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Alternative strategy for Iran

"Risks of appeasing Iran's mullahs"(Commentary, Wednesday) offers a refreshing and plausible policy option in dealing with Tehran's increasingly defiant nuclear posture and rogue behavior in Iraq.

Europe's decade-long policy of all carrots and no sticks has failed miserably as the cunning mullahs of Iran made a stew out of the carrots and ate it. The Iranian people are far worse off today than 10 years ago, when the Europeans cloaked their business-minded approach under the veneer of, then, "constructive engagement" and, now, "human rights dialogue." While the Europeans pocketed billions, ordinary Iranians grew poorer and thousands ended up hanged in public places or languishing in jails.

Appeasement advocates in Europe and the United States, while highlighting the negative aspects of a military strike, insist on yet more concessions to Tehran. As the author suggests, however, there is a third option: "For once, we should side with the millions in Iran whose cry is for freedom and regime change."

The United States shot itself in the foot in 1997 by blacklisting Iran's main opposition, the People's Mujahideen, in a doomed effort to reach out to now-lame-duck President Mohammed Khatami.

Having now acknowledged that no member of this anti-fundamentalist group was a terrorist, the administration should remove that unwarranted designation to show to the Iranian people that it is on their side and to give itself effective leverage in dealing with Tehran.

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