

Riding the "Green Wave"

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ZNet - Riding the "Green Wave" at the Campaign for Peace and Democracy and Beyond

By Edward S. Herman and David Peterson

There are many problems with the Campaign for Peace and Democracy's "Question & Answer on the Iran Crisis," issued by the CPD on July 7, and widely circulated since then.[1]

The CPD adopted this format, it tells us, because "some on the left, and others as well, have questioned the legitimacy of and the need for solidarity with the anti-Ahmadinejad movement," and the CPD believes "those questions need to be squarely addressed."

We believe, on the contrary, that the CPD's 13 questions-and-answers do little to clarify issues related to Iran's June 12 presidential election and its tumultuous aftermath, and even less to help leftists and "American progressives" decide how they should respond to them.

As we try to show below, when stripped of its didactic format, this Q&A amounts to little more than an emotional plea to its target audience to surrender what remains of their leftist instincts (long under siege in the States, and shrinking rapidly), and join its authors[2] for a ride on the "green wave" of yet another color-coded campaign that fits well with one of their government's longest-running programs of destabilization and regime-change. We believe that any "confusion" felt by the left and "American progressives" towards these events is a confusion that has been sown by our would-be instructors.[3]

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1. Consider first the CPD's selectivity. A look at its "Past Sign-on Statements and Letters" and elsewhere on its website (e.g., "Statement of Purpose") shows that, in contrast to its lengthy, 4,000-word Q&A of July 7, as well as its earlier statement on the "Crisis in Iran" (June 17), the CPD has yet to put up a Q&A related to or a statement announcing its solidarity with the mass demonstrations in Honduras after the June 27-28 military coup that overthrew the democratically elected president of the country, Manuel Zelaya. Neither has the CPD announced its solidarity with the 100 or more indigenous victims of a June 5 massacre by the government of Alan García in Peru, which some groups are calling the "Amazon's Tiananmen," nor with the high numbers of civilian victims of the several-year-long U.S. and NATO bombing campaigns

over Afghanistan and Pakistan, now sharply escalated by the new Democratic administration.

If we expand the purview of perpetrator-and-victim sets beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan to other theaters of U.S. and NATO violence, the possibilities for Q&A's and shows of solidarity with the victims would become unmanageably large. But as of July 2009, shouldn't Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Honduras rate a very high priority among American progressives precisely because the U.S. government and its military are destructively engaged in the first two theaters, and in the third, where the U.S. is deeply involved in training and arming the military, and where its influence is unmistakable, almost surely could have prevented the coup, and still could easily reverse it, had the U.S. leadership wanted it reversed?

Given that Hosni Mubarak's Egypt is on the U.S. payroll and a part of the "global spider's web" of secret prisons run by Washington, shouldn't we have been more concerned with Egypt's last presidential election in September 2005, which Mubarak, effectively Egypt's president-for-life, won with 89% of the vote? Shouldn't we pay more attention to the complete absence of elections in U.S. client Saudi Arabia? Or to client-state Mexico, where presidential elections have a long history of vote-rigging, the last one, in July 2006, stolen in favor of the pro-business, U.S.-favored candidate Felipe Calderon, and inspiring a massive tent-city protest in the center of Mexico City to demonstrate people's support for the leftist runner-up, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador?

In each of these theaters and the many others that fall within the U.S. sphere of influence and responsibility, the potential benefits of a sustained left-critique and consciousness-raising about U.S. policy and its devastating impact on the lives of people are far greater than anything to be gained by urging "solidarity" with dissenters in a distant land where the U.S. influence for constructive purposes is minimal, but its hostile and destructive interventionism has been and remains great.

2. Is it a mere coincidence that these neglected matters, all of which bear undeniably on the cause of peace and democracy, are also ones in which a thoughtful Q&A would inevitably challenge U.S. policy action or inaction, whereas a focus on Iran at this moment fits instead the long-term U.S. policy of demonization, isolation, sanctions, destabilization, and eventual regime-change?

Contemporaneous *New York Times* coverage of events inside Iran and Honduras (for example) reflects exactly the same set of priorities: That is, on the one hand, a heavy focus on the Iranian election, the charge of vote-fraud on behalf of Ahmadinejad, the protests against this, the violent crackdown across Iranian society, and the shaken legitimacy of the Islamic Republic; and, on the other hand, the downplaying of the Honduran coup and the protests and repression there, the possible U.S. role behind the

scene, the credulous reporting of the formula repeated by the Obama administration that it seeks the “restoration of the democratic order in Honduras,” rather than of the ousted President, sober questions about what the Honduran Constitution does and does not permit, and a barely concealed apologetics for the coup.

The contrast in the *Times*’s treatment of Iran and Honduras for the first 15 days of coverage after the June 12 election (i.e., June 13 - June 27) and after the June 28 coup (i.e., June 29 - July 13) has been dramatic.[4] The *Times* devoted at least 61 reports to Iran, and 19 to Honduras, with at least 21 of the Iran reports beginning on Section 1, page 1; in fact, the *Times* devoted page-1 reports to Iran consecutively for all 15 days in our sample. Only two reports on Honduras started on page 1. The *Times* also devoted 14 op-eds and 2 editorials to Iran, but only 2 op-eds and 1 editorial to Honduras. In terms of content, the *Times*’s opinion pages unequivocally rejected the fairness and legitimacy of Iran’s election and its government’s handling of the protests. (Its two editorials were “Neither Real Nor Free” (June 15) and “Iran’s Nonrepublic” (June 18).) But when discussing Honduras, it was the legitimacy and tactics of Manuel Zelaya’s government that the *Times* and its contributors questioned, with Zelaya dismissed as an “ally” of Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez (Alvaro Vargas Llosa, “The Winner in Honduras: Chavez” (June 30) and the editorial “Mr. Arias Steps In” (July 10)), and a politician whose “larger goal seemed to be a change from our democratic system into a kind of 21st century socialism...to create a Hugo Chavez-type of government” (Roger Marin Neda, “Who Cares About Zelaya?” (July 7)).

For progressive Americans, aren’t the *New York Times*’s priorities upside-down? But then how about those of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy? It is interesting that the CPD actually lauds the news media’s performance on Iran, claiming that “there is no good evidence so far that Western news reports on the government’s electoral fraud and violence repression of dissent have been fundamentally inaccurate” (#7). But there were gross inaccuracies in the establishment media’s assertion of vote fraud. As Mark Weisbrot points out,[5] the first sentence in the lead, front-page story run by the *New York Times* on June 23 reported that “Iran’s most powerful oversight council announced on Monday [June 22] that the number of votes recorded in 50 cities exceeded the number of eligible voters there by three million, further tarnishing a presidential election that has set off the most sustained challenge to Iran’s leadership in 30 years.”[6] Yet, Weisbrot adds, Iran’s Guardian Council had actually stated something completely different:

Candidates campaigns have said that in 80-170 towns and cities, more people have voted than are eligible voters. We have determined, based on preliminary studies, that there are only about 50 such cities or towns....The total number of votes in these cities or towns is something close to three million; therefore, even if we were to throw away all of these votes, it would not change the result.[7]

So there were 3 million *total* votes in the 50 towns and cities, not 3 million over-votes. Furthermore, the over-votes did not prove fraud. Iranians can vote at any polling place, so it is—according to the government—common to have more votes than eligible voters where there are a lot of commuters, vacationers, or areas where

the voting districts are not clearly delineated. Yet the *Times* misleading report was picked up widely and used to convince people that the government had “admitted” to having stolen three million votes.

