

NEWS ON IRAN

No. 27 National Council of Resistance of Iran - Foreign Affairs Committee January 30, 1995

DOMESTIC

Protests, strikes

Voice of Mojahed, Jan. 27 - Workers at the Ceramics factory in Kazeroon, Fars province, staged a strike for the non-payment of their wages. Fearing the spread of the protests, authorities promised to give them their six-month back pay.

Voice of Mojahed, Jan. 27 - Students at the Teacher Training School in Khoy, northwest Iran, staged a protest, demanding that they be allowed to wear Kurdish attire. Officials opposed the move and arrested a number of activist students. Enraged students retaliated by leaving the school *en masse*. The move compelled the authorities not to expel the arrested students.

Iran Zamin, Jan. 26 - On January 21, people in 12 villages in the Alavi Kola region, northern Iran, clashed with officials of Omid cooperative which provides services to the area. The cooperative sustained heavy damages.

The regime sent its Pasdaran to quell the protest, but residents, furious over the authorities' embezzlement of their investments, clashed with the security forces.

Iran Zamin, Jan. 26 - On January 19 and 20, teenagers in the city of Kela-Chaay, northern Iran, poured out onto the streets and began chanting anti-government slogans. They attacked many government stores and beat up the regime's agents who tried to confront them.

Iran Zamin, Jan. 26 - In Ramsar, northern Iran, teenagers came out onto the streets and destroyed some of the decorations the regime had put up to celebrate the anniversary of the mullahs' rule.

Voice of Mojahed, Jan. 25 - Residents in the city of Isfahan, central Iran, began chanting antigovernment slogans, following the ceremonies marking the birth of the twelfth Shiite Imam. Security forces attacked the crowd and fired warning shots. Enraged protesters clashed with the Guards until 2:00 am.

Al Riyadh, Jan. 23 - On January 22, residents of Shahreza, Isfahan province, attacked a government supermarket and damaged it heavily. The store had refused basic commodities, including cooking oil, sugar, detergent and soap to people presenting government-issued coupons.

Chanting "death to Rafsanjani," the crowd blamed him for the spiraling prices. Guards equipped with anti-riot gear attacked the protesters, wounding a number of people and arresting scores of others.

Suppression

Salam, Jan. 26 - Continuing his trip to the western province of Ilam, the commander of the state security forces, Reza Seifollahi, toured the border regions of Mehran and Dehloran. In a speech, a day earlier in Ilam, he condemned the World Arrogance's conspiracies against the Islamic Republic and boasted of the security forces' readiness to neutralize them.

Jomhouri Islami, Jan. 26 - The annual gathering of officials of the Guards Corps' politico-ideological training and Khamenei's representatives in the Corps was held in Tehran. The gathering addressed the importance of implementing the Corps' politico-ideological training within its rank and file.

Jomhouri Islami, Jan. 26 - The regime's National Security Council held a closed-door session to discuss the causes of the riots last Friday in the Azadi stadium between two rival football teams. It adopted unspecified measures to prevent similar outbreaks in the future.

Corruption

Jomhouri Islami, Jan. 29 - An employee of a branch of the Bank of Tejarat in northern Tehran, was arrested for embezzling 100 million toumans (\$350,000). He had diverted money from the accounts of those deceased or traveling to the accounts of his friends and acquaintances.

Jahan-e Islam, Jan. 26 - A reader questioned the intelligence minister's remarks concerning the \$400 million embezzlement from a bank. He wrote: "The minister easily says only 6.5 billion toumans (\$20 million) were stolen. Some sources confirmed that it was \$40 million. Even if we agree with the minister, that is equivalent to the salaries of 902 employees for 30 years."

Falling rial, imports

Israeli radio, Jan. 25 - Rial continued to fall against foreign currencies. A dollar sold for 3,650 rials after reaching 4,000 rials a day earlier. The Bahar-e Azadi gold coin sold for 53,000 toumans, exactly double its price last week.

Israeli radio, Jan. 28 - Iran will import \$2.5 bn. in essential goods beginning the next Iranian year, March 21. This means that for every citizen there will be only \$41.5 worth of imports, one of the lowest in the world.

Education in crisis

Tehran radio, Jan. 24 - Half the educational centers in the province of Semnan lack books and libraries. Rural areas are simply without any libraries. There are only 300,000 books on religion, short stories, literature and art. If we divide that by the number of students, it would mean only two books for each student all year.

Fear of flying?

Kayhan, Jan. 25 - Following several plane crashes, Majlis deputies are asking airlines for guarantees on their official trips. For instance, a Majlis deputy invited for the opening ceremonies of the Mobarakeh steel factory in Isfahan has not yet signed on and another has agreed to go only if the airline would guarantee the safety of the flight.

FOREIGN**Arafat meets Rajavi's envoy**

NCR Secretariat, Jan. 27 - Yesterday, in the Jordanian capital, Mr. Yasser Arafat, the head of the Palestinian government, received Dr. Aladdin Touran, the envoy of Mr. Massoud Rajavi, the NCR President.

