

Tudeh News

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The Report of the Political Committee (Ratified) to the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Tudeh Party of Iran

Dear Comrades:

Allow us to begin the second plenary session of the Central Committee of the Tudeh Party of Iran following the Fifth Party Congress with a moment of silence in the memory of our martyred comrades and all the martyrs of the struggle for our country's freedom and honor. In less than one year after the Fifth Party Congress, a series of events, serious national conflicts and dangerous regional confrontations have genuinely raised the anxiety of all the groups concerned with the future of our country. To find appropriate solutions for problems facing the movement, it appears necessary to analyze the events over the past year especially the destructive policies of the regime of supreme religious leadership (Velayate Faghih) and the deepening of the political and economic national crisis.

Continuation of the destructive economic policies and intensification of poverty and deprivation

As you know, during the last year, we witnessed an unprecedented rise in the price of oil to over \$56 a barrel. Such an astronomical rise should have significantly increased the Islamic Republic's foreign reserves and financial resources for helping to reduce the back breaking economic pressure on millions of our hard working citizens. In this regard, it

suffices to mention that the higher oil revenues have not only not had a positive impact on the country's economic condition but according to the recent data from London's Economist Intelligence Unit Iran's foreign debt in 2004 reached \$13.5 billion with the anticipation of this figure rising to \$16 billion in the current year. The same data report a 15.5% inflation rate as well as forecasting a deterioration of the government budget deficit from 3.5% of gross domestic product to 5.5% in 2005.

The economic policies of the government over the last two years have continued on the same destructive path of the last two decades. They have resulted in nothing but further poverty and deprivation, as well as the gradual deterioration of the country's productive capabilities. Having moved towards an economy dependent upon merchants and brokers and the lack of clear, strategic policies for reconstruction and expansion of productive capabilities have brought about disastrous results for our country. A consistent and rapid growth of unemployment has engulfed millions of our citizens. Many of the country's industries, such as the textile industry in the north, have gradually collapsed. Wages have not kept pace with a persistent rise in the inflation rate. Exempting a vast number of sectors from the labor code has intensified the exploitation of workers. According to recent data, more than 60% of the labor force works with only temporary contracts.

Even though it is difficult to find reliable data from the regime's information network, we can nevertheless get a sense of the depth of the country's economic and political crisis from statements by government officials. Nejat Amini, Ministry of Welfare's Director of

Bureau for Eradication of Poverty in a recent interview with ISNA (Iranian Students News Agency) declared that: "Approximately one million of the people under the absolute poverty line, the hungry ones, whose income does not even provide them with the minimum daily caloric intake, would be considered the most vulnerable sector of the society at the top priority of the safety net."

The regime's destructive policies underlie this black and inhuman poverty. Reducing the labor force, privatization, lack of support for domestic production and importing of goods without any plans, which are all prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, have left the same effects as similar plans in other countries. These plans have ballooned the foreign debt, deepened the already vast gulf between poverty and wealth, made the economy ever more dependent on multinational corporations, and destroyed the economic and productive infrastructure. The Director of the regime's Chamber of Industry and Mines told IRNA (Islamic Republic News Agency): "Importing without any plans, ratifying the bill to collect taxes, increasing the cost for facilities, lack of security for investment, lack of industrial strategy and dilapidated machinery and equipment have confronted the country's industries with a serious crisis. At the moment, more than 90% of the country's industries and mines are facing bankruptcy. This is a fundamental challenge for the government."

This brief review indicates that the Islamic Republic's economic policies over the last two decades, contrary to the goals and claims of establishing justice, continue to benefit the interests of big capitalists. It is the large majority of the people of the country that also continue to bear the brunt of these pressures and economic deprivation. The masses have correctly realized that no significant difference exists between Rafsanjani's policies under the pretentious slogan of "development" and those of Khatami's for "Islamic justice". Over the last twenty years, in Iran, the poor have become poorer and the rich, those close to the regime and the big capitalists have amassed

more wealth in the deeply corrupt regime of the Islamic Republic.

Country's political developments, the end of Khatami's eight-year government and the future presidential election

The election for the seventh Islamic Consultative Assembly (the parliament) has proven to be a watershed event in guiding the path for what has followed. The Guardian Council, having received the green light from the Valiye Faghigh (supreme religious leader, Khamenei), ruled thousands of candidates, including many of the opposition figures and even a large number of the elected members from the Sixth Parliament, as ineligible and lacking the necessary qualifications. Thus, began the onslaught by the reactionary forces determined to change the situation that since May 23, 1997, had confronted them with "crises" and serious nuisance. The reactionary forces had prior to the election for the Seventh Parliament managed to win with narrow majorities the elections for city councils, including Tehran's. They had therefore concluded that Khatami's popular support had seriously waned after seven years of compromises, concessions and inaction. They also assumed that the people's movement following its high point during 1997-2001 had weakened. The leaders of the regime found the timing opportune for changing the policies. Creating crises and obstacles and making threats against Khatami and his supporters have given way to a policy of direct confrontation. The reactionary forces were well aware that the (Khatami's government's) quick sand policies of "active calmness" would drain the energy out of the popular movement, which would then not be able to resist the reactionary onslaught. It is on this basis that the "electoral" process, which should more aptly have been called a circus, was played out for obtaining the full parliamentary control. The Guardian Council planned it. The security forces and the Revolutionary Guards, along with other armed militia, under the tutelage of the Valye Faghih (supreme religious leader) carried it out with a campaign of terror and intimidation in order to quell any inkling of

popular resistance. They finally achieved their goal.

