



National Iranian American Council

US-Iran Policy Program

8 Month Report, June 2007

The US-Iran Policy Program is aimed to providing Washington's policy circles—the bureaucracy, White House, Capitol Hill, media, or other actors and organizations—with objective, independent, and non-partisan analysis on Iran. The program aimed to deliver two Annual Policy Conferences, six large staff briefings on Capitol Hill, one-on-one briefings with staffers as well as other US officials, two conference reports, two larger in depth reports on US-Iranian Relations, two “brief reports” on specific themes in US-Iranian Relations, and twelve monthly op-ed/commentary/analysis.

The Policy Program has quickly become a critical voice on Capital Hill on US-Iran relations. NIAC's objective, independent, and non-partisan analysis has been systematically distributed to staffers, media, and most importantly policy makers. Though the program only secured approximately 50% of its required budget, it has nevertheless accomplished major feats within the last eight months and performed beyond the goals for its first year. These include two major conferences on Capitol Hill (with a third one being planned for November), three staff briefings and an additional three being set-up for the fall, and more than 80 one-on-one meetings with congressional offices.

Annual Policy Conferences and conference reports

- *February 14, 2007: US-Iran relations: collision, stand-off, or convergence?*

This full day conference included prominent speakers such as Professor Frank Fukuyama, Congresswoman Jane Harman, Colonel Larry Wilkerson (Colin Powell's Chief of Staff), Flynt Leverett (New America Foundation), Bruno Pellaud (former deputy chief of safe guards at the IAEA), and Daniel Levy (former advisor to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak). The discussions centered on how to be change Iranian behavior without resorting to force, how Iran's internal pro-democracy movement best can be aided, how to break the impasse over the nuclear issue through a formula of inspections rather than suspension, as well as previously undisclosed details about the May 2003 Iranian negotiation offer to the US. The conference was a major success with more than 390 participants. Transcripts of the conference have been distributed to all Congressional offices as well as to the Bureaucracy dealing with Iran, policy makers, and other collaborative organizations.

- *July 26, 2007: Human Rights in Iran and US Foreign Policy Options*

This panel featured several high-power speakers including Alex Arriaga (Amnesty International), Joe Stork (Human Rights Watch), John Tirman (MIT), Laura Secor (The New Yorker) as well as Congressmen Jim Moran (D-VA), Mike Honda (D-CA) and Tom Tancredo (R-CO). The conference addressed Iran's deteriorating human rights situation along with US policy options – including a lengthy discussion on measures the US *shouldn't* take, such as the infamous Iran Democracy Fund. The conference was held at a critical time. Not only had four Iranian Americans been detained in Iran during a large clamp-down on Iran's civil society, but Congress was only days from deciding whether to re-appropriate funds for the Iran Democracy Program. The panel was attended by 170 staffers and media representatives, and NIAC had to turn away an addition 50 individuals due to lack of space. The transcripts of the conference have been distributed to all congressional offices and other relevant parties, and the video has been posted on the NIAC website and on youtube.

- *November 2007: War Game – Regional Repercussions of War with Iran and US options*

NIAC is planning a war game on Capitol Hill with some of the US's foremost military and Middle East experts on regional repercussions of war with Iran – and the limited options the US has to deal with the fall out of a war with Iran. The aim is to ensure that decision-makers are made aware of the likely consequences of this scenario in order to motivate them to chose an alternative path.

Staff briefings on Capitol Hill

NIAC has, together with the Congressional Dialogue Caucus, organized several briefings on Capital Hill to provide a forum for lawmakers to gain insight and engage on issues that affect US-Iran policy. Starting with 20 participants (staffers and members), these briefings have doubled in size since their initiation. The briefings provide an excellent opportunity to provide critical education to staffers and lawmakers on realities of Iran and US-Iran relations.

The first of these briefings was held on **January 17, 2007** with **Joe Cirincione**, Vice-President of the Center for American Progress. It focused on alternative solutions to the nuclear dispute.

The second briefing took place on **May 16, 2007** with **Joe Volk** of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, who gave a presentation of his recent trip to Iran to se Iranian decision-makers, including President Ahmadinejad.

The third briefing was held on **July 19, 2007** with **Paul Pillar**, a 28 year veteran of the United States intelligence community. He discussed Iran's role in Iraq and the recent accusations made by the Administration in that regard.

NIAC is currently collaborating with the Congressional Dialogue Caucus on organizing three additional briefings for the rest of the year. Likely topics include discussion of the upcoming Iranian parliamentary elections, a presentation by Network 20/20 on their recent visit to Iran, and a presentation by an Iranian NGO on the impact of sanctions on their work and the general atmosphere in Iran.

One-on-one briefings

Our team has actively reached out to members of Congress their staffers, providing them with vital information. The significantly increasing number of requests from staffers for information reflects the success and appreciation the program has had on Capitol Hill.

In addition, NIAC is in the process of briefing all Presidential candidates on these matters.

