

USADI Dispatch

A publication of the U.S. Alliance for Democratic Iran

Volume 1, No. 35

Thursday, July 1, 2004

USADI Commentary

Ayatollahs and US Presidential Election

Some observers believe the election season in the United States is forcing the administration to refrain from taking firm action against Iran's increasingly threatening and rouge behavior. The logic: Any such escalation could lead to a crisis the administration would not welcome. If true, this approach could undermine regional stability and our long term security interests.

Tehran, no doubt, is counting on this. The cunning mullahs in Iran are notorious for manipulating the domestic political climate in other countries, and since 1979, the US presidential election has been the focus of their attempts to blackmail our policy makers. This election appears to be no different.

Many in Iran's leadership believe they have a window of opportunity until November to advance their secret nuclear weapons program beyond the point of no return and make their presence in Iraq irreversible. The mullahs feel the US preoccupation with Iraq's security will prevent it from doing anything concrete to counter Iran's nuclear mischief and meddling in Iraq.

The mullahs do not operate on the basis of our election year calendar. They have one of their own and are working hard to get to the end zone before their perceived window of opportunity is closed. The recent announcement that Iran would continue with the uranium enrichment process, the dubious capture of eight British servicemen last week, and photographing sensitive locations of New York city by two Iranian guards of the Iran's mission to the United Nations are just a few examples of Tehran's brazenness.

Washington must make it crystal clear to Iran's ruling tyrants that regional stability and the security concerns of the United States far outweigh any presidential campaign considerations.

The world would face an unprecedented calamity if Iran – the most active state sponsor of terrorism – went nuclear. Iranian meddling in Iraq would be of even greater repercussions given the impact it could have on the security of Iraq and the whole region.

More importantly, the theocratic regime in Iran has never been more isolated among Iranians. The rising influence of the most extreme figures, such as former and current commanders of the revolutionary guards, in the government is an attempt by the mullahs to get a second lease on life. It is not surprising that since February they have cracked down harshly on protests and strikes in different parts of Iran and have stepped up their activities in the nuclear front and in Iraq.

All the parties involved in the election must be unanimous in denouncing Iran's rouge behavior and pledge their firm stance against Iran's suppression of its citizens, nuclear weapons program, and export of fundamentalism to Iraq and beyond. They should also unambiguously declare their support for Iran's anti-fundamentalist opposition movement that is working to unseat the tyrant mullahs. The failure to do so would be seen by Tehran as a sign of weakness.

Relations between UK and Iran worsen

LONDON - Relations between London and Tehran were called into question on Thursday after Britain accused Iran of forcing eight British servicemen and their boats to cross the national boundary from Iraq ahead of their capture in Iranian waters.

The six marines and two navy sailors were detained for three days in Iran last week, during which they were paraded blindfold on television and forced to publicly apologize for what they called a "mistake".

Iran insisted that the boats were intercepted only after they entered Iranian waters on the Shatt al-Arab waterway that divides southern Iraq from Iran.

Britain says the men maintain they did not stray over the maritime border but were "forcibly escorted" by Iranian troops.

"This really does create an extraordinary strain on Iranian-British relations," opposition Conservative foreign affairs spokesman Michael Ancram said on Thursday.

"We were required to apologize for what appeared to have been trespassing into Iranian waters," he told BBC radio. "Our servicemen were paraded blindfolded and humiliated."

"If it's true, then at the very least we must expect a full apology from the Iranians and a swift return of the equipment," Ancram said.

Iran had "a lot to lose" after working to improve relations with the West, he said, labeling the episode as "outrageous".

In a strongly-worded written statement on Wednesday, British Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon dismissed the Iranian version of events.

"In a recent debriefing the crews have said that they were operating inside the Iraqi border and were forcibly escorted into Iranian territorial waters," he said.

"Our assessment continues and will be greatly assisted by the retrieval of navigational information in the Global Positioning System equipment carried by the crews," he said.

He continued: "We are very concerned about the blindfolding of the men and have made representations to the government of Iran.

The eight servicemen were released on Friday, and their detention and public display angered London and threatened to derail relations between the countries.

