

# NCRI-US's Book on IRGC Drones Released, Experts Discuss Tehran's Push for UAVs, Nuclear Capability; Offer Policy Options

*Democracy and human rights should be the central elements of the admin's Iran policy. Raisi must be held accountable for crimes against humanity and genocide.*

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, December 17, 2021 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- On December 15, 2021, the US Representative Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran ([NCRI-US](#)) held a panel discussion in Washington, DC. entitled "Policy Options to Counter the Rising Iranian Threat – First 100 Days of Ebrahim Raisi."



NCRI-US hosts "Policy Options to Counter the Rising Iranian Threat – First 100 Days of Ebrahim Raisi" conference and presents its new book "IRAN: IRGC's Rising Drone Threat; A Desperate Regime's Ploy to Project Power, Incite War," on Dec 15, 2021.

The event's speakers were Senator Joe Lieberman, former Democratic senator from Connecticut; Ambassador Robert Joseph, former Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security; Mr. David Shedd, former Acting Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, former Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Intelligence Programs and Reform; Georgetown Professor Matthew Kroenig, Deputy Director, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, and Director, Global Strategy Initiative, The Atlantic Council; and Mr. Jonathan Ruhe, JINSA Director of Foreign Policy.

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*Alireza Jafarzadeh*

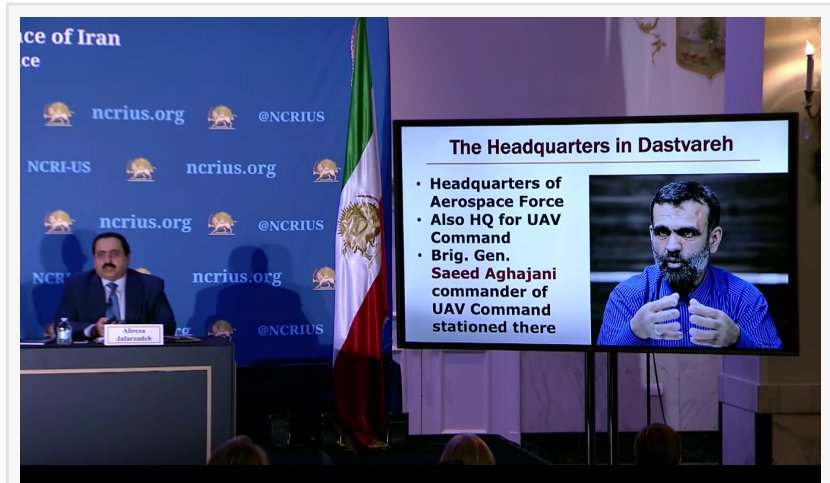
Hosting the event, Mr. Alireza Jafarzadeh, Deputy Director of the Washington Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran and the author of *The Iran Threat*, opened the discussions with a summary of the latest book released by the NCRI-US, *IRAN: IRGC's Rising Drone Threat; A Desperate Regime's Ploy to Project Power, Incite War*. Mr.

Jafarzadeh reminded everyone of previous NCRI revelations on October 6th about the IRGC's UAV program, its UAV command, as well as its commander, Saeed Aghajani, noting that they had been so effective that on October 29, 2021, the Treasury Department designated a number of individuals and entities in connection with the regime's UAV program, and designated Aghajani under executive order 13224, i.e. terrorism. On November 30th, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed a very bipartisan resolution, H.R.6089, the "Stop Iranian Drones Act," introduced by Ranking Member Michael McCaul (R-TX) and supported by Chairman Gregory Meeks (D-NY).

Jafarzadeh then revealed a network of front companies with civilian appearance used by the IRGC for the purposes of procuring parts, materiel, and accessories for their UAV program. NCRI identified and provided details about 15 such companies.

"What we can conclude from this is that since Raisi took office, the Quds Force of the Revolutionary Guards has intensified its activities, including its UAV attacks. And they're spending billions of dollars on UAV and missile, while 80% of the Iranian population live below the poverty line," Jafarzadeh concluded.

