

The redesigned Honda Civic was named Motor Trend magazine's 2006 Car of the year



11

Bayern Munich's Ali Karimi (r) vies with Vienna's Steffen Hoffman in a Champions League match



10

Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Shahroudi called for respecting the rights of business owners



3

Elham Is Gov't Spokesman

Denies

Administration's Link With Hojatiyeh

TEHRAN, Nov. 23--Head of Presidential Office Gholamhossein Elham was appointed as the government spokesman on Wednesday because of his familiarity with the administration's activities.

Elham earlier served as vice president of Tehran University for administrative and financial affairs, and as head of the Guardians Council's Research Center, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting's (IRIB) website reported.

With a PhD in criminology, he has also served as the spokesman of GC and deputy head of the Organization of Leader's Representatives in Universities.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an open Majlis



Gholamhossein Elham

session, Elham referred to the government's approach following the Majlis no-confidence vote for the Oil Ministry nominee, IRNA reported.

"Based on the constitution, the final decision in this

respect will be made after examining all legal aspects. Now that Mohsen Tasalloti did not garner sufficient votes, the issue of choosing an acting head is at stake... If there arises a need for further interpretation, the GC will take the needed measures," he said.

The spokesman noted that both the Majlis and the president have certain rights.

"The parliament should trust the president's nominee. That the minister is nominated after the interaction of the president with the Majlis is neither to the benefit of the Majlis nor the chief executive," he said.

Asked about the link between the administration's members and Hojatiyeh Association, Elham said, "There exists no link between the line of thought of Hojatiyeh Association with that of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government, which attaches credence to the concept of supreme jurisprudence."

Members of the underground reactionary group known as Hojatiyeh Association believe an Islamic government should only be established after the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (AS), the 12th Imam of the prophet's household.

No Early Fuel Shipment For Bushehr Plant

EU May Resume Talks

MOSCOW, Nov. 23--A senior Russian official said on Tuesday Moscow would not ship nuclear fuel to the Bushehr plant it is building for Iran before the facility's scheduled completion by mid-2006.

The senior official from the Russian Federal Agency for Nuclear Power, Alexander Shmygin, told reporters that it would be "very hard" to keep the transferred nuclear fuel under Persian Gulf's climatic condition, IRNA reported.

It was not immediately clear whether Tehran had ever requested an earlier transfer of nuclear fuel.

The Bushehr plant, built under a one-billion-dollar deal, has also seen several dates for its completion pushed back.

The Islamic Republic announced in August that the 1,000-megawatt plant would be operational in October 2006, a year behind schedule.

The plant was expected to come on stream in 2005, some two years from an earlier target of 2003.

Meanwhile, diplomats said on Tuesday the European Union is ready to resume talks with Iranians on its nuclear program provided they agree to discuss a proposal that it shift plans to enrich uranium from Iran to Russia.

The talks could take place on December 6, even though Iran has refused to meet the EU demand that it stop uranium conversion--a stage before enrichment in the nuclear fuel cycle. In a bid to avert a crisis over Iran's nuclear program, Moscow proposed that Tehran be allowed to continue to convert uranium ore but then ship it to Russia for enrichment.

On Monday, EU and US officials said they would not push the IAEA's 35-nation board to refer Iran this week to the UN Security Council.

Third Oil Nominee Rejected

TEHRAN, Nov. 23--Majlis on Wednesday gave a vote of no-confidence to the third oil minister-designate, Mohsen Tasalloti.

Of the 254 MPs present in Majlis, 139 MPs voted against, 77 for and 38 abstained.

Since November 24 is the last day of the president's legal three-month deadline to introduce the new minister, the Guardians Council will have to decide whether the president must introduce a new nominee immediately

or should appoint another caretaker to the ministry for another three months.

Majlis previously refused to give its vote of confidence to Ali Saadeddin, the first nominee. Consequently, the president appointed Kazem Vaziri-Hamaneh as the ministry's caretaker.

