

CDDRL

WORKING PAPERS

Number 109
March 2009

Transition to Democracy in Iran: Observations on International Influences on Democratization in Iran

Abbas Milani
Stanford University

Center on Democracy, Development, and The Rule of Law
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies



Additional working papers appear on CDDRL's website: <http://cddrl.stanford.edu>.

Paper prepared for CDDRL's Authors Workshop "Evaluating International Influences on Democratic Development" on March 5-6, 2009.

Center on Democracy, Development,
and The Rule of Law
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies
Stanford University
Encina Hall
Stanford, CA 94305
Phone: 650-724-7197
Fax: 650-724-2996
<http://cddrl.stanford.edu/>

About the Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (CDDRL)

CDDRL was founded by a generous grant from the Bill and Flora Hewlett Foundation in October in 2002 as part of the Stanford Institute for International Studies at Stanford University. The Center supports analytic studies, policy relevant research, training and outreach activities to assist developing countries in the design and implementation of policies to foster growth, democracy, and the rule of law.

*Transition to Democracy in Iran: Observations on International Influences on
Democratization in Iran
Abbas Milani*

Introduction:

Democracy has been a hundred year old dream in Iran. From its inception, the role of international forces figured prominently in the struggle. The Persian malady of conspiracy theories, attributing nearly every major event in the modern history of the country to some pernicious and pervasive foreign force—The British, the Free-Masons, the Communists, and in the last thirty years, the “Zionist-American” conspiracy—has only added poignancy to the debate about the role of international forces in Iran’s search for democracy. Indeed, the prevalence of such conspiracy theories is, in itself, a measure of democracy’s failure. Conspiracy theories are concoctions of a community that feels bereft of a voice or role in shaping its own fortune and fate, a community humbled in its image of itself, and awed and intimidated by the power of the omnipotent conspiring force. Moreover, as the British Embassy in Iran more than once noted in its political reports, the continued prevalence of these conspiracy theories afforded outside forces—particularly England—more power than they in fact held. For decades, for example, many Iranians held it to be something of a “self-evident truth” that the constitutional revolution of 1905, the harbinger of the modern search for a democratic polity based on the rule of law (*Mashruteh*) was in fact a

concoction of the British. The British wanted to curtail Russia's influence in Iran, the "theory" argued, and democracy was a convenient tool for fighting Tsarist despotism.

Even today, three decades after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, many royalists still take facile solace in the fantasy that the clerics were in fact hand-maidens of the British, and that the revolution was nothing other than England's revenge on an increasingly independent Shah, or on the US which had pressed Britain out of its dominant position in Iran.

Belief in conspiracy theories, or "heated exaggerations, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy" is, as Richard Hofstadler has argued, founded on a "paranoid style of politics,"ⁱ a style befitting a disenfranchised, misinformed, populace, hopeful to make sense of their political fate, but unable to cohere the fragments they know into a cohesive narrative.

In Iran, conspiracy theories are the secular incarnation of Shiism's messianic proclivity—the idea that the twelfth Imam, the Mahdi, is the ultimate arbiter of History, and that He even determines the contours of daily life. Ahmadinejad, famous for his Messianic proclivity and his insatiable appetite for conspiracy theories moves seamlessly from blaming all that happens to Iran on "Zionist and Imperialist" conspiracies to suggesting that the Iranian economy is managed by the Twelfth Imam.ⁱⁱ Conspiracy theories in Iran—as in other countries—are an enemy of democracy, as they posit and create a passive citizenry, willing to accept that forces outside

society shape and determine the political fate of the community. They absolve citizens of responsibility for their own action and fate and blames it all on the “Other,” and a responsible citizenry, cognizant of their rights and responsibilities, is a foundational pre-requisite for democracy.

While there is considerable disagreement amongst scholars and analysts about the exact nature and typology of the Iranian regime—with some labeling it as pseudo-totalitarian, others considering it a case of the Weber’s Sultanist regime,ⁱⁱⁱ still others calling it theocratic despotism, and finally some who argue the regime is a form of “Apartheid democracy”^{iv}—there is near consensus on two issues: the Islamic Republic is one of the most despotic regimes in the world, and Iran is arguably the biggest challenge facing the new administration in Washington. It is also a historic truism that amongst Muslim nations of the Middle East, few, if any can match Iran in the longevity and vitality of its search for democracy, the maturity of its civil society, and the democratic discourse and demeanor an increasingly larger segments of the society exhibit. In Iran today, for example, for the first time the idea of equality between women and men, and the idea that members of the Bahai faith are entitled to every right of citizenship are widely accepted while a hundred years ago, even the harbingers of democracy found these ideas difficult to embrace.

Iran’s nuclear program, the country’s defiance in the face of UN resolutions that asked the regime to suspend its uranium enrichment,

evidence that the regime is in fact trying to become at least a virtual nuclear state—like Japan, with the exhibited technological know-how needed for making a nuclear bomb, but still without a bomb—if not indeed a full member of the “nuclear club” are only the most urgent aspects of the Iranian challenge. The urgency of the nuclear issue has, all too often, eclipsed concern for the democratic rights of the Iranian people. In reality, the ultimate solution to the Gordian knot of this threat is for democracy to come to Iran. Though Iran is still ruled by a stubbornly authoritarian regime, the hundred-year old dream of democracy lives on. The same dynamic forces that brought about the first 1905-07 movement, are still operative in Iran. They have, hitherto, failed to deliver on their democratic aspirations, yet they offer the best hope for solving the dilemma that is Iran.

In the course of the last century, the nature of the interaction between Iran’s indigenous democratic forces and outside influences has witnessed profound changes, determined in each phase by the power of the democratic movement and the nature of the world’s interest in Iran. Four distinct phases, each shaped by a different set of exigencies, can be clearly discerned in the kind of interest outside forces have had in Iran:

In the early part of the twentieth century, Iran was of interest to the outside world, particularly to colonial Britain and Tsarist Russia as a “buffer state.” Russia had by then pursued an aggressively expansionist policy, conquering much of the Caucasus—till then mostly part of Iran—and

threatened to reach the strategically crucial warm waters of the Persian Gulf. Britain, on the other hand, was keen on protecting her colony in India—the “Jewel of the Crown”—and keeping Russia out of Iran was a necessary element of this objective. Iran thus maintained its nominal independence as a *buffer state*, with British and Russian governments each maintaining a small army of their own in the country.

