

been shown that spontaneous street demonstrations in Iran can overthrow a government or regime."

The commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards threatened recently to crack down on a wave of internal dissent and criticism, saying it jeopardized the country's security. "The universities are in the hands of the opposition, and young people are chanting 'death to despots.' We have to behead some and cut off the tongues of others," he said.

Within the clerical hierarchy, there is increasing opposition to the ruling clique, which has failed to eliminate Montazeri, the former successor to Khomeini, from the picture. In terms of religious credentials, Montazeri outranks all of the ruling regime's officials. He was shelved in 1988 by Khomeini after he protested the massacres of Mojahedin. In his correspondence with Khomeini at the time, he had written: "You cannot annihilate the Mojahedin with executions. They are an idea. Killing them will only spread their ideas."

Despair and apathy have taken their toll on the Revolutionary Guards, the regime's principal military force. Three of the corps top 6 commanders, and at least 150 other officers have resigned. If we consider the Revolutionary Guards' unique role in safeguarding and prolonging the regime, the gravity of this crisis becomes clear. Tehran's rulers are in dire need of a foreign crisis they can use to shore up their eroding forces.

At the same time, the regime is facing a profusion of economic problems. Projections for oil revenues in the mullahs' budget exceed 16 billion dollars, but the actual figure is hardly 10 billion dollars. Inflation is increasing with each passing day, and with it the pressure on the public. 80% of the populace is living below the poverty line. Meanwhile, corruption and embezzlement scandals involving billions of toumans are rampant throughout the regime.

Policy Options: Here in Washington, there have been a number of discussions over the past year about various approaches to Iran. Some people in this city are saying that Khatami is different than other mullahs, and America should officially recognize these differences. Of course, this is a coy way of promoting the sort of appeasement policy that ended in the Irangate scandal a decade ago. Appeasement was at the heart of the administration's Iran policy over the past year.

But if you will permit me, let's be realistic. Contrary to America's expectations, Tehran did not make any changes in its policies of terrorism and fundamentalism. In fact, after the State Department published its annual report on terrorism, naming Tehran the world's most active state sponsor, the mullahs took responsibility for the entire list of their terrorist acts, especially their attacks on the Mojahedin.

The distinguishing characteristic of this theocratic regime, which sets it apart from all other dictatorships of the twentieth century, is its export of terrorism and fundamentalism. If the mullahs take a step back in this direction, they will lose their ability to enforce the domestic suppression as well. Before they can transform themselves into a modern, twentieth-century dictatorship, they will be swept aside by the Iranian people.

The inability of certain circles in America to comprehend this stubborn reality is behind the notion that you can turn the anti-human rulers of Iran into moderates. The events taking place in Iran today signal the weakness and disarray of the regime and the prospects of its overthrow, not some sort of trend toward liberalism. Goodwill gestures by the U.S. government, such as the inclusion of the Mojahedin on its list of terrorist organizations, will only serve to goad the re-

gime on, and to give the Iranian people the negative impression that once again, the U.S. government is on the wrong side.

This is the same mistake made almost twenty years ago, during the last year of the Shah's reign. President Carter referred to the Shah's Iran as an "island of stability," and the British Foreign Secretary at the time stressed Britain's full support for the monarchy up until the final months. At that same time, western intelligence agencies said that Iran was not in the revolutionary stage, or even the pre-revolutionary stage. I don't think I need to remind you of what happened next. Today, the circumstances are similar. Events are happening very quickly in Iran, and it seems that the U.S. is not keeping up with them. As the leader of the Iranian Resistance has stated, the Iranian people will not recognize any contracts signed to find and drill Iranian oil.

