

# THE IRAN CRISIS: A TRANS-ATLANTIC RESPONSE

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## HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

JUNE 9, 2005

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## THE IRAN CRISIS: A TRANS-ATLANTIC RESPONSE

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JUNE 9, 2005

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
WASHINGTON, DC

The hearing was held at 1:30 p.m. in room 192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, presiding.

*Commissioners present:* Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman; Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Co-Chairman; Robert B. Aderholt, Commissioner; and Mike McIntyre, Commissioner.

*Panalists present:* Jeff Gedmin, Director, Aspen Institute Berlin; Tom Melia, Deputy Executive Director, Freedom House; Goli Ameri, Co-Founder, Iran Democracy Project, Hoover Institution; Karim Lahidji, Vice-President, International Federation of Human Rights; and Manda Ervin, Founder, Alliance of Iranian Women.

### HON. SAM BROWNBACK, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. BROWNBACK. The hearing is called to order. Thank you all for joining us today for this Helsinki Commission hearing regarding the Iranian crisis and the trans-Atlantic response.

I hold up in front of you today's Los Angeles Times, the front-page, "Iran Preparing for Advanced Nuclear Work, Officials Say," though today's hearing is not about nuclear work in Iran. Iran indeed presents a crisis for the United States and for the trans-Atlantic community. Today we're going to examine the trans-Atlantic response to that crisis.

I want to welcome everybody to this Helsinki Commission hearing on human rights in Iran, the first in a series of hearings we'll be holding about rogue regimes in the world and implications for the OSCE region. Indeed, Iran directly borders several OSCE participating States, and events in that large country have a direct bearing on the broader Middle East and beyond.

While many are rightly focused on the security threat posed by Iran, as I noted in today's paper, our focus today will be on the deteriorating human rights climate under Tehran's tyrannical regime. I am particularly mindful of the hardship faced by individuals living under authoritarian regimes or dictatorships.

Across the border, Iran's human rights record is dismal and getting worse. The Iranian regime employs all of the levers of power to crush dissent, resorting in every form of persecution, even so far as execution. No effort is spared to silence opposition.

Virtually every fundamental freedom is trampled by the tyrants in Tehran. In the absence of any meaningful accountability, the Government of Iran's dismal human rights record has actually worsened, according to the State Department's latest Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. Severe restrictions are placed on freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion.

With respect to religion, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has concluded that, quote, "The government of Iran engages in or tolerates systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, including prolonged detention and executions based primarily or entirely upon the religion of the accused."

Accordingly, the State Department has designated Iran of a country of particular concern. Each year since 1999, under the International Religious Freedom Act, they have received that designation. The country's security and intelligence services are pervasive, while the apparatus of political control has increasingly sought to remove any remnant of reform. As a result, a small circle of clerics, headed by the supreme leader, maintains a virtual monopoly of power in Iran.

In the face of this formidable regime, courageous individuals and groups do seek change, often at great personal risk. I recall the students gunned down during the course of the demonstrations of July 1999. Hopes that even modest political changes could be won by so-called moderates have proven illusory. Against this backdrop, I'll be interested in the views of the witnesses on the upcoming Presidential elections scheduled for June 17th.

"Freedom denied" sums up the regime's approach to fundamental human rights across the board. And the tyrants in Tehran time and time again have shown a zeal for crushing outbreaks of free thought. Having come down hard on vestiges of independent media, the regime has pursued those who sought refuge on the Internet as a domain for democratic discussion.

I strongly believe that the people of Iran want change. There is a young and vibrant base—there is a young and vibrant base that, with the support of the international community, could promote major change in Iran and in the region. We were able to secure last year a small amount of funding for dissidents inside and outside of Iran for the purposes of promoting democracy and human rights.

We must do more to support the Iranian people and the civil society building within that country. I believe that a concerted approach by the United States and Europe could be effective and sustainable.

As news reports have indicated, the United States and the Europeans have worked together in recent months on the growing threat of Iran's nuclear ambitions. France, Great Britain, and Germany have urged Tehran to abandon their development of nuclear technologies in return for backing Iran's bid to enter the World Trade Organization. As a result, the United States has expressed optimism at Europe's promise to refer Iran to United Nations' Security Council should Tehran fail to comply with the agreement.

As Chairman, I would also point out that there is considerable cooperation between the United States and our European allies when it comes to human rights in Iran, at least there is on paper.

Over the years, there have been numerous jointly sponsored U.S.-EU resolutions on the subject at the U.N. Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva. This year, there was not.

Recently, the Bush administration initiated a human rights working group to discuss these issues with our European allies. I would appreciate the analysis of today's witnesses on the real state of play in efforts to partner with Europeans to address in word and in deed the egregious human rights situation in Iran.

This is a topic that I've worked on for a number of years. When I was on the Foreign Relations Committee, and when I chaired the Middle East Subcommittee, now on the Appropriations Committee, and chairing the Helsinki Commission, is the issue of Iran, and human rights, and the rights—and the need to build democracy in a free society inside such a great country where the people want democracy, the people want human rights, and the government denies them.

I think it's particularly important that we emphasize the human rights issues here and the democracy issues. There are a number of people emphasizing security issues, but we need to press on the issue of the fundamental human rights of the Iranian people.

Today's panelists include—and we have an excellent panel. Several have traveled a great distance to be here, and I'm very appreciative of your willingness to travel and to give us your time, information, and insights.

Today's panelists include Dr. Jeff Gedmin. He is the director of the Aspen Institute in Berlin, an independent nonprofit and non-partisan organization for international affairs and trans-Atlantic relations. Over the last 2 years, the Aspen Institute Berlin—I said “in Berlin,” but I meant Aspen Institute Berlin—has held roundtables, conferences, and discussions on a trans-Atlantic approach to dealing with human rights and democracy in Iran, most recently holding a conference this May in Amman, Jordan, on the upcoming Iranian elections.

We also have Mr. Tom Melia, the deputy executive director of Freedom House, a nonprofit and non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting freedom and democracy around the world, with specific expertise in young democracies and civil society development.

Ms. Goli Ameri is the co-founder of the Iran Democracy Project at the Hoover Institute and served as a U.S. public delegate to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva this year. Ms. Ameri was born in Tehran. She had considerable experience in promoting democracy through multilateral means and has sought to encourage the Iranian dissidents in Iran as well as in communities in the United States and Europe.

Dr. Karim Lahidji has been an Iranian human rights activist since 1958. During the 1970s, Dr. Lahidji established the Association of Iranian Experts in Law to promote the protection of human rights, especially for political prisoners.

After fleeing Iran in 1979, Dr. Lahidji established the League for the Defense of Human Rights in Iran, in Paris, and later joined the European-based International Federation for Human Rights as vice-president. He has worked for the French Foreign Ministry as a legal specialist in asylum cases. And a note, that Mr. Buquette

(ph) from the State Department will be translating today for him. I thank you for that willingness to translate.

Finally, an old friend of mine, Ms. Manda Zand Ervin, will be testifying. She's founder of the Alliance of Iranian Women, has been a long-time human rights advocate around Capitol Hill and specifically holds conferences and briefings on the plight of women and children under the Iranian regime. In fact, she held such an event just yesterday. Manda will share on the current pre-election climate and everyday trials for the people of Iran.

As stated at the outset, I'm delighted to have each of you present here today. We will run a time clock, as an informal note to you. It's on a 7-minute time scale. If you need some more time than that, please feel free to take it.

Your written testimony will be entered into the record. And you're free to summarize, if you would like to, and to present how you would see and choose to go forward.

With that, I am delighted to have each of you present here today. And if you—I must serve some special needs. We'll just go down the order that I introduced people by.

So Dr. Gedmin, we had started with you. And I'll hear your testimony first, unless there's any additional needs that the witnesses have.

Dr. Gedmin?

**JEFF GEDMIN, DIRECTOR, ASPEN INSTITUTE BERLIN**

Mr. GEDMIN. Senator, thank you very much. It's a pleasure and honor being here, including for the reason that you have been so committed to this issue, and your leadership has been so important.

In doing a little homework to prepare my statement before you, I sent an e-mail a couple days ago to an acquaintance of mine who works at a fairly senior level in the European Union. And I asked him for their side—what the European Union was doing now at this moment to promote democracy and human rights inside Iran.

He sent me an e-mail back. And in sum, it had three points. First, he said, "Jeff, as you know, the priority, of course, is the nuclear issue. Second, as you know, there's very little activity, in fact, from the EU side because the regime wouldn't permit it." And third, he said, "Probably equally so on the U.S. side because if the United States got too involved, of course, it would be the kiss of death for some of these groups."

Now, I've been living in Europe for 3 years so it didn't shock me. But nevertheless, it's not very heartening. And you have to think we've been here before. I mean, if you summarize that in short-hand, it means, "We like democracy and human rights but we have other priorities. We can't get too confrontational; the regime won't approve. And by the way, it's pretty hard to do because the regime won't approve."

And it seems to me, Senator, that we have broadly agreed, at least in the United States, that our conversation on foreign policy since September 11th has changed. It's changed in our thinking about democracy, not only for the moral reasons, but because, as the President and others have said, the old realism, the old sta-



bility sort of policies didn't keep us safe, either. They weren't fully moral, and they didn't keep us safe.

Now, I was encouraged by the testimony given by Nick Burns, the Undersecretary of State who came to the Senate Foreign Committee in May to report that the administration was taking, in part because of leadership by you and others on the Hill, taking a more serious look at a more active approach to democracy and human rights in Iran.