AFP, July 1, 2004

The US Alliance for Democratic Iran (USADI), is an independent, non-profit organization, which aims to advance a US policy on Iran that will benefit America's interests, through supporting Iranian people's aspirations for a democratic, secular, and peaceful government, free of tyranny, fundamentalism, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism. The USADI is not affiliated with any government agencies, political groups or parties.

1201 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20004

Tel: 202-661-4675, Fax: 202-318-0402, E-mail: dispatch@usadيران.org

Wall Street Journal (Editorial)

July 1, 2004

What's Iran Up To?

That's what U.S. authorities wondered as they expelled two security guards at the Iranian mission to the United Nations last weekend, after the mission was warned repeatedly against permitting its employees to videotape the Statue of Liberty, the subway, bridges and other New York landmarks.

For a dismaying answer, consider the statement made two weeks ago in Tehran by one Hassan Abassi, head of the Revolutionary Guards' Center for Doctrinaire Affairs of National Security Outside Iran's Borders. (Quite the job description.) "We will map 29 sensitive sites in the United States and give the information to all international terror organizations," the New York Sun quotes Mr. Abassi as saying.

In a June 17 report, Memri -- the Middle East Media Research Institute -- reports a nearly identical statement by Mr. Abassi about compiling a target list of "29 sensitive sites." And also: "We have a strategy drawn up for the destruction of Anglo-Saxon civilization."

That strategy would certainly explain its all-out sprint to develop nuclear weapons, which Iran could possess in about a year unless the West acts to stop it. Also relevant is Tehran's recent announcement that it has allocated billion to resume developing long-range missile systems that can reach targets in Europe and the U.S. Then there's the 9/11 Commission's disclosure last month of Iran-al Qaeda links.

All of which suggests that maybe it's time for U.S. policy to more forcefully and directly support democrats in Iran who want to liberate their country from this terror-sponsoring regime.

Fox News

Jun 29, 2004

Iran Ready to Take It to the Brink

WASHINGTON — With a dubious nuclear technology program, the capture of British sailors last week and reports of meddling in fledgling Iraqi affairs, Iran — a member of the now-notorious "axis of evil" — appears to be testing the waters to see how far it can push the West. Some foreign policy analysts say Washington may find it difficult to fight back.

"The costs of the Iraq war are higher than just the soldiers who are dying and the money we are spending," said Joseph Cirincione, director of the non-proliferation project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq squandered much of the U.S. authority in the Middle East and may have damaged America's ability to get help from Muslim states to fend off threats from Iran, he said.

"We really destroyed our relationship with the Arab world, and we are now in a much weaker position with Iran," he said.

"Iran is drawing a line in the sand," said Alireza Jafarzadeh of Strategic Policy Consulting. Jafarzadeh, formerly linked to the Washington, D.C.-based National Council of Resistance of Iran, which has been called a terrorist organization by the State Department, has won much support on Capitol Hill for his work as a staunch watchdog of Iran's nuclear weapons programs.

"Iran clearly wants all players in Iraq to know that the bigger and more populated and stronger neighbor is the big bully in the alley," he said.

The National Council of Resistance of Iran has claimed hundreds of nuclear experts are working directly for Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and that Iran seeks to have a nuclear bomb within two years. Last week, FOX News showed satellite images of two locations in Iran that are suspected of being sites for Iran's continued efforts to produce nuclear weapons. ...

Last week, experts warned the House International Relations Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia that a nuclear bomb in the hands of Iran would spell imminent disaster for the United States.

"A nuclear-capable Iran, under their present leadership, could be an unparalleled earthquake, with shockwaves that could rock the foundations of U.S. vital interests in the region, at home and around the world," said Paul Leventhal, founder of the Nuclear Control Institute. Leventhal added that Iran's support of terrorist organizations could lead to the further proliferation of nuclear materials.

Reports indicate that Iranians are helping insurgents in Iraq fight U.S. forces and are terrorizing Iraqis aiding the new interim government, and before that, the Coalition Provisional Authority. Rep. Curt Weldon, R-Pa., who has been keeping a close eye on Iranian weapons acquisition and sales for years, emphasized this problem in recent Capitol Hill hearings.

"In my opinion, the bulk of what we are seeing in terms of unrest in Iraq is being carried out both by Iranians, by those groups being supported by Iran's money and by those organizations that are determined not to have Iraq to be a stable nation," he said....