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The People's Iran

HON. DAVID KILGOUR

Among many e-messages coming from Iran in recent days, I found one from a woman especially moving: "...this is the most authentic, grassroots and beautiful movement from the people, by the people and for the people."

Iranians have spoken, with defiant demonstrations in the hundreds of thousands, and in rallies elsewhere, including one last weekend near Paris of 90,000, in protest against widespread election fraud and the fist of a regime unleashing terror.

JUNE 12 ELECTION

The ayatollahs' election monitors this week admitted that the number of ballots cast in fifty cities on June 12th exceeded the number of eligible voters, although they insisted lamely that this affected only three million votes. Adding to the mounting skepticism is an analysis by the respected Chatham House and Institute of Iranian Studies at St. Andrew's University, which challenged the official results, based on a comparison of the 2009 votes with those of 2005.

The study also showed that in a third of all provinces the official results, if accurate, would have

required Ahmadinejad to win not only all 'conservative' voters, all former centrist ones and all new voters, but up to 44 percent of formerly 'reformist' voters despite a decade of conflict between the two groups.

Among numerous other indications of ballot stuffing are reports that before the election a number of officials in the Interior ministry (where the votes were counted) were fired because their loyalty to Ahmadinejad was questioned. Overall, the incumbent's declared victory by eleven million votes now looks fabricated.

BALLOTS VS. BULLETS

The ongoing confrontation of ballots and bullets across Iran underlines an important major issue of the 21st century: how the direction in the Koran -- "commanding right and forbidding wrong" -- is to be resolved in 48 nations with Muslim majority populations.

Recent voting trends are revealing. Indonesia, the largest Muslim democracy, held parliamentary elections in April 2009. Support for fundamentalist parties declined. Most voters seemed concerned about good governance and economic development. Overall, support for fundamentalist parties

fell from 39% to 29.5%. The largest, the Prosperous Justice Party, won only 8.4% of the votes.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's Democratic Party captured 20.5% of the popular vote and he is also expected to win reelection in the upcoming presidential election. His strategy of co-opting the good governance agenda and launching a wide-ranging anti-corruption campaign was well received.

PAKISTAN AND MALAYSIA

Similar conclusions can be derived from elections during 2008 in Pakistan and Malaysia. In both, most of the electorate voted for parties that promised good governance. Parties that had purely religious agendas did not do well. In Pakistan, votes went overwhelmingly to secular parties.

In Malaysia (which has a 65% Muslim majority), voters resoundingly rejected the ruling party in four major states despite its attempts to appeal to religious sentiments. For the first time since independence in 1957, the government fared very poorly; it was seen as corrupt and inefficient.

The elections in all three countries, as well as the more recent one in Lebanon, have important

implications for other governments: the best thing they can do is to encourage good governance that will deliver on education, economic growth and stability.

CONCLUSION

Iran is a vitally important country to the world for many economic, geographic and security reasons. It's culture is thousands of years old; it has a large and youthful population, with almost two-thirds under thirty.

What has transpired in Iran in recent days is home-grown and the brave people of Iran should be applauded for trying to establish a government for all. They might not succeed this time, but the momentum for change, for greater freedom, is rising and cannot be easily stopped.

The world was transfixed by Neda Soltan lying in a pool of blood, presumably because she got out of a car caught in traffic within sight of a sniper. The international community must consider with care its role in the future of Iran. Western governments should look for ways to be supportive without attempting to co-opt this movement into their own agendas. We hurt more than help if we are seen using the Iranians' movement to accomplish our ends. Democracy will come to Iran, but it will come not because of international agendas, but because the people of Iran want it and are prepared to sacrifice for it.

To its credit, the Harper government has taken a firm stand against the terror of Khamenei-Ahmadinejad. To side unequivocally with the people of Iran, more should be done, including:

- Supporting the demand of the Iranian opposition for a nuclear-weapons-free Iran, with equal rights for women and minority ethnocultural communities and religions, separation of church and state; the rule of law and independent judges; representative democracy; and good relations with neighbours and the world. A first step here would be to follow the lead of the 27 EU countries and delist the PMOI opposition as a terrorist organization.
- Support the work of Iranian Canadians and others in their efforts toward good governance and the rule of law. For example, Canada should play a more active role in the work of Stop Child Executions, led by the Iranian-born Canadian, Nazanin Afshin-Jam.
- Propose additional UN sanctions against Iran's government until an election can be held with sufficient independent monitoring to provide a fair process.

