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House of Representatives

ENCOURAGING DEMOCRACY IN IRAN!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker, I recently reintroduced H. Res. 94, Siding with the Pro-Democracy Movement in Iran. This resolution addresses Iran's nuclear threat as Tehran seeks a nuclear weapon in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, has started to enrich uranium to 20 percent, and has plans to build 10 additional uranium enrichment facilities. Moreover, Tehran's continued support for terrorism and its suppression of dissidents require the United States to adopt a new approach.

Over the past year, millions of ordinary Iranians have taken to the streets to participate in anti-government demonstrations, despite growing suppression and risk of arrest, imprisonment and execution. The ruling regime, for its part, has resorted to a brutal campaign of murdering protesters, such as Neda

Agah Soltan in the streets and in its many gallows. My resolution calls on the U.S. government to side with the Iranian people's endeavors by refraining from a selective approach to Iranian opponents who struggle for democracy and human rights. It invites the Secretary of State to join our British and European allies in ending the blacklisting of Iran's main opposition, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI) by removing them from the list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO).

Removing the PMOI from the FTO list is not only the right thing to do, but it also sends the right message to Tehran. The Iranian regime and its President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have rebuffed offers of negotiations, and stepped up their intransigence in every sphere of contention with the United States,

including human rights, their nuclear weapons program and support for terrorism in the region.

In November, I sent a joint bi-partisan letter along with a number of my colleagues to Secretary Clinton. In this letter we brought the resolution to the attention of the Secretary of State and stated that over 100 House Members have already urged her to delist the PMOI. In our letter, we noted that "Iranian officials should not be seen as exploiting an unjust US designation to further justify imparting their draconian punishments on prisoners of conscience."

The PMOI's continued designation in the U.S. has deadly consequences. I invite my colleagues to support this resolution and send a message to the world that violations of human rights will not be tolerated!