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You Decide.**



**Talk Station WRKO- AM 680  
Wednesday, June 30, 2004**

**Peter Blute:** Right now we want to switch gears a little bit and talk about another problem spot relating to one of the members of the “Axis of Evil,” and that’s Iran. A couple of stories in the paper today are of concern. The AP indicates that the American Military commander in Iraq ordered British troops recently to prepare a full scale grown defensive against Iranian forces that had crossed the border and grabbed disputed territory a senior officer has disclosed, “An attack would almost have certainly been provoked open conflict with Iran, but the British chose instead to resolve the matter through diplomatic channels. If we had attacked the Iranian positions, all hell would have broken loose.”

Meanwhile yesterday in New York the US State Department has expelled two Iranian guards. They work at the UN for the Iranian government. They’ve been expelled because of mysterious activities including moving around New York City and filming landmarks, bridges and all kinds of things. This is the second time that this has happened.

And we also have the situation where the International Atomic Energy Agency knows that Iran is moving towards nuclear weapons, some people think they’re going to have them very soon, and so we’re asking the question is it time that we prepare to confront Iran. Our number is 617-266-6868, or you can call us toll free at 877-469-4322.

Joining us to talk about that is an expert on Iran, Alireza Jafarzadeh, who is a Fox News Channel foreign affairs analyst, and president of Strategic Policy Consultant, a well-known authority on Issues relating to Iran. Thank you very much for joining us.

**Alireza Jafarzadeh:** Thank you very much Peter. It’s a great pleasure to be on your show.

**Peter Blute:** Let me ask you something about Iran, we go back in history to that period with the Shah, then the Ayatollah came in, and then we’ve had various interactions. In recent years we’ve kind of been focused elsewhere, Afghanistan, now Iraq, how much of a concern should Iran be to US policy makers?

**Alireza Jafarzadeh:** Well, I think you said very nicely Peter, that the attention really has not been where it should have been, which is the Iranian regime. Because, for a long time, Iran has been the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism; they have been engaged in building nuclear weapons program; they have been vehemently opposed to

peace process [in the Middle East]. So, really in every aspect, internationally speaking, they have been the major threat in the region with a very destructive agenda, which is turning the whole region into a society modeled after what they have built in Iran, which --domestically speaking-- is a disaster. There are tremendous violations of human rights continuing there, whether it is the situation of woman who continue to be repressed or the public hangings, chopping off people's hands, beheading people and all of that. So that has been a serious concern, and I think we haven't really paid enough attention to that.

**Peter Blute:** How close are they from your resources and contact, how close are they to having nuclear weapons.

**Alireza Jafarzadeh:** Peter, the information I've been getting from sources, mostly from the Iranian opposition sources who first revealed a big portion of this whole nuclear weapons program that is the National Council of Resistance of Iran, which is the main opposition that revealed the site in Natanz and Arak and a number of places.

Based on the regime's own assessment, they believe if things go their way, they will be able to get the bomb by the end of 2005. That's right around the corner, about two years from now. And they have just about everything they really need. They have sophisticated plants that can enrich uranium there, which is a necessary component for building the bomb, and they are now building a parallel way of getting fissile material which is in Arak, where they can produce plutonium which is another way, a parallel way of getting the bomb.

They have the delivery system, the Shahab-3 and Shahab-4 missiles. Shahab-3 is done, they're mass producing it, it has a range of 880 miles and Shahab-4 has a much longer range that they're working on it. And they have this supposedly peaceful nuclear program that would give them the proper façade and the proper cover to do all the research and all the nuclear related activities to benefit from all kinds of experts that they need supposedly for nuclear energy, but in fact they are using them for their nuclear weapons program.

**Peter Blute:** We're talking to Alireza Jafarzadeh about Iran and what threat it presents to the United States and to the world for that matter, if you want to join our discussion, 617-266-6868 or you can call us toll free at 877-469-4322.

Alireza why is it that the Europeans appear to be the ones who are more energized to confront Iran over their weapons?

**Alireza Jafarzadeh:** Well, I think at least recently they're playing a more active role, but historically in the past two decades, they were the ones who were in the forefront of a policy of engagement and appeasement and trying to open up dialogue with Tehran. And always in different ways came to basically help the Iranian regime. It's been since last year that the Big Three, Britain, France and Germany played an intermediary role in trying to convince Tehran to abandon their nuclear weapons program and to cooperate. And I must tell you that the policy of olive branch on the part of the Europeans has not really worked at all. In fact, just a few days ago, Iran announced that contrary to their promises to the Europeans to suspend enrichment related activities, they are going to resume and they actually started, according to their statement just yesterday.

So, that shows that their policy of rapprochement and cooperation with Tehran has failed. I think it really leaves the international community with few options in dealing with Iran.

**Peter Blute:** It seems like Iran and ayatollahs at least in the upper echelon have the most to lose if Iraq becomes a stable democracy. Would you agree with that?

**Alireza Jafarzadeh:** I certainly agree with you Peter, because Iraq is not just a neighbor in the region for them. Iraq's role has, for the past two decades, been really detrimental for the Iranian regime. Because Iraq has the highest Shiite population in the world after Iran, with sixty percent of their population being Shiites. It has some nine-hundred miles of common border with Iran. Six holiest sights in the Shiite are in Iraq, particularly in Najaf and Karbala. And historically, the Iranians have had tremendous access to Iraq, especially to theological schools in Najaf.

So the Iranian ayatollahs felt that this is an opportunity for them and if they can succeed in destroying everything the Iraqi people want to do, then things will go their way. Otherwise, if Iraq has progress, if there is a future democratic Iraq, a secular Iraq; that will have a tremendously negative impact on Iran, because that sends a message to the population in Iran that would mean that Iran's policies in Iraq has failed. So Iranian Ayatollahs feel that they can't survive a situation like that. So they have been doing everything possible, particularly in the past fifteen months, to disrupt the whole political process in Iraq; to create chaos by sending money, arms, agents of the Ministry of Intelligence, Revolutionary Guards, and clerics.

Iran has even formed its new groups in Iraq, like Hezbollah --modeled after the Lebanese Hezbollah-- and other groups particularly in the southern part of Iraq, with the intention of derailing the whole process and eventually be able to build a sister Islamic Republic in Iraq.

**Peter Blute:** We're talking to Alireza Jafarzadeh; he's a foreign affairs analyst for Fox News Channel and President of Strategic Policy Consulting. He's an expert on Iran. And Iran is coming forward now as a major threat to the world community and to the United States, and we almost came to blows apparently according to this report between British troops and Iranian troops the other day in Iraq. Alireza, you keep hearing about this younger generation in Iran, they're internet savvy, they are western-oriented, they want to be secular; how powerful a movement is that within Iran?

**Alireza Jafarzadeh:** Well, Peter there is a very powerful movement both inside and outside of Iran, I think you hit the nail on the head by referring to the youth. Two thirds of the Iranian population is the youth and they are vehemently opposed to the clerics -- even though this is a generation that was really raised under the rule of the clerics, bombarded every day by the propaganda of the radio and television-- but they never bought the idea of an Islamic Republic by the clerics.

**Peter Blute:** Alireza, thank you very much for joining us, we appreciate it.

**Alireza Jafarzadeh:** Sure, thank you very much, Peter.