

October & November 2004 Monthly Report

Project/Division: US-Iran Program
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US-IRAN RELATIONS:

In its most positive assessment of Iran in two years, the IAEA reported that it had found no evidence of a nuclear weapons program in Iran and credited Tehran's recent cooperation with the agency. While IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei stated that the IAEA will no longer need to issue special reports on Iran on a regular basis, he could not rule out the possibility that Iran is conducting a clandestine nuclear weapons program.

The report followed a resolution passed by the agency approving Iran's suspension of sensitive nuclear activities as part of a deal with the European Union. Iran agreed to halt its enrichment work in exchange for political and economic incentives, including a guarantee that Iran would not be referred to the U.N. Security Council. The resolution described the freeze as a voluntary, confidence-building measure and not a legally binding commitment. Iranian officials stated that Tehran had only agreed to a temporary freeze of its nuclear fuel activities and would never completely abandon its uranium enrichment work. Iran and the EU will begin negotiations on the agreement in December.

American officials accused the IAEA of irresponsibility and Iran of deceit, and argued that the US reserved the right to unilaterally report Iran to the Security Council.

In regional news, there is evidence of a renewed crackdown by Iran's conservative regime against press freedoms and potentially the NGO community. Recent arrests of several bloggers, online journalists, and NGO activists have raised fears that the regime is determined to muzzle dissent expressed via the Internet - an area that until recently has not been closely regulated by the regime.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Film:

In cooperation with American University's Center for Global Peace, Search for Common Ground co-sponsored a documentary film presentation, *Persepolis Recreated*, by Farzin Rezaeian on October 30 at American University in Washington, D.C. *Persepolis Recreated*, through its striking footage and 3-dimensional reconstruction, allows the audience to visualize the beauty and dazzling splendor of Persepolitan palaces before their sad destruction. The film screening was preceded by a discussion with the director and guest speaker John Prevas,

historian and author of the upcoming book *Envy of the Gods: Alexander the Great's Ill-Fated Journey Across Asia*.

Farzin Rezaeian has researched and written for many educational and documentary films that he has produced or directed at Sunrise Film Productions. John Prevas is an author and professor of Latin and ancient history at Eckerd College. In retracing the route of Alexander the Great, his recent travels took him from the ruins of Persepolis in Iran to the deserts of Uzbekistan, the valleys of Pakistan, and the mountains of Afghanistan.

For more information or to purchase a copy of the DVD and book, please call 708.386.2720, or visit www.sunrisefilmco.com

Education:

Educational exchange follow-up activities are moving forward. Nancy Dye, President of Oberlin College, is communicating with Tehran University regarding a music exchange and Rob Cronin, Central Asia Program Director for the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), recently spent two weeks in Iran and met with many of the contacts made during the spring student exchange coordinators' exchange.

In addition, following assistance from SFCG the Institute of International Education (IIE) selected one candidate from Isfahan University to participate in the 2005 Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program (FLTA). IIE would like to send approximately five Iranian graduate students to the US for ten months to teach Farsi at US colleges and universities. The FLTA Program, which IIE operates in a number of countries, aims to strengthen foreign language instruction at colleges and universities throughout the US and to provide young student teachers with the opportunity to refine their teaching skills while gaining overseas experience.

SFCG will convene a meeting in December of the student exchange coordinators delegation, Ambassador Zarif, and others involved in educational cooperation between American and Iranian universities.

Astronauts:

To build on the success of our 1999 exchange of former American astronauts to Iran, SFCG is exploring the possibility of sending a delegation of astronauts on a return trip to Iran. The American participants would meet with their Iranian colleagues in the fields of astronomy and science, as well as with faculty and students at Iranian universities.

US-Iran Program Website:

For information about US-Iran cultural programs, exhibits, and other Track II activities being organized by different institutions across the country, please visit the *Events* section of the US-Iran Program website at: http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/iran/programmes_iran.html