Given the U.S. news media’s history of systematically biased and unreliable reporting on issues central to U.S. foreign policy and when dealing with an official enemy, is the CPD’s position on media coverage of Iran’s election credible? We wonder if the CPD also found media performance on the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq to be fundamentally accurate, *ca.* 2002-2003? Or on Israel’s recent wars against Lebanon (2006) and the Gaza Palestinians (early 2009)? Or on the alleged “threat” that Iran’s nuclear program poses to the world? Or is it just the news media’s performance on the election and its aftermath in Iran that the CPD finds fundamentally sound?

3. By portraying the Islamic Republic as even more of an outlaw regime than it had been portrayed prior to June 12, doesn’t this intensive focus on discrediting the Iranian election feed nicely into the U.S.-Israeli destabilization and regime-change campaign? No matter how much the CPD protests otherwise (#13), doesn’t its call for “solidarity with the anti-Ahmadinejad movement” and its advocacy for “a different form of government in Iran” encourage leftists to pull-down their natural defenses against U.S. imperialism?

Much intelligent analysis has pointed to similarities between a strategy employed by the Mousavi camp in June 2009, and the strategy’s use in earlier campaigns of destabilization against U.S. targets for regime-change that date back to the elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 2000, Georgia in 2003, and the Ukraine in 2004, to name three where it succeeded.[8] As was the case in these three other countries, the challenger Mousavi and his aides started by declaring Mousavi the “definite winner” by very wide margins on the day of the election (Friday, June 12), long before the polls had closed and the votes were counted; one Mousavi aide even told Agence France Presse that “Mousavi has got 65% of the votes cast,” a “landslide victory,” AFP called it.[9] This was followed by Mousavi’s claim on the next day (Saturday, June 13) that his rightful victory and therefore the will of the Iranian people had been stolen by the incumbent President Ahmadinejad’s supporters in the Ministry of the Interior, with the official result delegitimized; from here went the calls to Iranians and all democracy-loving peoples the world-over to reject it.[10]

But the regnant portrayal of Iran’s 2009 election as a sham, riddled with fraud and illegitimate, also reminds us of the Reagan administration’s propaganda campaign in 1984, which focused on the hostile Sandinista treatment of the newspaper *La Prensa*, the withdrawal of Contra leader Arturo Cruz from the election, and other actions that delegitimized it, thus justifying further U.S.-sponsored terrorism. As early as July 1984, Ronald Reagan himself had likened the Sandinistas’ proposal to hold elections in November to a “Soviet-style sham.” The editors of the *New York Times* picked-up on their President’s rhetoric, warning first that “If [the Sandinistas] go forward with plans to hold a sham vote..., they will confirm Mr. Reagan’s thesis” (October 7), and concluding one month later that “Only the naïve believe that [the] election in Nicaragua was democratic or legitimizing proof of the Sandinistas’ popularity.... The Sandinistas made it easy to dismiss their election as a sham” (November 7).[11]

For progressive Americans who'd like to "make it clear to the Iranian people that there is 'another America', one that is independent of the government and opposed to its oppressive and anti-democratic foreign policy" (#12), but whose memory of their own government's history has yet to be Twittered-away, isn't the net-effect of the CPD's activism to increase the likelihood that the next president of Iran, some time in 2013 (if not sooner[12]), will be a U.S.-supported candidate—in the pattern of the "remarkable victory" of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in 1990 that delivered a "devastating rebuke to the Sandinistas," as the *New York Times* editorialized, a "clear mandate for peace and democracy," in the first President Bush's words?[13]

4. Even the language used by the CPD displays a revealing bias. At no place in its July 7 Q&A does the CPD refer to the United States or to Washington or to any U.S. leader as "murderous" or "vicious" or "barbaric," or any U.S. action as "ferocious." Instead, such language is reserved for U.S. targets such as Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic (#9), and for the clerical-state in Iran. Thus, the CPD's introduction speaks of their "horror at the ferocious response" of Iran and the "brutal repression" in support of the "electoral fraud," and later the CPD refers to the "ferocious violence of the security forces" against the protestors and the general public (#8).

But in the CPD's November 2002 statement (later updated), "We Oppose Both Saddam Hussein and the U.S. War on Iraq: A Call for a New Democratic U.S. Foreign Policy," such invidious language is used only to describe the regime of Saddam Hussein, whom it calls a "killer and serial aggressor," and a "tyrant who should be removed from power," but never the United States.

"War"—not George Bush or the United States—but "War threatens massive harm to Iraqi civilians," the CPD stated, "and will encourage international bullies to pursue further acts of aggression."

The CPD recognized that President Bush's objective was "to expand and solidify U.S. predominance in the Middle East, at the cost of tens of thousands of civilian lives if necessary" (and many more, ultimately). But this didn't make the United States or Washington or President Bush a "bully," a "killer and serial aggressor," or a "terrorist" on a grand scale.

5. The CPD goes to great length to deny that the post-June 12 protests in Iran can be regarded as a consequence of U.S. policy towards that country, and is adamant that U.S. interference played no role in the election and its aftermath. "[F]oreign meddling does not prove foreign control," the CPD asserts, and "foreign meddling does not automatically discredit mass movements or their goals; it depends on who is calling the shots...[T]here is no evidence that the CIA or any other arm of U.S. intelligence—or Mossad—had anything to do with initiating or leading the protests in Iran...[T]here has been not a scrap of credible evidence that the millions of people in the streets these past few weeks were brought out by CIA money" (#6).

But "foreign control" and "calling the shots" are extreme forms of foreign meddling, and we regard them as straw men of the CPD's making. Another straw man is the CPD's repudiation of the notion that "millions of people in the streets" were on the CIA's payroll, the CPD implying strongly that the consequences of U.S. meddling

are too insignificant to be a factor.

