



Nowruz 2017 Celebration

The U.S. House of Representatives

Foyer - March 9, 2017



Speaker Paul Ryan
and
Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

extend wishes for a free Iran,
on the occasion of Nowruz to
the Iranian people and Iranian
American Communities across
the United States



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Statement from Paul D. Ryan, House Speaker and
Member of Congress, Representing Wisconsin's 1st
Congressional District

"On behalf of the House of Representatives, I want to wish Iranians around the world, particularly Iranian Americans and the Iranian American community of Wisconsin, a very joyous Nowruz. I look forward to working with all of you in the year ahead toward a free Iran, and a safer, more prosperous future for this generation and the next."



Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader

March 9, 2017



Organization of Iranian American Communities-United States
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Dear OIAC Friends:

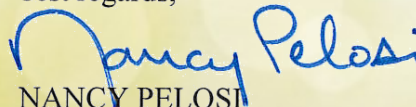
My best wishes to the Organization of Iranian American Communities as you gather on Capitol Hill to celebrate Nowruz, the Iranian New Year.

America is a proud nation of immigrants. Every person and family who comes here – whether it was 200 years ago or two years ago – brings the optimism, determination, and courage that is so uniquely American. The Iranian-American community's exceptional contributions to the scientific, financial, and public service realms play a vital role in helping to promote diversity and equality in our nation and in Iran.

The democratic values that your organization's members advocate for are examples of what makes our country stronger. Respect for human rights, gender equality, and religious and ethnic tolerance are goals that I am deeply committed to in Congress and are a driving force in effecting further change in Iran. Your continued activism and dedication to the people of Iran is critical to moving forward in these challenging times.

Again, thank you for your dedication. I wish you a happy and fruitful Nowruz.

best regards,


NANCY PELOSI
Democratic Leader

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)

Excerpt:

. America has entered into a new era. It's an era of uncertainty at first, but also an era of great potential. It's an opportunity for all of us to reassess and readjust our policies. The previous administration spent years working with the brutal regime in Iran. First to negotiate a nuclear deal, then to prevent the regime from walking away from this weak and dangerous deal. They should've been working against the regime and for the people of Iran. So America had actually legitimized the Supreme Leader, legitimized his regime as members of the international community. Shame on us.

Predictably, this allowed the regime to become more oppressive at home and it allowed the regime to continue to support terror internationally. Iran is still the number one sponsor of terror in the world. It continued to sponsor illicit activity across the region and across the globe. We have all paid the price for this mistake. Iran has held the global community hostage, threatening to walk away from the deal. Every day they said that. Not to mention that Iran is literally holding several American citizens hostage right now, right this very day. Why? Because they expect another handsome ransom payment.

The Middle East is less stable, thanks to Iran's continued support for Assad, a murderous tyrant. The region is less secure because Iran has taken the sanctions relief that we provided and infused the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and its military for more cash for things like its ballistic missile program, its terror activities across the globe. We have been part of the problem and we are all less safe, because not only did the countries of the P5+1 legitimized the nuclear program of Iran, but it guaranteed Iran the ability to become a nuclear state in less than ten years' time.

Oh, my goodness, but those who have suffered the most, those who often get neglected or forgotten are the people of Iran, your relatives back home. While the world has been quick to welcome the regime back into the fold, we have ignored the simple and undeniable truth that Iran is a dictatorial theocracy and that the people of Iran are being denied their most basic human rights.

We have an opportunity now in this new season, in this new spring, in this new year to change the narrative and to stand in solidarity with the people of Iran who wish and fight and dream of a free and democratic society. We can change the conversation. We can change the focus. And we can move away from the previous administration's policy of appeasing the regime to a new policy of holding that murderer's regime accountable with new sanctions on human rights abuses, with new sanctions on all of its illicit activities.

