

# Holiday Seasonal Luncheon

Senate Policy Briefing

## IRAN UPRISING: THE NATION RISES FOR FREEDOM



### Senate Briefing

### Iran Uprising: A Nation Rises for Freedom December 4, 2019



## Kennedy Caucus Room (325 Russell Senate Office Building)

**Senator Martha McSally**, Armed Services Committee;  
**Message by Senator Ben Cardin**, Member, Foreign Relations Committee;  
**General James Jones, USMC(Ret.)**, Former National Security Advisor, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Marine Corps Commandant;  
**Governor Tom Ridge**, First Homeland Security Secretary and Pennsylvania Governor;  
**Ambassador Lincoln Bloomfield, Jr.**, Former Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs



## Senator Martha McSally

It's so good to be with you today. Welcome to Washington, D.C. And I've deployed to the Middle East six times. General Jones will be speaking later. I don't know how many times you spent there, but those of us who served and wore the uniform, I mean we see, and we've experienced firsthand the terrorist state sponsor that Iran is as the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world. We all knew this as we wore the uniform. And there were many sons and daughters of American families who came home in flag draped coffins, because of the terrorist activities of Iran. And so, we know the price that is paid, because Iran and their terrorist activity, whether it's sponsoring proxy militias or Hezbollah, or Hamas, and support the Assad regime, all across the region. And what an awful and bad actor as a regime that they are, both internally to their people and then externally as the largest state sponsor of terror.

I was just actually over in the region a few weeks ago, again, to observe firsthand the bombing of the Saudi Aramco oil facility. Again, their activities, you know, taking aggression against a neighbor trying to disrupt the global flow of oil, and actually was out on a destroyer in the Straits of Hormuz. Wanted to, again, see firsthand what was going on with their continued malevolent activity in the region.

I never supported the so-called Iran Deal. I thought it was a crappy deal, excuse my language. I'm a fighter pilot. [applause] And, as you all know, the influx of resources that came from that awful deal allow them to continue to fund terror and to continue to repress their own people in Iran. And so, I fully supported President Trump's decision in order to pull out of that deal and the maximum pressure campaign this maximum pressure campaign has been impactful, as you know. We are seeing that now Iran is having to make difficult choices about how they're funding their different proxy groups and their terrorist activities. As you know, none of those resources that flowed to them because of the deal helped the Iranian people. None of it. All it did was help them continue to prop up their terrorist organizations and their awful activities.



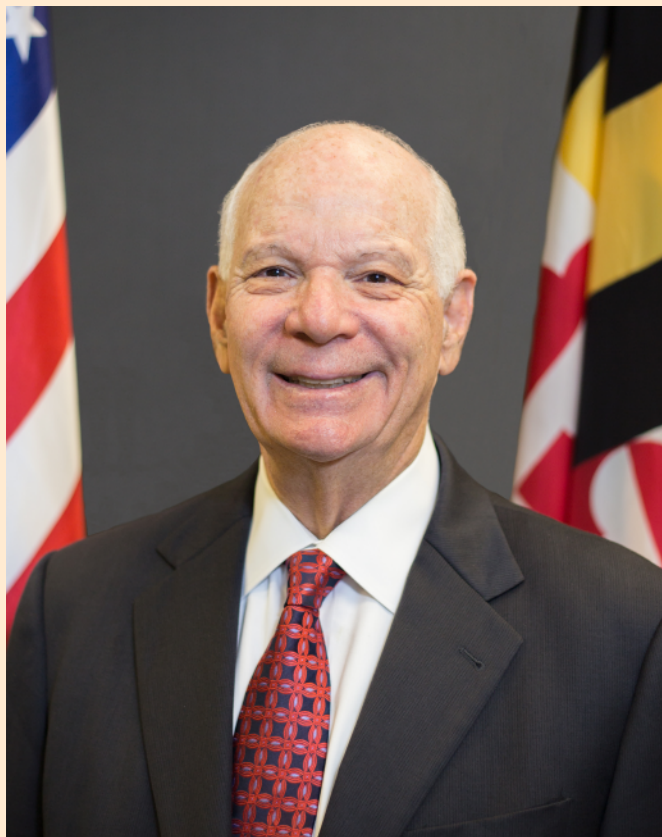
And so, the pressure needs to continue to be cranked up. And our European partners need to step up. They need to face the reality that Iran is breaking the deal, that they're continuing to support terrorism, and they need to join us in the maximum pressure campaign against the Iranian regime.

So, as we see with the uprisings that are happening, and that this lunch is focused on, we have people every single day right now who are putting their lives on the line because they were born with the desire to be free. I believe that God gave us all that desire to be free and to live out all of our dreams and our potential. And you're seeing that in the bravery of the Iranian people right now.

And we stand with them in their fight for freedom. We stand with them. And we will continue to call out this regime for what they are doing to their own people, slaughtering their own people, and what they're doing in the region to slaughter others and support terrorist activity. We need to continue to crank up the pressure on the regime until the Iranian people are finally free.

God bless you for all you're doing, and thanks for your support, and we'll keep working with you on this issue.





## US Senator Ben Cardin

Message from Senator Ben Cardin from Maryland, the ranking member of subcommittee on Western hemisphere, the transition that transnational crime, civilian security, democracy, human rights and global woman issue, Foreign Relation Committee. This message was read by Jonathan M. Weadon, Foreign Policy Fellow, office of Senator Cardin.

Good morning. Senator Carden would like to be here. He expresses his regrets, he is unable to attend, but I have been asked to read the following on his behalf.