But if you look at it on balance, and I don't have to tell you or the others sitting at this table, it's pretty modest, to put it mildly. It seems to me, in particular if we're talking about promoting democracy in the greater Middle East, that Iran is a very striking example, an odd example, where we're not terribly assertive or not terribly imaginative or bold.

Because as you said, Senator, in your opening statement, it's a big population. It's a young population. It is location, location, location. It also the nexus of everything we talk about, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and brutal treatment of their own people.

And at the end of the day, it seems to me that there are two very important reasons—and I'll say something briefly about both—about why the security approach has to be wedded to the human rights and democracy approach.

The first, I'd simply say [inaudible] the moral case. You've said it, you've reported on it, you've described it, you've spoken eloquently on it in the past, the criminal treatment of the Iranian people. And as you said, it's not getting better. It's getting worse.

We've talked about an Iranian Gorbachev at least since the late 1990s, and it hasn't happened. And it's not happening, not in any foreseeable future, and not through the June 17th election.

First of all, the moral case, I'll let others speak to that. I think they're better qualified. And you've already spoken to that.

The second, however, it seems to me, is the strategic case. And I think we neglected, if I may say. That is to say to my EU friend and friends in this administration who would say to me, "We have to concentrate on the nuclear issue. It's paramount."

Well, I think there's a flaw to that, when we concentrate on that Aspects to the exclusion of democracy. And here's why. Look at the interviews every time Secretary of State Rice, President Bush, Vice President Cheney, the question always comes, "If we can't succeed in halting the Iranian nuclear program through negotiations, what is Plan B?" And Plan B is a codeword for "Will we use military?"

Well, I don't know anything about that. But people who do know something about it tell me that it's going to be hard, if at all possible. No one's contemplating a land invasion. No one's contemplating occupation. And someone somewhere may be contemplating strikes, but as we all know, the material is so diffuse and so well-buried that it's probably implausible at best.

So if you ask me, Senator, when people say, "What is Plan B, if negotiations fail to stop or curb the appetite of the Mullahs for the bomb?" I reply by saying, "Plan B should be a second Plan A. It should be a parallel Plan A."

And that is, while we negotiate—and we hope that it will bear some fruit. I'm doubtful, frankly. But we hope for that, and we fol-

low our European lead, as you suggested we might. We do everything we can to integrate in the dialogue with the Europeans and with the regime itself a plan to promote democracy. That means speaking the truth and helping the democrats, above all.

Why is that? Well, it seems to me the following. There are people who argue that, for a variety of reasons, even a democratic Iran will want the bomb. And I can't judge that. That may be so. I'm just not certain.

But it seems to me, at a minimum, that at the moment that there's a democratic Iran, beyond the obvious moral triumph for the people of Iran, above all, three things happen: No. 1, it's going to be easier to convince that decent, accountable government not to want or need the bomb; No. 2, that decent, accountable government is going to be far, far less likely to lie, and conceal, and cheat, as this regime has done.

And if we got to that moment, that this democratic and decent, accountable government wanted the bomb, acquired the bomb, it's going to be a completely different conversation and a far better conversation to see a nuclear Iran under the control of a democratic government rather than the bomb in the hands of the Mullahs.

To put it in a different sort of way, this was the argument we had during the cold war, right? We always said, "It's not the weapons that pose the primary threat. It's the people who control the weapons." And that made the difference between the Soviet Union and, in our most acrimonious disputes, democratic France, for example.

I'll close with the following. You alluded to this, Senator. We, for our small part, have been doing a number of meetings in the United States and in Europe, the Aspen Institute Berlin, bringing together people from parliaments, governments, Iranians, journalists, editorial writers, to talk about how we wed the democratic agenda with the security agenda, and spotlight focus, and do more practical steps to help the people of Iran bring about democracy in their country.

In the meeting we just held in Amman 2 weeks ago, two things struck me. First of all, that the obstacles are rather apparent and well-known. They're partly bureaucratic. On the European side, commercial interests play a significant role, to put it mildly. But it struck me second that the arguments—not only the moral arguments, but the strategic arguments—are all on your side and our side.

So for our small part—and I'm very eager to hear what the others have to say—we're planning more meetings to bring practitioners, and operational people, and thinkers, and editorial writers together. We planned a meeting in London later this summer. We planned a meeting in Los Angeles later this summer. We would be very eager to have your advice, your guidance, guidance of your staff and participation, including of those on the panel.

So that's my opening statement. Thank you very much.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Thank you very much. Definitely appreciate that, and I look forward to questions.

Tom?

**TOM MELIA, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
FREEDOM HOUSE**

Mr. MELIA. Thank you, Senator, for the invitation for Freedom House to participate in the hearing today. This is a great opportunity for us to join in this deliberation.

I come to you not as an expert on Iran—you have a number of them in the room—but as someone who brings a comparative perspective to how democratic change happens, how it has happened, and is happening around the world. Freedom House, of course, is engaged on many fronts around the world, both supporting human rights defenders, and journalists, and civic activists, as well as doing a wide range of analysis of publications on these issues, including on Iran, which we cover in our annual survey of freedom, “Freedom in the World.”

I’ve just returned from a meeting in Brussels, 10 days ago, I guess, of the Trans-Atlantic Democracy Network. This is about a year old, an effort launched by some NGO’s, including Freedom House and the National Endowment for Democracy, to broker a conversation between Europeans and Americans about how we can work together to promote democracy more widely in the world.

And this was the first face-to-face meeting. And we brought together about 100 people from both sides of the Atlantic in government and in the NGO world, in the activist communities, and also a few activists from the Middle East and from far Eastern Europe.

We focused principally, in this meeting, on Belarus and Egypt, but it was really a broader conversation. Iran came up more than once in these discussions.

And what I can report to you from this deliberation over 2 days by senior officials on both sides of the Atlantic. Undersecretary of State Nick Burns was a very active participant in our meeting, along with others from the State Department and other parts of the U.S. Government. Their counterparts on the EU side, very senior officials in the European Union’s nascent foreign affairs department also took part in the discussion.

I can report that the frayed relations that complicate our dealings on some fronts are mending on the democracy-promotion front. There is a growing consensus, and I think a common language, about the need to work together in addressing the democratic challenges of these neighborhoods to the east and south of Europe.

The Europeans want to work with us. In fact, our conference was supported financially by the European Union Mission, here in Washington, which saw the need to broker this kind of a dialogue between government officials and NGO activists on both sides of the Atlantic.

So I think there is cooperation emerging, but as we get into talking about Europeans, and about the European Union, of course, there’s more than one European perspective, perhaps even more different perspectives in Europe than there are American perspectives on how to advance the cause of democracy.

And it was notable in this meeting that there are clear differences between the more traditional Western European officials around Brussels and the newly arrived officials from Central and Eastern Europe. There’s a much more high energy interest in mov-

ing the agenda forward from the Central Europeans, and that just came through in every encounter we had.

Whether they were members of the European Parliament, or they were officials from the executive side of the European Union, the interest and the determination to move the agenda forward was much stronger among the new members of the European Union because they've seen the advantages of international support for democracy efforts and they want to return the favor to the world.

So I think we have allies in the EU's vast bureaucracy, and in their foreign ministry that's emerging, and very certainly in the European Parliament, where there are a lot of very senior officials who came out of the democratization struggles of the 1980s and early 1990s and are willing to be strong allies. And there are leaders on these issues in the EU context, and I think we need to be mindful of that and look for ways to cooperate with them.

Let me make two other points, by way of summarizing the testimony that you have before you. One is about what Freedom House would urge be the focus in Iran as elsewhere in the cause of supporting democrats and democracy activists. And the other is the results of a recent study that we've published about how freedom is won, that's the title of a new book. The report is available on our Web site, "How Freedom Is Won," which is a survey of transitions over 30 years, from 1972 to 2002, the same period in which we've been doing our Annual Survey of Freedom in the World.

Maybe I'll start with the latter point, how freedom is won. This reviews the transitions that have gone on in scores of countries around the world. And there's a number of interesting findings about this.

And what we perceive is that the transitions are advanced most quickly and are most successful when there's a broad civic engagement in the democracy movement, that is bottom-up, popular agitation for democracy, rather than elite brokering of transitions to democracy. The more enduring and more profound democratization experiences are those that follow on broad-based popular activism, and demonstration, and pressuring from below.

One of the more interesting additional points that comes out of this is the role of violence. It turns out that in places where the opposition does not resort to violence in any of its political agitation, the possibilities for a stable consolidation of democracy after a transition are markedly higher than where the opposition has, in some way or another, resorted to violence.

You may think it matters more what governments do, but it matters more what the opposition does in these environments for the long-term health of a new democracy. I guess the premise, if you think about it this way, is that the dictatorships are obviously willing to resort to violence to maintain their position. That's the old news. That's the baseline we start from.

The thing to look at is, what are the future Governors going to be—how are they going to behave? And if they refrain from violence and establish a habit of governing negotiation, and compromise, and political engagement, then those are the habits that they will bring to their new roles in government.

So as we look about the world and think about ways to engage, advising our friends to remain focused on civic non-violence, civic action that eschews and rejects violence seems to be important, not only for the short-term quality of the political process but also for the enduring nature of what follows thereafter.

The other point I was going to make is that we would urge all efforts to center on what the people of Iran, what they want, what they're doing. We should try to take our cues from Iranians as much as we can, both Iranian-Americans here and Iranians on the ground in the field. Our efforts will always be directed first and foremost toward supporting local efforts, providing information and advice as we can, even in third countries or neutral locations, keep the focus always on what the popular will demands and what local actors advise.

