

Tudeh News

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The Report of the Politburo to the Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Tudeh Party of Iran (December 2008)

(Ratified by the Enlarged Plenary Meeting)

Preface

Dear Comrades,

Let's begin the broad meeting of the Central Committee of the Tudeh Party of Iran with a moment of silence to pay tribute to the memory of those who lost their lives for the liberation of the nation, and all of our fallen comrades.

Since the last meeting of the central committee in July 2007, significant developments have transpired in Iran and globally, the review and analysis of which is imperative for the formulation and refining of the current party policies. This report will address the most significant issues that have had a decisive impact in the domestic and international events, and will draw and present concrete conclusions to the Central Committee for review and discussions.

A – Reflecting on the domestic events over the time span between the two meetings of the C.C.: A review of the most significant political, economical and social events and developments

Comrades,

This Broad Plenary Meeting of the C.C. of our party is held at a time when Ahmadi-Nejad's government, i.e. the government supported and endorsed by the Supreme Leader of the regime, a government that came to power through extensive vote rigging and intervention of security and military forces is approaching the end of its 4-year term. The performance of Ahmadi-Nejad's governance could be analyzed from various perspectives. This government, enjoying a close harmony among the parliament (Majlis), the judiciary power, and the security and military forces, had unlimited resources to its avail in order to implement its plans, related to major policies and issues. What occurred in the past four years in political, social and economical arenas of the country is undoubtedly a crystal clear reflection of the plans and ideas of the most dark-minded factions of the regime under the direct support umbrella of the Supreme Leader of the regime. Khamenei's [Supreme Leader] comments in recent months in direct and explicit support of disastrous performance of Ahmadi-Nejad's government, and his comment about the necessity of resumption of this government, is a clear indication of

this fact that despite some discords among various factions of reactionary forces, the leadership of the regime, and above all Khamenei, strives to maintain and uphold the status quo by all means possible.

In the previous meetings of the C.C. of our party held after Ahmadi-Nejad's government took power, we pointed out that one of the phenomena worth noting in the course of 2005 presidential elections was Ahmadi-Nejad's propaganda revolving around the social-economical shortcomings and his emphasis on relieving people from chronic poverty. Promises of fundamental changes in economic direction and policy, distributing oil revenue among the people and moving towards justice, were among the populist and deceptive policies that the propaganda machine of Ahmadi-Nejad and factions of reaction - aware of economic pressures and shortcomings - put emphasis on. Examination of the report card of Ahmadi-Nejad's government after four years in office clearly reveals the disregard and negligence of the leadership of Supreme Leader regime and its appointed government towards solving the wide-ranging problems of people, and their rights and prosperity.

A review of economical, social and political report card of Ahmadi-Nejad's government, even based on the official, twisted statistics of the regime, could reveal the anti-people nature of this government. One of the catchphrases of Ahmadi-Nejad's government was the revitalization of economy and national production. But what is the reality? Clear signs of revitalization of economy and national production should by right be sought in restoration and reconstruction of domestic industry, growth of domestic products, ending the dependence of the national economy on oil revenue, improving job market and significant reduction of inflation. It should be noted that Ahmadi-Nejad's government term coincided with the rise of oil price up to \$140 per barrel, and Iran's oil revenue during this time was significantly more than the oil revenue during the previous administrations of Khatami [former

reformist president] and Rafsanjani [former president during Iraq war]. According to statistics on hand, during the 8-year presidential term of Rafsanjani, i.e. from 1989 to 1996, the total oil revenue of the government was \$126 billion. During Khatami's term in office, i.e. from 1997 to 2004, government's oil revenue was \$173 billion. The ninth administration [Ahmadi-Nejad's] has so far had \$198 billion oil revenue, towards the end of its term. Note that according to this statistics, the oil revenue of Ahmadi-Nejad's government has been greater than that of two terms of Rafsanjani's or two terms of Khatami's administration. Therefore, this government has been in a financial position to be able to take substantial steps forward in various areas, including reducing poverty and deprivation and helping the restoration of the national production.

Comrades,

Our party has always believed in the direct relationship between the policies and solutions of various state governments and their class nature. There were more than a few political forces that accentuated the populist rhetoric of Ahmadi-Nejad and portrayed the state economic policies of his administration as "radical and supportive of working people", and criticized TPI for not defending the new administration and accused TPI of "turning right".

