



Reframing Iran: Views from the Field

A report reflecting the views of the
Network 20/20
delegations to Iran

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The estrangement between the United States and Iran over nearly three decades continues while the two countries increasingly pursue conflicting geopolitical agendas, whether in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, or Israel and the Palestinian territories. The presidents of both countries have described the other's nation in hyperbolic negative terms, and their diplomats have little experience of each other because of a generation-long prohibition of official contacts. In this climate, even the extremely small number of unofficial exchanges or collaborations between Americans and Iranians are vulnerable to attack by many in Iran and in the United States as "Trojan horse" strategies concealing more belligerent intentions. Nevertheless, desire for increased contact with the United States is widespread among Iranians. A more detailed understanding of Iran's politics, history, and current conditions is vitally needed if the significant strands of Iranian society that are open to establishing constructive relations with the United States are to be effectively engaged.

In the fall of 2006, Network 20/20 members took the unusual step of fielding two delegations to Iran in order to gain first hand knowledge and build bridges with their counterparts in this important country. The delegations had three goals in mind:

- 1) To acquire a better understanding of Iran and Iranians in today's geopolitical climate
- 2) To gain insights into the impact of the 28-year gap in Iranian-U.S. bilateral relations
- 3) To make concrete recommendations for reframing issues and reestablishing diplomatic relations between Iran and the United States

In two separate 10-day trips to Iran, Network 20/20 conducted more than 50 interviews in six cities and several villages. Some meetings were planned in advance, while others took place spontaneously in tea houses, at historic sites, on the street, and in bazaars. Interviewees represented a cross-section of Iranian society ranging from students, soldiers, and taxi drivers to government officials, mullahs, NGO leaders, and university chancellors. Many interviewees spoke English; Network 20/20's Farsi-speaking members conversed with those who did not.

Overall, we found that interest in better relations with the United States remains strong, objections to U.S. policy do not inspire hostility to Americans individually, and in a few cases U.S.-Iranian medical, environmental, business, and drug prevention collaborations have endured.

Nationalist sentiment is shared by Iranians across the political spectrum and colored by grievances over past American and British interference in domestic affairs. Iran's nuclear program is largely viewed as symbolic of Iran's independence and prestige, rather than in terms of proliferation or military strategy. Even strong opponents of the clerical and security establishments strenuously object to coercive diplomacy by the U.S., and especially to the threat of military force. While most reformists feel that threats of military force and regime change are counterproductive to their reform agenda, they privately believe that external pressure is critical to forcing the clerical regime to moderate. Keeping the diplomatic heat on the Iranian government for its human rights record and disruption of the Middle East peace process, for example, is an approach many reformists welcome.

Within Iran, political debate persists, skepticism about the government's motives abounds, and liberal civil society institutions have been tenacious. While Western analysts usually portray the country in terms of a crude division between "reformists" and "conservatives," the reality is far more nuanced, and political alignments and personal ideology can be fluid.

Our main recommendations to U.S. opinion leaders and policy makers are that:

- The U.S. government should reestablish diplomatic relations with Iran. The United States should also avoid mixed policy messages. For example, Congress should not pass legislation that couples support for Iranian democracy with support for regime change.
- The U.S. government should build expertise on Iran among its diplomats and support joint projects or exchanges in the less controversial areas of the environment, education, science, public health, and culture working through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), multilateral agencies, or private foundations.
- The U.S. government should work with the current Iranian government on issues of political, social, and economic reforms. Eventually the United States should help Iran, the way it has China, accede to international organizations, including the World Trade Organization.

- Congress should hold open hearings on how better relations could be established with Iran. A large pool of expertise on conditions, politics, and attitudes in Iran is present in the United States among Iranian-Americans and among academics, journalists, former diplomats, and some businesspeople. Where possible, experts and opinion leaders should be invited to participate in such hearings on Iran.
- In the current highly charged climate, people-to-people relationships need to go beyond simply enacting good will between Iranians and Americans and begin testing out ways of raising the level of the debate between our two countries.

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INTRODUCTION

Americans and Iranians look at their shared history through different lenses, focusing on different events and accentuating different grievances. For many Iranians, the 1953 overthrow of their elected prime minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, is the defining moment in the relationship. That coup d'état, which was engineered by U.S. officials, led to the installation of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, whose government was brutal in its repression of political opposition and generally unresponsive to human development among its subjects, even as it was seen to be modernizing by the West. America's support for the Shah over more than a quarter of a century is, in turn, often cited by Iranians of a wide-range of ideologies as proof that U.S. aims are not in the interest of Iran. Furthering this mistrust, American backing for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war still resonates among young Iranians and the Ahmadinejad generation of government officials. Finally, the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq keeps these grievances alive among young and old alike.

By contrast, many Americans look at Iran against the backdrop of the 1979 storming of the U.S. embassy in Tehran and the subsequent 444-day captivity of 66 American diplomats and supporting staff. For many Americans that ordeal marked their first awareness of religiously justified anti-American politics in the Muslim world.

The symmetry of countervailing grievance between Americans and Iranians is repeated at the level of foreign policy: U.S. support for Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, Iran's main power rivals in the region, is seen as hostile by the Iranian state, while Iranian support for Hezbollah in Lebanon and for Hamas in the Palestinian territories is viewed by the American state as a significant threat to vital U.S. interests in Israel. With the U.S. buildup of naval forces in the Persian Gulf and the recent detention of members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in northern Iraq, tensions have mounted further. The standoff between the two countries threatens both U.S. national interests and global peace and security.

As U.S. influence in the Middle East is challenged violently in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Levant, Iran's influence has grown, sometimes as a stabilizing force, as in its development aid to western Afghanistan, and sometimes as a destabilizing one, as in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories and, the U.S. government increasingly asserts, Iraq. But allowing deepening security disagreements to preclude any further dialogue between the two countries is a mistake. The political differences between the two countries need to be addressed, and a framework for negotiation that both countries can live with needs to be constructed.

This is not an impossible task. Paradoxically, the United States and Iran have been growing closer to each other in several areas: Iranian trade with the U.S. via third parties has increased steadily since the revolution; after a major drop in student visas in 2001 and 2002, the number of Iranian students going to America to study has gone back up; and, significantly, the United States has maintained steady, mediated contacts with Iranian government officials, which were instrumental in coordinating U.S. contacts with Afghanistan's Northern Alliance prior to the defeat of Afghanistan's Taliban regime in late 2001.

In order to formulate a serious and successful foreign policy toward Iran, Americans need information about what Iranians think, believe, and feel about their own society and how it fits into the international system. This report is an attempt to outline from recent on-the-ground interviews and discussions how Iranians view U.S.-Iranian relations and what their aims and goals are, both as individuals and for their country. Our findings are based largely on interviews conducted in Iran, with additional information coming from e-mail exchanges and off-the-record meetings in the U.S., Canada, and Europe with scholars, diplomats, NGOs, international organizations, businesspeople, and journalists, many of whom visit Iran regularly. We have generally not named our interviewees in this report because of concern that publication of their remarks could, in some cases and in unpredictable ways, affect them adversely.

MAIN FINDINGS

According to the chancellor of a prestigious university in Tehran, despite the current government-to-government freeze, the way to start fostering further cooperation among Iranians and Americans is by people-to-people visits that allow us to question our fundamental perceptions. “Coming here to talk to people like me in order to seek a greater understanding of reality is how we can all start to see that what we believe is often very different than the actual facts,” he said in a meeting with members of our delegation. “This sort of exploration can only lead to a greater understanding and further cooperation between our two countries.”

Regime-Change Rhetoric Harms Relations and Reforms

Yet in the aggravated climate surrounding the sanctions debate in the United Nations Security Council, young reformers we met bemoaned the setbacks they suffer from the hardliners every time the United States issues statements that threaten to isolate Iran. They told us that Americans must begin to understand Iran on its own terms and to listen to Iranians and learn about local realities, rather than rely on stereotypes. America’s big-stick diplomacy only fuels Iran’s hardliners and hinders reforms, we were told.