The central government, particularly after 1911 was virtually impotent. Iran teetered on the verge of becoming a failed state. The forces fighting for democracy—the merchants of the bazaar, members of the nascent middle class, parts of the urban poor, guided and goaded by enlightened members of the clergy, even some tribal leaders—were not strong enough to seize power, yet persistent enough to render traditional despotism untenable. The conditions were similar to what historians and social theorists consider ripe for the rise of a Bonaparte-like power: capable of pushing back both traditional despots and democrats. By 1921, that Bonaparte appeared on the horizon in the figure of a Cossack colonel named Reza Khan. By then democratic forces were in retreat. Some fled the country, setting up the Berlin Committee, and publishing a journal called *Kaveh*—easily one of the most unabashedly modern, democratic voices in the history of Iranian journalism. Funds for the journal were paid for by Kaiser Germany. This was the beginning of another persistent pattern in the history of Iran’s democratic movement and its relationship with outside influences: despondent of the

overwhelming power of the two main outside forces—e.g. Russia and Britain at one time, US and Soviet Union in another—Iranian democrats sought the help, if not the protection of a “*Third Force*.” In the years after the First World War, Kaiser Germany fit the bill.^v For Iranian democrats, then, Germany, the dark force of despotism in an increasingly democratic Europe was a benevolent ally.

In 1908 oil was discovered in Iran and the nature of outside influences in Iran changed. Britain had managed to get the monopoly rights to Iran’s oil reserves, particularly in the Southern regions. Before long, the Northern parts of Iran, near the Caspian Sea and the Russian border were also discovered to have rich in their oil and gas reserves. From that moment, till today, the politics of oil has not only shaped the nature of outside interest and influence in Iran, but has left an indelible mark on the trajectory of Iran’s democratic movement.

It is customary to talk of the oil curse, or the “paradox of Plenty”^{vi} as the enemy of democracy in countries like Iran. But for Iranian democracy, oil has had a Janus face. On the macro-strategic level, oil has been both the bane and a bonanza for Iranian democracy. It has been the bane of democracy because it has helped turn the state into the society’s master—a Moloch that expects absolute obedience and in return is willing to allow the people to share a part of the oil revenue. If in a democracy, the state is the servant of its citizens, and serves at their pleasure and through a “social contract,” in

oil-rich Iran, people become not citizens but subjects and at best employees of the state and they survive by virtue of the pittance they receive from it in the form of subsidies.

In this sense, oil has been the vampire of Iranian democracy, depriving the society of its democratic life by turning the state into a master, a reincarnation of the “Oriental Despotism” envisioned by scholars from Mark to Wittfogel as a fate mandated by geography and the need for elaborate hydraulic systems.^{vii}

The same oil revenue has allowed corrupt, despotic governments hide their economic failures and bribe parts of the society to become its shock-troops. The army and SAVAK during the Shah, and the Revolutionary Guards and the *Basijis*—gangs-cum-militia that control every neighborhood and institution in Iran today—are varieties of the same structural phenomenon: A well-paid minority that acts as guardians of status quo, a brutal and efficient machinery of oppression oiled by Petro-dollars.

At the same time, the same oil has helped create the very foundation of democracy by affording the state the capital needed to develop, and train large middle and technocratic classes. Oil enabled the Shah (and to a lesser degree the clerical regime) to change the fabric of Iranian society and make it more modern, urban, market-oriented, and thus more prone to and prepared for democracy.

Finally, oil changed the nature of outside influences in Iran. Britain was for half a decade—from 1908 to 1951—obsessed with maintaining its lucrative monopoly of oil and every decision it made seem guided by the exigencies of this over-riding strategic goal. The British decision to work for the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Dr Mossadeq, immediately after he dared annul Britain’s lucrative monopoly in 1951, is only the most egregious example of how British policy was driven, indeed determined by the politics of oil. There is something of a consensus amongst scholars that events in August 1953—called a dastardly coup by Mossadeq partisans and a heroic national uprising by royalists—cast a long, still lingering shadow over the contours of democracy in Iran. Some have gone so far as to blame the September 11 attacks on the US on the events of August 1953!^{viii}

For Soviet Union, too, oil became a force at least as dominant than as ideology in shaping their interest in Iran. No sooner had they realized the extent of Iran’s oil and gas reserve in the regions near the Caspian Sea did Stalin decided to foment a movement for “self-determination” amongst Iran’s Kurdish and Turkic speaking minorities. Recently declassified documents from the Soviet archives indicate that Stalin intended to use these movements as bargaining chips to receive the right to explore Iran’s Northern provinces.^{ix} Even when Mossadeq, the iconic democratic leader of the post-war decade, called for nationalization of Iranian oil, Soviet Union used the

Tudeh Party to attack him as a “lackey of imperialism,” and to suggest that Iran should demand the nationalization of oil only in the Southern regions. When Mossadeq refused, Soviet Union spared little effort to undermine his democratic experiment.

In 1965, when the Shah finally agreed to sell Iranian gas to the Soviet Union and signed a big barter agreement—gas for a steel mill—the Soviet Union became, overnight an advocate of the Shah, praising his “progressive” policies. Ironically those were exactly the days the Shah was increasingly his authoritarian grip of power. Since the revolution, oil-interests not just by Russia, but by the EU, the Chinese and the Indian governments has further shaped these countries’ “influence” in Iran. The desire for a cheap barrel of oil has invariably trumped any interest in the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people. An emerging “International Brotherhood of Authoritarianism” is emerging, with Iran as a junior partner to Russia and China. Iran’s initial gleeful support of the Russian invasion of Georgia, calling it the last nail in the coffin of “American-sponsored color revolutions” was the most obvious manifestation of this new Brotherhood’s emergence. The chilling aesthetic perfection of the Beijing Olympic, was, to the Iranian regime a reminder of authoritarianism’s potential “efficiency.” Even before this reminder, there has been increasing talk amongst some Iranian leaders of following what they call “the Asia Look” in foreign policy and the China model in domestic control.

Domestically, the regime hopes to emulate the Chinese model of using improvements in the people's economic livelihood as a guarantee for its continued authoritarian hold on power. Iran has signed more than a hundred billion dollars worth of oil and gas deals with China already. The regime hopes to launch the construction of a pipeline that will connect Iranian oil and gas fields (and those of the rest of the Persian Gulf) to the apparently insatiable Chinese market. China is hardly likely to push for democratic change, or exhibit much concern for human rights in Iran, and that is the kind of trading partner the Islamic regime most covets.

