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Iran accuses U.S. of kidnapping top diplomat in Iraq

2/6/2007 4:00:00 PM GMT

A senior Iranian diplomat has been kidnapped in Baghdad, the Iranian foreign ministry said on Tuesday, accusing the U.S. military of involvement.

Jalal Sharafi, the second secretary at the Iranian embassy in Baghdad, was snatched by gunmen from his car in the central Karrada district on Sunday, an Iranian official said.

Some reports suggested that Sharafi was kidnapped outside the Baghdad branch of the Iranian state-owned Bank Mellī.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini told the *ISNA* news agency that the diplomat had been abducted by a group linked to Iraq's defense ministry "which works under the supervision of American forces".

"The Islamic Republic of Iran holds the American forces in Iraq responsible for the life and safety of the Iranian diplomat," he said.

Iraqi officials earlier said the gunmen were wearing uniforms of the Iraqi 36th Commando Battalion - a special Iraqi unit under U.S. direction.

The details of the abduction are still sketchy, but an Iraqi government official told *The Associated Press* news agency a gun battle broke out after the kidnapping but the car carrying Sharafi escaped.

Some men were arrested after the abduction, but *The New York Times* quoted Iraqi officials as saying they had legitimate defense ministry identification.

An official told the paper the men may have kept their ID's after being dismissed. It is not thought they are still being held.

- "Terrorist act"

Hosseini added that the Iranian foreign ministry summoned the Swiss and Iraqi ambassadors to Iran to protest the abduction.

The Swiss embassy handles U.S. affairs in Iran, which has no diplomatic relations with Washington.

Meanwhile, Iran's ambassador to Iraq, Hassan Kazemi-Qomi, condemned Sharafi's kidnapping and held the U.S. responsible for his life.

"It seems that this terrorist act has been committed in the framework of Bush's order and with the goal of escalating the confrontation with Iran," he was quoted by Iranian state television as saying.

However, a U.S. military spokesman denied that U.S. or Iraqi forces had been involved in the kidnapping.

"We've checked with our units and it was not a [multinational forces - Iraq] unit that participated in

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(AFP Photo) Security checks are carried out in Baghdad after the abduction

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that event," Lt Col Christopher Garver claimed.

The news comes amid escalating tensions between Washington and Tehran.

The U.S. and its [European](#) allies accuse Iran of seeking to make atomic weapons. But Tehran insists that it has a legitimate right to work on a peaceful [nuclear program](#) as a signatory to the [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty](#).

President [Bush's](#) recent allegations that Iran is aiding the Iraqi resistance have also added to the tensions.

Earlier this month, *The Washington Post* reported that President Bush authorized the U.S. army to "kill or capture" Iranians in Iraq as part of a new aggressive strategy aimed at weakening Iran's government and forcing it to give up its nuclear program.

U.S. occupation forces in [Iraq](#) already detained a number of Iranians, including diplomats, in the past two months. They are still holding five Iranians.

The Iranian and Iraqi governments strongly protested the recent U.S. arrests.

Tehran denies U.S. accusations that it is supporting Iraqi fighters, and blames the U.S. for [Iraq's](#) growing violence and for inflaming tensions between Iraqi Shias and Sunnis.

-- *AJP and agencies*

More on Iraq...



Video shows U.S. "friendly-fire" attack on UK forces

A leaked video showing the killing of a British soldier by U.S. "friendly-fire" in Iraq was released by The Sun newspaper on Tuesday.



Bush's 2008 budget seeks billions for Iraq

President Bush submitted a \$2.90 trillion budget to Congress, proposing a big increase in military spending, including tens of billions of dollars for Iraq.



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Reader's Comment

The US did not hide their capture of Iranian "diplomats" a few weeks ago. Why would they hide the further "kidnapping" of an Iranian "diplomat" at this time? Even if this happened, would it be different than the holding hostage of the entire US Embassy staff in Iran when the now hero Jimmy Carter was President of the US?


Standard Comment (Click to Rate)

Hall from USA 

Reader's Comment

For decades the US has been encouraging, funding and now carrying out international terrorism on the open. The United States army is decaying into street criminals. And they still insist they are interest in peace and democracy in Iraq. This is certainly under the orders of the US Gov to please their Jewish Masters.

Good Comment (Click to Rate)

Pariot from America 

Reader's Comment

Bush passed a law against Iranians in Iraq, his soldiers kidnaped previous diplomats twice. Now people and the other Iranian diplomats have seen the team operating in the area. So if it is not Americans then it dose not make sense.