If I could finish—I know the red light is on—the final point I would make, is in response to your question about what to make of the forthcoming elections in Iran. Having taught a few courses about democratic change at Georgetown University over the last few years, I've read a few books about this. And sometimes you read a lot of books and in the end you learn what you sort of thought you knew at the beginning.

And in this regard, I would say about the forthcoming Iranian elections what Samuel Huntington, in his book "The Third Wave," I think, has it about right. He borrows from the work of Schumpeter in the 1940s in talking about political democracy and capitalism. And he says that a country is democratic to the extent that elections are held on a free and inclusive basis regularly for the most important decisionmaking offices in the land. If you have real elections that matter, that are competitive, for the offices that matter, then you approach a democracy.

And as we know from reviewing the Iranian constitution and knowing what we know about Iran, the elections are not about filling the offices that matter in Iran. So I think that hopes for an election that leads to a profound or sudden democratic transition in Iran, as they have in some other places, are probably more hopeful than based in reality. I think these elections will confirm what we know about the Iranian system and may not be an occasion for a great movement forward.

With that, I'll conclude and be glad to respond to any further questions.

Mr. BROWNBACK. It's an interesting thought.

Ms. Ameri? Welcome. Delighted to have you here.

**GOLI AMERI, CO-FOUNDER, IRAN DEMOCRACY PROJECT,  
HOOVER INSTITUTION**

Ms. AMERI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and the Commission for inviting me here today.

Just as a point of correction to your introduction, although I do have a long-term history of promoting democratic movements, I don't think I can take credit for having encouraged dissidents.

I also want to thank the members of the Iranian-American community who have taken the time to be present here today.

I'm honored to have the opportunity to share with you some of my experiences at the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva,

as well as the feedback that I received from thousands of Iranian-Americans all over the country during my congressional campaign last year. I believe the unique insight that I might bring to this hearing is an intimate and firsthand knowledge of the power and force of freedom and democracy, because these two words to immigrants like myself are not abstract, academic, or political words. Freedom and democracy are words that have had a direct impact on my life and on the lives of hundreds of thousands of other Iranian-Americans in the last 30 years.

Many Iranian-Americans started their life in this great country with only the clothes on their backs and a first-class education gained right here in the United States. To quote Governor Schwarzenegger, "It's a privilege to be born here. It's an honor to become a citizen here. It's a gift to raise your family here."

Iranian-Americans are a product of the American dream, and they have seized this dream with a vengeance. Among other roles, they are the founders, co-founders, and senior executives of Fortune 500 and Inc. 500 companies. They're university presidents. They're the director of the Mars program at NASA. They're the deputy national security adviser and deputy undersecretary of education, and they're nationally recognized reporters and news anchors.

The Iranian-American community feel fortune to have had the freedom to select our vocations and to direct our destinies. So they've taken it upon themselves to return the faith that America has placed in us by giving back to our communities and keeping our democracy vibrant.

I had the privilege to meet thousands of these Iranian-Americans around the country during my congressional campaign. The community has not always been vocal on the topic of Iran. Some have felt that the U.S. Congress has not reached out enough. So please know they are grateful for this hearing and for this invitation.

But there are also other reasons for the community's silence. Many living in the United States still have family back in Iran. There's a fear about speaking up, fear about the negative impact on relatives, or being stopped at the airport and thrown into jail upon entry into the country.

And then there's been the grappling with the public image in the United States, how to separate the Iranian Government from the Iranian-American community. You heard I took a precious 1 minute in this testimony to show you that Iranian-Americans are model citizens in this country.

Iranian-Americans love their heritage and the motherland, and they abhor extremism and terrorism. The community cringed at the hostage crisis, cringes at and condemns every act of terrorism. I don't know of a single Iranian-American who did not shed tears in agony and rage after the tragic of 9/11.

Then there are more complex issues at play. Family members of Iranian-Americans, elderly parents, even those on their death beds are denied visas because Iran is recognized as a terrorist nation. How do you separate the innocent people from the government? How do you articulate the difference and the genuine suffering of the families to lawmakers at a time when the fight against terrorism is an important national priority?

It's a complex subject, so oftentimes the Iranian-American community chooses to be silent. But please don't think for a moment that because mainstream Iranian-Americans are not vocal that they don't care about what happens to their motherland and to their compatriots in Iran.

In my encounters with thousands of Iranian-Americans in the past 2 years, an overwhelming majority want for the people of Iran to enjoy the same basic freedoms we have enjoyed in this country, freedom of press, speech, religion, separation of church and state, the rights of women, and the right to property. They want for Iran to be respected and recognized as an example of freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and economic prosperity in the Middle East and as a trusted partner in the world community.

They also care deeply about Iran's sovereignty and the preservation of its borders and are profoundly concerned about a military conflict between the United States and Iran. Ultimately, they believe that a free, democratic, and prosperous Iran cannot be a nuclear or any other form of threat to the United States or any other nation.

In my experience, there are three different views on U.S. policy toward Iran amongst Iranian-Americans. One group believes that the United States needs to take an active role and make regime change an official U.S. policy. The second group believes that freedom from decades of oppression can only come from the Iranian people themselves without any type of outside involvement.

In my travels, the majority of Iranian-Americans I met have a third, more considerate way in mind. They speak as concerned citizens of the United States and independent of political opposition groups or extremist political doctrines. They care about U.S. long-term interests as much as they care for their compatriots in Iran. They believe in the people of Iran and want them empowered to take their destiny into their own hands.

Iranian-Americans support the promotion of a civil society and a civil movement in Iran. However, they want to ascertain that the format of support does not hurt the long-term security and interests of the United States, as well as not sully the mindset of the Iranian people toward the United States.

For centuries, Iranians have been weary of what is commonly known as, quote, unquote, "foreign influences." In my father and grandfather's time, everything that happened in Iran, the good, the bad, and the ugly, was because of the British. The Russians and the French had their own designs, and the overthrow of Prime Minister Mossadegh by the CIA in the 1950s dragged the United States into the fray, as well.

This is where the trans-Atlantic alliance becomes so important. To quote the upcoming Freedom House report, which has studied 70 countries where authoritarian systems have collapsed, the United States and other countries, obviously in Europe, need to increase their support for nonviolent means of civic resistance led by broad-based coalitions that unite mature and skilled civic organizations and a citizenry that has been awakened to the misrule of their leaders.

I must emphasize, Mr. Chairman, that Iranian-Americans differentiate between support for civic organizations and support for opposition groups, with the latter being of zero interest.

Broad-based civic support is already happening in the Netherlands through the efforts of the Iranian-Dutch parliamentarian, Ms. Farah Karimi. She passed a bill in the Dutch Parliament appropriating 30 million euros to a credible and professionally managed Persian-language satellite broadcasting station, as well as a Web site for defending human rights in Iran. We hope that the European Union will not create any obstacles to the implementation of this plan.

It is extremely important for the United States and Europe to closely cooperate in supporting a civic society in Iran so that, one, members of that civic society will not be punished for accepting help from the United States, and two, fingers will not be pointed at the United States for meddling in the internal affairs of Iran and give the regime an excuse to fan nationalistic fires.

There is no populous in the Middle East that is more pro-American than the Iranian people. The Iranian-American community wants to ascertain that these feelings are long-lasting.

I recently had the honor to have been appointed by the president as a U.S. public delegate to the U.N. Human Rights Commission. I witnessed first-hand the fruits of close cooperation between the European Union and the United States.

We passed a resolution proposed by the European Union condemning Belarus' human rights record. We cooperated on the resolution regarding the genocide in Darfur. The European Union helps us in defeating Cuba's retaliatory resolution on Guantanamo. None of this came easily, but it shows we can work together.

As an immigrant to this great land, I'd like to say to the Europeans that America is not attempting to craft the world or Iran in its own political and economic image, for freedom and democracy are not American values. They're universal values. These are values that were nurtured by the French Revolution, a power force behind ideas and movements of liberal democracy and popular sovereignty.

As Secretary Rice said in her recent speech to the Community of Democracies in Chile, "The real division in our world is between those states that are committed to freedom and those who are not."

Mr. Chairman, once again, on behalf of the Iranian-American community present, I thank you very much for this invitation.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Thank you. And that was a very thoughtful statement. I've worked with the Iranian community for some period of time, and breaking that into three parts and groups is, I think, a very useful organizational format and way to think of it. And also, as we've been able to appropriate some moneys the last 2 year, where to place those, I think, is a real consideration to have made.

Ms. AMERI. And it's a challenge.

Mr. BROWNBACK. We'll talk some more about that in some questions.

Mr. Lahidji, thank you very much for traveling here. And let me also say, I honor you for your years of standing up for human rights. You've been doing that since 2 years after I was born, and



I'm impressed. And I think that is a profound statement of your own commitment and strength of desire for your own people to be free. And I honor that, and I'm delighted you're here.

**KARIM LAHIDJI, VICE-PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL  
FEDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

Mr. LAHIDJI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And also to give me this opportunity to speak in French, my language of education.

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, we talk very often about the situation of human rights in Iran always from a practical standpoint first. We talk about arbitrary executions, torture, arbitrary arrests. All that is fully and well-known by everybody, thanks to the work of the media, and some NGO's that work inside and outside Iran.

Thanks to the work of these human rights NGOs and the media, you know the case of the journalists called Akbar Ganji who is arrested because he denounced and talked about these political assassinations.