Our Party's Central Committee declared back then in a statement that: "Just as we had mentioned in our prior statements on the seventh parliamentary election, the Guardian Council has openly attacked the electoral process with the knowledge, complicity and coordination of the top echelon of the regime. This offensive strives to finish off once and for all the reformist forces still committed to their cause and to force Khatami's government into complete and unquestionable submission. This has in reality been the culmination of a coup d'etat that has been brewing under the surface since the great popular victory of May 1997." (Nameh Mardom, #679, February 4, 2004)

The seventh parliamentary electoral process and the accompanying open violence by the reactionary forces in crushing the rights of those who were previously considered "of their own" sounded the death knell of the view that had proclaimed the possibility of obtaining freedom and even an "Islamic rule of the people" under the regime of Velayat Faghih (supreme religious leader). A solid majority of eligible voters boycotted the election. Those selected by the Guardian Council received minimal votes on their way to becoming members of parliament. These evidences demonstrate that the ruling forces rely on only a limited social base. They prolong their existence in power with the rule of force and using what the constitution has provided them.

The parliamentary elections paved the way for future plans: to complete the hold on all levers of power by grabbing away the presidency in the next election. The parliament used to be the only arena of opportunity for the opposition to bring forth issues and gather momentum to effect change. Having also closed this window, the regime's dark forces aimed at closing all doors to any activity by the opposition. They attacked the media and closed the reformist newspapers. They imposed wider filters on internet access and closed many news websites. They intensified the arrest and torture of those critical of the

regime in order to establish dossiers for further crackdowns. They have laid the groundwork for making all previously "friendly" political parties and organizations which cannot function within the framework determined by Valye Faghih (supreme religious leader) as illegal. These are all an inseparable part of a master plan to revert Iran to pre-1997 days. These strategies are quite similar to those in the early 1980s in the bloody suppression of groups defending the revolution. Another words, by this next presidential election, the reactionary forces would like to impose an environment where all opposition is silenced so that according to Hashemi Rafsanjani (President for eight years before Khatami and one of the regime's hopefuls in the upcoming election) a "joyous election" could be organized in completing a stranglehold on power and reaching a relative stability.

Dear Comrades,

The June 2005 presidential election is approaching and Khatami's eight-year rule is ending. We will present an analysis of this period to learn from the past in guiding us in the future. On May 23, 1997, the courageous and awe inspiring anti-dictatorial popular movement of our country dealt a heavy blow against the regime of Velayat Faghih (supreme religious leader) and its candidate, Nategh Nouri. In difficult circumstances imposed by the reactionary rulers, more than 20 million Iranians went to the ballot box and declared their undeniable wish for changing the system of government. Slogans of "Rule by the People" and "Civic Society" in themselves demonstrated the dictatorial regime's power and repression. From the day after the electoral victory, arguments were made as to how to realize these slogans and the people's wishes. The powerful presence of the people pushed back the reactionary forces and turned the country's political environment upside down. Differences within the regime and active presence of political and social forces, such as students, youth, women and workers in an effort to attain their demands were the early victories of the movement. This trend could have boded well for the next step. The

reactionary forces, concerned about their fate, started an all out attack against the popular movement. Initially, it organized the horrific chain murders in order to instill fear in the public. The people's resistance and the government reformers protests unveiled the dark and criminal nature of the regime's rulers faced with an ignominious defeat. The arrest of Saeed Eslami (Emami), the Valye Faghih's close associate, and his subsequent "death" while in prison to hide the truth, seriously shook the foundations of the regime. However, obvious from the outset and clearer more so now has been the extremely limited capacity of the leaders of the reform movement in advancing the cause of the people. In the end, the goal of the leaders of this movement, despite all of its inconsistencies, has been to maintain the structure of the Islamic Republic regime by being satisfied with a few superficial changes in order to lighten some of the regime's violent policies. Defending the principle of Velayat Faghih (supreme religious leadership) and attempting to compromise with the rulers for saving the regime have been indicative. The reactionary forces relied on this misguided approach by slowly rebuilding their ranks and renewing the attacks on the movement. A bloody and violent suppression of the student movement and the ensuing clamp down on the media, writers, reporters and intellectuals put the popular movement on the defensive. The people were discouraged about the chances for reform. Adopting compromising strategies, such as "active calmness", in the face of violent repression by the reactionary forces reinforced the view that the leaders of the reform movement were also afraid of the people and wished to "calm" the masses to "save" the regime. A golden opportunity has now been lost and the reactionary forces have albeit temporarily escaped from the danger of "reforms". The eight-year experience has also shown that contrary to what Khatami had hoped, humanistic and appropriate slogans do not suffice when facing a force ready to use any means to survive.