Examination of the policies of Ahmadi-Nejad's administration reveals the specific characteristics in the direction of this government, which is affiliated with the grand mercantile capitalism and bureaucratic bourgeoisie of the country. The principal direction of the socio-economic policies of Ahmadi-Nejad's government and some of its consequences could be summarized as follows:

B- Unwavering steps towards increasing privatization of essential sections of industry and country's manufacturing plants

Debate about the economic path of the country was one of the most important battle-fields between the reactionary and progressive forces, right from the first day after the revolution. Inclusion of Article 44 in the constitution was one of the accomplishments of the February revolution which was revoked by Ahmadi-Nejad's government, following the executive order issued by the Supreme Leader of the regime. The consequence of these policies is to bring the macro policies of the regime more than ever in line with policies and prescriptions of IMF and World Bank already experimented in various countries. The disastrous consequences of these policies could clearly be observed in the developing countries of the world. The executive order of the Supreme Leader in 2007 regarding Article 44 was warmly welcomed by the IMF. In a report about the economic prospect of Iran, the IMF stated: "Recently the government has been pursuing privatization more seriously. According to the executive order issued by Ayatollah Khamenei regarding Article 44 of the Constitution, more than 80% of state-owned enterprises must be privatized in the next 10 years. The executive order on Article 44 revitalized privatization plans. Privatization of state-owned enterprises will be completed by the end of the 5-year plan."

All the statistics in the recent years indicate a decreasing trend in the domestic production levels and destruction of national industry. Many of the privatized units, which have mainly handed over to grand capitalists and those connected with the regime, have been dismantled in no time and sold, and their workers have joined the unemployed masses in the country.

In a report titled "A tough year for industry" about the bleak state of manufacturing sector and domestic industry, "Sarmayeh" newspaper wrote: "the year 2008 will be a tough year for the domestic manufacturers, both in the internal and foreign market. Industries such as sanitary and cosmetics products, pharmaceutical, appliances, electronics, textile and steel, and automotive

part manufacturing will face serious problems." The same newspaper, in a report published in Feb 2008 pointed out the bankruptcy of the fertilizer manufacturing plants, delay in granting bank credits for development of natural gas industry, and bankruptcy of Iran's power industry, and wrote: "secretary of Power Industry Syndicate said in an interview with Sarmayeh that Power Department of Ministry of Energy is unable to pay its debts and companies working in power industry cannot survive because of their high debts and loss of their credits with banks. In recent years, the power industry has lost its ability to service domestic market and very soon the country will become an importer of equipment for power industry."

The crisis is not limited only to one area of domestic production, but it encompasses the whole domestic industry. Following the implementation of privatization policies, and lifting the support for domestic production through subsidies and increasing the customs duties (which is utilized even in many developed capitalist countries, including the USA, to support domestic production), hundreds of manufacturing units were forced to close down. For example, the media reported that paying subsidies to fertilizer manufacturers was discontinued and as a result, 300 fertilizer plants and manufacturing units were closed down. By cutting subsidies to cement manufacturers, now foreign made products will be imported much cheaper than domestic products. Iran's agricultural industry and agriculture of strategic products in particular, will now depend on foreign technology for fertilizer and pesticides. According to the same report, due to the closure of these 300 manufacturing units, close to 15 thousand workers were unemployed. Another example of these policies could be spotted in the lack of government support for the domestic production of steel. Pursuing an open-door policy, and the overflow of imported goods by the government, caused a 25% decrease in the production of steel in the first two

months of last Iranian year compared to the same period in the year before. The chairman of Iran's Steel Manufacturers stated that: "allocating 3% of the credits to Ministry of Commerce to import steel happens at a time when domestic manufacturers are challenged with raw material procurement. If this credit was allocated to secure raw material for manufacturing plants, we would have both secured a sustainable production and created jobs and added value." He then harshly criticized the policy of supporting imports and added: "1.5 million tons of steel have been imported from China in the first 2 months of the current year. It is not in country's interest to shut down the production capacity of domestic plants and then import steel."

