

Iran files protest at UN over Hillary Clinton's 'obliterate' comment

By Nazila Fathi

Thursday, May 1, 2008

TEHRAN: Iran has lodged a formal protest at the United Nations over comments by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton that the United States would "totally obliterate" Iran if it attacked Israel with nuclear weapons, the state-run IRNA news agency reported Thursday.

Iran's deputy ambassador to the United Nations, Mehdi Danesh-Yazdi, sent a letter Wednesday to the United Nations secretary general and the United Nations Security Council denouncing the remarks, IRNA said.

Clinton made the comments in an interview on ABC television last week. "I want the Iranians to know that if I'm the president, we will attack Iran," she said when she was asked what she would do if Iran attacked Israel with nuclear weapons. "In the next 10 years, during which they might foolishly consider launching an attack on Israel, we would be able to totally obliterate them," she added.

Danesh-Yazdi wrote in his letter that Clinton's comments were "provocative, unwarranted and irresponsible" and "a flagrant violation" of the United Nations Charter, IRNA reported.

"I wish to reiterate my government's position that the Islamic Republic of Iran has no intention to attack any other nation," he wrote. Nonetheless "Iran would not hesitate to act in self-defense to respond to any attack against the Iranian nation and to take appropriate defensive measures to protect itself," the letter added.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran said during a trip to New Delhi on Tuesday, that he believed that neither Clinton nor Senator Barack Obama, the other Democratic presidential candidate, had a chance of winning the U.S. presidential election in November.

"Do you think a black candidate would be allowed to be president in the U.S.?" the semiofficial Mehr News Agency quoted Ahmadinejad as saying. "We don't think Mr. Obama will be allowed to become the U.S. president."

Referring to Clinton, he said: "Presidency of a woman in a country that boasts its gunmanship is unlikely."

Azerbaijan frees Iran cargo

Azerbaijan on Thursday released a shipment of Russian equipment for Iran's first nuclear power plant, more than a month after it was halted at the border, The Associated Press reported from Baku, Azerbaijan.

The cargo passed through the Astara customs checkpoint on the border with Iran, an official with Azerbaijan's State Customs Committee said on condition of anonymity. Azerbaijan had halted the cargo headed for the Bushehr plant on March 29 and demanded more information from Russia about the nature of the material.

Iran is paying Russia more than \$1 billion to build the light-water reactor.

It is Iran's first atomic energy plant. Construction has been held up by disputes between Tehran and Moscow over payments and a schedule for shipping nuclear fuel.