The second nominee, Sadeq Mahsouli, withdrew before the Majlis voting. In his letter to the president, Mahsouli said, "Due to the strategic position of the oil minister, I prefer somebody else, who can secure higher votes in the Majlis, occupy the post."

President Ahmadinejad was elected as Iran's sixth president by over 17 million votes in the run-off election held on June 24.

Dorri-Najafabadi:

Reporters Combat Enemy Propaganda

TEHRAN, Nov. 23--Prosecutor General said on Wednesday the enemy should not be allowed to make advances in the media warfare against Iran, noting that reporters are soldiers who combat the enemy's propaganda.

Ayatollah Qorbanali Dorri-Najafabadi, who paid a visit to the Islamic Republic News Agency, added, "We must maintain our vigilance in dealing against the enemy." He described reporters as "soldiers who fight against the enemy's propaganda warfare", IRNA reported.

Dorri-Najafabadi congratulated Ahmad

Khademolmelleh for his recent appointment as IRNA chief and expressed hope that he would help improve the status of IRNA in line with the outlines of the fourth development plan (2005-10).

The official referred to the US and Israeli media onslaught against Iran and observed that they are resorting to every trick in the book to ruin the psychological and spiritual foundations of the Islamic Revolution and make the Iranian expatriate community disheartened with the Islamic Revolution.

Referring to the case of the death of Iranian-

Canadian photojournalist, Zahra Kazemi, he said, "The Canadian government has tried to exaggerate this incident and launch a psychological warfare against Iran. This is while the Canadian government has on several occasions violated the rights of Iranian nationals. For instance, Canada never pursued the murder of Keyvan Tabesh seriously. The Canadian officials are trying to politicize Kazemi's case."

Dorri-Najafabadi pointed out that in recent years the conditions of Iranian prisoners have improved and the number of inmates has declined.

Talabani Refutes Claims of Iran Meddling

Promises to Include Anti-Saddam Indictment

TEHRAN, Nov. 23--Iraqi President Jalal Talabani here Tuesday brushed aside accusations that Iran was interfering in Iraq's domestic affairs.

Talabani called on the two neighbors to seize on "the historical moment to establish best relations." "I reiterate that the accusation of an Iranian interference in Iraq's affairs is repudiated, for...Iran does not need to meddle in Iraq," he told at a meeting with Iranian Parliament Speaker Gholamali Haddad-Adel.

"Iran and Iraq have numerous religious, historical, cultural and geographical commonalities and we have come to Iran to strengthen our friendly and strategic relations," he said.

Talabani is the first Iraqi leader to visit Iran in nearly four decades,

including 1980-88 during Saddam's regime imposed a war on Iran.

Haddad-Adel hailed Iraq as a country with the most ancient human civilization and dismissed accusations of Iranian interference in Iraq.

The parliament speaker reiterated Iran's stance that public votes must form the basis of the future Iraqi government, adding that security and peace in Iraq would benefit all neighboring countries, including Iran.

Iran also demanded that an Iraqi court trying Saddam include the indictment brought by Tehran against the former dictator.

Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi assured Talabani that "the indictment proposed by Iran against

Saddam is based on international legal norms".

"(It) contains documents and complaints brought by Iranian citizens against Saddam's crimes, including human and financial losses that have been imposed on the Iranian nation," Shahroudi said.

Last month, Iran announced that it had sent its own indictment against Saddam to the Iraqi government with the list of complaints including genocide and the use of chemical weapons.

Talabani promised cooperation in putting Iran's complaints on the agenda of the court proceedings.

The Iraqi president, who arrived in Tehran on Monday at the head of a socioeconomic delegation, was officially seen off by his Iranian counterpart Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Wednesday.

700 Insurgents Killed in Iraq in 2 Months

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Nov. 23--American and Iraqi forces have killed more than 700 suspected insurgents in less than two months during operations in western Iraq, the US military said on Wednesday, calling the result "very successful".