General Jones, Ambassador Bloomfield, distinguished guests and friends of the Iranian people.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Organization of Iranian American Communities for hosting this event. And of course, would like to single out the Iranian American Community of Maryland for their invitation to me to deliver some brief remarks. I hope everyone gathered here today had a wonderful Thanksgiving last month as well as a joyous moment. These are tense times in Iran and its neighboring states. Military operations by Turkey and Russia, supported by the Iranian and Syrian regimes, have made what was already a dangerous refugee crisis in northern Syria even more chaotic with the resulting instability, creating a fertile environment for Islamic state elements to regroup.

Although glimmers of hope for a resolution of the five-year conflict in Yemen have appeared, even an end to the slaughter will only be the beginning of an arduous process to rebuild that shattered country. Popular outpourings of frustration with government mismanagement, price increases and lack of opportunity have brought hundreds of thousands of protesters into streets across Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran. The protest in Lebanon and Iraq have succeeded in convincing the premiers in both States to resign and we hold out hope that their successors will be responsive to the demands of their people. Sadly, and unacceptably, the unelected regime in Tehran is less interested in responding to the demands of its people than it is and using any means necessary to assure that its dominance over the lives of Iranians remains unchallenged. As we have seen in recent weeks, the security apparatus of Iran has resorted to every tactic in the dictatorial playbook to quash the protests they have shut down internet service made mass arrests and directed propaganda efforts to allege that the protests are nothing more than the manifestation of a foreign clot under the auspices of the CIA, Islamic state, and Kurdish militants. The regime has no evidence to back up this last claim because the facts of the protest already speak for themselves. The Iranian economy creaking under the weight of us sanctions on its oil trade and a number of key industries has seen significant inflation, rising unemployment, and the need for the government to reduce fuel subsidies, a catalyst for the protest where Iranians have been able to get access to the internet, they have posted dozens of videos appearing to show security forces violently suppressing demonstrators. The unreliable status of the internet has made it difficult to get a precise figure on the number of protesters who have died, but it is certainly in the hundreds with thousands of others detained by the security forces. I have long been an advocate for the protection of human rights as well as support for positive democratic change in Iran.



Countless Iranians had been abused by the regime since the revolution in 1979 and many more continued to be, as we can see in the daily headlines from Iran. We have seen this abuse of power play out again and again throughout the history of post 1979 Iran. We saw it during 2009 green revolution and again in 2017 and 2018 as the Iranians tried to make their voices heard in response to poor economic conditions and government corruption. We see this violent protection of the regimes, interests outside of Iran's borders throughout Yemen, the Gulf, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. My message to you this morning is that despite the regime's best efforts to hide its activities, the world is watching, and Congress is watching, and the United States is watching as well. These repeated displays of state violence are why I've introduced legislation to mandate US strategies against Iran's malign activities outside of its borders and why I have co-sponsored resolutions supporting the right of Iranian citizens to have their voices heard.

One final note. While I will never cease pursuing accountability for Iranian officials who violate human rights or benefit from corruption. And while I will always support the rights of Iranian people to self-determination, I'm committed to making sure that we do not respond to regime provocations and engage in an authorized military activity against Iran. The current authorization for military force, which dates from the days following the 9/11 attacks is not the proper means to permit war with Iran and to treat it as such, would be a Constitutional violation of Congress's duty to authorize any such action. Now, as with anytime we are witnessed to acts of injustice, our most potent weapon is making sure the world is witness to Iran's murderous reprisals against its own people, and that we speak with one voice and demanding an immediate end to the bloodshed. Thank you.





## US Senator Ben Cardin



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# Message of Maryam Rajavi

## President - elect of National Council of Resistance

Honorable senators,  
Distinguished personalities,  
Dear friends of the Iranian people and  
Resistance,

I would like to express my gratitude for  
your interest in the Iranian people's strug-  
gle for freedom in Iran.

In recent days, a number of distinguished  
senators from both parties extended their  
support to the Iranian uprising.

They showed that the representatives of  
American democracy stand by the people of  
Iran.

On behalf of the people of Iran, I sincerely  
thank them.

Honorable personalities,  
The Iran uprising which started on November 15th spread to more than 200 cities across Iran in just a few days. The mullahs' reaction has been ruthless. They have murdered in cold blood more than 1,000 protesters in the streets. There are shocking video clips showing revolutionary guards directly shooting at young people.

One clip from the northern city of Gorgan shows an IRGC commander shooting a young man from close range. Then another guard strikes him with an axe.

More than 12,000 people have been arrested.

But the brave young Iranians have remained defiant in face of this brutality. Vast regions of the city of Shiraz in southern Iran, with 2 million residents were in the hands of people for two days.

In some other cities, people took over the control of many districts from the IRGC.  
The people of Iran showed that they will not be satisfied with anything less than the regime's overthrow.

This uprising revealed several basic facts:

First, the mullahs' regime has no support among the people and lacks legitimacy.  
Second, the regime has no solutions to offer for political and economic crises.

Third, the MEK's efforts to build an organized movement succeeded. The resistance units of the MEK played a key role in the uprising.

Fourth, the answer to the problem of Iran is to overthrow the religious dictatorship, which is the desire of the Iranian people.

The solution for the crises in the Middle East, from Iraq, to Yemen, to Syria and Lebanon, is the overthrow of this regime.







So, this uprising will continue until freedom and democracy are established in Iran.

The Leader of the Iranian Resistance, Massoud Rajavi has said, "This uprising will continue, expand and get deeper. It is tied to the organized resistance and the regime has no way out of this showdown."

The regime considers murder and suppression as its only means to remain in power.

But nothing can deter the Iranian people from fighting to achieve their goal of freedom.

Distinguished guests,

Unfortunately, the international community has not responded to all these arrests and carnage properly.

