

NEWS ON IRAN

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Over 200 US Lawmakers Stress Support for National Council of Resistance Led by Massoud Rajavi

Text of the letter by U.S. Representatives to President Clinton

Over the past 16 years, tens of thousands of people have been executed in Iran for political reasons, and an even greater number have been arrested and tortured.

After the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, the West tried to strengthen the "moderate" factions within Iran so as to promote respect for international norms. This policy has failed. Severe human rights violations continue, and any form of political dissent is forbidden. Women receive harsh treatment, by such means as whipping and stoning to death, and are considered sub-human. Persecution of religious minorities has worsened, and in 1994, three Christian leaders were murdered.

Under the rule of Rafsanjani, Iranian involvement in international terrorism has grown. His regime has provided a vehicle which has encouraged the fervent spread of fundamentalism through the exploitation of Islam. Opponents of the establishment have even been assassinated abroad, and foreign nationals are not immune to this violence. The death sentence for Salman Rushdie has been reaffirmed, and there are no signs that it will be lifted.

The Tehran regime has become the primary obstacle to the Middle-East peace process, and is actively trying to sabotage the progress. Iran is also engaged in massive research and network campaign to produce and acquire nuclear weapons. Long-range missile production and procurement are another priority in Tehran's military program. The mullahs' Scud-B missile attack on an opposition National Liberation Army has demonstrated that the current regime is capable not only of violating both international and UN regulations, but of utilizing weapons of mass destruction without hesitation. Unfortunately, the funds for this unbridled terrorism and arms acquisition are being supplied by Western nations, whose extensive economic trade with Iran surpassed twenty billion dollars annually. The U.S. alone executed \$5 billion in trade with Iran in 1994.

The regime has been engaged in an unprecedented economic crisis. Rafsanjani's plans for the country's economic recovery have failed. Iran's bureaucracy is riddled with corruption and protest demonstrations have begun to erupt in Tehran, Qazvin, and other cities throughout Iran.

Despite the atmosphere of repression, there has been widespread support for the National Council of Resistance of Iran, a coalition of democratic forces fighting against the Tehran regime. The Council has democratically elected a capable leader, a Muslim woman, and has turned to the People's Mojahedin as a possible answer to the phenomena of Islamic fundamentalism.

Based on continued human rights violations, the violent displays of terrorist activities, and the regime's relentless oppression of non-conformists, we believe that the United States should reevaluate its foreign policy towards Iran. As a global leader, the U.S. must support the Iranian people's cry for democracy with great enthusiasm. The National Council of Resistance of Iran, led by Mr. Massoud Rajavi, will contribute to the realization of political pluralism and democracy in Iran.

We are convinced that the policy of appeasing the Iranian regime, under any pretext, is counter-productive. The time has come for a practical policy that encompasses military, economic, political and diplomatic sanctions. We welcome the recent measures in Congress to impose serious sanctions on Iran, however we also believe that the United States must take a leading role in initiating such sanctions within the international community as well. We feel confident that you will continue to be a leader on this issue.

News from Congressman James Traficant, June 8, 1995: US Rep. James A. Traficant, Jr. (D-OH) today called on the US State Department to recognize and support Iranian pro-democracy groups, including the National Council of Resistance (NCR) of Iran. "It's not enough for the State Department to condemn the ongoing human rights abuses of the oppressive Iranian government," noted Traficant at a Capitol Hill press conference held earlier today. "It's time for the State Department to get off their keisters and support the Resistance. Change in Iran will only come from within, and the State Department should support groups like the NCR who can bring democratic change to Iran."

"Those struggling for democracy inside and outside of Iran need to know that the United States stands firmly behind them," continued Traficant. "I applaud the NCR for their untiring efforts to unite all Iranians - both in Iran and abroad - in a single effort to bring freedom to Iran." Traficant was joined at the press conference by US Reps.

Dan Burton (R-IN), Gary Ackerman (D-NY), Robert Torricelli (D-NJ) and Robert Ney (R-OH). The members held the press conference to highlight a letter they and more than 200 other members of Congress have co-signed to President Clinton urging that the United States adopt a comprehensive policy towards Iran - in that combines sanctions and condemnation with strong support for all pro-democracy groups, including the NCR.

In his comments at the press conference Traficant highlighted the key role played by Maryam Rajavi, who was elected in 1993 by the NCR's parliament-in-exile as the future president of a democratic Iran. "The fact that the head of the NCR is a woman speaks volumes about the NCR and the nature of their democratic movement," noted Traficant.

"I strongly support the NCR and other groups for the heroic efforts they are making to bring peace and democracy to Iran, as well as an end to human rights

abuses in that troubled country," said Traficant. "I share their hope that Iran may one day become a free and democratic nation, a country in which individual and human rights will be both protected and tolerated," asserted Traficant, a member of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

Secretariat of the National Council of Resistance of Iran - Paris, June 9, 1995: In a press conference at the US Congress on June 8, representatives Dan Burton (R-IN), Robert Torricelli (D-NJ), Gary Ackerman (D-NY), Bob Ney (R-OH) and James Traficant (D-OH) stressed the need to adopt a comprehensive policy to oust the dictatorship ruling Iran, including imposition of coordinated international sanctions against the mullahs and support for the National Council of Resistance of Iran.

