



**The Meir Amit Intelligence
and Terrorism Information Center**



Highlights of the week:

- ✓ "It's time for revenge": strong reactions to assassination of nuclear scientist
- ✓ In another blow to his status, Rafsanjani loses control of Iran's largest university
- ✓ Conservative establishment steps up pressure on "deviant faction" ahead of Majles elections
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- ✓ After years of unsuccessful fight against an American culture icon: the end of Barbie in Iran?
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"It's time for revenge": strong reactions to assassination of nuclear scientist

The assassination of nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan has drawn strong reactions from top officials and media in Iran. In addition to condemning the attack and laying the blame on Israel and the United States, Iran's media claimed that the assassinations of nuclear scientists reflect the failure of the West's policy of sanctions against Iran.

In their statements, Iranian officials stressed that the policy of assassinations will not deter Iran from moving forward with its nuclear program. Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi said that Iran's enemies should know that they can't stop its scientific progress, and that Iran will keep advancing its development efforts.

The conservative media argued that, with the Majles elections around the corner, the assassination of the scientist reflects a comprehensive strategy by the West to disrupt Iran's security ahead of the elections. The daily Qods said that Ahmadi Roshan's assassination lends further credence to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's warning about the efforts made by Iran's enemies to present it with increasingly difficult challenges as the date of the elections approaches. According to the daily, the West is interested in generating an atmosphere of insecurity and instability in the country to put greater pressure on domestic public opinion. The daily Javan also associated the assassination of the nuclear scientist with the coming Majles elections. The United States and its allies are interested in achieving two objectives: to prevent Iranian scientists from developing technology that will help Iran make progress, and to instill despair and hopelessness in Iranian society on the eve of the elections.

Hossein Shariatmadari, editor-in-chief of the daily Kayhan, went beyond condemning the assassination and analyzing its implications, and called for retaliation. Statements from top officials in Israel and the United States are evidence that their intelligence and security services have made a decision to assassinate nuclear scientists. Therefore, Iran is entitled by law and Islam to respond to this policy. With thirty-two years of experience gained in the all-out campaign against Western services, Iran's intelligence and security services are perfectly capable of assassinating Israeli political and military officials, Shariatmadari said.

Deputy Chief of Staff Seyyed Mas'oud Jazayeri stated this weekend that Iran considers the assassination of its scientists to be a threat and is looking into ways to punish those responsible for planning and carrying out the attack as part of its "threat against threat" strategy. Intelligence Minister Heydar Moslehi commented on the issue as well, saying that Iran will deliver a crushing response to the attack.

Criticism of the authorities' inability to stop the attacks on Iranian nuclear scientists was heard on the periphery of the media discourse about the most recent assassination. The daily Mardom Salari said that Iran's security and intelligence services, which captured the leader of the Baluchi Jondollah organization, took down a U.S. drone, and detained American spies, could have been expected to protect the lives of the Iranian scientists.

The daily Ebtekar also took issue with the authorities' helplessness over the assassination of the scientists, and wondered how many scientists will have to die before the authorities step up. The daily rejected the calls to assassinate scientists in response to the killing of Iranian scientists, saying that the proposal to retaliate in this manner has no basis in religion, Islamic law, or humanity. We do not need to retaliate by assassinating scientists, Ebtekar said, although our security forces do retain the right of vengeance.

In another blow to his status, Rafsanjani loses control of Iran's largest university

Only two weeks after his website was blocked by the authorities and his daughter was sentenced to six months in prison and banned from any public activity for five years, Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council and former president, suffered another blow when the board of trustees of the Islamic Open University (Azad University) chose a new chancellor to replace Abdollah Jasbi, one of Rafsanjani's allies.

The university board, headed by Rafsanjani, decided at its meeting to appoint Farhad Daneshjou chancellor of the university, ending Jasbi's 29-year tenure. Farhad Daneshjou is the brother of Kamran Daneshjou, the science minister in Ahmadinejad's government. The decision was passed by a majority of votes.

Rafsanjani and Jasbi argued that Daneshjou's appointment is illegal, and that no agreement was reached at the board meeting. However, those members of the university board who supported Daneshjou's appointment for chancellor of the university, including the Supreme Leader's university representative, claimed that the decision is legal, and that the appointment will be submitted for final approval by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, headed by the president.