But who ever said that huge numbers of Iranians were on the CIA's payroll? More to the point: Does the CPD have any "credible evidence" that *none* of them are?[14]

Surely the CPD knows that in early 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice requested \$75 million "in emergency funding to step up pressure on the Iranian government, including expanding radio and television broadcasts into Iran and promoting internal opposition to the rule of religious leaders"? Before the money was appropriated by Congress, \$15 million of it was channeled "toward grants for software programmers who specialize in creating programs that thwart Internet firewalls erected by repressive countries such as Iran and China. The idea, which was championed by Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R-Va.), is intended to assist dissidents without making them the target of arrests and harassment." [15]

The CPD ignores ABC TV's report in 2007 that the CIA "received secret presidential approval to mount a covert 'black' operation to destabilize the Iranian government," a policy that "would be consistent with an overall American approach trying to find ways to put pressure on the regime," retired CIA officer Bruce Riedel told ABC. The CPD also ignores Seymour Hersh's report about a "major escalation of covert operations against Iran," worth \$400 million, and "designed to destabilize the country's religious leadership." One source familiar with the presidential order told Hersh that its purpose was "to undermine the [Iranian] government through regime change," and involved "working with opposition groups and passing [out] money." [16] As always with how the U.S. "intelligence" agencies spend their massive budgets, the potential for additional unreported operations is great. [17]

The CPD ignores the existence, let alone the impact, of multiple, large, and overlapping governmental and nongovernmental programs devoted to developing the media and expertise necessary for "democratic movements" in other countries, and to "strengthen the bond between indigenous democratic movements abroad and the people of the United States," as the National Endowment for Democracy describes its mission. [18] Despite President Obama's semi-apologetic admission in his speech at Cairo University the week before Iran's election that the United States once "played a role in the overthrow of a democratically elected Iranian government," [19] *USA Today* reports that "The Obama administration is moving forward with plans to fund groups that support Iranian dissidents,...continuing a program that became controversial when it was expanded by President Bush." Part of the purpose of the \$15 million Near Eastern Regional Democracy Initiative, a Senate Appropriations committees spokesman told *USA Today*, "is to expand access to information and communications through the Internet for Iranians." [20]

In short, there is extensive evidence of U.S. meddling inside Iran, over a very long period of time, and these efforts cannot simply be dismissed as old-style leftist hyperbole. [21]

6. Also relevant to assessing the true nature and scope of U.S. interference in the lives of Iran's 70 million people—and their election process—but virtually ignored by the CPD are the massive U.S. wars in neighboring Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, the constant threats of attack by the United States and Israel, the use

of the International Atomic Energy Agency dating back to 2003 to harass Iran over its legal and NPT-compliant nuclear program, [22] and the serious economic and political sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States, its allies, and the Security Council—all of which add-up to a sum that vastly exceeds “foreign meddling,” and the impact of which cannot be dismissed by asserting that there is “no evidence that” the CIA has engineered yet another coup on the model of its 1953 overthrow of Mohammad Mosaddeq.[23]

Isn't U.S.-organized economic warfare that reduces Iranian standards of living over many years,[24] along with the likelihood that it can only be ended by a U.S.-approved political transformation, a grave form of foreign intervention in Iranian politics, in the June 12 election, and in its aftermath? Isn't it reminiscent of Reagan's and Bush One's blackmailing threat to continue the Contra's terrorist war against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua until the people removed the Sandinistas from power? Isn't the CPD's insistence that “American progressives” can safely discount these forms of foreign intervention as having played no important role in recent events inside Iran a form of apologetics for the same ugly operations?

7. Apart from these ongoing destabilization campaigns, a series of reports since early July have described plans and training for possible future Israeli military attacks on Iran's nuclear program. It is important to remember that such reports have been regular features in the Western media for six years running, invariably contain a psychological warfare component, and are even discussed as psy-ops inside Iran. But this time we notice some novel features to the reports, including an agreement with Egypt for Israeli warships to pass through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, an agreement with Saudi Arabia permitting the Israeli air force to traverse Saudi airspace, several long-range, joint U.S. and NATO training missions with the Israeli Air Force, and joint U.S.-Israeli tests of the Arrow interceptor missile “designed to defend Israel from missile attacks by Iran and Syria,” according to the London *Times*. “It is not by chance that Israel is drilling long-range maneuvers in a public way,” an Israeli defense official stated. “This is not a secret operation. This is something that has been published and will showcase Israel's abilities.”[25]

There is also U.S. Vice President Joe Biden's response to question by George Stephanopoulos on ABC - TV in the States, widely interpreted as giving a virtual go-ahead to an Israeli bombing attack on Iran:[26]

Stephanopoulos: [I]f the Israelis decide Iran is an existential threat, they have to take out the nuclear program, militarily the United States will not stand in the way?

Biden: Look, we cannot dictate to another sovereign nation what they can and cannot do when they make a determination, if they make a determination that they're existentially threatened and their survival is threatened by another country.

We find it damning that as these U.S. and Israeli threats to attack Iran have escalated in June and especially in July, the U.S.-based Campaign for Peace and Democracy, while remaining silent on this major threat to international peace and security posed by the

United States and Israel, which if carried out would undoubtedly kill many more Iranian civilians than the Iranian government has killed since June 12, initiated its campaign to delegitimize Iran's June 12 election as its *cause celebre*—and in effect laid down with the lions.

8. Considering events inside Iran from June 12 on, it seems highly likely that many of Iran's more affluent, urban-activist and technologically savvy youth had concluded that they could achieve their political objectives best, not at the ballot box in June 2009, and not by arguing their case before the rigid bodies of Iran's executive branch, but by tailoring their messages of dissent to foreign audiences, taking to the streets to provoke repressive responses by state authorities, with every action of the state serving to delegitimize it in the eyes of the West's metropolitan centers, whose recognition and validation the protestors have sought above all.[27] Indeed, the West is where we find the real streets the demonstrators want to control. Not “from Engelob Square to Azadi Square,” as Robert Fisk reported it,[28] but how Engelob Square and Azadi Square, Evin Prison and the Basij militia, play in the United States and other Western powers, where 98% of the “internationalists” wouldn't blog, “tweet,” text-message, or take to their own streets to stop a single NATO missile from striking a wedding or funeral party in Afghanistan, however much they cheer Iran's dissidents.

