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Agents of the Ayatollahs: CASMI's Links to the Iranian Regime

The Campaign Against Sanctions & Military Intervention in Iran (CASMI) was founded by Abbas Edalat in 2005. CASMI claims to be “independent of all political groups and governments, including the Iranian government”,¹ but a number of its senior members are in fact closely linked to the Iranian regime. Tellingly, the group’s website, www.campaigniran.org, was formerly hosted by the same company, Patrix LLP, as that of the Iranian Embassy in Britain.² The founder of Patrix LLP also happens to be on CASMI’s International Steering Committee, which comprises the following individuals:³

- Abbas Edalat
- Phil Wilayto
- Mohammad Kamaali
- Foaad Khosmood
- Nader Sadeghi
- Shirin Saeidi
- Reza Shirazi

¹ <http://www.campaigniran.org/casmi/index.php?q=about>

² <http://www.serverinsiders.com/isp/patrix-llp.html>

³ <http://web.archive.org/web/20120910214930/http://www.campaigniran.org/casmi/index.php?q=node/70>

CASMII also has an Advisory Board, whose members include:⁴

- Kaveh L. Afrasiabi
- Alex Patico
- Behrad Nakhai
- Mohammad Ala
- Javad Fakharzadeh

Abbas Edalat

Abbas Edalat is currently employed as an adjunct professor of mathematical sciences at the Sharif University of Technology in Tehran.⁵ Sharif University is known to be a hotbed of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) activity related to Iran's clandestine nuclear weapons programme.⁶ Its current chancellor is Reza Roosta Azad, an ally of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and member of the Society of Devotees of the Islamic Revolution (also known as the Isargaran Society), founded by Ahmadinejad.⁷ The Isargaran Society is dedicated to the principle of *Velayat-e-Fiqh* ('Absolute Guardianship of the Jurist'), and rejects democratic and liberal values.⁸

Edalat also works at the Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences (IMP),⁹ a government-sponsored research institution set up by the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI) in 1989 to train Iranian nuclear scientists.¹⁰ Its founder

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <http://web.archive.org/web/20111011234720/http://www.campaigniran.org/casmii/index.php?q=node/114>

⁶ <http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/nuclear/12576-role-of-sharif-university-in-the-iranian-regimes-nuclear-program>

⁷ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2010/08/selected-headlines-205.html>

⁸ <http://www.princeton.edu/irandataportal/parties/isargaran/>

⁹ <http://www.doc.ic.ac.uk/~ae/>

¹⁰ <http://www.nti.org/facilities/254/>

and present director is Mohammad Javad Larijani,¹¹ a senior advisor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.¹² Kamran Daneshjoo, the incumbent Iranian Minister of Science, Research & Technology, sits on the IMP's board of trustees as its *ex officio* president.¹³ In 2010, Daneshjoo announced that only those who have proven their commitment to the principle of *Velayat-e-Fiqh* would be permitted to teach at Iranian universities.¹⁴

In 1999, Edalat founded the Science & Arts Foundation (SAF), an NGO which operates inside Iran.¹⁵ The SAF's president in Iran is Mohammad Reza Haeri-Yazdi,¹⁶ who is also General Director for Research at the Iranian Ministry of Industry.¹⁷ Another of the SAF's board members is Abbas Maleki,¹⁸ one of Edalat's colleagues from Sharif University, who previously served as Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran between 1988 and 1997.¹⁹

Kaveh L. Afrasiabi

Kaveh L. Afrasiabi describes himself as a supporter of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad,²⁰ and even accompanied him as part of his delegation to the United Nations in 2010.²¹ He also claims to have worked with former President

¹¹ <http://www.ipm.ac.ir/directorMessage.jsp>

¹² <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/11/16/177468.html>

¹³ <http://www.ipm.ac.ir/doc/Constitution.pdf>

¹⁴ http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2010/03/daneshjoo_iran/

¹⁵ <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/CharityFramework.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1077499&SubsidiaryNumber=0>

¹⁶ <http://web.archive.org/web/20100129064833/http://www.saf.ir/en/about>

¹⁷ <http://web.archive.org/web/20100730134046/http://www.magfa.com/pages.asp?pgName=AboutUs>

