

**IRAN: REALITY, OPTIONS, AND CONSEQUENCES.  
PART I—IRANIAN PEOPLE AND ATTITUDES**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY  
AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

OCTOBER 30, 2007

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**IRAN: REALITY, OPTIONS, AND CONSEQUENCES. PART I—IRANIAN PEOPLE AND ATTITUDES**

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**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2007**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS,  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m., in room 2247, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John F. Tierney (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Tierney, Lynch, Higgins, Yarmuth, Braley, McCollum, Van Hollen, Hodes, Welch, Shays, and Platts.

Staff present: Dave Turk, staff director; Andrew Su and Andy Wright, professional staff members; David Hake, clerk; Janice Spector and Christopher Bright, minority professional staff members; Nick Palarino, minority senior investigator and policy adviser; and Todd Greenwood, minority research assistant.

Mr. TIERNEY. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, the hearing entitled, "Iran: Reality, Options, and Consequences. Part I—Iranian People and Attitudes" will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that only the chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee be allowed to make opening statements.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Again, I ask unanimous consent the hearing record be kept open for 5 business days so that all members of the subcommittee be allowed to submit a written statement for the record. And without objection, that is also ordered.

Good morning and welcome to everyone here today. I appreciate our witnesses going through the long lines that I understand are outside in order to be able to get here. This I think is an important topic. And this first hearing will set the tone and give us good, substantial background information for the hearings to come.

Two weeks ago, the President of the United States made the following statement, "If you're interested in avoiding World War III, it seems like you ought to be interested in preventing them from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon."

A few days later, the Vice President followed up this line with his line in the sand, "We will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon." He then elaborated, "Our country and the entire inter-

national community cannot stand by as a terror-supporting state fulfills its most aggressive ambitions.”

Compare this statement to one that Vice-President Cheney made just 2 months before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, “We will not permit a brutal dictator with ties to terror and a record of feckless aggression to dominate the Middle East and to threaten the United States.”

The administration’s rhetoric on Iran is becoming more strident and inflammatory. The temperature is rapidly rising. And at the same time, as was the case with the buildup to the Iraq war, much of the decisionmaking is being made in the utmost of secrecy.

My hope is this administration has learned lessons over nearly 7 years in office, lessons about truth, humility, and the importance of fully leveling with the American people. It is my hope that any administration, when faced with such an important foreign policy challenge as Iran, will take a calculated, well-thought out approach with a clear understanding of our long-term security and strategic interests, the varying policy options and their consequences. We must also be aware of what we don’t know and the law of unintended consequences.

Congress should also have learned some lessons over the past 7 years, most importantly about the need for vigorous congressional oversight. Our Constitution requires and demands that Congress ask the tough questions, questions about whether all other options have been exhausted, about the consequences and true costs of war, and whether the President is basing his decisions on an accurate picture of reality. “Trust us” should never be good enough under our constitutional separation of powers, and it should certainly not be good enough now.

Beginning today, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs initiates a series of robust, deliberative, and focused oversight hearings on a topic that has long been overdue for congressional examination—U.S. policy toward Iran. Our constitutional responsibility demands nothing less.

As our series hearing entitled, “Iran: Reality, Options, and Consequences,” suggests, we will fully explore the many options for dealing with Iran and the consequences of those options. But let’s not put the cart before the horse. First, let’s learn something about Iranians, something we know far too little about.

Fareed Zakaria recently put it this way: “We are on a path to irreversible confrontation with a country we know almost nothing about. The U.S. Government has had no diplomats in Iran for almost 30 years. American officials have barely met with any senior Iranian politicians or officials. We have no contact with the country’s vibrant civil society. Iran is a black hole to us—just as Iraq had become in 2003.”

The reality is that very few people in Washington understand Iran and that many generalize and oversimplify a complex society of 70 million people. We have little to no understanding of the attitudes and opinions of ordinary Iranians. We don’t know what the word is on the so-called “Iranian street.” We don’t fully appreciate Iran’s rich history and how it is ingrained in the Iranian psyche, or about how the Islamic Revolution of 1979 intimately shaped the

behavior and livelihoods of a generation of Iranian youth, women, and politicians.

The United States has continued to isolate Iran through unilateral and multilateral economic and trade sanctions. Outside of a few people-to-people exchanges and limited opportunities for travel by academics, journalists, and Iranian-Americans, there has been little direct contact with Iran.

So before we start speculating about the prospects for diplomacy or regime change, or the consequences of a U.S. military attack, all of which will be discussed at later subsequent hearings of this subcommittee, let's take a step back and try to understand who the Iranians really are. This fundamental, common-sense approach, unfortunately, was largely missing in the public dialog leading up to the Iraq war. It will not be missing this time.

We need to ask several basic questions. What makes Iranians tick? What drives and motivates their behavior? Do Iranians want democracy? Are they resoundingly anti-American, or are there opportunities for improvements in our relationship? How can we reintegrate Iran into the global economy and get them to adhere to international human rights standards? And, given our lack of connection over the last 30 years, what don't we know? And where are our blind spots?

By understanding Iranians and building our knowledge of the intricacies in our fractured relationship, the subcommittee will be able to conduct our constitutionally mandated oversight, to find out if the current administration has thought through all of these issues adequately and thoroughly, and to ask tough questions that get to the heart of the myriad of issues involved.

With the support of the subcommittee members on both sides of the aisle, I am pleased to embark on this series of Iran hearings.

And I now yield to the ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. Shays.

[The prepared statement of Hon. John F. Tierney follows:]



FROM THE OFFICE OF JOHN F. TIERNEY  
*Representing Massachusetts's 6<sup>th</sup> District*

For Immediate Release  
October 30, 2007

Contact: Catherine Ribeiro  
(202) 225-8020

**NATIONAL SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING**  
*"Iran: Reality, Options and Consequences. Part 1 – Iranian People and Attitudes."*

**WASHINGTON, DC** —Chairman John F. Tierney (D-MA) announced the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs will hold a series of robust and deliberative oversight hearings on U.S. policy toward Iran entitled, "Iran: Reality, Options and Consequences." Today's initial hearing consisted of "Part 1 – Iranian People and Attitudes."

Subsequent hearings will focus on Iranian political dynamics, the history and current prospects for diplomacy and the advisability and consequences of military action. Witnesses for the series of hearings will include top former U.S. government officials holding key positions and experts who have lived and traveled extensively in Iran.

*A copy of Chairman Tierney's opening statement as prepared for delivery is below:*

**Statement of John F. Tierney**  
**Chairman**  
**Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs**  
**Oversight Hearing on "Iran: Reality, Options and Consequences. Part 1 – Iranian People and Attitudes"**  
**As Prepared for Delivery**  
**October 30, 2007**

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Good morning, and welcome to everyone here today.

Two weeks ago, the President of the United States made the following statement, and I quote, "...if you're interested in avoiding World War III, it seems like you ought to be interested in preventing them from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon."

A few days later, the Vice President followed up with this line in the sand, and I quote, "We will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon." He elaborated, "Our country and the entire international community cannot stand by as a terror-supporting state fulfills its most aggressive ambitions."

Compare this statement to one that Vice President Cheney made just two months before the U.S. invasion of Iraq. I quote, “We will not permit a brutal dictator with ties to terror and a record of feckless aggression to dominate the Middle East and to threaten the United States.”

The Administration’s rhetoric on Iran is becoming more strident and inflammatory; the temperature is rising rapidly. And at the same time – as was the case with the build-up to the Iraq war – much of its decision-making is being made in the utmost of secrecy.

My hope is that this Administration has learned lessons over its nearly seven years in office – lessons about truth, humility and the importance of fully leveling with the American people. It is my hope that any Administration, when faced with such an important foreign policy challenge as Iran, will take a calculated, well-thought out approach with a clear understanding of our long-term security and strategic interests, the varying policy options and their consequences. We must also be aware of what we don’t know and the law of unintended consequences.

Congress should also have learned some lessons over the past seven years, most importantly about the need for vigorous Congressional oversight. Our Constitution requires and demands that Congress ask the tough questions – questions about whether all other options have been exhausted; about the consequences and true costs of war and whether the President is basing his decisions on an accurate picture of reality. “Trust us” should never be good enough under our Constitutional separation of powers, and it should certainly not be good enough now.

Beginning today, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs initiates a series of robust, deliberative and focused oversight hearings on a topic that has long been overdue for Congressional examination – U.S. policy towards Iran. Our Constitutional responsibility demands nothing less.

As our series hearing title – “Iran: Reality, Options, and Consequences” – suggests, we will fully explore the many options for dealing with Iran and the consequences of those options.

But let’s not put the cart before the horse. First, let’s learn about Iranians, something we know far too little about.

Fareed Zakaria recently put it this way, “*We’re on a path to irreversible confrontation with a country we know almost nothing about. The United States government has had no diplomats in Iran for almost 30 years. American officials have barely met with any senior Iranian politicians or officials. We have no contact with the country’s vibrant civil society. Iran is a black hole to us – just as Iraq had become in 2003.*”

The reality is that very few people in Washington understand Iran and that many generalize and oversimplify a complex society of 70 million people. We have little-to-no understanding of the attitudes and opinions of ordinary Iranians. We don't know what the word is on the Iranian street. We don't fully appreciate Iran's rich history and how it's engrained in the Iranian psyche; or about how the Islamic Revolution of 1979 intimately shaped the behavior and livelihoods of a generation of Iranian youth, women and politicians.

The United States has continued to isolate Iran, through the use of unilateral and multilateral economic and trade sanctions. Outside of a few people-to-people exchanges and limited opportunities for travel by academics, journalists and Iranian-Americans, there has been little direct contact with Iran.

So before we start speculating about the prospects for diplomacy or regime change, or the consequences of a U.S. military attack, all of which will be addressed in later hearings before this sub-committee, let's take a step back and try to understand who the Iranians really are. This fundamental, common-sense approach, unfortunately, was largely missing in the public dialogue leading up to the Iraq war. It will not be missing this time.

We need to ask several basic questions. What makes Iranians tick? What drives and motivates their behavior? Do Iranians want democracy? Are they resoundingly anti-American, or are there opportunities for improvements in our relationship? How can we reintegrate Iran into the global economy and get them to adhere to international human rights standards? And, given our lack of connection over the last thirty years, what don't we know; where are our blind spots?

By understanding Iranians and building our knowledge of the intricacies in our fractured relationship, the Subcommittee will be able to conduct our Constitutionally-mandated oversight; to find out if the current Administration has thought through all of these issues adequately and thoroughly, and to ask tough questions that get to the heart of the myriad of issues involved.

With the support of the Subcommittee members on both sides of the aisle, I am pleased to embark on this series of Iran hearings.

I now yield to the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Mr. Shays.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I congratulate you for embarking on this series of hearings about Iran. These hearings will further our knowledge about a country that promotes and supports terrorism. The American public must understand that if unchecked, Iran poses a national security threat not only to the United States and our allies, but to the entire world. We must never forget that Iran supports terrorists, wants to become a nuclear power, and has threatened other nations with annihilation.

Given its location, Iran is in a unique position to influence control over the energy-rich Middle East. As we listen to the comments of the Bush administration and the Iranian leadership about what lies ahead for our two nations, I agree with you, Mr. Chairman, what is of fundamental importance is understanding the people, the politics, and the culture of the Iranian people. We have learned some hard lessons from our experience in Iraq about the absolute importance of understanding countries and their people, particularly those we are confronting.

Our relationship with Iran is complex. Besides Cuba, Iran is the only country in the world with which the United States has had no sustained direct contact. In fact, we have had no significant connection with the Government of Iran since 1979, when Iranian students, with the approval of their government, strong-armed the embassy in Tehran, taking and holding 52 American diplomats hostage for 444 days.

The United States has designated Iran a state sponsor of terrorism. Three pressing problems override our relation with this nation: One, Iran's efforts to develop a nuclear weapon; two, Iran's ongoing involvement with and support for terrorist groups throughout the Middle East; and, three, Iran's sustained and increasing support for militia groups in Iraq.

The United States is deeply concerned about Iran's connections to numerous terrorist groups threatening the United States and our allies around the globe. Iran is providing weapons, funding, and guidance to Hezbollah, which threatens Lebanon and Israel. Iran also provides significant support for Palestinian terrorist groups such as Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which threatens lasting peace and security in that region.

The United States is deeply concerned about Iran's race to possess a nuclear weapon. A nuclear armed Iran would pose an incalculable risk to its Arab neighbors, to the countries of the greater Middle East, and to Europe. This would be unthinkable for all who value security and peace.

What we must ask ourselves is whether it is better to isolate Iran or to engage its leaders in discussion. While we must not have 535 Secretaries of State, Congress should take a stronger role in pressing the administration for diplomatic dialog and discourse with Iran.

This administration must understand that even though Iran is a rogue state, it is still a country with enormous influence in the Middle East, which we have to deal with one way or the other. It is time for us to start talking with Iran diplomat to diplomat, politician to politician, and person to person.

I look forward to today's hearings as a positive step in this direction, and we welcome all our witnesses today, and especially wel-

come Dr. Kenneth Katzman, who agreed to testify only 4 days ago. And I would like to again thank you, Mr. Chairman, and say to our witnesses I have to be going before the Appropriations Committee on a particular bill in my district, and I will hustle back as soon as I make my testimony there.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Shays. We are going to have a brief statement from some of the Members who expressed an interest, despite our earlier comments on that. And Mr. Higgins, the Chair recognizes you for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say I don't have a written statement, but I think this is particularly important for a lot of reasons. One is there is new war talk in the air. When the President begins to reference World War III with specific reference to Iran, which is flanked incidentally by Afghanistan and Pakistan, that is troubling. It is troubling because I think it reeks of irresponsibility, it is warmongering, and it creates a potentially further destabilizing influence in a region that is very important to our strategic interests.

What is even more important is the results of your surveys about the Iranian people. My understanding is the Iranian people are relatively young, average age approximately 26. Seventy percent of the population is under the age of 30. The government lacks legitimacy in the eyes of the governed. Corruption is endemic, and employment is chronic. Most of the Iranian population are very pro-Western.

My concern is with a lot of war talk in the air, perhaps air strikes on some 18 to 30 nuclear-related facilities that happen to be interspersed with civilian populations, that we have to be very, very careful, obviously, before we take any kind of military action. Strongly engaging diplomatically I think is important, given the precarious nature of this regime.

I think our interests are profound in that region, profound in that country, and we have an obligation to explore not only the face of Iran, which happens to be a President Ahmadinejad, which his statements are very provocative, his goal I think is to become the face of extremism in the Middle East, and I think he has succeeded in that regard, but to understand there is a population of 70 million people, that is important to our strategic interests in that area as well.

So I look forward to your testimony, and I thank you for being here.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Higgins. Ms. McCollum is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Thank you, Chairman Tierney. Thank you very much for holding this hearing. I expect to be learning a lot from our testifiers. With the talk of, as Congressman Higgins just pointed out, of President Bush talking about World War III, Vice-President Cheney issuing ultimatums without a robust discussion in the Congress, I think it makes sense that this committee, with the charge that we have with government oversight, show that we are going to take the prudent, measured look at what is the situation in Iran, but more importantly understand Iran so that we can engage with the families. Not necessarily engage always with the ex-

treme talk that we hear from Iran, but to really understand what is going on with the typical Iranian family and what they would like to see their government do.

As I go back home and talk to the families in my district and listen carefully with what they want this Congress to do, they clearly want engagement. They clearly want dialog, they clearly want the heated rhetoric to cease and for engagement and diplomacy to take effect.

So Mr. Chair, I think this hearing is extremely important. And as it was just stated, when the number of youth far exceed the elders in a country, they have a different time reference as to their engagement with the United States. Many of them do not remember or probably don't even understand how some Americans continue to struggle with the kidnapping of our civil and State Department people in the embassy. They don't understand why we have even cutoff the way that we have dialog with Iran.

So Mr. Chairman, I look forward to learning, I look forward to taking my responsibility to defend and protect the Constitution and the people here of the United States seriously. But I want to do it as an informed Member of Congress, not someone just going off sound bites on the evening news. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Ms. McCollum. If the witnesses would please stand. It is our practice here before the subcommittee to swear all witnesses before they testify. I would ask you to please raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. The record will reflect that all witnesses answered in the affirmative. And we are going to have all of your written statements put in the record by unanimous consent. So if you could keep your testimony to 5, 10 minutes, we would appreciate that. It is usually 5, but we think it is a pretty deep subject so we would have some forbearance on that.

I want to take a moment and introduce each of the witnesses before they testify rather than all three at the same time. Our first witness this morning is Ken Ballen, who is the president of Terror Free Tomorrow. He is here to share the results of the first nationwide survey of Iranians since 2002, and what lessons we can learn from that effort.

Mr. Ballen has spent more than 20 years on the front lines of law enforcement, international relations, intelligence oversight, and congressional investigations. He has successfully prosecuted international terrorists. He has also prosecuted major figures in organized crime, international narcotics, and one of the first cases in the United States involving illegal financing for Middle Eastern terrorists. He has been counsel to the Iran-Contra Committee under Chairman Lee Hamilton, where he was the lead investigator. He was also chief counsel for the bipartisan Senate Special Investigative Committee, with Senator John McCain, and the chief counsel to the House Steering and Policy Committee for Speaker Foley, where he directed policy initiatives on crime prevention and security, intelligence oversight, and select national security matters to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Mr. Ballen, we would be pleased to hear your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF KEN BALLEEN, PRESIDENT, TERROR FREE  
TOMORROW**

Mr. BALLEEN. Thank you very much, Chairman Tierney, members of the subcommittee. I first would like to commend you, Mr. Chairman, for not only this series—I needed to turn that on—thank you, Mr. Chairman. I first would like to commend you and the subcommittee not only for holding the oversight hearings on Iran, but for starting them in a place and on a topic that most people would not begin with, which is the people of Iran. That is absolutely the right place to start.

Mr. Chairman, the Iranian people are speaking. The question before us now is are we listening? The United States has imposed new economic sanctions against Iran, but these sanctions or any other economic sanctions are likely to fail unless we also begin to address the Iranian people directly.

President Reagan told us during the cold war that the average Soviet citizen was the best ally of the United States. President Reagan called that Soviet citizen Citizen Ivan, our friend. That is no less true with Iran today.

Terror Free Tomorrow, an independent, nonprofit center on the importance of public opinion, partnered this summer with D3 Systems, one of the most outstanding polling organizations for polling in closed societies and in troubled situations like Iraq and Afghanistan. They are here with me today. D3 Systems conducted a nationwide phone survey of Iran this past summer. And in an act of what could only be called everyday courage on the part of ordinary Iranians, over the phone—they didn't know who was on the other end of the line; could have been the government, could have been anyone—over the phone they told our pollsters that they reject the autocratic rule of the Supreme Leader, that they want normal relations with the outside world, and nuclear weapons are simply not their priority.

As the Chair mentioned, this is the first uncensored, complete poll on these controversial issues since September 2002. What was the result in 2002? Well, the result was the Iranian government put the pollsters in jail. Our results was that 79 percent surveyed across Iran said they want free elections and the opportunity to elect their leaders rather than have their leaders chosen for them. They want relations with the outside world, 68 percent with the United States. Only 11 percent of Iranians said they favor their current system of unelected rule by the Supreme Leader.

These results should not be treated as routine. They are not routine.

About the same time that we conducted a poll of Iran, we conducted a similar phone survey of Syria, another closed society. And while three-quarters of Syrians said they favor better relations with the West, almost no one in our poll of Syria was willing to directly or indirectly come up to that line of criticizing the government or their Supreme Leader, Bashar Assad. But in Iran they did. Criticizing the Supreme Leader, as my distinguished colleague to my left here will tell you in Iran, is a line that one crosses at considerable personal risk. Yet in our poll the Iranian people are bravely and collectively crossing that line.

The question before us is are we listening. I can tell you one party that is listening. It is the Iranian Government itself. Within a month of our poll they released a poll, refuting point by point the findings that we came up with.

What accounts for the difference in results? Well, they didn't release their methodology and questions, so I don't really know. But I can tell you this, that perhaps when the government calls you up and says it is the government, you are going to get a very different answer. Or perhaps they went to the minority of Iranians, the demographic that do support them, because we did find that in our poll. We found that a very strong and committed minority, ranging from 11 percent, as I mentioned, in terms of keeping the current system of the unelected religious rule of the Supreme Leader, to almost a third in terms of certain policies of President Ahmadinejad do support the government. So you have a majority of people who don't, but you have a determined and committed minority who do.

So where do we stand? What is the bottom line on all of this? On the one hand, we have the Iranian people expressing to us their true voice. On the other hand, we have the Iranian regime very busy expressing the voice of the people that it wants the rest of the world to hear. But the rest of the world is silent. Sanctions are imposed, military threats are made. The regime is talked to by some, it is shunned by others. And in all this debate no one is reaching out over the head of the regime to talk to the people themselves. The United States is not, nor are the Europeans. No one is.

The irony of this situation that we find ourselves in is that the regime itself is very busy trying to represent the people and their will and to speak for them. But as much as they may try, the regime does not. The rest of the world, if it spoke to the priorities of the Iranian people, to their economic desires, to their desires for trade, to their desires for peaceful coexistence, to their desire for, yes, respect from other nations, the irony is if the United States did reach out, as we did during the cold war and delivered messages, a positive agenda directly to the people, we would find our most receptive audience to be inside Iran itself.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am happy to answer any questions as to the details of the polls and our findings, which I avoided in my opening statements in the interests of time. And as I said, I am accompanied by D3, which can speak to methodology as well.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ballen follows:]

**Congressional Testimony**

**THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION INSIDE IRAN**

Written Testimony of Kenneth Ballen  
President  
Terror Free Tomorrow: The Center for Public Opinion

House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
National Security and Foreign Affairs Subcommittee  
Washington, DC  
October 30, 2007



[www.TerrorFreeTomorrow.org](http://www.TerrorFreeTomorrow.org)

**Statement of Kenneth Ballen, House National Security Subcommittee**

**I. Introduction: The Iranian People Are Speaking. Are We Listening?**

I would like to commend Chairman Tierney, Ranking Member Shays and the Subcommittee for starting its series of hearings on Iran with the topic of the Iranian people and their attitudes. It is not the topic most would begin with, but it is the right place to start.

The United States has now imposed new economic sanctions against Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, while also designating the elite Quds Force of the Guard as a terrorist organization.

But these measures—or any other economic sanctions—are likely to fail against the current Iranian regime, unless the United States begins to address the people of Iran themselves.

President Reagan told us that America's greatest ally against the Soviet Union in winning the Cold War was the average Soviet, "Citizen Ivan," Reagan said.

This is no less true with Iran today.

In what can only fairly be described as an act of every day courage by average citizens, this past summer Iranians told our pollsters over the phone—not knowing whether the Iranian government itself was the party on the other end of the line—that they reject the current autocratic rule of the Supreme Leader and want full trade and normal relations with the West instead of nuclear weapons.

In the first uncensored nationwide public opinion survey since September 2002 (when the Iranian pollsters were jailed), 79 percent of those surveyed across Iran want free elections and normal relations with the outside world, and almost 70 percent with the United States itself. Only 11 percent of Iranians said they support the current Iranian system of the unelected religious rule of the Supreme Leader.

These results should not be taken as routine.

At about the same time that we conducted our phone survey of Iran, we conducted a similar poll of Syria. While three quarters of Syrians expressed that they also want better relations with the West, almost no Syrian felt free to directly criticize the Syrian government, let alone their Syrian "Supreme Leader," Bashar Assad.

Indeed, criticizing the Supreme Leader and the nature of his religiously determined right to rule is a line inside Iran publicly crossed at personal risk. Yet in our poll, the Iranian people bravely and collectively are crossing that line.

The question is: Are we listening?

