

European incentives, a mockery of war against terrorism

AP Associated Press

Armed rebels included in incentive offer from Europe

The Associated Press, Oct. 22, Vienna -- An Iranian exile group bristled

Friday at a European offer of incentives aimed at getting the Tehran regime to stop uranium enrichment, saying it included a promise that the European Union would continue viewing one of its key members as a terrorist organization.

In a statement made available to The Associated Press, the Paris-based National Council of Resistance of Iran said the text - formally presented to Iran this week by the U.K., France and Germany - "makes a mockery of the war against terrorism."

European negotiators included a reference to the Iranian resistance group MEK in their last-chance offer of a trade deal and peaceful civilian nuclear technology to entice Iran to give up enrichment and avoid the looming threat of U.N. sanctions.

The document presented to an Iranian delegation in Vienna Thursday included a pledge that the Europeans "would continue to regard the MEK as a terrorist organization." The MEK, the main group in the resistance council's coalition, also is on the U.S. State Department's list of terrorist organizations.

The council called the continued terrorist designation "shameful," and it accused the Iranian authorities of using the E.U.'s characterization as a pretext "to torture, execute and suppress dissidents."

The council urged the international community to stop blacklisting the group, which it contends will "only lead to the rise in human rights abuses in Iran and the increasing role of the mullahs in international terrorism."

Last month, the National Council of Resistance of Iran claimed to have uncovered more evidence that Iran's nuclear activities are broader than it has publicly admitted. It alleged that Iran has a hidden uranium processing plant near Bandar Abbas, a major industrial port in southern Iran that is home to a missile production facility, an oil refinery and a large thermal power plant.

AP Associated Press

Iran not seen accepting nuclear incentives

The Associated Press, Oct. 21, Vienna, Austria - Iran is unlikely to accept European incentives aimed at getting it to suspend uranium enrichment, diplomats said

Thursday, raising the prospect of a showdown next month between Tehran and the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency. Envoys from Britain, France and Germany offered civilian nuclear technology and a trade deal to the Iranians in a private meeting at the French mission to international organizations in Vienna. But Western diplomats said they doubt Iran will back down easily....

An Iranian diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Thursday's meeting did not involve detailed negotiations, merely the formal presentation of the European offer.

REUTERS

Tehran's fear of 'regime change' emerges in nuke fiasco

Reuters, Oct. 15, Vienna - Iran might be willing to give up its uranium enrichment capabilities but it wants many things in return -- above all a guarantee that no one

will try to topple the Islamic regime, diplomats and analysts say...

"Iran wants some political steps to be taken first," said a Western diplomat in Vienna familiar with the negotiations between Iran and the European trio. Iran's top requirement was an "assurance of the status quo," he said, meaning a guarantee that there would be no Iraq-style "regime change" undertaken in Iran, which has been an Islamic republic since the 1979 revolution...

Diplomats said Iran might try to strike a last-minute deal with Europe to avoid a referral to the U.N. Security Council when the IAEA meets again next month but the Europeans will not compromise.



Iran refuses to end uranium enrichment on eve of EU nuclear talks

Agence France Presse, Oct. 20, Tebran - Iran refused to give up on producing enriched uranium in defiance of the West and said dialogue was the only way to resolve the nuclear standoff, on the eve of talks with the EU's Big Three. The Islamic republic is ready to cooperate with the international community over its nuclear programme provided its "rights" are respected, President Mohammad Khatami said Wednesday. "We demand respect for our rights to have nuclear technology for civilian use and that no-one tries to deprive us of this," he said after a cabinet meeting. "We are ready to cooperate and believe that dialogue and negotiation are the only ways to reach an understanding."

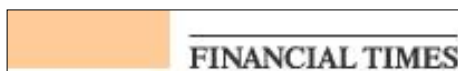
The Iranian Atomic Energy Organization chief was more blunt, warning that Tehran would reject a European proposal aimed at defusing the standoff if it did not respect its rights to master nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. "Civil nuclear technology... is one of the legitimate rights of any country. We do not accept any proposition which does not respect our rights," Gholamreza Aghazadeh said.



