

Bush's America Destabilizing Region



Mostafa Mohammad-Najjar

SARI, Mazandaran, Dec. 8--Defense Minister Mostafa

Mohammad-Najjar said here Thursday that creating discord among regional states is one America's new strategies aimed creating turmoil.

The minister, who is accompanying President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the cabinet to Mazandaran province, made the remark in a meeting with provincial armed forces commanders, IRNA reported.

Turning to the systemic and pattern of US failures in the Middle East, including the so-called Road Map for Mideast peace, he said that the

confidential letter of the sacked US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to George Bush in which he admitted US defeat in Iraq and its strategic blunders show that the era of aggression and bullying is over.

"The US should respect the will of the regional people and stop its interference in their affairs, which is a threat to peace and security."

"Instead of learning from the past and compensating for its mistakes, and revising its (failed) policies, the US

is turning to a new weapon," he added.

Mohammad-Najjar said that by trying to sow the seeds of religious strife between Shiites and Sunnis and pointing the finger of blame on Iranian and Arab groups, the US intends to provoke new conflicts and sectarian strife in the volatile region.

"Through such ploys, the US is trying to prepare the grounds for extending its military presence in Iraq and in the process destabilize the regional countries to serve Israeli interests."

US, UK, Israel Plotting in Lebanon Siniora Involved In Blame Game

TEHRAN, Dec. 8--Substitute Friday prayers leader of Tehran Ahmad Khatami said here Friday that developments unfolding in Lebanon are in fact a follow-up of Israel's 33-day attack on that country.

Addressing the weekly congregation at Tehran University campus he said Britain, the US, and Israel are trying to make up through diplomacy and support for the embattled government in Beirut all that they failed to achieve during the summer military assault that killed hundreds of innocent Lebanese, IRNA reported.

He welcomed the Lebanese Hizbollah's critical stance over the "unpopular" composition of the Siniora administration and said, "Shiites, Sunnis, and Christians should have a share in the government compatible with their weight. The call of Lebanese Hizbollah is valid and logical and is representative of the Lebanese nation."

The ayatollah blasted

Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora for opposing Hizbollah's rationale and said the premier does not understand the obvious and is playing a blame game in trying to blame others for turning Lebanon into an arena of Iran-US conflict.

"Such blame games will not untie the Gordian knot of the non-national Lebanese government that--as the Hizbollah has rightly said--is the US Embassy (in Beirut)."

"The US has long lost its effectiveness. Foreigners who are supporting you should know that the Lebanese Islamic resistance, that emerged victorious in the 33-day war, with God's help will also be triumphant in this political battle."

In another part of his second sermon, the preacher said Iran will never give up its right to peaceful nuclear energy.

"The Iranian nation is steadfast in defending its right to nuclear energy for civilian use and will not back down," he said.

Persian Press Watch

Lesson

ABRAR: The incident at the Tehran University dorm complex on July 9, 1999 (when it was attacked by plainclothesmen) was a lesson for the student movement because it had got too close to the government. A prominent political analyst and lecturer is of the opinion after that incident a new political atmosphere became dominant in the country. Sadeq Zibakalam said in an interview that since then the country entered a new political phase and the student movement became rather irrelevant. Except in France where student movements are quite popular, other developed countries do not have anything in the form of student movements. However, since political groups and newspapers face certain redlines in Iran, the student movements take upon themselves the task of political activism. Zibakalam stresses that university students have other more important things to do the most important of which is studying and producing knowledge. A glance at data on political prisoners held before the 1979 Islamic Revolution shows that 80 percent of them were university students and 15 percent of them were seminary students.

Questionable

KAYHAN: Judiciary chief, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, in a letter to former oil minister, Bijan Namdar-Zanganeh commended him for not amassing wealth when he held the top portfolio. The letter became a pretext for a Persian daily newspaper to claim that the oil mafia as claimed earlier by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was quite baseless. Now the question that arises is if Zanganeh is praised for not increasing his personal wealth, does it mean that nothing wrong was done in the Oil Ministry and that the oil mafia is a nonentity? The reality is that what actually happened in the Oil Ministry and affiliated companies needs many more write-ups and columns in the broadsheets. For example, although Article 53 of the Constitution stipulates that oil revenues must be deposited with the government treasury, there are documents that show the former officials of the Oil Ministry in some cases failed to do so.