It is a good tidings for democracy that the regime's economic incompetence renders this model domestically untenable. The global economic crisis, praised initially by the leaders of the Islamic regime as God's wrath on America, has further crippled the Iranian economy, making the China Model even less tenable. Falling oil prices are sure to curtail the regime's ability to pursue its goals, both abroad and at home.

While oil has been a powerful temptation for Russian commissars and comrades, the influence of Russia on Iran's democratic quest has not been limited to the issue of oil. It has been an accident of geography and history that many democratic ideas came to Iran through contacts with Russia and its nineteenth century fermenting intellectual scene. As Isaiah Berlin has elegantly demonstrated in his *Russian Thinkers*,^x modern and democratic ideas, emanating from the French Revolution were deformed in Russia into

millenarian, ultimately despotic concepts. Cultural pathologies in Iran, particularly the Shiite proclivity to see itself in messianic, absolute, and self-referential terms have further helped the domination of Russian thoughts in Iran's political discourse —whether in the form of Stalinism or nineteenth century theories of the intelligentsia.

Russian influence on the concept of intelligentsia has not been the sole debilitating influence of Russian on Iran's democratic evolution. The Communist Tudeh Party, created under the protection the Soviet Union's occupying forces, was not only a malleable tool of Soviet policy, but advocated anti-democratic ideals in the guise of promoting Leninist/Stalinist ideas, particularly the notion of "democratic centralism." Moreover, the party invariably sided with despotism—royal or clerical—if such siding benefited the interests of the Soviet Union. The most glaring example of this infamous proclivity to side with despotism was the party's unabashed, and total support for not just the clerical regime, but its most notoriously brutal factions (e.g. their support of the "hanging judge," responsible for the death of hundreds of people, "tried" and convicted in his kangaroo court for presidency.)

If oil was the economic factor in determining the contours of many international influences in Iran, the rise of a communist power in the Soviet Union, in 1917 suddenly afforded Iran a rare geo-strategic importance. Iran was pivotal—indeed the crucial "Northern Tier" in the US military's famous

formulation—in the West’s policy of containment, and security and anti-communist fervor became, for almost six decades, the ultimate measure in shaping Western influences in Iran. From the British decision to support the coup in 1921 that eventually led to the creation of the Pahlavi dynasty and the American participation in toppling the Mossadeq government in 1953, to the Kennedy administration’s decision to not pressure the Shah for more democratic reforms, and even the Carter administration’s decision to acquiesce to the rise of Khomeini, in each case fear of a communist take-over in Iran was the specter that haunted and shaped each of these monumental decisions—decisions that in each case left a profound impact on the nature of Iran’s democratic evolution. Authoritarianism was deemed a reasonable, if not indeed necessary price to pay for the containment of communism.

Moreover, as the fear of communism increased inside Iran, and as the US and Britain often reminded the Shah of the mortal dangers embodied in the communist threat, the Shah and at times the CIA experimented in Iran with a model that was later repeated, writ large, in Afghanistan. Islamist forces were allowed to grow, organize, mobilize, train cadres, collect funds, and set up a unit in nearly every neighborhood in Iran. The Shah believed the clergy to be his allies in his fight with the communists, the force he considered the main threat to his throne. Even in his last book, Answer to History, written in exile, and long after he had been “un-kinged,” he argues, with surprising certainty that it was in fact the communists who overthrew

him. The secular democratic forces, infatuated with their own self-deluding importance, either dismissed as insignificant and retrograde the Islamist threat and ignored to take the full measure of the anti-democratic power of these forces, or assumed they can out-smart the clerics, by using their mass appeal and power of mobilization to overthrow the Shah and then swiftly move to push aside the clerical leadership. This was, after all, what had happened in 1905-7 revolution, wherein the clerics helped mobilize the masses, only to discover that the intellectuals had designs for a decidedly secular polity. As many of the leaders of the Islamic Republic reiterated more than once, the 1979 was “pay-back for the constitutional revolution,” only this time it was the secular democrats who were “used.”

With the victory of the Islamic revolution, once again the nature of international interests in Iran changed. On the one hand, China, Russia, and even some EU countries seized on the increasing tensions between the US and the new clerical regime to expand their own trade and influence in Iran. None showed any serious concern for the future of democracy in Iran. The clerical regime became at the same time important as a heart of the rising radical Islamist movement. No sooner had Iran re-launched its nuclear program in 1985-6 and decided to keep it a secret from the world than the nuclear program became a focus of international interest in Iran.

Islamic Republic's self-confessed financial, ideological and military patronage of Hezbollah, their repeated boasts, particularly at the end of the thirty-six

day war between Israel and Lebanon, that Ayatollah Khomeini and Khamenei have been the creators and “guides” of Hezbollah, the regime’s clear and incontrovertible support for a variety of Shiite forces in Iraq (Hakim and Sadre are the two biggest recipients), the regime’s support for some of the most influential forces and war-lords in Afghanistan, and finally the regime’s support for Hamas are other elements of the Iranian challenge.

The existence of powerful Shiite populations in Bahrain (where they are becoming a majority), in Saudi Arabia (where they are located near the oil-rich provinces of Arabia), and in Yemen (where recent resurgence of Shiite radicalism threatens the Sunni-dominated and pro-Western central government) could all potentially offer the regime in Iran the ability to ferment more trouble in the region. Saudi Arabia’s decision to confront Iran’s rising hegemonic power over the region, evident most recently in the country’s willingness to act as a mediator between Taliban and the Afghan government, is creating a veritable cold war between the two countries. The recent declaration of Sheikh Yusef al-Qaradavi—one of the Sunni world’s most influential clerics—that Shiism is a form of heresy and his call to action to confront Shiism’s proselytizing in the Sunni nations is the theological face of this rising war.^{xi}

In fact, so powerful has this concern been that some Iranian democrats fear what they call the “Libya syndrome”—the possibility that the world, particularly the US will forfeit any interest in Iran’s democratic movement,

in return for the simple (and most likely false) promise by the mullahs that they will not seek a bomb.

