

Judge says Musavian no spy



Iran Times: The conservative Judiciary and the conservative Ahmadi-nejad Administration are snarling at each over espionage charges leveled against Hossain Musavian, once a nuclear negotiator under President Khatami. Musavian was accused last spring of giving Iranian secrets to foreign governments. But the Judiciary announced that a judge had found Musavian innocent of the charge of espionage, innocent of a secondary charge of illegal possession of classified documents and guilty only of the lesser charge of "making negative propaganda against the ruling system." Judiciary spokesman Ali-Reza Jamshidi said Musavian received only a suspended sentence for that third charge.

Hours before the announcement, Cabinet spokesman Gholam-Hossain Elham had demanded that the Judiciary put Musavian on trial in open court, saying the evidence that he was a spy was solid and the public ought to be able to see the evidence and judge for itself. The call for an open trial was itself a surprise, given that the regime normally prefers trials behind closed doors. But the open spat between the two branches was itself noteworthy. Under the Khatami Administration, officials routinely complained that the Judiciary was too harsh and was taking political actions disguised as judicial actions to suppress reformers. Since Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad became president, the Judiciary has slowly emerged as a restraint on the executive branch. Where the Judiciary routinely closed newspapers under President Khatami, it is the Culture Ministry closing them under Ahmadi-nejad, while the Judiciary has ordered some of them re-opened. Several days earlier, Intelligence Minister

Gholam-Hossain Mohseni-Ejai went so far as to say that allegations of spying against Musavian has already been proven. He complained that the judge in the case had failed to follow through only because of finagling. Musavian, a staffer with the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) and nuclear negotiator under Khatami, was arrested in April and accused of threatening national security by passing classified information to foreigners. He was freed a week later after posting bail of 2 billion rials (\$215,000 dollars). Many analysts think Ahmadi-nejad—facing increasing resistance to his handling of Iran's nuclear program—is cracking down on the opposition. The charges levied against Musavian were thought by some to be one example. Last month, Musavian's former boss, Hassan Rohani, the secretary of the SNSC under Khatami, publicly criticized Ahmadi-nejad for isolating Iran from the rest of the world with his rhetoric about Iran's nuclear program. In a speech last month, Ahmadi-nejad accused an unnamed Iranian official of defending the West's tough stance on Iran's nuclear program. Many analysts thought he was referring to Musavian. "We even have a recorded speech of one of them telling the enemy: 'Why should you give up?... Step up the pressures to make them [Iran] retreat'," Ahmadi-nejad said. Sadeq Zibakalam, professor of political science at the University of Tehran, said: "Ahmadinejad is

showing no signs of toleration towards criticism. Instead of responding to his critics, he wants to defame them and depict them as traitors." Intelligence Minister Mohseni-Ejai, meanwhile, labeled Musavian a proven "nuclear spy." That was days before the court found him innocent of espionage. The Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA) quoted the minister as saying, "He [Musavian] has given information to foreigners, including the British Embassy, in contradiction to the country's interests and security. You say that if the judge didn't charge him, Musavian is not guilty, but I say that from the viewpoint of the Intelligence Ministry he is guilty. "Of course, behind Musavian there are influential people who want him acquitted. Those who want to have him acquitted have contacted the judge a few times. From the viewpoint of the Intelligence Ministry, he is a criminal... This is definite and provable. But the decision rests with the judge," said Mohseni-Ejai. The case is not necessarily closed. Unlike in the United States, the prosecution in Iran has a right to appeal findings of not guilty. Jamshidi, the Judiciary spokesman, called on politicians not to dispute the court ruling, saying that could undermine the status of the Judiciary. "Judicial and security cases like this one, which are very sensitive, must not be spread among the public," he said. "Those speaking for or against him [Musavian] should not say anything that could derail the case."

Rudaki will replace Vladimir Lenin



Iran Times: Lenin is out and Rudaki is in! Officials in Tajikistan have announced that the last remaining statue of Soviet founder Vladimir Lenin will be removed from Central Park in the capital city of Dushanbe and replaced with a statue of Rudaki, the creator of modern Persian poetry. The Lenin statue was placed in Central Park in 1926 and survived the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991.



Lenin next September on the poet's 1150th anniversary. Rudaki was born in 858 CE in the Tajik town of Panjrud, which was part of the Persian world at that time.