Another point to reflect on, is the impact of government's policies and courses of action in dealing with domestic industry and production- whether through privatization of profitable manufacturing plants or lack of centralized support for the production capabilities of the country and protecting it against imports - and the fact that the nation's economy continues to depend on foreign currency revenue from oil sales. With the loss of vast portions of domestic production capacity, and in the lack of distinct policies to create modern industry based on modern technology, the country has maintained the state of a mono-product economy, and the sustainability of Iran's economy is still tied to the developments in the global oil market. According to the regime's official statistics, oil revenue constitutes 50% of GDP, and furthermore, 80% of country's import is paid for by the foreign currency from oil sales. According to the same stats, government revenue largely (over 85%) depends on oil money. Therefore, the drop in the price of oil from \$140 to about \$60 per barrel will have a direct and immense impact on the economy of the country.

As mentioned above, the counterpart of privatization policy of the industries is the **opening of domestic markets to the**

import of consumer goods more than before, damaging domestic production, and swelling Iran's debts.

According to the reports published by Iran's Customs, only in the first 4 months of the current Iranian year (spring of 2008), parallel to the increase in the value and weights of imported industrial raw material as a result of the imposed sanctions, the import of luxury consumer goods like cars, fully automatic washing machines, fridge, cigarette, audio equipment, decorations, cosmetics and alike, has drastically increased. In summer of 2008, Tabnak internet site wrote: "the Customs of Islamic Republic of Iran published the Foreign Trade activities of the country in the first 4 months of the current [Iranian] year and reported a decrease in industrial imports and an increase in the import of consumer goods and luxury goods. According to this report, the import of brand new cars in the 1st 4 months of the year grew 90% and increased to 21 thousand from 11 thousand vehicles compared to similar period in last year, while the average price of each vehicle was \$20,000." Also, Sarmayeh newspaper, in a report on 3 August 2008 about the growth in imports, for the first time reported that the authorities in Ahmadi-Nejad's administration had requested an additional 8 billion dollar budget to import gasoline in the current [Iranian] year. The paper wrote: "yesterday, Monday August the 2nd, Oil Ministry deputy in Refining and Distribution of Oil Products emphasized that an additional \$8 billion dollar budget is needed to import gasoline; i.e. the government would like to import at least \$11 billion dollar worth of gasoline."

The other issue is that despite the enormous increase of oil revenue, Iran's foreign debts not only did not decrease during Ahmadi-Nejad's term, but it soared at an increasing rate. Kargozaran newspaper, 9 March 2008, quoting from ISNA wrote: "Business Monitor International reported in its latest report that Iran's foreign debts would increase in excess of \$8 billion in 4 years. In its 2nd quarter report of 2008, BMI

estimated Iran's foreign debts in the last year at \$23.3 billion which would increase by \$500 million this year to reach \$24 billion. BMI believes that Iran's foreign debts in the coming years will grow; in [Iranian] years 1387 and 1388 it will increase to \$26.3 and \$28.1 billion, respectively, and following the same increasing trend, it will soar to \$29.2 billion in 1389. A one billion dollar increase will mean a total national debt of \$30.2 billion in 1390. In 1391 Iran's foreign debt will hit \$31.6 billion which is \$8.1 billion more compared to national debt in 1385."

As mentioned above, despite the substantial oil revenues, Ahmadi-Nejad's administration did not pay back any major part of the national debt for which the nation pays high interests. According to the latest estimates, a large part of Iran's oil revenue has been spent as "expenses", or more accurately, has been pocketed by the military affiliates of the government and other regime heads. In what he stated in the recent weeks, Bijan Zanganeh, the former Minister of Agriculture and Oil referred to the \$198 billion oil revenue of Ahmadi-Nejad's government and said: "based on the Development Plan of the country and the legal permissions issued, there must now be about \$96 billion in the reserve fund, but according to the statement by the previous Minister of Economy, at the end of 1386 this figure was at \$16 billion, although these days we hear that this figure, at maximum, stands at \$8 billion; as such, expending the \$80 billion disparity is under question."

Dear comrades,

Another direct result of open support for grand mercantile capitalism and bureaucratic bourgeoisie that has placed the governance of the country in the hands of the most corrupted elements of the regime heads, has been the **growth of cash in the hands of private sector, i.e. the liquid wealth of grand capitalists of the country, inflation hike, and unprecedented rise of poverty and destitution in our society.** The

damages of these anti-national policies will impact first and foremost the workers and working people, civil servants and all the disadvantaged of the society. Comrades would remember that in its first budget, Ahmadi-Nejad's administration placed the fight against poverty and destitution on the top of its agenda. In those days, just before the release of this first budget of the government, ILNA reported that "since the poverty line is defined at 250,000 Toman by the government, a major portion of civil servants are living under the poverty line. This problem, i.e. poverty, will cause an increase in bribery, girls who run away from home, and child labour. Currently, the cost of living has doubled while incomes have increased only 30% and these increases are not in proportion."