Today's mobile communications technology (including voice, text-messaging and Twitter, and digital imaging) played an unprecedented role in the election and its aftermath, as did the Internet (websites, email, Facebook, and photo and video-sharing platforms such YouTube and Flickr), and foreign-based radio and television sources such as the BBC, CNN, and Al Jazeera, as well as BBC Persian TV and Voice of America's Persian News Network. By-passing Iran's state-run media, younger Iranians kept informed via these state-of-the-art *samizdat* and establishment foreign sources. Much of the establishment Western media (print, TV, and radio) also relied heavily on the new *samizdat*, and for one-to-two weeks running featured content drawn allegedly from Iran's street protestors.[29]

When Tehran's executive branch accuses the U.S. Government and foreign NGOs of trying to foment a “velvet” or “color revolution,” this is the *modus operandi* that Tehran has in mind. Given the U.S., U.K., and Israeli investment in destabilization and regime-change in Iran, we believe it highly plausible that strategy exists for mobilizing Iran's dissident youth via both *samizdat* and the foreign media beyond their country's borders that feed-back into the consciousnesses of the Iranian street and the executive branch, altering the relation between the two, in precisely the sense that U.S.-based nonviolent action-operatives and foreign regime-changers have been advocating for use in Iran for years.[30]

In short, the protests are certainly not entirely “home-grown” and have a pretty clear link both to direct destabilization campaigns and to the massive destabilizations imposed upon this region of the world by the United States and its allies just this decade alone. It is also interesting to note that Peter Ackerman, the founding chair of the U.S.-based International Center on Nonviolent Conflict and a former chair of the right-wing Freedom House, along with the ICNC's founding director and president Jack DuVall, once cynically cautioned that for a destabilization campaign such as this to be

maximally effective against Iran, it “should not come from the CIA or Defense Department, but rather from pro-democracy programs throughout the West.”[31]

None of this is to deny the reality of a massive democratic surge inside Iran on a scale unseen since the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. But it is to question how well we understand the role of state-of-the-art communications technology in mobilizing the demonstrators, and how truly “indigenous,” autonomous, and independent they are from foreign meddling and influence, where foreign powers have invested considerable resources and know-how in these modern regime-change campaigns.

9. The question of vote fraud in Iran’s reported election results remains hotly contested.[32] There have been allegations of fraud among both Iran’s political class and foreign analysts,[33] but the true scale of any possible tampering with the actual ballots cast is uncertain. Still, more than any other factor, it is the allegations of an election rigged by Iran’s executive branch to deny the will of the Iranian people that have driven events inside Iran since June 12.

The CPD devotes its first five Q&A’s to delegitimizing both the election and Iran’s political system. The CPD dismisses the political system’s fairness (#1), the “un-elected” nature of its “theocratic rulers” (#2), as well as rejects Ahmadinejad’s reported victory (#3 - #5). “[T]here is very powerful evidence that either no one emerged with a majority [in the first round],” the CPD even states at one point, “or that Mousavi won outright” (#3). The CPD also states that the “basic prerequisite of a democratic system—that people can change their government—is missing” in Iran (#2), and that as the “un-elected Guardian Council” filtered out hundreds of potential candidates, leaving only four to run for the presidency, with no free press, free expression and freedom to organize, the June 12 election wasn’t free and fair (#1 and #2, and *passim*).

While we agree that Iran’s political system has very serious defects, it towers above others in the Middle East that are U.S. clients and recipients of U.S. aid and protection. If Iran were a U.S. client rather than a U.S. target, its political system would be portrayed as a “fledgling democracy,” imperfect but improving over time and with the promise of a democratic future. Furthermore, in the current electoral contest, the three challengers (Mousavi, as well as the former Speaker of the Parliament, Mehdi Karroubi, and the former head of the Revolutionary Guards, Mohsen Rezaei) seemed ABLE to voice sharp disagreements with the incumbent and with many aspects of Iranian life under its current executive branch; also, Mousavi’s candidacy was supported passionately by large numbers of people, and he had very contentious debates with Ahmadinejad as well as the others two candidates on national TV. [34] We do not recall the CPD ever contesting the legitimacy of the U.S. political system or the fairness of U.S. elections on the grounds that an unelected dictatorship of money—as opposed to the Islamic Council of Guardians—vets the nominees of the Republican and Democratic parties, reducing the options available to U.S. citizens to two candidates, neither of whom can change the foreign or domestic priorities of the imperial U.S. regime. Nor did the CPD draw any important comparison between conditions in Iran, on the one hand, and conditions in Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Kuwait, or Iraq and Afghanistan under U.S. military occupation, on the other. And though the CPD mentions that conditions are worse in the “dictatorship” of Saudi Arabia, the CPD never explains why its focus is (and has been) on Iran rather than Saudi Arabia or the

United States of America.

Although serious doubts have been raised about the integrity of Iran’s vote-counting process, it is worthy of note that the only relatively scientific, non-partisan poll of Iranian opinion conducted in the *pre*-election period, between May 11 and 20, asked the question, “If the presidential elections were held today, who would you vote for?”[35] 33.8% of the Iranians surveyed said that they’d vote for Ahmadinejad, compared to 13.6% for Mousavi, 1.7% for Karroubi, and 0.9% for Rezaei. These results formed the basis for the pollsters Ken Ballen and Patrick Doherty’s claim shortly after the election that their “nationwide public opinion survey of Iranians three weeks before the vote showed Ahmadinejad leading by more than a 2 to 1 margin—greater than his actual apparent margin of victory [on June 12].”[36]

While 50.1% who did not name any of these four candidates, either because they didn’t know (27.4%), they didn’t like any of the four (7.6%), or they refused to answer (15.1%), present a real problem, this deserves less weight than critics of the official results have given it. “If one merely extrapolated from the reported results [of the Ballen - Doherty poll],” Robert Naiman writes, “that is, if one assumed that the people who refused to respond or who didn’t know voted for the four candidates in the same proportion as their counterparts who named candidates,” Ahmadinejad would have received 66.7% of the votes, almost 4 points more than the Interior Ministry announced on June 13.[37] Moreover, were we to allocate as high as 60% of the undecided votes to the two “reform” candidates (Mousavi and Karroubi) and only 40% to the two “conservative” candidates (Ahmadinejad and Rezaei), but in the same proportion that each received from those who answered the “who would you vote for” question by naming their candidate, Naiman projects that Ahmadinejad still would have received 57% to Mousavi’s 36%—results that “differ from the Interior Ministry numbers by less than the poll’s [3.1%] margin of error.”

The CPD tries to get around these results by arguing that the Ballen - Doherty poll was taken early in the campaign, before the TV debates in early June, which were a “turning point” where people “sensed...an opportunity for real change” (#4). But the CPD’s contention that Iranian public opinion changed after the poll in May is not only speculative and lacking in evidence, it ignores the fact that Ahmadinejad’s forces were also campaigning, and vigorously; and contrary to the CPD implication that the TV debates turned the tide against Ahmadinejad, U.S. journalist Joe Klein, though hostile towards the incumbent, nonetheless reported that Ahmadinejad “was, without question, the best politician in the race,” and that his nationally televised debates against both Mousavi and Karroubi “were routs.”[38]

The CPD also claims that while Ahmadinejad did get support from the poor with his social welfare programs (i.e., Ahmadinejad’s “social welfare programs, funded from oil revenues, have undoubtedly induced many among the poor to give him their allegiance,” the CPD sneers (#5)), “there is no evidence that these were enough to give him the huge majorities that he claims” (#5). But we repeat that the only evidence gathered by an opinion poll suggested roughly a 2-1 lead for Ahmadinejad over Mousavi, and hence a possible majority victory. Nowhere does the CPJ acknowledge that Ahmadinejad’s refusal to kow-tow to the West and his nationalistic stance in opposing the U.S., Israel and a threatening Western establishment, also could have won him votes.

