

NEWS ON IRAN

No. 53 National Council of Resistance of Iran - Foreign Affairs Committee October 9, 1995

Rafsanjani's Asian Tour

As-Sharq al-Awsat, Oct. 6 - Rafsanjani's aim in touring Asia was to reject the notion of Iran's diplomatic isolation and domestic political turmoil... The U.S. has succeeded in convincing her European allies and Japan to downgrade their political relations with Iran... Iran has failed to achieve any success in the Asian continent. Latin America is also very far away with little interest in Iran...

Rafsanjani's second objective was to encourage the traditional anti-American sentiment in the non-aligned movement... but chances for his success are nill... [The Filipino President Fidel] Ramos practically confused Rafsanjani when he declared that the main goal of the latter's visit was to announce the end to Iran's support for the Muslim movement on Mindanao island... Rafsanjani's Asian policy has coincided with two setbacks: First, the Middle East tour of the Japanese prime minister which excluded Iran, and second, China's suspension of its contract with Iran for a nuclear power plant... Iran is presently facing trouble for the sale of a quarter of its oil.

Tehran radio, Oct. 4 - Deputies of the Islamic Assembly today voted in favor of a law allowing indirect taxing of some goods and services... Accordingly, each litre of imported and domestic beverages are taxed 200 and 70 rials respectively. The tax on imported cigarettes with filters is 10 rials each [i.e. 200 rials per pack], and 5 rials if it is made in the country. For non-filtered cigarettes the tax is 2.5 rials each.

Abrar, Oct. 6 - Four months after the announcement of the new foreign exchange policy, carpet exports have resumed only 50% of their normal activity. Carpets comprise the country's largest non-oil export.

Tragic Protest

Iran Zamin, London-based Persian weekly, Oct. 9 - According to reports from the Azeri town of Ahar (northwestern Iran), a 45-year-old woman set herself ablaze on October 1 at the City Hall intersection, to protest razing of her home. She was severely burned. Consequently, a large number of people rushed to the site, chanting anti-regime slogans and clashing with the security forces.

Ahar's municipality has begun razing some houses for road construction, but refused to reimburse the owners for the price of their houses.

Voice of Mojahedin radio, Oct. 5 - Chief of Tehran's Revolutionary Court says the three convicts arrested a year and half ago for attempting to assassinate Rafsanjani on the anniversary of the 1979 revolution, were sentenced to several years in prison. Rahbarpour said: They had formed a special band but were not tied to well-known

anti-government political groups, and therefore received jail sentences.

Social Restrictions Tightened Up

Tehran, Oct. 4 (Reuter) - Iran's largest public cultural centre has canceled all music classes a month after supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei blasted music for corrupting youth, a newspaper said on Wednesday.

The daily *Jomhouri Eslami* quoted the manager of Bahman Cultural Centre, a sprawling complex run by Tehran's municipality, as saying in a letter to Khamenei that music classes for youngsters were stopped in accordance with the leader's fatwa, or religious ruling.

Salam, Oct. 7 - Following the closure of all music classes in Bahman Cultural Centre, 118 Iranian musicians addressed a letter to Khamenei, expressing their protest.

Tehran Iran (AP), Oct. 3 -- Iran's parliament banned all government offices and institutions from using foreign terminology in official correspondence.

The Majlis, or parliament, voted to "eliminate all alien" terms from official documentation, Tehran radio reported.

Last year, the government banned the use of satellite dishes to prevent Iranians from watching Western television programs and to control the West's "cultural onslaught."

Tehran, Oct. 3 (Reuter) - Iranian police arrested nearly a thousand Tehran youths, described as "rogues and rascals..." Residents said police units combing the capital in minibuses detained youths standing at street corners or near girls schools...

Several police stations were overflowing with arrested youths, some also held for having long hair, a young man who was himself held for questioning told Reuters.

Lost and Found!

Tehran, Oct.7 (Reuter) - An Iranian police helicopter which was missing for more than two months has been found.

Kayhan newspaper said the helicopter had disappeared from radar screens about 75 days ago and was found on Thursday in the desert about 700 km (420 miles) south of Tehran with "insignificant damage" but all the passengers starved to death.

"The exact cause is not yet clear but probably technical problems had caused the emergency landing in the desert," the newspaper reported. It said two brigadiers, a colonel and a crewman died of dehydration and starvation.

