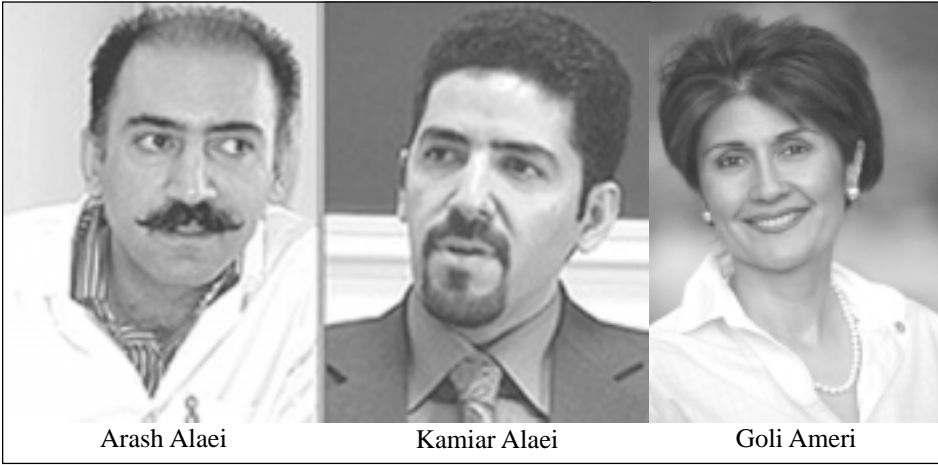


AIDs docs convicted as CIA agents

Regime says it breaks back of velvet revolution



Arash Alaei

Kamiar Alaei

Goli Ameri

IranTimes: Two internationally recognized Iranian AIDS doctors are among four men sentenced to jail last month for allegedly joining a CIA-backed "soft revolution" plot to overthrow the regime. Goli Ameri, who was the highest ranking Iranian-American in the Bush Administration, was charged with being one of the leaders of the alleged American plot to topple the Islamic Republic. The counterespionage director at Iran's Intelligence Ministry announced that the CIA has been promoting civil disobedience inside Iran under the guise of international scientific and cultural gatherings. This continued a theme Iran developed about two years ago of labeling contacts with foreigners as dangerous and anti-regime. It may lead to yet more restrictions on Iranians' ability to make contact with the outside world. The counterespionage director, whose name was not provided, said the CIA plot had been "nipped in the bud" with the arrests. The official said two brothers, Arash and Kamiar Alaei—who have been in prison since June 2008—and two others, who have not been named, were tried behind closed-doors last month and sentenced to prison terms. He added that others had been put on trial but were either pardoned or acquitted. He said the four men convicted had all confessed their guilt. "They aimed at creating social crisis, street demonstrations and ethnic disputes," the counterespionage director told a news conference. According to Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), Kamiar and Arash were sentenced to three and six year terms respectively. They will serve out their sentences in Tehran's Evin prison. "If Kamiar and Arash are engaged in any war, it's the battle against HIV/AIDS," said Sarah Kalloch, Director of Outreach for PHR. "They traveled the world to share the Iranian model of HIV prevention, and to learn from other countries about innovations in infectious disease treatment," Kalloch added. But the Iranian intelligence official said Washington was seeking to infiltrate elite circles and had spent \$32 million of the \$75 million approved by the U.S. Congress in 2006 on its "soft overthrow project." He said the four who were arrested and sentenced to jail were among the plot's main agents. He also accused the United States of stationing intelligence agents in neighboring countries including the UAE, Turkey, Kuwait and Azerbaijan. The intelligence official said Washington used pretexts such as diplomacy, cultural and scientific exchanges, joint research projects and the transfer of medical discoveries to advance its agenda. He said the main figures in the network—Iranian nationals operating inside Iran—

approached academics, physicians, clerics, athletes, artists and "dress designers."

