

Iran-UK: Absolutely no point engaging clerical regime - Lord Fraser

Friday, 09 December 2005

NCRI – The Rt. Hon. The Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, QC, former Minister of State at the Department of Trade and Industry, who previously supported engagement with the clerical regime told the Symposium of Parliamentarians & Jurists London on November 29: “I think there is absolutely no point whatsoever in trying to constructively engage with this regime or in any sense to appease it. I have changed my mind quite a difficult confession for a politician to make. But nevertheless I have and what I want to do is to persuade others, as you do to change their minds as well.”

Excerpts of his speech is as follows:

Thank you very much for permitting me to say some brief words in support of what has been proposed here today. Primarily, the removal of the proscription of the PMOI in the way that it has been urged so eloquently by so many today. I am in broad agreement with almost everything that has been said and I don’t think at this time it behoves me to repeat it.

I entirely agree with the Prime Minister when he says (and I am not of his political persuasion) that he is warning Iran to stay out of Iraq. Quite right upon that! He has made hostile noises about the expansion of the nuclear programme in Iran. With that I entirely agree and he has been as shocked as everyone else about the comments made by the president of Iran about the removal of Israel from the face of the earth. So in all those matters I entirely agree with him.

What troubles me, is what I see of the internal contradiction that is at the centre of the departmental policy. Because like you, I picked up those remarks that the Prime Minister made in answering questions at the select committee. Particularly, the expression of opinion by him that if there was any way to go, if there was one way to get rid of the regime, it was from within Iran itself. I think that is absolutely spot on. It seems to me though, that if that internal contradiction that the very people who are trying to lead that internal resistance to the mullahs regime are being proscribed not only in the United Kingdom but throughout the European Union.

I have to say with some reluctance that I agree with David Alton that I think this is all a forgery excuse, to allow some feeble discussion over nuclear weapons to continue. At the last meeting here you may remember that I was a sinner who had come to repentance. I admitted and confessed to constructive engagement and my approval of it. Certainly I did once upon a time. It is certainly easier to confess to that than it is to confessing of once having been in favour of appeasement. But I did believe that there was a real opportunity to take forward constructive engagement with the regime. Now my analysis and my analysis alone has forced me to make a complete about turn on that.

I think there is absolutely no point whatsoever in trying to constructively engage with this regime or in any sense to appease it. I have changed my mind quite a difficult confession for a politician to make. But nevertheless I have and what I want to do is to persuade others, as you do to change their minds as well. I am sure that what seems to me quite a lunatic policy is abandoned by Jack Straw and by Charles Clarke.

I looked at the evidence alone as an individual and came to a very clear view, that what was being put forward and what was being said about the PMOI was simply false and rigged. I cannot understand that if I can come to that conclusion alone given the vast resources of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and given the vast resources of the Home Office that they cannot undertake some sort of analysis which would lead them to exactly the same conclusion that I came to as an individual.

So what I am urging is and what I would press upon this group who are all in favour of removing that proscription that the more important tasks that we have is to persuade both the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary that at long last this awful way in which the PMOI have been treated in the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe should once and for all be removed.