

Bush Receives Endorsement From Iran



Tue Oct 19, 6:33 PM ET

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI, Associated Press Writer

TEHRAN, Iran - The head of Iran's security council said Tuesday that the re-election of President Bush ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) was in Tehran's best interests, despite the administration's axis of evil label, accusations that Iran harbors al-Qaida terrorists and threats of sanctions over the country's nuclear ambitions.

Historically, Democrats have harmed Iran more than Republicans, said Hasan Rowhani, head of the Supreme National Security Council, Iran's top security decision-making body.



Latest Headlines:

- [Bush and GOP Web Sites Suffer Outages](#)
AP - 46 minutes ago
- [Poll: Kerry Improves Image Among Voters](#)
AP - 47 minutes ago
- [Robertson: Bush Said No Deaths in Iraq](#)
AP - 47 minutes ago

[All Election Coverage](#)

"We haven't seen anything good from Democrats," Rowhani told state-run television in remarks that, for the first time in recent decades, saw Iran openly supporting one U.S. presidential candidate over another.

Though Iran generally does not publicly wade into U.S. presidential politics, it has a history of preferring Republicans over Democrats, who tend to press human rights issues.

"We do not desire to see Democrats take over," Rowhani said when asked if Iran was supporting Democratic Sen. John Kerry ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) against Bush.

The Bush campaign said no thanks.

"It's not an endorsement we'll be accepting anytime soon," Bush campaign spokesman Scott Stanzel said. "Iran should stop its pursuit of nuclear weapons and if they continue in the direction they are going, then we will have to look at what additional action may need to be taken including looking to the U.N. Security Council."

Kerry, who says halting nuclear proliferation will be a priority if he becomes president, believes Bush should have done more diplomatically to curb Iran's alleged nuclear weapons ambitions. He says Iran should be offered nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes, but spent fuel should be taken back so it cannot be used to develop nuclear weapons.

"It is telling that this president has received the endorsement of member of the axis of evil," Kerry campaign spokeswoman Allison Dobson said. "But Americans deserve a president who will have a comprehensive strategy to address the potential threat of Iran's growing nuclear program."

The United States severed diplomatic relations with Iran after militants stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979 and held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days. Iranian clerics were crucial in determining the fate of the 1980 U.S. election when Republican Ronald Reagan ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) won in part because Democratic incumbent Jimmy Carter was unable to secure the hostages' release.

The hostages were freed as Reagan was inaugurated.

The United States supported Iraq ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, but by the late 1990s, U.S.-Iranian relations were somewhat better. They plummeted again after Bush accused Iran of being part of the "axis of evil" with North Korea ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) and prewar Iraq.

The Bush administration also accuses Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons and sheltering operatives of Osama bin Laden ([news](#) - [web sites](#))'s al-Qaida terror network. Still, Iran was happy to see Bush destroy two big regional enemies — the Taliban in Afghanistan ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) and Saddam Hussein ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) in Iraq.

Iranian political analyst Mohsen Mofidi said ousting the Taliban and Saddam was the "biggest service any administration could have done for Iran."

And Bush, he said, has learned from his mistakes.

"The experience of two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the responsibility Bush had, will make it a very remote possibility for him to risk attacking a much bigger and more powerful country like Iran," he said.

Mofidi added that "Democrats usually insist on human rights and they will have more excuses to pressure Iran."

Republican and Democratic presidents have issued executive orders against Iran, with Reagan in 1987 barring Iranian crude oil and other imports, and Bill Clinton ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) in 1995 banning U.S. trade and investment in Iran.

"We should not forget that most sanctions and economic pressures were imposed on Iran during the time of Clinton," Rowhani said. "And we should not forget that during Bush's era — despite his hard-line and baseless rhetoric against Iran — he didn't take, in practical terms, any dangerous action against Iran."

Bush has been reluctant to offer Iran any incentives for better U.S.-Iranian relations, but in recent days there have been signs Washington will back European economic incentives if Iran stops uranium enrichment activities.

Gholamreza Aghazadeh, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, was quoted by state-run television Tuesday as saying Iran is interested in buying nuclear fuel from the West, but will not concede its right to the technology.

The nuclear issue has been most sensitive, and the Bush administration is threatening to press for sanctions against Iran over it. Tehran says its nuclear ambitions are peaceful, for energy purposes.

Kavoos Emami, another Iranian political analyst, praised Kerry for mentioning the need for dialogue with Iran, and said the Democrat would be better for Iran.

"Bush has insulted Iran more than any other U.S. administration. If Kerry is elected, a U.S. military attack against Iran will never happen or will be a very remote possibility," he said.

Story Tools

 [Email Story](#)

 [Post/Read Msgs](#)

 [Formatted Story](#)

Ratings: Would you recommend this story?

Not at all **1** - **2** - **3** - **4** - **5** Highly

Avg Rating: 4.18, 974 votes

Copyright © 2004 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. The information contained in the AP News report may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without the prior written authority of The Associated Press.

Copyright © 2004 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved.

[Questions or Comments](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Copyright Policy](#) - [Ad Feedback](#)