

Tehran: Iran ‘regime-change plotters’ jailed

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The members of a network found guilty of attempting to orchestrate a “Velvet Revolution” in Iran have been sentenced to prison.

In a Saturday statement, the Islamic Revolution’s Court hit out at the Bush administration for “making strenuous efforts to topple the Iranian government.”

“Under the Bush administration renegades and fifth elements in Iran have kept close contact with US intelligence agents. Under the cover of governmental and non-governmental institutions, with the support of the US State Department and Congress they have been working toward achieving their objectives,” read the statement.

Earlier on Tuesday, Iran’s Judiciary Spokesman, Alireza Jamshidi, said authorities had arrested four Iranian nationals who were plotting a regime change at the behest of the Bush administration.

According to Jamshidi, the four were paid by the White House, the State Department and the CIA, to expand their network and topple the Iranian government.

The Iranian court said on Saturday that the verdict has been reached based on confessions made by the suspects.

“The guilty parties have confessed to trying to distance the people of Iran from the government and introduce the United States as their sole savior,” Tehran’s Revolution Court said.

“Based on clear confessions, the suspects planned to weaken the foundation of the government and overthrow the Islamic Republic,” the statement adds.

While Iran says the four Iranians have confessed to have links to the US government, the US State Department denied the report on Wednesday, saying, “Any charge against an Iranian that he or she is working with the United States to overthrow the Iranian government is baseless.”

The US denial came despite a July report by investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, which revealed that the US Congress had secretly agreed to a request made by US President George W. Bush, to finance a major anti-government operation inside Iran with a budget of \$400 million.

This is while the 1981 Algiers Accords signed between the US and Iran in the aftermath of the US embassy takeover in Tehran obliges Washington to refrain from interfering in Iran’s

'internal affairs'.

"The United States pledges that it is and from now on will be the policy of the United States not to intervene, directly or indirectly, politically or militarily, in Iran's internal affairs," reads Point 1 of the accords, which led to the release of the American hostages.

Despite the 1981 treaty, under the Bush administration the US opened an Office of Iranian Affairs (OIA) in the State Department and tasked the unit with drawing up plans to overthrow the Iranian government.

With the help of Elizabeth Cheney, the daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney, the office launched the 'Democracy Program' initiative, which has been shrouded in secrecy since its inception.

The US Congress has reportedly appropriated more than \$120 million to fund the project.

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