President Bush’s co-mingling Iran with North Korea and Iraq and calling it part of the “axis of evil” immediately after Iran supported the U.S. in Afghanistan has had deleterious effects. According to a retired government official in Tehran, “the U.S. pulled the carpet out from under the Iranian internationalists who had supported outreach to America.” Iran’s UN ambassador, Javad Zarif, who was in charge of his country’s negotiations with Washington over Afghanistan at the time, explained why the U.S. label “axis of evil” had such a negative impact in Iran. He said that many Iranians had expected a positive response from the U.S. for Iran’s help in Afghanistan and that they were outraged and hurt by the poisonous labeling “axis of evil” that they received instead. He told us, “Iran made a mistake by just hoping that the U.S. would reciprocate and by not linking its assistance in Afghanistan to American help for Iran in other areas.” It is likely that Iran will drive hard bargains with the U.S. in the future.

In the context of tensions between the U.S. and Iran, American Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns told us that the U.S. and Iran maintain only limited back-channel contacts. Burns reported that he himself has never been in a room with an Iranian official and that the State Department does not have a cadre of Farsi speakers. “There is no one in my generation who’s ever served in Iran,” he said. “There’s no one in my generation who has ever worked with the Iranians in any way, shape, or form. And we have got to fix that.” To that end, Burns has promoted first-time Farsi lessons among State Department employees.

He has established a special outpost in Dubai where U.S. diplomats can meet Iranians as they come and go to and from Tehran, and has set up a special interagency task force within the State Department to facilitate the exchange of information on Iran.

While Iran's hard-line president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, resists international pressures to open its nuclear program to full international inspection and the United States elaborates new complaints about Iranian influence in Iraq, supporters of democratic reform have been heartened by the setbacks Ahmadinejad received in the December 2006 elections for municipal government bodies and for the "Council of Advisors," a large body that advises Iran's "supreme leader," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. As long as tensions run so high, however, even secular liberals in Iran are not receptive to gestures of support from the American government. Like the journalist Akbar Ganji, important dissidents tend to reject overtures from the U.S. administration.

The pro-democracy broadcasting proposed under the Iran Freedom Support Act, which passed both houses of the U.S. Congress with broad bipartisan support in 2006 as part of a package that also threatens sanctions against Iran's nuclear program, is widely seen as propaganda in service of a U.S. policy of regime change. The Iranian sociologist and former UNESCO advisor Ehsan Naraghi opposed the act from early in its conception, writing to Pennsylvania's Senator Rick Santorum that "your support would only give the authoritarians the opportunity to accuse freedom activists of complicity with the American superpower."

A manufacturer we met in Yazd warned, "America's threats of regime change, bombing, and UN sanctions fuel our hardliners. We will be set back and our freedoms taken away if it comes to war." A participant in the embassy hostage taking of 1979 who now promotes human rights and other reforms complained to us that the surge in support for democratic reform, symbolized by former President Mohammed Khatami's first-ballot electoral majorities of 70 percent in 1997 and then 78 percent in 2001, was "stopped in its tracks" by President Bush's 2002 "axis of evil" speech. In 2004, candidates identified with the reform movement were able to win only 39 out of 290 seats in Iran's Majlis, or parliament. By 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who had a base of support among Revolutionary Guard veterans of the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s and an alliance with Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, was able to gain a second-round majority of 62 percent in Iran's presidential election. Although a major reason for the resurgence of politicians aligned with Iran's clerical power structure in 2005 is that right-wing bodies were able to approve who could run for office in partyless elections, the effect on popular opinion in Iran of the United States' escalating anti-Iranian rhetoric and actions should not be discounted.

Nationalism Is a National Pastime

In order to more effectively engage Iranian opinion, U.S. officials as well as independent observers need to realize how deeply nationalism runs through Iranian society. When Iranians perceive the nation to be under threat, nationalism transcends resentment of the unpopular regime, helping explain how it can be both unloved and stable at the same time. We heard statements of pride in Iran's civilization from reform-minded students and conservative shopkeepers alike. Insistence on Iran's independence is contained not only in President Ahmadinejad's bellicose rhetoric but also in the opinion of a shopkeeper who told us that he knew what the International Atomic Energy Agency was but did not care whether or not Iran's nuclear program was in compliance with IAEA treaties. Despite such strident remarks, we learned that public support for the nuclear program is neither as universal nor as fixed as the government claims and that Iranians would have access to more information about the issue if the media were less strictly controlled.

A diplomat in Tehran who has served internationally told us, "The United States and Iran can work together only if their mutual interests are respected and not on the basis of U.S. interests dominating, as they have for more than 50 years." While Iranians are tired of being a pariah state, they are also proud of their country's growing global power and importance. "Iran has the power now while the U.S. is caught up in a quagmire in Iraq," the diplomat commented. Said the university chancellor in Tehran: "The goals of the Iranian people are not simply limited to economic success and prosperity. The people want their country to have independence and a voice on the international stage."

Our meetings in Iran were made through contacts developed in advance of our visits, often taking advantage of the personal connections of our members. We also conducted interviews on the spot during our travels around the country. Many people welcomed us and were glad to talk frankly and at length about a wide range of topics. But in a social context where the clerical power structure has a surveillance and enforcement apparatus in the Revolutionary Guard's millions-strong paramilitary Basij force, reform-minded people were more accessible. We met fewer supporters of Ayatollah Khamenei or President Ahmadinejad than we did those who question or oppose them. The conservatives we did meet were deeply nationalistic, even if they did not understand foreign affairs. For example, a conservative school teacher in Tehran told us she continues to support the President and his foreign policy whatever it was because he has raised her salary. When asked about Ahmadinejad's denunciations of Jews, she said that she didn't know anything about the Holocaust but that she was proud that Ahmadinejad had "stood up for the Palestinians to the whole world."

President Ahmadinejad in Person

At a small group breakfast meeting that we attended in New York, President Ahmadinejad played down his Holocaust denial, emphasizing only his belief that Palestinians had been made to suffer as a result of Jewish suffering during World War II. “A blacksmith committed a sin, and they beheaded another blacksmith to make up for it,” he said in colloquial phrasing typical of his rhetoric. A short man dressed in the white windbreaker he wears everywhere, Ahmadinejad contrasted sharply with the black-robed and turbaned ayatollahs with whom he has an uneasy alliance. He greeted us with a polite salute and then proceeded to talk for two hours, allowing us to ask whatever questions we wanted.

Ahmadinejad skirted critical questions, parrying queries on freedom of expression in Iran, for instance, with the assertion that “no one in the United States questions democracy, but in Iran we can question the principles of Islamic government.” The exchange did not produce evidence of common ground on which to resolve the United States’ disputes with Iran, but Ahmadinejad did profess to be in favor of dialogue, promising to provide forums for exchanges in technical areas such as aerospace and adding tongue in cheek that “Americans can go to Iran without being fingerprinted and treated disrespectfully.” (A visa for President Ahmadinejad himself had been opposed by the State Department, and a number of Iranian journalists were denied visas to accompany his visit to the United Nations.)

The denunciatory rhetoric that President Ahmadinejad had demonstrated in his UN speech the day before our breakfast meeting was significantly muted when we met in the absence of a large diplomatic audience to witness his performance. He emphasized an almost mystical side to the nationalist populism he projects. “Iranians have a love affair with Iran,” he said at one point, recalling his service in the Revolutionary Guard during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. “Even Armenians and Jews joined in the fight.” At another point he said, “Ideals are like mountain peaks for a mountaineer. As you climb you must look at the peak but also at your feet. We must move up towards the ideal. Otherwise life is boring.” Again, there was little in the exchange to provide a basis for bilateral understandings, but the closed-door meeting provided insight into a quieter side of the Iranian president’s personality and also, perhaps, into an aspect of his domestic appeal in Iran. “From the taxi driver to the baker, nobody is worried what will happen if the U.S. attacks... Iranians have inner strength.”

Iran’s Government Must Meet Rising Expectations

In Iran we found repeated confirmation of Ahmadinejad’s assertion that his constituents were concerned about improving their lot in life. But we also found that the government faces increasing difficulty delivering sufficient

economic benefits. Despite the steep rise in oil prices over the past few years and strong growth rates in the economy overall, benefits to Iranians have trailed off.

Almost a third of a century of sanctions have taken their toll, fueling the black market and forcing Iranians to pay its high prices for medicines and other essentials. Inflation, estimated to be as high as 30 percent, is also eroding living standards; the price of some basic food commodities like potatoes and tomatoes quadrupled in six months. The country's oil infrastructure is decaying, and it has been unable to reap a full return on the high prices because it cannot meet the export quotas set by OPEC. Domestic consumption of highly subsidized natural gas and gasoline is rising rapidly, and in the case of gasoline, Iran's minimal refinery capacity means it must import at market rates in order to sell gasoline to the public for 35 cents a gallon. Surpluses gained from higher oil revenues that are not lost to the subsidy on gasoline appear to be consumed by the government and the network of clerical organizations that control these revenues.

