



Iran's Presidential Election: A Predictable Victory for Khamenei

By Ali Alfoneh

On June 12, 2009, Iranians will cast their ballots in the Islamic Republic's tenth presidential election. Elections provide a patina of democratic legitimacy to the Islamic Republic, one upon which supporters of engagement often seize. RAND scholar James Dobbins, for example, has said that "after Israel and Turkey, Iran is the most democratic nation in the Middle East."¹ And Richard Armitage, while still deputy secretary of state in the George W. Bush administration, commented, "I would note there's one dramatic difference between Iran and the other two axes of evil, and that would be its democracy."² Appearances can be deceiving, however. Though the Islamic Republic holds elections, they are more about style than substance. A close examination of election procedures demonstrates how the Iranian leadership constrains the election process to maintain the status quo.

The first formal step required of presidential aspirants in Iran is to register their candidacy. By the May 9, 2009, deadline for the Iranian presidential election,³ 3,272 individuals had filed candidacy papers, but as of May 16, 2009, only 476 actually completed the process.⁴ To complete their paperwork, each candidate must provide information about military service and discharge papers, occupational history, court cases in which they have been involved, a list of any foreign countries in which they have lived, foreign languages they speak, their educational and cultural histories, their social activities, a history of their various candidacies, a scanned photograph, and their identification papers.⁵

The next step is for the Guardian Council to vet the candidates. Between May 10 and 15, the Council whittled down those who had completed the paperwork to just a handful.⁶ By May 20, the Guardian Council had indeed disqualified all but four presidential aspirants: current president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, former Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) chief Mohsen Rezai, Mehdi Karrubi, and former prime minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi.⁷ After the Council

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releases its final verdict on any appeals on May 21, the remaining candidates will have just three weeks to campaign before Iranians go to the polls.⁸

The Legal Framework

Direct election of the president by Iranian citizens over the age of eighteen, enshrined in article 114 of the Iranian constitution, preserves popular sovereignty in theory. This is false, however, since article 113 makes the president subservient to "the office of Leadership," a reference to the supreme leader. The Guardian Council bases its vetting process on article 115 of the constitution, which defines competent

Key points in this Outlook:

- The elections in Iran are more about style than substance because the supreme leader constrains the election process to maintain the status quo.
- Iranian leadership and some Western diplomats extol Iranian elections, but public interest inside Iran may be waning.
- Regardless of who wins the election, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei will be the true victor because the president is subservient to him.

candidates as “religious and political personalities possessing the following qualifications: Iranian origin; Iranian nationality; administrative capacity and resourcefulness; a good track record; trustworthiness and piety; demonstrated belief in the fundamental principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the official religion of the country.”

Article 115, in effect, disqualifies half the country. The Council’s interpretation of the term “political personalities,” derived from the Arabic word *rijal* [men of distinction], has long meant a ban on female candidates. While Council spokesman Abbas-Ali Kadkhodai has said that the process is now open to women, in practice this statement appears meant more for public consumption than for application to the vetting process.⁹ Of the 476 official candidates this year, only 42 are women (see table 1). Additionally, the requirement of adherence to the “official religion of the country” excludes the 11 percent of the population who are Sunni rather than Shiite Muslim, as well as the 2 percent who are Christian, Jewish, Bahai, or Zoroastrian.

More generally, however, the Guardian Council has used the call for “distinction” implied in the term *rijal* to bar whomever the Council did not consider sufficiently “distinct.” In its arbitrary rulings, the Council has at times considered public service at the parliamentary and cabinet minister level a mark of distinction but on other occasions not. Remarkably, a leading theological and religious position has been a disqualifying factor for fear of competition for religious legitimacy between the president and the supreme leader. The notions of “administrative capacity and resourcefulness,” “a good track record,” “trustworthiness and piety,” and “belief in the fundamental principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran” are abstract ideas used to disqualify candidates not to the liking of the regime authorities (see appendix 1).

During the 2005 elections, the Guardian Council initially approved only five candidates: Ahmadinejad, Karrubi, Ali Larijani, Mohammad-Bagher Qalibaf, and Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. After a press uproar, however, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei permitted former higher education minister Mostafa Moin and Vice President Mohsen Mehrizadeh to run,¹⁰ an episode that illustrated his arbitrary power. The exclusion of Reza Zavarehi, a former Guardian Council member who had passed muster in the 1981 and 1997 elections, further symbolizes Guardian Council capriciousness.

