

1,000 jurists, social and political dignitaries attend Baghdad Conference

3,230 Iraqi jurists see PMOI as their nation's ally and partner in foiling threat of fundamentalism, terrorism

Iraqi jurists endorse PMOI's legal status in Iraq as legitimate Resistance movement

Excerpts of the press release of AIJ-Iraq, Jan. 17 - The Association of Independent Jurists for Defense of Human Rights in Iraq held a conference on Monday, January 17, 2005, at Baghdad's

Babylon Hotel with 1,000 lawyers and political and social dignitaries participating.

The meeting featured a statement by 3,230 lawyers from northern, southern and central provinces of Iraq endorsing the legal status of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran as a legitimate Resistance movement in Iraq. The statement cites legal opinions by some of the most prominent lawyers on the international level which were specifically signed and endorsed by 500 European, American and Canadian jurists at the International Seminar of Jurists on November 10, 2004, in Paris.



15 prominent judges, 22 professors of law, hundreds of court judges, prosecutors and legal consultants are among the 3230 Iraqi lawyers and jurists who signed the November 10, 2004, declaration of the International Conference of Jurists in Paris.

Representatives of Independent Democrats, Islamic Party, Motherland Party, National Assembly of Iraq, Democratic Coalition of Iraq, Assembly of Iraqi Sheikhs, Assembly of Nobles, Assyrian Democratic Movement, Constitutional Monarchist Party, as well as sheikhs and political personalities from Karbala, Najaf, Mousol, Baghdad and the provinces of Anbar, Salahaddin and Diyala declared their support for the jurists' declaration.

Prominent legal experts and scholars from different countries sent messages of solidarity to the Iraqi jurists and stressed that the terror label against the PMOI is not legally justified and this organization must be recognized as a legitimate Resistance movement in Iraq.

Mash'an Jabouri, secretary general of the National Assembly Party and member of the Iraqi Parliament's security committee, said, "Once again, I declare my full support for the legal, political and moral rights of the People's Mojahedin in Iraq. The PMOI is a political organization which has been subject to many efforts to distort its image, but it is an organization which struggles for democracy and freedom of Iranian people. Based on the principle of Arab hospitality, the Iranian people's right to achieve freedom and democracy and Islamic values, we have the duty to give our full support and backing to the People's Mojahedin of Iran in their political struggle for democracy and freedom in Iran.

Various speakers addressed the conference on the eve of the Iraqi elections. **They described the Iranian regime's meddling in their country as a hidden war and an undeclared occupation which has jeopardized Iraq's political future.**

The jurists also declared that they consider the People's Mojahedin of Iran that advocates a tolerant Islam, **as their natural ally and partner in neutralizing the mentioned dangerous threats.** On this basis, the presence of the PMOI as a powerful opposition force in the Iraqi territory is seen as **a balancing element and a strategic need in favor of the national interests of Iraq** while undermining it will only benefit the enemies of Iraq. Conscious of this reality, Iran's rulers have also

focused on the PMOI as the first target of their massive slander campaign in recent years in Iraq with the sole intention of alienating the people of Iraq from their ally in their fate-making struggle at the present juncture.

Spokesman of the Association of Independent Jurists, Mr. Sofiyan Othman, showed the participants, the papers bearing signatures of lawyers and jurists engaged in this unprecedented initiative. He noted that the disarmament and terrorist designation of the Iranian people's legitimate and largest democratic opposition force has upset the balance of power in the region and in Iraq in favor of the real sponsors and godfathers of terrorism, i.e. Iran's ruling regime, and emboldened it in further interference in Iraq.



The Iraqi Association of Independent Jurists stresses that the Multi-National Force and the Government of Iraq must recognize the political refugee status for the PMOI individuals and residents of Ashraf in Iraq and prevent the Iranian regime from taking advantage of the terrorist label it has placed on a legitimate force with the political motive of suppressing its opposition and gaining open hand to step up its meddling in Iraq.

Some 60 news media and press prepared reports from the conference of Iraqi jurists in Baghdad.



