

USADI Dispatch

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USADI Commentary

A Coherent Policy on Iran

Nearly 5,000 Iranian-Americans attended a gala in Washington DC last weekend to express their unity with the people of Iran for one cause – the end of the brutal and theocratic regime. Repeatedly, they called for referendum – a referendum for regime change.

The dissident community paid homage to the quake victims and many of their guest speakers blamed the corrupt Tehran regime for the staggering death tolls and massive destruction in Bam.

The big turnout was a clear indication that the Iranian community is inclined to join efforts to work for secular democracy in Iran. Acts of defiance by brave Iranians inside Iran mirror those by their compatriots abroad. They are unified in their disdain and disgust for the mullahs and their fundamentalist ideology.

Dozens of speakers from the United States, Australia, The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Britain underscored the need for change and offered their support to the Iranian resistance. Many, from feminists to a Christian cleric, echoed that theme. They were unanimous in their belief that the ruling theocracy will never provide moderation, economic opportunity or freedom to the Iranian people.

The speakers also denounced the clerics' growing overt and covert interference in Iraq and attempts to have the members of the Iranian Mujahedeen - currently under the protection of the US forces in Iraq - extradited to the mullahs' regime.

The keynote speaker, the honorable Richard Perle, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, said that Iranians who want to lead this regime change must be supported by free nations of the world.

In a video message, a leading figure of the Iranian opposition, Maryam Rajavi, repeated her October 18th call for a UN monitored referendum for regime change in Iran. She also called for a united solidarity front against the ruling mullahs, emphasizing that Iranian-inspired fundamentalism in Iraq poses a greater danger than Tehran's nuclear weapons program.

In America, we also hold much disdain for the mullahs ruling Iran the "most active state sponsor of terrorism" with an unbending determination to export their fanaticism. Yet our current policy towards Iran is far from being coherent. Our policymakers should hear the message of "Night of Solidarity" loud and clear: the Iranians want an end to the ruling mullahs and are demanding a referendum for regime change. The United States should firmly support and lead the call for an internationally monitored referendum in Iran.

Iran: Uranium Enrichment Halt to Be Short

TEHRAN - Iran's suspension of uranium enrichment will be short-lived and the Islamic Republic will restart the program whenever it chooses, Hassan Rohani, head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said Wednesday.

"It (enrichment) is not stopped, rather it is suspended and this will not last long. Whenever we think it is right we will restart it," the mid-ranking cleric told a students gathering, reported by the IRNA news agency.

Western diplomats have told Reuters Iran has been acquiring large amounts of equipment for centrifuges used to enrich uranium despite its promise to suspend all activities.

Reuters, January 28, 2004

Bin Laden Son 'Forewarned Iran of 9/11'

BERLIN - An Iranian defector, preparing to testify in Germany's second major Sept. 11 trial, said on Tuesday that a son of Osama bin Laden had personally told Iranian leaders of the planned attacks on U.S. cities in 2001.

The defector, who goes by the cover name Hamid Reza Zakeri, told Reuters in a telephone interview that al Qaeda had forewarned Tehran of the attacks because it wanted Iran's help in sheltering its leaders afterwards.

"Iran would be the safest place for al Qaeda because it wasn't a country where the U.S. could directly or indirectly intervene" to seize al Qaeda leaders on the run after the planned attacks, he added.

Zakeri says he is a former intelligence official who defected in July 2001 and tried to warn the United States that a major attack would take place on or about Sept. 10.

Reuters, January 27, 2004

Two more executed in Iran

A woman and a man have been executed in Iran, press reports said Monday. In the first case, the woman was given 80 lashes and then hanged in prison in the northern city of Qazvin.

Agence France Presse, January 26, 2004

The US Alliance for Democratic Iran (USADI), is an independent, non-profit organization, which aims to advance a US policy on Iran that will benefit America's interests, through supporting Iranian people's aspirations for a democratic, secular, and peaceful government, free of tyranny, fundamentalism, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism. The USADI is not affiliated with any government agencies, political groups or parties.

