

Presents

U.S. IRAN POLICY – CITIZEN'S ROLE May 09, 2008 - Van Nuys, CA

On Friday, May 09, 2008, the Southern Chapter of the California Society for Democracy in Iran hosted a panel discussion on United States policy towards Iran.

Local Iranian-Americans from Van Nuys and Sherman Oaks joined Iran Experts, Human Rights Activists, Religious Leaders, and concerned citizens in the Van Nuys, Library to explore practical and popular strategies to confront extremist Islam while facilitating a democratic change in Iran.

PRESENTERS



Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, the Representative from 46th District of California. She is a member of Armed Services in the US House of Representative. She addressed the CSDI via recorded video message..

Mr. Nasser Sharif is the President of California Society for Democracy in Iran. He is a human rights and political activist. Nasser Sharif has a bachelor degree in chemistry from Germany; his view on Iran has been published in major news papers.

Professor. Ali Parsa, Dr. Parsa is a professor of history at California State University – Fullerton, and a Lecturer in Middle East History at UCLA. He is also lecturer in humanities at Pepperdine University. Dr. Parsa lectures on a variety of subjects; including comparative religion, history of world religions, and history of Near Eastern religions.

Pastor Jim Bessey, Chair of the Synod Worship Committee of the Southwest California, Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. His theological studies were done at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, where he earned a Master of Divinity degree. Further graduate work was done at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA.

Ms. Mitra Saeedi-Samani, a former political prisoner in Iran. She had been imprisoned in Iran's notorious EVIN prison and endured may years of torture in the hands of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.



Panelists utilized video and slide presentations to articulate their views



on the Iranian regime and its evolving threat to the people of Iran and indeed all of mankind



Honorable Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, D-CA

Excerpts from her video message to CSDI panel discussion:

I would like to thank the Southern California Society for Democracy in Iran for organizing today's panel discussion on U.S. Policy towards Iran....

I would like to congratulate the work of the SCSDI... Your work has continued to bring national attention to the government of Iran's continued sponsorship of terrorism and its numerous human rights violations. Government of Iran remains a growing threat to the U.S. and its allies as it continues to support terrorism and foster its nuclear weapons capabilities....

I have joined the majority of the members of my house colleagues in supporting the late Congressman Tom Lantos's bill that supports diplomatic and economic sanctions to end Iranian nuclear weapons program. And as a long-standing human rights activist, I also share your concern for the human rights of the Iranian citizens. Last December, for the 54th time in the past 30 years, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution condemned Iran for gross violation of its citizen's rights....

View the entire video at our website: www.californiasdi.org

California Society for Democracy in Iran



Excerpts from Ms. Samani's remarks:

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

I would like to thank you and Mr. Sharif, the president of California Society for Democracy in Iran for making it possible for me to shed some light to the gross violations of human rights by the fundamentalist regime of Iran.

...The situation of human rights in Iran is one of the worst in the world. Why? Because in the words of Nelson Mandela: "The prison system of a government reflects the intrinsic characteristic and properties of that government in the most concise and exposed way".

Iran is also the only country in the world that the type of women's dress is considered a "national security" issue...

...The clerical regime in Iran has issued numerous decrees sanctioning massacre and executions, torture and other forms of violations of the most basic principles of human rights. It is a fact of history that illegitimate and unpopular regimes cling to power through mass terror. And indeed, the mullahs' regime was according to their own opinion polls, detested by some 95 percent of Iranians, and could not survive without brutal repression at home and export of terrorism and fundamentalism abroad.

The U.S. State Department report on Human Trafficking says Iran is "a source, transit, and destination country for women and girls trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and involuntary servitude." Voice of America reported that women and children in Iran are also trafficked internally for the same purposes.....

The restive, secular, and democratically oriented people of Iran are yearning for regime change. Were it not for the drastic oppressive measures and total media censorship, more of thousands of

protests calling for this change would be known to the world. In 2007, there were at least 5000 protests against the government of Iran. The pace of dissent is rising as this totally militarized regime continues to spend precious national resources on fomenting violence outside Iran and further suppresses Iran's population. Today, the world and indeed the United States need a courageous initiative to solve the Iranian crisis because the classic solutions of appeasement and military threat have failed to moderate Iran's behavior.