¹⁸ <http://web.archive.org/web/20100129064833/http://www.saf.ir/en/about>

¹⁹ <http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/node/9294>

²⁰ <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2009/afrasiabi170609.html>

²¹ <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/sep/21/world/la-fg-iran-nuclear-20100922>

Mohammad Khatami.²² In 2004, he served as an adviser to the Iranian negotiating team during talks over Iran’s nuclear programme.²³

Afrasiabi has, in the past, worked at the Tehran-based Centre for Strategic Research (CSR),²⁴ an influential think tank established in 1989 “to compile and draw up [the] Islamic Republic of Iran’s strategies in various fields”.²⁵ The CSR is part of the Expediency Council,²⁶ an advisory body whose members are appointed by the Supreme Leader to “supervise” all branches of the Iranian government.²⁷ The current director of the CSR is Hassan Rowhani, formerly chief of the Supreme National Security Council.²⁸

Alex Patico

Alex Patico was one of the founders of the National Iranian American Council (NIAC) and served as its treasurer until 2008.²⁹ Since its inception, the NIAC has closely coordinated its various projects and campaigns with the Iranian regime, through Iran’s Ambassador to the United Nations³⁰ and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s deputies.³¹ The NIAC is frequently referred to as the “Iranian lobby in the [the] US” by the Iranian state-run media.³²

Between 2002 and 2007, as treasurer of the NIAC, Patico approved the transfer of funds to Hamyaran, a regime-controlled umbrella agency comprised of Iranian

²² <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2009/afrasiabi170609.html>

²³ http://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/28/international/middleeast/28iran.html?_r=1&scp=7&sq=afrasiabi&st=cse

²⁴ <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kaveh-l-afrasiabi-phd>

²⁵ <http://www.csr.ir/Center.aspx?lng=en&abtid=00>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/middle_east/03/iran_power/html/expediency_council.stm

²⁸ <http://iranpulse.al-monitor.com/index.php/2013/01/1112/former-supreme-national-security-chief-crass-talk-is-not-foreign-policy/>

²⁹ http://www.niacouncil.org/site/PageServer?pagename=About_patico

³⁰ <http://iraniansforum.com/index.php/factbook/384-parsi-and-zarif>

³¹ <http://iraniansforum.com/index.php/factbook/387-meeting-with-an>

³² <http://iraniansforum.com/index.php/factbook/458-niac-governmentpress>

NGOs, under the supervision of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³³ At the time, Hamyaran’s director was Baquer Namazi, who had previously been instrumental in establishing the NIAC.³⁴

Phil Wilayto

Phil Wilayto was the leader of a 2007 “People’s Peace Delegation to Iran” which sought an audience with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.³⁵ Although they were unsuccessful, the delegation was able to meet with then Vice President Esfandiyar Rahim-Mashaei,³⁶ and Wilayto himself later did meet with Ahmadinejad in New York, describing him as “an intelligent, thoughtful and deeply religious leader”.³⁷

In 2012, Wilayto was a guest speaker at a conference held to commemorate Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, which was organised by the Iranian Embassy in Canada³⁸ through the Cultural Centre of Iran (CCI) in Ottawa.³⁹ The director of the CCI at the time was Hamid Mohammadi,⁴⁰ who also worked as the cultural attaché of the Iranian Embassy in Canada.⁴¹ In a Farsi-language interview, Mohammadi revealed that his embassy had been recruiting Iranian-Canadians under the guise of various cultural outreach programmes and gatherings.⁴²

³³ <http://iraniansforum.com/Document/NEDreport.pdf>

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ <http://defendersfje.tripod.com/id49.html>

³⁶ <http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/30657.html>

³⁷ <http://warisacrime.org/content/ahmadinejad-meets-us-peace-activists>

³⁸ <http://www2.macleans.ca/2012/06/06/carleton-university-teams-up-with-iranian-embassy-to-honour-ayatollah-khomeini/>

³⁹ <http://iraniculture.ca/dev/2012-imam-khomeini-conference-the-contemporary-awakening-and-imam-khomeinis-thoughts/>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/07/11/dont-interfere-ottawa-warns-embassy-after-accusations-iran-is-recruiting-expats-in-canada/>

⁴² Ibid.