Contrary to the common perception, propagated both by the Islamic Republic of Iran and some in the Western academia, promotion of democracy in Iran by the US was not an invention of the neo-conservatives, used to hide their sinister motive for “regime change.” While the notion of exporting democracy at the point of a gun, or the tip of a laser-guided missile was a novel, cognitively dissonant idea, promotion of democracy has been a part of US policy in Iran for better part of half a century. Of all “outside influences,” the US has been the only country that has shown, since 1941 when the US “entanglement” with Iran commenced, more or less consistent concern for democracy and maintained, for much of this period, close contacts with Iran’s opposition forces. Indeed, soon after this “entanglement” Roosevelt commissioned his special emissary to Iran to formulate what came to be known as the Hurley Report—an attempt by the US to turn Iran into an experiment in democracy in a Muslim country. The exigencies of the Cold War and the death of Roosevelt altogether eclipsed the Hurley dream.

Even during the early days of the Mossadeq government, the Truman administration was tacitly in favor of his nationalization effort and in fact stopped Great Britain from attacking Iran and taking over the oil regions of the country. Mossadeq’s inability and unwillingness to compromise and Britain’s success to convince the Eisenhower administration that the Tudeh

Party embodied a clear and present danger to the West eventually lead to the US decision to participate in the attempt to overthrow the democratically elected government of Mossadeq.

In the years after the coup, while the US helped create the Shah's infamous secret police—called SAVAK by its acronym—it also began to push for a more liberal policy by the government. Moreover, the US tried to maintain ties to the democratic opposition. For example, in 1958, the CIA had half-a-dozen “contacts” inside the leadership of the National Front—Iran's leading democratic coalition at the time. At the same time, in the early days of the Kennedy administration, the Shah came under pressure from the US to reconcile with the National Front and even bring them into a coalition government. The majority of the National Front leadership ultimately decided against making peace with the Shah. The memory of August 19, 1953 and the fall of Dr. Mossadeq were fresh on their minds. Their leader, Dr Mossadeq, was still under virtual house arrest and barred from taking part in politics. Though they were ostensibly representative of Iran's moderate middle class, the leaders of the National Front preferred puritan but quixotic militancy over pragmatic realism. In the famous words of Khalil Maleki, himself a supporter of Dr. Mossadeq and a one-time leader of the National Front, and the lone voice advocating the wisdom of a pragmatic reconciliation with the Shah, particularly against what he considered the patently more reactionary clergy, “these leaders are not even demagogues; they are merely followers of the demos.”^{xii}

But the Shah, too, was adamantly against the idea of the reconciliation. In those days, in private as in public, he often attacked leaders of the National Front and used

various arguments to push back against the idea of a coalition with them. In numerous talks, he used a thinly disguised language to attack the National Front leaders for making peace with separatists in Azerbaijan. He chastised them for using the cover of the night to meet with representatives of foreign government. A National Front government, he told the American ambassador in a private luncheon at a friend's home, "would be a precursor of communist takeover." The leaders of the National Front, the Shah went on to say, have "no purpose except to come to power." Moreover, their organization has been "badly infiltrated by communists."^{xiii} As it happened, documents of the Tudeh Party confirm the claim that in this period, members of the party were ordered to join the National Front and try to take control of the group's political platform. Moreover, in those years, the US embassy in Tehran began to study the actual strength of Communists in Iran and began compiling a comprehensive list of communist magazines and publications in Persian and they found that after Russian, French and English, Persian communist publications ranked fourth in the world.^{xiv}

On another occasion, when again the issue of the National Front's membership in a new coalition government was raised by American officials, the Shah stated, "flatly...he could not live with a National Front Government whose first act would be to abolish SAVAK."^{xv} On this point, the Shah's prediction came true. Seventeen years later, when finally a leader of the National Front did agree to form a government of national reconciliation, one of his first acts was indeed to dismantle the SAVAK—by then easily the most notorious and despised element of the Shah's regime.

Aside from the age-old argument that the National Front will pave the way for communist—the argument used by the British in 1952 when they were trying to convince

the Truman administration to join in the effort to topple Dr. Mossadeq--in 1961, the Shah also offered a different argument against the idea of such a coalition. On numerous occasions, he told American and British officials that in Iran, the Shah has “always been the center of power.” Without a powerful king, the center cannot hold. This time, cognizant of the Kennedy administration’s keen interest in introducing reforms in Iran, the Shah told the American ambassador that if there is to be any meaningful reform in Iran, it has to come under the aegis of the Shah and no one else. He also made it clear, on numerous occasions, that “he would abdicate rather than accept position of a figurehead.”^{xvi}

The assassination of Kennedy and the gradual increase in the price of oil afforded the Shah an opportunity to resist these democratic pressures. Even more consequential was his success in convincing the US embassy to cease its contacts with members of the democratic opposition. These contacts were resumed only on the eve of the Islamic Revolution, when it was by far too little too late. This monumental decision soon began to show its debilitating effect on State Department and CIA analysis of the Iranian situation: Those written in late fifties and early sixties show a remarkable sensitivity to the situation in Iran and the strengths and weaknesses of the regime and of the democratic forces; on the other hand, analysis prepared in early 1978, show a surprising ignorance of the reality on the ground-- the Shah is declared to be in full control and the opposition in strategic retreat.

The Nixon era, and the advent of the Nixon doctrine, wherein the Shah was designated to become the dominant force in the Persian Gulf, saw an end to any attempt by the US to promote democracy in Iran. While reforms promoted by the Kennedy

administration had by 1970 changed the fabric of Iranian society and created a large middle class, the Nixon doctrine stopped any pressure for democratization at exactly the moment Iran needed it most.

This dangerous decision was compounded by the Carter administration's decision to press for human rights in Iran. As it happened, the pressure to liberalize the Shah's authoritarian regime came at the time when the Shah was suffering from paranoia, depression, and indecision that was the result of his own character and the chemotherapy he was undergoing to cure his cancer. Moreover, the Iranian economy was at the time experiencing a sudden downward spiral because of the falling price of oil. The result was the perfect storm that was the revolution. The Shah's scorched earth policy of destroying the moderate democratic forces, along with his decision to allow the clergy to expand their power and influence lead to the ascendance of a despotic clerical regime.

