

Policy Experts Underscore Prospects for Change in Iran, Regime's Utter Weakness

NCRI-US Nowruz Conference Emphasizes Iranians' Aspirations for Freedom and Democracy

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, March 26, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On March 24, 2021, as the ancient Iranian New Year, Nowruz, was celebrated in Iran and around the world, the U.S. Representative Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran ([NCRI-US](#)) held an online conference to examine Iran's internal situation, prospects for fundamental change, and the Tehran regime's regional and international behavior. Distinguished policy and national security figures contributed to the virtual discussion of a framework for an effective Iran policy.



Policy Experts Underscore Prospects for Change in Iran. NCRI-US Nowruz Conference Emphasizes Iranians' Aspirations for Freedom and Democracy, March 24, 2021

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[Soona Samsami](#), NCRI Representative in the U.S. provided a clearer picture of the domestic situation in Iran. “From all indications,” she said, “domestically and internationally, it appears that the Iranian year 1,400 will be different from all the previous years, and will be the harbinger of the dawn of a New Year in Iran, when freedom will dawn on our fettered homeland.”

Ms. Samsami explained that “With repression failing to stem the tide of uprisings and protests, the mullahs had pinned their hopes and prayers on the 2020 U.S. elections. But in the two months since the new U.S. President has taken office, it has become clear that a return to the previous balance of power is impossible.”

She concluded by emphasizing that “The regime is now at its weakest point. The circumstances for a revolution are in place in Iran, and the social readiness for overthrowing the regime is beyond the shadow of a doubt. The position of the Iranian regime in 2021 is totally weaker than in 2015, but it wants to paint a completely different picture by threatening others.” Seeking to gain concessions, she added, “the regime has tried to test the US government's resolve by stepping up rocket attacks in the countries in the region, and by further violating its nuclear commitments over the past few months.”

The NCRI's US Representative warned that “Any concessions to this regime or silence towards its crimes, will only embolden it to increase its threats more than ever before. The only option for the United States and the international community is to show maximum resolve against this regime and to stand on the side of the Iranian people as they strive to bring down the regime and establish a democratic, secular and non-nuclear republic in Iran.”

Ms. Samsami was followed by Senator Robert G. Torricelli, former Democratic Senator from New Jersey, who said, “Let me begin both by a statement of admiration and frankly, some of relief with the comments of Secretary of State Blinken, who has made clear ... that there will be no change, no reconciliation, no unilateral concessions until the Iranian [regime] acts.

He recalled “The thousands of people who have taken to the streets, the protests, the slogans, those who will put their lives at risk -- indeed, 1500 souls have lost their lives in this new, perhaps last chapter in the fight for Iranian freedom. So, on this Nowruz, we remember them, those who were lost in the last year, and we mark their courage as a new year starts, those who have taken a stand to salvage and change their country.”



Soona Samsami, U.S. Representative of National Council of Resistance of Iran, delivers her remarks at NCRI-US Nowruz conference, "Policy Experts Assess Prospects for Change in Iran," March 24, 2021



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Senator Torricelli summed up the international and domestic political landscape by saying, "The genie cannot be put back in the bottle... The only answer for the regime in Tehran is that it comes to an end, and the people of Iran reclaim their country and get the kind of free and prosperous and secure future shared by people around the globe."

His advice to U.S. policy makers: "For our part, as Americans, our role is simple: Stay the course, keep to our principles, allow the Iranian people the space and the time to reclaim their country."

The U.S.'s first Secretary of Homeland Security, Governor Tom Ridge, focused on the achievements of the NCRI and Iranian Resistance, saying "I think it's important to note that as you held your ground against tyranny, terrorism, and oppression, you began to attract more and more supporters from around the globe, as evidenced by the number of countries that are represented historically on our annual event that we've been holding in Paris for long over a decade."

The creation of Ashraf 3 had convinced the Governor that the NCRI and MEK "are more determined than ever to bring about a democratic, non-nuclear, free and secular Iran." He emphasized that the movement's "spirit and resolve has remained untarnished" and "relentless in your pursuit in your daily lives, your historic resistance and in your decades long sacrifice."

Governor Ridge underscored that he is "quite confident that your leader, Madam Rajavi, is indeed a great inspiration to young Iranians from around the world who support your cause, who understand and appreciate the sacrifice you've made on their behalf."