Iran to negotiate enrichment halt length

The Associated Press, Oct. 18, Tebran - Iran won't permit its diplomats to negotiate with European nations over its nuclear program if the goal of talks is to deprive Iran of the right to enrich uranium, Iran's top nuclear negotiator said Monday. Hasan Rowhani said, however, that Iran was prepared to negotiate suspension of some of its nuclear activities. "But if the discussion is about depriving us of our legitimate right (to manage the cycle of nuclear fuel), it's not negotiable. Our negotiating team is not authorized to discuss this either with Europeans or others," Rowhani said. "We don't compromise on our national rights," he added...

"We have some red lines. We have some principles. And we won't give up our principles," Rowhani told the television. "It's unacceptable for us that we are told Europeans and Americans have the right to manage the cycle of nuclear fuel and possess nuclear power plants but Iran doesn't. No one can tell us this. This is illogical and contrary to international regulations and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty," Rowhani said.



US attacks European move on Iran

Financial Times, Oct. 21 -- Iran on Wednesday became the focus of new transatlantic divisions over suspected weapons of mass destruction as the US publicly disassociated itself from a European offer of incentives to Tehran to give up its uranium enrichment programme....

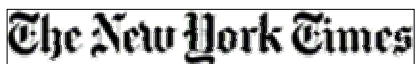
"We haven't bought on, signed on or endorsed it," Richard Boucher, State Department spokesman, said of the EU proposal



US frown on reported European nuclear offer to Iran

AFP, Oct. 20, Washington - The United States said it would be "concerned" by Iran's acquisition of any new nuclear technology, signaling opposition to a reported European offer to give Tehran a light-water reactor it proves it is not secretly developing atomic weapons. The State Department said the transfer of such technology would be problematic given Iran's past performance and failure to comply with international demands to come clean on details of its nuclear program, which the United States maintains is a cover for acquiring atomic arms. "We have long had concerns about Iran's acquisition of nuclear capability, of nuclear technology, because for many years we have seen a confirmed pattern of noncompliance with safeguards," spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters.

"We fundamentally have concerns about Iran acquiring more nuclear technology and capability."



U.S. highly skeptical that dialogue is worth trying

The New York Times, Oct. 16, Washington - The Bush administration on Friday acquiesced in a plan by three European nations to offer Iran a discussion on political ties and future economic and other benefits in return for an immediate suspension of its nuclear-fuel-enrichment efforts, European and American officials said...

According to officials familiar with the session, a four-page plan for Iran drafted by Britain, France and Germany was circulated and discussed but not formally adopted. The plan, various officials said, called for the British, French and Germans to tell Iran next week that if it suspended its uranium enrichment in November, and if this were verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency, a discussion would begin aimed at improving relations over the long term...

The Europeans would also want to discuss human rights in Iran and the problem of terrorism in the region. According to people familiar with the session, the main American representative at the talks, John R. Bolton, under secretary of state for arms control and international security, was highly skeptical that any such approach would work or was worth trying...



Germany, UK urge Iran to suspend nuclear program

The Associated Press, Oct. 19, London -- The foreign ministers of Britain and Germany on Tuesday urged Iran to indefinitely suspend its nuclear program and avoid a showdown next month with the U.N. nuclear agency. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and his German counterpart Joschka Fischer said the international community lacked confidence in Iran, which last year agreed to suspend uranium enrichment, but have since resumed testing, assembling and making centrifuges used in the process. "Iran has yet to give us the confidence we need about its intentions," Straw said at a joint news conference. "We cannot go on indefinitely but Iran could still give us that confidence by introducing an indefinite suspension of its enrichment and processing activities."



British Gov't warns Iran over nuclear ambitions

Agence France Presse, Oct. 19, London - Iran must "act decisively" to cease its nuclear programme or else face referral to the United Nations Security Council, the British government warned. Tehran had to act swiftly to allay concerns raised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) about its alleged to acquire nuclear weapons, International Security Minister Denis MacShane said. "Confidence cannot be restored unless Iran agrees to suspend its fuel cycle activity, including all centrifuge work and uranium conversion," MacShane told a meeting in London. "They are not necessary for a civil nuclear power generation programme but would give Iran the technologies which would help it towards a military nuclear capability." Iran stands accused of secretly trying to develop nuclear weapons, a charge it denies.

