



US-Iran Media Resource Program

National Iranian American Council

9 month report

Program supported by:

Connect US Fund, OSI, Colombe Foundation, Ploughshares Fund

The US-Iran Media Resource Project is aimed at ensuring that the national media has the best information and interpretation available in a timely manner on the sensitive negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear program. The project has provided the news media with objective, balanced and well-documented analyses of important developments, highlighting potential openings for a peaceful settlement that might otherwise be unnoticed and deepening the understanding of the motives of involved actors.

The fundamental goal of the program has been to **prevent war between the US and Iran**. The proposed solution towards preventing war has been to push for **direct US-Iran negotiations through overwhelming public and media support for such a shift in policy**.

Evaluation:

The project has made a significant impact on the debate in the US by producing unique analysis disseminated widely both to the media and directly to decision makers, briefing journalists in order to improve the accuracy of their reporting, advising TV and radio producers, and giving interviews to the media.

The evaluation of the project during its first 9 months is based on both qualitative and quantitative measurements.

Quantitatively, the project has produced an impressive number of deliverables, including seven (7) in depth **Issue Briefs**, twenty-two (22) **Editorial Memos**, and **eight (8)** statements. These written analyses have addressed a variety of issues, all pointing to the superiority of direct US-Iran negotiations versus military or economic warfare. These analyses, in turn, were either quoted or influenced otherwise reporting in major newspapers as well as important news shows, such as *Meet the Press* (where NIAC's analysis was directly quoted by Tim Russel).

NIAC also briefed print and TV journalists and producers on a weekly basis during this period. In addition, NIAC gave more than **150 interviews** to TV, Radio and print media. These interviews ranged from local radio stations to major NPR shows such as *Talk of the Nation*, to *PBS News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, the *Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer* on CNN and one-on-one interviews in *Time Magazine*. Finally, NIAC was quoted more than 80 times in major print media during this period - *Financial Times*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, *Associated Press*, *Reuters*, *Boston Globe*, *the Nation* and the *Wall Street Journal*, to name a few. (See Appendix)

Qualitatively, the project has been even more crucial. It has succeeded in bringing wide range attention to Iran's 2003 Grand Bargain offer (including through a CNN interview with NIAC about the proposal, as well as a 2 hour CNN program on US-Iran relations that currently is in production). Furthermore, according to most analysts in DC, the Bush Administration's push for a military confrontation with Iran earlier in January 2007 was pushed back by overwhelming opposition to the idea by the media, Congress and the general public.

NIAC played a critical role in creating this opinion against such a confrontation.

On January 10, 2007, President Bush addressed the nation to discuss his policies in Iraq. In that speech, the President said the following:

"Iran is providing material support for attacks on American troops. We will disrupt the attacks on our forces. We'll interrupt the flow of support from Iran and Syria. And we will seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq."

This was widely seen as a near declaration of war on Iran. Rather than focusing on the weakness of the unproven accusations made by the President to justify military confrontation with Iran, during the first 48 hours after the speech, the media repeated their mistake from Iraq – penetrating questions about the validity of the accusations were simply not asked.

On January 12, NIAC produced a widely distributed analysis, "*Bush's Iraq Plan - Goading Iran into War*." It pointed out the weakness of the Administration's strategy and argued that rather than fixing Iraq, the new strategy seemed more about goading Iran into war by targeting Iranian targets and diplomats in Iraq. NIAC pushed the analysis extensively with the media, with great results. The angle was picked up quickly by *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe*, where parts of NIAC's analysis were repeated verbatim. Soon enough, pointed questions were asked at the White House press briefings and within a few days, the idea that the Bush Administration was seeking to goad Iran into war became part of the mainstream narrative. This in turn, caused the Democratic led Congress to react strongly and according to many analysts, the push-back this created is a critical reason as to why the White House's war plans were derailed.

This is one of many examples of how the project played a pivotal role in mobilizing media and public opinion against a US-Iran war at a critical junction.

Unfortunately, however, the risk for a US-Iran war remains high. The incident with the British sailors detained by Iran shows the sensitivity of the situation. Such an incident between the US and Iran in the Persian Gulf can easily provide hawks in Washington with a pretext to give a green light to a larger military confrontation.

NIAC's US-Iran Media Resource Project is very much needed in order to ensure that a) such incidents are prevented from triggering a US-Iran conflict and b) that the state of US0-Iran relations are moved to a state in which sensitivity to such incidents and the risk for a military conflict are scientifically reduced. As a result, NIAC would like to request that Connect US renew its support for the project for an additional 9 months with a \$25,000 grant.

