
From: Jake Colvin <jcolvin@nftc.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 24, 2008 3:34 PM
To: 'Trita Parsi'; 'Lauren Coletta'; 'Lynn M. Kunkle'; 'Carah Ong'; 'Michael Ostrolenk'; 'Ira Shorr'; 'John Isaacs'; 'Mike Amitay'; 'Marie Rietmann'; 'Jim Fine'; 'Ifriedman@peacenow.org'; 'David Culp'
Cc: 'Babak Talebi'; smalaklou@niacouncil.org; eblout@niacouncil.org
Subject: RE: Re transpartisan coalition

Since Trita mentioned us by name, I wanted to give just a couple of thoughts. First of all, the work that has gone into this effort has been tremendous, and Carah in particular should be commended for keeping an unwieldy group together and moving forward. I wanted to mention two of our concerns about signing onto any coalition, which I think feeds into some of what Trita mentioned below regarding the composition of this particular coalition and further outreach:

1) We are always interested in knowing the composition of current support. If there are no other business associations on, or other like-minded organizations like CATO (or if they make up a small minority), we often hesitate to sign on. I realize there is a chicken and egg problem here.

2) We favor some control on membership prospects. If anyone can sign up to be part of the coalition, it makes us nervous. We are more likely to sign up to something when we are confident that there is a gatekeeper that will prevent associations or individuals who could harm the credibility of the coalition from signing up. A gatekeeper can also preserve balance between progressive/centrist/conservative elements.

I tend to think that this is most effective if it is truly transpartisan, and I am happy to see how I might reach out to CATO or others in the future and see if we might all jump at the same time.

Jake

From: Trita Parsi [mailto:tparsi@niacouncil.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 24, 2008 4:40 PM
To: 'Lauren Coletta'; 'Jake Colvin'; 'Lynn M. Kunkle'; 'Carah Ong'; 'Michael Ostrolenk'; 'Ira Shorr'; 'John Isaacs'; 'Mike Amitay'; 'Marie Rietmann'; 'Jim Fine'; 'Ifriedman@peacenow.org'; 'David Culp'
Cc: 'Babak Talebi'; smalaklou@niacouncil.org; eblout@niacouncil.org; 'Trita Parsi'
Subject: Re transpartisan coalition

To all our campaign friends,

As you all know, over the past five months, Carah, Mike, Ira, and the other organizers have worked diligently to give direction to the coalition's efforts and the campaign. Thank you for your dedication and hard work. NIAC has been honored to be involved in every step along the way. Because we care about the coalition and our partners, we would like to propose that we take a step back to make the coalition more fully trans-partisan.

I am writing to you in the spirit of making sure we do everything possible to reach our collective goal - changing the policy of the United States on Iran. To do so, building a trans-partisan coalition is key.

We need to recognize that a trans-partisan effort has to be truly trans-partisan in the sense that the coalition needs to have a good balance of groups on the right, center and left. We cannot just be trans-partisan in name.

As we've continued our campaign-planning, events on Capitol Hill (such as the NIE) have provided a real shift in the dynamics of the debate. We can capitalize on these developments if moderate and conservative organizations and members of Congress embrace the campaign. Without that support, NIAC fears that the campaign's efforts will be met with unfortunate failure.

In order to bring on board Senators like Feinstein et al we must show them that this campaign will provide the bi-partisan and trans-partisan support that they need (politically) to take a courageous stance on the issue. At this point, even those who should be our natural allies, organizations like USA*Engage, are reluctant to endorse or embrace our message. This should give us pause and prompt us to take a step back and potentially revise our approach.

I am not an expert on how to build trans-partisan coalitions. But I am quite impressed by the efforts of Michael at Reuniting America.

My sense after having observed their efforts is that to build these larger coalitions, one needs to start from scratch. Instead of presenting groups on the right with pre-written statements hoping they will sign on, these groups should be involved from the earliest possible stage and have a chance to participate in the creative process. In other words, they should be able to have input in the campaign's statement and overall messaging. Presenting groups with what can be perceived as a fait-accompli, I fear, will reduce our chances of successfully expanding our list of partners.

