

**AMERICA AND THE IRANIAN POLITICAL REFORM  
MOVEMENT: FIRST, DO NO HARM**

---

---

**HEARING**  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION

—————  
FEBRUARY 3, 2010  
—————

**Serial No. 111-93**  
—————

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/>

—————  
U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

54-940PDF

WASHINGTON : 2010

---

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office  
Internet: [bookstore.gpo.gov](http://bookstore.gpo.gov) Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800  
Fax: (202) 512-2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402-0001

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HOWARD L. BERMAN, California, *Chairman*

GARY L. ACKERMAN, New York	ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida
ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, American Samoa	CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey
DONALD M. PAYNE, New Jersey	DAN BURTON, Indiana
BRAD SHERMAN, California	ELTON GALLEGLY, California
ELIOT L. ENGEL, New York	DANA ROHRABACHER, California
BILL DELAHUNT, Massachusetts	DONALD A. MANZULLO, Illinois
GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York	EDWARD R. ROYCE, California
DIANE E. WATSON, California	RON PAUL, Texas
RUSS CARNAHAN, Missouri	JEFF FLAKE, Arizona
ALBIO SIRES, New Jersey	MIKE PENCE, Indiana
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia	JOE WILSON, South Carolina
MICHAEL E. McMAHON, New York	JOHN BOOZMAN, Arkansas
JOHN S. TANNER, Tennessee	J. GRESHAM BARRETT, South Carolina
GENE GREEN, Texas	CONNIE MACK, Florida
LYNN WOOLSEY, California	JEFF FORTENBERRY, Nebraska
SHEILA JACKSON LEE, Texas	MICHAEL T. McCAUL, Texas
BARBARA LEE, California	TED POE, Texas
SHELLEY BERKLEY, Nevada	BOB INGLIS, South Carolina
JOSEPH CROWLEY, New York	GUS BILIRAKIS, Florida
MIKE ROSS, Arkansas	
BRAD MILLER, North Carolina	
DAVID SCOTT, Georgia	
JIM COSTA, California	
KEITH ELLISON, Minnesota	
GABRIELLE GIFFORDS, Arizona	
RON KLEIN, Florida	
VACANT	

RICHARD J. KESSLER, *Staff Director*  
YLEEM POLETE, *Republican Staff Director*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

GARY L. ACKERMAN, New York, *Chairman*

RUSS CARNAHAN, Missouri	DAN BURTON, Indiana
MICHAEL E. McMAHON, New York	JOE WILSON, South Carolina
SHEILA JACKSON LEE, Texas	J. GRESHAM BARRETT, South Carolina
SHELLEY BERKLEY, Nevada	JEFF FORTENBERRY, Nebraska
JOSEPH CROWLEY, New York	MICHAEL T. McCAUL, Texas
MIKE ROSS, Arkansas	BOB INGLIS, South Carolina
JIM COSTA, California	GUS BILIRAKIS, Florida
KEITH ELLISON, Minnesota	DANA ROHRABACHER, California
RON KLEIN, Florida	EDWARD R. ROYCE, California
BRAD SHERMAN, California	
ELIOT L. ENGEL, New York	
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia	
GENE GREEN, Texas	
VACANT	

HOWARD DIAMOND, *Subcommittee Staff Director*  
MARK WALKER, *Republican Professional Staff Member*  
DALIS ADLER, *Staff Associate*

# CONTENTS

---

	Page
WITNESSES	
Mr. Mehdi Khalaji, Senior Fellow, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy .....	14
Ms. Geneive Abdo, Director, Iran Program, The Century Foundation .....	19
Fariborz Ghadar, Ph.D., Distinguished Scholar and Senior Advisor, Center for Strategic and International Studies .....	26
Mr. J. Scott Carpenter, Keston Family Fellow, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy .....	37
LETTERS, STATEMENTS, ETC., SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING	
The Honorable Gary L. Ackerman, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York, and Chairman, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia: Prepared statement .....	4
Mr. Mehdi Khalaji: Prepared statement .....	17
Ms. Geneive Abdo: Prepared statement .....	21
Fariborz Ghadar, Ph.D.: Prepared statement .....	28
Mr. J. Scott Carpenter: Prepared statement .....	39
APPENDIX	
Hearing notice .....	60
Hearing minutes .....	61
The Honorable Dan Burton, a Representative in Congress from the State of Indiana: Prepared statement .....	62
The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, a Representative in Congress from the State of Virginia: Prepared statement .....	64



## AMERICA AND THE IRANIAN POLITICAL REFORM MOVEMENT: FIRST, DO NO HARM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2010

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST  
AND SOUTH ASIA,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:09 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Gary L. Ackerman (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Our witnesses having come forward; the committee is called to order.

Americans are not very good at sitting still. Patience is not our strong suit historically; it has not been a very prominent feature of our national character. The terms that describe us best most often reflect our restless impatience for progress, our natural inclination for pragmatism, and our deeply ingrained tendency to focus most of all on getting the job done. In foreign affairs, however, the world offers few situations that lend themselves to neat, quick, and simple solutions.

It is not that Americans are incapable of patience. We can rise to the challenge when necessary, and especially when the alternatives offer little hope of success. Following the Second World War, a 40-year Cold War was not America's first choice for a foreign policy. But the alternatives to slow, grinding, vigilant containment of the Soviet Union, when honestly examined, led both Democratic and Republican administrations right back to containment. With more diplomacy, some with more pressure, but all with the same deadly serious goal of preventing the expansion of Soviet domination and all committed to the eventual collapse of the Communist system under the weight of its own failure and fallacies.

Iran, as I have stated in other hearings, is not the Soviet Union. By every measure of size, wealth, capability, and influence, it is a vastly smaller, though still a dangerous challenge. And I would respectfully suggest that, though the temptation is strong, reasoning in the Middle East, by historical analogy in Europe, is an invitation to disaster. Nevertheless, the situation in Iran today does resonate most powerfully with Americans, recalling memories of the late 1980s and the collapse of Communism.

Again a long policy of containment appears to be on the cusp of an unexpected but remarkable success borne on the backs of oppressed people struggling to be free from a vicious, brutal, ideological regime. Moreover, there is a chance that this wholly indigenous

movement, by virtue of its own success and entirely for its own reasons, could bring about an incredibly positive shift in the global security environment.

I don't think anyone believes the current leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran will go quietly or easily into retirement, and I think it would be foolish to assume that a reformed Iranian Government would automatically be very friendly to the United States or be less committed to the pursuit of its own national interest. But there is good reason to think that a different Iranian Government, one that was truly answerable to the aspirations of the Iranian people, would transform the politics of the Middle East, dramatically change the global struggle against violent Islamic extremism, and potentially salvage the global nonproliferation regime.

With stakes of this scale, American minds, my own included, begin to race ahead. How can we help? How can we support the green movement? How can we accelerate the demise of this awful and irresponsible regime? And so on. The most essential thing, I think, is to be patient. Not passive, not indifferent, but instead of heeding the inner voice that yells, don't just stand there do something, we need to turn this impulse on its head. Rather than just doing something, we need to stop and think things through.

Even if there were not a painful history of American intervention in Iranian affairs, and even if the Iranian regime was not desperate to smear its domestic opponents as American lackeys and spies, we should at the very least have some humility about the ability of our Government to competently shape highly politicized and dynamic events in other nations. I would submit as proof the entire previous decade.

It seems to me that our first obligation is to do no harm. And our second obligation is to recognize that we are not a doctor and Iran is not a patient. Iran is a sovereign state whose people are struggling bravely for their own freedom. It is natural and right for us to want to support their struggle. The question is how. I would suggest that we start with a healthy amount of skepticism about our ability to shape political developments in other countries and a firm respect for the sovereignty and independence of Iran.

With these caveats, I believe there are some important things that we can and should do, all of which can be done publicly and outside of Iran. First, I think it essential that the President and the Secretary of State continue to regularly comment on the situation within Iran. I think the President's inclusion of Iran in his State of the Union Address was very important, and I would want to highlight the very strong remarks made by Secretary Clinton following the regime's violence against protesters during the observance of Ashura in December of last year.

Second, I think the White House and the State Department in their daily briefings should draw attention to events in Iran as they occur and make clear the views of the United States when there is violence or reports of severe violations of human rights. Third, the United States along with other nations must assure that we are actually committed to the international human rights, should press within the United Nations the issue of Iran's repression of its own people, if possible in the Security Council and at least within the Third Committee, and in the Human Rights Coun-

cil. Every nation should be given the chance to stand with the people of Iran.

Finally, I am convinced that the United States must continue to work with our international partners to apply sanctions on the Government of Iran for its defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions and for its violations of its IAEA Safeguards agreement. Both the House and the Senate have passed gasoline sanctions, and I look forward to working with the Obama administration to find a way forward on this legislation. Our goal must be to ensure the maximum impact on the Iranian Government with the minimum harm to our diplomatic efforts and to the people of Iran who are struggling for their freedom.

What I hold to be essential is that we must act and that we must act in concert with others if at all possible. The Iranian regime is facing pressure from within unlike anything it has ever felt before. To the extent that we can heighten that pressure by political and economic sanctions, I believe we are absolutely bound to do so.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ackerman follows:]

HOWARD L. BERMAN, CALIFORNIA  
 CL 100011

GARYL ACKERMAN, NEW YORK  
 BEN F. FALCONE, ARIZONA  
 DONALD M. FRAYNE, MISSOURI  
 BRAD SHERMAN, CALIFORNIA  
 ELOI L. BRIGEL, NEW YORK  
 BILL DELAHUNT, MASSACHUSETTS  
 GREGORY W. MEERS, NEW YORK  
 DAVID E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA  
 RUSSELL GARNAHAN, MISSOURI  
 ALEXIS STRES, NEW JERSEY  
 GERALD E. CONNOLLY, VIRGINIA  
 MICHAEL J. McCARROLL, NEW YORK  
 JOHN S. TANNER, TEXAS  
 GINGER SHERB, TEXAS  
 LYNN WOODBERRY, CALIFORNIA  
 SHEILA JACKSON LEE, TEXAS  
 BARBARA LEE, CALIFORNIA  
 SHELLEY BENNETT, NEW YORK  
 JOSEPH CIRINCIONE, NEW YORK  
 MIKE ROSS, ARIZONA  
 BRAD MILLES, NEW YORK  
 DAVID SCOTT, GEORGIA  
 MIK COSTA, CALIFORNIA  
 KEITH ELLISON, MISSOURI  
 GAVRIELLE GIFFORDS, ARIZONA  
 RON KLEN, FLORIDA  
 VACANCY

RICHARD J. KESSLER  
 Staff Director

DOUGLAS J. CAMPBELL  
 Deputy Staff Director

SARAH HARTZ  
 General Counsel

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS  
**CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES**  
 COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
 WASHINGTON, DC 20515

TELEPHONE: (202) 225-5021  
 HTTP://WWW.FOREIGNAFFAIRS.HOUSE.GOV/

February 3, 2010

ILEANA RODRIGUEZ, FLORIDA  
 KENNETH R. CLAYTON, MISSOURI

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, NEW JERSEY  
 DAN BURTON, INDIANA  
 ELTON GALLEGLY, CALIFORNIA  
 DAN Rostenkowski, CALIFORNIA  
 DONALD A. MANZULLO, ILLINOIS  
 EDWARD R. ROYCE, CALIFORNIA  
 RON PAUL, TEXAS  
 JEFF FLAKE, ARIZONA  
 KINGSPECIE, ILLINOIS  
 JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
 JOHN BOGDANSKI, ARIZONA  
 J. GREGG BARRETT, SOUTH CAROLINA  
 CONNOR BACK, FLORIDA  
 JEFF FORTENBERRY, INDIANA  
 MICHAEL T. ANCAUL, TEXAS  
 TED POE, TEXAS  
 BOENIGLIS, CALIFORNIA  
 GUEM BLUMBERG, VIRGINIA

YIENH D.S. POBLETE  
 RENEGOTIATION DIRECTOR

MARK C. DAGE  
 R. H. FREDERICKS, DIRECTOR  
 DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
 DOUGLAS C. ANDERSON  
 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**America and the Iranian Political Reform Movement: First, Do No Harm**  
**House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia**  
**Rep. Gary L. Ackerman, Chairman**

Americans are not very good at sitting still. Patience is not our strong suit and historically, it's not been a very prominent feature of our national character. The terms that describe us best most often reflect our restless impatience for progress; our natural inclination for pragmatism, and our deeply ingrained tendency to focus most of all on getting the job done.

In foreign affairs, however, the world offers few situations that lend themselves to neat, quick or simple solutions. It's not that Americans are incapable of patience. We can rise to the challenge when necessary, and especially when the alternatives offer little hope of success.

Following the Second World War, a forty year Cold War was not America's first choice for a foreign policy. But the alternatives to slow, grinding, vigilant containment of the Soviet Union, when honestly examined, led both Democratic and Republican administrations right back to containment. Some with more diplomacy, some with more pressure, but all with the same deadly serious goal of preventing the expansion of Soviet dominion, and all committed to the eventual collapse of the Communist system under the weight of its own failure and fallacies.

Iran, as I have stated in other hearings, is not the Soviet Union. By every measure of size, wealth, capability and influence, it is a vastly smaller though still dangerous challenge. And I would respectfully suggest that though the temptation is strong, reasoning in the Middle East by historical analogy in Europe is an invitation to disaster.

Nevertheless, the situation in Iran today does resonate powerfully with Americans, recalling memories of the late 1980s and the collapse of Communism. Again, a long policy of containment appears to be on the cusp of an unexpected but remarkable success, borne on the backs of oppressed people, struggling to be free from a vicious, brutal, ideological regime.



Moreover, there is a chance that this wholly indigenous movement, by virtue of its own success, and entirely for its own reasons, could bring about an incredibly positive shift in the global security environment.

I don't think any one believes the current leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran will go quietly or easily into retirement. And I think it would be foolish to assume that a reformed Iranian government would automatically be very friendly to the United States, or be less committed to the pursuit of its own national interests. But there is good reason to think that a different Iranian government, one that was truly answerable to the aspirations of the Iranian people, would transform the politics of the Middle East, dramatically change the global struggle against violent Islamic extremism and, potentially, salvage the global non-proliferation regime.

With stakes of this scale, American minds, my own included, begin to race ahead: How can we help? How can we support the Green Movement? How can we help accelerate the demise of this awful and irresponsible regime? And so on.

The most essential thing, I think, is to be patient—not passive and not indifferent—but instead of heeding the inner voice that yells, “Don't just stand there! Do something!” we need to turn this impulse on its head. Rather than just doing something, we need to stop and think things through.

Even if there was not a painful history of American intervention in Iranian affairs, and even if the Iranian regime was not desperate to smear its domestic opponents as American lackeys and spies, we should, at the very least, have some humility about the ability of our government to competently shape highly politicized and dynamic events in other nations. I would submit as proof the previous decade.

It seems to me that our first obligation is “to do no harm.” And our second obligation is to recognize that we are not a doctor, and Iran is not a patient. Iran is a sovereign state whose people are struggling bravely for their own freedom. It is natural and right for us to want to support their struggle. The question is how?

I would suggest that we start with a healthy amount skepticism about our ability to shape political developments in other countries, and a firm respect for the sovereignty and independence of Iran. With these caveats, I believe there are some important things that we can and should do; all of which can be done publicly and outside of Iran.

First, I think it essential that the President and the Secretary of State continue to regularly comment on the situation in Iran. I think the President's inclusion of Iran in his State of the Union address was very important. And I would want to highlight the very strong remarks made by Secretary Clinton following the regime's violence against protesters during the observance of Ashura in December of last year.

Second, I think the White House and the State Department in their daily briefings should draw attention to events in Iran as they occur, and make clear the views of the United States when there is violence or reports of severe violations of human rights.

Third, the United States, along with other nations that are actually committed to international human rights, should press within the United Nations the issue of Iran's repression of its own people; if possible in the Security Council, and at least within the Third Committee and in the Human Rights Council. Every nation should be given the chance to stand with the people of Iran.