Now that the vetting is concluded, candidates have less than a month to campaign. This, too, helps the regime hierarchy to manipulate the results, by magnifying the importance of state media that it makes accessible only to its favorite sons.

Even this may not be enough for the leadership’s comfort, however. Iranian voters are fickle, and so the regime maintains the option of direct intervention through the IRGC and the paramilitary Basij, which can direct their members’ votes and interfere with ballot security. The lack of independent election monitors also enables the regime to rig results during the tabulation phase, as both Karrubi and Rafsanjani alleged in 2005.¹¹

Decreasing Interest inside Iran?

Despite the fanfare with which the Iranian leadership describes its elections and the legitimacy granted to Iranian elections by some Western diplomats, public interest inside Iran may be waning. In 2009, the number of registered candidates is less than half that of 2005 (see appendix 1). This decline may reflect disillusionment with the possibility of fair competition. During the 2005 presidential elections, the Guardian Council approved only seven candidates, and in 2001, only ten (see appendix 1).

TABLE 1
APPLICANTS FOR 2009 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, BY AGE AND SEX

Age group	Under 25	25–30	30–40	40–50	50–60	Over 60	Male	Female	Total
	30	39	139	115	98	54	433	42	475

SOURCE: “Amāre Sabte-Nam-Kanadegan-e Entekhabat-e Riasat-Jomhuri” [Statistics on Registration for Presidential Election], Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (Tehran), May 10, 2009, video available in Persian at www.iribnews.ir/PhotoGallery/Photo/_90229c30.wmv (accessed May 10, 2009).

NOTE: The Guardian Council approved the 476th candidate after the statistics on applicants were released.

Indeed, the Iranian public mocks the election process. A journalist covering candidate registration at the Interior Ministry described “bizarrely dressed people” and “a comedy scene.”¹² Among the candidates was an old man dressed in a death shroud to reflect his readiness to sacrifice for the country; a twenty-eight-year-old man with a tattooed nose who sang “illicit songs” and said he hoped to serve “the poor and unprivileged”; a passerby from outside the city who figured that as long as he was in Tehran, he should run for president; and a lady who wore sandals but no socks in breach of sartorial regulations.¹³ Other colorful candidates included an old man who promised to make soccer unlawful if elected, a polygamist who declared women’s rights his main campaign issue, and a candidate who said “yellow cake is what we eat” when asked about Iran’s nuclear program.¹⁴

Nevertheless, several prominent candidates are registered, including Ahmadinejad, Rezai, Mousavi, and Karrubi, whose candidacies have been approved of by the Guardian Council. Table 2 provides a description of what is known about their backgrounds. Former parliamentarians Akbar A'lami and Ghasem Shole Sadi also registered

but were not on the Guardian Council's May 20 list of approved candidates, and their complaint is unlikely to help them pass through the Council's needle eye.

Ahmadinejad is also seeking reelection and, despite his economic and management failures, remains the likely frontrunner. While the Western press depicts him as little

