

# USADI Dispatch

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## USADI Commentary

### Crushing the "Outpost of Tyranny" from Within

During her Senate confirmation hearings, Secretary of State-designate Condoleezza Rice expressed her views about Iran's ruling mullahs, appropriately calling Iran one of the "outposts of tyranny" in the world. Her comments were a welcome sign that a sound and effectual Iran policy may be emerging in the coming months.

Responding to questions from two Senators known for their pro-appeasement views on policy toward Tehran, Dr. Rice flatly rejected the inaccurate comparison between Iran under theocratic rule of the clerics and the Chinese government of 1972. She repeatedly emphasized that there were no "common ground" with the regime in Iran.

"This is just a regime that has a really very different view of the Middle East and where the world is going than we do" including an "appalling" human rights record, Dr. Rice said.

No doubt, Iran is going to be the main foreign policy topic in Washington in the months ahead. But as the new foreign policy team begins its work on Iran, there is an urgent need for fresh views. So far, most of the analysis has come from the old schools of foreign policy with a heavy dosage of "realist" policy suggestions.

It is time to have a deeper appreciation that the twin menace of the international terrorism and nuclear proliferation, embodied in expansionist worldview of Iran's Islamic fundamentalists, has introduced a new set of geo-strategic equations quite different from those of the Cold War era.

National security considerations can no longer be a justification for ignoring and dismissing indigenous movements seeking freedom. In fact, it can be argued that experience of Iran in the past several decades shows how the Cold War calculus paved the way for the emergence of a religious tyranny by ignoring the crackdown on democratic forces there.

Still, some foreign policy establishments such as the Council of Foreign Relations have justified flirtation with Iran's terror-sponsoring tyrants under the pretext of "selective engagement" with "authoritative interlocutors" who are "solidly entrenched".

Solidly entrenched?

The ruling mullahs have been bestowed this description by the CFR neither because they are running a popular government nor because they have created a sound economy and an open social, political environment.

Indeed, according to CFR's report last summer, "Iran's theocratic system is deeply unpopular with its citizenry... across a wide spectrum of age, class, and ethnic and religious backgrounds." "Iran's public has become intensely disillusioned" with the status quo. The report also stated that "Iran's economic woes pose direct, daily hardships for its population, whose income measured on a per capita basis has fallen by approximately one third since the revolution."

The Islamic Republic seems to be "solidly entrenched" due to its immense capacity to suppress political dissent. The CFR report says Iran rulers "have repeatedly demonstrated their willingness to preserve the regime by crushing anti-regime protests and imprisoning or even killing their political opponents."

This assessment would hardly make the ruling regime "solidly entrenched". After all, how "entrenched" is a regime, which rules through a reign of terror? One cannot help but recall President Carter's depiction of the Shah's regime as "an island of stability" only a few months before the unraveling of the monarchic rule began.

If anything, these facts make a compelling case that this regime is vulnerable in the face of a popular uprising if its capacity to crush anti-regime protests could be undercut. Considering the limits of a military strike, the more viable and prudent approach seems to be relying on indigenous forces seeking freedom and popular sovereignty through regime change.

Rather than promoting dialogue with Iran's loathed "authoritative interlocutors", we must reach out to the anti-fundamentalist Iranian democratic opposition groups. A meaningful first step would be to end the terrorist designation of Iran's main opposition group, the People's Mujahedeen, which has significant organizational discipline and capability as an actor of change and is singularly dedicated to unseating Tehran's tyrants.

There is a great chance to crush this "outpost of tyranny" from within. It should not be squandered.

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The US Alliance for Democratic Iran (USADI), is an independent, non-profit organization, which aims to advance a US policy on Iran that will benefit America's interests, through supporting Iranian people's aspirations for a democratic, secular, and peaceful government, free of tyranny, fundamentalism, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism. The USADI is not affiliated with any government agencies, political groups or parties.