This is the continuation of the same trend which gave impunity to the perpetrators of the massacre of political prisoners in the 1980s and especially in 1988, when the current leaders of the regime were responsible for the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners.

I call on the international community to uphold its responsibility to end this impunity.

It is time to compel the regime to stop torture and execution of those arrested during Iran protests.

Governments and the international community must set aside any consideration or accommodation vis-à-vis the Iran's ruling theocracy and demand an immediate stop to the killings and arrests. And if the mullahs' remain defiant, the UN must decisively put in place Security Council sanctions.

The United Nations Security Council must declare the leaders of the clerical regime and those in charge of suppression of the uprising as criminals committing crimes against humanity so that they face justice.

The world community must strongly condemn the regime's Internet terrorism and assist the Iranian people to break this inhuman blockade. This regime only understands the language of power and firmness. The mullahs must be prevented from shutting down the internet in critical situations.

By using different ploys, the regime is trying to conceal the actual number of those killed and imprisoned. The UN must urgently dispatch fact-finding missions to Iran to ascertain the extent of the number of the martyrs, the wounded and the prisoners. Considering that many of those detained face torture and execution, the dispatch of such missions has absolute priority.

It is time for the international community, especially the European Union and the United States, to recognize the struggle and the resistance of the Iranian people to overthrow the clerical regime and support their right to resist against suppression and repression. The people of Iran expect Congress to lead the way in recognizing this noble right.

A free and democratic Iran is not only the urgent desire of the people of Iran but is essential for peace and security in the Middle East and the world.

I thank you very much.



# General James Jones, USMC(Ret.)

Former National Security Advisor, Supreme Allied  
Commander Europe, Marine Corps Commandant



As I was listening to Ambassador Bloomfield, I was asking myself how did I get here? And why am I here? And I think the answer to that first question is—thank you. I think the answer to that first question is—I'm here because I was outraged ten years ago when I first discovered the existence of a place called Camp Ashraf and the existence of an organization called MEK. I don't know why I didn't know anything about it, but it was never brought to my attention when I was National Security Advisor. And it wasn't really until I left the White House in 2010 and was made aware of the attack by the Iraqi uniformed military on Camp Ashraf on the day that our Secretary of Defense was visiting Iraq. And those videos, those tapes which I still have, are some of the most outrageous things I think I've ever seen in my life.

Then it got worse, because as I learned about the history of Camp Ashraf and the MEK and the people in Camp Ashraf, and I learned about the fact that the United States disarmed the 4,000 residents in return for a pass that some of you have that guaranteed that the United States was going to take care of the security of these—of the residents of Ashraf. They assigned a number of very senior military officers to be the representatives of the government to Camp Ashraf, one of whom has dedicated his life to this issue, only to find that at the end of the day, when the President announced the withdrawal of American forces, those of us who asked the question, "What's going to happen to Ashraf?" And said, "Well, we talked to the Maliki government. They're going to take care of them." They took care of Ashraf alright. They continued brutal attacks. They killed innocent people, unarmed people, and this nightmare continued for several years. People like Governor Ridge and Ambassador Bloomfield and former Secretaries of State, former members, directors of the FBI, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, probably 75 or 80 people united in outrage against this. And yet, we continue to list the MEK as a terrorist organization. Even when a US court directed the State Department to delist or show cause why they should be listed, they still dragged their feet. And it was—it went on for much too long, but finally, at the end of the day, despite the failed promises of the move to Camp Liberty and the dragging of the feet to get Ashraf people relocated into Albania, we finally prevailed. But a tremendous loss of life and what a horrible cost.

I grew up in postwar Europe. I was two and a half years old when my parents moved to France in 1946. And I grew up looking at the United States, even though I was an American, I didn't really know what that was, because I lived in Europe, but I looked at the United States from the outside in. And I had many friends when I was a young boy, and we used to say, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" And they would say, "I want to be an American." I was an American, even though I didn't know what really that was, but I was very proud of the fact that despite the horrors of World War II, that the thing that America was remembered for was the good thing, the doing the right thing....

On the history of Ashraf and the history of the people in that camp, I count that as a failure to do the right thing. A failure by the previous administration, a failure by people who were using the people of Camp Ashraf, in my view, as a pawn between the behavior of the regime that people were trying periodically through different administrations to nudge into doing the right thing when the regime had no intention of ever doing the right thing.





And so, ten years later, I'm still here. And I'm still here remembering the outrage, remembering things like that. I'm still here, because for the first time we have hope. We have hope that in the not too distant future that the regime will fall, democracy will come to Iran, and the people of Iran will live to see a brighter day.

About two weeks ago, I got on an airplane and I flew to Albania. And I had some appointments in Albania. I specifically did not tell Mrs. Rajavi and her friends that I was coming, and the reason I didn't is because I knew what extraordinary lengths they would go to to make me feel welcome. I didn't want 1,000 people out there throwing flowers at me and saying, "Welcome," and everything else, so I said, "You know what? I'm going to land. I'm going to check into the hotel. I'm going to drive the hour or so it takes to get there. I'm just, I'm going to give them one hour, that's it. I'm going to tell them in one hour, 'I'd like to come.'" And that's what we did. And within that one hour, by the time I got there and pulled up at the gate at Ashraf Three, it was lined with people from I don't know where you got everybody, but [laughter] they were throwing flowers, they were singing, they were chanting. I walked into the auditorium. There were 3,000 people there, you know, like they'd been rehearsing this for 3 weeks. [laughter] I guarantee you the United States Marine Corps could not react that quickly to put on [0:36:19] [applause]

So, it was a great visit, and I congratulate everybody that had anything to do with bringing Ashraf Three to life. It's a very impressive place with very impressive people.