The quasi-official source for the fraud allegation in the West is the U.K.-based Chatham House analysis, released on June 21. When Ahmadinejad defeated Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani by 61.7% to 31.5% in the second-round run-off in June 2005, commentators attributed Ahmadinejad's nearly 2 to 1 margin of victory to Rafsanjani's "symboliz[ing] wealth and power," with Ahmadinejad "capitaliz[ing] on the schism between the government and the people, the poor and the rich," as one senior advisor to the outgoing President Mohammad Khatami explained. "The White House responded to the [2005] election result by reiterating charges made previously by President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice over the legitimacy of the vote, noting that 'over 1,000 candidates were disqualified from running and there were many allegations of election fraud and interference,'" the *New York Times* reported. [39] But with voter turnout in June 2009 showing "massive across the board increases," rising from 28,100,000 in the first-round of 2005, to 38,700,000 in the first and only round of 2009, Chatham House finds it "problematic" that there was any "correlation between increases in turnout and increased support for any candidate...."[40] This would be a solid objection, if in fact there had been a substantial "swing to Ahmadinejad" in 2009. But out of the total number of valid votes reported by the Interior Ministry on June 13, Ahmadinejad received 62.6% to Mousavi's 33.8%, leaving little evidence of a "swing" or change between the second round of 2005 and 2009. Furthermore, as noted, the Ballen - Doherty poll completed three weeks before the election showed Ahmadinejad with a 2 to 1 edge over Mousavi, and as Naiman indicated, with reasonable adjustments for the effects of non-voting and run-off consolidations, Ahmadinejad's numbers for the June 12 election are consistent with that pre-election poll.

In short, although there is some anecdotal evidence of vote fraud in the reported results of Iran's June 12 election, the CPD's assurances of massive vote fraud and a possible Mousavi majority are not based on any credible evidence whatsoever.[41] Some 700,000 Iranians worked 45,000 polls on June 12, including tens-of-thousands drawn from opposition parties. Ballots were counted at the polling sites in the presence of some 14 - 18 people, including these opposition observers. Numerous other safeguards also would have had to be violated on a massive scale—in the presence of tens- and perhaps hundreds-of-thousands of witnesses. The results of each of the 45,000 polls were posted to the Interior Ministry's website. Neither the Mousavi camp nor anyone else have produced witnesses who can testify to the violation of voting and counting procedures on a scale beyond the anecdotal and therefore marginal. If vote fraud occurred on the scale necessary to rig the election by the nearly 11,290,000 votes that separate its proclaimed winner, the incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, from its runner-up, the former Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi, the fraud would have had to occur outside the voting process. This is possible, but unproven. As Iran's Supreme Guide Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in his first post-election sermon, "If the difference was 100,000 or 500,000 or 1 million, well, one may say fraud could have happened. But how can one rig 11 million votes? The Guardian Council has said that if people have doubts they should prove them." [42] It is quite possible that Ahmadinejad won his first-round majority without or despite a resort to fraud.

"The data offers no arbitration in this dispute," the Chatham House analysis cautiously states, and we agree.[43] But this means that the assured conclusion of massive fraud, a stolen election, and a

"coup d'état," simply are unproven speculation, and that passions in the West, stirred by the repeated allegations of theft, are deeply problematic—as they would not be, were the same passionate intensity focused closer to home, on the tangible coup d'état in Honduras.

10. The CPD asks whether Ahmadinejad is "good for world anti-imperialism?" It answers that "There is a foolish argument in some sectors of the left that holds that any state that is opposed by the U.S. government is therefore automatically playing a progressive, anti-imperialist role and should be supported. On these grounds, many such 'leftists' have acted as apologists for murderous dictators like Milosevic and Saddam Hussein" (#9).

This tendentious analysis misrepresents the real issues, and begs several questions. According to both the letter and the spirit of the UN Charter, a state that is on the imperial hit-list ought to be defended against aggression, and interference in its affairs is ruled out. Aggression and subversion should be strenuously opposed by the American left. It should not be suckered into such efforts even when the target is *not* playing a "progressive, anti-imperialist role."

Whether North Vietnam and the Vietnamese resistance were "playing a progressive, anti-imperialist role" in the years 1950-1975 can be debated. But it must be recalled that folks straightening-out the "confusion" on the left in those years were also busy demonizing the "murderous dictator" Ho Chi Minh and featuring Vietnamese terrorism, thereby providing *de facto* support to a truly genocidal aggression by the United States.

The Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein was not playing a progressive, anti-imperialist role in the 1980s and 1990s. But what leftist would have swallowed the U.S.-U.K. aggression of 2003 on grounds that Saddam was a "murderous dictator"? (For the record, we know that on this occasion, the CPD did not swallow it.) Yet, it appears that in the CPD's judgment, anyone strenuously opposing imperialist attacks on the former Yugoslavia and Iraq could be found guilty of apologizing for "murderous dictators"!

So, while Mahmoud Ahmadinejad might not be good for world anti-imperialism, his country is not just "opposed by the United States," it has been under serious U.S. attack and faces a continuing threat of escalated violence. It should be first-order business of a left and supposed campaign for *peace* as well as democracy to oppose this threat. But with Ahmadinejad a demonized target and Iran's allegedly sham election of June 12 utterly discredited, the CPD's willing participation in that whole process (in contrast to Honduras, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia) provides first-class service to the imperial powers.

Concluding Note: "American progressives"?

The Iranian election of June 12 and its aftermath have been subjected to competing but not necessarily exclusive interpretations. In dealing with these events, some commentators have framed them as features of an autonomous, local struggle for democracy; others view them as an internal struggle tightly integrated into regional and global struggles for conquest of territories and control over scarce energy resources. We may recall that Iran is one of the two remaining members of the "Axis of Evil" (January 2002-), accused then and still today of pursuing weapons of mass destruction and exporting terrorism, "while an

unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom."
[44]

We believe that the latter frame is by far the more illuminating and politically relevant, as it emphasizes the fact that the huge publicity given to Iran in the establishment Western political and media systems is closely connected to the U.S., NATO, and Israeli campaign to destabilize and change regimes in Iran, a campaign that is part of a larger program of power-projection, subversion, territorial expansion, and serial warfare. The same basic point applies to the U.S. campaign against Iran's nuclear program, and remains perhaps the most visible part of the regime-change project (i.e., short of an eventual military attack).