Finally, I am convinced that the United States must continue to work with our international partners to apply sanctions to the government of Iran for its defiance of UN Security Council resolutions and for its violations of its IAEA safeguards agreement. Both the House and Senate have passed gasoline sanctions and I look forward to working with the Obama Administration to find a way forward on this legislation. Our goal must be to ensure the maximum impact on the Iranian government with the minimum harm to our diplomatic efforts and to the people of Iran who are struggling for their freedom. What I hold to be essential is that we must act, and that we must act in concert with others if at all possible. The Iranian regime is facing pressure from within unlike anything it's ever felt. To the extent that we can heighten that pressure by political and economic sanctions, I believe we are absolutely bound to do so.

###

Mr. ACKERMAN. I would like to call on my distinguished partner in these hearings, the ranking member, the distinguished gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. You know, when you say those nice things, I always wish, Mr. Chairman, my wife was here to hear it, she doesn't appreciate me that much. Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening today's hearing regarding the growing political opposition movement in Iran and what this movement might mean for U.S. relations with Iran in general, and specifically in our efforts to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

On June the 12th, 2009, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was ostensibly reelected to his second term as President of Iran. Within 48 hours of Iranian officials announcing his landslide 62.6 percent victory in what outside observers widely expected to be a close contest, Tehran and other cities throughout the country were overwhelmed with protesters in response to what the people of Iran knew to be a rigged election.

The immediate response by the Obama administration was, in my opinion, weak. In a statement released to the media, the President said he was "deeply troubled by the violence that I have seen and been seeing on television." He went on to say, "I can't state definitively one way or another what happened with respect to the election, but what I can say is that there appears to be a sense on the part of the people who were so hopeful and so engaged and so committed to democracy who now feel betrayed."

This, in my opinion, was a tepid and half-hearted endorsement of freedom in Iran, whereas the President should have immediately and forcefully denounced a sham election, indicated U.S. support for the demonstrators, and called on other nations to do the same. Furthermore, he should have used the crisis to rally additional international support for sanctions aimed at stopping Iran's quest for nuclear weapons. Instead, the administration, naive in my opinion in its policy of engagement with Iran, more than likely squandered the chance for real political change from within by failing to speak out against a regime's brutal oppression of its people when it mattered the most.

There are some, as evidenced in the title of this hearing, "First, Do No Harm," who believe the President was right to be measured in his response to the crisis, believing that an excessive degree of interventionism from the United States would have backfired and hardened Tehran's determination not to negotiate with the United States and the international community over its nuclear program. Again, I believe this reasoning is flawed because Tehran has never wavered in its nuclear ambition.

A year has now passed since the President first reached out to Iran in a bid to engage the regime. In this time, Iran has responded to President Obama's open hand by continually and continuing to defiantly maintain its uranium enrichment program, calling for the destruction of Israel, pursuing long range missile weaponry, working to destabilize the peace process in the region, and supplying weapons to terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas.

Iran has no interest in resolving the dispute over its nuclear program, and has skillfully outmaneuvered the Obama administration

into giving the regime 1 more year to go get closer to acquiring an atomic bomb. The administration may finally be getting wise to Iran's diplomatic shell game. As we speak, the United States is dispatching patriot defensive missiles to four Persian Gulf countries—Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait—and moving U.S. war ships into the gulf which are capable of shooting down Iranian missiles.

In addition, the President's Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, is preparing a new sanctions resolution, the fourth in 4 years, for the United Nations Security Council to consider. And finally, the Congressional leadership has also lifted its block on the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act as it recently passed both the House and Senate. And, Mr. Chairman, I hope we will talk to the chairman of the full committee and make sure we get this bill through Congress as quickly as possible and send it to the President without further delay.

Unfortunately, the President's timing with regards to Iran seems wrought with irony. As he begins to finally close his open hand into a fist, we see that the regime that never once attempted to unclench its own fist now seems to be gaining back its footing. I more than anyone hope for the sake of national and regional security and for the sake of the people of Iran that we have not done too little too late. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. You are very welcome. And a copy of my remarks will be sent to your wife.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Ellison.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chair, are these my opening remarks or my questions?

Mr. ACKERMAN. Your opening remarks, and we will have your questions after your opening remarks.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, Mr. Chairman, let me thank you for this hearing. I think that it is extremely well timed and well titled. I think we should be trying to learn more about how we can help improve the well being of the people of Iran without exacerbating any problems that may be existing. For me, I think we should avoid a ham-handed meat cleaver approach, and I think we should use all deliberate information to be as most skillful and effective as we can.

I think it is important that we have signal and are beginning to broaden our portfolio and demonstrate not only that we are concerned about nuclear proliferation but that we are also concerned about the welfare and human rights and other people of Iran. And so I am glad that we have embarked on this path, and I think it is very important that we do so. I will say that, you know, the United States and Iran have a long history. We have a very long history and it is complicated, and the fact is that those of us in the United States don't know nearly enough about it.

But some of the things that have happened in the course of this relationship people in Iran are very painfully aware of. And so it is important that we put a premium on effectiveness and that we build a international consensus as President Obama's overtures have begun to do, and that we act decisively to protect the world from nuclear proliferation and equally promote the civil and human

rights and well being of the people of Iran, who have a long, long, long history of creativity and contributions to the entire world. So with that, I thank you again, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing. I want to identify myself with Mr. Burton's remarks, I am very skeptical that our President has had a policy that will in some way take advantage of the opportunity we have in Iran. I think that what the President has been doing unfortunately has actually hindered the efforts of the free people of Iran from achieving their goal, which is a mutual goal we should have, which is displacing this repressive mullah regime that threatens the peace of the world but also threatens each and every one of their families in Iran.

Let me just note that I agree with the chairman that change is absolutely necessary in that region for all of our sake. But what I would disagree with, Mr. Chairman, is your call for patience. The time for patience is over, it is long over. We should have been engaged in a very active way a long time ago. And we have had plenty of time to think about what our strategy is. Let us just note that containment did not end the Cold War. Mr. Chairman, I respectfully disagree with your assessment.

Containment didn't end the Cold War. Had we continued with a containment strategy, the Soviet Union would still exist, it would still have all its missiles aimed at us, and the world would be a lot less safe. Ronald Reagan initiated a plan, a strategy, of rolling back the Communist world, rolling them back by supporting those elements within those Communist countries which would fight tyranny in their countries and thus accomplish the goal that was mutually beneficial to all free people, which is expanding the realm of freedom and displacing antidemocratic tyrants which then were in charge of the Soviet Union.

We should have been doing the same with the people of Iran all of these years, not just this administration but the last administration. The people of Iran should have not only unequivocally known that we were on their side, but that we have actually provided them with the resources that they need to succeed. A solidarity movement in Poland didn't just emerge out of nowhere. We helped the solidarity movement, we helped the mujahedin, we helped the Contras, we helped those fighting the Cuban mercenaries in Africa. And the bottom line is, Communism did disintegrate, but that was not containment.

We have contained radical elements in Iran for too long. Containing them in power will lead us to a more dangerous world. We should have an offensive strategy aimed at helping the freedom loving people of Iran who are our greatest allies. We should do it overtly if necessary. We must side with the oppressed people in order to fight the oppressor, and that will make it a more peaceful world and a more successful strategy.

I appreciate you holding this hearing so this type of discussion can go on between us and these expert witnesses, and perhaps we can send a message today to those brave people on the streets of Tehran who are putting their lives on the line to stand up for their

own freedom and democracy. We are on their side, no if or buts about it, we are on their side and opposed to the mullah regime. It is time for the mullahs to go back to the mosque.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Appreciate the gentleman's support for separation of mosque and state, and I do appreciate your conclusions, but I am reluctant to turn the hearing into a debate over which President has had more patience, those who had 8 years of patience including President Reagan and 8 years of patience with President Bush without actually doing anything provocative, and I don't know that we now have to run out of patience after 1 year. But let us commit to work together to try to encourage the things that we want to see accomplished by our country, because our failure to do so is not our President's failure but our nation's failure. Now Mr. Green.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I would like to associate myself with those more recent remarks, because there have been many Presidents of both parties since the 1940s who opposed Communism in lots of different ways, and it just so happened in 1989 under the first President Bush's watch that system came down after many, many years. But, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this hearing today and I would like to welcome our distinguished panel to the subcommittee.

Since last summer the political tension in Iran has continued to capture the international community's attention. Today we are here to discuss what the U.S. role should be as the green movement continues to make its presence known. The Obama administration is reportedly debating whether to deemphasize or abandon outright engagement efforts with Iran and help the green movement. Therefore, do you think these protests offer an opportunity for the U.S. Government to ramp up its democracy promotion efforts or should we step back and let them address it internally?

Are we correct in even viewing the reform movement as significant? I remember the 1990s when Iranian leaders entered office with strong support from various pro-reform constituencies, yet despite that public support for reform, the Supreme Leader and key conservative allies successfully limited their ability to carry out the reforms by tying up the key legislations and the appointed legislative review bodies and used their control over the key oversight bodies to shape the election outcomes. It wasn't necessarily in the streets it was being shaped, it was actually in the government. Therefore I am interested in our panel's assessment for the prospects of the opposition to bring on major changes.

Is the violent crackdown on the opposition a sign that the current government is weak? That is another question. And if the green movement is ultimately successful in acquiring a leadership position or even concessions from the current government, how would such an outcome affect Iran's foreign and nuclear policies and therefore our interest in the Middle East? As a strong supporter of H.R. 2194 The Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act, I am interested in whether our panel believes these sanctions are consistent with the goals of the opposition movement. And, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate their testimony, I yield back my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Green. Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing today, and I welcome all of our distinguished panelists as well. Mr. Chairman, as we have spoken of many times, I believe that unless we improve our strategy the world is going to awake very soon to the headline that Iran has a nuclear bomb. For many years the United States and world powers have tried various tactics to halt the nuclear ambitions of Tehran's clerical elites. They have in essence litigated Iran's case in the National Security Council, they have imposed several rounds of economic sanctions, and they have tried to engage Iran with diplomacy, most recently with a deal that could have begun the long process of normalization of relations.

But through all of this, as we are very much aware, Iran's leaders have not blinked as they move closer and closer to the ability to make nuclear weapons on short notice. Tehran doubts the collective resolve of world powers. And it is not difficult to see why. European corporations continue to do business with Iran, Russia exploits the international rife over Iran's nuclear program for its own geopolitical gain, in maneuvering China seeks to profit. And this international deadlock over Iran's nuclear intransigence certainly seems bleak.

But in the last 6 months, Mr. Chairman, we have seen something fairly remarkable and something that has stunned the leaders in Iran, something that could help us eventually transcend these international deadlocks. In June, everyday Iranians started to take to the streets to protest the Presidential election's controversial outcome. In Tehran alone, crowds of demonstrators swelled up to the hundreds of thousands. These protests were nothing short of remarkable.

Indeed, Iran has not seen such demonstrations since 1979, the infamous year since the theocrats that reign in Tehran today first seized power. Iran's leaders were initially caught flat-footed by these protests, but they quickly mounted a counteroffensive, and over the following days and months Tehran's crackdown became ever more brutal. YouTube enabled the world to witness some of this brutality and the barbaric shooting in broad daylight of one female demonstrator whose name is now chanted by crowds.

News networks broadcast in real time the violent clashes between regime-sponsored militia and protesters. The international media reported the shocking slayings of opposition figures on the holy day of Ashura in late December. And among those who were killed was Ali Mousavi, a nephew of the man whom the opposition views as the rightful winner of the contested Presidential election. Yet the Iranian regime's escalating violence has seemed to embolden the Iranian people's resolve.

What started out as a series of protests quickly became something else, it became a movement. By year's end, demonstrators throughout Iran were calling not for a mere recount, they were challenging the legitimacy of Tehran's clerical authoritarian regime. While we in Washington focus, appropriately so, on a new round of sanctions, many Iranian people continue to risk their lives in the country's growing protest movement. They continue to brave the regime's fists, clubs, water hoses, and bullets to take to the street. They continue to defiantly hold signs and chant slogans, not

just in Farsi but in English, so that the whole world might know their call for dignity and justice.

With this growing mass protest movement, everyday Iranians have accomplished what sanctions and other forms of multilateral pressure aim to do, create the conditions for change in Tehran. Again, Mr. Chairman, while I support the new sanction, I believe it is time, and you alluded to this as well, for the White House and the Congress and the entire international community to elevate the Iranian people's struggle to the center of the world stage. The Iranian people deserve a more moderate, reasonable, and just government in Tehran, and the Iranian people may be the last and best hope for halting Iran's drive for nuclear weapons capability, and it may be the Iranian people who help avoid a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much. Mr. Crowley.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing from the expert witnesses this afternoon. And I would just add, I don't have an opening statement, but I don't think any human being who watches or listens to 24/7 news has missed at least in passing even what has taken place in Iran over the past year. Just some very moving, nonprofessional, everyday human beings, and they are capturing on either cell phones or iPods the images of brutality within the Ahmadinejad regime.

I also think we do disservice to that heroism by, at least from this side of the world, trying to cast blame, and I think time ought to be focused more on what can we do to make a difference, to let the Iranian people know that we are concerned about them? We know that their desire is to have a healthy, respectful relationship with the West, and particularly with the United States, and that there are people suffering in that country today because of radicalism and fundamentalism. And whatever we can do to help change that is what I think the focus ought to be.

And respectfully say to my colleagues, I have been moved by it, and what these people go through, the bravery that has been demonstrated, by those who are on trial today even for their protest, is remarkable and something that every American ought to be made aware of. So, Mr. Chairman, with that, I don't want to go on any more than I have, I am interested in hearing the testimony of your witnesses. And with that I will yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much. Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A big problem we have is that the Obama administration seems to act as if the June election in Iran never happened. Not long ago, an Iran expert noted that the administration views the democratic movement inside Iran, to use his words, "as a wrench in the works of nuclear negotiations." I think that there is an inability here to see things as they are right now in Iran.

After the brutal crackdown on the religious holiday of Ashura, the President did speak out somewhat more forcibly. I will grant that. With oppositionists denouncing the Supreme Leader by name and demanding the dismantling of the Islamic regime, he didn't have much choice at that point. Indeed, we will hear testimony today that "even staunch conservatives and hardline clerics have



now joined the opponents of Ahmadinejad.” We will also hear that the “sanctity around Supreme Leader Khamenei has been shattered.”

Despite some rhetoric on human rights in Iran, the Obama administration hasn’t committed the needed resources to creatively encourage change. There is no full throttle support for the Iranian democracy movement in the budget that landed in Congress this week. Instead, the administration seems intent on a regime-centered approach. But I would ask this, which is more likely, what is the more likely thing we will see, a verifiable nuclear deal with the current regime, or the opposition movement’s success?

The regime in Iran probably doesn’t fear another round of “least common denominator” U.N. sanctions, and that is increasingly what these are being termed. But it is downright paranoid, that regime in Iran is downright paranoid, of a color revolution. It is paranoid of the feelings of the people in Iran that we have seen expressed on the street. Next week on February 11th, large protests are being planned to coincide with the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

The year that the people of Iran as we watch internationally and the media that is broadcast out of Iran, they seem to indicate to us that if past protests are a guide, many in the street will be asking again whether President Obama is “with them or against them.” I hope he is ready to clarify that answer to that question, because to be on the right side of history is to be speaking out forcefully for the people who are taking these risks and going to the streets in Iran. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Costa.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this important hearing today, I am looking forward to the witnesses. I will be brief. I think that the administration does need to voice in a stronger fashion their support for what is being heard around the world as these Iranians take tremendous risks of their own lives and their families’ lives to protest the outrage in the election that was circumvented, the results that were circumvented last year.

Clearly there is nothing more powerful than those within the country that are being oppressed and are reacting to that oppression. I will be looking for the witnesses to in their testimony let us get a better sense of how widespread that is, and how it is impacting what has been the formal opposition as well as the informal opposition to the current regime, and how it deals with the ruling body and what sense you have as to the debate and the turmoil that may be taking place within that structured element of the regime.

