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### **Summary**

### **Political Front**

#### **Minister Warns UAE Against Israeli Plots**

After the Emirati ambassador to Washington endorsed the use of military option against Tehran, Iranian Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi says the remarks originated from Israeli conspiracies. Speaking to reporters on Sunday, Vahidi cautioned certain countries against adopting policies that could harm their national interests. "These countries should exercise caution that US and Israeli spy agencies do not influence their diplomats," the Iranian minister said. The comment came after The Washington Times quoted Emirati Ambassador to the U.S.

#### **EU Parliament Delegation to Visit Iran**

The spokesman of national security and foreign policy commission of Iran's Parliament (Majlis) said that a parliamentary delegation from European Union (EU) has announced willingness to visit Tehran. As reported by Khabar Online, the spokesman of the commission, Kazem Jalali asserted at a news conference: "The issue of a trip by the members of the European Parliament's to Iran was raised last year. It was observed and later approved by the lawmakers."

#### **Mahathir: U.S. Attack on Iran a Matter of Time**

Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad says the U.S. compelled the UN Security Council to impose sanctions against Iran in order to weaken the country and lay the ground for a military attack. "The world is made to believe once again the lie that Israel's existence is being threatened by a nuclear armed Iran," Mohamad said at the opening of the Breaking the Gaza Siege summit in Kuala Lumpur.

### **Mottaki Leaves for Madrid**

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki left here for Madrid yesterday, heading a high-ranking politico-economic delegation, for an official two-day visit. During his stay in Spain, Mottaki will meet and confer with Spanish counterpart and certain other key officials of the country. Moreover, he is scheduled to meet Iranians residing in Spain. Among objectives of the visit are reportedly expansion of mutual ties, exploration of mutual capacities and discussion of latest developments relating to Iran nuclear program. Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast, Deputy Foreign Minister and Director General of the West Europe-North American Affairs Department at Foreign Ministry, Mohammad-Ali Ahani, as well as member of Majlis Foreign Policy and National Security Commission, Mehdi Mehdizadeh, are accompanying Mottaki in the visit.

### **Minister: West Fears Global Spread of Hijab**

The western countries are worried about the rapid spread of Hijab in the world, Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Hosseini said yesterday. "This has made the West so furious that it does not allow women in the western societies to appear with Hijab in the open, fearing that it may endanger its interests," Hosseini reiterated. Warning that the West is resolved to promote the culture of nudity in the cyber space and networks, he urged all Muslim countries to show the luminous face of Islam to the western society

### **MP Slams U.S. for Amiri Abduction**

A top Iranian lawmaker has condemned the United States for the abduction of an Iranian academic, who was kidnapped by the US last year while on pilgrimage to Mecca. Iran has found new documents related to the abduction of Shahram Amiri by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The documents have been handed over to the Swiss ambassador in Tehran, since the Swiss Embassy hosts the US interests section.

### **First Multi-Organ Transplantation Successfully Conducted in Iran**

Iranian surgeons for the first time in the country carried out multi-organ transplantation. During the 10-hour operation carried out in Namazi Hospital in Iran's southern city of Shiraz, the surgeons successfully performed first multi-organ transplantation in a 31-year-old man suffering from cancer. "Multi-organ transplantation is only performed in six centers across the world," the head of the organ transplantation department of Namazi Hospital

### **Iran Ready for Sudden Cut in Gas Supplies**

A senior oil official said Iran has worked out several ways to make up for any possible cut in gasoline supplies to the country, reiterating that Tehran is now fully ready to overcome any sudden embargo on its fuel imports from abroad. "We are currently producing 45 million of liters of gasoline per day, and we have prepared the ground so well that we would not feel any kind of shortage, and even if all suppliers embark on stopping sales (of fuel) to Iran, there would be no problem,"

### **Commander: Iran to Prevail Against Enemy's Soft War**

A senior Iranian commander expressed confidence that the soft war launched by the enemies against Iran would produce no result for the West, and underlined that the Islamic Republic will once again win the war against its enemies. "Undoubtedly, we will be the winning side in this soft war because we have Islam's logic and rationale which is a winning weapon," Commander of Basij (volunteer) Forces Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Naqdi said. Referring to enemies' new type of warfare, Naqdi pointed out that the country's enemies are now striving to win people's souls, spirits, thoughts and minds rather than conquering the country's territories.

### **Iranian Data Center Company Garners ISMS**

Afranet Company has successfully achieved to gain the Information Security Management System (ISMS) certification and ISO 27001. Afranet is the first Iranian data center company that obtains this certification. Referring to the necessity of localization of Iranian websites, Managing Director of Afranet Company Fereydoun Ghasem Zadeh told reporters that several domestic institutions, companies and also most of the state organizations have tried to get ISMS certification since 2008.

### **Iran to Open Bushehr Plant in Sept.**

Iran's nuclear organization official says the country's first nuclear power plant will be inaugurated in the southern Iranian port city of Bushehr by September. Today we passed one of the most important and final test, the hot water tests, of Bushehr power plant before its inauguration," IRNA quoted Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Ali Akbar Salehi as saying yesterday. Salehi said that Bushehr power plant which needs five percent enriched uranium is to become operational in the Iranian month of Shahrivar (August 23- September 22)."

### **Confusion on US-Iran policy**

Worldview: Obama struggles for coherency while Iranian demonstrators clearly want change. One of the most difficult challenges facing the Obama administration is how to handle Iran. The president made it clear before he took office that he wanted to open a dialogue with Iran and end the 30-year standoff with the Islamic Republic. Iranian

officials had been indicating for the past few years that they were ready to talk. Now, in view of the current turmoil in that country, Obama seems to be uncertain how or even whether he can grasp the Iranian nettle.

### **First Expose of Iran's Seven Hellhole Prisons**

Until the defeated Iranian presidential contender Mehdi Karroubi broke the wall of silence surrounding the Islamic Republic's prisons to demand an investigation into allegations of rape, little attention was paid to the abuses meted out to protestors who dared to claim that the June 12 election was rigged. These abuses are inflicted routinely and systematically in seven secret prisons where political detainees are held at the behest of the revolutionary Islamic regime. Those prisons are described DEBKAfile's Iranian sources as inhuman hellholes

#### **Six more jails and detentions centers operate in the Tehran area.**

A low, inconspicuous door behind the Ghamar Bani Hashem Hospital on Resaalat Street near the security ministry leads into a top-secret holding facility for interrogating political prisoners. It is closely guarded by Iran's intelligence ministry. It has two floors and a yard, containing four interrogation rooms, eight isolation cells and eight holding cells in which dozens of detainees are crammed, allowed access to showers once a week and toilets three times a day. Here, the detainees undergo their first inquisition and beatings before they are transferred to other prisons. Their eyes and mouths are bound with leather straps to prevent them from identifying their tormentors. Their agony ends when they sign written confessions.

#### **Most of the victims' families do not know their whereabouts.**

Several hundred political prisoners are crowded into this facility for drug offenders which is designed for 250 to 350 inmates. It is situated in the Narcotic Unit's headquarters in central Tehran. The building consists of three large units broken up into cells of 1.5 x 2 meters, into each of which up to five detainees are squeezed for an agonizing three to seven days. Under interrogation, their arms and legs are broken to make them confess and give up information. Accustomed to beating and humiliating dope traffickers, the wardens carry on abusing the political detainees.

Sanitary conditions are appalling and the inmates are fed scraps from the prison staff canteens. The stench of vomit and sweat in the unventilated cells is unbearable. Whenever a detainee dies of torture or disease, prison authorities file a fictitious report. After the questioning finishes, those who survive are transferred to the central prison at Evin. No one has been brought to book for their deaths.

#### **The Revolutionary Guards Prison 59**

This penal complex in the cellar of the Revolutionary Guards Corps base Esharat-Abad suburb of Tehran is the most terrible of all seven secret jails. It is so secret that even the head of the justice department for the Tehran district has never been granted permission

for a visit. Run by the field security unit of the IRGC, this is where suspected spies and people accused of grave security offenses are questioned by officials who are not bound by any laws or regulations.

### **The United States and Iran through the Ages**

Professor Gary Sick served on the National Security Council under Presidents Ford, Carter, and Reagan, and was the principal White House aide for Iran during the Iranian Revolution and the hostage crisis. Sick is the author of *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter With Iran* and *October Surprise: America's Hostages in Iran and the Election of Ronald Reagan*. He currently serves as a researcher and adjunct professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. Did advisors and key players in the Ford Administration imagine how dramatically U.S.- Iranian relations would change?

### **What are the most pressing challenges to a healthy U.S.-Iranian relationship?**

There are many, many challenges; first, there are several facts that simply have to be acknowledged. Iran is the largest, most populous, and one of the most economically important countries in terms of its oil and gas reserves in the Persian Gulf. It dominates one entire side of the Persian Gulf and one side of the Strait of Hormuz, through which 60 percent of the world's exported oil and gas go. It is enormously important.