**Statement of Kenneth Ballen, House National Security Subcommittee****II. The Results of Our Unprecedented Public Opinion Survey**

The Terror Free Tomorrow survey showed that four out of every five Iranians would prefer the freedom to elect their own leaders, and economic opportunity with international engagement, over building nuclear weapons. People widely rejected the policies of President Ahmadinejad, and want renewed and normal relations with the United States.

The survey was conducted in Farsi by telephone from a nearby country by our field manager D3 Systems ([www.d3systems.com](http://www.d3systems.com)) During June 5th to June 18th, 2007, our random sampling covered 1,000 interviews across all 30 provinces of Iran, with a margin of error of 3.1 percent.

The complete results and methodology of the survey can be accessed at [www.TerrorFreeTomorrow.org](http://www.TerrorFreeTomorrow.org) As noted above, the last poll to ask similar controversial questions inside Iran was released in September 2002 by Abbas Abdi. The pollsters were imprisoned as a result.

Developing nuclear weapons was seen as a very important priority for the Iranian government by only 29 percent of Iranians. By contrast, 88 percent of Iranians considered improving the Iranian economy as a very important priority for their government.

Rather, four-fifths of Iranians favor Iran providing full international inspections and a guarantee not to develop or possess nuclear weapons in return for outside aid. Moreover, 68 percent of Iranians also favor normal relations and trade with the United States. Indeed, in exchange for normal relations, a majority of Iranians even favor recognizing Israel and Palestine as independent states, ending Iranian support for any armed groups inside Iraq, and giving full transparency by Iran to the U.S. to ensure there are no Iranian endeavors to develop nuclear weapons.

Yet the most significant finding of our survey for the future of Iran's present rulers is the Iranian people's opposition to their current system of government.

Specifically, 61 percent of Iranians were willing to tell our pollsters that they oppose the current Iranian system of government, where the Supreme Leader rules according to religious principles and cannot be chosen or replaced by direct vote of the people.

More telling, over 79 percent of Iranians support a democratic system instead, in which the Supreme Leader, along with all leaders, can be chosen and replaced by a free and direct vote of the people. Only 11 percent of Iranians said they would strongly oppose having a political system in which all of their leaders are chosen by popular election.

**Statement of Kenneth Ballen, House National Security Subcommittee**

Iranians across gender, age, income and every demographic group oppose the unelected rule of the Supreme Leader in favor of electing all their leaders. While these views run stronger in Tehran, they are held in each province of Iran, and in both urban and rural areas.

An important caveat: Even though most Iranians do not support their current system or the regime's policies, there is a significant and committed minority of Iranians who do. 11 percent favor the current unelected rule of the Supreme Leader, and that number rises to anywhere from 23 percent to 34 percent when questioned about specific policies of President Ahmadinejad. There is a strong, faithful and committed minority behind the current system and government.

In addition, general discontent is also reflective of the fact that the Iranian economy is the number one issue of concern for Iranians from every age, region, education level and class. 80 percent think the present economic situation in Iran is fair or poor, and 9 out of every 10 Iranians believe that creating new jobs and curbing inflation should be very important priorities for their government.

Indeed, three-quarters favor Western investment to create more jobs, while trade and political relations with the West were the second highest priority Iranians chose for their government. Support for Western and outside relations in general was also much stronger than support for the United States alone. For instance, Iranians chose normal trade with China and France by a nearly 2 to 1 margin over the United States.

Lastly, almost two-thirds of Iranians support financial assistance to Palestinian opposition groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as well as Lebanese Hezbollah and Iraqi Shia militias. However, only a third consider the Iranian government providing financial support to these groups as very important, as opposed to nearly half who think that seeking trade and political relations with Western countries is very important.

The bottom line is that while most Iranians want political change, opening to the outside world and free economic exchange, not all do. And there remains a powerful undercurrent of distrust towards American policies in particular.

Whatever Iranians feel, the survey results indicate that they want to determine the nature of the future of Iran for themselves.

If approached with respect for their own priorities, however, Terror Free Tomorrow's path-breaking survey of Iran also demonstrates that the Iranian people could be the best ally of the U.S. and the West against the government in Tehran.

**Statement of Kenneth Ballen, House National Security Subcommittee**

**III. The Impact of Our Public Opinion Survey inside Iran**

The Terror Free Tomorrow poll did not go unnoticed inside Iran. Circulated throughout Iranian blogs, it was particularly cited by student organizations, with a prominent group headlining the results: "Iranian Students: Your Fellow Citizens Want Democracy Too."

And the poll did not go unnoticed by the regime either.

Three weeks following our survey's dissemination, the Iranian government published their own poll in official government media, refuting the Terror Free Tomorrow findings point by point.

More than simply clinging to power, many in the Iranian ruling class are "true believers," with a powerful ideological stake in having the people behind them.

Hence, continual polls sponsored by the government are regularly published in the Iranian press.

These polls generally reflect support for current government policies. Since the government does not release the exact questions or methodology, it is hard to assess the discrepancy between our independent survey and the government polls. It could be that people simply answer differently when they know the government is asking the questions. Or it could be that the government polls are weighted to the minority demographic that strongly supports its policies.

With its ongoing series of government polls, the Terror Free Tomorrow survey represents the only alternative outlet for public opinion polling inside Iran.

**IV. The Role of Iranian Public Opinion in Setting Future Policy**

While the Iranian people are expressing their true voice, the Iranian regime is busy expressing the voice of the people it wants the world to hear.

But the world is silent.

Sanctions are imposed, military threats made, the regime is talked to by some, shunned by others, and in all of this debate, no one is reaching out over the head of the regime to address the Iranian people directly.

The United States and the larger international community, with one clear voice, need to tell the Iranian people that we support their priorities of trade, technology and economic opportunity.

**Statement of Kenneth Ballen, House National Security Subcommittee**

The world should tell Iranians that it entirely shares their goals of democracy, human rights and a positive agenda of a future Iran proud, secure, and a fully respected and participating member of the community of nations.

By publicly, repeatedly and forcefully letting the Iranian people know that the United States is on their side, popular pressure on an unpopular regime could increase.

Moreover, by taking the leadership role of prominently setting forth a positive vision of what the future can be, whatever actions the United States and other nations actually take now, or later, at least could be understood inside Iran as trying to isolate the regime, and not the people themselves.

The irony is that the Iranian regime is now engaged in a determined effort to win over, represent and speak for the Iranian people. But as much as it may try, the regime doesn't. While the rest of the world, and the United States in particular, remain painfully silent.

If the United States and other nations did try to directly address the concerns of the Iranian people, they would find their most receptive audience to be inside Iran itself.



**TERROR FREE  
TOMORROW**

**Polling Iranian Public Opinion: An  
Unprecedented Nationwide Survey of Iran**

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### Executive Summary

Discontent with the current system of government, the state of Iran's economy, and isolation from the West is widespread throughout Iran. In this context, nuclear weapons are the lowest priority for the Iranian people.

Iranians even overwhelmingly support their government providing full inspections and a guarantee not to develop nuclear weapons in return for trade and assistance from other countries. The popular will to live in a democracy open to the West and the United States, with greater economic opportunity, comes from every region and segment of Iranian society.

These are among the significant findings of the first nationwide public opinion survey of Iran on these issues since President Ahmadinejad took office in August 2005. The survey was conducted by telephone from June 5<sup>th</sup> to June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007, with 1,000 interviews proportionally distributed according to the population covering all 30 provinces of Iran. The last poll to ask similar controversial questions was conducted in September 2002 by Abbas Abdi inside Iran, who was imprisoned as a result.

Developing nuclear weapons was seen as a very important priority for the Iranian government by only 29% of Iranians. By contrast, 88% of Iranians considered improving the Iranian economy as a very important priority for their government.

Rather, 80% of Iranians favor Iran providing full inspections and a guarantee not to develop or possess nuclear weapons in return for outside aid. A majority of Iranians (52%) also favor the development of nuclear weapons and believe that the people of Iran would live in a safer world if Iran possessed nuclear weapons. However, support for nuclear weapons drops to below 17% if Iran were to receive outside assistance in return for full inspections and a guarantee not to have nuclear weapons.

68% of Iranians also favor normal relations and trade with the United States. In return for normal relations, a majority of Iranians favor recognizing Israel and Palestine as independent states, ending Iranian support for any armed groups inside Iraq, and full transparency by Iran to the United States to ensure there are no Iranian endeavors to develop nuclear weapons.

Yet the most significant finding of our survey for Iran's present rulers may be the Iranian people's opposition to their current system of government.

61% of Iranians were willing to tell our pollsters over the phone that they oppose the current Iranian system of government, where the Supreme Leader rules according to religious principles and cannot be chosen or replaced by direct vote of the people.

Even more telling, however, over 79% of Iranians support a democratic system instead, where the Supreme Leader, along with all leaders, can be chosen and replaced by a free and direct vote of the people.

Only 11% of Iranians said that they would strongly oppose having a political system where all of their leaders, including the Supreme Leader, are chosen by popular election. 80% of Iranians also oppose a return to monarchy.

Iranians in every demographic group oppose the unelected rule of the Supreme Leader in favor of electing all their leaders. While these views run stronger in Tehran, they are also held across all provinces of Iran, and in both urban and rural areas.

The survey also leaves no doubt that the Iranian economy is the number one issue of concern for Iranians from every age, region, education level and class. 80% think the present economic situation in Iran is fair or poor, and 9 out of every 10 Iranians believe that creating new jobs and curbing inflation should be very important priorities for their government.

Indeed, three-quarters favor Western investment to create more jobs, as well as medical, education and humanitarian assistance from Western countries to Iranian people in need. Trade and political relations with the West were the second highest priority Iranians chose for their government, after improving the Iranian economy. Support for Western relations in general was also much stronger than support for the United States alone.

The survey had other important findings as well:

- A significant minority of Iranians still support the current system of rule by the Supreme Leader as well as certain policies of President Ahmadinejad, ranging from 23% to 34%;
- Almost two-thirds of Iranians support financial assistance to Palestinian opposition groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as well as Lebanese Hezbollah and Iraqi Shia militias;
- However, only a third consider the Iranian government providing financial support to these groups as very important, as opposed to 47% who think that seeking trade and political relations with Western countries is very important. In contrast, 88% of the public want improvement in their economy to be the top priority of the Iranian government, with developing nuclear weapons last at 29%;
- While nearly two-thirds support Hamas and Hezbollah, 55% of Iranians would also endorse recognizing Israel and Palestine each as separate, independent states, as part of achieving normal relations with the United States;
- 78% of Iranians strongly favor the development of nuclear energy, but only 33% strongly favor nuclear weapons;

- 56% of Iranians stated that President Ahmadinejad has failed to keep his campaign promise to “put oil money on the table of the people themselves;”
- France, the European Union and China were preferred by Iranians to the United States;
- Iranians chose normal trade with China and France by a nearly 2 to 1 margin over the United States;
- Similarly, 73% of Iranians would favor a medical humanitarian hospital ship to visit Iran, with that percentage holding steady if the ship comes from China or Europe, but dropping to 42% if the ship is American and only 21% if the ship is Israeli.

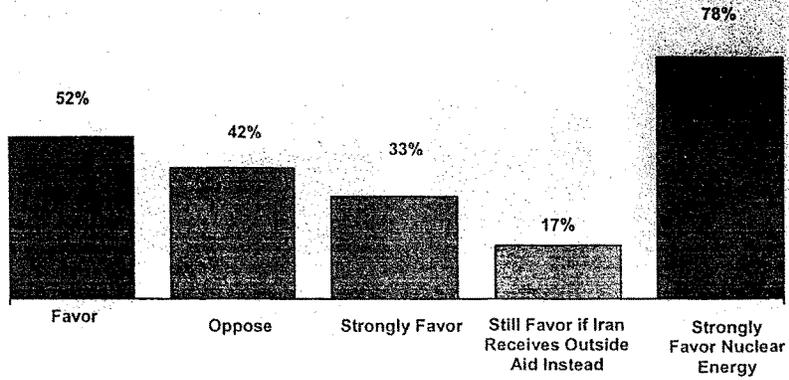
Keen observers of Iran have insisted for years that the Iranian people are pro-Western, indeed pro-American, while profoundly opposed to the largely unelected clerical regime that rules them.

Terror Free Tomorrow's unprecedented nationwide poll of Iran offers indisputable empirical proof that these commentators are accurate in their anecdotal assessment. Even answering our unknown pollsters over the telephone, Iranians have courageously asked for change.

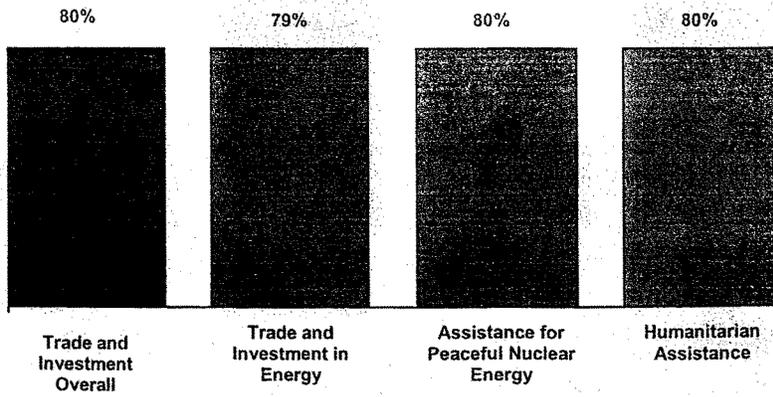
**For a *Wall Street Journal* editorial on the poll, click [here](#), for other press coverage, click [here](#), for an event at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), click [here](#).**

Views of Iranians

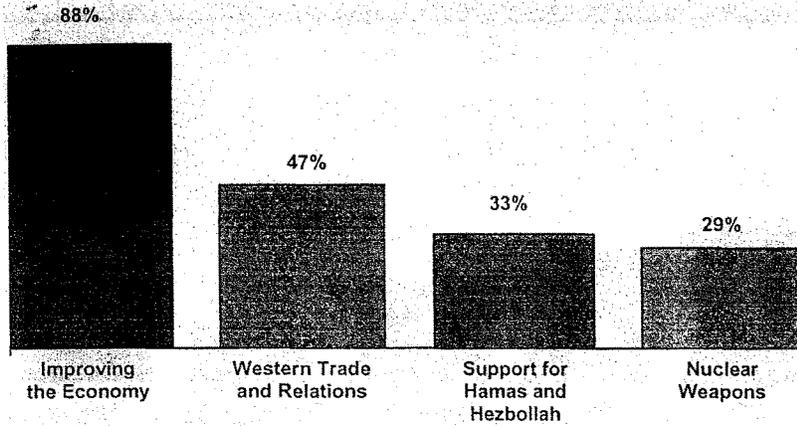
On Iran Developing/Possessing Nuclear Weapons, Percent of Iranians who:



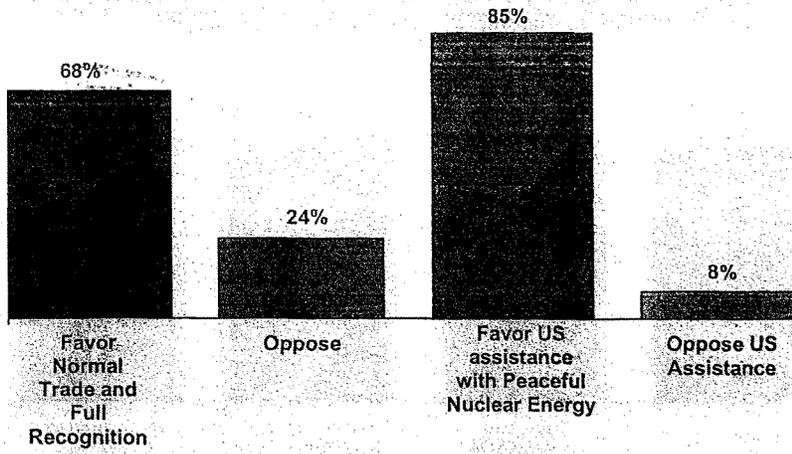
Percent of Iranians Who Favor Full Inspections and Guarantee to ensure No Nuclear Weapons, If Iran Receives From Other Countries:



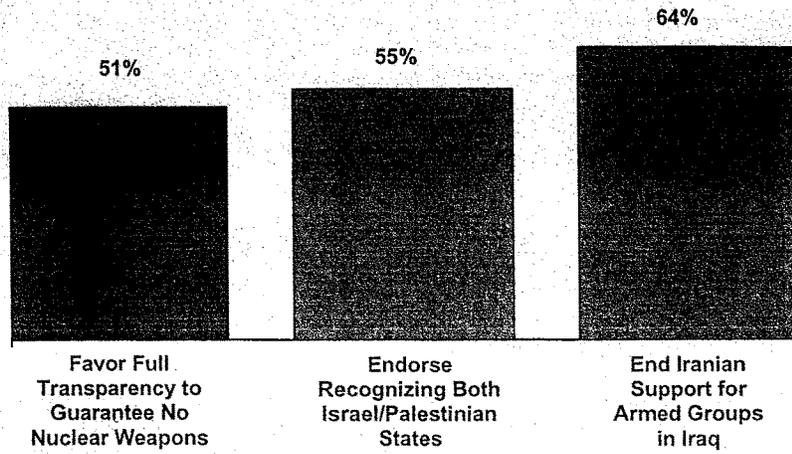
Priorities that Iranians Think are Very Important for their Government:



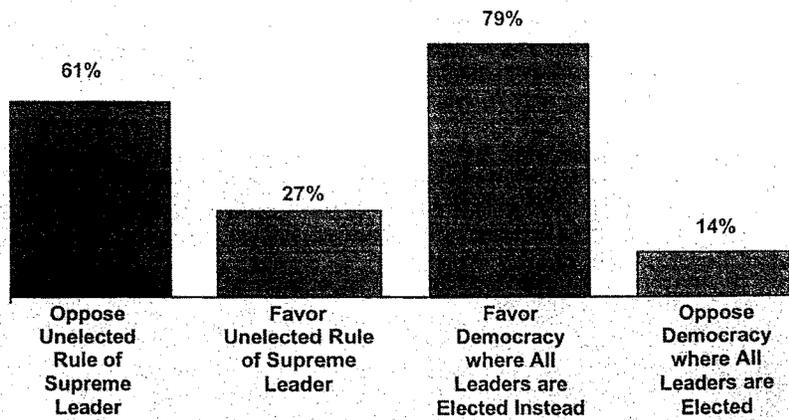
On Relations with the United States, Percent of Iranians who:



In Return for US Recognition and Trade, Percent of Iranians who:



On their Current System of Government, Percent of Iranians who:



### Background and Methodology

Terror Free Tomorrow's survey results have been featured across the political spectrum by the Heritage Foundation, the Brookings Institution, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Clinton Global Initiative and at the National Press Club. They have received lead editorials and feature stories in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Associated Press*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *USA Today*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Baltimore Sun*, CNN, National Public Radio, *Roll Call*, *The Hill* and *U.S. News & World Report*, among others.

Terror Free Tomorrow is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization, whose President, Ken Ballen, successfully prosecuted international terrorists, and played a leading role in some of the most important Congressional investigations over the past two decades. Our distinguished international Advisory Board is led by Senator John McCain, Lee Hamilton and Tom Kean.

In the last two years alone, Terror Free Tomorrow has conducted more than twenty-three nationwide public opinion surveys, including in Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and elsewhere. We completed the first nationwide public opinion survey in Bangladesh on international issues in almost five years, as well as the first such polls in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan since 9/11, among others.

Terror Free Tomorrow's surveys have been cited by former Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush, and in the US Congress (on the Senate Floor, by key Senators and Congressmen, and in both House and Senate testimony), at the United Nations, and relied on by the State Department as an independent benchmark in evaluating the success of American foreign policy (*State Dept Performance and Accountability Report*), and by the Department of Defense in the *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*.

Terror Free Tomorrow was the first to conduct a nationwide poll in Indonesia after the tsunami. President Bush, and former Presidents Clinton and Bush, all cited the poll as a key reason for sustained American tsunami relief. The US State Department also relied on Terror Free Tomorrow polling in testimony before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

In addition, Terror Free Tomorrow conducted the first and only poll in Pakistan after the devastating October 2005 earthquake. The poll was featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, CNN and international media. Moreover, the poll served as the principal finding by the US Senate for the United States "to take the lead" in relief efforts to Pakistani earthquake victims (Senate Resolution 356, co-sponsored by Senators Lugar and Biden, Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee).

In May 2007, Senators Russ Feingold (D-WI) and Norm Coleman (R-MN) have introduced important new legislation to strengthen America's public diplomacy and humanitarian efforts, relying on Terror Free Tomorrow's surveys as one of the key findings for the legislation.

The incoming Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and current Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Michael Mullen, wrote that Terror Free Tomorrow's findings, provided the proof to "one of the defining moments of this new century."

According to Admiral Mullen, Terror Free Tomorrow's findings have directly led to continuing successful mission by the U.S. Navy around the world, including the recent mission of the U.S. Navy ship *Mercy*.

Admiral Michael Mullen stated that the favorable change in public opinion documented by Terror Free Tomorrow after American tsunami relief was a "critical factor" in launching the 2006 mission of the Navy hospital ship *Mercy*. *Mercy* is a fully equipped, 1,000-bed hospital, which from May to August offered free medical services and training to the people of Indonesia, Bangladesh and elsewhere, including care to over 61,000 needy patients.

As Admiral Mullen testified in March 2007 before the U.S. House Armed Services Committee:

"Perhaps the most tangible application of Navy's global reach and persistent presence in building partner capacity was last year's five month deployment of the hospital ship *MERCY* in the summer of 2006 to the tsunami-affected areas in South and Southeast Asia. In an August 2006 public opinion survey, conducted by Terror Free Tomorrow, Indonesians and Bangladeshis overwhelmingly indicated their support of this humanitarian mission. In Indonesia, 85% of those aware of *MERCY*'s visit had a favorable opinion, and in Bangladesh this figure was 95%. Further, 87% of those polled in Bangladesh stated that *MERCY*'s activities made their overall view of the United States more positive. These polling results provide real indication of the power of our partnerships."

Terror Free Tomorrow's work has received lead editorials and featured stories in, among others, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Associated Press*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *USA Today*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Baltimore Sun*, CNN, National Public Radio, *Roll Call*, *The Hill* and *U.S. News & World Report*. Other coverage includes *The New York Times*, MSNBC, ABC News, CBS News, FOX News, *Reuters*, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Post*, *The National Review*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *United Press International*, *The White House Bulletin*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Globe and Mail* (Canada), *The Afghanistan Times*, *The Jakarta Post* (Indonesia), Metro TV Indonesia, *Tempo* (Indonesia), *Kompas* (Indonesia), TV/Radio Australia, *Straits Times* (Malaysia), *Pakistan Dawn*, *The Nation* (Pakistan), GEO TV Pakistan, *Pakistan Daily Times*, *Voice of America*, *Jornal do Brasil*, *Die Welt* (Germany), *Le Monde* (France), BBC, *The Guardian* (UK), *The*

*Daily Yomiuri* (Japan), *The China Post*, *The Seoul Times*, *The Indian Express* (India), *The Hindu* (India), *The Turkish Daily News*, *The Turkish Press*, *Zaman* (Turkey), *The Oman Tribune*, *The Gulf News* (UAE and pan-Arab), *The Middle East Times*, *The Iranian News*, *The Muslim News*, and *The Daily Star* (Lebanon and pan-Arab), among others. Terror Free Tomorrow has also been extensively covered in blogs throughout the Internet.

Terror Free Tomorrow findings have also been cited in scholarly journals including the *Harvard International Review*, the *New England Journal of Medicine*, and important books on American foreign policy, such as *The Audacity of Hope* by Senator Barack Obama; Peter Beinart's *The Good Fight*; Tony Smith, *Washington's Bid*; Colonel David Hunt, *How to Wake Up Washington and Win the War on Terror* Carnes Lord, *Losing Hearts and Minds*; and Dick Martin, *Rebuilding Brand America*.