France calls for complete halt to Iran uranium enrichment

Agence France Presse, Oct. 16, Paris - France and its G8 partners should call for a complete suspension by Iran of its advanced uranium enrichment programme, the French foreign ministry said on Saturday. "Time is of the essence. France will continue to work with its partners and the Iranian authorities... towards the complete suspension by Iran of its enrichment and reprocessing activities," the ministry said in a press statement. A November 25 deadline for Iran to comply with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) demands to suspend uranium enrichment work is looming, with the possibility that Iran may be referred to the UN Security Council and face sanctions if it misses the deadline.



Russia wants to build more nuclear plants in Iran

Reuters, Oct. 15, Moscow - Russia will build more nuclear reactors for Iran when a diplomatic stand-off over its atomic programme subsides, Russia's atomic watchdog said on Friday. "The Iranian side has told us they want more nuclear reactors, and if the political aspect does not harm that, Russia will build more reactors there," said Andrei Malyshev, head of Russia's federal nuclear supervision service... "Our experts are currently discussing the construction of a second reactor. It's a very serious project," Malyshev said.



Following Zarqawi's footsteps in Iran

Newsweek, Oct. 17 - In the vice presidential debate, Dick Cheney said that after U.S. forces attacked Afghanistan seeking to roust Osama bin Laden, al-Zarqawi "migrated to Baghdad." But other U.S. officials say the Jordanian terrorist's contacts in neighboring Iran are probably more extensive than any dealings he had with Saddam. Sources close to Jordanian intelligence say al-Zarqawi has gone back and forth across the Iran-Iraq border since Saddam's regime fell. According to a

Jordanian intelligence briefing made available to NEWSWEEK, al-Zarqawi crossed the Iranian border after being wounded in Afghanistan in late 2001, was treated, then stayed in an Iranian safe house in the same town as fugitive Qaeda leaders.



US warns Iran against any support for Zarqawi

AFP, Oct. 18 - The United States warned Iran against providing any type of support to Al-Qaeda-linked foreign militant Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi and his Tawhid wal Jihad (Unity and Holy War) group, saying such backing would be a "very, very serious matter." The State Department declined to comment on allegations of an Iran-Zarqawi link, first claimed last week by Iraq's interim national intelligence chief Mohammed al-Shahwani and then reported by Newsweek magazine, but said Washington remained deeply concerned about Tehran's activity in Iraq. "All I would be able to say (about the accusations) is that we have generally been very concerned about some of the reports of Iranian activity in Iraq," spokesman Richard Boucher said.

UK parliamentarians debate EU-Iran dialogue



Iran Focus, London, Oct. 20 – Several members of Britain's House of Commons strongly criticized Tony Blair's government yesterday for its economic ties with Iran, at a time of growing concern over the clerical state's human rights violations and nuclear program.

The rebuke came during a Commons debate on European Union-Iran relations.

Former cabinet member Win Griffiths, Labour MP from Wales, called financial ties to Tehran unethical.

He said that the government's approach of constructive engagement had hit a dead-end adding that "after eight years, there has been little, if any, progress".

Mr. Griffiths also called for the removal of Iran's main Iranian opposition group, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), from the EU's list of terrorist organizations.

"There is a very strong case for the European Union to remove the terrorist tag, because they have been accepted as protected persons, and have said that they will not engage in or support terrorism or violence; they have also given up their arms", he said.

Touching on Iran's human rights record Sir Sydney Chapman, from the opposition Conservative Party, said, "At least 120 people have been publicly executed since March. It is on record that about 120,000 members of the (PMOI) have been executed in the past 20 years. One has only to study the articles in Iran's penal code to see how far that country disrespects human rights."

Dr. Rudi Vis, Labour MP for Golders Green, contended that the PMOI's presence on the terror list was a bad decision on the part of the UK government adding "I repeat what I see as the main contribution of today's debate: the request to the USA, the EU and the UK to remove the PMOI from the list of international terrorists. That would be a major achievement towards peace in the world and something in which the UK, the EU and the USA should be most interested." When Conservative MP Sir Teddy Taylor urged Whitehall to continue its engagement policy towards Iran, another Conservative MP, Graham Brady, retorted, "We must, however, now recognize that that strategy of engagement has nearly run into the sand. Iran has reneged on its commitments to the international community and to the International Atomic Energy Agency by continuing to pursue nuclear technology that would enable it to become a nuclear power."