### **How has the Bush Administration fared in its policy toward Iran?**

In the last year, the Bush administration has begun making some significant changes in U.S. policy. We were very involved in this latest proposal to Iran that offered a package of benefits that was presented to them by three members of the Security Council and three European powers recently. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice signed that letter to Iran and the number three diplomat at the State Department was said to continue to participate in the meeting that was held subsequently. That was a major step.

### **Abducted Academic Leaves for Home**

Iranian academic Shahram Amiri, who was kidnapped by Saudi Arabian and US intelligence agents last year, has left the United States for Tehran. Amiri took refuge in Iran's interest section at the Pakistani Embassy in Washington on Tuesday, demanding an "immediate return" to Iran, Presstv reported. The embassy is in charge of Iran's interests in the United States because the two countries do not have diplomatic relations. Ties were cut off soon after the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

## **Economic Front**

### **India, Iran to Hold Gas Pipeline Talks**

The multi-billion-dollar Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline is back on India's agenda with the government planning to hold a bilateral meeting in Teheran on the issue after a gap of at least two years. Petroleum secretary S. Sundareshan said the Iranian government proposed talks on the IPI to which India has agreed. The development comes in the backdrop of India's indication of support for Iran against recent US sanctions. "There is supposed to be a meeting of the joint working group to discuss the IPI-related issues," Sundareshan said.

### **Carpet Exports to Reach \$500m**

Carpet exports from Iran will reach 500 million dollars by the end of the current Iranian year (ending March 20, 2011), head of Iran National Carpet Center announced yesterday. Speaking on the sidelines of the 5th Festival of Iranian Exquisite Carpets, Feisal Mardasi said based on the statistics available on carpet exports, some 56 million dollars of carpet were exported during June 21- April 21, 2010. He said the bulk of exports within the mentioned period is not satisfactory because national carpet production capacity is well above the current figure. He noted that Iranian carpets are usually marketed in Italy, Germany, the UK, France, Spain, Switzerland, the US and Canada as well as the UAE, Kuwait, Russia, Ukraine and Japan. 5th Festival of Iranian Exquisite Carpets is being held at Tehran's Sa'dabad Historical-Cultural Complex from July 6 to 16. The ten-day festival brings together local carpet weavers as well.

### **Iran, India Sign Six Agreements**

Iran and India signed six cooperation agreements at the end of the 16th session of their Joint Economic Commission, held in New Delhi on July 8-9, 2010. Iran's visiting Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Shamseddin Hosseini, and Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna attended the signing ceremony in New Delhi Friday evening. Cooperation in air service, new and renewable energy, small scale industry, science and technology, paper research and transfer of sentenced persons were among the agreement inked by the two sides. Facilitation of code share, cooperation in marketing arrangement and enhancement in the capacity of the designated airlines from the current 23 services per week to 31 services were the main parts of air services agreement.

### **Iran Inaugurates Softgel Production Line**

Iranian researchers have succeeded to establish the country's largest production line for softgel capsules based on the latest technologies. Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi, the Iranian Minister of Health and Medical Education, announced that Iranians have succeeded to set up the line despite the recent sanctions. The head of Minoos industrial group Saeed Ohadi

told IRNA the new line is developed based on the world's latest technologies and can revolutionize Iran's pharmaceutical industry.

### **Iranian, Spanish Provinces to Expand Relations**

Officials from Iran's central province of Yazd and Spanish Castellon province agreed to boost mutual cooperation. An eight-member trade delegation from Yazd and officials of the Spanish city of Castellon inked several agreements on cooperation in water transfer, solar energy and tile production. The delegation, headed by Yazd Governor General Mohammad Reza Fallahzadeh, inked three Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) at the end of its 6-day visit to Spain. The delegation also met with members of Castellon Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Yazd is an architecturally unique city.

### **Energy Ties With Russia Underlined**

Iran's ambassador to Moscow Mahmoud Reza Sajjadi underlined the necessity for robust cooperation between Iran and Russia in the energy sector, particularly in oil and gas fields. "Tehran and Moscow should expand their cooperation in the field of energy," Sajjadi said, addressing the 1st Iran-Russia Joint Seminar on Oil and Gas on Saturday. "Despite extensive grounds, unfortunately, the two countries' cooperation in oil and gas and petrochemical fields is limited due to lack of knowledge and familiarity with this cooperation

### **FM: D-8 has huge capacities for expansion of economic ties**

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said that eight developing nations group (D-8) has huge capacities for expansion of economic ties. In the 13th ministerial meeting of D-8 in Abuja, Nigeria, Mottaki said that Iran believes strengthening south-south cooperation and deepening multilateral ties in the framework of D-8 are among important factors for presenting a new model of cooperation in current instable economic situation. Holding D-8 summit is a valuable opportunity for finding ways to strengthen ties among member states of the organization,

### **Iran Top Regional Electricity Producer**

Iran ranks first in the region in terms of generating electricity and is ready to export 2,000 to 4,000 megawatts of electricity, said Deputy Energy Minister Mohammad Behzad. According to a report posted on the Energy Ministry's website, he referred to a 38-percent increase in the output of the power plants across the country last year, IRNA reported. "Efforts are underway to raise the figure to 45 percent in the next five years," he noted. Electricity consumption shows an increase of 9.5 percent in the current Iranian year from 7.5 percent last year,

### **Russian Companies...**

According to Russian news agencies, Mirkazemi declared that sanctions “will in no way have an effect on the economic and industrial development of Iran. Independent countries are truly cooperating with Iran.” Russian state oil company Zarubezhneft said earlier on Wednesday it was interested in signing a geological exploration contract with Iran. CEO Nikolai Brunich said a consortium could be set up to include Zarubezhneft, the state oil company of Iran and another Russian oil company.

Moscow-Tehran relations chilled earlier this year as Russia improved ties with the United States, a forceful advocate of sanctions. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has said Moscow was running out of patience with Iranian unwillingness to address Western fears over its nuclear program.

On Hold

### **Social Front**

#### **Supreme Leader: Ground Available for Clergies' Presence in Universities**

Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, said here on Sunday that the ground is available for activities of clergies in universities. “Fortunately, contrary to the past on certain occasions, now the ground is available in the current government for presence of clergymen in universities,” said Ayatollah Khamenei in a meeting with a group of officials representing his Excellency in universities. The Supreme Leader reiterated that a very positive atmosphere and environment is now available in Iranian universities for the purpose. “One should be fully thankful of all the blessings by using the opportunities available in the best possible manner.

#### **Tehran Choir in China**

Tehran Choir is in China to participate in the World Choir Games 2010 in Shanghai. The ensemble conductor, Milad Omranlou, told Fars News Agency that the choir will take part in three categories, namely folklore, chamber and pop music. “We will have three performances during the event and then will perform with other ensembles, including the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra.”

## Detailed News

### **Minister Warns UAE Against Israeli Plots**

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Meanwhile, Vahidi went on to slam the Emirati official for his lack of judgment, saying that such officials do not take their own national interests into consideration, IRNA reported on Sunday. "Regional countries should be careful not to make comments or adopt stances that are more foolish than remarks made by Israeli officials," the Iranian minister stressed. Following al-Otaiba's provocative remarks, the UAE deputy foreign minister Tareq al-Haidan dismissed the report as inaccurate, saying the ambassador's remarks had been "taken out of context."

### **EU Parliament Delegation to Visit Iran**

The spokesman of national security and foreign policy commission of Iran's Parliament (Majlis) said that a parliamentary delegation from European Union (EU) has announced willingness to visit Tehran. As reported by Khabar Online, the spokesman of the commission, Kazem Jalali asserted at a news conference: "The issue of a trip by the members of the European Parliament's to Iran was raised last year. It was observed and later approved by the lawmakers."

He didn't refer to the exact time that the visit would be made, however pointed that the EU parliamentary delegation had proposed two dates for a possible travel to Tehran: "We at the national security commission gave out our opinion and we hope the visit happens as soon as possible." Last year, the Islamic Republic's officials maintained the visit of a parliamentary delegation from European Union was postponed due to what they called the meddling of some European countries' embassies in the unrests grew in Iran after the disputed presidential election on June 12, 2009.

### **Mahathir: U.S. Attack on Iran a Matter of Time**

Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad says the U.S. compelled the UN Security Council to impose sanctions against Iran in order to weaken the country and lay the ground for a military attack. "The world is made to believe once again the lie that Israel's existence is being threatened by a nuclear armed Iran," Mohamad said at the opening of the Breaking the Gaza Siege summit in Kuala Lumpur. He went on to add that these sanctions were adopted despite the fact that Mohamed ElBaradei, the former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), had repeatedly stated that there is no evidence of Iran pursuing military nuclear program. Mohamad said that the U.S. followed the same pattern in its previous war against Iraq, and attacked Baghdad after weakening the country by imposing crippling sanctions against it. The former Malaysian premier added, "It is a matter of time before the war criminals in Israel and the United States launch another war of aggression, once Iran has been weakened by sanctions." The one-day International Conference on Breaking the Gaza Siege is expected to conclude with a clear plan on measures and efforts to be undertaken to challenge the siege and eventually put an end to it.