In his opening remarks, Congressman Burton said: "The decade-long search for 'moderates' in the Iranian regime has not borne out. We call on the administration to hold a sincere dialogue with the National Council of Resistance of Iran, the democratic opposition in that country. The NCR and its constituent groups, including the Mojahedin, have been carrying out a valiant struggle for freedom against the mullahs. They certainly deserve our strongest encouragement."

Representative Torricelli added: "In the first instance, our letter is a simple request, for President Clinton to begin the recognition of the need for a new United States policy. Second, it is a statement of policy, that the People's Mojahedin in particular and the National Council of Resistance generally needs to be a central element of that policy. The National Council of Resistance is an opportunity that the United States has not taken... We will not change the policy of the Iranian government without the active support of an alternative. It is not necessary that we endorse everything that the National Council of Resistance has ever done, or everything it represents. It is only necessary that we recognize it as an alternative to apply pressure on the Tehran government."

Congressman Traficant stressed: "Those struggling for democracy inside and outside of Iran need to know that the United States stands firmly behind them. I applaud the NCR for their untiring efforts to unite all Iranians to bring freedom to Iran... The fact that the head of the NCR is a woman speaks volumes about the NCR and the nature of their democratic movement."

Congressman Ackerman noted: "For the last 14 years, the NCR and others have provided a tangible hope for the people. A coalition of several groups, the NCR has declared its commitment to the democratic principles, including free and fair elections, a pluralistic government, and equal status in society for women. In fact, the newly elected President of the NCR happens to be a woman... There is no doubt that the NCR and others can help take Iran out of the Dark Ages and back into the fold of the international community as a positive participant."

Representative Ney said: "I want to add my support of the Resistance... Yes, the United States must use all pressure that it can muster in order to make again a way of life for the people of Iran to have freedom, and to

pursue their life... I support the Resistance, and we can't listen to the propaganda that is brought forth. The Resistance is the way, is the group to work with to bring about freedom."

Among the signatories, there are 7 Committee chairmen and chairwomen, 7 ranking Committee members, and 33 Subcommittee chairmen and chairwomen. A significant number of members from the Committee on International Relations are among the signatories as well.

It is worth recalling that previously 317 members of the Italian Parliament (the majority) and 185 members of the Swedish Parliament (also a majority) signed similar statements calling for the adoption of a firm stance against Khomeini's anti-human regime and support for the NCR and its President-elect, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi.

US Representatives call for firmer policy on Iran

AFP, June 8, 1995: Nearly half of the Democratic and Republican representatives called on the Clinton administration to harden US policy toward Iran and to draw the international community to this ideal and conduct dialogue with the Mojahedin Khalq...

Democratic Representative, Robert Torricelli (NJ) expressed confidence in a press conference that "only an international and comprehensive embargo can influence a political change in Tehran." He said that Bill Clinton "must take the initiative in convincing France, Germany, Britain and Italy that it is in the interest of all of us that the illegitimate regime in Iran be ended..."

Furthermore, the representatives deplored the role of Western countries who by keeping their trade ties with Iran, which surpasses \$20 billion annually, help fund "unbridled terrorism" and "arms acquisition." They expressed regret that the U.S. alone executed \$5 billion in trade with Iran in 1994.

Voice of America, June 9, 1995: Congressman Dan Burton says Iran is the biggest threat to US security interests in the world today. Iran continues to brutally repress its own people, subvert its neighbors and other countries in the region, export Islamic terrorism and fundamentalism, actively work against the Mid East peace process, stockpile weapons of mass destruction, including the attempt to build a nuclear capability. We call on the administration to hold a sincere dialogue with the National Council of Resistance of Iran, the democratic opposition in that country.

Representative Burton said more than two hundred members of Congress have signed a letter to the President asking for cooperation with the N.C.R., or as they are more generally known, the Mojahedin... Nevertheless, [Representative Robert Torricelli] complained that the US State Department still rejects the National Council:

I think there's been a triumph of hope over reality in the State Department with regard to Iran -- the belief that somehow the government would reform itself, and that we could avoid dealing with opposition groups in the belief that the government will collapse from within. The problem is time. By associating ourselves with those who

are prepared to sacrifice, work and fight to end the Tehran government, we can prevent another generation, another ten years from being lost and end the Tehran government sooner rather than later. That's our difference in strategy.

**Tehran Condemns Anti-Iranian Initiative by
Members of Congress**

AFP, June 11, 1995, Tehran: The Iranian speaker of parliament, Ali-Akbar Nateq Noori, described the Sunday call by members of the US Congress for a stronger policy against Iran as a "terrorist act."

The speaker of parliament, calling the People's Mojahedin Organization a "terrorist group," said, "This request is like a terrorist act directed at us."