Law experts say PMOI can stay in Iraq

Az-Zaman, Jan. 18, Iraq -- In the seminar held by Iraqi law experts and lawyers, they demanded the Iraqi Interim government and Multi-National Forces to recognize the PMOI as a legitimate and legal organization and their presence in Iraq. In their decision in the resolution of the seminar that was held in Baghdad, they announced their readiness to defend the organization that the Iranian regime tries to label as terrorists. According to the decisions that have come in the resolution they demand the U.S. to take the terrorist tag off the organization. The law experts described the organization as an organization defending the Iranian people's rights.

In his speech at the seminar, Mashan Al-Jabouri member of the Iraqi Interim Parliament, said, "I announce my confirmation of the right of a legal presence of the PMOI in Iraq, because this is a political organization."

While demanding support for the organization, he announced his opposition to any terrorist act.



Meeting in support of PMOI in Baghdad

Semi-official Fars News Agency, Jan. 18, Iran -- The Association of Iraqi Jurists held a meeting in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad aimed at drawing attention in support for the MKO.

According to Tuesday's report by Lebanese-based As-Safeer daily, Iraqi jurists gathered in Baghdad's Babylon Hotel calling on the Interim Iraqi Government and the occupiers to let the Mojahedin Organization remain in Iraq.

Based on this report, the jurists announced at the meeting, "The EU has no proof to show that the People's Mojahedin Organization carried out terrorist operations even inside Iran. The European Union has made a big mistake by designating the organization as terrorists."...

Ibrahim Al-Azzawi, member of the Lawyers' Guild of Iraq, also said, "It is the right of every nation that is tortured and harassed to resist against it." He claimed that the People's Mojahedin Organization is an organization, continuing its struggle to change the regime in Iran. He stressed that according to the international law, including the Geneva Conventions, members of this organization must be granted political refugee status.

Semi-official Mehr News Agency, Jan. 18, Iran -- Eftikhan Al-Ani, one of the legal experts who directed the



conference, said in his remarks, "There is a lot of duplicity in what the Iranian regime has done since the beginning of the Iraqi occupation until today." He called on the Iranian regime to distance itself from making contradictory statements and from interfering in Iraq's internal affairs.

We should de-list and work with the MEK- Palmer

Council on Foreign Relations, Jan. 16, Washington, D.C. – Ray Tanter: Not once did I hear from this esteemed group the word "Iranian opposition." There is an Iranian opposition, and it would appear to me that if regime change were a goal, that that opposition should be cultivated...

And so I would like to put on the table the idea of a third option that is not just negotiations, that is not just military strikes, but supporting the Iranian opposition in the manner in which the president has already said--President [George W.] Bush--has already said he wants to go over the head of the unelected ayatollahs and go right to the people.

Mark Palmer, president and chief executive officer, Capital Development Company; member, Committee on the Present Danger: Let me first say, Ray, thank you for the question, because our paper is entirely premised on support for the opposition, or in our view Iranians, the majority of the population. So this is not some dissidents who are sitting in a cell somewhere. This is the whole body politic...

Whatever the history of the MEK, whether or not American army colonels were assassinated by legitimate members of the MEK in the '70s, whatever role they played during the Iran-Iraq War, there is no question in my mind at least that there are many Iranians, both outside Iran and inside Iran, who support it. It was at the time when [Ayatollah Ruhollah] Khomeini came in, in 1980, in '79-80, it was certainly a very serious force among ordinary Iranians--very organized force. And the fact that Khomeini ended up executing tens of thousands of MEK people, and that the MEK was able to organize an army demonstrates that this is a serious opposition. Whether one agrees with everything that some of the leaders stand for is another matter, but that it is a serious opposition I think goes without question...

And if serious people in the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and elsewhere come to the conclusion that it is not today a terrorist group, we should de-list them and work with them.

Officials, analysts blast Tehran as source of terrorism in Iraq

Khamenei calls for unity of Muslims against U.S.