You know my friend, Nasser Zarafshan, who is a lawyer. He was a lawyer defending the families, for instance, of those victims of political assassinations. And he has been arrested since 1998 and imprisoned, thanks to his work that he has been doing in favor of those people. And he is just a lawyer.

Today, however, I want to talk about something else. I want to talk about the contradiction that exists, in terms of the structure or conjectural contradiction that exists within the Islamic Republic of Iran. I'll show you the contradictions between what is happening and what is supposed to happen.

First of all, when we talk about republic in Iran, this is a farce. This is a great lie. Why do I say that? Because by definition of republic is a regime that's based on public or popular sovereignty.

So as I was saying, the constitution in Iran, yes, it's true, states, and talks about a legislative branch and executive branch. It's true that there is a president who is elected by universal suffrage. There is an assembly or parliament, also, that's elected by universal suffrage. However, power itself is dual in the sense that, on one hand, there is this supreme guide, who is kind of a Superman, who supersedes over the other branches of government. We're talking about a president in Iran. And we just talked about the election that will take place on June 17th. Well, I need to say that the president of Iran is not really—the president who is elected is not really the head of the executive. The head of the executive is the supreme leader, and he's not elected.

He is the head of many institutions. He is the head of the armed forces. He is the head of the government militia called Pasdaran. He is the head of the police. He is the head of the intelligence services. There is no private television or radio in Iran. He names the heads of Iranian radio and television. Therefore, he has 100 per cent real executive power.

Therefore, the major contradiction that there is between the Iranian system and a true republic in this case would be that, in our case, he who holds the whole power, he is really the one who mas-

ters all of the executive power, is not elected by the people in Iran. He is the representative of God on Earth.

The same thing happens with the legislative assembly. The legislative assembly has very, very little power, really, the elected legislative assembly, of course. Because, for instance, the legislative assembly cannot pass any laws that are not compatible or in accordance with Islamic criteria, so all the laws that are passed by the Congress or the legislative assembly have to be reviewed by a council of six clerics who are appointed by the supreme leader.

So the republic, either of the executive or legislative powers, are controlled by the public, I mean none of them. And therefore, we cannot talk about public sovereignty in that regime.

Also, about the role of the council of guardians, the six religious leaders who are appointed by the supreme guide, before elections, be it Presidential elections or legislative elections, this council has to examine, look at the lists of candidates. For instance, in the next few weeks for the Presidential elections, initially there were 15 names on the list but only 8 were approved by the council.

The second aspect of this particular republic is that, first, on one hand, in a real republic, you have equality under the law for everybody. In a republic, this type, Islamic republic like that, the underlying and governing principle, it's not equality. It is discrimination that really rules. And as a result you have a council of six, or other people who are not really representative of the country, but they are religious leaders there that hold the power.

In this particular republic, we're talking about the right of the common citizen are different from the rights of Muslims, or the rights of non-Muslims are different from the rights of Muslims. Women don't have the same rights as men. But common people don't have the same rights as the clergy.

It's true that there are two factions, at least within in the country, the moderates and the conservatives. And there are clashes sometimes between them. But in the last 8 years, we have been noticing and observing that even the reformers, according to the constitution that is in effect today, can't do much in the country because those who are—whoever is elected as president, on one hand, or those who are popularly elected as members of parliament, those do not have any control over power, do not have really real power, the power that's necessary to rule and to solve, you know, problems of a modern society like that, of today's Iran.

Also, under the present constitution, any reform of the power structure in the country that would lead to democracy or respect of human rights is impossible. It's impossible because the main point, the main topic of the constitution, is that any amendment, any modification, any change that one wants to make to the constitution has to have the explicit and direct approval of the supreme leader.

So you have a situation where one only man is empowered to say yes or no to any, any initiatives or attempts to add reform in the constitution.

Mr. BROWNBACK. If I could, if you could summarize, we'd need to so we can get to the rest of our witnesses and some questions, too.

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. And that's why, for 15 years now, I've been talking to the United Nations. I've been talking to the European Union. And I always say that, for as long as the present structure prevails, and for as long as this same constitution happens and exists in Iran, no reform is possible in the country.

And for that reason, we have been calling for international pressure in this globalized world, especially today, against the regime in Iran, against that person, that one person that holds all the power. And so that that person and that structure could let go a little bit of that total power so that the population in Iran can see after so many years the return of the rule of law and democracy to that country.

That's why we call for international pressure to be exerted on the regime in Iran so that the people in Iran can regain its freedom, and can live in freedom and in the respect of their rights, like any other free person in the world.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Good. Thank you very much.  
Manda Ervin?

**MANDA ERVIN, FOUNDER, ALLIANCE OF IRANIAN WOMEN**

Ms. ERVIN. Mr. Chairman, members of the Helsinki Commission, and ladies and gentlemen. Since the time is short, I'll get to the point.

Today, I hope to shed some light on what life is like inside Iran, what Iranians face everyday on the streets of Tehran and beyond. Life in Iran is a battleground between the people and the forces of the regime everyday.

Lack of interest by the regime in reinvesting and upkeeping the old industries has been actually increasing—has been constantly increasing the joblessness and labor uprising around the country. The regime own the majority of the industry. As a result, the regime cracks down on the protesting of the unemployed by a well-prepared and equipped paramilitary forces.

As Mr. Gedmin spoke about civil disobedience, Iranians have been dealing with the regime through civil disobedience. Every month, as there are discontent laborers, there are teachers who have not been paid in months sitting in front of the parliament protesting and asking to be paid. They are confronted by the same forces, beaten up, injured, or killed.

In the struggle of the forming a union to get their salaries paid, the bus drivers are getting beaten up, fired, and oftentimes disappeared. They are asking ICFTU [International Confederation of Free Trade Unions] and FSN for support.

Three weeks ago in the province of Khuzestan, in southwestern Iran, there was an uprising that lasted for days. The people cannot continue living in the ghettos and want a job. They met the regime's paramilitary forces with the full force of their power, and over 100 people were killed as the result of the clash.

The soccer games are the occasion for the people to show their discontent. Two weeks ago, after the Japan versus Iran match, the demonstration lasted all night and ended up with the paramilitary forces killing four people and the people setting fire to their vehicles. I should mention that women are not allowed in stadiums to watch the games.

There are students on hunger strikes and sit-ins at the universities around the country at all times. Of course, they face assaults, threats, and harassment by the regime's plain-clothed forces called Basiejies. Last Wednesday, a group of Basiejies attacked the students at the University of Khoy and injured many of them.

The student leadership throughout the universities in Iran have boycotted the elections. Hashemi Rafsanjani has made himself a candidate for the president for the third time, and no doubt that he will be miraculously elected by a large majority, despite the fact that the elections are boycotted by the people.

On the city walls, buses, telephone booths and trees, the people spray paint, "No to elections, yes to referendum" or "The election has been boycotted by the Iranian people," and many other slogans.

For the last 2 weeks the members of the media have been participating in a sit-in strike for freedom of some of their fellow journalists from prison. In February, the paramilitary forces broke down the doors of many houses, and after beating them up, arrested large numbers of activists, including some of the members of our own organization, Alliance of Iranian Women.

The prisoners of conscience in the infamous Evin Prison are on hunger strike in protest. The regime is regularly arresting people, especially student dissidents. Last week's arrests are Mr. Moradi, Mr. Parandokht and Mr. Javid Hebrani from Democratic Party of Iran.

The regime of Iran practices gender apartheid and legal abuse of children. The constitution of this regime belongs to the 7th century and is unacceptable in the 21st century—it is unacceptable to 21-century societies. The people of Iran are asking for condemnation of this regime not only in words, but by action.

This is what one Iranian woman had to say: "We understand the fear of nuclear threats and the danger of supporting terrorism by the regime of Iran. But the policy has been not to cave in to blackmail or terrorists. Iranian regime uses terrorism for blackmailing purposes, uses the threat of nuclear programs for the purpose of blackmailing America into submission. The only way to solve these issues is by removing the regime, not making deals with them. The more the West caves in, the more threats and demands they will face. We know our Mullahs," she told me.

We believe, by supporting the 50 million young Iranians who are the future of Iran, we will guarantee a loyal friend and ally in the region for our children in the United States. We have submitted packages of information that will reveal the horrors of gender apartheid and legal abuse of children in Iran.

And Mr. Chairman, if I may, I have the updated news for the last 48 hours in Iran. This is the news for the last 48 hours from Iran.

Iran's soccer team beat its last Asian opponent, going for the World Cup. On Tuesday, the country used the occasion for protest, as is typically done. And they protested after the games. The protest lasted all night, and by the end of the night, four children were killed, four of the young people were killed by the regime, and the people set fire to the vehicles of the regime.

Mr. Akbar Ganji, who has been a journalist, a well-known journalist and author, who had been released from prison a short time

ago, disappeared since his family said—since Tuesday, he has disappeared. His family believes he's been arrested by the paramilitary forces, but many believe worse.

On Tuesday again, Nasser Zarafshan, who is a lawyer, an activist lawyer, who has been in prison because he was vocal about lack of justice in the system and demanded simple access to the files of his clients, is on hunger strike. And he's an elderly man. And he has cancer. He's in prison.

