

Capitol Hill Meetings

Rexon Ryu (pronounced Yu), Hagel's office Room SR 248 - March 31, 2006

Hagel is concerned about the current path we are on. Rexon preferred not to see the imposition of punitive measures but rather a call for negotiations between both governments. He noted that the military is stretched thin already and was open to pursuing constructive measures. He wasn't sure about the feasibility of reauthorizing ILSA with fewer or diluted sanctions in place on Iran. He concurred that Iraq was not a success but several unknowable factors will govern Congressional action on Iran. It's too soon to say what the Administration will do.

Rexon stated that he would be willing to look into the OFAC licensing issue. **The first thing he wants is a list of organizations that applied for a license and were denied.** Hagel is a supporter of policies that have utility and are aimed at strengthening civil society without aiding the Islamic Republic.

Note: the \$75 million in HR 4939 was redirected, not slashed. This could produce an internal competitive struggle concerning how the money will be distributed and how much will actually go to Iran. Find out what BBG?

Mark Silverman and William Ralph, Chafee's Office, SR 141 A - March 31, 2006

Expressed an interest in peaceful dialogue and a willingness to support our cause. Mark asked us detailed questions about the survey that NIAC conducted. Trita noted that the initial survey asking what activities NIAC should be doing was sent out to 10,000 members. NIAC members were the ones asked specifically about the Iran-US issue, of which 86 percent expressed a desire to resolve the matter peacefully. Few NIAC members were supportive of UN sanctions and an even lower share of the total favored a military option to the Iran nuclear standoff. They asked for a copy of the resolution sponsored by AIPAC calling for the President to use any means necessary to stop Iran.

Mark and William warmed to the idea of a more sophisticated standard for understanding the wishes of Iranian Americans and Iranians. They seemed to approve of the US-Iran poll proposal and said they would ask Sen. Chafee about the option of including a resolution that requires Congressional approval of any plan to strike Iran. They appeared as grateful to us as we were to them and said they would think of other ways to be helpful. They suggested that we contact John Sununu's aide, Scott Thare, who is a Department of State Fellow.

Debra Tekavec of John Murtha's office, Rayburn 2423, 225-2065 - March 31, 2006

From the outset, Debra expressed support for a non-military approach and predictably was dismayed at the Iraq war's prosecution. She was eager not to repeat the mistake of Iraq in Iran. Trita reiterated that the Neocon strategy was to pursue the least resistant path to conflict and then create the perception of being pushed into that conflict. He noted the approval of a resolution passed last year containing language that gave the President authority to use any means necessary to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Debra was confident that the US was not likely to go to war in Iran--she stressed "it's not going to happen" citing the fact that we are in an election year and that the Iraq war is already too costly. She said she would talk to Rep. Murtha about drafting the resolution declaring the sense of Congress that any military operation in Iran required Congressional approval. She suggested that we contact Erin Logan in Joe Biden's office, who is Iranian American and covers defence issues. Trita already knows Puneet from Biden's office but said that it can't hurt to contact Erin too.

Tom Vinson, Rep DeFazio's (Oregon) office – 225.6416

Spoke with Vinson over the phone. Received language introduced by his boss and Ron Paul that would require the President to go to Congress before any military action. I also poked over the phone to Tom Vinson of DeFazio's office about the War Powers affirmation amendment to HR 4939, which was withdrawn on the House floor. As expected, the language was included because of the potential misuse of military authority. Vinson said that it was withdrawn so that it could be attached to the regular defense authorization bill later in the year. He said that he tried to add the same language to the prior defense authorization bill and it was voted down (gained only 130 votes). He tired going the resolution route before, partnering with Ron Paul ® of Texas and that measure was scuttled by the Rule Committee who never made the resolution in order (I will try and get the resolution #). He said that the Majority have avoided tying the President's hands. That sentiment may be changing because there is more evidence of mild opposition among Republicans because of errors in Iraq. He is not concerned about the "any means necessary" Resolution because of its non-binding nature and that the case with Iraq is different because regime change was the official American policy back then and does not currently apply to Iran. He seemed cordial but not interested in focusing on Iran or Iranian American interests in general. He wanted to know if there is an equivalent for Iran of the Iraqi National Conference and I said no and went into the spiel about setting high standards and gauging the views of the population before taking action in Iran,. He doesn't think that conflict in Iran is likely by "you can't put anything past them."

Rep. DeFazio may offer an amendment, debatable for 10 minutes. The amendment provides that none of the funds made available in this Act may be used to initiate military operations except in accordance with Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States. The amendment ensures that if the President contemplates military action against Iran, Syria, or North Korea or any

other country; he must first compel to Congress seeking authority before actually initiating military action. The amendment does NOT require the President to seek authority from Congress in regards to military action in Iraq or al Qaeda since Congress has already authorized those actions. Contact: 5-6416.

Mark Lippert from Obama's office (over the phone)

He seemed very receptive and warmed to our views. He stated that the current approach lacked creative thinking and was eager and informed and asked questions. He proposed that objectively speaking, Iran would not escalate into a military assault but that it was difficult to say.