This, of course, also means that we must be ready to do some compromising and at times potentially soften/toughen our message or avoid addressing certain aspects of this issue in which agreement can't be found. But it's worth the price, because a trans-partisan coalition that doesn't have a good balance of participants is likely not going achieve what we all hope it should.

An example of this outreach was demonstrated when Grover Norquist offered his support but did not sign-on. He exemplifies not just a powerful voice in the Republican Party, but also an important figure that can provide trans-partisan legitimacy to our efforts. I think it is critical that we do whatever can be done to get him to sign on, especially since his full involvement would give our efforts a tremendous credibility boost.

If our decisions are driven by the current political realities, I believe that we have a window of a few months in which we can reinforce our efforts to open the coalition to groups on the right – which then includes renegotiating some of the language on our campaign statement to make it possible for them to say “Yes!”

The up side to taking a step back is significant, I believe. We all represent organizations that have limited budgets, resources and time. This effort and idea is, in my view, simply too good not be done in a way that maximizes our chances of success. None of us want to launch this campaign and then see it fail to receive the media attention it deserves, or fail to create the political momentum it clearly has the potential to achieve.

To this end, I strongly urge our group to postpone the launch plans and reinvigorate existing efforts to get a more balanced coalition in place, even if it requires that we tweak our message. I understand, of course, that it is unfair to increase the already exhausting workload of Carah and others, and I volunteer NIAC's time and resources to help reach out to groups on the right (granted, of course, that we don't present them with a fait-accompli).

Again, I want to thank everyone for their time, dedication and persistence!

Sincerely,
Trita Parsi, PhD
President

National Iranian American Council
1411 K ST Ste 600
Washington DC 20005

Tel: 202 386 6325
Fax: 202 386 6409
Email: tparsi@niacouncil.org
web: www.niacouncil.org

From: Christopher Preble <cpreble@cato.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2007 10:48 AM
To: Babak Talebi
Subject: RE: Plans for thursday june 28 and thursday july 5

Babak,

It was good to see you last week. Busy time on the Iran front. The Kyl-Lieberman amendment is pretty awful, and I'm sure it will garner a lot of votes.

Here is my latest, written before the Ahmadinejad visit, and the latest on Capitol Hill.

<http://www.caller.com/news/2007/sep/24/war-with-iran-would-entail-grave-risks/>

Stay in touch,
Chris

Christopher Preble
Director of Foreign Policy Studies
The Cato Institute
1000 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20001

cpreble@cato.org
(202) 218-4630

Of all enemies of public liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. . . .

No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.

- James Madison, 1795

-----Original Message-----

From: Babak Talebi [mailto:btalebi@niacouncil.org]

Sent: Friday, June 22, 2007 10:36 PM

To: Christopher Preble; Michael Ostrolenk; Ivan Eland Eland; Philip Giraldi; NIAC President Trita Parsi; Jake Colvin; Samah Norquist

Subject: Plans for thursday june 28 and thursday july 5

Friends,

We have had about 36 meetings over the past month with Republican offices in the relevant committees and I think I speak for everyone when I say that in general we have been pleasantly surprised by the reactions.

It has also been a distinct pleasure working with each one of you and I for one look forward to our continued success and cooperative efforts.

On Wed those of us who were able to attend the strategy meeting agreed that we should move on to the next steps in producing some positive alternatives for congressional consideration. We also agreed that as we are drawing up those plans, we should continue with the Hill meetings.

My question for everyone is:

who is available this thursday june 28? And who is available next thu july 5th (during the recess)?

Our 3 meetings with allies (shays, gilchrest, and paul) were postponed to next week and one idea is to get staffers from friendly offices together in one session to share our thoughts and strategies. We can use such a meeting to get a specific amendment or bill introduced.