Now let's see what has been the outcome of 4 years of Ahmadi-Nejad's government. Although finding accurate and acceptable statistics regarding poverty in Iran is very hard, but reading between the lines of the existing stats, this concrete conclusion could be drawn that poverty and destitution has exacerbated during Ahmadi-Nejad's government. For instance, the recent studies by the Central Bank [of Iran] indicate that the number of people living under the poverty line increased during the first two years of the ninth government, from 18% to 19%. Based on these figures, currently between 14 and 15 million people are living under the poverty line. "Noandish" internet site, 8 May 2008, quoted Ali Asgari, Economic Deputy of President Office of Planning and Strategic Control, as saying: "according to the published economic index, about 20% of the population lives under the poverty line. For an Islamic society in which brotherhood is the highest priority, this index is not nice. This is when the government distributes 4 to 5 thousand billion Toman worth of basic goods every year, and yet a portion of people do not benefit from it." In a round-table discussion about economy, organized by Student Organizations at the office of "Supreme Leader Representative in Universities", Ali

Asgari said: “also, in excess of 60% of the [national] economic revenue ends up in the hands of 20 to 30% of the population and the rest of the revenue is left for the others, and this is an unequal sharing of chances.” According to the confessions of this statesman, 14 to 15 million people live under the line of poverty.

The dimensions of the escalation of poverty and unemployment would be clearer when inflation numbers and the rise of cost of living are considered. This past summer the central bank of the regime reported that “the price of some food items shows an increase of 40 to 45% in just about a month.” According to this report, the price of chicken, milk and milk products like butter, cheese, yogurt, cream has increased more than 25%. The price of rice and beans also rose by 10 to 15%. In just a week, the price of red meats, from lamb, veal and beef increased by 7.2, 9.2 and 5.3%, respectively. In the fresh vegetable category, the price of tomato, cucumber and lettuce increased between 1.8 to 12.8%. The price of tea also rose by 5.1%. The sky rocketing and shocking rise of prices is happening at a time when the wages have remained unchanged in the current year and are below the actual rate of inflation. In August 08, Sarmayeh newspaper reported about the relationship between inflation and the wages of working people and public employees in particular, and wrote: “the budget allocated for compensation of the wages of public employees for the current year compared to the last, was increased by more than 14%; however, the actual raise in the wages of the public employees was only 7.9%. This year too, despite the fact that the central bank posted an inflation rate of 18.4%, the raise in wages of the public employees was only 10% which was 8.4% less than the inflation rate.”

Dear Comrades,

Clearly, the harsh living conditions of working people will trigger a growing discontent and dissent among them. Last

year we witnessed tens of labour protest movements, demonstrations by educational workers, vast protest movements by students, and also a continuation of women’s struggle against the government and its policies.

The working class of Iran was also faced with a hard challenge last year. One of the important arenas of the trade struggle of the workers is to fight against temporary contracts - which were promoted by Ahmadi-Nejad’s administration and its anti-labour Ministry of Labour - have had an unprecedented growth. According to the statistics released earlier this year, 80% of workers in factories and in manufacturing industries are working under temporary contracts covering a working term from only 2 months and 10 days up to 6 months. A large portion of temporary workers that are covered under the Labour Law, work under the most harsh and slavery conditions. This situation has had an adverse impact on the efforts of labour activists to form and brace independent labour organizations. Furthermore, in the past few months, Ahmadi-Nejad’s administration and the reaction parliament started talking about changes to the Labour Law and taking away the rights of the workers more than before. Labour organizations and activists swiftly reacted to this stance. In the recent years, our party has repeatedly stressed that dispersion among workers and labour movement, for whatever reason it may be, will impede the growth of the trade union movement in the country at the moment, and ultimately will give the chance to the regime to divide the struggles of the workers, and suppress them one by one. The efforts of labour activists to form independent labour organizations have been faced with brutal and suppressive action of the security forces of the regime. Due to arrests and further pressures on labour movement activists, efforts in this area have been faced with ever increasing difficulty.