His wife, a very old elderly lady, has attempted a sit-in in front of Evin Prison, and she's been sitting there for the last 48 hours. I was told this morning that about 60 of the intellectuals, lawyers, and even an 84-year-old lady poet, great poetess of Iran, have joined Ms. Zarafshan in front of Evin Prison, and they have all attempted the sit-in. But they're facing the regime's paramilitary forces. I was told that the people from all over the country are traveling by buses and planes to come join them in front of the prison.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Iran need our support, our moral support, our standing in solidarity with them. They don't want words anymore. They don't trust words. They want actions. They want United States and Europe to stand together against the regime of Iran.

We don't mean war, we don't mean occupation. We talk about solid support for the people of Iran, as the world did for South Africa when there was racial apartheid in South Africa. Iran is practicing gender apartheid. They're selling their children. The world needs to come together in solidarity against this regime and help the people of Iran.

I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, Ms. Ervin.

I want to enter into the record a sheet that your organization handed to us. It has 17 women's rights in Islamic Republic of Iran. And I'm going to enter this into the record.

"The value of a woman's life is one-half the life of a man. A daughter gets half the inheritance of the sons." There's some really amazing things in there. I'm going to put this in part of the record, as well.

We've been joined by Congressman McIntyre, previously by Congressman Aderholt, who had another meeting to go to.

Congressman McIntyre, did you have comments that you had—

Mr. MCINTYRE. [Off-mike.]

Mr. BROWNBACK. OK. Then let's go to some question and answer, if we could.

I want to get right to the nub on this. I've worked on the Iranian issue for some period of time. We've been able to get some small appropriations. I think we need to do more on civil society development and building. What I look and see within the U.S. Government is the desire to do something here. And it's not a military answer that people anticipate, it is on the democracy building and the civil society building.

How exactly would you target in on that? What should we do? And what amount of funds is it that we should be asking for to be able to encourage a civil society development inside Iran, the basis of which—the like of which we've done previously, say, in Ukraine,

Georgia, Kyrgyzstan. These are places that have had people's movements come forward, but the seeds for the civil society development were sown long ago and have been nurtured for a number of years.

What should we be doing in Iran in that regard? Any of the panelists?

Ms. ERVIN. Yes, I can.

Mr. BROWNBAC. I'm going to go to Tom. Speak up first, if you would.

Mr. MELIA. Well, as I think Jeff Gedmin alluded to earlier, there are obviously complications in Americans going in and out of Iran to do the kinds of things that civic activists and political democracy supporters have done in so many other countries. We just can't go in and out of Iran like we can elsewhere. But there are lots of other people who can. And this is—this may get back to the reason we're meeting here today. There are a lot of Europeans who can come and go to and from Iran. There are Iranians who travel in the region and more widely where we can meet them.

I think that if we make the kind of funding that you're talking about available on a dispersed basis, so it gets in the hands of more different kinds of civic groups who want to help Iran, I think they can provide more venues for Iranians to come out and find skills training, and encouragement, and ideas for how to mobilize the citizenry back home.

I think if we concentrate it in too few hands and make it look like one big American project, it makes it harder for Iranians to engage with us because of the dangers when they go home.

So one idea would be to make more money available but try to find ways to make it more dispersed so that different kinds of Americans can use it and also different non-Americans can use it to engage with Iranians. That's just one idea to address one of the real concerns.

Mr. BROWNBAC. Ms. Ervin?

Ms. ERVIN. In Iran today, there are 3,000 NGOs. That proves to me that the basis for a civil society, for a democratic society is there, because people are taking care of themselves. Because there is no government, so they take care of themselves.

There are NGOs who are taking care of those from the 8-year-old war between Khomeini and Saddam Hussein. All the people who have lost limbs in the war, and they are being raised and cared for by the people, not the government.

And then there are 50 million young people. But Iran has a very young, vibrant society, all educated, eager, and they would love to work. And if they are given the opportunity, if they are given the support, they will go out, they will stand up.

Yesterday, we showed a documentary that Dr. Ensani (ph) had made in Iran last summer. She was talking to a group of young people who mountain hike on weekends. That's the only place that they get together. She asked these young people, "What do you want for your future?" Of course, they don't see any future for themselves.

But they were saying, "We want the Mullahs out. We want the Mullahs out." Every single one of them wanted the Mullahs out. And they said, "We want America here." They want what America

stands for, freedom, democracy. They didn't mean that they want America's military there. They want the American ideals in Iran. They want what America represents in Iran for themselves, for their country.

So they are ready. It's not difficult for Iran to—it's not like other countries. The education system has been there from before the revolution. And the women have all been active. We've had 100 years of women trying to get their equal rights. And right after we got it, it was snatched away from us.

But it is not very difficult to approach and work with the people of Iran, because they are so eager to work with us.

Mr. BROWNBAC. Do you have any additional thoughts, Ms. Ameri? You had some structure of thought that you had put to this in your testimony. Anything additional thoughts on this point?

Ms. AMERI. You know, Senator, I think I probably should let Dr. Lahidji talk about that, because he's in contact with the civil society in Iran and I am not.

The only thing that I can tell you is that the Iranian-American community is very leery of these funds being dispersed to opposition groups, that the U.S. Senate and Congress sees rather often around these halls.

Mr. BROWNBAC. Dr. Lahidji?

Would he have a thought or comment to this question?

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. Iranian civil society is very active and very dynamic. It's true that the civil society as it is in Iran needs cash, needs money, but it's dangerous to send money directly from abroad to any of these human rights or women's organizations in Iran.

I kept talking about Abbas Abdi. For instance, there's a journalist in Iran who has been arrested and convicted because he had contacts with Gallup, you know, the polling organization here in the United States. And the regime used that to go against him and to accuse him of spying for the United States.

Mr. BROWNBAC. Because of his association with Gallup?

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. Gallup, the polling company. And he was condemned to 5 years and has just been freed recently.

Mr. BROWNBAC. There's polling companies I've been wanting to get after for years. [Laughter.]

I'm getting on that.

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. And I mentioned that example of this journalist, because we have to be very vigilant, very careful when establishing relationships of any sort of showing solidarity toward Iranian people, Iranian civil society. It's dangerous that way. And what civil society in Iran wants, it wants a real, solid and concrete support and solidarity from others.

Another issue here is this. I mean, for over 20 years now, we have been witnessing many, many resolutions that are passed by international organization or European organizations, be it the Human Rights Commission, UNGA, the European Parliament, etc. However, never one single sanction was applied as a result of these resolutions.

For a period of time now, the privileged interlocutor, if you will, with the regime was the European Union. But every time that we would approach the European Union and ask for effective meas-

ures, some concrete initiatives on their part, or warranties that that was going to be done, they would say, "Well, we'll continue our positive, productive dialogue with Tehran."

And you know that for 3 years now there has been not a single draft resolution presented to the Human Rights Commission in Geneva. So there's no real pressure. There's no real pressure being applied against the regime in Tehran.

And you know very well that with regimes, such as the present regime in Iran, only the voice of force is listened to. By force, I don't mean, of course, military intervention, but I mean strength, I mean effective resolutions, effective sanctions, or measures that be, you know, solid—

Mr. BROWNBAC. So what he seeks is, if I can get this to a finer point, is a resolution with sanctions, if actions do not follow?

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. Yes, exactly. And I'll give you an example. We mentioned the South Africa, the issue of South Africa here. And I could cite Libya. I mean, for many years, you know, Libya was under sanctions, Libya was under effective measures on the part of the international community. And in the end, Gadhafi yielded. And today, there's a direct dialogue, there is co-operation, even, between the international community and Libya.

For as long as there's no restrictions that are applied against the regime, for as long there will be normal political, normal diplomatic relations between the West and Iran, for as long as the European community will continue to have this dialogue that they call productive, and so on, with the Islamic Republic, for as the European troika continues this dialogue directly and talks about a normal dialogue with the regime in Iran, there won't be any change. There won't be any change for as long as things continue to be like that.

Yes, even if, let's say, the European troika—the British, the Germans, and the French—arrives at a compromise with the regime in Iran, even if there's a written agreement between the parties, as a lawyer, as an advocate for human rights, I can assure you there's no guarantee whatsoever that this will be respected, that any agreement will be actually respected by the regime.

Why? Because we're talking here of a particular case of Iran. We're talking about this regime which is what I call a rogue regime.

Mr. BROWNBAC. Thank you.

Tom, you talked about civil disobedience, on how freedom is won and the role of violence. And you said it's best, clearly, in the history of what you've studied, if opposition groups do not use or resort to violence, and the need for civil disobedience.

Ms. Ervin was talking about, we've got a level of civil disobedience going on in Iran today. It's not based on violence. Is this being effective? Is there any way to appraise that? And if yes, is there any way to see more of that civil disobedience taking place inside Iran?

Mr. MELIA. There's probably room for more. Clearly, the government has not gotten the message from its people yet that there needs to be structural change in the system. They don't feel like they need to respond to that yet.

So if there were ways to strengthen the hand of the citizen activists who want to make their views known to the public in this de-



monstrative, visible, forceful way, there would be ways to help support that. As vibrant as civil society is in Iran, and as diverse as it is—we all know from experience elsewhere in the world—that there’s learning that can be done, there are skills that can be transferred about mobilizing a broader civic coalition.

These 3,000 or more different groups are each operating in their own environment and occasionally come together for joint efforts on different projects. A broader, societal-wide effort, which has appeared in other places—you saw the broad participation of citizens in the protests of the fraudulent elections in Ukraine last autumn. That was both spontaneous and the result of many years of preparation and planning.

What happens in these civic movements and transitions is that often years of training, of specific skills training, on coalition building, on pursuing an agenda, on engaging of parts of the establishment but also trying to isolate other parts of it.