Major General Rick Lynch, a spokesman for US forces in Iraq, said that as well as those killed, 1,500 suspects had been detained,

including an undisclosed number of foreign fighters, and more than 200 weapons caches discovered, Reuters reported.

"It's been very successful," Lynch told a briefing in Baghdad, referring to a series of security offensives conducted by US and Iraqi forces in Anbar province since Sept. 28.

Over the same period, the US military has lost more than 170

troops in Iraq, including 80 in Anbar.

Many of the operations in western Iraq, including the largest, dubbed "Steel Curtain", have been supported by aerial bombardments by US warplanes.

Iraqi doctors and residents say civilians, including women and children, have been among those killed.

See Page 2

Perspective Nuclear Struggle

By Mohammad Reza M. Karimi

Come Thursday, the International Atomic Energy Agency will witness a struggle between Iran and forces undermining the rule of law in the UN body.

Although a vote on referring Iran's nuclear issue to the UN Security Council is highly unlikely in this session, Iranian negotiators cannot afford to downplay the campaign for restoring the nuclear rights of developing countries. That is, in fact, the larger and main issue.

As far as the Iranian issue is concerned, the Americans and the EU-3, namely Britain, France and Germany, want to see the Russian compromise proposal of taking advanced uranium enrichment out of Iran run its natural course. Iranians have not responded to the proposal yet, but had earlier indicated their determination to master the full nuclear fuel cycle. Once their answer is "Nyet", Russia will be hard-pressed to switch sides.

When that happens, the only other friendly veto power China will also reconsider its support. Expecting China to sacrifice its lucrative trade ties with the US for the sake of Iran already sounds improbable.

As far as the validity of the UNSC referral is concerned, who cares? Parties hostile to Iran are hell-bent on preventing Iran from achieving its right to civilian nuclear technology enshrined in the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Even though the IAEA confirmed in its Nov. 2003 report and later that there is no evidence of Iran diverting nuclear materials or activities to a weapons program, who cares? In fact, Iran resumed work at Isfahan's Uranium Conversion Facility only after the Europeans backtracked on the Paris Agreement. Their so-called comprehensive package refused to outline objective guarantees for the gradual resumption of enrichment program and attempted to impose an indefinite suspension.

The Europeans have not yet realized that the issue has become a national cause and no carrot or stick will make Iran give up its lawful right to civilian nuclear technology.

See Page 2

Opinion A Message

By Bijan Moqaddam

Ratification by the Majlis of the general outlines of a bill for suspending voluntary nuclear activities if Iran's nuclear dossier is referred to the UN Security Council, conveys an important message. We hope the West, especially governments active in relation to our nuclear program, will receive this message as intended.

The indisputable fact is that our people strongly believe the government has taken all the necessary steps for improving transparency of its nuclear activities and building confidence with Europe and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). These moves by Tehran have been acknowledged by IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei in his recent report.

Negotiations with the Europeans have not been effective due to their excessive and irrational demands. Therefore, the people are exerting pressure on the government to seek new alternatives. Leaders of the so-called EU3 have relied on false information and have been unable to grasp the internal dynamics of the country. They have ignored the power of the people and of institutions like the Majlis and in the process created an impasse.

The only way to overcome the present deadlock is for Europe to accept Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology and agree to uranium enrichment operations inside the country under IAEA supervision and participation of other countries. This is and can be the best assurance from Tehran that it is upholding relevant international conventions.

The parliament's message as abundantly clear: if the unjust trend engineered by America continues and the IAEA makes a political move by sending Iran to the UNSC, the only way to protest this global injustice by Tehran would be to defend its rights by leaving the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) and end all voluntary activities. In this case, neither supervision of the nuclear facilities would be allowed nor the calls on other countries to participate in our nuclear programs have any meaning.

In fact, those who despite all IAEA monitoring and inspections feign concern with the aim of provoking international public opinion against Iran and forcing it to retreat, will this time around be more worried but not have the instruments for interaction and supervision.

Let us hope the message of the people's representatives gets across as it is.