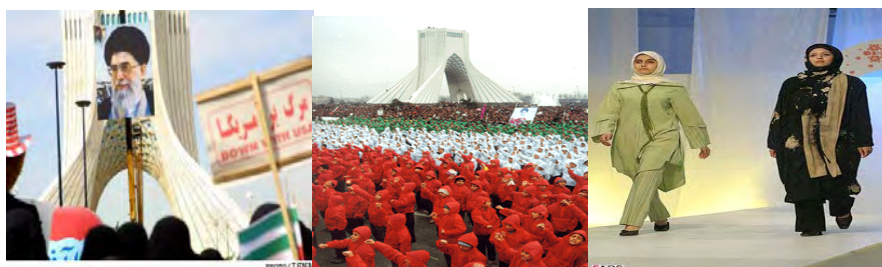




Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center

Spotlight on Iran

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Week of July 15-22, 2010
Editor: Raz Zimmt



Highlights of the week

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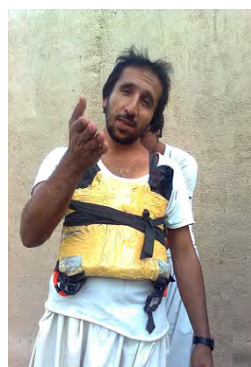
Less than one month after execution of Jundollah leader: another terrorist attack in Sistan and Baluchestan Province capital

Twenty-eight people were killed and over 300 were injured in a suicide bombing attack last Thursday (July 15) in a Shi'ite mosque in Zahedan, the capital of Sistan and Baluchistan Province in southeastern Iran. The attack was the work of two suicide bombers, Mohammad Rigi and Abdolbasset Rigi, who blew themselves up as Shi'ite worshippers inside the mosque were celebrating the birthday of the Shi'ite Imam Hossein, which falls on the same date as Revolutionary Guards Day. Two explosions took place in the mosque. Several people died in the first explosion, in front of the mosque entrance; a second explosion occurred several

minutes later, when people rushed to help the victims. Some of those killed or injured were Revolutionary Guards.



شهید محمد ریگی معروف به جلیه جان



شهید عبدالملک ریگی معروف به آقا جان

The two suicide bombers (<http://taptan313.blogspot.com>)

The Jundollah terrorist organization claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack, saying it was a retaliation for the regime's incessant crimes in Baluchistan and to the execution of Jundollah leader Abdolmalek Rigi last month. Rigi was executed on June 20, several months after he was captured in an operation carried out by Iranian security forces. His brother, Abdolhamid Rigi, was executed in May, having been extradited from Pakistan to Iran in 2008. Following the execution, Jundollah published a statement on its official website promising to continue fighting against the regime and announcing the appointment of Hajji Mohammad Zaher Balouch as the organization's new leader.

Last week, Interior Minister Mohammad Mostafa Najjar said at a press conference in the city of Kerman that, ever since the execution of Rigi, who, according to Najjar, was supported by Western intelligence services and by Israel, the situation in southeastern Iran calmed down completely (Press TV, July 13). After the terrorist attack, security forces detained 40 possible suspects (ILNA, July 17). The three Majles representatives from Sistan and Baluchistan Province submitted their resignations this week in protest of the regime's failure to maintain security in their electorate.

Following the attack, top Iranian officials once again blamed the US for the acts of terrorism perpetrated by Jundollah. Majles speaker Ali Larijani claimed this week that the US was the main culprit behind the suicide bombings in Zahedan. Speaking at the beginning of the Majles session, Larijani said that it was a day of shame for the US, which was involved in that horrible crime, warning it that there would be consequences (Fars, July 18). The Friday prayer leader in Tehran, Hojjatoleislam Kazem Seddiqi, also laid the blame on the US, saying it had its "dirty hands" in the suicide bombing and claiming the US carried it out to cover the embarrassment caused by the Shahram Amiri affair—Amiri is the nuclear scientist who returned to Iran last week (Fars, July 16).

The conservative media also blamed the US for Jundollah's continuing terrorist attacks. An editorial published by the conservative daily Jomhuri-ye Eslami (July 17) says that the main objective of the US in establishing Jundollah was to create a conflict between Shi'ites and Sunnis, and to destabilize the security situation in eastern Iran in order to harm the Islamic regime. However, the arrest and execution of the organization's leaders have foiled the American scheme, and any further crimes by Jundollah will only increase the hatred Shi'ite and Sunni Iranians feel towards that organization, and will strengthen their support for the regime.

