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# Iran's tortured Green movement is down but not out. We can still help

One harrowing year since the stolen election, the people of Iran need the world's attention to go beyond the nuclear issue



**Timothy Garton Ash**

guardian.co.uk, Wednesday 9 June 2010 18.59 BST

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Do not forget Iran. Remember Neda. If there are green-clad protests in Tehran this weekend, to mark the first anniversary of the election that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stole, they will doubtless again be crushed with casual brutality by the thugs of the basij militia, secret police and Revolutionary Guard. Imprisonment, torture, male rape and execution are the offerings these henchmen of the Islamic Republic bring to honour Allah, the compassionate, the merciful.

Faced with such violent repression, the Green movement is a long way down – but not out. Iran will never again be the country it was before the election of 12 June 2009. In the great demonstration three days later, one of the largest in recorded history, everything was changed, changed utterly. In the subsequent repression, a terrible beauty was born. The historical process may take years, but one day, as the economy worsens and discontent spreads to more sections of society, the movement will be back in force, though perhaps in a different form. Eventually, in Iran there will be statues of Neda Agha-Sultan, the young woman shot in one of the early mass demonstrations, and memorials to the martyrs of this struggle for freedom, as there are now memorials to the martyrs of the Iran-Iraq war.

We should also never forget that this is a self-generated movement from within a Muslim society, dedicated to transforming the contemporary world's longest-running and still most formidable Islamist regime into something very different.

If you want to get a sense of the agony and ecstasy of Iran over the last year, read Death to the Dictator! by Afsaneh Moqadam. It tells the story of the stolen election and attempted Green revolution through the experience of one young man, Mohsen, who is caught up in the excitement of the protests, but then detained, tortured, and repeatedly

raped by his jailers. (Mohsen is too humiliated to admit this, but the horrible effects are detailed to his mother by a doctor, with appropriate medical advice.)

The larger political narrative is vividly and knowledgeably woven around this central, biographical thread. One thing that emerges very clearly is the vital role of women, which the Nobel peace prizewinner Shirin Ebadi has written about. Mohsen's mother herself joined the protests, independently of the men in her family, and we understand that this is a double emancipation. "Afsaneh Moqadam" is a pseudonym, and some names and details have been changed to protect those involved, but I have spoken to the author and am left in no doubt that this harrowing account is closely based on a true story.

Then go on YouTube to watch the American film For Neda. The film is a bit too schmaltzy for my taste, but well worth seeing, with some brave reporting by Saeed Kamali Dehghan, who returned to Iran to film interviews with Neda's family (and to report for the Guardian). Despite the regime's efforts to block it, many people in Iran have reportedly already viewed it online. Finally, look at Amnesty International's latest report on Iran, with its sober catalogue of arrests, torture and numerous executions.

Meanwhile the United States, Britain and other western powers today managed to push another round of sanctions through the UN security council. Despite being watered down at the behest of Russia and China, these do further tighten the screw on the regime, including some of the leaders and enterprises of the Revolutionary Guard. But the sanctions are related only to the nuclear issue, not to human rights.

Two questions arise: what is the best way to stop Iran getting a nuclear bomb? And how will possible strategies on the nuclear issue interact with the country's tortured internal politics? I doubt very much whether any sanctions acceptable to China will be strong enough to stop Iran getting to the nuclear weapon threshold. They will, however, worsen the country's economic situation and therefore potentially increase the social discontent that feeds opposition.

Some say the west should have responded more favourably to the recent Turkish-Brazilian proposal to take a chunk of Iran's low enriched uranium outside the country. (Miffed, Turkey and Brazil voted against the latest sanctions.) I don't think that would have stopped Iran moving covertly to the nuclear weapon threshold, and many regime opponents in Iran would not welcome such readiness to shake their oppressors' bloody hands.

Bombing Iran, as advocated by hotheads in the US and Israel, would almost certainly produce a wave of patriotic solidarity with the regime. At the other extreme, ever more foreign policy sages in Washington now say privately (and a few argue publicly) that we

must learn to live with – and "contain" – a nuclear Iran. But the risk of sparking a Sunni-Shia nuclear arms race in the Middle East is very grave, while such a "success" would also strengthen the Ahmadinejad regime at home. So: four alternatives, none of them good.

What remains is the hope of getting a more responsible government in Iran. To be sure, the leaders of the Green movement do not differ as much as we might like from the regime's position on the nuclear issue. But a more popular and legitimate government, re-engaging with the world, would create a very different dynamic and set of linkages around the nuclear issue.