The regime, which is faced with discontent of the masses across the country, parallel to having taken anti-popular economic and

social policies, and in order to prevent harmonization and synchronization of the protests of working people and ultimately escalation and expansion of these protests, has intensified its pressure and suppression policies. However, continuing pressures and organized attacks against The Syndicate of Workers of the Tehran and Suburban Bus (Vahed) Company and keeping Mansour Osanloo [Chair of its Board] detained in regime's torture cells, and also intensifying the activities of suppression forces, even in "Islamic Associations of Labour", and a rise in firing labour activists, are all part of policies that the regime is pursuing in order to suppress the labour movement in the country.

Suppressive policies of the regime are not limited to the labour movement, but are also equally enforced against the student movement and the struggles of the women's movement activists. Last year, the student movement was faced with extensive confrontation by the regime's security forces. Regime has attempted to shatter student organizations, divide and split the student movement and also militarize the education system more than ever. Putting pressure on student activists, tagging student activists as "suspicious", widespread arrests, framing students and taking them to judiciary courts, intensifying the activities of security forces of regime that are stationed in universities under the cover of "student Basij", all and all have posed ever increasing hurdles for the on-going political and student-specific activities of the student movement. Realizing the radical atmosphere in the universities, and considering that the next presidential elections is approaching, the regime is determined to curb the power of student movement and to minimize their active participation in the current political struggle against the dark-minded and reactionary rule.

The same suppressive policies have been strongly pursued against the independent movement of women. The campaign of the activists in the women's movement against the reactionary and misogynist policies of

the ruling regime, and the remarkable and admirable role of women activists in the peace movement has been one of the distinct characters of women's struggle in the last year. One of the major areas of political and women-specific struggles in the last year was women's fight against the anti-human "Family Protection" bill, which was presented to the 8th parliament. The extent of popular protests against this anti-human bill was so broad that the ruling reaction, gauging the level of social resistance against this bill, and in order to deceive and curb women's movement, claimed that a few of the members of parliament and judiciary authorities criticized and objected to articles 23 and 25 of the bill and asked for modifications to these two articles. Our party, in common with the activists of women's movement, rightly stressed that the objections against and problems with "Family Protection" bill are not limited to only those two articles. The spirit of this bill and the views reflected in it are gravely anti-human, back-warded, and totally in the interests of the new rich, and parasite and middle-man wealthy groups in Iran today. In "Family Protection" bill, over and above the two articles 23 and 25 which are about polygamy and taxing marriage dowry respectively, there exists no restriction or legal regulation against the temporary marriage, which is widely detested by the society. In another word, the reactionary bill of so called "Family Protection" gives the "right" to men to have hundreds of "temporary wives" and this does not even require registration of the temporary marriage. Also, this bill disregards and neglects the fate of thousands of vulnerable women and girls from disadvantaged and destitute working families, who are forced into temporary marriages because of poverty and inequality and injustice in society. Holding protest meetings, sittings, organizing extensive international actions, protest action of 50 of women activists, including Ms. Shirin Ebadi [peace Nobel laureate], and attending a parliamentary session in order to oppose this anti-human

bill, eventually forced the regime to back off and withdraw articles 23 and 25 and article 4 of chapter 53. This victory of women's movement proved that with coordinated effort and mobilizing the public opinion of the society, reaction could be hindered in implementing its plots.

Continuing pressures and hostility against writers and artists has been another area of regime's suppressive policies. Heavy retribution against journalists, closing down newspapers, decline in book publishing, and hampering artistic creativities in music, theatre, movies, poetry and novel writing by the Ministry of Guidance of Ahmadi-Nejad's administration are among the suppressive policies that we have witnessed in the past 4 years.

Comrades,

The continuing suppression of the rights of our nation's ethnic groups presents yet another example of the cruel violation of democratic rights and freedoms in our country. The complexities of the situation in the Middle East and Iran's neighboring countries, including the presence of foreign occupying forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, the presence of imperialism's military bases in a few of the neighboring countries and the intervention of foreign forces in our country's internal affairs have all further complicated the struggle of our oppressed people. As documented in the proceedings of its Fifth Congress, the Tudeh Party of Iran supports full equality of rights for the country's ethnic and minority population and calls for their voluntary union in a united country based on safeguarding Iran's territorial integrity. We believe that the struggle for the rights of our nation's ethnic population is an inseparable part of the overall struggle of people against the despotic ruling regime and for freedom, democracy and social justice in our country.

