

CAMPAIGN FOR A NEW AMERICAN POLICY ON IRAN

Wednesday, December 18, 2008, 12:30-2:00pm

Hosted by: Physicians for Social Responsibility

Meeting notes

[**Bold** is agenda items; *italics* means requests for action]

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Brief update and member initiatives

a. AFSC/FCNL

AFSC, FCNL and others are arranging for a delegation of Iranian religious leaders to travel to the US in the Spring.

b. PSR

Jill and PSR are traveling to Iran on an FOR delegation in March. Jill is also planning a series of events on Iran similar to her recent "Steps to Zero" event. PSR doctors are also going to be holding meetings on the Hill to discuss Iran as part of PSR's lobby days.

c. American Foreign Policy Project

Richard and others are planning to arrange for the experts (from the Joint Experts Statement) to publish op-eds and papers preempting common arguments against engaging with Iran.

d. 3D Security

Eric is holding a Congressional staff working group meeting January 16.

3. January event on Capitol Hill -- with briefing paper, Campaign party

We're planning to hold a reception on the Hill in January to publicize the Joint Experts' Statement and our recommendations to the administration/Congress. Also, we should celebrate that the US hasn't attacked Iran. And finally, this is a chance to demonstrate that our group and our position is now the "center of gravity" on the Iran issue. With Obama in the White House, it is no longer acceptable for staffers to say they only hear from the far-right hawks on Iran--we're here and we're going to push for a positive agenda. Richard Parker has volunteered to try and arrange for a couple of the experts to speak at this event.

If you are interested in helping out with this, contact me or Paul Kawika Martin. Hormoz Rashidi, Director of Programming at NIAC has volunteered his time to plan this event.

4. Membership Criteria presented for approval

With no consensus this proposal was shelved until our next meeting.

Mike Amitay proposed a two-tiered structure consisting of a “coordinating committee” of groups actively involved and a second tier for organizations that support our cause.

5. Transition briefing

After an immensely valuable discussion that took most of the meeting, we agreed to endorse the Joint Experts’ Statement on Iran as a general set of recommendations for a new Iran policy. As for specific suggestions to the administration, we will tailor a document that covers areas not touched by the JES. These are:

- **Change the *status quo* on Iran** -- Abandon pursuit of regime change; replace inflammatory rhetoric with a long-term strategy; include Iran in the regional security dialogue; end the “Democracy Fund” as we know it
- **Open a *properly managed interests* section** -- Plan for a flood of visa applicants; expand student visas/people-to-people exchanges; reciprocate Iranian interests section’s status in Washington
- **Tell Congress: no new sanctions** -- Introducing new sanctions is counterproductive when pursuing negotiations; “Sanctions” includes divestment and other unilateral coercive measures; review and assess the efficacy of sanctions already in place
- **Appoint a Special Envoy for Iran** -- Task a high-ranking State Department official with the Iran portfolio; official should answer directly to the Secretary of State and have direct access to the President on Iran issues

After completing this publication, we will submit it to the transition team both electronically (through Your Seat at the Table) and in person, via our contacts. Following this, we will also develop a separate publication to advise Congress on its strategy for Iran, encapsulating similar recommendations. We will develop this next month and unveil it at our event on the Hill.

RECAP: ACTIONS REQUESTED:

Please provide me with your feedback on this outline of recommendations. Your input via email or phone will be critical to this publication, so please contact me with any recommendations. PDisney@niacouncil.org; (202) 379-1638.

Attending:

Patrick Disney (*National Iranian American Council*)

Mike Amitay (*Open Society Policy Center*)

Anthony Wilson (*Open Society Policy Center*)

Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach (*Mennonite Central Committee U.S.*)

John Isaacs (*Council for a Livable World*)

Ed Martin (*American Friends Service Committee*)
Eric Ham (*3D Security Initiative*)
Stephen McInerney (*Project on Middle East Democracy*)
Ira Shorr (*Physicians for Social Responsibility*)
Sarah Burns (*Just Foreign Policy*)
Sanam Anderlini (*International Civil Society Action Network*)
Richard Parker (*American Foreign Policy Project*)
Susan Frank (*USA*Engage*)
Alissa Wilson (*American Friends Service Committee*)
Ryan Anderson (*Win Without War*)
Kate Gould (*FCNL*)
Jim Fine (*FCNL*)
Jill Marie Parillo (*Physicians for Social Responsibility*)
Kevin Davis (*Bipartisan Security Group*)
Paul Kawika Martin (*Peace Action*)
Emily Blout (*National Iranian American Council*)

Calling:

Leila Zand (*Fellowship of Reconciliation*)
Dane vonBreichenruchardt (*Bill of Rights Foundation*)
Jimmy Durchslag (*Mainstream Media Project*)