How and when that domestic political change comes is both morally and practically a question for the Iranians themselves. The experience of other countries suggests that it will depend on the movement's ability to formulate clearer, more strategic goals, retain non-violent discipline and be inventive in finding new tactics of protest; to appeal to other social groups affected by a declining economy (workers, public service employees, bazaari merchants); and to exploit growing divisions within the regime. (A remarkable new investigation by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism and Guardian Films, viewable at [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk) from Friday, documents significant defections from the Revolutionary Guard.)

Iran will be liberated by the Iranians, not by us. But at the margins there are a few things we can do from outside. First, do no harm. In a political version of the doctor's Hippocratic oath, we must examine every step we take on the nuclear issue to make sure it does not actually damage the internal movement for change. Second, keep open the lines of communication and information, so Iranians inside and outside the country can tell each other what is happening there. The BBC Persian language television service must on no account fall victim to UK public spending cuts.

Work should be redoubled on internet firewall circumvention technologies, so all Iranians have online access to films like *For Neda* as well as their own home-made citizen journalism. Third, our leaders should say much more clearly that the sanctions we impose are also a response to the brutal repression inside Iran. We care about their rights, not just about our security.

Last but not least, we must always remember what has happened over the last year, and help Iranians to do the same. What all tyrants want is for their own people and the outside world to forget. The Czech writer Milan Kundera once famously observed that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting". For man, read also woman. Mohsen, and his mother.

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**ProfessorPlums**

9 Jun 2010, 7:17PM

But the sanctions are related only to the nuclear issue, not to human rights.

Have sanctions ever been sought against a country for human rights abuses alone?

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**MoveAnyMountain**

9 Jun 2010, 7:22PM

Bombing Iran, as advocated by hotheads in the US and Israel, would almost certainly produce a wave of patriotic solidarity with the regime.

It didn't in Serbia - a far more coherent, unified and solid country than Iran. There is no reason to think it will in Iran either. That sort of solidarity is alien to the Iranian people - and what is more we have historical precedent. The "Battle of the Cities" caused trivial damage to Iran's cities. But it was, in part, enough to force Iran to accept peace.

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[Link](#)**MoveAnyMountain**

9 Jun 2010, 7:29PM

ProfessorPlums

Have sanctions ever been sought against a country for human rights abuses alone?  
South Africa? Rhodesia?

[Recommend?](#) (12)[Report abuse](#)[Clip](#) |[Link](#)**Resistance**

9 Jun 2010, 7:31PM

This is so disappointing. First, you say the election was stolen, where is the clear evidence that this was the case? Then you are calling for bombing Iran Iraq style to prevent them from what you *perceive* to be their intention to have nuclear weapons because to do otherwise would spark an "arms race" between shia and Sunnis. Leaving aside again that there is absolutely no evidence that Iran is developing nuclear weapons, this just exposes you for what you are: another warmonger of the type who wear the "freedom and democracy" gown.

My advice is this: Leave Iran to Iranians, won't you? Let them decide how they want their country to be run. They overthrew the Shah when they felt they didn't like the direction he was leading their country, let them do so again to the current government if they want. Massively exaggerated "twitter revolution" by westerners with their own agenda will not bring change.

Lastly, please no more freedom and democracy bombs that are nothing but a façade for a 21st century imperialism that seeks to take away at gunpoint the resources of the very few who are still stubbornly independent.

[Recommend?](#) (54)[Report abuse](#)[Clip](#) |[Link](#)**OneWorldGovernment**

9 Jun 2010, 7:31PM

The Green movement has not extended to the other social classes and does not represent a legitimate threat to this regime. The western media has continually failed to acknowledge this problem for the Green movement. Until that happens, this regime will remain in power. Furthermore, Rasfanjani, Mousavi, and co. do not represent a big break from the policies of the regime that has the levers of power now in Iran. They just want power for themselves under the same system. Iran's domestic situation is for them to sort out, but containing Iran's influence in the region is the matter at hand. Hopefully, Turkey can further usurp Iran's influence with the Palestinian cause as they will bring a better chance for solving the region's problems into an acceptable scenario.

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**skeptical111**

9 Jun 2010, 7:37PM

My heart goes out to the brave Iranian protesters. Not only are they brave beyond belief, but also they are so lonely and seldom mentioned. Their guilt: they are being persecuted, maimed, prison-raped, assassinated by their own government, not by anything attributable to the West.