Iranian state-run News Network Television, Jan. 18 - Excerpts of remarks by Ali Khamenei, the mullahs' supreme leader, on Hajj - The exercise of unity and coherence in the Islamic nation has never been so necessary as today when we need this brotherhood to distance ourselves from the Arrogants and Heathens. Today, the world of Islam is scientifically, economically, propaganda wise, and militarily, surrounded. The occupation of Qods (Jerusalem) and Palestine led to the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan...

If the United States does not manage to contain and suppress the Islamic Awareness Movement by economic, political, propaganda and military means within the next few years, then all their calculations for gaining absolute rule over the world, control over the most important gas and oil wells of the world and material supremacy over all mankind – which is the only motive for their industrial machine – will be upset. The major western capitalists and Zionists who are playing behind all the Arrogant governments, will fall from the height of their authority...

The objective of the people of Iraq and their true leaders in the elections totally contradicts the objectives of the occupiers. Today, two major threats jeopardize the Iraqi elections. First, rigging and relocation of people's ballots particularly that the Americans are so skillful in this. Second is the danger of a military coup and another dictator gaining control of the destiny of Iraq.

We, the Muslims, call for unity to confront the aggressors and occupiers and belligerents, to implement ethics and morality, to revive wisdom and Islamic justice and scientific and economic progress and to gain back the greatness of Islam.



Rafsanjani tells Iraqis to kick U.S. out

Fars news agency, Jan. 14 -- [In the second sermon of Tehran's Friday prayers,] Hashemi Rafsanjani addressed the Iraqi people, saying, "Our Muslim brothers in Iraq must not become tired. We have lost a large number of youths and clergies, and you must also make such



sacrifices. That is because God is not committed to those who sit in the house and take no action. God is committed to those who come to the battlefield."

Noting that Iraqis are on the brink of victory, he said, "Iraqis should not fear the American and British military men."...

Rafsanjani stressed, "The United States can no longer fool people with claims of establishing democracy and freedom, and carry out a military expedition under this title."

The head of the State Expediency Council said the era when the US could deceive people under the name of political openness has ended. He added, "Nations must use this atmosphere to kick and throw the US out of the region. If the world of Islam, religious scholars, Islamic scientists, writers and speakers use this opportunity, it is a unique occasion. It is among the valuable historical opportunities when the Islamic world can free itself of the hands of neocolonialists, take over its vast resources and put the plunderers on trial."

Iraq is best place for Iran-U.S. confrontation

Fars news agency, Jan. 14 – A member of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee described the year 2005 as a year of political and propaganda confrontation between Iran and the U.S. He expressed hope that this showdown would end up in our country's interest. According to him, Iraq is the most important place in the area of political confrontation between Iran, U.S. and the West. As a powerful country in the region, Iran cannot remain indifferent to this matter.

Iraqi defense minister divulges names of agents

Al-Arabiya TV, Iraq, Jan. 17 – In exclusive remarks made to Al-Arabiya, Hazem Shaalan accused Iran and foreign parties of giving funding some Iraqi groups in the upcoming elections in Iraq.

Shaalan (showing a thick book): "The lists of candidates must rely on domestic support. This book contains the names and salaries of Islamic militants who receive funds from outside Iraq and particularly from Iran. This book contains names and account numbers and the amount of salaries they receive..."

Shaalan warned against the voices who call for departure of Multi-National Forces from Iraq and described it as opening the way for Iran and Syria to interfere in Iraq. Shaalan stressed on the important role of the MNF-I in safeguarding the security in Iraq.

Shaalan, "Those who advocate setting a deadline for departure of Multi-National Forces actually mean that the MNF-I should leave so that Iran arrives in."



Allawi's campaign manager demands removal of pro-Iran alliance

Baghdad daily, Jan. 17, Iraq – Adnan Al-Jenabi, election campaign manager for the Al-Iraqiya list said the (pro-Iran) United Iraqi Alliance continues to abuse the names of religious symbols harm the elections and mislead the voters in complete disregard for the rules for election campaign. He told journalists that the Al-Iraqiya list demands that the United Iraqi Alliance's slate be crossed out from the lists of election candidates because it pretends not to know the rules and has violated them dozens of times.