Senator Joe Lieberman, who joined the panel from New York, opened by saying, "Thanks for that characteristically compelling report, in this case about the Iranian drone program. I must say that what you've just presented, and I'm sure the written report backs it up, reminds us that the NCRI-US is not just an advocacy group, but it also has become a respected think tank, you might say, and even beyond that a kind of independent intelligence agency whose reports have attained credibility. And that's really contributed to the effort to improve the lives of the people of Iran and also to make the region and the world, including the United States, safer from the threats



Alireza Jafarzadeh presents NCRI-US's new book and shares new details about IRGC's drone program at the conference "Policy Options to Counter the Rising Iranian Threat – First 100 Days of Ebrahim Raisi" conference hosted by the NCRI-US in Washington DC on Dec 15, 2021



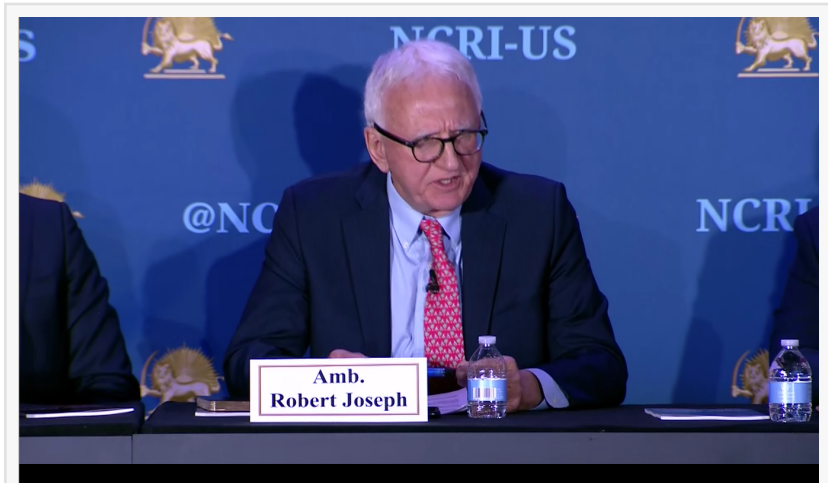
Hon. Joe Lieberman, former Democratic Senator from Connecticut, speaks at the "Policy Options to Counter the Rising Iranian Threat – First 100 Days of Ebrahim Raisi" conference hosted by the NCRI-US in Washington, DC, on December 15, 2021.

represented by the current regime in Tehran.

“I think we’re on the wrong course, we the United States, in our efforts in Vienna to reenter the JCPOA. I think these efforts are well-intentioned but they don’t meet the reality of what Iran is doing, either in Vienna or in Iran or throughout the region or the world. And I think they’re in that sense unrealistic and highly risky...

“For their violations of the JCPOA and various other international norms, Iran should be brought to the UN Security Council and face punitive action there. But it’s time to stop this game that they’re playing with us, which is dangerous, and gives them time to build up their nuclear program, and to be prepared to have all other options on the table, including if necessary, certainly supporting an uprising of the Iranian people against the regime, not militarily but in every other way we can... And I think we have in the United States I say as a final word, indicated by some of the recent legislative actions, including the stop the drone program legislation, the beginnings of a return of a bipartisan congressional consensus on Iran...”

Ambassador Robert Joseph also underscored the fact that the panel was “meeting at a critically important time...The correct decision, both politically and morally, on which we will I think be judged by history, is to support the people of Iran in their struggle for freedom and democracy. This is a deplorable regime that wants the United States, Europe, and others to focus not on its internal vulnerabilities, but on the JCPOA negotiations, as those negotiations provide both a sense of legitimacy and a convenient diversion from its desperate domestic situation. And if successful, the result will serve as a lifeline for Iran’s rulers...



Amb. Robert Joseph, former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control & International Security speaks, at the “Policy Options to Counter the Rising Iranian Threat – First 100 Days of Ebrahim Raisi” conference hosted by NCRI-US in Washington, DC, on Dec 15, 2021



Mr. David Shedd, former Acting Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, speaks at the “Policy Options to Counter the Rising Iranian Threat – First 100 Days of Ebrahim Raisi” conference hosted by the NCRI-US in Washington, DC, on Dec 15, 2021.