I will be setting up meetings for the next two thursdays - so if you could share your availabilities that would be greatly appreciated.

I hope you all enjoy your weekends.

Regards,

Babak Talebi

Sent via BlackBerry from T-Mobile

-----Original Message-----

From: "Christopher Preble" <cpreble@cato.org>

Date: Wed, 20 Jun 2007 14:03:19

To: "Babak Talebi" <btalebi@niacouncil.org>, "Michael Ostrolenk" <michaeldostrolenk@gmail.com>, "Ivan Eland Eland" <ieland@independent.org>, "Philip Giraldi" <pmgiraldi@gmail.com>, "NIAC President Trita Parsi" <tparsi@niacouncil.org>, "Jake Colvin" <jcolvin@nftc.org>, "Samah Norquist" <snorquist@globalpartnersllc.net>
Subject: RE: Question: Iran strategy meeting

Babak (et al),

Apologies for not responding to this message last week, and I'm sorry that I wasn't able to attend today's meeting. It has been a crazy few weeks.

Since you asked, I'm speaking, along with Ted Carpenter, about U.S.-Iranian relations (The Grand Bargain) in the evening on Monday, June 25th, at the World Affairs Council of Northern California. Ted and I will both have some free time on Monday during the day, and I am staying in San Fran on Tuesday, so if you know of people in the area who might be interested in meeting with us, I'm open to it.

Details of the event are below:

<http://www.itsyourworld.org/program.php?page=1898>

On Wednesday evening, June 27th, I am speaking to the World Affairs Council of Dallas. Same applies. I do have some meetings scheduled during the day on Wednesday, but also some free time.

<http://www.dfwworld.org/NETCOMMUNITY/Page.aspx?&pid=395&srcid=180>

Finally, I will be discussing our outreach efforts at an event sponsored by CAP and the Peace and Security Initiative this Friday, June 22nd, at Noon. The event begins in the morning with another panel, so you might be interested in both sessions. (I see that Trita is already on the program!)

Keep up the good work, all. We didn't manage to stop the last war, but perhaps we'll be more successful this time around.

Best,
Chris

Christopher Preble
Director of Foreign Policy Studies
The Cato Institute
1000 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20001

cpreble@cato.org
(202) 218-4630

Of all enemies of public liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. . . .
No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.
- James Madison, 1795

-----Original Message-----

From: Babak Talebi [mailto:btalebi@niacouncil.org]

Sent: Friday, June 15, 2007 12:37 AM

To: Michael Ostrolenk; Christopher Preble; Ivan Eland Eland; Philip Giraldi; NIAC President Trita Parsi; Jake Colvin; Samah Norquist

Subject: Re: Question: Iran strategy meeting

Thank you mike - I'll certainly be there

Sent via BlackBerry from T-Mobile

-----Original Message-----

From: Michael Ostrolenk <michaeldostrolenk@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, 14 Jun 2007 21:40:50

To: Chris Preble <cpreble@cato.org>, Ivan Eland Eland <ieland@independent.org>, Philip Giraldi <pmgiraldi@gmail.com>, Babak Talebi <btalebi@niacouncil.org>, Trita Parsi <tparsi@niacouncil.org>, Jake Colvin <jcolvin@nftc.org>, Samah Norquist <snorquist@globalpartnersllc.net>

Subject: Question: Iran strategy meeting

Dear All,

Please let me know if you can come to our office for a meeting on Wednesday the 20th at 1:30 till 3 p.m. to discuss our next steps with our Iran Hill meetings?

Thanks,

Michael

Michael D. Ostrolenk
Co-Founder/National Director
American Conservative Defense Alliance
<http://www.acdalliance.org> <<http://www.acdalliance.org>> /
michaeldostrolenk@gmail.com <<mailto:michaeldostrolenk@gmail.com>>
Phone: 301-717-0599
Fax: 240-209-0576
1920 L. Street, Suite 200, NW
Washington DC 20036

"We must find a President who will order a foreign policy of enlightened self-interest supported by a defense system of superior weapons strong enough to deter the most reckless aggressor.† Such a foreign policy will make it clear to all the nations of this world that we have no desire to expand our territory or to impose our type of government or our way of life on any other people."