As a professor, I've met Iranian students in the States who are extraordinarily educated, refined, and contemptuous of their own government. I wouldn't be more specific in any way, as the degree of fear instilled by the Tehran government is incredibly "persuasive". One would hope that the compassionate, solidararian assortment of Turkish "charitable" organisations and selective Western lefties would send a flotilla to defend the victims of Iran's totalitarian government... but I'm not holding my breath. The hypocrisy of Islamic-and-friends "solidarity" stinks to high heavens.

To end this on a more positive note: to understand better the pre-Islamist Iranian ethos, there are few better places to go than the extraordinary movie called "House of sand and fog". Aside Ben Kingsley's expectedly brilliant performance, one gets a chance to watch - and feel - Shohreh Aghdashloo's acting of genius... she is part of that old Iranian world, far from perfect, but in which amazing women such as Shohreh were at least not beaten up in the street by the Islamic fashion police just for dressing "improperly".

Ms. Aghdashloo is in my opinion the greatest actress in the United States at the present time. Some people may know her from "24" season 4, where she was eerily excellent in a superficial movie, but for her truly best work one needs to watch "House Of Sand And Fog" and the haunting "The Stoning Of Soraya M".

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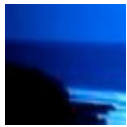
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**[Resistance](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:37PM

This comment has been removed by a moderator. Replies may also be deleted.



**[Bluecten](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:38PM

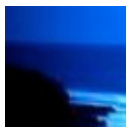
UNSCR 1929 requires member-states to inspect ships and planes headed to or from Iran if they suspect banned cargo is aboard.

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**[Bluecten](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:42PM

on one country in the middle east who has a far far much worse record in human rights than Iran

Why just one, haa? Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Oman, Qatar, Yemen, Iraq, Dubai, Turkey so on and so forth. Take your pick.

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**[MoveAnyMountain](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:46PM

Resistance

This is so disappointing. First, you say the election was stolen, where is the clear evidence that this was the case?

Excellent ostrich impersonation there!

Then you are calling for bombing Iran Iraq style to prevent them from what you perceive

to be their intention to have nuclear weapons because to do otherwise would spark an "arms race" between shia and Sunnis.

No he doesn't. Read the article.

Leaving aside again that there is absolutely no evidence that Iran is developing nuclear weapons, this just exposes you for what you are: another warmonger of the type who wear the "freedom and democracy" gown.

No evidence, you know, apart from their clear nuclear weapons programme. They have been lying about it since 1979 and have been hiding it from the UN inspectors. It is a weapons programme. That is why they bought nuclear warhead designs from Pakistan. If you can think of a peaceful use for a nuclear warhead please let us know.

Resistance

MAM, I guess from your response to ProfessorPlums, you will also be very glad to see sanctions imposed on one country in the middle east who has a far far much worse record in human rights than Iran (Oops, I hit a raw nerve there.)

What? Saudi Arabia? I doubt it does. Syria? I suspect we all know the country you mean and, of course, it has the best human rights record in the Middle East. So it is interesting that you believe otherwise.

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**[preemptiveresponse](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:47PM

Resistance

9 Jun 2010, 7:31PM

Says it all really.

Interesting that with all this talk about sanctions for Iran's so called weapons programme no one in the media seems to have mentioned that the IAEA have found no evidence and the west is basing its case on Israeli heresay.

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**[TwoSwords](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:49PM

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**TheShermanator**

9 Jun 2010, 7:51PM

I think the world should butt out of Iran's internal matters.

Instead, we should sit on the sidelines and watch as the regime collapses like a house of cards.

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**Achilles0200**

9 Jun 2010, 7:54PM

OneWorldGovernment

The Green movement has not extended to the other social classes and does not represent a legitimate threat to this regime.

And why not? If a small minority of Germans (as was the case) actively opposed the Nazis in WW2 would you consider them not to be legitimate? If a regime masquerading as democratic but totalitarian in its instincts (and largely so through its behaviour) seized power in the UK and executed its political opponents would you not think that it should be resisted by all means possible - even if it was supported by a majority of the population?

Your reasons for dismissing the Green movement are spurious. They may actually command a broader base of support than you are prepared to acknowledge, Most people conceded that they are drawn from the more educated sections of society so the chances are that they are less likely to be brainwashed by the regime and can see Ahmadinejad and his cronies for the destructive and nihilistic threat that they pose to Iran as a whole.