Late Study

AFARINESH: Since time when bank working hours changed, people from different walks of life have been protesting the move by the government. Lawmakers tried to push through a bill in the Majlis calling for reverting to the bank working hours. Interior Minister Mostafa Pour-Mohammadi recently said the government will announce the result of its study on the bank working hours within the next three weeks. What is noteworthy is the fact that Pour-Mohammadi has said experts are reviewing the change in timings and its effects. It seems the minister is unaware that expert studies should be done before not after implementing a major project! It is unacceptable to conduct research when a major program is under implementation.

Low Quality

DONYA-YE EQTESAD: More than 10 years have passed since cellular phones entered the Iranian market. Now the most important question people ask those in charge of the telecommunication industry is why the quality of mobile phones is still so low. Furthermore, the people want to know when the quality of such phones is so low why officials should even think about selling new cellular phone connections. For many years officials have given empty promises to the people that the quality of cellular network will improve. Despite the low quality of the phones and services rendered to customers, the government is planning to increase the number of mobile phones to 40 million.

Apolitical?

ETEMAD-E MELLI: One of the most important issues that might come to one's mind about the upcoming elections for the local councils and the Assembly of Experts is whether politics should have anything to do with these events. In other words, the question is whether the local city and village councils should be considered as a political instrument or should councilors be elected according to their expertise and knowledge? Although this question might at first glance seem to be correct, it actually lacks scientific and rational basis. This is because since councils are administrative bodies, they indeed are political in a sense. Students of political science and management have a course on the 'History of Political Ideologies and Administrative Bodies' in which they are taught that administrative bodies should be considered political institutions.

Saffar-Harandi:

Gov't Needs Only One News Agency

Martyred Journalists Commemorated

SARI, Mazandaran, Dec. 8--Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Hossein Saffar-Harandi said here Thursday that the government needs only one official news agency, namely the Islamic Republic News Agency.

Speaking to reporters on the third day of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit to this northern province, he dismissed the idea of having several state news agencies, IRNA reported.

Many if not most news agencies currently claiming to be private, are actually considered to be governmental, he noted, and added that today there are too many news agencies in the country and one

news item or report is carried by dozens of agencies.

"Government organizations are authorized to have their own website or private weblog," he added.

In unrelated news, the minister on Thursday paid tribute to journalists and media persons martyred in a C-130 plane crash in Tehran last year.

Describing the press corps as "representatives of public opinion" he said the heart-rending accident had saddened the entire society.

Remembering two of the victims originally from Mazandaran province, namely the IRNA correspondent Sepahdar Sajedi and ISNA correspondent Mohammad-Hasan

Gharib, the minister condoled their bereaved families and the provincial journalists.

The tragic plane crash of an Islamic Republic Air Force C-130 in southwest Tehran on December 15, 2005 cut short the life of almost 100 reporters.

IRNA's Sajedi, photo-

journalist Mehdi Afzali and students of Tehran-based School for Media Studies Ibrahim Baqaei and Mehdi Abbasi were martyred when the plane carrying reporters and officials to cover military exercises in the Persian Gulf crashed after take-off.

New Student Movement Emerging

YAZD, Dec. 8--Head of the Majlis Cultural Commission said here Thursday that a new university student movement rooted in seeking and promoting justice and truth is emerging in the country.

Speaking on the occasion of University Student Day (Dec. 7) at the Yazd Islamic Azad University, Emad Afrough noted that the new movement would be the country's third student movement.

Recalling that the student movement dates back to 1953, the legislator said June 5, 1963 was a turning point in the history of student movements in Iran.

He pointed out that the second university student movement dates back to November 4, 1978, and complained that the student movement is presently lethargic and associated largely with intellectual progress, not linked to political issues.

"The main reasons behind the lassitude of the movement are weak intellectual techniques, lack of a campaign theory, leaning towards reactionary attitudes and confusing intellectualism with political activism," IRNA quoted Afrough as saying.

Progress of intellectualism is perpetual, he said, and added that those who think as soon one political camp comes to power there is no need for intellectualism, they have not

really understood the concept of intellectual progress.

Criticism is one of the main features of intellectual growth of student movements, Afrough noted.

"Tolerating criticism is a prerequisite for holding power and those who gain political power must be open to criticism. If student movements do not criticize (the powerhouses), they themselves will be criticized."

