

2007
World Congress
for Democracy
in Iran

Saturday June 30, 2007
Paris, France

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2007 World Congress For Democracy in Iran

Join us for the World Congress for Democracy in Iran

When: June. 30, 2007

Where: Paris, France

For the first time in the history of the Iranian Diaspora, democracy advocates and like minded individuals from all over the world will come together to examine the situation in Iran and progress toward democracy. Experts will cover pressing issues including the policies of Tehran's regime which has led to current crisis on Iran's nuclear program, human rights, women's rights, meddling in Iraq and support for international terrorism.

Your participation is encouraged. Such an unprecedented event provides a forum for dialogue and exchange of views among citizen oriented and global democratic advocacy networks. The live broadcasting of this event into Iran will undoubtedly enhance the voice of change and empower the Iranian people for change inside Iran.

Enclosed are samples of some recent events that have occurred in Iran, the United States and Europe; including last year's event in Paris.

Please contact us if you have any questions at all regarding this upcoming event.

World Congress Platforms

The world will come together Saturday, June 30, 2007 to call for a Democratic, Secular Republic in Iran and support for a democracy roadmap. The following platforms will examine the current issues in Iran:

Human Rights: Tehran must be confronted publicly and privately for its violations of human rights. Speakers on this platform will address the need for direct and persistent condemnation of human rights, gender apartheid, and violence against religious minorities in Iran.

Terrorism: Tehran continues to support terrorist groups and undermine the stability in Iraq through its extensive network with extremists groups in the region. Speakers on this platform will present strategies to deter future acts of terrorism sponsored by Tehran.

Nuclear Threat: Tehran is defiantly pursuing its nuclear program with an aggressive timetable. With various options are on the table, Tehran also senses indecision and disunity in the West. Speakers on this platform will offer a roadmap for a cohesive approach on Tehran's nuclear threat.

Global Policy: No one in Washington or elsewhere in Europe can claim that appeasement and a foreign war represent viable policy options on Iran. Speakers on this platform will present a third option, which is to support democratic change by the Iranian people.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

Iran has, by all standards, the worst human rights record of any country in the world today. In its annual 2005 report, Human Rights Watch condemned Tehran's rights record. It wrote, "Basic human rights in Iran, especially freedom of expression and opinion, deteriorated in 2004.... The Iranian authorities systematically suppress freedom of expression and opinion. In 2004 the authorities also moved to block Internet websites that provide independent news and analysis, and to arrest writers using this medium to disseminate information and analysis critical of the government.... Torture and ill-treatment in detention has been used particularly against those imprisoned for peaceful expression of their political views. In violation of international law and Iran's constitution, judges often accept coerced confessions. The use of prolonged solitary confinement, often in small basement cells, has been designed to break the will of those detained in order to coerce confessions and provide information regarding associates. This systematic use of solitary confinement rises to the level of cruel and inhuman treatment. Severe physical torture is also used, especially against student activists." Reporters without Borders described Iran as the biggest prison for journalists.

- There have been over 100,000 executions in Iran in the past quarter century, including the massacre of 30,000 in 1998.
- Torture is prevalent both as an instrument of punishment and as a means of extracting confessions from detainees. Some 170 forms of physical and psychological torture, including systematic flogging, mutilation, amputation, rape and mock executions, have been recorded in Iran's prisons.
- Hundreds of thousands have been arbitrary arrested for political reasons.
- Religious and ethnic minorities have suffered tremendously and subjected to systematic discrimination.

Gender Apartheid

The Tehran regime displays a different kind of brutality towards women. Women are considered as second-class citizens in both law and practice. The government has imposed segregation in public transport, hospitals and educational centers banning women from visiting male physicians, or female teachers teaching male students. The United Nations Human Rights Commission's Special Representative on the situation of human rights in Iran described that country as "a big prison for women."

Prof. Yakin Erturk, the United Nations Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur on violence against women reported at the end of her weeklong trip to Tehran in February that Iranian women were

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sentenced to death based on inaccurate evidence and that in many cases, women who lodged complaints had been victimized. Women who were raped faced enormous obstacles in order to have their voices heard, she added.