Amb. Marc Ginsberg, former Ambassador to Morocco and former White House Middle East advisor for President Carter began his remarks with a review of "the struggle for democracy, the



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struggle for freedom that has brought the Iranian people to the streets and at times they have sacrificed their lives." He spoke of their determination to change the regime, which he said reflected their "utter contempt for the widespread financial corruption, the cronyism and nepotism that have to be viewed as key contributing factors to the enormous number of protests that had taken place during the period widely known as 'bloody November' [of 2019] ... These protests essentially led so many Iranians to ask themselves, are we living in a regime that is no different than the corrupt regimes of the past? The financial corruption at the top of the Ayatollah's regime and across almost every segment of his regime cries out for an overturning of the regime and an end to the corruption."

Ambassador Ginsberg was optimistic that "this is indeed the potential year for the coming of the light, a light that shines brightly on democratic freedoms and on the efforts of all of us who aspire for Iran, a better day of freedom, hope, and liberty."

The next speaker, Amb. Robert G. Joseph, former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, outlined what he felt are three key issues. First, appeasement "in any and every form has failed to achieve U.S. objectives." Secondly, Tehran "will never give up its quest for nuclear weapons. It may make some tactical maneuvers, as it did with the JCPOA, but it will continue to advance its capability to have a nuclear weapon at the time of its choosing." Third, "abandoning the principled policy of promoting human rights – as was done in 2009 -- only encourages more gross violations.

Ambassador Joseph concluded that the means to success in achieving U.S. goals is through regime change, "not through military invasion – but by supporting the democratic opposition." He said the regime "has lost all legitimacy with its own people. It is an evil regime that has committed documented crimes against humanity. It is a brittle regime that should and will be



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overthrown by the Iranian people." The U.S., he said, "at a minimum...must not stand in their way. We must not feed the beast. We must support the people of Iran – not their dictators."

Ambassador Mitchell Reiss, former director of Policy Planning at the State Department, agreed with Amb. Joseph, saying he also sees "a government that has lost all legitimacy in the eyes of its own people. I see a government that is grossly incompetent in running Iran."

Amb. Reiss was confident that "President Biden and his senior officials have all recognized the shortcomings of the 2015 nuclear agreement. They have admitted that the agreement did not address the ballistic missile program that Iran continues to develop. They have admitted that the agreement did not halt Iran's ongoing interference in the region, where it has tried to destabilize neighboring governments. They have admitted that the agreement did nothing to halt the massive human rights violations that the mullahs and IRGC inflict every day on the Iranian people."

He noted that support for human rights is "quickly becoming a theme of the Biden Administration's overall approach to foreign policy," which is "not good news for the mullahs and IRGC."

John Sano, former Deputy Director of the National Clandestine Service, addressed the Iran regime's use of terrorism domestically and as foreign policy. He advised the panel that "one only has to look at the most recent instances of persecution and terror that Iran's terrorist organization, the Ministry of Intelligence and Security [MOIS] has perpetrated upon its own people, as well as those of other nations." He referred to the first ever trial and conviction of "a senior Iran diplomat, Assadollah Assadi on charges of terrorism and having been sentenced to 20 years in prison, along with three of his accomplices."

"That's just one indication of the length Tehran will go to," Mr. Sano noted, "in order to maintain their fragile control over their own people through murder, kidnapping, and torture."

Mr. Sano concluded with the observation that "The efforts of Madam Rajavi and of the entire MEK organization are not just a beacon of hope for positive change, but an international example of how Iran could be, what the future should be as an active participant in the international community, a force for freedom in a turbulent region and for a true democracy and for equal representation."



Dr. Steven Bucci, visiting fellow at The Heritage Foundation and a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, delivers his remarks at NCRI-US Nowruz conference, "Policy Experts Assess Prospects for Change in Iran," March 24, 2021

His remarks were followed by those of Steven Bucci, visiting fellow at The Heritage Foundation and a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, who stressed the need to “recognize and label the government of the mullahs as the largest state sponsor of terror in the world, the most prevalent sponsor of that, and go after them for it.”

From another angle, Mr. Bucci said “We also need to label them and pursue them as oppressors of the Iranian people. We have let them get away with running roughshod over their own population, and basically giving them a pass.”

The best approach, according to the policy expert, is to “come together with the Iranian people against this government, and “forget the idea that the mullahs are ever going to be a partner for us in the Middle East in any meaningful or positive way until that government changes.”

General Charles "Chuck" F. Wald (USAF, Ret.), former Deputy Commander of United States European Command began by emphasizing that “Iran continues to be a malicious enemy of the United States in the Middle East... They continue to promote terrorism.”

General Wald warned that the IRGC must “stop building and testing ballistic missiles that could reach not just the Middle East, but Europe and potentially the United States, at some point. They need to stop sponsoring the attack of Western military personnel.”

Drawing on his experience as a military-political analyst, General Wald warned the U.S. must not be “blind to the fact that the Iranian government... almost always, doesn’t negotiate with goodwill.” He concluded by commending the NCRI for “all you’ are doing for your people, for the people of Iran that love freedom and want to be part of the world.”

Amb. Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs welcomed the New Persian Year Every year by expressing “hope for better times, for freedom in Iran, for a better outcome for the Iranian people and for a happy ending to the long struggle for freedom. This year,,” he said, “we have hope, but we also see evidence that things are moving in the right direction.”

Ambassador Bllomfield derided the regime’s record as “the worst violator of terrorism, of suppression of human rights -- murdering its dissidents and jailing brave defenders of democracy.” The mullahs’ regime, he said, is “a corrupt regime, which has engaged in trafficking in drugs, in persons, in children, and, in so many ways, undermining the hopes for a rules-based international order. The jails of Iran are filled with the Alexei Navalnys, and the unmarked graves are filled with brave dissidents who just dared to speak their own mind about the future of their country.”

Prof. Ivan Sascha Sheehan, Executive Director of the School of Public and International Affairs, University of Baltimore agreed that “Iran’s human rights record should be the principal focus of

U.S. policy in the year ahead," particularly "when it comes to holding regime officials accountable for crackdowns on protestors for engaging in demonstrations against the ruling theocracy."

"U.S. officials," he said, would be "wise to maintain and expand the assertive policies aimed at exploiting Iran's increasingly apparent vulnerabilities and seeking to further curtail the regime's nefarious activities."

Professor Sheehan concluded his remarks with a brief overview of steps he believes essential to a successful Iran policy. U.S. officials, he said, must "prioritize the Iranian people, not only their leaders; emphasize human rights; enforce the sanctions imposed on the Iranian regime; and support Iran's pro-democracy activists and bypass the Iran lobby." If this approach is adopted, then "U.S. security interests will be served, the aspirations of the Iranian people will be upheld, and Iran can once again become a cradle of freedom in the Middle East."

Addressing the Biden Administration, Professor Matthew Kroenig, director of the Global Strategy Initiative at The Atlantic Council noted that the "primary autocratic challenge in the Middle East" comes "from the mullahs and Tehran, against U.S. and allied interests."

"Democracy is really the best machine ever invented for generating wealth and prosperity and freedom and happiness for people, Professor Kroenig declared, "and it's a shame that the people of Iran have been denied the blessings of democracy over the past several decades. But I hope that in the future, democracy will come to Iran."

The discussion concluded with remarks by Bruce McColm, President, Global Initiative for Democracy, former Executive Director of Freedom House. As the New Year dawned, Mr. McColm urged the panel to "look back in the last year. Under the leadership of Mrs. Rajavi, the NCRI has grown considerably and deepened its relationships around the world. I see this in the new faces, in the various seminars and press conferences that you have been holding... We're seeing over the world that the international community has basically gotten fed up with the Iranian regime... In fact the NCRI has become the dominant figure in the issue of Iran... The regime continues to be very dangerous and that it's dangerous from intense weakness."

Thanking everyone for their participation, NCRI-US Deputy Director Alireza Jafarzadeh concluded the event by saying, "Even the regime's Supreme Leader Khamenei had to acknowledge that 2021 is not 2015. The developments over the past few months further show that whatever happens in the future, the outcome awaiting the regime will be an outburst of uprisings. Indeed, with or without the JCPOA, with or without the sanctions, the Iranian regime is too weak, too corrupt, too repressive, and too paranoid to escape the outbreak of uprisings and its overthrow."

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