Since its establishment in 2003, Jundollah carried out numerous terrorist attacks in Sistan and Baluchistan Province, home to over three million people, the majority of them belonging to the Baluchi minority. The terrorist attacks resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Iranian civilians and security forces personnel. According to the organization, its main goal is to put an end to the discrimination of the Baluchi minority, comprising about two percent of Iran's population and belonging to the Sunni denomination of Islam. On their part, the Iranian authorities claim that Jundollah is a terrorist organization supported by American and British intelligence services, with ties to the Al-Qaeda network. The major terrorist attacks perpetrated by the organization in recent years include an attack in the town of Tasuki in March 2006 in which 21 civilians were killed, an attack in the city of Zahedan in February 2007 in which 18 Revolutionary Guards members were killed, a suicide bombing attack in the city of Saravan in December 2008 in which a number of police officers were killed, an attack at a Shi'ite mosque in the city of Zahedan in May 2009 in which 25 people were killed, and an attack in the city of Sarbaz in October 2009 in which over 40 people were killed, including a number of Revolutionary Guards top officials.

Exiled Iranian intellectual calls to remove Khamenei from power; reformist political activist calls to bring him to trial

This week, exiled Iranian intellectual and cleric Hojjatoleslam Mohsen Kadivar, one of the most outspoken opponents of the concept of "rule of the religious jurispudent", has published on his official website (www.kadivar.com, July 17) an open letter to the chairman of the Assembly of Experts, Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, demanding that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei be removed from power. In the long-worded letter, Kadivar accused Khamenei of despotism, injustice, and violations of law. According to Kadivar, over his two decades as Supreme Leader, Khamenei has repeatedly violated the Iranian constitution, causing severe damage to the Islamic republic and weakening Islam. He called upon Rafsanjani to exercise the authority of the Assembly of Experts and impeach Khamenei.

In his letter, Kadivar claims that Khamenei prevents the Assembly of Experts from carrying out its responsibility of supervising the Supreme Leader, and that he has expressed to Assembly of Experts leaders his opposition to being supervised by it. Based on testimonies from Rafsanjani and Ahmad Jannati, the chairman of the Guardian Council, Kadivar says that Khamenei prevents bodies under his command from reporting their activities to the Assembly of Experts. Kadivar further asserts that previous efforts by the Assembly of Experts to limit the Supreme Leader's term failed due to Khamenei's objections. Kadivar noted that if Rafsanjani did not exercise his constitutional authority, the situation in the Islamic republic could no longer be reformed by legal means.



Kadivar's letter, which was also published on websites affiliated with the reformist opposition, was met with much hostility from Iran's conservative circles. An editorial published in the conservative daily Resalat strongly criticized Kadivar, claiming that exiled Iranian intellectuals competed to see who could cause the greatest offense to the Supreme Leader and the sanctity of Islam. Kadivar's claims, the article says, are based on rumors circulating on Western anti-Iranian media, while his attack on the Supreme Leader reflects the concern of Iran's enemies over its strong defense of the revolution led by the Supreme Leader. Kadivar would argue that his letter is based on the constitution, when in fact his entire letter questions the concept of "rule of the religious jurisprudent" on which the Islamic republic is based (Resalat, July 20).

Kadivar is one of the most prominent Iranian intellectuals opposed to the concept of "rule of the religious jurisprudent" (*Velayat-e Faqih*). Since the late 1990s, he has been calling to adopt new social and political patterns based on the principles of democracy and well-suited to modern times. He was arrested in February 1999 for spreading lies and propaganda against the regime and was released in July 2000. He lost his academic position several years ago, and currently resides in the US.

In addition to Kadivar, Issa Saharkhiz, a human rights activist and reformist journalist held under arrest this past year, also issued a call to remove Khamenei from power and bring him

to trial. During his currently ongoing trial, Saharkhiz accused the Supreme Leader of violating clauses in the constitution and the principles of justice, and illegally interfering with the elections. He further claimed that he intended to file lawsuits against Khamenei for his silence over the torture of political prisoners in Iran (Jaras, July 18).