Rudaki is considered the first person of note to compose poetry in the "New Persian" language, written with the Arabic alphabet. He is widely viewed as the father of modern Persian classical poetry in both Iran and Tajikistan. Rudaki was the court poet to the Samanid ruler Nasr II (914-943 CE), whose court was in Bokhara. Rudaki eventually fell out of favor and died in poverty in 941 in his native village.

But now it is slated to go. Tajikistan's Communist Party has asked President Emomali Rahmon to save the statue and allow the party to move it to its headquarters. Rudaki is due to replace

Peugeot says Iran Khodro at fault for burning autos

Iran Times: France's Peugeot automaker says Peugeot 405 cars are bursting into flame because Iran Khodro, the assembler of the Peugeots in Iran, changed some of the parts without permission. The scandal of the burning Peugeots has been aflame for



more than two years and shows no sign of an end. Iran Khodro, which for many months denied there was any problem, said several weeks ago that it planned to sue Peugeot for providing defective parts. But it has been unable to explain why only Peugeot 405s assembled in Iran are erupting in flames. Peugeot finally gave its side of the story last week in a report carried by La Tribune, a French financial and business daily. "The Peugeot 405s are made by Iran Khodro under license," the company explained, with 95 percent of the parts made locally. "Iran Khodro itself made modifications to these vehicles without our prior validation. The parts involved in the incidents are the parts that were modified," Peugeot said. Earlier, Manouchehr Man-teqi, managing director of Iran Khodro, told state television he planned to sue Peugeot over "technical weaknesses" in the car's design. Manteqi accused Peugeot of "inflicting financial damage and sullyng the reputation of Iran Khodro." Last December, the chief of Iran's traffic police, Brig. Gen. Reza Royanian, said he was prepared to ban the licensing of all new Peugeot 405 cars made in Iran if the manufacturer didn't act quickly to stop them from bursting into flames. But more than 10 months have passed and the police have done no such thing. The Peugeot 405, the second best-selling car in Iran, has been made in Iran under license since 1990 by Iran Khodro, until last year the country's largest automaker. For more than two years, news reports have described Peugeot 405s periodically bursting into flames on the highway and sometimes incinerating their occupants. Iran Khodro has acknowledged, albeit slowly and reluctantly, a problem in the fuel system and recalled 109,000 of the models for fixes in 2005 and 2006. But Gen. Royanian said last December that Peugeot 405s were still bursting into flames. He said he had reports of at least one car repaired under the recall burning up after Iran Khodro returned it to its owner. The extent of the problem is debated. Manteqi has described the problem as fairly minor. He said few cars ever had a fire problem; that only 20 of those

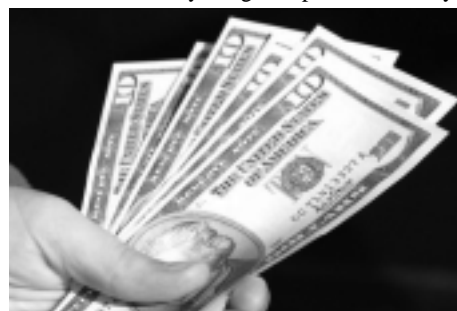
were ever consumed by flames while the others had minor damage, and that no one was ever killed in any Peugeot 405 fire. But Police Chief Royanian said fire officials told him that in just the first half of the last Persian year they recorded 700 car fires, of which 70 percent involved cars made by Iran Khodro. He did not say how many were Peugeot 405s. He also said 300 car occupants were killed or injured by those car fires, but he didn't specify how many were killed. Several weeks earlier, Public Prosecutor Qorban-Ali Dorri-Najafabadi assailed Iran Khodro saying that 60 fires in one of its car models had resulted in 124 deaths. Mehdi Ghasem, the firm's director of marketing, told reporters the problem was nothing but "an occasional technical fault in the fuel system" of cars made before Now Ruz 2005. He insisted that Peugeot 405s made after Now Ruz 2005 had no such problem. In October 2006, Royanian threatened to prosecute car-makers if they were found responsible for putting defective vehicles on the road. He also said then that his staff was preparing a 1,000-page report on technical problems in Iranian-made cars which he would send to the Majlis. A few days later, his boss, National Police Chief Esmail Ahmadi-Moqaddam, was quoted by the Fars news agency as saying news stories highlighting problems in auto manufacturing were unhelpful and stressing that he has asked his colleagues "not to bring up such issues in the media." Nothing more has been heard of Royanian's planned report or threatened prosecution. Iran Khodro first publicly addressed the fire issue in September 2005. It said the Peugeot "poses no serious safety risks for owners and they can use their cars confidently." But it said customers who had concerns were welcome to take their vehicles into a dealer for a checkup. The announcement said problems with the Peugeot 405 fuel system "are rare and the problem can arise in any other vehicle." The next month, Iran Khodro announced it had recalled 35,000 Peugeots that were made between November 2004 and March 2005 for fuel system repairs. Later, still more were recalled. Manteqi said at one point that 60,000 cars had been checked and 30,000 were found to have a faulty fuel system part that was replaced. In January 2006, Gholam-Reza Hajikhani, head of the recall program, told a news conference that 70 percent of the reported car fires were in cars that owners had failed to bring in for repairs under the recall. That implied that 30 percent of the fires were in cars that had been repaired, but no one asked him to explain that. Masud Jalali, Iran Khodro's vice president for quality control, told that news conference, "In 12 years, we have advanced as much as foreign carmakers have done in a hundred years. We will reach world quality levels in three years."