Terror Free Tomorrow's field partner and project manager on the Iran survey is D<sup>3</sup> Systems, Inc. [www.D3systems.com](http://www.D3systems.com)

Indeed, the Iranian survey follows the precedent of the first nationwide survey of Afghanistan by ABC News in December 2005, which won the Gallup Award for Excellent Journalism Using Polls and was also managed by D<sup>3</sup> Systems.

D<sup>3</sup> has conducted widely praised surveys in Iraq and Afghanistan for ABC News, *USA Today*, BBC and others. D<sup>3</sup> is recognized for its expertise in overseeing research projects from design through analysis in some of the most difficult research environments around the globe.

Since 1988, D<sup>3</sup> Systems has developed a particular expertise on research in the Middle East.

D<sup>3</sup> Systems has developed unique research capabilities from scratch in Afghanistan and Iraq. D<sup>3</sup> founded, in 2003, the first registered opinion research firm in Afghanistan: the *Afghan Center for Socio-economic and Opinion Research* (ACSOR). ACSOR has conducted qualitative and quantitative research projects for an international client group including The Asia Foundation, the US State Department, the BBC, the Voice of America, and Radio Free Europe. D<sup>3</sup> has also conducted a number of quantitative surveys in Iraq for ABC News, *USA Today*, the BBC, the Voice of America, *Deutsche Welle*, Radio Sawa, and others.

Beginning in Europe in the early 1990s, D<sup>3</sup> has played a leading role in the international use of telephone research for opinion polling and media audience measurement and evaluation into denied or limited access countries. While international telephone research from a central site (CATI) is an established method for consumer or business-to-business surveys, D<sup>3</sup> has pioneered its use to reach publics in societies where on the ground, random probability sampling with sensitive questionnaires is not possible.

In countries where opinion polling and media research are sensitive or dangerous and telephone ownership is widespread, D<sup>3</sup> conducts telephone surveys from a multi-lingual regional CATI center. These countries include Iran and Saudi Arabia. D<sup>3</sup> has conducted quantitative and qualitative projects in the Middle East for key public sector broadcasters (VOA, Radio Sawa, Radio Farda, BBC, Deutsche Welle, and World Radio Network).

For the current survey of Iran, KA Europe SPRL also participated. Interviews were conducted by phone from a CATI facility in a nearby country outside Iran. The exact location of the CATI facility is not identified in order to maintain confidentiality for the interviewing team.

The interviews were conducted in Farsi by native speakers, among a random national sample of 1,000 Iranians aged 18 and up from June 5<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The questionnaire consisted of 20 substantive questions, 12 demographic questions, and 24 quality control questions. During the course of fieldwork, there were 2,124 contact attempts made. Of these, 465 resulted in non-contacts, yielding a non-contact rate of 21.9%. Another 8 contact attempts results in non-eligible respondents because they were not Iranian nationals. Of the 1,651 successful contacts, there were 651 refusals giving the study a 60.6% response rate. The poll has a +/- 3.1% margin of error at the 95% confidence interval.

Telephone interviewing was employed instead of face-to-face research in Iran because of the political and social constraints involved. Face-to-face interviewing in Iran can be difficult for interviewers who risk possible prosecution and imprisonment. The last poll to ask similar controversial questions was conducted in September 2002 by Abbas Abdi inside Iran, who was imprisoned as a result.

Face-to-face interviewing also poses issues related to access to households and respondents due to social considerations. Access to female respondents across the Middle East can also be challenging.

These problems can be overcome through the use of CATI research in Iran. Iran has an estimated national land-line telephone penetration rate of over 90%, which gives it a higher telephone penetration rate than many other countries. The high percentage of land-line households also reduces potential bias from cell phone-only households.

Interviews were conducted by 20 trained interviewers who are native Farsi speakers, with some university education or higher. Interviewers were briefed on a number of items including, but not limited to, the objective of the program and survey details, selection of respondents, the questionnaire (both asking of questions and recording of responses), timing and control issues, and usage of the CATI system. Interviews were subjected to numerous quality control

procedures including direct supervision of all interviews by a supervisor experienced in Iranian surveys.

The target sample was a random selection of Iranian nationals, both male and female, above the age of 18. The sample covered all 30 provinces of Iran, with the number of sampling points chosen in proportion to the size of each province's population, as well as both urban and rural strata. Sampling points were chosen by randomly selecting telephone exchanges within each province and randomizing the digits in the telephone numbers. Both starting points and households within each exchange were randomly selected while accommodating for the fact that telephone exchanges in Iran are indiscriminately assigned and mix both business and residential numbers. Respondents within each household were selected using the "Last Birthday" method.

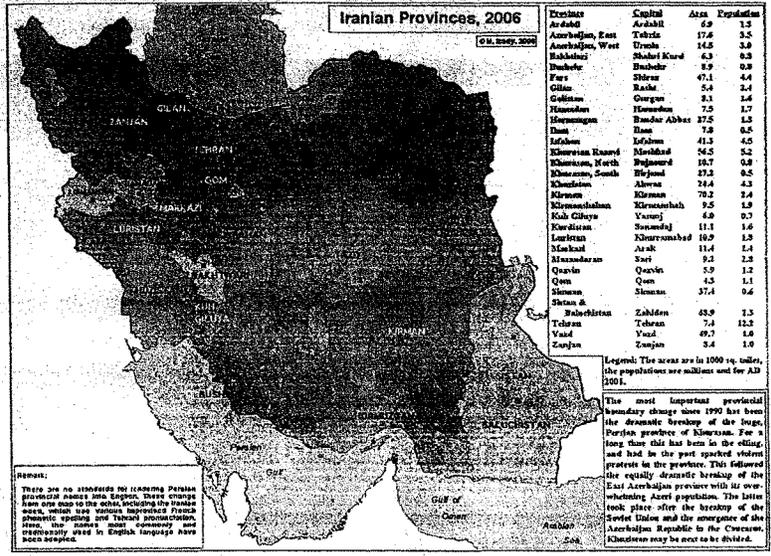
The interview was completed on the first call for 63.9% of respondents. The designated respondent was called up to 3 times for an interview. The interview was completed during the second call for 15.6% of respondents and on the third call for 20.5% of respondents. If the interviewer failed to speak to the eligible person after 3 call-backs, then the interviewer skipped to the next telephone number using the CATI system. Call-backs were utilized for 421 respondents; 361 of them were interviewed and 60 of them were not interviewed after 3 call-backs.

The survey yielded demographic results similar to that of official national population data from the Islamic Republic of Iran. D<sup>3</sup> typically weights for both age and sex in surveys of Iran. During field, some telephone exchanges in Esfahan and Golestan provinces were not working at full capacity due to technical maintenance in the area. Therefore, a few sampling points from both provinces were replaced with those from other provinces. A third weighting column for province was added for this study to adjust for the slight under sample in Esfahan and Golestan (see the following charts). Otherwise, no significant problems were observed during fieldwork.

Chart 1: Weighted vs. Unweighted Demographics

	National Population %	TFT W1 Realized Sample (un-weighted)	TFT W1 Realized Sample (weighted)
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	51%	50%	50.5%
Female	49%	50%	49.5%
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	24%	35%	25%
25-34	27%	27%	27%
35-44	20%	20%	20%
45-54	11%	11%	11%
55+	17%	7%	17%
<b>Geographic Code</b>			
Urban	61%	61%	61%
Rural	39%	39%	39%
<b>Province/City/Region</b>			
Ardabil	2%	2%	2%
Azerbaijani Gharbi	4%	4%	4%
Azerbaijani Sharqi	5%	6%	5%
Bushehr	2%	1%	1%
Chahar Mahall va Bakhtiari	2%	1%	1%
Esfahan	8%	4%	6%
Fars	7%	7%	7%
Gilan	4%	4%	4%
Hamadan	2%	3%	3%
Hormozgan	2%	2%	2%
Ilam	1%	1%	1%
Kerman	4%	3%	3%
Kermanshahan	3%	3%	3%
Khorasan	10%	10%	10%
Khuzestan	6%	6%	6%
Kohkiluyeh va Buyer Ahmadi	1%	1%	1%
Kordestan	2%	2%	2%
Lorestan	2%	3%	3%
Markazi	2%	2%	2%
Mazandaran	4%	4%	4%
Semnan	1%	1%	1%
Sistan va Baluchistan	3%	3%	3%
Tehran	17%	17%	18%
Yazd	1%	1%	1%
Zanjan	2%	2%	2%
Qazvin	2%	2%	2%
Qom	1%	2%	2%
Golestan	2%	2%	2%

Chart 2: Telephone Penetration in Iran



East Azarbayejan	95-99%	Kordestan	80-85%
West Azarbayejan	80-85%	Kerman	80-85%
Ardebil	95-99%	Kermanshah	80-85%
Esfahan	95-99%	Kohgiluyeh & Boyerahmad	75-80%
Ilam	80-85%	Gilan	75-80%
Bushehr	90-95%	Golestan	95-100%
Tehran	97-100%	Lorestan	75-80%
Chaharmahal & Bakhtiyari	85-90%	Mazandaran	95-99%
Khorasan	85-90%	Markazi	80-85%
Khuzestan	80-85%	Hormozgan	75-80%
Zanjan	80-85%	Hamadan	80-85%
Semnan	95-99%	Yazd	95-99%
Sistan & Baluchestan	75-80%		
Fars	80-85%		
Qazvin	80-85%		
Qom	85-90%		

The source of statistical information is the official website of STATISTICAL CENTRE OF IRAN (SCI). SCI also publishes official statistics on telephone installation and in-use figures, and places of usage (household, offices, public). SCI cites the Iranian Telecom Company as the source. The most recent data are from 2004 (Muslim Calendar Year 1383).

**Chart 3: Distribution of Population and the Telephone Sample**  
(Data Source: 2005 Population Estimates of Statistical Centre of Iran)

Province (Ostan)	Population	Distribution	Number of Interviews
<b>Total Country</b>	<b>68.467.413</b>	<b>100,0%</b>	<b>1.000</b>
East Azarbayejan	3.500.183	5,1%	51
West Azarbayejan	2.949.426	4,3%	43
Ardebil	1.257.624	1,8%	18
Esfahan	4.454.595	6,5%	65
Ilam	545.093	0,8%	8
Bushehr	816.115	1,2%	12
Tehran	12.150.742	17,7%	177
Chaharmahal & Bakhtiari	842.002	1,2%	12
Khorasan*	6.499.906	9,5%	95
Khuzestan	4.345.607	6,3%	63
Zanjan	970.946	1,4%	14
Semnan	589.512	0,9%	9
Sistan & Baluchestan	2.290.076	3,3%	33
Fars	4.385.869	6,4%	64
Qazvin	1.166.861	1,7%	17
Qom	1.064.456	1,6%	16
Kordestan	1.574.118	2,3%	23
Kerman	2.432.927	3,6%	36
Kermanshah	1.938.060	2,8%	28
Kohgiluyeh & Boyerahmad	695.099	1,0%	10
Gilan	2.410.523	3,5%	35
Golestan	1.637.063	2,4%	24
Lorestan	1.758.628	2,6%	26
Mazandaran	2.818.831	4,1%	41
Markazi	1.361.394	2,0%	20
Hormozgan	1.314.667	1,9%	19
Hamadan	1.738.772	2,5%	25
Yazd	958.318	1,4%	14

\*Khorasan now divided into Northern Khorasan, Southern Khorasan, and Khorasan Rasavi.

## Topline Questions and Answers

### M6: Province

	Number	Col%
Province		
Ardebil	16	1.6%
Azerbaijani Gharbi	40	4.0%
Azerbaijani Sharqi	53	5.3%
Bushehr	11	1.1%
Chahar Mahall Va Bakhtiari	11	1.1%
Esfahan	64	6.4%
Fars	70	7.0%
Gilan	39	3.9%
Hamadan	27	2.7%
Hormozgan	17	1.7%
Ilam	7	.7%
Kerman	34	3.4%
Kermanshahan	28	2.8%
South Khorasan	7	.7%
Khuzestan	58	5.8%
Kohkiluyeh Va Buyer Ahmadi	8	.8%
Kordestan	20	2.0%
Lorestan	25	2.5%
Markazi	21	2.1%
Mazandaran	45	4.5%
Semnan	8	.8%
Sistan Va Baluchistan	29	2.9%
Tehran	185	18.5%
Yazd	14	1.4%
Zanjan	14	1.4%
Qazvin	16	1.6%
Qom	17	1.7%
Golestan	20	2.0%
Khorasan Rezavi	87	8.7%
North Khorasan	11	1.1%
Total	1000	100.0%

**M5: Urbanization**

		Number	Col%
<b>Urbanization</b>	<b>Major Metros</b>	256	25.6%
	<b>Other Urban Towns</b>	347	34.7%
	<b>Villages</b>	362	36.2%
	<b>Total</b>	35	3.5%
<b>Total</b>		1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q1: Do you think the economy in Iran today is going in the right direction, or do you think they are going in the wrong direction?**

	Number	Col%
<b>The Iranian economy is headed in the right direction</b>	271	27.1%
<b>The Iranian economy is headed in the wrong direction</b>	423	42.3%
<b>Neither Right nor Wrong Direction</b>	106	10.6%
<b>Refused</b>	15	1.5%
<b>Don't know</b>	185	18.5%
<b>Total</b>	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q2: How do you feel about the overall economic situation in Iran today?  
Would you say the overall economic situation is excellent, good, fair or poor?**

	Number	Col%
Excellent	35	3.5%
Good	145	14.5%
Fair	470	47.0%
Poor	327	32.7%
Refused	4	.4%
Don't know	20	2.0%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q3: In terms of your own personal economic situation, do you think your financial situation today is better, the same, or worse than it was when President Ahmadinejad took office in August 2005?**

	Number	Col%
Better	236	23.6%
The same	438	43.8%
Worse	314	31.4%
Refused	1	.1%
Don't know	11	1.1%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q4: Overall, would you say President Ahmadinejad's policies have or have not succeeded in reducing unemployment and inflation?**

	Number	Col%
Have succeeded	326	32.6%
Have not succeeded	522	52.2%
Refused	54	5.4%
Don't know	97	9.7%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q5: Do you feel that President Ahmadinejad has kept his campaign promise to “put oil money on the tables of the people themselves”?**

	Number	Col%
Yes	224	22.4%
No	563	56.3%
Refused	92	9.2%
Don't know	121	12.1%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q6: Compared to when President Ahmadinejad took office in August 2005, do you think the amount of corruption overall in Iran has increased, stayed the same, or decreased?**

	Number	Col%
Increased	283	28.3%
Stayed the same	280	28.0%
Decreased	359	35.9%
Refused	12	1.2%
Don't know	66	6.6%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q7a: I am going to read you a list of possible investment options for the government of Iran when it comes to investing Iran's oil and gas revenues. Please tell me for each option that I read whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important? (Rotate List)**

**Creating New Jobs**

	Number	Col%
Very important	917	91.7%
Somewhat important	44	4.4%
Somewhat unimportant	3	.3%
Not at all important	12	1.2%
Refused	3	.3%
Don't Know	22	2.2%
Total	1000	100.0%

**Q7b: I am going to read you a list of possible investment options for the government of Iran when it comes to investing Iran's oil and gas revenues. Please tell me for each option that I read whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important? (Rotate List)**

**Curbing Inflation**

	Number	Col%
Very important	895	89.5%
Somewhat important	64	6.4%
Somewhat unimportant	3	.3%
Not at all important	14	1.4%
Refused	3	.3%
Don't Know	21	2.1%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q7c: I am going to read you a list of possible investment options for the government of Iran when it comes to investing Iran's oil and gas revenues. Please tell me for each option that I read whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important? (Rotate List)**

**Improving the oil and gas industry itself**

	Number	Col%
Very important	783	78.3%
Somewhat important	128	12.8%
Somewhat unimportant	20	2.0%
Not at all important	18	1.8%
Refused	1	.1%
Don't Know	49	4.9%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q7d: I am going to read you a list of possible investment options for the government of Iran when it comes to investing Iran's oil and gas revenues. Please tell me for each option that I read whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important? (Rotate List)**

**Developing nuclear energy, but not nuclear weapons**

	Number	Col%
Very important	757	75.7%
Somewhat important	117	11.7%
Somewhat unimportant	36	3.6%
Not at all important	35	3.5%
Refused	9	.9%
Don't Know	45	4.5%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q7e: I am going to read you a list of possible investment options for the government of Iran when it comes to investing Iran's oil and gas revenues. Please tell me for each option that I read whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important? (Rotate List)**

**Developing nuclear weapons**

	Number	Col%
Very important	369	36.9%
Somewhat important	147	14.7%
Somewhat unimportant	81	8.1%
Not at all important	282	28.2%
Refused	16	1.6%
Don't Know	105	10.5%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q8: Iran's oil and gas industry today does not have enough refineries to serve its own people's needs for gasoline and fuel. Some people think new investments should be made to improve Iran's declining oil and gas industry. Others think these investments should be made instead in developing nuclear energy. Which do you think should be the first priority?**

	Number	Col%
Improving the oil and gas industry	411	41.1%
Developing nuclear energy	459	45.9%
Refused	45	4.5%
Don't know	85	8.5%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q9a: Thinking about Iran's economy, normal trade relations now exist with only some countries. Do you favor or oppose having normal trade relations with each of the following countries? (Rotate List)**

China

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	636	63.6%
Somewhat favor	142	14.2%
Somewhat oppose	33	3.3%
Strongly oppose	96	9.6%
Refused	9	.9%
Don't know	84	8.4%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q9b: Thinking about Iran's economy, normal trade relations now exist with only some countries. Do you favor or oppose having normal trade relations with each of the following countries? (Rotate List)**

**Iraq**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	378	37.8%
Somewhat favor	159	15.9%
Somewhat oppose	78	7.8%
Strongly oppose	295	29.5%
Refused	11	1.1%
Don't know	78	7.8%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q9c: Thinking about Iran's economy, normal trade relations now exist with only some countries. Do you favor or oppose having normal trade relations with each of the following countries? (Rotate List)**

**Britain or the UK**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	392	39.2%
Somewhat favor	130	13.0%
Somewhat oppose	73	7.3%
Strongly oppose	298	29.8%
Refused	10	1.0%
Don't know	96	9.6%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q9d: Thinking about Iran's economy, normal trade relations now exist with only some countries. Do you favor or oppose having normal trade relations with each of the following countries? (Rotate List)**

**Russia**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	479	47.9%
Somewhat favor	164	16.4%
Somewhat oppose	65	6.5%
Strongly oppose	179	17.9%
Refused	11	1.1%
Don't know	102	10.2%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q9e: Thinking about Iran's economy, normal trade relations now exist with only some countries. Do you favor or oppose having normal trade relations with each of the following countries? (Rotate List)**

**The United States**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	334	33.4%
Somewhat favor	109	10.9%
Somewhat oppose	70	7.0%
Strongly oppose	389	38.9%
Refused	15	1.5%
Don't know	82	8.2%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q9f: Thinking about Iran's economy, normal trade relations now exist with only some countries. Do you favor or oppose having normal trade relations with each of the following countries? (Rotate List)**

**France**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	561	56.1%
Somewhat favor	171	17.1%
Somewhat oppose	38	3.8%
Strongly oppose	134	13.4%
Refused	9	.9%
Don't know	87	8.7%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q9g: Thinking about Iran's economy, normal trade relations now exist with only some countries. Do you favor or oppose having normal trade relations with each of the following countries? (Rotate List)**

**Israel**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	105	10.5%
Somewhat favor	27	2.7%
Somewhat oppose	31	3.1%
Strongly oppose	748	74.8%
Refused	17	1.7%
Don't know	71	7.1%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q9h: Thinking about Iran's economy, normal trade relations now exist with only some countries. Do you favor or oppose having normal trade relations with each of the following countries? (Rotate List)**

**Turkey**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	569	56.9%
Somewhat favor	192	19.2%
Somewhat oppose	39	3.9%
Strongly oppose	109	10.9%
Refused	9	.9%
Don't know	82	8.2%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q10a: Do you favor or oppose investment from Western countries in Iran to create more jobs?**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	523	52.3%
Somewhat favor	225	22.5%
Somewhat oppose	53	5.3%
Strongly oppose	156	15.6%
Refused	8	.8%
Don't know	35	3.5%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q10b: Do you favor or oppose medical, education and humanitarian assistance from Western countries to Iranian people in need?**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	505	50.5%
Somewhat favor	247	24.7%
Somewhat oppose	46	4.6%
Strongly oppose	157	15.7%
Refused	6	.6%
Don't know	39	3.9%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q11: A hospital ship recently provided medical care to 61,000 patients, including major surgeries and medical training, while visiting Indonesia and Bangladesh. Would you like a hospital ship like this to visit Iran on a similar medical humanitarian mission?**

	Number	Col%
Yes	732	73.2%
No	194	19.4%
Refused	3	.3%
Don't know	70	7.0%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q12a: Should Iran accept or refuse a hospital ship visit from each of the following countries? (Rotate Order)**

**Russia**

	Number	Col%
Accept	558	69.2%
Refuse	157	19.5%
Refused question	11	1.4%
Don't know	80	10.0%
Total	806	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q12b: Should Iran accept or refuse a hospital ship visit from each of the following countries? (Rotate Order)**

**USA**

	Number	Col%
Accept	339	42.0%
Refuse	380	47.2%
Refused question	16	2.0%
Don't know	71	8.8%
Total	806	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q12c: Should Iran accept or refuse a hospital ship visit from each of the following countries? (Rotate Order)**

**Israel**

	Number	Col%
Accept	171	21.2%
Refuse	549	68.1%
Refused question	17	2.1%
Don't know	69	8.6%
Total	806	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q12d: Should Iran accept or refuse a hospital ship visit from each of the following countries? (Rotate Order)**

**China**

	Number	Col%
Accept	608	75.5%
Refuse	120	14.9%
Refused question	10	1.3%
Don't know	67	8.3%
Total	806	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q12e: Should Iran accept or refuse a hospital ship visit from each of the following countries? (Rotate Order)**

**European Union**

	Number	Col%
Accept	577	71.6%
Refuse	139	17.3%
Refused question	10	1.2%
Don't know	80	9.9%
Total	806	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q12f: Should Iran accept or refuse a hospital ship visit from each of the following countries? (Rotate Order)**

**Saudi Arabia**

	Number	Col%
Accept	590	73.2%
Refuse	133	16.5%
Refused question	8	1.0%
Don't know	75	9.3%
Total	806	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q12g: Should Iran accept or refuse a hospital ship visit from each of the following countries? (Rotate Order)**

**Turkey**

	Number	Col%
Accept	604	75.0%
Refuse	117	14.5%
Refused question	11	1.4%
Don't know	74	9.2%
Total	806	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q13a: Do you favor or oppose the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran developing nuclear energy?**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	779	77.9%
Somewhat favor	136	13.6%
Somewhat oppose	18	1.8%
Strongly oppose	38	3.8%
Refused	10	1.0%
Don't know	19	1.9%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q13b: Apart from nuclear energy, do you favor or oppose the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran developing nuclear weapons?**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	330	33.0%
Somewhat favor	190	19.0%
Somewhat oppose	48	4.8%
Strongly oppose	370	37.0%
Refused	13	1.3%
Don't know	50	5.0%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q14: If the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran had nuclear weapons, do you think that the people of Iran would live in a safer or more dangerous world?**