They then arranged American visas for them in the UAE for group visits to the U.S. after they consented to cooperate in sowing discord between the Iranian government and its people. He claimed the U.S. was trying to implement an old strategy previously used against the Soviet Union—which he called "Project Riga." But he said Tehran knew of the plot from the beginning and countered it by "infiltrating" the network. The intelligence official also alleged institutions such as the Woodrow Wilson Center, the Soros Foundation, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and officials including Under Secretary of State William Burns, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Goli Ameri and Ramin Asgar—another U.S. official—were involved in the plot. Mohammad Karim Abedi, a member of the Supreme National Security Council, said, "The Iranian people since the 1332 [1953] coup and even during the Constitutional Movement era [of the early 1900s] have experienced such velvet coups. Three big espionage networks of the world, including the Mossad and the CIA, are cooperating to deal a blow at Iran. "In the past the British have always attempted to sew seeds of discord among Iranian tribes to achieve their goals and that is why the policy of 'divide and rule' has been registered in the name of the British." One unnamed Iranian analyst said the sentencing of the four men was in part directed at the new American president. "This is actually Iran's message to Obama that they are closely monitoring any movement the Americans may mastermind to undermine the Islamic Republic," the analyst told Reuters. During a daily briefing January 13, the State Department spokesman was asked to respond to Tehran's claims. "Any charge against an Iranian that he or she is working with the United States to overthrow the Iranian government is baseless," the spokesman said, adding that Iran has in the past used similar charges to falsely accuse and detain civil society activists. Kamiar Alaei is a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York (SUNY) School of Public Health in Alnever bany, New York, and was expected to resume his studies there this past fall. In 2007, he received a masters of science degree in population and international health from the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston. Arash Alaei is the former director of the International Education and Research Cooperation of the Iranian National Research Institute of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. Since 1998, the pair has been leading HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention programs in Iran.

Jail prisoner in Romania dies

IranTimes: An Iranian-Romanian businessman, arrested for bank fraud in western Romania last February, died after a six-month on-and-off hunger strike. Farid Jahani "was admitted to the hos-



pital in Timisoara on December 14 in a serious condition," the Newsin agency reported, citing an unnamed hospital official. Jahani reportedly began his hunger strike six months ago and had already been transferred from his jail cell in Timisoara to the hospital section of Bucharest's Rahova prison several times, prison officials told

Agence France Presse. "We did all we could to improve his health, but he refused all medical care," prison officials said. Jahani was arrested and charged with illegally transferworker at the Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI) in St Paul's, an inner suburb of Bristol. Raikes, who is the single mother of four, is currently the fundraising and development coordinator at SARI. The Queen recognizes contributions to British society in "honors lists" issued twice a year, for New Year's and the Queen's Birthday. The lists are actually compiled by a state committee, not by the Queen herself. With her new honor, Raikes can sign her name with the prestigious initials MBE after it, ring 2.2 million euros (\$2.9 million) from a bank in southern Craiova to his own personal accounts. Officials investigating the case believe the funds were used to finance "Middle Eastern terrorist networks." Five others have been arrested and are currently being tried in Timisoara for involvement in the case.

Two stoned to death; one escapes by digging out

IranTimes: Two Iranian men were stoned to death for adultery late last month at a cemetery in Mashhad while a third escaped death by digging himself out during the stoning. Judiciary spokesman Ali-Reza Jamshidi confirmed the stonings—



A woman is prepared for stoning in an execution carried out in Iran in the 1980s.