And that is my message of hope to you. A message for a new beginning, a new approach in this new year. The United States has an obligation to the people of Iran, and indeed to all the people around the world who suffer under repressive regimes to make the respect for human rights a priority, and to uphold the ideals and the values that we all stand for—freedom, human rights, the rule of law.



Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA)

Excerpt:

... I've worked hard to make sure that America's list of terrorist organizations reflects reality. Now if that list is going to have any credibility, the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps has to be added to that list. [applause]

I want to thank the MEK for their work in August of 2002, revealing Iran's nuclear program in Natanz. And we worked hard to make sure that people's human rights in Camp Ashraf, in Camp Liberty were respected. Now we must pressure the Iraqi government to turn over the property that was left by the people when they left Camp Liberty and Camp Ashraf. And I know that the government of Iran understands the threats that face it and its dictatorial and bloody regime.

And that is why they work every day against the MEK, but Maryam Rajavi and the MEK pose a risk to that government because they speak out for democracy for the people of Iran, a democracy I look forward to working with you to achieve. We have a host of resolutions here in Congress, whether it is condemning the government of the Islamic Republic for its 1988 massacre of so many thousands of prisoners or whether it is imposing sanctions on Iran because of its support for terrorism around the world.

So many people have been fooled in this country and around the world. They think of the Islamic Republic and they see Foreign Minister Zarif and they think that smiling, debonair face is the face of the regime. The real face of this regime, the real symbol of this regime is Aylan Kurdi, that little three-year-old boy on the beach in the Aegean Sea. A boy who among 400,000 others died at the hands of Assad and his puppet masters in Tehran. We cannot be fooled by smiling, debonair diplomats.

... Now, I look forward to working with so many of you to achieve a democratic Iran and to put pressure on the Islamic Republic regime for as long as it lasts. We look forward to a new light, a new day for the people of Iran, and that's why I would say Happy Nowruz to everyone here.





Happy Nowruz

Bipartisan Representatives at Nowruz Celebration, Clockwise: Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Mike Coffman (R-CO), Ted Poe (R-TX), Darrell Issa (R-CA), March 9, 2017





Nowruz Mobarak

Bipartisan Representatives at Nowruz Celebration, Clockwise: Brad Sherman (D-CA),
Judy Chu (D-CA), Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), Eddie Johnson (D-TX), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), March 9, 2017



Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX)

Excerpt:

The year that we're getting ready to celebrate is, in my opinion, the year of reckoning. Reckoning. And I think that's important and I will tell you why.

First of all, the American people, Congress, we stand with the people of Iran. Our quarrel is not with the good folks in Iran where many of you have friends and family that are being persecuted today. Our concern and our quarrel is with the mullahs of Iran who are running roughshod over the people that live in Iran. And if you don't know what roughshod means, just look it up. It's in the Texas dictionary. [laughter]

And my opinion as an outsider looking in, the Iranian people continue to be persecuted by the dictator and the mullahs of Iran. The American people are concerned about the people of Iran, but we are really having issues with the mullahs of Iran, and I want to make that clear, that we are not, have no quarrel with the good folks of Iran. Many of you originally were in Iran and came to the United States. The United States has a lot of Iranian-Americans, and Iranians that are going to school here and other things.

As critics over the years have said it could not be done. The first thing they said that could not be done was...that the imprisoned Iranians in Camp Ashraf would never have liberty at Camp Liberty, but yet in spite of the Iraqi government, the Iranian government, and our own State Department, the folks in Camp Ashraf got to go to Camp Liberty. And even though the missiles kept coming in and the Iraqis did everything they could to discourage those folks in Camp Liberty, including taking the lives of many folks.

And I will say to this day, not one of those murderers have been held accountable for the murders in Camp Liberty or Camp Ashraf. But they said it couldn't be done, that they would never be able to leave, and yet they were wrong. It has been done. The folks in Camp Liberty, even in spite of the fact that they said it could never be done, have moved to Albania and hopefully they will have real freedom and real liberty there. But I got news for the folks, the mullahs and Iran. We're not through yet.

