

Weapons used in Iran attacks came from the U.S

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Local police have restored security and tranquility to Zahedan after a bomb attack ripped through the city Friday night, a day after another explosion involving an attack on a bus owned by the local Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps killed about 18 people and wounded 31 others in the same city.

"Terrorist agents try to implement their ominous plots without being bothered at all," Zahedan Governor General Hassan-Ali Nouri told IRNA, adding that "the explosion in Zahedan Friday night was just a blind operation," Nouri said.

Was the attacks a new attempt to fuel tension between the Sunnis and the Shias, and expand it to include not just Iraq but Iran as well?

Citing "informed source", the semi-official Fars news agency reported on Saturday that the explosive devices and arsenals used in the recent wave of explosions that hit the southeastern Iranian city of Zahedan starting Wednesday came from the United States.

The Fars report said that documents, photographs and film footage, showed that the explosives and arsenals used in the attacks were American.

Although the new revelations hadn't been made public yet, it prompted many analysts to link the terrorist attacks in the Iranian city to recent allegations raised against Islamic republic by the Bush administration which stepped up recently its anti-Iranian rhetoric, claiming that Tehran provides anti-occupation fighters in Iraq with financial and military aid to kill American troops.

The "informed source" also listed several attempts by Jundallah, an armed group operating in the country and blamed for past killings in the area bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan, to assassinate Sunni and tribal leaders to sow tension between the Shia and Sunni citizens in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

"The Shias and Sunnis on Friday massively participated in the funeral of Wednesday's (IRGC) victims. They unanimously expressed their support for the ideals and achievements of the Islamic system," Nouri said.

"The nation's presence in all sensitive scenes of the system have undoubtedly angered the enemies of the people and the Islamic Revolution," Nouri further stated.

"Last night, terrorists seeking to destroy the people's unity through scenes of horror fought against the hardworking security police forces who did their utmost to maintain security in the region," the governor-general said.

Jundallah has claimed responsibility for Wednesday and Friday attacks in Zahedan, and about 65 suspects in addition to the three people responsible for the bomb attack have been arrested, according to official IRNA news agency, which cited statements by Brigadier General Mohammad Gaffari, a senior police officer in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Footage of the attack on Iran's Arabic-language station Al-Alam showed that the bus had been blown away to a twisted frame of wreckage by the explosion, and witnesses said the attackers shot at the bus from their car to force it to stop, before stopping the explosives-laden vehicle in the path of the bus, and then evacuated the scene of the attack before the bomb exploded.

The bomb is believed to have been detonated by remote control.

Shortly after the attacks occurred on Wednesday, Iranian officials accused Britain and the United States of interfering in the country's affairs and supporting ethnic minority rebels operating at the country's sensitive border areas, holding the two states, known for their long history of arming and aiding armed groups in the region to implement their political agendas, responsible for the attacks. Despite Bush's insistence that he doesn't plan to open another battle front in the Middle East, war drums against the Islamic Republic appear to be beating more loudly these days.

And that's being done through many ways: Either through attacks, or active efforts to destabilize the government, sometimes through the support of what the U.S. calls Iranian opposition groups, like the Mujahedin e-Khalq (MEK), which fought on Iraq's side during the Iran-Iraq War and has been labeled by the State Department since 1997 a "terrorist group" for killing U.S. officials during the Shah's reign.

Like Iraq, the U.S. efforts in Iran will prove counterproductive.

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