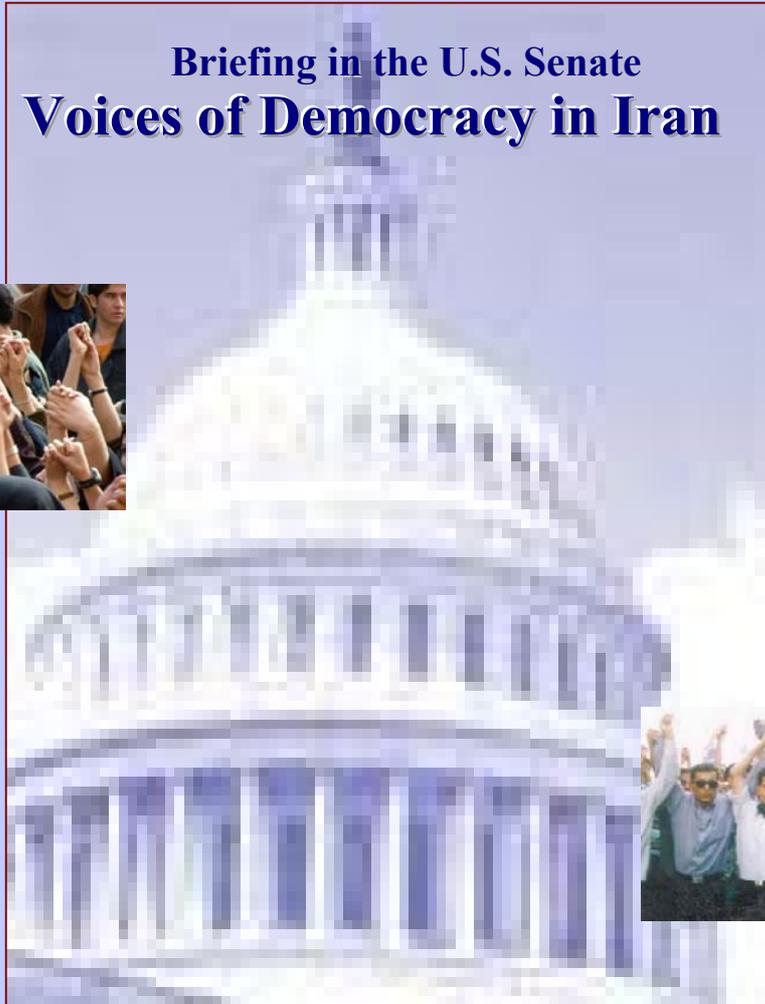


COMMEMORATION OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT OF IRAN

Briefing in the U.S. Senate Voices of Democracy in Iran



July 7, 2004
902 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C.



COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF REFERENDUM IN IRAN
1050 Connecticut Avenue N.W. Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
USA
Ph: (202) 772-4154 Fax: (202) 772-3101
info@referendum-iran.org , www.referendum-iran.org

On July 7, 2004, the Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran (CSRI), sponsored a briefing in the US Senate, commemorating the 5th anniversary of 1999 student uprising.

This program was introduced by the Mr. Hedayat Mostowfi, executive director of CSRI, revealing a comprehensive report, which covered the latest statistics of social oppression, inhumane punishments and social injustice in Iran. The report covered the period of 2002 to 2004.

CSRI released the names of 70 students who have been arrested or summoned the notorious Ministry of Intelligence during March 2004 to July 2004. The list included those murdered under torture or have gone missing. The program also included a presentation and musical performances of Iranian student solidarity movement in exile.

Excerpts from speeches are given in this booklet.





The policy discussion was moderated by Mr. Masoud Dolati, President of CSRI with the following distinguished speakers:

Professor Raymond Tanter

Adjunct Scholar at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Dr. Kenneth Katzman

Middle East Specialist of Congressional Research Services

Professor Donna Hughes

Director of Rhode Island Women's Studies Program and the Eleanor M. and Oscar M. Carlson Endowed Chair

Ms. Zahra Amanpour

Representative of the student solidarity movement in US



*Hedayat Mostowfi
Executive Director of
CSRI*

This is a critical moment. The people of Iran are suffering. The Iranian regime has stepped up repression against the students. I have with me, a list containing the names of some 70 Iranian students that have been arrested within the past three month in Iran. The list includes names, date of arrest, place of arrest and the sentences as you can see here. Also I have with me a list of names of students arrested last year, the fate of many still unknown.