	Number	Col%
Safer	515	51.5%
More Dangerous	314	31.4%
Neither safer nor more dangerous	67	6.7%
Refused	19	1.9%
Don't Know	85	8.5%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q15a: I'm going to read a list of types of assistance which Iran has been offered by other countries. These have been offered if Iran provides full inspections and a guarantee not to develop or possess nuclear weapons. For each, please tell me if you would support or oppose Iran receiving this type of assistance in return for Iran guaranteeing not to develop nuclear weapons.**

**Trade and capital investment overall to create more jobs**

	Number	Col%
Support	802	80.2%
Oppose	147	14.7%
Refused question	12	1.2%
Don't know	39	3.9%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q15b: I'm going to read a list of types of assistance which Iran has been offered by other countries. These have been offered if Iran provides full inspections and a guarantee not to develop or possess nuclear weapons. For each, please tell me if you would support or oppose Iran receiving this type of assistance in return for Iran guaranteeing not to develop nuclear weapons.**

**Trade and capital investment in energy refineries to lower the price of gasoline**

	Number	Col%
Support	792	79.2%
Oppose	162	16.2%
Refused question	14	1.4%
Don't know	31	3.1%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q15c: I'm going to read a list of types of assistance which Iran has been offered by other countries. These have been offered if Iran provides full inspections and a guarantee not to develop or possess nuclear weapons. For each, please tell me if you would support or oppose Iran receiving this type of assistance in return for Iran guaranteeing not to develop nuclear weapons.**

**Medical, education and humanitarian assistance to Iranian people in need**

	Number	Col%
Support	795	79.5%
Oppose	167	16.7%
Refused question	9	9%
Don't know	28	2.8%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q15d: I'm going to read a list of types of assistance which Iran has been offered by other countries. These have been offered if Iran provides full inspections and a guarantee not to develop or possess nuclear weapons. For each, please tell me if you would support or oppose Iran receiving this type of assistance in return for Iran guaranteeing not to develop nuclear weapons.**

**Technological assistance for developing peaceful nuclear energy**

	Number	Col%
Support	798	79.8%
Oppose	142	14.2%
Refused question	12	1.2%
Don't know	48	4.8%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q16a: I am going to read you a list of possible long-term goals for the government of Iran. Please tell me whether you think these goals are very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important for the government of Iran. (Rotate List)**

**Developing an arsenal of nuclear weapons**

	Number	Col%
Very important	287	28.7%
Somewhat important	184	18.4%
Somewhat unimportant	78	7.8%
Not at all important	333	33.3%
Refused	19	1.9%
Don't Know	100	10.0%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q16b: I am going to read you a list of possible long-term goals for the government of Iran. Please tell me whether you think these goals are very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important for the government of Iran. (Rotate List)**

**Improving the Iranian economy**

	Number	Col%
Very important	880	88.0%
Somewhat important	64	6.4%
Somewhat unimportant	16	1.6%
Not at all important	13	1.3%
Refused	10	1.0%
Don't Know	16	1.6%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q16c: I am going to read you a list of possible long-term goals for the government of Iran. Please tell me whether you think these goals are very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important for the government of Iran. (Rotate List)**

**Providing financial support for Arab and other foreign groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah**

	Number	Col%
Very important	331	33.1%
Somewhat important	235	23.5%
Somewhat unimportant	103	10.3%
Not at all important	235	23.5%
Refused	16	1.6%
Don't Know	80	8.0%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q16d: I am going to read you a list of possible long-term goals for the government of Iran. Please tell me whether you think these goals are very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, or not at all important for the government of Iran. (Rotate List)**

**Seeking trade and political relations with Western countries**

	Number	Col%
Very important	468	46.8%
Somewhat important	257	25.7%
Somewhat unimportant	90	9.0%
Not at all important	106	10.6%
Refused	19	1.9%
Don't Know	62	6.2%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q17a: Do you support or oppose financial assistance to each of the following groups? (Rotate List)**

**Palestinian opposition groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad**

	Number	Col%
Strongly support	435	43.5%
Somewhat support	212	21.2%
Somewhat oppose	69	6.9%
Strongly oppose	198	19.8%
Refused	27	2.7%
Don't know	58	5.8%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q17b: Do you support or oppose financial assistance to each of the following groups? (Rotate List)**

**Lebanese Hezbollah**

	Number	Col%
Strongly support	410	41.0%
Somewhat support	226	22.6%
Somewhat oppose	79	7.9%
Strongly oppose	205	20.5%
Refused	25	2.5%
Don't know	56	5.6%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q17c: Do you support or oppose financial assistance to each of the following groups? (Rotate List)**

**Iraqi Shiite militias**

	Number	Col%
Strongly support	379	37.9%
Somewhat support	201	20.1%
Somewhat oppose	76	7.6%
Strongly oppose	257	25.7%
Refused	25	2.5%
Don't know	61	6.1%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q18a: In the past, some Iranian diplomats have offered proposals to the United States that would lead to normal relations. I will read you some of the proposals, beginning with those Iran asked for from the United States. For each, please tell me whether you favor or oppose this proposal? (Rotate List)**

**Full United States recognition of Iran and normalized trade relations**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	555	55.5%
Somewhat favor	129	12.9%
Somewhat oppose	50	5.0%
Strongly oppose	176	17.6%
Refused	20	2.0%
Don't know	69	6.9%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q18b: In the past, some Iranian diplomats have offered proposals to the United States that would lead to normal relations. I will read you some of the proposals, beginning with those Iran asked for from the United States. For each, please tell me whether you favor or oppose this proposal? (Rotate List)**

**Full access for Iran to peaceful nuclear technology**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	774	77.4%
Somewhat favor	75	7.5%
Somewhat oppose	23	2.3%
Strongly oppose	55	5.5%
Refused	18	1.8%
Don't know	55	5.5%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q19a: Now, I am going to read you several proposals which some Iranian diplomats were willing to give to the United States in return for normal relations. For each, please tell me whether you would favor or oppose this proposal.**

**Full transparency by Iran to assure there are no Iranian endeavors to develop or possess nuclear weapons**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	374	37.4%
Somewhat favor	139	13.9%
Somewhat oppose	83	8.3%
Strongly oppose	290	29.0%
Refused	29	2.9%
Don't know	86	8.6%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q19b: Now, I am going to read you several proposals which some Iranian diplomats were willing to give to the United States in return for normal relations. For each, please tell me whether you would favor or oppose this proposal.**

**Endorse recognizing Israel and Palestine each as separate, independent states**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	420	42.0%
Somewhat favor	126	12.6%
Somewhat oppose	84	8.4%
Strongly oppose	261	26.1%
Refused	36	3.6%
Don't know	73	7.3%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q19c: Now, I am going to read you several proposals which some Iranian diplomats were willing to give to the United States in return for normal relations. For each, please tell me whether you would favor or oppose this proposal.**

**Ending Iranian support for any armed group inside Iraq and only using Iranian influence to actively support a peaceful, democratic government in Iraq**

	Number	Col%
Strongly favor	494	49.4%
Somewhat favor	144	14.4%
Somewhat oppose	42	4.2%
Strongly oppose	187	18.7%
Refused	34	3.4%
Don't know	99	9.9%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q20a: I am going to read you a list of three options for governing Iran. Please tell me whether you support or oppose each as a form of government for Iran. (Rotate List)**

**A political system where the 'Supreme Leader' rules according to religious principles, and cannot be chosen or replaced by a direct vote of the people.**

	Number	Col%
Strongly support	167	16.7%
Somewhat support	102	10.2%
Somewhat oppose	82	8.2%
Strongly oppose	531	53.1%
Refused	55	5.5%
Don't know	63	6.3%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q20b: I am going to read you a list of three options for governing Iran. Please tell me whether you support or oppose each as a form of government for Iran. (Rotate List)**

**A political system where the 'Supreme Leader,' along with all leaders, can be chosen and replaced by a free and direct vote of the people.**

	Number	Col%
Strongly support	719	71.9%
Somewhat support	72	7.2%
Somewhat oppose	27	2.7%
Strongly oppose	108	10.8%
Refused	29	2.9%
Don't know	45	4.5%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**Q20c: I am going to read you a list of three options for governing Iran. Please tell me whether you support or oppose each as a form of government for Iran. (Rotate List)**

**A political system where there is a monarch who is not elected by the people, rules for life, and his family inherits the right to rule.**

	Number	Col%
Strongly support	63	6.3%
Somewhat support	40	4.0%
Somewhat oppose	56	5.6%
Strongly oppose	745	74.5%
Refused	45	4.5%
Don't know	50	5.0%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

##### D1: Gender

	Number	Col%
Male	505	50.5%
Female	495	49.5%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

##### D2: Your actual age

	Number	Col%
18-24	253	25.3%
25-34	271	27.1%
35-44	198	19.8%
45-54	112	11.2%
55+	166	16.6%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**D3: Do you work.....?**

	Number	Col%
Full-Time	233	23.3%
Part-Time	124	12.4%
Does Not Work	641	64.1%
Don't Know	2	.2%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**D4: (ASK ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WORKING FULL OR PART TIME): Are you...?**

	Number	Col%
Self-employed	82	23.0%
State Company	83	23.2%
Foundation	5	1.3%
Private Firm/Factory of 10 or Less	62	17.2%
Private Firm/Factory of More Than 10	48	13.4%
Other	65	18.2%
Refused	11	3.0%
Don't Know	2	.7%
Total	357	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**D5: (ASK ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WORKING FULL OR PART TIME IN D3):  
What is your primary occupation?**

	Number	Col%
Owner of a Large Business	11	3.0%
Enterprise Manager	6	1.6%
Department/Div. Manager	12	3.4%
Professional	40	11.1%
White Collar Worker	26	7.4%
Clerical Worker	18	5.0%
Foreman, Technician	6	1.7%
Skilled Worker	32	8.8%
Semi-Skilled Worker	12	3.2%
Unskilled Worker	40	11.1%
Military (Officer)	1	.3%
Civil Servants	54	15.2%
Farmers, Fishermen	15	4.1%
Landless Agricultural Laborer	1	.3%
Small Business Owner, Shopkeeper	75	20.9%
Refused	7	2.0%
Don't Know	3	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**D6a: How many years of formal education have you completed?**

	Number	Col%
Illiterate/No Formal Education But Can Read/Write	79	7.9%
Elementary,Intermediate	160	16.0%
Secondary	477	47.7%
University	285	28.5%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**D6b: Educational achievement**

	Number	Col%
Illiterate	46	4.6%
No Formal Education But Read & Write	33	3.3%
Some/Finished Elementary	75	7.5%
Some/Finished Intermediate	85	8.5%
Some Secondary	132	13.2%
Finished Secondary	345	34.5%
Some/Finished College	165	16.5%
Finished University	120	12.0%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**D7: What is your religious affiliation?**

	Number	Col%
Shia Muslim	914	91.4%
Sunni Muslim	46	4.6%
Muslim	33	3.3%
Other	6	.6%
Don't Know	1	.1%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

**D8: What is your household's total monthly income from all sources, that is all types of income for all persons living at this address? Is it.....?**

	Number	Col%
100,000 Tomans or Less	86	8.6%
100,001 - 150,000 Tomans	123	12.3%
150,001 - 200,000 Tomans	194	19.4%
200,001 - 400,000 Tomans	385	38.5%
400,001 Tomans or Greater	139	13.9%
Refused	41	4.1%
Don't Know	33	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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**D9: Would you describe your household as upper class, middle class, working class, or poor?**

	Number	Col%
Upper (A/B)	10	1.0%
Middle (C1,C2)	571	57.1%
Working (D)	219	21.9%
Poor (E)	194	19.4%
Refused	2	.2%
Don't Know	4	.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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**D10: What is your ethnic origin?**

	Number	Col%
Persian	544	54.4%
Azeri	187	18.7%
Gilaki & Mazanderani	84	8.4%
Kurd	70	7.0%
Arab	20	2.0%
Lur	65	6.5%
Baloch	11	1.1%
Turkmen	7	.7%
Other	11	1.1%
Refused	2	.2%
Total	1000	100.0%

Iran: Terror Free Tomorrow, June 2007

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Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Ballen. I am sure we are all interested in statistics. And some people will want to question on that. Sometimes statistics, besides being difficult to say, is difficult to comprehend.

Mr. BALLEEN. It is difficult to say, I can assure you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. And I am sure we will probably have plenty of questions on that. I appreciate your opening statement.

Our next witness is Karim Sadjadpour. He is an associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and he is bringing a wealth of experience from living and studying in Iran. Mr. Sadjadpour joined the Carnegie Institute after 4 years as the chief Iran analyst at the International Crisis Group, based in Tehran and Washington, DC. He is a leading researcher on Iran. He has conducted dozens of interviews with senior Iranian officials and hundreds with Iranian intellectuals, clerics, dissidents, paramilitaries, businessmen, students, activists, and youth, among others.

Mr. Sadjadpour was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. And we are pleased to have your testimony today, sir.

**STATEMENT OF KARIM SADJADPOUR, ASSOCIATE, CARNEGIE  
ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE**

Mr. SADJADPOUR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. It is really a privilege to be here, and I do commend you for expressing an interest in the views of the Iranian people.

There is three, four points that I would like to make, and I would preface my talks by saying that anecdotally, my experiences in Iran very much coincide with a lot of the results of Mr. Ballen's survey. And I think it is one of the few surveys that I have seen that I have seen results which coincide with anecdotal experiences of myself and many others who have spent time in contemporary Iran.

Discontent in Iran is very deep and very widespread. It is very difficult, whether you are traveling in Tehran or throughout the country, to find someone, regardless of age, gender, socioeconomic class, religiosity, who will say to you things are going well here, I am happy with the performance of the government and the clerics are doing a good job. It is extremely rare to be able to find someone who is able to say this.

But we have a population which is increasingly politically disengaged these days. They participated overwhelmingly the last 8 years, from 1997, the election of the reformist President Mohammad Khatami, through 2005 in their elections. They elected Khatami with 80 percent turnout, they reelected him with 70 percent turn out. They elected a reform-minded parliament. But what they saw was their votes weren't able to affect change domestically. And increasingly what we have seen is the Iranian population as a result is disengaged. And I think this political disengagement is quite natural. As a friend of mine in Tehran told me, it is like going to the gym every day for 6 years and not losing 1 pound. Pretty soon you are going to stop exercising if you don't see results.

The failure of the U.S. policies in Iraq have also had a role in the Iranian political participation. I think increasingly Iranians look next door and they say if the choice is between what we see in Iraq, democracy and carnage, and what we have now, which is authoritarianism and security, we will choose the latter. And this is a population which has experienced themselves an 8-year war with Iraq and is very allergic to any prospect of tumult and chaos and insecurity.

Second point I want to make is about Ahmadinejad's election. We all know that he was elected with a very clear mandate. It wasn't to wipe Israel off the map or to deny the Holocaust. It was to improve the economy. He has really failed miserably in doing so. And I think if we are looking at Ahmadinejad's election as the glass being half full, we see for Iranians they see it actually does make a difference to participate in elections and it does make a difference who is the president of their country. During the Khatami era, many people believed that, again, participating in elections in Iran are an exercise in futility. But I think many people realize there is a difference between a president like Mohammad Khatami and President Ahmadinejad. And I think we will see in upcoming elections, March 2008 parliamentary elections and June 2009 Presidential elections, Iranians going to the polls and electing more moderate, pragmatic leaders.

The third point I want to make, and this is a very important point, that we should have no illusions that some type of abrupt, sudden change or sudden upheaval in Iran will be a change for the better. I would like to quote the great U.S. diplomat, retired U.S. diplomat John Limbert, who is a great scholar on Iran who was taken hostage in 1979 in the Iranian embassy for 444 days—in the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. And when he was reflecting on his experience, on his 1979 experience, he wrote that what I learned from 1979 was that revolutions are not won by those who can write incisive op-ed pieces. They are won by those who are willing to go out on the streets and fight the type of battles and street battles that need to be waged to win these revolutions.

And likewise in Iran these days I would agree entirely that we have a young population which is very much in favor of tolerance and democracy and co-existence. But the only two groups in Iran which are armed and organized are the Revolutionary Guards, which number about 125,000, and the bassij militia, which number about 2 million. So any type of sudden, abrupt upheaval in Iran unfortunately, I would argue, is not going to bring to power these liberal democrats, because by virtue of the fact they are liberal democrats they are not going to be willing to fight these street battles with these armed groups, who will be very much willing to fight these street battles.

So I think we should be looking at transition in Iran as a longer term prospect or medium term prospect, not some type of sudden, abrupt upheaval.

Last, I would argue that despite what we know about popular opinion, that the Iranian street is the most pro-American street in the Middle East, that there doesn't exist an inherent enmity toward Israel, that the Iranian street doesn't wake up in the morning thinking about enriching uranium and producing a nuclear weap-

ons capability. Despite this fact, Iranian popular opinion, what we know is that Iranian popular opinion has little impact on Iranian foreign policy. Again, opinion polls, anecdotal evidence suggests that the Iranians overwhelmingly want to have a normalization of relations with the United States. Despite this, Iranian Government antagonism toward the United States is as great as it has ever been. Iranian support for Hezbollah and for Hamas is as great as it has ever been, and the Iranian defiance on the nuclear issue is as great as it has ever been, despite the fact that these issues don't particularly resonate on the Iranian street.

I would close by saying when we think about challenges to U.S. foreign policy at the moment and over the coming years, for me five or six things come to mind. First, there is obviously Iraq. Second is nuclear proliferation. The third issue is terrorism. The fourth issue is energy security. And the fifth issue is Middle East peace, Arab-Israeli peace. And the sixth issue, if we want to be altruistic, is Afghanistan. And if you look at each of these six issues individually, the one common point which spans all of them is the fact that Iran is integral to each of these issues. It is integral to Iraq, to energy security, Arab-Israeli peace, terrorism, Afghanistan. And looking at it from that context, ignoring Iran is obviously not an option. Bombing Iran will exacerbate all of these issues which I just listed. And we are left with what Churchill called the least bad option, referring to democracy, and that is talking to Iran.

So despite the fact that we have this population which is overwhelmingly in favor of a different type of government, a different type of relationship with the United States, we don't have the luxury of waiting for the Iranian people to be our interlocutors in Tehran. And I think we have to deal with the regime we have, not the regime we wish we had. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sadjadpour follows:]

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF KARIM SADJADPOUR  
ASSOCIATE, CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE  
October 30, 2007**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I commend the committee for its interest in understanding the views of the Iranian people, who project a fundamentally different image of their country than that espoused by their president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

It goes without saying that it is difficult to make broad generalizations about a socially diverse population of 70 million. Yet I do believe there are some important thoughts and trends among Iranians which transcend age, gender, religiosity, and socioeconomic class distinctions. Based largely on my experience living and traveling throughout Iran intermittently from 2001-2005, I would like to outline briefly a number of important factors and their implications for U.S. policy.

I preface my comments by saying that any kind of U.S. military attack on Iran would alter substantially the factors I list below, almost entirely for the negative.

**1. Discontent in Iran is deeply felt, widespread, and largely economic, but factors such as the Iraq war have tempered Iranian desire for abrupt change**

Throughout the country Iranians' sense of alienation vis-à-vis their leaders is palpable and transcends socio-economic class, age, ethnicity, and religiosity. No matter where you go or with whom you speak, it is rare to find anyone who will say: "I am happy with the state of the country. The mullahs are doing a decent job."

The state of the economy is the greatest source of outrage. Despite the record oil windfall, Iranians are experiencing increased inflation and unemployment (unofficially both are around twenty percent). Underemployment is rampant. On a daily basis in Tehran and other large cities one encounters dozens of young men with professional degrees in fields such as architecture and engineering driving taxis and making pizzas due to a paucity of employment prospects.

Despite these socio-economic discontents people have become increasingly disillusioned with politics. In 1997, 2000, and 2001 they went to the polls in overwhelming numbers, twice to elect President Khatami and once to elect a reform-minded parliament, yet saw insufficient returns on their civic investments. As a Tehran-based intellectual once told me, "People's disengagement from politics is understandable. It's like exercising every day for six years and not seeing any results. Soon you are going to stop going to the gym."

What's more, without a clear alternative model or alternative leadership, the deep-seated desire for economic, political, and social reform among many Iranians is tempered by a strong aversion to unrest, uncertainty, and insecurity. Having already experienced one tumultuous revolution (or in the case of Iran's youth, the aftermath of one tumultuous revolution) and a brutal eight-year war with Iraq, Iranians have few concrete ideas as to how change should take place other than it ought to occur *bedun-e khoodrizi* -- "without bloodshed."

The post-war carnage and tumult in next-door neighbor Iraq has made Iranians even warier about the prospects of a quick-fix solution. As opposed to the aftermath of the U.S. removal of the Taliban in Afghanistan, when some Iranians could be heard romanticizing about the prospects of an equally swift U.S. intervention in Tehran, today no Iranians point to Iraq as a paradigm for change. As one middle class, middle-aged Tehran resident once told me, "When we look at what's going on in Iraq, it seems our real choice is not one between democracy and authoritarianism, but between stability and unrest. People are not happy in Iran, but no one wants unrest."

Nonetheless, despite concerns about Ahmadinejad and his team's desires to return to the early days of the revolution, societal reform in Iran is a train that has left the tracks. While it may be slowed down at times, and will certainly face delays and obstacles, it is process that will be very difficult to reverse, for sheer demographic reasons: Two thirds of Iranians are under 33-years-old; they increasingly are connected to the outside world via satellite television and the internet; and they have no special affinity for a revolution they did not experience and a revolutionary government which has not been able to meet their economic expectations

## **2. Tehran is not a microcosm of Iran**

One reason why Ahmadinejad's 2005 election took analysts and observers by surprise is the fact that Tehran is not a microcosm of Iran. Similar to urbanites around the world, Tehran's population is generally more progressive, more informed, and more politicized than the rest of the country.

Rather than rely on official state television as its sole news source, Tehran boasts much higher rates of Internet penetration, satellite television viewership, and newspaper readership. Moreover, political discontent in the capital is exacerbated by exhausting traffic, suffocating air pollution, and high inflation. This sense of alienation was apparent in the 2005 Presidential election, as first-round voter turnout in Tehran was only 33% (as opposed to 62% nationwide).

Outside of Tehran, Iranians are similarly dissatisfied with the status quo, but they are far less politicized. Political discussion is usually centered on the lack of viable employment or the high cost of "meat and onions" rather than a lack of political and social freedoms. This presents a growing dilemma for journalists and analysts covering Iran.

Though Tehran is the country's political heart and soul (where the 1979 Revolution took place) and deserves the lion's share of the focus, national elections are increasingly being decided outside of Tehran, given the capital's low voter turnout. While the seeming gulf between middle-class north Tehran and working-class south Tehran was emphasized during the elections, more difficult to reconcile for Iran watchers is the gulf between Tehran and the rest of the country.

### **3. Ahmadinejad has failed to deliver on campaign promises, but his fate is uncertain**

Ahmadinejad has failed to deliver on his lofty electoral pledges, namely that he would "put the oil money on people's dinner tables". On the contrary, since his inauguration in August of 2005 the country has experienced massive capital flight, a precipitous drop in foreign investment, rampant inflation and increased unemployment.

There are clear signs that his popularity is fading. In last December's municipal elections the President's political allies were trounced by more moderate and pragmatic politicians. Absent any drastic occurrence (i.e. a military attack on Iran), this is a trend that should likely continue in the March 2008 parliamentary elections, as well as the June of 2009 presidential elections, when Ahmadinejad is up for re-election.

Aware that he lacks support among the urban middle and upper classes, however, Ahmadinejad has courted economically disenfranchised Iranians in far-off provinces, promising loans and debt-relief. Cognizant of the fact that he lacks favor among the country's elite—technocrats, business mangers, journalists, academics and even senior clerics—he has aimed to curry favor with the country's paramilitary groups, such as the *bassij*, and attempted to co-opt the country's top military force, the Revolutionary Guards, by granting them lucrative construction and development projects.