The decision to appoint Daneshjou chancellor of the university instead of Jasbi reflects the ongoing decline of Rafsanjani's public status. Azad University is

considered the largest in Iran. It has over 1.7 million students who study in about 400 branches across Iran. For the past several years, President Ahmadinejad and Rafsanjani have been in a fierce fight for control of the university, which required Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's personal intervention in October 2010.

Meanwhile, the reformist daily Sharq reported this week that the Ministry of Islamic Guidance recently approved the release of the book Group of 5+1 in Iran, which portrays Rafsanjani as the main supporter of the riots that broke out after the 2009 elections.

Conservative establishment steps up pressure on "deviant faction" ahead of Majles elections

Ali-Akbar Javanfekr, President Ahmadinejad's media advisor and director of the government daily Iran and the government news agency IRNA, was sentenced to one year in prison this week on charges of offending Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. The court also banned him from any political, partisan, or media activity for five years. Javanfekr's verdict was issued only months after he had been sentenced by court to one more year in prison and three years of suspension from media activity on charges of publishing content offensive to the values of Islam.

In addition to the sentence against the president's ally, Fars News Agency reported this week that two members of the "deviant faction" have been sentenced to several years in prison and flogging and fined on charges having to do with espionage, embezzlement, and moral corruption.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the Majles Internal Security Committee accused the government and the "deviant faction" of running a "pre-election economy" and taking advantage of the upcoming second stage of the subsidy policy reform to mobilize public support on the eve of the Majles elections. In an interview given to Mehr News Agency, Parviz Sorouri said that the government is trying to persuade the public that, in its current configuration, the Majles will not let it fulfill its promises to increase the cash benefits paid under the subsidy policy reform, thus encouraging Iranians to vote for candidates affiliated with the "deviant faction".

Who sent a false text message saying cash benefits will no longer be paid to Iranians?

A text message sent to Iranian citizens claiming that cash benefits will no longer be paid under the subsidy policy reform caused a public uproar and media frenzy.

Earlier this week Iran's media reported that in the last several days a number of citizens have received a text message from an unknown source stating that, since they own a car and an apartment, as of this month they are no longer eligible to receive the cash benefits. The text message drew considerable interest since it was sent shortly after government officials announced that, as part of the second stage of the reform plan, the government intends to stop paying the cash benefits to more than 10 million Iranians with high incomes.

Following the media frenzy sparked by the text message, Behrouz Moradi, chairman of the organization in charge of implementing the subsidy policy reform, said that it was a false announcement designed to raise concerns among the public, hit the economy, and undermine the government's success in implementing the reform. So far the authorities have been unable to ascertain who is responsible for sending the text message.

After years of unsuccessful fight against an American culture icon: the end of Barbie in Iran?

The conservative website Mashregh reported this week that the police has recently instructed toy stores to take Barbie dolls off the shelves and released an announcement that they can no longer be sold. As a result of the new instructions, some of Tehran's large toy stores have started removing Barbie dolls and stopped selling them.

In recent years Barbie has drawn widespread resistance from clerics and conservative quarters in Iran, which consider it a symbol of the corrupt, immoral Western culture. Several months ago a conservative website warned that Barbie could be taking over "the souls of the youngsters" in Iran and called on the authorities to collaborate with local manufacturers to encourage the use of Iranian and Islamic characters instead of the American doll.

In an attempt to deal with the growing influence of Barbie and her partner Ken on Iran's younger generation, several years ago the dolls Dara and Sara (a modestly

dressed brother and sister pair) were introduced as an original Iranian substitute. However, Dara and Sara could not capture the hearts of Iranian children, and Barbie continued dominating the local toy market and appearing on schoolbags, stationery, and clothes.

“It’s time for revenge”: strong reactions to assassination of nuclear scientists

The assassination of nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan has drawn strong reactions from top officials and media in Iran. In addition to condemning the attack and laying the blame on Israel and the United States, Iran’s media claimed that the assassinations of nuclear scientists reflect the failure of the West’s policy of sanctions against Iran and are part of a strategy designed to disrupt the country’s security on the eve of the Majles elections.

Javad Jahangirzadeh, member of the Majles Foreign Policy and National Security Committee, said that the assassination of the scientist reflects the failure of the policy of threats and sanctions pursued by Western countries towards Iran. In an interview to Fars News Agency, the Majles member said that Iran’s enemies had attempted various tactics to prevent its nuclear progress. When that didn’t work, they had to adopt a strategy based on assassinating nuclear scientists (Fars, January 11).