So it just seems to me that there is an opportunity to not just focus on sanctions, which sadly have not seemed to have much effect at this time, and we know where this regime is headed if left to their own devices. So it seems to me that this is a time to recalibrate the efforts that took place last year that have not been successful and to focus on taking advantage of the opportunities that are now before us, and I would like the witnesses to tell us what you think those opportunities are. So with that said, I will yield the balance of my time and look forward to the witnesses.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much. I will now introduce our witnesses. Mehdi Khalaji is a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Mr. Khalaji focuses on Iranian politics and the politics of Shia groups in the Middle East. From 1986 to 2000, Mr. Khalaji trained in the Seminaries of Qom studying theology and jurisprudence and earned his doctorate researching intellectual and philosophical political developments in Iran and the wider Islamic and Western worlds. Mr. Khalaji pursued a career in journalism at two Iranian publications, then working for BBC Persian as a political analyst of Iranian affairs, and eventually becoming a broadcaster for Radio Farda.

Geneive Abdo is a foreign policy fellow and director of the Iran Program at the Century Foundation. Prior to joining the Century Foundation Ms. Abdo, was the Liaison Officer for the Alliance for Civilizations, a U.N. initiative under then Secretary General Kofi Annan. Prior to her tenure with the U.N., Ms. Abdo spent 20 years as a foreign correspondent for The Guardian, The Economist, The Dallas Morning News, and Reuters, and has contributed to many other publications focusing on the Middle East and the Muslim world.

Fariborz Ghadar is a distinguished scholar and senior advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Dr. Ghadar is a professor and founding director for the Center of Global Business Studies at Penn State University. During his career he has focused on global business, economics and finance, and has worked as an investment banker at the World Bank. He has been a consultant to a score of businesses and governments, but served last in government as a Vice Minister in the Shah of Iran's Government.

Finally, Scott Carpenter is the Keston Family fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and director of Project Fikra, which focuses on empowering Arab democrats—that is with a small “d”—in their struggle against extremism. From 2004 to 2007, Mr. Carpenter served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and in 2006 was named Coordinator for the State Department's Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative. Mr. Carpenter also served in the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, and before coming to the State Department at the International Republican—that is with a capital “R”—Institute.

Without objection, each of our witnesses' full statements will be entered into the record, and I would ask you each to summarize your testimony in about 5 minutes. The lights are in front of you, and we can move directly to questions after each of our witnesses presents their testimony to us. Thank you very much, we will begin with Mr. Khalaji. Press the button on your microphone and move it a little bit closer, if you would.

**STATEMENT OF MR. MEHDI KHALAJI, SENIOR FELLOW, THE  
WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY**

Mr. KHALAJI. Yes. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Mr. Burton, and members of the subcommittee, thank you very much for having me here and giving me this opportunity to testify before you. The current democratic movement in Iran, which began after the big Presidential election in June 2009 is a nonviolent movement which

aims to rely on itself without asking for foreign help. The people involved in this movement believe that democracy is not a gift that can be received by others, but rather an internal effort of a people to emancipate itself from tyranny and realize its dream of justice, freedom, and national sovereignty.

The Iranian people appreciate President Barak Obama's policy of not intervening in Iranian political affairs and allowing them to manage their way toward democracy. Therefore, any policy toward Iran should be chosen in a prudent and cautious way that would not affect the democratic movement in a negative manner. My experience with political activists who are involved in the green movement is that they do not expect any direct help from the United States or any other foreign power, but a close look at the Iranian situation reveals that in this specifically historical moment, the interest of the international community and the democratic interest of Iranians are in confluence.

To be sure, the focus of international community is on the Iranian nuclear program, while the main preoccupation of Iranian people is securing basic political and human rights and integrating the country into the international community. However, peace in the region and democracy in Iran now seem to be inseparable because the same forces that threaten the peace are the same powers in Iran who threaten democracy and run the repressive machinery against the Iranian people.

The threat to regional peace and Iranian democracy are the same: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp, IRGC. IRGC is not only the main body in charge of the Iranian nuclear program, but also is the most effective means for political suppression in the hands of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's leader and commander in chief. The Islamic Republic is nothing but an economic-religious-military complex that applies its coercive power not through political institutions but through a military and security apparatus under the direct supervision of Ayatollah Khamenei.

His religious authority is contested by clerical establishment. The only power base he has is within the military and security community of the country. Khamenei has lost much of his political and religious legitimacy, and without the military, and especially IRGC, he would have no real power. Since coming to power, Ayatollah Khamenei has never given an interview to the media. He does not feel any sense of responsibility to the people, driving his power from Iran's oil income.

In practice, he is accountable before nobody despite the constitutional provision for an assembly of experts to supervise his leadership. Because he bids who can run for this assembly, he directly controls dozens of foundations that own some of the wealthiest companies in Iran and is not accountable before the Parliament or the government. The IRGC, whose commanders he appoints, and its affiliates control one third of Iran's national income, dominating construction, oil field services, and telecommunications among other industries.

In order to stop Iran's suspicious nuclear activities, the international community needs to apply pressure on the IRGC, which not only threatens the region through a suspicious nuclear program but is using the Quds force as symmetrical warfare and support for

extremist groups to try to weaken Sunni allies of the United States and sabotage the Arab-Israeli peace process and the budding democratic process in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Democracy and peace can be achieved through weakening the military government in Tehran and pressuring the IRGC. The two parallel tracks, the international community's effort for peace and the Iranian people's democratic movement, naturally reinforce each other because they fight with the same enemy. Therefore, the main mechanism for supporting the democratic movement in Iran is to target the financial and military capability of IRGC.

Mr. ACKERMAN. If you can begin to sum up.

Mr. KHALAJI. Yes. A more powerful IRGC would result in a more militarized government, and a more militarized government is more likely to militarize the nuclear program for dangerous purposes. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Khalaji follows:]

## United States House of Representatives

## Committee on Foreign Affairs

Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia

GARY L. ACKERMAN (D-NY), CHAIRMAN

America and the Iranian Political Reform Movement:  
First, Do No Harm

February 3, 2010

Testimony of Mehdi Khalaji

Senior Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy

The current democratic movement in Iran, which began after the rigged presidential election in June 2009, is a non-violent movement which aims to rely on itself without asking for foreign help. The people involved in this movement believe that democracy is not a gift that can be received by others, but rather an internal effort of a people to emancipate itself from tyranny and realize its dream of justice, freedom and national sovereignty. The Iranian people appreciate President Barak Obama's policy of not intervening in Iranian political affairs and allowing them to manage their way toward democracy. Therefore, any policy toward Iran should be chosen in a prudent and cautious way that would not affect the democratic movement in a negative manner.

My experience with political activists who are involved in the Green movement is that they do not expect any direct help from the United States or any other foreign power. But a close look at the Iranian situation reveals that in this specific historical moment the interest of the international community and the democratic interests of Iranians are in confluence. To be sure, the focus of the international community is on the Iranian nuclear program, while the main preoccupation of the Iranian people is securing basic political and human rights and integrating the country into the international community. However, peace in the region and democracy in Iran now seem to be inseparable, because the same forces that threaten the peace are the same powers in Iran who threaten democracy and run the repressive machinery against the Iranian people.

The threat to regional peace and Iranian democracy are the same: the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The IRGC is not only the main body in charge of the Iranian nuclear program, but also is the most effective means for political suppression in the hands of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's leader and commander-in-chief. The Islamic Republic is nothing but an economic-religious-military complex that applies its coercive power not through political institutions but through a military and security apparatus under the direct supervision of Ayatollah Khamenei. His religious authority is contested by the clerical establishment. The only power base he has is within the military and security community of the country. Khamenei has lost much of his political and religious legitimacy and without the military and especially the IRGC, he would have no real power.

Since coming to power, Ayatollah Khamenei has never given an interview to the media. He does not feel any sense of responsibility to the people, deriving his power from Iran's oil income. In practice, he is accountable before nobody, despite the constitutional provision for an Assembly of Experts to supervise his leadership, because he vets who can run for that Assembly. He directly controls dozens of foundations that own some of the wealthiest companies in Iran and is not accountable before the parliament or the government. And the IRGC – whose commanders he appoints –

and its affiliates control one third of Iran's national income, dominating construction, oil field services, and telecommunications, among other industries.

In order to stop Iran's suspicious nuclear activities, the international community needs to apply pressure on the IRGC, which not only threatens the region through a suspicious nuclear program, but is using the Quds force, asymmetrical warfare, and support for extremist groups to try to weaken Sunni allies of the West and sabotage the Arab-Israeli peace process and the budding democratic process in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Democracy and peace can be achieved through weakening the military government in Tehran and pressuring the IRGC. The two parallel tracks – the international community's effort for peace and the Iranian people's democratic movement – naturally reinforce each other, because they fight with the same enemy. Therefore, the main mechanism for supporting the democratic movement in Iran is to target the financial and military capabilities of the IRGC. A more powerful IRGC will result in a more militarized government, and a more militarized government is more likely to militarize the nuclear program for dangerous purposes. The real change in Iran is not a formal shift in the façade of the political structure. The change happens when civilians who think of Iran's national interest rather than ideological ambitions take power and push the fundamentalist military out of the economic and political spheres.

Another important step the West can take to help the democratic movement is to help Iranians connect with the outside world. Khamenei often expresses his belief that he is in a soft war with the West. For him, all new telecommunication, internet and satellite technology are western tools to defeat him in this war. All bloggers, human rights and female activists, artists and writers, journalists and students -- even clerics who criticize him -- are un-paid western soldiers in this war. Even the teaching of humanities is a part of the western soft-war arsenal, which is why he has suggested closing all university humanities departments. The Iranian regime annually spends billions of dollars to jam TV and radio transmissions, filter the internet, censor all Western-cultural products, listen in on phone conversation, and interrogate artists, writers and university professors who travel to the West for cultural festivals or conferences. Khamenei cannot govern in an Iran opened to the world. He prefers to govern a large prison-like Iran in which Iranians are disconnected from the world outside.

Putting cracks in the wall of this prison -- opening Iran to the world -- would be a great help to the democratic movement in Iran. The United States has made many efforts in this regard but still could do more. The major internet companies in the West could work with activists to find ways to bypass Iran's internet censors. Companies that provide Iran with the technology of surveillance and suppression should be named and shamed; consumers should shy away from these companies' products, and governments should urge these companies to reconsider their practices. Iran should not be able to use modern technology for fundamentalist and totalitarian purposes. It is outrageous that Iranian state television is allowed to transmit on the EUTELSAT Hotbird satellites (run by France) when Iranian jamming of Hotbird satellites has been so powerful that other customers demanded that EUTELSAT kick the BBC and VOA off the satellites -- which to its shame EUTELSAT did -- before later adding these services back. Iran's violation of its international commitments about not interfering with satellite transmissions should be vigorously pursued at the International Telecommunications Union. As a customer through its role with the VOA, the U.S. government should demand EUTELSAT throw Iranian state television off Hotbird, not VOA. New measures and mechanisms are needed to stop Iran from breaking international law.

Furthermore, because Iran's leaders are afraid of any contact between Iranians and the world outside, the international community, including European countries and the United States, should facilitate the visa process for ordinary Iranian citizens so that they can readily travel abroad. Direct contact between Iranians and the rest of the world is an important tool for dismantling the regime's propaganda against Western liberal democratic values, and is a major antidote to reactionary anti-Americanism and anti-Western sentiments.

And finally the U.S. should make a distinction between human rights issues and democracy. The Iranian people need the international community's support on human rights. Many officials who are involved in human rights abuses are affiliated with the IRGC and close to the team that run the nuclear program. For instance, General Mohammad Reza Naqdi is the commander of the Basij militia and also in the U.N. black list. 12 years ago, he was convicted in a Tehran

court to three months prison for his involvement in torture of prisoners. He was also involved in crackdowns on students during the student movement a decade ago. Human rights are abused mostly by IRGC and security officers involved in the nuclear program. Therefore, supporting human rights in Iran and pressuring its violators is not only a moral cause, but should be a strategic long-term policy for the United States. The Iranian people, under a democratic government, can be a reliable partner for building regional peace in the Middle East and an example for other Islamic countries in their path toward democracy.

**Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Ms. Abdo.**

**STATEMENT OF MS. GENEIVE ABDO, DIRECTOR, IRAN  
PROGRAM, THE CENTURY FOUNDATION**

Ms. ABDO. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am extremely honored to have this opportunity to discuss the opposition movement in Iran with you and policy approaches the United States could take in order to encourage the opposition movement. My perspective is based upon my first hand experience with Iran's leaders and civil society when I worked in Tehran as a correspondent for The Guardian newspaper from 1998 to 2001.

The opposition protests have become an ever present force in Iranian politics. It is apparent from the recent demonstrations in December that the protesters have become more determined and more radicalized. Perhaps the most significant outcome of the protest movement is that the sanctity around Supreme Leader Khamenei has been shattered. He no longer is respected as a powerful political authority, nor is he considered a religious leader with divine attributes.

Moreover, the concept of supreme clerical rule, viewed by many now as a form of government that inevitably leads to despotism, should be abolished. It is clear now that a country which once aspired to be an Islamic state and a republic cannot withstand all power concentrated in the hands of one Ayatollah. As a result, in the eyes of many Iranians, the Islamic Republic of Iran is no longer an Islamic state or a republic.

Seven months after the Presidential election, it is impossible to determine the outcome of this conflict. However, in the short term it is safe to assume that the state will prevail through the use of excessive force and violence, particularly through the Islamic Revolutionary Guards. The strength of the opposition movement for this reason is of supreme importance now, and the United States' action and assistance to this movement is extremely important.

A strong opposition movement provides the West with leverage against the regime. For these reasons and many others, it is important for the United States to assist those people as part of this movement who are trying to reform the system, even if a reform state still means that a theocracy remains in power. So who is the opposition movement? The movement is not restricted only to street protesters. Increasingly the opposition is gaining the support of traditional and religious Iranians, and this is very important, who have historically supported the hardliners around Supreme Leader Khamenei.

A groundbreaking survey was recently published that provides evidence of this complete defection of the traditional base that once supported President Ahmadinejad. Many Iranians living in the provinces, which had been the base of his support, now are part of the opposition movement. Another important feature of this movement today is that it has abandoned the ideological underpinnings of the Islamic Revolution. They no longer believe in an Islamic state, at least that part of the movement that is the younger generation.

Perhaps this is only the minority of the movement, we don't know, it is difficult to assess the percentages. However, the opposition generally is effectively depriving the regime of its revolu-

tionary ideology, and this is something that the United States could certainly exploit. So regarding the expectations that the opposition movement has from the United States, I have made a short list. One of the primary, I think, avenues that the opposition thinks that the United States could take would be toward highlighting the human rights violations through the United Nations.

The United States could pressure Iran's regime on its abysmal human rights record somehow through the United Nations if not through the Human Rights Commission that is part of the U.N. The opposition believes that a U.N. tribunal could investigate the torture and killings of demonstrators and other dissidents. This would highlight their abysmal human rights record before the international community, but more importantly it could cause a lot of Iranians inside Iran who now still support the system to understand that the Islamic Republic is no longer behaving as an Islamic state.

The opposition movement is dependent upon the Internet and social networking in order to communicate with Iranians inside and outside the country and to organize protests. Oppositionists want the United States to provide technical assistance to run and maintain anti-government Web sites, and also enable them to communicate when the regime blocks Internet sites and social networks. They want, for example, anti-filtering software that would be immune to government interference.

The United States also should pressure foreign telecommunications firms not to sell telecommunications technology to Iran and to refuse to ship technology that has already been purchased. The opposition also believes that the United States should signal to Tehran that Washington does not recognize the legitimacy of President Ahmadinejad's administration due to the rigged election.

Mr. ACKERMAN. If you could begin to wrap up.

Ms. ABDO. Okay, thank you. Activists and NGOs, such as Women and the Million Signature campaign, whose members have been arrested and interrogated, believe that they would benefit from the opportunity to network with other NGOs from the region and from the United States. They believe that such workshops and training could help them develop their strategies inside the country. In conclusion, the green movement is not searching for grand gestures from the United States. However, modest steps, particularly those that would address the lack of human rights and the absence of political liberalization would give the opposition more legitimacy in Iranian society. This kind of assistance, they believe, could come from the United States. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Abdo follows:]



Testimony Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives

February 3, 2010

Geneive Abdo, Director, Iran Program  
The Century Foundation

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am extremely honored to have this opportunity to discuss the opposition movement in Iran and the policy approaches the United States could take in order to encourage proponents of democratic reform. My perspective is based upon my first-hand experience with Iran's leaders and civil society when I worked in Tehran as the correspondent for the *Guardian* newspaper, from 1998—2001, and the last decade of research and writing about Iran.

