

Good News for Iran. And Maybe for the US?

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On the morning of May 11, 2021, Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced his candidacy for President of Iran. Elections set for June 18 will determine the presidency, local councils, by-elections for parliament, and the Assembly of Experts that will have a say in choosing the next Supreme Leader.

The Good News.

But, while the *Washington Post* routinely describes Ahmadinejad as a hard-liner, and “an isolationist with a talent for riling the West”, the big news is that he has chosen Nader Talebzadeh Ordoubadi as an advisor. This demonstrates that the former president is open to an inclusive government that has the potential to reach out to the West. In the past, he has said that presidential elections are an “empty drum”, asserting the current style of governance will not resolve the country’s woes. Ahmadinejad’s and Nader’s candidacies must be approved by the Guardian Council, a 12-man body supervising elections. All people standing for office—even for the presidency—must meet with its prior approval.

Someone Who Knows.

However, Nader Talebzadeh’s selection as advisor is probably the wisest decision that Dr. Ahmadinejad might make. And is likely to be the best choice for Iran. Nader studied in the United States—at Randolph Macon College in Ashland, Virginia, at American University in Washington, D.C., and at Columbia University in New York City. He speaks fluent, unaccented American English, can easily discourse on Medieval Europe, and has a wide-ranging interest in assembling thinkers, activists, politicians, journalists, and government officials for broad discussions on a variety of subjects.

Mr. Talebzadeh has interviewed this writer (and other Americans) a number of times, on his TV program *Asr* (Time) as well as on other media. He is skilled at asking probing questions tied to current events, especially those of great international interest. Nader is also a well-known writer and movie-maker who has produced an excellent film on Jesus Christ.

Sanctions.

Nader Talebzadeh Ordoubadi is also an expert on sanctions—the hard way.

In February 2019, Sigal Pearl Mandelker, then Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence and, likely, an Israeli citizen, sanctioned him, his wife, Zeina Mehanna, his organization The New Horizon Conference (NHC), and some of its staff for holding a week's program in Mashhad and other Iranian cities. Ostensibly, the reason was "anti-Semitism, Holocaust Denial, and allowing Iranian intelligence to recruit attendees". As a participant in the May 2018 event, this writer sat next to an Arab, a Semitic person, and listened to Miko Peled, an Israeli-American activist, and Rabbi Dovid Weiss of New York City speak. The author heard nothing about Holocaust Denial and the only two people he knew who were "pitched" by Iranian intelligence were approached outside the Conference.

The Crime.

Nader's real "crime" was assembling Western dissidents, whistle-blowers, human rights activists, and global affairs analysts to provide unvarnished interviews on their areas of expertise to an astonishing number of news outlets, both Iranian and international. Worse, the NHC had, in particular, invited former CIA officials, State Department diplomats (such as this author), and one-time Defense Department staff.

Besides permitting corrupt Lebanese banks with no ties to the U.S. to steal NHC staff funds deposited with them, the sanctions also bar American citizen participation in future NHC programs—on the pain of jail terms and asset seizure. This was and is a blatant violation of freedom of association, travel, and speech, the U.S. Constitution be damned!

Help or Hinder?

But how will this help Iran and the United States? It would appear that Sigal Pearl, with her Foreign Influence and Foreign Preference security blots, would have poisoned Nader against the United States forever. He and his wife appealed their sanctions to the Treasury Department. But, like most American government agencies faced with inconvenient facts and hard truths, Treasury ignored their pleas.

However.

Benefits, Benefits, Benefits.

We are dealing with a man who is neither small physically nor small mentally. To quote Kevin Barrett, writer, talk show host, and former academic,

"Unlike Bill Moyers, Nader is unafraid of such controversial issues as 9/11 truth, false flags, political assassinations, and other matters pertaining to the Deep State. Nader has lived extensively both in the US and Iran, and understands both societies, and their overlapping histories, well. If any US president were to ever decide to atone for past crimes and heal the American-Iranian relationship, the first person to consult would be Nader Talebzadeh."

Dr. Barrett is entirely correct. But, this time, it's not the American president that will consult him, it may well be the next Iranian president. Nader Talebzadeh is not someone to hold a grudge. His interest is not himself but the wider world in which he lives. The whole point of his NHC programs was to use the thoughts and recommendations derived from the various fora involving international authors, activists, and experts to make the world a better place, to break down walls of misunderstanding and promote the general welfare.

As an extremely intelligent Iranian, Nader understands his own country and his own society. He is the product of a land with a history ranging back to the Elamites of 2600 BC. Present day Iran is the product of ancient Sumeria, the Medes, the Achaemenids, the Sassanids, the Seljuks, the Safavids, and Islam. Mr. Talebzadeh, therefore, is someone who knows where he has come from and where he is going.

He knows America. He frequently remarks that someone who understands the origins of the United States and treasures its former emphasis on freedom of speech and other constitutional liberties is an “Old American”. Therefore, Nader fully understands the U.S. *raison d’etre* and how it has become divorced from reality. He can see how small minded, pulling, professional politicians have corrupted and perverted the American ideal.

Moreover, over the years, Nader Talebzadeh has acquired a wealth of knowledgeable American contacts. These would prove to be valuable assets in his new role as advisor to Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. They could well become his “kitchen cabinet”, providing unofficial advice should he have need of it.

Conclusion.

In the past, the Iranian government has depended on well-meaning officials who have traveled to the United States, who have acquired secondhand knowledge of that country, yet were too steeped in their own traditions to make beneficial changes. Nader Talebzadeh Ordoubadi offers more. He is a true Iranian yet he has acquired an intimate, far-reaching knowledge of the United States through study, travel, and personal interaction with American thinkers, activists, and former government officials.

If anyone can pour oil on the waters of a needlessly-turbulent relationship, Nader can. His appointment as advisor to the possible president of Iran will pry open a tightly-closed, clamshell-like approach to international relations.

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