In the years immediately after the 1979 revolution, the standard of living for average Iranians improved markedly, even though gross domestic product declined precipitously and has recovered pre-revolution levels only in recent years. Electrification and piped water were brought to more than 90 percent of the population. Natural gas for cooking and heat was piped into 90 percent of urban households. Health, family planning, primary education, and other government-supplied services dramatically expanded. Birth rates declined to close to the replacement level for Iran's population. As many as 90 percent of households were able to purchase televisions, and phone service was brought to rural areas.

According to UNICEF figures, childhood mortality rates under the Shah ran nearly as high as those in India, then a much poorer country. After the revolution these rates declined from 130 deaths per thousand children under five in 1980 to 72 in 1990, 55 in 1995, 44 in 2000, and 41 in 2002. In the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report for 2006, however, Iran's oil-rich per capita income of \$7,525, which places it 72nd among 177 countries surveyed, does not translate proportionately into a higher standard of living: Even while absolute poverty is low in Iran (35th out of 177 countries, considerably lower than under the Shah), the country ranks only 96th in terms of the UNDP's overall human development index, 85th in terms of total life expectancy and adult literacy, and 92nd in terms of enrollment of potential students in schools, colleges, and universities.

In Peace, Economic Strivers Question their Government

The Iranian government's recent inability to meet the rising expectations of its people has led many Iranians to question the power of their leaders. We met many

Iranians who were taking on extra jobs to maintain their standard of living. “All they give us is slogans,” said a 67-year-old former naval officer who now works as a mechanical engineer and also drives a Tehran taxi to make ends meet. “Talk about Palestinians and Hezbollah won’t help me buy milk for my grandchildren!”

The wages of even professional jobs are untenably low. We were told that an engineer or a college professor would have difficulty buying a home or sending children to a university. A female journalist in her early thirties reported that when a local bakery shut down for renovations during last summer’s battles between Israel and Hezbollah, her neighbors immediately concluded that the Iranian government had sent all the country’s flour to Lebanon. The economic aspirations of Iranians could be an important engine for greater integration with the international community. Alternatively, threats like U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf or broad sanctions affecting the Iranian people could result in an entrenchment of hardliners and Iran’s closing itself off from the West.

Two-thirds of all Iranians are 35 years old and younger, according to the UN Population Division, and the entry of young people into the labor force has outstripped job creation by about 200,000 people per year, according to the World Bank. In September 2006, the World Bank reported unemployment in Iran at 11.5 percent overall and 23.2 percent among young people, compared with 10.9 and 22.4 percent, respectively, six months earlier. Young men and women we met complained that Iran’s economy is decrepit, that unemployment is rising, and that wages for nonprofessional jobs like driving buses and taxis are unbearably low. They blame the government for mismanaging the economy. “The government is everywhere,” they say. “All of us are working with the government in some way or another because it’s so big that it permeates all of life. You can’t get away from it.”

Compounding the problem, Iran’s constitutional prohibition of foreign ownership has caused deterioration in its petroleum infrastructure because it forbids the sharing of oil resources with foreign refinery developers and Iran lacks the capital, technology, and management to build them on its own. “Why are we importing gasoline when we are a major oil-producing nation?” one professional job-seeker asked us rhetorically. Several young entrepreneurs argued that foreign direct investment could bring new opportunities for employment. A small business owner in Shiraz complained that even though the government, which has controlled 80 percent of employment in the past, has slowly begun to privatize, his own chances of making it are hampered by Iran’s isolated status in the world. An entrepreneur named Sami who sells air time to calling-card companies said that his business suffered because of negative views of Iran among his international clients.

Ideology Is Discredited by Corruption, Undermined by Media

Other young men complained of government corruption. Ahmed, a 37-year-old entrepreneur, found himself shut out of a computer-importing business when he ran up against government officials who had their own interests in computer importing. “If they tell you to stop, there is nothing you can do,” Ahmed complained. “I had to abandon my business entirely.” When we met him, he was working as a translator and tour guide at the same time that he tried to get an internet marketing business off the ground. A 34-year-old would-be businessman added, “If I want to get anything done, I have to bribe government officials—not much, but enough to get the paperwork moved up the chain.”

Iranians tend to view their theocratic regime as hypocritical because official corruption is so prevalent. “The connection between regime piety and corrupt wealth dominates how Iranians see the world,” a journalist wrote after describing a police crackdown on illegal satellite dishes. While the dishes are ostensibly banned because they are conduits for Western influence, the journalist’s informants asserted that dishes began to be confiscated only when the son of a prominent regime-connected ayatollah obtained a contract to import laptop-size satellite dishes. The well-connected dish trader wanted to make sure of demand for his new product, according to the journalist’s sources on the episode.

Satellite TV dishes are widespread, despite official prohibitions. When a Network 20/20 delegate visited relatives in Shiraz, his cousin told him that thanks to ingenious connecting and sharing devices, Iranians can now access Showtime, Cinemax, and even pay-as-you-go porn channels from the United States. “How will the Iranian government ever be able to regulate what channels are available to us?” asked the cousin. DVDs of Western films are widely available, and despite the fact that high-speed Internet access is the exception, not the rule, many young people we met reported use of the Internet on a daily basis, tolerating long delays online to download media-rich content from international websites. Young Iranian men and women publish more than 90,000 blogs, making Farsi the world’s third most popular language on the Web, according to the Iran Civil Society Organization’s Training and Research Center.

Higher Education of Women Accelerates

While visiting colleges and universities, we found that the professional education of women, while contributing to pressure for employment, adds expertise to the work force and represents a major force for social change. The number of women graduating from Iran’s universities now exceeds the number of men. For instance, 20 of the 25 graduate students in Islamic Azad University’s spring 2006 environmental management seminar were women. In the university’s applied physics department, 70 percent of the 2006 graduates were women. An American

medical scientist visiting Tehran told us that in academic settings she had observed equality between male and female researchers. “No distinctions are made around the Petri dish,” she remarked.

A nurse who had just finished a night shift insisted, “I will choose a person as a husband who lets me work because I love my job.” This sentiment is heard despite the fact that in Iran a woman needs her husband’s permission to work and it is difficult for a single woman to rent an apartment. Working mothers are a growing phenomenon, with the result that husbands are sharing the workload at home for the first time. Professional women lack access to management positions, however, and earn less than a third of the income of their male counterparts.

Who Speaks Up for Women’s Rights, and How

Two highly educated professional women in Tehran argued for reform that goes beyond shared housework. They want to see gender equality in Iran in government, society, and the home. They said revisions were needed in divorce and child custody laws and cited a host of smaller issues, including the fact that their husbands are not allowed in hospital delivery rooms while they are giving birth. Like women all across Iran, they expressed a desire to attend soccer games and other sports events along with men. Such wishes are typical of the plethora of freedoms that Iranians press for in addition to human rights, freedom of speech, judicial practice, and government transparency.

On a street in Tehran, a 23-year-old graduate student in blue jeans, sweater, and headscarf pointed out another woman in head-to-toe chador and asked, “Do you know what she’s wearing?” When we said politely that the outfit was a chador, she vehemently countered, “No, it is a prison.” Such statements clearly show that the visceral objections to the public concealment of women that many Westerners feel when they travel through the streets of Iran are not foreign to some Iranian women. But the dodging of the veil by university-educated women should not be promoted as the primary battleground in the struggle to improve the lives of Iranian women. “Progressive women need to bring along the more conservative female forces in Iranian society,” we were told by a sophisticated Iranian woman in her mid-forties. “Sometimes these women hold us back more than the men. They are difficult because they are fundamentalist and ideological. Also they are ignorant of international norms.” It should be noted that besides the large increase in female literacy in Iran since the revolution, contraception is now available to more than 70 percent of Iranian women. Other young women we met bristled at having to wear a headscarf, and many went to lengths to fulfill the requirement of public modesty in minimal ways, wearing form-fitting outfits, bright lipstick, and token scarves perched on the back of the latest hairdos. But they told us also that they don’t want to be told by outsiders that they should take it off.