I also have a couple of other detailed lists showing the level of repression in Iran. Another news I received moments ago is that dissident political prisoners in Tehran's Evin Prison, including members of Iran's opposition, the People's Mojahedin, have staged a hunger strike on the eve of the anniversary of the July uprising and in protest against a new wave of suppression and widespread arrest of university students and youths in Iran.

Our committee believes that the Iranian students' movement is in a very unique position today because it is bridging the gap between the civil society and opposition leaders.

Their role is particularly important because of the perceived domination of the Iranian regime's ideology whose sole basis is to spawn hatred and false religious values throughout the region. We need to help the Iranian people break down this system of oppression and end the threat of the clerical regime.

Let us join those who voice concern over the growing threat of Tehran's regime that has gone beyond the borders of Iran and is threatening progress and peace in the Middle East. Let us announce that the current regime in Tehran is illegitimate and must be replaced with a democratic and peace seeking government. Let us support the pro-democracy movement of Iran.

Professor Raymond Tanter

Adjunct Scholar at the Washington Institute for Near East

How you commemorate the student movement in Iran?



To anticipate the conclusion, the United States should combine moral rhetorical support in the form of statement from the White House to the students along with overt and covert material assistance to the armed opposition and that means re-arming secular democratic opposition which is now in Camp Ashraf. Those are my conclusions.

... As my colleagues have pointed out the regime's paramilitary units violently confronted the students, injuring and arresting peaceful demonstrators. And I would say that I am glad that Ms. Amanpour reminded me of December 7, 1957 with respect to anti-Nixon visit which culminated in the January 1979 fleeing of the Shah and installation of Khomeini. I was in Mexico giving a talk and told others that I would be giving a talk about the Iranian student movement in the United States and they said we thought the students were against the Americans. I said interestingly enough the students are now pro-American. I suspect that the revolution that began in December of 1957, was not as anti-American, which it was, as it was anti-Shah. So, when Americans tend to identify with corrupt regimes, the people tend to stick with the American as the regimes fall. That is what we have in Iran...

The students require words of support from the leadership of not only the United States but all the Great Powers rather than statements of neutrality... What is the equivalent in Iran to the solidarity movement in Poland? The student movement is the closest equivalent to Poland's Solidarity movement. So, what we need to do is to provide rhetorical support for the student movement on the one hand and on the other hand get the Mojahedin E-khalq off the terrorist list. So, Tehran is not Warsaw, nor is the religious theocracy in Iran subject to the external moral authority of a Pope. Therefore, you need to support the armed Iranian opposition outside Iran... Let me give some specific points on what needs to be done:

1. I would like to see Mojahedin to be recognized as Iran's main opposition group and its members in Camp Ashraf should receive Protected Person Status according to 4th Geneva Convention. This is crucial.
2. The Iraqi Interim Government should grant refugee status to the People's Mojahedin based in Iraq and provide with complete freedom of association and I hope that things are moving towards that direction. But you really have to keep publicizing this in order to make sure that this is working.
3. I would like to see the People's Mojahedin and all those associated organizations off the foreign terrorists' organization list. You know once the People's Mojahedin based in camp Ashraf receive the "protected person" status under the Geneva 4th, there is no reason for them to be on the list.

Dr. Kenneth Katzman

Middle East Specialist of Congressional Research Service



...As a strategist, I focus on not only what Iran is doing to its own people within itself, but really what is the threat and how does this effect US security.

Iran is a very different story with compare to Iraq. Iran is not under any international sanctions. Iran is able to, through participation in non-proliferation treaty, to acquire certain civilian nuclear technology and there are no international sanctions on Iran.

So, Iran is able to build up its nuclear capability without any real constrains. This is a major

concern, because I believe Iran does want a nuclear weapon and is attempting to achieve a nuclear weapon capability. Now, some may ask me Mr. Katzman why do they need this?