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### **Minister: West Fears Global Spread of Hijab**

The western countries are worried about the rapid spread of Hijab in the world, Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Hosseini said yesterday. "This has made the West so furious that it does not allow women in the western societies to appear with Hijab in the open, fearing that it may endanger its interests," Hosseini reiterated. Warning that the West is resolved to promote the culture of nudity in the cyber space and networks, he urged all Muslim countries to show the luminous face of Islam to the

western society. His remarks came days after the first anniversary of the death of Marwa el-Sherbini known as the 'Hijab martyr', a pregnant Egyptian woman who was stabbed to death in a German courtroom. Sherbini was killed in a courtroom in the eastern German city of Dresden in front of her 3-year-old son on July 1, 2009 by the unemployed Russian-born Axel M. as she gave evidence against him for insulting her. Axel M., 28, (whose full name could not be publicized before the end of the legal proceedings under German law), was in court appealing against an earlier court decision that had imposed a fine on him for having insulted Sherbini by calling her - among other things - a "terrorist". He was a neighbor of his victim.

### **MP Slams U.S. for Amiri Abduction**

A top Iranian lawmaker has condemned the United States for the abduction of an Iranian academic, who was kidnapped by the US last year while on pilgrimage to Mecca. Iran has found new documents related to the abduction of Shahram Amiri by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The documents have been handed over to the Swiss ambassador in Tehran, since the Swiss Embassy hosts the US interests section.

"The U.S. move to kidnap Amiri runs counter to international regulations," Fars News Agency quoted a member of the Iranian Parliament's (Majlis) National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, Javad Jahangirzadeh, as saying. "This is totally an illegal move against one of our citizens. It is clear that the US seeks to take advantage of Amiri's case to inculcate that he has valuable information and to introduce him as an important source of information," he added. The lawmaker reiterated that the US government kidnapped Amiri so that the Iranian academic would disclose data that they could later claim as invaluable information about Iran's nuclear case. Jahangirzadeh called on Iran's Foreign Ministry and other responsible bodies to seriously follow up Amiri's case. He said that international bodies should be held accountable for the Amiri case, adding, "Otherwise, an inappropriate image will be portrayed for the future situation of the world."

### **First Multi-Organ Transplantation Successfully Conducted in Iran**

Iranian surgeons for the first time in the country carried out multi-organ transplantation. During the 10-hour operation carried out in Namazi Hospital in Iran's southern city of Shiraz, the surgeons successfully performed first multi-organ transplantation in a 31-year-old man suffering from cancer. "Multi-organ transplantation is only performed in six centers across the world," the head of the organ transplantation department of Namazi Hospital Seyed Ali Malek Hosseini said. Malek Hosseini added that surgeons have succeeded to transplant the intestine, stomach, duodenum, pancreas, and spleen of a brain death donor into the body of the young man. The operation was not associated with any significant complication and the patient, who is in a good health condition, will soon be discharged from the hospital. "The multi-organ transplantation has saved the life of the

patient who had not long to live because of the aggressive tumor which was spreading all through his body," a surgeon in the organ transplantation department of Namazi Hospital Saman NikEghbalian said. Malek Hosseini believes the exceptional operation performed in Namazi Hospital would pave the way for further similar surgeries in the country and subsequently would save many lives.

### **Iran Ready for Sudden Cut in Gas Supplies**

A senior oil official said Iran has worked out several ways to make up for any possible cut in gasoline supplies to the country, reiterating that Tehran is now fully ready to overcome any sudden embargo on its fuel imports from abroad. "We are currently producing 45 million of liters of gasoline per day, and we have prepared the ground so well that we would not feel any kind of shortage, and even if all suppliers embark on stopping sales (of fuel) to Iran, there would be no problem," Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs Hossein Noqrekar Shirazi said yesterday. Meantime the official dismissed the possibility of a sudden cut in fuel supplies to Iran, mentioning that suppliers are competing with each other to sell their products to the country. He stressed that Iran will join the world's main gasoline suppliers within the next two and half years, and added, "Out domestic production would surpass one million barrels a day once we become an exporter." Noqrekar Shirazi also reminded 30 years of different types of pressures and sanctions against the Islamic Republic, and said pressures backfire because they increase the country's attention and reliance on domestic production. He also underlined Iran's technical capabilities in the oil and gas sectors, and noted, "Our technology is weaker than that of some countries but today more than 70% of the tools and equipments needed by our oil industry, including those which require both simple and advanced technologies, are manufactured inside the country."

### **Commander: Iran to Prevail Against Enemy's Soft War**

A senior Iranian commander expressed confidence that the soft war launched by the enemies against Iran would produce no result for the West, and underlined that the Islamic Republic will once again win the war against its enemies. "Undoubtedly, we will be the winning side in this soft war because we have Islam's logic and rationale which is a winning weapon," Commander of Basij (volunteer) Forces Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Naqdi said. Referring to enemies' new type of warfare, Naqdi pointed out that the country's enemies are now striving to win people's souls, spirits, thoughts and minds rather than conquering the country's territories. He further explained that the enemies are using their vast media assets and hatch numerous cultural plots to gain control over nations' souls, thoughts and minds in a move to pave the ground for destroying the society through destroying the public opinion.

### **Iranian Data Center Company Garners ISMS**

Afranet Company has successfully achieved to gain the Information Security Management System (ISMS) certification and ISO 27001. Afranet is the first Iranian data

center company that obtains this certification. Referring to the necessity of localization of Iranian websites, Managing Director of Afranet Company Fereydoun Ghasem Zadeh told reporters that several domestic institutions, companies and also most of the state organizations have tried to get ISMS certification since 2008.

“In order to help these companies and promote information security and sustain information technology services,” he added, “Our company launched a data center which is host to major and highly visited websites.”

“Islamic Azad University website is among these sites with more than 2 million viewers per day,” he said. “Based on the research by international viewers more than 70 percent of the security problems is due to management issues,” he said. He went on to say that using ISMS standard helps us to promote information security.

### **Iran to Open Bushehr Plant in Sept.**

Iran's nuclear organization official says the country's first nuclear power plant will be inaugurated in the southern Iranian port city of Bushehr by September. Today we passed one of the most important and final test, the hot water tests, of Bushehr power plant before its inauguration," IRNA quoted Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Ali Akbar Salehi as saying yesterday. Salehi said that Bushehr power plant which needs five percent enriched uranium is to become operational in the Iranian month of Shahrivar (August 23- September 22). "After 37 years, grounds have been prepared for the plant's opening," he further explained. "We have reached the point of no return. Grounds are prepared for the final opening of the reactor," he stressed. The construction of the plant started in 1975 when Germany signed a contract with Iran. Berlin, however, pulled out of the project following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iran then signed a deal with Russia in 1995. Under the deal, the plant was originally scheduled to be completed in 1999, but the completion has been repeatedly delayed due to financial and technical problems. Salehi also said that Iran will not enrich uranium 20 percent more than it needs for Tehran medical research reactor. He said, "We had no plan to enrich uranium at 20 percent and that is why the Islamic Republic of Iran demanded the International Atomic Energy Agency supply fuel for Tehran medical research reactor. It indicates that Iran had no plan to enrich uranium at 20 percent." "Regretfully, the western suppliers set a number of conditions for delivery of fuel for Tehran medical research reactor. So, Iran had no choice but to produce fuel for the reactor," Salehi said. He reiterated that all Iran's nuclear activities and sites, including its nuclear power plant in the southern city of Bushehr, are directly monitored and supervised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). "The IAEA cameras monitor the entrance and exit of fuel in the (Bushehr nuclear power) plant," he said.

Noting that the existing uranium in the plant is currently under the IAEA seal, Salehi reiterated that the Agency checks the fuel once in a while and that the IAEA cameras will continue monitoring the fuel even after it is loaded into the reactor.

Salehi went on to say that planning has been made to produce composite fuel plate for Tehran medical research reactor by August/ September 2011.

Speaking to reporters, he said the production line to produce composite fuel plate will be commissioned within coming months in Isfahan.

“We have no problem for producing fuel for Tehran medical research reactor,” he underlined.

Asked about the current fuel shortage for Tehran medical research reactor, he said it is now producing radioisotopes every other week to meet domestic demand for cancer patients, he said.

“Patients should not be concerned as we have already provided medicine from abroad,” Salehi said.

On cooperation with Russia on running Bushehr nuclear power plant, he said Iranian experts have been well trained and the job will be well done.

### **Confusion on US-Iran policy**

Worldview: Obama struggles for coherency while Iranian demonstrators clearly want change. One of the most difficult challenges facing the Obama administration is how to handle Iran. The president made it clear before he took office that he wanted to open a dialogue with Iran and end the 30-year standoff with the Islamic Republic. Iranian officials had been indicating for the past few years that they were ready to talk. Now, in view of the current turmoil in that country, Obama seems to be uncertain how or even whether he can grasp the Iranian nettle.