... In a country where over 60% of the students are women, the opposition must and does represent their ideals and expectations. Decisiveness of U.S. policy towards Iran can be demonstrated with the recognition of the Iranian people's Resistance. The most important step to that end would be to remove Iran's largest opposition group, the People's Mojahedin of Iran (PMOI/MEK) from U.S. list of terrorist organizations.

Excerpts from Dr. Parsa's Presentation:

Iranian Threat Iraqi Stability and Confronting Extremist Islam

“Export” of “Revolution”: a GOAL

- Without Iranian regime as a driving force, Islamic extremism and its use of terrorism would have all but dried up (in the 1960s and 1970s)
- **Mullahs in IRAN have transformed the IDEA of creating a global Islamic rule to an achievable GOAL**



Devouring Iraq: Mullah's stated GOAL

- *“The fate of Iran's nuclear dossier will be determined not at the negotiating table, but in the streets of Baghdad and Beirut.” (Kayhan Daily, August 2007 - Iranian Supreme leader Khamenei's mouthpiece print organ)*

As Khomeini stated in 1982 and Iran's leadership reaffirmed recently:

- **Primary on Iran's agenda is paving a path to domination of Iraq**
- **Iraqi people, Iranian Opposition, and American military stand in their way**

Iranian and American People have Converging of Goals and Actions: This anti-extremist alliance must be recognized and fully empowered



Excerpts from Pastor Jim Bessy

Good afternoon

A principle tenet of religion is the God given right of man to exercise his free will. Dictatorships take away from people this most basic of rights. The most destructive and in fact unreligious forms of all dictatorships are religious theocracies.

...Iran's Ayatollahs subscribe to and lead an intolerant, aggressive, supremacist, and violent brand of Islam. They are fully aware that with peace and freedom and in the

absence of conflict, the people of Iran will surely choose the path consistent with the societal, political, religious, and cultural norms and standards and not oppression, executions, torture, and religious intolerance.

...The average Iranian has seen an erosion of his/her basic human rights. And if one is part of a religious minority, be it Sunni, Bahai, Christian, Zoroastrian, or Jew, or even Shiite with views contrary to those of the mullahs, he can anticipate repression, jail or even death. Apostasy, this medieval charge, is actually one that is enforced in Iran.

What a tragic calamity for a peaceful nation with a history rich in religious tolerance, diversity, and cultural wealth.

In order for the Middle East region to become stable, Iraqis see peace, our troops to come home, and a nuclear calamity prevented; the people of Iran must be empowered to free themselves.

You may ask how? God has endowed humanity with the will and called upon him to seek equality, and advance peace. The people of Iran are blessed with a highly dedicated peaceful and tolerant resistance movement seeking to establish a democratic and free Iran.

Tellingly, the leader of this movement is a woman, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, who has articulated a 16 point charter of fundamental freedoms for Iran. I must take a minute to read to you just a few:

1 - There will be complete freedom of belief, expression and the press. Any form of censorship or scrutiny of beliefs will be forbidden.

2 - General elections and suffrage will be the basis for the legitimacy of the government. Laws not enacted by the elected legislators of the country are not official and lack credibility.

3. All forms of discrimination against the followers of various religions and denominations in the enjoyment of their individual and social rights will be prohibited. No citizen shall enjoy any privileges or be subject to any deprivations with respect to nomination for election, suffrage, employment, education, judgeship or any other individual or social right, for reason of belief or non-belief in a particular religion or denomination. The qualifications of judicial officials will not be determined by their religious or ideological position.

4 - Any form of compulsory religious or ideological teaching, and any compulsion to practice or non-practice of religious rituals and customs will be forbidden. The rights of all religions and denominations to teach proselytize and freely perform their rituals and traditions, and the respect for and security of all places belonging to them, shall be guaranteed.