Why do you believe Iran wants this nuclear capability? And my view is, it is complex. There are many different explanations. I happen to lean toward the explanation that Ayatollah Khomeini used to say that relations with the US are like the wolf and the lamb. Iran has a historic feeling that it is subject to the whims of the United States and it believes that achieving a nuclear weapon is a way of delivering itself, equalizing the relationship and it is not subject anymore to the dismissal of whims of the United States. That is my view. But I also believe there is legitimacy to other views who say Iran wants to be more aggressive if it has nuclear weapons capability. Then is might try to intimidate other Persian Gulf states, it might acquire new prestige and use it to renew support for Hizbollah, Hamas and other Islamic movements that Iran is supporting...

I believe that Iran is attempting to acquire nuclear weapon, I believe clearly and evenly that the International Atomic Energy is saying that Iran is not forth coming. It has concealed information. .. So, this is something that it's being worked on and the Bush Administration wants to refer Iran to the UN Security Council for possible international sanctions on the nuclear issue. But what really interests me as a scholar is actually Iran's support for extremist Islamic movements in the region... Tehran is the major beneficiary of this chaos in Iraq... Sistani is a revred scholars and he does not take instructions from Khamenei. He does not take instructions from Khatami. But there is a lot of friendship there, there is not a lot of difference between Tehran's position and SCIRI and DAWA. They are very very friendly. Tehran does not really, even have to give instructions to these parties. So, Tehran is clearly benefiting, the question is what will Tehran do with this new power... So, in my view Tehran has clearly benefited from the war in Iraq and it remains to be seen what Tehran will do with this, but I am sure Tehran has its own intentions and I think they are potentially very detrimental to United States national security.

Professor Donna Hughes
Director of Rhode Island Women's Studies Program and the Eleanor M.
and Oscar M. Carlson Endowed Chair

A measure of Islamic fundamentalists' success in controlling society is the depth and totality with which they suppress the freedom and rights of women. Earlier this year, with the assistance of Iranian democracy activists I gathered information about prostitution and the



trafficking of women and girls out of Iran for sexual slavery. It is impossible to know how many victims there are, but all sources indicate an exponential growth in prostitution in Iran. The sex trade is also international, as thousands of Iranian women and girls have been sold into sexual slavery abroad. This criminal activity is often conducted with the knowledge and participation of the ruling mullahs. Government officials themselves are involved in trading and sexually abusing women and girls... One factor contributing to the increase in prostitution and the sex slave trade is the number of teen girls who are running away from home. The girls are rebelling

against fundamentalist imposed restrictions on their freedom, domestic abuse, and parental drug addictions. Unfortunately, in their flight to freedom, the girls find more abuse and exploitation...

Today, the two greatest threats to rights and well being of women in the world are Islamic fundamentalism and the growing sex trade. The fundamentalists in Iran are the chief sponsors of first of these threats, and leading practitioners of second. Since I wrote an article about prostitution and the trade in women and girls in Iran, a number of people have written to me asking what can be done to stop this trade and assist the victims. The answer is that only freedom and democracy in Iran can end slavery. Only the overthrow of the mullahs and the defeat of their theocracy will liberate women from a system based on contempt and hatred for women. Only the installation of democracy based on rule of law will rid Iran of the corruption and mafia-like control of Iran. Only individual liberty and equality between men and women will guarantee freedom for women and girls. And only courts of justice will punish the criminal perpetrators for their violence and exploitation. Of course, we are here today to commemorate the pro-democracy student movement that has courageously demonstrated for just those values and principles. They have heroically stood up to the vicious tyranny in Iran, and many have paid an enormous price for their bravery. Many of those activists have been and are women. Supporting the bold resistance of these women to the mullahs is the only way to defeat the slave traders and the terrorists...Those of us with freedom of speech and freedom of association, which are denied to activists in Iran, must use them to support the freedom fighters in Iran. We must work together and lobby our governmental representatives to take positions against the fascist Iranian regime and in support of democracy and freedom. We must tell them that there are no moderate, reformist mullahs in Iran, but there are millions of people who want to be free.

Ms. Zahra Amanpour Representative of the student solidarity movement in US

...the 1999 student demonstrations escalated into mass protests for the overthrow and even death of Iran's religious and political leaders... They are the children of the revolution. Therefore, it is imperative that we understand them in the context of their struggle... One incident that later became a symbol to the student movement took place on December 7th, 1957.