TABLE 2
SOCIAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE MOST PROMINENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Candidate	Year of birth	Place of birth	Education	Profession prior to candidacy
Mahmoud Ahmadinejad	1956	Aradan village, near Garmsar, Semnan province	Ph.D. in civil engineering, Science and Technology University	Prerevolution: Student activist. Postrevolution: Member of the Revolutionary Guards; war veteran; governor of Maku; governor of Khoj; adviser to Kordestan general governor; cultural adviser to minister of higher education, 1993; Ardebil governor general, 1993–97; Science and Technology University academic board member since 1989; Tehran mayor, 2003–2005; president since 2005. ^a
Mehdi Karrubi	1937	Ali-Goudarz, Lorestan province	Bachelor's degree in theology, Tehran University; <i>ejtehad</i> degree, Theological Seminary of Qom	Prerevolution: Cleric; religious propagator; political activist since 1962; sentenced to internal exile in Gonbad-e Kavous, 1966–67; political prisoner, 1973–76; interned on several occasions, 1976–79. Postrevolution: Served on the Revolutionary Committees; representative of Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, the Housing Foundation, the Martyr Foundation, and the Pilgrimage Organization, 1987; member of the Constitution Review Panel, early 1989; parliamentarian, 1980–2005; deputy speaker of the parliament, 1985–89; speaker of the parliament; E'temad-e Melli [National Trust] founding leader since 2005. ^b
Mir-Hossein Mousavi (Khameneh)	1941	Khameneh, East Azerbaijan province	Master's degree in architecture and urban development, National University (Martyr Beheshti), 1969	Prerevolution: Founder of the Islamic Society of Students at the National University in Tehran, interned in 1973, founding member of the Cultural Association of the Islamic Movement, employed at private companies and as assistant professor. Postrevolution: Associate of the late Ayatollah Mohammad Behshiti; became a member of the Islamic Republican Party Central Committee and also functioned as the editor in chief of the party mouthpiece, <i>Jamhuri-ye Eslami</i> ; member of the Council of the Revolution; foreign minister, 1981; prime minister, 1981–89; Khomeini's representative to the Foundation of the Oppressed, 1981–89; Khomeini's appointee to the Constitution Review Panel, 1989; member of the Expediency Council, coworker of the political adviser of the president and senior presidential adviser, and member of the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution in Iran since 1996.
Mohsen Rezai (Sabzevar Rezai Mir-Gha'ed)	1954	Bakhtiari tribal areas, near Masjed-e Soleyman, Khuzestan province	Ph.D. in economics, Tehran University, 1992	Prerevolution: Student activist; member of the Mojahedin-e Khalq organization, from which he distances himself because of Marxist metamorphosis in prerevolutionary prisons; member of the Mansouroun prerevolutionary terrorist group since 1973. Postrevolution: Personal bodyguard of Khomeini, 1979; Central Committee member of the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution faction, 1979; cofounder of the Intelligence and Political Investigations Department of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), IRGC Command Council member, head of IRGC expeditionary force to Torkaman Sahara to crush rebellion against central government, 1979; IRGC commander in chief, 1981; Expediency Council secretary since 1997. ^d

SOURCE: Biographic data is from Iran Research Group, *Who's Who in Iran*, ed. Farokh Moini (Berlin: MB Publishing, 1990).

NOTES: a) "Zendeginameh" [Biography], Presidency of the Islamic Republic of Iran News Service (Tehran), available in Persian at www.president.ir/fa (accessed May 3, 2009).

b) Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution, "A'za-ye Sabegh Showra-ye Ali Enghelab-e Farhangi" [Former Members of the Supreme Council for the Cultural Revolution], available in Persian at www.iranculture.org/about/oldmembers.php?id=98 (accessed May 5, 2009).

c) Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution, "A'za-ye Showra-ye Ali-ye Enghelab-e Farhangi" [Members of the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution], available in Persian at www.iranculture.org/about/members.php?id=126 (accessed May 5, 2009).

d) "Raz-e Almosana-Boudan-e Shenashnameh-ye Rezai" [The Secret of Rezai's Identity Card Being a Replacement], *Tabnak News* (Tehran), May 11, 2009, available in Persian at www.tabnak.ir/fa/pages/?cid=47309 (accessed May 13, 2009); and "Ashnai" [Familiarity], website of Mohsen Rezai, available in Persian at www.rezaee.ir/fa/pages/biography.php (accessed May 5, 2009).

more than a lunatic, the combination of his ascetic lifestyle, his populist call to return to the egalitarian ideals that animated the 1979 revolution, and his fierce nationalist rhetoric appeal to the public. He is also a master campaigner and, indeed, rose to fame for his management of the 2003 municipal elections. More than any other candidate, he has mobilized the masses at rallies during his much publicized provincial campaigns featuring, among other things, distribution of potatoes and petty cash in the rural areas.¹⁵ This, in itself, suggests that he has the support of Khamenei, who does not tolerate mass rallies for those whom he dislikes. Indeed, perhaps because of this pseudoendorsement, Ahmadinejad has privileged access to funding, travel, media, and support from the IRGC and the Basij. Ahmadinejad's supporters call his 2005 victory "a miracle";¹⁶ it is quite possible that they could produce another miracle on June 12, if turnout is low in urban areas and higher in rural ones where he is strong.

Ahmadinejad's main rival is Mousavi, who has reemerged on the public scene after a twenty-year absence. In the Iranian context, this imbues him with mystical qualities of men of God who abandon political power for the sake of higher spiritual goals. Claims that Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, favored him and that he is allegedly descended from the Prophet Muhammad reinforce the image. Western diplomats and more educated Iranian classes appreciate his soft-spoken eloquence and general dignity, which stand in sharp contrast to Ahmadinejad's boorishness. Former president Mohammad Khatami's endorsement of Mousavi's candidacy is likely to boost his campaign with at least some parts of the urban youth vote that secured Khatami's two consecutive landslide victories. Mousavi has also been endorsed by Rafsanjani, his old party comrade from the Islamic Republican Party¹⁷ Expediency Council—most likely out of fear of the greater evil of Ahmadinejad rather than affection for Mousavi—and this may secure vital financial support for the Mousavi campaign.