Conservatives Avoid Third List

TEHRAN, Dec. 8--A lawmaker and member of the Central Council of the Followers of Imam Khomeini's Path and Leader Front said his group would not present an independent list of candidates for the Dec. 15 council elections.

Mohammad Reza Bahonar said the front has decided to support two lists released by the conservative camp, Fars News Agency reported.

"We made great effort, but failed, to convince the rightwing to forge a consensus over a single list," he said, calling on the supporters of the conservatives to vote for candi-

dates from among the two lists proposed by the rightwing.

Bahonar, who is also secretary general of the Islamic Society of Engineers, stressed that a third list by his Front would add to the ambiguity in the present election season.

The nation is set to vote on Friday for the city and village councils, being held simultaneously with elections for the Experts Assembly and the parliamentary midterms.

An IRNA survey indicated that more than 50 percent of eligible voters expected to cast bal-

AWJ Calls for High Voter Turnout

TEHRAN, Dec. 8--The Association of Women Journalists (AWJ) on Thursday called for a mass turnout in next week's general elections.

In a statement it noted that one of the indicators of a working democratic society is the people's participation in elections, IRNA reported.

The people's role in determining their own destiny and charting the future course of the nation is the most significant aspect of their participation in the electoral exercises, the AWJ added.

ful Experts Assembly, local councils and parliamentary midterms are scheduled for Dec. 15.

"Active presence of all sections of society in the vote will be a test of the people who pursue righteousness and want to help create equal opportunities for all," the statement concluded.

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He referred to the civilian nature of Iran's nuclear program and said imposition of sanctions on the Islamic state would not produce the results desired by its architects and entail negative consequences.

Veteran Actor Passes Away

TEHRAN, Dec. 8--Iranian film producer and actor of cinema, theatre and radio, Ahmad Qadakhchian died on Friday after a heart ailment.

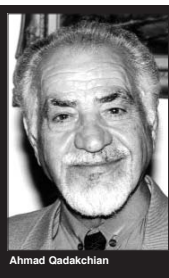
Qadakhchian, 86, was born in Tehran and started his career as an actor for the theater and radio in 1941, Mehr news agency reported.

After a decade of work for the radio and theatre, he played a key role in the film "Golden Dreams" in 1951 and launched his career as a cinema actor.

The veteran actor played key roles in more than 100 films including "The Protocol", "Explosion in the Operation Theater", "Contact",

"Target", "Guilty" and "Soil and Blood".

Following in the footsteps of his father as a distinguished film producer and during his 65-year career as a cinema actor, Qadakhchian produced 11 films. "Man", "Heydar", "Mirage" and "Sorceress" are among his better-known productions.



Ahmad Qadakhchian

Rabbi Warns Against Holocaust Abuse

VIENNA, Austria, Dec. 8--Austrian rabbi and chief of the Orthodox Anti-Zionist society of Austria, Moshe Aryeh Friedman, on Friday cautioned against strategic abuse of the historic event of Holocaust.

Speaking to IRNA before departing for Tehran to attend a Holocaust symposium, Rabbi Friedman said, "As one who has conducted research on the issue for years, I regrettably notice how Judaism and fame of our ancestors are abused through distortion of the

historical event."

Rabbi Friedman stressed that impartial scholars and journalists, who conducted objective research on the Holocaust and its politicization by Zionism, have been singled out as criminals and sentenced to prison.

The Jewish authority said, "We should focus on the fact that the behind-the-scenes individuals and financial backers as well as perpetrators of some World War II crimes had been Zionists themselves."

Now another Holocaust

has taken place, this time involving Palestinians and Arabs--something unprecedented in history, he warned.

The Austrian religious figure thanked Iran as the best venue for the conference on the Holocaust because it was neutral during the World War II.

Friedman described Iran as a model state with regard to tolerating religious minorities.

The international 2-day symposium of "Study of Holocaust, Global Perspective" will open in Tehran on December 11



Moshe Aryeh Friedman

and is sponsored by the Foreign Ministry's Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS).

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On Iran's rights within the framework of the NPT, Bot

to reach an acceptable solution. The senior Dutch diplomat called on the international community to deal effectively with the Middle East crisis and come up with a comprehensive mecha-

nism to resolve regional problems.

Both sides expressed hopes that tensions in Iraq and Afghanistan would end and stability would return to the region through understanding and collaboration among regional powers.