One of the things that I've noticed about the times that we live in is that we are back to an era where democracies are competing with autocracies. And I think this is very worrisome, and certainly the regime is an autocracy. Russia is an autocracy. China's an autocracy. North Korea's an autocracy. But democracy is under attack in ways that we've never been under attack before, because like it or not, some of these demo- some of these autocracies are smart. The Chinese are smart. They know what they're doing. The Russians are...to me, Russia is a declining power. You know, they have some—they have oil, they have nuclear weapons, but that's about it. They have a GDP the size of New York State maybe, but they're a nuisance. They're a strategic nuisance. But the Iranian regime is an extreme—an extremely vile, extremely criminal regime. And we should have special content for them. And shame on any country that says that—that advertises itself as a democracy that doesn't call them out for what they are. Shame on them!

We should never trade our values for economic gain. We should never do that.

One of the things that concerns me a little bit in the international dialogue is during the Cold War, we used to talk about values. We used to talk about the evils of communism in terms of human suffering. But I don't hear that discussion that much anymore, and I think that the United States should lead a resurgence among democratic countries and organizations like NATO and the European Union and elsewhere to start talking about values and to shine a spotlight on people who trade, who subordinate their values in favor of trade relations with a country like China. And I think that that's important to do....

To our staff members here, to our Senators, to our Congressmen, to our White House, this ought to be something that is discussed now. We made that mistake in Iraq when we invaded Iraq without any kind of future plan. We should not make that mistake in Iran. The NCRI is a coalition that has democratically elected a leader. They have Jeffersonian democratic principles. It is something that we should celebrate, and frankly, the next time we meet here, there should standing room only, and we should have as many members of Congress and the Senate in this room as we possibly can. It's that important.

So, those plans, I think, should be broadcast. I think this should be broadcast to the people in Iran. What is going to happen the day after the regime falls? I think the regime would like to know that. But I know the people would gather a great deal of motivation to keep up the struggle, and we should broadcast that plan throughout the democratic countries that support the NCRI and its democratically elected leaders.

So, yes, over ten years, outrage replaced by great hope, and I look forward to being with you in Tehran one of these days, so thank you





# Governor Tom Ridge

## First Homeland Security Secretary and Pennsylvania Governor



As always, there's a very kind introduction and a very warm reception. And I thank you for that. I do want to echo the comments of my distinguished colleagues and my friends, one to say thank you to the group that pulled this together. The diaspora of Iranian patriots is international. I think that's one thing that people in this city need to understand. When we attend events in support of the democratic opposition in Iran will find people literally from dozens and dozens of countries. So, what I think the first thing Washington needs to understand is that the MEK and the men and women at Ashraf represent literally hundreds of thousands of people outside of Iran, let alone millions of citizens inside of Iran. So, I tip your hat for your sustained commitment to the cause of freedom. And that's exactly what you're committed to.

But secondly, to echo and reaffirm what the ambassador and the general said, those of you who have both the privilege, the responsibility and the opportunity to make a difference in the halls of this great institutions of Congress and the House and the Senate, I tip my hat to those of you who serve on Congressional staffs. It's not an easy job. It's not a 9 to 5 job. You're often asked to do very difficult and often controversial things, but I presume that's why you accepted the position when the Congressman or the Senator asked you, you wanted to be in the middle of making a difference. And I appreciate your presence here today.

Some remarks I'm going to put aside a little bit because my friend the general gave me an opportunity during his kind remarks, and very thoughtful and poignant remarks, to remind me of why I got involved even before the general did. It was shortly after I left the Department of Homeland Security, this wonderful group of individuals came in to see me to talk to me about Camp Ashraf and all the circumstances leading up to their need to come in and chat with me to see if I would be supportive of their mission, their cause, which over the years turned out to be something that I've been committed to for almost 15 years, and the mission, their cause, is liberty, freedom and independence for a democratic Iran. But what was most interesting to me at that outset was the first allegation they put on the table before me was, "You need to understand, Mr. Secretary, former Secretary, that we've been accused and we're listed, the MEK is listed as a terrorist organization." I was intrigued by that allegation because when I was privileged to serve this country and privileged to serve President Bush almost on a daily basis—just the ambassador and the general will tell you—when you're in that position on a daily basis we used to get briefs just on the terrorist threats against United States citizens, United States interests both here and abroad. And I went back thinking all those daily briefings I received, both oral and written, where we listed the terrorist organization, the potential threat, the potential target, it was just an interesting document that our intelligence community put us together, and I tried to recall if at any time in literally hundreds and hundreds of pages of documents that I reviewed for almost three years, if I'd ever seen the MEK listed needed by our intelligence community as a terrorist organization that threatened an American citizen or American interest anywhere. And you know what, ladies and gentlemen? I couldn't think of one. So, I concluded on my own, with other due diligence that I felt obliged to do before I associated with the cause and the mission of this group of people, that they were put on that list for political reasons. They were not a terrorist organization and the general has pointed out, finally, finally the administration, President Obama's administration and Secretary Clinton was forced to acknowledge in a rather bizarre way they didn't respond to show cause, they couldn't show cause why the MEK should remain listed as a foreign terrorist organization. And one can appropriately conclude if they're unable to show cause then they probably shouldn't have been there in the first place. We need to understand that. This town needs to understand that. And Congress needs to understand that.





