

IIC Curriculum Vitae

History

IIC was founded in August 1997 by Trita Parsi, the present President. While conducting research on Iran for US Congressmen in Washington DC in 1997, he recognized the necessity of establishing a lobbying organization in order to protect the socio-economic and political aspirations of the Iranian people on one hand, and to promote the historical and contemporary cultural and scientific contributions of people of Iranian heritage worldwide, on the other. This consequently led, in collaboration with a large number of intellectuals and experts, to the formation of Iranians for International Cooperation (IIC).

Objectives

IIC's main objective is to safeguard Iran's and Iranian's interests. Currently, our agenda is topped by the removal of US economic and political sanctions against Iran, and the commencement of an Iran-US dialogue. Iranians constitute one of the most productive and highly educated ethnic groups in the US. Yet, we are a very small voice in US politics. We simply do not participate in the political processes in this great democracy, and if we do not participate we cannot expect to have our voice heard. Many of the problems Iranians face in the US, and much of the enmity between the US and Iran, could either have been terminated or reduced had we attempted to constitute a political force in the US. For instance, had there been an organized *Iranian* opposition to the proposed US sanctions back in 1995, chances are that the sanctions either wouldn't have been enacted *or* that they would have been enacted in a much more lenient form. Now, we missed that train, but we still have the opportunity *and the responsibility* to help our people out of this situation and to make sure that we never get in such a precarious situation again.

Achievements

The first achievement of IIC can be traced back to the summer of 1997 when Trita Parsi worked as a political consultant for Congressman Robert Ney of Ohio. Congressman Ney was at the time a proponent of the US's isolation policy of Iran and had contacts with the

Mujahedine Khalq terrorist organisation. Mr. Parsi was hired to consult the Ohio Congressman on his policy vis-à-vis Iran, and persuade him to reconsider his position in favour of a pro-dialogue, pro-engagement policy.

IIC has then addressed almost all decision-makers in the US Congress and informed them on the opinion of Iranian-Americans in the US. Due to our activities, US Congressmen are today much more aware of the thoughts and preferences of the powerful Iranian-American community. Prior to our activities, most US Congressmen were under the impression that the Mujahedin-e Khalq terrorist organisation represented an accurate reflection of the political preferences of Iranian-Americans.

Furthermore, IIC has fought discrimination and slander against Iran and Iranians. Unfortunately, it is today politically acceptable to mock Iran and Iranians in the US. This unfortunate situation can only turn for the better if Iranian-Americans in the US fight such illegal activities. IIC has for the last two years sent numerous complaint letters to Radio shows, TV programs and newspapers whenever we felt their comments to be offending.

Also, the use of the illegitimate and fabricated term "A... Gulf", which certain news agencies have commenced to use as a political weapon against Iran, has been something we have fought against successfully. Several TV programs and Radio shows have apologised for using the fabricated terminology and assured us that only the term "Persian Gulf" will be used in the future.

What we can achieve

IIC is capable of organising the grassroots and pressure US lawmakers to pose a more Iran friendly position. We are also capable of undertaking nation-wide fax and petition campaigns. Furthermore, we have extensive contacts with the US media and can have IIC representatives participate in TV and radio debates. Moreover, we have highly educated members with excellent diplomatic skills who can play the role of mediators between Iran and the US. We are, however, not fully capable of raising substantial amounts of money as of yet. But bearing in mind the age of our organisation, we are confident that we will double our fund-raising capacity this year.

*Mission statement of
Iranians for International Cooperation*

Recalling Iranians for International Co-operation's (IIC) status as a non-political organization with no ambition or mandate, to become or support any political group, movement or faction in any country;

Reaffirming IIC's nature as an advocacy group with a specific and restricted mandate;

Recognizing Iran as an ancient and sovereign nation, whose people must enjoy the right to self-determination;

Seeking to maintain the territorial, cultural, political and economic sovereignty of Iran, as it is crucial to peace and prosperity in Iran itself as well as in the Persian Gulf and Middle East region;

Mindful of the detrimental effect hostility and distrust between Iran and the United States of America have on the prospects of peace, prosperity, and democracy in Iran;

Emphasizing the negative effect economic and political isolation of Iran have on the process of democratization;

Stressing that unilateral sanctions against Iran have resulted in more unnecessary friction and have only strengthened forces aiming to halt reforms;

Stressing further that economic sanctions violate the Iranian people's Human Rights as stipulated in Article 22 and 25 of the Declaration of Human Rights*;

Noting with satisfaction that neither the Iranian nor the American people wish to continue the current state of strained relations between the two countries;

Noting further that the Iranian people have clearly expressed their wish to increase contacts with the West;

Emphasizing that trade and constructive contacts have a positive effect on the reform process in Iran;

1. *Decides* to campaign for the lifting of the United States sanctions imposed on Iran and the normalization of relations between Iran and other nations, especially the United States of America;
2. *Decides further* to promote the use of dialogue as a means to normalize relations between the United States of America and Iran;
3. *Decides further* to fight all forms of discrimination against Iranians;
4. *Strives* to promote dialogue and cooperation as a means to solve international disputes while promoting Iran's national interest and facilitating friendship between Iran and other nations;
5. *Strives further* to establish a permanent institution safeguarding the interest of the Iranian people;
6. *Calls upon* all peaceloving people, especially Iranians to join IIC in its campaign.