It goes without saying that "all peoples have the right to self-determination," and that any struggle for freedom deserves our solidarity and respect. No less compelling to us, however, are the injunctions against the "subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination, and exploitation," "armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples," and the "partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country." [45] The Iranian election and the Iranian struggle for freedom are the rightful property of the Iranian people, not something about which their more sophisticated counterparts in the States and on the "internationalist" left need to instruct them. But this is especially true where that struggle is used in the destabilization and subjugation program.

Overall, the Campaign for Peace and Democracy's "Question & Answer on the Iran Crisis" reminds us of the position Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice staked-out in her early 2006 statement before the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee: "We may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran," Rice warned. But, she added, "We do not have a problem with the Iranian people. We want the Iranian people to be free. Our problem is with the Iranian regime..." [46]

A Gallup World Affairs poll taken in the United States around the same time found that nearly one-in-three Americans ranked Iran "America's greatest enemy," ahead of Iraq (22%) and North Korea (15%), to name the other two notables. The same poll found that Americans rated Iran the "most negatively" out of 22 foreign countries, a place of honor formerly held by Iraq for the previous 15 years (1991-2005). "Generally speaking," Gallup explained, "Americans' ratings of other nations are fairly stable from year to year, though they do change in response to international events." [47]

But the "international events" to which Gallup referred were located in Washington, London, Paris, and Bonn, and directed at Iran, specifically these capitals' use of the IAEA to harass Iran over its nuclear program, to depict its nuclear program as a global threat to international peace and security, and to demonize its president—the latter process ratcheted-up so high since the 12th of June that by now Iran has been demonized beyond recognition.

Rather than countering this process, the CPD pleads with "American progressives" to let their guards down and go for a ride on the "green wave." Instead of U.S. citizens asking the question, *What should we do about the current situation in the United States of America?* (extended to those parts of the world that suffer beneath its myriad forms of violence and oppression), the CPD asks

(#12): "What should we do about the current situation in Iran?"

This approach to "progressive" politics makes us wonder, not whether "Ahmadinejad [is] good for world anti-imperialism?," but, frankly, whether the CPD is? We have our doubts.

— Endnotes —

[1] Besides its posting to the Campaign for Peace and Democracy's own website, the CPD's July 7 "Question & Answer on the Iran Crisis" has also been posted to websites at AfterDowningStreet.org, CASMII, *The Independent*, Payvand Iran News, Portside, and ZNet, among others. At the time of this writing (July 12), we do not believe that this Q&A has been posted at AlterNet, CommonDreams, Information Clearinghouse, or Truthout—four other left and progressive websites with a sizeable audience.

[2] The four authors as listed on the July 7 document are Stephen R. Shalom, Thomas Harrison, Joanne Landy, and Jesse Lemisch.

[3] As was the case concerning the decade-long dismantling of the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, the phenomenon of left-splintering over the true significance of Iran's June 12 election has been marked. For an example of how the subject of Iran in 2009 is being exploited under the banner of the American "left" literally to *attack the left* and to *enforce a doctrinal discipline* regarding the election and its aftermath see Reese Erlich, "Iran and Leftist Confusion," *CommonDreams*, June 29, 2009. It therefore comes as no surprise that the CPD has provided a link this anti-left diatribe by Erlich on the CPD's homepage ("Related Materials, Announcements, and Links"), as well as a listing for "Reese Erlich Speaking Engagements." (See David Peterson, "And Whose Side Are You On?" ZNet, July 1, 2009.)

[4] These results are based on searches of the Factiva database according to the following sets of parameters: (a) *rst=nytf and Iran* for June 13 through June 27, and (b) *rst=nytf and Honduras* for June 29 through July 13. We then checked the Factiva-generated results, item-by-item, to generate the final results reported above.

[5] Mark Weisbrot, "Was Iran's Election Stolen?" *PostGlobal*, June 26, 2009.

[6] Michael Slackman, "Amid Crackdown, Iran Admits Voting Errors," *New York Times*, June 23, 2009.

[7] According to Mark Weisbrot (personal communication), the Guardian Council's June 22 statement can be found on this webpage, and the English-language translation that he uses was provided by Rostam Pourzal.

[8] See, e.g., Simon Tisdall, "Iran plays the blame game," *The Guardian*, June 16, 2009; Anthony Dimaggio, "Lapdog Journalists," *CounterPunch*, June 18, 2009; James Petras, "Iranian Elections: The 'Stolen Elections' Hoax," Centre for Research on Globalization, June 18, 2009; Phil Wilayto, "Some Observations on the Iranian Presidential Election and Its Aftermath," *Truthout*, June 19, 2009; Paul Craig Roberts, "Are the Iranian Protests Another U.S. Orchestrated 'Color Revolution'?" *CounterPunch*, June 19-21, 2009; Steve Weissman, "Iran: Non-Violence 101," *Truthout*, June 21, 2009; M.K. Bhadrakumar, "Beijing cautions U.S. over Iran," *The*

Hindu, June 22, 2009; Jeremy R. Hammond, "Has the U.S. Played a Role in Fomenting Unrest During Iran's Election?" *Foreign Policy Journal*, June 23, 2009; Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, "Iran: This Is Not a Revolution," *MRZine*, June 23, 2009; Huang Xiangyang, "Why Doesn't the Media Leave Iran Alone?" *China Daily*, June 26, 2009; Elias Akleh, "Demonizing Iranian Democracy," *Palestine Chronicle*, June 30, 2009; Mazhar Qayyum Khan, "Is 'regime change' at work in Iran?" *The Nation* (Pakistan), June 30, 2009; Steve Weissman, "Iran: The World Is Watching," *Truthout*, June 30, 2009; William Blum, "Much Ado about Nothing?" *Anti-Empire Report*, July 3, 2009; John Laughland, "The Technique of a Coup d'État," *LewRockwell.com*, July 21, 2009.

[9] "Mousavi says he 'definite winner' in Iran election," Reuters, June 12, 2009; "Mousavi claims landslide victory in Iran vote," Agence France Presse, June 12, 2009.

[10] The Xinhua News Agency reported that a statement posted to the Mir Hossein Mousavi campaign's website dated June 13 decried "obvious and numerous violations and irregularities [on] the election day," asked his supporters "to remain [on] the scene," warned that "such an injustice will cause the removal of the legitimacy" of the government and is "shaking the pillars of the sacred system of [the] Islamic Republic [of Iran]" and amounts to "dictatorship," asked "[Iranian] officials to stop such a process before it is late," and proclaimed that "he will not surrender to such a dangerous show." ("Iran's Mousavi says obvious violations in Iran's presidential election," June 13, 2009.)

[11] Steven R. Weisman, "Reagan Predicts Nicaraguan Vote Will be 'Sham'," *New York Times*, July 20, 1984; "Going With the Wind in Nicaragua," *New York Times*, October 7, 1984; "Nobody Won in Nicaragua," *New York Times*, November 7, 1984.