Secondly, I'm not going to revisit the horror stories associated with what the Iraqis and the Iranians did to the residents of Ashraf and the painful, painful process as American citizens—and by the way, those of us who support—you need to know this—the cause and the mission of a free and independent pluralistic democratic non-nuclear Iran, the Republicans and Democrats, those from the foreign service, the diplomatic corps, the former legislators, clergy of multiple faiths, across the board it's a rather remarkable group of men and women who align themselves with the cause of freedom. And so as I think back to those 15 years, one of the most poignant memories I have and I share with you today was the first time I spent a couple of hours with the mothers and the fathers and the sisters and the brothers of those who for the past 20 or 30 years had been persecuted, tortured, imprisoned and killed because of their political beliefs, political views in Iran. Pretty difficult talking to a mom who lost a son or a daughter, innocent son or daughter, who were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and killed because of their belief in freedom. Think about that for a moment. I dare say if we could somehow manage to get those mothers and fathers here and sit down with individual senators and congressmen and talk to them as parents and loved ones, they'd understand that this has been going on not just the past two weeks, not the past couple of months, this has been going on for almost 40 years.

And by the way, in '88, there was a fatwa that said it's okay to kill innocents because of their political beliefs, because of their aspirations, because they believe they were born to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. You die because of your aspirations? You suffered because you want to be free? Now fast forward the next 35 or 40 years—before you leave, I hope you just walk over here. And it's one thing to look at the names—I've had many opportunities to serve my country, and the general will appreciate this, he said it would have been better if I had been a Marine, but I wasn't, I was just an Army grunt. But one of the things with Marines and Army men and women, you go to the Vietnam Memorial when there's 58,000 names....

At some point in time, if we are true to ideals, and the ambassador and the general spoke to them eloquently and completely, so I'm kind of repeating that message, but if you're true to your beliefs at what point in time does the United States and Europe, from the right or the left, liberal or conservative, but if you are from a democracy and privileged to choose your own leaders and to determine your own fate—and by the way, we know democracies are imperfect. One of the blessings of democracy is we are allowed to identify the imperfections in our system of government and then work together to try to improve them. There are plenty of imperfections in the theocracy of Iran. Only regime change will improve them. But it's certainly about time the democracies of the world not only send representatives and spokespeople to the gatherings we have either in the United States or overseas, but in a more formal way publicly not only denounce the barbaric acts of this Iranian regime. I did not see the video, but reports of 40 to 100 young men hiding in a marsh outside of a major city in Iran that were gunned down, innocents, young innocents gunned down because of their aspiration to be free, to be self-governing, to live in a democracy. And at what point in time does 40 years of horror, 40 years of repressive action, the killing of innocents, at what times does Europe and the United States say enough is enough and publicly not only condemn the regime but embrace the MEK as the only democratic alternative to the theocracy. It's about time.

A couple final thoughts if you don't mind. It's very interesting to see how leaders in Iran over the past couple of weeks have categorized this unrest. Well, let's be real clear. It's happened in all 31 provinces, in almost 200 cities, hundreds killed, thousands wounded, 4 to 5 thousand, and as many as 10 to 12 thousand already retained and the numbers are going to continue up. And if you listen to them, this just is a small dissenting group. The MEK is just a boutique group, there's not much to that organization. They're just a small cadre of dissidents. Well the numbers don't lie and the facts don't lie: 31 provinces, 200 cities, you've arrested or killed almost 20,000 of them already. I don't think it's a small group. It's a national appeal for justice and freedom and independence. [applause]



And I was reminded of a quote that you're all probably familiar with, and I'd like to close with it if you don't mind. It's from a great democrat, someone who served his country and the cause of freedom, but not only for his country but for the rest of the world, in 1942, when things were looking a little bleak for the Allies and certainly looked bleak for Great Britain, Winston Churchill, who commented, "Now this is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning." Well, this is the end of the beginning at the very least. For 40 years, the MEK and those who support them within Iran and the diaspora around the world, they've cried out for global attention, for international embrace of their aspirations. And now is the time for the broader global community to accept the reality. The cause is just, the goals are something that all democracies embrace, and it's about time that the United States of America lead that effort among democracies to not only condemn this regime, but to publicly support the democratic uprising, proudly led, proudly led by the MEK.....

It's about time the world recognizes that the alternative is the MEK. Thank you very much. [applause]



# Ambassador Lincoln Bloomfield, Jr.

former Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs



But actually, I'm going to focus a little more on the dark side of why we came here today. I want to address my comments principally to the people who are working for United States Senate or House, people who are working in Congress. First of all, I salute you, and I thank you for your public service to the United States. It's very important. And thank you for coming today.

I also wanted to thank the members of the media who are here today and who may be covering this event. I want to salute your courage for telling the truth. It's pretty hard to put a spin on the remarks that you heard, the facts that Madame Rajavi has given you, and particularly the video clips from inside Iran. And there are many more like that. I saw one today from Iran. It was a funeral gathering for one of the killed, the deceased protesters with thousands upon thousands of people—that was today—on a cell phone video. And there are many more like that.

So, I want to challenge any members of the media who talk about Iran, any producers, executives of media organizations, any thinktank Iran experts who build their career by interviewing Iranian officials and want to maintain access to Tehran, there will come a time—soon, I predict—when you will be judged by whether you got the story right or whether you maintained access to a regime which is on, perhaps, on the verge of collapse. I urge you to rethink your position, to tell the story of this group, of these Americans, of the relatives who were—who perished in the jails of Iran and the streets of Iran under the thumb of the regime. That is the story.

And I have to comment—now you know why Iran spent so much money and went to Syria's defense in 2011. Now you know what they were trying to prevent. This is why they went to Syria in 2011 when the Arab Spring arrived, to prevent what you just saw, to prevent what started a few weeks ago on the streets of Iran. But it can't be stopped because of the protests in Lebanon, the protests in Iraq against Iranian influence, and the protests, frankly, around the world—in Bolivia, in Chile, in Hong Kong. This is a moment that is against authoritarian repression and it is particularly acute in Iran today, so they have failed to stop this uprising.