The fragmentation within the corridors of power in Iran—even staunch conservatives and hard-line clerics have now joined the opponents of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei—is unprecedented in the country's post-revolutionary history. Even political elites who helped establish the Islamic republic have joined the Green Movement and now stand in opposition to the state. The opposition protests have become an ever-present force in Iranian politics. It is apparent from the recent demonstrations in December that the protestors have become more determined, more violent, and willing to risk their lives for change. Perhaps the most significant outcome of the protest movement is that the sanctity around Supreme Leader Khamenei has been shattered. He is no longer respected as a powerful political authority, nor is he considered a religious leader with divine attributes. Moreover, the concept of supreme clerical rule, *velayat faqih*, is viewed by many as a form of government that inevitably leads to despotism and should be abolished. It is clear now that a country which once aspired to be an Islamic state and a republic cannot withstand all power concentrated in the hands of one ayatollah. As a result, in the eyes of many Iranians, the Islamic Republic of Iran is no longer an Islamic state or a republic.

Iran is one of the few modern states to have undergone two revolutions over the span of less than a century. For reasons historians might identify in the future, a rigged election set in motion unprecedented unrest on the streets and fragmentation within the regime, all of which lends great optimism to the potential for significant political reform. The persistent street demonstrations and the expanding demands of the opposition movement can be neither crushed nor ignored. What began as a predominantly urban, middle class movement with a central grievance of a rigged election has evolved into a movement of diverse social classes and numerous generations, even though young people comprise most of the movement. While many in the opposition do not advocate regime change, many do want to change the political system.

The intensive rivalry for power among competing factions inside Iran's government cannot be overestimated. The hard-liners around President Ahmadinejad and Supreme

Leader Khamenei believe that they are in a fight not only for their own survival, but for the preservation of the principle of *velayat faqih*. On the other side of the political spectrum, the opposition and its leadership also are divided. Increasingly, the symbolic leaders of the Green Movement, including former President Mohammad Khatami, Mir Hossein Moussavi, and Mehdi Karroubi, are distancing themselves from the portion of the movement that is becoming radicalized.

Seven months after the presidential election, it is impossible to determine the outcome of these conflicts. However, in the short term it is safe to assume that the state will prevail through the use of excessive force and violence. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the militias they control are loyal to President Ahmadinejad and Leader Khamenei, and it is unlikely this loyalty will end in the near future. With the IRGC's control over politics and the economy, Iran appears headed for becoming a military dictatorship. Therefore, the strength of the opposition movement could have a significant impact on the degree of change, if any, to the political system. A strong opposition movement also provides the West with leverage against the regime. For these reasons and many others, it is important for the United States to assist those risking their lives for a more democratic Iran, even if this reformed state remains a theocracy.

### **The Opposition Movement**

The leaders of the opposition are not President Mohammad Khatami, Mir Hossein Moussavi, or Mehdi Karroubi; rather, they are women, students, human rights activists, and clerics. The movement also is not restricted only to street protestors, which in June numbered three million, according to Tehran's conservative mayor Muhammad Baqer Qalibaf. Increasingly, the opposition is gaining the support of religious and traditional Iranians who historically have supported Supreme Leader Khamenei and hard-liners, such as President Ahmadinejad. According to a groundbreaking survey, parts of which were published on the website [www.insideiran.org](http://www.insideiran.org), large percentages of Iranians living in villages in Fars and Isfahan provinces, once popular bases of support for Ahmadinejad, say that they wish they had not voted for him. The series of polls were conducted by scholars in Iran from August 2009 to December 2009. It is important to emphasize that, in such provinces, Iranians have benefited from President Ahmadinejad's economic policy of doling out stipends to the underprivileged and allocating funding to the provinces where they live precisely to keep his political base intact.

The diversity of the opposition is a stark contrast to the movement of ten years ago, when Mohammad Khatami was president. During those years, the fleeting opposition was comprised mostly of young journalists and university students. Despite their attempts to broaden the movement, they failed. At the peak of protests in the summer of 1999, estimates of the turnout were in the tens of thousands, which is miniscule compared to the three million demonstrators in the summer of 2009.

Another important feature of the opposition today is that it has abandoned the ideological underpinnings of the Islamic Revolution. When I attended demonstrations ten years ago in Iran, as the correspondent for the *Guardian* newspaper, I often asked the students if

they wished to reform the existing state or dismantle the Islamic system. They always chose the former. Today, however, perhaps not the majority, but certainly some within the opposition would like to dissolve the Islamic system. This objective is what prompts them to condemn Ayatollah Khamenei publicly and stomp their feet over portraits of him, as they did for the first time in November, during a state-sponsored rally to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran. In addition, the opposition does not direct their ire at the United States; the familiar chants of “Down with America” have vanished from public discourse, at least within the opposition. In this way, the opposition effectively is depriving the regime of its revolutionary ideology, which has served to preserve what little legitimacy the state has left in the eyes of the people. And finally, the opposition is not a champion of either the rights of Palestinians or Muslims in general. The Islamic republic’s ideological ambition to defend the oppressed in the region against Western supremacy has no relevance for the opposition, which is narrowly focused on Iran’s domestic politics.

#### **Expectations Regarding the United States**

It is difficult to explain fully the overpowering presence the United States maintains in Iranian psychology, not only because the United States is the historical adversary of the Islamic republic, but also because it is considered the promised land for some of the Iranian people. For Iranians, the United States holds an omnipresent place in Iran’s history and is a major determinant of its fate. During less-tense times, when Iranians visited the United States, they often were confused as to why articles about Iran did not dominate the print media and television news, since so many stories in Iran focus on the United States. They believed Iran’s obsession with the United States was at least on par with Americans’ preoccupation with Iran. This psychology leads the oppositionists to believe that the United States—the world’s superpower that has been so intricately involved in Iran’s modern history—could aid them in significant ways.

At the same time, however, many dissidents are adamantly opposed to direct assistance from the United States and public endorsements of the opposition’s reform efforts, both of which would undoubtedly taint their cause and reaffirm the regime’s accusations. The regime continues to blame Western powers, particularly the United States, Great Britain, and Germany, for instigating the unrest and directing the opposition movement from abroad. While it can be assumed that a large part of the Iranian population does not believe the government’s propaganda, segments of society with access only to state-run media and no access to international media likely believe the regime’s explanations. The regime has used various intimidation strategies to discourage Iranians from accepting funding from the U.S. government or even foundations and think tanks in the United States. The Intelligence Ministry in January published a list of sixty foundations and research institutions that Iran claims are backed by Israel and the United States to foment a popular rebellion. Iranians are forbidden from having any association with these organizations, which include the Open Society Institute, the Ford Foundation, the National Endowment of Democracy, and the Woodrow Wilson Center. This threat already is having an effect; scholars in Tehran are now refusing invitations to attend conferences that are organized or funded by institutions on the government’s blacklist.

Despite disagreements within the opposition over the type of U.S. assistance, most agree that some form of support is vital to send a signal to the regime that the United States has not abandoned its basic foreign policy agenda favoring a more democratic Iran. This support could place the opposition in a position of eventually extracting compromises from the regime, particularly given the fact that the most likely scenario in the near future is neither another revolution nor an opposition movement in retreat. The most logical way forward for both sides is compromise, although at this point it is difficult to anticipate what that agreement might entail.

Even before the presidential election, talks were under way among reformists and pragmatic conservatives about establishing a national unity government. This idea resurfaced again in August, when former President Hashemi Rafsanjani proposed a unity plan. Now, we are hearing from reliable sources in Iran that leaders in the opposition and some in the regime are once again advancing this plan as a way out of the crisis.

In detailing the kind of assistance that the opposition would appreciate, I want to emphasize that my recommendations are based upon what opposition figures have said, either to me directly or in their statements published in Persian sources. I feel a profound responsibility not to misrepresent their goals and desires, and not to project my own opinions onto their movement.

**Recommendations:**

- The United States should pressure Iran's regime on its dismal human rights record, if not directly then through the United Nations. Some have suggested that a U.N. tribunal investigate the torture and killings of demonstrators and other dissidents. Such an investigation would discredit the regime, not only in the eyes of the international community, but inside Iran. As has been widely reported, dissidents are being tortured and killed. In some cases, the bodies of demonstrators are never returned to their families. Oppositionists want the United States to make human rights part of any future negotiations with Iran. In the words of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi, in an interview with Radio Farda on January 12, 2010: "Issues such as human rights, support for civil societies, and the establishment of a lawful government in Iran must be added to negotiations with Iran," Oppositionists fear that the United States cares more about regional security in the Middle East than human rights and will not risk alienating the regime from the nuclear negotiations by making human rights a condition of any future talks.
- The opposition movement is dependent upon the Internet and social networking in order to communicate with Iranians inside and outside the country, and to organize protests and other activities. Oppositionists want the United States to provide technical assistance to run and maintain anti-government websites and also enable them to communicate when the regime blocks Internet sites and social

networks. They want, for example, anti-filtering software that would be immune to government interference.

- The United States also should pressure foreign telecommunications firms, such as Nokia and Siemens, not to sell telecommunications technology to Iran and to refuse to ship technology that already has been purchased.
- The United States should investigate how blogger and micro-blogging services, such as Twitter, can be “hardened” against regime interference, particularly during demonstrations.
- The opposition also believes that the United States should signal to Tehran that Washington does not recognize the legitimacy of President Ahmadinejad’s administration due to the rigged election. Although many realize that this is not probable as long as Washington maintains an ongoing diplomatic dialogue with Iran, the opposition believes that such a gesture would empower their movement.
- Activists in NGOs, such as women in the Million Signature Campaign, whose members have been arrested and interrogated, believe that they would benefit from the opportunity to network with other NGOs from the region or from the United States. They believe that workshops and training sessions could help them develop strategies for continuing their efforts of political reform in the face of great obstacles. It is important to keep in mind that civil society organizations in Iran have become fully active only recently, and many lack experience.

The Green Movement is not searching for grand gestures from the United States. However, modest steps, particularly those that would address the lack of human rights and the absence of political liberalization would give the opposition more legitimacy in Iranian society. In turn, the hardliners might be more inclined to reach a historic compromise, which would be far more beneficial to Iranian society and the world than a military dictatorship under the control of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Dr. Ghadar.

**STATEMENT OF FARIBORZ GHADAR, PH.D., DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR AND SENIOR ADVISOR, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Mr. GHADAR. Chairman Ackerman, Ranking Member Burton, and distinguished members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, I am honored to have been invited by the committee to testify today about America and the Iranian political reform movement. I will be testifying today in my capacity as distinguished scholar and senior advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a professor of business at Smeal College of Penn State University.

Chairman Ackerman and the members of the committee eloquently described the mess that Iran is in right now. The latest events in Iran are symptoms of a tectonic shift in Iran's political environment. The regime has been using the Basij and the paramilitary guards to beat up on protesters. If you look at last week, we had recent conciliatory movements by both Karoubi and Mousavi to reconcile to a certain extent with Khamenei. Khamenei did not respond to that.

The opposition has asked for participating on February 11th in a massive demonstration but in a peaceful matter. We don't know what the outcome will be, but there are three possible outcomes. The Revolutionary Guards will beat down the opposition into the underground for them to raise another day, a compromise will finally be worked out among the different factions of the regime, or the demise of the regime as we know it will occur.

Given the uncertainty and the demand for freedom from oppression by the public, but also for independence, we should not take sides in the future nature of the regime. We should not endorse a candidate or a party or even a constitution. These matters are up to the Iranian public. A wise strategy is one that informs the Iranian public and ensures that their voices are heard. That we can do. The opposition, however, needs to know that we will not use them as a chip that is traded away to the Iranian regime.

A successful strategy is to respond to the aspiration of the Iranian people, the aspirations that are ignored by their own regime. The Iranian public, as many mentioned, is pro-America. What Iranians want, freedom and independence. Various surveys and polls show that Iranians would like to promote economic development, share technology, create employment, and have a closer relationship with our country.

The great majority of the Iranian population, as was mentioned, are young people, technologically advanced, unhappy with the situation, the way they are being treated, and the social restrictions. They are, however, at the same time concerned about the U.S. Government. The fear is partially due to the potential military attack or expanded sanctions. Neither of these policies is going to be successful. Military action would likely galvanize Iranian society against attackers, delay the nuclear program by a limited lies, and encourage the hardliners to go after nuclear bombs.

Sanctions can be broken down into three categories: Trade sanctions, which have not been successful; investment sanctions on for-

eign direct investments, which have been successful; and fund flows, controlling the funds that go to the Revolutionary Guard and target it and confiscate it. Based on the desire of independence and at the same time freedom, I suggest the following. Continue and expand our broadcasts highlighting the mismanagement and corruption that exists in the system.

Ahmadinejad in his first election talked about corruption, sat there piously in front of his house and showed that his house is very small while his opposition lived in mansions. He tried to do the same thing in the recent election on television, but that did not sit well with everyone. Broadcast Iran's economic performance. The economic performance has been miserable. Corruption, nepotism, disregard for meritocracy, is just rampant.

In fact, Iranians often compare themselves to the Turks. In the past 30 years the GDP per capita in Iran has been practically stagnant, while the Turks' GDP per capita has grown four fold. Iranians visit Turkey, see that, but not only that, the Azeris across the border are doing much better than the Azeris in northern Iran, the Arabs are doing much better across the Gulf than they are in Iran. Continue broadcasting the brutality and the lack of human rights, which were mentioned earlier. Show how the Revolutionary Guard and senior leaders have pilfered the economy and show how they have passed the money around.

Continue to target and confiscate Iran's Revolutionary investments, and at the same time while targeting them, sanction it to prevent civilians, so for example civilian airlines from being repaired. It may seem heartless, but enhancing sanctions to prevent electronic gear that allows the government to control what is going on would be very helpful. I believe that we are at a critical point in dealing with the Iranian regime. The Iranians are already ready to take major action. They want independence, and at the same time they want freedom. We can assist in both without interfering. Thank you, Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ghadar follows:]

**Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee,  
Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia**

***“AMERICA AND THE IRANIAN POLITICAL REFORM MOVEMENT:  
FIRST DO NO HARM”***

A Statement by

**Dr. Fariborz Ghadar**

Distinguished Scholar & Senior Advisor  
Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

**February 3, 2010**

**2172 Rayburn House Office Building**



**Testimony of Dr. Fariborz Ghadar  
Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee**

**“America and the Iranian Political Reform Movement: First Do No Harm”  
February 3, 2010**

Chairman Ackerman, Ranking Member Burton and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to have been invited by the Committee to testify today about “America and the Iranian Political Reform Movement.” I will be testifying today in my capacity as a Distinguished Scholar and Senior Advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a Professor of Global Business at the Smeal College of Business at Pennsylvania State University.

The latest events in Iran (the death of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, whom many considered as the reformists’ spiritual leader; the unrest and brutal behavior of the regime’s thugs; the show trials; the firing and black listing of thousands of reformists; and the revelations about rape, torture and executions) are symptoms of a tectonic shift in Iran’s political environment. Despite the repeated warnings by the regime’s leaders, the revolutionary guards, the Basij, and the police that demonstrators would be mercilessly handled, sternly confronted and arrested, the reformist and opposition demonstrations have continued and are more daring than even during the post June elections. The longer these demonstrations go on in the face of hardliner demands to crack down, the clearer it becomes that the focus of the opposition is shifting from Ahmadinejad to the system itself and the Supreme Leader Khamenei. The chants of “Death to the Dictator”, the tearing and stomping on images of Khamenei, and the demands for justice clearly show that the protest movement is now questioning the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic.

The regime and Khamenei’s control are not endangered--yet. The Revolutionary Guards and the paramilitary Basij have been ordered to suppress the demonstrations by force in the most brutal manner. The shootings and killing of demonstrators, the massive arrests that have followed, and the casualties that include Moussavi’s nephew are aimed at suppressing the reformist movement. Since June of 2009 thousands of reformists have been fired from their jobs. Last Thursday two demonstrators were hung and nine have been sentenced to death. Last week, the two leading opposition leaders made limited conciliatory statements

toward Khamenei, but also called for major demonstrations on February 11, the anniversary of the Islamic republic. Therefore, it is questionable whether the movement will quietly dissipate. No one accurately predicted that millions would take to the streets following the June election and no one can tell whether the opposition will simmer below the surface waiting for another day or erupt into a full-scale uprising. The events may just as likely lead to a critical standoff between the regime and its opposition. What will be the outcome is difficult to gauge at this point.

