

# NEWS ON IRAN

No. 26 National Council of Resistance of Iran - Foreign Affairs Committee January 23, 1995

## DOMESTIC

### Protests, strikes

*Corriere della Sera*, Jan. 22 - The opposition National Council of Resistance said that hundreds were killed or wounded by the security forces during riots in a football match in Tehran. Some among 120,000 fans began to chant anti-government slogans. The Pasdaran charged the crowd, using tear gas and electric batons. The Guards caused a disaster. This proves the existence of an active opposition force in Iran. The Iranian government tried to play down the incident and says it was not political. But what actually happened at the stadium remains a mystery.

Reuters, Jan. 21 - Rioting broke out at a football match between Iran's two top teams, Pirouzi and Esteghlal, and fans set some seats on fire at a Tehran stadium... An Iranian opposition group, the National Council of Resistance of Iran, said in a statement sent to Reuters in Nicosia that riots were political and that crowds were chanting anti-government slogans. It said many were killed or wounded...

Voice of Mojahed, Jan. 20 - A demonstration broke out in the northern city of Astara when lights went out during a boxing match. Angry spectators charged officials and assaulted them. The Guards arrested several protesters. Scores were also wounded.

Voice of Mojahed, Jan. 18 - Rising waters of the Caspian sea have flooded and damaged many homes in the city of Astara. Due to the authorities' inaction to help the residents, sporadic protesters have erupted in the city through out the week.

Voice of Mojahed, Jan. 18 - Workers at Lowshan factory in the northern Gilan province staged a protest against the privatization of the factory and the firing of many workers. Some 1,500 workers staged a strike.

### Rising prices, falling rial

Voice of Mojahed, Jan. 21 - The campaign to control prices has caused tremendous chaos in the distribution of commodities and their prices throughout the country. Goods offered by government cooperatives cost two to three times more than their official prices. Vegetable oil, 75 cents a kilo, is sold for \$1.30 a kilo at cooperatives. Copper, 80 cents a kilo, is sold at \$3.75 and Aluminum, 90 cents a kilo is sold at \$1.85.

*Ettela'at*, Jan. 22 - Rial continued to fall. A U.S. dollar traded for 3,400 rials. Last week it sold for 3,150 rials. The Bahar-e Azadi gold coin exceeded 400,000 rials (\$1,330). This marks a 120,000 rial (70%) increase relative to December.

*Salam*, Jan. 22 - A retired employee writes: "In 1980, before retirement, I received 140,000 rials (\$1,850)\* a month. Then, a kilogram of beef cost \$1.85. My salary then is \$43.00\*\* now, but the price of a kilo of beef has increased 40-fold.

### Clampdown

Israeli radio, Jan. 18 - For the first time since the ban on satellite antennas became law, the interior minister Besharati said that the satellite dish owners have only two weeks to voluntarily remove them. He said the state security forces will begin their task to remove the antennas in two weeks, adding, "This campaign is on top of the interior ministry's agenda."

### Corruption

*Salam*, Jan. 22 - The head of the national auditing organization said that during investigations on privatizing 15 industrial factories, the authorities have come across some irregularities, from which a number of individuals have made huge profits.

### Bazargan's death

NCR Secretariat, Jan. 20 - Recalling that Bazargan's political philosophy totally contradicted that of the Iranian Resistance, NCR President Massoud Rajavi offered his condolences to Bazargan's family. He added: In 1985, when Bazargan was in Europe, I sincerely asked him not again return to Khomeini and under his shameful rule. But he did not accept my advice. Repeatedly and in many messages to Mr. Bazargan, with whom the Mojahedin parted ways thirty-some years ago, I emphasized that he will never again find a place within the clerical regime and that the Iranian Resistance will have to pay a heavy and bloody price for his support for the mullahs.

Indeed, until the very last days of his life, the criminal mullahs did not accord any possibility for and freedom of political action to the man, whom Khomeini at the outset of his rule had demagogically described as the "government of the Imam Zaman (the twelfth Shiite Imam)."

The 14-year life and political conduct of Bazargan clearly reflects the irreformability and the height of the clerical regime's ignobility and demagoguery. Fortunately, during the last days of his life, Mr. Bazargan in an interview with the German daily *Frankfurter Rundschau*, unequivocally stated that the clerical regime is irreformable and stressed that its popular base is no more than five percent.

Reuters, Jan. 20 - Mehdi Bazargan, Iran's first prime minister under Khomeini, died of a heart attack on Friday in Switzerland, aged 86, relatives and colleagues said. Bazargan was taken ill after he arrived at Zurich airport from Iran on his way to the United States for treatment for heart disease. He was taken to a hospital by helicopter but was pronounced dead on arrival.

The original Mujahideen Khalq, a group that... challenged the clerical government, started as a splinter group of youth from his Freedom Movement. The Mujahideen, who later moved to Iraq, denounced Bazargan for his middle-of-the-road positions, which they said played into the hands of the government.