In this meeting, Mr. Arafat expressed his admiration for the NCR President's righteous positions concerning regional peace and his condemnation of the mullahs' interferences and demagogic stances.

Al Hayat, Jan. 30 - NCR Secretariat said that the head of the Palestinian autonomous government, Yasser Arafat, received last Thursday in Amman, the envoy of Massoud Rajavi, President of the National Council of Resistance. The NCR statement said that Arafat asked the Iranian Resistance to open an official bureau in Gaza city, the seat of the autonomous government.

Marzieh in Britain

London, Jan. 24 - The legendary Iranian singer, Marzieh attended a reception in her honor at the House of Commons. Invited by the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, she was received by Lord Avebury, the Group's president. Marzieh also addressed the British Society of Artists and the British Pen Club. She also met Mr. Ronald Harwood, President of the International Pen.

FEATURE

Last Friday's Tehran prayer sermon by Ahmad Jannati, head of the Council of Guardians and one of the most senior regime officials, is this week's feature. It was the harshest attack to date on Rafsanjani and his cabinet. His remarks aptly depict the depth of the crisis plaguing the regime.

Excerpts:

"I wish to address the problem of the day. As much as I try to pull myself out of this quagmire and speak less about it, I find myself unable to do so. The mischief by some has affected currency prices. They double suddenly and God knows how much more they will rise. Everything depends on the currency rate: Vegetables, potatoes, onions, pastries, dairy products, etc... There are some in the government and some capitalists who undermine efforts to cut down prices. There is a lot of cash in the hands of a few. Where have they gotten it from? From this very chaotic market during and after the war and from mischief-making and a black market. They

have acquired billions very easily... Then they look around to see where they can invest it so that they can multiply their wealth, regardless of adverse effects on ordinary people... I don't know what kind of species these people are. When one becomes greedy for the material world, one forgets his dignity, honor, morals, God and the future. Watch it! Now that you have so much, even if you don't earn a penny more, it will suffice for you and hundreds of your descendants. Why do you try to increase your wealth and make the impoverished suffer? People are writing me letters about their plight. Believe me some time I wish I was dead, because I don't know what to do about it... I was just reading a letter by someone who wrote, 'I don't have a job, my life is ruined, this or that.' These letters keep coming from everywhere, from Tehran and other cities. Some people don't have their supper and others make such deals, earning several billion toman. Whoever is infatuated with money does not understand any reason other than the whip. Our organs must deal with them decisively.

"One of our problems is that we are weak in our approach to these people. I warn those responsible to 'exercise restraint and beware of God.' You [Rafsanjani] do not engage in these things personally, but have unleashed others. I once read a report that one of these people who escaped the country for wasting public property, had his belongings confiscated. Now that the air has cleared a bit, he has returned. First of all, he has been given a post and his letter of appointment cites his good background. You have chosen him as your adviser. Should I commend you? He now demands his property from us... If we allow these people to become so brazen and so covetous, then we must forget about everything. Which capitalist or criminal will be afraid? Why are these people not punished? Lack of decisiveness was detrimental to us.

"In the matter of over-pricing our judicial system was prepared to punish the big shots. But once we got close, these people intervened and impeded our actions. Was the fight against over-pricing directed at the petty sellers? We are restrained when we want to question a government company, many of whom are engaged in corruption, fabricate bills, refrain from making their profits and losses and their warehouses public and hide their products for higher prices,

"This self-sufficiency has become a calamity. Everybody is thinking about himself, accumulating money from here and there to run their own affairs. If we don't punish these people, who are we going to punish? Our judiciary is prepared. But some prevent it. I tell them 'exercise restraint. Beware of God.' Let the judge do his work. Allow some people to become hopeful; don't let our Moslem kids, the hezbollahis, lose hope, don't break the law. And if you did so, be prepared to be punished and surrender to the law.

"I don't know how much money these people have. They keep importing cars. Why do you allow so many luxury cars from abroad to be imported? When each of them are driven in the streets, they are thorns in the eyes of the more impoverished, people who can't even buy a bicycle. This one drives an eight-million-touman car. They allow these cars to be imported; not all of them are smuggled.

Our car factories are working a third their capacity, what do you expect? The matter must be taken seriously....

"Is it proper that one vie for this or that ministerial post, this or that organ, this or that organization and engage in mischief? One must think of the people. Some people spend lavishly. I am surprised... They say, for example, that \$1.00 million is not important, finish the deal. These gentlemen have become so impudent that they say \$1.00 million is not worth the effort. Well, \$1.00 million is 300 million toumans. Occasionally, we don't have the funds for trivial cultural matters. God knows! Some times we want to publish the Quran in sufficient numbers, but we can't. We want to have meetings for preachers, but can't do it. We want to send preachers on trips, but can't. Many of our cultural activities have remained idle. Sometimes one million tuman would have taken care of the problem but we didn't have it."

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