A memorandum of opinion released by the Revolutionary Guards said that the terrorist acts committed by the “Zionist regime of terrorism” with the support of the United States are an indication of the widespread fear of Iran becoming a world power and a model for those independent nations and governments which stand outside of the influence exerted by Western hegemony (Fars, January 12). In their statements, Iranian officials stressed that the policy of assassinations will not deter Iran from moving forward with its nuclear program. Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi said that Iran’s enemies should know that they can’t stop its scientific progress, and that Iran will keep advancing its development efforts (ISNA, January 11). The daily Jomhuri-ye Eslami also said that Iran’s progress towards nuclear independence cannot be stopped by physical killings. The assassination of the nuclear scientist by terrorists affiliated with the United States and the “Zionist regime” is an indication of the extreme hatred the enemies of the revolution harbor against Iran’s independence and drive for self-reliance, but the Iranian people have proven that terrorist attacks will not stop the younger generation of Iranians from working for the ongoing scientific progress of their country (Jomhuri-ye Eslami, January 12).



Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan's funeral

The conservative media argued that, with the Majles elections around the corner, the assassination of the scientist reflects a comprehensive strategy by the West to disrupt Iran's security ahead of the elections. The daily Qods said that Ahmadi Roshan's assassination lends further credence to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's warning about the efforts made by Iran's enemies to present it with increasingly difficult challenges as the date of the elections approaches. According to the daily, the West is interested in generating an atmosphere of insecurity and instability in the country to put greater pressure on domestic public opinion.

The daily added that Western countries are concerned about the stability prevailing in Iran in light of the developments in the Arab world and Iran's growing strategic influence on Arab and Muslim nations. They therefore endeavor to step up sanctions against Iran to destabilize its economy and disrupt its security by assassinations and terrorist attacks. The daily also pointed out a connection between the assassinations of the nuclear scientists and the rapid, constant progress of the Iranian nuclear program. Western countries believe that assassinating nuclear scientists is the only way to stall the nuclear program, spread fear among the scientists, and dissuade young Iranians from pursuing studies in relevant scientific fields (Qods, January 12).

The Javan newspaper also associated the assassination of the nuclear scientist with the coming Majles elections. The United States and its allies are interested in achieving two objectives: to prevent Iranian scientists from developing technology that will help Iran make progress, and to instill despair and hopelessness in Iranian society on the eve of the elections. Experience has shown, however, that any act of terrorism only makes the Iranian people more determined to realize their demands and goals (Javan, January 12).

Hossein Shariatmadari, editor-in-chief of the daily Kayhan, went beyond condemning the assassination and analyzing its implications, and called for retaliation. Statements from top officials in Israel and the United States, including Israel's Chief of Staff Benny Gantz, are evidence that their intelligence and security services have made a decision to assassinate nuclear scientists. Therefore, Iran is entitled by law and Islam to respond to this policy. With

thirty-two years of experience gained in the all-out campaign against Western services, Iran's intelligence and security services are perfectly capable of assassinating Israeli political and military officials, Shariatmadari said. Tracking down and getting to these Israelis is easily possible, and Iran has fighters across the globe who are always ready to carry out such tasks and punish these corrupt individuals (Kayhan, January 12).

This weekend Deputy Chief of Staff Seyyed Mas'oud Jazayeri discussed a possible response by Iran to the assassination, saying that Iran is looking into ways to punish those responsible for planning and carrying out the attack. He further added that Iran considers the assassination of its scientists to be a threat, and that, as part of the "threat against threat" strategy, it is examining ways to punish the assassins and hit terrorism supporters in the United States, Britain, and the "Zionist regime" (Fars, January 14). Intelligence Minister Heydar Moslehi commented on the issue as well, saying that Iran will deliver a crushing response to the attack and that the United States, Britain, and Israel will be brought face to face with the results of their action. Speaking at a press conference, the minister said that Britain and the United States cannot hide the part that they have played in the killing of the Iranian scientists (Fars, January 15).

Esma'il Kowsari, vice chairman of the Majles National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, also spoke about a possible Iranian response to the assassinations of the nuclear scientists, saying that the decision on the way Iran will deal with the ongoing assassinations of its scientists rests with the leadership and the Supreme National Security Council (Baztab, January 12).