[12] On Sunday, July 19, some websites began reporting that Iran's former president Mohammad Khatami had called for a referendum on the "current situation" inside Iran. "People should be asked whether they are happy with the current situation," Reuters reported comments attributed to Khatami. "If the vast majority of people are happy with the current situation, we will accept it as well." (Zahra Hosseinian, "Supreme leader warns against helping Iran's enemies," Reuters, July 20, 2009; Robert F. Worth, "Ex-President In Iran Seeks Referendum On Leaders," *New York Times*, July 20, 2009.)

[13] "The Morning After in Nicaragua," *New York Times*, February 27, 1990. George Bush's remark was quoted in the same.

[14] The term 'CIA' can refer very precisely to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, with its reported annual budget and the myriad activities that it funds. But 'CIA' is also used much more loosely to refer to all similar agencies of the U.S. Government, their budgets, and their activities, or to refer to the dirtier activities of the U.S. Government—those "covert" activities that one or more agencies of the U.S. Government directs, funds, sponsors, and the like, but which the Government would never publicly admit. In fact, among the general public, these second and third uses of 'CIA' are probably the most frequent.

[15] Ewen MacAskill and Julian Borger, "Bush Plans Huge Propaganda Campaign in Iran," *The Guardian*, February 16, 2006; Glenn Kessler, "Rice Asks for \$75 Million to Increase Pressure on Iran," *Washington Post*, February 16, 2006; Glenn Kessler, "

Congress Sets Limits on Aid to Pakistan," *Washington Post*, December 20, 2007.

[16] Brian Ross, "Bush Authorizes New Covert Action Against Iran," ABC News, May 22, 2007; Seymour M. Hersh, "The Bush administration steps up its secret moves against Iran," *New Yorker*, July 7, 2008. In the latter, Hersh makes it clear that this funding was for terrorist operations against targets inside Iran, and has employed both CIA and Joint Special Operations Command units, as well as regional terrorist groups such as the Jundallah (or Iranian People's Resistance Movement), the Mujahedin-e Khalq, and the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan. Also see Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, "The U.S. Aggression Process and Its Collaborators: From Guatemala (1950-1954) to Iran (2002-)," *Electric Politics*, November 26, 2007.

[17] The reported budget of the U.S. "intelligence" agencies (of which the CIA is by far the largest) for Fiscal Year 2008 was \$47.5 billion. ("DNI Releases Budget Figure for 2008 National Intelligence Program," News Release No. 17-08, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, October 28, 2008.)

[18] See "About Us," the National Endowment for Democracy website, accessed in July 2009. Also see the NED's annual budgeted items for promoting "democracy" inside Iran so far this decade: Iran - 2001, Iran - 2002, Iran - 2003, Iran - 2004, Iran - 2005, Iran - 2006, Iran - 2007, and Iran - 2008. Here we'd like to emphasize that the NED is but one of many groups that act and spend lavishly in the name of "democracy," but for which the right to self-determination and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States never seems to stand in its way.

[19] Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on a New Beginning," Cairo, Egypt, White House Office of the Press Secretary, June 4, 2009. A June 7 commentary on Obama's speech in the Iranian newspaper *Keyhan* noted: "In Cairo, Obama spoke of change," and "pretend[ed] that his country's problems with Iran are purely historical [i.e., things of the past]." But, the commentator added, Obama mentioned only the 1953 coup and Iran's nuclear program today. "America's actions in supporting Saddam when he attacked Iran, bringing down of Iran's airbus passenger plane, attacking Iran's oil rigs, blocking our country's assets, military occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, and bullying actions against governments and nations did not attract his notice. He merely apologized for an issue when his apology would not change anything and was nothing but a propaganda move." (Sa'dollah Zare'I, "Speech in Cairo; running on sands," *Keyhan* website, June 7, 2009, as translated by the BBC Monitoring Middle East, June 9, 2009.)

[20] Ken Dilanian, "U.S. grants lend support to Iran's dissidents," *USA Today*, June 26, 2009.

[21] In William Blum's estimate, the "United States has seriously intervened in some 30 elections around the world" since World War II. ("Much Ado about Nothing?" *Anti-Empire Report*, July 3, 2009.) Had the U.S. Government kept its hands-off Iran prior to the June 12 election, surely this would have been the first time in post-World War II history that it failed to interfere in a foreign election the outcome of which was important to its global policies.

[22] Sylvia Westall, "No Evidence Iran Seeks Nuclear Arms: New IAEA Head," Reuters, July 3, 2009. We add that since 2003, the

IAEA has never reported any hard evidence that Iran seeks nuclear weapons. (See, e.g., “Iran Has Centrifuge Capacity for Nuclear Arms?” ZNet, June 6, 2009.) Even the National Intelligence Estimate, *Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities* (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, November, 2007) asserted with “high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program” (p. 6), the NIE adding that it intends ‘nuclear weapons program’ to be taken in the minimalist sense of “nuclear weapon design and weaponization work” (n. 1, p. 6), not work on highly enriched, weapons-grade fissile material.

[23] See Malcolm Byrne, Ed., “The Secret History of the Iran Coup,” National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 28, November 29, 2000. At this webpage, one will also find a PDF of the complete text of Donald Wilber’s first-person account, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952-August 1953* (CIA Clandestine Service History, March, 1954).

[24] Following the July 15 crash of a Tehran-based commercial airliner shortly after it took-off from ImamKhomeiniAirport, killing everyone on board, the *New York Times* reported that the crash “underscored the country’s vulnerability to aviation disasters. Iran has been unable to adequately maintain its aging fleet of American-built aircraft for 30 years because of an embargo after the Islamic Revolution, and has increasingly relied on aircraft from Russian manufacturers, which have their own troubled safety history.” (Robert F. Worth and Nicola Clark, “Iranian Airliner Crashes And Explodes, Killing 168,” *New York Times*, July 16, 2009.)

[25] Yaakov Katz, “Israel sends sub through Suez Canal,” *Jerusalem Post*, July 3, 2009; Dan Williams, “Israeli sub sails Suez, signalling reach to Iran,” Reuters, July 3, 2009; Yaakov Kaatz, “IAF to train overseas for Iran strike,” *Jerusalem Post*, July 5, 2009; Uzi Mahnaimi and Sarah Baxter, “Saudis give nod to Israeli raid on Iran,” *Sunday Times*, July 5, 2009; Sheera Frenkel, “Israel rehearses Iran raid; Warships in Suez a stark signal to Tehran,” *The Times*, July 16, 2009.

[26] Interview with Vice President Joe Biden, *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*, ABC - TV, July 5, 2009.

