



Asociace
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HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
PRAHA

International conference: How to deal with Iran?

organized by the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Prague
and the Association for International Affairs

Date: 14 April 2010

Venue: CERGE, Politických vězňů 7, Prague 1, 1st floor

Working language: English

The Iranian elections in June 2009 brought back to the seat President Ahmadinejad, yet subsequent challenges to their legitimacy caused significant domestic unrest. The protesters, also known as the "Green Movement", mobilized and have been disputing the elections, some of them the Islamic regime as such. The regime is still trying to crackdown the voice of the protest movement by using arbitrary detention and sentencing of Iranian citizens, among them oppositional political activists, intellectuals, civil society leaders, students and journalists. Yet, as the regime is using harsh force against the opposition, cracks are appearing amongst the ruling elite. In the light of the continued protests, the Islamic regime is facing the most serious challenge to its legitimacy to date.

Notwithstanding its domestic instability, Iran continues to play a significant role in the region of the Middle East. A central pillar of its foreign policy remains to be a nuclear program and the support of various radical groups accompanied with the harsh language vis-à-vis Israel. As the international community, led by the United States, still sees a window for a diplomatic resolution, a stricter regime of sanctions becomes all the more likely to avoid the use of force. Considerable debate is evolving around how to prevent Iran's nuclear program without undermining the growing domestic opposition to the Islamic regime.

This conference will be an opportunity to discuss the impacts of the protests on the Islamic Republic, as well as the challenges Iran presents to the international community.

PROGRAM

10:00 – 10:10 **Welcome remarks**

10:10 – 12:00 **Panel I**

The Aftermath of the Election: Iran in turmoil

- Who is behind the "Green movement" – Leaders, strategies, demands and divisions
- What kind of political system do the protesters want?
- Is there support for the protestors among a broad spectrum of Iranian citizens?
- Who are the competing forces among the Iranian ruling elite? Are they realigning?
- What is the position and role of the Revolutionary Guards?
- How does the Iranian regime exert control over society?
- How stable is it economically?

Speakers

Hossein Aryan, Journalist, Radio Farda (Prague)

Fred Andon Petrossians, Online Editor in Chief, Radio Farda (Prague)

Shadi Sadr, Lawyer & Women's Rights Defender (Tehran and Frankfurt)

Massoumeh Torfeh, Research Associate, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Chair: Marc Berthold, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (Berlin)

12:00 – 13:00 **Lunch**

13:00 – 15:00 **Panel II**

How to deal with Iran? Iran as a Challenge for the International Community

- What is the impact of the current domestic situation on Iran's foreign policy and regional/international standing?
- Did Obama's positive approach toward the Muslim world have any impact on the Iranian political elites?
- Should/could the West openly support the democratization in Iran? If so, how?
- Is there a genuine will among the Western countries to stop the Iranian nuclear program?
- Is there still time for persuading Iran politically to not develop nuclear weapons?
- Can sanctions work?
- Are Western companies willing and able to stop cooperating with Iran?
- How should Western countries deal with Iran? What should be the strategy?

Speakers

Key note

Barbara Lochbihler, MEP (The Greens/EFA), Chair of the EP's Delegation for relations with Iran (Brussels)

Patrick Clawson, Deputy Director for Research, The Washington Institute for New East Policy

Ralf Fücks, President, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (Berlin)

Meir Litvak, Researcher, Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University (Israel)

Özlem Tür, Assistant Professor, Middle East Technical University (Ankara)

Chair: Irena Kalhousová, Association for International Affairs (Prague)

Please confirm your participation until 12 April 2010: registrace@amo.cz