Criticism of the authorities' inability to stop the attacks on Iranian nuclear scientists was heard on the periphery of the media discourse about the most recent assassination. The daily Mardom Salari said that while the terrorists cannot be expected to cease their acts of terrorism, Iran's security and intelligence services, which captured the leader of the Baluchi Jondollah organization, took down a U.S. drone, and detained American spies, could have been expected to protect the lives of the Iranian scientists (Mardom Salari, January 12).

The daily Ebtekar also took issue with the authorities' helplessness over the assassination of the scientists, and wondered how many scientists will have to die before the authorities step up. The public expects the authorities to provide an adequate response to the phenomenon, said an editorial published earlier this week. The daily rejected the calls to assassinate scientists in response to the killing of Iranian scientists. Assassinating scientists is the ugliest, most inhumane offense one country can inflict on another. One of the reasons why Israel is hated around the world is its past practice of assassinating scientists. Under no circumstances

does the Islamic worldview permit assassinations, and the proposal to retaliate in this manner has no basis in religion, Islamic law, or humanity. Assassinating scientists and scholars is a characteristic of Western culture, whereas in Islamic culture scientists and scholars enjoy highly privileged status, and the pen used by a scientist has greater value than the blood of a shaheed. We do not need to retaliate by assassinating scientists, Ebtekar said, although our security forces do retain the right of vengeance (Ebtekar, January 15).

The daily Tehran Emrouz also called on the security services to implement the necessary measures to protect the lives and safety of Iranian scientists. The United States and Israel have proven that they have no qualms about assassinating politicians, scientists, intellectuals, journalists, and all those who oppose them, and Iran's security services must exact a heavy price for these assassinations (Tehran Emrouz, January 12).

In another blow to his status, Rafsanjani loses control of Iran's largest university

Only two weeks after his website was blocked by the authorities and his daughter was sentenced to six months in prison and banned from any public activity for five years, Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council and former president, suffered another blow when the board of trustees of the Islamic Open University (Azad University) chose a new chancellor to replace Abdollah Jasbi, one of Rafsanjani's allies.

The university board, headed by Rafsanjani, decided at its meeting to appoint Farhad Daneshjou chancellor of the university, ending Jasbi's 29-year tenure. Daneshjou, who received his PhD from the Polytechnic of Central London, is the brother of Kamran Daneshjou, the science and technology minister in Ahmadinejad's government. The decision to appoint Daneshjou was approved by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, headed by Ahmadinejad. Five of the nine university board members voted for the appointment, including Daneshjou himself; his brother, the science minister; Hojjat-ol-Eslam Mohammad Mohammadian, the Supreme Leader's university representative; and Marzieh Vahid Dastjerdi, the health minister. The university board meeting was held on the background of an announcement released by the science minister that, unless a new university chancellor is chosen by January 20, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution will appoint its own administrator to head the university.

Following the decision to appoint Daneshjou chancellor of the university, Rafsanjani argued that the appointment is illegal. An official statement released on his behalf by the secretariat of the board of trustees said that, at the beginning of the meeting, Rafsanjani had suggested summoning the twelve candidates for chairman of the university to the board meeting to hear

their plans for the university. A number of board members were against the proposal and claimed that it was enough to go through each candidate's curriculum vitae to make a decision. The announcement released on Rafsanjani's behalf also said that the board meeting ended without an agreement after several of its members voted for Daneshjou without the consent of the chairman of the board, rendering the decision legally invalid (ILNA, January 12).

Abdollah Jasbi also said during a press conference that the decision to appoint Daneshjou chancellor of the university is illegal. He noted that, during the board meeting, he had offered to resign and let Rafsanjani appoint a provisional administrator to manage the university until a final decision on the appointment of a chancellor was made, but that proposal was not accepted (Mehr, January 11).

However, those members of the university board who supported Daneshjou's appointment for chancellor of the university argued that the decision is legal and final. Hojjat-ol-Eslam Mohammad Mohammadian said at a press conference that all board members had examined the scientific and executive background of the candidates for chancellor and decided to choose Daneshjou for the job.