Last summer, in a matter of two months, the world witnessed public hanging of a 16-year-old girl, death sentence for a 33-year-old mother and stoning verdict for a 14-year-old girl. The fundamentalist regime in Tehran has found sex trafficking a profitable business. In the past several years, there have been numerous cases revealing officials' involvement in trading and sexually abusing women and young girls. Prostitution and human trafficking claim younger lives everyday. Girls between ages 10 to 17 are the prime victims of sexual slavery in Iran.

In Tehran alone, 4,000 street girls roam the city everyday. Reports indicate that 90 percent of runaway girls end up in prostitution or are sold in Persian Gulf human trafficking market.

Women and girls bear the brunt of Iran's economic hardship. At least, 700,000 children, aged 10 to 14, work in black labor market in Iran. Sixty-seven percent of the students deprived of education are girls between 11 and 16 years old.

Only 11 percent of Iranian women are employed. Twenty-six percent of all women have mental and psychological problems.

In the western and southern regions of the country, suicides are mostly self-immolations among women.

In a western province of Iran, deputy of governor on women's affairs, Heyran Pournajaf, said, "About 70 percent of those who commit suicide in Ilam are women." The director general of social affairs of the governor reported, "90 percent of these women were between 17 and 35 years old." The World Health Organization has placed Iran among the top three countries on deaths by suicide.

Religious Minorities Persecuted

The Iranian regime has flagrantly persecuted religious minorities, notably Baha'is, Jews and evangelical Christians. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and US State Department have documented many cases of individuals, religious leaders, and religious institutions, which have suffered tremendous abuse.

Churches and Christian training, temples and synagogues are routinely monitored and there has been widespread closure of these institutions by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance, forcing many churches to go underground.

Circulation of Christian literature, including scripture in Persian language, is banned. The office of the Bible Society together with all Christian bookshops was closed in 1990. Several Christian leaders, mostly converts from Islamic backgrounds, have been executed or assassinated. In 1994, Rev. Hussein Soodmand, Mehdi Dibaj and Bishop Haik Hovsepian-Mehr and Tateos Michaelian, the senior pastor of St. John's Armenian Evangelical (Assemblies of God) church, were murdered by Iran's Intelligence Ministry. Despite all denials at the official level the Law on Apostasy is practiced and remains in force.

TERRORISM

The U.S. State Department has described Iran as the leading state sponsor of terrorism. The Tehran regime has continued its support for terrorist groups and those opposed to peace in the Middle East. It has used the fall of the Iraqi government to meddle in Iraq's affairs by sending thousands of Revolutionary Guards, intelligence agents and clerics with the ultimate aim of erecting a sister Islamic Republic in that country. Since the end of major combat in Iraq, Tehran has spent more than four billion dollars to fund the insurgency, terrorist operatives and recruit agents. It has also tried to influence the democratic process and the recent elections by ensuring that pro-Iran elements gain the upper hand.

Tehran's regime has also been responsible for more than eighty percent of all terrorist attacks abroad. Iranian dissidents and opponents in Europe and the Middle East have been among primary targets of its hit squads. They include:

- Switzerland: Prof. Kazem Rajavi, NCRI's country-representative.
- France: Dr. Shapour Bakhtiar, Shah's last Prime Minister.
- Austria: Dr. Abdolrahman Ghassemlou, Leader of Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran.
- Italy: Mohammad Hossein Naqdi, NCRI's country-representative.
- Germany: Dr. Sadeq Sharafkandi, Leader of Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran.
- Turkey: Zahra Rajabi, senior NCRI member.

Terrorism is a pillar of Tehran's foreign policy. Active material, financial and political support for its network and proxies have been detailed by former Iranian intelligence officers in German courtrooms and elsewhere in the world.

NUCLEAR THREAT

The acquisition, development and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction have been a permanent feature of the Iranian regime's efforts right from the very beginning, and remain so today. Iran's clerics consider nuclear arms as a strategic weapon not only in a military sense, but also in giving them leverage to impose their hegemony in the region and spread their brand of fundamentalism. Furthermore, if they ever obtain nuclear bomb, it would enable them to take hostage the international community.

In order to cover up its real intentions, the regime has pursued a systematic policy of denial and deception for 20 years. If these programs were peaceful, there would be no need to pursue them secretly.