Plight of Religious Minorities

Washington, Oct. 4. (Reuter) - The State Department on Wednesday updated its warning to Americans against travel to Iran, saying that former Moslems who have converted to other religions were now subject to arrest and possible execution.

The department said travel to Iran "remains dangerous because of the generally anti-American atmosphere and Iranian government hostility to the U.S. government."

U.S. citizens travelling to Iran had been detained without charge, arrested and harassed by Iranian authorities, the warning continued.

Agence France Presse, Oct. 4 - In a statement released in Paris, [the National Council of Resistance] described as "a ridiculous theatrics" the trial of three Iranian women sentenced to jail for murdering a Protestant priest. The statement says that many people have been sentenced to death in Iran just for distributing Mojahedin literature or for sympathizing with the organization... Therefore, issuing prison terms for the three women who the regime alleges are affiliated with the Mojahedin and accused of murder and bombing is in and of itself revealing of the fabricated nature of this case from day one. Several human rights organizations have held the Iranian regime accountable as the perpetrator of the killing of the three Iranian priests, the statement also mentioned.

Nuclear Ambitions

Moscow (AP), Oct. 6 - Russian experts will begin work late next month on Iran's controversial Bushehr nuclear power plant, a top Russian nuclear official said Friday.

Russian officials have said they might sell Iran up to four nuclear power reactors for the plant in the city of Bushehr.

A contract signed last January calls for Russia to complete the plant and one of the two 1,000-megawatt reactors left unfinished when the German company Siemens abandoned the project after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

In addition to that \$800 million construction contract, Russia has signed a deal to provide Bushehr with \$30 million worth of fuel from 2001 to 2011 and take back spent fuel for reprocessing.

Arms Build-Up

Israeli radio, Oct. 2 - A delegation from Iran's Islamic government arrived in Minsk, Belorussia to purchase T-80 tanks, Moscow radio reported. During the vice-president Hassan Habibi's recent trip, it was said in Russia that the Islamic government would pay the price for the military equipment it needs and Russia will instead give oil and gas to Belorussia for the equipment it delivers to the Islamic state.

Extra-judicial killings

Agence France Presse, Oct. 4 - The Supreme Court of Justice, the highest judicial authority in France, rejected the appeal for murderers of Shapour Bakhtiar [the shah's last prime minister]. On December 6, 1994, Ali Vakili Rad received a life sentence and Massoud Hendi was condemned to 10 years in jail.

Islamic Nintendo!

Nicosia (Reuter), Oct. 5 - Move over Nintendo. Iran is launching an Islamic computer game.

The game "embracing Islamic values and beliefs" is being developed at Iran's Centre for Computerised Research in Islamic Sciences, Iranian television said.

The television, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said the game would be mass produced soon. It did not give details. The centre, based in the holy city of Qom, has already released multimedia CD-ROM discs of the Koran and the works of Iran's late revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Feature

Los Angeles Times, October 2, 1995

By: Chris Pasles

If you can imagine the painting, "Liberty Leading the People," springing to life, you can get some idea of the galvanizing impact the singer Marzieh made on a largely Iranian audience Saturday at the Pantages Theater in Hollywood. And why the current regime in Iran regards her as dangerous.

At 71, Marzieh is already a musical icon, having embodied the spirit of Persian classical songs for more than 50 years. But with her defection in 1994, after 15 years first of government - and then self - imposed silence in opposition to the mullahs, she upped the ante by joining the Moujahedeen Khalq, a leftist resistance group. So the concert, her first in the United States, became a political as well as a musical event.

Security was tight. Everyone had to pass through metal detectors, which delayed the program about 45 minutes.

Marzieh entered to tremendous applause, which doubled when she kissed one of the Iranian flags at the side of the stage. At the break, when people carried flowers to her, one man knelt and kissed her hand, as did a young violinist when she distributed the flowers to the orchestra.

Marzieh often looked austere and imposing, but the years vanished when she smiled or sang of a young woman's longing. To a Western ear, her throaty mezzo ranged from the urgent expressivity of a flamenco-singer, not yet in vocal tatters, to a more lyric lightness.

Her colleagues included Shapour Bastan-Siar, who led the orchestra with self-effacing authority; and Hamid-Reza Taherzadeh (playing Tar) and Kamyar Izadpanah (Santoor), who both offered virtuoso solo work.

NEWS ON IRAN

No. 53 National Council of Resistance of Iran - Foreign Affairs Committee October 9, 1995