[27] This is not to ignore the fact that Shirin Ebadi, Akbar Ganji, and other well-known Iranian dissidents have repeatedly emphasized their refusal to accept the help of the U.S. Government, out of the reasonable fear that to be seen as accepting U.S. Government help discredits their cause and endangers their freedom and safety in Iran.

[28] Robert Fisk, “Iran’s day of destiny,” *The Independent*, June 16, 2009; and Robert Fisk, “Fear has gone in a land that has tasted freedom,” *The Independent*, June 17 2009.

[29] Here we would like to register a skeptical question, the answer to which we do not pretend to know: Since June 12-13, how many of the “voices of the 2009 Iranian Revolution” (Twitter, text-messaging, and Internet traffic) have been generated by non-indigenous “intelligence” services, “nongovernmental” organizations, and PR firms exploiting the anonymity inherent to these state-of-the-art communications systems to disseminate a consistent party-line about Iran that is hostile towards its executive branch, favorable towards the opposition—and therefore favorable to foreign destabilizers as well?

[30] In one early commentary advocating regime-change for Iran, the U.S.-based International Center on Nonviolent Conflict’s Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall argued that, just as “Serbian dissidents [back in 2000] were given working capital—money for supplies, communications, and, most important, training in strategic nonviolent struggle,” so a similar “civilian-based struggle [to make] a country ungovernable through strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, and other nonviolent tactics—in addition to mass protests—crumbling a government’s pillars of support...is possible in Iran.” (Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, “The nonviolent script for Iran,” *Christian Science Monitor*, July 22, 2003.)

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] For a copy of the election results as reported by Iran’s Ministry of the Interior on June 13, see Ali Ansari *et al.*, *Preliminary Analysis of the Voting Figures in Iran’s 2009 Presidential Election*, Chatham House (U.K.), Appendix, “By Province Results for the 2009 Iranian Presidential Election,” June 21, 2009, pp. 12-13. As determined by the Interior Ministry, the reported total of “valid” votes for the four candidates were: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (24,525,209), Mir Hossein Mousavi (13,225,330), Mohsen Rezaei (659,281), and Mehdi Karroubi (328,979).

[33] *Ibid.* Also see “The contested results,” *The Guardian*, June 17, 2009, which plots the reported results for Ahmadinejad and Mousavi across a province-by-province map of Iran. And see Juan Cole, “Stealing the Iranian Election,” *Informed Comment*, June 13, 2009; Juan Cole, “Terror Free Tomorrow Poll Did not Predict Ahmadinejad Win,” *Informed Comment*, June 15, 2009; and Juan Cole, “Chatham House Study Definitely Shows Massive Ballot Fraud in Iran’s Reported Results,” *Informed Comment*, June 22, 2009.

[34] In 2009, televised debates were held for the first time in the history of Iran’s 10 presidential elections since the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. There were six TV debates in all (June 2, June 3, June 4, June 6, June 7, and June 8), and each one involved two candidates at a time. In only one of these debates did Ahmadinejad and Mousavi face-off against each other (June 3). For a video copy with an English-language voiceover of the June 3 debate between Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Mir Hossein Mousavi, see the *IranNegah.com* website, June 3, 2009, <<http://irannegah.com/Video.aspx?id=1214>>; and for an English-language transcript of this June 3 debate, see Charlie Szrom *et al.*, *IranTracker*, June 9, 2009, <<http://www.irantracker.org/analysis/mousavi-ahmadinejad-june-3-presidential-debate-transcript>>.

[35] *Results of a New Nationwide Public Opinion Survey of Iran before the June 12, 2009 Presidential Elections*, (May 11 - 20), Terror Free Tomorrow, Center for Public Opinion, and New America Foundation, Q27, p. 52.

[36] Ken Ballen and Patrick Doherty, “The Iranian People Speak,” *Washington Post*, June 15, 2009.

[37] Robert Naiman, “Based on Terror Free Tomorrow Poll, Ahmadinejad Victory Was Expected,” *Huffington Post*, June 14, 2009.

[38] Joe Klein, “What I Saw at the Revolution,” *Time Magazine*, June 18, 2009.

[39] Ali Akbar Dareni, "Analysts: Rafsanjani Turned Off the Poor," Associated Press, June 27, 2005; Michael Slackman, "Winner in Iran Calls for Unity; Reformists Reel," *New York Times*, June 26, 2005.

[40] Ansari *et al.*, *Preliminary Analysis of the Voting Figures in Iran's 2009 Presidential Election*, p. 3. By no means are we simply dismissing the objections raised by the Chatham House analysis. For example, the authors write: "The 2009 data suggests a sudden shift in political support within precisely these rural provinces, which had not previously supported Ahmadinejad or any other conservative...showing substantial swings to Ahmadinejad.... At the same time, the official data suggests that the vote for Mehdi Karrubi, who was extremely popular in these rural, ethnic minority areas in 2005, has collapsed entirely even in his home province of Lorestan, where his vote has gone from 440,247 (55.5%) in 2005 to just 44,036 (4.6%) in 2009. This is paralleled by an overall swing of 50.9% to Ahmadinejad, with official results suggesting that he has captured the support of 47.5% of those who cast their ballots for reformist candidates in 2005. This, more than any other result, is highly implausible, and has been the subject of much debate in Iran" (pp. 10-11).

[41] This paragraph summarizes the work of Mark Weisbrot, "Was Iran's Election Stolen?" *PostGlobal*, June 26, 2009.

[42] See Richard Beeston, "The most evil of the Western countries is the British Government'," *The Times*, June 20, 2009. For a more complete version, see "'Western intelligence services, Zionists' behind post-election disturbances Iran leader," BBC Monitoring Middle East, June 19, 2009.

[43] Ansari *et al.*, *Preliminary Analysis of the Voting Figures in Iran's 2009 Presidential Election*, p. 6.

[44] George W. Bush, Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, January 29, 2002.

[45] See Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/RES/1514), UN General Assembly, December 14, 1960, para. 2, 1, 4, and 6. As para. 7 adds: "All States [shall act] on the basis of equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of all States, and respect the sovereign rights of all peoples and their territorial integrity."

[46] Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Opening Remarks before the Senate Appropriations Committee, "FY 2006 Supplemental Budget Proposal," March 9, 2006. Rice added: "We have proposed a \$75 million package that would allow us to broadcast more effectively in Iran, better messaging for Iran. We have proposed money that would be used for innovation in our efforts to reach the Iranian people through websites and modern technology. We have also proposed that we would be able to support non-governmental organizations that can function in Iran and in many ways, most importantly, to improve and increase our educational and cultural outreach to the people of Iran."

[47] Joseph Carroll, "Americans Say Iran Is Their Greatest Enemy," Gallup, February 23, 2006; and Jeffrey M. Jones, "Americans Rate Iran Most Negatively of 22 Countries," Gallup, February 23, 2006.
