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From: Emily L Blout [eblout@niacouncil.org]
Sent: Thursday, September 18, 2008 3:31 PM
To: 'Trita Parsi'
Cc: pdisney@niacouncil.org
Subject: proactive thinking on next week

Patrick and I think it would be good to tell the coalition to start planning for Ahmadinejad's visit next week and suggest they use the Pickering proposal as an alternative talking point to the war and sanctions rhetoric (see below) his visit will inspire.

Also, a simple resolution endorsing the Pickering plan would be helpful to counteract the inevitable anti-Ahmadinejad resolutions that will be introduced. Delahunt might do it.

Let me know what you think,

Emily

From: Emily L Blout [mailto:eblout@niacouncil.org]
Sent: Thursday, September 18, 2008 5:50 PM
To: 'Daniel_Stein@tester.senate.gov'
Subject: Thank you!

Dan,

It was great talking with you today. Thanks for looking over the white paper. Your feedback was really helpful.

When you get a chance, read the Pickering/Luers/Walsh proposal (with an eye to where your research/writing was used) and NIAC's April conference transcript, in which Hans Blix and Pickering talk about the plan at length. The idea has been endorsed by Senators Feinstein, Specter, Hagel and Carper already. We'd love to see your boss take a position on it, and next week may be the time to do it. Ahmadinejad's trip to the UN is sure to reignite the pro-war, pro-embargo rhetoric. It will be critical to have as many pragmatic, security minded members of Congress out there as possible talking about alternative solutions to throw water on the flames.

-Emily

PS. Check out this op-ed from yesterday's [Washington Times](#) by one of the founder's of the James Baker Institute at Rice University, Edward P. Djerejian. It talks about the strategic value of direct diplomacy with Iran. (the text is below)

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"Promoting Iranian American Participation In American Civic Life"

The diplomatic cost of not talking

The Washington Times

4/18/2010

Edward P. Djerejian
Wednesday, September 17, 2008

You negotiate peace with your adversaries and enemies, not with your friends. That is what diplomacy is all about. With current sanctions and talks under the aegis of the United Nations making little progress in impeding [Iran's](#) nuclear program, concerns are mounting and there is a steady drumbeat of possible resort to military options. Under these circumstances, and on the eve of our presidential elections, there could be no more urgent need than to address the overall [United States](#)-Iranian relationship.

The costs of not talking with our adversaries are clear. This came home to me when we were engaged in the Iraq Study Group (ISG) in 2006 and met with the Iranian Permanent Representative to the United Nations. The lack of official and sustained communications between the United States and Iran not only have led to misperceptions, certainly on the part of the Iranians as to United States policies, but have also proved an impediment to our ability to influence Iranian behavior beyond sanctions and the implied threats of military action. The task before us is this: How to engage the Iranians in serious discussions that have the potential to identify whatever common ground may exist between us on specific issues, and then to try to resolve those issues in bilateral and multilateral forums, as appropriate.

The Iranians have engaged with us on Iraq, but they do not want a dialogue on Iraq alone. They seek a broader agenda of discussions where the major issues, both bilateral and regional, are on the table. Sustained engagement between the United States and Iran on key issues (e.g., Iraq, Afghanistan, Arab-Israeli peace, terrorism, support for Hezbollah and Hamas, human rights, and bilateral relations) could make real progress possible on the nuclear issue.

We need to put Iran into perspective. Without question, Iran is a regional power in the Gulf and Middle East, by virtue of its size, strategic location, rich history and culture, and oil and gas resources. But Iran is not the Soviet Union, which constituted an existential strategic threat to the United States.

Iran can threaten its neighbors in the Gulf and the region, including Israel. However, most of these countries have strong bilateral relations with the United States. Iran knows that if it threatens or acts against them, it would seriously risk the active opposition of the United States and other major powers. The concept of deterrence is real in this respect from political and economic to military measures.

Given Iran's domestic, economic, and political problems and challenges, Iran has strong reason not to antagonize the United States to the point of confrontation. Such a confrontation would be costly for both sides; for Iran, it would be devastating.

Therefore, as the world's preeminent power, the United States can afford to take the first step in putting the Iranian regime to the test by offering a broad strategic dialogue on all the key issues between us. Our willingness to engage with Iran is not and in no way should be seen as a lack of United States resolve on the key issues that affect our national security interests and those of our friends, especially the issue of nuclear weapons. While pursuing the nuclear issue actively through multilateral means, a first step in a dialogue could be an exchange of respective assessments regarding the key regional issues such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Arab-Israeli peace, Lebanon, Gulf security, and terrorism.

The overall subset of these discussions would be the United States-Iranian bilateral relationship. Here we will have to make clear that we are not pursuing regime change. Instead, the United States will look for a change in behavior and policies by Iran. We would promote our positions on human rights, democracy, the role of civil society, and the rule of law as structural parts of the bilateral dialogue.

With regard to the nuclear issue, some analysts have suggested that there are at least three key schools of thought in Iran. The first school consists of hardliners who are determined to achieve a nuclear weapons capability. A second is comprised of those who seek what might be called the Japanese model. Namely, acquire the means to produce nuclear weapons - without crossing that threshold, yet retain the ability to do so. A third school argues that nuclear weapons are not necessary. For these Iranians a more important goal is to address pressing socio-

economic needs through integration into the global economy. These different factions should be taken into consideration by U.S. diplomacy in a sophisticated manner to test the possibilities for forward movement on the nuclear issue.

The stakes are simply too high in the United States-Iranian relationship to not adopt a comprehensive, strategic and direct dialogue at the highest levels. In sum, we should not miss this opportunity to engage realistically and without illusions one of the most important and adversarial regimes we face in the region.

Edward P. Djerejian, who served as ambassador to Syria and Israel, is founding director of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University.