Barry Goldwater

From: Babak Talebi <btalebi@niacouncil.org>
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2008 7:41 AM
To: 'Christopher Preble'
Subject: Question about the RNCC

Chris,

How are you doing? Long time no see – I have not seen you at the last few CATO speeches I attended but I presume you are still there and busy as ever?

I wanted to reach out and ask you a question or two about the RNCC – will CATO be at the convention in St. Paul or will you guys have any events on the ground there? NIAC will be sending reps to both conventions (for the first time) and we are trying to reach out to as many conservative and libertarian friends as possible to do some networking and to put our name out there.

I though I might ask you for advice on events we should try to attend or invitations we should try to secure. I know most of the parties and invite-only events will be for donors, but I thought you might have some suggestions on who to reach out to.

Looking forward to seeing you again sometime soon,

Regards,

Babak Talebi
Director of Community Relations

(202) 460-5680 Cell
(202) 386-6319 Direct
(202) 386-6409 Fax

National Iranian American Council
1411 K St. Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
Web: www.niacouncil.org
"Advancing the interests of the Iranian-American Community"

From: Christopher Preble <cpreble@cato.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2007 1:28 PM
To: Babak Talebi
Subject: RE: Update on Meetings for the 7th and 14th

Babak,
Sounds good. I'll see you tomorrow at 9:15 am.
R/
Chris

Christopher Preble
Director of Foreign Policy Studies
The Cato Institute
1000 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20001

cpreble@cato.org
(202) 218-4630

Of all enemies of public liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded,
because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. . . .
No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.
- James Madison, 1795

-----Original Message-----

From: Babak Talebi [mailto:btalebi@niacouncil.org]
Sent: Wednesday, June 06, 2007 4:25 PM
To: 'Babak Talebi'; 'Jake Colvin'; mostolenk@libertycoalition.net; 'Trita Parsi'; 'Ivan Eland'
Cc: Christopher Preble; D Bandow; 'Larry Madison'; 'Marcus Epstein'; 'Philip Giralddi'; 'samah Norquist'
Subject: Update on Meetings for the 7th and 14th

Friends,

I wanted to send you all an update for our meetings scheduled for tomorrow (June 7th) and next Thursday (June 14th).

A few notes: Rep Bono's FPLA asked to postpone our 9:30am meeting to next week and I have not confirmed a time for that meeting yet, though I'm trying to get her for the two empty slots in the afternoon.

We will meet at 9:15am in the House Cafeteria instead tomorrow so that we can introduce Chris and Samah (?) to our presentation.

Jake will join us in the afternoon but will not be attending the morning meetings.

I have not received confirmation from Larry, Marcus, Phil, or Samah regarding these meetings and would be curious to hear their suggestions, comments, or questions if they have any.

Also, included below, you will note a short synopsis of whether each member has co-sponsored the relevant sanctions legislation so that we can gear our approach appropriately.

I look forward to seeing you all tomorrow morning.

Thu Jun 7 –

9:15am – meet in House Cafeteria

10:00am – Rep Pence (IN-6) Rnk. sub-c For Aff – LeAnne Holdman (1317 Longworth)
Co-sponsor, 1400 and 957
Very Conservative on FP issues

10:45am – Rep Jo Ann Davis (VA-1) For Aff – Amanda Foster (1123 Longworth)
Co-sponsor, 957

11:30am – Rep Hall (TX-4) Rnk. Sub-c Commerce - Kyle Oliver (2406 Rayburn)

1:00pm – Sen Snowe (ME) Commerce - Dylan Williams (154 Russell)
Co-sponsor, 970

Favors targeted sanctions on Sudan
Favored sanctions on NK after its nuclear test

2:00pm – Sen Warner (VA) Armed Srv - Scott Suozzi (225 Russell)