Coping Amid Restraints and Repression

Many Iranians live with far more freedom in their daily lives than the legal codes they live under formally allow. Often rules are simply disregarded. A former high-ranking government official argued that one way to achieve progress is by not enforcing rules that are still in place, rather than waging public battles on hot-button issues. She called this approach “productive corruption,” in which an opportunistic public argument that a “perfect society” is only attainable in the afterlife might allow for greater tolerance in the here and now. She identified former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani as an exemplar of this approach, noting that Rafsanjani has often been accused of corruption but that individual freedoms, as well as privatization of state businesses, increased under his government. By contrast, a young secular women’s rights activist we met disagreed with this tack, complaining vehemently that “productive corruption is a Band-Aid solution, as it keeps women vulnerable to parallel security forces and skirts the fundamental problem of lawlessness in Iranian society.”

Iranians who take on the current order in explicit terms, however, have faced unrelenting pressure. Over the past four years, the Iranian authorities have ordered the closure of more than 100 newspapers. In the fall of 2006, the government closed the daily *Sharq*, a paper that had in some ways accommodated government controls while trying to secure means for reform-minded journalists to continue their work. *Sharq*’s editors, like those of earlier reformist papers, have been threatened, attacked, and sometimes put in prison. A professor of law at the University of Tehran told us that reformist academics, particularly in the political science and humanities departments, had been forced into retirement under Ahmadinejad. Besides the impact of these retirements, including potentially his own, the professor complained that the overseers of Iran’s universities now are “men who lack experience in academic administration.” The situation is so dire that the majority of Iran’s prominent intellectuals and activists either have fled the country or are remaining silent within Iran, engaging in tangential occupations and waiting for a more conducive time to again speak up.

University students in Tehran and Shiraz told us that in the face of the government’s blocking of websites and online newspapers, they have solicited friends outside Iran to forward the sites’ content to them as e-mail attachments. While such inventiveness is likely to preserve the circulation of dissident opinion among a small group of dedicated students and techies, other Iranian citizens ranging from a restaurant owners to an environmental expert complained that the regime’s interventions were effectively removing the Internet as an alternative theater of debate.

A few activists remain resolute. “If the regime expects me to keep silent about the violation of Iranian citizens’ human rights, it is wasting its time,” the journalist Ahmad Zeidabadi told us boldly. “Even if they decide to execute me, like Thomas More, I will not relent.”

The Rise, Retreat, and Potential Revival of Reform Politics

Optimism among reformists was at its peak soon after former President Khatami won his first term in 1997. That enthusiasm dimmed as the Supreme Leader Khamenei and his clerical allies repeatedly exploited the structural weakness of the president's office to thwart reform. And President Ahmadinejad's victory in 2005 left many liberals despondent. "Every morning I wake up and remind myself that I am in Iran," a professor of agriculture told us. "I keep my expectations low." In the run-up to the December 2006 elections for municipal councils and for the Assembly of Experts, an 86-member council that advises and selects the Supreme Leader, many opponents of President Ahmadinejad despaired of a positive outcome. "Iranian elections are massive. We have more than 46 million eligible voters for more than 130,000 seats," a professor from Yazd told us. "But the Council of Guardians makes sure that their conservative candidates dominate every race." Two physicians in Esfahan complained that more than two-thirds of the candidates for the Assembly of Experts either were not allowed to run or dropped out of the race. This vetting extended to the municipal council elections throughout the country. Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati complained that the decisions on who would be allowed to run for the municipal councils "are governed by bribery."

Despite the very real controls on who can run in Iran's elections, the December elections had surprising results. President Ahmadinejad, whose clerical sponsor had himself been barred from contesting by the Council of Guardians, saw an allied slate of candidates known as the Pleasant Scent of Service win only three of the 15 council seats in Tehran, where Ahmadinejad served as mayor before being elected president. Moderate conservatives won seven seats on the Tehran council, reformists won four, and an independent took one. Elsewhere, the pro-Ahmadinejad slate won just three of 11 seats in Isfahan, four of 16 in Tabriz, one of 11 in Shiraz, three of nine in Qom, and one of nine in Ardabil, where Ahmadinejad had once served as governor. In the election for the Assembly of Experts, the big winner was former President Rafsanjani, who received more votes than any other candidate in Tehran and has recently argued for a more conciliatory approach on Iran's nuclear standoff with the U.S. Significantly, Rafsanjani's victory came after former President Khatami brokered an agreement that saw to it that Rafsanjani, Khatami, and the reformist former speaker of parliament, Mehdi Karrubi, did not field competing candidates for the assembly seats. Turnout was over 60 percent. Whether the election results indicate a popular rejection of Ahmadinejad's histrionic politics or a backlash against him among the clerical establishment is difficult to sort out. But observers of Iran, and U.S. government officials in particular, would do well to pay closer attention to the shifting currents in Iran's politics.

Attitudes Toward Americans Since the Invasion of Iraq

An academic we met told us that with the Iranian government recognizing that the United States seeks to infiltrate Iranian civil society in order to forward a cause of regime change, “it is essential for Americans to have no connection to the U.S. government whatsoever and for them to be known and respected among Iranians before collaboration is possible.” An NGO worker told us that Iranian civil society organizations that had sought U.S. funding as recently as two years ago now avoid such contacts. “Meetings with Americans have created resentment among Iranian NGOs and mixed feelings about receiving support from outside,” she said, adding that some organizations in civil society in Iran have temporarily gone underground and that U.S. overtures to them would only increase the insecurity of their relations with the state.

Before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Iran had the most staunchly and energetically pro-American population in the Middle East, a matter of no small importance given conditions in the rest of the region. But the images of devastation in Iraq and media reports of U.S. aggression that Iranians view daily have led to a dramatic change in these sentiments. A young wife and mother told us, “In the past three years, the botched invasion has resulted in a serious loss of political capital for the United States, and the sort of sympathies that brought Iranians out in protest to the September 11 attacks do not exist today.”

Nevertheless, the American and international members of Network 20/20’s delegations were warmly greeted throughout Iran. Three young Zoroastrian computer engineers we met poignantly described their reaction to the attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001. One of them recalled:

When 9/11 happened, many Iranians felt profound sadness and unity with the American people. Like everyone else in the world, we viewed that day as a horrible tragedy that affected the whole world. Young people all over Iran—in Tehran, Esfahan, Yazd—shed tears and even expressed themselves in public by holding candlelight vigils in public squares. They condemned the senseless acts of the terrorists and demanded justice. Many chanted, “Death to the terrorists!” Of course, our public display of solidarity did not go unnoticed by the regime or their local thugs, the Basij. Young boys (around 12 to 15 years old) who had volunteered for the Basij were ordered to disperse the crowds, which they accomplished by brutally clubbing people with batons and storming in on motorcycles. I was hit in the back of the head and had to be taken to the hospital.

While such a heart-warming story does little to resolve the state-to-state disputes between the United States and Iran, it does serve to remind us that some individual sympathies persist. We found communication and in some cases collaboration to be thriving in a number of technical arenas. International researchers in fields as varied as archeology and medical research have maintained institutional collaborations throughout the years of Iran's isolation. Members of the 20/20 delegation are now developing associations in their various fields with friends they made on their visit. While it will take time to build these initiatives, several promising starts have been made in the areas of women's rights, the environment, and filmmaking.

Forwarding Collaboration and Communication

Some areas of potential collaboration we identified include public health, where Iran's successes in family planning, drug treatment, and HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention have drawn praise from U.S. and other international researchers and agencies; medical research of heart disease, multiple sclerosis, and loss of eyesight, where Iranian advances have generally been made by non-government institutions; stem-cell research, which, unlike in America, is not thwarted by theological polemic, in part because many Sunni and Shia sects believe that a fetus is infused with a soul only at the age of 120 days; and environmental protection, where a local adviser to international organizations operating in Tehran tells us that environmental protection projects are already funded by multilateral mechanisms to which the United States is usually a main financial contributor, and where Iran has already coordinated with its neighbors to mitigate the effects of oil drilling in the Caspian Sea.

Iran's poor integration into the international system, however, has an impact on exchange even in noncontroversial areas. A research doctor at the Royan Institute in Esfahan reported that Iran's exclusion from the World Trade Organization has limited its access to scientific equipment and replacement parts. A seasoned diplomat told us that because of sanctions, until very recently Iran Air had not been able to buy spare parts for its airbus fleet for 27 years, and that the situation had become increasingly dangerous for air travelers within Iran. On a more personal level, the suspicious treatment of Iranians entering the United States discourages collaboration and people-to-people exchange. In the summer of 2006, for instance, more than 100 prominent Iranian academics attempted to enter the United States for a reunion of the prestigious Sharif Industrial University's alumni. They all had valid visas, but half were deported because of concern among American border agents about the sudden high number of visiting Iranians. Such spontaneous and uneducated reactions are counterproductive and should be prevented.