and the escape. Last month, The reformist daily Etemad-e Melli ran a statement from a group of lawyers and women's rights activists that said the stonings were carried out at Behesht-e Reza cemetery in Khorasan Rezavi province between December 21 and 26. "One of them, named Mahmud, an Afghan national, was able to save

himself from the stoning hole with serious injuries, but two others died," it said. Iranian law allows a person sentenced to death by stoning to go free if he or she can dig themselves free before succumbing to the rain of stones. One of those who did not survive was identified as Hushang Khodadad. According to a January 1 report in the Khorasan newspaper, Khodadad was executed in late December for adultery and raping his daughter. Khodadad was a member of the Baha'i faith, but officials said he was not executed for his religious beliefs. According to Fars, Khodadad had confessed not only to an adulterous relationship with relatives—including incest with his daughter—but also to sodomy with one of the inmates he was imprisoned with. In August, the Judiciary said it had removed stoning as a punishment in its draft of a new Islamic penal code. That bill is now pending before the Majlis. In 2002, a directive by Judiciary Chairman Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi imposed a moratorium on all stonings. The rights group quoted by Etemad-e Melli "voiced concern at the stoning sentence being carried out contrary to Ayatollah Hashemi-Shahrudi's order" and "called on the authorities to put an end to this punishment."

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Iranian ad offers big bucks for killing Egypt's Mubarak

IranTimes: Egyptians are insisting that Iran put on trial the authors of an advertisement that of-



Hosni Mubarak

fers a reward to anyone who kills Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The ad was run last month by Iran's Fars news agency. The sponsor was iden-

tified as a student organization. The ad offered \$1 million to anyone who killed Mubarak. The ad has infuriated Egyptian officials. Ministers, MPs and media commentators have denounced the running of the ad and demanded that Iran punish the offenders. But the new source of friction with Cairo has received very little attention in the Tehran media. The Daily News Egypt quoted Iranian officials as saying the ad's authors were "extremists" who do not represent Iran's position and who are out to undermine Egyptian-Iranian relations. But they said nothing about charging the ad's authors. Mostafa al-Fiqi, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of parliament, said incitement to murder is a crime under both international and national law. (Actually, international law is not concerned with such matters.) Iran-Egyptian relations have not been good since Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was given asylum in Egypt after the revolution and allowed to be buried there by President Anwar Sadat. Some years later Sadat was assassinated. The Islamic Republic issued a postage stamp to honor the killer and named a Tehran street after him.

Iranian in Idaho wants to move her/his murder trial

IranTimes: A transgender Iranian in Idaho charged with first-degree murder is asking a judge to dismiss the case or change its venue because of extensive local publicity. Majid Golestani, a transgender refugee in her early



40s, is charged with the fatal August 2008 shooting of her 29-year-old roommate, Ehsan Velayati Kababian, also an Iranian refugee. According to police accounts, Kababian was in a parked car when Golestani pounded on the window. When Kababian opened the door, Golestani reportedly shot him. The vehicle then careened into a nearby house; Kababian was pronounced dead when authorities arrived. After shooting her roommate, Golestani reportedly fled to a nearby house and shot herself in the head. Golestani survived her suicide attempt and was taken

into custody. Last month, District Judge Randy Stoker of Twin Falls scheduled the trial to start June 16, despite two motions filed last year by public defender Marilyn Paul, the Twin Falls Times-News reported. Stoker has yet to rule on the motions. In a motion filed September 30, Paul asked the judge for a change of venue, claiming that intense pretrial publicity would make it impossible to hold a fair trial in Twin Falls, which is in far south Idaho near the Utah and Nevada borders. Three months later, on December 15, Paul filed another motion asking the judge to either dismiss the case entirely or suppress statements Golestani made to police while she was hospitalized. Paul said the videotaped interview by police while Golestani was in the hospital shouldn't be allowed in court because police had exploited the defendant's condition. "The video recording of the interrogation shows defendant [Golestani] as too weak to even wipe the tears from her face," Paul wrote in her motion to dismiss or suppress. "The detective chose to interview defendant [Golestani] in her hospital bed while the defendant was in pain, under medication and hospitalized." Paul further alleged police didn't properly read Golestani her Miranda rights. Shemshat Muhammedberdiyena, 37, a friend of both Golestani and Kababian, told the Times-News she believes Golestani shot Kababian because she was jealous over a former girlfriend with whom Kababian had secretly been talking.