Mohammad Kamaali

Mohammad Kamaali (also known as Mohammad Mahdi Kamali, or Mohammad Kamali) was the founder and a former director of the British company Patrix LLP (previously known as Javan Systems LLP).⁴³ Until it was dissolved in 2009, Patrix LLP hosted the official website of the Iranian Embassy in Britain under the domain name www.iran-embassy.org.uk.⁴⁴ That web address is still active, but now redirects to the embassy's current domain, www.london.mfa.gov.ir.

Patrix LLP also hosted the website of the Organisation of the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, www.mojahedin-enghelab.net,⁴⁵ an Iranian political party whose members occupied senior government posts during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005).⁴⁶

Another website hosted by Patrix LLP, www.iranscholarship.net (which now redirects to www.scholarship.msrt.gov.ir),⁴⁷ belongs to the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research & Technology.

Behrad Nakhai

Behrad Nakhai is a nuclear scientist known for his public denial of the Iranian regime's desire to build nuclear weapons.⁴⁸ He has admitted to being in contact with Iran's mission to the United Nations, and in 1998 was personally invited by then Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and head of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI) Gholam-Reza Aghazadeh to visit Iran and study its nuclear programme.⁴⁹ The trip never went ahead, however, because the US Department of Defence would not allow it. Although no official explanation was

⁴³ <http://www.companydirectorcheck.com/mohammad-mahdi-kamali>

⁴⁴ <http://www.serverinsiders.com/isp/patrix-llp.html>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ <http://www.princeton.edu/irandataportal/parties/mojahedin/MojahedinProfile2.pdf>

⁴⁷ <http://www.serverinsiders.com/isp/patrix-llp.html>

⁴⁸ http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=aaacb114bd67e6a98cda914b5ffc0bf9

⁴⁹ <http://original.antiwar.com/porter/2012/10/29/pentagon-nixed-1998-us-nuclear-scientists-probe-of-iranian-program/>

ever given, former Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau has speculated that the Pentagon did not trust Nakhai.⁵⁰

Foad Khosmood & Nader Sadeghi

Foad Khosmood⁵¹ and Nader Sadeghi,⁵² like many of their colleagues in CASMII, have both written for Payvand. Payvand is a publication set up by Karim Haqi after he was recruited in the Netherlands by the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence & Security (MOIS) in 1995.⁵³ According to the Dutch security service, the publication and its contributors have been the recipients of regular payments from the MOIS.⁵⁴

Mohammad Ala & Javad Fakharzadeh

Mohammad Ala and Javad Fakharzadeh were both founders and executive members of the (now defunct) Persian Gulf Task Force (PGTF).⁵⁵ The PGTF was part of Iranians for International Cooperation (IIC),⁵⁶ a small pro-Iranian lobbying organisation founded by Trita Parsi with the support of Sadegh Kharazi from the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵⁷ Both Ala⁵⁸ and Fakharzadeh⁵⁹ have written for the MOIS-controlled Payvand.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ <http://www.payvand.com/news/06/jul/1277.html>

⁵² <http://www.payvand.com/news/07/jan/1148.html>

⁵³ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/98899212/EP-Casaca-Introducing-Haghi-Iranian-Agent>

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ <http://iranian.com/ala.html>

⁵⁶ <http://www.netnative.com/news/00/jun/1029.html>

⁵⁷ <http://www.mojahedin.org/pagesen/printNews.aspx?newsid=13927>

⁵⁸ <http://www.payvand.com/news/11/feb/1244.html>

⁵⁹ <http://www.payvand.com/news/07/jun/1031.html>

Shirin Saeidi

Shirin Saeidi has written for the Tehran Times,⁶⁰ a self-defined “anti-Western media outlet” whose stated purpose is to generate “content and articles in line with the ideals and policy of the Islamic Revolution”,⁶¹ and is under the control of the Iranian Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance. Like many of her colleagues, Saeidi has also made written contributions to Payvand.⁶²

Reza Shirazi

Reza Shirazi immigrated to Iran in 2010.⁶³ According to his Facebook profile, he “likes” Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and Tehran’s state-run propaganda channel, Press TV.⁶⁴

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⁶⁰ <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=460997>

⁶¹ <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1306435>

⁶² <http://www.payvand.com/news/12/jan/1164.html>

⁶³ <http://www.facebook.com/reza.shirazi1/info>

⁶⁴ <http://www.facebook.com/reza.shirazi1/favorites>