Which Iranians should America talk to? Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's “Supreme Leader” and officially the ultimate arbiter in the land, seems to be losing his grip on events. Iranian demonstrators openly challenge his authority. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has just taken office for a second term after an election that appears to have been rigged, has lost credibility with millions of Iranians who believe their votes were stolen. And his policies and actions are now being questioned by some of his own hard-line backers.

Above all, a significant minority of the population seem to have lost their fear of a repressive government. Night, after night thousands shout from their rooftops “God is Great” (a rallying cry of the revolution that toppled Iran's previous regime in 1979) and “Death to the Dictator” (by which they mean Ayatollah Khamenei). Brutal repression by thuggish government militias has reduced the size of daytime demonstrations on the streets, but has not stopped them. The surprising thing about this anti-government movement is how long it has gone on. The big student riots of 1999 were suppressed by the government after several days. But the demonstrators behind this new movement — young people, women, middle class professionals, even clergymen — keep coming back for more. The outside world sees very little of this, except in the furtive cellphone videos taken by the demonstrator themselves. These new “citizen journalists” hide their cellphones up their sleeves or in small containers. They have developed their own journalistic code and often begin a video with a closeup of a street sign and the front page of a local newspaper to authenticate when and where the video was shot. They frequently change their email addresses and use other techniques to avoid being tracked down by the authorities.

But despite their efforts, it is hard for foreign governments to assess the real situation in Iran. The United States had lousy intelligence cover of Iran in the years leading up to the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in the Islamic Revolution. Most of the American news

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media also missed the big story that the old Iranian regime was in danger of collapsing until it actually happened. (I know, because I was there before it happened and could not get my company to run my report.)

Much the same situation prevails today. America still seems to have spotty intelligence from Iran and the Iranian clampdown on foreign and independent media has stopped most first hand reporting from the country. The Obama administration is flying blind as it tries to find a way to bring Iran to the negotiating table and prevent it from producing a nuclear weapon.

The administration has complicated matters by imposing a deadline on the Iranian government:

Either agree to open talks on your nuclear program by September or face “crippling” sanctions. Imposing a deadline on a country whose decision making machinery is in a state of flux is not a wise move. It looks even less clever when both sides know that really tough sanctions would not work without the agreement of China and Russia (and that seems unlikely).

The administration's embarrassment is obvious. The White House believes the Iranian election was rigged, but does not want to foreclose the possibility of negotiations with the new Iranian government. So it acknowledges that Ahmadinejad is president but refuses to send him a letter of congratulations. Other foreign governments have taken equally meaningless stances.

Confusion, hypocrisy and a lack of accurate, firsthand, knowledge of the situation on the ground are the hallmarks of America's relations with Iran. Better news reporting from the scene over the years might have helped the United States handle the current crisis in a more intelligent way. But then, you could say that about every other foreign crisis America faces.

### **First Expose of Iran's Seven Hellhole Prisons**

Until the defeated Iranian presidential contender Mehdi Karroubi broke the wall of silence surrounding the Islamic Republic's prisons to demand an investigation into allegations of rape, little attention was paid to the abuses meted out to protestors who dared to claim that the June 12 election was rigged. These abuses are inflicted routinely and systematically in seven secret prisons where political detainees are held at the behest of the revolutionary Islamic regime. Those prisons are described DEBKAF's Iranian sources as inhuman hellholes: This is the jail which supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei wanted razed to the ground to conceal the outrages committed there against scores of reform-seeking protestors who had the cruel fortune to be dumped there. Kahrizak on the southern outskirts of Tehran was notorious as the penal facility for Iran's most violent thugs and gangsters. Those inmates were let loose on the political prisoners who were incarcerated in cells ten meters square. An unknown number suffered rape and bloody beatings, which not all survived.

The commander of Iran's internal security forces Esmail Ahmadi-Moghaddam said Sunday, Aug. 9, that he would not deny his share in the blame for the "terrible things that took place in Kahrizak" where two protestors were admittedly found dead. He claimed that two of the security officials responsible for "widespread prisoner abuse" had been

fired and awaited trial. The prison remains open and our sources doubt those responsible for the outrages will be brought to trial.

**Six more jails and detentions centers operate in the Tehran area.**

A low, inconspicuous door behind the Ghamar Bani Hashem Hospital on Resaalat Street near the security ministry leads into a top-secret holding facility for interrogating political prisoners. It is closely guarded by Iran's intelligence ministry. It has two floors and a yard, containing four interrogation rooms, eight isolation cells and eight holding cells in which dozens of detainees are crammed, allowed access to showers once a week and toilets three times a day. Here, the detainees undergo their first inquisition and beatings before they are transferred to other prisons. Their eyes and mouths are bound with leather straps to prevent them from identifying their tormentors. Their agony ends when they sign written confessions.

**Most of the victims' families do not know their whereabouts.**

Several hundred political prisoners are crowded into this facility for drug offenders which is designed for 250 to 350 inmates. It is situated in the Narcotic Unit's headquarters in central Tehran. The building consists of three large units broken up into cells of 1.5 x 2 meters, into each of which up to five detainees are squeezed for an agonizing three to seven days. Under interrogation, their arms and legs are broken to make them confess and give up information. Accustomed to beating and humiliating dope traffickers, the wardens carry on abusing the political detainees.

Sanitary conditions are appalling and the inmates are fed scraps from the prison staff canteens. The stench of vomit and sweat in the unventilated cells is unbearable. Whenever a detainee dies of torture or disease, prison authorities file a fictitious report. After the questioning finishes, those who survive are transferred to the central prison at Evin. No one has been brought to book for their deaths.

**The Revolutionary Guards Prison 59**

This penal complex in the cellar of the Revolutionary Guards Corps base Esharat-Abad suburb of Tehran is the most terrible of all seven secret jails. It is so secret that even the head of the justice department for the Tehran district has never been granted permission for a visit. Run by the field security unit of the IRGC, this is where suspected spies and people accused of grave security offenses are questioned by officials who are not bound by any laws or regulations. They have sole discretion to determine the degree of abuse their victims deserve. Most of the cells are made for solitary confinement, although around ten large chambers hold a number of detainees. None have light or ventilation; sanitary conditions are appalling and food scanty. Detainees are allowed one telephone call during the period of their detention subject to permission from the security guards, which means depending on how well they cooperate. Inmates are completely cut off from the outside world so that when it is important for the regime to extract confessions to crimes they never committed, they are susceptible to psychological manipulation, such as fake newspaper front pages or fabricated news bulletins. These detainees may disappear

into this top-secret prison for long stretches of time of up to a year or two without their families knowing where they are. This detention center on Schrevardi street in central Tehran is shared by the intelligence ministry and Revolutionary Guards. It is located on the top floors of a shopping center and hidden behind a secret door. It is used for political detainees whose incarceration is too secret for them to be held in other prisons. For many it is also the end of the line for few survive the questioning practices at this place. This jail administered by the internal security services, named for the notorious American prison in Iraq, is located on Seoul Street in the Fatemeh suburb of Tehran, a residential district where few are aware that Abu Ghoraib is used to torture security personnel accused of grave offences or crimes against the regime. Prison No. 66 This jail is also run by the Revolutionary Guards behind the Allameh Tabatabai military base on the Asfariyeh highway north of Tehran. Here former Guards members accused of serious offenses or subversion against the state are subjected to extreme torture. At least two inmates have died in recent weeks.

### **The United States and Iran through the Ages**

Professor Gary Sick served on the National Security Council under Presidents Ford, Carter, and Reagan, and was the principal White House aide for Iran during the Iranian Revolution and the hostage crisis. Sick is the author of *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter With Iran* and *October Surprise: America's Hostages in Iran and the Election of Ronald Reagan*. He currently serves as a researcher and adjunct professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. Did advisors and key players in the Ford Administration imagine how dramatically U.S.- Iranian relations would change? In 1974 or 1975 could anyone have predicted that such a large-scale Iranian revolution would occur? The simple answer is no. No one in the government—even leaders in Iran—were astonished by how it evolved and how the Shah's security apparatus collapsed. There is a book called *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran* that actually examines all the conflicting theories of revolution that have been applied to Iran and examines them on the basis of a thorough review of what information was available at the time. It demonstrates well that the Iranian revolution was a surprise to everybody; that it didn't actually become inevitable until very late in the day. There was a tipping point in the fall of 1978, and up until that point it was very possible that the shah would survive the challenge. Once that tipping point passed, it was all downhill for the shah. I think everyone who witnessed it was shocked by how quickly it went and how totally the shah and his very impressive security apparatus were incapable of responding to the challenge. How does the Iranian Revolution play into the Iranian national narrative? How do moderate Iranians who oppose the current regime view the events of 1979? In answering that, you have to realize that people's views change dramatically over time. I think most of the people in Iran did not really expect the Shah to be overthrown or a new revolutionary regime—much less an Islamic-oriented regime—until September 1978. Most people were just going about their business and didn't anticipate how big this was going to be. As the revolution grew, a great many people from all walks of life—in Iran and outside of Iran—combined to support the idea of the revolution.