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**Achilles0200**

9 Jun 2010, 7:56PM

TheShermanator

I think the world should butt out of Iran's internal matters.

Instead, we should sit on the sidelines and watch as the regime collapses like a house of cards.

That could take decades unfortunately and there is plenty of evidence that during that time Iran will have no compunction about meddling in the affairs of others.

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**[Resistance](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:57PM

MAM, I don't want to turn this in to a forum but each of your response there was predictable. Typical MAM I might add. Israeli supporters constantly beat the drum of war against any country they perceive to be a threat to what they call the Jewish state. We have being here with Iraq. And we are now here with Iran. We may well be there tomorrow with Syria next after Iran. I don't think they are doing their country any good through these actions.

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**[HomoSapiens](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:57PM

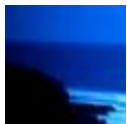
When are sanctions going to be imposed on the nuclear states, who have still not carried out their obligations under the NPT?

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**[Bluecten](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:57PM

History teaches that tyrannies often fall after suffering a military defeat. Nothing will really change in Iran as long as the Artesh[ regular army] remains loyal to the regime.

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**[pete999](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:57PM

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**[mface](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 7:58PM

I am curious. Aside from "not forgetting", let's face it, a remarkably passive exercise, what can someone like me do? I could use some advice.

I have already thought of e-mailing our t.v. news organizations for them to keep the Green Revolution alive on their newscasts. Some of the cable news programs are so desperate for filler material that they could certainly take the people of Iran as a regular weekly interest story.

Is there a way of reaching the Iran military leaders, the ones who really run the country now? Do they have a website? Do they have an address?

I don't have any money to contribute to Amnesty International, but some of the readers here might have something to give.

The problem with this article is that it gives no suggestions for people like us to utilize. I'll admit, my letters to Iran's military leaders might consist of "Okay, stop it already" or "Cut it out!" but, with that over with, I might think of something more useful. Who knows?

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**[edwardrice](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 8:01PM

Meanwhile the United States, Britain and other western powers today managed to push another round of sanctions through the UN security council. Despite being watered down at the behest of Russia and China, these do further tighten the screw on the regime, including some of the leaders and enterprises of the Revolutionary Guard. But

the sanctions are related only to the nuclear issue, not to human rights.

Sanctions only hurt ordinary folk. They screw the everyday hard working people of Iran.

*But the sanctions are related only to the nuclear issue, not to human rights.*

There is no evidence Iran is building the bomb, so why the sanctions?

Punishment: The Iranians elected the wrong government in a stolen election.

Nothing, of course, to do with Iran having lots of oil and gas.

Recommend? (25)

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**moretheylie**

9 Jun 2010, 8:08PM

to mark the first anniversary of the election that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stole,

the lie isnt getting any more truethful, even if you and your cohorts continue to repeat it for eternity

Eventually, in Iran there will be statues of Neda Agha-Sultan, the young woman shot in one of the early mass demonstrations, and memorials to the martyrs of this struggle for freedom, as there are now memorials to the martyrs of the Iran-Iraq war.

the neo cons fantasy fiction ..

We should also never forget that this is a self-generated movement from within a Muslim society,

uk usa financed and backed .. who you trying to make idiots of ?

with some brave reporting by Saeed Kamali Dehghan, who returned to Iran to film interviews with Neda's family (and to report for the Guardian)

how inept can the iranian security sevices be?

Finally, look at Amnesty International's latest report on Iran, with its sober catalogue of arrests, torture and numerous executions.

and not that of the usa, china, russia, uk or israel?

But the sanctions are related only to the nuclear issue, not to human rights.

have nothing to do with nuclear issue .. theyre about creating the environment at which point sanctions can be moved to war .. we seen it before .. iraq ..

Two questions arise: what is the best way to stop Iran getting a nuclear bomb?

no sane person believes they are seeking the bomb.

I don't think that would have stopped Iran moving covertly to the nuclear weapon threshold, and many regime opponents in Iran would not welcome such readiness to shake their oppressors' bloody hands.

there is no covert programme .. if there is how do you know about it?

the regime by accepting the swap deal was looking to shake hands its the uk-israel-usa that are looking to war.

Iran will be liberated by the Iranians, not by us.

so we are going to pretend that its a peoples revolution .. just like the other color revolutions .. sorry not falling for it though this is quite an insight as to how we are going for regime change

What all tyrants want is for their own people and the outside world to forget.

is the uk - usa ruled by tyrants ... they surely want us to forget .. be blind, dumb and deaf

..

