

Former Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT)

OIAC Capitol Hill Rally & Photo Exhibition

August 2nd, 2021

Well, thank you very much for inviting me to join you today as you gather on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol, leaders of Iranian American communities throughout the country and friends of freedom from everywhere. You are here for a cause that is as old as America. It's the cause of freedom and the cause of justice and I am proud to stand with you. Your values are American values.

Let us be specific. We are here to protest the selection of Ebrahim Raisi as the next president of Iran. Raisi is taking office as president tomorrow. Instead, based on everything we know now, he should be taken to stand trial for crimes against humanity and the Hague. That's how serious this is.

I want to begin with a historical comparison, which I hope will help to illustrate the seriousness of this moment. In 1934, September, the Nazis had taken control of Ukraine and on a day in September, they marched more than 34,000 Jews to the outskirts of the city at a place called Babi Yar, where over the next two days, they shot and murdered all of them and pushed them into a large ravine and covered it over with dirt. Now why do I mention that? Because I was thinking as I was preparing to speak to you today, how would the families of those 34,000 people have felt if 33 years after Babi Yar, one of the Nazis who was in charge of that slaughter of their family and friends was elected president of Germany? The truth is the German people and the German law would not allow that to happen. But think of how the way the families and friends of the people who were killed in 1988 they would have felt and that as the result of the death committee that Ebrahim Raisi led feel today. We have to explain that to not just let it happen. people and we can

Iran is run by an extremist terrorist regime. But this is outrageous. If the scenario that I talked about, which is that a Nazi who was involved in the murder of the 34,000 had become president in Germany, the world would have been outraged. Today, this man, Raisi, who participated in the murder without trial of almost 30,000 Iranians only because of their political beliefs and activities, there is not enough outrage. Where is the outrage? And I want to believe that the outrage worldwide begins today here at the United States Capitol and at capitals of civilized countries around the world. You know there are historians who say that the absence of protest to the slaughter that happened at Babi Yar in 1941 encouraged the Nazis to go ahead with the horrific genocidal acts that they carried out in the years that followed in World War II. We're not going to let that happen again in Iran.

Dante said that the hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in times of moral crisis maintain their silence. We cannot and will not remain silent. And that's why I'm so appreciative that you are all there and why I'm so proud to have the opportunity to join you. I am encouraged in that regard by the recent statements of Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, because he has ended silence. As he said, the people of Iran now look to their broader aspirations for freedom. And Blinken continues saying very much with the people who are trying to make their voices heard. Well, now I hope and pray and appeal to the administration to take the next logical step and end its attempts to negotiate an agreement with the regime in Tehran now headed by a mass murderer, and to sustain the fantasy that they may have a

reasonable peace with Iran in these circumstances. Any agreement with this regime in Tehran will be worth no more than the piece of paper that Neville Chamberlain proudly waved in the air when he returned from Munich in 1938, promising that it would bring peace in their time, when in fact, it led directly to World War II.

It is time to end the futile negotiations and coddling of the extremist regime in Tehran and to truly stand with the Iranian people, the brave Iranian people who when the protests that began in [??] [00:06:38] and have now spread throughout the country are clearly calling for our help. And they want our help for a single purpose - and it s the only viable policy for us left - to change the regime in Iran, to free the people of Iran from these tyrants and to restore and bring back the truly democratically selected government. This will be in the interest of the people of Iran, it will be in the interest of the United States, and it will be in the world s interest. With our help and with God s help, Iran will soon be not just the home of a very brave people, it will also be the land of a very free people.

Thank you. Thank you for being here and I look forward to seeing you all soon.