Mr. Denis MacShane, the Foreign Office's Minister for Europe concluded the debate by saying that "Iran is top of the agenda". "I share the view that there are too many people in prison in Iran for making political statements, and too many executions have taken place, including the awful one of the 16-year-old girl", he added. Touching on Iran's so-called nuclear weapons program, the Minister stated: "In the past two years, the International Atomic Energy Agency has documented serious failures by Iran over 18 years to meet its safeguards obligations and be fully transparent with the agency. That has led to widespread concern about whether the ambitions of Iran's nuclear programme are, as the Iranian authorities claim, entirely peaceful. That is not simply a British, German, French or American concern: it is shared by the entire international community, as we have clearly seen from the actions of the IAEA board of governors, whose last six resolutions on Iran have all been adopted by consensus."



On Thursday Mr. MacShane called on Iran to comply with the latest resolution passed by the IAEA Board of Governors, calling on Iran to fully and unconditionally suspend its nuclear enrichment activities.

"Confidence cannot be restored unless Iran agrees to suspend its fuel cycle activity, including all centrifuge work and uranium conversion", MacShane told a meeting in London.

Commentaries, Analyses

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

People Power, Iranian-Style

The Wall Street Journal, Oct. 18, Commentary by Paulo Casaca --

Last April, on a tour of Iraq, I spent several days in a camp north-east of Baghdad populated by several thousand Iranians. They were members of Iranian People's Mujahedeen, an organization the regime in Tehran considers as its enemy number one, with America and Israel.

Arriving at Camp Ashraf after traveling around Iraq felt like reaching an oasis. Traffic police who imposed fines on speeding; Ashraf was the only place I found in Iraq where traffic rules were respected and enforced. People could move in peace and freedom. The urban infrastructure, such as water, sanitation and electricity, was very well maintained by the Iranians themselves.

The sprawling enclave looked like a microcosm of another Iran. Here, where all the road signs are in Farsi and English, I found an extraordinary collection of mainly middle class, university-educated activists united by their hatred of the Islamic fundamentalist regime in their homeland.

I was also struck by the cultural diversity: Dozens of well-stocked libraries, several theaters and movie halls, five orchestras and, according to Kamyar Izadpanah, a U.S.-educated composer, one of the best Persian music conservatories in the world. Two universities -- set up with the help of professors from Baghdad University -- teach a wide array of subjects from law to engineering.

About a third of these dissidents are women, and women hold senior leadership and management positions. One of them, the Mujahedeen's secretary general, Mojgan Parsai, studied computer science in the U.S. In Ashraf, women are proud of their achievements in gender equality. My most moving meeting was with former political prisoners, who described horrific torture and rape that they suffered at the hands of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

At the "terrorism museum" in the middle of the camp, an astonishingly large number of terrorist devices used by the Iranian regime to liquidate its opponents are on display. Photographs and grim statistics chronicle 450 acts of terrorism around the world attributed to Tehran's operatives -- irrefutable proof that these activists have been the victims of terrorism and the Iranian regime the perpetrator.

I left the camp with the clear impression that the Iranian Mujahedeen is a legitimate resistance movement that merits the support of the free world. In a region still dominated by intolerance, tyranny and blind fanaticism, this movement is advocating an Islam based on democratic governance, secularism, tolerance, and gender equality. The fact that the movement is led by a woman -- Maryam Rajavi, who lives near Paris -- only sharpens the contrast with a regime that bars women from high political office.

* * *

I recount my experience because I believe the Mujahedeen constitute our best chance to counter the growing Iranian threat. And counter it we must. While Iraq dominates the U.S. presidential campaign, it is Iran that is fast becoming the focal point of international concern. Rightly so. Iran is home to an Islamic fundamentalist regime that openly sponsors terrorism, foments violence in Iraq, develops long-range missiles, and has been caught "red-handed" concealing critical aspects of its advanced nuclear program.

Where does this leave the West's policy options? Some in Europe and in the U.S. -- oblivious to the evident failure of years of "constructive engagement" with Iran that only strengthened the more radical faction of the theocratic clique -- insist on continuing on the same path. But Iran's mullahs are proven masters in the art of taking the carrot and asking for more. If we don't change course, we may end up with nothing better than a promise of compliance that Iran -- like North Korea in the 1990s -- could secretly break. This is precisely what Iran did when the "EU-3" foreign ministers visited Tehran last October and struck an agreement with the Iranian leaders to suspend uranium enrichment. We now