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**[crazyilting](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 8:08PM

There is so many threads being woven in the middle east that one wonders if they aren't forming a rope. I can barely keep up with the background study needed to follow all of the issues happening. Didn't we attack Iraq because there was a fear of weapons of mass destruction that would wipe out Iran? So now we are starting the same song and dance with Iran?

With the way they have been flexing as of late I would suspect they are closer then we think they are to their final goal.

There are simply to many fires to put out in the middle east, if something isn't done soon i fear there will be a war that will dwarf all previous wars we have ever encountered.

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**[WakaJawaka](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 8:26PM

**T.G.A.:** One harrowing year since the stolen election ...

Timothy, why are you repeating the lie about the stolen election? You know as well as anybody that there's not a shred of evidence for fraud in Iran's last elections while the

evidence for the correctness of their results is overwhelming and well documented ... An independent, objective poll was conducted in Iran by American pollsters prior to the election. The pollsters, Ken Ballen of the nonprofit Center for Public Opinion and Patrick Doherty of the nonprofit New America Foundation, describe their poll results in the June 15 Washington Post. The polling was funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and was conducted in Farsi by a polling company whose work in the region for ABC News and the BBC has received an Emmy award.\*

Many experts are claiming that the margin of victory of incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was the result of fraud or manipulation, but our nationwide public opinion survey of Iranians three weeks before the vote showed Ahmadinejad leading by a more than 2 to 1 margin - greater than his actual apparent margin of victory in Friday's election.\*

\*Sources:

[Are You Ready for War with a Demonized Iran?](#)

by Paul Craig Roberts, Counterpunch, June 16, 2009

[What Actually Happened in the Iranian Presidential Election?](#)

by Esam Al-Amin, Counterpunch, June 22, 2009

Whether we like it or not, Ahmadinejad has won this election fair and square. But I wonder what sources (if any) you are using for your claims, Timothy?

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**[EACLucifer](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 8:30PM

@ WakaJawaka

An election where, out of hundreds, only four were permitted to stand.

It was stolen before the first vote was cast.

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**[NeverMindTheBollocks](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 8:51PM

"Do not forget Iran. Remember..."

...the lack of evidence of the "stolen" election that this CIFer alleges occurred.

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**[Persiangulf](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 9:10PM

It is amazing how much they love Iran. The western media has kept Iran in its media day in day out! Is that because they love Iran and care for Iranians? Or is it because Iran has 2nd largest natural gas reserves and third natural oil reserves. Look into the Iranian history: you see the CIA toppling the chosen Prime minister of Iran and imposing the shah and his family on Iranians. Since then Iranians have had a war created by the west for eight years which killed million people. Are you surprised why Islamic republic is the chosen system in Iran. You try to explain to the martyred ,s family that the west cares.

Are you saying that Iranians can not see what chaos the west has caused in Kwait, Iraq , Pakistan and finally Afganistan. Look what Israel done to lebanon and palestenians. Is the western power biased towards Israel. You damn right the west is biased. Sanctions on Iran. Come off it. WEst and America would not sell pasenger plane to Iranians!!

Iranian people must remember that no one cares for them but themselves. The Americans and their many many bases and spies have caused as much headache for Iran as possible. Can usa be trusted!! Are you joking!! They just play games to get their way ! right and wrong is not part of it. I am anti west but has Timothy ash a hidden agenda ? you damn right he has? This is the first time I have heard of his name. But I promise you I would never read anything he writes. He is biased and you can see who he supportsA true jurnalst stays unbiased unlike this one. I am really tired of the western media trying to tell its readers what to think!! Do they think people can not think for themselves if they just reported the news and left their readers to make their own mind! I love Iran and I know better than believing this type of articles.

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**[Persiangulf](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 9:12PM

Should read I am not antiwest

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**[Achilles0200](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 9:15PM

NeverMindTheBollocks

"Do not forget Iran. Remember..."

...the lack of evidence of the "stolen" election that this CIFer alleges occurred.

I am tired of repeating this ad nauseam but there is evidence (the question is whether you accept it or not.

The evidence? Firstly, the perception of the people that it had been stolen (they may have been mistaken but clearly they believed that the case - perception is not proof but it is prima facie evidence that ought to be investigated). Secondly, the regime itself behaved as if they had stolen the election - they could have put the matter beyond doubt by having a re-run under independent monitoring but instead they chose the path of brutal and bloody intimidation and repression.