He seemed supportive of an idea floated by Dr. Taki of the Council on Foreign Relations who had argued for a contact group in Iran as a diplomatic channel for dialogue between the US and Iran (this guy has spoken before the Foreign Relations Committee and could be a good panelist.) that idea had not received much traction. He was aware that a nuclear program was popular in Iran and that it would be best to negotiate for a more benign and less robust program. He suggested talking to Pat Garvey (good guy from foreign relations staff) and Tim Reiser from Senate Appropriations (his proxy is Jennifer Park). The important thing to note about Tim is that he and Mark fought hard to prevent the INC from receiving tax payer dollars (when they worked for Leahy) – was VERY supportive of the standard of assessment recommendation and the survey recommendation, he thought that the limitations on use of force resolution approach made sense but that it would be ultimately ineffective because the Democrats who tried to use the same approach during Iraq in 2002 backed out at the last minute; buckling under election year pressures. He suggested that we instead use a more cultural strategy that involved outreach and contact with congressional staff. He also thought our best bet legislatively was the supplemental which is moving right now. We could to our advantage the concerns existing about how to intelligently spend the money set aside for Iran to prevent an INC Part 3. He said Paul and Tim would be good people to talk to about hearings. Finally, he thought it prudent to reach out to the DOD and to speak with their people too. V. good resource.

Judah Ariel, Earl Blumenauer's office – April 2006

Judah is on our team so to speak. He is wary of AIPAC's influence and not supportive of the Iran Freedom Support Act which his boss voted against he is also interested in positive democracy building strategies. He is aware of the OFAC licensing issue and wanted to do more to help (I think Mercy Corps in based in his district). He is also in favor of a proactive diplomatic effort on the side of the US. He suggested logging out an alternative (not so much focused on a potential US-Iran war). Instead a letter that outlines specific good will gestures included in our recommendations page should be drafted and signed by members. The gestures should not contradict the strategy. This way we can show that ILSA

in its current form is counterproductive and prevents us from being flexible in promoting change in Iran. Concerning HR 282, Judah said that his boss got an amendment to the bill which was added that prohibits any assistance to foreign terrorist groups. He also stated that committee report language include language that limits any democracy assistance to groups with demonstrated political legitimacy in Iran (nothing more specific than that though). He suggested that we speak to Jim Leach's office (another Republican) and to Hillel Weinberg of Henry Hyde's office. According to Judah, Paul, Blumenauer, and Leach were the only ones voting against 282 in committee. He mentioned that he was in an off the record meeting with different Democrats of all different persuasions and noted that there wasn't much variation in their perspective, meaning that there could be some realistic effort to shape their opinion if we take the right approach. Although direct negotiations were not on their agenda, they were also not unilaterally in favor of sanctioning Iran to death. He said that they were most interested in a Libya-like solution to Iran nor some sort of sanctions/containment policy. Important to note this when we meet Mike Sheehy of Pelosi's office next week.

Message Janice O'Connell, Chris Dodd's Office SR 448 – 224.2823

Sam Antha from Wolf's office – April 10, 2006

Seemed like she was interested in collecting information and learning more. Was engaged but did not seem sympathetic. Was very cautious about her boss' position on the matter and did not want to give anything away.

Ken Cummings from Chris Van Hollen's office – April 11, 2006

Seemed very receptive. Was eager to help and suggested looking at the Intelligence and armed services or even government reform committee. Gave some names of people to follow up with in the minority. He supported having an event as a way of delivering different perspective – he said that the only issue would be getting people there. He suggested government reform which has oversight of the state department as a goof alternative to HIRC. He said we should talk to Dave Rapalo or Andrew Su of the minority staff. He suggested another meeting with Christ Van Hollen this time. Note that we want to give our side of the debate and to voice our reservations about HR 282.

Semhar Araia, Jim Moran's office – April 11, 2006

Semhar came across as a strong ally. She wants to engage in immigrant outreach more readily than her predecessor. She sees NIAC as a way of connecting with the district and engaging in a dialogue with different groups. ¼ of Moran's constituents are foreign born and need to be reminded of how to exercise their rights. she is concerned about religious persecution practiced in the Islamic Republic (Bahais and Christians). We agreed to meet again and she would find

out about the Congressman can attend the fundraiser on June 3rd. Talked extensively with Semhar. She asked a lot of questions.

Jennifer from Rep. Carol Maloney's office – April 11, 2006

Also spoke briefly with Afshin in Maloney's office. Jennifer asked a few questions about the intent of the nuclear program. She was concerned about the feasibility of an effort to tie the President's hands and did not give away any expression of support or solid action. She thinks that any resolution with a chance of passing would have to be driven by Republicans and include severely watered down language. A coordinated effort by constituents would be necessary before any feasible results can be achieved. She noted that vocal opposition to Iraq did not swell until it was too late. Talked about a possible congressional breakfast in the district. Maloney prefers being in the district (on Mondays and Fridays). Just send an email to the district office. Best to do it in May.