Speaking at the same press conference, Daneshjou himself said that only four of the nine university board members had been opposed to holding the vote during the last meeting and demanded that it be postponed until all candidates personally submit their plans for running the university. He said that, prior to the vote, Rafsanjani had told him that he was not opposed to his nomination. He called on the board members to accept the majority opinion and defined the statement released on Rafsanjani's behalf as a decision reflecting the minority opinion (Fars, January 11).



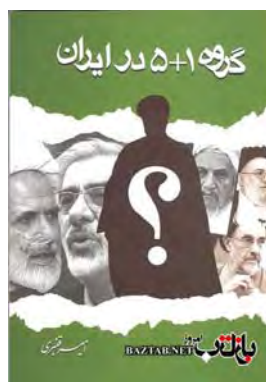
Meeting of the Azad University executive board

The decision to appoint Daneshjou chancellor of the university instead of Jasbi reflects the ongoing decline of Rafsanjani's public status. Azad University is considered the largest in Iran. It has over 1.7 million students who study in about 400 branches across Iran. For the past several years, President Ahmadinejad and Rafsanjani have been in a fierce fight for control of the academic institution. Ahmadinejad claimed that Rafsanjani and his allies, who controlled the board of trustees, took advantage of their position to advance political interests, and even accused them of corruption. After the 2009 elections the president accused Rafsanjani and Jasbi of mobilizing university resources for the benefit of reformist opposition leader Mir-Hossein Mousavi.

To restrict the government's ability to interfere with university affairs, the board of trustees decided to declare the university assets an Islamic endowment (*waqf*). The purpose of the declaration was to keep the government from taking over the university and its property. After the decision was announced, the president, in his capacity as chief of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, made two amendments to the university regulations aimed to significantly increase the power of government representatives and the president-led council in university affairs at the expense of its board of trustees. The amendments also put a limit on the tenure of the chancellor of the university.

In October 2010 Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei was forced to intervene in the severe conflict between Ahmadinejad and Rafsanjani. He ruled that the decision of the board of trustees to declare the university assets an Islamic endowment should therefore be revoked, but that the amendments made to the university regulations by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution should be revoked as well.

Meanwhile, the reformist daily Sharq reported this week that the Ministry of Islamic Guidance recently approved the release of the book *Group of 5+1 in Iran*, which portrays Rafsanjani as the main supporter of the riots that broke out after the 2009 presidential elections in Iran.



The cover of the book *Group of 5+1 in Iran*

The book portrays Mir-Hossein Mousavi, Mehdi Karoubi, Mohammad Khatami, and two top reformist clerics Ayatollah Yousef Sanei and Ayatollah Mohammad Mousavi Kho'iniha as leaders of the riots, and Rafsanjani as the one pulling the strings in the riots (Sharq, January 15).

Conservative establishment steps up pressure on “deviant faction” ahead of Majles elections

Ali-Akbar Javanfekr, President Ahmadinejad's media advisor and director of the government daily Iran and the government news agency IRNA, was sentenced to one year in prison this week on charges of offending Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. The court also banned him from any political, partisan, or media activity for five years. The report on Javanfekr's sentence did not specify the exact details of the charges, which apparently have to do with remarks published by the president's advisor on his personal blog (Fars, January 15). Javanfekr categorically denied the allegations and claimed that the sentence does not take the regime's interests into account (Khabar Online, January 16).

Javanfekr's verdict was issued only months after he had been sentenced by court to one year in prison and three years of suspension from media activity on charges of publishing content offensive to the values of Islam in a special supplement on women's veils published by the daily Iran in August 2011. The release of the supplement by the government daily drew strong criticism from the president's opponents, who argued that the views expressed there reflected the anti-religious outlook of the “deviant faction” (a term used to refer to the political faction affiliated with the president and his office chief Rahim Masha'i). The Iranian security forces attempted to arrest Javanfekr this past November, after his sentence was given. Ultimately, however, he was not arrested, apparently thanks to the president's intervention.

In addition to the sentence against the president's advisor, Fars News Agency reported this week that two members of the “deviant faction” have been sentenced to several years in prison and flogging and fined on various charges. One of them was charged with espionage for the intelligence services of the United States, Britain, and Italy, embezzlement, forgery and having an illegal (i.e. extramarital) relationship. The other was charged with embezzlement, accepting bribe, and having an illegal relationship (Fars, January 15).