In some areas of culture, cross influences seem to persist regardless of the difficulties of communication and collaboration. Our encounters with viewers of American television and movies attest to this, as does the reception given Iranian art films by American cinephiles. A U.S. wrestling team that has competed in post-revolutionary Iran for almost a decade has succeeded in establishing strong ties with Iranian counterparts as well as wrestling fans. We also note with approval the recent lifting of a ban on Iran by Fifa, the world football ruling body, just hours ahead of the draw for the 2007 Asian Cup finals. Remembering the role that table tennis played during the early 1970s in the thaw in relations between the United States and China, we welcome the possibility of a U.S.-Iranian contest in the 2010 World Cup.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to each of the groups below are made in order of their direct connection to Network 20/20's expertise.

To the U.S. Government

The U.S. government should reestablish diplomatic relations with Iran. It should cease calling for regime change; the Iranian government is not going away. Instead the U.S. should work through diplomatic channels to raise issues that concern us like human rights and support for terrorism. Eventually the U.S. should help Iran, the way it has China, accede to international organizations, including the World Trade Organization. The U.S. should explore whether the model of U.S.-Iran cooperation that was successful in Afghanistan can be replicated for Iraq.

A bilateral meeting between officials of both countries should be considered to lay the foundation for reopening diplomatic ties. While noting disagreements on specific issues, the meeting could result in a mutual declaration of intent. The declaration should include mutual benefits, rather than one-sided benefits to the U.S. or Iran.

The development of a corps of Foreign Service officers with knowledge of Farsi, Iranian history, and Iranian culture should be accelerated, and existing mechanisms of dialogue with Iranians should be expanded. The restrictions on meetings between Iranian and American officials should be relaxed. If a thaw in bilateral relations takes place, a cadre of knowledgeable diplomats will enable the U.S. to collaborate with Iran on certain issues while pursuing a hard line in others. With this in mind, the government's new National Security Language Initiative should be made a priority. Areas for potential future cooperation include the environment, drug and HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, drug interdiction, and medical research.

Other actions that should be considered include: a) moderating the rhetoric, as threats, accusations, and ultimatums are counterproductive; b) allowing Iranians to obtain visas to enter the United States and encouraging their visits; c) revitalizing the Fulbright program for academic exchanges, especially short-term professor exchanges; d) sending one or two young diplomats from each government's foreign ministry to study language for a year at a university in the other's country; and e) establishing virtual joint classes and discussion groups between universities (as Soliya does with the Arab world) and other institutions and organizations.

The State Department should coordinate with immigration officers and other branches of the Department of Homeland Security where visas have been issued to Iranians to visit the United States to ensure that these vetted and pre-

approved exchanges are not thwarted because officers at the point of entry lack information. As stated above, visas should be given to Iranians and their visits encouraged.

Incentives should be identified to reward compromise on the part of Iran.

While relations are now too strained for the United States to offer carrots in advance of agreements, the outlines of specific incentives should be articulated. Among possible approaches could be U.S. promotion of direct investment to improve Iran's decaying oil infrastructure, encouragement of Iran's membership in the World Trade Organization, and the removal of American objections to the proposed natural gas pipeline between Iran, Pakistan, and India. Cultural and scientific exchanges could also be part of an incentive package.

There should be a review of the existing array of U.S. sanctions to assess their impact, followed by consideration of whether those with little or no negative effect on specific targeted problems might be reconsidered. Those restrictions that have potential to cause large-scale suffering among Iranian citizens should be abandoned. For example, even the threat of broad economic sanctions such as an oil blockade would greatly strengthen hard-line forces in Iran. Sanctions prohibiting the exchange of academic or cultural information contained in the works of senior government officials in Iran, Cuba, and Sudan should be abandoned. Reading such texts would be of real value to Americans, and many believe that such restrictions are not in keeping with the First Amendment.

Iran should not be a scapegoat for Iraq. While an assessment of Iran's role in supporting violent actors in Iraq's internal conflicts is beyond the scope of Network 20/20's Iran project, the deteriorating situation in Iraq clearly has multiple causes. The Iraq Study Group's recommendation that Iran be urged to cooperate in intra-regional settlements concerning Iraq remains a more promising approach than the confrontational one being pursued by U.S. officials. At a minimum, official American statements should acknowledge that Iran has a natural interest in securing influence for itself in its immediate neighborhood, even while objecting to the forms that influence may now take.

To the U.S. Congress

Hearings should be held on how to engage Iran more productively than a quarter of a century of nonrecognition, isolation, and sanctions seems to have done. Besides assessing the U.S. government's intelligence and plans for addressing its security complaints with Iran, Congress should hold open hearings on how to engage Iran more productively. A strong pool of expertise on conditions, politics, and attitudes in Iran is present in the United States among Iranian-Americans and among academics, journalists, former diplomats, and some

businesspeople. Where possible, experts and opinion leaders should be invited to participate in such hearings on Iran. The hearings should include information about existing cooperation between Americans and Iranian, as well as reports on Iran's leadership in the areas of health, the environment, and culture. Network 20/20 would be pleased to participate in such hearings.

An early priority should be a visit to Iran by members or former members of Congress, followed by a reciprocal visit by Iranian parliamentarians.

To NGOs, Universities, Media Organizations, and Private Citizens

People-to-people efforts should help Americans gain a better understanding of Iran. By broadening people's experience of the other society, efforts like Network 20/20's can gradually build critical thinking in both the U.S. and Iran, which can, in turn, be used to generate new forums for resolving disagreements. Beyond simply enacting good will between Iranians and Americans, people-to-people exchanges need to try out ways of raising the level of the debate between our two countries. To that end, Network 20/20 proposes to expand its network by means of a conference on Iran to which Iranians, leaders from the large Iranian-American communities overseas, and prominent scholars and other professionals with experience in Iran will be invited. The agenda would include reports on Iran's leadership in the areas of health, the environment, and culture.

Nongovernmental organizations must take their cues from their Iranian counterparts if they are to be helpful to them. In the current atmosphere of suspicion of American NGOs resulting from fear of U.S. regime-change funds flowing through them, it is imperative that efforts to address women's rights, the persecution of journalists, and other human rights issues in Iran be autonomous of the U.S. government. In addition, Iranian civil society organizations should lead in setting the agenda and in defining the nature and scope of these relationships.

Collaborations between unofficial Iranian and U.S. institutions should be preserved and extended. In various fields, collaborations built largely by individuals working in academic or research institutions have persisted, sometimes for many years. These contacts should be defended against restrictions in the event that U.S.-Iranian official relations become even more estranged. New collaborations in noncontroversial areas such as health, the environment, and culture would best be nurtured now by funding from organizations that are independent of the U.S. government.

Academic expertise on Iran should be supported. Teaching about Iran and of the Farsi language should be expanded in American universities and be directed not only at area studies specialists but also at those in other disciplines who

propose to work in Iran. Linkages with Iranian universities need to be set up and the viability of joint degree programs and student-faculty exchanges explored. Priorities for joint programming would be the enforcement of human rights, international law, public health, and environmental regulations at the regional and local levels. Federal area studies funding may be drawn on to support such an expansion, but support from foundations and the Iranian-American community should also be pursued. The independence of academic programs from government policy should be defended.

Western media, including from the U.S., should report on events and opinion within Iran even while the strategic standoff between the U.S. and Iran moves to the top of the news. Reporting on how American rhetoric and actions influence Iranian opinion is vital if Americans are to accurately gauge the effects of their government's policies. The media should strive to cover Iranian politics and society more broadly, rather than focusing primarily on the histrionics of a single politician, and should seek to move beyond simplistic assumptions about and representations of Iranian society and politics. Consumers of media could help achieve better coverage by pointing out errors and by providing context in letters to the editor, op-ed columns, and other feedback media.

Appendix A

Network 20/20 Mission Statement

Preparing Future Leaders to Shape the Global Security Debate

Twenty years from now, when business leaders and policymakers from the U.S. and countries of pivotal concern for global peace sit down at the negotiating table, will they meet as strangers or as colleagues with a history of cooperation?