Mousavi's strengths are also potential vulnerabilities. He may have been favored by Khomeini, but he is disliked by Khamenei. So strong was Khamenei's antipathy for Mousavi that, according to Rafsanjani, the supreme leader, while still president, threatened to resign should Mousavi form another cabinet.¹⁸ Additionally, Khamenei may worry about the challenge to his own religious legitimacy that Mousavi's pious image and descent pose. Mousavi's age may connote dignity in a culture like Iran's, but it is also a detriment. No one under thirty realistically remembers Mousavi's premiership. He can hardly compete with the Basij and the

IRGC when attempting to mobilize the youth. Mousavi's best chance may be high turnout and Khatami's support since, just as with Khatami's 1997 landslide against front-runner Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, a huge margin of victory may be harder to erase in backroom dealing.

While Iranian elections can surprise, it does not appear likely that Rezai or Karrubi have greater chances than Mousavi of gaining access to the presidential palace in Tehran. Because Rezai and Ahmadinejad share a similar base of support, Rezai's presence may undercut the president. This could be offset, however, by Karrubi, who may dilute Mousavi's base. Apart from stealing Mousavi's voters, the Karrubi campaign, which has reserved its venom for Mousavi's entourage, may also prove politically costly for the Mousavi campaign. Until now, the Mousavi campaign has had to convince former Khatami supporters that Mousavi is a serious reformer. But Karrubi's accusations to the effect that Mousavi is a revolutionary whose demands for radical reforms could lead to the hard-liners in the Guardian Council and elsewhere suppressing the reform movement are damaging to Mousavi. He must show he is loyal to the regime and will work within the framework of the permissible. This strategy may leave reform-minded voters unsatisfied and the regime structures concerned about Mousavi's intentions.

Khamenei's Predictable Victory

Election procedures have not changed since the last elections, and so it is unlikely that the 2009 election will follow a fundamentally different path from earlier elections in the Islamic Republic. As in the past, the legal framework and the Guardian Council's vetting make Khamenei the ultimate winner regardless of which candidate prevails in elections.

Khamenei has managed in the past to intimidate candidates such as Khatami and former interior minister Hojjat al-Eslam Abdollah Nouri who have sought constitutional reform to change the rules of the game. Many of these have dropped out, leaving only those who support the supreme leader's vision in the race and do not call for restrictions on the powers of the Guardian Council.

The election now is political theater. No matter what happens, the government will consider the result a reaffirmation of the pact between the people and the supreme leader. This makes Khamenei the winner and leaves the public even more disillusioned. The longer, however, the public feels disenfranchised, the greater the likelihood of future instability in the Islamic Republic.

APPENDIX 1
BASIC STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, 1980–2009

Presidential Election	Date	Number of applicants for candidacy	Candidates approved by the Guardian Council	Candidate elected
First	January 25, 1980	124	8 Abo-Hassan Bani-Sadr, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, Daryoush Forouhar, Hassan Habibi, Ahmad Madani, Mohammad Mokri, Kazem Samii, and Sadegh Tabatabai. ^a	Abo-Hassan Bani-Sadr
Second	July 24, 1981	71	4 Habib-Allah Asgar-Owlati Mosalman, Ali-Asghar Parvaresh, Mohammad-Ali Rajai, and Abbas Sheibani. ^b	Mohammad-Ali Rajai
Third	October 2, 1981	46	4 Hassan Ghafouri-Fard, Ali Khamenei, Ali-Asghar Parvaresh, and Reza Zavarehi. ^c	Ali Khamenei
Fourth	August 16, 1985	50	3 Habib-Allah Asgar-Owlati Mosalman, Mahmoud Kashani, and Ali Khamenei. ^d	Ali Khamenei
Fifth	July 28, 1989	79	2 Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Abbas Sheibani. ^e	Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani
Sixth	June 11, 1993	128	4 Abdollah Jasbi, Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Ali Taheri Motlagh, and Ahmad Tavakkoli. ^f	Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani
Seventh	May 23, 1997	238	4 Mohammad Khatami, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri, and Reza Zavarehi. ^g	Mohammad Khatami
Eight	June 8, 2001	814	10 Ali Fallahian, Hassan Ghafouri-Fard, Abdollah Jasbi, Mohammad Khatami, Ali Shamkhani, and Ahmad Tavakkoli. ^h	Mohammad Khatami
Ninth (first round)	June 17, 2005	1014	7 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Ali Larjani, Mohsen Mehr-Ali-Zadeh, Mostafa Moin, Mehdi Karrubi, Mohammad-Bagher Qalibaf, and Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. ⁱ	N/A
Ninth (second round)	June 24, 2005	2	2 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. ^j	Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
Tenth	June 12, 2009	476	4 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Mohsen Rezai, Mehdi Karrubi, and Mir-Hossein Mousavi	N/A