Iranian democrats, for their turn, failed to develop a cogent policy or a unified leadership on the eve of the revolution. Evidence indicates that in subsequent years, the clerical regime uses everything from appeasement, terror and "agent provocateurs" to sow disunity and confusion amongst the democrats, and disrupt the democratic process in Iran. The Bush administration policy of offering seventy five million dollars to support "regime change" in Iran helped the regime and undermined the genuine democrats. It created an atmosphere of confrontation between the two regimes, and the clerics used that atmosphere to further dismantle the rudiments of civil society. Moreover, it put the democrats in a kind of

defensive position—needful of “proving’ that they were not a recipient of the seventy five million dollars largesse. ^{xvii}

Domestic Methods of Control:

The Islamic Republic of Iran has a sophisticated, multi-faceted, and carefully calibrated policy of authoritarian control. It uses a subtle and supple combination of overt coercion and terror, multiple and increasingly powerful intelligent agencies, particularly amongst the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC), well-oiled and monopoly control of radio and television, overt draconian censorship, internalized fear and censorship inculcated in the mind of writers and publishers, people’s religious fears and beliefs, and finally a form of financial bribing to control the domestic population. Political docility, or passivity begets no economic gains but political opposition is sure to lead to economic ruin and pressure. More important, economic support for the regime is handsomely rewarded. The fact that the regime’s foes have, generally, underestimated its ability to use cunning, violence and Machiavellian guile to achieve its end has also given them more room to maneuver, and succeed in its plans.

The regime has divided society into two camps—the *Khodis*, or the insiders who are a minority, who defend the regime and whose livelihood is directly dependent on the state (often in the form of stipends, or government jobs, and sometimes in the form of lucrative no-bid contracts bestowed upon the more reliable elements.) All political posts in the society are the reserve of

this group. Amongst them, there are serious factional feuds. Indeed amongst them there is something of an Apartheid democracy, manifest in regular, albeit controlled elections, where these factions compete amongst one another for a bigger piece of the economical and political pie. These feuds are a double-edged sword. On the one hand, Khamenei, as the Spiritual Leader, and more powerful than any faction, uses these factional feuds to remain the most powerful man in the country. On the other hand, the feuds could potentially be of value for the democratic movement.

In line with the regime's nature, the regime has been keen on creating "a new Islamic" man or woman—pious, docile, and xenophobic, particularly anti-American and anti-Israeli. At the same time, it tried to foster a discourse of democracy that borrows its essential structural elements from the Stalinist-Cold War model. It offers what in essence it calls "genuine Islamic" democracy and surmises that in this form of governance "the true interests" of the under-class ("the *mostaz'afan*" in their lexicon) are actualized for them by their benevolent leaders—most important of all, *Valiye-Fagih* (Jurist) whose wisdom and whose legitimacy are both divine. Opposed to this ideal "democracy" they regularly criticize what they dismiss is the bogus ("bourgeois") democracy in the West where the veneer of liberalism covers the "real" despotic nature of a government that caters to the rich ("*Mostakbarin*" or the arrogant ones.) The brutalities of the war in Iraq has allowed the regime to deftly use pictures and reports of the war to argue that liberal

democracy begets chaos. The recent financial crisis was celebrated by the leaders of the regime as a sign of God's wrath on America, while Russia's invasion of Georgia afforded the regime another opportunity to sound the "death knell" of liberal democracy. The invasion, Ahmadinejad declared more than once, is the last nail in the coffin of America's bogus "democracy promotion" scheme.

Iranian democrats—from the women's movement to the student and labor union movements—have on the other hand worked hard to expose, and fight the regime's authoritarianism, but to shape a genuine democratic discourse that is at once local and global—it is tuned to the realities of the Iranian society but is at the same time fully cognizant of the most recent developments in democratic theory around the world. Rorty and Rawls, Habermas, Nussbaum and Isaiah Berlin are amongst thinkers whose works are readily used in the evolution of this discourse. The women's movement, recently focused on the idea of gathering a million signatures demanding gender equality in Iran, and the incredibly prolific writings of activists (like Noushin Ahmadi), who have translated and published dozens of books on the theoretical foundations of feminism are promising examples of this pattern. Ironically, a recent new obstacle to the evolution of this democratic discourse is the resurgence of a kind of Marxist-Stalinist orthodoxy amongst a small but vocal and organized minority of the youth.

There are in fact many signs that the regime has utterly failed in its grand social engineering project. Indeed, again by many kinds of evidence--both empirical and anecdotal—the regime is deeply isolated from the vast majority of the population, and the Iranian youth, who comprise about seventy percent of the population, are surprisingly global in their disposition, wired and savvy in their use of the internet, secular in their values and ideals. A kind of craven consumerism, hungry for the latest Western and American fads, are rampant amongst some in the Iranian youth and middle class. In a recent poll, conducted by the regime’s Ministry of Intelligence for the Parliament, only thirteen percent of the population indicated they would vote for Ahmadinejad in the coming elections. The secular, melancholic and defiant music of Mohsen Namjoo, and dozens of other under-ground rock and jazz and hip-hop groups in Iran, and the many films, novels and short-stories that are published in spite of the regime’s draconian censorship, all eloquently register the society’s dismay with the status quo; they are also a testimony to the rich diversity of these voices.

Double digit unemployment and double digit inflation have added to people’s economic despair. The fact that the regime uses its many mechanism for vetting candidates—the Guardian Council that must approve all candidates for all elections, and the regime’s intelligent agencies, local “Committees” and offices of Basij in each locality are the most important such vetting agencies—and the fact that in the last presidential election, they

clearly rigged the election are both indicators of the regime's isolation and unpopularity. In a recent article, in the daily *Keyhan*—considered by the cognoscenti as a virtual official organ of Ayatollah Khamenei, it was clearly indicated that Ahmadinejad won the last election only through the active support of the IRGC and the Basij.^{xviii}

Frightened of these troubling signs, and aware of the economic crisis that exists today and of the bigger one that looms on the horizon (particularly if the price of oil does not increase) and finally aware of the almost one hundred billion dollars the regime needs to simply pay for the subsidies it pays for everything from gasoline to sugar, the regime has recently re-structured its most potent and powerful tool of survival and suppression, the Revolutionary Guards. The main task of the IRGC—hitherto focused on defending the country against foreign enemies-- is now fighting “domestic foes” and eliminating threats to the regime. In line with their new task, the IRGC has a new configuration, divided to thirty one sections, each in charge of a district in the country, each with a commander in charge. Moreover the two to five million members of the Basij—gangs-cum-militia-cum-Brown Shirts—have been put under the direct command of these IRGC district commanders. In short, in anticipation of turbulences, the regime has been retooling its oppressive apparatuses.