Is Shiite good will a good bet?

The New York Times, Jan. 16, Baghdad -- As foreigners entered his office last week, the Basra chief of the



Islamic Dawa Party made an urgent request. "No photographs of the ayatollah," he said, pointing to the picture of the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran. "It would be misleading to show this," explained

the chief, Salem al-Husseiny. "Our ties to Iran are religious, not political."

Mr. Hussein spent some 20 years in exile in Iran, and he remains grateful for the refuge. He also knows how sensitive the questions of Iranian and Shiite clerical influence have become - for the wary Sunni Iraqis who dread the coming era of Shiite power, for the Americans, even for many fellow Shiites.

Leaders of the main Shiite parties all now voice the same soothing line: They want democracy not theocracy. They do not seek violent retribution for their oppression under Saddam Hussein, when Sunnis dominated Iraq, and they won't brook Iranian interference.

But Iraqi Sunnis and the country's influential ranks of secular professionals are wondering why they should believe all this....

At least one Sunni minister of the current interim government has been openly skeptical. He is calling for a postponement of the Jan. 30 elections for a constitutional assembly, warning that the Shiite parties seem certain to come out on top and that this will, in effect, mean an Iranian takeover...

Iran agents try to groom their image



Iran Labor News Agency (ILNA), Jan. 16 – Finance Minister and member of Iraqi Shiite coalition Adel Abdul Mahdi said, "We do not want an Islamic and Shiite country. We want a democratic country."

According to *The Washington Times*, Muslim Shiite Coalition groups that tend to gain the largest share of seats in the parliamentary elections on January 30 announced Saturday that the possibility of an Iranian-style government taking power in Iraq does not exist.

A leader of the coalition, Movafaq Al-Rabii, said at a news conference, "The election is not a race between Shiites and Sunnis. There is no intention to establish an Islamic and religious government or a Shiite government like Iran in Iraq."

Iranian money channeled to Iraq

United Press International, Jan. 15, Baghdad - A senior Iraqi official Saturday accused Iran of channeling money into Iraq to "achieve sectarian objectives" and destabilize the country.



Waset Governor Mohammad Ridha said 18,987.30 in Iranian tomans were seized and found to have been sent to a resident in the province "to try to entice sectarian extremism and ruin the elections process."

While he did not specify Iran by name, referring only to its currency allegedly seized, Ridha insisted there were "hidden hands trying to destabilize the province by focusing on sectarian allegiance over allegiance to the homeland."

His accusation came amid repeated charges by Iraqi Defense Minister Hazem al-Shaalan that Iran was interfering in his country's internal affairs.

Insurgency in Iraq connected to Iran

Iran Focus, Jan. 16, Tebran – Sources within the Iranian opposition have confirmed to Iran Focus that they were able to obtain a classified document from within Iran's intelligence and security apparatus showing Iran's connections to insurgents carrying out attacks in Iraq.



The document is a report written by an Iraqi group mounting armed attacks on Iraqi civilians and U.S. and Coalition troops in Iraq. It was addressed to Revolutionary Guards Brigadier General Obeydavi, a senior commander of the Qods (Jerusalem) Force.

The Qods Force is the extra-territorial arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and oversees the Iranian regime's external military activities in Iraq.

Bombing expert tied to Tehran's Intelligence Ministry

Al-Etjab Al-Akbar daily, Jan. 15, Iraq -- Iraqi security forces announced that they have arrested one of the senior officers of the former Republican Guards. These forces said that Hamed Ismail Dervish, 51, who identified himself as Abu Ahmad was in charge of planting explosive packages. Government sources believe that he works with the Iranian Intelligence Ministry and the Hezbollah.



