
From: Trita Parsi [tparsi@jhu.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2006 7:59 PM
To: 'Siamak Namazi'
Subject: RE: Your quotes (in context)

I love this: "Their strength is the ignorance of the members of Congress."
AWESOME!!! Its ingenious! I am sooo going to steal this quote!

From: Siamak Namazi [mailto:snamazi@atiehbahar.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2006 10:51 PM
To: 'Trita Parsi'
Subject: FW: Your quotes (in context)

Here you go.

/s

From: Chuck Hoskinson [mailto:choskinson@cq.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2006 6:47 PM
To: snamazi@atiehbahar.com
Subject: Your quotes (in context)

Analysts who study Iran however say the United States has few options for undermining the Islamic regime.

"There's no well-organized opposition that has credibility inside the country," said Trita Parsi, Middle East specialist at Johns Hopkins University and former aide to Rep. Bob Ney, R-Ohio.

As for exiles, people are horrified by the regime, but are also repulsed by the choice of organized resistance groups, he said.

"There is a tremendous unwillingness to get involved in these things," he said. "This idea of the U.S. supporting Iranian resistance groups is not seen as positive."

And pursuing a policy of regime change also risks the considerable goodwill the United States enjoys among Iranians, said Siamak Namazi, a visiting fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy who lives in Iran.

"Everyone in Washington talks about what the Iranian people want. I want to ask them, how do they know?" he asked.

"The Bush administration is trying to come up with a microwaveable democracy. It's not going to happen that way. To create a democracy, you have to fortify civil society and put the framework in place to have a democracy."

Any type of democratic actors that the United States actively supports will be perceived as U.S. puppets and are at risk as long as Iranian leaders see the support as aimed at unseating them, said Karim Sadjadpour, an analyst with the International Crisis Group.

"It's very difficult in this climate for the United States to effect internal change within Iran," Sadjadpour said.

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Critics point out however that the National Council is neither democratic nor as popular

as its supporters suggest.

“There’s very few groups as hated as the MKO,” Namazi said. He said Iranians will never forgive the group for backing Saddam Hussein in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

“Their strength is the ignorance of the members of Congress.”