So while popular opinion in Tehran and other urban areas is not sympathetic to Ahmadinejad, the electoral behavior of the *bassij* and the IRGC, as well as the opinions of those residing outside the capital, will play an important but unpredictable role in deciding his fate.

### **4. The degree of popular support for the nuclear issue has been exaggerated**

Despite the tremendous effort made by the country's ruling elite to appeal to Iranians' keen sense of nationalism—pointing out Western double standards, extolling the virtues of nuclear energy, and praising the country's scientists—popular opinion regarding the nuclear issue is more nuanced than what the Iranian government would like the world to believe.

Certainly many Iranians, even those unsympathetic to the regime, have been vocally supportive of their government's nuclear ambitions for a variety of reasons: Iran needs to prepare for life after oil; Western double standards permit India, Pakistan, and Israel to have nuclear programs; Iran lives in a dangerous neighborhood and thus need not only a nuclear energy program but also a nuclear weapon.

What's debatable is how deep, informed, and widespread that sentiment is. As the former *Economist* correspondent in Tehran best put it, "It would be quite remarkable if a populace increasingly disengaged from politics were suddenly energized by something as arcane as nuclear fuel and its byproducts." Even many among Iran's political elite have conceded that nuclear pride has been manufactured. In the words of Mohammed Atrianfar, a close advisor to former President Hashemi Rafsanjani,

"People have been hearing these things about having the right to have or to possess this [nuclear] capability. And, naturally, if you ask an Iranian whether [they] want this right or not, they would say they do want it. But if you ask, though, 'What is nuclear energy?' they might not be able to tell you what it is."

What's more, few Iranians romanticize the idea of conflict or militarization in the aftermath of an eight year war with Iraq that produced 500,000 Iranian casualties. In a strikingly candid opinion piece in the *Financial Times* in May 2006, former Iranian deputy foreign minister Abbas Maleki dismissed the notion that the nuclear program is driven by popular demand:

"Reports suggest that Tehran's official joy over the nuclear breakthrough is shared by a large segment of Iranian society. Such reports should not be taken as evidence that the Iranian people share their government's views, and should not be used as a pretext for using force against Iran's population.... The general public does not consider the nuclear issue to be of vital importance. Nuclear technology will do little for the average Iranian; it cannot create more jobs for a country that needs one million jobs annually, it cannot change the chronic low efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness of the economy and management, and it will do nothing to improve Iran's commercial ties with the rest of the world."

##### **5. The government's enmity toward the U.S. and Israel doesn't resonate on the Iranian street, but the U.S. has lost political capital among Iranians**

While it is widely noted that Iran's is the most "pro-American" population in the Muslim Middle East, in the aftermath of the U.S. occupation of Iraq it may be more apt to say that Iran is the "least anti-American" population in the Middle East. There still exists strong empirical and anecdotal evidence to support the argument that a majority of Iranians would welcome a normalization of relations with Washington, but the United States has lost considerable political capital on the Iranian street in the aftermath of the Iraq war. Skepticism has increased about U.S. designs for the region, as many Iranians have come to see the U.S. project in Iraq as less about democracy and more as a botched attempt to expropriate the country's oil resources.

When it comes to the issue of Israel, there exists no inherent reason why the Israeli-Palestinian struggle should be an issue of overriding concern to the average Iranian. Iran itself has no land or border disputes with Israel, no Palestinian refugee problem, a long history of contentious relations with the Arab world, and a long history of tolerance vis-à-

vis the Jewish people (the Jewish community in Iran, numbering around 25,000, is the largest in the Middle East outside of Israel). Though for both ideological and strategic reasons the regime has been relentless in its demonization of Israel the last three decades, popular Iranian sentiment toward the Arab-Israeli dispute has gradually grown numb. It is a distant conflict that has insufficient tangible impact on their daily lives to cause a significant portion of the population to agitate either for or against it.

#### **6. The Iranian public has little impact on the country's foreign policy**

There exists little correlation between Iranian popular sentiment and Iranian foreign policy. At a time when the majority of Iran's young population aspires to have normal relations with the U.S. and reintegration in the international community, Ahmadinejad's conduct is leading Iran down a path of confrontation with the United States and further international isolation.

Yet, an inability to influence their government's foreign policy is not high on Iranians' long list of grievances, given their more immediate economic and social concerns. Although popular grumblings may exist that Iranian money, much needed at home, is being used to support Hezbollah and Hamas or being defiantly poured into a nuclear program with uncertain benefits, neither issue in isolation is animus enough for Iranians to agitate.

This will likely remain the case as long as Iranians continue to perceive corruption and mismanagement—not an isolation-inducing foreign policy—to be the primary cause of domestic economic malaise. If and when domestic economic conditions deteriorate to such a degree that has a drastic impact on people's daily lives, however, the regime, in particular Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, may decide to alter course on foreign policy. Regime survival, not ideology, is paramount for the country's theocratic elite.

#### **IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY:**

##### **1. In the current climate, U.S. democracy promotion efforts have been unconstructive and counterproductive**

While prior to the Iraq war Iranian democratic activists often expressed appreciation for U.S. moral support, today it is important to ask what, if any, have been the benefits of the current administration's public efforts to promote democracy in Iran. Though Iran was neither free nor democratic prior to U.S. democracy promotion efforts, Iran is certainly less free and less democratic in the aftermath of U.S. democracy promotion efforts.

The repercussions of U.S. efforts to promote democracy in Iran have been various:

- The regime has clamped down on domestic opposition and criticism under the pretext of "protecting national security".

- Democratic agitators, civil society activists, and scholars (including several Iranian Americans) have been intimidated, silenced, or imprisoned.
- Interaction between U.S. and Iranian scholars, NGOs, and analysts has dropped precipitously, further limiting our understanding of Iran.

To be sure, it is unfair to place the onus of the Iranian government's human rights abuses and stifling of democracy primarily on U.S. policy. The Iranian government has exhibited cruelty toward its own population long before the Bush administration came to office; the administration's very public democracy promotion efforts simply provided Tehran a convenient pretext to act with impunity.

It is precisely for this reason, however, that Iran's most respected dissidents and democratic agitators have asked the U.S. government to cease such democracy promotion efforts. In the words of prominent dissident Akbar Ganji,

“Iranians are viewed as discredited when they receive money from foreign governments. The Bush administration may be striving to help Iranian democrats, but any Iranian who seeks American dollars will not be recognized as a democrat by his or her fellow citizens...Of course, Iran's democratic movement and civil institutions need funding. But this must come from independent Iranian sources. Iranians themselves must support the transition to democracy; it cannot be presented like a gift...So here is our request to Congress: To do away with any misunderstanding, we hope lawmakers will approve a bill that bans payment to individuals or groups opposing the Iranian government. Iran's democratic movement does not need foreign handouts; it needs the moral support of the international community and condemnation of the Iranian regime for its systematic violation of human rights.”

## **2. Objective, professional, Persian-language news sources would be well-received in Iran**

For the last year there has been a debate in Washington regarding the content of Voice of America and RFE/RL's Persian language service. Some have argued that these broadcasts are not sufficiently supportive of the views of the U.S. government and/or not sufficiently critical of the Iranian government.

Professional and objective news broadcasts will find an important audience in Iran. There is a dearth of quality television news programs in the Persian language. Official Iranian state television broadcasts are tightly controlled by the government, and opposition satellite television networks broadcast out of Los Angeles and elsewhere in the West are not viewed as credible alternatives. The model should be the BBC World service; indeed the BBC intends to launch their Persian-language television broadcast sometime in early 2008.

Insisting that U.S. government-funded media outlets espouse U.S. views ultimately undermines its ability to attract a relevant audience. As one senior European diplomat

pointed out, “People around the world wake up in the morning to the BBC World service; I’ve never heard anyone say they start their day by listening to ‘Voice of America’”

### **3. A sudden upheaval or abrupt political change is unlikely to be for the better**

John Limbert, the erudite Iran scholar and talented former U.S. diplomat (taken hostage in Iran for 444 days) once reflected on the 1979 Iranian revolution that his liberal-minded Iranian friends “who could write penetrating analyses and biting editorials” lacked the stomach to “throw acid, break up meetings, beat up opponents, trash opposition newspapers, and organize street gangs....and engage in the brutality that wins revolutions.”

Today we should be similarly sober about the realities of a short-term upheaval in Iran. There currently exists no credible, organized alternative to the status quo whether within Iran or in the diaspora. And despite the fact that a seeming majority of Iranians favor a more tolerant, democratic system, there is little evidence to believe that in the event of a sudden uprising it would be Iranian democrats who come to power. The only groups which are both armed and organized are the Revolutionary Guards (numbering about 125,000) and the *bassij* (numbering around two million). Any successful political reform must co-opt these forces and make them feel they will have some position in a changed Iran.

### **4. The U.S. should make it clear that it has no intention of undermining Iran’s territorial integrity.**

Maintaining Iran’s territorial integrity is an issue which unites the vast majority of Iranians of all ethnic, religious, and political persuasions. Iran is not a post-Ottoman creation; it’s a nation-state with over 2,000 years of history. A sense of Iranian identity, an attachment to the soil of Iran, is very strong and transcends ethnic and religious affiliation.

To be sure, ethnic minorities in Iran have legitimate grievances against the central authority. Kurds, Baluchis, and Arabs are economically disenfranchised and feel that the central government doesn’t tend to them as it does to Persian Shiites. The reality is that disenfranchisement is nearly universal in Iran, and the Islamic Republic is an equal opportunity oppressor. Far more Persian Shiites have been imprisoned in Iran over the years than Kurds, Arabs, or Baluchis.

There is a concern among many Iranians—including those opposed to the regime—that the U.S. is flirting with a strategy of fomenting ethnic unrest in Iran. This would be a disastrous step that would offer no strategic gain apart from provoking bloodshed among innocent civilians. Washington should do its utmost to reassure the Iranian people that such concerns are unfounded.

### **5. Altering democracy promotion efforts does not mean indifference to human rights abuses**

The Iranian government's poor human rights record has gotten decidedly worse since Ahmadnejad's inauguration. In addition to the imprisonment of journalists, scholars, and activists, Iran has reinstated draconian punishments such as public hangings and the stoning to death of adulterers. Religious minorities and homosexuals continue to be persecuted. The U.S. government should be consistent in expressing its concern for human rights practices in Iran.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. We appreciate your testimony.

Dr. Kenneth Katzman is the Middle East Specialist with the Congressional Research Service here in Washington, DC. He served in government and the private sector as an analyst in Persian Gulf affairs, with special emphasis on Iran and Iraq. In his current position, he analyzes U.S. policy and legislation on the Persian Gulf region for Members of Congress and their staffs. He has written numerous articles in various outside publications, including a book entitled, "The Warriors of Islam: Iran's Revolutionary Guard."

Doctor, we are pleased to hear your testimony today.

**STATEMENT OF DR. KENNETH KATZMAN, SPECIALIST IN MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENSE, AND TRADE DIVISION, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE**

Mr. KATZMAN. Thank you very much. I would like to thank the committee for asking me to appear today on the issue of Iranian public opinion and translation into Iranian policy.

I would note that my official responsibilities at CRS include analyzing Iranian politics, U.S. policy toward Iran, Iran's strategic capabilities, Iran's economy, social and human rights situation. I do not have specific expertise in polling data or methodology of specific polls. My experience has been, in watching Iran over 20 years, that Iran's political and social attitudes are extremely opaque and difficult to gauge. It is important, I think, to try to correlate assessments of Iranian public opinion with known political events and outcomes, such as election results, removal or appointment of cabinet ministers, negotiators, others, demonstrations, indicators of unrest, or similar events.

The poll that was cited would appear to be consistent, that the Iranian public is relatively pro-American, would appear to be consistent with observed events such as the candlelight vigils held by thousands of Iranians the night of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States. The Iranian people, as Karim mentioned, do not hold the United States responsible for maintaining the Iranian regime in power because the United States and Iran have been estranged since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The Iranian public attitude toward the United States is often contrasted with attitudes in such U.S. allies as Egypt, with which the United States is an ally. Egyptian opponents of the government view the United States as cooperating in the official oppression by the Egyptian government, for example. Other observable events show that the Iranian people are discontented with their regime and system of government. We have had repeated series of demonstrations. President Ahmadinejad in fact has faced student unrest. He has been shouted down, stickers and posters denouncing him as a dictator, and various indicators. We have had labor unrest. We have had the imprisonment of labor leaders.

What is interesting, however, is we cannot really predict from polls or others when unrest is going to boil over. For example, there were few objective indicators of public opinion that showed unrest was about to boil over in July 1999, when we had the student unrests. Mohammad Khatami, the reformist, was in power then. And the thinking of most experts was that the Iranian stu-

dents and others were relatively contented, because they had now a reformist leading Iran. Yet the student unrest boiled over because they saw that the conservatives, the hardliners in Iran, were trying to undermine Khatami's reforms, and they conducted a large protest which Khatami was ultimately forced—at fear of dismissal he was forced to actually condone the crackdown on the students. And I believe about eight students were killed, or seven or eight students were killed in that crackdown.

The same factors that limit public expression in Iran also cast some doubt, I think, on objective polling results. The regime is very aggressive in imprisoning, you know, civil activists. It severely restricts freedom of speech in the press. Journalists are routinely arrested for stories critical of the government. And reformist newspapers are regularly closed.

Polls have also in some sense missed some of the big election turning points we have had in Iran. For example, the June 2005 election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, very few experts saw his emergence. The thinking was that Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the senior leader in the regime, would win those elections. He did not. There was also a shock when Khatami was first elected in 1997. The thinking was that the conservative candidate was going to win because the regime was going to fix the election to ensure he won. He did not. He was overwhelmingly defeated, and in fact went on television to concede defeat.

From a policy analysis standpoint, I think it is significant to try to assess the degree to which public opinion affects Iranian behavior. And what we can say is it really does not in many ways. Iran's system is very opaque. The Supreme Leader has under the Constitution vast powers, even to dismiss the President without even much cause. The Supreme Leader is sometimes described as being out of touch, yet he does maintain contacts with his constituencies, the bazaar merchants and all.

In some ways, Ahmadinejad is out of touch. He has surrounded himself with former Revolutionary Guard officers that served in the Iran-Iraq war, as he did. They have sort of an insular opinion. They viewed the Iran-Iraq war as a heroic struggle, whereas the senior leaders, the Supreme Leader Rafsanjani and others viewed it as a time of deprivation, where Iran's economy nearly collapsed. So even though Ahmadinejad is elected, many would argue in some ways he is more out of touch than are some of the more seasoned leaders of the regime.

I would also, as Karim mentioned, the Arab-Israeli dispute. The Iranian public has never really expressed any major interest in interfering or having their government insert itself into the Arab-Israeli dispute. Yet Iran, as has been noted, is described by the State Department as the most active sponsor of terrorism, mainly groups that are opposing the Arab-Israeli dispute. The conclusion we might draw is there are few means for Iranian attitudes to effect policy. The public appears amenable to suspending the militarily useful aspects of Iran's nuclear program if doing so would ensure economic prosperity and avoid further sanctions. But this has not translated into Iranian Government policy to date. The implications are that U.S. policy efforts likely need to affect the thinking of senior regime leaders. If the United States is to succeed in per-

suading the government to suspend its enrichment of uranium, it would likely have to convince the senior leadership of the regime that an Iranian nuclear weapon would not ensure Iran's security or that Iran's economic future is jeopardized by the continuation of that program. Or alternately, the sanctions imposed on Iran would have to be so tight and so significant that it creates overt public unrest that the regime has to respond to.

The Iranian public might not necessarily blame the international community for imposing sanctions, but might instead blame Ahmadinejad and the senior leadership for providing the United States with justification for ratcheting up the sanctions, because Ahmadinejad is widely perceived as provoking confrontation with the international community on the nuclear issue.

The polls suggest nuclear power as electricity generating is popular, because Iranians want technological achievements, sophistication, etc. But the polls I believe, indicators of attitude, do show that the public does not want to push the nuclear program so far that it ends up with Iran being isolated and crippled by economic sanctions. If the serious unrest unfolds, that would likely attract the definite attention of the Iranian senior leadership. However, as discussed, the leadership has thus far shown no hesitation to react with repressive force to suppress rioting and demonstrations, and would likely do so in the future.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Katzman follows:]

# CRS Report for Congress

## Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses

Updated October 9, 2007

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Congressional  
Research  
Service

Prepared for Members and  
Committees of Congress

## Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses

### Summary

According to the Administration's "National Security Strategy" document released on March 16, 2006, the United States "may face no greater challenge from a single country than Iran." That perception continues, generated primarily by Iran's nuclear program and intensified by Iran's military assistance to armed groups in Iraq and Afghanistan and to Lebanese Hezbollah. In part to direct regional attention to that view but also to engage Iran on an Iraq solution, the Administration attended regional conferences on Iraq on March 10, 2007, and May 3-4, 2007, both attended by Iran (and Syria), and subsequently has held a series of bilateral meetings with Iran in Baghdad.

The Bush Administration is pursuing several approaches to attempt to contain the potential threat posed by Iran, but the U.S. emphasis now is to strengthen international economic sanctions on Iran to compel Iran to comply with the U.N. Security Council deadlines since August 2006 that have demanded it cease uranium enrichment. Two U.N. resolutions (1737 and 1747) ban weapons of mass destruction (WMD)-related trade with Iran, freeze the assets of Iran's nuclear and related entities and personalities, prevent Iran from transferring arms outside Iran, and require reporting on international travel by named Iranians. With Iran still refusing to comply on enrichment but offering to reveal to the International Atomic Energy Agency additional information on its nuclear program, further steps are under discussion at the U.N. Security Council, although some Security Council members want to await the results of additional diplomacy before extending sanctions to civilian trade issues. Separate U.S. efforts, showing some success, have included trying to persuade European governments to curb trade, investment, and credits to Iran; and pressuring foreign banks not to do business with Iran.

To strengthen its diplomacy, the Administration has added components to efforts to contain Iran, including a consistent large naval presence in the Persian Gulf and arrests of Iranian agents in Iraq. The Administration strongly denies it is planning on military action against Iran, but has refused to rule it out. Some legislation passed in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, including H.R. 140 and H.R. 957, would increase U.S. sanctions on Iran — both the U.S. trade ban and the Iran Sanctions Act that seeks to prevent foreign investment in Iran's energy sector. Both H.R. 1400 and a Senate amendment to the FY2008 defense authorization bill (H.R. 1585) recommend that the Administration name Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a foreign terrorist organization. Other legislation, such as H.R. 1357, H.R. 2347, and S. 1430, would promote divestment of companies that do business with Iran. Some in the Administration believe that only a change of Iran's regime would end the threat posed by Iran, although without specifying a clear means of achieving such a result.

For further information, see CRS Report RS20871, *The Iran Sanctions Act (ISA)*, and CRS Report RS22323, *Iran's Influence in Iraq*, both by Kenneth Katzman, and CRS Report RS21592, *Iran's Nuclear Program: Recent Developments*. This report is updated regularly.



Statement of Kenneth Katzman  
Specialists in Middle Eastern Affairs  
Congressional Research Service

before

The Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Hearing: "Iran: Reality, Options, and Consequences, Part 1"

October 30, 2007

I'd like to thank the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform for asking me to appear today to analyze the relationship between Iranian public attitudes and Iranian policy on key issues of interest to the United States. I would ask that my testimony be submitted for the record.

I have been asked to assess, in particular, the difficulty of accurately gauging true public opinion in Iran and, beyond that, the degree to which public opinion might affect Iran's policies, if at all. I would note, at the outset, that my official responsibilities at CRS include analysis of U.S. policy toward Iran, Iranian politics and strategic capabilities, Iran's economy, and the social and human rights situation in Iran. I do not have professional expertise in analyzing polling data or assessing the accuracy or methodology of specific polls.

### **Assessing Iranian Opinion**

My experience and analysis has been that Iranian political and social attitudes are extremely opaque and difficult to gauge. It is therefore important, one might argue, to try to correlate assessments of Iranian public opinion with known political events and outcomes, such as election results, removal or appointment of cabinet ministers or other officials, demonstrations, indicators of unrest, and like events.

As one example, the opinion poll by the group "Terror Free Tomorrow," which is discussed in the testimony of the organization's director, Ken Ballen, indicates that Iranians are generally favorably disposed toward the United States. That finding would appear

consistent with such observed events as the candlelight vigils held by thousands of Iranians the night of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States. The findings are also consistent with the widely reported anecdotes of visitors to Iran such as American tourists, journalists, and academics. The explanation widely cited by experts on Iran is that the Iranian people do not hold the United States responsible for maintaining the Iranian regime – widely viewed as repressive – in power, because the United States and Iran have been at odds for almost all the period since the 1979 Islamic revolution. The Iranian public attitude toward the United States is often contrasted with attitudes in such U.S. allies in Egypt, with which the U.S. government has friendly relations, and Egyptian opponents of the government, who view the United States as cooperating or tolerating the official oppression and corruption.

Other observable events in Iran appear to corroborate poll findings that the Iranian people are discontent with their regime and system of government. Within the past few years, there have been a number of significant popular demonstrations against the regime by groups, such as women and labor unions, that are known to be discontented. In March 2006, for example, the police dispersed a rally in Tehran commemorating International Women's Day. In June 2006, police forcefully dispersed a women's rights demonstration. In December 2006, and then again in September 2007, students disrupted or protested appearances by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at Iranian universities. In the latter instance, the students mocked Ahmadinejad as a "dictator," and their use of the term appeared to indicate that there is student dissatisfaction about the lack of academic freedom and freedom of expression in Iran. Leaders of Iranian unions have been arrested for strikes and other labor unrest. For example, in July 2007, authorities arrested the leader of the Syndicate of Bus Drivers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, Mansour Osanloo, for the third time in less than two years.

The polls indicate such discontent, but are not necessarily able to assess the depth of public discontent that would motivate Iranians to publicly challenge the regime. Demonstrations and strikes are good indicators of this depth of feeling. Still, these demonstrations have been relatively sporadic. It is therefore difficult to draw conclusions from these events that there is widespread popular discontent with the regime.

Another illustrative example are the Tehran University student riots of July 1999. There were few, if any, objective indicators of public opinion that showed that unrest was about to boil over in the manner it did then. A reformist, Mohammad Khatemi, was in power, and most Iran experts assumed that students were relatively content that politics in Iran were moderating, and were pleased that Khatemi had rolled back some of the excesses of his predecessors, such as press restrictions and enforcement of Islamic dress. Relatively unnoticed was growing student resentment over the degree to which Khatemi's conservative opponents in Iran were trying to undermine him and prevent fundamental reform of the economy. The conservatives were also frustrating Khatemi's efforts by using their influence over the security forces and the cleric-dominated justice

sector to conduct crackdowns on the press and on intelligentsia seeking to discuss the evolution of Iran's political system. The unrest evolved into several days of student riots and a crackdown by the security forces on the riots. Outmaneuvered by his opponents, Khatemi reportedly feared dismissal by the Supreme Leader if he did not back the crackdown on the rioting, and he did so publicly. His capitulation to the hardliners caused Khatemi to lose the student support that had helped sweep him to election victory in 1997. Still, support for reform, and the hopes that Khatemi would confront the hardliners (which he did not), carried him to another landslide victory in the presidential elections of 2001.

The same factors that limit public expression in Iran could also cast some doubt on objective polling results. As I have noted, the regime is quick to move to suppress any demonstrations of dissent. Not only does it arrest and imprison political or civil society activists, but it severely restricts freedom of speech and the press, according to the State Department human rights reports on Iran and other observers. In late 2006, the government increased confiscation of satellite dishes in homes, which are legally prohibited but use of which had been generally tolerated. The government also blocks foreign satellite transmissions, and controls use of the internet. It reportedly uses filtering software to block access to some Western newspaper web sites, as well as those of some non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The State Department asserts in its human rights report for 2006, released February 2007, that a 2004 poll by an Iranian press organ found that Iranian citizens trust the internet more than any other news media. Since the internet gives Iranians access to foreign media, it can be hypothesized that, if the poll is accurate, it indicates that Iranians do not trust much of their own media, but look to foreign media for more accurate representations of events and trends in Iran itself. Journalists are routinely arrested for stories critical of the government, and reformist newspapers are regularly closed, although they tend to reopen quickly under new names.

