

# Vermont Guardian

## *For The Independent Mind*

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### **Iran, Venezuela discuss oil embargo**

TEHRAN — "Oil is the lifeline of the West, and most of the West's military industries are dependent on it," the Tehran Times suggested in an editorial last week. Irritated by a recent resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that called for a halt to Iran's uranium conversion program, the newspaper suggested that oil-rich states form a united front and use oil as a tool to confront "western neocolonialist countries."

In Venezuela, Pres. Hugo Chavez has taken the idea a step further, threatening to halt oil exports if alleged attacks on his country continue, according to Agence France Press. Appearing last week as a witness at a symbolic "anti-imperialist court" in Caracas, Chavez said, "Washington's molestation may cause more serious problems; our two oil tankers going to the U.S. everyday may go to another country." He added that the "Northern America market is not compulsory for us." Venezuela exports 1.5 million barrels of oil to the United States daily.

According to the Islamic Republic News Agency, the Iranian newspaper's editorial described oil as "the most potent economic weapon for settling scores," and suggested an embargo on oil sales to the United States and European countries that are pressuring Iran to end its nuclear program. It also criticized what it sees as a double standard, noting that Israel, Pakistan and India have nuclear weapons, and that most of them have conducted tests.

In an interview with an Israeli TV station from his Texas ranch, Pres. Bush expressed doubts that the European Union's diplomatic initiative to defuse the crisis over Iran's nuclear activities would succeed, and refused to rule out the use of force. "All options are on the table," he said.

Israel has been prodding Washington to get tougher, charging that Iran resumed its nuclear activities because it sensed the "weakness" of the international community. "Iran made this decision because they are getting the impression that the United States and the Europeans are spineless," a senior official from Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office told Agence France Press.

The IAEA's resolution expressed "serious concern" at Iran's resumption of uranium conversion and set a Sept. 3 deadline for its report on the country's compliance. "We want diplomacy to work," Bush commented, "and, you know, we will see if we are successful or not. As you know, I'm skeptical."

## **Pentagon's 9/11 walk gets media push**

WASHINGTON — On the morning of Sept. 11, the Defense Department will stage a Freedom Walk from the Pentagon to the Mall near the Reflecting Pool, where a performance by country music star Clint Black will be broadcast to troops overseas.

Some of the event's co-sponsors were no surprise: Lockheed Martin, Subway, and the Washington Convention and Tourism Corp. But the donation of public service announcement by the Washington Post, WTOP radio, WJLA-TV, and News Channel 8 drew fire from anti-war activists.

"No common person will see this as not taking sides in this war," Adam Eidinger, a promoter of Operation Ceasefire, an anti-war concert planned for September, told the Post. "This is clearly support for the war because it's being organized by the U.S. military."

The Pentagon has held previous 9/11 events, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Communications Allison Barber told the paper. "It's to commemorate the victims of 9/11. It's to honor our veterans past and present," she said.

In an article on the dispute, titled "Antiwar Activists Decry Media's Role in Promoting Pentagon Event," the Post explained in its self-coverage that the media organizations drew a distinction between supporting the troops and supporting the war policy. They also reported that the sponsorships emanated from the corporate sides of the companies, not the newsroom.

"Our interest in the event is consistent with our past support of causes related to the victims of Sept. 11 and the veterans of wars past and present," said Eric Grant, spokesman for the Post. "The event was never presented to the Post as a rally to support the war." On Aug. 16, the Post announced that it was dropping out of sponsorship.

Walk participants will have to register with the Pentagon via the department's website. Barber said that requirement is only to give planners an idea of the crowd size for logistics and security.

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**Northern Vermont:** PO Box 335, Winooski, VT 05404  
**Southern Vermont:** 139 Main Street, Suite 702, Brattleboro, VT 05301  
**Contact:** 802.861.4880 (ph) | 802.861.6388 (fax) | 877.231.5382 (toll-free)

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