discussion, at least, of possible sanctions."



Tehran's support for terrorism, WMDs represent a threat that needs to be addressed

U.S. Department of State, Oct. 1 - Deputy State Department Spokesman Adam Ereli: "Iran, by its policies of supporting terrorism, pursuing weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, and their opposition to the peace process represent a problem, a threat that needs to be addressed."

The New York Times A glimmer of hope for U.S.-Iran rift?

New York Times, Oct. 2, Washington - After months of forceful American talk on Iran, the Bush administration's new openness to having Secretary of State Colin L. Powell attend a conference along with an envoy from Iran next month is spreading hope among European and Arab officials that such a meeting may reduce tensions in the region.

State Department officials insist that Mr. Powell's newly expressed willingness to be in the same room with an Iranian representative at a conference on the future of Iraq does not portend a softening in other American grievances, including the demand that Iran abandon its suspected nuclear weapons program and support of terrorism...

While hard-liners around President Bush press for a tough stance, hoping to open a debate about whether to support "regime change" after the American election, some in the State Department are said to be more sympathetic to the idea of diplomatic engagement, as urged by many Arab and European allies...

Dr. Allawi has appealed to Iran and Syria, which also has troubled relations with the United States, to do more to stop cross-border help for insurgents in Iraq.

The Washington Times IAEA looking in wrong places

The Washington Times, Oct. 4 - The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is currently investigating Iran's nuclear program, especially the possibility that Pakistan helped it with substantial transfers of technology and materials in the past. There has been no conclusive evidence so far, except for a piece of evidence that Pakistan had supplied designs for an

advanced centrifuge called P-2 to Iran in 1995. There is a reason why the IAEA is finding it difficult to discover the nuclear trail in Iran. The agency is not looking in the right places, for instance in Pakistan. What it needs to do is not complicated, either: It has to begin by questioning A.Q. Khan, the Pakistani nuclear scientist who has been persuaded to go into hiding by Islamabad following disclosures early this year that he was the kingpin in a worldwide network of nuclear smugglers...

Gen. Beg, according to a former Pakistan cabinet minister, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, had negotiated with Iran for a nuclear deal. Gen. Beg bragged that "Iran is willing to give whatever it takes, \$6 billion, \$10 billion. We can sell the bomb to Iran at any price." A former U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Robert Oakley, has also referred to a conversation with Gen. Beg during which the latter said he was discussing nuclear cooperation with Iran's Revolutionary Guards...

Large sums of unaccounted money were deposited in the personal accounts of at least two Pakistani scientists for clandestine deals with Iran. One of them was Muhammad Farooq, a centrifuge expert, who traveled to Iran and Libya on behalf of Mr. Khan, and was ironically the key source of information against Mr. Khan when U.S. and Pakistani intelligence officials debriefed him in November...

More evidence of Mr. Khan's Iran link is an Islamabad businessman named Aizaz Jaffri. In December, Mr. Jaffri reportedly flew to Iran after three employees of the KRL were detained for questioning following the disclosures about Mr. Khan. Officials suspect that Mr. Jaffri's responsibility on the Iran trip was to find out how much the Iranians had told the IAEA officials about Pakistan's involvement in their nuclear-weapons program.

Iran's nukes

New York Daily News, Oct. 2 - In an interview in an Israeli newspaper this week, Giora Eiland, Israel's national security adviser, made a startling statement: November will be the "point of no return" for taking out the Iranian nuclear program...

Iran is now on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons. This week, President Bush said categorically that he will not let that happen. But how will he stop it? Persuasion? The Iranians are spitting in the face of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Invasion? The U.S. military is already busy in Iraq and Afghanistan. Covert action? A botched operation would bring the wrath and scorn of the world down on the United States...

Still, the ayatollahs are about to go atomic - and somebody has to stop them. That will be a dangerous and thankless job. Increasingly, it looks as if it will be outsourced to Israel.

Human rights, prime victim of clerical regime in Iran

Iran may be poised for democratic revolution

S. Carolina Herald, Oct. 4 - Iran is poised for a democratic revolution.

Tehran, the nation's capital, as well as several other cities have been wracked in recent days with widespread anti-government protests and violent crackdowns by government forces. Buildings have been set ablaze, and exiles are calling for revolution....

Iran is Al-Qaida's best friend -- and probably the Iraqi insurgencies, too. The Iranians have been sowing discord in Iraq since before Saddam's ouster, and an end to their mischief would go a long way toward stabilizing Iraq. It would also have a profound teaching effect on the entire region that democratic change is inevitable and that everyone should get onboard the freedom train.



State Dept. Official Touts Partnerships for Peace, Human Rights, Oct. 4 - Assistant Secretary Holmes addresses San Francisco World Affairs Council, he said: It is troubling that, while there are more democracies in the world today than at the time of the U.N.'s founding, the United Nations pays so little heed to the principles of democracy and liberty.

There is, I believe, a democracy deficit in the U.N. today. Undemocratic countries like Cuba and Iran have way too much influence over the outcomes of U.N. activities. There are caucuses and groupings to promote every cause under the sun in the U.N. And yet until recently, there has been no caucus to promote democracy.



Iran and Religious Freedom

Voice of America, Oct. 4, Editorial - The following is an editorial reflecting the views of the United States Government:

In the latest U.S. State Department report on religious freedom, Iran is again listed as one of the most serious violators. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell says the report singles out eight countries of particular concern: "We are re-designating five countries that, in our judgment, continue to violate their citizens' religious liberty: Burma, China, Iran, North Korea, and Sudan. We are also adding three additional countries to this list: Eritrea, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam."

According to the report, Iran is guilty of "severe violations of religious freedom." These include "imprisonment, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination" based on religious belief. The report says that in Iran "all religious minorities suffer varying degrees of officially sanctioned discrimination particularly in the areas of employment, education, and housing." Those minorities include Sunni and Sufi Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Baha'is. Conversion of a Muslim to a non-Muslim religion is punishable by death.



Young men flogged in public in Isfahan

Iran Focus, Oct. 6, Tebran – Three young men were flogged in public yesterday afternoon in Farah-Abad Square in the city of Isfahan.

No reason was given as to why the three men were flogged.

Security forces have recently launched a new clampdown on youth and women in Isfahan as part of a new campaign to stem the spate of anti-government protests in the city.

Last week violent clashes erupted between local residents and the security forces in Isfahan. Among the casualties was a 14 year-old schoolboy who reportedly was shot and seriously wounded.

On Monday a 33 year old man named Mehrzad Vajebal-Hoghough was hanged in public in one of Isfahan's main squares as his wife and child were forced to look on.

Young man hanged as wife and child looked on

Iran Focus, Oct. 5, Tebran – A young man was publicly hanged yesterday afternoon in the Robat square of Isfahan (central Iran) as his wife and child were forced to watch.

Mehrzad Vajebal-Hoghough, a 33 year old resident in Isfahan was accused of armed robbery and possession of 7 Kilograms of marijuana.

The judge who had sentenced Mehrzad asked him if he had any final comments as he was being led to the gallows, according to witnesses. Mehrzad did not reply and was silent, they said.

Some 3 thousand people had crowded in the square to witness the hanging. One eye-witness stated that State Security Forces (SSF) forced the victim's son to stay and watch his father execution while tormenting him by swearing at him and calling him the son of an infidel. He added that the crowd became 'violent and vocal' upon seeing the young boy crying, and that the regime's agents, fearing 'a furious reaction' from the crowd, were forced to quickly bring down the dead corpse within 10 minutes. The regime's state-run press has confirmed over 125 public executions since March 2004. The actual figure is believed to be much higher.

