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Human Rights and the War on Terror: Iran

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Iran

by Syd Dillard

*[Y]ou won't believe it...but the whole country is in mourning. You should have been here for the demonstrations and candlelight vigils for America, it's all true: the tears, the long-stemmed roses the candles,...and then of course the hoodlums attacked and started beating us, especially the young kids, and arresting them. ...The funny thing about it is that those bastards felt betrayed by the love we showed 'the imperialist Zionist Enemy.' Ever since that night I keep asking myself, what is it that makes us in this God forsaken place to feel so orphaned and so filled with grief for what happened in a city we have never seen, except in dreams? (Azar Nafisi, 2003 "They the People," *New Republic*).*

The West has been conditioned to perceive Iran as hostile, suspect, and promoting terrorism. The conventional wisdom is that Iran is not an "open society", but one where dissent is repressed. However, the literature, as in the quote above, paints a picture of diverse peoples and political thought. Yet diversity in popular attitudes does not preclude Iran from a troubling human rights record. The more reformers demand and speak out, the more repressive the regime becomes. In defense of these activities, Iran appeals to cultural and religious tradition. Outside its borders, Iran has also been either a sponsor or supporter of terrorism for a long time, including in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There is also evidence connecting the Iranian regime with Hamas, Hizbolleh, and even Al-Qaeda.

Reflecting this mixed experience, the literature on Iran and the War on Terror is a combination of work on Iran's role in promoting terror in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its relationship to Iraq, its questionable connections to Al-Qaeda, and its approach to civil and political rights in its own territory.

Included in this bibliography is a wide range of sources for exploring these connections, information on Iran's own war against terror, and the regime's continuing human rights abuses against women and political dissidents. Also included are studies and articles documenting and monitoring the dissatisfaction of the Iranian people with the current authoritarian-clerical regime.

Websites

The Arab Regional Resource Center on Violence Against Women. <http://www.amanjordan.org>.

This is an important news resource about terrorism and women's human rights abuses in the Middle East.

Center for the Study of Islam & Democracy. <http://www.islam-democracy.org>.

Attempts to educate the public on issues relating to Islam, the Muslim world, and seeks to stimulate dialogue among policy makers, politicians, and academics.

Community-Online. Com Non-Profit Organizations in the Iranian Community. <http://www.community-online.com>.

An informational website with links to a variety of organizations relating to Iran and Iranians inside and outside the country.

Human Rights Watch World Report 2003 Middle East and Northern Africa-Iran. <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k3/mideast4.html>.

Reports on the human rights abuses in Iran.

Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society. <http://www.isisforum.com>.

This organization monitors events in Iran and other countries such as human rights abuses, terrorism, and regimes' fights against terror while promoting secularism.

Iran Focus-News. <http://www.iranfocus.com/modules/news>.

This website is a collection of news articles from around the world which focus on Iran offering a wealth of perspectives.

Islamic Republic News Agency (Irna) Irna News. <http://www.irna.com/en/tnews>.

News of events in Iran as well as the regime's perspective of global events presented in the state controlled media.

Muslim World Journal of Human Rights. <http://www.bepress.com>.

This is a free, academic forum dedicated to the discussion of the various human rights debates facing the Muslim world which is of utmost concern in the current climate.

The National Council of Resistance of Iran Foreign Affairs Committee. <http://www.iran-e-zad.org>.

Provides a perspective from ex-patriots who oppose the current regime in Iran.

United States Institute of Peace. <http://www.usip.org>.

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan federal institution created by Congress to promote the prevention, management, and peaceful resolution of international conflicts. Established in 1984, the Institute meets its congressional mandate through an array of programs, including research grants, fellowships, professional training, education programs from high school through graduate school, conferences and workshops, library services, and publications. The Institute's Board of Directors is appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate.

Women's Rights and Feminist Activism. <http://www.wifp.org/feministactivism.html>.

Provides articles and editorials concerning women in Iran, human rights abuses, and efforts to engage the international community to pressure Iran to stop and prevent these abuses.