Anti-Tehran figure advises White House

Iran daily (Iranian state-run), Jan. 20 – We have heard that in a speech to (President) Bush, Paul Wolfowitz, one of Pentagon's anti-Iranian personalities said: "Once Iraq reaches democracy, it will change the present political structure of Iran and Syria." In an interview with Tempo magazine published in Jakarta, Deputy Defense Minister Paul Wolfowitz said: "While Iraq succeeded (in political reform) despite the

deadly terrorism, it will show its neighbors Iran and Syria there is a better way to life." Claiming that there is no democracy in Iran and Syria, he said: "Iraq's victory will have much influence on them and much of the changes will be probable without war."



Syria acts as Iran's arm in Iraq - Shaalan

ILNA (Iranian state-run), Jan. 14 – Al-Kafah Al-Arabi weekly wrote that it does not seem Shaalan intends to change his stance on Iran and Syria and said he still recognizes Iran as Iraq's number one enemy...

Shaalan claimed: "Syria is considered Iran's arm in Iraq... Iran runs a big terrorist army in Iraq and if Arab brothers and the international community do not take a step in stopping Syria and Iran's activities in Iraq, it will create a disaster in Iraq."

Iraqi MP blasts Iran meddling in Iraq



Iran Focus, Baghdad, Jan. 15 – Hossein Sadr, a candidate from the election list of the current interim-Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, aired his comments on the Al-Iraqiya network Thursday, saying that Iran should not be allowed to meddle in Iraq's internal affairs.

Referring to recent footage of an Iraqi terrorist leader who admitted to acting on Tehran's orders, Sadr said, "The tape that was broadcast showed confessions that are worrisome; these confessions proved that in fact the Iranian regime and Syria are meddling here".

"It is our right as a people to have our own freedoms, and to have peace and stability and to condemn such interferences. We condemn support given to terrorists and terrorist operations regardless of whether they are from the Iranian regime or any other country," Sadr added .

In comments directed at Iran, the Iraqi MP said, "I tell them from this platform that Iraqi Shiites are Arabs and Iraqi Shiites have their nationalistic values and Iraqi Shiites under no circumstances will fall under the influence of the Iranian regime."

"We will not allow Iranian or non-Iranian interference in the internal affairs of Iraq or the Iraqi elections. Our neighbors should not curry political favor with Iraqi Shiites just because they share the same religion", he said.

Sadr finished by saying, "We have a lot of proof for what we say but do not intend to reveal them all at present and are leaving them for later on. The proof show that certain neighbors are interfering in our elections and this is of concern to us."

Woman trained by Iran to assassinate Shaalan



AFP, Jan. 15, Beirut - Iraqi Defense Minister Hazem al-Shaalan said an Iraqi woman trained as an assassin in Syria by former henchmen of Saddam Hussein had recently pulled a gun on him in his office before breaking down in tears.

"She was about 40," and her husband is in prison for his involvement in a car bombing in Baghdad, Shaalan told Saturday's issue of the Al-Hayat daily...

Shaalan said his would-be assassin, whom he declined to name "for security reasons", was an Arab from the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk and belonged to a network of women trained in Syria under Iranian supervision.

"She was among 50 Iraqi women, wives or relatives of detainees or of men killed in clashes with the Iraqi national guard or troops belonging to the multinational force," he said, referring to US-led troops in the country.

They were trained "to mount terrorist operations and assassinations in Iraq," he said.

Shaalan accused "Iranian clerics of supervising the women's training, after which the women were placed in ministries and other Iraqi state institutions...".

The minister defended his frequent claims that Syria and Iran are playing a major role in the bloody insurgency in his country.

"I have documents in my possession and a lot of proof," he said.

Insecurity will spread from Iraq to neighboring countries

Al-Iraqiya television, Jan. 13 – Mr. Yasho Majid Hedayeh, head of the Democratic Rafedin Coalition: "After the regime change in Baghdad, Iraq had no boundaries any more and the neighboring countries, too, were after their own interests. The issue of security is a multilateral issue. Insecurity will not remain in Iraq, but will spread to the neighboring countries.

