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UN Secretary General underscores Ashraf residents rights

In his quarterly report on May 14 to the Security Council pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009), the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, stressed the rights of residents of Camp Ashraf, Iraq, for protection against arbitrary displacement in Iraq or forced extradition to Iran.

In his report to the Security Council, which provides an update on UN activities in Iraq during the months of March, April, and May 2010, he states:

“UNAMI continues to monitor the situation in Camp Ashraf in Diyala Governorate.... Although no significant outbreaks of violence have occurred during the reporting period, distrust and tensions between both sides remained, with limited cooperation regarding access to services and supplies in the camp. UNAMI, while reiterating the right of the Government of Iraq to exercise its authority over Camp Ashraf and the obligation of the camp’s residents to fully respect the law and the authority of the Government of Iraq, has continued to advocate for the residents’ unhindered access to goods and services of a humanitarian nature, as well as for their right to be protected from arbitrary mass displacement or forced repatriation against their will in violation of the universally accepted principle of non-refoulement. UNAMI remains committed to assisting both parties find an acceptable resolution to this problem.”

Tehran’s latest uranium maneuver, brokered by Brazil and Turkey, a fraud

Maryam Rajavi:

Agreement to swap enriched uranium in Turkey is a ridiculous maneuver by the mullahs to evade international sanctions

The international community must move towards a comprehensive oil, arms, and diplomatic embargo against Tehran for its nuclear program and suppression of dissent



A day before a draft sanctions resolution was tabled at the UN Security Council, the Iranian regime announced the signing of a trilateral nuclear agreement with Brazil and Turkey. On the face of it, Tehran agreed to send its low-enriched uranium to Turkey in return for nuclear fuel. In reality, this was an underhanded attempt to short-circuit looming sanctions.

The regime has a long history of shifting its positions to buy more time and the international community has regrettably continued to be conned. This time, however, instead of immersing themselves in pure naïveté, world leaders noted that just a week prior, Iranian authorities refused to negotiate over the key demands made by the Security Council.

Substantively, the Turkish accord did not change anything. Indeed, as a notable

editorial by the state-run daily Kayhan – considered the mouthpiece of mullahs’ Supreme Leader – put it on May 18, “Iran has on many occasions stressed that uranium enrichment activities and fuel production cannot count as topics for any deals or negotiations.”

In light of that, the US and other world powers were prudent to push ahead with proposing a fourth round of UN sanctions. As important as that is, the draft resolution has been considerably diluted to accommodate primarily short-term economic concerns of Russia and China. But, when it comes to an issue that has the potential to threaten international peace and security, short-term economic concerns must take a back seat.

The international community must move

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Maryam Rajavi:

Iranian regime's claim to have agreed to a nuclear fuel swap is a fraud

Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, described the announcement made by the Iranian regime that it had reached an agreement to swap enriched uranium in Turkey as a ridiculous maneuver by the mullahs to evade international sanctions. The regime is extremely fearful of the adoption of a new UN Security Council resolution as domestically it is facing people's nationwide uprising and is trying to quell it by brutal suppression, torture and growing number of executions.

Mrs. Rajavi added: This maneuver is the continuation of the regime's ongoing deception and concealment of the facts in order to complete its nuclear weapons program. The regime considers nuclear bomb, export of terrorism and fundamentalism to be crucial to its survival at a time facing its downfall. The regime will never abandon its nuclear weapons program by negotiations and appeasement.

Agreement on the transfer of part of 3.5 percent enriched uranium to Turkey is announced while thousands of centrifuges are operating in Natanz in clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions.

The President-elect of the Iranian Resistance expressed regrets for the role played by Brazil and Turkey to save the killers and torturers of the Iranian people from crisis and their overthrow. She concluded: The Iranian people want a regime change, democracy, peace and stability in the region. No political maneuver or any foreign support will prevent the regime from its inevitable downfall. Eight years after the revelations by the Iranian Resistance of the main nuclear centers at Natanz and Arak, the failed policy of negotiations and appeasement of the mullahs and offer of incentive packages to them, which have brought them closer to nuclear weapons, cannot be justified in any way.