Commanders of the IRGC have become increasingly involved in the economic field, amassing often fantastic and invariably illicit fortunes. To

further ensure the allegiance of these commanders, recently in a surprising move—of dubious constitutional basis—Khamenei ordered that henceforth, one of the Foundations controlled by the IRGC—the *Mostazafan* Foundation—will be allowed to directly sell part of Iran’s oil on the international market.

But even windfall revenues in the last couple of years have not been sufficient to cover the regime’s ailing and failed economic policies.

Ahmadinejad has repeatedly dipped into the foreign currency reserve—initially set up to allow the regime to weather sudden falls in the price of oil—and used the money to implement some of the president’s harebrained economic ideas, or simply saturate the markets with imported domestic commodities. Infrastructural investments have been sadly wanting.

The fact that in recent years there have been hints that the US might be fermenting centrifugal movements in some of the border regions of Iran—in Kurdistan, Azarbaijan, Baluchestan, and Khuzestan, where some of Iran’s largest ethnic minorities live—has also played into the hands of the regime. Al Jazeera and its constant attacks on the treatment of what it calls the “Arabs of Iran” have brought a new layer of concern. Iranian nationalists, worried about the Balkanization of Iran have been at times reluctant to challenge the regime, lest they contribute, albeit unwittingly, to this Balkanization. The regime has cleverly promoted the idea that in the current

circumstances, weakening the regime is tantamount to help in the break-up of Iran as we know it.

International Influence:

To counter unwanted “international influences” the regime has a four-track policy for garnering and augmenting its own international influence. Every time there is an indication that one of these “international influences” might be tempted to help Iranian democrats, the regime uses its connections with its own international network to fight the threat. Sometimes these efforts are public and overt, sometimes discreet or covert. These take shape in different arenas, and are geared toward different constituencies. The first obvious public efforts of the regime to increase its international influence are those in international organizations:

1. Attempt to increase its presence, power and supportive coalition in the UN. The recent failed attempt to join the Security Council is the most obvious manifestation of this effort. The regime at the same time has worked assiduously to create a de facto coalition of forces with third world countries against the US, and Israel, and with Islamic countries against Israel.
2. Attempt to use the same kinds of anti-American sentiments in the IAEA to ensure that no critical reports are approved by the organization.

3. In both these arenas it has also used China and Russia to forestall any resolution against the regime, particularly on the nuclear issues.
4. Failed but continued attempt to join the Shanghai Cooperation Council—as part of the regime’s attempt to align itself with China.

The second aspect of regime to augment its international influence has been to offer support to many radical, sometimes terrorist organizations—Hezbollah, Shiite groups in Iran, war-lords like Hekmatyar in Afghanistan, Hamas—to establish a de facto Islamic alliance against the non-Islamic world. Regular international conferences of these types of organizations in Tehran are part of the same effort. The regime has particularly emphasized the power of what has allegedly been called “the Shiite arch” and in so doing, it has created a Sunni backlash.

The third aspect is the regime’s subtle propaganda war on the international scene. The regime spends millions of dollars in sponsoring different television and radio networks that address the English and Arab speaking world. Moreover, the regime’s ability to use symbolic politics to foster its support has been spectacular: a billion dollar to help Lebanese Shiites rebuild their homes after the war with Israel; millions of dollars of free electricity and other services in the Shiite parts of Iraq. Ahmadinejad’s many rants against Israel must be seen in the context of this aspect of the regime’s over-all strategy of augmenting its influence amongst the countries of the Third World.

Aspects of this effort have now caused the ire of some in the Muslim world. Recent attacks by Al-Qaradawi, a prominent Sunni scholar and TV personality against the Shiite invasion of Sunni societies and his call to arms to resist the onslaught are early signs of this brooding tension, and the backlash against the regime's propaganda.

The fourth and final aspect of the regime's policy has been to unite with different countries to achieve its goals. The most important instances:

1. Alliance with China, Russia, India, and the advent of what in Iran is called the "Asia Look" or the tendency to re-align Iran away from the West (for markets, for allies, for mentors)
2. Alliance with Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia to bring the regime's message to the Americas. Aside from a costly and symbolically vapid gesture of establishing direct flights between Tehran and Caracas—a flight that often takes place with a handful of passengers—the regime has promised large investments, and joint ventures in these three Latin American countries.
3. Improved relations with other Muslim countries in the region. The regime has even suggested to join some of the conferences limited to Arab nations.
4. In recent months, the regime has also suggested the creation of a regional security organization, composed of countries on the Persian Gulf.

5. The regime has tried to create a favorable presence in the conference of Caspian Sea lateral states, formed to help divide the oil and gas wealth that lies beneath that rich territory.

Recommendations:

Two answers dominate current discussion about Iran. The first advocates a “grand bargain” with the Iranian regime: we provide security guarantees and convince them that “regime change” is no longer part of U.S. policy; in return, the regime abandons its nuclear ambitions. The second proposes to continue the Bush policy: the Islamic Republic gives up its enrichment activities; we respond by opening discussions. The first strategy offers what the regime most covets before starting to talk; the second insists that the regime surrender its most important bargaining chip before negotiations begin.

Neither approach is very promising. Moreover, they share a common weakness. Both concentrate on Iran’s nuclear program and forgo any concern for the fate of human rights and democracy there. That is why many Iranian democrats fear a Libyan scenario.

To find an alternative strategy, we need to step back from the current impasse and accept the proposition that the solution to the “Iran Problem” is an Iranian democracy, made by the Iranian people, for the Iranian people. Those who are rightfully wary of U.S. interventionism, or simply distrust the U.S. government’s intentions, suggest that the project of building democracies in Iran and elsewhere is not America’s business. Furthermore,

some believe that U.S. culpability in the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Mohammad Mossadeq in 1953 not only disqualifies the United States from credibly taking part in discussions of Iranian democracy today, but also has created in Iran a permanent state of distrust toward America.

The truth about Iranian attitudes is more complicated. From 1941, the beginning of serious U.S. involvement in Iran, until 1953 and the fall of Mossadeq, the United States was considered by many Iranian nationalists and democrats—including Mossadeq himself—an ally in their fight against British and Soviet colonial influence.