Tehran gave fake passport to Zarqawi – Algerian journalist

Farda Radio, Jan. 13 - Algerian journalist Atwan Tazakrat said, "Al-Zarqawi stayed in Iran for three to four months, and Iranian officials did not deny his presence. They provided him with a fake passport with which he traveled to Syria where in mid-2002 he plotted the assassination of an American citizen."

Referring to the escape of three of Bin Laden's sons that went to Iran from Afghanistan and their footprints were never found, he said, "It is not clear whose support they are under and where they have gone. One of Al-Qaida's spokesmen, Solaiman Abu Ghais, went to Iran immediately after the September 11 attacks and was never arrested."

In response to a question on whether or not the photo had been published, Tazakrat said, "This photo was never publicly distributed but I was able to see it. The source who confirmed to me that the Jordanian King had seen the photo is credible."



Tehran agent arrested for Al-Qaida ties

WorldNetDaily.com, Jan. 13 - An Iranian agent was arrested yesterday in Kuwait for ties to recent al-Qaida-related attacks in several Middle Eastern countries, according to a popular Mideast radio network .

Sawa Radio, which broadcasts throughout the Middle East, reported the unnamed Iranian agent was apprehended by Kuwaiti security forces after intelligence implicated his involvement in an al-Qaida terror network with prior information on recent attacks in Saudi Arabia...

Security sources told World Net Daily they suspect Iran-financed Hezbollah serves as a conduit between Tehran and contacts within al-Qaida. They say Iran has stepped up coordination with al-Qaida and with insurgents in Iraq to destabilize America's efforts to rebuild Iraq and hold elections at the end of the month .

If the report proves accurate, the arrest would connect the Iranian regime to al-Qaida and would likely result in increased international pressure against Tehran, which the U.S. has accused of trying to develop an illicit nuclear weapons arsenal .



Iran behind Islamic Jihad insurgency attacks

Middle East Newsline, Jan. 16, Jerusalem -- The Iranian-sponsored Islamic Jihad has been termed a leading contractor of insurgency attacks in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israeli security sources said Jihad has used Iranian funding to recruit operatives from other insurgency groups for major attacks against Israel...

"Islamic Jihad has long sought cooperation of other groups because it does not have enough operatives," a security source said. "Now, with plenty of Iranian money, Jihad can recruit whomever it wants."

The Iranian funding has been relayed to Islamic Jihad headquarters in Syria, the sources said. From there, Jihad sent the funds through couriers arriving in the West Bank.



Iran tops potential trouble spots list- Cheney



Cheney: Iran tops US trouble spot list

Reuters, Jan. 20, Washington -- U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney says that Iran is at the top of the administration's list of world trouble spots and expressed concern that Israel "might well decide to act first" to eliminate any nuclear threat from Tehran.



"You look around the world at potential trouble spots, Iran is right at the top of the list," Cheney said in an interview aired on MSNBC on Thursday, the day that George W. Bush was sworn in for a second four-year term as president.

Cheney, one of the chief architects of the Iraq war, said the administration would continue to try to use diplomacy to address what he said were serious concerns about Iran's nuclear weapons program and ties to terrorism.

The administration has also accused Iran of interfering in the affairs of neighbouring Iraq, where U.S. forces have been bogged down in a ferocious insurgency since the 2003 invasion.

If Iran resists demands to rein in its nuclear program, Cheney said the next step would be to take the matter to the U.N. Security Council and international sanctions "to force them to live up to the commitments and obligations."

Cheney described Iran's nuclear program as "fairly robust."

If Iran acquires atomic bomb, entire region will become unstable



VOA television, Jan. 19 - Democratic Senator from Florida, Bill Neilson said: The world can not allow Iran turn into a nuclear power and even Europe has not succeeded in negotiating with the regime. Iran is still seeking to expand its nuclear power.

I do not know how much Iran has progressed in obtaining the nuclear power. Therefore, when I asked Condoleezza Rice when she becomes the Secretary of State, if she will prevent Iran from expanding nuclear weapons, she gave a positive answer.

