



از ایرانم از سر آزادگان

**Azadegan Foundation**

## Azadegan's Strategy for Change and Its Vision for a New Iran

### *The Recent Past and the Contemporary Situation*

The Azadegan Foundation<sup>1</sup> believes that the clerical rulers of Iran have lost the last vestiges of political, moral, and religious legitimacy. A simple conclusion can be drawn from a review of the past 26 years of the rule of the "Jurisprudent". No matter what guise, color of turban or political platform, the goal of every mullah-dominated administration has been the same: The preservation of clerical supremacy at all cost.

The cost to the Iranian people has been very high. Political repression is standard government policy, the level of corruption is extraordinarily high, economic mismanagement has driven down the standard of living to less than what it was 30 years ago. For more than eight years, the regime blamed all its troubles on the vicious war with Iraq. In 1989, Hashemi Rafsanjani came to power running on a "progressive" platform. He was touted a moderate cleric by the world press. Hopes were high that he would open up Iran, establish relations with the US, and improve the economy. Instead, the political so called "chain murders" started in Iran and abroad. (He was implicated and subsequently indicted in Europe for the assassination of Kurdish Opposition leaders.) Rafsanjani's administration continued its support for international terrorism. Mismanagement of the economy became worse because corruption became even more rampant. It could be seriously alleged that his greatest achievement was to fully integrate

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<sup>1</sup> The Azadegan symbol, shown at the top of this page, is a modernistic version of the ancient Persian symbol known as "Faravahar", which can still be seen on many ancient and modern buildings and structures, particularly in Persepolis. In ancient Iranian philosophy, Faravahar is the essence and spirit of goodness, found in every person and thing. The Faravahar symbol has been expounded upon in detail in the Zoroastrian religious classic, the Avesta. It is also the name of the first month of the Persian year. It symbolizes the good, and is the custodian of goodness, and the guardian of "Iran Zamin": "Our Land". It also symbolizes a clear-vision being, who is the culmination of man's quest to reach the zenith of humanity.

cleptocracy into theocracy. And the closest he came to any relations with the US was to give interviews to American journalists and to set up a couple of lobbyists in Washington to try to polish his image abroad.

The more “moderate” Mr. Khatami who followed Mr. Rafsanjani in 1997 tried to keep some semblance of openness and decency by paying lip service to the “rule of law”. But he was neither able to open up the system, nor prime the economy, nor control rampant corruption. Violation of Human Rights increased, political assassinations and “chain murders” continued, political prisoners were raped, tortured and murdered during his tenure in office. This is the definition of a ‘moderate’ in the Islamic Republic. It can be argued that Mr. Khatami’s style was more moderate and subdued and he was often at odds with the other more powerful clerics over the means of wielding power. Yet the record shows that his goals and objectives were exactly the same: i.e. the monopolization of power by the clerics and the rule of the “Jurisprudent” within a fundamentalist, activist, Islamic Republic.

At the present, there seems to be a last ditched effort at keeping the mullahs in power. The result of the last controlled and manipulated presidential election was Mr. Mahmood Ahmadinejad as the new hand picked president. Mr. Ahmadinejad was the protégé of apocalyptic Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi MesbahYazdi. He had the support of radical clerics of Ghom, and was accepted by Ayatollah Khamenei, the “supreme leader”, to prevent the maverick and manipulative Rafsanjani from coming to power and making a Faustian deal with the US. Ahmadinejad had three characteristics which made him their preferred candidate: He was an apocalyptic ideologue, who denied the holocaust, and called for Israel to be wiped from the map. He had the support of the radical faction of the Revolutionary Guard; and he was totally devoted to the cause of Revolutionary Islam.

Those who advocate negotiation with Islamists in the hope that the clerics will moderate are basing their assessments on mirror-imaging, and shows that they do not understand the psychology of the Iranian and clerical audiences, and that the great majority of Iranians have, either discreetly or openly, rejected the rule of the clerics.

Since Mr. Ahmadinejad’s election, the situation in Iran has become increasingly fragile. Although awash in petro-dollars, the economy which had been stagnating for some time has almost ground to a halt. The high priests are jostling for power among themselves while the people are in a state of exasperation.