SOURCE: Where no other source is provided, the data is from Islamic Republic of Iran Interior Ministry, "Jadval-e Amari-ye Entekhabat-e Riasat-e Jomhuri-ye Bargozar-shodeh Pas Az Pirouzi-ye Enghelab-e Eslami" [Statistical Table on Presidential Elections Held after the Islamic Revolution], available in Persian at <http://moi.ir/Portal/File/ShowFile.aspx?ID=fbb6e04f3331-4b86-9347-5c4fd5a7d0c7> (accessed May 3, 2009).

NOTES: a) David Menashii, *Iran: A Decade of War and Revolution* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1990), 121.

b) *Ibid.*, 185–86.

c) *Ibid.*, 191.

d) *Ibid.*, 342.

e) "Amar-ha-ye Noh Dowreh Entekhabat-e Riasat-Jomhuri Be Ma Che Migouyad?" [What Do Statistical Data from Nine Rounds of Presidential Elections Tell Us?], *Dowlat-e Dahom* (Tehran), April 18, 2009, available in Persian at www.dolatte10.com/News.asp?nid=916 (accessed May 3, 2009).

f) *Ibid.*

g) *Ibid.*

h) *Ibid.*

i) *Ibid.*

j) *Ibid.*

Notes

1. Quoted in "Talking Tehran Down," *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 2003.

2. Quoted in Robin Wright, "U.S. Now Views Iran in a More Favorable Light," *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 2003.

3. "Sabt-e-Nam-e Davtalabin-e Dahomin Dowreh-ye Entekhabat-e Riasat-e Jomhuri" [Candidate's Registration for the

Tenth Presidential Elections], *Setad-e Entekhabat-e Keshvar* (Tehran), available in Persian at www.sabtename10.ir/# (accessed May 3, 2009).

4. "Kadkhodayi: 120 Davtalab-e Riasat-Jomhuri Sabeghe-Darand" [Kadkhodayi: 120 of the Presidential Aspirants Have a Criminal Record], *Entekhab News Agency* (Tehran), May 16, 2009, available in Persian at www.entekhabnews.com/portal/index.php?news=4640 (accessed May 20, 2009).

5. "Sabt-e-Nam-e Davt'alabin-e Dahomin Dowreh-ye Entekhabat-e Riasat-e Jomhuri."

6. Persian: *Showra-ye Negahban-e Ghanoun-e Asasi-ye Jomhuri-ye Eslami*.

7. Islamic Republic of Iran, Ministry of Interior, "Asami-ye Namzad-ha-ye Entekhabat-e Dahomin Dowreh-ye Riasat-Jomhuri Elam Shod" [Names of the Candidates for the Tenth Presidential Elections Were Announced], available in Persian at www.moi.ir/Portal/Home/ShowPage.aspx?Object=News&ID=4fa8899a-98ff-45cc-a600-e615e99bee83&LayoutID=b05ef124-0db1-4d33-b0b6-90f50139044b&CategoryID=832a711b-95fe-4505-8aa3-38f5e17309c9 (accessed May 20, 2009).

8. "Amar-e Sabt-e Nam-Konandegan-e Entekhabat-e Riasat-Jomhuri, 2" [Statistics on Registrants for Presidential Elections, 2], Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, May 10, 2009, video available in Persian at www.iribnews.ir/PhotoGallery/Photo/_a1ab83d6.wmv (accessed May 10, 2009).

9. "Kadkhodayi: Reis-Jomhour-shodan-e Zanan Man'I Nadarad" [Kadkhodayi: There Are No Obstacles for Presidency of Women], *Asr-e Iran*, April 11, 2009, available in Persian at www.asriran.com/fa/pages/?cid=69361 (accessed May 4, 2009).