There, Sir, is your evidence!

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**[HopWo](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 9:25PM

This situation has always seemed slightly paradoxical. The West's response always reminds me of the old saying about having your cake and eating it too.

On one hand, the West want's the Iranian Government to come to the table over the Nuclear (and other) issues, and will use both carrot and stick to achieve this.

But at the same time, the West seems determined to undermine the Iranian Government by supporting unrest and the Green Movement at home, and continuing to declare the government illegitimate.

It would be nice if the West would make up its mind on which way they want it.

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[Link](#)**gordong156**

9 Jun 2010, 9:25PM

The BBC Persian language television service must on no account fall victim to UK public spending cuts.

If the sanctions don't kill them (see Iraq) our 24hr propaganda surely will.

[Recommend?](#) (6)[Report abuse](#)[Clip](#) |[Link](#)**edwardrice**

9 Jun 2010, 9:35PM

This comment has been removed by a moderator. Replies may also be deleted.

**VictorPurinton**

9 Jun 2010, 9:44PM

When you meet and get to know Iranians, they are so sweet, so smart, and so wonderful that it is almost impossible to reconcile such beautiful people and such a beautiful country with the cunning, heartless and savage bastards who are its rulers.

The reason they are so despicable is that they are in a position where they have to stay in power at all costs. The marches last summer were not really a dispute about the proper handling of an election. They were about the regime.

Iranians know that they are treated like cattle by the mindless thuggery of the Shi'ite theocracy, and they're as sick of it as any American or European would be. Imagine if you had to live in a country where elections are meaningless, where communications and the press can be shut down with a single nod of a grizzled, wrinkly head. A head who cannot be voted out of office. That's it. It's him. You have no say.

Iran's governance is a joke. Apologists for the regime (such as those in this thread) are sleazeballs masquerading as reasonable people.

We see you, Iranian regime. And we spit on your thuggery, your smiling lies, your brutality, and your silly streets of gold.

Yes. We know you. You're pigs.

Now go ahead. Somebody defend them. Somebody talk about Iranian democracy.

Somebody declare that the regime is legitimate.

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**[edwardrice](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 9:53PM

Persianguf

"you see the CIA toppling the chosen Prime minister of Iran and imposing the shah and his family on Iranians "

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**[Brusq](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 10:09PM

There are countries with much much worse human rights records than Iran - including Israel, China, N. Korea, Russia and most of Arab nations.

Why this fixation on Iran ?

Ignorance and arrogance - the only plausible explanation.

.

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**[saagua](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 10:10PM

The US and Israel like to find ways to smear Iran since it is one of the few Muslim nations not under their thumb. And of course their mignons follow suit. But trashing Iran and Islam in general isn't working very well. The US pretense at world empire is fading fast, with the Afghan war about to be lost, and Iran unbowed by sanctions.

Turkey has ceased to dance to America's tunes and Brazil has just enjoyed slapping Uncle Sam in the face. Things are changing and that is a good thing.

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**[TheShermanator](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 10:42PM

@ saagua

*And of course their mignons follow suit*

What are "mignons?"

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**[WakaJawaka](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 10:46PM

**EACLucifer:** An election where, out of hundreds, only four were permitted to stand. It was stolen before the first vote was cast.

... you mean the same way that Dennis Kucinich's presidential campaign was killed by Disney Corporation before voters got the chance to decide for themselves?

For anyone who doesn't remember this: in November 2007 Dennis Kucinich took part in a public TV debate of all Democratic presidential candidates (Obama, Clinton, Edwards, Biden ... the whole lot). The debate was hosted by CNN and broadcast live country wide. Directly after the debate CNN conducted a quick poll among TV viewers which revealed that more than 70% found Kucinich's answers the most honest and the most convincing, leaving Obama, Clinton and the rest trailing far behind. It must have been at that point that corporate America decided to put a spoke into Kucinich's campaign. Before the New Hampshire primary in January 2008 another public TV debate of all candidates was scheduled, this time hosted by Disney Corporation's ABC which was openly backing Hillary Clinton's campaign. Shortly before the broadcast ABC told Kucinich that they wouldn't let him take part in the debate. It was as simple as that. Consequently Kucinich withdrew his candidacy a while later.