Dan McAdams from Rep. Ron Paul's office – April 11, 2006

Very strong supporter of our cause, but also in favor of Iran being allowed to develop nuclear weapons. Paul is an avid anti-imperialist and opposed to the Israel lobby's strong influence over US foreign policy. He mentioned the Hudson Institute. When discussing the OFAC issue, he was concerned that respectable foundations with a strong reputation to uphold would be above the board. Dan asked for the resolution with wording that gave authority for the US and other nations to use any means to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Dan is working on language that would limit the White House's authority to conduct a military strike or a so-called surgical strike. Walter Jones has asked for a classified meeting to members of the chamber (we should meet with Jones). He suggested using the library caucus (23 members) as a way of promoting the alternative go to thelibertycommittee.org. He recognizes that this struggle entails an uphill battle, and is willing to water down language and accept compromises. Is concerned that politics has no market component. The same choices that made the mistake on Iraq are the ones who are calling for another war. Jones is on Armed Services.

Richard Mereu, Representative Elton Gallegly

Every time the current Iranian President speaks, the possibility for a peaceful and diplomatic solution to Iran is weakened. Wanted information on the administration of Ahmadinejad. He was wary of a military conflict but his boss is a supporter of HR 282. Gave very little away about the issue and did not express any forthcomingness about helping or offering support for our cause.

Paul Unger (LD) and Brent Perry (LA) for Sen. George Allen

This office seemed cordial from one angle but very passively aggressive about Iran's rogue status and a military strike being a foregone conclusion. They asked about S. 333. Trita tried to explain that the EU-3 talks were not making progress, that diplomacy was not being used rigorously enough, and military strikes will have negative consequences. Iran was not like Stalin or Russia; according to Brent Perry because it was a state sponsor of terror and the US has a policy of not negotiating with terrorists. They did not want to question or criticize the president by limiting his actions. They were interested in the TV and radio broadcasts included in the supplemental. Trita responded by stating that Iranian Americans are the number one recipients of victimization from the oppressive Iranian regime. Gauging the viewpoints of the people has not been pursued and sanctions work when the people have the ability to put pressure on the government – they cannot do that at the moment.

Ur Jaddou, Representative Zoe Lofgren's office

Ur is an indigenous Iraqi (non-Arab). She wanted to be helpful but did not offer any commitment of support. She seemed to be fully on board on HR 282. Trita had to explain that after 26 years, sanctions were not working while Iranians were losing economic leverage. He states his reservations about HR 282 – lifting the sunset on ILSA sanctions – effectuating sanctions in perpetuity like Cuba and recognizing an opposition group is also a concern because none of the options being considered have the backing or credibility to earn Iranian American support or support in Iran. She seemed sympathetic about providing tools for state to make more informed choices. If we reverse the Clinton enacted sanctions, then Democrats will find this unpopular. Does not want a resolution tying the president's hands. Actions from her boss would depend on the situation and how far it blows out of control. She prefers a wait and see approach. She wanted us to start with Congressman who represents Iranian American strongholds. Get them to start writing letters and keeping their members informed. She urged us to do a letter about HR 282. She suggested considering Judiciary and Homeland Security as possible forums for action. Also thought it would be useful for NIAC to approach Lofgren in her district. Send an invite to UT whenever we are ready to set something up. Scheduler is Cameron.Day@mail.house.gov.

Richard Purcell of Senator Dick Durbin's office

We are on the same page because military action should be a last resort, according to Richard. Took in a lot and said very little. Very informed and alert about the subject for a leg correspondent. He knows that not talking is undermining the pro-democracy effort. He agreed that there is more of a willingness to challenge the administration. He thought it helpful to gain support of Republicans and get them on board of our cause. Our members should focus on contacting our Republican reps. He doesn't think that Democrats will remain silent on the issue for too long. We could make the case already that the constitutional requirement

is clearly outlined. He said that Brownback want to offer a supplemental amendment to increase funds for Iran pro-democracy groups.

Jennifer Park of Senate Appropriations

Very receptive, welcomed suggestions, and asked a lot of questions. Wanted to know more about militant groups and opposition groups based in the US. Trita talked about the MEK and Pahlavi's nationalist movement in Los Angeles. Jennifer (former Moran staffer) suggested that we meet with Paul Grove from McConnell's staff. She agreed about the Chalabi concerns we shared. Agreed to a sense of Congress language either in the Supplemental or the next appropriations bill that would prohibit funds to the wrong kinds of groups. She suggested reaching out to Megan O'Sullivan of NSC since State generated the idea. Trita said that we would send some language that was considered in the past that could be used by the subcommittee. She noted that the supplemental Iran provisions in the House and Senate bills were structured differently. She was sympathetic about the visa problems that prevent money from being directed to the student visa program. She was in discussions about how state can ease this visa problem. She was considering tasking an NGO to be a transit point in Iran to process and facilitate visas related to this program. Was supportive of a standard or criteria for assessment. State wants to majority of pro-democracy funds to be spent in Iran. Trita noted the NGO restrictions that prevent Red Cross and Mercy Corps from getting any capacity building and humanitarian assistance from being done in Iran. She was receptive to the idea that we need more oversight and checks concerning money.