In our opinion, the most important experience of the past eight years has been that Iran's

governing structure, meaning the rule of Velayat Faghih (supreme religious leadership) and all of its organs, such as the "Council of Guardians of the Constitution", the "Council for Expediency of State Decrees", the Assembly of Experts, the legislative branch, the repressive, security forces and the mafia-like groups related to the ruling clerics, who hold the economic power in the country, cannot be reformed. These bodies, due to their intrinsically repressive and reactionary nature, are the main obstacles facing the people in their quest to attain their goals. Changing and getting rid of this whole structure is the only way to bring hope to the future of this country in moving towards freedom and democracy.

Comrades,

One of the other issues confronting us all over the last year has been Iran's plan to use nuclear energy, and the immense pressure brought on by the United States and its allies to stop such plans. Through articles in our Party's newspaper, we have repeatedly declared our strong opposition to foreign interference in Iran's internal affairs. We, along with all the other progressive and patriotic forces within the country, reiterate that Iran has a justifiable right to take advantage of such opportunities and we support all policies that defend this right. To oppose the pressure politics of the United States and its allies, we must mobilize the public opinion. At the same time, transparent policies must be adopted in accepting the international agencies' investigations of Iran's peaceful use of nuclear energy to counterbalance imperialism's militaristic policies in the region and especially towards Iran. The Presidential Election and the Times Ahead

The massive preparation to finish off the critics has been in full force since eight years ago. In considering the election of the next President, we must come to a realistic conclusion about the following questions and views:

Would the conflict within the government and the continuation of the reforms, albeit at a very slow pace, benefit or harm the movement?

Would a monolithic government not intensify the contradictions within the society and eventually lead to a social explosion?

Would maintaining the “mirage” of reforms, which is not threatening the reactionaries in any way, not assist to prolong the rule by the fundamentalists?

Comrades,

Above, while critiquing the policies of the Khatami government and his supporters in the social and economic arenas, we mentioned that such policies wasted a historic opportunity. In spite of this view, we cannot agree with the view that a complete consolidation of the government, as the reactionary forces are aiming to achieve, would benefit the short and long term goals of the movement. The experience of the seventh parliament is a clear example. Despite the weak and sometimes reactionary performance of the sixth parliament, we cannot conclude that there is no difference between the actions of the sixth and seventh parliaments and their effects on the society. Just as the last few months have shown, the parliament has become another tool of repression of the masses. Therefore, consolidation of the government cannot benefit the peoples movement and the reforms. Over the last eight years, while criticizing the policies of the Khatami government and the ruling reformers, we believed and still do that this trend would have provided a relative breather to lend support to the movement in its battle against reaction. It is exactly for the same reason that the reactionary forces have engaged in an all-out attack to finish off the “inconvenience of reform”. They also wish to return to the pre-1997 era. Even if the experience of the seventh parliament repeats in electing a president who is at the beck and call of the Valye Faghih (supreme religious leader), reforms and the popular movement will continue. Defeating the plans of the reactionaries now has a special importance. We cannot be neutral towards the future events in the country. It is clear that in the absence of a mass mobilized protest movement, the

reactionary forces will pursue a similar policy to that for the seventh parliamentary elections and disqualify many of the candidates. In our opinion, the progressives must turn the elections into an arena of struggle and raise the public awareness against the regime of Velayat Faghih (supreme religious leadership). This opportunity can bring together groups with differing views and plans and create a building block for a coalition to confront the despotic regime. We have repeatedly mentioned over the last few months that we must wage this struggle by relying on the masses and the potentials of social forces.

Comrades,

Failure of the experience to “appease” the regime has demonstrated that fundamental and lasting reforms may not be carried out within a framework determined by the reactionary forces. On the other hand the experience of May 23, 1997 showed that a united front involving millions of people has the capability to overcome the obstacles imposed by the reactionary forces. We have to nurture this capability anew and bring it onto the arena. If the regime of the Velayat Faghih continues in any way and form, it will bear nothing but deprivation and injustice for the people of our country. Only with the elimination of this regime can we open the way to the future. This opening is also not possible without the alliance of all the opposition forces. Only when the workers stand next to the youth, students and the women, and together enjoy the support of the other sectors of society, would be possible to bring down the reactionary forces and rescue Iran from the misfortune of Velayat Faghih. We cannot let the reactionary forces carry out their plans without any opposition. The people’s movement, despite all the blows it has received and all the anxieties and disappointments that bear on it, still has such power that it can derail the plans of the reactionary forces. Organizing this movement is the key to resolve all the political, economic, social and cultural problems of the society.