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Iran tries but...

per," saying, "They get our oil and give us a worthless piece of paper." He appeared not to know that, while oil is priced in dollars, actual payments can be made in any currency. Saudi King Abdullah sat stone-faced while Ahmadi-nejad and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez ranted about the United States at the public opening session. In a brief speech, he summed up his reactions: "Oil is an energy tool for construction and development. It should not be turned into a tool of dispute and whimsy." The dollar did not plunge after the OPEC exchange was revealed and the U.S. government didn't care how much OPEC talked about the dollar. What Washington wants is for OPEC to pump more oil. U.S. Energy Secretary Sam Bodman was asked at a news conference if the United States was concerned about OPEC discussing the dollar. He gave a simple answer: "No." But he called for more OPEC oil to be delivered to the market, saying crude stocks around the world are now about 100 million barrels below the five-year average. Most analysts agree that is part of the reason for today's high oil prices. To many,

It is the Europeans who have complained loudly about the dollar's fall. They see their exports declining and fewer American tourists coming to Europe. The Saudis have not been vocal like the Europeans, but the Saudis own billions of dollars worth of U.S. Treasury bills, whose value is declining. Therefore, Iran's effort to squeeze the U.S. dollar did not make American economists unhappy—but for the Saudis it was a direct Iranian attack on Saudi financial interests, something the Saudis are not likely to forget. Iran argued that OPEC was of the dollar, since oil is priced in U.S. dollars. But many economists question that logic. They say that one factor contributing to the rise in the price of an OPEC barrel is the fall in the value of the dollar. In other words, the market adapts to the dollar's decline. By simple mathematics, it is hard to show any harm to OPEC. Since January 1, the U.S. dollar has declined 10 percent versus the euro—but the price of an OPEC barrel has risen 56 percent in that same period, covering the dollar's decline 5 1/2 times over. Iran and Venezuela proposed that instead of pricing oil in dollars, it should be priced in terms of a basket of currencies. No one else showed much interest. Even if OPEC should chose to price oil in terms of a currency basket, the world commodity markets would continue to trade oil in dollars. While oil, like all other commodities, is priced in dollars, it can be bought and paid for in any currency that seller and buyer mutually agree on. Over the past year, Iran has shifted most of its oil transactions from the dollar to the euro and yen. It says it is doing that because the dollar is weak, but analysts point out that the shift only started after the U.S. Treasury began to tighten its rules so as to make it harder for banks to do dollar business with Iran. Thus, while Iran characterizes its shift away from the dollar as an attack on the dollar, the shift appears to many others as a defensive move intended to protect Iran from its narrowing banking options. At the summit meeting, Ecuador rejoined OPEC after 15 years, bringing total membership to 13. The members now are: Algeria; Angola; Ecuador; Indonesia; Iran; Iraq, Kuwait; Libya; Nigeria; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; the United Arab Emirates; and Venezuela.



Iran's initiative on the dollar was not actually an assault on the United States, but an attack on Saudi economic interests. American economic planners are generally not unhappy with the decline in the value of the dollar. In fact, many are delighted. It makes American products cheaper on international markets and thus promotes U.S. exports while making imports more expensive, thus narrowing the balance of payments deficit.

حل جدول شماره ۱۹۸

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