Three students who were taking part in a protest against then Vice President Nixon visiting Iran were killed by the Shah's government... In January of 1979 the struggle that had started more than three decades prior entered a new era when the Shah of Iran fled and Khomeini returned from exile...The Islamic Republic of Iran was installed. That very same year Khomeini, knowing full well the power that student movement had, closed all universities in the name of a "Cultural Revolution".



To further isolate the student movement and the democratic aspiration of the Iranian people the US embassy was taken over...The political reality underlying student protests and bloody clashes with the police in Tehran and other Iranian cities continued to grow.

In June of 2003 students once again took to the streets of Tehran and other cities. The regime reacted with the arrest of 4000 people many of whose fate is still unknown...

Those who say the student movement in Iran is leaderless and lacks identity are gravely mistaken. It is a dynamic movement that has survived brutal repression and isolation from the rest of the world. And yet their cry for freedom was heard around the world.

In 1999 12,000 exiled Iranians gathered in Washington DC like us today to show their solidarity with the student movement in Iran. The student movement is strong and has a clear mandate, which is calling for a regime change referendum in Iran.

Maryam Rajavi, of the National Council of Resistance in Iran has called for a UN monitored referendum. As an Iranian student in exile I support this referendum and believe like many Iranians that it is the only peaceful way to bring freedom and democracy to Iran and save the world from the threat of a nuclearized regime in Tehran.

Ms. Soolmaz Aboali, a Communications major from George Mason University, VA and Gold Medal winner in Shotokan in the Pan American Tournament in November 2003 in Brazil

On July 9th 1999, the student protest started as a peaceful demonstration on Tehran campus but it turned into the first major anti-regime demonstration since the revolution that lasted six days before being crushed by the Revolutionary Guards, the Basij militia, and plainclothes militia men. During this time, the students of Tehran, Tabriz, Esfahan, and Shiraz along with 18 other cities were violently attacked by the Islamic vigilantes under the

discretion of the mullah's regime. The crackdown began with the attacks on Tehran campuses in the middle of the night, as the students slept, the gendarmes used machetes, metal pipes, chains, and butcher knives to attack the students. They targeted over 80 students in various rooms in the dormitory. The evidence of this brutal night shows the remains of broken doors and glass along with blood smeared corners and hallways as indicated in our photo exhibit here today. The vigilantes locked all the exits, and the students were terrorized throughout the night, it was 18 hours before anyone was allowed escape...



Mr. Pourya Khademi, Political science and Sociology major From University of California at Berkley.

"I have gone to school both in the United States and Iran. But when I walk through the Berkley campus, I see many different student clubs and groups handing out leaflets and flyer on many different issues. This is when I am reminded of my fellow students in Iran. This is the freedom they want... Today, Iran's student movement is stronger and more organized than ever... We the students in exile along with our fellow students in Iran are demanding fundamental changes in Iran. We are rejecting this regime in its entirety and believe the only peaceful way to bring about change in Iran is through an internationally monitored regime change referendum. In the students own words on the 9th of July 1999, "death to despotism, and death to



Mr. Sohrab Kazeronian of University of Connecticut, CT

I would like to dedicate the famous Persian piece
"Ma ra Beboos"
(kiss me for the last time)

Dedicated to the parents who did not get a chance to say one last goodbye to their children, the students who were killed by the Iranian regime.



Masoud Dolati
President of CSRI

Indeed it is time for fundamental change in Iran.

Today you have heard from our experts and the student representatives who support the democratic aspiration of the Iranian people. The youth of Iran are clearly striving for a different life, a life of freedom and independence. Although every nation must find their own ways to liberate themselves and walk the path of democracy, it is our duty as freedom-loving people to support the Iranian freedom fighters achieve such goals...

Our committee believes the only way to advance change in Iran is through an internationally monitored referendum. This is our only peaceful option to bring democracy and establish a secular and representative government in Iran. The brutal nature of this regime is very clear to the world community.