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Forbes Magazine
February 2, 2004
Turn Up the Heat on Terror Central

By Steve Forbes

Despite the seeming post-earthquake thaw in relations with Iran, a new day between our countries is not a-dawning. Iran's hard-liners are still in charge, and they are expert at playing the good cop (moderate)/bad cop (hard-line) routine to win advantages. Make no mistake, this clerical dictatorship is a principal source of terrorism around the world today.

In Iran terrorists receive training as well as funding, and the country is a prime sanctuary for these agents of evil. Iran also is working rapidly to develop nuclear weapons and is far along in the process of creating missiles to deliver these and other weapons of mass destruction to Europe and, eventually, the U.S.

In short, the Bush Administration should ratchet up pressure to bring about a regime change. Invading Iran à la Iraq is out of the question--for now. But instead of trying to work with Teheran's corrupt clerics, we should openly extend aid to various Iranian opposition groups, substantially beef up Radio Free Europe-like broadcasts to this critical country and start putting real pressure on Russia to stop providing Iran with all-important assistance for its military programs.

Iran's malicious mullahs' ploy is to buy time. Nothing in Iran's past behavior suggests it is about to turn over a new leaf. Its supposedly moderate President Mohammad Khatami--elected by the people--is a toothless tiger who has not opened up Iran during six years in power. The regime still cracks down hard on democratic dissent.

Our pusillanimous State Department says that ultimately the Iranian people must take their country back from its oppressors. Maybe, but that doesn't mean we can't take a more proactive approach in helping them do so. Ronald Reagan pursued such a course with regard to the U.S.S.R.'s European satellites. He was not content with containment; he wanted to actively undermine the Evil Empire. His Administration did all it could to clandestinely help Poland's Solidarity movement. Other dissidents were also aided, especially with communications equipment. Broadcasts of Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and the Voice of America were all strengthened...

The sooner we revive this Reaganesque spirit vis-à-vis Teheran, the faster we'll win this war against terrorism.

The Washington Times
January 28, 2004
Revolt or revolution?

Either a revolt or a revolution is under way in Iran against the oppressive rule of Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the Council of Guardians dominated by extremist mullahs.

Political predictions are notoriously problematic. Thus, the European upheavals of 1848 marked a turn in history that didn't turn. The Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989 was commonly misjudged as the beginning of the end of the Chinese Communist Party. Upon learning at Versailles of the storming of the Bastille in 1789, King Louis XVI inquired: "Is it a revolt? The Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt retorted: "No, Sire, it is a revolution."

During the last century, Iran surprised the world twice. Its 1906 constitutional revolution inaugurated unprecedented individual liberties and representative institutions. In contrast, the 1979 Islamic Revolution featuring spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini plunged Iran into a theocratic despotism alien to its culture. Indeed, it marked the flip-side of the budding Iranian democracy under Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh that the United States shipwrecked with a 1953 royalist coup d'état in favor of Mohammed Reza Shah, the second and last in the Pahlavi line.

An indigenous Iranian democratic revolution seems vastly more promising than in neighboring Arab states. According to experts, the Council of Guardians and Leader Khamenei enjoy but 10 percent to 15 percent popular support...

The council's slender support does not guarantee its overthrow by a democratic revolution. Brutality and ruthlessness regularly defeat widespread peaceful opposition. The Bolshevik Revolution succeeded for 75 years in the Soviet Union by practicing and inculcating terror and fear...

On the other hand, Iran has twice tasted the freshness of a democratic dispensation. Its political culture is mature, resembling that of Turkey's. A majority of Iran's citizens are young and unthrilled by the 1979 Islamic Revolution... And the exhilarating fervor that greeted the overthrow of the shah of Iran and the taking of American hostages for 444 days has long since dissipated amidst corruption, economic hardships, and petty mullah ambitions.

The odds thus seem favorable to an Iranian democratic revolution in 2004...

By Bruce Fein, an international consultant and constitutional lawyer at Fein & Fein.