In addition to this internal turmoil the Iranian regime faces other internal and external challenges that define its relationship with the Iranian public. The nuclear negotiation is the critical issue from the perspective of the US and its allies, but is not high on the list of issues from Iran's point of view. Iran faces economic difficulties ranging from high unemployment, the lack of foreign and even domestic investments, the need for technology to develop its industries (particularly the oil and gas sector), Afghan illegal immigration issues, the major problem of narcotics (15% of Afghan Opium is used in Iran), and above all assurances that the West does not seek regime change. At the same time that Iran wants to play a significant role in the region both economically and strategically, its regime faces challenges from both the cleric and the secular power centers. It is becoming clear that the Revolutionary Guards and the Basij have been and will continue to be relied on to keep the population under control. The price the regime has paid and will continue to pay is a further para-militarization of the economy.

The Iranian economy is in shambles and will likely continue to deteriorate as oil prices hover around 70 dollars a barrel. The economy's burdensome legacy and economic mismanagement has brought about double-digit inflation, unemployment and underemployment of about 30%, as well as price distortions due to extensive subsidies and supports. The over-valued national currency is responsible for the country's substantial capital flight, a dramatic decline in the country's foreign exchange reserves, and an enormous level of government debt. Foreign and domestic investments have evaporated both due to sanctions but also because of the difficulty to do business in such a corrupt environment. Furthermore, the quality of the management of the economy and the administration is declining. Nepotism, the growing role of the paramilitary in all aspects of the economy and the lack of any meritocracy has resulted in poor economic performance and shortages of critical social amenities from housing to health care. Rising poverty and a widening gap between the privileged and connected rich and the population at large is also

of great concern. Finally we see a regime that is becoming globally isolated and economically more and more desperate. The disastrous economic performance is primarily due to the Iranian government's own mismanagement and corruption while sanctions have also played a significant role.

Some sanctions have successfully robbed the regime of capabilities and resources. Most successfully, sanctions on direct investment have been effective in substantially eliminating foreign investment by US and western companies. However, trade sanctions have unintentionally created a thriving black market and opened doors for U.S. competitors. Trade has been rerouted through third countries such as Dubai and products from countries such as China have supplanted western goods. China and Dubai are now the top two trading partners of Iran. Restricted products are often smuggled into the country by paying bribes to revolutionary guard entities that control the flow of goods into the country.

Foreign direct investment has been eliminated substantially, but the result has been that large projects have been passed on to companies with limited capability owned by the revolutionary guards with the assistance of third country organizations that also have limited capability. The Tehran Metro, the gas pipeline to Pakistan, and the development of the gas field at the border with Qatar are such examples. Furthermore, these sanctions have in no way altered the regime's intentions. Often these sanction or the threat of sanction have resulted in the regime taking steps to increase prices, reduce subsidies (helping the regime's budgetary constraints) and blame the US. Tracking financial flows that belong to the revolutionary guard and senior government officials on the other hand have had some success and is probably an effective way to put pressure on the regime without hurting the population at large.

In my opinion, our policy must support a vision of an Iran that fits well within the greater Middle East and as a stakeholder in the international community. To achieve this we need to be reinforcing American ideals and leverages our greatest supporters. I am talking about the vast number of Iranians who have courageously stood up against the regime and demanded that the Islamic Republic hear their voices in the face of unprecedented brutality. They demand freedom and independence. They believe that Iran has achieved independence from foreign intervention but not freedom from government oppression. This is the demand of the Iranian people. This honorable and just cause is what protestors demand and what Iranians are willing to die for. The

conventional options of military engagement or further sanctions fail to recognize that the future lies with the Iranian people and not the Iranian regime. These options also are contrary to the concept of independence, a critical demand in the Iranian mind. US policy should support freedom without appearing to reduce peoples' sense of Iranian independence.

The Iranian public is pro America. Numerous polls have shown that the great majority of Iranians like America and Americans. Many Iranians have relatives in the US who are prospering in our land of opportunity. The Iranian public knows this well. A recent poll just released by World Public Opinion indicates that 63 percent of Iranians say they favor restoration of diplomatic ties with the US. Only 27 percent are opposed. Given that the telephone poll sample used fixed lines, this is an amazing number as Iranians normally fear expressing positions that counter the regime, especially on tapped fixed line phones. Also, the great majority of the Iranian population are 15 to 30 year old technologically capable, educated, cell phone users that face a much larger unemployment rate and are dissatisfied with social restrictions. However, attitudes towards America, while very positive, have eroded slowly over time. The polls also indicate that the majority are fearful of and mistrust the US government. The fear is partially due to a potential military attack or expanded sanctions.

If either of these two fears become reality they will prevent Iran from evolving into a stakeholder in the international community. Military action would likely galvanize Iranian society against the attackers; delay the nuclear program for a limited time period, while encouraging hardliners to argue for the development of nuclear weapon capability. It will also give the regime an excuse to expand its brutality against any potential opposition. Further trade sanctions will also strengthen the hand and further enrich the pockets of the revolutionary guards and regime hard liners while allowing the US to take the blame for the regime's own incompetence and corrupt economic policies.

Two examples bring home the sanctions issue. While food and medicine do not face sanctions, food prices have increased dramatically. In fact, the regime cannot blame sanctions for shortages and dramatic price increases on the U.S. Conversely, repeated civilian air traffic accidents in Iran have successfully been blamed on US and European sanctions. It is reported that Iranians traveling by plane often inquire about the model of the plane and would

reschedule to fly on aging Boeing and Airbus equipment rather than Russian planes. In fact, the government declared it illegal to divulge the type of plane on flights to the traveler. In the minds of Iranian travelers it is difficult to understand why the traveling Iranian public is the target of sanctions. Recent discussion on the import of gasoline is another case in point. The simple mention of sanctions over a year ago resulted in the Iranian regime instituting first coupons and then smart cards that restrict gasoline purchases at subsidized prices, which are close to 40 cents per gallon. The allocation for private cars has been recently reduced further from 100 liters per month to 80 liters (approximately 20 gallons/month). Additional purchases are allowed at a price closer to \$1.60 per gallon. This, in essence has increased the price to users and thus helped reduce the substantial budget constraints of the government by billions of dollars. At the same time that the public is asked to pay the higher gasoline price for purchases exceeding 20 gallons a month, the revolutionary guards have smart cards whose large allocations may be sold in the black market. Further sanctions are unlikely to limit gasoline imports, as other refineries are likely to step in and offer gasoline. The Iranian regime will of course use this as an excuse to further reduce subsidized gasoline prices and reduce their budget deficit.

The success of sanctions is predicated on the assumption that we will weaken the regime by these sanctions and that the regime desires western imports and investments. These assumptions are incorrect. Sanctions play in the hand of the regime, deprive the Iranian public of economic growth, and reduce the role of the private sector (particularly small and medium companies) at the expense of the revolutionary guards and the paramilitary establishment. Sanctions strengthen the regime's hand against the public and the private sector and play into its fear of international interaction with the Iranian public. Its efforts to seal the nation post election by restricting the flow of information via the internet, crackdown on cell phones, text messaging and twittering make it clear that the regime is terrified of economic, informational, and social interaction with the West.

A more effective approach would be for the international community to punish revolutionary guard entities via limiting transfers while promoting information flows and economic activities with the private sector. This is a much more nuanced strategy that targets the paramilitary but protects the public. A more effective strategy would:

(1) Global media outlets should continue and expand broadcasts highlighting the mismanagement and corruption existing in the system. Ahmadinejad's unexpected success in the previous election was successful because he was able to project himself as an honest, pious person in contrast to the rich and corrupt opponents. Even in the most recent election, during debates on Iran TV, Ahmadinejad continued his attack on the corrupt opponents. Except this time it was a stretch for the public to believe his hands are clean.

(2) The international community should broadcast Iran's economic performance compared to neighboring countries. Mismanagement and corruption has hurt Iran's economy and people. Iran and Turkey had comparable economies but in the past decade Iran, despite its oil and gas reserves and revenue, has seen its per capita income decline and its foreign and domestic investments evaporate. Iranians travel to Turkey without much difficulty and can see the relative improvement of Turks' standard of living compared to their own. Iran's economic performance is miserable relative not only to Turkey but also to neighbors south of the Persian Gulf and in the Caspian region. Azeris north of the border have improved their livelihood much more than Iranian Azeris. This is not due to sanctions but the Iranian regimes incompetence, corruption, nepotism and disregard of meritocracy.

(3) The international community should continue broadcasting the brutality that the regime and the paramilitary are using against their own people. Highlight the number of highly regarded thought leaders and experts who have been fired and black listed. Discuss the devastation brought upon citizens whose sole sin has been to question the behavior and performance of the regime.

(4) Expose how the revolutionary guard senior leaders have pilfered from the Iranian economy and where they are sending and hiding their funds. Discuss the rapid erosion in the foreign exchange reserves of the nation and ask where these funds disappeared.

(5) Expose some of the houses and real estate that the corrupt Iranian leaders have been buying overseas and highlight their residences in Tehran and other cities.

These first five points should be repeatedly communicated via various channels to the Iranian public. Global media outlets, conferences, interviews, and discussions can broadcast these points continuously.

(6) The international community must continue to target and confiscate the revolutionary guard's investments and international accounts and fund transfers. Target the revolutionary guard and regime leaders' money. The US Treasury efforts in this vein should be redoubled and supplemented.

(7) While targeting the revolutionary guard and regime leaders, and continuing strict sanctions on nuclear technology, remove sanctions that target the Iranian people. Sanction that prevents civilian airplanes from being repaired and maintained seems heartless. On the other hand we should put sanctions on companies that provide electronic gear that allow the regime to target protestors.

(8) Iranian good will towards America and Americans is due to the number of Iranian educated and trained here over many decades. America also has allowed many Iranians to immigrate here over the years. Removing restrictions on travel to the US and allowing Iranians to once again study in US universities would be a clear indication of our interest and support for the Iranian public. Opening a consulate and making visas more available reinforces the fact that we are with the people of Iran. A strategy that articulates we support the people but not the regime is imperative given the situation in Iran.

(9) Consider allowing US and Western companies to invest with the Iranian private sector in areas that are beneficial of the public and not the revolutionary guards. Commercial interaction and the development of a prosperous middle class are the biggest risks to totalitarian regimes.

Having made these suggestions, I wish to reiterate it is the Iranian public that desires independence and demands freedom from oppression. While there is reason to be deeply concerned about the events in Iran, and all civilized persons should be alarmed at the brutality shown by the regime towards its people; it is not up to foreigners to dictate what needs to be done. We are not Iran's referee. The economic mismanagement, the lack of concern for human integrity, the brutal behavior of the regime at the end of the day is a matter for the Iranian people to address and resolve. What would be helpful to the

people of Iran is to inform the public and assure that the legitimate concerns and voices of the Iranian people are not drowned by the regime.

No doubt this is a more nuanced strategy but the goal is to promote relations with the Iranian public while making life difficult for the Iranian regime and Para military organizations. Strategic policy implementation should be measured by results. Three decades of sanctions have not been effective, have not changed the regimes behavior, and have resulted in erosion in the very positive Iranian public's attitude towards the US government. The people of Iran have a positive attitude towards the American people. Is it now time to consider an alternative strategy of intelligent engagement with the Iranian people.



Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

**STATEMENT OF MR. J. SCOTT CARPENTER, KESTON FAMILY FELLOW, THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY**

Mr. CARPENTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Burton, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the timely opportunity to testify before you today. For most of its history, the United States has sought to support freedom and opportunity abroad, knowing that free peoples properly concerned with their own hopes and dreams, to not to be enemies and indeed often become partners. As we come together to apply this principle to Iran, the subcommittee sounds a note of caution, urging us to first do no harm.

In my experience, however, working on the inside at the State Department, this seemingly appropriate, reasonable tone often becomes an excuse for hand wringing and paralysis. Creativity and a willingness to take a modicum of risk are suborn by the simple phrase uttered all too often, we have to be sure that whatever we do does not put them at greater risk, whether the them is Zimbabwean labor activists, Egyptian bloggers, Chinese civil rights lawyers, or others.

For this reason, I take my cue from the activists themselves. Surely they know better than we the risks that they are prepared to take for their freedom. The U.S. Government's responsibility therefore should be to make a clear offer of support for them to take up or not as they choose. In the case of Iran's green movement, so much more. The green movement represents the latest iteration of a century-long effort to forge a constitutional republic based on pluralism and democracy.

Since 1906 this strive has been thwarted, first by monarchs and later by theocrats, often aided and abetted by outside powers, including the U.S. Today, the Islamic regime has unleashed increasingly brutal waves of violence against its own people, as we have heard. Yet in the face of this violence, people in the streets are calling on the Obama administration to support them. Demonstrators in November chanted, Obama, Obama, are you with us or are you with them? We would be foolish to think that they were asking this rhetorically.

As several Iranian-Americans have noted, the goal of protesters holding signs in English is not simply to show off their linguistic ability. Given our principles and their calls for support, it is critical that the U.S. avail itself of this opportunity and responsibility to get it right. Too often when it comes to the people of Iran we have come down on the wrong side of history, as we did in 1953 and again in the lead up to the revolution in 1979. As one green movement activist put it to me recently in Brussels, if the United States thought relations between it and Iran were strained after the Musaddeq coup, just wait until Washington betrays the green movement.

So what should the U.S. do? In my view, it is time for the Obama administration to launch a comprehensive offensive to challenge the regime on human rights grounds. In my written testimony I have made a number of recommendations but will highlight just a

few here. First, future policy actions must be set squarely within the context of human rights. If the U.S. imposes targeted even more broad-based sanctions, link it to human rights violations of the IRGC and the Basij.

The administration should make it known publicly that it is planning for the eventuality of a democratic government coming to power in Iran by working with Congress to prepare the necessary legal groundwork to lift sanctions and remove Iran from a list of state sponsors of terrorism. It should articulate the benefits that would flow from such steps while also making clear the process will take time. This would have the twin benefits of making clear the current regime is not democratic while helping to set expectations in the event the regime actually did collapse.

The administration in my view should publicly relaunch a revitalized Iran democracy fund and/or bolster the National Endowment for Democracy's ability to support democrats inside and elsewhere. As you know, Mr. Chairman, the administration has renamed the program the Near East Regional Democracy, or NERD, fund, and has defunded a number of prominent grantees including the Yale Human Rights Documentation Center.

Critical in the medium term is to do something dramatic to improve the voice of America's Persian News Network. Poor management and a lack of proper editorial board are currently robbing PNN of most of its impact. The administration should finally and expeditiously move forward on targeted sanctions against IRGC leadership and companies, but not in an incremental manner. Instead it should execute all prospective targeted sanctions at the same time as a single tidal wave to boost intended effectiveness and strengthen their political impact inside Iran.

At this critical juncture of Iran's turbulent history, it is clear that the regime is vulnerable, and the reason for that vulnerability is the deepening legitimacy crisis spurred on by the green movement. Expressing solidarity with the aspirations of the Iranian people at this moment will reinforce the regime's paranoia and may yet tip the balance in favor of those committed to reshaping or even overthrowing this regime. A change in regime provides the best safeguard against a nuclear Iran and may even usher in a period of U.S.-Iranian partnership that could radically impact U.S. efforts to stabilize both Iraq, Afghanistan, and the broader Middle East. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carpenter follows:]

**Statement on *America and the Iranian Political Reform Movement: First, Do No Harm*  
Before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee  
on the Middle East and South Asia**

**Submitted By  
J. Scott Carpenter  
Keston Family Fellow, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy**

**February 3, 2010**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking member Burton, members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the timely opportunity to testify before you on what the United States could be and should be doing to support the Iranian opposition.

For most of its history the United States has sought to support freedom and opportunity abroad. This persistent insistence has been borne out of both principle and experience, knowing that free peoples, properly concerned with their own hopes and dreams, tend not to be enemies and, indeed, often become partners.