Some three months after the elections, by early October 2005, the Tehran Stock Market lost about 30 percent of its value. It has been reported by multiple sources that tens of billions of dollars have been moved abroad, mostly to accounts in the United Arab Emirates. This massive flight of capital is taking place just when the economy has great and increasing need for capital infusion. Most of the industry is aging and needs capital investment in order to survive and be competitive. Instead, political uncertainty and rampant corruption is causing the industrialists to move their capital to safer havens abroad.

The flight of Iran's intellectual capital — Iran's brainpower — is another important issue. Lack of economic opportunity, double digit unemployment rates, and a stifling political environment, are some factors causing the best and the brightest to leave Iran as soon as any opportunity arises. With the most educated leaving in droves, any hope for socio-economic progress dims as well. This is the future managerial class that is emigrating. It is important to note that the generation that is leaving is first generation born, raised and educated after the revolution of 1978. This phenomenon in itself is indicative of the multi-dimensional failure of clerical leadership in the Islamic Republic.

All available evidence indicate that the majority of the Iranian people are opposed to the clerics and are prepared to support action to change the Administration, providing they are assured that the outcome will not lead to an even more abysmal situation. The nation cannot bear the continued and consistent violation of their fundamental rights. They want an end to random incarcerations, torture of opposition personalities, and mismanagement of the economy, astronomical unemployment rates, and harsh and uncompromising repression. The regime's misguided foreign policy and its erratic behavior in the world arena has further isolated Iran and has virtually cut-off international investment sources. The regime's inability to differentiate between the Iranian national interest and Islamist interests has been another root cause of the alienation of the Iranian people from the Islamic regime. Adding to the instability of an already volatile region makes it a threat to world equilibrium. Reports from a variety of sources inside Iran indicate that the country is on the verge of implosion and conditions are just right for the regime to be toppled. The Islamic regime is vigorously following a nuclear policy. It does not seem to comprehend that the international community cannot tolerate and will not permit a regime which funds international terrorism and provides it moral and logistical support to be armed with nuclear weapons. There is struggle and competition for power among the ruling clerics, but they are all united in advancing ecumenical revolution that was started by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to descend to the new Dark Age, and they must and will be stopped.

### ***Azadegan Organization***

In 1981, a group of Iranian professionals and students, who were opposed to the direction the Iranian revolution had taken, came together in Europe under the leadership of General Dr. Bahram Aryana, a man of high integrity and patriotism. They formed the Azadegan Organization hoping to unify the opposition forces and energize the Iranian nation to roll back the reactionary forces in Iran. I was one of the original founders at the time. Some mistakes were made despite the best intentions and the efforts fell short, despite some individual, heroic actions. The organization went dormant for a few years.

In 1987, I revived the organization by bringing together a number of Iranian ex-patriots living in the US. I also initiated the formation of similar chapters in Iran in 1988. Membership consists of limited professionals and specialists in various fields, united in their vision for a democratic, stable, constructive and pro-western Iran. The purpose of the new Azadegan was and is to help, if not be directly instrumental, in the liberation of Iran when conditions permit. In order to keep the organization cohesive and avoid

infiltration by various destructive elements, membership was limited and by invitation only.

Azadegan has always maintained that Iran can and should only be liberated through the efforts of the Iranian people themselves. Over the past twenty years, Azadegan has steadfastly promoted the idea of a united Iran with democratic principles, respect for human rights, an abiding belief in the principles of social justice, equality under the law irrespective of gender, ethnicity or religion, and a free market economy.

We strongly believe that Peace and security of the Middle East, future of NPT and international order depend on change in Iran, from clerical government to a secular democratic one. The solution in our view is, neither through diplomacy that experienced miscarriage, nor sanction that will not change the mind and policy of the regime or war that could destabilize the greater Middle. The most powerful social and political forces are inside of Iran resides within The People of Iran specially dissatisfied younger generation which will change the shape of Iran.

It needs big idea, a workable strategy, and strong leadership with national magnetism to galvanize and lead them to victory.

In a nutshell, Azadegan represents an idea for change, and a new Iran. We want an Iran liberated from despotic clerics, a democratic, secular and prosperous country and a strong united

### ***Leadership***

I strongly believe that the Iranian nation is ready for change today. As President of Azadegan, I am ready, willing and able to assume responsibility for the liberation of the Iranian nation, to help remove the current regime which is one of the foremost violators of human rights on record, and to put an end to repression, misery and support for international terrorism. Azadegan is organized and prepared to undertake the leadership in bringing about the establishment of a national, sovereign and secular democratic government based on the will of the people, responsive to the needs of the people and respectful of the rights of the people.