Revolutionary Guards' construction company withdraws from development of South Fars oil field; sanctions mentioned as possible cause

In a surprise announcement, Iran's national petroleum company and the headquarters of Khatam-ol Anbiya', the Revolutionary Guards' construction corporation, announced this week the corporation's withdrawal from phases 15 and 16 in the development of the South Fars oil field on the Persian Gulf coast. The corporation's announcement did not specify the reasons for the withdrawal from those two phases in the development of the oil field; however, the announcement did mention the UN Security Council resolution to include the corporation in the additional sanctions recently imposed on Iran. The announcement says that, under current conditions, the corporation's continuing involvement in phases 15 and 16 in the development of the oil field could jeopardize Iran's national resources, hence the decision to withdraw from the development plan (Fars, July 17).

In July 2006, a consortium led by the corporation won a two-billion-dollar tender for the development of phases 15 and 16 of the oil field. A spokesman for the national petroleum company said that the development of the oil field would not be delayed by Khatam-ol Anbiya's withdrawal, and that phases 15 and 16 in the development program would be given to a consortium made up of different companies. So far, about fifty percent of the two phases' development have been completed, with the remaining half to be completed within about 20 months (Mehr, July 17, 2010).

Iranian media have recently reported that the development of phases 22, 23, and 24 in the South Fars oil field will also be given to the Khatam-ol Anbiya' headquarters. In addition, the development of phases 13 and 14 in the oil field has been awarded to a consortium made up of that corporation and several other Iranian companies. Those phases were handed over to the responsibility of Khatam-ol Anbiya' after Turkey, the Dutch Shell and the Spanish Repsol pulled out their investment in the expansion of the oil field, considered the largest in the world.

Established in 1989 under orders from the Supreme Leader, Khatam-ol Anbiya' has recently expanded into construction, transportation, industry, agriculture, gas, and petroleum. In recent years, the corporation has won billions of dollars' worth of tenders in various economic

spheres. Over 800 companies operate nowadays as part of the corporation, and so far it has accomplished over 1,700 projects in various spheres. The corporation's increasing penetration into the Iranian economy has been criticized by various members of the Iranian political system, who have spoken out against the increasing involvement of the Revolutionary Guards in the economy.

Meanwhile, ISNA news agency has reported this week on a possible cancellation of the transaction in which 50 percent plus one share of Iran Telecommunications were acquired several months ago by Tose'e-ye E'temad-e Mobin, a corporation some of whose companies are affiliated with the Revolutionary Guards' Cooperation Fund.

The news agency has reported that several Majles members consider submitting a proposal to cancel the transaction and return control of Iran Telecommunications to the government, seeing as the Minister of Economy was unable to convince the Majles members that the deal was legal. During the debates between the minister and the Majles Economy Committee, committee member Elias Naderan claimed that the acquisition of the majority of Iran Telecommunications shares by a corporation directly linked to the Revolutionary Guards could not be considered privatization (ISNA, July 18).

Appropriate Iranian response to Facebook: social network of Supreme Leader supporters

A new social network called Velayat Madaran (<http://velayatmadaran.ir>) has been recently launched in Iran, its intended target audience being the supporters of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. According to its creators, the network was designed to provide an appropriate response to the "soft war" waged online by the enemies of the Islamic republic, to create a friendly virtual environment for the Supreme Leader's supporters to converse, exchange ideas, and nurture culture, thus improving their knowledge of the online battle tactics used by Iran's enemies and of means to defeat them.

Similarly to other social networks, the new Iranian network allows users to upload audio files, videos, and pictures. The network is open to "supporters of the Supreme Leader" from around the world, including web surfers from "occupied Palestine" (for those residing in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories) and "dear Palestine" (for residents of Palestine in the borders of 1948). Earlier this week, the network had 3,158 members, 2,409 men and 519 women, the vast majority of them from Iran.



Meanwhile, Ayatollah Seyyed Ahmad Alam al-Hoda, the Friday prayer leader in Mashhad, said that all “cyber war” capabilities must be used in the campaign waged by Iran’s enemies on the Internet. The conservative cleric claimed that the Internet has been taken by the enemy and turned into a battlefield. Out of the 10 million online blogs, 9.5 million are anti-Islamic. Therefore, the top priority for Muslim cultural activists must be making themselves heard online by creating blogs and websites or attacking websites, using any tactics and any means permissible in war. Unless the Muslims strike the enemy, the enemy will strike them first (Farda, July 20).

Pictures of the week: industrial workers amidst ongoing power outages