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## Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

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### Bush Starts Second Term Focused on Iraq, Iran, and 'Promoting Freedom'

Prague, 20 January 2005 (RFE/RL) -- Bush's foreign policy priorities for his second term include Iraq, Iran and promoting democracy around the world. National security adviser Condoleezza Rice, set to become secretary of state, explained the administration's perspective on 18 January when she appeared before a Senate panel.

"America and the free world are once again engaged in a long-term struggle against an ideology of hatred and tyranny and terror and hopelessness," Rice said. "And we must confront these challenges with the same vision and the same courage and the same boldness that dominated our [post-World War II] period."

Reuel Gerecht is a former Middle East specialist with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). As director of the Washington-based think tank Project for a New American Century, he helped develop the argument for going to war in Iraq. Gerecht, now with the American Enterprise Institute, said he believes Rice's words point to an ongoing shift in U.S. foreign policy that will only accelerate in the second Bush administration.

That change, he said, involves a new push for democracy around the world -- particularly in the Middle East. Earlier American support for dictators there is now seen as having helped spawn disaffection and radical Islam -- and so contributed to the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001.

Will Washington stick to diplomacy and dollars to prod autocratic societies to open up not only in the Middle East, but also the former Soviet Union? Or will it again see force as a possible tool for change?

"If you compare that to previous American administrations which largely were unconcerned about the relationship between dictatorship, autocracy, and Islamic extremism, then the answer is clear: I think there has been a fundamental shift in American foreign policy and they [the Bush administration] will continue to move down that path," Gerecht said. But how?

"I would say that you will start to see more people in the administration begin to think about -- reluctantly begin to think about -- a preemptive military strike because the diplomatic avenues, particularly the European effort, has so far shown so little promise," Gerecht said. But not all conservatives see it that way.

Raymond Tanter is an Iran expert who served in the National Security Council for former President Ronald Reagan. He said some in the administration argued for a policy of long-term "regime change" in Iran that supported the political opposition while avoiding for now any military action:

"They will first take the main Iranian opposition group, the Mujahedin e-Khalq, off the State Department foreign-terrorist-organizations list and return the weapons to that group -- that group is now lodged in Iraq -- and start putting pressure through the Iranian opposition on the regime in Tehran so that Tehran cannot simply be on the offensive with respect to its nuclear weapons program and its state sponsorship of international terrorism." Tanter said...

## The Wall Street Journal (Editorial)

January 17, 2005

### No Sticks, No Carrots

Where the European Union's revived trade talks with Iran will lead is anyone's guess. What's more certain is that the process shouldn't inspire confidence in the union's ability to defuse international crises. Negotiations resumed last week, 18 months after the EU broke off earlier talks and two months after Britain, France and Germany struck a bargain in which Tehran agreed to suspend its uranium enrichment activities while the two parties discussed a new trade accord. The deal by the so-called EU-3 was hailed by multilateralists worried the U.S. and possibly Israel would take military action to keep the mullahs from developing nuclear weapons.

All the back-slapping -- if not the trade talks themselves -- should have ended Wednesday when Hasan Rowhani, Tehran's top nuclear negotiator, said, "Suspension of enrichment is for a limited period to win the confidence of the international community." In other words, as soon as Tehran has secured more-favorable trade terms, it sees no reason to continue with its cooperative charade. Tehran has made no bones about its nuclear intentions in the past, but this might have been its most brazen avowal yet.

The negotiations, of course, went on -- not least because the EU has gone to great lengths to explain that the trade talks are not linked to developments in the nuclear deal. If the EU-3 become dissatisfied with progress on the uranium-enrichment front, they'll have to petition the entire bloc to have the trade talks halted...

We're no fans of economic sanctions for reasons both philosophical and pragmatic. But neither do we favor trade concessions to rogue states that promote terrorism and have nuclear ambitions. Whatever Europe thinks it is doing, we can only guess. But whatever it is, the problem of Iran is coming no closer to a solution. And it is important for everyone to know that the penalty for failure could be very high, a nuclear-armed radical regime making big trouble for both Europe and the U.S.