Moreover, Iran is a rich country in natural resources, yet some seventy to eighty percent of the population is living below the poverty line. In addition, Iran sits on one of the largest oil reserves and the second largest gas reserves in the world today. Therefore, nothing can justify allocating billions of dollars to nuclear projects while millions in Iran cannot make ends meet.

Concerns over Iran's nuclear program grew after revelations in mid-2002 about two secret nuclear facilities - a uranium enrichment plant at Natanz and a heavy water production plant near Arak - by the National Council of Resistance of Iran. That led to a subsequent IAEA investigations of what turned out to be nearly two decades of covert nuclear activities, including suspicious "dual use" experiments that can be linked to weapons programs.

RIISING CHALLENGE



Since August 2005, an already radical regime in Tehran has become more radical with Ahmadinejad and his policy of terror in Iraq, race for nuclear arms and suppression at home. United States has declared his regime as the world's most active state sponsor of terrorism. Armed with deadly missiles, Ahmadinejad's regime is capable of striking parts of Europe, Israel and American forces in the Middle East.

Time is running out Ahmadinejad's belligerence runs counter to the national interests of Iranians, as does the regime's nuclear drive, terrorism, and meddling in Iraq. In April 2006, Iranian regime's President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, announced that their regime had operated the first cascade of centrifuges, injecting gas in them and producing enriched uranium. Ahmadinejad reiterated, "The hegemonic powers of the world, particularly the criminal United States, are faced with countless problems and serious challenges today..." Rafsanjani also claimed that the regime can enrich uranium on an industrial scale and emphasized, "We must expand these machines to acquire a complete industrial unit... When ElBaradei comes to Iran, he will face a new situation."

Nuclear Tehran: Danger to Iranians and the world On 2006 International Women's Day, women staged a large anti-regime protest denouncing Ahmadinejad's nuclear agenda. In a recent call-in program on the Farsi-language *Radio Farda*, a caller from Iran said: "The Iranian establishment claims that nuclear energy is the right of the Iranian nation. Aren't freedom and democracy the right of the Iranian people? The oil money is not the right of the Iranian people? Why the names of Palestine, the Lebanese Hezbollah, and Syria are included in our annual budget? Are they partners in our oil money or are they from one of Iran's provinces?" Another caller from Tehran told *Radio Farda* that "In my opinion, Iran's nuclear case must have been taken to the UN Security Council, because this regime has threatened the lives of 70 million people with its nuclear ambitions?"

Islamic Fundamentalism: the Rising Global Threat Tehran's foreign policy is designed to advance its fundamentalist hegemonic objectives in line with its dream of a theocratic empire. Use of terrorism has been and will remain to be the mullah's primary means of advancing foreign policy objectives in the region and across the globe. In April 2006, The Sunday Times of UK reported that Iranian officials are boasting about the 40,000 trained suicide

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bombers are ready for action in Middle East, Europe and US.

Robert Blackwill, deputy national security adviser during President Bush's first term, told the Council on Foreign Relations think tank, "Iraq thinks Iran is the major strategic threat to Iraq". Washington rightly believes that a nuclear-armed Iran presents a threat to Middle East stability and world peace. Indeed the Iranian regime under Ahmadinejad's watch is a rising challenge and threat which can no longer be ignored.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Iranian people's resolute struggle for liberty inspires the Diaspora to rally for a democratic change. Instead of a foreign war or continued appeasement, a home grown movement for democracy can indeed end the tyrannical regime in Tehran and ensure a peaceful and nuclear-free Iran.

Dealing with Tehran's Regime

Since early 1990s, the United States and the EU have offered many carrots and little sticks in dealing with Tehran. For eight years, Khatami made the carrot stew and served the Tehran regime. Now that the international community recognizes there is no amount of political concessions or economic incentives would moderate Tehran's regime, it is time to erase all traces of appeasement policy including the blacklisting of Iran's main opposition groups, like the MEK or the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI).

Solution

Iranian people have an inalienable right resist this regime, therefore, United States and Europe must recognize the critical role of Iran's main opposition group and its ability to organize and lead the democracy movement. The democracy movement in Iran does not wish to see its homegrown efforts for regime change impeded. Nor does it want to outsource it to any form of foreign military intervention. The Iranian people support a third option for democratic change in Iran. In her address to Council of Europe on April 10, 2006, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi leader of the NCRI, set forth that option. "Today, I have come to say that the international community is not required to choose between the nuclear-armed mullahs or a war. There is a third option: Democratic change by the Iranian people and their organized resistance. Making concessions to the mullahs is not the way to avoid war. It would increase the possibility of a war. It is necessary to react quickly. We do not have much time." she said.