Meanwhile, Parviz Sorouri, chairman of the Majles Internal Security Committee, accused the government and the “deviant faction” of running a “pre-election economy” and taking advantage of the upcoming second stage of the subsidy policy reform to mobilize public

support on the eve of the Majles elections. In an interview given to Mehr News Agency, Sorouri said that the “deviant faction” is trying to raise the public’s expectations ahead of the implementation of the reform’s second stage by resorting to clichés and unrealistic promises to increase the cash benefits paid by the government as part of the program. According to Sorouri, the government is trying to persuade the public that, in its current configuration, the Majles will not let it fulfill the promises it made to the Iranian people, thus encouraging Iranians to vote for candidates affiliated with the “deviant faction” (Mehr, January 15). Sorouri’s statement comes on the heels of President Ahmadinejad’s announcement that he is soon planning to implement the second stage of the subsidy policy reform, which includes increasing the cash benefits paid to the weaker sectors of society.

Who sent a false text message saying cash benefits will no longer be paid to Iranians?

A text message sent this week to Iranian citizens, claiming that cash benefits will no longer be paid under the subsidy policy reform, caused a public uproar and media frenzy.

Earlier this week Iran’s media reported that in the last several days a number of citizens have received a text message from an unknown source stating that, since they own a car and an apartment, as of this month they are no longer eligible to receive the cash benefits paid by the government to Iranian citizens. An Iranian who received the text message told the Qods newspaper that the message is a source of great concern for his family, since they depend on the cash benefits. So far the authorities have been unable to discover who is responsible for sending the text message.

The text message drew considerable interest since it was sent shortly after government officials announced that, as part of the second stage of the reform plan, the government intends to stop paying the cash benefits to more than 10 million Iranians whose monthly income ranks in the top three deciles.

Following the media frenzy sparked by the text message, Behrouz Moradi, chairman of the organization in charge of implementing the subsidy policy reform, said that the text message was fabricated. He asked the legal authorities to check who is responsible for sending it, and said that a lawsuit will be filed against those individuals. Moradi said that the text message was part of a plot designed to spread lies, raise concerns among the public, hit the economy, and undermine the government’s success in implementing justice and the subsidy reform (Mehr, January 16).

Top officials in the reform organization stressed that the fabricated text message has nothing to do with the government's plans with regard to the second stage of the subsidy policy reform. They noted that, at first, people who earn a high income will be sent a letter asking them to remove themselves from the list of cash benefit recipients on their own initiative. It is only then that the government will intervene, and, at any rate, no text message has been sent about the issue. The officials noted that the fabricated text message was also sent to low-income families, ones that are not supposed to be on the list of families which will stop receiving the cash benefits (Kalemeh, January 16).

After years of unsuccessful fight against an American culture icon: the end of Barbie in Iran?

The conservative website Mashregh reported this week that the police has recently instructed toy stores to take Barbie dolls off the shelves and released an announcement that they can no longer be sold. As a result of the new instructions, some of Tehran's large toy stores have started removing Barbie dolls and stopped selling them (Mashregh, January 16).

In recent years Barbie has drawn widespread resistance from clerics and conservative quarters in Iran, which consider it a symbol of the corrupt, immoral Western culture. Several months ago a conservative website criticized the Iranian authorities for not taking the necessary measures to stop the use of Barbie's image on such children's items as schoolbags, stationery, clothes, and watches. The website claimed that the doll is "taking over the souls of the youngsters" and that the authorities need to collaborate with local manufacturers to encourage the use of Iranian and Islamic characters instead of Barbie.



In an attempt to deal with the growing influence of Barbie and her partner Ken on Iran's younger generation, several years ago the dolls Dara and Sara were introduced as an original Iranian substitute. The design and distribution of the dolls, a modestly-dressed brother and sister pair, was aimed to promote traditional Islamic and Iranian values and better cope with the market penetration of American dolls. It soon became clear, however, that the Iranian

dolls could not capture the hearts of Iran's children, and Barbie continued dominating the country's toy market

As part of the growing criticism of Barbie's harmful influence on the consumption culture of young Iranians, the Gerdab website argued this week that the purchase of Barbie dolls triggers a psychological change in children and increases the influence of values that go against the values of Iranian-Islamic culture. The website reported that toy stores no longer sell just Barbie dolls and have also started offering harmful Chinese-made make-up for children due to the influence of the make-up wearing American dolls (Gerdab, January 16).

Pictures of the week: United Conservative Coalition women's conference