From the overthrow of Mossadeq until 1988, Iranian views were generally far less favorable, in part because of the perceived American role in the 1953 coup, in part because of U.S. support for the Shah. Then, the United States sided with Saddam Hussein during Iran's eight-year war with Iraq (1980-88). And throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union endlessly reaffirmed the vision of the United States as hegemonic imperialist force.

But with the end of the Iraq War and collapse of the Soviet Union, perceptions again shifted. European countries, as well as Russia and China, studiously overlooked Iranian human rights violations, and continued to expand their trade with the regime, whose oppressive and adventurous policies isolated the nation and tarnished its global image.

The United States was the only major power willing to stand up to the

ruling clerics. And because the enemy of an enemy is a friend, America reemerged as a potential ally in the minds of many Iranians. Against this background, the Bush foreign policy created a double bind for Iranians. On the one hand, the Bush administration's tough talk against the clerical regime has had an enthusiastic audience among some in Iran. On the other hand, Iranians realized that American policy in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, strengthened the worst elements in the Islamic regime. These errors were made worse by the inexplicable Bush policy of grouping Iran with an "axis of evil," just as Mohammad Khatami's reformist government was preparing the ground for a rapprochement with America. After years of erratic American policy and mutual distrust, the advent of the Obama administration may herald a new beginning in relations between the two countries. .

But American success will depend on the acceptance of a few new cognitive and practical axioms. Conventional discussions about U.S. policy and democracy in Iran focus on the role the U.S. government can or should play in the process. But in a democracy, citizens can and sometimes do influence foreign policy. Their vigilance and care in protecting democracy at home can promote democracy elsewhere. For example, popular international solidarity with the black majority's fight against the apartheid regime in South Africa was a key element in its demise. Citizens themselves, not the often-clumsy, over-reaching state, can be the best ambassadors of democracy.

Concerned Americans can help the democratic process in Iran by pressuring the U.S. government to avoid unwise policies. The worst policy would be an attack on Iran. The National Academy of Sciences and the Committee of Concerned Scientists, which warn that using nuclear-tipped bunker-busting bombs to destroy fortified underground Iranian nuclear sites will kill hundreds of thousands of Iranian civilians, offer models of reasoned public argument. Voters, activists, and civic organizations should rank opposition to a military option in Iran high on their agendas. Iranian democratic advocates deserve and require progressive backing. There are other ways Americans can show solidarity with the Iranian democratic movement. The anti-imperialist left must fight a tendency, among some of its representatives, to spare the mullahs harsh criticism because they “stand up” to American hegemony.

An unfortunate romance developed between some Western intellectuals and the clerical regime that came to power after the 1979 Islamic revolution. Michel Foucault’s brief infatuation with Ayatollah Khomeini and the Ayatollah’s “critique of modernity” is the most egregious example of this romantic folly.^{xix}

Rather, Iranian democratic advocates deserve and require progressive backing. Among these advocates, none are more deserving than the Iranian women in the movement. In the last few months, they have focused their energy and formidable organizational skills in collecting one million

signatures in defense of constitutional equality for women. They have forced the regime to retract some of its more egregious misogynistic laws, for example, a proposed law that would have allowed men to take additional wives without the consent, as existing law provides, of the first wife.

The regime's retreat on this specific law, however, was tactical. Before long, the clerics introduced a new law that bans young women from traveling outside their cities of birth to attend university. The law is a de facto negative quota against women, who are becoming a larger and larger majority in the country's highly competitive university system. It also further limits their movement around the country. American feminists can oppose these efforts by helping raise awareness of the struggle of Iranian women and the regime's misogynistic laws and practices. Moreover, by extending privately funded scholarships, internships, and research grants to Iranian women, they can enrich the feminist movement in Iran and help educate the West about the rich diversity of thought and practice among Iranian women today.

The Iranian democratic movement also needs support in its struggle for religious freedom and equality. Iran's shrunken Jewish population—down to 25,000 from a one-time high of 150,000—lives under constant accusations of Zionism. Yet, while the media has focused on President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Holocaust denials and comments about

the state of Israel, sectarian persecution in Iran is not limited to Jews or even non-Muslims. Shiism is the state religion in Iran, and every religious minority struggles for the right to worship in private. The Bahá'í of Iran are arguably the most persecuted religious minority in the country. Their youth are barred from public universities if, on their application forms, they indicate their faith. Sunni Muslims (10 percent of the population) have suffered recent attacks on their places of worship by Shia vigilantes. Even Shias whose practice differs from official dogma find themselves under pressure. Reformist thinkers like Yousefi Eshkevari, Abdulkarim Soroush, and Abdullah Nouri face constant attacks and threats, and debate even among traditional ayatollahs is silenced.

Civil and political rights, too, are a priority for many Iranian groups. Ethnic minorities fight for the right to speak their own languages and have a more active role in managing their own affairs. Iranian workers try to establish independent labor unions. Iranian students, writers, poets, musicians, painters, and filmmakers agitate for basic democratic freedoms and against the regime's increasingly draconian censorship. Recently, even merchants of the bazaar—for a century the most reliable source of support for the clergy—successfully organized a strike to fight a proposed tax. There are also millions of Iranians who are addicted to drugs, particularly heroin, and thousands suffering from AIDS. Their plight has remained largely hidden from the Iranian public and the rest of the world.

Concerned citizens in the West can help give voice to those abandoned by the regime.

The Islamic regime has not only resisted attempts by the American government to advance democratic movements and causes within Iran; it has also used the Bush administration's clumsy gestures of support to label all Iranian democrats agents of American colonialism. Support from American citizens would be more difficult to resist or dismiss. For example, the official travel bans against members of the regime that the United States and United Nations have considered will likely have little impact on the regime's ability to maintain its power. Yet if a leader of the regime meets massive demonstrations—demanding equality for women, religious tolerance, and an end to despotism—every time he travels, the Iranian democratic movement will be heartened at the expense of an embarrassed regime in Tehran. One might argue that the Iranian regime's apparent indifference to, even disdain for, global public opinion would nullify any effect foreign protests could have. But this stance is a bluff. The regime is highly sensitive to its image in the West. American progressives, like their peers in other democracies, can become a force for democracy by exposing the Iranian regime and holding it responsible for every breach of human rights in the country.

Through increased contacts and solidarity with their Iranian counterparts, organizations from labor unions and religious groups to

professional and trade associations can help the nascent Iranian civil society survive the regime's continued onslaught.