Today as we come together to apply this principle to Iran the subcommittee sounds a note of caution urging us to first do no harm. In my experience, however, working on the inside at the State Department, both as a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and then in the Bureau for Near East Affairs, this seemingly appropriate, balanced tone often becomes an excuse for hand-wringing and paralysis. Creativity and willingness to take a modicum of risk are suborned by the simple phrase uttered all too often, "We have to be sure that whatever we do does not put them at greater risk." Thus do diplomats convince themselves not to help Zimbabwean labor activists, Egyptian bloggers, and Chinese civil rights lawyers.

For this reason I tend to take my cue from the activists themselves, choosing to make available whatever assistance the United States has to offer and allowing those in the trenches fighting for their lives to decide whether and how to accept it. They surely know better than we the risks they are prepared to take for their freedom. The U.S. government's responsibility therefore should be to make a clear offer of support. In the case of Iran's Green Movement, so much more.

Iran's broad-based if loosely linked protest movement poses the first serious challenge to the Islamic Republic, shaking it to its core. This movement represents the latest iteration of a century-long effort to forge a constitutional republic based on pluralism and democracy. Since the 1906 Constitutional Revolution, this drive has been thwarted first by monarchs and later by theocrats often aided and abetted by outside powers, including the United States.

The Islamic regime has demonstrated its resolve and determination to stay in power by unleashing waves of violence against its own people. Executions, especially against young people, are on the rise. And yet in the face of such violence, people in the streets are calling on the Obama administration and the American people to support them

Demonstrators in November chanted, “Obama, are you with us or are you with them?” We would be foolish to think they were asking this rhetorically. As several Iranian Americans have noted, the goal of protestors holding signs in English was not simply to show off linguistic ability.

Given our principles and their call for support, it is critical that the United States avail itself of this opportunity – and responsibility – to get it right. Too often when it comes to the people of Iran we have come down on the wrong side of history.

We got it wrong in 1953 when we joined with the British to overthrow the popularly elected Prime Minister Muhammad Musaddeq.

We got it wrong again in the period leading up to the Revolution in 1979. In the decade or so prior we ignored the warning signs and failed to press the Shah to liberalize politically as he liberalized economically. We ignored his excesses and human rights abuses and agreed to his demand that we not work with anyone in the opposition. In the process we failed to nurture currents in society that might have played a moderating role, possibly averting the political upheaval that followed. Ultimately we reaped the whirlwind of our policies: a broad-based democratic revolution took place which was then subverted by Islamist radicals who remain with us today.

Our unconditional support for dictatorship in Iran has created deep ambivalence among Iranians toward the United States. Since the Constitutional Revolution in 1906, Iranians have been involved in a struggle to give democratic voice to one of the great civilizations only to find themselves thwarted by visionless monarchs or power hungry theocrats. Washington consistently has come down on the wrong side. Today, on the eve of another anniversary of the Revolution and at a time when the theocrats are being challenged in unprecedented ways by their own people, we should get it right. As one Green Movement activist put it to me recently, “If the U.S. thought relations between the United States and Iran were strained after the Musaddeq coup, just wait until Washington betrays the Green Movement.”

So what *should* the United States do? It is time for the Obama administration to launch a nuanced, if comprehensive, offensive to challenge the regime on human rights grounds confident that it is following, not leading, the Iranian people who are risking their lives to create a new future in Iran. Should the Green Movement succeed, a fundamental reorientation of the regime may be possible with positive implications for the core American interest of avoiding a nuclear Iran.

My specific recommendations largely fall into three categories: public diplomatic statements and actions; re-engineered and re-emphasized programming; and punitive sanctions.

*A public diplomacy offensive*

Recently, the Obama administration has sought to leaven its outreach policy with references to human rights. Yet it has done so only half-heartedly, and only after

reassuring Tehran that it remains open to continued negotiations. This bifurcation of policy may once have produced results, but not in the post-June 12 context. At present, the regime is too nervous about its survival to catch the nuance or to care. It welcomes the continued open door, but rejects any interference into its domestic affairs even while it excoriates the U.S. for plotting its overthrow. Worse, the “we’re-with-you-but-open-to-negotiations-with-your-government” message is too easily misunderstood by the Iranian people, who are becoming increasingly resentful of American equivocation. In October, an Iranian cartoonist has depicted President Obama covering his eyes while shaking hands with Ahmadinejad who, in turn, tramples bloodied individuals.



Clearly, it is time to get the rhetoric right.

To begin with, future policy actions must be set squarely within the context of the Administration’s human rights concerns. If the United States imposes targeted or even more broad-based sanctions, it should link such action to the IRGC/Basij violations of human rights since June 12th, for instance. Sanctions taken at the UN would, of course, remain oriented toward stopping Iran’s nuclear program, but the way in which the United States explains them would change. This message should be conveyed first and foremost by the President, but also by key members of his administration, who should all be made routinely available to the BBC Persian Service and Radio Farda to explain U.S. policy.

Additionally, the United States should seek to expropriate the rhetoric of the Islamic Republic that has successfully portrayed itself as a victim of the U.S. for the past 31 years. After June 12<sup>th</sup>, the power of the government’s “Great Satan” rhetoric rings hollow to most Iranians. Playing on Iranian psychology, the Obama administration should now attempt to invert this relationship by portraying itself as the victim of regime dissimulation. The message is a simple one: “The deal that was proposed in Geneva would have given Iran everything it wanted. Clearly the U.S. was prepared to compromise its principles to achieve an agreement but we can only go so far. We cannot sacrifice our human rights principles to achieve a deal while the regime kills and tortures its own citizens.”

The administration should also make it known publicly that it is currently planning for the eventuality of a democratic government coming to power in Tehran by preparing the necessary legal groundwork to lift sanctions and remove Iran from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. It should articulate the benefits that would flow from such steps, while also making clear that the process will take time. This would have the twin benefits of making clear that the current regime is *not* democratic while helping to set expectations in the event the regime actually did collapse.

The administration should publicly re-launch a revitalized Iran Democracy Fund and/or bolster the National Endowment for Democracy's ability to support democrats inside Iran and elsewhere. As you know the administration has renamed the program the Near East Regional Democracy (NERD) Fund and has de-funded a number of prominent grantees, including the Yale Human Rights Documentation Center. What's more concerning to me, however, are those groups who until their funds were cut off were providing a much needed lifeline to those inside Iran. For instance, I recently received a desperate email from a former grant recipient based in Europe who works to get news into and out of Iran. In the email he begged for more assistance as his organization sought to accommodate fleeing journalists from Iran to enlist them in the struggle. The State Department, he reported, was cutting their funding. Such actions send powerfully negative messages to those our rhetoric of solidarity is meant to reassure.

Along these lines, the White House should strongly consider having the President give a speech at the National Endowment for Democracy echoing President Reagan's original speech in Westminster in 1982 but this time focused on Iran and the democratic aspirations of its people.

Critical in the medium term is to do something dramatic to improve what should be America's preeminent vehicle for communicating with the Iranian people: the Voice of America's Persian News Network (PNN). Poorly managed by people who do not know Iran or its politics, PNN's journalistic professionalism currently meets only minimal standards. Most of VOA's 200 employees lack any television experience beyond what they have gained at VOA, for example. Its lack of a proper editorial board makes for poor priority setting, robbing PNN of impact. To cite just one example, on the day after the death of Ayatollah Montazeri, when the BBC Persian Service was blanketing Iranian airwaves with coverage similar to that given in the U.S. to pop star Michael Jackson's passing last summer, PNN was airing documentaries on global warming. Indicative of its lack of impact is the fact that Khamenei rails against the BBC Persian Service, but rarely mentions VOA. The Obama administration should work urgently with the Broadcasting Board of Governors to appoint a director who knows broadcasting, speaks Farsi, knows both American and Iranian politics, and who can re-tool the organization to meet its Congressional mandate. This is not as hard as it sounds.

While the VOA is being fixed, mechanisms should be found to create a communications platform for the opposition so that it can get its message out. Similar, if sensitive,

programs exist to support independent terrestrial and satellite radio stations targeting Syria, for instance. Other examples abound in the past including U.S. support for Serbian opposition radio. This requires some risk-taking but would not require centralization and for the moment would be simply encouraging the State Department to continue on-going efforts rather than dropping them.

*Seeing sanctions straight*

The administration should move forward expeditiously on targeted sanctions against IRGC leadership and companies but not in the typical incremental manner. Doing so only allows for regime elements to develop strategies to avoid the impact of the proposed measures, and robs the individual announcements of their strategic communications impact. Reportedly, the administration has used the past year of “engagement” to devote considerable time and effort to identify the economic underpinnings of the IRGC.<sup>1</sup> If true, the time to act is now. It should execute all prospective “targeted sanctions” at the same time as a single tidal wave to boost their intended effectiveness and strengthen their political impact inside Iran.

Targeted sanctions should be combined with the threat of a gasoline embargo—or even the embargo itself. The regime pretends not to care about gasoline sanctions, but adding this measure to the U.S. arsenal would increase pressure on regime hardliners, giving them something more to worry about and the opposition something additional to blame them for. It is true that since 2007 the regime has recognized its strategic vulnerability and has taken steps to reduce it. Nonetheless, the current political unrest and cold winter creates a propitious moment for the President to encourage passage in the Senate of the companion bill to the House’s already passed Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act (IRPSA), which would give him the power to initiate such a ban. But here too, any sanctions or threat of sanctions imposed should be initiated because of the regime’s human rights violations.

*Stiffening Europe’s resolve*

As human rights abuses in Iran have mounted and Stalinesque show trials have continued, European populations have become increasingly outraged, putting pressure on their leaders to do something. This has created a shift in official opinion, rhetoric and, occasionally, policy. The Netherlands, for instance, recently joined the United States in listing the IRGC as a terrorist organization, and the European Commission is reportedly in the process of identifying possible sanctions against Iran.<sup>2</sup>

The Obama administration should create momentum for this shift in attitude by indicating its strong, public support for such initiatives. It should also encourage each European capital to echo its statements on human rights. Although Brussels may yet prove to be a weak reed, London, Paris and Berlin have never been as close to taking real action against Iran as they are now. Moreover, President Obama remains personally popular in

<sup>1</sup> Michael Hirsch and Michael Isikoff, “Obama’s Enforcer,” *Newsweek*, December 12, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Ilan Berman, “Toughen Up On Iran,” *Forbes.com* 11 Dec. 2009  
<<http://www.forbes.com/2009/12/11/iran-america-politics-washington-opinions-contributors-ilan-berman.html>>.

Europe, and could use this popularity to good effect by making a public plea on human rights grounds. Without American leadership, however, Europe is not likely to find the will to act. Given that Europe, rather than the U.S., holds the economic leverage vis-à-vis Iran, failing to do so would represent another enormous missed opportunity.

#### **Shifting gears**

In the very near term, given the determination of hardliners to use force against the people, a democratic breakthrough in Iran remains unlikely. Yet the violence the regime is currently employing is radicalizing those in the streets, and making the Green Movement's putative leadership less inclined to compromise. Proof of this hardening of positions was evident in the recent manifesto issued by exiled intellectuals known to be close to the internal Green Movement leadership, which demands the immediate resignation of President Ahmadinejad as a precondition for talks.<sup>3</sup>

The regime, in other words, is vulnerable. As President Obama's dream of negotiating a nuclear deal fades, the prospects for confronting the regime by expressing solidarity with the aspirations of the Iranian people have increased. Doing so will reinforce the regime's paranoia and may yet tip the balance in favor of those committed to reshaping or even overthrowing it. A change in regime provides the best safeguard against a nuclear Iran and may even usher in a period of U.S.-Iranian partnership that could radically impact U.S. efforts to stabilize both Iraq and Afghanistan. Engagement as a policy has failed; it is now time to unequivocally challenge the regime on human rights.

---

<sup>3</sup> Robin Wright, "Abdolkarim Soroush on the Goals of Iran's Green Movement," [The Huffington Post](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robin-wright/abdolkarim-soroush-on-the_b_414882.html) 7 Jan 2010 <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robin-wright/abdolkarim-soroush-on-the\\_b\\_414882.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robin-wright/abdolkarim-soroush-on-the_b_414882.html)>.



Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much. I will yield myself 5 minutes. First do no harm, that was not made up by me, that was Hippocrates' advice to physicians who had good intentions of going out and helping people, that was the first rule of advice. So I went and I saw this movie some time ago, it had a lot of bad guys in it, I think it was called The Godfather. And there was this guy there that, every time he kissed somebody bad things happened to them.

The real question before us is, how do we, and I think we have all agreed up here despite the fact that we have some divergent views, agreed that we want to help the people in the green movement and the people who want a democracy and the people who love their country for all the right reasons. How do we embrace them without it becoming the kiss of death? How does that happen? We can say things, we can do things, we can spend money, how do we do that?

We need to have some ideas to consider that do no harm. Because it seems to me that the bad guys there are wiping out the good guys as soon as they can get their hand on them. And my good friend from California spoke to the issue of the democracy movement in Poland, and I would remind us that it was not the overt action of an American President—the leader of the free world who had F-16s at his disposal, the world's greatest superpower, with nuclear weapons, that really triggered this—but it was a quiet man of peace who represented millions and had no military division whatsoever whose plane landed from Rome and got out and uttered the historic and biblical words, "Be not afraid."

And it was that very inspirational statement from the Pope at the time to a very Catholic nation that inspired them to take the actions that they needed, knowing that they had world opinion, and more importantly right, on their side. It would have been a very different message if the chief rabbi of Jerusalem delivered it or the imam of all imams, but it was somebody with whom they could relate. Should there not be a different messenger, possibly, of this message? Is there an uber-imam that could come from somewhere and land in Tehran and tell people not to be afraid? Are there things that we can—and there were some suggestions here by the panel—specific action that we can take without putting the sign of death on the very people that we want to help? That is my question. Mr. Khalaji?

Mr. KHALAJI. I think you are completely right, there are some measures that if the United States take them it would harm this movement significantly. I am against any sort of financial support to political groups or any explicit support to the political figures. These are sort of thing that hurt this movement. But I think that many people who are involved in the nuclear program and are threatening the peace in the region—

Mr. ACKERMAN. I have 1 minute left, and I want everybody to answer, so if we could?

Mr. KHALAJI. Yes. They are the same people who are cracking down on people. And I think that putting pressure on these people specifically, especially IRGC people, especially Khamenei and people around him, will help a lot.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Ms. Abdo?

Ms. ABDO. Thank you. I would recommend two tangible things. As we have said in this meeting, emphasis on human rights violations, because this will cause the base perhaps that still supports the regime to take a different position. And two, anything that could be done to address Iranians' access to the Internet and communications so that they can communicate with each other in order to mobilize their movement. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Ghadar?

Mr. GHADAR. In addition to what has been said, I think the corruption and the nepotism in the regime should be highlighted. The Revolutionary Guards are raping the country. In addition to the human rights, they are pilfering the country. This should be highlighted, and this is the cause of the Iranian economic malaise and desperate situation, unemployment and inflation.

Mr. ACKERMAN. My time is up, but if I could be indulged? Because I don't want to cut off the witness questioning by the distinguished minority member.

Mr. BURTON. You are the boss, whatever you say goes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. It doesn't mean I am not going to cut you off, Dan.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. I move to give the chairman 2 additional minutes. Ask for unanimous consent.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Just 30 seconds, if you will, Mr. Carpenter.

Mr. CARPENTER. Thank you. As I said, in my written testimony I have included a number of suggestions, but I do think it is important that the President and senior members of the administration be able to speak out as indicated on the human rights issues, putting us squarely on the side of the human rights issues, while finding ways to create platforms for the opposition themselves to be able to organize and speak to one another to support them, whether on the Internet or satellite radio or even satellite television. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much, and I thank the committee for your indulgence. Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. You know, I was reading some of the information about what they have been doing to these demonstrators, and as I understand it they have killed two, they have executed two last week. There are 16 more that are going on trial I guess Saturday, or this past Saturday, and nine more have been announced for execution next week. I just can't believe that we should stand by and see these kinds of atrocities take place because people just want freedom.

And so I was a little upset when Admiral Blair, who is the National Director of Intelligence, indicated that the protesters had little chance for success. He said "Strengthened conservative control will limit opportunities for reformers to participate in politics or organize opposition." He went on to say "The regime will work to marginalize opposition elites, disrupt or intimidate efforts to organize dissent, and use force to put down unrest."