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People who we might call moderates or centrists saw this as a move towards greater democracy and human rights, and away from the rule of the monarchy. Those people took to the streets and in some cases even risked their lives for the sake of the revolution. There were some very strange cases. For example, when I was on the National Security Council during that time, a lot of people who had been in Iran came to see me. One afternoon, a member of the Jewish Agency, an organization responsible for protecting Jews who are threatened in parts of the world and helping them escape to Israel—came to see me and said that he had just come from Iran. This was in the fall of 1978. He sat on the sofa in my office and I remember vividly his recounting that he had spoken with the leaders of the Jewish community in Tehran—this was a very large Jewish community comprised of about fifty or sixty thousand Jews—and how the children of Jewish leaders were out marching in the streets for Khomeini. He couldn't believe it. The rest of the Jewish community outside Iran was very concerned about what this might mean to support fundamentalist Islamic rule. But many young Jewish people in Iran were caught up in the enthusiasm for the revolution. People's views about the revolution at that time were remarkable supportive, even in places that you would least expect it. That was certainly not universal. As the revolution over, people who had been proponents of greater democracy, human rights, women's rights were thrown out of that system and marginalized; people like Yazar Kamanzi, who had promoted the idea of the revolution as a democratic movement, were marginalized. With this, a lot of people's opinions began to change, and many centrist opinions began to shift against the revolution. There were a lot of committed monarchists who opposed the revolution from the start. A lot of people who were in favor of the revolution had a change of heart and decided that was not what they had in mind at all. Inside Iran, it's far more complicated. People who lived through the revolution suffered a huge, chaotic breakdown of the government and its operations. They fought a war for eight years, and they have been subjected to far more control of their personal lives. It's not that there is a revolutionary movement again or a burgeoning counter-revolution movement, but there is huge disillusionment with what the revolution has produced.

The revolution has done some really good things. They brought pipe gas to rural areas that never had it before, there are schools in villages that had never seen schools, there are roads to towns that weren't there. There is television throughout the country. Going to college is much more feasible for people of all walks of life and all areas of the country. Their healthcare system has actually improved dramatically. So there are a number of things that the Islamic revolution has achieved, but it's been at a cost.

There are a lot of people inside Iran—although they've seen what revolution looks like and don't want to go through it again—who are just disillusioned about where they are. A lot of people I think just want to get on with their lives at this stage. That's the place where the present regime has a real problem. On one hand, it's not producing great economic benefits for the country, but at the same time it's cracking down more and more because they see this opposition and apathy growing amidst the Iranian people. The two together have undercut their legitimacy. This is a very complicated situation, but I think the key here is that this is dynamic—attitudes don't stay fixed in one place.

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Even people who were part of the group of students who took over the American embassy—people who were committed to the revolution and to clerical rule—have in many cases changed their views and become outspoken opponents of the regime to the extent of actually getting thrown in jail. So it's a moving target and the revolution is not something that is black or white or good or bad—it's something that is evolving and changing over time.

Similarly, how does the Iran Hostage Crisis play into the modern Iranian narrative? Do Iranians remember the hostage-taking with pride, as a moment when Iran brought the most powerful nation in the world to its knees, or is it viewed differently?

At the time, it was a point of pride in Iran. People marched in the streets in favor of it. Though some of it was engineered by the government—people were brought in for demonstrations and the like, but much of it was sincere. Khomeini, who was of course the leader at the time, called it the second Iranian Revolution. In that sense, what he felt was being accomplished and his underlying reason for keeping the crisis going as long he did was that he really wanted to break any kind of relationship with the United States. He saw the U.S.-Iran relationship as one of dependency and he felt that Iran needed to break away from it totally. The hostage crisis provided a political opportunity for him to get his own domestic agenda passed, which he did against growing odds at the time; and secondly, to break off any contacts or sense of dependency on the United States. I think those were shared by a lot of Iranians. Again, lots of Iranians had very different views—there were a lot of Iranians who were appalled and ashamed that a country which called itself civilized would invade a foreign embassy and hold hostages in that way over such a long period of time.

For many Iranians, this was truly unacceptable. Basically today, most Iranians have simply forgotten about it—it's not a big deal in Iran. It's not something that people talk about. Though they go through the ritual of remembering the taking of the embassy each year, it is not a significant memory in the Iranian consciousness. I would say the average Iranian hardly ever thinks about it. Though Iran has forgotten about it and put it nearly completely out of their minds, it has never been forgotten in the United States at all and continues to be at the very heart of U.S. policy with regard to Iran. It has posed many problems domestically as America forms its policy toward Iran. It has shaped U.S. attitudes towards Iran so dramatically that if anyone who says a good word about Iran or talks about engaging with Iran is immediately risking the label of being 'Soft on Terrorism' or 'Soft on Iran' or 'An Appeaser.' It has prevented the United States from progressing in a political sense.

If you think about it, the Vietnam War was unfolding at the same time as the Iranian Revolution. More than 50,000 Americans were killed in Vietnam—it was a terrible war with disastrous consequences that affected American politics from one end to another. But today we have full diplomatic relations with Vietnam, even though it is a communist government. We do business with them and American prisoners of war go over there and revisit where they were held captive. In Iran, we have no diplomatic relations at all and there is still deep division over whether we should even talk to the government.

I think this goes back to the hostage crisis; it has undoubtedly left an indelible mark on America's psyche. It has been and remains slow to heal.

### **What are the most pressing challenges to a healthy U.S.-Iranian relationship?**

There are many, many challenges; first, there are several facts that simply have to be acknowledged. Iran is the largest, most populous, and one of the most economically important countries in terms of its oil and gas reserves in the Persian Gulf. It dominates one entire side of the Persian Gulf and one side of the Strait of Hormuz, through which 60 percent of the world's exported oil and gas go. It is enormously important.

The United States and Iran disagree with one another about many issues. It's not just that the United States has been scarred by the hostage crisis, the Iranians have a domestic political problem also because their revolution was oriented around opposition to the United States. This idea of chanting 'death to America' at every major public event that Iran holds has soured Iranian domestic politics. Someday, those feelings and emotions will have to be resolved. That doesn't mean that they are just going to vanish one day, but I think we're actually seeing a time when both the United States and Iran know they cannot function without one another. The United States cannot have a coherent policy in the Persian Gulf without having contacts with Iran and dealing with Iran on a number of regional issues. Iran cannot have a coherent policy in the region without having some contact or relationship with the United States, which is in fact the most powerful country in the Persian Gulf. We have the largest footprint in the Gulf of any country. Iran can't ignore that, and we can't ignore them. We are going to find a way to begin to deal with one another.

### **How has the Bush Administration fared in its policy toward Iran?**

In the last year, the Bush administration has begun making some significant changes in U.S. policy. We were very involved in this latest proposal to Iran that offered a package of benefits that was presented to them by three members of the Security Council and three European powers recently. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice signed that letter to Iran and the number three diplomat at the State Department was said to continue to participate in the meeting that was held subsequently. That was a major step. The United States will have diplomatic relations with Iran someday. We will begin to deal with some of the issues that separate us and bring us together. We do share a number of fundamental interests in the region – you can either focus entirely on the negative side or you can look at the positive side of things and build on it. It's going to have to be a mixture of both of those; we can't forget the negative things that happened with the Iranians, but we can't ignore the positive side of things. At this stage, I think we are beginning to experiment on both sides with this idea of strengthening relations. This will, no doubt, be a poignant challenge for the next administration.

What do Iranians hope to achieve from nuclearization? Do they seek national security or regional sovereignty? What are their underlying intentions? Looking back, Iran began seeking nuclear capability under the days of the shah. In fact, I was present in Tehran with President Carter in the last full year of the Shah's reign when he agreed to sell the Shah seven nuclear reactors. This idea had been approved quite explicitly by the Ford administration years earlier. So, the idea of developing nuclear power capability existed long before the Iranian Revolution, and the United States actually cooperated with that

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process. Of course then, as now, developing nuclear capability offered you the capacity of building a nuclear weapon. Today, people joke that if Japan wanted to, they could have a nuclear weapon in a long weekend. Other countries like Brazil or Taiwan are much further away from it, but if they decided, they needed to have a nuclear weapon, they could, using what they've got, get one rather quickly.

Iran is on its way to being a member of that forty nation club that has the capacity to build a nuclear weapon. Iran's interests are vast. First, Iran actually does need alternatives to oil and gas. In the long run, their energy and electricity consumption have gone up dramatically. Today, Iran produces about four million barrels of oil per day, and it uses one and a half million barrels a day for domestic uses. It also imports refined products because it doesn't have enough refineries to keep up with the demand for gasoline and diesel.