know that the promise was never respected. The Iranian leaders' intransigence is to a large extent based on their perception of a widening gulf between the U.S. and Europe. This, Iranian strategists declare, creates a "security margin" for Tehran. They seem convinced that the trans-Atlantic divide will prevent any serious action against the Islamic Republic. The hard-line ayatollahs already ridicule the very idea of Security Council sanctions. In their view, trade rather than other concerns ultimately determine Europe's position on Iran, while the U.S. is bogged down in Iraq. This situation has provided Tehran with an exceptional window of opportunity that it hopes will be wide enough to take its nuclear weapons project beyond the point of no return. As long as the regime remains in power, Iran will continue to be a source of instability and terrorism. Europe has a grave moral and political responsibility to adopt a new, firm approach on Iran. The failure of past diplomatic and economic sanctions imposed on Iraq is no argument to foreclose the use of effective pressure against Iran, even though the current state of global oil markets would complicate any decision. But the West must start sending the right signals if its resolve is to be taken seriously in Tehran. It must stop sending trade missions to Iran, as both the U.K. and France recently did. And it must stop staging big diplomatic events to promote ties with the Iranian regime, as Germany did. There is, however, a much more effective way to obliterate the Iranian rulers' "margin of terror" -- what their "security margin" really means -- and that is to support the Iranian people's democratic aspirations. Western governments must speak out more forcefully in support of the millions of Iranians, particularly the young and women, who want to see a democratic, secular and pluralist government replace the current theocracy. It is my view, shared by more than 1,000 members of parliaments in Europe, that our first political step should be to end the international blacklisting of the mullahs' principal opposition movement -- the Iranian Mujahedeen.

Many in the U.S. Congress and prominent voices in international law endorse the call. Senior U.S. officials confirm that an exhaustive, 16-month investigation by several U.S. government agencies, including the State Department and the FBI, has exonerated members of the Iranian Mujahedeen of terrorist charges. Officials on both sides of the Atlantic are on the record as saying that the only reason why the group was put on the U.S. terrorism list in the first place was to send a "goodwill gesture" to the Iranian regime.

Let Iran's clerical rulers know that their "security margin" is history. That's the only way to save the world from cataclysmic options a few months, or years, down the road.

Mr. Casaca, a Socialist Euro-MP from Portugal, is president of the European Parliament's delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

TIME

Can Sanctions Deter Tehran?

Time, Oct. 21 - For one thing, it's far from clear that the divergent positions of Washington and Tehran can be reconciled. The Bush administration has made clear it has no intention of offering Iran concessions outside of the strict terms of a nuclear energy deal, but Tehran may be inclined to hold out for guarantees against any attempt to change its regime, and for a wider restoration of political and diplomatic relations with the West....

Should the European deal fail to interest Tehran, the next step for the U.S. and its allies would be to upbraid Iran at the UN Security Council and begin the process of pursuing comprehensive international sanctions against it... Sanctions would carry some weight, for the simple reason that even the hardliners in Tehran are desperate to reintegrate their economy with the West. Failure to generate jobs and wellbeing in Iran may be an even greater threat to the survival of the regime than the battle plans of Washington's neocons...

Much depends on the state of Iran's internal discussions over nuclear weapons. And on the back channel talks that will inevitably occur between Tehran and Washington, regardless of the state of public relations between the two: What with the fate of al-Qaeda detainees in Iran, the future of Iranian resistance groups dubbed terrorists by the State Department but nonetheless kept intact by the U.S. in Iraq, and Tehran's role in helping stabilize post-Saddam Iraq, they have plenty to talk about even before they touch on nuclear weapons.

Los Angeles Times

Reining in Iran's nuke-program needs ingenuity

Los Angeles Times, Oct. 20, by Patrick Clawson, Washington - Iran is known to be deploying long-range missiles that would be militarily useless unless

equipped with a nuclear warhead. And it has insisted that it will continue to enrich uranium in defiance of a request by the United Nations to stop.

What's more, President Bush and Sen. John F. Kerry both have said an Iranian nuclear bomb would be unacceptable to the United States; Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's rhetoric is even tougher. Given all this, what are the prospects that US military force — or Israeli military force with tacit or public US backing — will be used to stop Iran's nuclear program?