Now he may believe that, but I just think that is the wrong message to send. I mean if we don't give money, if we don't give any kind of tangible support to the people who are demonstrating, we should at least in my opinion say, you know, we wish you success, we want to see freedom reign, and we want to do everything we

can—without interfering in your process over there directly—we want to do everything that we can to encourage freedom, democracy, and the things that we believe in. And that really concerned me that he said that.

Now, if the current regime were somehow to fall due to internal pressure, who would be best situated to take power there? And those currently pushing for reform, would they be the best ones or would there be other hardline people waiting in the wings to take over? And one other thing, some have worried in the past that the imposition of sanctions would drive the Iranian people toward their government. If we impose sanctions, if we could get our friends around the world to impose sanctions with us, would that drive the Iranian people toward the regime, would they be neutral, or would this encourage them to push harder for reform? And we can start at either end. Start at this end this time.

Mr. CARPENTER. Well, in terms of sanctions, what we have heard, or I have heard from people in green movement, is what they want are sanctions that are short and sharp and that shock the system. And as we all know, the international community does not tend to work in that way. As we have heard, sanctions tend to be least common denominator, they are not designed to shock, and that is what would be most helpful. They want to avoid what happened in Iraq where there is this slow ratcheting up of sanctions that end up hurting the Iraqi people and the system within Iraq so desperately that it creates real problems. So I think they are open to sanctions, but they have to be short and sharp.

Mr. BURTON. What do you mean by “short and sharp”?

Mr. CARPENTER. Well, the gasoline embargo that the Congress has been considering and asking to put toward the President, I think that is the type of thing that would have a potentially huge impact. The second thing I would say, again, I want to come back to the Iran Democracy Fund. And with deference to my colleague, who I love like a brother, he is my marja, but I have heard people in Europe who are working in the green movement begging for more assistance as journalists are being forced to flee Iran, journalists who had been operating inside. And those funds have been cut off by the State Department. So there are things we can do, we don't have to talk about it all the time, I don't suggest that we talk about it. Sorry.

Mr. BURTON. Go ahead, I am running out of time, I want to make sure everybody gets the chance to give their opinion.

Mr. GHADAR. If we break down sanctions into three categories, the most effective has certainly been going after the money of the Revolutionary Guards, targeting them, identifying them, taking them over. Furthermore, I think we should highlight the pilferage that is occurring. Iranians are very sensitive to corruption. We should highlight the corruption over and over again, the system is corrupt, we should take that to them. Foreign direct investment sanctions have been effective but they are long term. In my opinion, trade sanctions have not been effective, they won't be effective, they will hurt the population. I constantly hear that airplanes are falling from the sky, and they blame us for not being able to get components from Boeing.

Mr. BURTON. Can we do 30 seconds for each of the other witnesses?

Ms. ABDO. There have been several meetings of people within the green movement in Europe. And one thing, even though there is a great debate among them, one recommendation they do make is that there is some sort of funding for civil society organizations that doesn't come from the U.S. Government directly. This, they believe, will help their organizations without tainting them with something like a democracy fund. So their recommendation is that it come from unofficial or nongovernmental organizations. Thank you.

Mr. BURTON. Dr. Khalaji?

Mr. KHALAJI. Regarding to the potential scenario for the end of this crisis, I think that the world, and especially United States, plays an important role in shaping the future of Iran. Because if the efforts we make now, it leads to the weakening of the military body of the Iranian regime, the possibility of establishment of a military government after this crisis would be less. Because I think one of the scenarios which is likely is, after the weakening of Khamenei and the civilian politicians, Revolutionary Guard comes from behind the scene to the front. So it is a big danger, but we can prevent it by confronting this IRGC now.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Ellison.

Mr. ELLISON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very quickly, we have heard terms in the press, terms like mullah government, but isn't it true that one of the things going on now is that members of the opposition are part of the clerical establishment and the IRGC is starting to sort of take over and militarize the government? So to describe the government now as just a mullah government is sort of not accurate, am I right or wrong? It looks like Ms. Abdo is nodding agreeably, do you want to elaborate?

Ms. ABDO. Yes, you are absolutely right. One of the most important results of what has happened is that even though much of the clerical establishment had grown very, really in quiet I guess opposition of the state, what has happened now is that those internal private debates have become public. And conservative clerics now are opposed to the system. In fact, I don't know if some of you read some of the news reports, but the Chief Justice of Iran now, Mr. Larijani, who is the brother of the Speaker of Parliament, made statements this week that politics should not enter the judicial system, that he will not take orders to execute people anymore, that there has to be a judicial process. So if someone who is a staunch hardliner, such as Mr. Larijani, who is also a cleric, is now publicly opposed to the state, this means that the cracks within the system are pretty profound. And this has happened, as you point out, Representative Ellison, that this has happened actually throughout the clerical establishment.

Mr. ELLISON. And in fact Mr. Karoubi is a religious leader as well, isn't that right?

Ms. ABDO. Yes, he is a religious leader as well.

Mr. ELLISON. And he is an opposition leader. Mr. Khalaji?

Mr. KHALAJI. Yes, as a former seminarian and who has studied in the clerical establishment for 14 years, I would say that the clerical establishment in Islam, especially in Shiism, is completely dif-

ferent than other religions like, you know, Christianity and Catholicism. So when somebody wears robe and turban, it doesn't mean that he is necessarily a religious leader or religious authority.

Mr. ELLISON. Okay.

Mr. KHALAJI. So Karoubi is known in Iran not because of his religious authority but because of his political record.

Mr. ELLISON. Thank you for your inclusion. I only have 5 minutes, so please do forgive me. I appreciate your remarks though. You know, you all have talked about sanctions and tried to come up with smart sanctions, I have a question for you hypothetical. If the people of the democracy movement believe that all we care about is the nuclear issue, not their human rights, and if our response to what they believe our concerns are is to deprive the average Iranian of gasoline, what will be the impact of that? And is that scenario a possibility? Dr. Ghadar?

Mr. GHADAR. I absolutely agree with your comment. Let me just briefly on the previous one, my fear is even more exaggerated than you articulated. I am afraid that it is in fact the Revolutionary Guards that are calling the shots and Khamenei is afraid to do anything, but I don't have proof for that, but just the fact that they are the instrument as holding control. With regard to sanctions, I believe sanctions that hurt the people will ultimately hurt us, okay?

I mentioned the airlines, I don't think gasoline is going to be effective, I think that what the government will just basically reduce, they have no smart cards, the smart cards will basically the amount allocated was 100 liters a month, last month they reduced it to 80, you can buy it on the black market four times the price, the Revolutionary Guards have cards that they can use, they can even sell it on the side. Sanctions has allowed the Revolutionary Guards to basically play a role in smuggling and profiting from the market, and also on foreign direct investment making all the major investments themselves.

Mr. ELLISON. Thank you, Doctor, and please forgive my abruptness, they only give you a few minutes. I actually introduced a sanctions bill, and the bill I am introducing is called the Stand With the Iranian People Act, I call it SWPA, but what it does is that it prohibits procurement contracts with persons or entities that provide censorship or surveillance technology to the Government of Iran, it encourages U.S. allies to deny visas to Iranian officials who have carried out human rights abuses, it affirms the importance of diplomacy with Iran in order to advance national security interests of the United States, and it also encourages work with the U.N. to investigate human rights abuses, and finally it enables U.S. American NGOs to provide humanitarian assistance directly to Iranian people. Now I know you haven't read my bill, but just conceptually based on what I have shared with you, what do you think in the last 4 seconds? Just if I could ask for unanimous consent for 1 minute, maybe 2?

Mr. ACKERMAN. Let us give 30 seconds.

Mr. GHADAR. I think that is a great idea. I would also add to that that allowing Iranian students to come to the United States, allowing maybe a consulate to be opened so that actually Iranians can see that we are open to them.

Mr. ELLISON. Did you say consulate?

Mr. GHADAR. Consulate, yes.

Mr. CARPENTER. Representative Ellison, I have read your bill and I think it is a good bill. I think there have to be some safeguards put in place on the humanitarian assistance side, OFAC licensing, et cetera. And I also think you should go further in terms of allowing certain communications equipment and other things for NGOs to be able to distribute, again with that oversight. In terms of the broad—

Mr. ACKERMAN. We are going to have to just keep moving.

Ms. ABDO. I think your bill is perfect. I mean I think that those are practical recommendations that are practical and that wouldn't necessarily taint the movement.

Mr. KHALAJI. I think they are excellent. Just one thing, along with banning visa for Iranian officials we have to facilitate the visa for ordinary Iranians. This is the nightmare of Ayatollah Khamenei to see Iranian people connected to the world outside.

Mr. ELLISON. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And let me be the contrarian that I guess I have been designated to be on this committee. And let me just say while I have great respect for my very creative and I wouldn't mind saying a new force here in Congress, and we certainly appreciate his ideas, but let us take a look at where is the pivotal spot over there. What is going to make the change? We are not talking about the Revolutionary Guard, we are talking about the factor that gives the mullahs the right to determine who will run in the election.

It is the mullah's power to determine who will get on the ballot and respect for that power that keeps that regime in place. Take away that, and have anyone who wants to run on the ballot be free to get on the ballot, that regime would disappear. So it is the mullah regime that is the enemy. The Revolutionary Guard, where does their power come from? It comes from the fact that no one can run on the ballot unless they are approved by the mullahs and they are not going to let anybody in who is against the establishment.

The changes that happened in Poland and the disintegration of the Soviet Union happened for a number of reasons. Yes, the Pope played a major role, that was great. But let us note it wasn't just the Pope. Ronald Reagan had meetings in the White House with people who were resisting the Communist dictatorship in Poland and elsewhere, he participated in rallies in which the people who were struggling for freedom in Poland participated. That type of endorsement we do not have today by this administration, and we need that kind of endorsement.

The President of the United States and all of us should identify and embrace people who are struggling for freedom in Tehran, and we have not done that. And the chairman is absolutely right when he says this isn't the only administration that has held off from that type of approach, you are absolutely right in that, Mr. Chairman, and I am not just leveling criticism at Obama who has been in the presidency now for just 1 year, but for the entire administration that preceded him.

I am going to be asking Mr. Chairman and the subcommittee in which I am a member to hold hearings into broadcasting and what quality of broadcasting we have going into Iran and elsewhere. I am sitting next to one of the heroes of freedom broadcasting, and Ed will certainly have some comments on that in a moment I am sure. Finally, about what we can do, go after the money. These mullahs are corrupt.

They are not only repressive, they are not only part of a repressive regime, they are part of a corrupt regime that is, as you say, just robbing the people of Iran blind. They are sucking the wealth away from that society, and much of it goes into banks in the West. We should make it our job, and Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that we in the Congress call on this administration to identify and locate those funds that have been taken from the people of Iran by the mullah leadership and to seek to have those funds frozen and perhaps even put into a freedom fund that could be used by those people struggling for democracy in that country.

Those things would be seen as real, not only by the people in the streets but also of course by the people in power. We need to do more than just every now and then reconfirm that supposedly we are on their side but we are going to have patience and think about what actions we should take. We have heard some great suggestions today, I think we should follow up on those suggestions, we should be powerful in our advocacy of democracy, and we should be courageous in aligning with those people who are struggling for democracy in Tehran and elsewhere.

That is the way to build a more peaceful world, and if we had people here talking about China I would be saying exactly the same thing. People around the world who want democracy are our greatest allies, whatever country they come from. Iran is not our enemy, the Iranian people are not our enemy. The Chinese people, the Iranian people, all of those people are our greatest allies in this struggle. We recognize that, Ronald Reagan recognized that, and that is how we defeated Communism. We need to have that same type of identification of our allies now as we face radical Islam in the future. So thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for this. Unfortunately there is 3 seconds left. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I would ask that my opening statement be entered into the record at this point.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Without objection, all members' statements.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the chair. You know, picking up on my friend from California's last comments, I am certainly totally sympathetic with his point of view, but something that concerns me about U.S. identification with what seems to be clearly a truly indigenous mass movement in Iran is that we are between the rock and the hard place. Too much identification, public identification, by the United States with such a movement could put in jeopardy such a movement and play into the hands of the hardliners who want to make the argument that dissent is in fact an import from foreigners who are up to no good like "the great Satan America."

And on the other hand, you know, we don't want to be silent in the face of human rights violations by the current regime, and we certainly want to hold out some lifeline that is meaningful to those

who have the courage to go to the streets, the barricades, to speak up for human rights and freedom in Iran. So I guess I would ask the panelists to comment briefly, keeping in mind our time, but would you comment on the indigenous nature of this mass movement and maybe its prospects of success, and your guidance to us and to the United States Government about where is that fine line that we not have unintended consequences? Mr. Carpenter.

Mr. CARPENTER. Thank you. Dissent as an import, that is the accusation the government is already making, they are already saying that this is a United States, British effort to undermine the regime and anybody who participates is a traitor to the regime. So the fact that we stand back and dissociate ourselves with it doesn't change anything, they continue to do it. So we might as well help in the way we can by associating ourselves strongly with them on the ground in terms of support on the human rights basis. No one buys it in Iran that the British and the United States are at the base of this movement.

Mr. GHADAR. Congressman, I think two things. One, we need to make sure that we inform the Iranians of what is going on so they know what is going on. And then we need to take steps for their voices to be heard, whether it is on TV or Internet. I don't think neither of those are going to put us between a rock and a hard place. However, the critical issue is, the Iranians on one hand want freedom, which we support completely, but on the other hand want independence. And it is that battle where the opposition is asking for freedom and the regime is saying, you are stooges of the opposition. So it is a fine line we can't cross. But informing them and making sure their voices are heard is not going to cause problems for us.

Ms. ABDO. Congressman, you raise an important issue which we haven't touched upon so much today, and that is, what is a realistic scenario and how can the opposition really make a difference? And I think that at least in the short term the most realistic scenario is not the opposition in retreat, neither is it regime change. But it is a compromise, some sort of unity government that has been discussed in Iran.

And that is why it is necessary to empower the opposition, so that they can be well placed politically to extract concessions from the regime, such as perhaps President Ahmadinejad will remain in power but perhaps their own representatives might be allowed to enter government in some way. There are parliamentary elections coming up as well. Ordinarily, historically, reformists are often barred from running in these elections. It would be important to have more reformists in the Parliament. So there are many things that could happen within the political structure if the opposition movement were in a better position than it is today.

Mr. KHALAJI. I think that, we don't know what happens, but what we are certain about is that Khamenei as the Supreme Leader would not have any strong place in the future of Iran. Whether green leaders reach to some sort of agreement with the government, whether Revolutionary Guard takes power, whether regime changes, in any possible and likely scenario, Khamenei would not be there. Second is that I don't believe that green leaders can compromise with the government. Or it is better to say that I don't



think that the government accept to compromise with the green movement. What I expect is two extreme sides of this spectrum, either the collapse of the regime or a more militarized regime in Iran.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, my time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Well thank you for your excellent testimony and for unpacking some of the delicate dilemmas that present itself in trying to stand with something that is very important without interfering with its eventual positive outcome. In that regard, I want to tell you all that many of us discussed behind the scenes when the opposition movement first appeared as to what the proper response would be, trying to determine this line between prudence and risk taking, not trying to do something in support of the opposition that would actually undermine it by giving a pretext for its crackdown by the government.

And so I chose prudence, I chose to remain quiet, because I thought until we had a better understanding of the resiliency, the depth, the passion, the willingness to sacrifice, the continuity of this potential movement, that given the past history with the United States we could inadvertently lead to its crushing. It is different now. I think that we as an international community with one collective voice need to shout from the hills the Iranian people's right for autonomy and their right to protest and their right to seek a more just form of governance.

And so I think this hearing is part of that speaking out, Mr. Chairman. And with that said, that touches upon some of what your concerns were, Mr. Carpenter, in trying to determine when is the appropriate time to speak and speak loudly. And even if it gave further pretext as you are suggesting, we are already being blamed, I have heard that, so what harm can come from it? But with that said, Dr. Ghadar, you said there is three possible outcomes.