I think that we must take preventive measures to thwart the expansion of nuclear weapons and atomic power. If Iran acquires an atomic bomb, the entire region will become unstable.



Rice: We must insist for Iran abandon its nuclear weapons

The Associated Press, Jan. 18 – Excerpts of the opening statement by Dr. Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's nominee to be secretary of state, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:We must remain united in insisting that Iran and North Korea abandon their nuclear weapons ambitions, and choose instead the path of peace...

To be sure, in our world there remain outposts of tyranny and America stands with oppressed people on every continent ... in Cuba, and Burma, and North Korea, and Iran, and Belarus, and Zimbabwe.



Iran at the center of US concerns

AFP, Jan. 17, Washington - The delicate international issues President George W. Bush is facing ahead of his second term range from a difficult situation in Iraq, the nuclear ambitions of North Korea and Iran and new hopes for Israeli-Palestinian dialogue...

IRAN is at the center of US concerns in the area because of its influence in Iraq **Kharrazi: We will**



Neo-cons turn their attention to Iran

The Financial Times, Jan. 17 - Having adopted legislation in the past aimed at Cuba and Iraq, similar groups of Republicans and Democrats in Congress are currently setting their sights on promoting "regime change" in Iran....

In Congress, the proposed Iran Freedom and Support Act, sponsored by senators Rick Santorum and John Cornyn, calls on the administration to back "regime change" and promote and fund the transition to a democratic government through alliances with opposition groups that renounce terrorism.

Some exiles believe around \$100m (EU75m, £55m) will be laid out. Others say this figure is too high. A similar bill in the House is proposed by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Florida republican and fierce anti-Castro campaigner.

Tehran answers any possible US threat

News Network Television, Jan. 20 - The Foreign Minister called claims of a US attack on Iran "psychological war". Mr. Kharrazi said, "The Americans are embarking on a psychological game and operation to affect us, but we have experience in this field."

The Foreign Minister also said, "We will respond to any possible threat from the United States." Kharrazi added, "Although we do not want to get into a conflict with anyone, we will powerfully defend our well-being and national interests."



Tehran DM brags of massive military might

Reuters, Jan. 18, Tebran -- Iranian Defense Minister Ali Shamkhani said in remarks published on Tuesday that the Islamic Republic, which has seen U.S. forces topple regimes in neighboring Afghanistan and Iraq in the last three years, did not fear attack.

"We are able to say that we have strength such that no country can attack us because they do not have precise information about our military capabilities due to our ability to implement flexible strategies," the semi-official Mehr news agency quoted Shamkhani as saying.

"We can claim that we have rapidly produced equipment that has resulted in the greatest deterrent," he said, without elaborating..

"...Today, the Islamic Republic has acquired massive military might, the dimensions of which still remain unknown, and is prepared to attack any intruder with a fearsome rain of fire and death," it said.



U.S. is punishing eight Chinese firms for aiding Iran

The New York Times, Jan. 18, Washington - The Bush administration imposed penalties this month against some of China's largest companies for aiding Iran's efforts to improve its ballistic missiles. The move is part of an effort by the White House and American intelligence agencies to identify and slow important elements of Iran's weapons programs...

American officials said the list of exports to Iran was classified, but they described them as high-performance metals and components that are banned under the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000 because they could aid the country's efforts to extend the range of its missile fleet...

"We suspect that the Iranians also have the Chinese bomb design," a former senior American official said several months ago, referring to a design that Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani nuclear scientist, acquired from China, sold to Libya and was suspected of peddling elsewhere. "What everyone is looking for is the missile that matches up with the design."

U.S. blocks Euro plan to woo Iran

The Telegraph, Jan. 18 - America has hobbled an effort by Britain and other European countries to persuade Iran to freeze its nuclear programme. Senior officials said privately that the US would not offer economic or political concessions to woo Teheran.

President George W Bush is trying to improve relations with Europe and will visit London and Brussels next month. But in private, American officials are furious at the European Union's "engagement" with Teheran. They say they will not co-operate with what they see as the dangerous policy of giving the regime "rewards for bad behavior"....