A conscious political strategy can be developed that also then takes advantage of sometimes spontaneous events that occur, like a fraudulent election, or a conspicuous case of corruption, or a corrupt violation of human rights, something that can catch fire in the sense of mobilizing a broader part of the population.

But that needs to happen, or it happens best, when there are people who are trained to be organizers who can take advantage of that moment. And that’s what happened in Ukraine and other places.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. Gedmin, you’re working in Europe, with the Aspen Institute the last 3 years. Europe’s taken the lead, at least on the confrontation and dealing with the nuclear weapons development with the Iranians.

This seems like a case where Europe should be willing to aggressively join with us on the human rights issues, women’s rights in Iran, or the obvious complete lack of women’s rights in Iran should strike a chord in Europe. Why are we not seeing, or am I just not looking the right places to see why the Europeans are not more stirred up on the issue of human rights, or lack of human rights, in Iran?

Mr. GEDMIN. Well, dear Mr. Chairman, you know why. The Europeans, those that Tom alluded to in Western Europe, are not broadly, at least those in power, in government, stirred by these issues. And I think we need to do two things.

There are people in Europe who care about this deeply, in fact. They do sit in parliaments, and they do run NGOs, and some of them are in governments, by the way. Let me add that.

I think we have a pretty good idea of who they are, and we need to support them. Tom alluded to that. They have some competitive advantages that we might not have in this case. We need to support them.

In the other cases, we need to shame them. European governments have been telling us for some time how deeply they care about democracy and human rights, including in Iran, and how keenly interested they are in soft power, soft power, soft power, soft power. So this should be actually not only a trans-Atlantic moment but a European moment.

So to that question, I would say, support those who are inclined—and they do exist. There are very good people there. And we need to do a better job of shaming the others.

The second thing I want to take up very briefly, if I may, is, I think Tom is absolutely right. Of course, Iran is Iran. And as other colleagues have said, we have to, above all, listen to the Iranians. They know best. It's their country, and it's their fate, and it's their future. But at the same time, there's skills, and expertise, and knowledge that have been developed over the years.

I'd cite two things. I'd make a pitch for the new Freedom House report that has looked at—I forgot now, what did you say—67 countries since 1972 about what worked, what didn't work, what seemed to be present.

There's a new article coming out by Mike McFaul in the *Journal of Democracy*, he was involved in the Freedom House project. He's looked at recent countries, like Serbia, Ukraine, and Georgia.

I might add, not only is that information rich and useful, but it seems to me, in conversations like this, we need Americans, we need Europeans, we need Iranians, but we need those democratic practitioners from Slovakia, from Georgia, from Ukraine. They share our passion. They have the solidarity. The Iranians can tell us what's applicable, and transferable, and what's not. They can come and listen. But it seems to me they have a big contribution to make, too.

Mr. BROWNBACK. This has been a troubling issue to me for some period of time. It just seems to me to be so clear on its surface and so clear in the need, and it is a soft power issue. I fully believe—I don't anticipate some sort of military intervention by the United States.

So this is a soft power issue. But why couldn't we get a stronger—and there's a broad basis of Iranian diaspora in Europe that I've worked with and seen over the years. It just seems like this one's one that ought to come together and hasn't happened it. Ms. Ameri?

I now go to Congressman Smith, who has just joined us.

Ms. AMERI. Actually, just—Congressman Smith, it's good to see you again.

Just a very quick comment on what you just said. I think we in the United States could certainly do a better job in our public diplomacy. And I think if we go back and we remember the way the Europeans handled our involvement in Iraq, there was a lot of finger-pointing about U.S. interests in Iraq. And that's the reason why, you know, we decided to enter Iraq.

I don't think the United States does enough public diplomacy when it comes to the Europeans. I understand that right now we're trying to work with the Europeans on this nuclear issue, but I think if somebody went back and did a little bit of research on the number of trade deals that have been signed between Europe and Iran, it becomes very clear as to where the interests are.

And that's something that I think someone in your position, you know, just like Senator—I can't remember his name, from Minnesota, Coleman—Senator Coleman talks a lot about the United Nations without the administration getting directly involved. I

think someone in your position can certainly talk a lot about those areas that the Europeans are failing at, areas are crystal clear.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Seem very clear.  
Congressman Smith?

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CO-CHAIRMAN,  
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE**

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank you for calling this very important hearing.

I want to say I express my apologies to the witnesses for my late arrival. We've been undergoing a 2-day markup of the Foreign Relations Act of 2006 and 2007. It is my bill, so I had to be there for a very extensive markup. It does have language in there extending or expanding our broadcasting capabilities, especially into the Middle East, including to Iran.

And it also—as Ms. Ameri just mentioned the importance of public diplomacy, the 9/11 Commission put its finger on that pulse, I think, when it admonished Congress and the administration to do much more in that area. And we are trying to respond with this legislation and other pieces of legislation to that call.

Just let me ask you a couple of questions, since I missed the testimony. I have a copy of your testimonies, and like other members of the Commission, we'll go back and read through it. But just a couple of questions, and perhaps the chairman has already raised some of these.

But on the issue of human rights, you know, as we know, since 2002, the Special Representative has not been reappointed as part of the Human Rights Commission to Iran. In the past, special representatives and rapporteurs in the U.N. system have had limited to no access in many countries where there is a serious breach in human rights.

We're now in the process, and the United Nations itself is in a process of reform, but we're certainly involved, as well. Yesterday, Chairman Henry Hyde's bill on U.N. reform passed with a very special emphasis on the issue of a human rights council and what it would look like. And I know Kofi Annan has talked about that.

If the United Nations is going to make difference, and the United States, and all of the other countries that seem to care about these issues, what would be your recommendations, do special representatives work? Do we keep countries like Iran off a U.N. council if they haven't met a threshold or at least minimum human rights standard?

It seems to me that one way of stonewalling is just don't let the Special Representative in. Well, that should have a serious consequence. Cuba does that. There's been a special representative established for years for Cuba. She's been unable to get in to that country to do her work. They put up the "Not Welcome" sign and there's no penalty.

And let me ask you, as well, we've had hearings in the Commission on using the OSCE model, not reinventing the wheel in terms of the fundamental precepts of the OSCE, because they're all based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights anyway, and trying to extend it to the Middle East.

Of the Mediterranean Partners of OSCE, and there are six of them now—Iran is not one of those—seems to be a very good way of—you know, that's our foothold. Hopefully with Europe, and the United States, and Canada pushing, we might be able to extend a Helsinki process to Iran.

And finally, with Rafsanjani the head of the Expediency Council talking about a June 17th run, what's your sense of what a post-Rafsanjani Iran look like? Would there be any difference when it comes to human rights? I remember the Washington Post years ago when Rafsanjani was put forward as the head of the government, they were gushing over this new moderate that was taking hold, Western-educated, and obviously our expectations fell flat then.

So just a few opening questions if I could.

Ms. ERVIN. About Mr. Rafsanjani, post-Rafsanjani, who would definitely be elected as the President, so-called, yesterday, or the day before yesterday, after Iran beat Bahrain in soccer and they went to the World Cup representing Asia, the people were furious and, as is their custom, they came out and they demonstrated against the elections.

What they were saying is, "No elections, no Rafsanjani, we want a referendum." And what they did across the country, these days, where, if you go, you will see signs. They are boycotting the election. They tore every single poster off the city walls, posters that Rafsanjani had put up. They tore every one of them, and they had made piles and set them on fire.

For these people it doesn't make any difference, whether it's Rafsanjani, or Khatami, or anybody else, this system has got its own—it's already there. These positions are there to present a face to the Western world to say that we're democratic. But Rafsanjani, whether being the council, head of the council, and now being the President, too, it will be the same thing.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Yes?

Mr. GEDMIN. I'll be very brief. I don't know if special representatives work, but it seems to me—and I think I'm going to affirm what was implicit in your question—that anything we can do, bilaterally, multilaterally, in international organizations, to deny legitimacy to an illegitimate regime is an absolute imperative.

Ms. ERVIN. Here, here.

Mr. GEDMIN. And I note, or add as a footnote, that this regime, like other dictatorships, craves legitimacy. It's extremely important to them. That's why they hold elections at all. Otherwise they would say, "We have nothing but a dictatorship." They have to at least pretend to have elections on June 17th. That's the first note.

The second note is, the idea of a Helsinki or OSCE process for the greater Middle East I think is interesting. I haven't thought about it probably as deeply as you have, but I know that people like Henry Kissinger have thought about it and suggested it. Prince Hassan from Jordan has suggested it. Dore Gold, the former U.N. Ambassador for Israel suggested it.

Not to engage in any kind of naive adventure, but at a minimum how it was helpful, as you know better than I, in Eastern Europe there were regimes that craved legitimacy—we can say, "Here you go. Here's a code of conduct." Now, they're going to lie, and they're

going to cheat, but it gives us something to point to, to say, "You signed it." And it gives their own people something to point to and say, "You're putting us in jail over something that you signed and agreed to." I think it's worth thinking about.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. To answer your question about Rafsanjani, I could say that last year, when there were parliamentary elections, 50 percent of the people didn't show up at the polls. And a result, we don't know that even 50 percent of the voters will come to the polls in these June 17th election, which is an election that takes place after a selection.

Now, who is Rafsanjani? I mean, if you think, in terms of Khatami, you know, Khatami, you know, who was not even well-known at the time he was elected, if you think of his record, it wasn't so bad after all for a former minister. Now, Rafsanjani, he is one of the architects of the regime itself.