And so, I'm going to challenge my friends who work on the Senate and ask some harder questions. Are you ready to brief your Senators on what is happening and what will happen in Iran? The protests may have started in December of 2017, but in the past two weeks, a new situation has developed. The regime has begun opening fire on their own citizens.....

Are you ready to explain why the people have risen up? It's not just a recent hike in the gas prices. Gas prices have gone up many, many times in Iran. It's not because America withdrew from the JCPOA Nuclear Accord. The economy was collapsing before the sanctions were put on by the Americans. That revolution was never consummated in 1979. And that's—this is kept coming back to the streets in 1981, in 1999, in 2009, and now it's back in full force in 2019. That's what's happening. So, you need to explain the history of this regime and why they never achieved legitimacy.

Are you ready to help your Senators organize hearings? Can you find Iran experts who anticipated the collapse of the clerical regime? Good luck with that. I've listed to all of the thinktank Iran watchers and media correspondents. They all say the same thing. "Oh, the regime is in no danger of collapse." How many of them predicted the fall of the Soviet Union?" So, I think we need to rethink and avoid strategic surprise.

Are you ready to explain why Iran will not collapse into chaos, as happened, unfortunately in Iran, in Iraq, and Libya. Iran is different from Iraq and Libya. No offense to those great Arab countries. They have 2500 years of proud civilization. They have well over a century of striving for democracy.





And are you ready to identify people among the opposition groups of Iran who have a plan to move toward legitimate government, based on consent of the government—of the governed? You're sitting in a room with people, all of whom can explain to you what that plan is.

Are you ready for Congress to make specific recommendations to the administration? You've heard some ideas already today about the internet. That's vital. Perhaps there could be a UN Security Council resolution offering international support and good offices if there is to be a transition from the clerical regime to a legitimate government. Look at 2254 which was the Syria resolution. Why shouldn't the Iranian people enjoy the same support from the world community?

How about calling for a thorough counterintelligence investigation to identify the regime's agents of influence in the United States? ... The public needs to understand how certain news groups and reporters have made a tacit deal with the regime in order to gain privileged access and safe passage in and out of Iran. How about asking the FBI to vet the most visible experts, the ones who get quoted in the Times and the Post and all the other papers every day about Iran? Who seem to have easy access to senior leaders of this regime... Here are some questions, and I'll just run through them, and then you're going to hear from two great American leaders.



First, if the NCRI is not a terrorist group—and it never was, and that's a fact—why did the U.S. government and other governments find it convenient to put them on the terrorism list? That's actually an easy question. There are plenty of books written about that. The NCRI was the one who exposed Iran's nuclear enrichment program in the early 2000s. They've published detailed books. Many of them are probably outside the door here. Book after book on subjects like a guide to all of the bases of the Revolutionary Guards in Syria, who the commanders are, where they're located, the locations of the regime's terrorist sites and training sites inside Iran, details of the industrial conglomerates that are owned by the religious foundations under the Supreme Leader or the Revolutionary Guards. They control all the contracting. They control all the banks, as you already heard. Books about many of the aspects of the smuggling routes throughout the Middle East, a guide to the regime's recent terror operations across Europe, country by country. And now, a guide to the regime's security leaders in each of the provinces of Iran—the people running the suppression of the protests. In other words, they generated an entire catalog of well written, well researched publications which are all registered with the Library of Congress....

Another question—this event today was cosponsored by Americans, Iranian-Americans from OIAC branches in 33 states, plus the District of Columbia. Every branch talks with their elected Representatives and their Senators. Can you name a community of Iranian-Americans other than this one that even comes close to the OIAC in terms of the breadth and depth of membership? They organized this event because all of these Americans have family ties from every corner of Iran, and they're not living in every corner of America. They run successful businesses, they raise families, they represent the American dream. And they're trying to send Congress a message. "This regime has no future. America must prepare to support the people of Iran when the regime collapses."

Have you noticed that some analysts and journalists keep acting—asking, "Where does the National Council of Resistance of Iran get their financial support?" This is kind of an annoying question that keeps coming up. Well, if any of you have questions about this, I assure you that any member of the OIAC here today will be glad to explain how the Iranian diaspora and many Iranians inside Iran support the NCRI. And have you noticed that no one ever asks, "Where does the son of the deposed shah of Iran, Reza Shah, get money to run a huge campaign appealing for help in his apparent bid to reclaim his father's position back in Iran?" I suppose the only question is how much of the people's money, how many billions of dollars did the shah move into foreign banks to support his family before fleeing the country?

And finally, I'm sure you all heard about the infamous CIA coup against Prime Minister Mossadegh in 1953. The U.S. and the British secret services succeeded in deposing the nationalist patriot, Mohammed Mossadegh and bringing the shah back into power from exile. We have faced, as a country, relentless criticism for this geopolitical sin for 66 years now. So, when you hear someone talking about supporting Reza Shah as an alternative to the ayatollahs, ask yourself this—are you seriously talking about repeating one of our nation's most notorious mistakes? Are you seriously think the people of Iran want the United States to bring the shah back again?

So, let me finish with a little secret you'll never hear from our experts on Iranian policy inside the beltway. Can you guess what happened to the nationalist ideas and agenda of the deposed Prime Minister Mossadegh? What happened to Mossadegh's nationalism? Well, guess what? The National Council of Resistance of Iran, the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, living in Albania and the OIAC supporters here and all across the United States are all the intellectual heirs of Iran's great nationalist hero Mossadegh and the freedom movement.



# Tim Ghaemi

## Representative of Organization of Iranian American Communities



Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of organization of Iranian American communities, especially our community in Arkansas and all the states who have co-sponsored this event, I welcome all of you. Our Senate Policy Briefing today focuses on Iran uprising and how a nation rises for freedom.