“Drones have substantial tactical value for the regime. But the principle strategic value is best understood in the broader geopolitical context. Having lost all legitimacy at home, the regime sees its very survival as a function of its ability to export its influence and ideology outside of Iran. Drones, like ballistic missiles, serve this purpose by providing a means of intimidation and attack. For this reason, the regime will never give up this capability, and in my view this must be a factor in the design of policies and capabilities intended to counter Iran’s aggression...

“... the team installed by the Supreme Leader after the fraudulent elections this past September makes evident that the underlying assumptions of the Biden strategy will only produce further failure. Just look at the rogue’s gallery that constitutes the new Iranian leadership, at least ten of whom are currently sanctioned by the United States, Europe, and the United Nations. Foremost of course is President Raisi, who served as a member of the death committee in the murder of thousands of political prisoners in 1988, a true crime against humanity that has recently been described by over a hundred European parliamentarians as an act of genocide...

“Today the mullahs’ desperation is palpable. We can see it in the calls across Iran for an end to the corrupt regime. The people of Iran have seen their beloved country become a prison to those inside and a pariah to those on the outside... The choice is clear, we can pursue misguided and failed policies that provide resources to the oppressors, or we can support the Iranian people in their struggle to overthrow their oppressors through regime change from within.”

Mr. David Shedd, joining the panel from Florida, opened his remarks by thanking the NCRI for sharing information from inside a despotic environment which had been collected “at great peril,



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Mr. Jonathan Ruhe, JINSA Director of Foreign Policy, speaks at the “Policy Options to Counter the Rising Iranian Threat – First 100 Days of Ebrahim Raisi” conference hosted by the NCRI-US in Washington, DC, on December 15, 2021.

on the UAV program and many of the other aspects that you are engaged on. And then finding a way to share this with the public and have that awareness created by the great work that you are doing in terms of sensitizing the world as it pertains to the activity of this despotic regime...

Mr. Shedd discussed the proper way to deal with the Iranian regime's threat, adding, "The last thing you want to do is take the foot off the proverbial pedal on the pressure on the Iranian machine. And this idea that any kind of lifting of sanctions or providing sanction relief will be met with a response of kindness and understanding and making concessions on the part of the regime is an entirely false premise which is not supported by history in any way, shape or form."

Shedd emphasized the need for "finding ways... [to] support the internal opposition so that the focus of the regime continually goes back inside Iran as opposed to the export of their nefarious activities, be it in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and elsewhere around the globe so that they have to attend to the kind of internal pressures that emerged from that opposition... And so this is an opportunity for the Biden administration to actually show support for the internal opposition." Former DIA Acting Director highlighted the significance to "use the international forums but with the United States in the leadership to really keep the human rights issues at the forefront and place the regime clearly in the crosshairs of one of if not the greatest human rights violator in the world at present time..."

Professor Matthew Kroenig emphasized the "global competition between democracies and autocracies" saying, "Whenever there's a new president, people ask what the president's foreign policy doctrine is. And it seems that the emerging Biden doctrine is this idea that we're at an inflection point between democracy and autocracy and we need to rally the democracies, like at the Summit for Democracy last week, to take on these revisionist autocracies that are challenging the United States and its allies, challenging the rules-based international system." He added, we should also consider the Iranian regime as part of this...

"There's a lot of focus on the sanctions, but the real cause I would say of the struggling of the Iranian economy is the regime's mismanagement of the economy. Diplomatically, the aggressive



NCRI-US's new book "IRAN: IRGC's Rising Drone Threat; A Desperate Regime's Ploy to Project Power, Incite War," presented at the "Policy Options to Counter the Rising Iranian Threat - First 100 Days of Ebrahim Raisi" conference on Dec 15, 2021

foreign policy of this regime has led much of the rest of the world to counterbalance against it. And then it has the same military and security challenge that all dictatorships do, which is that it fears its own people more than it fears external enemies. And if you look at the behavior of the Iranian regime, it spends an awful lot of resources and attention on repressing and abusing the Iranian people.“... Iran already has the ability to deliver nuclear weapons against its enemies. It has the most sophisticated ballistic missile program in the Middle East. And so the last remaining piece is the uranium enrichment. And so people have focused on this breakout time... if the Supreme Leader made the decision today to enrich as much uranium as fast as possible, that he could be essentially to the point of no return within three weeks.