All the laws that run counter, not only to human rights but to even the conception of the model of the modern state, all those laws passed during the 8 years when Rafsanjani was a Member of Parliament. More than 100 members of the opposition have been killed in Iran or abroad during the 8 years when Rafsanjani was president.

Now, maybe, if he's elected, and given the fact that he is of the same variety of the supreme leader, Khomeini, but there maybe Rafsanjani will negotiate with the United States, maybe he will talk here and there sometimes, but don't fool yourself. Don't think that Rafsanjani has any interest in favor of democracy, of human rights. With Rafsanjani, the Iranian people will have the same thing that they've had for the last 25 years.

Mr. MELIA. Congressman, if I could pick up on a couple of the questions you raised. I'd say that Freedom House, first of all, has a long history of being very active in the U.N. system. We're a registered NGO in the U.N. system and we participate very actively around the Human Rights Commission's annual meetings in Geneva.

We bring human rights activists and human rights defenders from countries around the world to make their case there to the delegates assembled from the various nations involved. So we try to facilitate a real dialogue around the Human Rights Commission, rather than one that's just between governments.

And one of the things that we've learned from this is that it sometimes seems that the governments of countries like Iran, China, Cuba, Sudan take these venues more seriously than do the Western democracies. They expend a lot of energy around those meetings keeping the people that we're bringing out of meetings, thwarting efforts to appoint special rapporteurs, thwarting efforts to get resolutions raised.

They bring their best diplomats. They bring their A-team to places like the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. And I don't think that we always do. We bring excellent people, but I don't think all the democracies do. I think that what's called for here is a more vigorous, integrated diplomacy on our part to utilize these U.N. mechanisms to be places to name and shame.

As Mr. Gedmin said, these governments want legitimacy and prestige. You know, this is true of dictatorships throughout the world and throughout history. After you've murdered your rivals and imprisoned your friends, the next thing you want is to be respected by your neighbors. And so that's part of the human nature of dictators.

And we need to use that and say that, in order to be treated like a legitimate government, you have to act like one. And so there are a variety of mechanisms—and we can't just do it in one venue, one time, one place, one country. We need to be working on this full time.

That requires the kind of vigorous, integrated diplomacy—for instance, we could be doing even more to promote the idea of the Community of Democracies. There's an idea that's been floating around since 2000, under the previous administration, that's been picked up under the current administration to organize a coherent, active caucus of democracies in the U.N. system. Now, it's been launched recently, but remains not as central to our diplomacy, I think, in the U.N. system as it could be.

So there are a variety of things that we could do that would enable us to be acting like these venues matter more and using them to leverage and pressure these governments who do care about it. They wouldn't be there being as interested in being on these commissions and being part of these deliberations if it didn't matter to them what these reports said, and what these rapporteurs came up with, and who was in the room.

So I think they've told us that it's a place where we can affect their behavior.

Mr. SMITH. If I could just respond briefly, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for that comment, because I would agree with you, and all of you, for your comments and responses.

Rudy Boschwitz headed up our delegation to the Commission on Human Rights. And I joined him for 3 days. And Ambassador Molee (ph), I think, did a magnificent job. But the problem is, we just do it seasonally rather than like the Chinese, as you point out, and others who work it 365 days a year. And they are constantly trying to peel off votes, water-down language, and we need to have that same kind of focus to make a difference.

You'll be happy to know that, as part of this markup today, we added the Advance Democracy Act by way of amendment to the larger bill. And that provides \$110 million over 2 years, but as importantly creates an office within the Democracy, Labor and Human Rights, dedicated to do exactly what you said. So we have a much more robust focus.

You know, as Senator Brownback knows so well, because he has led the effort here on the Senate side, for the State Department for years we've had a major problem with getting, whether it be trafficking, religious freedom, or any other human rights issues to become something other than an asterisk at the bottom of a list of talking points, that it is central not an adjunct to the work of the State Department.

And Freedom House certainly has been doing yeoman's work in that, and I do want to thank you for that. But that passed today and will move onto the floor within two or 3 weeks.

Mr. MELIA. Terrific.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I thank you, Congressman Smith. One final question for Dr. Lahidji. Is there wide-scale corruption at the government-leader level inside the Iranian Government? I hear of rumors of this, but I want from his words. And if you could be as succinct as possible, I've got to get to another meeting. But I would like to know his thoughts on this.

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. You rather should talk about a mafia ruling Iran, not just corruption within the government. The mafia is in power. Economic power, political power is in their hands.

And I can tell you that out of eight candidates for the coming elections, seven are part of this mafia.

Mr. LAHIDJI. Thank you.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Is this an organized—I mean, would he put this as an organized mafia that's running the government?

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. Yes, the Pasdaran, the government militia, is part of this organized mafia. The intelligence services, the clergy are all part of this. Eighty percent of Members of Parliament in Iran today are former guardians of the revolution, revolutionary guardians.

And they are in very close relationship with those who control economic power, because there's market economy in Iran, so to speak. Everything is in the hands of the state. And the state controls economic activity. So 80 percent of the Parliament Members are directly linked to this economic mafia.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Thank you for commenting about that. I've heard of the different scales. And when you have an economy of the nature of the Iranian economy, it's almost by nature going to be controlled by a few people within in the system, because it doesn't haven't free market, it doesn't have the mechanisms in it for any sort of openness, and so it's controlled. And then a few people get very wealthy and a lot of people live very poorly in a system like that.

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. Yes, for instance, very often people ask the question, "Would the Chinese model work in Iran?" And the answer is no. No, because there are differences between the two. There is a market economy in China, which does not exist in Iran. And in China, on the other hand, you don't have a religious group that controls everything, that controls the private life, that controls the rights of women or the electoral. Therefore, there are big differences between the two.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I want to just say in conclusion—and Chris, I'll let you go on, because I'm going to have to slip out—but I want to thank the panelists for being here. And those of you who particularly that traveled some distance, I really want to thank you for your efforts.

I love the Iranian people. There is going to be a democracy in which the people are free. It's going to be a very vibrant country. It will be an absolutely blooming flower in that region and around the world. I have no doubt, from the number of the Iranian-Americans, Iranians from all over the world that I've run into and have

met. This is going to be a very strong, democratic, open, vibrant country.

It's for us to continue to push that, because the government, which doesn't represent anywhere near the majority of the people, continues to sit on top of them. I, for one, am going to continue to push that.

I hope the panelists will help us to be wise in our selection of policy moves, because we can be ham-handed on these things and not knowing exactly which way to go. But the desire is there to do what's right and to help these people to prosper and to be free, and that will be, and is, my commitment.

I'm going to turn the hearing over to the Co-Chair Smith to continue. I must go on to another set of meetings, but I do very much appreciate your attendance and your testimony.

Mr. SMITH. First of all, let me thank Chairman Brownback again for calling this hearing. I think he's brought in the Helsinki process in a very effective way to this part of the world and a focus that is going to make a difference. So I want to, Sam, thank you so much for that vision. It's so important.

Just two final questions. One, what is the reaction of Iranians is to programming from Radio Farda? Yesterday, we beefed up our Middle East broadcasting to the Broadcasting Board of Governors in our bill. Many of us believe that broadcasting is extremely important, but I would really appreciate your feedback, whether or not you think it is effective.

And second, to Ms. Ameri, I just wanted to thank you publicly for the tremendous job you did in Geneva. Obviously, it was under very difficult circumstances. Like I said at the outset, we unfortunately don't work, you know, all year, 12 months out of the year the way some of our adversaries and the adversaries of human rights do.

But for those several weeks that you spent there, and for the 3-days that I saw you there, you did a magnificent job. And I want to thank you for that on behalf of the Congress, because it is difficult to uproot and spend so many weeks dealing with what very often is a Tower of Babel, where you have rogue nations walking the halls, running interference for the dictatorships back home who incarcerate, and beat, and torture political prisoners and mistreat others, as well. So you did a great job. And it was great getting to know you during that time.

And I would just ask you, if you would, your response or reaction to the fact that there was no resolution on Iran, your hopes and, perhaps, expectations that if, as this U.N. reform measure goes through, led hopefully by Kofi Annan and by others to construct a council where there would be some rules of entry, that you don't have rogue nations sitting in judgment, spending disproportionate amount of time, for example, on Israel while other nations get off scot-free. What is your sense whether or not we may be moving into an area where human rights will mean much more than they have within in the U.N. system?

Ms. AMERI. You know, Congressman Smith, I think you yourself have been there for quite a few years. And you understand better than a lot of other people how dysfunctional an organization I



think the United Nations is, particularly the Human Rights Commission.

And I think, just as Mr. Melia said, you know, thank God for organizations like Freedom House that actually show up there and try to do the work of the people.

Something that was very, very fascinating to me when I was in Geneva is that there were really no Iranian NGO's there. I think really, with the exception of Dr. Lahidji, who shows up there year after year, I think, for the last 15 to 20 years, there is really no viable, credible third-party Iranian NGOs active in Geneva.

So you know, when you don't have a viable NGO active, and you know, hopefully we can make Freedom House a lot more interested in the cause of Iran, and I think that will make a huge difference, then you have a problem there.

And then, of course, you know, you have countries like Canada that decide not to propose a resolution because they are deathly afraid that they are going to undercut the success they had with the resolution at the General Assembly because they are absolutely sure that they will not get the votes. And they won't get the votes because the human rights abusers like China, and Cuba, and Zimbabwe, and Iran, and all of those people will band together and they will derail the resolutions.