(Click to Rate)

all from USA 

Reader's Comment

Geez Iran has such solid moral grounds and set precedent by Iran itself to protest either arresting or kidnapping diplomats now dont it ? Could it be said this is the epitomy of both Me twisted logic and falsely justified ME actions comming full circle to bite them in the backside once again ? Iran appearantly has never heard of diplomats being taken hostage before that or else the multi-faced Iranian and typical two faced ME hypocracy is hard at work once again too ?


Bad Comment (Click to Rate)

Pollert from Pittsburgh 

Reader's Comment

Americans have more than 160,000 troops and thousands Israeli Zionists are working with them in Iraq, and if JWS holocaust lasted for less than two years 60years ago by wicked westerns, Iraqis slow path holocaust is in fifth years by the same evil empire, they killed millions and millions in world war II for their greed, ones again the same barbaric gangs joint to gather to repeat their evil crime again, they are trapped in Iraqi triangle and in order to save their evil face or fool their people looking for another conflict to divert the world attention from their holocaust in Iraq, they may be able fool their people with their wicked propaganda media, but world is much smarter than to buy their scraps.

(Click to Rate)

AB from IRAN 

Reader's Comment

yeah.i'm sure you all believe it when the shoe is on the other foot


(Click to Rate)

tom from usa 

Reader's Comment

it is a clear act of provocation on part of bush 's adminstration and evidenley a terrorist act planed and orchestrated by us forces. bush has decided to clash with iran militarily as the only option left to divert a complete defeat in iraq. iran is wiser than that to fall in bush's provocation.

(Click to Rate)

Syrus from panama' 

Reader's Comment

I wonder if they will lop of his top. It would serve Iran right for medling in Iraq's affairs.


(Click to Rate)

I See from USofa 

Reader's Comment

Americans' foreign policy has been subcontracted in entire world, from North Korea, Iraq, Arabs- Israeli conflict, Afghanistan and Iran. And if they can't bring peace to any where from South America to South Africa, because they are corrupted country, Americans must learn the reality if the world don't respect them because they are not respectful and stop blame others for their stupidity start learning the reality.


(Click to Rate)

AB from IRAN 

Reader's Comment

bush has got to be the worlds worse tare sit. the nation he leades is the second worse tare ist state in the world. isrrl still holds the number one tare ist state on record. america and isrrl have been taking countries to war for so many years that i cant even keep track anymore. ggdd willing these two tare ist states will parish so that we can finaly leave in peace.

(Click to Rate)

blast from the past 

Reader's Comment

there is no doubt in my mind the american are behind this kidnaping,this blood evil bush has no respect for mankind,bush is number one terrorist in this planet,american are behind all this murdering ,kidnaping and killing inosent iraqi women and chilldren,i tell you one day this maddog bush will pay the price of his evil act,damn you bush.


(Click to Rate)

omid from uk 

Reader's Comment

Yes, this must be the work of the US. There's no way that a terrorist group like al Qaeda, or the groups that are blowing up innocent Iraqis. Why would they want to broaden the wedge between the US and Iran? Inconcievable!!

(Click to Rate)

Alex from the Galaxy 

Reader's Comment

"The West knows very well that we are not seeking to build nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are against our political and economic interests and our Islamic beliefs. Therefore, the Islamic Republic will not fear the uproar and will continue the path of scientific progress relying on its principles and the world cannot influence the will of our people." Ayatollah Ali Khamenei quote


Standard Comment (Click to Rate)

Big from Small 

Reader's Comment

the suicidal third world poor iranians should get out of iraq before the us military starts flying b52, f117, f22, b2 and b1 bombers over tehran. the world doesnt want those suicidal fanatics to have nukes and this is just the beginning. next tehran will be in the dark when those bunker busters start taking out the power grids in tehran. you play with fire expect to get burnt. if iran doesnt want to look like iraq it better back off and raise the white flag.

(Click to Rate)

defcon2 from usa 

Reader's Comment

if iran is 100% certain the the americans kidnapped its diplomat, they sure know what to do - kidnap an american diplomat based in the same iraq. it's as simple as that except of course the iranians are just saying that to embarrass the the american govt. should the iranians fail to retaliate, then I am 100% certain that it was the iranian govt which had kidnapped one of their own.


(Click to Rate)

farouk from britain 

Reader's Comment

Was it not to long ago that Iran held American hostages for more than one year ,under threat of death? Weren't these diplomats taken as hostages by gunmen by attacking the American consulate building? All the computers and files were taken. Funny when the shoe is on the other foot how we cry wolf.


(Click to Rate)

Peacemaker from USA 

Reader's Comment

only terrorist and terrorist nations kidnap diplomats. if the us said they are not involved they are not involved. wait didnt iran the "country of iran" the government of iran kidnap american diplomats in nineteen seventy nine. was that not an act of terror by some clown with make up and a beard wearing a ladys dress named ayatollah kookoomaniac.

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defcon2 from usa 

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