Turning to nuclear power is not strange. Iran has some of the greatest hydroelectric capabilities. Nuclear is not the only alternative energy source. It is 1.5 billion barrels of oil—we're talking billions of dollars over a long period of time. Finding alternatives to the fossil fuel consumption in Iran is a very sensible thing to do.

Ultimately, Iran wants to be taken seriously as a regional power. They see that countries who have nuclear capability are taken much more seriously by the rest of the world. Iran wants to be taken seriously in the region and have a voice.

By replacing eliminating the Taliban in Afghanistan and replacing Saddam Hussein with a group of Shia political leaders, the United States has in fact increased Iran's power and influence in the region. Iran is a much more powerful and influential country than it was five years ago, largely because of our actions.

Our misguided policy has affected Iran's relations with other Arab nations, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—Iran's overall influence is felt much further away. They are able to play a political game in the Levant area, providing support to Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Those elements have in fact increased Iran's influence and ability to extend its influence. This has grown rapidly in the last five years. Having nuclear power and being able to produce a weapon means a great deal.

In August of 1990 you famously wrote an opinion article in the New York Times raising concerns about the timing of the freeing of hostages in Tehran and Ronald Regan's presidential campaign. Has any new information come to light in the last two decades that has changed your views on what happened?

That, of course, was hugely controversial. There were a lot of people who were extraordinarily angry with me for making that argument. In terms of new information, I have found evidence that both supports and negates my argument. From my perspective, and I've said this in the book, there's no smoking gun. There is a lot of circumstantial evidence, and as far as I'm concerned, it remains an open question. I think that's where it will remain until we reach a breakthrough of some sort. A conversation with the Iranians will perhaps shed light on what really happened. Either way—whether it supports or negates, I'd like to know what happened.

## Abducted Academic Leaves for Home

Iranian academic Shahram Amiri, who was kidnapped by Saudi Arabian and US intelligence agents last year, has left the United States for Tehran. Amiri took refuge in Iran's interest section at the Pakistani Embassy in Washington on Tuesday, demanding an "immediate return" to Iran, Presstv reported. The embassy is in charge of Iran's interests in the United States because the two countries do not have diplomatic relations. Ties were cut off soon after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. In collaboration with Saudi forces, US agents kidnapped Amiri while he was on a minor pilgrimage (Hajj) in Medina in June 2009 and transferred him to the US. Since then, two videos featuring him and one audio message have emerged. Meanwhile, in the latest audio message obtained by Iran's intelligence sources, Amiri insists that he was offered \$10 million to appear on CNN and announce that he had willingly defected to the US. Holding the US accountable for Amiri's abduction, the Foreign Ministry in Tehran earlier this month summoned the Swiss charge d'affaires Georg Steiner -- whose embassy represents US interests in Iran -- and handed over documents related to his abduction by the CIA. Analysts say US intelligence officials decided to release Amiri after they failed to benefit from their propaganda campaign against Iran's nuclear program.

### Clinton's Remarks

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton claimed Amiri was "free to go" at any time, unlike the three US hikers detained for over one year by Tehran.

"He is free to go, he was free to come," AFP quoted Clinton as claiming in Washington on Tuesday, ignoring Amiri and Iranian officials' remarks that the scholar had been abducted. She contrasted the case of the Iranian scientist to that of Americans Shane Bauer, 27, Sarah Shourd, 31, and Josh Fattal, 27 who have been held in Iran since July 31 last year for illegal entry into Iran.

"Iran continues to hold three young Americans against their will."

Intelligence Minister Heydar Moslehi told Presstv on April 8 that Iran had compelling evidence that the three Americans were working for foreign spy agencies.

Speaking in an interview with AFP in December 2009, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said "The three Americans had entered Iran illegally and were arrested in a sensitive military zone. They [the US and the West] make a big deal out of this case to implicate that Americans are very important [to them]."

Ahmadinejad pointed to several Iranians abducted by the US government around the world, saying "Americans have kidnapped more than 10 of our citizens in other countries even though they had visas.

They [Americans] took them [to the US] but they say nothing [about this case]."

On May 25 the New York Times reported that the then US Central Command chief General David H. Petraeus had issued a secret directive in September 2009, authorizing the dispatch of American Special Operations units to both friendly and anti-US states in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Horn of Africa to conduct clandestine military activities and gather intelligence.

According to the report, the target countries included Iran, Saudi Arabia and Somalia.

### US Contact

Washington claimed on Tuesday that it has been in contact with Amiri.

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“The United States government has maintained contact with him [Amiri],” AFP quoted State Department spokesman Philip Crowley as telling reporters in Washington on Tuesday.

He declined to specify further.

### The Shahram Affair

Confronted with the accusation that Iranian nuclear scientist Shahram Amiri had been kidnapped by US and Saudi intelligence agencies while on a trip to Mecca, and brought to the US for interrogation, State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley averred: “We are not in the habit of going around kidnapping people.”

To which the only proper response is: Oh, really?

Given the numerous instances of “extraordinary rendition” in which our government has been engaged, and no doubt continues to be engaged, one wonders how Senor Crowley can say that with a straight face. But then again, being an official spokesman for the US Department of State no doubt requires some sort of facial surgery – or, perhaps, an industrial-strength shot of Botox – to achieve the desired results.

Now that Shahram has shown up at the Iranian interests section of the Pakistani Embassy in Washington, D.C., saying to have been abducted by the US and Saudi intelligence services, and tortured, Crowley may want to review his knowledge of US habits.

### Missing Link

In March, ABC News released an “exclusive” report hailing Shahram’s “defection” as a great US “intelligence coup,” the missing link in the puzzle piecing together a picture of Iran’s nuclear program. Shahram is said to have worked for the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and news of his “defection” appeared alongside reports of an Iranian “secret” nuclear facility on the outskirts of the city of Qom.

As it was, the Iranians themselves revealed the existence of the Qom facility and opened it up to inspection by the IAEA, but the matter of Shahram’s disappearance appeared to throw a shadow over their efforts at openness. We were to be told that the defector had brought with him a laptop which contained all the secrets of Iran’s nuclear program, and this was to be touted as yet more evidence – as if this administration needed any – Iran was harboring nuclear ambitions in defiance of the “international community.”

“According to the people briefed on the intelligence operation,” ABC “reported,” “Amiri’s disappearance was part of a long-planned CIA operation to get him to defect. The CIA reportedly approached the scientist in Iran through an intermediary who made an offer of resettlement on behalf of the United States.”

That, at least, was the official story, dutifully relayed to the world by ABC “News”: Shahram, however, upended their neat little narrative, months later, with a YouTube video – that indispensable weapon of counter-propaganda – in which he told us:

“I was kidnapped last year (2009) in the holy city of Medina on 3 June in a joint operation by the terror and abduction units of the American CIA and Saudi Arabia’s Istikhbarat [intelligence agency]. They took me to a house located somewhere that I didn’t know. They gave me an anesthetic injection. When I became conscious I was in a big [voice interrupted] towards America.”

“During the eight months that I was kept in America, I was subject to the most severe tortures and psychological pressures by the American intelligence investigation groups.

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“And the main aim behind these investigation teams and the pressure imposed on me was to make me take part in an interview conducted by an American media source and claim that I was an important figure in Iran’s nuclear program and I had sought asylum in America at my own will. And (to say) while seeking asylum I took some very important documents and a laptop with classified information on Iran’s military nuclear program in it to America from my country.”

This was followed, hours later, by yet another video, in which someone claiming to be Shahram – and looking, admittedly, just like him – said he wanted to clear up “rumors,” denied having any political views or that he had betrayed his country, and stated: “I am in America and intend to continue my education here. I am free here and I assure everyone that I am safe.”

Gee, it’s a good thing the CIA has their own YouTube channel: now there’s a solid investment of the US taxpayers’ money. But Shahram wasn’t done with them quite yet.

On June 29, a third video cropped up, which was played by Iranian television, in which the real Shahram cleared up the mystery:

“I, Shahram Amiri, am a national of the Islamic Republic of Iran and a few minutes ago I succeeded in escaping US security agents in Virginia. Presently, I am producing this video in a safe place. I could be re-arrested at any time.”

After appealing to western human rights organizations to intervene on his behalf – fat chance! – he continued:

Fabricated Video

Alase “The second video which was published on YouTube by the US government, where I have said that I am free and want to continue my education here, is not true and is a complete fabrication. If something happens and I do not return home alive, the US government will be responsible.”

All this time Washington had refused to acknowledge Shahram’s presence in the US, but when he showed up at the Pakistani Embassy an official who refused to be named told the media: “He came to this country freely, he lived here freely, and he has chosen freely to return to Iran.”

Such evidence as we have indicates only the last of those three assertions bears any resemblance to the facts. Aside from Shahram’s testimony, and his presence at the embassy, the high quality of the second video, and the relatively poor quality of the first and third, is suggestive of an effort by US intelligence to cover up a badly botched job.