I have not been identified with the old system or the present regime of Iran, but I have been in contact with and have good relations with almost all opposition groups inside and outside of Iran. Because I have an extensive, untainted political record, recognition as a political strategist, and a constructive activist, many Iranian opposition leaders contact me on a regular basis seeking advice. I have been in touch with former military officers inside and outside of Iran, and have established some good links with some military officers in the current regime. The Iranian Armed Forces, Military and the Revolutionary Guards have come to know me as a staunch and consistent supporter and admirer. They are truly patriotic, as proven during their selfless and heroic defense of Iran against the invasion by Iraq under Saddam Hussein. The Iranian Armed Forces have a tradition of standing with the people.

### ***Azadegan's Strategy for the Liberation of Iran***

The following four points summarize our strategy for removing the clerics from power and transferring power to the people:

1. Increasing pressure on the ruling clerics by influencing domestic and world public opinion. This can be accomplished through professional information management using print and electronic media, as well as by psychological warfare. Azadegan has the human resources available. Adequate funding can be provided by patriotic Iranians.
2. Forming a government-in-Exile, when feasible, in coordination with internal forces. Azadegan has commenced preparation for this phase of action.
3. Using internal contacts and human resources, such as the disillusioned Army, Revolutionary Guard and Bassij officials, to further convey the message to the clerical leaders that they have run out of options; that the only option is to leave office. (It is estimated — probably correctly — that about 30 percent of the Revolutionary Guards and about half of the Bassij Forces are still supporters of the regime today. But it is a proven fact that the great majority of all the Armed Forces owe their primary allegiance to Iran and the people. And they are keenly aware of the extent of mismanagement of the country by the clerics. They will not stand aside and see Iran be destroyed any longer.)
4. Utilizing existing elements to channel Iranian frustrations and hopes, so that the current protests can be translated effectively into a general uprising, leading to a *pronunciamento*, demanding, in fact ensuring, and removal of the current leadership for establishment of a united, strong, prosperous, secular democratic Iran

It is important to note that despite 27 years of relentless suppression, constant threats of incarceration and personal reprisal, the Iranian people openly challenge the regime and condemn its policies.

### ***A Synopsis of Azadegan's Program for a New Iran***

#### **A. Domestic Policy**

1. In order for the establishment of a democratic and secular government to take root, the mullahs must be banished to their mosques once and for all. Separation of religion and state must be enshrined in the laws of the land so that the possibility of a recurrence of another episode of theocracy will be prevented forever. For unity and the preservation of territorial integrity, it is imperative that the clerics be removed from the commanding heights of power.
2. It is in the national interest of Iran for the transition of power to take effect in a peaceful manner. Bloodshed and vengeance must be prevented. I believe transfer of power should take place preferably by peaceful means. With the agreement of the people, a general amnesty should be granted to all except those who are

alleged to have committed serious crimes against the people and whose hands are tainted with blood of Iranians. The accused should be granted fair trial and should be afforded full protection under law. It is preferable that change take place by peaceful means. It is in the high interest of Iran that transfer of power takes place without bloodshed. It will contribute to the integrity and unity of Iran. It would guarantee physical safety of the ruling clerics and their families. If the clerics are wise enough to understand that their time is over, they would succumb to the resolution of the nation and relinquish power peacefully. No matter what they decide, change must take place at any price by any means