Rich Harper, Senator Feinstein

Trita thanked Rich for the Feinstein Op-Ed released over the weekend. His view is that the Administration is using Iran to test and develop a new generation of nuked. He noted a strongly worded resolution authored by Feinstein and Kyl calling for diplomatic action concerning Iran, he thinks that the best approach for us is to get to know staff and open the lines of communication. He thanked us for providing an accurate portrayal of the population's views on these issues. He thought about crafting Feinstein's arguments into a resolution. He asked for us to draft a letter to Feinstein to congratulate her for taking her position and reiterating the views of the membership. He said that it would be useful for our members to go to the Feinstein's website to leave feedback and express support directly. He would have to look at language before supporting any resolution that includes a sense of Congress approach that supports diplomacy as the US priority.

Mike Kuiken, Senator Levin

He said that although his boss was in favor of a peaceful solution, his boss probably won't engage on this issues and was not in favor of direct negotiations. He was the lead opponent on the war in Iraq and offered an alternative resolution

(which was ultimately trounced). He said he supported confidence building measures and the he would help set up meetings with state. We need to figure out how to best use Mike who can facilitate.

Semhar Araia (2nd meeting) Jim Moran's office

She asked a lot of questions about the nuclear program and about the sense of support that the President has earned. She gave us a sheet with Iran activity in Congress. DeFazio's language apparently withholds funding for any attack on Iran without Congressional support (this kind of resolves the problem of splitting the Dems by making any military action contingent on making funding available). Trita wants as many legislative obstacles in place to prevent a war as possible. This way we can promote a preemptive peace strategy and push for direct negotiations. The fear of a US attack driven by the regime change policy is what is driving the nuclear program – which happens to be the only deterrence the Iranians have. Iran's incendiary comments are not doing anything to reverse the regime change strategy. Security guarantees are a key component of talks that are being overlooked and are driving the nuclear program forward. Iran does not belong to any regional organization and has been isolated by non-recognition as a regional power. Trita wanted support from Semhar concerning a resolution calling for dialogue between Iranian and American diplomats.

Chirs Otilio from Bob Ney's office

Chris stated the that Bob was stuck in a tough reelection battle. He said that Hadley was going to address the Iran Working Group this Wednesday. I suggested to Trita that Chris field some questions included in our Q and A document on the matter. Must figure out which ones we want addressed. Trita was tasked with contacting Bob Ney about putting together an Iran Working Group panel discussion or briefing.

George Allen's LA Steven Taylor

Left packets for Steven. Will meet with him on April 13th at 1:30 p.m.

Cord Sterling (Senator John Warner's LA)

Was very uninterested and non-helpful. Seemed intent that Iran was pushing us into a war. Can't meet until June 5th at 2 p.m. Very curt and not interested in a direct meeting.

Met with Lance from Jeff Flake's office, May 9th

Flake is opposed to sanctions because he used to work in Namibia and saw the economic hurt exerted from 30 countries with sanctions on Namibia. His aide

agreed that the last people that are harmed are the leaders but that Flake's concern was administrative and that sanctions go counter to free market principles. Flake is not against cultural exchanges but is adamantly opposed to the Iranian regime. He agreed to look at a letter although his aide was concerned about the public perception of being involved with a letter or a trip to Iran. I got the impression that his aide was not willing to be helpful and that even though Flake voted against HR 282, his reasons for opposing it were not altogether in line with NIAC's concerns.

Suggestion from Dennis Kucinich

Note: In a meeting with Kucinich's staff member I was told that meeting with Rep. Christopher Shays (CT) might be helpful if we wanted to try and push for a hearing in the government reform committee. Shays already held a hearing on the oil for food program which featured John Bolton. I contacted Jordan Press and left messages.

Darryl Issa

I have left several messages with his LA without a return phone call.

May 15th Met with Kendra Hooper from Rep. Devin Nunes (CA) office

Kendra was very friendly and wanted to appear balanced. She asked a lot of questions about the Mujahedin who had visited her frequently. She wasn't sure about her member's position on Iran or whether he would be supportive of a letter that would criticize the President. She asked for more information and wanted to be kept informed. She suggested speaking with Evan from Rep. John Doolittle's office--her former office. She acknowledged that AIPAC and MKO had been meeting with her and appreciated NIAC stepping forward. I reminded her that MR. Nunes' mentor Bill Thomas had expressed opposition to sanctions in the past and asked for any contacts she knew in Thomas' office. She suggested that I speak to either Shelby or Mike in Bill Thomas' office.

May 15th Jeannie Siskovic in Sen. Voinovic's office

She listened intently and was eager to hear about NIAC's position. She stated that her boss was in favor of talks and diplomacy and had been very critical of John Bolton's diplomatic strategy. He had made calls to the Ambassador's office asking repeatedly to tone down the rhetoric. He felt that continued reminders that the military option was on the table was undermining diplomatic efforts. She wanted to hear about who we had lined up to support our letter. I told her that we gotten a good reception from many offices and had gathered three members in the House who are championing our proposal. She noted that she was friends with Rexon from Hagel's office and Mark in Chafee's office and that she would attempt for the three of them to look at the letter and work collectively on it. This

would be pending her boss' approval. She also noted that her boss was a cosponsor of S. 333 but his support for the bill was unclear.