Another notable phenomena in the last year, was the movements and efforts of social forces in mobilizing a nationwide peace movement to confront the risk of war and

the US attack against Iran, which encompassed a relatively large spectrum of political forces, women's movement, students' movement and parts of labor activists. Although not immune to unfortunate occasional lapse of unity among various forces, however, these efforts demonstrated that even with different political views, it is possible to come together around more general slogans and organize a joint effort against the ruling reactionary regime and the dangers that threaten the country. Continuing these efforts and moving towards closer collaboration among all of these groups could be an exemplary model for future campaigns in other arenas of the struggle. Our Party welcomes these efforts, and considers itself an inseparable part of the movement of social and progressive forces in our country who strive to organize a joint struggle against the reaction.

The emergence of the peace movement in the country, which was broadly welcomed by the global peace movement, is rooted in the ongoing dangerous tensions between Bush and Ahmadi-Nejad governments over the sensitive issues of the region and Iran's uranium enrichment policies. At the last meeting of the Central Committee of our party, we elaborated on this issue at length. It is imperative to reiterate that the issue of nuclear crisis and the resulting international tensions, which led to issuing resolutions by the security council of the UN against Iran, and escalation of frictions in the Persian Gulf region between Iran's regime and Bush administration - while Iran's neighbouring countries are burning in war, bloodshed and occupation of foreign forces, and are facing an immense human disaster - truly concerns the national and patriotic forces.

In recent years, Tudeh Party of Iran have consistently insisted on defending the national rights of the country, including the right to peaceful use of nuclear energy, and has asserted its strong opposition to any foreign interference in Iran's domestic affairs. We have, at the same time, stated that promoting and taking advantage of

these policies by the Supreme Leader [Velayat-e Faqih] regime is used as a disguise to suppress the rights of people and to distract the public opinion from the escalating domestic problems and to intensify repressive policies. The aggressive and destructive policies of imperialism in the region, which have led, under various guises, to a total military occupation of two neighboring countries, and its unprecedented military presence in the Persian Gulf, are other concerning issues that cannot be neglected.

Our party also believes that resumption of the current tensions and the possibility of broader economic sanctions on Iran are against the interests of our nation. Considering the outcome of the recent US presidential elections and the heavy defeat of Republicans, discredited policies of Bush administration and ultra-right and warmonger forces in Washington, and with Barak Obama's administration taking office, we believe that in the coming months the outlook exists for alleviating the crisis and stepping into serious negotiations in order to ease tensions in the region. A serious and responsible approach by Iran and the country's ringleaders can have a significant impact on other developments in the region.

C- Political developments in the Country and the Position of Various Forces

Dear Comrades,

We mentioned in the last meeting of the Central Committee that the presidential elections of 2005 and the coming to power of Ahmadi-Nejad's reactionary anti-people government was a painful and costly experience for our nation, as well as for the reform and freedom-seeking movement of our people. Misunderstanding the realities of the society; improper analysis of the potential of the movement and the level of its organization, i.e. presuming that the popular movement was ready to seriously challenge the reaction and overthrow the regime and that the slogan to participate in

the elections and to support Moein [reformist presidential candidate] was "behind" the level of demands of the popular movement; as well as sectarian approaches to delimit between "insider" and "outsider"; and ultimately surrendering of the reformist to the plots of reactionary forces; all in all brought disastrous results for our people. But just like our Party and other progressive forces predicted, even though the reaction took advantage of this temporary retreat of the popular movement, but it could still not impose a deadly silence on our country and suppress the movement. Despite all the pressures, we witnessed in the last months of the Ahmadi-Nejad administration that the defeats and temporary retreats after the election are gradually giving way to the return of the social forces to the arena of struggle, escalation of political activities, and emergence of new avenues and possibilities to confront the ruling reaction.

The spectrum of the country's political forces has also altered during this period. The previously governing reformist camp has split, the new "Etemaad-e Melli" [National Confidence] party has formed, which like the "Kargozaran" [Brokers] party is not a political party with a social base, but an assembly of a small group around Karoubi [the former speaker of parliament] and his close circles. The Participation Front and Organization of Mojahedin of Islamic Revolution [both of reformist groups] have both experienced some changes. All in all, these developments reflect a turning to the right of this spectrum. The socio-political credibility and reputation of these forces suffered heavy damages due to a few factors, including the heavy defeat of the electoral policies of this spectrum; delay and disarray in supporting Moein's candidacy; candidacy of Karoubi; caving in of Khatami before the pervasive interference of military and police forces in elections; continuing the compromising policies after Ahmadi-Nejad took office; and the attempts by factions of these forces to position themselves under the protective umbrella of Rafsanjani in order to

get a chance to be able to participate in the parliamentary elections. Severance of major parts of the student movement from these forces is one of the indications of the mentioned damages.