“So what do we do about it? It makes sense to talk to your enemies. But we need to have a stronger pressure track. I think the regime needs to understand that it can't muddle through and get to a nuclear weapon, that if it continues on the path that it's on there are going to be unacceptable consequences.

“... I think there are things we can do to make the regime worry more about its domestic insecurity issues, supporting the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people. And then I do think we need to put the military option back on the table as a last option. but I think the ultimate goal, as many of my colleagues have pointed out, is to one day have a better government in Iran that respects the human rights of its own people and that follows a more cooperative foreign policy internationally.”

JINSA Director of Foreign Policy Jonathan Ruhe elaborated on Iran's growing focus on drones and missiles: “The bottom line is essentially that Iran is able to compensate for its weakness at home, projects strength abroad, due to a combination of three factors it's exploiting I think in a very sophisticated fashion. The first, as the book lays out, is Iran's concerted improvements to its drone and missile capabilities just in the past five or six years, especially since it enjoyed all the sanctions relief from the JCPOA nuclear agreement...

“The second factor, as the new books points out, is Iran's ability to proliferate these capabilities around the region. Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, while also using Iran itself as a base for launching these attacks. And what that does, is, it essentially encircles the Middle East, U.S. allies in the region, and U.S. bases in the region, with overlapping fields of fire.

“And thirdly, and I think this is somewhat underappreciated, is the lack of strategic depth in defense by the United States and our allies in the Middle East. ... And so what this creates is a situation where Iran's drones are becoming weapons of mass effectiveness that help compensate for the regime's weakness at home and give them strategic leverage...

“I hope my comments have amplified what the book lays out in great detail. And things the United States and our partners can do, one is look at the Middle East and the changing strategic context in the region.

“Second, genuine sanctions enforcement on a lot of Iran’s ability to obtain dual-use materials to enhance its drone program, and also penalize countries that help Iran further these capabilities.... And then finally, it would send an important signal to Iran, that the United States is serious about considering other options.”

Alireza Jafarzadeh concluded the conference by saying, “this regime is much weaker than it was in 2015, but they want to project power and cover their weakness.

“This regime is in big trouble domestically. Inside Iran, the protests of 2017 have continued. Nothing has stopped the protests, neither COVID-19 nor the ascension of Ebrahim Raisi at the helm as the new president for the Iranian regime. In fact, since Raisi has taken over, people have more reasons to want to protest. And every issue they deal with, whether it’s water, whether it’s electricity, whether it’s environment, the wages, the situation of the teachers, the farmers, their counterpart of these protests is the regime itself. There’s no third party. This regime is weak, it’s vulnerable, is rejected by the majority of its own population.”

Jafarzadeh closed with three specific suggestions:

“First, the Biden administration should make democracy and human rights a central element of its policy regarding Iran. This way they can stand on the side of the people of Iran instead of trying to find a way to deal with the repressive rulers.

“Second, holding Ebrahim Raisi to account for crimes against humanity and for genocide.

“Third, the Iranian regime has been in serious violation of the 2015 nuclear agreement since day one. There are, according to the IAEA, three undeclared sites where traces of enriched uranium were found which the regime had never declared in 2015. And Tehran has continued to be in violation. All of the UN Security Council resolutions need to be reinstated, period.

“And the real responsibility is on the shoulders of the people of Iran and the organized resistance to bring about fundamental change in Iran. And that is the solution that will end all the problems associated with the Iranian regime, including its nuclear weapons program, its missile program, its regional intransigence, and also repression inside the country.”

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