Beyond the conclusions of our conferences and briefings, the topics of discussion have included:

- The negative effects of unilateral sanctions on the prospect for diplomatic engagement between the U.S. and Iran
- Collaboration on regional security, particularly Iraq
- Divestment issues
- The negative effects of the Democracy Fund on civil society in Iran

NIAC has conducted over 80 one-on-one briefings with Congressional offices. These offices include but are not limited to: Representative Joe Barton, Representative Michele Bachmann, Representative Mary Bono, Representative Charles W. Boustany, Representative Steve Chabot, Representative John Conyers, Representative Jo Ann Davis, Representative Peter A. DeFazio, Representative Jeff Flake, Representative Wayne Gilchrest, Representative Paul E. Gillmor, Representative Ralph M. Hall, Representative Maurice Hinchey, Representative Bob Inglis, Representative Jesse Jackson, Representative Dennis J. Kucinich, Representative Mark Kirk, Representative Barbara Lee, Representative Nita Lowey, Representative Betty McCollum, Representative Thaddeus McCotter, Representative Mike Pence, Representative Deborah Pryce, Representative Ron E. Paul, Representative Michael J. Rogers, Representative Peter J. Roskam, Representative Christopher Shays, Representative Nydia Velaquez, Representative Joe Wilson, Representative Lynn Woolsey, Senator Lamar Alexander, Senator Robert Bennett, Senator Sam Brownback, Senator Robert C. Byrd, Senator Robert P. Casey, Senator Susan M. Collins, Senator Norm Coleman, Senator Bob Corker, Senator Jim DeMint, Senator Elizabeth Dole, Senator Dick Durbin, Senator John Ensign, Senator Michael Enzi, Senator Russ Feingold, Senator Judd Gregg, Senator Daniel

Inouye, Senator John Kerry, Senator Dick Lugar, Senator Clair McCaskill , Senator Mel Martinez, Senator Bill Nelson, Senator Richard C. Shelby, Senator Gordon Smith, Senator Olympia J. Snowe, Senator Jon Tester, Senator John W. Warner, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse.

Monthly op-ed, commentary and analysis

While new and objective research is very much needed, the challenge to get the US-Iran program fully funded prompted us to make a strategic decision to focus more on information dissemination rather than new analysis. As a result, we have devoted our resources primarily towards one-on-one briefings, conferences and briefings rather than the lengthier analyses we originally had envisioned. Still, we have produced a large number of memo's and op-eds, and distributed these widely. These include:

The Hill: Fund bridges, not failed policy Dr. Trita Parsi and Emily Blout	Sep 11, 2007
Memo: Bush Indictment of Iran Tops Usual Rhetoric Dr. Trita Parsi	Aug 29, 2007
Memo: Terror Label for Guard Corp Entrenches US-Iran Enmity Dr. Trita Parsi	Aug 15, 2007
Memo: A New Cold War with Iran? Dr. John Tirman	Aug 14, 2007
Memo: Success in U.S.-Iran Security Talks Requires Balanced View Dr. Bahram Rajaei	Jul 25, 2007
Memo: Iran's Security Outlook Dr. Farideh Farhi	Jul 14, 2007
Memo: Iraq - One-Sided Focus on Iran's Role Counterproductive Dr. Bahram Rajaei	Jul 13, 2007
Memo: New War Rhetoric Undercuts Iraq Talks Dr. Trita Parsi	Jun 12, 2007
Memo: U.S.-Iran Convergence in Iraq? Dr. Bahram Rajaei	Jun 1, 2007
Memo: Might the U.S., Iran Cooperate on Al-Qaida? Prof. R. K. Ramazani	Jun 22, 2007
Memo: The Challenges in Forcing Iranian "Behavior Change" Dr. Bahram Rajaei	May 25, 2007
Memo: Scholars Bear Brunt of Anti-Diplomacy Backlash Dr. Trita Parsi	May 23, 2007
Memo: Can Europe End the Lose-Lose Game with Iran? Dr. Trita Parsi	May 10, 2007

Memo: A Counterproductive Precondition Dr. Bahram Rajaei	Apr 12, 2007
Memo: Supporting Terror to Destabilize Iran Will Backfire Dr. Bahram Rajaei	Apr 5, 2007
Memo: Duel for leverage fuels conflict, not diplomacy Dr. Trita Parsi	Mar 30, 2007
Memo: How Not to Foster Democracy in Iran Dr. Bahram Rajaei	Mar 26, 2007
Memo: Will Surge Hurt US More Than Sanctions Hurt Iran? Dr. Trita Parsi	Feb 26, 2007
Memo: Supporting a Wise Iran Policy: What Congress Can Do Dr. Bahram Rajaei	Feb 14, 2007

Request

Over the past eight months, the US-Iran Policy Program has performed above expectations. It is quickly becoming one of the key sources for analysis and information on Iran and US-Iran relations on Capitol Hill. The Pluralism Fund's support for the program in 2007 - \$30,000 - has been critical. We would kindly like to request a renewal of TPF's support for 2008.