In several cases, polling data and other data have not been reliable indicators of political outcomes in Iran. In two recent major elections in Iran, press reports quoting polls and interviews with Iranians proved inaccurate. In the June 2005 presidential election, for example, not one major press report foresaw the emergence of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the eight candidate field. He was little known to Western journalists, and there was a clear consensus that senior leader and former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani would likely emerge victorious in the election. Some observers believed that other leading candidates would fare well, including Mohammad Qalibaf, the former security chief, and Mustafa Moin, the former Minister of Higher Education, and a well known reformist. Almost no one observed the clear shift, late in the campaign, and with the apparent backing of the Supreme Leader and the Revolutionary Guard and Basij forces, toward Ahmadinejad. He went on to the second round run-off against Rafsanjani in which he soundly defeated Rafsanjani.

Conversely, the other major recent election "shock" was the earlier victory of Mohammad Khatemi in the 1997 presidential election. Khatemi's chief opponent in the election, Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri, a conservative, had the clear backing of the senior regime leadership. It was widely assumed by U.S. and other experts that the regime would, if necessary, fix the election somehow to ensure Nateq Nuri's victory, and that there was no way Khatemi would be allowed to win the election. Yet, on election day, Khatemi took nearly 70% of the vote, and the regime was clearly cowed by the overwhelming support

for the reformist Khatemi that there was no means to alter the result. Nateq Nuri publicly conceded defeat and Khatemi was sworn in in August 2007.

### **Assessing the Relationship Between Public Attitudes and Iranian Government Policy**

From a policy analysis standpoint, many consider it significant to try to assess the degree to which Iranian public opinion affects Iranian governmental decisions and policies, because public opinion might give analysts and indication of how Iran might react to U.S. and international policies toward Iran. Yet, the Iranian political system is relatively opaque, and constitutes a hybrid of elected, appointed, and partially elected institutions. Some of Iran's institutions have close contact with the public, while other institutions are relatively remote and reflect the preferences of Iran's clerical or national security establishment.

First and foremost is the position of the Supreme Leader. That post was established by the Islamic republican constitution adopted after the 1979 fall of the Shah of Iran, and was held by the leader of that revolution, the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The current Leader is Ali Khamene'i, a Khomeini disciple who was elected president during 1981-89 and was named Supreme Leader upon Khomeini's death in June 1989. The Supreme Leader is named by an elected 83-seat "Assembly of Experts," which also has the official responsibility of amending the constitution and overseeing the work of the Supreme Leader.

The Supreme Leader has vast powers under Iran's constitution – he is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and has the power to dismiss the elected President of Iran. He also makes half the appointments to the 12 seat "Council of Guardians" – an appointed body that reviews legislation to ensure that it comports with Islamic law. This also ensures that Iran's politics are relatively opaque, because subordinate leaders compete for the ear and favor of the Supreme Leader. Lines of authority are not clear, and it is often difficult to judge the relative influence over policy of the leaders below Khamene'i.

Although not directly elected, the Supreme Leader is not necessarily immune to or unaware of public opinion. Khamene'i, for example, is known to maintain close contacts with one of his key constituencies, the *bazaar* merchants, who are highly sensitive to the potential effects of any international sanctions on Iran's economy. The bazaar merchants are also able to filter up to Khamene'i complaints from the citizenry on such issues as inflation, unemployment, and the effects of a recently-implemented gasoline rationing plan.

One feature of the Supreme Leadership post is that Iran has aligned its laws and practices to shield the Supreme Leader from all direct criticism. It is illegal for publications to directly criticize the Supreme Leader, and citizens have been known to be arrested for criticizing him within earshot of security personnel. In the absence of direct criticism, it might be difficult for Khamene'i, or any Supreme Leader, to align his policies with the interests and hopes of the citizenry.

However, in some ways, Khamene'i might be more in touch with public opinion than is the elected President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Ahmadinejad reportedly has

surrounded himself with longtime allies from their time as Revolutionary Guard officers during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. Many of these officers from Ahmadinejad's generation subsequently became provincial governors and local leaders; Ahmadinejad himself was Tehran mayor before being elected President. By the accounts of many observers, Ahmadinejad and his circle remember the time of the Iran-Iraq war as a heroic struggle against an Iraq that they perceived as backed by the West. Unlike Khamene'i and other more senior leaders, Ahmadinejad does not view the Iran-Iraq war as a time of severe economic deprivation and defeat. To some extent, Ahmadinejad is considered out of touch with many urban or more affluent Iranians who want economic growth and integration with Europe and Asia, not to mention eventually also the United States. It is these types of groups, and students and intellectuals are among them, that have protested and criticized Ahmadinejad recently. These groups perceive Ahmadinejad as unwisely pushing Iran into confrontation with the United States and Europe over Iran's nuclear program – a drive that, for the first time, has brought United Nations sanctions against Iran.

Some of these sentiments appear to be reflected in the "Terror Free Tomorrow" poll, as well as other polls and observations. The poll clearly shows that most Iranians would trade assurances that Iran is not developing a nuclear weapon for international assistance and enhanced investment from and trade with the West. This sentiment might account for what a wide range of observers say has been a decline in Ahmadinejad's popularity as his confrontation with the international community has escalated. The decline in his popularity was demonstrated in December 2006 when most of Ahmadinejad supporters, including his sister, lost their bids for seats on Tehran's elected city council. Pro-Ahmadinejad candidates won only three of the fifteen council seats, even less than the four seats won by the reformist candidates who were viewed as reeling from their loss in the 2005 presidential elections. The Terror Free Tomorrow poll, if accurate, would also suggest that most Iranians do not agree with Ahmadinejad that the three U.N. resolutions demanding Iran suspend uranium enrichment are not, as Ahmadinejad says, "tom pieces of paper."

Public preferences in Iran also have not translated into Iran's policy in the region. Polls, including the Terror Free Tomorrow poll, have consistently suggested that the Iranian public views itself as relatively remote from the Arab-Israeli dispute, and does not believe that it is Iran's role to try to determine the outcome of any negotiations to settle that long conflict. During the time of the Shah of Iran, Iran and Israel had full diplomatic relations. The current Iranian leadership, on the other hand, has consistently opposed Israel, and, judging from the reports of the State Department on international terrorism, it has provided material support to groups such as Hamas that do not accept a "two state solution" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Iran's support to such groups, as well as to Lebanese Hezbollah, has been a consistent source of friction between Iran and the United States.

A question that arises is whether or not the most representative institution in Iran, the Majles (parliament) reflects public opinion and can therefore influence policy. It could be argued that the public has a channel to express its views, through the Majles, and that the Majles is capable of writing laws to reflect those preferences. In practice, however, in the view of most experts, the Majles lacks substantial influence in the Iranian political system. It is fully elected, and therefore generally does reflect voter choices in particular time periods, but it has not been able to translate those choices into policy. In part, this

reflects the substantial influence of the unelected Council of Guardians, which is able to block the implementation of legislation it dislikes on the grounds that such laws are not Islamic. In addition, the Council of Guardians has the responsibility of screening candidates for all Iranian elections. Majles members who fear this screening process are considered reluctant to sponsor or vote for legislation that is not considered sufficiently in line with the preferences of the senior leadership, particularly the Supreme Leader.

### **Implications**

The conclusion we might draw is that there are few means for Iranian public attitudes to affect policy. The public might appear amenable to suspending the militarily-useful aspects of Iran's nuclear program if doing so would ensure economic prosperity and avoid further sanctions, but this view has not translated, to date, into Iranian government policy choices. The implications are that U.S. policy efforts would likely need to affect the thinking of senior regime leaders, and not the public. If the United States is to succeed in persuading the Iranian government to suspend its enrichment of uranium, it would likely have to convince the senior leadership that an Iranian nuclear weapon would not ensure Iran's security, or that Iran's economic future is jeopardized by the continuation of that program.

The Iranian leadership is not impervious to public opinion. For now, public preferences on the nuclear issue are expressed in polls and in comments to journalists or other observers. At some point, however, were international sanctions to severely crimp Iran's economy, it is possible that public attitudes might evolve into overt public unrest. The Iranian public might not necessarily blame the international community for imposing sanctions and causing economic hardship, but might instead blame Ahmadinejad and the senior leadership for providing justification for international sanctions by provoking confrontation on the nuclear issue. The polls and other observations suggest that the quest for nuclear power is popular in Iran, partly because Iranians want to constitute a great nation that is technologically sophisticated. However, the polls also show that the public does not necessarily want to push the program so far that Iran ends up isolated and economically crippled by sanctions.

Serious unrest has always, in the past, attracted the focused attention of the Iranian senior leadership. However, as discussed, the leadership has shown little hesitation to react with repressive force to suppress rioting and demonstrations, and it is likely to do so in the future.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much, Dr. Katzman. Thanks to all our witnesses. I am going to prolong this for a second before we get into questions and answers just because I think it would be instructive for everyone to hear a little bit about the actual structure of the government in Iran. And maybe, Dr. Katzman, we will start with you. If you could just give a brief primer on the Supreme Leader and how the Supreme Leader gets authority, about the Assembly of Experts, how they are either elected or appointed. The same with the Council of Guardians, the President, the parliament and all that. And then people can ask questions, and other panelists can add comments if they care to.

Mr. KATZMAN. Thank you very much. The Supreme Leader is not elected, but he is selected. When Ayatollah Khomeini, who was the founder of the Islamic Revolution died, the Assembly of Experts, which is elected on a provincial basis, this 83-seat body, meets and selects a new Supreme Leader. So the Assembly of Experts chooses a Supreme Leader. It can amend the Constitution and it can oversee the work of the Supreme Leader. The President, Ahmadinejad in this case, is directly elected by the public. The Majles, the parliament, is directly elected. The Majles can pass legislation; however, that legislation is reviewed by an unelected body, an appointed body called the Council of Guardians. The Council of Guardians ensures that any legislation comports with Islamic law, that it is not un-Islamic. And half the appointments are by the Supreme Leader, and the other half are by the judiciary, with the concurrence of the elected Majles. It is really very much a hybrid system. This Council of Guardians not only reviews legislation, but it screens candidates in the elections. So if you want to run for a seat in the parliament, you need to be vetted, you need to be approved by the Council of Guardians. If you want to run for President also, you must also be vetted by the Council of Guardians. And routinely in Presidential elections 150, 200 people file to run for President, and the Council of Guardians generally winnows that down to about 8 to 10, sometimes it has been less candidates for President. And in some cases women. Because the Constitution is a little bit unclear, some women have sometimes filed to run for President. But the Council of Guardians interprets the Constitution as not allowing women to run. So it routinely has omitted them from the field.

Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. I think that is quite helpful. Let me just begin the questioning briefly. It appears from the opening statements that sanctions might well have an impact, but it would be important for the people of Iran to understand perhaps that the sanctions are a result of the conduct of their government, something they would assess responsibility for to them as opposed blame to the countries imposing the sanctions. And then the government of Iran would then perhaps feel the heat from their own population and take some reaction to that. Several of you have mentioned the idea of being able to communicate over the heads of the Iranian Government to the people. How do you propose that might be done? And then the second part of the question would be how do you propose it might be done without increasing the paranoia of the Iranian Government, or what borders on paranoia, at

least their insecurity that somebody would be trying to change the regime as opposed to changing attitudes?

Maybe start with Mr. Ballen and move left to right.

Mr. BALLEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that is a good question. The problem is there is a battle for public opinion inside Iran. The regime does care. It may not follow what people want, but it desperately cares what people think.

As I mentioned, in our poll there was a very committed minority base that it plays to as well. So that if we persist in saber rattling and talk of war, we persist in sanctions, and there is nothing positive on the horizon, there is no future being articulated about a vision of what the United States thinks and the international community of a future Iran that is secure, that can trade, that is a fully respected member of the community of nations, we leave the playing field open to the Iranian Government to portray the sanctions and portray the hostility as just that, hostility, and there is nothing to counterbalance it.

There are a lot of imaginative ways. President Nixon went to China. Our greatest emissaries since 9/11 in reaching out to the Muslim world have been former President Bush and former President Clinton after the tsunami. If I were the President of the United States, I would send them to Iran and talk to the Iranian people, talk to the Iranian Government, and put our case forward. Because at the end of the day, I think the United States can have a good, positive case to make. But if we don't make the case, and it is only about sanctions, only about military force, I think we will lose the battle of public opinion, which is important inside Iran.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Sadjadpour.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. I would argue that this current leadership in Tehran, especially the hardliners, really thrive in isolation. And they thrive as a result of sanctions, which have been in place for three decades now. I described them as kind of a weed which only grows in the dark. And you know, think about it. If you were a 75-year-old cleric in Tehran and you have a senior post in the Iranian Government, do you really want the country to open up and become more meritocratic? Or if you are a Revolutionary Guardsman which is privy to million dollar oil deals, do you really want Iran to open up and join the WTO and become more meritocratic? So I think actually sanctions and isolation further entrench the rule of a lot of these hardliners in office currently.

Now, that being said, I don't advocate removing the sanctions or offering Iran major economic or political incentives at the moment. What is problematic about that is that when Iran had a President, Mohammad Khatami, who was talking about the dialog of civilizations, Iran got little in return. Now you have a President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who is calling for Israel to be wiped off the map, denying the Holocaust.

So I think it is problematic from a Western policy perspective if we offer an Ahmadinejad administration incentives which we didn't offer a Khatami administration. Because the message Iran will learn is that when we take a moderate approach it projects weakness, but when we take a belligerent approach it reaps rewards. So I think that sanctions at the moment and the near term are a necessary means to make it clear to Iran, again, that a belligerent ap-

proach is not going to reap rewards. And I think we need a way of showing to, especially the hardliners in Tehran, that again this policy that they are currently pursuing is going to bring about isolation. And I think the Iranian people will elect more likely more pragmatic leadership when it comes to the next parliamentary and Presidential elections.

But ultimately I would agree with Ken and others who say that a prerequisite to domestic internal political change in Iran is a U.S.-Iran diplomatic accommodation. I see very little hope of the Iranian people, whom we have described today as being very much in favor of a more progressive, democratic system, at peace with its neighbors, at peace with the United States, I see very little hope they will become empowered and they will be able to achieve these dreams as long as the U.S.-Iran relationship remains as it is, which is in isolation.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Dr. Katzman.

Mr. KATZMAN. Well, my assessment is that I do see some signs that the ratcheting up of international sanctions is indeed starting to produce differences of opinion within the leadership, and that if this course of action were continued and perhaps accelerated these divisions could be exacerbated to the point where Iran might even consider altering its position on the nuclear issue. I think the change in the nuclear negotiator last week was reflective of that. I think the Supreme Leader and Mr. Rafsanjani, who reflect the views of the bazaar merchants, the trading community who want to deal with Europe and the outside world, they are becoming very nervous that these sanctions are going to cutoff Iran from Europe, from the United States, from the outside world, and they have seen what the U.S. power can do. They were in the leadership during the Iran-Iraq war, and they saw what the United States did in a naval battle in April 1988, and other things. And they are very much in awe of the U.S. power.

Ahmadinejad less so. Again, he views the Iran-Iraq war as a heroic struggle. His constituencies do not buy fancy European luxury goods. They don't care whether they are isolated from Europe or whatever. And so he seems willing to push the nuclear issue to the brink. The Supreme Leader and the others I think are much more sober about the possible effects if these sanctions are ratcheted up to the point where they really squeeze Iran's civilian economy, as we see some signs that they have started to do.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. Mr. Higgins, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just going back to, as Mr. Ballen said, focus here on the Iranian people and their attitudes about their lives, their history, and their future. What seems to be going on in Iran today is a more passive revolution, perhaps influenced by disappointment, having the population having had their expectations raised about economic reform and then not seeing that reform actually implemented and affecting their individual lives.

Can you give us some examples of how this passive revolution is manifesting itself in Iranian society?

Mr. BALLEEN. Thank you, Mr. Higgins, but before I address that I just want to clearly state my view for the record, which is that

sanctions are important. Increasing sanctions are important. However, if it is done without anything positive on the agenda, if it is done without any carrot, if it is just sticks coming from the United States, to be blunt, those sticks will fail alone in isolation. And as Karim said, I don't think there is any doubt that it plays into the hands of the most hardline and recalcitrant people inside Iran.

So I think you do need sanctions. I think everyone understands it might be a military action. You don't need to keep repeating that. I don't think that is helpful. But I think that accompanied by that, as we did in the cold war, we must recognize the importance of people because it could be a countervailing pressure inside Iran. And it also lets people understand that the sanctions are a result of the government's policies, and not from American hostility.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. About economic reform, what I would do to build on Ken's points and the chairman's question, in approaching Iran I would simply present two very distinct paths to the Iranian Government and present it publicly so it is also heard by the Iranian people. The first path is A, continue to take a noncompromising approach, a belligerent approach, and it is going to bring about isolation, increased economic malaise, increased political isolation for the government. And again, this is a population overwhelmingly young, two-thirds under 32. The aspirations are not to wipe Israel off the map and enrich uranium. They aspire to be reintegrated into the economic community and have economic prospects.

But simultaneous to that you do have to present an alternative approach, which is what President Bush Senior once said, good will begets good will. That if Iran takes a compromising approach, it is going to be met with certain incentives, reintegration into the international community, security assurances from the United States, and presenting these two approaches publicly will increase the desire of the Iranian people, increase the demands of the Iranian people on their government to take an approach which is less belligerent, less noncompromising.

But again, if it is just the threat of, quote-unquote, all options being on the table and saber rattling and sanctions and no alternative policies, I don't really see any change from what we have seen the last three decades, which is essentially Iranian behavior not improving one bit.

Mr. KATZMAN. Thank you. Just to add a little bit, because we talked about the military action issue. My own assessment is that the talk of military action in some ways, although maybe it is not always presented that well, in some ways it has helped convince the Europeans how seriously the threat from Iran is taken in the United States. The Europeans, and I just was in Europe talking, they have a very different threat assessment of Iran than the United States does. And very much when you talk to European diplomats, the view is, well, we are going to try to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, but if they do, well, we will deal with it.

The U.S. view is much, much different. Much different threat assessment. The Europeans do not want the use of force. And the talk of military action has in some sense convinced the Europeans how seriously this threat is taken in the United States and has

propelled them to offer new proposals for sanctions, for ways of pressuring Iran without use of force.

So in some sense it has not all been a negative development in my assessment.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. Mr. Shays was saying he was going to take his jacket off. I offer that to anybody in here. It is warm. It has been warm in the room here. We don't hold formality on that. Mr. Yarmuth, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was struck by the comments that all of you made in that the foreign policy of the Iranian Government does not reflect the vast majority of the citizens. And all I can say is we feel your pain or feel their pain. I am interested in the idea that our hope for a change in policy there may rest more with convincing from the bottom up. This is my interpretation of what was said, the bottom up of the population affecting the leaders as opposed to actually a formal change in the regime.

Is that a correct assessment or could you elaborate on that, that elections or a change in the supreme leadership is not necessarily going to effect change, but that this percolating attitude may change? Is that our best hope or better hope?

Mr. BALLEEN. I would simply say that is one element. I agree with what Mr. Katzman said that the regime has its own drivers, not just the—it is not a regime that respects the Iranian people. I think we all understand that and because the Iranian people want one thing doesn't mean the regime is going to do it.

But on the other hand, it is not a regime that is completely insensitive to public opinion, either.

And there is an ideological state, part of many inside the Iranian ruling class being connected to the people and having popular legitimacy. They wouldn't spend the amounts of money they spend on presenting public opinion in Iran, which they do, if they didn't care about it.

So I think that it is important but it is only one element, but it is an element that we should not ignore.

Mr. YARMUTH. There is an article in Esquire Magazine, in the November edition, called the Secret History of the Impending War with Iran that the White House Doesn't Want You to Know. It is based on interviews with two officials, one State Department official, and one member who worked on the National Security Council and dealt with Iran, Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann. And there are some pretty stunning reports in here. One of them from Hillary Mann that in 2003, in April 2003, right after the war began, that a diplomat of Iran, a high ranking Iranian diplomat, the nephew of the Foreign Minister, son-in-law to the Supreme Leader, was in discussions with the Swiss Ambassador who was then conducting diplomacy, basically, I guess, as a proxy diplomat for us, and the day that they had offered an agreement that was approved at the highest levels in Tehran, including decisive action against all terrorists in Iran, an end to support for Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, promise to cease its nuclear program and also its program to recognize Israel. The administration ignored the proposal and, in fact, reprimanded the Swiss Ambassador for meddling.

I am curious as to whether this type of information is used by the Iranian Government, assuming that it is valid, credible, that

this is the type of thing that is used on a PR effort inside Iran, and what this type of information, if it were widely disseminated, would mean for our relationships with the people and the government.

Mr. SADIQPOUR. There was a very interesting trial balloon which the Iranians floated in 2003, and really 2003 was a different world to 2007. I was based in Tehran at that time, and I can tell you that the Iranian leadership was quite nervous about what the U.S. Government was going to do.

If you recall at that time in 2003, oil prices were about \$25 a barrel, Iraq was a still a blank slate. There were student agitations taking place in Tehran. And again, the Iranians were nervous that the Hawks in Washington were thinking about transferring the regime change policy eastward to Tehran. So this trial balloon was floated.

Now fast forward to 2007. Iran has tremendous leverage, not only in Iraq but throughout the region, and they don't feel compelled to make these same type of compromises.

So we do see that when the regime is under duress, it is prepared to make compromises on issues which they appear very ideologically rigid on. They can compromise for the sake of the government.

What I would say in response to your first question is that we simply don't have the luxury of waiting for more progressive interlocutors anymore. The urgency of the nuclear issue, the urgency of the state of Iraq, is such that we have to talk to the current leadership in power in Tehran.

But elections in Iran, despite the fact that they are not free and fair, elected institutions can have an effect on the Iranian policies. We obviously see a difference between the views and the policies of an Ahmadinejad-led government as opposed to Khatami-led government.

So whereas I don't see any hope for some type of dramatic change in which true representatives of the Iranian people will be in office in the next few years, I do believe we will see a change that—we will see the prospect of less belligerent, more pragmatic leaders in Tehran who I think will be more amenable to certain compromise with the United States on the nuclear issue and other issues.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Yarmuth. You also gave a tease on the next series of hearings that we will be having which will go into depth on some of the negotiating opportunities since 2001 through today and possibly for the future.

Dr. Katzman, do you want to add something to that?

Mr. KATZMAN. My conversation with U.S. officials on that initiative and that idea suggested that it was much more murky, and we still really haven't gotten to the bottom of how well vetted that whole issue was in Tehran.

The list of things on that list, I find very hard to believe that Iran would ever agree to that many things. That would be like saying the Islamic Revolution never happened. That would just be a repudiation of everything Khomeini stood for and the entire basis of the revolution. I find it very difficult to believe they would ever agree to that package of offers.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. We are going to have some of those folks in to talk to us at the next hearing. So that should be very interesting in that respect.

Ms. McCollum, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We had a little bit of a discussion of how our governments could engage, and I am hearing clearly that, you know, speaking to one another, listening to one another changing the tone, it will be tough on both sides, but changing the tone so it is more civil in nature.

I would like to talk a little bit about two other ways in which engagement takes place. One is people to people.

I serve on the Appropriations Committee, and we recently had a hearing, not specifically so much with Iran, but talking about Voice of America, the Internet, TV, and radio exchanges.

