Supporting the People of Iran Should be Part of the Maximum Pressure Strategy

Since Iran regime is the main destabilizing factor in the region, a critical element of a successful Middle East policy is the way Iran’s threat is addressed. Pundits have argued that the policy of increasing pressure on Iran backfires because the end result would be the people of Iran rallying around the regime. However, recent wave of popular uprisings in Iran, in which people across the country have expressed their anti-regime sentiments in an unmistakable fashion, indicates that the people of Iran, when it comes to pressure on the regime, are siding with President Trump, not the tyrannical regime. In order to counter the Iran regime’s provocations, the people of Iran are the best ally of President Trump and must be treated accordingly.

The mainstream media and the Washington bureaucrats have been trying hard for more than three years to make their case for the impeachment of President Trump. However, since the start of impeachment, the people of the United States are increasingly siding with President Trump, as the polls indicate. It means that the people of the United States are the best ally of President Trump at home.

The main premise in the maximum pressure policy is that mounting pressure is going to destabilize the regime and force its decision-makers to change their regional behavior.

However, the corrupt Iranian media and the tyrannical regime officials, not surprisingly echoed by the mainstream media in the United States, have been trying to sell the narrative that the sanctions imposed on Iran and the policy of maximum pressure, including the preemptive targeting of Iran’s Quds Force commander, is actually helping the regime as it would somehow cause the people of Iran to rally behind the flag. If the claim made by these foreign policy
“experts” were in fact true that exerting pressure on the regime unites the people of Iran behind the regime, we should have seen the results by now.

Well, the proof is already in the pudding. Since November 15, 2019, frustrated Iranians took to the streets in more than 180 cities across the country calling for regime change and targeting government’s centers of repression and corruption. And starting on January 11, 2020 and in the aftermath of the mullahs’ accepting the responsibility for shooting down the Ukrainian plane, there has been a renewed outbreak of protests and a demand for regime change. However, not in a single case the people supported the regime or chanted anti-American slogans. Instead, Iranian people and their organized resistance movement unanimously showed support for a free and democratic Iran.

The policy of maximum pressure on Iran is achieving its intended goal because the successive waves of uprising are going to force the regime to either change its malicious regional behavior, or risk being crippled and ultimately toppled by the dissident majority. More importantly, it is the people of Iran, who are themselves exerting maximum pressure on the regime, which overlaps with U.S. policy of maximum pressure. On the subject of Iran policy, the people of Iran and their organized resistance movement are the best ally of the President. Few experts noticed that most of the political, repressive, and financial institutions that were attacked by the protesters in Iran, are sanctioned by the U.S. Government and many already designated as a terrorist entity.

Iran regime has been behind conflicts in the region including recent attack on U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. Hence, the main ingredient of a successful Middle East policy is an effective Iran policy addressing the regime’s destabilizing activities. The policy of maximum pressure is
working. Contrary to the pundit’s expectations, among the players in contemporary Iran, President Trump has no better ally than the people of Iran and their organized resistance movement. Showing support for Iranian dissident majority fighting for freedom, besides being in line with the long-standing American tradition of helping freedom fighters in the world, is in the interest of the United States and its Middle East policy.

It would be in the interest of the United States to do everything in its power to help bring to justice those who have been responsible for the killing of over 1500 protesters, injuring thousands of them and at least 7000 arrests.

Acknowledging the fact that the regime does not represent the people of Iran, and recognizing the inalienable right of Iranians to fight the tyranny must be the next step of the policy of maximum pressure. The U.S. administration must consider recognition of the National Council of Resistance of Iran—the coalition of Iranian groups fighting for freedom and democracy—as the true representative of the will and desire of Iranian dissident majority.