Citizen diplomacy and solidarity must become a pillar of a new American and Western policy in Iran. But the new U.S. administration can also play a constructive role in promoting Iranian democracy. It should first abandon unilateralism. Instead of acting as masters of the political universe, forcing "Western" democracy on recalcitrant "natives," the new administration can start by accepting the common-sense truth that democracy cannot be exported, certainly not at the point of a gun or a guided missile. Democracy is not a Western gift, but rather part of our common human heritage. A new American president whose first name, "Barack," is Arabic for "blessed" or "God's beneficence," and whose middle name, "Hussein," is the name of Shiism's quintessential martyr and third Imam, offers a greater challenge to the clerical regime than a Bush administration that talked of "crusade" and received support from people who sometimes dismissed Islam as nothing short of a heresy.

The two countries should negotiate directly and unconditionally. This abstention from conditions must be mutual. Neither the United States nor the clerics in Iran can declare an issue off the agenda. For the United States, the key to the success of such negotiations is to strike a fine balance: to reassure the clerical regime that the United States is no longer planning for regime change while making clear to Iranian democrats that concern for

human rights in Iran will not be bargained away for any concession by the regime.

The Bush administration's offer of more than \$70 million for those aspiring to topple the clerical regime was exactly the wrong idea. It found no takers among Iranian democrats, but it did lead to the emergence of dozens of newly minted "Iranian democratic groups," each vying for a piece of this largess. The fund thus played into the hands of the regime, allowing it to attack all activists as agents of the American project. No less damaging to the democratic cause in Iran would be an American policy that shows no concern for Iranian democratic aspirations.

Dehumanization of Iranians has reached harrowing new heights in the United States.

But why would the Iranian regime agree to this kind of relationship? After all, the clerics understand that normal relations with America threaten its power. Yet they also know that the oil bonanza is ending and that economic disaster may follow. While détente with the United States may be dangerous, it may also provide the only antidote to the still graver danger of an economic crisis that deprives the regime of all legitimacy and power. Along with civic solidarity and renewed negotiations—indeed, a prerequisite to their success—is an end to the demonizing of Iranians that has resulted from efforts to isolate the regime.

The Islamic regime in Iran has tried its own hand at demonizing by

reducing the complexity of American society to Abu Gharib and renditions. But dehumanization of Iranians has reached harrowing new heights in the United States. Prominent Americans have invited the United States to bomb Iran—“obliterate” it, to use Hillary Clinton’s words. Bill O’Reilly suggested blowing it “off the face of the earth.” These genocidal threats produced little public outrage in the United States. The road to democratic contact cannot be paved with intimidation and insult.

Greater access to the rich human diversity of contemporary Iranian society, a diversity and democratic disposition that resists the regime’s efforts at control, might foster a shift in American attitudes. The Iranian regime tries to present to the world an image of Iranian people as docile, pious, even xenophobic. Iranian democrats, on the other hand, have been trying—through film, music, painting, poetry, and fiction—to convey a very different image of Iran. Regular civic contacts—inviting Iranian artists, musicians, filmmakers, scholars, and human rights activists to the United States—would be the natural first step. Sports exchanges, for which there are some precedents, and visits by tourists and business groups to Iran and the United States, can help create an atmosphere of mutual trust, a necessary prelude to the success of both citizen and state support for democracy in Iran. Only the wisdom and humanity of concerned and informed citizens, combined with a new prudence in American policy, can navigate the treacherous waters ahead. And the only acceptable end to this terrible journey is democracy in

Iran. The forces that attempted to create democracy in Iran a hundred years ago are have only grown and become more experienced in the language and logic of democracy. The hitherto unrealized dream of democracy lives on. The abducted revolution of 1979 has only delayed the quest for democracy, but not destroyed it. International forces, acting with prudence and patience can be a crucial ally of Iranian democrats in what has so far seemed like a Sisyphean struggle.

ⁱ Richard Hofstadler, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," *Harper's*, November 1964, pp. 77-86. The seminal essay was later republished as a part of a book, in *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1996).

ⁱⁱ See "Pious Populism," *Boston Review*, December 2007, and "Persian Politicking", *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, October 2008

ⁱⁱⁱ In the most recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Akbar Ganji has called the Iranian regime Sultanist.

^{iv} In two above articles, I have argued that Iran is a form of Apartheid democracy.

^v For a discussion of Kaveh, and its content, See my "Kaveh and the Question of Modernity," published first in *Iranshenasi* and then collected in *Modernity and Its Foes in Iran* (Tehran, Akhtaran, 2001).

^{vi} For example, see Terry Lyn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Boom and Petro-States* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997)

^{vii} Karl Wittfogel developed an idea Marx had suggested in one of his discussions of the typology of power. See, Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New York, 1957)

^{viii} Steven Kinzer, in his *All the Kings Men* revisits the coup of 1953 and suggests that September eleven was a consequent of the coup in 1953.

^{ix} For a fascinating look at these documents, see Jamil Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis Over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941-1946* (New York, Rowman and Littlefield, 2006).

^x Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers* (New York, 2008).

^{xi} For a discussion of these developments, see Israel Elad Altman, "Iran and the Arabs: The Shiitization Controversy Between Al-Qardawi and Iran," *Iran-Pulse*, no. 25, October 24, 2008

^{xii} Khalil Malwki, *Do Nameh* [Two Letters] (Tehran, 1357/1958). Both letters are addressed to Dr. Mossadeq and in them Maleki describes the situation and offers biting criticism of the National Front leadership.

^{xiii} JFK, "Tehran to State Department, May 13, 1961"

^{xiv} *Tarikh-e Giam-e Panzdah Khordad be Ravayat Asnad* [June 5th Uprising According to Documents], edited by Javad Mansuri, (Tehran, 1378/1999), document number 2/37

^{xv} JFK, "Tehran to State Department, May 14, 1961"

^{xvi} JFK, "Tehran to State Department, May 13, 1961"

^{xvii} Akbar Ganji, one of Iran's leading dissidents, and Shirin Ebadi, the Noble laureate, have repeatedly talked about the folly of the seventy five million dollar fund. For example, see Akbar Ganji, Road to Democracy in Iran, edited by Josh Cohen and Abbas Milani (Boston, 2008).

^{xviii} Keyhan, 2008/08/21 (21 Mordad 1387).

^{xix} Janet Afary and Kevin B Anderson, Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005).