In her email quoted above, the young Iranian also spoke of "a spirit of fraternity, determination, resistance, courage, solidarity and generosity that no word can describe." It is this spirit the international community should share because the blood shed by Iranians are sacrifices made for the basic rights of us all.

David Kilgour is co-chair, Canadian Friends of a Democratic Iran, a member of the Muslim-Christian Dialogue of Ottawa and a former MP.

Female suicides a tragic stain on China's development

By CHRIS MALLINOS

Things began to go wrong when she was forced to marry a man she did not love.

Then only 20, Zhang Xiaoyun had to leave her family and friends to live with her in-laws. She didn't know or particularly care for her new husband, so it was only a matter of time before feelings of helplessness and resentment grew.

What's more, as a woman living in rural China, Zhang had no status in her community. She was a second-class citizen, expected to cook and clean for her husband. There was no place for independence or even a personality of her own.

So Zhang did the only thing she could think of to escape—she tried to commit suicide.

Zhang survived, but many like her do not. China is the only country in the world where more women kill themselves than men. Every year, a staggering 1 million women there attempt to take their own

lives. Upwards of 150,000 are successful. That's one suicide every four minutes.

Most occur in rural areas, where women struggle with poverty, abuse, and rigidly patriarchal traditions that see females as worthless and subservient. Without any social support system or rights of their own, these women suffer in silence.

Family disputes and economic pressures are often the main factors in suicide. And an alarmingly high number of women are pushed over the edge by seemingly minor quarrels with their husbands or in-laws—everything from a fight over mahjong to a disagreement about what to watch on television.

That's because suicide doesn't have the same taboo around it that you'd find in Western countries. In some parts of rural China, drink-

ing pesticide is an almost normal way of dealing with pent-up frustration.

It's an impulsive act of desperation—a cry for help—from wives with nowhere else to turn.

These women don't necessarily want to die, but they are alone and lack a sense of self-worth, so few think of the consequences. It's hard, after all, to understand the value of your own life when no one else considers you valuable.

Many marriages in rural China are still arranged, while other brides are simply sold off. Both practices are illegal, but these customs are hard to break. And once a woman is married, gaining the acceptance of in-laws is a tall order in the face of high expectations and little respect. On average, a rural woman who

attempts suicide has just five years of schooling and a median per capita income of \$13 a month. For these women, suicide is a way to escape from China's suffocating shadows of discrimination and anonymity.

Though one organization is trying to change this. The Beijing Cultural Development Center for Rural Women is an NGO that promotes social development for females in rural areas. It offers literacy classes, skills training, and mentorship, all in the name of giving rural women the sense of empowerment they need.

"They don't have self-confidence and feel their lives are meaningless," Chen Shanshan of the Beijing Center said in an e-mail interview. "We try to help them recognize themselves and realize their potential."

There's even a suicide-prevention program that tours the countryside, showing women the value of life and teaching communities about gender equality and inclusion. So far, the center has helped some 5,000 people, including a much

happier Zhang Xiaoyun, who is no longer suicidal.

But there remains a lot of work to do. The first step is to bring the plight of these women into the open. Too many of them are suffering in silence as China continues to modernize at an unprecedented rate.

Gross national product and international trade may be ways for a country to determine its economic wealth, but true well-being can only be measured by the quality of life of its citizens.

Until this well-being is taken seriously, and until China tackles gender discrimination, alienation, and inequality, the nation's development will remain woefully incomplete. No country should be able to call itself "developed" when a million of its citizens every year find suicide is their only option.

Chris Mallinos is a Toronto-based journalist whose work has appeared on six continents and in seven languages. You can reach him at www.chrismallinos.com.