I think it can't possibly have been as bad as this during the Iranian election campaign. Also EACLucifer, for some time I have noticed that people like you are shifting the ground. Now that your previous claims of fraud during the Iranian elections have been thoroughly debunked you claim that the fraud took place before the elections, of course again without providing any evidence. Why are you so keen to spread such falsehoods?

Isn't it bad enough that TGA, Tisdall and the rest of them peddle the CIA view of the world on these pages week by week?

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**[liviacosta](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 11:14PM

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**[liviacosta](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 11:16PM

This comment has been removed by a moderator. Replies may also be deleted.



**[ShayBegorrah](#)**

9 Jun 2010, 11:46PM

My favourite quote about the new sanctions on Iran is from a US blog [yglesias.thinkprogress.org](http://yglesias.thinkprogress.org) where some bloke called timmie noted wryly that "*You would have thought that Iran had learned from Iraq what happens to them when a state refuses to give up weapons they don't have.*"

Anyway, that is a "humorous" aside, unless you are an Iraqi. The main point is that whenever you read a TGA article about the Middle East you should remember what he was writing in the [New York Times](#) in 2002.

*Saddam Hussein's **stubborn claim** that he has no more weapons of mass destruction is a blow to those who had hoped for a peaceful solution to the Iraq crisis and a gift to those who think toppling him by force is the only path to effective disarmament. My own impression from talking to people inside and close to the Bush administration is that the Iraq war is now a matter of when and how rather than whether.*

Timothy Garton Ash repeats the US establishment line whatever it is and at the moment the Iranian election protests are another front in the "War on Muslims Living Near Oil".

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**roobz**

10 Jun 2010, 12:33AM

**Resistance**

and all of those that recommended the post at 7.31pm.

Please read the article before you accuse Garton Ash of supporting bombing Iran.

If you had read it, you would have seen TGA explicitly state that he is **against bombing Iran**.

Do yo work for the Iranian counterpart of Giyus, automatically rubbishing any article critical of the Iranian regime without even bothering to check your facts?

Bombing Iran, as advocated by hotheads in the US and Israel, would almost certainly produce a wave of patriotic solidarity with the regime...

Iran will be liberated by the Iranians, not by us.

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**saagua**

10 Jun 2010, 12:45AM

I think the reason Israel and the US fear that Iran might get nukes is that nukes, if Iran had them, would make it impossible to 'change the regime' there as was so clearly done in Iraq. IF Iran had nukes it would have them for the same reason Israel has them: to prevent an attack. In short, nukes are defensive weapons and seeing what happened to Iraq, Iran may well think that being able to get some would be 'useful' for its security.

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**Oshima**

10 Jun 2010, 12:49AM

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**skeptical111**

10 Jun 2010, 12:51AM

///

And of course their mignons follow suit

What are "mignons"?///

Mignons are groupies filleted for the purpose of spreading them out better.

(-:

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**[skygill](#)**

10 Jun 2010, 12:51AM

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**[liviacosta](#)**

10 Jun 2010, 12:53AM

This comment has been removed by a moderator. Replies may also be deleted.



**[liviacosta](#)**

10 Jun 2010, 1:02AM

This comment has been removed by a moderator. Replies may also be deleted.



**[Leondeinos](#)**

10 Jun 2010, 1:04AM

Right on, we should remember the people of Iran. But the US and British governments are today remembering only the rulers of Iran. Can we help the Iranians? Maybe, but not by starving them out.

Today's sanctions are not related "only" to the nuclear issue, any more than they are related to human rights. These sanctions are about control by the United States (of, among other things, a dark viscous fluid). They are intended as the next thing to war. US-driven sanctions have reinforced every regime to which they have been applied in the past and are being applied now (e.g., Iraq, Vietnam, Cuba, Burma, Libya, Iran, N. Korea, China, Soviet Union, ...). They are ineffective, but invariably lead to famine and health crises.

Life will get harder for the Iranians but not for their government. These sanctions will not stop the expansion of nuclear weapons in the world, or Iran (if that is the regime's intent).

Even if the current regime were to be pushed out by "sanctions" or war, the next regime will likely still seek nuclear weapons, just as the Shah sought them in the 1970's. They will do it for the same reasons of prestige, keeping bullies at bay in a tough neighborhood, and all the other reasons (some valid, most absurd) for which the US and Israel, for example, have and flaunt their nuclear weapons.

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**[liviacosta](#)**

10 Jun 2010, 1:08AM

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