Network 20/20 is an independent nonprofit organization that helps prepare next-generation leaders in the U.S. to participate meaningfully in the creation and execution of policies promoting entrepreneurial diplomacy and global security. We do this by means of lectures and educational initiatives at home and through a series of trips and exchanges abroad.

Network 20/20 fills two major gaps in U.S. foreign policy: lack of youth participation and lack of serious input from civil society in general. Network 20/20 helps to bridge these gaps by allowing mid-career individuals, with new and vigorous ideas drawn from their experiences in the real world of civil society, to refine their foreign policy understandings and share their insights with their peers.

Network 20/20 members come from the business world, the professions, media, NGOs, think tanks, government, and academia. They are a talented and diverse group that includes foreign nationals living in the U.S. What draws them together is that they are all motivated and disciplined individuals who are volunteering significant time and energy to improve their understanding of the world.

Appendix B

Entrepreneurial Diplomacy Program

In 2004, Network 20/20 launched its *Entrepreneurial Diplomacy Program* in an effort to connect young private sector leaders from the United States with their counterparts in other countries. Believing that the term “public diplomacy” has come to mean little more than government propaganda, Network 20/20 is building a broad network of influential private citizens that will generate concrete, actionable ideas to enhance international security and prosperity. The organization pursues this goal through study, dialogue, and field research in regions of global security concern.

Network 20/20 is an international association of talented young people who wish to make their mark in international affairs. In a world that grows more ideologically polarized by the day, Network 20/20 trains its members in civil debate dedicated to finding common ground between East and West, Islam and Christianity, developed and developing countries.

We believe that the world can only become more secure if its leaders know and respect one another. In the years ahead, our members will rise through the ranks of business, the private sector, and civil government while maintaining ties to their counterparts in countries of vital concern for global security. Because of Network 20/20, they will have ready access to an international network of their peers. Together, our members and their international associates will help build a more secure and prosperous world.

Richard M. Murphy
Chairman, *Entrepreneurial Diplomacy Program*

Richard M. Murphy is a senior editor at *Fortune Small Business* magazine. He holds an undergraduate degree in literature from Harvard College and a doctorate in social anthropology from Oxford University, based on fieldwork in Pakistan, where he was a Fulbright Scholar. Murphy's journalism has appeared in *Fortune*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Republic*, the *New York Times*, and many other media. He is currently under contract with Alfred A. Knopf to write *Lahore Nights*, a memoir about the culture and politics of contemporary Pakistan.

Lena Sene
Vice-Chairman, *Entrepreneurial Diplomacy Program*

Currently a 2006 White House Fellow placed in the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Lena Sene is a founding member of Network 20/20. Prior to her work at the White House, Sene was an Investment Representative at Lehman Brothers, where she advised entrepreneurs and CEOs of publicly traded companies on a full range of investment strategies. Before that she was a Private Banker at JPMorgan Chase, where she was selected as the sole recipient of the annual JPMorgan Rising Star Award for the Annual Women's Bond Club Merit Award Dinner in 2003. Sene holds NASD Securities Licenses 7 and 63. She is a board member of the United Nations Association of New York and a member of the Economic Club of New York. Born in the U.S., Sene was raised in Senegal, Russia, and the Ukraine and is fluent in English, French, Russian, and Wolof.

Appendix C

Network 20/20 Iran Project Team

George Billard – Team Leader

George Billard is a filmmaker based in New York City. He is President of Do Diligence, a film and television production company that has mounted productions in more than 30 countries, including Mongolia, Japan, Peru, French Polynesia, Australia, Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, and Chile's Easter Island. He is also President of Miracle Media, under which he produced and directed *The Well-Seasoned Traveler* for the A&E television network.

In the past 10 years, Billard has directed, photographed, and created a library of motion picture imagery that is distributed internationally through Getty Images. In addition, Billard continues to produce corporate communications and advertising. Clients include Panasonic, American General, Toyota, Dannon, Revlon, Warner Brothers, and Sony. He has a B.A. in Broadcast and Film from Boston University. In 2005 he earned an M.P.A. from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. For more information, visit his award-winning website, www.planetbillard.com.

Patricia Begley

Patricia Begley is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of two related companies, Prizmalite Industries and TioxoClean Inc., both of which are involved in nanotechnologies.

Prior to her current ventures, Begley had more than 20 years of experience in the investment banking industry, as the head of the investment banking department at Sumitomo Bank in New York and as a Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer of two private investment banking boutiques. Before that she spent six years at Drexel Burnham Lambert in Corporate Finance. She is a member of the first class of women to graduate from Yale University and holds an M.B.A. degree from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, where she was selected as a Wharton Fellow.

Tai-Heng Cheng

Professor Tai-Heng Cheng is Associate Director of the Center for International Law at New York Law School. He is also guest professor at Sarah Lawrence College and Of Counsel to the law firm Engel McCarney & Kenney LLP. In all of these appointments, he addresses complex issues situated at the intersection of public and

private international law. He was involved in the Dahbol arbitrations concerning the largest foreign investment in the Republic of India. He has also advised the Prosecutor-General of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor.

Professor Cheng holds a Doctor of the Science of Law degree and a Master of Law degree from Yale Law School, where he was Howard M. Holtzman Fellow for International Law. He also holds a Master of Arts degree and a Law degree with first class honors from Oxford University, at which he was Oxford University Scholar.

Lynn A. Foster

Lynn A. Foster has held senior level positions in financial and civic institutions and has had an enduring commitment to conservation, health care, and education. Recently retired as a research director of an investment management firm, she has also served as an institutional broker, a health care equity analyst, and a consultant to a venture capital firm specializing in health care investments. She is on the Executive Committee of the Board of the World Wildlife Fund and the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and chairs the Nominating Committee of the Board of the Population Council. She is a former president of the Girl Scout Council of Greater New York and a former trustee of the Girl Scouts of America.

Foster attended Punahou School in Hawaii and received a B.A. degree in English from Connecticut College and an M.B.A. with honors in Finance and Organizational Behavior from Boston University.

Thomas Gorman

Thomas Gorman is the Program Director at Network 20/20. A graduate of Vassar College with a B.A. in Political Science, Gorman's academic focus revolved around international affairs, with a particular focus on private security contractors and counter-narcotics policy in the Andean region. He has previously worked as a Research Associate for the Council on Hemispheric Affairs in Washington, D.C., drafting position papers relating to Western Hemispheric issues.

Originally from Brisbane, Australia, Gorman grew up in upstate New York. He has traveled widely in Australia and New Zealand, where he pursued his love of making wine and trekking in the wilderness. He speaks some Spanish and is currently learning Farsi.

Demetri Gounaris

Demetri Gounaris is a lawyer who works for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the United Nations, where he advises on matters of logistics, supply, and contract management. As a product of big New York City law firms, his professional background is in project finance, structured finance, and banking transactions. He has provided pro bono services to the Legal Aid Society, Volunteers for Legal Service, and the St. Ignatius soup kitchen. Gounaris also volunteers as a teacher of English to immigrants and refugees at the International Center in New York.

Gounaris grew up in Greece, the Dominican Republic, and Saudi Arabia and attended Columbia University and Boston College Law School. He speaks French and is currently learning Spanish.

Patricia Huntington

For more than 20 years, Patricia Huntington has advised grant makers in foreign policy, international development programs, and strategic philanthropy. Her clients have included American Express, the Ford Foundation, and the Sumitomo Corporation.

Prior to founding Network 20/20, Dr. Huntington directed a Rockefeller Foundation field research project in 11 countries on four continents. Dr. Huntington reported the results in a position paper, "Landmines and U.S. Leadership: A View from the Field." She also created an educational CD-ROM on global humanitarian mine clearance entitled "Landmines: Clearing the Way," which has been disseminated widely throughout the world.

Dr. Huntington is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Women's Foreign Policy Group, Women in International Security, and the Foreign Policy Association's Off-the-Record Lecture Series.

She earned a *Summa Cum Laude* for her Smith College undergraduate work on British imperialism in Southern Africa, an M.A. in African History from UCLA, and an Ed.D. from Rutgers University.

Glenn Johnston

Glenn Johnston is a director of business research for Kroll and is head of business development for the North America region. Before joining Kroll, he held director-level positions at the law firms of Loeb & Loeb and Covington & Burling.

Earlier in his career, Johnston was a financial journalist and worked in London and New York. He also spent four years as a public affairs officer with the United Nations, where he was assigned to the General Assembly's Legal Committee and the Security Council. Johnston has a law degree from Trinity College Dublin.