QUITTING THE CCP



Inspired by the 'Nine Commentaries,' as of June 24, at 5:13 p.m.

56,337,309

Chinese people have announced their intentions to quit the Chinese Communist Party and its affiliated organizations on a special Web site established by The Epoch Times. Many others, unable to break through the Chinese Internet blockade, have posted their withdrawal statements on poles or buildings. Others have written them on Chinese currency. Read recent statements of Chinese quitting the Party, the latest news on the "Nine Commentaries," and more at <http://www.NineCommentaries.com>

The 'Nine Commentaries' is the book that is disintegrating the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and changing China.

This award-winning Epoch Times editorial series discloses the true history and nature of the CCP. Now it is serialized here.

Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party

Commentary Seven

On the Chinese Communist Party's history of killing

IV. EXPORTING THE REVOLUTION, KILLING PEOPLE OVERSEAS

In addition to killing people with great delight and using a variety of methods within China and inside the Party, the CCP also participated in killing people abroad, including Chinese in other countries, by exporting the "revolution." The Khmer Rouge is a typical example.

Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge only existed for four years in Cambodia. Nevertheless, from 1975 to 1978, more than 2 million people, including over 200,000 Chinese, were killed in this small country that had a population of only 8 million people.

The Khmer Rouge's crimes are

countless, but we will not discuss them here. We must, however, talk about its relationship with the CCP.

Pol Pot worshipped Mao Zedong. Beginning in 1965, he visited China four times to listen to Mao Zedong's teachings in person. As early as November 1965, Pol Pot stayed in China for three months.

Chen Boda and Zhang Chunqiao' discussed with him theories such as "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun," "class struggle," "dictatorship of the proletariat," and so on. Later, these became the basis for how he ruled Cambodia.

After returning to Cambodia, Pol Pot changed the name of his party to the Cambodian Communist Party and established revolutionary bases according to the CCP's model of encircling cities from the countryside.

In 1968, the Cambodian Communist Party officially established an army. At the end of 1969, it had slightly more than 3,000 people.

But in 1975, before attacking and occupying the city of Phnom Penh, it had become a well-equipped and brave fighting force of 80,000 soldiers. This was completely due to the CCP's support.

The book "Documentary of Supporting Vietnam and Fighting with America," by Wang Xianguan says that in 1970 China gave Pol Pot armed equipment for 30,000 soldiers. In April 1975, Pol Pot took the capital of Cambodia, and two months later he went to Beijing to pay a visit to the CCP and listen to instructions. Obviously, if the Khmer Rouge's killing had not been backed by the CCP's theories and material support, it could not have been done.

For example, after Prince Sihanouk's two sons were killed by the Cambodian Communist Party, the Cambodian Communist Party obediently sent Sihanouk to Beijing on Zhou Enlai's orders. It was well known that when the Cambodian Communist Party killed people, they would "even kill the fetus" to prevent any possible

trouble in the future. However, upon Zhou Enlai's request, Pol Pot obeyed without protest.

Zhou Enlai could save Sihanouk with one word, but the CCP did not object to the more than 200,000 Chinese who were killed by the Cambodian Communist Party. At the time, the Chinese Cambodians went to the Chinese Embassy for help, but the embassy ignored them.

In May 1998, when a large-scale killing and raping of ethnic Chinese took place in Indonesia, the CCP did not say a word. It did not offer any help and even prevented the news from being spread inside China. It seems that the Chinese government does not care about the fate of overseas Chinese; it did not even offer any humanitarian assistance.

'Chen Boda (1904-1989) served as Mao Zedong's political secretary and editor-in-chief of the CCP journal "Hongqi" ("Red Flag"). He was a leader of the Cultural Revolution Group and wrote the People's Daily editorial "Sweep Away All Monsters and Demons" in 1966, which marked the

Letters to the Editor



Please send letters to the editor to letter_ca@epochtimes.com or to Include address and a daytime phone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Suggested Solution 4
PUZZLES! PEACE
Inside out
Presented By
FREE THE CHILDREN
children helping children through education
Here is the solution to this week's Puzzles4Peace puzzle found on page A2