I am a big supporter of Voice of America and the other ways in which we can engage, whether it is Internet, TV, and radio, as a way of sharing information, health care, what is going on with avian flu, what is going on in the news, current events around the world. Things like that. Educational cultural opportunities so that the engagements reinforce family to-family, person-to-person.

But there are other engagements that go on, and I was a little taken back by the statement, and I am going to reiterate the way I heard it so I can be corrected if I heard it wrong, that Europe is not engaged with Iran. We hear quite different from this administration at times criticizing the French and others for their engagement.

So I would like a little more information on that.

China is very engaged. I understand there is an airplane exchange being talked about because we do not supply even parts to commercial aircraft in Iran, and they are in desperate need of having that because of life, health, and safety issue for the Iranians, as well as other people traveling in and out of Iran.

And then India. India is engaged. India is a very robust democracy.

So if you could talk about those type of engagements and how we can learn from them or not repeat some mistakes that they might be making.

Mr. BALEN. Let me just first comment on the issue of China and France and what we found in our poll.

While there was a lot of feeling of opening up to the United States, Iranians preferred dealing with France and China by a two-to-one margin over the United States. The only other country that was less popular inside Iran in our poll than the United States was Israel.

So while there is pro-American sentiment, we are not exactly No. 1 on the list. There is a strong undercurrent of distrust, and I absolutely agree with what you are saying that the people-to-people, educational exchanges, all of that is vital. Absolutely vital, not only with Iran but around the world. The broadcasting of Voice of America and other agencies, I mean, we live in one world now. People look at the Internet.

For example, our poll was widely spread throughout the blogosphere inside Iran. We no longer live in isolation. American words, American policies matter throughout the world.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. I would like to focus just on one aspect of your question which is about Voice of America, and Radio Free Europe and some of these other Persian language television and radio broadcasts to Iran because there has been a big debate in Washington, and there has been a lot of criticism, that Voice of America and Radio Tomorrow have not been sufficiently sympathetic to the views of the current administration in Washington and haven't been sufficiently critical of the views of the Iranian government.

What I would simply say is that if we want these programs to be relevant, whether it is the VOA television broadcast or the Radio Farda radio broadcast, they have to be perceived as objective and professional in the eyes of Iranians.

Iranians right now are faced with two types of media. They have the official state-run television media, which is essentially government propaganda, and they have satellite television channels from Los Angeles, which are essentially Iranian exiles very much detached from the country and also not considered a credible source of news.

So I think there is a real vacuum to be filled. And if we try to fill that vacuum by projecting our own propaganda, I think we really insult the intelligence of the Iranian people. But I do think if we tried to take an objective, professional approach, similar to what the BBC World Service does, I think there is a real vacuum to be filled, and we will have a real audience and we will have a real impact in Iran.

Mr. KATZMAN. Thank you.

Under the Treasury Department regulations that govern the limited trade that the United States does with Iran, civilian aircraft parts can be licensed for sale to Iran. And the Clinton administration did license a sale, and the Bush administration, about a year or so, agreed to license a sale of some spare parts, landing gear, for Iran aircraft.

But it has to be licensed on a case-by-case basis. It is not just automatic. And the work has to be done sort of by contractor, and it can't be done by Americans. Lufthansa has done the work.

The countries in Europe, China, India, they have a very different threat perception of Iran than the United States does. They are not in the lead in any sense on the Arab-Israel dispute resolution as the United States is, and the United States is very sensitive to what Iran is doing to undermine Israel and the Arab-Israeli resolution of that dispute. China, India, Europe have far less, I think, a sober assessment of Iranian policy. Iraq, obviously, they are not involved in Iraq. Europeans, not all of them.

So I think the threat assessment is different. China obviously is motivated by oil. Needs a lot of oil. Iran is a source of oil. India, India sees Iran as a regional player, doesn't want to come into conflict with Iran. They have some naval and other exchanges at a fairly low level, but there is a defense agreement of exchanges at least so that they don't come into conflict in the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, etc.

Europe does a lot of trade with Iran, and as I said, just a very different threat perception. They do not have the psychological history that the United States has with Iran.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Mr. Welch, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the panelists for their excellent testimony.

Two areas of questions I would be interested in everyone's opinions on.

First is your assessment on the current administration's intention of using military force in Iran. I mean, that is constantly in the news. It is constantly laid out there as a potential threat.

I would be interested in actual use of force. I would be interested in how seriously you believe the administration is about pursuing military options and what the consequences of that attack would be.

Mr. KATZMAN. Thank you very much.

My conversations with people in the—there has been a lot of, as you know, press articles. I don't get the sense that there is any decision or any planning or any move toward actual military force against—what I am understanding where the administration is, they want the sanctions to succeed. There is a belief that if the Europeans join us in tighter sanctions we might have a chance of success. But the administration doesn't want the negotiations with our partners to just drag on and on and on without result. There is a view that there needs to show some progress soon, that Iran needs to show that it might change its position due to these sanctions at some point fairly soon.

The view is that, the administration view is that an Iranian nuclear weapon is unacceptable and must be prevented. That is—I believe that is U.S. policy, and if the negotiations on sanctions just go on and on and on without result, then I would say that these options probably will get more focused at some point fairly soon.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. I would agree that the military option is something that the current administration is not going to take lightly. President Bush has said that he would like to see this nuclear issue resolved on his watch. And I don't think the military option would at all resolve it. It would in fact exacerbate it.

If I have to quantify the likelihood of a military option, I would say 20 percent. But I think it is certainly within the realm of possibilities, and increasingly the pretext being used for potential military action is not the nuclear issue, it is Iran's alleged support for militias which are killing U.S. troops in Iraq.

As for the repercussions, I would repeat what I said earlier in the hearing, that when I think about U.S. foreign policy challenges over the next decade or so, there are five or six things that come to mind: Iran nuclear proliferation, terrorism, energy security, Arab-Israeli peace and Afghanistan.

Really thinking about bombing Iran, what would it do to these issues? Iraq, the likelihood of stabilizing Iraq is much, much less. I think the likelihood that Iran starts to pursue a nuclear weapons program unequivocally increases if we bomb them. I think the likelihood that Iran will support terrorism more increases if we bomb them.

In terms of energy security, oil prices go up at least 20, 30 percent, perhaps. The likelihood that Iran supports Palestinian rejection groups, Hamas and Hezbollah, increases, and again the likelihood that Iran will see fit to play a constructive role in issues of common mutual overlap like Afghanistan also decreases.

So I really see no redeeming qualities to the military option, not to mention the fact that this is the last oasis of good will which we have in the Middle East in terms of the Iranian population, and I think we likely soil that oasis by bombing Iran.

Mr. BALLEEN. Based on my discussion with senior Pentagon officials, I would concur in the conclusions of my colleagues.

I would point out one finding in our policy. Two-thirds of the people in Iran support Hamas, Hezbollah, Iraqi Shiite militia groups. I think that if we had a military attack, that support would likely increase.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Welch.

Mr. Lynch, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

I do note there are three votes scheduled on the floor right now: 15-minute vote on the previous question, for H.R. 3867 followed by a vote on the Internet Tax Freedom Act Amendment Act of 2007, 5 minutes, followed by a vote on designation of the month of October 2007 as Country Music Month, H.J. Res. 58, 5 minutes.

So we will go as far as we can, and we will break for a few minutes for good consideration and have our witnesses come back after that.

Mr. Lynch.

Mr. LYNCH. I want to address the situation on the possibility of sanctions, and I think the closest example that we have is the previous limited sanction that we had against Iraq, the Oil for Food Program. And these sanctions, while I think it is probably the way to go, the efficacy of these sanctions is questionable given the fact that the last sanctions that we had against Saddam Hussein were meant to be just that, a limited sanction but in effect in retrospect turned out to be a bonanza. It was a sweepstakes for him siphoning off billions of dollars.

The efficacy of any sanction program will depend on the willingness of our international neighbors to support us. Right now we have 1,700 German companies operating inside Iran.

Iran, if you look at Italy, Italy is Iran's third highest trading partner. We don't have solidarity for governments in action.

So what I am afraid of is that even if we do adopt these sanctions, that they will be less than useful. And so I would like to hear your thoughts on that, and second, in light of the votes here, there have been some quiet entreaties from the Bundestag to try to identify members of our committee and our Congress and moderate members of the Iranian parliament and members of the Bundestag to try to sit down and talk about just the broader implications of this situation. And I, for one, am loath to undermine the efforts of our own State Department or to complicate this matter if it is possible, but I would like to hear what you have in mind—in your minds as to the thoughts of some person-to-person or citizen-to-citizen or legislator-to-legislator type of dialog that might get us off of the position that we currently find ourselves in.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. With regards to sanctions, when the Iraq war was prosecuted, what we saw was the United States pursued very strong resolutions and strong sanctions and thereby had a very weak coalition.

I think what is key, if we want to try to attempt to change Iranian behavior, is initially weak sanctions and weak resolutions in order to achieve a more robust international coalition. Because I can tell you if Iranian leaders wake up in the morning and they say well, there is an intensification of U.S. sanctions but they have been in place for a few decades, we can endure it; but if they wake up in the morning and they say wow, not even China or Russia or India are returning our phone calls, then I think the world view from Tehran changes a bit.

But in order to get Russia and China and India on board, we have to make it clear to them we are not pursuing a military option, and that we are turning up the heat gradually and allowing Iran a way out if they choose to take a more conciliatory approach.

The second issue about interaction. We are at times of potential war and peace right now. So I think any type of dialog, especially between our Congress and the Iranian parliament, would be welcome. I think what is lacking right now is some type of a dialog, if anything, just to communicate one another's red line.

One example I like to give is of a deputy foreign minister in Iran. And when I used to be based in Tehran, he was always the hardest line interview I would have. Of all of the people I talked to, he was always very conspiratorial, always unwilling to divulge information, very suspicious of me personally; and he came on a fellowship to Harvard University last year, and he spent 8 months in the United States. And it was amazing based on his interaction with U.S. academics and U.S. analysts how much his views had evolved and how much their views had evolved that you appreciate the other side's concerns, security concerns and ambitions a bit more.

So my experience has always been that whenever these interactions happen, it helps to educate the other side, and it allays these tensions. It doesn't increase these tensions. So I think, broadly speaking, especially when we are talking about the level of Iranian and U.S. Congressmen and elected representatives, I would welcome the initiative.

Mr. TIERNEY. We have about 5 minutes to vote.

Mr. Lynch, your time has expired. We will be coming back for the panelists. The votes are probably about 20 minutes to a half hour, but we will start immediately once the committee gets back. I thank you for your patience and tell Members we will start as soon as the last vote is made. And then we will return. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Mr. Platts.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you for allowing me to jump in here between other questioners.

Mr. Ballen, I would like to start just to get a little understanding, I don't think I am going to repeat anything that was asked earlier, and being in three places at once I am still working on, so I apologize if I do.

But in the polling that the organization has done, one of the issues was about the support of the Iranian people for groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, state, or identified by us as terrorist organizations.

They weren't identified that way, is my understanding in the way the questions were posed to the Iranian people; is that correct?

Mr. BALLEEN. Yes, sir. That is correct. I mean, we simply named the groups. We didn't identify them as terrorist organizations. This would introduce bias in the question, and what the Iranians said was two-thirds have a favorable opinion of these groups, roughly two-thirds but I want to put that in some context. You can ask people in a survey what they think and you will get one answer, but it is important also to put it in context priorities.

That was not a priority for their—when we gave them a set of priorities to pick for the Iranian Government, the top priority was the economy, better relations with Western nations came in ahead. These matters, financial assistance to Hamas, Hezbollah, were not a priority, nor was nuclear weapons.

Mr. PLATTS. They were identified, as is my understanding, as Palestinian opposition groups. So they were identified in some fashion.

Mr. BALLEEN. You know, I believe that is correct. But I don't have the exact Farsi version in front of me. But we did not—we identified them by name and—

Mr. PLATTS. My reason for asking is whether there is an ability to determine what the Iranian people, their views of President Bush, but some of what your polling shows and our current actions, if those views would be different if they understood how we see those organizations for their support of terrorism or engagement of terrorism, if that would impact the Iranians' view of the economy being one and foreign affairs being down the list. It would be different if they were identified in that fashion, but there is nothing in your polling that would be able to indicate that?

Mr. BALLEEN. That is correct.

Mr. PLATTS. Also recently in the Senate, the Kyl-Lieberman amendment that was passed designating the Iranian Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organization based on their efforts regarding weapons of mass destruction, was that organization—or was that addressed at all in the polling?

Mr. BALLEEN. No, it was not.

Mr. PLATTS. If you were going to ask about it, how would you address that to the Iranian people in the way we see them now based on the Senate amendment as a terrorist organization or, again, just asking them in a generic way about the Iranian Revolutionary Guard?

Mr. BALLEEN. If you are asking, from my advice in terms of how to conduct a survey, and I would defer also to my colleagues from D3 Systems who conduct these surveys regularly in that part of the world and are experts in conducting surveys in Iraq and Afghanistan and closed societies like Iran, Syria. I think it is important when you ask questions to try to eliminate as much as possible any of your opinion or your perspective from the question. Otherwise, it would tend to bias the answers.

Mr. PLATTS. And I am going to run out of time here. 5 minutes is always tough.

The final issue, I guess I am going to have time for, is the discrepancy that appears in the policy. My understanding is it shows the Iranian people supporting both a Palestinian state and the State of Israel both co-existing.

Mr. BALLEEN. I think that is a very good question, sir.

What we asked was not that question out of context. We asked in terms of normal relations and better relations with the United States, would you support a two-state solution. In that context, the majority of people would.

But we did not ask the question do you support a two-state solution out of that context. I just want to clarify it for the record.

Mr. PLATTS. Was there any followup about their own President's statements then about the elimination of the State of Israel from the face of the map?

Mr. BALLEEN. We did not ask that in the survey as a question. So I can't give you an answer.

Mr. PLATTS. And I appreciate my time has expired.

Just how to understand the inconsistencies, their support for Hamas, Hezbollah, which is certainly doing its best to go after Israel, yet to some degree supporting a two-state solution.

Mr. BALLEEN. I understand. And I am not sure they are necessarily inconsistent views, in the sense that I certainly consider that and you do, knowing the platform of these groups. But Iranians may not perceive it that way. They may perceive Hamas and Hezbollah standing up for Palestinian rights as opposed to destroying Israel, and that if Hamas or other groups reached an accommodation, they would be supportive of that.

I don't know whether, Karim, you have other—

Mr. PLATTS. If others would like to comment.

Dr. Katzman.

Mr. KATZMAN. I would just say it also doesn't necessarily mean they support violence by Hamas or Hezbollah. It just means they support the political goals of Hamas or Hezbollah.

And, you know, many in the Arab world, Iran is not Arab, but many in the Arab world view those groups as having legitimate goals without supporting use of violence in those groups.

Mr. BALLEEN. I would concur in those remarks. I mean, it was a more general question about favorability. So it is hard to draw a lot of specifics that they support this policy or that policy from our survey.

Mr. PLATTS. So your caution then is we shouldn't read into that the Iranian people support terrorist activities because we don't have the data to understand that.

Mr. BALLEEN. Absolutely not. We don't have the data.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. I would make one point, and this was the slight inconsistency I saw in my own anecdotal experience as opposed to Ken's poll was in my experiences in Iran there was somewhat of a backlash toward the government support for groups like Hezbollah and Hamas for a couple of reasons.

One, they would say we are supposed to be a very rich country. We have major, massive natural resources and yet a quarter of our population is living at the poverty line, there is rampant inflation

and unemployment. Why are we sending all of this money to Hezbollah and Hamas when we have all of these domestic problems? Especially among the younger generations of Iranians I noticed an increasing sense of discontent for the government support for groups of Hezbollah and Hamas.

So I will just leave it at that.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

Mr. Shays, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. I apologize. When you were giving your testimony, I had to go to another hearing. But I did read your statements, and I would like your response to a few observations.

One, about 15 years ago, 10 to 15 years ago, I was in Iran—I was actually in Jordan talking about Iran to the head of their security, Jordanian security. And they basically said that when you shake hands with an Iranian, you need to count your fingers. And it was said to me in a way that wasn't intended to be cute, it was intended to say, you know, these are very clever, very aggressive people, and you feel one way but then you learn that you just got screwed.

So I would like to know their negotiating style, and I would like your comment to that.

The other comment I would like you to respond to is that when you go to Turkey, the Turks say we used to run this place for 402 years, why don't you pay attention to us?

I go to Egypt, and they will say we have been a country for 4,000 years. We go to Jordan. They say, we are the Hashemite Kingdom, why don't you pay attention to us? I go to Iraq and they say, we are the Fertile Crescent. We are where Western civilization began. Why don't you give us more respect?

And one thing that comes across very loud and clear in the Middle East is how you treat people and there is a tremendous amount of pride that just—it is palpable. You could almost cut it with a knife.

And my last comment, which I would like you to comment on, is that when I talk to the administration about Syria or Iran, I get the feeling that they feel like I apply my Western mind and so I want to treat people a certain way. But the impression I get from the administration is you don't understand what you do says something different than what you think it does. I am talking about the cultural difference. So I could wrap my arm around an Iranian and say why can't we work this out together, and they might view that as weakness or whatever. I don't know.

So comments.

Mr. BALLEEN. I would agree with you, Mr. Shays, that on this issue of respect and pride, and I think we see that very much—I will speak to the data in the poll just in Iran and Syria that we did and other policies around the world. There is a hunger. There is not an inimical hatred of the United States. That is just false. There is a hunger for a United States where people perceive, and the perceptions are important here, that they are being treated with pride and with respect. And I think that so much about what has happened since 9/11 has been a feeling from other countries, particularly in the Muslim world, that the United States does not

value them, that there is not a dignity and respect that is accorded to them.

I think it is not a correct impression, but it is the impression that people are getting. So I think that is a very important part of our policy and that we need to figure out how we can better convey that we do respect people, that we do respect their culture, and we respect their pride.

Mr. SHAYS. How about the other point, the other negative comments by the Jordanian security chief?

Mr. BALLEW. I am going to let my colleague answer that because I don't know the answer.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. Well, it is useful, instructive to kind of look, do an analogy of the Middle East and Europe. The Iranians are kind of the French of the region. They kind of have a sense of chauvinism vis-a-vis the other countries, especially countries like Jordan, which has a history which spans a half a century as opposed to Iran's.

There has always been this great sense of chauvinism in Arab countries, whether it was the Shah's regime or the Islamic Republic. And I think the smaller Arab countries certainly resent the same way they say the United States needs to respect us, they would direct that same message to the Iranians.

A couple points that I would make is that when it comes to the issue of popular opinion throughout the region, I would make the argument that Iran is the only country in the Middle East where if there were to be free and fair elections next month and let the chips fall where they may, Iran is the only country in the Middle East where the results would be an improvement on the status quo and would be favorable to U.S. policy interests. I don't know if there is any other country in the region where you could make that argument. And my point is in Iran people have been under repressive Islamist regimes for the last three decades, and if they would be able to vote free and fair, I think they would elect politicians who would be more sympathetic to having relationships with the United States.

Whereas in the other countries in the region, many of them U.S. allies, such as Jordan and Egypt, etc., I think the status quo autocratic leaders are more progressive than the results of democratic elections within those countries.

Last, the issue of how we should approach the Iranians, and I assume you are talking about the Iranian regime, I think respect, obviously, is a prerequisite. But I do think that it is problematic to offer this particular administration in Tehran incentives which we didn't offer the previous administration in Tehran which took a much more moderate approach. Because if you pay attention to the domestic debate within Iran, the hardliners who are currently in power were very critical. The former President, Mohammad Khatami, they said this talk of, quote/unquote, dialog of civilizations was very cute, but all it did was get us into the Axis of Evil and project a very weak image of the country, and what we need to do is take a hardline approach, and this is what the U.S. responds to.

So I do think it is problematic in the short term that we roll out the red carpet for Ahmadinejad and offer the major incentives. But

I do think that we will start to see a change of leadership in Tehran, not a change of regime but a change of leadership. And when there are more pragmatic kind of moderate officials in positions of influence in Tehran, I think it is then worthwhile to make it clear to them that if they want to take a conciliatory approach, it will—they will get a conciliatory response from the United States.

Mr. KATZMAN. You mentioned Iran's negotiating style, and I do think we have not seen the type of investment in Iran's energy sector that the Iranians expected, not necessarily because of the Iran Sanctions Act, which provides penalties on foreign investment, but really Iran's negotiating style.

Any number of oil company personnel have told me that it is Iran's negotiating style that prevented them from making or slowed major investments in Iran's energy sector because Iran, the negotiators, insisted on basically taking all of the profit out of the deal.

They negotiate and negotiate even after the contract is signed. The Iranians are still negotiating, renegotiating the terms, and many of the European oil companies have found it very, very difficult to negotiate with the Iranians and make a profit.

I would also say we have had a lot of discussion about incentives. The administration did offer Iran incentives. The June 2006 joint offer, the P-5, the Permanent 5 plus Germany. The offer to Iran was you suspend uranium enrichment and meet some of the other nuclear demands and you can have X, Y, and Z: Nuclear medicine, nuclear agriculture nuclear power, WTO, trade agreements, etc.

So there is a package that has been offered to Iran. It is not like there have been no incentives offered to the regime.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Just to followup on that point, one of the issues I think that might be interesting, I don't know how constructive it is to say we can talk about all of those things that Dr. Katzman said, provided you first give us everything we want before we start talking, and I think that has been some of the problem. I don't know how productive it is going to be.

So say we start negotiating with you as soon as you start getting us all of the end points that we want in our negotiations. We have one administration that wants to win the battle before the clocks start. We have another administration that is very, very security conscious and all of this paranoia, paranoid to some extent on that, and I think we have to break through that.

Can I just ask, there was talk during the conversation about international coalition sanctions and the idea that they should be built up slowly, which then goes directly in the face with what our administration seems to be saying is too slow. By the time you end up with that buildup of sanctions and any effect on them, they might have a nuclear weapon in place.

Doctor, do you want to talk a little bit to that?

Mr. KATZMAN. Thank you very much. The difference between the United States and, I would say, the Europeans right now is how quickly to ratchet up the sanctions. The European approach is that each sanction resolution should adjust a marginal amount to the previous of new sanctions and thereby place some psychological

pressure on Iran that there is more to follow. The U.S. view is that the process is simply moving too slow, Iran's nuclear achievement is moving ahead, and we have not yet stopped them from enriching uranium and that we need to ratchet up the sanctions more quickly and add a lot to the previous resolutions and really get at civilian trade with Iran. Civilian credits, investment in the energy sector, start getting at civilian trade to really, in the administration's view, shake up the leadership, that these sanctions are going to be quite biting.

Mr. TIERNEY. Let me ask this. Because of the security consciousness of the Iranian Government, do you think it would be constructive if our administration were to make it clear to them that ultimately the end of negotiations is there would be some security for Iran, that it would not be any attempt to change the government other than through an electoral process in that country and then came to Congress and asked them for a statement that if things proceeded on that end, Congress would at least be amenable to start talking about removing some of the sanctions?

Do you think—any of the witnesses think that would have a motivating factor in these negotiations?

Mr. SADJADPOUR. I would argue that some type of a U.S. recognition of the Iranian Government, and that would entail security assurances, is a prerequisite to any type of a broader diplomatic accommodation. I think at the moment, what is lacking these days between the United States and Iran—and it is not just these days, it has been the history over the last three decades—is trust. There is a very deep-seated mutual distrust, and this has definitely been exacerbated since the Bush administration and since the Ahmadinejad administration in Tehran.