On the other hand, the wide spectrum of reactionary forces, despite all the groupings and internal strife over pillaging the country's resources, has been facing increasing conflicts and developments over the last four years, especially as a result of Ahmadi-Nejad's failures in various areas. Some of these forces believe that given the performance of Ahmadi-Nejad's administration and the widespread dissatisfaction of people, a more credible candidate should be nominated for the next election. The developments in the parliament leading to the replacement of the Chairing Board and election of Larijani as Speaker, who had recently resigned over disagreements with Ahmadi-Nejad, exemplify the tensions within the ruling reactionary camp.

What is certain and could clearly be seen through the statements made by the regime's Supreme Leader [Ayatollah Khamenei] is the fact that the whole spectrum of the heads of the reaction, especially in the military and security forces of suppression, unanimously desire to avoid another 1997-election experience [1st time Khatami was elected]. Last year's parliamentary election was a clear example of this common policy of the reaction to maintain the status quo and to gain complete control over country's affairs. Permitting a limited engagement of some of the candidates affiliated with state reformists – who could pass the tight security filters of the Guardians Council and even so, majority of them could not win votes due to widespread vote rigging – proved that conforming with reaction and playing the game by the rules of the reactionary forces will result in nothing but political failure and social disgrace.

Another notable point is that although during the last presidential election and for some time thereafter, the issue of unity and coalition of country's national-religious and

freedom-loving forces became a high priority for the country's political forces and there were talks about forming a pro-democracy front that even led to holding a few meetings, but no specific and tangible outcome was achieved. This failure could be attributed to a few major factors, such as the split in the state reformist camp, extreme pressure from right wingers on the reformists to distance themselves from the radical national-religious forces, laying emphasis on the reactionary dividing line of "insider" and "outsider", and perpetrating sectarian policies and monopolizing.

D- The Upcoming Elections and our Policies

Dear Comrades,

With the upcoming presidential election approaching, the debate over participating or staying away and boycotting the elections will undoubtedly fill country's political stage once again. Unfortunately, many of the discussions in the recent years, during numerous election periods, could be considered more of preset and dogmatic political positions without a correct understanding of the country's developments and needs. It appears that in all these years, for a number of groups without any regard to the developments in Iran and the world, any form of participating in elections has been synonymous to turning to right and conforming with the regime, and on the other hand, boycotting the elections has been an indication of revolutionary zeal and radicalism, and any slight slip away from this policy was interpreted as clear treason against the interests of the people and the country.

As you know, our Party's policies in recent years have been based on a precise analysis of the country's circumstances, understanding the potentials and capabilities of the movement and struggles to create changes, albeit limited, for the benefit of the people, far from preset perception of the developments. Based on its creative and

scientific understanding of Marxism-Leninism, Tudeh Party of Iran does not and never did believe that diverse social conditions and the complex political struggle in the society would always follow the same prescription and a single formula.

Comrades might remember that for many years before the victory of the February 1979 revolution, our party deemed the slogan of socialist revolution improper and not appropriate for Iran's social conditions at the time, and promoted the slogan of National Democratic Revolution in line with the realistic stage of the social development of the country; as such, and for opposing exactly the same aforementioned mechanical approaches, the party was accused of "revisionism and conforming with bourgeoisie" because of. Similarly, in recent years, the party's slogan about a joint struggle of all the progressive and freedom-loving forces to "discard the Supreme Leader regime" has been gravely criticized from left and right as "conformance with the regime" and as a "rightist" slogan, whereas this slogan, which is derived from an understanding of our society's various challenges, including lack of organization of social movements and the weakness of the political forces in the country, reflects this belief that the path to prepare the grounds for fundamental, democratic and sustainable developments in Iran passes through several stages and different obstacles.

