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FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY IN IRAN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 27, 2009

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Statement of FDI President Kenneth R. Timmerman  
Regarding False Reports in Official Iranian Media

Over the past several weeks, the Islamic Republic official media has run a series of story alleging that the Foundation for Democracy in Iran and its Executive Director Kenneth Timmerman have been instrumental in guiding and funding the recent anti-regime demonstrations in Iran. This attempt to attribute the pro-democracy and anti-authoritarian movement in Iran to FDI and its Executive Director is grossly misleading and factually incorrect.

FDI Executive Director Kenneth Timmerman said, "While we would be happy to accept such an honor, neither I nor my board can take credit for such power or influence. The people of Iran have shown through their courage, independence and determination that they don't need help from anyone outside their country to get them to take to the streets. I have full confidence that they will get rid of the dictators of Tehran. Apparently, so do the regime's leaders."

In articles that have appeared in Fars News, IRNA, Keyhan, Eteelaat, Reselaat, Asr Iran, and elsewhere, the Iranian regime's conspiracy-minded propagandists have woven a tall tale of dark influences and of a secret cabal, led by FDI and Mr. Timmerman, who they claim to be involved with the CIA's "Iran desk" and other covert activities. This is pure invention.

"They'd do better hiring a new Bollywood screenwriter", said Timmerman. "Anyone can just Google my name or FDI and judge for themselves whether our profile fits that of a clandestine CIA operation, careful to leave no traces behind."

The latest claims, which appeared in two separate articles in Fars News this week and are repeated in the headline of the official Islamic Republic News Agency, assert that FDI has organized funding for former president Mohammad Khatami through George Soros. As proof, these eminent organs of Pravda-style "truth" trot out an article FDI Executive Director Timmerman published at

Newsmax.com on Sept. 7, 2006, which describes a dinner Soros threw in Khatami's honor in Boston during the former president's trip that month to the United States. Khatami, today, denies he attended the dinner – but as anyone can see from the Newsmax article, sources at the time included organizers of the dinner as well as Khatami's translator. That being said, there is no connection whatsoever between FDI or Ken Timmerman and Soros or his Open Society Institute.

Earlier articles in the Tehran Pravda have cited Newsmax.com articles that exposed a State Department bias toward Khatami, Moussavi and the so-called "reform" movement, to criticize the Obama administration for "interfering" in Iran's domestic politics.

Either Hossein Shariatmadari and the Supreme Leader's propagandists want to make Mr. Timmerman out as a supporter of Khatami–Moussavi and the (now former) "reformists," or as a critic. They can't have it both ways. The problem with conspiracy theories is that they get caught up on facts.

Moreover, Mr. Timmerman has been critical of the whole notion of "reforming" the Islamic Republic from the start. Right after Khatami's election in 1997, FDI issued a statement cautiously welcoming the new president, saying his election showed the "thirst for freedom" of Iranian voters, not some new "Tehran spring." We stated that Khatami's election was "the beginning, not the end, of the long road to democracy in Iran," and set down a few guidelines for what real "reform" would mean. This included the dismantling of the police state, the release of political prisoners, and respect for internationally-recognized civil and political rights. The full statement is [here](#).

This is not the time or place for a full critique of Khatami's failures as president, which began with his lack of spine. But FDI and Mr. Timmerman have written often and much about this, and have criticized the State Department repeatedly for trotting out the "dead parrot" of reforming a corrupt and dying regime. Remember: under Khatami scores of independent news organizations were shut down, hundreds of journalists were killed or disappeared, thousands of Iranians were jailed for their political views and many were murdered. And all the while, the nuclear ayatollahs continued to pursue the bomb.

The real fear of the thugs now ruling Iran is that the demonstrations that have rocked the country since the stolen June 12 election are authentic; that they are led from inside Iran; that neither the United States, France, Israel, George Soros, nor Kenneth R. Timmerman or FDI organized them or played the lead role in them. The Iranian people showed they didn't need outside forces to mount opposition to the regime. That is what has got the thugs running scared.