UNCHR-United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Religion

W. Andersen. 2003. "Meaningful Emptiness: Ground Zero 1." *European Legacy*. 8(1): 5.

On September 11, 2001, a battle said to be between the god of Muslims and the god of Jews and Christians, removed 3,000 humans from the earth. "Praise Allah!" said the Muslim terrorist, "for helping us kill that many." "Thank God," said the Jew and the Christian, "for saving so many others." What a misuse of religion! The irony of all ironies is the slaughter of innocents in the name of God.

L. Griffith. 2002. *The War on Terrorism and the Terror of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.

O. And B. Hoffman Roy. 2000. "America and the New Terrorism: An Exchange." *Survival*. 42(2): 156.

ABSTRACT: Presents the comments of three field experts on a thesis of Steven Simon and Daniel Benjamin describing the emergence of a religiously motivated terrorism that neither relies on the support of sovereign states nor is constrained by limits on violence. Islam, Iran and the new terrorism; American perspective; Whether religious terrorism is a new form of terrorism or not; Response of Simon and Benjamin.

Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch World Report 2003 Middle East and Northern Africa-Iran*. <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k3/mideast4.html>.

Reports on the human rights abuses in Iran.

Ann Elizabeth Mayer. 2000. "The Universality of Human Rights: Lessons from the Islamic Republic." *Social Research*. 67(2): 519.

Exposes and explores Iran's subordination of human rights to its brand of Islamic criteria since the 1979 Cultural Revolution. After twenty years, the corrosive impact of human rights violations on Iran's legitimacy threatens the regime's monopoly of power. Though cleric hardliners retaliate against reformists demands for human rights, the status quo is untenable.

Ayla Schbley. 2003. "Defining Religious Terrorism: A Causal and Anthological Profile." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. 26(2): 105.

This research redefines terrorism by refocusing the definition away from politics; proposes a unifying definition that is viable for global assessment and understanding; defines what a religious terrorist is by using a convergence of psychometric measures. Finally, it introduces the concept of International Islamization Terrorism (IIT) and calls on future research to assess the propensity of lit to global calamity, and the viability of a universal religious terrorist profile.

Women's International Network News. 2003. "Iran: The Encounter between Feminism and Reformism/Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Programme." *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development*. 29(1): 62.

Political Sociology

H. Horan. 2002. "Those Young Arab Muslims and Us". *Middle East Quarterly*. 9(4): 51.

ABSTRACT: Deals with the issue regarding the involvement of Arab Muslims in the terrorist attacks against the U.S. Reasons for the anger of Arab Muslims against the U.S. ; Suggestions to Arab Muslims; Ways on how the U.S. could resolve its conflict with Arab Muslims.

J. E. B. Lombard. 2004. *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition: Essays by Western Muslim Scholars*. Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom.

Azar Nafisi. 2003. "They the People." *New Republic*. 228(8): 19.

Analysis of Islamist hatred of the United States suggesting that it is fear of modernity, progressive thought, and loss of culture; but also suggests that the West should separate the people of the Muslim world and the self-proclaimed extremist representatives. Seeks to provide understanding and broad context of Muslims.

G. Sick. 2003. "Iran: Confronting Terrorism." *The Washington Quarterly*. 26(4): 83.

ABSTRACT: Focuses on the effectiveness of Iran in handling of terrorism on its territory. Existence of radical institutions in Iran that effect its policy on all issues; Iran's international image on its policy on terrorism; Integration of Iran's policy with international policy on terrorism after the election of President Muhammad Khatami in 1997.

Policy Briefs

George W. Bush. 2003. Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism: Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Notification That the National Emergency Declared with Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism Is to Continue in Effect Beyond September 23, 2003, Pursuant to 50 U.S. C. 1622(D). U.S. G. P. O.

George W. Bush. 2003. Periodic Report on the National Emergency with Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism: Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a 6-Month Periodic Report on the National Emergency with Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism That Was Declared in Executive Order 13224 of September 23, 2001, Pursuant to 50 U.S. C. 1641(C) and 50 U.S. C. 1703(C). U.S. G. P. O.