## FOREIGN

### Diplomatic row

Reuters, Jan. 19 - Norway on Thursday urged Iran to lift the death edict imposed on the British author Salman Rushdie and said it was assessing its relations with Tehran. Norway recalled its ambassador for consultations on Monday in the latest twist to a diplomatic row between the two countries sparked by the shooting in Norway of Rushdie's publisher in 1993. "We cannot accept the upholding of the fatwa or death sentence imposed on Salman Rushdie and all those who have participated in the publication of his book," Foreign Minister Bjoern Tore Godal told parliament... "This fatwa violates generally recognized human rights principles and the most fundamental norms of international law with respect to intergovernmental relations," Godal said.

### Nuclear quest

*Guardian*, Jan. 19 - Iran poses the greatest danger of nuclear proliferation in the post-cold war era and the international community needs to watch carefully to ensure that it does not break the rules, warned Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary.

Addressing the Commons foreign affairs committee on nuclear policy, Mr. Hurd said that Iran, though a party to the non-proliferation treaty (NPT), could not be trusted... "Given the general attitude of Iran to the region and the kind of policies and states she supports, she is the main danger," Mr. Hurd said.

### History's verdict?

*Ressalat*, Jan. 18 - Because it is an oppressor regime, the U.S. government will not last; this is the history's verdict. When Imam Khomeini used to say "the shah must go," some intellectuals were cynical. Now that the exalted leader, Khamenei, has stated that America is on its way out, one must believe that prediction.

### State Department report criticized

VOA, Jan. 12 - A recent U.S. State Department report on Iran's main opposition group, the People's Mujahideen, has ignited debate between Washington's foreign policy establishment and Capitol Hill... The drafters of the report refused to speak with the Mujahideen to hear their side of the story, despite a request from more than 100 legislators to do so. As a result, the report has been criticized by many legislators... Marvin Zonis, professor of international political economy at the University of Chicago argues that it would be in the U.S. interest to begin a dialogue with the Mujahideen. Zonis: "We have a brutal regime (in Iran). Naturally you are not going to get a lot of Iranian public opinion telling you they are in

favor of the Mujahideen when the regime has killed so many of their supporters...

"What difference does it make whether the Mujahideen has supporters or not. This is a group of people who have carried the burden of the organized opposition to the clerical rule since the overthrow of the shah and they continue to be willing to do that..."

"They remain the most organized, the most credible, the most hostile to the clerics than any other Iranian opposition group. The other Iranian opposition groups have basically fallen into 'quietude' and there is not much action on their part.

"You can write a report on the Mujahideen and conclude that they don't adopt your values. You can write a report on the Mujahideen and do research and conclude that they are not anyone's favorite opposition group. The point is, however, they exist, they in many ways parallel the interests of the United States and other Western States. And I believe that they should be incorporated into discussion about future of Iran."

## FEATURE

"Non-oil Exports, Mirage or Reality," *Iran Zamin*, No. 35, January 19, 1995;

by Parvin Abdi-pour

*Excerpts:*

Over the years, Iranian government propaganda has fueled the debate over non-oil exports as a means to reduce the country's dependence on oil revenues. Most experts say that oil, Iran's only source of income, will run out in 15 years.

A look at the official figures on non-oil exports from 1979 to 1988, however, shows that these exports have amounted to a meager \$6 bn. Out of this sum, carpets have lead the way with \$2.7 bn. Pistachios, furs, and Caviar have been other major exports. These exports obviously consist of more traditional goods as opposed to industrial products.

Despite much fanfare about the "strategy to expand non-oil exports," from 1989 to 1993, these exports were about \$12 bn., a far cry from the projected goal of \$18 bn. in the first five-year-plan. Industrial products were supposed to have been \$9 bn. In reality, however, they amounted to only a little more than \$1 bn.

Many, even within the ruling regime, question the targets set in the second five-year-plan which Rafsanjani presented to the Majlis. *Salam* of January 3 writes: "Is the projection in the second (five-year) plan of \$27.5 bn. worth of non-oil exports attainable?..."

"Some say that our country's exports are more traditional in nature and as such should not be encouraged because these exports are the result of compulsory hard labor of our citizens. Our relative advantage in producing these goods is in reality "an advantage in desperation." For instance, we make carpets and trade six of them for one car. The same car is manufactured in Japan in 16 person/hours, while we employ several people for several years to produce one carpet."

This situation demonstrates that Iran's non-oil exports are of low productivity. They were only \$1.5 bn in 1990. In comparison, Taiwan's was \$66 bn. in the same year. Evidently, the regime's propaganda about "a strategy to expand non-oil exports" is more intended for propaganda purposes than to find a genuine solution for the future. Fundamentally speaking, a viable strategy can only take shape within the framework of a democratic and popular system of government.

\* 1980 official exchange rate of 75 rials to a dollar.

\*\* 1995 official exchange rate of 3,300 rials to a dollar

