



National Iranian American Council

Advancing the Interests of the Iranian-American Community

The Honorable Jane Harman
2400 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0536

May 19, 2009

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Dear Representative Harman,

We are writing to express our distress over your comments favoring the separation of Iran according to ethnic lines and request a retraction. At the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference earlier this month, you said:

“The Persian population in Iran is not a majority, it is a plurality. There are many different, diverse, and disagreeing populations inside Iran and an obvious strategy, which I believe is a good strategy, is to separate those populations.”

Congresswoman, America and the Middle East know all too well the suffering that ethnic strife has caused throughout mankind’s history. Indeed, in your home state of California alone, 3,273 American servicemen and women have fallen while seeking to prevent a civil war from splitting Iraq apart along sectarian and ethnic lines.

They have given their lives because it lies in the interest of the United States of America to bring stability to the region – and end the instability that ethnic strife causes.

This is why it is all the more perplexing that you would favor a policy of deliberately promoting ethnic divisions and destabilization in Iran, while the President of the United States is embarking on a policy of diplomacy with the aim of bringing peace and stability.

As 140,000 American servicemen and women fight and die in Iraq and Afghanistan, we are certain that you did not intend to advocate a policy that would put U.S. troops in greater danger and that would destabilize the entire region, from Pakistan to the Levant, by exacerbating ethnic tensions.

We respectfully request that you retract your comments and lend your support to President Barack Obama’s effort to resolve tensions with Iran, including over its nuclear program, through diplomacy and negotiations.

Sincerely,

Trita Parsi, PhD
President

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