Scott Thayer, John Sununu - April 28th, 2006

State Department Fellow. He said that there has long been a divide between Hill staff and State Department because of not being briefed on aspects of the broader pictures and relationships involved that govern foreign policy. Scott wanted a short synopsis of the different opposition groups. Trita referenced a poll that suggests that 75 percent of Iranian Americans are neither in favor of the regime, so called opposition groups or foreign intervention but would like to see a democratic Iran. Scott noted that the Senator will not take many public positions on issues although he is a Palestinian. Scott is unconcerned about the possibility of a military strike but accepts that it could be possible: he doesn't think it will happen however. Was very unwilling to help or give any indication about areas that his boss might be willing to talk to us.

Charles Fitzpatrick of Specter's office - April 28th, 2006

He was not very helpful. He noted that Sen. Specter's position was in line with our thinking in that diplomacy is the better option but stopped short of giving us any other indications about Specter's position. NOTE: Specter and Leach met with an Iranian Ambassador a couple of years ago and were told that Iran wanted more cooperation with the US. In return Iran would cease its support for radical militant groups.

Naomi Zeff of Leach's office - April 28th, 2006

Naomi was very receptive to the idea of pushing for the NIAC agenda. She stated that 21 members voted against the Iran Sanctions Act, including her boss. She viewed the discussion on the floor as a way of trying to prove who can out-macho the other (Congress or the President). She was also in favor of negotiations and communication and a new overall strategy in relation to Iran. She could not guarantee support, but gave the impression that her boss would contemplate the possibility of helping the Iranian community. She will meet with her boss and try and set something up with Trita. She wanted us to draft a letter which would urge the President to support direct or multilateral negotiations.

Puneet (Biden's office and Senate Foreign Relations) April 28th, 2006

He wanted a document from Trita which he did not supply and was immediately disappointed about it. He was personally in favor of talks with Iran but needed the document in question. His spiel was that the Senate needed to figure out the best way to step forward. He called Feinstein unpredictable but admitted that it was encouraging to see her step forward. He will talk to Lugar's office about

getting us a meeting with Pat Garvey. I will follow up with Pat as well.
Lowering the rhetoric is a key step in being able to step forward.

Hunter Strop Ed Royce's office - April 30, 2006

Listened intently. Explained that politics were at work in relation to Iran. Expressed that he wanted to help with OFAC expansion. Royce is a big supporter of civic improvement plans. He did not suggest this directly but may be we could put together language as an amendment so as to add civic improvement to the list of items on the HR 282 laundry list. At least that way those individuals who are opposed to sanctions can have a tangible provision in there that helps the cause of democratic improvements.

Hunter asked about the threat of making friends with Iran if we are seen as doing business with Iran. I brought to his attention the fact that US negotiation will not diminish the effectiveness of a hard line stance as was noted by Feinstein, Lugar and Reid. The US has tried the zero negotiation approach for two decades and the results have not born fruit. One could say that one of the reasons for rapid nuclear development is because no talks with Iran were ever triggered in the last twentysix years. A new approach does not mean that anything has to be acceded to Iran, on the contrary because of the current diplomatic successes Iran is on the defensive and the US could gain huge diplomatic dividends bying showing a willingness to talk to the Iranians.

Matt Chiller, Harman's office - April 30, 2006

Referenced a poll that placed Iran as the number 2 national concern at the moment. Many consider Iran a menace. Harman is a consponsor to the Ros-Lehtinen bill and voted in favor of it this week. She also introduced and had beaten back an amendment to the intelligence authorization bill that would have required consistentquarterly reports to Congress on Iran and North Korea. After the Committee voted the amendment down, House Rules prevented the amendment from being reconsidered on the House floor. The misinformation in Iraqcould have been avoided if Congress had more knowledge of what the situation on the ground was. It could also stop the mass hysteria that has gathered over Iran, if there was evidence of how advanced Iran really is and that evidence is being shared with Congress. She wants an effort to push the President to give more information. Suggested we talk to Larry Hanauer (paternity leave) or Frank Rose on the Intelligence committee. They can get us a copy of the amendment.

Matt did not think Harman would support a letter discussing diplomatic efforts, rather, she wants to see improved intelligence as the way to prevent a war in Iran. Matt considered a war with Iran as an unlikely scenario. He thought that Congress would need overwhelming evidence to be able to sign on to another war and did not think that the President could split the Democrats in October--that to him would be too risky for the Reeps.

He was open to scheduling Ms. Harman to be part of a NIAC breakfast. She already is involved with round table discussions featuring the Muslim Public Affairs Council. Janaki Dighe is the new scheduler. I know her from her days with Jim Costa.

