



Associated Press

Mohl Sobhani

Washington Confirms Teheran Has Arrested Iran-Born U.S. Citizen

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23 (AP) — One more American has been arrested and is being held in Iran in addition to the 52 diplomatic hostages and a freelance writer, the State Department said today.

George Havens, a spokesman for the Department's Iran Working Group, said that the man, Mohl Sobhani, 44 years old, an Iranian by birth and a naturalized United States citizen, was arrested in Iran last month and was being held on unspecified charges.

He is being held, Mr. Havens said. "The Swiss have been trying to get access to him but so far have been unable to do so. We know of no formal charges." The United States has been working through the Swiss Embassy in Teheran on hostage-related issues.

Jack Anderson, the columnist, disclosing the arrest on ABC-TV's "Good Morning, America" program today, said that Mr. Sobhani was seized on Sept. 6 as he tried to leave Teheran with his wife and daughter. Mr. Anderson also said that the Iranian, who he said had been operating a computer company in Iran, had been charged with being an American spy.

Religion Said to Be an Issue

However, Mr. Sobhani's brother Morris, a civil engineer in Santa Barbara, Calif., said in a telephone interview that he believed that Mohl "was picked up because he is an American and because he is a member of the Bahai faith."

"They are executing and persecuting the Bahai continuously," he said.

"They have told his wife that she should not have married a non-Moslem and her marriage should be annulled and that the child they have is illegitimate," he said. Mr. Sobhani's wife is a Moslem.

Mr. Sobhani has two sisters and two brothers living in Southern California. Morris Sobhani said he learned of his brother's plight two weeks after his arrest and that he had sent telegrams to the State Department and United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, asking them to intercede.

Mr. Anderson also said that an unidentified American businessman had been arrested on charges of being an American spy. However, Mr. Havens said he could not confirm that report.

In addition to the 52 hostages, the Iranians are holding Cynthia Dwyer, 49, a freelance writer from the Buffalo, N.Y., area. She was seized on May 4 by revolutionary guards who took her from her hotel room.

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