We are coming together in such a critical time. The world is watching the events in Iran as well as in Iraq and Lebanon as these three nations denounce the terrorist regime of Iran.

We welcome a strong bipartisan congressional voice on the issue of Iran.

I want to thank the members of senate, the offices and our distinguished guests and speakers for accepting our invitation to this event. We are delighted to have such an impressive lineup of speakers joining us today. But before I introduce our moderator today, I would like to say a few words on behalf of our community.

As everyone has already watched the developments over the past two weeks in Iran, the initial flames of the recent Iran uprising were lit on November 15 after sudden tripling of gasoline prices, but protests rapidly concentrated on the nature of the regime. In a matter of days, the nationwide uprising spread to 189 cities in all 31 provinces of Iran. Protesters soon called for regime change by chanting "death to Khamenei," "death to Rouhani," and "death to dictatorship" as they confronted the repressive forces.

The latest information compiled from inside Iran indicates that at least 1,000 people have been killed, among them women, and children. Of those killed over 250 of them have already been identified with their names, pictures, and the city they were killed. Over 4,000 have been injured and at least 12,000 people have been arrested, as the arrests continue on a daily basis.

From the first day, the regime resorted to sheer violence and State Security Forces (SSF) declared a state of red alert, whereby the SSF handed over responsibility for suppressing the uprising to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, also known as the IRGC, and SSF forces were put under IRGC command.

The regime cut off the internet on the second day to disrupt communications between protesters and prevent reports of the scale and intensity of the uprising, as well as of the atrocities committed by the IRGC and SSF from getting to the outside world. The shutdown lasted for over a week before partial service resumption in some areas.

The Iranian regime confronted the growing protests with bullets, using both snipers and in many cases shooting protesters at point-blank range. In some areas like in Mahshahr the regime used heavy machine guns, armored personnel carriers and tanks. It deployed its multitude of repressive agencies and capabilities.

The NCRI has identified and released the identity and pictures of 87 officials who had leading roles in the violent murder and detention of protesters in the seven provinces which were the scenes of the most significant, widespread, and pervasive protests. (show pictures in the book)



As though the killings were not enough, the regime's senior officials have threatened to kill those arrested at the demonstrations.

Ebrahim Raissi, the Judiciary Chief said on November 21st that for the detained protesters "severe punishment awaits them." On that same day, Tehran Radio broadcast a speech by Tehran's Friday prayer leader Ahmad Khatami, who also described the protesters as "mohareb" (waging war on God), and that they must face the ultimate punishment meaning death.

After the regime started to fire live ammunition at demonstrators, according to the regime's own officials, dozens of centers of repression such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Bassij, and police headquarters were attacked.

In addition, over 1,000 state-run banks owned by the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and the IRGC, were attacked. People consider these financial institutions as plunderers of their wealth whose main mission is to fund the instruments of repression in Iran and terrorism abroad.

And by the way, most of these banks have already been designated as terrorist by the U.S. Treasury Department.

To give you an idea of the extend of the nationwide protests, Alireza Adyani, head of Ideological-political organization of the police force said, "The incidents of recent days in the country were more complicated than those which occurred in 1999, 2009 and 2018. In one day alone, unrest erupted in 165 cities of 25 provinces."

Another senior official said, "Well, these people were well-trained... For example, on Sunday, November 17, we had 147 clashes just in Tehran... Throughout the country, we had 800 clashes in just one day, forcing us to divide the strength of our forces."

The Iranian regime also highlights the role of the main Iranian opposition movement, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) and their Resistance Units and Resistance Councils inside Iran, as conceded by many regime officials, and state-run media.

The five main characteristics of the nationwide uprising which, by all indications, has shaken the regime to its foundations are the following:

1. The uprising showed that overthrow of the regime is attainable, as the public targeted the main symbols of repression, theft, and corruption.
2. Iranian people are ready to pay the price to unseat the ayatollahs.
3. The utter weakness of the regime, manifested by its rampant use of brute force and blocking the internet, was on display.
4. The gains of the uprising are irreversible; no matter how deep or wide the state suppression, the unrest will persist.
5. The role of the organized opposition namely the MEK will continue to be key in bringing down the regime.

Now, given the extend of killings, the United States, should take tangible steps to side with the protesters. One example is to prevent the Iranian regime from cutting off the Internet.

As for U.S. Congress, senior Members of Congress have, in a bi-partisan move, sided with the uprising. Senate Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell, Senate Foreign relations ranking member Robert Menendez, as well as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy have all sided with the protesters.

For the next step, Congress should introduce a language in no uncertain terms to hold the regime accountable for its crimes, side with the protesters who seek nothing but freedom, and to recognize the right of the Iranian people to unseat their repressive rulers.





## Media Coverages



<http://u.afp.com/JCeG>

Senator Martha McSally (R-AZ), speaking at an event in the Kennedy Caucus room in the U.S. Senate, on Dec. 4, 2019, entitled, Iran Uprising: The Nations Rises for Freedom. She said we stand with Iranian people. The briefing was organized by the Organization of the Iranian American Communities (OIAC).

<http://u.afp.com/JCeS>

Gen. James L. Jones, President Obama's first National Security Advisor and former Commander, Supreme Allied Forces Europe, speaking at an event in the Kennedy Caucus room in the U.S. Senate on Dec. 4, 2019, entitled, Iran Uprising: The Nations Rises for Freedom. Gen. Jones said we should broadcast that plan throughout the democratic countries that support your democratic leader [Maryam Rajavi]. The briefing was organized by the Organization of the Iranian American Communities (OIAC).