Rahul Manchanda

Prior to beginning his practice, Rahul Manchanda worked for one of the largest law firms in Manhattan, where he focused on asbestos litigation. Previously he worked for a multinational law firm in Paris, where he focused primarily on international arbitration, arbitration agreements, arbitration venue choice, and foreign policy.

At Boston University, Manchanda earned a B.A. in Biology, distinguishing himself in the chemical and biological sciences. He also attended Yale University, where he studied Molecular Cell and Evolutionary Biology.

He is admitted to practice in the highest state and federal courts in New York State and is currently an active member of the American Bar Association, the New York State Bar Association, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, Phi Alpha Delta International, the Global Interdependence Center, and the Asia Society.

Manchanda is fluent in French, English, Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi. He has also studied Russian, Latin, and Hebrew.

Sarah Pfuhl

Sarah Pfuhl is an associate in WilmerHale's Securities Department. Her practice focuses on regulatory investigations, including conducting independent internal investigations of alleged improper accounting practices for global Fortune 500 companies. Pfuhl's work has also included analysis of international affirmative action jurisprudence for an amicus brief submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court, pro bono representation of asylum clients, and research for the Open Society on international criminal law issues.

Pfuhl earned her J.D. *magna cum laude* from Duke University and was editor-in-chief of the *Duke Journal of Comparative and International Law*. In addition, she was an intern at Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, where she focused on international criminal law issues relating to the International Criminal Court Statute. Pfuhl is a member of the New York Bar Association.

Elsie Vance

Elsie Vance is currently an international consultant based in Istanbul and New York. Her clients include leadership educational and cultural institutions in Turkey and in the U.S. for which she provides strategic, marketing and governance services. Vance also serves on the Board of Trustees of Robert College of Istanbul, the American Research Institute in Turkey, Istanbul, and the Leadership Project of Washington, D.C.

Prior to moving to Istanbul, Vance worked from 1987 to 1994 as Vice President of the New York City Partnership, the leading business leadership organization in New York dedicated to promoting the social and economic climate of the city. Prior to that, she worked in leadership positions in the United States Senate from 1970 to 1986.

Vance has a B.A. in History from Vanderbilt University and an M.B.A. from Koç University in Istanbul, Turkey. She is married to Dr. Attila Askar, President of Koç University.

Josee Vrignon-Reboul

Josee Vrignon-Reboul, an attorney, was born in France, where she studied at the Institute for Advanced International Studies and the Center for the European Communities of the Faculty of Law in Paris.

Since moving to the United States in 1975, Vrignon-Reboul received her LLM from New York University and became a member of the New York Bar, working first at the law firm Skadden Arps in New York and then as Assistant General Counsel at Prudential Insurance Company in New Jersey. After full-time motherhood, she became a mediator for a community center.

Fluent in French and English with some conversational skills in Spanish, she travels frequently to France and has kept a residence in Nice.

Christiaan van den Hout

As the son of a Dutch diplomat, Christiaan van den Hout was born and raised till age four in New York. Later he attended the British School in The Hague and returned to New York City for a time before attending boarding school in England. While completing his education at Eton College, he was “house captain” of his boarding house and captained and played in Eton’s varsity teams for soccer, rugby, cricket, tennis, squash, fives, and rackets.

Before commencing university, he interned for Senator Ted Kennedy in Washington, D.C., then backpacked through South America, Australasia, and Southeast Asia. He is now in his second year at Edinburgh University, a Politics major, studying History.

Van den Hout is interested in film and art, foreign cultures, and international relations. At Eton College he was a member of the Political Society Committee, and he is currently involved in Edinburgh University's Political Society. He interned for nine weeks with Network 20/20, contributing to the Appendix of this report.

Network 20/20 Fellows from the Center for International Law at New York Law School

In July, 2006 the Center of International Law and Network 20/20 interviewed more than a dozen candidates, selecting two of them as Network 20/20 Fellows to conduct research on Iran. They are:

Matt Abrams

Matt Abrams is in his third year of studies in law at New York Law School. He graduated from Columbia University with a B.A. in Political Science. He has held internships with Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), the Legal Aid Society of New York, and Associate Justice Phyllis Gange-Jacob of the Appellate Term of the First Department of the New York Supreme Court.

Abrams has worked as a research assistant with Professors Anthony Fletcher and Tai-Heng Cheng, both of New York Law School. After graduation he plans to practice law in New York and eventually to run for public office.

Shahab Ghalambor

Shahab Ghalambor is a third-year law student at New York Law School. A graduate of California State University, San Bernardino with dual bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Finance, his academic interests before law school focused on international relations policy and theory. His primary fields of legal interest are commercial litigation and international law.

Ghalambor was born in Tehran, Iran, and immigrated with his family at the age of four to Southern California, where his family currently resides. He is fluent in conversational Farsi and Spanish. He is recently engaged to Kathryn Poole, a middle school teacher in Manhattan.

Appendix D

Iran Report Readers

Azadeh Moaveni	<i>Tehran Correspondent, Time Magazine</i>
Vali R. Nasr	<i>Adjunct Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies, Council on Foreign Relations</i> <i>Professor of Middle East and South Asia Politics, Naval Postgraduate School</i>

Iran Project Advisors

William O. Beeman	<i>Chairperson, Anthropology Department</i> <i>University of Minnesota</i>
Rachel Bronson	<i>Adjunct Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies, Council on Foreign Relations</i>
Richard W. Bulliet	<i>Professor of Middle Eastern History</i> <i>Middle East Institute, Columbia University</i>
Godfrey Cheshire	<i>Film Critic, Independent Weekly</i>
Hossein Kamaly	<i>Librarian, Middle East and Jewish Studies</i> <i>Columbia University Libraries</i>
Priscilla Lewis	<i>Deputy Director, American Strategy Program</i> <i>Director, U.S. in the World Initiative</i> <i>New America Foundation</i>
Alidad Mafinezam	<i>Director of Research</i> <i>Mosaic Institute</i>
Sayyeda Mirza-Jafri	<i>Project Manager</i> <i>One Nation - With Liberty and Justice for All</i> <i>Housed at the EastWest Institute</i>
Trita Parsi	<i>Managing Director</i> <i>National Iranian American Council</i>
Mohammad Reza Salamat	<i>Senior Economic Affairs Officer</i> <i>Division of Sustainable Development</i> <i>Department of Economic and Social Affairs</i> <i>United Nations</i>

Appendix E

Select list of persons interviewed in Iran Names withheld by request

Academia

Dr. Abdol karim Biazar shirazi	<i>Chancellor Islamic Religions University</i>
Massoumeh Ebtekar	<i>Professor, Immunology Department School of Medical Sciences Tarbiat Modarres University Vice-President (1997 – 2005) Islamic Republic of Iran Head (1997 – 2005), Environmental Protection Organization of Iran</i>
Azarakhsh Mokri, M.D.	<i>Assistant Professor of Psychiatry Tehran University of Medical Science</i>
Anonymous	<i>Professor University of Tehran</i>

Business

Ali, mid-30s	<i>Restaurateur, Tehran</i>
Ahmed, 34	<i>Businessman/Energy Sector, Tehran</i>
Anonymous, 37	<i>Computer Salesman/Entrepreneur Tehran</i>
Mehdi, 27	<i>Network Administrator/Small Business Owner, Esfahan, Shiraz and Tehran</i>
Sami, 26	<i>Entrepreneur, Esfahan and Tehran</i>

Think Tanks and NGOs

Laleh Daraie	<i>National Coordinator Small Grants Programme United Nations Development Programme</i>
Saied Ferdowsi	<i>Programme Analyst Energy, Environment, and Disaster Management Cluster United Nations Development Programme</i>
Hamidreza Taherinakhost	<i>Clinical Psychologist Iranian National Center for Addiction Studies</i>

Anonymous *International Agency, Tehran*
Anonymous *Women's Rights Advocate, Tehran*

Science

Mostafa, late 30s *Agricultural Professor, Tehran*
Anonymous *Medical Researcher – Drug Treatment
Tehran*
Anonymous *Medical Researcher – Drug Treatment
Tehran*
Anonymous *Physician, Esfahan*
Anonymous *Physician, Esfahan*