3. The Human Rights Charter of the United Nations should be incorporated into the laws of the land. Full equality for all regardless of gender, religion or political persuasion must be guaranteed. Holding public office at all levels should be open to all Iranian citizens.
4. Women must have their natural rights of full and equal participation in the political process and economic progress. Women's role is vital and central to every civilized and advanced society. The value and importance of a country is judged by how that state treats its women. The clerical regime for 27 years has treated women as second class citizens. Islamic fundamentalism has always been the worst enemy of women's rights and at no time in our history have Iranian women been subjected to more cruel, harsh and arbitrary treatment by the theocratic regime. Even their subjugation has been codified in law. This must end and freedom and equality of women and their education should be of highest priority. We are confident that the Iranian women will stand shoulder to shoulder with the Iranian men in liberating and building a new Iran.
5. A constitutional convention of the representatives of all the people should be convened as soon as feasible, to formulate a constitution and provide for the final form of government. The convention should guarantee all fundamental rights and liberties, including freedom of speech, religion and assembly.
6. In order to undertake the promulgation of its goal and to establish as soon as possible a democratic government in Iran, Azadegan will undertake all means necessary to establish and lead a provisional government to oversee the transition of power in Iran.
7. A strong government is necessary, but its role must be defined, and a common language — Farsi — and Iranian identity is critical to the nation. However, over-centralization is not conducive to the health of the nation. Moreover, the age of strong centralized control is over. There must be respect for local cultures, languages, and traditions. Provincial governments and local administrations must be empowered to deal directly with local issues with full support of the central government. This should also be true for tribal entities.

## **B. Economy**

1. Azadegan supports a free market economy compatible with the needs and realities of Iranian society, dedicated to the expeditious economic reform and rebuilding of

the shattered economic infrastructure as well as the industrial and agrarian sectors to help achieve these goals, a modern and progressive management system must be organized and put in place.

2. Growth and development should be promoted while the economic wellbeing of the people should be safeguarded.
3. Meaningful economic development can be only achieved through close economic ties with industrial nations and full integration into the world economic community.

### **C. Defense and Security**

1. The Iranian Armed Forces, the regular Army/Navy/Air force, the Revolutionary Guards and the Bassij — despite the fact that a small minority have been the agents of criminal acts on behalf of the clerics — have been the guarantor of the unity and independence of Iran. They have always, despite the illegal leadership of the present administration, been patriotic and courageous, and therefore must be reformed and de-politicized, equipped with better systems, training, and doctrine.
2. Azadegan supports all means necessary to provide for the security and territorial integrity of the nation through inter-regional and international security agreements.
3. Of high priority will be the rebuilding of Iranian defense needs to ensure the security of the State from internal disintegration and external aggression.

### **D. Foreign Policy**

1. The foreign policy based on ideology promoting revolutionary Islam is against the national interest of Iran and its regional stability and world peace. Iran must pursue an independent foreign policy based on its national interests.
2. Iran must be an instrument for peace and stability in the region.
3. Iran must contribute and subscribe to the balance of power among the various competing nations of the region.
4. Iran must denounce, repudiate and sever all relations with terrorist organizations and groups—international and domestic. It must also denounce unequivocally, all state sponsored terrorism regardless of its sources.
5. Iran must establish cordial relations with all nations. Because of her importance as a major regional power, Iran should make a special effort to establish friendly relations with all major powers of the world, to ensure and enhance her rightful place and position and good standing in the diplomatic, economic and security affairs of the region.
6. Specifically, Iran, under an Azadegan-led Government, will pursue a foreign and security policy of cooperation with, and protection of, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its neighboring states. Outstanding territorial disputes will be handled through diplomatic channels with the aim of creating a regional environment of trust and tolerance.

## F. Culture

1. Iranian culture and Persian language are most cherished of the Iranian common heritage, the very fabric of our national identity and the most important strategic reserve of Iran. We believe in cultural nationalism that is based on toleration, love of freedom, democratic ideals and ethical conduct. It has taken roots from history and tradition of the people before, and after Islam reinvigorated by the Great Persian Poet Firdawsi, who has called Iranians the “Azadegan”- that is the name of our movement. This cultural nationalism explains why Iranians, rarely if ever, used force to propagate religion. In fact, history bears witness to the opposite. As referred to in the Bible, Cyrus the Great liberated the Jews from the Babylonian servitude, and financed the reconstruction of their temple in Jerusalem. Indeed Cyrus, after the conquest of Babylonia in 539.B.C and liberation of all subject nations under subjugation of Babylonians, issued the first Declaration of Human Rights. The Bible refers to Cyrus in seventeen different places in the Old Testament, Books of Isaiah, second Chronicles, Ezra, and Daniel, calling him the anointed of God and God’s friend.
2. While the Farsi language and Persian culture are central to the national character, local languages, dialects and cultures should be preserved and encouraged. Diversity has always been a source of enrichment of the Persian heritage. It is imperative to preserve, enhance and promote this precious heritage for posterity,