The conflicts and clashes between various bands in the regime are a reality that will not go away. The most fundamental and essential conflict in Iran, however, is between the people—who desire freedom and democracy—and the religious, terrorist dictatorship ruling over them, whose survival depends on denying the people's demands. Despite an absolute repression, these demands have been embodied in a nationwide resistance movement. It is no accident that the regime's most viscous forms of repression are practiced on the resistance at home. Even abroad, beyond its terrorist attacks, the regime's primary demand from its international trading partners is that they adopt an anti-resistance, and specifically anti-Mojahedin policy.

If I may draw some conclusions: The religious despotism ruling Iran is an absolutely illegitimate regime, which has no place among the people of Iran. This regime and all of the factions affiliated with it, are partners in the murder and plunder of the people of Iran. The infighting within the regime is simply a power struggle.

The Iranian people demand the overthrow of the entire regime, and all of its factions. As the leader of the Iranian Resistance has stated, "The stage of this regime's overthrow and the need to prepare for it has arrived."

The National Council of Resistance of Iran, a coalition of 570 personalities and organizations representing the democratic forces of Iran, is the sole legitimate, popular, and the democratic alternative to the mullahs' regime. The NCR has committed itself to free and fair elections within six months after the overthrow of the mullahs. The vast majority of Iranians, in Iran and around the world, support the NCR's President-elect, Maryam Rajavi, and look to this alternative for hope in their struggle to rid themselves of the repression of the mullahs and establish a free, prosperous Iran.

PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE IN IRAN

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, on May 21 I joined a Congressional panel on U.S. policy options and prospects for change in Iran. The panel discussed President Khatami's election and Iran's efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction. I am certain that my colleagues will join me in recognizing the threat that Iran would pose to the U.S. and the region if it is successful in acquiring nuclear weapons.

I have introduced legislation (H.R. 3743) to thwart Iran's development of nuclear weapons. The Iran Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1998 will require the withholding of U.S. proportional voluntary assistance to the International Atomic Energy Agency for programs and projects of the Agency in Iran. The bill seeks to limit assistance from the Agency for the completion of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant in Iran. It is believed that the completion of the Bushehr plant will result in the transfer of civilian nuclear technology and training that could help to advance Iran's nuclear weapons program.

Firmness is the only means of deterring Khatami and the clerical regime from their quest for an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. We must make it clear, especially now when the mullahs may well be on their last legs, that we support the kind of progress towards democracy and genuine reform promised by the democratic opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I am submitting my remarks to the panel on this matter to be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

I want to thank the National Council of Resistance of Iran for organizing this event and for their ongoing efforts to focus attention on the rogue regime that continues to reside in Tehran under President Khatami.

Each of us here today, looks forward to the day when Iran rejoins the community of democratic nations. However, today is not that day. President Khatami, while slightly more moderate than his predecessor will not or cannot overcome the political forces in Iran which avidly pursue the development of weapons of mass destruction and continue support for terrorism.

We have heard many disturbing facts and figures, about Iranian human rights violations, about chaos and conflict within the country, and about Iran's support of international terrorist organizations, such as Hizballah, Hamas and the Palestine Islamic Jihad, all of which are responsible for terrorist attacks on Israel. Each of these facts reflects the ruling regime's status as a rogue state, which considers itself above international law, with little respect for human life, let alone human rights. The prospect of that regime armed with nuclear weapons is not a pleasant one.

Just this week, Russia and Iran announced that over the strong objections of the U.S. and Israel, that they would be stepping up their cooperation in the field of nuclear technology. In fact, Iran's Atomic Energy Minister made it clear that the two countries are considering further cooperation beyond their current project to build a nuclear power plant in Iran.

To give you a little background, Iran has been seeking nuclear power since the early 1970's, when the Shah attempted to build two reactors in Bushehr. The project, begun by a German company in 1974, was suspended following the 1979 Revolution. The clerical regime's efforts to obtain nuclear capability began in earnest in the midst of the Iran-Iraq War, in 1985, and in February of this year, Tehran announced its intention to construct two Russian reactors in Bushehr.