Appendix:

Select list of interviews:

5/5/2007 – To the Point, NPR
5/9/2006 – Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer, CNN
5/30/2006 – Interview with Council on Foreign Relations
6/3/2006 – C-Span
6/5/2006 – Dianne Rehm Show, NPR/WAMU
6/12/2006 – Talk of the nation, NPR
7/16/2006 – BBC Radio
8/18/2006 – To the Point, NPR
8/21/2006 – Talk of the Nation, NPR
8/22/2006 – NPR-KQED
9/12/2006 – KWRE Radio
9/13/2006 – Interviewed with Jim Lehrer NewsHour
9/14/2006 – Interviewed by Washington Post
9/18/2006 – Anderson Cooper and Situation Room (CNN)
9/19/2006 – Talk of the Nation (NPR)
9/19/2006 – Briefed USA Today
9/19/2006 – BBC World News
9/23/2006 – BBC Radio
10/6/2006 – Briefed WSJ
10/6/2006 – Interview with Time Magazine
10/31/2006 – “America's Workforce," in Cleveland
10/31/2006 – To the Point (NPR)
11/2/2006 – BBC Radio
11/3/2006 – WOSU-AM, Columbus, OH
11/13/2006 – WJFF-FM, Jeffersonville, NY
11/15/2006 – WWPR Bradenton (Tampa Bay, FL)
11/15/2006 – WKLA, Ludington, MI
11/16/2006 – WWPR Bradenton (Tampa Bay, FL)
11/16/2006 – PalTalk Talk Show
11/17/2006 – 1100AM KFNX News Talk Radio
11/17/2006 – Al Jazeera
11/20/2006 – KSFR FM, Santa Fe, NM
11/21/2006 – Briefed Jamie McIntyre CNN
11/21/2006 – Al Jazeera
11/24/2006 – KZFR-FM, Chico, CA
11/25/2006 – KGNU Boulder and Denver, CO
12/15/2006 – 90.7 FM, KPFK, Los Angeles.
12/26/2006 – To the Point (NPR)
12/27/2006 – WMNF 88.5FM Tampa
12/28/2006 – Pacifica radio KPFA
12/28/2006 – WPKN Radio 89.5 FM
12/29/2006 – Al Jazeera

12/29/2006 – BBC Radio
1/2/2007 – Situation Room CNN
1/4/2007 – KGAB Radio
1/13/2007 – Al Hurra
1/14/2007 – BBC Radio
1/15/2007 – KWRE in the St. Louis
1/16/2007 – Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press
1/16/2007 – Tom Omestad, US News & World Report
1/17/2007 – French TV 24
1/17/2007 – Al-jazeera
1/17/2007 – KSFR FM, Santa Fe, NM
1/20/2007 – C-Span
1/22/2007 – WSMN, Nashua, NH
1/22/2007 – KRCL, Salt Lake City
1/26/2007 – Al-jazeera
1/27/2007 – Interview with Radio Free Europe
1/29/2007 – Dianne Rehm (NPR)
1/30/2007 – To the Point (NPR)
1/30/2007 – Briefed CNN Situation room
1/31/2007 – CNN Situation room
2/1/2007 – CNN American Morning
2/1/2007 – BBC World News
2/1/2007 – NewsTalk 1530 KFBK/ Talk 650 KSTE
2/2/2007 – WSMN, Nashua, NH
2/2/2007 – Briefed CNN producers
2/5/2007 – Al Jazeera Riz Khan show
2/5/2007 – KRXA540
2/6/2007 – BBC World News
2/10/2007 – Al Jazeera
2/15/2007 – WHY Y
2/15/2007 – AIR AMERICA
2/16/2007 – VOA
2/17/2007 – C-SPAN, Washington Journal
2/19/2007 - American AM
2/20/2007 – www.radioopensource.org
2/20/2007 – BBC World News
2/21/2007 – St Loius radio
2/24/2007 – WZBC, Boston, MA
2/25/2007 – BBC Radio
2/26/2007 – Democracy Now
2/26/2007 – WOSU radio NPR station, Columbus, Ohio
3/1/2007 – KRCL, Salt Lake City, Utah
3/2/2007 – Jim Zogby Show
3/15/2007 – Extensive briefing for Frank Sesno, CNN
3/15/2007 – BBC Radio
3/15/2007 – BBC World News

3/22/2007 – Japanese TV
3/25/2007 – BBC Radio
3/27/2007 – Al Arabiya
3/28/2007 – Second extensive briefing for Frank Sesno, CNN
3/29/2007 – Danish TV
3/29/2007 – Briefing for Michael Hirsh. Newsweek
3/29/2007 – BBC World News
3/30/2007 – Danish State TV
4/1/2007 – KIRN Los Angeles
4/1/2007 – Al Jazeera
4/1/2007 – Al Hurra
4/2/2007 – Talk of the Nation (NPR)
4/4/2007 – PBS Newshour with Jim Lehrer
4/4/2007 – Al Jazeera
4/4/2007 – BBC World News
4/6/2007 – Jim Zogby Show

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