### *The Three Main Sources of Support.*

- 1- **The Power of Iranian People:** The population of Iran is now over 70 million. The majority or about 50 million youths are mostly unemployed or under-employed. The misguided policies of the regime have all but made the situation completely hopeless for them. They are ready to rise and create a human tsunami, if guided by wise and strong leadership. Women that constitute half of the population have courageously risen against despotic clerics. We have and are witnessing numerous selfless acts of heroism by men and women and students and journalists with many ending in summary executions, or slow painful death.
- 2- **The power of Iranian Expatriates:** Iranians in the diaspora are a potent, influential and wealthy group. Iranians abroad represent one of the most educated and able of ethnic communities, totaling more than five-million in different countries, mostly in the United States and Europe. If united in word and deed, the inertia of Iranians abroad will turn to a torrent of dynamism, which will ensure the successful return of Freedom to Iran. The Iranian expatriate community has a moral and national duty to unite. Since the future of Iran is at stake and the more radical faction has taken control of Iran and leading the country to verge of destruction, external Iranians are gradually and surely becoming more active, and this is good news.
- 3- **Power of World Public Opinion:** World public opinion is indeed-a superpower itself. It is obvious that the civilized world is concerned about policies and strategies of the clerical regime. It is no secret that clerics are primary financiers and promoters of international terrorism. It is well known that the Tehran regime

is undermining the peace process in the Middle East and does everything in its power to create instability in the region. Mr. Ahmadinajad, the Iranian clerical President, openly declared that the State of Israel must be destroyed. His explosive and irresponsible declaration caused condemnation in the international community. I am confident that the Iranian people now have the support of international community when they rise against the Islamic Regime.

***Post Script: Moral Support***

In this decisive moment in its history, Iran needs a strong, legitimate government which has the full backing and cooperation of its people, and the respect of international community. Restoration of peace and stability in Iran and the region is essential. Because of its size, population, strategic location, natural resources, history, and cultural identity, Iran is too important regionally and globally to be left in the hands of the current despotic and self-serving regime.

The Azadegan organization is dedicated to the liberation of Iran, and draws its support from the Iranian nation. Of particular importance to this movement is the role of Iranian women and youth. We shall strive, with all our resources, to bring freedom, equality, and equal opportunity for all the Iranian people, at home and abroad. The majority of Iranians do not agree with the internal or the external policies of the regime. All of them long to see a democratic government dedicated to peace and progress emerge in Iran. The Iranian expatriates are, by and large, highly educated and quite well off economically. They have become increasingly active politically. Many of them are willing to help financially, providing they see a chance and a hope for positive change.

The world public opinion has turned negative towards the regime in Tehran, but what is still lacking is the open, serious and enthusiastic support of the United States Government for democratic change in Iran. We are seeking this verbal support to moral and political backing. The psychological effect of such support for a reputable, untainted, and decisive Iranian leader is crucial in galvanizing the community around a unified movement. It is important to add that Iranian society is hierarchal/vertical, and has always been leader-oriented. Throughout Iranian history, ancient and modern, in times of crisis and general malaise, as soon as a national leader emerged, particularly when supported by the international community, the people would almost instantly congregate around the new Leader and bring about change. Of course it is necessary to be mentioned that in the past leaders failed to lay good foundation or build a system based on democratic values so that the country could remain stable after the termination or disappearance of the leadership. This lack of political foundation has always been a problem and cause of the anarchy and chaos and must be corrected and a system for political stability must be built.

It is the collective desire of the Iranian nation and the Azadegan Organization to see a stable, democratic prosperous Iran committed to world peace and regional stability. Azadegan is ready with an achievable plan, the right strategy, the necessary connections, and credentials acceptable to the Iranian nation as well as to friendly powers, to create a new, secular Iran.

We believe that Iran can only be rescued by Iranians themselves and only with Iranian money and ingenuity. Of course, we will need the moral and political support of democratic people and international community.

Currently, a tense struggle is going on between Sepantaman and Ahriman in Iran. We are certain that in this national campaign, Sepantaman, the good and moral force, will triumph over evil, and the land of Zarthost and Rustam will soon be freed.

Azadegan is confident that Iran will soon be liberated. With the blessing of Ahura-Mazda, guidance of the wise bird, Simorgh, and Motherland-King-Poet, Firdawsi, Iran will reemerge free, democratic, and powerful.

Azadegan has a logical vision for a new Iran.

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