The question remains, why has Iran devoted such colossal resources, money and effort to build the Bushehr power plant. Iran claims to need the Bushehr nuclear reactors to supply energy to the country. Yet, Iran's immense oil and natural gas reserves call into question its motives for constructing expensive nuclear reactors. Iran has 9.3 percent of the world's oil reserves and natural gas reserves, second only to Russia. Clearly, Iran does not need additional energy sources,

nor is nuclear energy an economic choice for Iran. So what is the motive?

It should not be a revelation to anyone that Iran is seeking to acquire nuclear weapons.

In 1991, Ayatollah Mohajerani, one of Rafsanjani's deputies, clarified the need to obtain nuclear weapons. "Since the enemy has nuclear facilities," he said, "Islamic countries must be armed with the same capacity."

In 1989, Rafsanjani underscored the need to obtain an atomic arsenal, stressing that "Iran cannot overlook the reality of nuclear strength in the modern world." Nuclear arms, in the Tehran mullahs' view, are "the most important strategic guarantee" of their survival.

For this reason, I introduced the Iran Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act. The bill will eliminate the use of U.S. taxpayer dollars to the International Atomic Energy Agency to provide assistance to Iran for the completion of the Bushehr plant. The U.S. believes that the completion of the Bushehr plant could provide Iran with substantial expertise to advance its nuclear weapons program. It is ludicrous for the U.S. to support a plant—even indirectly—which could pose a threat to the United States and to stability in the Middle East.

Beyond, Iran's nuclear weapons development program, there is substantial evidence of its efforts to develop other weapons of mass destruction.

Last year, Satellite reconnaissance of the Shahid Hemat Industrial Group research facility, not far south of Tehran, had picked up the heat signature of an engine test for a new generation of Iranian ballistic missiles, "each capable of carrying a 2,200-lb. warhead more than 800 miles," within strategic range of Israel.

In January, a senior Clinton administration official told the Associated Press that "Iran's purchase of Russian missile technology is giving Iran an opportunity to 'leap ahead' in developing new weapons" and according to a CIA report, Iran remains the largest illicit buyer of conventional weapons among 'pariah' states, buying an estimated \$20 million to \$30 million worth of U.S. military parts in 1997.

After the cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, Tehran stepped up its efforts to produce an indigenous chemical and biological arsenal. Thanks to equipment and technology legally or illegally imported from abroad, the Tehran regime is presently able to produce a series of biological and chemical weapons. Defense Secretary Cohen has expressed concern that Iran may have produced up to 200 tons of VX nerve agent and 6,000 gallons of anthrax.

Tehran's unrelenting quest for nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles clearly attests that the clerical regime has no intention of moderating its behavior. Appeasement by the West will only provide the mullahs with more room to maneuver. We need a comprehensive policy, that both protects us from the current threat and safeguards our future interests in that part of the world.

Firmness is the only means of deterring Khatami and the clerical regime from their quest for an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. We must make it clear, especially now when the mullahs may well be on their last legs, that we support the kind of progress towards democracy and genuine reform promised by the democratic opposition.

IRAN: HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS PERSIST

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, over the past year, I have listened with interest to promises of moderation and reform from Iran, but after a year of Mohammad Khatami's tenure as president, I cannot but help to conclude that the current regime continues to be one of the major violators of human rights and proponents of terrorist activities around the world. The only policy that can be successful vis-à-vis Iran is a policy of firmness. Firmness, however, will only prove effective when it is coupled with support for the establishment of democracy in Iran.