What’s interesting about this story isn’t only the scandal of a kidnapping carried out by our spooks – after all, we should be inured to that by now – but the role the US media was slated to play if Shahram had gone along for the ride.

## **Economic Front**

### **India, Iran to Hold Gas Pipeline Talks**

The multi-billion-dollar Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline is back on India's agenda with the government planning to hold a bilateral meeting in Teheran on the issue after a gap of at least two years. Petroleum secretary S. Sundareshan said the Iranian government proposed talks on the IPI to which India has agreed. The development comes in the backdrop of India's indication of support for Iran against recent US sanctions. "There is supposed to be a meeting of the joint working group to discuss the IPI-related issues," Sundareshan said. "We had suggested dates in May which were not acceptable to the Iranian side. We are now given to understand that they would like the meeting in Iran. We have accepted the location and asked them to suggest dates." The last trilateral meeting on the IPI issue involving Iran, Pakistan and India was held in July 2007.

"What has not been understood is that the talks were stalled on the question of Iran suggesting an alternate pricing formula. There has to be further discussion on this," Sundareshan said. "This is a major issue which is to be resolved. Once this is resolved the question of transit fee with Pakistan and transportation tariff will be taken up with Pakistan."

Some 60 million standard cu. m a day (mmscmd) of gas likely to flow through the pipeline daily may be equally divided between India and Pakistan. The pricing formula for the gas, linked to the Japanese crude cocktail price, is for the gas reaching the Iran-Pakistan border from the source. A further price escalation is expected because of transit rights and transport tariff to be paid to Pakistan by India.

Talks on the 2,300km pipeline started in 1995, but have been delayed over price and transportation fees India would have to pay Pakistan. While India's clinching of the civilian nuclear agreement with the U.S. slowed the process, Iran and Pakistan decided to go ahead with the project without India, and have even extended a partnership offer to China.

"There have been no talks on IPI for more than two years. In June, the Iranians had informed us that they were interested in holding talks," said another senior petroleum ministry official who did not want to be named.

India has recently warmed up towards Iran to court the energy-rich Islamic republic with whom New Delhi has shared uneasy ties of late. The two also recently held a meeting of the India-Iran joint commission—a panel that explores ways to boost economic ties between the two countries—after a gap of 16 months.

Iran is facing a fresh set of international economic sanctions for refusing to end its nuclear program. Ironically, India, which is heavily dependent on energy imports, last week criticized the "extra-territorial nature" of the censures—without naming the U.S.—saying the sanctions would "have a direct and adverse impact on Indian companies" and on India's energy security.

While Iran has the world's second largest oil and natural gas reserves, India is the world's fifth largest energy consumer and imports 75% of its needs, accounting for 3.5% of global energy consumption. The trade between India and Iran, is around \$15 billion.

Foreign secretary Nirupama Rao last week said that Teheran's importance as an energy partner stems from the "natural complementarity between the needs of energy-hungry India, which hopes to grow at a rate of 8-10% in the coming years, and Iran, which is home to the third largest proven oil reserves and second largest gas reserves". Analysts, are however, skeptical about the pipeline becoming a reality.

"We can keep talking about it but I don't think it's viable. There are some techno-commercial points that still need to be settled. One is the question of pricing and the second is the question of the physical security of the pipeline which passes through Pakistan, specifically the Baluchistan province," said Uday Bhaskar, security analyst and head of the National Maritime Foundation.

### **Carpet Exports to Reach \$500m**

Carpet exports from Iran will reach 500 million dollars by the end of the current Iranian year (ending March 20, 2011), head of Iran National Carpet Center announced yesterday. Speaking on the sidelines of the 5th Festival of Iranian Exquisite Carpets, Feisal Mardasi said based on the statistics available on carpet exports, some 56 million dollars of carpet were exported during June 21- April 21, 2010. He said the bulk of exports within the mentioned period is not satisfactory because national carpet production capacity is well above the current figure. He noted that Iranian carpets are usually marketed in Italy, Germany, the UK, France, Spain, Switzerland, the US and Canada as well as the UAE, Kuwait, Russia, Ukraine and Japan. 5th Festival of Iranian Exquisite Carpets is being held at Tehran's Sa'dabad Historical-Cultural Complex from July 6 to 16. The ten-day festival brings together local carpet weavers as well.

Visitors will get a chance to see tribal and nomadic tents and take part in Kilim and carpet weaving workshops. Iran exports carpets to more than 100 countries in the world. Carpet-weaving is undoubtedly one of the most distinguished manifestations of Persian culture and art, and dates back to ancient Persia. There is an estimated population of 1.2 million weavers in Iran producing carpets for domestic markets and international export.

### **Iran, India Sign Six Agreements**

Iran and India signed six cooperation agreements at the end of the 16th session of their Joint Economic Commission, held in New Delhi on July 8-9, 2010. Iran's visiting Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Shamseddin Hosseini, and Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna attended the signing ceremony in New Delhi Friday evening. Cooperation in air service, new and renewable energy, small scale industry, science and technology, paper research and transfer of sentenced persons were among the agreement inked by the two sides. Facilitation of code share, cooperation in marketing arrangement and enhancement in the capacity of the designated airlines from the current 23 services per week to 31 services were the main parts of air services agreement. The new Air Services Agreement (ASA) will be based on the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) template. The revised ASA will supersede the ASA initialed between the two countries on 30 April, 1980. It has the potential to spur greater trade investment, tourism and strengthening the cultural exchange between the two countries

besides bringing it in tune with the developments in the international civil aviation scenario. Meanwhile, the meeting of the Joint Commission provided an opportunity to review bilateral economic and cultural cooperation. Earlier on Thursday Shamseddin Hosseini visited Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Minister of Finance Pranab Mukherjee. India and Iran are expected to sign a bilateral investment protection treaty in order to double the bilateral trade to 30 billion dollars by 2015. Hosseini said in New Delhi on Thursday that New Delhi and Tehran will take forward the talks on the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline project and will come to an agreement. Iranian Minister and Deputy Minister also addressed a seminar on "Investment Opportunities in Iran". The day-long seminar, to enhance Iran-India business ties, was organized by India's apex business body the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) at FICCI auditorium. Meanwhile, the business delegation accompanying Hosseini also held meetings with Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

### **Iran Inaugurates Softgel Production Line**

Iranian researchers have succeeded to establish the country's largest production line for softgel capsules based on the latest technologies. Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi, the Iranian Minister of Health and Medical Education, announced that Iranians have succeeded to set up the line despite the recent sanctions. The head of Minoo industrial group Saeed Ohadi told IRNA the new line is developed based on the world's latest technologies and can revolutionize Iran's pharmaceutical industry. "This project can save more than 40 million dollars for the country," said Ohadi in the inauguration ceremony of the new line. Omega 3 (1000mg), Vitamin E (400IU) and Vitamin E and Aloe Vera are the three main products currently developed by this line. Iranians, however, hope to produce various other drugs and supplements through this technology in the near future. The factory is built in an area of 5,000 square meters at a construction and equipment cost of 14 million dollars. Softgel pills are privileged by easier swallowing, quicker absorption and lesser medicinal side effects.

### **Iranian, Spanish Provinces to Expand Relations**

Officials from Iran's central province of Yazd and Spanish Castellon province agreed to boost mutual cooperation. An eight-member trade delegation from Yazd and officials of the Spanish city of Castellon inked several agreements on cooperation in water transfer, solar energy and tile production. The delegation, headed by Yazd Governor General Mohammad Reza Fallahzadeh, inked three Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) at the end of its 6-day visit to Spain. The delegation also met with members of Castellon Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Yazd is an architecturally unique city. It is also known in Iran for the high quality of its handicrafts, especially silk weaving and its sweet shops. Castellon Province stretches 115 kilometers along Spain's Mediterranean coast creating the Costa Azahar. The ceramic industry has always been one of the primary livelihoods in the humble town of Castellon throughout the history. It has been a known city of artistry and craftsmanship.

## **Energy Ties With Russia Underlined**

Iran's ambassador to Moscow Mahmoud Reza Sajjadi underlined the necessity for robust cooperation between Iran and Russia in the energy sector, particularly in oil and gas fields. "Tehran and Moscow should expand their cooperation in the field of energy," Sajjadi said, addressing the 1st Iran-Russia Joint Seminar on Oil and Gas on Saturday. "Despite extensive grounds, unfortunately, the two countries' cooperation in oil and gas and petrochemical fields is limited due to lack of knowledge and familiarity with this cooperation," he added. "These two independent and sovereign countries should enjoy vast cooperation in a bid to make their oil and gas reserves an opportunity for national and regional development rather than an economic threat," he noted.

He called for the presentation of the two countries' energy products in Saint Petersburg energy Stock Exchange (SPBEX) or Kish Island Stock Exchange, and said the two states can cooperate in determining oil prices and optimizing energy production and refining technologies. Russia and Iran have cooperation in several energy projects. Russia has been building a nuclear power plant in Iran's southern port city of Bushehr since 1994. The start-up of the station, originally scheduled to be completed in 1999, has been delayed on several occasions. Western corporations began the construction of the Bushehr facility in the 1970s. However, following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Western companies reneged on their commitments and pulled out of the project due to political pressure from Washington. Iran then turned to Russia to complete the project. In 1992, Tehran and Moscow signed a deal to complete the construction of the nuclear power plant.