10. "E'teraz-ha Be Hazf-e Namzad-ha-ye Entekhabati-ye Iran" [Protests Against Exclusion of Election Candidates], Aftab News Agency (Tehran), May 25, 2005, available in Persian at www.aftab.ir/news/2005/may/23/c1c1116843338.php (accessed May 10, 2009).

11. "Karrubi: In Entekhabat Yeki As Tarik-Tarin Parvande-ha-yi Ast Ke Bara-ye Khatami Mimanad" [Karrubi: This Election Is One of the Darkest Issues That Will Remain for Khatami], Fars News Agency (Tehran), June 22, 2005, available in Persian at www.farsnews.net/newstext.php?nn=8403310390 (accessed May 13, 2009); and "Darkhast-e Hashemi Baraye Ta'ghib-e Farmandehan-e Nezami" [Hashemi Demands Persecution of Military Commanders], Aftab News Agency, June 13, 2005, available in Persian at www.aftabnews.ir/vdcccpxq2bqo.html (accessed May 13, 2009).

12. "Dar Nokhostin Rouz-e Sabt-e Nam-e Entekhabat-e Riasat-Jomhuri Rokh-Dad: Hozour-e Mardom-e Adi Bara-ye Kandidatori" [Happened on the First Day of Registration of Candidacy for Presidential Elections: Presence of the Common People], *E'temad*

(Tehran), May 6, 2009, available in Persian at www.etemaad.ir/Released/88-02-16/103.htm (accessed May 6, 2009).

13. "Avvalin Rouz-e Sabt-e Nam-e Namzad-ha-ye Dahomin Dowreh-ye Entekhabat-e Riasat-Jomhuri Dar Vezerat-e Keshvar" [First Day of Registration of Candidacy for Tenth Round of Presidential Elections at the Interior Ministry], *Jam-e Jam* (Tehran), May 6, 2009, photo available at www.jamejamonline.ir/Media/images/1388/02/15/100905965501.jpg (accessed May 6, 2009); and "Dar Nokhostin Rouz-e Sabt-e Nam-e Entekhabat-e Riasat-Jomhuri Rokh-Dad: Hozour-e Mardom-e Adi Bara-ye Kandidatori" [Events of the First Day of Registration of Candidacy for Presidential Election: Presence of the Common People], photo available at www.jamejamonline.ir/Media/images/1388/02/15/100905965485.jpg (accessed May 6, 2009).

14. "Koutah Az Majles Va Diplomasi" [Short Notes on the Parliament and Diplomacy], *E'temad-e Melli* (Tehran), May 7, 2009, available in Persian at <http://etemademeli.ir/1388/2/17/Etemaad-Melli/914/Page/4> (accessed May 10, 2009); and "Dar Hashiyeh-ye Sabt-e-Nam-e Davt'alaban-e Riasat-Jomhuri" [Alongside the Volunteer's Registration for Presidency], *Siasat-e Rouz Online* (Tehran), available in Persian at www.siasatrooz.ir/CNewsRDdetailOnline.aspx?QSCNDId=14228&QSDNId=271 (accessed May 10, 2009).

15. "Samareh: Sib-Zamini-ha-ye Tozi'I Bein-e Mahroumin Dar Gozashteh Monhadem Mishod" [Samareh: In the Past the Potatoes Now Being Distributed among the Poor Would Have Been Thrown Out], *Alef News Agency* (Tehran), May 1, 2009, available in Persian at <http://alef.ir/1388/content/view/44902> (accessed May 15, 2009).

16. Fatemeh Rajabi, *Ahmadinejad Mo'jzeh-ye Hez'reh-ye Sevvom* [Ahmadinejad the Miracle of the Third Millennium] (Tehran: Danesh-Amouz, 2006).

17. Hezb-e Jomhuri-ye Eslami, the dominant political party after the 1979 revolution, dissolved by Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's decree in June 1987.

18. "Khaterat-e Rafsanjani Dar Majara-ye Ekhtelaf-e Mousavi Ba Rahbar-e Enghelab Dar Zaman-e Nokhost-Vaziri-ye Ishan" [Rafsanjani's Memoirs about Prime Minister Mousavi's Conflict with the Leader of the Revolution], *Shabakeh-ye Ettela'e-Resani-ye Omid* (Tehran), April 11, 2009, available in Persian at www.omid20-web.blogfa.com/post-1858.aspx (accessed May 13, 2009).