What I would argue for a way forward is not to try to commence discussions necessarily on the nuclear issue, because I think it is an issue where there is just no common ground, it is a zero sum game; but it is to continue the discussions on Iraq and Baghdad, because that is one issue where there is a lot of overlapping interests between the United States and Iran. I would go so far as to argue Iran has more common interests with the United States in Iraq than any of Iraq's other neighbors. Iraq is an issue where we can eat away at this confidence deficit, try to build confidence, and then gradually expand the discussion to encompass issues like the nuclear issue and security assurances.

And I think what you suggest is a great idea, but I think we need a few small interim steps before we can get to that type of a gesture.

Mr. KATZMAN. Yes. One idea I think some people are talking about is to point to Libya, the U.S. agreement with Libya. When we made that agreement with Libya, they denuclearized, they agreed to give up all of their equipment, it was flown here to the United States. And in exchange, the United States laid out a road map of lifting of sanctions on Libya. And the United States can point to the fact that those sanctions were indeed lifted, and Congress did not block it, and the sanctions were indeed removed.

That model I think could be applied to Iran to say if you do the Libya thing, you give up, you will get X, Y, and Z. And it can work out like that.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. You know, it seems to me that some people question the legitimacy of the Iranian Government. That is their premise just moving out. But would you folks discuss with me a comparison the legitimacy of the Iranian Government versus that of Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia?

Mr. BALLEEN. Mr. Chairman, I think a lot of those governments have the same kind of issues with their people that the Iranian Government has with their people. They are not elected, representative governments. They do not necessarily—although sometimes they can reflect popular support.

I would just add that the issue of sanctions and other actions by the United States shouldn't be seen as an either/or proposition. Dr. Katzman just said laying out a positive agenda of where the future is going to be if Iran does change its course. I think we have done it as a matter of policy, but not as a matter of public policy in terms of articulating it clearly and forcefully.

Mr. TIERNEY. Anybody else want to comment on that?

Mr. KATZMAN. Just the legitimacy question. I mean some would argue actually that the Iranian system is more legitimate because it is based upon a Constitution that was adopted in a public referendum on the Islamic Republican Constitution after the revolution. So one could almost make a case that of those you mentioned, Iran has significant legitimacy to its political system.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Sadjadpour.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. I would just argue that we should take Max Weber's definition of "legitimacy," which is monopoly over coercion. So even if we don't like the Iranian Government, it does very cruel things to its people, it has a monopoly over coercion. There is no other game in town. There is no other alternative government waiting in diaspora. There is very little organized opposition at home. And essentially this is the government we have to deal with.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Mr. Yarmuth and Mr. Shays, you have any further questions?

Mr. YARMUTH. I just have one.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Yarmuth.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would you address whether there is any difference in the relevance of religion among the people to their political mindset, difference between that situation in Iran and what we have come to see in Iraq and some other Muslim countries? And if there is a difference, what relevance that has or what implications it has for U.S. foreign policy toward Iran?

Mr. SADJADPOUR. Well, there was an adage which people used to use during communist times, and they would say the best antidote for communism was to have people live in a Communist regime. You know, disabuse themselves of any fantasies of living in a Communist government.

And I think this adage applies to Islamism as well, to an extent. The best antidote is to have people endure and live under an Islamic system. And what we see in Iran is people have lived under this system for three decades. And even those who are quite pious and quite religious within Iran are very discontent with the status quo, because they say they soiled the name of our religion by combining it with politics.

So we shouldn't have the perception that discontent is only among those who are secularly minded in Iran. In fact, among the religious classes, there is an equal amount of discontent.

And I think what is taking place in the Arab world is that they romanticize about this Islamist society because they haven't really experienced it. And this is why I argue that if we were to have free and fair democratic elections in the region, the one country with which we could be truly confident that the results would reflect U.S. interests is probably Iran, just because the other countries in the region haven't experienced what Iran has.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Van Hollen, you rejoined us. I didn't see you. I am sorry. You are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And let me thank you very much for holding these—is that on now?

Mr. TIERNEY. Yes.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. And thank you for holding these hearings. I think, as you and others have pointed out, we haven't had any other diplomats or other personnel on the ground in Iran for a very long time. And it is very important that we get a much better understanding of what is going on inside Iran as we try and decide how to approach Iran and what our policy should be.

And based on all accounts and the testimony you gentlemen have provided today, it is pretty clear that President Ahmadinejad is quite unpopular at home based on his domestic record. The economy, of course, is the No. 1 issue on the minds of the Iranian people, and he hasn't delivered, clearly, on that. And I think that comes through on the surveys that were taken.

So my question is this: Isn't it counterproductive for us to focus on the military option the way this administration has been doing in recent weeks? President Bush and Vice President Cheney beating the war drums, doesn't that have the effect of rallying people in Iran in support of Ahmadinejad and strengthen Ahmadinejad among the population at a time when otherwise he is very unpopular? And so in that sense, even though we all know the military option is always something that America has in its arsenal, that by elevating the rhetoric on that issue we have the effect of actually bolstering Ahmadinejad at home and having a counterproductive result?

Mr. KATZMAN. Thank you, Congressman. I think in my talks what I am seeing is the administration may be talking about the military option, but it is really directed at our European partners and Russia and China. It is a way of signaling to them the pot is boiling here in the United States. We really find an Iranian nuclear weapon absolutely unacceptable, and we need you to step up and tighten the sanctions on Iran. I think that is really what the administration is trying to get at with that talk.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. I might agree with Ken that is the case, but I would argue, having just returned from Moscow recently, that increasingly Russia and China are actually far more worried about the U.S. bombing Iran than Iran getting the bomb. So the approach hasn't been constructive in that respect.

When it comes to the military option domestically within Iran, I would just say that the one thing and the only thing I could see

that could potentially rehabilitate Ahmadinejad's Presidency is a U.S. military attack. Because on his own, right now the economy is floundering, he hasn't delivered on any of his economic promises, but I think U.S. bombs in Iran may change that dynamic. And interestingly enough, it could actually improve the Iranian economy, because 80 percent of their export revenue is from oil, and if you bomb Iran and oil prices go up \$20 a barrel you could actually improve the Iranian economy and help them out even more.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. But does raising the rhetoric and focusing so much more on the military option, does it have the effect—does it give him a card to play at home that he wouldn't otherwise have? Does it elevate his status and provide more support for him than he would otherwise have?

Mr. SADJADPOUR. Yes. First of all, I would say for him I think he views the military option as more a carrot than a stick. And I think in the eyes of the Supreme Leader—I mean really the focus should be on the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. We haven't mentioned him today, but he is really the individual who is signing off on these key decisions, not President Ahmadinejad. And if we tried to get inside the head of Supreme Leader Khamenei, he really believes what the United States wants is not the change of behavior in Iran, but a change of regime.

And the nuclear issue; Iran's support for Hezbollah, Hamas, are just pretexts. And so with that belief, he believes if Iran compromises as a result of pressure, whether it is sanctions or military threat, compromising as a result of pressure is not going to allay the pressure, it is actually going to encourage even more pressure because it is going to signal to the hawks in Washington that you see, this pressure is working, so let's turn up the heat even more.

So this is kind of a dangerous paradigm in which we are operating that people have described it as a game of chess, but it is really a game of chicken. You have two cars moving at each other, and neither side believes it behooves them to slow down, because if you slow down it is going to signal weakness to the other side.

So to answer your question, I do think that the military option doesn't hurt Ahmadinejad domestically with the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. If I could, Mr. Chairman, and I think you raised an important point, we obviously focus a lot on Ahmadinejad in this country, forgetting to recognize that the Supreme Leader obviously makes the final decisions. And that has become sort of the way the press and the discussion in this country has unfolded.

If I could just ask you a question with respect to the North Korean model, because for many years in this administration you had people saying we wouldn't talk to anybody in North Korea, we weren't going to negotiate, we weren't going to do carrots along with sticks, we were only going to do sticks. And during that period of time, the North Korean regime in fact developed a number of nuclear weapons, which it has to this day.

Recently, the administration took a different tact, and obviously was willing, even after the Six-Party Talks, to then engage in more bilateral discussions with the North Koreans and was willing to offer carrots as well as sticks. Do you think that represents a good model for now moving forward with respect to Iran, or not?

Mr. SADJADPOUR. Theoretically, absolutely. Offering it as two distinct paths, offering the path of carrots and offering the path of sticks. But I think one of the difficulties in devising an effective approach toward Iran is the fact that I don't believe there exists a consensus in Tehran. I think if we were to assemble this room with the top 10 most powerful Iranian officials and ask them, OK, write for us, please, on a sheet of paper what you are hoping to achieve in your nuclear negotiations and in your negotiations with the United States, I think we would get 10 different sheets of paper.

I think President Ahmadinejad's vision for Iran is fundamentally different than the former President Rafsanjani. As I said, the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, I would describe him as being paralyzed with mistrust. If the United States says to Iran, OK, we want to dialog with you, he will receive it as a pretext for a regime change approach. And if the United States tries to isolate and sanction you, he will also perceive it as a pretext for regime change. So somehow we have to send the signal to Khamenei that the goal of the U.S. Government is not regime change, it is behavior change. And this is very difficult to do after three decades of not having relations and not having dialog.

And despite the fact that Secretary Rice may announce this publicly, that this is about behavior change, not regime change, when we have two U.S. aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf, and 75 million set aside for democracy promotion, and hundreds of thousands of troops surrounding Iran, it is easy to see why they get conflicting signals.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. If I can interject one, you just mentioned democracy promotion. And I think that leads to an interesting part of your submitted testimony where you talked about Iran's most respected dissidents and democratic agitators have asked the U.S. Government to cease such democracy promotion efforts. Can you tell us why it is they asked for that? I am sure when Congress passed that they thought they were doing a good thing. Mr. Sadjadpour, if you could.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. I really defer to Iranian democratic activists when it comes to this issue. And I was very curious to see in particular the views of this gentleman Akbar Ganji, who is really Iran's most respected dissident leader. He was in solitary confinement for 5 years, and he wasn't able to comment, obviously, during those 5 years, and when he came out I was very curious to see what his recommendations for U.S. policy would be. And his assessment, and that has been the prevailing assessment in Tehran, is that this public fanfare about promoting democracy in Iran and setting aside of millions of dollars simply gives the Iranian regime a further pretext to clamp down on these democratic agitators and civil society activists on the pretext of protecting national security.

Now, I am not exonerating the Iranian regime's cruelty and blaming it on the Bush administration. This regime was abusing their population far before the neocons came to power in Washington. So I am not saying this is necessarily primarily as a result of Bush administration policy, but the United States—\$75 million is like \$1.25 per Iranian. The notion that we are going to change this

government with \$75 million, I think, has been seen to be ineffective and ultimately counterproductive.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. I am just going to take a moment to read the quote that you had in your report from Akbar Ganji, who is the prominent dissident, you thought.

He said: Iranians are viewed as discredited when they receive money from foreign governments. The Bush administration may be striving to help Iranian democrats, but any Iranian who seeks American dollars will not be recognized as a democrat by his or his fellow citizens. Of course, Iran's democratic movement and civil institutions need funding, but this must come from independent Iranian sources. Iranians themselves must support the transition to democracy. It cannot be presented like a gift. So here is our request to Congress, the request of dissidents I take it, to do away with any misunderstanding. We hope lawmakers will provide a bill that bans payment to individuals or groups opposing the Iranian Government. Iran's democratic movement does not need foreign hand-outs. It needs the moral support of the international community and the condemnation of the Iranian regime for its systemic violation of human rights.

Would the three of you recommend that Congress pass a bill banning payment to individuals or groups opposing the Iranian Government? Anybody?

Mr. SADJADPOUR. I don't know if I would go so far as to pass a bill banning payment. And as I said earlier, I think that actually the bulk of this \$75 million was not for civil society activists and democratic agitators. The bulk of this money was intended for Persian language media and the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Farda.

But I would just emphasize my earlier point that this Persian language media is far more objective and receives a much larger audience in Iran if it is perceived as objective news media rather than U.S. propaganda. And again, I think if you have Iran's leading dissidents simply saying that we don't want the money, it is counterproductive, it is not helpful, I don't see the logic in insisting on saying, no, you actually do need the money. We know what is better for you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. Mr. Shays.

Mr. SHAYS. I agree sometimes with my colleague from Maryland, but I don't like the analogy of Korea. Because the fact was, this administration continually is blamed for acting unilaterally. In North Korea they acted multilaterally because they wanted China and South Korea and Japan at the table, particularly China, to get them to respond. And they stuck to their guns on it. But they were always offering carrots. They were saying "but meet with us collectively." And they did.

What confuses me about Iran is you are asking—first of all, I think as a general rule you should have an Embassy in every country in the world: Cuba, North Korea, Iran. And it is not a reward. It is just you have a vehicle to do business. And I wish we would get out of the thought that somehow we reward someone by having an Embassy. If we had had an Embassy in Iraq, we would have known that their infrastructure was pathetic times 10 just being

there. And half of our Embassy, by the way, does not include State employee officials.

But what I wrestle with is if the Supreme Leader Khamenei is paranoid, he is going to be paranoid if we are aggressive, he is going to be paranoid if we are not aggressive. You can't deal with someone who is paranoid very easily in the short run. So I don't quite know what we win either way with this so-called Supreme Leader.

What I wrestle with is Europe sends its troops to Afghanistan, but only allows four of their countries to be involved in battle. You know, the tip of the spear. I have so little respect for Europe. Tell me why I need to respect them. They are dependent in large measure on Iran, and so I am stuck with the fact they are going to be under the thumb of Iran. And it seems to me the way you avoid war is you have sanctions that work. And these guys don't want the sanctions to work. If they did, they would support it universally. And then Iran would have Russia and China as their only two folks to do business with. That is kind of how I see it. So disagree or not, but comment.

Mr. KATZMAN. I believe there are more than four European countries fighting in southern Afghanistan.

Mr. SHAYS. That is not what I said. They are there, but they will not allow their troops to be involved in battle.

Mr. KATZMAN. I think, again, they have a very different threat—I don't think they don't want the sanctions to work. I think they have a different threat assessment and a different philosophy that if we move these sanctions up more slowly and conduct dialog, at the same time we can get Iran to shift its position more effectively than if we go right to the ultimate full trade ban, cutoff of all credits, official credit guarantees, etc. If we do that, in the European view, we have sort of spent all our ammunition and we have nothing to followup with. They want to be able to say to Iran, we are going to keep ratcheting up. And maybe Iran will change.

Mr. SHAYS. Just to quickly respond to that, then they have no place to do business.

Mr. KATZMAN. Well, I agree with that, but I think they just also have a different threat—I don't think the business is necessarily driving. I think it is more the philosophy of how you get Iran to change its position rather than not wanting the sanctions.

Mr. SHAYS. I hear you.

Mr. BALLEEN. Mr. Shays, I would just comment that a missing actor or link in American policy has been putting forth, as I mentioned or testified earlier, the human rights agenda and talking about human rights in the positive agenda. I think if we more forcefully as a country talked about what was happening, as we did with the former Soviet Union, we engaged them, but we put front and center their human rights violations. This is a country in Iran where there are significant human rights violations, yet it is not part of the debate. It is not—it even hasn't been mentioned until right now, when I am bringing up the issue.

So I think it is very, very important. Not only Dr. Katzman mentioned, well, we are talking about military options so we can impress the Europeans; I think we could impress the Europeans if we started talking about human rights inside Iran, too.

Mr. SHAYS. I am going to emphasize that point. I think the reason the President has talked about military is he is trying to get China and Russia to wake up. In other words, if you don't want military operations, then make sanctions work. So I don't really think he is speaking to Iran. I think he is speaking to our allies.

Mr. BALLEEN. Right. And what I would respectfully suggest is that if we also talked about, A, the positive vision of the future where Iran could be, and also the human rights violations inside Iran today, we can also speak to our allies, too.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. I would just argue somewhat in defense of the Europeans, that they have actually had a far more positive effect at improving the human rights situation in Iran than the U.S. Government has. I can tell you numerous occasions of friends of mine, or prominent intellectuals and dissidents who have been imprisoned in Tehran. Myself, I was not imprisoned, but my passport was taken away from me. I would have loved to have been able to go to the U.S. Embassy and consult with the U.S. Ambassador, but there is no U.S. Embassy there.

And so Europeans have actually been quite effective on a lot of these human rights issues within Iran. So when it comes to the saber rattling intended for Russia and China, I agree it may be intended for Russia and China, but as I said, having just come back from Moscow, my concern is that this has been counterproductive. Because what the Russian officials and Chinese officials these days are obsessing about is not that Iran is going to get a nuclear bomb, it is that the United States is going to bomb Iran.

Mr. SHAYS. Right. And that is my whole point.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. But this point is not impressed upon them.

Mr. SHAYS. No, I want to state the point, because you are the one who triggered it. The whole point is they aren't obsessed by it; they don't seem to care. But they do seem to care if we would be involved militarily. And so that is a stark choice for the Russians and Chinese to deal with. I want to go on record, the last thing I want to see is us to be involved in a military engagement in Iran. I think it would be foolish, a huge mistake. But the way you avoid it is to have sanctions that work. I just wanted to trigger this.

You triggered this. All of a sudden some are talking about how nuclear got morphed into human rights. Isn't there a danger that the Iranians say to the Europeans, we gave in to you on human rights, back off the nuclear. In other words, you got something from us, now back off. So I mean I think human rights is important, but I would put the nuclear threat above the human rights, frankly. Wouldn't you?

Mr. BALLEEN. Well, in terms of U.S. national security, I think that is correct. But I think it is also very important for dealing with not only the regime, but the people in Iran and our allies around the world. That is one of the ways we successfully dealt with the Soviet Union during the cold war, and I think it was a successful model. We live in a world now where people do matter and their opinions do matter. And that has changed since the cold war. But that was one of the ways we were successful. We shouldn't neglect that.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Mr. Van Hollen.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. I just want to respond briefly to my friend from Connecticut with my use of the North Korean anal-

ogy as a model. Because what I am suggesting is that the way we ended up dealing with North Korea at the end, while the jury is still out, clearly has been more productive than the way we were dealing with them at the beginning. I think there can be no dispute that in this administration there was a major difference of opinion as to how to approach North Korea. And John Bolton, who continues to criticize the administration to this day, and others in the administration were strongly arguing that we should not provide any sticks to North Korea because essentially—

Mr. SHAYS. Any carrots.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Excuse me, thank you; any carrots to North Korea because essentially their intent was regime change in North Korea, at the end of the day. And the administration's position evolved over many years. I am not being critical of the fact they took the Six Party approach. What I am suggesting in fact is that model of engaging may be useful in Iran, where they have now taken the position that they refuse to talk to Iran about the big issues. We have had some efforts with respect to Iraq and conversations, but looking at what at least has tentatively been successful in North Korea at the end of the day may provide a useful model.

And I do think it is important, because while Secretary Rice seems to have won the day in the end with respect to North Korea, clearly the much more hardline position within the administration with respect to any kind of conversation or dialog with Iran has continued to dominate and win out.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. I am going to take the prerogative of the Chair and make a comment, ask a question, and close with some comments. I appreciate everybody's participation.

First comment is that, you know, I think we all respect our European allies, and hopefully are taking into consideration their thoughts and concerns as we move forward, as well as their recommendations. For all of this saber rattling, I have not seen Russia or China actually take any positive steps toward sanctions. I am not sure that has worked very well. So while we intend to get their attention, they may be moving in the opposite direction. They may be becoming more obstinate and having an adverse reaction to it.

The question I have is how much of the difference between the threat assessment that the Europeans and Russia and China may have and that of the United States is dependent on somebody's perception of what the threat of Iran is to Israel? Am I making myself clear on that? Does anybody care to answer that or respond? Doctor.

Mr. KATZMAN. I think it is crucial. I think it is very important. You know, none of those countries are front and center trying to broker an Arab-Israeli peace. None of them are close allies of Israel, as we are. And I think it is vitally important; that accounts for a lot of the difference.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Sadjadpour, you mentioned something I thought. What is the history with Iran originally? During the Shah regime, didn't they have normal relations? And how did we get to the point where we listen to Ahmadinejad make these outrageous statements? And what support is there for his outrageous statements?

Mr. SADJADPOUR. During the Shah's time there was essentially a lot of ties between Iran and Israel. There was a de facto—I call it a de facto Israeli Embassy in Tehran. It was known as kind of an Israeli consulate, but it was essentially operating like an Embassy. And part of the resentment that this current crop of leadership have in Tehran, apart from their ideological opposition to Israel as a usurper of Muslim lands, but part of the enmity which they have toward Israel, I would argue, is this—their experiences during the time of the Shah. Many of them, the current leadership, including the Supreme Leader and former President Hashemi Rafsanjani, were in prison during the time of the Shah and claim to have been tortured by the Shah's secret police, Savak, which was allegedly trained by Israeli intelligence, Mossad. So I think that is one of the roots of their enmity.

But I think it is also quite ideological. Many of them cut their teeth as revolutionaries on the Palestinian cause dating back to the 1960's.

Now, getting back to Ahmadinejad's rhetoric and the Holocaust and denying Israel, etc., this doesn't make much sense in the domestic Iranian context, because Iranians are not Arabs. The Palestinian issue doesn't resonate among Iran as it does among Arabs. There is not land or border disputes with Israel. There is a long history of tolerance vis-a-vis the Jewish people in Iran. There are still 25,000 Jews living in Iran, the largest Jewish community in the Middle East outside of Israel.

Why Ahmadinejad is taking this approach I think is much more for the broader Arab and Muslim street; and what has been, since the inception of the 1979 revolution, Iran has always aspired to be the vanguard of the Arab and Muslim world. And this type of rhetoric sits very well in Arab and Muslim streets. And this is why we see a lot of the Arab street right now supporting Iran's positions, because they are quite sympathetic to the fact that the Iranian Government stands up to Israel and stands up to the United States.

Mr. TIERNEY. If there was a preemptive bombing in Iran, or significant preemptive bombings in Iran by Israel or the United States, or some perception they were working in unison for that to happen, how would that change the attitudes of Iranians?

Mr. SADJADPOUR. Well, even the word "preemptive" I think is somewhat misleading because it implies that Iran is set to bomb the United States, and therefore we have to take preemptive action. But I think—

Mr. TIERNEY. I guess by this administration's theory they are preempting the nuclear outflow all the way back to knowledge.

Mr. SADJADPOUR. In my mind, there is a lot of time for diplomacy. When it comes to Iran, we are dealing in shades of gray, and it is a very complex issue. But when it comes to the prospect of bombing Iran, I think unequivocally it is a bad idea. I don't think of any potential redeeming qualities. And not only within Iran internally, but also on these broader range of issues which I mentioned: the future of Iraq, nuclear proliferation, energy security, Afghanistan, Arab-Israeli peace and terrorism; it is going to exacerbate all these issues by bombing Iran.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. I want to thank all of the witnesses here today, as well as my colleagues here for what I think was a very informing conversation. It is important we understand the Iranian public's opinion and attitudes for our own long-term national interests in the region.

We have many economic and security issues. I think Mr. Sadjadpour just summed them up: Israel, Afghanistan, energy needs, nonproliferation, terrorism. All of those, it is important that we, in my opinion at least, start engaging with the Iranians. And hopefully, that engagement is going to be important, going forward much longer than any lasting arguments between the Bush administration and Ahmadinejad. And I think we have to reach out and do that.

You helped us understand the complicated situation. Hopefully, our further hearings on this matter will give us more depth on that. So thank you very, very much for your testimony and your time here this morning.

Mr. Shays I think would also like to add his appreciation.

Mr. SHAYS. First, I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having this hearing on Iran. I think it is very important. I am looking forward to the others. And I frankly learn more from the outside experts sometimes than I do from our own government officials, because you all spend a heck of a long time thinking about this issue, but you also have I think a sense of freedom that sometimes others may not have. So a very, very interesting session, and thank you. And thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. This hearing is adjourned. [Whereupon, at 1:01 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