Tehran's latest uranium maneuver ...

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towards a comprehensive oil, arms, and diplomatic embargo against a regime that not only pursues a dangerous nuclear program but also violently suppresses its own population. In addition, Western powers should seriously contemplate the imposition of a diplomatic embargo on Tehran by denying its emissaries visas to travel abroad.

Two pronged policy to deal with Iranian regime:

- *Firm policy; imposition of comprehensive sanctions*
- *Political recognition of the Iranian Resistance for democratic change*

Terrorism and meddling in neighboring countries

Iran eases grip on al-Qaida

AP, May 13 - Al-Qaida operatives who have been detained for years in Iran have been making their way quietly in and out of the country, raising the prospect that Iran is loosening its grip on the terror group so it can replenish its ranks, former and current U.S. intelligence officials say.

This movement could indicate that Iran is re-examining its murky relationship with al-Qaida at a time when the U.S. is stepping up drone attacks in Pakistan and weakening the group's leadership. Any influx of manpower could hand al-Qaida a boost in morale and expertise and threaten to disrupt stability in the region.

Some experts believe that anyone from al-Qaida freed to leave Iran must be returning to the battlefield. Others believe that, with al-Qaida families left behind, terrorists may actually be working for Iran, gathering intelligence or passing messages before returning to Iran.

Either way, it's being noticed. Clare Lopez, a former CIA officer and a senior fellow at Center for Security Policy, says it's not a good sign.

Kuwaiti MPs want Iran envoy expelled over 'spy cell'

AFP, May 2 - Several Kuwaiti MPs on Sunday blasted neighbouring Iran over an espionage cell allegedly busted by the emirate's security forces, calling on the government to expel Tehran's ambassador.

"We call for freezing all agreements with Iran... The government should recall our ambassador from Tehran and expel the Iranian ambassador

from Kuwait," hardline Salafi MP Mohammad Hayef told reporters.

Hayef, who is well known for his anti-Iran stance, warned that if the government does not clarify its position "we will call for a special debate in parliament over the spy cell."

Citing a high-ranking security source, Al-Qabas daily reported on May 1 that security agencies had dismantled a spy cell working for Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).

Independent MP Shuaib al-Muwaizri, the spokesman for parliament's interior and defence committee, called for the expulsion of the Iranian envoy in Kuwait "if the news about the spy cell is proved."

"We hope that the government releases a statement on the issue and if it is true, the government must act decisively by asking the Iranian ambassador to leave Kuwait," Muwaizri told reporters.

IRGC spokesman Ramezan Sharif told the Fars news agency: "It is clear to all that the Revolutionary Guards are the first line of defence of the Islamic revolution and Iran's national interests.

"This power pushes enemies to imagine baseless information to prevent the strengthening of the Revolutionary Guards."

Kuwait's Al-Qabas said on Saturday that at least seven members of the alleged cell, some serving in the army and police, had been arrested.

Bahrain arrests

Authorities in Bahrain arrested one of its nationals suspected of having links with an alleged spy cell busted in Kuwait and said to be working for Iran.

Activities of the IRGC (Pasdaran) to tackle “soft” threats

Following the outburst of uprisings over the past year, officials of the Iranian regime’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC/Pasdaran), which is responsible for domestic suppression of dissent, have been discussing “soft” threats and ways to deal with them. For the IRGC, soft threats imply so-called cultural attacks primarily through the internet and satellite TV. Cyber activities refer to internet communications whereby users are connected to each other through computers, networks, telephones, and satellite, among other things.

Background

Although the paramilitary Bassij Force has been involved in all security arenas, since early 2008, the dimensions of its involvement broadened and it officially also penetrated the World Wide Web.

The Bassij Force initially started its activities by seeking out opposition websites and designating responsible organs to filter the sites and confront their owners. However, its stance gradually shifted from a “cultural” approach to a “confrontational” one.

On November 26, 2008, the state-run Fars news agency published an interview with Hamid-Reza Khaksar, Head of Bassij Public Relations. Khaksar referred to the Bassij Force’s cyber activities, saying, “Today, the enemy has infiltrated our cyber borders which encompass the internet, TV, and other media. The most suitable people for defending these borders are the Bassij forces.”