The US will not publicly denounce the initiative but appears content to watch it collapse.

It then hopes to bring the issue to the Security Council. Britain says such a move would be pointless because any sanctions would be blocked by Russia and China.



IAEA wants to return to Parchin military site in Iran

The Associated Press, Jan. 18, Vienna -- The U.N. nuclear watchdog agency is pushing for a fresh look at an Iranian military complex linked by the United States to possible atomic arms research just days after being granted limited access, diplomats said Tuesday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency is interested in testing another part of the sprawling Parchin complex just outside Tehran in its search for radiation that could point to such research, the diplomats said...

One of the diplomats said the fact that the agency had requested fresh access to another part of the site suggested there are continued open questions about the nature of the work conducted at Parchin.

"The inspectors want to go back to another explosives bunker" that they apparently were not granted access to last week, the diplomat said on condition of anonymity.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

No sticks, No carrots

The Wall Street Journal, Jan. 17 - Where the European

Union's revived trade talks with Iran will lead is anyone's guess. What's more certain is that the process shouldn't inspire confidence in the union's ability to defuse international crises....

The EU -- having removed the sticks from the Americans' and Israelis' hands -- has started feeding the carrots to Tehran before the mullahs have offered any real concessions...

We're no fans of economic sanctions for reasons both philosophical and pragmatic. But neither do we favor trade concessions to rogue states that promote terrorism and have nuclear ambitions. Whatever Europe thinks it is doing, we can only guess. But whatever it is, the problem of Iran is coming no closer to a solution. And it is important for everyone to know that the penalty for failure could be very high, a nuclear-armed radical regime making big trouble for both Europe and the U.S.



Iran eases talk of deadline for nuclear talks with EU

AFP, Jan. 15 - Iran has agreed to avoid setting a firm deadline for talks with the European Union on its nuclear program and could maintain its freeze of uranium enrichment activities

until at least mid-year .

"We have reached an agreement with the Europeans not to threaten each other with a deadline," senior nuclear negotiator Hossein Mousavian told the hard-line Kayhan newspaper on Saturday ...

At this point, he said, Iran would make a "completely reasonable decision" on the dialogue and freeze, which has been verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In recent weeks several Iranian officials have voiced impatience over the enrichment freeze, and have called for the talks with the EU to be wrapped up as quickly as possible .

The Europeans are pushing for Iran to accept a long-term suspension of its work on the nuclear fuel cycle, including the enrichment of uranium, to ease international alarm over what the United States alleges is a covert weapons drive .



Human rights situation deteriorates



Urgent Action: A 16-year-old student at risk of imminent execution

Amnesty International, Jan. 20 - Ali, a 16-year-old

student, may be at risk of imminent execution for the murder of another student in his high school, which took place between mid-January and mid-February 2003. Amnesty International has recently learned that Ali was sentenced to death in June 2004 and his sentence has already been confirmed by the Supreme Court...

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party. Article 6 of the ICCPR states: "Sentence of death shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age."

30 Iranian juveniles on death row in Iranian prisons



Iran Focus, Jan. 16, Tehran – At least 30 juveniles are on death row in Tehran and Rajai-Shahr (40km west of the Iranian capital) for offences they have been alleged to have committed under the age of 18.

"There are some 30 juveniles under the age of 18 in Tehran's Centre for Reform and Education (Juvenile Prison) and in Rajai-Shahr currently sentenced to death",

Fahimeh Hajmohammad-Ali, a lawyer working in Iran's judiciary, said in an interview with a state-run news agency, ILNA.

89% of unemployed women in Iran highly educated

Iran Focus, Jan. 17, Tebran – "About 88.7 percent of unemployed women in Iranian cities and 59.4 percent of unemployed women in rural areas are highly educated", Ladan Nowrouzi said, in an interview with a state-run news agency, SINA.

Referring to the 2002 data, she said, "The unemployment rate among women is 1.5 times more than among men. Among 15 to 24-year-olds the rate is 40 percent higher".

