

## COMMENT 234 - Iran's democratic alternative

*On the eve of the Free Iran Global Summit*

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A network of non-governmental organisations, including the '[Alliance to Renew Cooperation among Humankind](#)' (ARCHumankind) – the parent association of [South Asia Democratic Forum](#) – has endorsed the [Free Iran Global Summit](#), which will take place on the 23 and 24 of July. This will most likely be the largest event of the kind since the 2018 Paris rally, when an [Iranian-diplomat-led terrorist attack](#) was foiled.

That attack marked a turning point as concerns Jihadi terrorist operations in Europe. They have diminished ever since. Concurrently, we are also witnessing a context of successive [popular protests](#) in the country, as well as [resistance activities](#) targeting the Islamic Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) and other bodies of state repression. On the other hand, the spread of the IRGC's proxy network in the region has halted and the clerical regime seems to have bet heavily on its nuclear plan as the only way to insure its survival.

Iran was identified, together with China and Pakistan, as a country 'crucial in the making of the present Afghan tragedy' in [SADF's activities programme 2022](#). In the foreseeable future, it is quite unlikely for China's strategic position to change substantially. Pakistan may change in important ways; however, as concerns some key issues – namely its ingrained addiction to Islamic fanaticism and the preservation of its nuclear threat – we are unlikely to witness much transformation in the immediate future.

A strategic change in Iran, however, is far more likely, and this change can impact all significant fronts equated within the global situation – including Afghanistan. we could well witness the dismantling of that Islamist fanatic apparatus, the instauration of liberty indoors, the end to the export of terrorism and fanaticism abroad, and the termination of the Iranian nuclear programme.

Mike Pompeo, former Secretary of State and former director of the US intelligence, a most well-known agency, [endorsed the National Council of Resistance of Iran](#) and its President

Maryam Rajavi role as the alternative to the clerical rule. He did so in a visit he paid last month – developing a position he had [implicitly](#) assumed as long as four years ago when in his official capacity.

On the 23d of June, it was the turn of former US Vice-President, Mike Pence, to pay a visit to the headquarters of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) where he declared:

‘I have travelled more than 5,000 miles from my home in Indiana to be here today because we share a common cause: the liberation of the Iranian people from decades of tyranny, and the rebirth of a free, peaceful, prosperous and democratic Iran’ ([Fox News, 2022.06.23](#))

Mike Pompeo has been among the best informed and sharpest analyst we have been following in the highest levels of the US administration (see [ARCHumankind](#)’s post). Mike Pence is a very influential American political leader. Both consider the democratic alternative provided by the [ten-point plan](#) for instituting democracy in Iran as belonging at the very centre of the international agenda.

This high-profile US show of support to the democratic alternative to the Iranian dictatorship comes at a critical juncture for the country and deserves immense attention from the international community.

The Iranian nuclear programme was exposed twenty years ago by the [National Council of Resistance in Iran](#). Yet to this day the West still fails to apply international law, preferring instead to play hide and seek with the Iranian rulers regarding this programme. Each player pretends not to see what can hardly be hidden; the last move in such game being the position made public on June 8<sup>th</sup> by the Board of Governors of the [International Atomic Energy Agency](#) on the state of play of Iran’s nuclear developments.

The international community seems to still somehow hope that time will moderate the Iranian clergy’s intentions. On its part, the later has used that time to develop territorial expansion on its vicinity and repress its own people in-doors – needless to say, never giving up on the nuclear plan. Israel – avowedly the [prime target of Iran’s nuclear aggression](#) – has engaged in a series of strikes against critical infrastructure and key Islamic Revolutionary Guards officials in charge of this programme, strikes which unfortunately have delayed but not derailed nuclear developments.

As [Arab resistance](#) to the Iranian imperial expansion is increasing, and as the farce of a ‘[non-proliferation nuclear deal](#)’ is ever harder to keep afloat, the Iranian authorities’ temptation to build the first nuclear bombs and use them to both intimidate the Iranian citizenry and threat neighbours is strong and increasing.

The regime has benefitted from much support by both Russia and China, the world’s main autocratic powers; however, given the daunting challenges involved, it is not clear how far

are these powers willing to go so as to salvage the clerical establishment.

Iranian authorities are facing a new wave of popular protests – departing from several specific issues into a [common protest](#) against the principle of [religious political rule](#). Contrarily to what happened in the past, when the clergy could use its ‘moderate’ and ‘conservative’ factions to recover the wider public’s discontent or to slice the protest movement in different regional, ethno-religious groups, the clergy is now facing a [nation- wide resistance](#) organised in small-cells’ animating protest groups that are destroying the symbols of power, from posters of the Islamic leaders to the sieges of the IRGC integrated militia, disrupting the websites the regime propaganda instruments, and publicly exposing details of the [regime’s detention system](#).

The multiplication of cases wherein Iranian Resistance units manage to penetrate the regime repression and propaganda systems, as well as the successes obtained by the Israeli authorities in sabotaging the nuclear programme and some terror activities, might have caused the downfall of the all-too-powerful leader of the IRGC counter-intelligence, Hossein Taeb (following [Lavrov’s visit to Tehran](#) on the 23d of June).

As I have repeatedly stressed, the Iranian regime has been outperforming its predecessors as regards disinformation capacities, having been able to deeply penetrate Western decision apparatus, namely but not exclusively, with outlandish claims made against their opponents. A recent resurfacing of this sort of long-standing disinformation was recently published by the [Qatari Emirate’s](#) main publication in English language.

The regime perceived that the main dangers it is facing are coming from the support by Western conservatives to its real opposition. In order to try to fool it, as it has done through several disinformation operations in the past, it has lately tried to propel the ‘[Royalists](#)’ –who are inexistent as a meaningful opposition force – to the role of supposed main opposition.

Judging by the actions and words of both Pompeo and Pence, this stratagem may be floundering! The upcoming Free Iran Global Summit of next month may be a further step in uniting supporters of freedom and democracy from both within and out of Iran into supporting liberty in such a fundamental country!

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