On May 21st, I had the honor of hosting a gathering at which a number of my esteemed colleagues as well as experts on Iran and the region addressed various aspects of the question. In urging the administration to pursue a policy in favor of the Iranian people and their resistance, the speakers emphasized that the U.S. should not make the same mistake made during the Shah's time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the remarks I prepared for this briefing for publication in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

I would like to thank every one of you for participating in this event today. I believe it is very important that we keep our focus on the issue of human rights. Not long ago, I watched a video tape smuggled out of Iran by the Mojahedin Opposition Movement. It showed for the first time actual scenes of people being stoned to death in Iran. Four individuals were brought out, buried up to their waists, and stoned to death in the most cruel, gruesome and painful scene I have ever witnessed in my life. And this still goes on in Iran, officially. Since the election of Iran's new president, the government has announced the stoning of 7 people, four of them women.

Tens of thousands of Iranians have been executed for their political beliefs since 1981. My question is, what is our administration doing about these ongoing rights violations? What have we done to relieve the suffering of the Iranian people?

I believe our policy must be very firm about condemning human rights violations in Iran, and about supporting advocates of democracy, such as Maryam Rajavi. Change will come to Iran, but not from the current regime. We will not get anywhere by cuddling repressive dictators.

THE SITUATION IN IRAN

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the Iranian government under President Mohammad Khatami remains a brutal and oppressive regime. Despite words of moderation and conciliation, the Iranian government continues to actively and aggressively sponsor international terrorism. It continues to brutally oppress the Iranian people. In today's Iran there is still no freedom of the press. Under the Khatami government, there is still no freedom of religion or

freedom of speech. Human rights abuses continue unabated.

On May 21st, a number of my colleagues in Congress held a press briefing in the Rayburn Building to discuss the prospects for change in Iran, and how U.S. policy should be shaped to encourage democracy and freedom in Iran. While I was unable to attend the briefing, I did release a written statement. In addition to Members of Congress, other distinguished experts participated in the briefing, including former U.S. Ambassador James Akins, who served in our nation's Foreign Service with great distinction from 1956 to 1976. Ambassador Akins spent much of his career in the Middle East in such places as Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. He is the author of numerous articles about the Middle East. He is now an international and economic consultant. I would like to insert into the RECORD the written remarks I prepared for the briefing, as well as the remarks made by Ambassador Akins.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR., BRIEFING ON "U.S. POLICY OPTIONS & PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE IN IRAN", MAY 21, 1998

As we approach the one-year anniversary of Mohammad Khatami's election as President of Iran, it is appropriate to assess how much Iran has changed over the past year, and how U.S. policy should be shaped to encourage democracy and freedom in Iran. While President Khatami has spoken quite differently than his predecessor, Iran's actions both domestically and internationally, have not materially changed.

Iran still supports international terrorism. Iran continues to deny its people basic freedoms and human rights. Iran continues to treat its women like cattle.

There is chaos and conflict throughout the government. One thing is clear—President Khatami may have—may have—good intentions, but his good intentions have not yet resulted in a change in Iran's behavior internationally or internally.

Yet, our State Department continues to grope, hope and search for moderates in the Iranian regime. Our State Department continues to pursue a flawed policy of appeasement. When will the State Department learn that the moderates in the regime they are so desperately searching for, don't exist!

It's time for the State Department to recognize and support those Iranians inside and outside Iran who are struggling on behalf of a democratic and free Iran—including the Iranian Resistance.

The State Department's refusal to recognize the Resistance, and their labeling the Resistance as a terrorist organization is a travesty! Such a policy of appeasement and weakness plays right into the hands of the terrorist strongmen ruling Iran.

Let me repeat: there are no moderates in the Iranian government. Goodwill gestures from the U.S. will be perceived by the Iranian regime as a sign of weakness. Such gestures will achieve little, and will only embolden the Iranian mullahs to continue their non-stop campaign of terror and repression.

Contrary to the hopes of the Clinton Administration, Khatami's election last May has not resulted in any changes in Iran's domestic or foreign policies. Iran still poses a grave threat to U.S. security and world peace. Iran's ongoing support for terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hizbollah continues to threaten the Oslo Accords and other initiatives to establish a lasting peace in the Middle East.

Khatami's election has not halted or diminished Iran's efforts to expand its arsenal