George W. Bush. 2003. Report on Efforts in the Global War on Terrorism: Communication from the President of the United States Transmitting a Report, Consistent with the War Powers Resolution and Public Law 107-40, to Keep Congress Informed on United States Efforts in the Global War on Terrorism. U.S. G. P. O.

George W. Bush. 2003. Report on the Status of United States Efforts in the Global War on Terrorism: Communication from the President of the United States Transmitting a Report, Consistent with the War Powers Resolution and Public Law 107-40, to Help Ensure That the Congress Is Kept Informed on the Status of United States Efforts in the Global War on Terrorism. U.S. G. P. O.

George W. Bush. 2002. Report on the Status of United States Efforts in the Global War on Terrorism: Communication from the President of the United States Transmitting a Report, Consistent with the War Powers Resolution and Public Law 107-40, to Help Ensure That the

Congress Is Kept Informed on the Status of United States Efforts in the Global War on Terrorism. U.S. G. P. O.

Implications of Transnational Terrorism for the Visa Waiver Program. Washington, D. C. : U.S. G. P. O.

2003. A Review of the State Department's "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices". Washington, D. C. : U.S. G. P. O.

Status of International Religious Freedom: An Analysis of the State Department's 2003 Annual Report. Washington, D. C. : U.S. G. P. O.

Terrorism: Radical Islamic Influence of Chaplaincy of the U.S. Military and Prisons. Washington, D. C. : U.S. G. P. O.

CD

Palestinian-Israeli Connection

Bill Cooke. 2004. "Free Inquiry." *World Report*. 24(2): 42.

This article focuses on several issues of concern in Iran such as: Turkey, which borders Iran, has become a target of jihadist terrorists; and, Shirin Ebadi winning the Nobel Peace Prize for her defense of human rights.

A. A. Halim. 2004. "The New 'New World Order': Regional Security after Iraq." *Palestine-Israel Journal*. 11(1): 11.

ABSTRACT: *Explains that as the situation in the Middle East crystallizes, the changes being affected are profound. Desire of Israel to end the Palestinian problem and to eliminate the threats to its security from Iraq and Iran; Goal of the United States to eliminate obstacles to its policy in the Middle East; Aftermath of the Iraq War of 2003; Effect on Iran and Syria; Issue on weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.*

Avi Jorisch. 2004. "Al-Manar: Hizballah TV, 24/7." *Middle East Quarterly*. 11(1): 1.

ABSTRACT: *Presents information on Al-Manar, the official television station of Hizballah, the Iranian-supported Shi'ite movement that appears on every U.S. terrorism list. Significance of the television station; Role of the television station in the media revolution in the Arab world; Details of the operations of the television station.*

Eric Moore and Kevin W. Hershberg, ed. 2002. *Critical Views of September 11: Analyses from Around the World*. New York: New Press: Distributed by W. W. Norton & Company Inc.

Shaul Shay. 2005. *The Axis of Evil: Iran, Hizballah, and the Palestinian Terror*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

S. Zunes. 2003. *Tinderbox: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Roots of Terrorism*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Books

Reza Afshari. 2001. Human Rights in Iran: The Abuse of Cultural Relativism. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

History of human rights abuses since the 1979 Cultural Revolution by the Islamic Republic of Iran against its people, its war of terror and war on terror, and reflections since September 11.

Stephen Kinzer. 2003. All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror. Hoboken, N. J. : John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Interesting exploration of the historical events in which the U.S. played a major part in the overthrow of Mossadegh in 1953 to support the Shah of Iran. Kinzer plays the "what if" scenario suggesting that Iran could be a democracy instead of the authoritarian and terror-supporting regime it now is.

B. Reed, ed. 2002. Nothing Sacred: Women Respond to Religious Fundamentalism and Terror. New York: Thunder Mouth's Press.

A collection of feminist responses to religious fundamentalism which particularly targets women before and after September 11. Though this collection includes diverse responses concerning most religions, it provides insight into the plight of women in Iran and the Middle East in general.

Shaul Shay. 2005. The Axis of Evil: Iran, Hizballah, and the Palestinian Terror. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