In another advancement a senior official of Russia's Astrakhan Port lauded the robust ties between Tehran and Moscow, and praised the Iranian companies for their active presence and participation in trade activities in the Russian port city. "The Islamic Republic of Iran is Russia's most important trade partner and has a major share in these relations," Astrakhan's Deputy Minister for International Relations and Foreign Trade Mikhail Borsovic said in a meeting with directors of Iran's northern port city of Bandar Anzali Customs Office on Sunday. Borsovic said that Iranian traders enjoy a good status in Astrakhan, and added, "So far, 118 Iranian companies have been registered in Astrakhan." He also pointed out that Iranian companies are currently more active in reprocessing industries and manufacturing agricultural products. In April 2010, Iranian and Russian officials endorsed a mutual trade agreement to expand economic cooperation between the two neighboring states. The volume of Iran and Russia's trade exchanges is estimated at 3.7 billion dollars and the two countries are resolved to significantly increase their exchanges.

## **FM: D-8 has huge capacities for expansion of economic ties**

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said that eight developing nations group (D-8) has huge capacities for expansion of economic ties. In the 13th ministerial meeting of D-8 in Abuja, Nigeria, Mottaki said that Iran believes strengthening south-south cooperation and deepening multilateral ties in the framework of D-8 are among important factors for presenting a new model of cooperation in current instable economic situation. Holding D-

8 summit is a valuable opportunity for finding ways to strengthen ties among member states of the organization, Mottaki added. He underlined that Islamic Republic of Iran has a high priority for developing cooperation with Islamic and developing countries in the framework of D-8, so Iran does its utmost for strengthening and deepening bilateral and multilateral relations with them. Referring to the consequences and effects of world economic and financial crises and the fact that developing countries have had no role in creation of the crises, Mottaki said that the developing countries should find practical solutions to counter the crises and in this concern an active and direct participation seems necessary.

He added Iran believes that strengthening south-south cooperation, regional settings, and deepening multilateral relations in the D-8 framework are among important factors of such approaches.

Reminding women role in the society and family, Mottaki proposed establishment of a special working group to support women rights and gender justice.

D-8 summit will hold its meeting in Abuja, capital of Nigeria, on Thursday.

Foreign Ministers of member states of D-8 reviewed final declaration of the 7th summit meeting of the group on Tuesday.

### **Iran Top Regional Electricity Producer**

Iran ranks first in the region in terms of generating electricity and is ready to export 2,000 to 4,000 megawatts of electricity, said Deputy Energy Minister Mohammad Behzad. According to a report posted on the Energy Ministry's website, he referred to a 38-percent increase in the output of the power plants across the country last year, IRNA reported. "Efforts are underway to raise the figure to 45 percent in the next five years," he noted. Electricity consumption shows an increase of 9.5 percent in the current Iranian year from 7.5 percent last year, Behzad said. Some 18,000 megawatts of electricity was generated during the Fourth Five-Year Development Plan (2005-2010), he said, noting the figure will reach 25,500 megawatts during the fifth plan (2010-2015). Turkmen Delegation To Discuss Energy Ties A high-ranking delegation of Turkmen officials is due to visit Iran on July 20 to discuss development of the two countries' relations in the energy sector.

The delegation will be headed by Turkmenistan's Deputy Chairmen of the Cabinet of Ministers for Oil and Gas Baymyrat Hojamammedow during the visit to Iran, Fars News Agency reported. Iran has recently enhanced efforts to boost political, economic, energy and cultural ties and cooperation with the regional and neighboring countries, specially those in the Central Asia. In a ceremony attended by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in January 2010, Iran and Turkmenistan inaugurated the second gas pipeline to transfer gas supplies from Turkmenistan to Iran. The pipeline which passes through Dauletabad, Sarakhs and Khangiran regions will facilitate the hike in Turkmenistan's gas exports to Iran up to 20 billion cubic meters annually. Korpeje-Kurt Kui pipeline is the other gas pipeline already used for transferring Turkmen gas to Iran. Turkmenistan had agreed to boost the volume of its natural gas exports to Iran to 14 billion cubic meters (bcm) from the current 8 bcm following the start of operation of the new gas pipeline between the two countries.

## **Russian Companies...**

According to Russian news agencies, Mirkazemi declared that sanctions “will in no way have an effect on the economic and industrial development of Iran. Independent countries are truly cooperating with Iran.” Russian state oil company Zarubezhneft said earlier on Wednesday it was interested in signing a geological exploration contract with Iran. CEO Nikolai Brunich said a consortium could be set up to include Zarubezhneft, the state oil company of Iran and another Russian oil company.

Moscow-Tehran relations chilled earlier this year as Russia improved ties with the United States, a forceful advocate of sanctions. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has said Moscow was running out of patience with Iranian unwillingness to address Western fears over its nuclear program.

### **On Hold**

Russian oil and gas majors Gazprom, Gazprom Neft and LUKOIL , have signed billions of dollars worth of deals to help Iran develop its oil and gas fields but most projects are on hold because of sanctions.

Partly for this reason analysts have said Russia would try to walk a safe path between sanctions and its wish to maintain links with a fellow oil and gas power.

Shmatko also said Russian firms could supply Iran with refined oil products. US laws sanction any company worldwide that exports the motor fuel to Iran in an effort to deter Tehran’s nuclear enrichment activities. Iran says its nuclear activities are peaceful and not aimed at developing weapons.

Iran, dependent on imports to satisfy its citizens’ voracious appetite for state subsidized gasoline, has been shunned by many of its traditional suppliers, including independent trade houses and the trade arm of Russia’s No.2 oil firm, LUKOIL.

“We have not discussed trading operations, but if there is commercial interest and attractive terms Russian companies are ready to supply oil products to Iran without any doubt,” Shmatko said.

The text of the pact said the two countries would aim to increase cooperation in transit, swaps and marketing of natural gas as well as sales of petroleum products and petrochemicals, Reuters reported.

### **South-North Corridor**

“We are neighbors and if a big project to create a south-north transport corridor is implemented I believe that we will create long-term supply opportunities, including for oil products,” Shmatko said.

The two ministries also said they agreed “to prepare a broad joint roadmap for agreement on activities in power, nuclear energy and renewables” The ministers will meet again in the fourth quarter of 2010 to finalize agreements.

Executives of major Russian and Iranian companies were present at the signing ceremony on Wednesday but agreed only two deals to boost cooperation. The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) signed a protocol with Russian gas engineering company Cryogenmash to help it supply gas to 8,000 cities and villages in Iran with the use of liquefied natural gas technology.

Russian power engineering firm REP Holding signed a deal with NIOC to help modernize the Iranian oil industry. No further details were given during the signing.

## **Social Front**

### **Supreme Leader: Ground Available for Clergies' Presence in Universities**

Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, said here on Sunday that the ground is available for activities of clergies in universities. "Fortunately, contrary to the past on certain occasions, now the ground is available in the current government for presence of clergymen in universities," said Ayatollah Khamenei in a meeting with a group of officials representing his Excellency in universities. The Supreme Leader reiterated that a very positive atmosphere and environment is now available in Iranian universities for the purpose. "One should be fully thankful of all the blessings by using the opportunities available in the best possible manner. The Ayatollah said landmark scientific achievements,, political insight of academics and their presence on the scene at sensitive junctures, the religious atmosphere dominating universities and a large number of faithful university lecturers are all brilliant realities with the country's universities. The Supreme Leader said presence of highly knowledgeable clergymen in universities and their close contact with students and university lecturers is among big blessings in the post-Islamic Revolution era. "Such an important and valuable opportunity should be appreciated. Significance of the issue is clear from adverse publicity of the ill-wishers and their strong concern over Islamization of universities because one of the features of the Islamization is presence of clergymen in universities," said the Supreme Leader.

Stressing the need to address students' ideological as well as spiritual requirements, the Supreme Leader said seminarians shoulder heavy responsibility of offering human and scientific support to the offices representing him in universities.

### **Tehran Choir in China**

Tehran Choir is in China to participate in the World Choir Games 2010 in Shanghai. The ensemble conductor, Milad Omranlou, told Fars News Agency that the choir will take part in three categories, namely folklore, chamber and pop music. "We will have three performances during the event and then will perform with other ensembles, including the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra." The performance will be held in a joint effort with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Billed as the world's biggest choir competition, the event will be held from July 15 to 26 in Shanghai. Every two years, choirs from all parts of the world come together to celebrate the World Choir Games. Their motto is "Singing together brings nations together". The idea of the World Choir Games originates from the effort to bring people together through singing in peaceful competition. In this way the unity of nations through the arts can be effectively and illustratively demonstrated and challenged.

