

IRANIAN DOMESTIC MEDIA MONITORING REPORT

14 – 20 MARCH 2011

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20 MARCH 2011

STATE-FACILITATED MEDIA SOURCES

(Source: Islamic Republic News Agency, Tehran, in Persian 1008 GMT, 20 March 2011)

- Ebrahim Yazdi, the head of the Freedom Movement of Iran has been released from prison, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported on 20 March.
- According to IRNA, "Ebrahim Yazdi, the head of the illegal Freedom Movement group was freed this morning [20 March] after issuing a short statement."
- The statement read: "I hereby announce my resignation as the secretary-general of the Freedom Movement of Iran party."

(Source: Islamic Republic News Agency website, Tehran, in English 0900 GMT, 20 March 2011)

- Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast on Sunday [19 March] condemned the West's military air raid on Libya.
- "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been supporting people, defending their legitimate demands and causes in any country," said Mehmanparast.
- He said that these hegemonic powers are occupying oppressed states and bring doubt in their intention in taking such moves. "Such states always enter action with misleading slogans of supporting the public but in principle take their own interests in dominating the said countries into consideration", he said.

19 MARCH 2011

STATE-FACILITATED MEDIA SOURCE

(Source: Fars News Agency website, Tehran, in Persian 1130 GMT, 19 March 2011)

- Tehran Substitute Friday Prayer Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ahmad Khatami called on the people of the Islamic world to rush to the aid of the people of Bahrain, Libya and other countries in the region.
- In an interview with the political correspondent of Fars News Agency, Ayatollah Seyyed Ahmad Khatami said that the incidents in Bahrain were among the bitterest events this year. He said that the popular and Islamic protest and rally of Bahraini people against their despotic government was peaceful. He said: This is a test for Western liberal-democracy which constantly talks of people and human rights.
- The member of the Association of the Qom Theological Seminary Lecturers called on all Muslims to pray for the fighters and mujahids of God's path during the uprising in the region especially in Bahrain and called on the Islamic world to rush to the aid of the Muslim people in Bahrain, Libya and other places in the region.
- Addressing Bahraini people, the ayatollah said: Young Muslims and people have started an uprising in Bahrain and they should not get tired of their fight and Jihad.

17 MARCH 2011

STATE-FACILITATED MEDIA SOURCE

(Source: Resalat website, Tehran, in Persian 17 March 2011)

Text of commentary by Aref Bahrami headlined "Effort to convert Bahrain protests to regional crisis" published by Iranian newspaper Resalat on 17 March

- Recent Middle East developments are disrupting the region's nations one after another...what is evident from American policies about the entry into Bahrain by Saudi military forces is that America is trying to convert the popular protests in Bahrain into a scene for regional military struggles. While repulsing the revolution of the people of Bahrain this could create new challenges in the region.
- The Westerners have understood well that in the soft phase they cannot stand against the people's revolutions in the region. On this account they intend to draw these protests into the hard arena in order somehow to defeat these revolutions.
- Today, the nations of the region and especially Iran must make every effort to mount a soft defense of the region's revolutions.

16 MARCH 2011

STATE-FACILITATED MEDIA SOURCE

(Source: Islamic Republic News Agency website, Tehran, in English 0750 GMT,16 March 2011)

- Commander of Iran's Army Major-General Ataollah Salehi said on Wednesday [16 March] that "the Zionist regime would be damaged by the awakening of the Islamic states in the Middle East and North Africa."
- "Israel is a regime made of lie, making lies and fabrications," the commander told IRNA speaking on the sidelines of a local ceremony.
- He was commenting on the Zionist regime's latest allegations over seizing of a ship in the Mediterranean Sea which it claimed was carrying weapons to Gaza from Iran.
- "The Zionist regime will drown in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, God willing, after the collapse of the Egyptian pharaoh," the commander said, rejecting Israel's allegations against Iran.

15 MARCH 2011

PRIVATELY-FACILTIATED MEDIA SOURCES

(Source: Iranian opposition website iranpressnews.com and Balatarin in Persian 2200 GMT, 15 March 2011)

- Several Iranian opposition websites have reported widespread unrest throughout Iran on the last Tuesday of the Iranian year ending 20 March 2011, said Chaharshanbeh-Suri. The magnitude of the turnout was, however, unclear despite the opposition rhetoric.
- The exiled secular iranpressnews.com published several reports that outlined what it called was widespread unrest on 15 March. The opposition had called for anti-government protests on this day.
- This source stressed the secular and nationalistic aspects of the unrest in various cities in Iran. It included such headings as: "Chaharshanbeh-Suri the silence of

reformist media", seeing the Islamic reformists as feeling equally threatened by the rising secularism of the opposition and the alleged sidelining of the reformists.

(Source: Javan, Tehran, in Persian 15 March 2011)

Text of analytical report by Reza Abedi-Gonabad headlined "Whether Libya is the next target of America or not?" published by Iranian newspaper Javan

- All options are on the table in dealing with [Mu'ammr] Al-Qadhafi's regime. This was the first official reaction by the officials in the White House to the Libyan government's naked suppression of Mu'ammr Al-Qadhafi's opponents.
- The continuation of economic recession in America, that country's effort to use a foreign enemy as a way of preventing the intensification of domestic challenges, Libya's special geographical position, huge oil interests, America's effort to regain her lost reputation in the region following the popular uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, and above all the desire to have a more effective control of those developments, are among the reasons that have concerned some analysts about the possibility of American military intervention in Libya.
- In view of all considerations, and also in view of a relatively small number of American warships that have been sent by America and her allies to the waters off Libya, one can conclude that despite very heavy media propaganda, American officials have other ideas in their minds.
- Consequently, what today seems vital to the Americans is to regain their lost reputation and also to ensure the continued stability of energy exports. On this basis, it seems that through the dispatch of Western warships to the region, the White House mainly intends to influence popular protests and to provide support for the movements that are inclined towards the West in order to enable them to manage future developments in that country.