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USADI Commentary

Ending Tyranny in Iran

In his State of the Union Address, President Bush described Iran under the theocratic rule of mullahs as "the world's primary state sponsor of terror, pursuing nuclear weapons while depriving its people of the freedom they seek and deserve."

"And to the Iranian people, I say tonight: As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you," Mr. Bush declared. At last, a clear distinction was made between the tyrannical regime ruling Iran and the Iranian people.

This is a welcome, albeit much overdue, recognition that lines of separation must be drawn between the Iranian people and the ruling regime in Iran. It was also very significant that the two-decade long stand of Iranian people for their liberty was recognized in President Bush's address. Given the immediacy of threats posed by Tehran, however, more is needed.

The advocates of appeasement of the clerical regime make a distorted case of "Iranian national pride" to explain away the mullahs' drive for nuclear weapons. This absurd assertion flies against the reality. Indeed, the national pride of Iranians is best embodied in their continued resistance against the mullahs.

Iranians see this regime as the most anti-Iranian force bent on eradicating their national identity through destroying Iran's social, cultural, and economic fabric; plundering their national wealth; and auctioning their national resources in exchange for diplomatic favors and the blacklisting of the opposition groups.

In case of Iran, it is a strategic imperative to put into practice the grand ideals of expansion of freedom and ending tyrannies President Bush introduced in his inaugural speech. Iran's increasing rogue behavior at home and abroad presents a present and clear danger to expansion of democracy, regional stability global security.

At home, the crackdown on political and social dissent continues while public executions, torture of dissidents and floggings have increased. Despite growing suppression, dissident activists are finding new ways to expand the resistance front against the ruling regime. They, however, need the diplomatic and political support of Washington and other western democracies to better confront the clerical regime.

This support must by necessity include reaching out to anti-fundamentalist Iranian opposition groups. To his end, a meaningful first step would be to end the terrorist designation of Iran's main opposition group, the Iranian People's Mujahedeen.

In a recent appearance at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, Ambassador Mark Palmer, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and currently a member of Committee on the Present Danger, remarked that: "Whatever the history of the MEK... if serious people in the CIA and elsewhere come to the conclusion that it is not today a terrorist group, we should de-list them and work with them."

Meanwhile, Tehran has shown no intention of letting go of its drive for nuclear weapons, a main pillar of its expansionist fundamentalist ideology. The EU-Tehran talks are not advancing and regime is vowing it will not stop its uranium enrichment process. Thursday in Paris, Iran's leading opposition coalition, the National Council of Resistance revealed that Tehran has obtained the materials and expertise to make the triggers for an atomic bomb.

Iran's shadow looms large in Iraq. Tehran has an elaborate and multi-phased agenda to gradually hijack Iraq's democratization process. It should and could be stopped. Red flags should be raised when leaders of a regime known for holding un-democratic and un-representative sham elections, become fervent advocates of democratic elections in Iraq.

Let's recall that within two years after the 1979 revolution, the clerical regime consolidated itself by purging the liberal wing of the regime and cracking down on democratic opposition. By early 1981, Iran had turned into a full-fledged theocracy. Now Tehran is actively working to do the same to Iraq's tenuous march toward democracy. The Iraqi leadership should take measures to shield Iraq's nascent democracy from Iran's machinations.

Iran should be recognized by its people, not by the terror-sponsoring fundamentalist tyrants ruling it. And people of Iran should be recognized by their struggle for freedom. This recognition, however, must be translated into specific practical measures in the framework of a comprehensive policy toward Iran. This policy must ensure the unseating of the clerical regime by Iranians themselves as a necessary step toward elimination of "conditions that feed radicalism and ideologies of murder" in the world.

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.

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Iran Nears Bomb Production With Nuclear Trigger Capacity

PARIS, Feb 3 (AFP) - Iran has obtained the materials and expertise to make the triggers for an atomic bomb, bringing closer its goal of acquiring nuclear weapons later this year, the main Iranian opposition grouping said in Paris Thursday.