The first hope is that Iran's program can still be stopped via diplomacy. It is not out of the question that Iran will step back from its nuclear program — scaling it back and slowing it down, if not dismantling it entirely — if



confronted by the international community with a stark choice: Penalties if the nuclear program continues, benefits if it is stopped. But such a choice, of course, is effective only if Iran believes that the penalties for proceeding will be serious — and it is hard to come up with a set of meaningful and plausible penalties that do not involve the military. Comprehensive sanctions like those imposed on Iraq seem unlikely. Who would propose banning Iran's 2.5 million barrels a day of oil exports when oil prices are so high? So is military force a realistic option? An air raid on Iran's nuclear facilities, similar to Israel's 1981 raid on Iraq's Osirak reactor, would face many problems. First, we probably do not know about all of Iran's many facilities. What we do know shows that Iran's nuclear program is physically dispersed and designed to be rebuilt after raids. We can hope that Iran would react to a raid by deciding that its nuclear program was not worth the cost, but if Iran decided instead to rebuild, then our raid might only slow the program by two years. Plus, if we struck, Iran could retaliate by laying mines in and around the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance to the Gulf. That could drive world oil prices even higher. And then there's the fact that we could end up paying a high price in international public opinion for a raid against Iran, jeopardizing the willingness of other governments to join with us in putting pressure on Iran. In other words, a raid on Iran's nuclear facilities might buy some time, but only at a considerable cost. An invasion of Iran is even less appealing than an Osirak-style raid. There is the obvious cost in lives and dollars, as well as the sobering lesson from Iraq about postwar stability. What America can do — both on its own and with allies — is to contain and deter Iran. Steps to this end could include increasing US military presence around Iran; putting nuclear weapons on US ships off Iran's coast; reinforcing the region's protection against missiles and extending an explicit nuclear umbrella to those threatened by Iran. None of these measures is as dramatic as an air raid, but as a package they could show Tehran that Iranians will be less secure if it pursues nuclear weapons. Containment and deterrence can be used to press Iran to accept a diplomatic solution, and they also enhance the ability of the US to apply military force later if need be.

In short, there are a wide range of military options to step up pressure on Iran if we think creatively. We do not need to start by dropping bombs.

Exporter of terrorism

South Florida Sun Sentinel, Oct. 18, By Nasser Rashidi - The war in Iraq has developed into what can be viewed as a battle between the free world and Islamic fundamentalism. The mullahs in Iran wish to destroy the hopes of the Iraqi people for freedom and democracy by provoking instability in Iraq and eventually to bring an Islamic fundamentalist government to power. Iraq is the arena where international terrorism demonstrates its real face -- Islamic fundamentalism -- and its actual sponsor, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Let's review some information about Tehran's rulers: The mullahs' leaders have kept up their overt rhetoric to fuel insurgency in Iraq, while covertly they provide logistical support as well as manpower. Millions of dollars in material support and thousands of intelligence agents, revolutionary guards and mercenaries have found their way into Iraq across the long porous borders between the two countries. In mid-June a group from Teheran called "the Committee Commemorating the Martyrs of Islam's Global Movement" claimed that they registered about 15,000 Iranians, including members of the

mullahs' intelligence agencies, for suicide bombing operations in Iraq, as well as in other lands of the region. On June 25, Pakistani border police arrested some 18 men trying to sneak into Pakistan on false Bangladeshi passports, three of them being Iranian agents. About the same time, Iraqi authorities rounded up eight Iranian intelligence officers in Najaf, and one other, a high-ranking officer in the Revolutionary Guards, was caught while attempting to sabotage an oil pipeline. Iran's mullahs have plenty to gain from the unrest, instability, political turmoil, and economic failures of Iraq and Afghanistan among other countries in the region. The exportation of Iran's Islamic revolution serves to cover-up the mullahs' own instability and fragile position in Iran and is the flip side of the coin of their ongoing policy of domestic suppression. Peace and stability in Iraq and throughout the entire region is only possible through an all out confrontation of Iran's regime. The mullahs' hope is that in this election year the United States will not take the lead in any initiations beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. Banking on this, the Iranian regime is pushing its luck on both fronts: extending suppression inside Iran and exporting fundamentalism and terrorism outside Iran, particularly into Iraq. Europe and the United States must join forces and take a firm stand against the fundamentalist regime of Iran. They must refuse to be intimidated by the mullahs' terrorist acts, and refuse any type of negotiations as long as Iran continues to sponsor terrorism, acquire weapon of mass destruction and violate the rights of its people. There is now a pragmatic solution, centered on the Iranian opposition, to uproot Islamic fundamentalism once and for all. The Western countries should support this international movement and the efforts of Iranian people for a regime change

Nasser Rashidi is a human rights activist with the National Coalition of Pro-Democracy Advocates in Washington, D.C.