The next thing we want to do is make sure that they IRGC is labelled a foreign terrorist group, which they are. They are a foreign terrorist group that are causing havoc throughout the world, including in Iran. And so we want to make that the next legislative priority and I hope you will support us in that endeavor. [applause] After we do that, our ultimate goal is to make sure that there is liberty in Iran.



And I would like to say something to the younger Iranians, those under 30 years of age, the 65 percent of the population in Iran. We call those folks in the United States “millennials.” So the millennials of Iran, listen very carefully, because it is up to you to bring change in Iran. It has always been the youth of a country to seek the rights that they are entitled as human beings on this earth. And now it is up to that 65 percent to lead for change in Iran.

The United States, as I told you, as our policy we want independence from the mullahs, but the American government is not going to come in to Iran and liberate Iran. We are not going to do that. That is not our job or responsibility. It is the job and responsibility of the people of Iran to change that regime. [applause]

I sometimes make comments about millennials, you know, they’re kind of a different group of young people, but the thing I like about them—the passion, the energy, and the belief that really they can make a difference and make change and that’s why I call on the millennials in Iran to do that.

I believe that the mullahs in Iran fear freedom. That’s what they fear and that is the only thing they fear is freedom, so I encourage you to be passionate. Don’t give up. That is the easy way out. And the dictator of Iran wants you to give up. You’re not going to give up. You have supporters here across the seas that support you in that endeavor not to give up.

There are those here in this room who have lost family members because of what’s taken place in the government of Iran. I’ve met you, I consider you friends and family. We owe it to those people to make sure that we have a free and independent Iran, for the people of Iran get to control their own destiny.

And so I would say to you millennials in Iran, “Rise up, you multitude of millennials, and take control of your country. And quit letting the mullahs of Iran be dictators. Throw off the shackles of the mullahs and have a free and independent country. Do not grow weary in your hope and quest for liberty, because that is the one thing that all of us deep down in our souls have, no matter where we are, who we are, male, or female, or what language we speak. We are born inside with the spirit of freedom and nobody should take it away from anybody on earth, including your family and friends in Iran. And that’s just the way it is.”



Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA)

Excerpt:

Well, I came to wish all of you a very, very Happy Nowruz. We have had a long association with one another and I admire your fight for democracy in Iran, but most of all, I admire what you've done to help the people of Camp Liberty to be able to leave that facility and to be able to live a normal life. I'm so thrilled that they are out of there.

I felt every abuse personally and to know that they are now out of that facility is just truly tremendous, and it shows what kind of incredible dedication you have. You have been so forthright. You have been so committed in making sure that there is freedom for them, but then also that there is democracy in Iran.

So thank you for all the work that you do, thank you for fighting for human rights, thank you for fighting for women rights, and thank you for fighting for a democratic Iran. Again, Happy Nowruz.

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA)

Excerpt:

We know the people of Iran are suffering, even as we meet today. They've got a bunch of Nazis, Islamic Nazis with clubs, with knives, with whips who ride by on motorcycles and repress the people and throw them into prison and into dungeons. It's time the people who are conducting this terrorist operation in Iran are arrested, but we can't arrest them because they're part of the mullah regime. So I say, time to put the Iranian Revolutionary Guard on the terrorist list.

The Revolutionary Guard in Iran are the quintessential domestic terrorists. It's time to recognize that. It's time for us to say, "Terrorism committed by people like that are going to be included on our list of unacceptable and unacceptable behavior and thus punishable by American sanctions."

So I say to you tonight, I join you. I join all of those Iranians in pleading with the American people, "Let us live up to our own standards. Let us stand for freedom and justice and thus against the mullah tyranny."



Happy Nowruz, Nowruz Mobarak





Happy Nowruz, Happy New Year

COMPILED BY ORGANIZATION OF IRANIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES - US



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