[Interview with FOX about Iran](#)

3:00pm – Sen Shelby (AL) Rnk Banking - Watson Donald (110 Hart)
Statement on how nuke program, human rights abuses trouble him
Worried about Iranian hegemony in Iraq and Middle East

4:10pm - Sen DeMint (SC) Rnk sub-c Comm – Phillip Denby (340 Russel)
Statement expressing concern about Holocaust conference

Thu Jun 14 –

???? – Rep Bono (CA-45) Commerce – Chris Foster (104 Cannon) **quick**
Co-sponsor, 1400

9:00am

9:45am

10:30am – Sen Dole (NC) Armed Services, Banking – Arjun Mody (555 Dirksen)
Co-sponsor, 970

Co-sponsored Iran Freedom Support Act of 2005
Supported renewed sanctions on Burma
Dole mission to Bam rejected by Iran

11:15am – Sen Collins (ME) Armed Services, Rnk HS and Gov Aff – Patrick Hughes (413 Dirksen)
Co-sponsor, 970

Has pressured Treasury to go after U.S. companies with interests in Iran

1:00pm – Sen Martinez (FL) Armed Srv, Banking – John Goetchius (356 Russell)

Statement saying Iran's attitude must improve before talks
Recently called for sanctions against Sudan

2:00pm

2:45pm – Rep Inglis (SC-4) Foreign Affairs – Ryan Hamilton (330 Cannon)

3:30pm – Rep Rogers (MI-8) – Andrew Hawkins/Andy Keiser (133 Cannon)
Co-sponsor, 1400 and 957

4:15pm

Regards,

Babak Talebi
(202) 460-5680 Cell
(202) 719-8076 Office
(202) 719-8097 Fax

National Iranian American Council (c/o OAI)

2801 M Street, NW

Washington, DC 20007

Web: www.niacouncil.org

"Promoting Iranian American Participation In American Civic Life"

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From: Jake Colvin <jcolvin@nftc.org>
Sent: Thursday, July 26, 2007 2:28 PM
To: 'Mike Amitay'; 'Carah Ong'; 'Trita Parsi'; 'Babak Talebi'; 'Emily Blout'; 'Michael Ostrolenk'; 'Chris Preble'
Subject: Concerns about HR 2347 and 180 (Divestment)

I wanted to share with you the below letter that Bill Reinsch sent to all Members of Congress in response to two divestment bills that as of now are scheduled to be considered separately on the House floor this coming Monday under suspension. There is a push to move HR 2347, "Iran Sanctions Enabling Act" and a revised version of HR 180, "Darfur Accountability and Divestment Act." We note some of the problems with the bills below in addition to our broader concerns about state involvement in foreign policy. There is a chance to slow this down. Please feel free to share the thoughts expressed below with your members. Contrary to the assertions this morning at the NIAC conference, there will be 2 separate votes on the bills so there will be an opportunity to make a specific point on Iran sanctions vs. Sudan sanctions.

On that, one of the best points to make is that the decision to proceed with H.R. 2347, which would enable state divestment from companies doing business in Iran, undercuts the assertion made in H.R. 180 that, "Congress acknowledges that divestment should be used sparingly and under extraordinary circumstances and that H.R. 180 "is based on unique circumstances, specifically, the reprehensible and abhorrent genocide occurring in Sudan." Questions? 202.464.2025.

July 26, 2007

Re: HR 2347, "Iran Sanctions Enabling Act" and HR 180, "Darfur Accountability and Divestment Act"

Dear Congressman:

I am writing on behalf of the National Foreign Trade Council, an association of some 300 U.S. companies engaged in international trade and investment, to express concern with two divestment bills - H.R. 2347 and H.R. 180 - which may shortly be considered by the full House. Given the serious and potentially-far reaching implications for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy that arise from this legislation, I strongly urge you to insist the bills be given closer scrutiny.

