

Iran arrests senior U.S. scholar in Tehran

by UPI

TEHRAN - A 67-year-old Washington-area female scholar has been arrested in Tehran, accused of trying to overthrow the Iranian government with a revolution.

In a statement Tuesday, Iran's Intelligence Ministry claimed Haleh Esfandiari, who has dual U.S.-Iranian citizenship, had been sowing dissent in her role as director of the Middle East program at the Smithsonian's Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, The Washington Post reported.

Iran's state television, the government voice, claimed Esfandiari confessed in interrogations that the Wilson Center had "invited Iranians to attend conferences, offered them research projects, scholarships ... and tried to lure influential elements and link them to decision-making centers in America."

There was no immediate indication of what would happen within the judicial system next, the Post said.

Esfandiari's husband, Shaul Bakhash, said the description of his wife's activities is "totally unfounded," while Lee Hamilton, Wilson Center director, told the newspaper there "is not one scintilla of evidence to support these outrageous claims."

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