Khaksar described Bassij’s duties in the cyber world as identifying the operational axes and subjects, categorizing the “enemy’s propaganda bases,” updating the intelligence database, monitoring and analyzing activities of the Bassij, and designing the architecture of Bassij intelligence web enterprise.

However, these attempts were not remotely sufficient to cover the entirety of the internet and various political and social activities conducted by Iranian students and dissidents. That is why the IRGC came to the fore at a qualitatively higher level.

Pasdaran’s Goals

The IRGC’s cyber activities have been outlined as: “By penetrating the World Wide Web and bolstered by the technological advances in the country, some destructive individuals and networks began their activities and exploited these advances as well as the internet. Identifying and confronting them required a suitable structure coupled with special technological measures. Realizing this danger, and grasping the threat that the country faces with regards to information and internet advances, serves as one of the reasons for establishing the Center for Investigating Organized Cyber Crimes. This center was established in 2007 in order to investigate and confront organized crimes of terrorism and espionage, as well as social and economic offenses on the internet. By investigating the organized and destructive activities which are primarily carried out by the arrogant powers’ intelligence networks in the country, this center identifies and controls these individuals and networks.”

Although the Center for Investigating Organized Cyber Crimes was set up in 2007, its first statement was issued in March 2009 in order to spread fear among the regime’s opponents, who were carrying out extensive activities on the internet. As has been made clear from the regime’s statements, the IRGC views the effects of the internet on the people and its forces as the main threat. In other words, its measures are focused in two directions:

1. Maintaining security: The nationwide protests in 2009 clearly demonstrated that popular disenchantment is entrenched in Iranian society, and that it will continue while surviving the regime’s suppression. The IRGC’s visible involvement was the result of the fact that the situation spiralled out of the control of the State Security Forces (SSF) and the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS). Even with the direct involvement of the IRGC, however, the protests continued to take shape at various stages, even advancing as far as breaking apart the regime’s security apparatus. An example of that was the December 2009 uprising on Ashura day.
2. Preventing defections in the IRGC: On the other hand, the IRGC is trying to shield its own personnel from the effects of the internet and satellites as well as the aftershocks of growing popular dissent by launching measures such as the “Purity Program,” which is essentially a cultural measure to teach the principle of velayat-e faqih (absolute clerical rule). In this regard, mullah Ali Saeedi, the Supreme Leader’s representative at the IRGC, announced on April 17, 2010 that the number of ideological and political education sessions for the IRGC’s cadres have tripled. He said, “We must fill the minds of everyone in society and especially the IRGC and Bassij personnel with more ideological teachings and improve their religious outlook. The deepening of spirituality and wisdom which results from ideological and political teachings must be palpable in the IRGC.”

Pasdaran Intelligence Organization and control over the internet

With the creation of the IRGC Intelligence Organization in September 2009, the Center for Organized Cyber Crimes was placed under the authority of this organization. Mullah Taeb, the Head of the IRGC Intelligence Organization, expanded the center’s activities in order to curb the uprising and suppress forces.

Broadening internet control

In addition to the Bassij and the IRGC Intelligence Organization, which are involved in controlling and censoring material on the web, on Tuesday, November 10, 2009, it was revealed on the sidelines of the open session of the regime’s Majlis (Parliament) that the Supreme National Security Council has divided responsibilities for implementing the country’s security policies among various police and security organs. Ruhollah Hosseinian, a member of the regime’s Majlis and an avid Ahmadinejad supporter, told a reporter from the state-run Etemad daily on Tuesday after the open session, “Security measures like installing satellite jamming equipment, the involvement of numerous security organs in the course of the post-elections incidents, and transferring the monitoring of the internet to the State Security Forces are among some of the measures implemented by the SNSC in order to confront the soft threat of the state’s enemies.”

Husseinian, a close friend of the culprit of the so-called chain killings of the 1990s, explained, “Transferring the responsibility to monitor the internet to the State Security Forces was implemented because the internet is an enormous environment. It has various security, cultural and political dimensions, and monitoring it would require the involvement of an array of different forces.”