The purpose of these two examples is to stress on this point that our party has always employed scientific means to analyze the class developments in the society, and has always developed its policies, and will do the same in future, based on understanding the complexities of struggle in a country where a large portion of the population is in the "middle class" and due consideration to the interests of the working class and working people in the country. Therefore, our policy towards participation in each election depends on the particular circumstances at the time in the country and the possibility for the masses to have an effect on the events of the country, and not

by applying dogmatic and fixed formulas that would always be used until the regime of Islamic Republic would be toppled.

In recent years, whenever our party has reached to this conclusion that participating in an election could shift the balance of power in the society against the ruling reaction and would benefit short or long term interests of the people's movement, it supported participation in the election, despite all accusations and pressures. On the other hand, if the party did not foresee any viable opportunity for change, it did not support participation in the election. Reviewing two examples of recent elections clarifies the policies and practices of our party. Our party fully participated in the last presidential elections. Our goal in doing so, in addition to mobilizing the masses and to exposing the policies of the reaction, was to prevent the election of Ahmadi-Nejad and to help elect Moein as a window of opportunity to continue the reform process in our society.

On the other hand, last year we analyzed the situation in the country, the preparations and plans of the reaction, and the level of mass struggles against these policies, and then encouraged political forces of the country, such as state reformists not to participate in the parliamentary elections. With massive elimination of thousands of dissident and critic candidates to the reaction, it was clear to us that with the way the election was organized and held, there was no chance for the voters to have their say, even at a limited level.

Hence, our position about the upcoming election is also clear. If public opinion pressure and mass struggle could force the reaction to retreat and let reformist and criticizing candidates through the filters of the Council of Guardians, and therefore create a real opportunity to defeat the reactionary candidate(s), then taking part in elections could be a step towards changing the conditions and revitalizing the reform process in the country. Otherwise, under the

same conditions imposed during the previous parliamentary elections and barring the participation of any criticizing voice in the elections, then the road to an effective participation in this process will be blocked and the struggle must be continued in other ways.

Comrades,

One of the issues that our party has emphasized in recent years is the necessity to form a broad anti-dictatorship front. Our party considers the formation of this front as an important step towards organizing all social forces and preparing an all out struggle to discard the Supreme Leader regime. The fundamental issue, as was proved during the eight years of the Khatami government, is that without a united and organized popular support a sustainable and democratic reform cannot be pressed forward. Shifting the balance of power in a country whose political and economic life in the last four years has become increasingly militarized requires a massive social force and a united broad popular movement. Currently, the practical possibility to do so does not exist in our country, and with the lack of this possibility, the ruling regime can survive by using different maneuvers, suppression, or making some socio-economic changes at the surface. Experience of the last four years and the parliamentary elections showed that the social, economic and political demands cannot be responded and achieved by current methods of governing, i.e. by total dictatorship of the Supreme Leader. In order to free itself from this political dead end that has ruled it for so many years, Iran is in need of profound changes.

Exploiting people's movement just as a tool to score points against the rival, and remaining captive in the mindset of insider and outsider (or "us and them") as defined by the reaction and its oppressive system, will ultimately benefit the ruling reaction and the enemies of Iran's interests. Relying on behind-the-scene deals and submitting to

the reaction's demands under the pretext of protecting the interests of the "Holy System", is a repetition of the experiences of eight years of reform government and its failure at the end. A social movement could only be created based on an independent program for social and economic changes, and with realistic slogans. The experience of Ahmadi-Nejad government has taught the people that a monopoly of power organs in the hands of reactionary elements that are tightly bonded with the Supreme Leader has brought disastrous results. Today, this experience is presenting itself in various protest actions. The social power has to be carefully organized and armed with specific struggle slogans. Going into the upcoming presidential election without an effort to remove the roadblocks set by despots in the way of people's voting, such as unconditional acceptance of the discretionary control of the reactionary Council of Guardians, and without launching campaigns in the society to confront this control, will have the same outcome as the previous parliamentary and presidential elections in 1384.

Consequently, our party still promotes and supports the formation of a broad front consisting of all freedom-loving and national forces. With this front, and with a common program, we can fight against the policies of the ruling reaction. Without this united action and broad cooperation, the reaction will be able to impose itself on the society at almost no cost to it, as it did in previous years.

Our party considers the cooperation of all national-religious and freedom-loving forces, and also the close cooperation of students, women and workers trade organizations, as the sure means of the popular movement for implementing its plans. Political and ideological differences as well as narrow-minded views must be overcome. With cooperation, the revived forces of people must be organized and prepared for the struggle against the reaction.