

NEWS ON IRAN

No. 30 National Council of Resistance of Iran - Foreign Affairs Committee February 20, 1995

DOMESTIC

Protests, strikes

Voice of Mojahed, Feb. 18 - Reports from Iran say that employees of the Department of Education in Bandar Gaz, northern Iran, staged a gathering in front of the Department to protest the regime's refusal to pay their bonuses and overtime pay.

Voice of Mojahed, Feb. 18 - Residents in villages near the city of Bandar Gaz clashed with a number of the Pasdaran who were attempting to prevent a wedding. The Guards were badly beaten up for their intrusion into a private party. Shortly afterwards, the Pasdaran brought in reinforcements and arrested a large number of the guests, many of whom are still in detention.

Iran Zamin, Feb. 17 - Workers in Isfahan's paint company staged a strike to protest inaction to help families of workers who died in the explosion and fire at the factory last month. The week-long strike has disrupted factory's production.

Voice of Mojahed, Feb. 16 - In the northern city of Rasht, employees and workers at the silk factory, staged a protest against embezzlement of their funds by the factory's director general. Despite intimidation by local authorities, the factory's atmosphere remains tense

Iran Zamin, Feb. 16 - Workers and employees of Isfahan's Khambaf factory went on strike on February 4 to protest non-payment of their bonuses and wages and the sale of the factory to the private sector.

Iran Zamin, Feb. 16 - The municipality workers of Khoy, northwest Iran, staged in sit-in at the municipality to protest low wages and extreme poverty.

Iran Zamin, Feb. 16 - Employees and workers at Isfahan's steel factory signed a 7-meter-long petition threatening to strike if their demands were not met. They protested theft and embezzlement by the factory's authorities.

Iran Zamin, Feb. 16 - Students in Mahabad, western Iran, turned a rally into an anti-government demonstration, chanting slogans against the regime's leaders and writing slogans on walls. Security forces arrested many students.

Iran Zamin, Feb. 16 - Students at Payam-e Noor university in Malayer, western Iran, staged a protest over the lack of transportation facilities, especially for female students, shortages of classes and poor management.

High prices

Ressalat, Feb. 20 - Meat prices rose 500 to 1000 rials in just one week. Head of the Meat Distributors Union said one reason is that besides exporting live-stock, a

significant number are smuggled out of the country. Household goods rose by 20% last month. A piece of soap and a bottle of shampoo rose by 25%.

BBC radio, Feb. 19 - The Central Bank announced that whole sale consumer index prices rose by 40% in the past nine months compared with the similar period last year. The prices at the retail level are much higher.

Salam, Feb., 18 - Retail prices for food stuff rose sharply compared with last week. Beans, lentils, lamb, peas and split peas, beef, poultry, Persian rice and cheese rose by 17.9, 9.5, 8.3, 8, 7.2, 5.4, 4 and 2% respectively. Cooking oil, Persian and imported butter were unavailable at regulated prices.

Child labor

Voice of Mojahed, Feb. 19 - In Voshahr, near Borazjan, factories that produce leather and straw-mat, and package dates, employ women and underage girls. Families send their 12-year-old girls to work out of destitution.

FEATURE

"Dirty Dishes?" *The Boston Globe*, editorial, February 13, 1995, Excerpts:

The clerics who rule Tehran cause Iranians endless grief with their incompetence, their corruption and their propensity for settling disputes with a hangman's rope. Nevertheless, the mullahs' frantic efforts to wage a cultural war against the secular vulgarities of the Great Satan do produce moments of sublime comedy.

Witness the law passed on New Year's day in the ersatz Parliament conferred on Iran by Ayatollah Khomeini. The legislators, whose laws must be ratified by the clerical Council of Guardians, authorized the government "to safeguard the borders of the country and of its families against destructive and indecent satellite programs."

To protect wayward viewers against the nefarious influence of "The Simpsons," MTV or the dreaded CNN, the deputies banned all satellite dishes great and small.

The danger was clear to them- as it always is to cultural warmongers. They were appalled that Iranians do not watch the didactic or anodyne programming on the regime's own channels... Enforcement of the new law will be a bit of a problem. It used to be easy for Revolutionary Guards to detect the big outdoor dishes that betray interest in the elicit Western media, but the new 18-inch dishes are more readily hidden from the cultural worries who ensure that everyone lives up to Khomeini's Contract with Iran.

The new law empowers the Basij - ardent neighborhood enforcers of purity attached to the Revolutionary Guards - to enter homes and confiscate forbidden dishes. The fine for possession of a dish is \$1,700, a fortune for most Iranians.

The mullahs are about to learn a lesson that Patrick Buchanan and William Bennet have yet to Master: Nobody ever wins a cultural war. In Tehran, cabbies commonly refuse to pick up clerics trying

to hail a ride. Sometimes the cabdriver draws a finger across his throat as he accelerates.

NEWS ON IRAN

No. 30 National Council of Resistance of Iran - Foreign Affairs Committee February 20, 1995
