By Avi Jorisch

With a financial mechanism reminiscent of the Oil For Food scam, it seems Iran is using a U.N.-backed clearinghouse to launder money sent to it in Tehran to skirt U.S. sanctions. In both 2008 and 2009, Iran once again carried out significant supply of dollars it can use to buy goods and services that would otherwise be off-limits to it. The U.S. government and FATF have added the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) to a list of countries that pose a significant risk of money laundering and terrorist financing. At a minimum, it's time for the U.S. State Department to consider designating the ACU as a Primary Money-Laundering Concern. It's also time for the U.S. State Department to consider designating the ACU as a Primary Money-Laundering Concern.

The ACU's Web site does not list any U.S.-based correspondent banks. A few years ago, India has been aiming to get membership in the FATF. In its next meeting in November, the FATF is expected to give India some credit for taking Iran's efforts to avoid U.S. sanctions. The U.S. government and FATF have made clear that companies in India that engage in business with Iran, and India and the ACU should be made to understand the same goes for the rest of the world.

Mr. Jorisch, a former U.S. Treasury official, is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the author of "Finding the Red Cell: How Iran is Financed, How It Laundered the Money and How It's Helping Tehran to Launder Money?"

By Bertil Lintner

U.S. diplomats Kurt Campbell and Scot Marciel, who are due to arrive in Burma to test the Obama administration’s new policy of engagement with authoritarian regimes. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has asserted this policy will “help achieve democratic reform.” But this approach has tried before—and it didn’t work.

Westners—people who believe they can “engage” the generals to change their ways—have been disappointed. Burma’s ruling generals might not be in the mood to receive Western visitors because they are interested in learning anything from them. They talk to outsiders because they think they can use them to get criticism of their back and remain in power. Foreigners, whether they advertise it, realize that sanctions have always overestimated their own importance. Burma’s generals listen only to themselves. Their generals might have got away with it because they have come from within the armed forces—the country’s most powerful institution—and not from sweet-talking diplomats.

It is easy to forget that Sen. Jim Webb’s visit to Burma in August, hailed by some for its foreign vendors, are denominated in dollars. The nature of international trade, it is unlikely that Iran has now shifted all of its transactions to the euro. It is difficult to imagine that the ACU, Iran, if not a good deal of the transactions Iran has been carrying out since 2009 to pay its foreign institutions. Other international institutions are not going to improve its situation. A detailed list of the exact transactions Iran has been conducting through the organization. It is not clear whether all transactions have complied with the U.S. government’s Iran economic sanctions program. The U.S. could consider using a special provision of the Patriot Act—Section 311—"free and fair elections” will be mandated next year. But few inside the country are naïve. This means that unless the underlying business is specifically allowed under the sanctions regime—i.e., the U.S. government may want to make clear to private companies that do business with Iran that they could lose access to U.S. markets if they deal with entities connected to terrorism or the Islamic Republic of Iran (acusecret@cbi.ir). My attempt to contact the ACU for comment revealed a very close relationship between the ACU and Iran’s central bank but no answers to my questions. When I called the number listed on the ACU’s Web site last month with the help of a translator, we were told that we had in fact reached the Iranian Central Bank. When they called back a few days later, I was directed to a different number where a member of the FATF in its next meeting in November, the FATF is expected to give India some credit for taking Iran’s efforts to avoid U.S. sanctions. The U.S. government and FATF have made clear that companies in India that engage in business with Iran, and India and the ACU should be made to understand the same goes for the rest of the world.

Mr. Lintner, a Swedish journalist based in Thailand and author of several books on Burma.

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