Citing secret sources inside Iran's nuclear development program, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) said that Tehran has produced or bought from abroad quantities of polonium-210 and beryllium -- two elements required for building a "neutron initiator." It has also developed the know-how to make a "neutron generator" which is another key part of the neutron initiator, the NCRI said.

A neutron initiator starts the chain reaction that leads to nuclear fission, and along with the nuclear fuel and the delivery system is an essential part of an atomic bomb. "Tehran has already succeeded in using beryllium in conjunction with polonium-210 for large-scale laboratory testing purposes, and is getting very close to the point of industrial production," Mohammad Mohaddessin, the NCRI's foreign affairs committee chairman, told a news conference.

"All these activities have been hidden from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) ... They reflect an unrelenting effort to obtain nuclear weapons ... Tehran is advancing toward critical stages in its quest for a nuclear bomb," Mohaddessin said.

Mohaddessin cited the names of senior officials in Iran's defense ministry and Atomic Energy Agency who he said were responsible for acquiring the two elements. They include deputy defense minister Seyyed Ali Hosseini Tash -- "the official in charge of producing weapons of mass destruction."

In 2004 Iran secretly imported 20 kilograms of beryllium from a foreign country, and it now has enough to "produce initiators for a dozen nuclear Bombs," Mohaddessin said. He refused to name the supplying country but said all its information had been passed on to the IAEA and interested governments. The beryllium was imported by a front company -- named as the San'at Gostar Majd Company -- which was set up "to justify any possible revelations and inquiries by the IAEA ... and lend support to (the government's) claim that the work is for peaceful purposes," Mohaddessin said.

The polonium-210 was being produced by irradiation of the metal bismuth, the NCRI said. "Tehran has lied to the IAEA that it has not produced polonium-210 in the last 12 years," said Mohaddessin. The NCRI also produced maps showing a complex called Lavizan II, which is situated in a military zone about 25 kilometers (17 miles) northwest of Tehran city centre.

According to Mohaddessin, Lavizan II is being used by the Iranian government to produce beryllium needed for the nuclear initiators, but also to enrich warhead uranium "via laser technology." "The main problem holding the regime back is that it still has an insufficient quantity of enriched uranium. This is their main priority now -- getting enough uranium," he said.

The Washington Post
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Rice Says U.S. Won't Join Europe in Iran Nuclear Talks

LONDON, Feb. 3 -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Thursday that the United States would rebuff European efforts to bring it into negotiations with Iran aimed at preventing the Islamic state from developing nuclear weapons.

Flying to Europe for her first trip abroad as secretary, she told reporters that the United States was confronting the theocratic government in Tehran in "a variety of ways" with "a variety of different partners" to end its nuclear weapons ambitions, support for Islamic extremism, interference in Iraq and human rights violations. Her unusually strong words signaled that the Bush administration would take a more robust stand against Iran during the president's second term. "It's not the absence of anybody's involvement that's keeping the Iranians from knowing what they need to do," Rice told reporters.

"They need to live up to their obligations. They need to agree to verification and to stop trying to hide activities under cover of civilian nuclear power."... Rice told reporters... that Iranian behavior on other issues was "not acceptable" and "out of step" with both other nations and a region that is embarking on political change... "What we support is that the Iranian people should have a chance to determine their own future, and right now, under this regime, they have no opportunity to determine their own future," Rice said... She stopped short of calling for the ouster of Iran's ruling clerics... But in unusually strong language, Rice said Iran's treatment of its own people is "something to be loathed." Citing President Bush's State of the Union address Wednesday, she said the Iranian people "deserve better."

In his speech, Bush said, "To the Iranian people, I say tonight: As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you."

When pressed on whether Bush's statement meant a new policy on so-called regime change, Rice said, "Policy is that the United States in a variety of ways and with a variety of different partners is seeking to deal with the destabilizing effects of Iranian behavior -- Iranian behavior toward terrorism, Iranian behavior on nuclear weapons as well as nuclear power, Iranian behavior in trying to deal with Iraq in ways that are not transparent."...