<http://u.afp.com/JCe5>

Gov. Tom Ridge, the U.S. first Homeland Security Secretary, speaking at an event in the Kennedy Caucus room in the U.S. Senate, on Dec. 4, 2019, entitled, Iran Uprising: The Nations Rises for Freedom. Gov. Tom Ridge, for a long time it was said Mujahedin-e Khalq has no support and is insignificant. Events of the past two weeks showed that they are the alternative to the regime, which will certainly fall. The briefing was organized by the Organization of the Iranian American Communities (OIAC).

<http://u.afp.com/JCep>

Amb. Lincoln Bloomfield Jr., former Assistant Secretary of State for Political and Military Affairs, speaking at an event in the Kennedy Caucus room in the U.S. Senate, on Dec. 4, 2019, entitled, Iran Uprising: The Nations Rises for Freedom. Amb. Bloomfield said It is time to look at the past and stand with the real nationalists those followers of great Dr. Mossadeq. The briefing was organized by the Organization of the Iranian American Communities (OIAC).









**December 8, 2019**

**Senate policy briefing called for recognition of the alternative to the Iranian regime**



**Senator Martha McSally (R-AZ)**



**General James Jones, USMC(Ret.)**



**Mrs. Maryam Rajavi,  
President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI)**





**With the bipartisan speech by Sen. Martha McSally (R-AZ) and message from Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD), the Senators declared that they “stand with” the people of Iran “in their fight for freedom.”**

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, December 8, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Organization of the Iranian American Communities (OIAC), held a policy briefing in US Senate, discussing the Iranian uprising, its aftermath and path forward. With the bipartisan speech by Senator Martha McSally (R-AZ) and message from Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), the US Senate speakers declared that they “stand with” the people of Iran “in their fight for freedom.” In addressing the event, Senator McSally said, “our European partners need to step up...you’re seeing that in the bravery of the Iranian people right now...We need to continue to crank up the pressure on the regime until the Iranian people are finally free.” Senator Cardin message added “despite the regime’s best efforts to hide its activities, the world is watching, and Congress is watching, and the United States is watching...I will never cease pursuing accountability for Iranian officials who violate human rights or benefit from corruption..... the world is witness to Iran’s murderous reprisals against its own people, and that we speak with one voice and demanding an immediate end to the bloodshed” Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) also delivered video remarks and said, “The Iran uprising which started on November 15th spread to more than 200 cities across Iran in just a few days. The mullahs’ reaction has been ruthless. They have murdered in cold blood more than 1,000 protesters in the streets. There are shocking video clips showing revolutionary guards directly shooting at young people.” Mrs. Rajavi added: “...the mullahs’ regime has no support among the people and lacks legitimacy...the regime has no solutions to offer for political and economic crises...the MEK’s efforts to build an organized movement succeeded. The resistance units of the MEK played a key role in the uprising...the answer to the problem of Iran is to overthrow the religious dictatorship, which is the desire of the Iranian people.” And she concluded, “The solution for the crises in the Middle East, from Iraq, to Yemen, and from Syria to Lebanon, is the overthrow of this regime.”

“Governments and the international community must set aside any consideration or accommodation vis-à-vis the Iran’s ruling theocracy and demand an immediate stop to the killings and arrests. And if the mullahs’ remain defiant, the UN must decisively put in place Security Council sanctions...European Union and the United States, to recognize the struggle and the resistance of the Iranian people to overthrow the clerical regime and support their right to resist against suppression and repression. The people of Iran expect Congress to lead the way in recognizing this noble right,” Mrs. Rajavi said.

A bi-partisan panel of experts including General James Jones, USMC(Ret.), former National Security Advisor, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Marine Corps Commandant; Governor Tom Ridge, First Homeland Security Secretary and former Pennsylvania Governor; and Ambassador Lincoln Bloomfield, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs also addressed the policy briefing.

In his remarks, General Jones said, “I really do think that hope is coming. I really do think that the regime is more vulnerable now than it ever has been, and that there will be an end to this...” As for the alternative to the regime, General Jones said, “The NCRI is a coalition that has democratically elected a leader. They have Jeffersonian democratic principles. It is something that we should celebrate... and I look forward to being with you in Tehran one of these days.”

Governor Ridge added how the NCRI for Iranians “is a national appeal for justice and freedom and independence...it’s about time that the United States of America lead that effort among democracies to not only condemn this regime, but to publicly support the democratic uprising, proudly led, proudly led by the MEK.”

Ambassador Bloomfield spoke on Iran’s history for democracy and freedom adding, “The National Council of Resistance of Iran, the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, living in Albania and the OIAC supporters here and all across the United States are all the intellectual heirs of Iran’s great nationalist hero Mossadegh and the freedom movement...people who stand for an Iran governed with democracy, freedom, self-determination, universal principles, and unalienable rights.”

Mr. Tim Chaemi delivered a message on behalf of OIAC calling on the United States, to “take tangible steps to side with the protesters. One example is to prevent the Iranian regime from cutting off the Internet.” While recognizing the strong bipartisan support for the protesters by US congressional leaders, he urged Congress to “introduce a language in no uncertain terms to hold the regime accountable for its crimes, side with the protesters who seek nothing but freedom, and to recognize the right of the Iranian people to unseat their repressive rulers.”



*Iran Uprising:  
A Nation  
Rises for  
Freedom*

In 189  
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1000 killed,  
1,000 injured,  
12,000 arrested.

**COMPILED BY ORGANIZATION OF  
IRANIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES US**

Organization of Iranian American Communities U.S.



**2020 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Suite 201  
Washington, DC 20006  
Ph: 202-403-0744**

**Twitter:@OrgIAC**

**INFO@OIAC.ORG**

**WWW: OIACUS.ORG**

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