So it's my greatest hope that, you know, with reforms that Mr. Annan has proposed, that this Human Rights Commission really becomes a commission of human rights defenders. And you have to earn your right to be on that commission. And if you're not acting according to international laws of decency, and freedom, and human rights, there are some real serious sanctions that are going to be effective.

I thank you very much for your kind words. I appreciate it.

Mr. SMITH. Anybody else like to touch on the radio issue?

Yes?

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. We in the federation, in the League for the Defense of Human Rights, expect a lot and think a lot is riding on the reform of the Human Rights Commission. Actually, we have sent a few proposals to Kofi Annan. And we hope he will take these into account and some of them, at least, will be implemented in the reform.

Very briefly, I will just explain to you what we think are two imperative conditions that have to be respected while reforming the Human Rights Commission. We think that one thing has to change, vis-a-vis the current situation, is that not every member of the United Nations can be a member of the council.

We think that for any country to be a candidate for membership in the new commission, or the council for human rights, as it were, two conditions have to be fulfilled. First one that the main charters, or the main treaties and documents, or conventions, rather, about human rights have to be ratified by the country before the country can present its candidacy for that body. And also that the human rights record in that country not be, let's say, too bad.

We also think that, similarly to what happens to the Security Council, this new human rights council has to have the means to enforce the respect of their resolutions. Because for as long as the resolutions of the Human Rights Commission or this future council

are not executive, I mean, they're not really enforced, there will be no change in the human rights records in those countries.

Mr. LAHIDJI. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Can I just followup very briefly? And then if anyone would like to answer those questions, and maybe on the radio, as well.

The idea that the main treaties would have to be signed, the United States, as you know, has signed and ratified the convention against torture, the genocide convention, but there are others like the convention on the rights of the child—and a matter of fact, I actually gave the speech in 1989 at the United Nations on behalf of the Bush I administration in support of it. We did sign it, but never ratified it.

I mean, would that preclude a country like the United States, where we do have, I think, a very, very extensive network of—or series of state and Federal laws protecting children against child abuse, etc. I mean, we do have, I think, a very good body of law when it comes to child protection, yet we have not signed on to the convention on the rights of the child.

I would be cautious that we not—I mean, signing a U.N. Document—the PRC and others sign them all, or at least many of them. The Convention on Civil and Political Rights, they've signed that. And certainly it has not led to a—so just that might be a way of preventing a country like the United States from being a part of the U.N. Council on Human Rights. What's your sense on that?

Mr. LAHIDJI [through interpreter]. Yes, for that reason, I talked about two conditions that have to be fulfilled. But those are parallel conditions. And not all conventions necessarily have to be to have been ratified by a country who is pretending to a position in that council.

Because I can tell you that, for 25 years that we have had this regime in Iran, the child protection convention has been signed and ratified by Iran, but with riders to it which are what they call the Islamic conditions that they have to abide by. And for us, that emptied the convention entirely from any substance.

So as far as we're concerned, the fact that Iran has ratified that particular convention that the United States hasn't is of no value. But what I mean is, if not all conventions being ratified by the country, at least most of them.

It's true. I mean, the United States has not ratified this one. The United States has not ratified or even signed the creation of the international court, either. That's why there is a second set of conditions added to this one which is the record of the country, in terms of respect of human rights.

I mean, what is really going on, on the ground, in the country? That's the important thing. Because you may sign or ratify as many conventions as you want, but the practice then in the country may be different from that.

So that is what we want to see. We want to see respect for human rights in the country. And we don't want to see any country with a seat in this future council which may be a country that violates human rights.

Mr. GEDMIN. Congressman, the way you asked your question reminded me of this expression that we should always have an open

mind but not so open that our brains fall out. And that joins with the last comment.

We know what democracies are. We know that democracies have fair and free elections. We know that democracies have free competitive, independent media. We know that democracies have independent trade unions. We know that democracies allow freedom of speech, assembly, and religion. And we know what the opposite is, whether they sign treaties or not, or whether we sign treaties or not.

I just want to add as simply underscoring what's already been said, and said by you, that organizations like the United Nations are just great hope for the idealists. And I mean that quite sincerely.

But as also has been indicated here today, not for the first time, there are enormous opportunities for cynical tyrants that work them. And as my colleague here from Freedom House said, they send their A-team. They know how important it is. And they work decidedly and often very effectively.

And in the case of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, which has had shining moments, at worst it's been a farce where the United States gets kicked out and Sudan gets brought in, where the PRC is never condemned and Israel is frequently and zealously. So it seems to me that the kind of questions you ask and the kind of statements you make is what we need more of, just straight talk.

And so I'd just add, as a political advertisement, I hope that the U.S. Senate confirms John Bolton, because John Bolton will be a tough customer up there. But he will speak to these issues truthfully and he'll call things as they are.

Mr. SMITH. Would anyone else like to respond to—and I would concur with your assessments. I've known John when he was the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations. And that is when I had my year at the U.N. as a congressional member of the U.S. Delegation.

He was tough, and he had a respect for the United Nations, but for one that is not dysfunctional, one that lives up to the dream and the mission, as written and articulated in the middle-1940's. So I appreciate your comments.

I want to thank all of our witnesses. The part of the hearing I've been a part of, you've provided tremendous insight and counsel to the Commission. I will go back, as I'm sure the other Commissioners will, and read your prepared statements.

But thank you so much. It's been an extraordinary hearing.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:45 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

## APPENDICES

### PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, RANKING MEMBER, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate you convening today's hearing on the state of human rights and democracy in Iran. Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. Developments in Iran have obvious implications for other countries in the Middle East—including several OSCE Mediterranean Partners as well as the OSCE participating States themselves. While there is much talk about bringing democracy to regimes in the Middle East, security concerns usually eclipse that aspect of the situation in Iran.

Frankly, democracy is not a word that comes quickly to mind when thinking about Iran. Elections scheduled for next week for the largely symbolic position of president have raised the profile of Iranian politics. I understand that literally hundreds of potential candidates were scrapped and now a handful or so of individuals are vying for that position. Last week Iran's most prominent investigative journalist, Akbar Ganji, urged a boycott of the elections, citing the unfair and undemocratic nature of the process. I hope that the experts with us today can shed some light on what, if any, relevance the elections have.

During the Commission's hearing last year on the "The Middle East: Would The Helsinki Process Apply?", Natan Sharansky—a true champion of human rights—made a particularly poignant observation: "The lesson of Helsinki is that when demands to uphold human rights are backed up by effective action, the cause of freedom and peace can be advanced. The danger today is that the commitment to spread human rights and democracy in the Middle East will remain an empty promise."

The United Nations and the U.S. Government have consistently criticized Iran's human rights practices and strict limits on democracy, particularly Iran's suppression of political dissidents and religious and ethnic minorities.

While there may be limited leverage over the regime in Tehran, it is our responsibility to use those opportunities that we do have. As Ranking Member of the Trade Subcommittee of the Committee on Ways and Means, I am mindful of Iran's keen interest in membership in the World Trade Organization. In 2001 I successfully offered an amendment in the Ways and Means Committee to extend the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) for an additional five years. Iran must make progress with the European Union (EU) on dismantling its nuclear program, as it begins its accession talks with the WTO to conform its trade practices to the organization's standards.

As a cosponsor of the Iran Freedom Support Act and a longtime member of the Commission, I am particularly mindful of the importance of holding the current regime in Iran accountable for its threatening behavior while at the same time supporting a transition to democracy in Iran. This legislation would increase U.S. sanctions contained in ILSA, make exports to Iran of WMD-related technology sanctionable activity, and raise the threshold for the President to waive ILSA's provisions or terminate its application.

The legislation also specifies criteria for designating pro-democracy groups eligible to receive U.S. aid.

I continue to have concerns about Iran's material support to groups that use violence against the U.S.-led Middle East peace process, including Hizballah in Lebanon and the Palestinian groups Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Some reports also indicate that some senior Al Qaeda activists are in Iran as well, although Iran claims they are "in custody" and will be tried.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today.

### WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

[Prepared by the Alliance of Iranian Women—[www.a-i-w.org](http://www.a-i-w.org)]

1. The value of a woman's life is one half of the life of a man.
2. The testimony of two women is equal to the testimony of one man.
3. Daughters get half the inheritance that the sons get.
4. A woman does not have the right to divorce her husband.
5. A man can divorce his wife any time he wishes and without her knowledge.
6. Men are allowed to marry 4 wives and as many temporary wives as they want.
7. Women can not travel, work, go to school, or even leave the house without the husband's permission.
8. A woman must live where her husband decides.
9. Mothers do not get the custody of their children when the husbands divorce them.
10. Husbands can take the baby away from the mother and have another woman feed and raise the infant.
11. A widow does not get the custody of her children after the death of her husband. The children will be given to the paternal grand parents or relatives and the mother has no right of visitation.
12. If the husband has no family the Mullah of the community takes the custody of the woman's children and all the family money and belonging.
13. In the case of a man's death the wife will be left without her children, home and belongings.
14. The age of criminal responsibility, under article 1210(1) of Iran's Civil code is set at 15 for boys and 9 for girls.
15. The law sanctions marriage of girls before 13 years of age and boys at 15.
16. In his book Ayatollah Khomeini requires that young girls should be at the husband's home before they reach puberty.
17. In the case of inheritance for the old wife, mother of the grown children, she gets  $\frac{1}{8}$ th of the value of the building of the house. Not the land that the house is sitting on.





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