So, on the 5th anniversary of July 1999 uprising, let us talk about solutions and the importance of supporting the indigenous voice of change, particularly the student movement in Iran. When we see hundreds of thousands of Iranians in Tehran and other cities are rejecting this regime, it is imperative that European and the United States encourage the democracy movement in Iran by abandoning appeasement and taking a firm stance on Tehran's regime.



Meeting of the Committee for the Support of Referendum in Iran, in the US Senate

Radiofarda:

With assistance from two US Senators the Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran, was able to hold a meeting in one of the Senate buildings. This meeting was in commemoration of the Student movement in Iran and in remembrance of its suppression by Tehran regime, five years ago.

Radiofarda: 08/07/2004 Parichehr Farzam: Five years ago, in July 9th of 1999, the student movement of Iran shattered the foundations of the fundamentalist regime of Iran. After that point, the will of (Iranian) people for a fundamental change was heard with a voice louder and more widespread thereafter. These sentences are the opening remarks of the invitation from the Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran for a meeting for this purpose in the US Senate. This foundation says: "Tehran's reaction to silence the voice of democracy in Iran was very violent."

In a meeting in one of the Senate Buildings on Wednesday, this foundation names 24 students who have been arrested only in May last year. Between March-October last year, 4500 in Qazvin, 1000 in Gonabad, 892 in Ardebil, 4000 in Lorestan, 4600 in Western Azerbaijan, 1058 in Qom, 600 in Golestan and 8500 in Mazandaran have been arrested. From 8500 arrested in Mazandaran 3290 are women. Although not all those arrested are students, many among them are. Shortly after the wave of rapes, arrests and oppression of students in Tehran and many other Iranian cities 5 years ago, a song was made and became famous. It passed the borders of Iran and was also broadcasted in the meeting held by the Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran in the US Senate.

[Broadcasting music "My schoolmate"....]

In Wednesday's meeting, Hedayat Mostowfi, committee's executive director, thanked the US Senate, in particular several Senators who helped him to organize the ceremony. The organizers had invited three prominent experts in Iran and Middle East issues, Women's rights and U.S. politics, to express their views on the political oppression in Iran and the Iranian student movement in a panel. One of the experts, Dr. Kenneth Katzman, was a specialist on Middle East Affairs in the Research section of Congress. In his talk on Iran and the region, Kenneth Katzman stated: "Iran is not under any international sanctions. Iran is able to, through participation in non-proliferation treaty, to acquire certain civilian nuclear technology and there are no international sanctions on Iran. So, Iran is able to build up its nuclear capability without any real constrains. This is a major concern, because I believe Iran does want a nuclear weapon and is attempting to achieve a nuclear weapon capability."

The meeting held by the Committee in Support of Referendum in Iran in one of the Senate Buildings, had a special combination. In addition to the experts' panel, a movie of the attack to the students 5 years ago was shown. Shattered and messed up rooms, broken windows and big and small spots of blood on the doors, walls and ceilings of the rooms, and students fleeing. Flames in the middle of the street and sidewalks. A boy that had raised two fingers in a sign for victory. A boy who was carrying a girl, perhaps his classmate" on his hands, Someone who had his bloody shirt over his head and reminded me of Ahmad Batebi's photo, that was published on the famous "The Economist" magazine, with the title: Another revolution" and a question mark after that.

And again in the US Senate, two Iranian students (a boy and a girl), who now study in U.S., but have seen the oppression of students in Tehran 5 years ago, and then a student who stands behind the microphone in the Senate building and with eyes looking at him with curiosity, awe, compassion and worry, plays the "Kiss me" song. This student says: "I play and dedicate this song to the mothers and fathers who were never able to kiss their student children on those sad but critical days."

And from the corner of one eye, I notice a participant who is wiping tears from the corner of his eyes. I ask "I noticed that you are wiping your tears. Is there a particular reason?" he says, "Yeah, because he dedicated his song to the students whom we did not have a chance to even say goodbye to them and I knew many of them. That's why."

And the Iranian student still plays the "Kiss me" song for the Iranian and American audience.

[Broadcasting a part of the song "kiss me", played by the student...]

Radio Farda is a service of U.S. International Broadcasting, which is funded by the U.S. Congress and operated by the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), an agency of the U.S. Government.