Mike Sheehy, Nancy Pelosi - April 30, 2006

His expectation is that the issue will be resolved diplomatically. No direct negotiations are being pushed thus far. He just met with Secretary Burns to go over the IAEA report and is looking at resolutions to be offered. Pelosi advised the President that a diplomatic answer is being pursued. Regretted no dialogue between Iran over Iraq. Still, he does not believe war is possible unless there is overwhelming evidence. He noted that our staunchest allies are not in favor of a war with Iran. He predicts two resolutions will be floated in the UN and Iran will be given more time to resolve the situation. Direct talks could be introduced at a later date. HR 282 doesn't seem like it will make too much of a difference. The flexibility of the administration will not be confined since the language contains only the sense of Congress (it will still be written into law however and is still a step in the wrong direction that has the stamp of approval from the most important legislative body in the land). He believes that the bill may not be enacted by the President.

Trita expressed that NGOs are not helped by HR 282 and noted that a degree of suspicion is being generated by the bill that could undermine democracy improvements and efforts to reign in the nuclear program. The points raised about OFAC restrictions created some interest in Mike and he welcomed suggestions about the OFAC issue. (Might be a good idea to put together a list of OFAC parties who expressed an interest in helping us. May be we can compose a letter or even push for legislation).

Mike suggested that we speak to Betsy Phillips (Majority) Anicia Desai (Minority) about adding language to the Supplemental or Appropriations bills that could reference OFAC or adding some provision that requires a poll or some evidence to suggest that the majority of the Iranian American population and Iranian population backs opposition groups.

Samantha Spinney of Kucinich's office - May 5th, 2006

I thanked her for advising Kucinich on the Iran issue and for his courage to stand up in favor of talks. She responded well to calls for talks. She suggested speaking to Ven Nerrala from Barbara Lee's office. Lee voted for HR 282 after adding language that prevented the administration from using the language of the bill as a justification for a military strike on Iran. Lee is the cochair of the Progressive Caucus although her staff member, Bill Goold, coordinates the agenda. She told

us not to write off Waxman and thought it useful to meet with his staff, Dave Rapallo and Henry Hyde's office.

Debbie Tekavec, Murtha (lunch) - May 5th, 2006

Very supportive and stated that she would push for John Murtha to get on board as a cosponsor of the letter. She suggested that Murtha was not convinced that Iran was an imminent threat. He has his hands full with the Iraq war and was not devoting too much attention to Iran.

She noted the May 4th op-ed submitted by General Odom and asked me to pick it up.

Ann Vaughn of Sam Farr's(CA) office - May 5th, 2006

Ann was very knowledgeable and thanked us for presenting our case and balancing the discussion. She thought it would be a good idea to engage Boeing because of the potential economic losses that exist as a result of airplane part bans. The Iranian market has now been cornered by Airbus. She suggested meeting with Adam Schiff's office since he is the Chair of the Democratic Security Policy Club Caucus (I left a message).. She thought it would be a good idea to speak with Ed Markey's office and with Rep. Shays (CT) Chair of the Nonproliferation caucus (left a message with Jordan Press). Putting together a panel would grab the interests of this entire group. She recommended a nuclear expert in addition to Trita and one other person as potential participants. Kolby of Subcommittee on Foreign Operations was another good contact. She pointed out that Rep. Mark Kirk had dropped legislation that would blockade Iran (Cuba missile crisis style). She thought that meeting with offices that don't agree was key to helping to inform and educate staff members.

Alexia Smokler, John Conyers (MI) - May 5th, 2006

Conyers is the ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee and a progressive but he cosponsored HR 282. Alexia was most sympathetic but she noted that the issue of Iran had become heavily politicized and that her boss was unwilling to stick his neck out on the issue. She was aware of the misperceptions concerning Iran and suggested that we get a room and hold a hearing on the matter. She did not offer to reserve the room recommending that we approach Ron Paul or Cynthia McKinney to set it up and jointly sponsor the briefing. In addition to the briefing, she proposed a dear colleague letter that would announce the briefing to all members of Congress. Although she stated that her boss was on the fence, she wanted us to set up a meeting with Trita, her boss, Jim Zogby, Mary-Rose Okar (sp?) and Trita. She suggested that Trita address the Out of Iraq Caucus (chaired by Maxine Waters (CA) which had recently hosted a briefing in which John Murtha gave remarks. She also suggested a meeting with Ven Nerrala in Barbara Lee's office. I mentioned to her that we were pushing to get the Republicans on board and to put together a coalition of members from all

ideological walks of life. She wanted us to observe HCONRES 55, the Out of Iraq bill which had 5 Republican cosignatories including Jones, Leach and Paul.

Colton Campbell of Mike Thompson's office (CA) - May 5th, 2006

Very kind and willing to engage me. He straight up noted that his boss was a cosponsor of HR 282 although he also signed onto the Defazio bill which calls for Bush to come to Congress before taking military action. He described Mr. Thompson as a pragmatist. He thought the most effective way of convincing Mr. Thompson of NIAC's priorities was to contact Elly Fairclough in the district office and arrange a Congressional breakfast or meeting. He noted that there was a sizable population of Iranians in Mr. Thompson's Woodland Office.