Executions in Iran and international condemnations

Four hangings in Isfahan and Ahvaz

On May 20, the Iranian regime hanged a prisoner identified only as A. A. in public in the city of Ahvaz, according to the state-run Fars news agency. Another prisoner named Mohammad was hanged in Esfahan after eight years in prison according to the same news agency.

On May 18, two other prisoners, identified as Azizollah, 35, and Morteza were executed at the central prison in Esfahan.

The regime's officials had also promised to execute another prisoner next week identified as S. R. in Ahvaz.

Imprisoned film maker on hunger strike to protest inhumane treatment



The Iranian Resistance calls for international condemnation of the Iranian regime for arrest and inhumane treatment of an Iranian film maker.

Mr. Jaafar Panahi, who has been in jail since last March, had previously been arrested for attending a memorial ceremony in the honor of martyrs of the Iranian people's uprising held in Tehran's Behesht-Zahra cemetery in summer of 2009.

He has not been allowed to see his family and his lawyer in the past three months and has been subjected to inhumane treatments, beatings, torture and abuse. He has gone on hunger strike since a few days ago.

Pressures on incarcerated PMOI supporters and families of Ashraf residents



On Wednesday, May 19, the clerical regime, during a kangaroo court, tried Mr. Hamid Haeri, a 60-year-old political prisoner, on charges of "moharebeh" (waging war against God), supporting the People's Mojahedin Organization

of Iran (PMOI/MEK), persistent political activity and propaganda against the regime. He was arrested in a raid on his house by the regime's intelligence agents on December 6, 2009 on charges of visiting his child and brother in Camp Ashraf, Iraq. The raid took place while he was in bed recovering from a serious car accident.

The regime's interrogators and torturers have placed Mr. Haeri under continual physical and psychological torture, threatening him that if he refuses to comply with their demands, they will also arrest his wife and daughter and place them under torture.

The regime's show trial took place even as Mr. Haeri was in critical condition and could hardly walk. There were signs of torture evident on his face, and he looked to be suffering from malnutrition and hunger. Having been a prisoner in the 1980s, he is also suffering from the remaining effects of tortures from that period as well as heart problems. He has had two heart attacks so far.

EP President condemns executions in Iran



The President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek condemned in a statement on May 11 the execution of five prisoners which took place on 9 May in Iran.

"I was informed that five Kurdish prisoners - one of whom was a woman - were hanged in Iran on 9 May. They were convicted of various charges, including of being 'moharebs' or 'enemies of God' - a crime punishable by death under Iran's Islamic law... Iran should respect the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," President Buzek said.

He added: "The growing number of death sentences in the past few years has contributed to a disturbing trend of intimidation towards opposition protestors."

Six face death for links with PMOI



Amnesty International made an urgent appeal on May 21 against death sentences issued for six Ashraf residents' family members and supporters of the PMOI. Excerpts from the appeal follow:

URGENT APPEAL

Ja'far Kazemi is now known to be among six men facing execution in Iran for their alleged links to the banned group, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI). In some cases, these links may amount to no more than having contact with family members linked to the PMOI. The six could be executed at any time.

Tehran's prosecutor announced on 15 May that the death sentences of Ja'far Kazemi, Mohammad Ali Haj Aghaei, Mohammad Ali Saremi (or Sarami), Abdolreza Ghanbari (or Qanbari) and father and son, Ahmad and Mohsen Daneshpour Moghaddam, were upheld by the Appeal Court after they were found guilty of moharebeh (enmity against God) in relation to their alleged links to the PMOI.

FIDH strongly condemns executions



The international community should support independent voices in Iran and "strongly condemn" the execution of political activists there, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) said in a statement posted on its website May 20.

"The Iranian judiciary is a tool in the hands of Ayatollah Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad to repress harshly peaceful protesters and political opponents... The nuclear deals should not make us forget the terrible human rights situation in Iran. The international community cannot wait and see but should on the contrary support independent voices in Iran, and strongly condemn the increasing number of death sentences and executions of political activists," FIDH statement concluded.