I want you to assign a probability to those possible outcomes, one, that the movement is crushed, two, that it finds some common ground, some compromise for its accommodation with the current governmental structures, or three, it results in a paradigm shift in the form of governance in Iran. Because this comes back to that point as to what to do as well as when to do it. Assign a probably.

Mr. GHADAR. That is a very difficult thing to do, but I will be glad to give you my biased point of view.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I would prefer you do it than me.

Mr. GHADAR. Okay. I think the likelihood of the Revolutionary Guard's beating up on everybody is quite high on February 11th, but that is not going to basically dissipate the problem. So I would give that a low probability of 10, 15, 20 percent. I think the probability of the demise of the regime is highly optimistic, I don't think they are going to just walk away. So the bulk of the probability, maybe 60-65, 70 percent, is going to some kind of compromise. These guys are all in cahoots together, with all due respect, Mousavi, Karoubi, Khamenei, Rafsanjani, they all basically have the same roots. The opposition in the streets are ahead of all

of them. Therefore, the compromise will be made among them behind closed doors. How it will be done, I don't know.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. If you agree to that level of probably for that outcome, what will these compromise structure look like, would anybody have any insight into that?

Mr. GHADAR. I think there is going to be a reduction in the influence of the Supreme Leader, I think there will be additional opposition members in the Parliament, and I think that Mr. Rafsanjani will play a more active role as a mediator.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Go ahead, Mr. Khalaji.

Mr. KHALAJI. For the same reason Dr. Ghadar mentioned, I think that the compromise won't happen. The relationship between green leaders and the government is like the relationship between Iran and United States, there is a mutual distrust. When Iran is powerful it doesn't want to compromise, when they are weak they don't want to compromise. That is the situation exactly now with the green movement and government.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I understood this point as well that what started out as opposition to what was considered to be a fraudulent election has now matured and moved way beyond that.

Mr. KHALAJI. Exactly.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Tapping into a root of opposition that has been festering—not festering, organically growing—for a long time because of all of the abuses. I think I am done, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. There are votes that are being called momentarily on the floor. If we all keep to or under our 5 minutes I think we can get the last two members and the witnesses' response. Mr. Crowley.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Many have looked to history, and particularly in Indonesia and the demise of Suharto, the exposure of his corruption that led to the demise of that regime. Some news reports have suggested that the Supreme Leader Khamenei has up to \$30 billion in assets. And even if that is not true, it still appears that there may very well be serious corruption that exists within his own personal life.

Some of the reports say that he owns over 200 walking sticks or canes, one of which has an encrusted diamond in it, also that he may have ownership of eight airplanes. One, how do we confirm or how are we confirming that those statistics are true or not? How widely known or suspected is the level of corruption of Khamenei, does the public know about it? And what else is being done to bring attention to the corruption that exists within the mullah regime? Obviously, as I think what I heard from the testimony, that everyone here believes that the shine is off the apple, but to what degree is that the case and what is being done to further expose that? And if anyone politely would like to respond?

Mr. GHADAR. Congressman, it is difficult to say how much money he has got, but I will give you some examples. There are reports that around \$250–300 billion of Iranian money is invested via Dubai. Okay, where does this money come from? Who makes \$250 billion? That is not the salary of the Supreme Leader, okay? We can track that down, we can put pressure via UAE on Dubai to find out what is going on. Much of this transaction has to go outside

of Western banks, but we do have some pressure on those institutions to find out what is going on.

Right after the election, the foreign exchange reserves of Iran dropped dramatically. There was clearly money flowing out very rapidly. Where did it go? I don't know, but I am sure that our Treasury can play a very active role in identifying that. There were reports that a truck was found in Turkey with billions of dollars of gold and currency, where did that go? The Turks confiscated it and I don't know where the negotiations are going on. There are numerous examples of this, the question is do we have the will to go after it? That is not going to step on the Iranian opposition, the Iranian opposition will support this move. Talking about it, broadcasting about it will be positive.

Mr. CROWLEY. I appreciate that in terms of adding additional suspicions, but really more to my question, is it believed, what is the level of credibility within the Iranian people that that is the case and what is being done to expose more of that?

Mr. GHADAR. I believe the Revolutionary Guard members who have won all the contracts are highly suspect. After the foreign direct investment was held out, the major contracts, anything over \$1 billion was given to the Revolutionary Guard, the Tehran metro, the gas biplane goes to Pakistan, the gas operation Qatar. I think the Iranian population questions the Revolutionary Guards. I don't know to what extent they will question the Supreme Leader.

Ms. ABDO. Yes, I would agree, I think that there is a great difference in how the public views the Supreme Leader versus the Islamic Revolutionary Guards, and very little is known about Khamenei and his wealth. But I would also like to just add quickly to a suggestion that was made earlier. Even though, as you mentioned, Congressman, the legitimacy around Khamenei has certainly been damaged, I think that if we are talking about restructuring, you know, the government, I think that we can assume that he will remain in power until he dies.

I mean even though his power might be diminished and there is much more of a move now to rule by consensus within the power structure, I don't foresee any time in the near future when, even though his legitimacy has certainly been affected by this crisis, that he will step down from power or that he still, you know, won't have a primary decision making role. Thank you.

Mr. KHALAJI. It depends what we mean by the economic corruption. As far as I know, there is no evidence that Khamenei collects money for himself. He has a very simple life. But he controls the wealthiest organizations and companies in Iran, which are actually in charge of financially supporting Hezbollah, Hamas, extremist groups, and other dangerous group in the region. And they are in charge of actually expanding the power of Khamenei inside the country. Khamenei has lost his religious and political legitimacy, but it is not known in Iran as a symbol of the corruption.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you very much.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. The gentleman's time is expired. Final five.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to ask a question of Ms. Abdo. And you and your colleagues have all raised this issue of human rights abuses of the Iranian regime. Has the

Obama administration shown any inclination to raise that issue at the U.N. in order to try to broadcast that out across the international community?

Ms. ABDO. So your question is?

Mr. ROYCE. Has it been brought before the U.N.? In the past I have been involved in human rights issues where we have tried to get different countries, we have inquired as to why not raise these issues, human rights issues, at the U.N. level. And my question, is there the inclination by this administration to raise it at the U.N.?

Ms. ABDO. To my knowledge, this administration has not raised it. And I think that one suggestion that has been made is, rather than try to get, say, the U.N. General Assembly to pursue any sort of investigation, that it might be more wise to have the Human Rights Commission within the U.N. pursue such an initiative. I know that in the past a body of the U.N. has had negotiations with Iran and European diplomats over human rights issues, and what the Iranians tried to do at that time was to tie the nuclear issue to the human rights issue. So, you know, we will make compromises on this issue if you are going to, and that didn't really work.

Mr. ROYCE. And you concur with me, I mean our whole problem here is that we are not focusing on human rights, and it seems to me the ghoulish show trials that we are seeing there and the rapes of people in detention and the deaths on the streets and in the universities, all of this, all of these human rights abuses, which in terms of the atrocities, the photographs that we see, we have the documentary evidence here, it seems that the key issue here is, can the West get these facts out so that the entire international community and everyone in Iran are confronted with the facts?

Can we assist on that or are we going to be preoccupied on other questions and not engaged on what needs to be broadcast? And then the second question I would ask you, ma'am, is there a way to guarantee that we do a better job? I have been involved with legislation, authoring legislation for broadcasting into Yugoslavia, too late, into Afghanistan, too late. But here we have an opportunity to do what we did too late into Burma, and that is establish the facts for people on the ground in terms of what is actually happening. And in the past we haven't always done such a good job in terms of how we have delivered that message. I would like your critique on that too and how we could help.

Ms. ABDO. Well, as a former journalist, I can tell you that media is very powerful. And as we have seen with these demonstrations the BBC Farsi Service has made an enormous impact in providing exactly the kind of information that you are talking about. Now, having said that, I think that that kind of sort of example or paradigm can't really apply to Voice of America, primarily because Voice of America is associated in a way with the U.S. Government that BBC is not. And so I think that for a lot of reasons, in addition to the fact that BBC Farsi Service is just a superb, superb news organization, it has had a great effect, but it has been very powerful.

Mr. ROYCE. Your critique on all of these other issues is very helpful, and we will try to implement them to the greatest extent possible. We don't have a critique from you, and we get a lot of advice

in terms of what we ought to do in terms of public diplomacy. If you would ever feel inclined, given your background, to write up some suggestions based upon your observations, I would like to see them and I think probably some of the other members of this committee would look forward to those observations.

Ms. ABDO. Thank you, I am happy to do that.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you. I think I have a few more minutes. Anyone else want to make a comment on this?

Mr. KHALAJI. I think that one of the way that United States can support human rights in Iran is to use its channels to religious leaders of the world and have them put pressure on Iran, especially on the Supreme Leader, because the Iranian leader, he consider himself as the religious leader and the leader of Muslim World. So for example we have seven Baha'is in prison, they are held without any reason, and they are at risk. And we have many other people, if you have dozens of Sunni religious activists, they are in prison. So we can use these channels and ask different religious leaders in the world, write a letter to Ayatollah Khamenei publicly and criticize him or respectfully ask him to end this human rights abuse in Iran.

Mr. ACKERMAN. And that will have to be the last word.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The gentleman's time is expired, the committee's time is expired. Let me thank the panel for their indeed expert testimony, you have been a great help to this committee. I am very proud of the committee's number of people who participated today, the great questions and the thinking that went into them and the responses by our witnesses who have been a great help to the process. Thank you all very much. The committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:57 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]



# APPENDIX



MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

**SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE**  
**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
*U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*  
*WASHINGTON, D.C.*

**Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia**  
**Gary L. Ackerman (D-NY), Chairman**

February 2, 2010

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building**:

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 3, 2010

**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**SUBJECT:** America and the Iranian Political Reform Movement: First, Do No Harm

**WITNESSES:** Ms. Geneive Abdo  
Director  
Iran Program  
The Century Foundation

Mr. Mehdi Khalaji  
Senior Fellow  
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Fariborz Ghadar, Ph.D.  
Distinguished Scholar and Senior Advisor  
Center for Strategic and International Studies

Mr. J. Scott Carpenter  
Keston Family Fellow  
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

**By Direction of the Chairman**

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-225-3021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

---



### COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON MESA MEETING

Day Wednesday Date 2-3-2010 Room 2172

Starting Time 2:08 Ending Time 3:56

Recesses  ( to )

Presiding Member(s) Ackerman

CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING THAT APPLY:

- Open Session
- Electronically Recorded (taped)
- Executive (closed) Session
- Stenographic Record
- Televised

TITLE OF HEARING or BILLS FOR MARKUP: (Include bill number(s) and title(s) of legislation.)  
America and the Iranian Political Reform Movement: First, Do No Harm

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:  
Ackerman, Crowley, Costa, Ellison, Connolly, Green, Burton, Fortenberry, Rohrabacher, Royce

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (Mark with an \* if they are not Members of IIFAC.)

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes  No   
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)  
Ackerman, Burton

ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE MARKUP: (Attach copies of legislation and amendments.)

RECORDED VOTES TAKEN (FOR MARKUP): (Attach final vote tally sheet listing each member.)

Subject	Yeas	Nays	Present	Not Voting
<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_  
or  
TIME ADJOURNED 3:56

  
Subcommittee Staff Director

**Opening Statement**  
**Ranking Member Dan Burton**  
**Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia**  
**“America and the Iranian Political Reform Movement: First, Do No Harm”**  
**February 3, 2010**

---

Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening today’s hearing regarding the growing political opposition movement in Iran and what this movement might mean for U.S. relations with Iran in general, and specifically in our efforts to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

On June 12, 2009 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was ostensibly re-elected to his second term as President of Iran. Within 48 hours of Iranian officials announcing Ahmadinejad’s landslide 62.6% victory in what outside observers widely expected to be a close contest, Tehran and other cities throughout the country were overwhelmed with protestors in response to what the people of Iran knew to be a rigged election. The immediate response by the Obama Administration was in my opinion weak. In a statement released to the media, the President said he was “deeply troubled by the violence that I’ve been seeing on television.” He went on to say, “I can’t state definitively one way or another what happened with respect to the election. But what I can say is that there appears to be a sense on the part of people who were so hopeful and so engaged and so committed to democracy who now feel betrayed.”

This was a tepid and half-hearted endorsement of freedom in Iran whereas the President should have immediately and forcefully denounced the sham elections, indicated U.S. support for the demonstrators, and called on other nations to do the same. Furthermore, he should have used the crisis to rally additional international support for sanctions aimed at stopping Iran’s quest for nuclear weapons. Instead, the Administration, naive in its policy of engagement with Iran, more than likely squandered the chance for real political change from within by failing to speak out against the regime’s brutal oppression of its people when it mattered most.

There are some, as evidenced in the title of this hearing “first, do no harm,” who believe the President was right to be measured in his response to the crisis, believing that an excessive degree of interventionism from the United States would’ve backfired and hardened Tehran’s determination not to negotiate with the United States and the international community over its nuclear program.

Again, I believe this reasoning is flawed because Tehran has never wavered in its nuclear ambition. A year has now passed since the President first reached out to Iran in a bid to engage the regime. In this time, Iran has responded to President Obama’s open hand by continuing to defiantly maintain its uranium enrichment program, calling for the destruction of Israel, pursuing long-range missile weaponry, working to destabilize the peace process in the region, and supplying weapons to terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas.

Tehran has no interest in resolving the dispute over its nuclear program and has skillfully maneuvered the Obama Administration into giving the regime one more year to get closer to acquiring an atomic bomb. The Administration may finally be getting wise to Iran’s diplomatic shell-game. As we speak, the U.S. is dispatching Patriot defensive missiles to four Persian Gulf countries – Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait – and moving U.S. warships into the Gulf which are capable of shooting down Iranian

missiles. In addition, the President's Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, is preparing a new sanctions resolution - the fourth in four years - for the United Nations Security Council to consider.

And finally, the Congressional Leadership has also lifted its block on the "Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act" as it recently passed both the House and Senate. Mr. Chairman, we need to conference this bill as quickly as possible and send it to the President without further delay. Unfortunately, the President's timing with regards to Iran seems wrought in irony; as he begins to finally close his open hand into a fist, we see that the regime that never once attempted to unclench its own fist now seems to be gaining back its footing.

I, more than anyone, hope for the sake of national and regional security, and for the sake of the people of Iran, that we have not done too little too late.

---

**The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)**  
**MESA Subcommittee Hearing**  
**American and the Iranian Political Reform Movement: First, Do No Harm**  
**Wednesday, February 2, 2010**  
**2pm**

Iran is no stranger to mass movements. We are all familiar with the movement against the Shah in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which ultimately led to the 1979 Revolution. Unfortunately the United States' relationship with the Shah tarnished the U.S.'s reputation among many Iranians. But with the Green Movement's rise against the corrupt and brutal Ahmadinejad regime, the U.S. has an opportunity to alter the narrative of U.S. involvement in Iran and morally support this democratic movement. The message is clear—though we are opposed to the Ahmadinejad regime's policies, we morally support the Iranian people in their movement for democracy and human rights.

The recent fraudulent elections in Iran unearthed the seeds of democracy among the Iranian people. When the Interior Ministry announced that Ahmadinejad won 62% of votes only two hours after polls closed, Iranian streets erupted in protest. We saw the power of assembly, and the inherent democratic desires of the Iranian populace. The fact that Grand Ayatollah Montazeri of Qom questioned the legitimacy of Ahmadinejad's win, and defended the right of the people to assemble, indicates there are pro-democratic voices in Iran that can be encouraged. Other Ayatollahs, such as Grand Ayatollah Yusef Sanei and Grand Ayatollah Abdol Karim Musavi Ardabili, also criticized the use of violence against protestors. Unfortunately, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' violent crackdowns are still common.

The United States Congress has taken steps to impose additional sanctions aimed at the Iranian regime through Chairman Berman's bill—the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act. It is unfortunate that not all countries "play fair" when it comes to sanctions. For example, trade sanctions against Iran have resulted in increased business between Iran and two other powers—China and Dubai. It is shameful that other nations would support the Iranian regime through trade. However, the U.S.'s position against the Iranian regime is clear—we oppose both the regime's nuclear enrichment and the regime's human rights abuses.

Given the nascent democratic movement in Iran, I look forward to today's hearing.

