

## Transition in Iran...

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The future of Iran has been [a subject near and dear to my heart](#) for several years now and when friends asked me for my views on Iran's state of affairs in the aftermath of their elections, I was unusually noncommittal. President Obama had said that it was up to Iran to determine its own leaders and I agreed with him. But when the Iranian people's protests picked up momentum and friends now asked, 'what should we do?' I decided that it was time to speak up. The realities in Iran today dictate that we do nothing for the moment, especially not while the Iranian people are opening up new chapters in their history on their own each day. Our President has been doing everything that he can to deny the Middle East extremists their 'Great Satan' punching bag, after setting the stage for pursuing new levels of diplomatic activity in all the Middle East capitols. [As I previously noted](#), Obama's Cairo speech has established a solid foundation for us to build upon.

When Azar Nafisi, was [asked about the election protests on CNN recently](#), her comments focused on women's rights once again, [which is what she's been talking about and fighting for all along](#). [Recent coverage by Roger Cohen](#) of the New York Times [has only further amplified the realities of the problem](#). For the US to take sides about what happens politically within Iran would be a mistake. The dictatorial system in Iran has been challenged and fractured once again. The last time that we saw this happen was under Mohammad Reza Shah. And while I applauded his efforts to modernize Iran, his human rights failings allowed the clerics, who had lost power under his rule, to jump into the gap. [The stage is now well lit once again and visible to the entire world](#); we shall see what is next for Iran. If the current regime fails to engage with the world diplomatically, it will further weaken and crumble.

I am betting on the youth of Iran, that educated body of men and women that the revolution made possible, that 70% of the population [that is already connected to the world](#), to help Iran take its proper place among the lead nations of the 21st century. It is Iran's human rights issues that will ultimately draw world attention and influence changes within. Its religious leaders will continue to learn that the world has changed dramatically since they took power. Dictatorial regimes fall slowly and die hard.

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