In particular, it would be useful to hold hearings specifically on the two bills, including the new text that was substituted during today's markup of H.R. 180 by the House Financial Services Committee, to permit a full assessment of its impact on the ability of the federal government to conduct foreign policy, as well as the appropriateness of allowing individual States and municipalities to do so.

Federal laws to enable foreign policy-making at the State and local levels - as proposed in H.R. 180 and 2347 - threaten to create a complex web of restrictions and regulations that interfere with the Constitutional right given to the President to conduct foreign policy. They will also inevitably cause numerous problems for businesses trying to comply in good faith with inconsistent and in some cases contradictory requirements from different jurisdictions.

The President's Special Envoy to Sudan Andrew Natsios has already expressed the Administration's opposition to State divestment legislation in April 11 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee saying, "There is a reluctance to support this because the fear is that to have each State or municipality conducting its own foreign policy could create chaotic conditions." Mr. Natsios went on to say that "once the...crisis is over and you want to change the sanctions, some States may not do it. That is still the case; there are still sanctions against South Africa and some State pension funds because of something that happened 20 years ago."

These revised bills present other concerns as well:

- The divestment power in H.R. 180 is extended to "any local government within a State, and any agency or instrumentality thereof," while the standard in H.R. 2347 applies to "a State or local government." These are sweeping standards that offer counties and hamlets a hand in foreign policy decisions. No matter how well-intentioned such local governments may be, such entities are ill-suited to opine on U.S. foreign policy.

- The decision to proceed with H.R. 2347, which would enable state divestment from companies doing business in Iran, undercuts the assertion made in H.R. 180 that, "Congress acknowledges that divestment should be used sparingly and under extraordinary circumstances and that H.R. 180 "is based on unique circumstances, specifically, the reprehensible and abhorrent genocide occurring in Sudan."

- H.R. 180 directs the Secretary of the Treasury to create a list of bad actors in Sudan "using only publicly available (including proprietary) information." At best, that directive is unclear and at worst it is contradictory.

- H.R. 180 would allow States, municipalities or their instrumentalities to divest holdings in firms that appear on the U.S. Treasury blacklist or on "any list developed by the State or local government for the purpose of divestment." The legislation provides no quality controls for such alternate lists. Various political risk research firms have touted lists that include upwards of 200 companies supposedly doing business in Sudan.

- The headlines created by these alternate lists, whether accurate or not, could harm innocent companies and open cities or States to expensive lawsuits. Even well-intended research can be conducted poorly. In addition, there has been a worrying lack of transparency with some of these lists. Companies that are captured by their provisions have no obvious recourse to object and in some cases may be unaware that they are even on an exclusion list.

At its core, this type of enabling legislation is bad public policy. By encouraging State funds to depart from the underlying fiduciary responsibilities of money management, and by injecting social or political criteria into investment decisions, Congress threatens to complicate the conduct of U.S. foreign policy and impart selective mandates on pension funds that will ill-serve investors and pensioners down the road. Foreign policy sanctions by States not only undermine the ability of the U.S. to speak with one voice but also frustrate cooperation with U.S. trading partners who often see them as a violation of U.S. international commitments and who are prompted to enact blocking statutes or otherwise retaliate against U.S. interests.

Today, with regard to divestment, the focus of Congress is on Sudan and Iran. But setting a precedent here will lead to more attempts by State legislatures to divest from Zimbabwe or Nigeria, and then on to Russia or China or the hot-button social issue of the day - and it is likely that States will not wait around for the blessing of Congress to proceed. This is not an idle worry. During committee consideration of an Ohio divestment bill targeting companies doing business in Iran, an amendment to add China to the list of offending countries failed by a vote of 12-10.

Given these potentially serious consequences for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, I hope you will oppose this bill if it is considered next week and urge that it be given more detailed consideration before any further action is taken on it.

Sincerely,

William A. Reinsch
President
National Foreign Trade Council

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Jake Colvin

Cell - 202.361.9360

jcolvin@gmail.com