The Washington Times

Iran ran away with the bomb

Washington Times, Oct. 19, by Arnold Biechman - Well, the talks and meetings will go on and on to the next Ramadan and the Ramadan after that and Iran will go on working on its nuclear arms program until it has the Bomb. There will be no deal with Iran no matter how costly nuclear bomb manufacture might be. With oil prices going through the roof, money is not a problem now or in the foreseeable future...

Incentives? Hah. Iran is the second-largest producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and holds 10 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and the second-largest (after Russia) natural gas reserves. Incentives? Hah. Iran earns an estimated \$900 million for every \$1 per barrel increase in the price of its oil. And with oil up in the \$50+ per barrel range, Iran is awash in cash and can do what it wants as bomb maker and bomb supplier. Incentives? The only incentives that might matter would be the threat of sanctions. Who has the will to push for sanctions? France, Germany? Hah. Who has the power, let alone the will, to enforce sanctions if they ever came to a Security Council vote? As far as I can see, it's all going Iran's way. Iran is stronger today than a decade ago...

Iran is today the dominant land power in the Middle East militarily and economically. As leader of Shi'ite Islam, Iran must be delighted at the war in Iraq. With its new missiles, Iran has shown it could project its power far from home, and not only by financing the Hezbollah terror squads. The Iranian people may be unhappy with the clerical dictatorship but there is little they can now do about it. Far more serious, Iran undertook its nuclear program in September 2002 under a decree of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and is on its way to being a nuclear power if not one already. And as far as I can see, nobody can stop Iran despite a resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adopted last September which called upon Iran "immediately [to] suspend all enrichment-related activities." According to an Iranian exile resistance group, Iran has secret sites all over the country engaged in nuclear activity. One secret site at Arak, about 154 miles southwest of Tehran, produces heavy water and plutonium. A sufficiently powerful heavy water reactor can be used to turn uranium into bomb-usable plutonium without requiring enrichment facilities. In Isfahan, there is the Center of Nuclear Research. There are other sites about which little is known. These plants are capable of producing three nuclear weapons a year.

Iran seems unstoppable. It has lots of scientific talent at home and abroad for hire, lots of theological-imperial ambitions, lots of money, lots of eager sellers and money lenders in the European Union and in Russia. And that's how wars begin.

TIME

Tempting Tehran

Time, Oct. 17 -- On one subject, at least, Europe and

the U.S. are united: neither wants Iran to get the bomb. But officials on both sides of the Atlantic are pessimistic about a deal with Tehran that could prevent it from developing the capacity to build a nuclear weapon. "We're giving it another try, but there's a lot of skepticism," says one European diplomat. After G-8 members met last week to devise a package of inducements and threats, reports emerged that Britain, France and Germany would offer Tehran new trade talks and access to Russian nuclear fuel, if the country halted its nuclear ambitions. Tehran appeared to reject the move. The Europeans had hoped their agreement with Iran last year to cease work on uranium enrichment — Tehran says it's for peaceful purposes — might lead to rapprochement.



But "every time we went, there was another lie," says the diplomat. Meanwhile, buildings in Iraq full of equipment useful for making atomic bombs have been "systematically dismantled" since the U.S.-led invasion, according to a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). A Western diplomat familiar with the report says the theft includes "equipment that would be useful for spare parts for a nuclear program in a country under sanctions, such as Iran."

Europe really doesn't have much to offer Tehran for good behavior. Most European countries are trading with Iran already, evidenced by last month's reported €3.25 billion agreement by Spanish and Anglo-Dutch oil concerns to exploit Iran's natural gas reserves.

Saeed Laylaz, a reformist analyst in Tehran, says only an end to U.S. sanctions and admission to the World Trade Organization might tempt the regime — something the U.S. is unlikely to support.

Without a breakthrough, it's likely the IAEA will refer Iran next month to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions. Some diplomats are worried about what they call their nightmare scenario: an air strike by Israel against Iran's nuclear facilities, to which Washington would acquiesce, inflaming anti-U.S. feeling among Muslims. Says a British official: "There's worry that a crisis is looming." On that grim prospect there is also wide agreement.