

Reelect or not reelect—that is what Sherman’s sanctions are all about

Some Congressmen are willing to go to any lengths to get reelected. Even if that means fabricating lies, making racist remarks on the House floor and jeopardizing the lives and well being of their co-religionists in other countries. Congressman Brad Sherman, Congressman Peter Deutsch and Senator Charles Schumer are the latest addition to this sad list of power hungry Machiavellians.

Interpreting the import of judicial decisions and other development in Iran may have much to do with "the eye of the beholder". The trial of the Iranian Muslims and Jews accused of spying for Israel ended with relatively lenient sentences considering the seriousness of the charges. But on the other hand, the sentences can also be seen as extremely harsh mindful of the unreliability of the Iranian judiciary system.

Nonetheless, the activities undertaken by opportunists such as Congressman Sherman have not helped the accused. On the contrary, the more he uses this sad incident to get reelected, the worse the fate of these individuals becomes.

Sherman, Deutsch and Schumer have separately introduced new amendments that would reverse President Clinton’s decision to lift sanctions on food, medicine and Iranian carpets. Again, a combination of opportunistic tendencies and lack of creativity has caused these politicians to resort to economic sanctions as a campaign and foreign policy tool.

The biggest losers in this cynical campaign are American taxpayers, the Iranian people and not the least, the Iranians charged with spying. Let us not forget that the trial is continuing, since the accused have appealed. Further politicizing the trial at this sensitive stage only serves to entrench the position of all parties, rendering a solution more difficult.

If Congressman Sherman truly were concerned about the well being of Iranian Jews, he would not have resorted to sanctions. More than twenty years of sanctions on Iran have only benefited the anti-democratic and anti-American elements within the Iranian power establishment; the very same people who staunchly oppose the state of Israel. But imposing sanctions has also benefited Congressmen up for reelection, of which Congressman Sherman is all too aware.

The reformist movement has in the last three years achieved greater freedom for ordinary Iranians, but it has to a large extent failed to meet the expectations of the Iranian voters. On the other hand, isolation and sanctions have in the past twenty years only caused greater suffering, strengthened the anti-democratic forces and facilitated human right violations. While Iranian opportunists are trying to isolate Iran from the inside, opportunists and enemies of the Iranian people in the U.S., such as Congressman Sherman, are trying to isolate Iran from the outside.

It is deeply deplorable that Sherman, Deutsch and Schumer is willing to take the entire Iranian people hostage in order to serve another two years in Congress. Hopefully, Californian voters will make their voices heard and send a clear signal to those who try to use others misfortune for their own personal gain. Ironically, due to his racist remarks, Congressman Sherman may unintentionally have awakened the Iranian-American voters in California. If so, a more constructive and balanced approach towards the problems in Iran and the Middle East should be expected from Californian Congressmen.