Meeting with Tom Krebsbach and the Citizens for Diplomacy not Confrontation - May 8th 2006

This group is pushing for a Congressional Fact Finding Trip to Iran. One or two of the participants recommended that the thrust of the staff meetings should be giving Iran the freedom to develop their technology, focus on the price of gasoline rising, and that Iran had never attacked a country indecades. I helped reshape the message of the visitors by asking them to advocate for talks and engagement with Iran as a component of the strategy. I could not reasonably or realistically convince them to not push for a trip, since that was the purpose of their meetings, however I did recommend that they consider the consequences of advocating for such a trip when a similar tactic backfired in Iraq. Michael Shank supported me by asking people to remind staff that the current strategy was not working, the treaty system in effect is faulty. Tom was going to distribute Joann Hart and Seymour Hirsch articles and other related materials.

Jan Shinpoch, COS to Rep. McDermott (WA) - May 8th, 2006.

McDermott received more votes numerically than any other Dem. Spinoch stated that it would be a disaster for Dems and Reeps to go to Iran on a trip and would be politically damaging to Democratic plans to win the House and Senate. She predicted that Reeps would not get involved to avoid providing cover for the Dems in this election year. She suggested that the press would question Pelosi and Cantwell and present a trip as Dems giving comfort to our enemies and appeasing a bad guy. We would be risking Democratic chances by changing the subject to Democrats are doing proactively. The Logan Act is also likely to be invoked, a law that prevents members of the Legislature from conducting foreign policy. New ethics legislation that bans privately paid travel also is disruptive and imposes criminal penalties for non-disclosure. She thought that the likelihood of an attack was possible but not until after the election in November. She was most concerned about the 90 day period between Nov and Jan 2007. She does not believe that bunker busters are being considered. She recommended us

meeting with Tom Lantos, Henry Hyde, and Michael Rose in Maxine Waters's office.

Lance Walker, Jeff Flake May 9th

Jorie Feldman Sen. Kennedy

Kennedy is on board and supports diplomatic engagement with Iran. Kennedy's staff commented on Iran's support for the war in Afghanistan . He is not supportive of military action and has concerns with S.333.. I noted that Reid had become the 58th cosponsor and they sounded sympathetic. They'd viewed the current nuclear standoff as yet another indication of Bush's incompetence. She suggested that a letter, briefing or some other measure should ask the Administration to spell out a strategy for Iran. She believed that the push for a trip to Iran was realistic although she and her colleague seemed split on whether or not Sen. Kennedy would be supportive or participate. She reminded us that Kennedy and Fainstein had withheld funding for the nuclear bunker buster program this year and last year, so the program itself is not complete. The likelihood of their use was low because of this.

Meeting with Chris Van Hollen (MD) - Wednesday, May 10th, 2006

Trita and I approached Mr. Van Hollen to ask for him to join or take the lead on a letter on Iran and direct negotiations. He proposed that direct negotiations on the nuclear issue would be hard and that we should focus on the Republicans. He seemed reluctant to get on board although he was willing to consider a letter that would ask the Administration to fulfill its pledge to meet with Iran on the issue of Iraq. He thought we should try and get people on the letter who were not the usual anti-Iraq crowd, in order to be seen as credible. This is difficult since the philosophy of neoconservatism has already identified those in favor of preemptive strike policy and those against it precisely because of Iraq. Getting Bush to do what he said he would do seemed to interest Mr. Van Hollen the most and he seemed unwilling to consider anything else.

Eric Powers of Lynn Woolsey's office, May 12th

Eric works for the progressive Caucus Cochair, although he seemed to leap to the defence of AIPAC and thought that elements of the Mearsheimer and Walt article were anti-Semitic. He noted that Iran and HR 282 were the priorities of the Jewish lobby. I and others in the group responded that the article demonstrated the existence of a strong well funded operation that was not allowing for a balanced debate on the topic of Iran. He did not think his boss would be in favor of a fact finding mission, and thought it would be difficult to gain financing since State Dept would have to fund the trip. It would be logistically a nightmare to achieve too. He thought it would be best for the group to work with Jimmy Carter and request a meeting with the former president. We had a discussion about the utility of sanctions and he seemed sympathetic although I wasn't sure what his

personal politics were on the subject. He pledged to push for NIAC to address the progressive caucus. He would look at a letter requesting US-Iran talks.

Harry Reid's aide, Jessie Daniels, May 12th, 2006

Jessie was very friendly and asked a lot of questions and wanted me to share my personal opinion on a number of issues related to the topic of Iran including the McCain World Cup bill, and what was driving Iran's nuclear program. She wanted me to provide her with some concrete steps and recommendations concerning what the US could offer Iran in return for nuclear nonproliferation, assuming talks began. She wanted information on whether or not pride was the reason for development of nuclear technology. I responded that it was partially responsible but that the country was split on the nuclear issue and fear was driving the program. She talked about the inherent catch22 involved with Iran talks eg we don't talk to terrorists vs this is the way to stop terrorism from occurring in the first place. She said that American public opinion was heavily in favor of preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon and preventing them from moving ahead with a program. She would look at a letter requesting US-Iran talks.