Moving Forward

Only by establishing much more direct communication with Iran's opposition groups including NCRI who promotes democracy, secularism and a republic in Iran, can the United States hope to influence the course of events there. The United States will face the great risk of hurting the pride and trust of the Iranian people if its direct communication excludes groups who continue to be blacklisted as a favor to Tehran. A necessary step is to correct the failed policy of appeasement which led to unjust designation of MEK or NCRI as "terrorist group". More than 150 member of United States Congress has urged the State Department on several occasions; these groups do not belong to such category and are Iran's "legitimate resistance movement". Speakers on this platform will address the roadmap for a democratic, secular, republic in Iran and the role of international community in standing with Iran's patriotic resistance.

SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE

It is time for a new WORLD policy on Iran that would help restore the reputation of the United States and Europe as a defender of human rights and democracy. Courageous efforts must be made on both sides of the political spectrum to unite the world on Iran policy. US and EU should speak in one voice when it comes to defending human rights and democracy in Iran. For too long Washington and Europe have tolerated the regime in Tehran whose primary goal is to establish a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic. Time is not on our side when it comes to Tehran's growing threat. Washington, London, and Paris must:

- Iranians' impression is that although some sanctions have been put in place through executive orders and some American officials condemn the regime and demand further changes, Washington has not gone far enough. Iranians expect concrete steps taken against Tehran by reminding the EU countries of

their own history of resistance and urged to recognize the resistance of the Iranian people. The United States should embark on an international effort to isolate Tehran politically and economically.

- Washington should seize the historic opportunity by acknowledging the legitimacy of 26 years of pro-democracy movement in Iran.
- The Iranian regime continues to suppress the Iranian people who are longing for democratic change. Only by establishing much more direct communication with Iran's opposition groups that promote democracy, secularism and a republic in Iran, can the United States hope to influence the course of events there. The United States will face the great risk of hurting the pride and trust of the Iranian people if its direct communication excludes groups who were blacklisted as a favor to Tehran.

BUILDING TRUST FOR A FREE IRAN

To gain the trust of the Iranian people, we must adopt a firm policy devoid of any obstacles for the Iranian Resistance. Rejecting appeasement is indispensable to the policy towards Tehran.

To increase the global support, President Bush must work to adopt a firm policy in dealing Tehran's nuclear and terrorism threat.

To achieve a real solution, America must support the third option, which is to democratic change in Iran brought about by the Iranian people and their Resistance.

A free and democratic Iran stands for:

I. Human Rights in a Democratic Iran

Free Iran will uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all international covenants on human rights. All privileges or discriminations based on gender, ethnic background, religion or beliefs will be abolished, and all citizens shall enjoy equal political and social rights.

II. Rights of Women in a Democratic Iran

Free Iran will recognize women's rights are human rights and woman's exclusive right over her own body including choice of clothing and cover.

III. Freedom of Religion in a Democratic Iran

Free Iran believes in the separation of Church and State. No citizen shall enjoy any privileges or be subject to any discrimination due to their religious belief.

IV. National Minorities in a Democratic Iran

Free Iran recognizes the rights of all ethnic and national minorities. It recognizes the plan for the autonomy of Iranian Kurdistan, specifying that "the administration of all affairs of the autonomous region of Kurdistan," except for those related to foreign policy, national defense, national security, foreign trade and customs.

V. Economic in a Democratic Iran

Free Iran accepts national capitalism and the bazaar, private ownership and enterprise, as well as private investment. Through a free-market economy, a democratic Iran will emphasize on the need to utilize the latest scientific and technical achievements and views relations with industrial countries necessary to reconstruct Iran's economy.

VI. Peace and Security in a Democratic Iran

Free Iran's foreign policy is based on independence, respect for the United Nations Charter and international conventions and treaties, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Free Iran supports the Middle East peace process. Free Iran opposes nuclear proliferation and the production of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles.