

Reaction of Iranian Americans for Liberty to Article in Responsible Statecraft

WASHINGTON, D.C., USA, April 6, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A recent article in Responsible Statecraft by Bryan Metzger titled, "How a shadowy, hawkish new group tied to Iranian monarchists is gaining influence in Congress" purports several blatant untruths about Iranian Americans for Liberty (IAL) and our organization's work, putting the lives of Iranians abroad and their families at home at grave risk.

We are a bipartisan group of Iranian Americans who are deeply committed to peace and prosperity for the Iranian people, as well as the national interests of our adopted home, the United States of America. Our Board of Directors is committed to ensuring IAL

will always be a bipartisan organization. Our Board consists of Democrats and Republicans. In addition, we have in the past and will continue to organize and host events with both Democrat and Republican members of the Iranian American community.

We, like many members of the Iranian American community, reject the false narrative of having to choose between being either a mouthpiece that pushes the propaganda of the Islamic Republic of Iran or warmongers. Indeed, this false choice is deep rooted in a manufactured and patently false dichotomy propagated by the Islamic Republic of Iran's propagandists inside Iran and around the world. This false dichotomy incorrectly asserts that the free world and the United States either have to appease the regime of Iran or start a war with them. There are certainly more options in the advocacy realm than these two choices.

Four weeks ago, IAL embarked on an educational campaign to highlight the problematic role of the National Iranian American Council (NIAC) as the suspected chief Washington D.C. lobbyist for the Islamic Republic of Iran. Among other topics, our campaign exposed how NIAC has protected the Islamic Republic government from any scrutiny over its mismanagement of the COVID-19





If Responsible Statecraft, the Quincy Institute, Mr. Parsi and NIAC thought their article would scare us, they were foolish. We will continue forward on our stated mission.”

Bryan E. Leib

pandemic through the mass dissemination of misinformation and falsehoods. Shortly after the campaign began, NIAC and its affiliates started targeting IAL in an attempt to intimidate us and silence our voice.

Responsible Statecraft is part of the Quincy Institute and has close ties with NIAC; [Trita Parsi](#) is a co-founder and executive vice president of the Quincy Institute and also the founder of NIAC. Mr. Parsi started his career as a staffer for disgraced Ohio Congressman Bob Ney who was investigated for and subsequently resigned in the

aftermath of his involvement in arms sales to the Islamic Republic of Iran which was a direct violation of the US sanctions on arms sales to the Iranian regime.

We believe that this article from RS about IAL was clearly written at Mr. Parsi’s direction in response to our recent educational campaign and as an attempt to undermine IAL’s critical work, though ironically, the author asserts that Parsi had no role in the article’s publication.

In his first article at the publication, 2020 graduate Metzger conflates and confuses numerous unaffiliated Iranian American organizations and individuals. These claims, including connections to misuse of State Department funds, would be libelous had Metzger made them directly, rather than misleading his readers through innuendo.

Let us be clear: IAL is not receiving and has never received funding from any governments and has no connections to the individuals that are named by Mr. Metzger as recipients of State Department funds, including Mr. Amir Etemadi. If Mr. Metzger or RS had any interest in responsible journalism, they could have independently verified these facts. IAL has no affiliation or ties, formal or informal with Mr. Etemadi. It is up to Mr. Etemadi to clarify on what basis he received funds from the State departments and how he spent those funds. This smear attempt by RS is very similar to the tactics that NIAC has used for years to silence their critics in the Iranian American community. In addition, IAL is funded and continues to be funded by members of the Iranian American community who support IAL’s mission statement.

Metzger also falsely claims that IAL tamps down voices of Iranian Americans. This is categorically false. IAL advocates for peace with Iran’s Arab and Jewish neighbors, universal human rights, and freedom of speech, expression, and religion. Anyone, regardless of their political affiliation, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or background is welcome to join IAL. While Metzger names numerous conservative members of Congress who have met with IAL, he does NOT name their liberal colleagues who have not accepted our invitations. IAL would be honored to host any member of Congress, regardless of their party affiliation.

In a vile and anti-Semitic trope, Mr. Metzger accuses IAL’s work in advocating for the Persian

Jewish community to be motivated and funded by foreign governments. This reminds us of the false narrative pushed by Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) (another member of Congress heavily supported by NIAC and Mr. Trita Parsi) when she said "it is all about the benjamins". Mr. Parsi and NIAC, like their puppet masters in Tehran, have a long history of using identity politics to divide Iranians and Iranian Americans on the basis of religion. This is particularly repugnant in light of the fact that Mr. Parsi in the past has falsely argued that since AIPAC purportedly represents the Israeli government, NIAC should counter that by aligning itself with the Islamic Republic of Iran's government.

While Mr. Metzger is eager to highlight the legal political contributions by members of the Iranian American community, he fails to mention that Mr. Jamal Abdi, the President of NIAC, was a registered bundler for the Joe Biden for President campaign. As a bundler, Mr. Jamal Abdi raised more than \$100,000 for President Biden. We find it highly suspect that Mr. Metzger was more than eager to quote Mr. Jamal Abdi in his article about us without mentioning this tidbit of critical information.

In closing, IAL will always do everything in our power to be an amplifier of the voices of the Iranian American community as well as Iranians living in Iran. We will always be a denier of the Iranian government's efforts to achieve its nefarious goals.

Bryan E. Leib

Iranian Americans for Liberty

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