...Here, I have read you a few of Ms. Rajavi's charter for Iran of tomorrow. These are some of the hallmarks of a democratic society. We must reach out and support these Iranians and their organized resistance against warmongering Islamic extremists in Iran.

I thank you for the time you have afforded me.

Excerpts from A CSDI Statement: (By Mr. Babak Dadvand of the CSDI)

Last month, Iran's president Ahmadinejad said, "We have two missions... To construct Iran and change the global situation. It is impossible to reach the summits of progress without changing the corrupt and unjust order of the world." The regime in Iran is based on velayat-e faqih which is a medieval system that relies on repression at home and export of terrorism and religious fascism abroad.

...In Iraq, mullahs, through the terrorist Qods force, funnel resources, manpower and other explicit support to deadly militias. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus both told Congress recently that Iran's "maligned" influence is not only causing U.S./Iraqi casualties, but is "the greatest long-term threat to the viability of a democratic Iraq." Mr. Crocker admitted that Iran is creating "proxy" agents" who are "instruments of the Iranian government." Democrats and Republicans alike now increasingly fault Iran.

Iranian regime's predatory behavior started 30 years ago, when it began killing and torturing the Iranian people. Iran declared war on its own population long before the current drumbeat on its nuclear weapons program was heard around the world. Since 1981, it has executed more than 120,000 of the



countries best and brightest. Its prisons and torture chambers are filled with Iranians who have never stopped rejecting theocracy and who will always seek democracy. Mullah's barbaric human rights record and their utter disregard for the will of the people have been documented in 54 U.N. condemnation resolutions, the last of which was issued last December.

Addressing Iran's well established nuclear weapons program takes on special urgency now that Iran's supreme leader Khamenei has consolidated all organs of country's power within his grasp. Purging of the so called reformists from the government was primarily motivated by the need to expedite the way towards nuclear weapons. We must not overlook this fact.

Policies aimed at diffusing the Iranian threat have so far relied on appeasement of the dictators in Iran. Early in this decade, Mullahs played with and finally rebuffed the EU 3 diplomatic attempts. Iran again ignored the 5+1 incentives package offered in June 2006. Iran has also ignored 3 U.N. Security Council Resolution. The well meaning attempts at diplomacy only served to provide more time to the mullahs to complete their nuclear weapons program. Indeed, these appeasement policies have failed.

...In 2006, European Union's second highest court annulled the EU decision to place the MEK on its terror list. In December 2007, U.K.'s Proscribed Terrorist Organizations Appeals Commission ruled in favor of MEK and ordered the British government to remove them from the country's terror list. POAC had described the decision to maintain the PMOI on the list "unlawful" and "perverse." The British Court of Appeal, in 22 page ruling, ordered the removal of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran from the terrorist list. This ruling is definitive and can not be appealed.

The bottom line is that Iranian people have been deprived of their legitimate right to organize against the regime in Iran. These policies have also undermined the stated goal of confronting extremist Islam emanating from Iran.

...To unlock this riddle, U.S. policy must tap the potential of the Iranian people. Removing the MEK, Iranian people's largest and most capable resistance from the U.S. terror list is the most decisive step U.S. can take to stimulate change in Iran, and it is the least costly.

...When a credible court that looked at the same group, same activities, and same allegations found this group not to be engaged in terrorism, the State Department ought to weigh this 22-page ruling by the Court of Appeal as well as a 144-page ruling by a previous court which acted in favor of the PMOI, in its scheduled five-year review of the terrorist designation for the Iranian opposition movement in October 2008.

We believe our representatives in the U.S. Congress, the aware conscience of the people of this country, must challenge the State Department for this great injustice to the Iranian people and their Resistance.

In light of the POAC's ruling, their pressure on the State Department for the removal of the PMOI from the Terror List should increase. This pressure (on the State Department) to change their attitude and their characterization of the main Iranian opposition group will subsequently contribute to the peace and security in the region.