Iranian Voices

Anahita, 23 *Graduate Student, Tehran*
Mehdi, 24 *Graduate Student, Tehran*
Sarah, mid-20s *Tour Organizer, Tehran*
Woman, 40s *School Teacher, Tehran*
Man, mid-60s *Tour Guide, Tehran*
Man, 50s *Former Naval Officer; Driver
Tehran*
Man, 40s *Scientist, Tehran*
Man, 50s *Diplomat, Tehran*
Man, 67 *Driver, Tehran*
Man, mid-60s *Driver, Tehran*
Woman, 32 *Nurse, Tehran*
Woman, 30s *Activist - Women's Rights, Tehran*
Man, 40s *Taxi Driver, Tehran*
Man, late 40s *Shop Owner, Shiraz*
Women, 20 and 23 *Graduate Students
Islamic Azad University, Shiraz*
Pega, 20 *Student of Architectural Design
Islamic Azad University, Shiraz*
Woman, 21 *Student of Architectural Design
Islamic Azad University, Shiraz*
Man, early 20s *Software-Engineering Student
Islamic Azad University, Shiraz*

Man, 50-60s	<i>Shopkeeper, Shiraz</i>
Men, mid-20s	<i>Jobseekers, Shiraz</i>
Sarah, 21	<i>Student of English, Yazd</i>
Maryam, 20	<i>Student of English, Yazd</i>
Men - 20, 20, and 22	<i>Computer engineers, Yazd</i>
Man, late 50s	<i>Occupation Unknown, Yazd</i>
Man, 28	<i>Entrepreneur, Yazd</i>
Man, mid-50s	<i>Professor, Yazd</i>
Hazera boy, 14-15	<i>Student, Esfahan</i>
Man, mid-40s	<i>Research Doctor, Esfahan</i>
Men, early- mid 30s	<i>Accountants, Esfahan</i>
Negin, 30	<i>Scholar, Caspian Coast</i>

Media

Azadeh Moaveni	<i>Tehran Correspondent, Time Magazine</i>
Anonymous	<i>Journalist, Tehran</i>

Religion and Culture

Anonymous	<i>Cleric, Qom</i>
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Appendix F

Persons interviewed in North America and Europe

Academia

Reza Aslan	<i>Doctoral Candidate, Sociology of Religions University of California, Santa Barbara</i>
William O. Beeman	<i>Chairperson, Anthropology Department University of Minnesota</i>
Richard W. Bulliet	<i>Professor of Middle Eastern History Middle East Institute Columbia University</i>
Fatemeh Haghighatjoo	<i>Visiting Scholar Center for International Studies Massachusetts Institute of Technology Member (2000-2004) Iranian Parliament</i>
Bernard Haykel	<i>Associate Professor Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies New York University</i>
Hossein Kamaly	<i>Librarian, Middle East and Jewish Studies Columbia University Libraries</i>
Alidad Mafinezam	<i>Director of Research Mosaic Institute</i>
Vali R. Nasr	<i>Adjunct Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies, Council on Foreign Relations Professor of Middle East and South Asia Politics Naval Postgraduate School</i>
Gary Sick	<i>Senior Research Scholar Middle East Institute School of International and Public Affairs Columbia University</i>
Negin Yavari	<i>Assistant Professor of History & Humanities The New School for Social Research</i>

Business

Amir Farmanfarmaian	<i>Managing Director Fortune Asset Management Ltd.</i>
Nazanine Farmanfarmaian	<i>Designer, Tassoudji Designs</i>
Salman Farmanfarmaian	<i>Principle, SCP Partners</i>

Law

Cyrus Amir-Mokri *Partner*
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom

Think Tanks and NGOs

Mehdi Faridzadeh *Founder and President*
The International Society for Iranian Culture

Stephen Heintz *President, Rockefeller Brothers Fund*

Lt. Col (Ret.) Paul Hughes *Senior Program Officer, Center for Post-Conflict Peace and Stability Operations*
United States Institute for Peace

Priscilla Lewis *Deputy Director, American Strategy Program*
Director, U.S. in the World Initiative
New America Foundation

Genevieve Lynch *Director, Kenbe Foundation*
Co-Chair, the Pluralism Fund

Sayyeda Mirza-Jafri *Project Manager*
One Nation - With Liberty and Justice for All
Housed at the EastWest Institute

John Edwin Mroz *Founder, President, and CEO*
EastWest Institute

M. Baquer Namazi *Chairman of the Board of Directors*
Hamyaran Iran NGO Resource Center

Siamak Namazi *Managing Director, Atieh Bahar Consulting*

Trita Parsi *Managing Director*
National Iranian American Council

Mohammad Reza Salamat *Senior Economic Affairs Officer*
Division of Sustainable Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations

David Speedie *Special Advisor to the President and Director*
Islam Project, Carnegie Corporation of NY

Stephen Tankel *Coordinator of Studies, EastWest Institute*

Anisseh Van Engeland *Consultant, Action des Chrétiens Pour*
L' Abolition de la Torture, Paris

U.S. Government

R. Nicholas Burns	<i>Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Department of State</i>
Suzanne Maloney, Ph.D	<i>Policy Planning Staff Office of the Secretary Department of State</i>
Karen Volker	<i>Policy Planning Staff Office of the Secretary Department of State</i>

Iranian Government

H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad	<i>President Islamic Republic of Iran</i>
Bahman Naimiarfa	<i>First Counselor Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations</i>
H.E. Dr. M. Javad Zarif	<i>Permanent Representative Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations</i>
Mrs. Maryam Zarif	<i>Member Network 20/20 International Committee</i>
Anonymous	<i>Current Government Official Islamic Republic of Iran</i>

Media

Godfrey Cheshire	<i>Film Critic, Independent Weekly</i>
Roxane Farmanfarmanian	<i>Editor Cambridge Review of International Affairs</i>

Appendix G

Background Meetings and Briefings

2005

March 9

Network 20/20 Off the Record Briefing
Iran: The Next War? An Insider's View

Roxane Farmanfarmaian
Editor, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*

April 19

Network 20/20 Off the Record Briefing
After Saddam: Iran's Vision of Rebuilding Iraq
Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
Ambassador Javad Zarif

Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations

July 25

Network 20/20 Off the Record Briefing: *No god but God*
The Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Reza Aslan

Doctoral Candidate in History of Religions at the University of California, Santa Barbara,
former Visiting Assistant Professor of Islamic and Middle East Studies at the University of
Iowa, and Truman Capote Fellow in Fiction at the Iowa Writers' Workshop

October 26

Network 20/20 Off the Record Briefing:
Money and Power in Today's Iran

Siamak Namazi

Managing Director, Atieh Bahar Consulting
Public Policy Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center for International Studies, Princeton

2006

May 2

Network 20/20 Off the Record Briefing
H.E. Dr. M. Javad Zarif

Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Iran-U.S. Talks on Iraq: Common Ground?

Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations

September 20

Breakfast Meeting with U.S. Academics
H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

October 11

U.S. Policy toward Iran
Council on Foreign Relations
R. Nicholas Burns
Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, U.S. Department of State

October 11

Network 20/20 Off the Record Briefing with the Pluralism Fund
The Treacherous Triangle: The Secret Dealings of Iran, Israel, and the U.S.
The Rockefeller Foundation
Dr. Trita Parsi
President, National Iranian American Council

October 26

Network 20/20 Off the Record Briefing
The Shia Revival
JP Morgan Private Bank
Vali R. Nasr
Professor, Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School
Adjunct Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations

November 20

Network 20/20 Off the Record Briefing
Iran's Role in Regional Security
U.S. Trust
Ambassador M. Javad Zarif
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Appendix H

Further Reading

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- Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Geopolitical Imperatives* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997)
- Bulliet, Richard W., *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004)
- Council on Foreign Relations, *Iran: Time for a New Approach*, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Robert M. Gates, Co-Chairs; Suzanne Maloney, Project Director (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2004)
- Ebadi, Shirin, with Azadeh Moaveni, *Iran Awakening: A Memoir of Revolution and Hope* (New York: Random House, 2006)
- Ebtekar, Massoumeh, with Fred A. Reed, *Takeover in Tehran: The Inside Story of the 1979 U.S. Embassy Capture* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2000)
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- Pollack, Kenneth, *The Persian Puzzle* (New York: Random House, 2005)
- Roy, Olivier, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004)
- Salehi-Isfahani, Djavad, "Revolution and Redistribution in Iran: Poverty and Inequality 25 Years Later," paper presented at the Third Annual World Bank Conference on Inequality, Washington D.C., June 5-6, 2006, available at: http://www.filebox.vt.edu/users/salehi/Iran_poverty_trend.pdf
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