



June 10, 2009

Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
Washington, DC

Re: State Department interference in Iranian elections

Dear Madam Secretary,

I am writing to bring to your attention the apparent intervention by U.S. State Department employees in the June 12 Islamic Republic of Iran elections, and to urge you to apply U.S. laws governing the actions and travel restrictions on Iranian diplomats, which currently are being flouted by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

State Department and Voice of America support for the Iranian regime

- Supervisors and editors at the Voice of America's Persian Service have disinvited guests who had been booked by regular Persian Service employees on recent shows, because it was feared the guests would promote a boycott of the June 12 elections in Iran.
- To justify this pro-regime bias in election coverage, supervisors and editors have told employees they are "under orders" from the State Department to use Voice of America's Persian language broadcasts to promote participation in the June 12 election and to support the two "reformist" candidates in the election, Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karrubi.
- By suppressing the widespread calls for a boycott of the elections, which your own State Department has criticized as undemocratic because the candidates are all hand-picked by the Leadership, the State Department and VOA's Persian Service are providing de facto support for the regime.
- Furthermore, your Iran desk officers and other senior policy advisors who are following Iran are well-aware that voter turnout and participation (or the lack of it) are a key gauge of popular rejection of the regime.
- Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has told Iranians that voting on June 12 is their way of "showing support for the regime."
- Expediency Council chairman, Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, has stated that anything over 40 million votes cast will "guarantee the survival of our regime for

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the next four years,” while anything below 40 million votes will cast a pall on the regime’s legitimacy.

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Madame Secretary, these are much-quoted public statements that anyone following Iran has seen. **By promoting participation in these sham elections, the State Department is providing support to the Iranian regime.**

A senior hard-line cleric, Askar Oladi, made this point clearly in a recent election gathering, according to the Associated Press. “All four major candidates are in line with the system,” he said. “So we do not feel concerned about who will be our next president. We should make sure we can maximize the turnout because that high turnout can ensure and secure the future of our system.”¹

No change with Mousavi

Furthermore, Madam Secretary, the United States should have no illusion as to the prospects for real “change” in Iran should Mir Hossein Mousavi, who appears to be the State Department’s preferred candidate, come out on top after these sham elections.

He may not employ the same over-the-top rhetoric of the incumbent, but he has a long pedigree as a supporter of terrorism.

For example, as Prime Minister in the early 1980s, Mousavi:

- ran Iran’s repressive intelligence services before the intelligence ministry was formally established;
- was a founder of Hezbollah in Lebanon, a group the State Department considers to be an international terrorist organization, and coordinated financing for Hezbollah by diverting a portion of Iran’s oil revenues to them;
- chaired the Foundation of the Oppressed (Bonyad-e mostazafan va janbazan), which “makes purchases for several hundred companies in Iran and buys equipment for the Iranian nuclear weapon, chemical/biological weapon and missile programs,” according to the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control.
- called on Iran to send “an armed force to fight Israel.”

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Students protested during a Mousavi campaign rally recently, accusing him of responsibility for the cold-blooded murder by the regime of tens of thousands of political prisoners in 1988, at the end of the Iran-Iraq war.

Regime “diplomats” are barred by U.S. law from organizing ballot boxes

¹ Borzou Daragahi and Ramin Mostaghim, “Iran Urges Citizens to Vote,” Los Angeles Times, May 28, 2009; <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iran-elections28-2009may28,0,3190760.story>

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The regime has announced that it will be renting rooms in hotels and other public places in thirty-five locations around the United States so Iranian-Americans can vote on June 12 and eventually in a run-off election two weeks later.

The United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran have no diplomatic relations. Iranian diplomats in Washington, DC and New York (at the UN) must apply for specific permits from the Department of State to travel beyond a 25 mile radius of their diplomatic post.

The laws of the Islamic Republic require that representatives of the Guardian Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must supervise each ballot box at all times. Those laws also stipulate that the ballot boxes in overseas locations be placed “only on sovereign soil.”

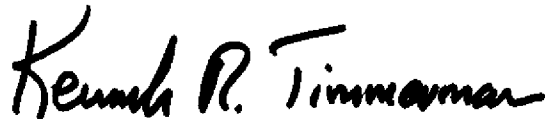
We request that you issue orders to the Department of Diplomatic Security and other appropriate U.S. law enforcement authorities to ensure that U.S. laws are upheld at balloting places on U.S. soil.

We request that this include verifying the passports of the individuals deputized by the regime to oversee the elections.

- Should these individuals turn out to be Iranian diplomats illegally traveling beyond the 25 mile limit, **they should be removed** and sent back to their diplomatic residence.
- Should they turn out to be U.S. citizens or green card holders who have taken an oath of allegiance to a foreign sovereign to officiate the election as officers of that foreign sovereign, then **they should be prosecuted** under Title 8, Chapter 12, U.S. Code, for “voluntarily... taking an oath or making an affirmation or other formal declaration of allegiance to a foreign state,” a violation that results in loss of U.S. citizenship.²

We strongly urge you to halt the interference by the State Department in the Voice of America’s Persian service, and to take action to ensure that U.S. laws are upheld during the Iranian regime balloting in the United States.

Sincerely,



Kenneth R. Timmerman
President and CEO

FDI is a private, non-profit organization established in 1995 under the laws of the State of Maryland, for the promotion of democracy and human rights in Iran, with a board of distinguished Americans and Iranians. Full information on us can be found at www.iran.org

² See http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscode08/usc_sec_08_00001481----000-.html

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