Alex Nunez of John Kerry's staff

Alex supported talks and noted that Mr. Kerry had been in favor of talks for years now. She wanted our members to speak out directly and stated that MA residents call on a regular basis to push for talks with Iran. She would look at a letter requesting US-Iran talks.

Mike Rose, Maxine Waters

Rep. Waters is the Out of Iraq caucus Chair. Michael was VERY supportive and grateful for the meeting. He noted that his boss was wary of seeing Iran as another Iraq and wanted to see something done. He could try and get a briefing set up if not among the members then among the staff. He was not afraid to consider or even champion legislation or amendments if it could be a way of avoiding the mistakes in Iraq.

Ann Norris of Barbara Boxer's office

I did most of the talking at this meeting and did not feel like I was getting through completely. I stressed that Iranian Americans were highly concentrated in California. Was in favor of talks but was not willing to go out on a limb and preferred a wait and see approach. She was clear about the realities surrounding Iran. She seemed very tired and looked at her watch a lot. I'm not sure if she thought NIAC could challenge the dominant paradigm sufficiently. She would look at a letter and get back to us. She also asked to see who we had already spoken to and which people were taking the lead on the letter.

Kendra Hooper from Devin Nunes' office - Monday May 15, 2006

Cindy Panuco from Xavier Becerra's office - Monday May 15, 2006

Her boss sits on Ways and Means. She did not seem engaged and was not interested in learning about the subject very much. Seemed like the office's mind was made up and she had limited knowledge of HR 282. She stressed that hearing from the community shapes his views and suggested a district meeting with our members to place the topic on his radar. He is from Los Angeles. The name of the district scheduler is Gayle Greenberg. Community input will help him decide whether or not he will join a letter.

Sylvia Oyinlola from Juanita Millender-McDonald's office - Monday May 15, 2006

Was very judicious and evenhanded in her approach. She asked about the Mujaheddin and wanted to know more about the organization and why they were considered so dangerous. I responded that our position was that they had not proven to the Iranian American community that they have democratic credentials and still remain on the terrorist watchlist. Sylvia wanted to know the number of Iranian Americans in Millender McDonald's district. It might be good to have this information with us when we visit each office. I will get the excel sheet from Ehsan. She noted that Ms. Millender McDonald's focus was HIV and international poverty. I noted the problems with tightening of sanctions and how they exacerbate poverty. She does not think that talks will stop from moving forward with a nuclear program, even though I noted that pressing ahead with nuclear development was already happening. She wanted to see a copy of the letter. she also asked us about our position on the immigration bill and I stated that we were concerned with the criminalization provisions contained in the House bill.

Josh Kirshner and Andrew Shapiro from Sen. Clinton's office - Monday May 15, 2006

Josh knows Trita and is a visiting fellow from the State Department. He showed a great deal of enthusiasm and asked a lot of questions until being relieved by his superior, Andrew. The entire tempo and mood of the conversation shifted when Shapiro arrived. He asked us about talks and demonstrated a knowledge of the issues. He noted that Sen. Clinton did not believe in outsourcing the negotiations to other powers. He asked about the possibility of a propaganda victory for Ahmadinejad if Iran engages in discussions and receives permission from the West. This suggested that he was fearful that the US would be made to look weak in such a scenario. He thought that the best way to go was to buy time and to add pressure to the regime in the process. He noted that Clinton is not yet a coponsor of S.333 but soon will be. Clinton's reservations stem from problems with the

language, he did not specify what his office had concerns with. He noted that Biden and Lugar don't want to push it forward. He did not think that a strike was imminent and wanted us to share our view of S. 333 before he was willing to introduce his views. Andrew also was willing to offer assistance on immigration issues and asked us to contact the office and he cooperate fully with us.

Before Andrew's participation, Josh asked about the MEK and Trita responded that the organization was even more ill-regarded than the regime because of the Iran-Iraq war and the sharing of intelligence with Saddam. Kirshner noted that when he was with State that the MEK were gaining influence in Congress and several members of Congress were warned that any funding being received by the MEK needed to be legitimate. Trita highlighted Ros-Lehtinen, Tancredo, and Filner as MEK supporters. He asked about S. 333 and Trita went into how regime change was problematic and that any US association to the money going out will be damaging to non-proliferation and democratization. After viewing our White Paper, Josh predicted that the airplane part recommendation would never become a reality. The US doesn't want Iran using US technologies to make their own gains and would be wary of Iranian students coming to the US to become trained in science that could be misused for WMD development. Josh asked detailed questions about opposition groups. Trita responded that they were incompetent and lacked the backing of the people. The regime in Iran like them because they make them look good. Talk of a referendum in Iran is now was popular two years and was being pushed by the Shah's son. He backed down after the hardcore monarchist elements in his camp reigned him in.