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It Isn't 'Meddling' to Stand for Democracy and Rights

"Obama's Obsolete Iran Policy" by Bret Stephens (Global View, June 30) addresses important problems with American policy regarding Iran. One of the reasons for the problems is that the policy is based on incorrect assumptions about Iran and the Islamic Republic.

The regime's elections cannot be considered free and democratic, since all of the candidates are selected by the mullahs, all pro-democracy political groups are banned, and all radio and television programs are controlled by the regime. One of the incorrect assumptions by President Barack Obama and his advisers is that they thought the elections would be fair and legitimate. Previous elections of the regime have also included charges of fraud. In 2005, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mehdi Karrubi complained that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won by using fraud.

The U.S. administration has been manipulated and intimidated by the Islamic Republic's accusations of American "meddling" in internal Iranian affairs. When the regime attacked Iranians who protested in Tehran and other cities, Mr. Obama quoted Martin Luther King Jr. Does he think that the support that Dr. King and his colleagues received from leaders in other countries was "meddling" in internal affairs of the U.S.?

Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress received important support from the leaders of many countries. That international support was an important factor in the victory of the South African people against the apartheid regime. Pro-democracy activists in Poland, Hungary and many other countries also received international support that helped them to replace despotic regimes with democratic gov-

ernments. These are examples of the kind of support that the Iranian people request from all enlightened governments and individuals in the world.

Support for freedom and human rights is not meddling in internal Iranian affairs. The Islamic Republic has killed many Iranians during the protests, and many more have been injured and arrested. Ahmad Khatami, a member of the Assembly of Experts, has said that those who have been arrested "should be punished ruthlessly and savagely." What the imprisoned protesters need is meaningful and unequivocal support from Mr. Obama and other leaders. If world leaders ignore the "savagery" actions of the regime, more brave Iranians will be tortured and killed.

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