



Why did Seyed Hossein Mousavian's speech at the 2023 US Strategic Command deterrence symposium anger the opponents of the Islamic Republic of Iran? Mousavian explains in an interview with Iran Daily.



Iranian Power vs American Decline

EXCLUSIVE

Iran Daily: House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers and Senate Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Wicker have demanded an explanation for why the US Strategic Command invited you as a keynote speaker in STRATCOM's recent Deterrence Symposium. The letter claims that: "Mousavian served as the Iranian regime's Ambassador to Germany in 1992 when the regime's intelligence operatives assassinated four Iranian dissidents in Berlin. In response, German authorities forced Mousavian to leave the country along with several other Iranian 'diplomats' and intelligence operatives."

Mousavian: This accusation is a big lie. The 398-page verdict is published and everyone can have access to it. The Berlin court verdict does not contain any direct or indirect allegations against me. German authorities never forced me to leave the country. The court verdict was issued in April 1997. My seven-year assignment as ambassador terminated in early 1998. Since then, I have been a frequent visitor to Germany.

The second major explanation requested by the Congress members is that you mocked US officials under assassination threats from Iranian officials. "In a 2022 documentary paying homage to [General Qassem] Soleimani, Mousavian smiled while referring to Iranian death threats against former special representative for Iran Brian Hook. He gleefully said [in Farsi]: "An American told me that Brian Hook's wife can't sleep, and she cries and trembles as they say they'll kill Hook...that is how shaken they are!"

This is another lie and a fake story manufactured by certain lobbies in Washington which are trying to drag the US into another war in the Middle East by attacking Iran. When president Trump had General Soleimani assassinated, I was in Iran to visit my mother who was hospitalized. As a researcher, I attended the funeral of General Soleimani to see the reaction to this assassination. Seven million attended the funeral in Tehran and 20 million in other cities in total. This was clear evidence of General Soleimani's popularity. The 10-second clip from my two-hour interview with Iranian TV was taken out of context. Iranian TV never broadcast the interview with me. It just aired the 7-10 seconds about Brian Hook's family. I have always opposed assassinations and threats of assassina-

tion against both Iranian and US nationals because it is against the UN Charter and a violation of international rules and regulations. During my two-hour interview, I advised Washington and Tehran to stop the mutual threats made and explained the dangers. I said the assassination of General Soleimani was a clear violation of international law while I also explained that threats against Brian Hook had caused panic in Hook's family.

You highlighted the historical context of Iran-US relations, particularly the erosion of trust on Iran's part as the starting point of today's confrontation. Has this distrust solely affected Iran or extended to other nations with ties to the US? How do you assess its impact on US foreign policy today?

Considering the historical context is crucial in having a good understanding of Iran-US relations. In my speech at the US Strategic Command, I made it clear that if the US had not dismantled democracy in Iran through the coup in 1953, the two countries could have remained strategic partners after the Second World War. Moreover, if the US had adhered to the Algerian Accords and not supported Saddam's aggression and the use of chemical weapons against Iran, the two capitals could have maintained a friendly relationship. That is why I suggested the US review the past and lay the foundation of new relations with Iran based on mutual respect and non-interference.

The Iranian diaspora, especially the more hardline segments advocating for intensified sanctions and even conflict against Iran, has reacted strongly to your statements. Yet, a question remains: Why does opposing the Islamic Republic for them seem synonymous with supporting the US?

The Iranian diaspora, advocating for intensified sanctions and even war against Iran; is a minority. The overwhelming majority of Iranians living abroad would like peace between Iran and the US. Those advocating intensified sanctions and war on Iran are either paid or have lost their hope to visit their motherland. I have always suggested that the government of Iran must have a broad policy considering the enormous capacity of the Iranians living abroad. The fact is that we have around 6 to 7 million Iranians abroad and over 90% of them have no serious and active engagement with their motherland. The Iranian government is responsible and should find a solution to embrace them.

A significant part of your speech addresses the nature of the US and its hegemonic policies globally, not just against Iran. Do they not see these issues, or do they interpret them differently?

We have two different schools of thought in the US. The hawks are after bullying, coercion, sanctions, and military strikes, and the other is after engagement and cooperation. These two narratives are challenging each other not only on Iran, but also on China,

Russia, and other adversaries.

If you were to categorize the attacks following your speech, based on the source – whether intellectual, media, or political – how would you explain it?

A: You have noticed that not only the US hawkish and pro-Israel media like the Washington Free Beacon but the Iran International and Iranians pro-confrontation with Iran have jointly attacked me as peace between Iran and the US is their nightmare come true. They will do everything to escalate US-Iran animosities preventing rapprochement between the two countries. Attacks on me are all about this issue.

Alongside the attacks, there likely have been positive reactions to your speech. Could you elaborate on the positive responses from individuals, groups, or countries worldwide and the content of those responses?

When attacks on me are organized by the Israeli lobby and the US hawks, those positive about my arguments, prefer to keep silent because they are afraid of the consequences.

Do you believe the quality of US politics (both domestically and internationally) has trended toward strength or weakness in the long term over recent decades? Please explain your answer.

I think the current US foreign policy will weaken the US position worldwide. My talk at the US Strategic Command was about the US policy in the Middle East. That is why I offered them the following

seven recommendations for a revised US Middle East policy:

Focus on economic, investment, and technological cooperation rather than sanctioning and weaponizing.

End dangerous and counterproductive war policies, interference, and regime change. Establish healthy and friendly relations with all countries rather than creating alliances with some countries against other countries.

Support the creation of a new regional security and cooperation system in the Persian Gulf and hand over the responsibilities to the regional countries to maintain peace and stability rather than trying to achieve it with tens of military bases and trillions of dollars.

Promote civilian diplomacy to strengthen citizen-to-citizen relations such as tourism, athletic, academic, cultural, and social relations based on respecting each other's religions and cultures rather than imposing Western cultures.

Support the Middle East free from all WMDs. Regionalize the principles of the JCPOA in a Persian Gulf cooperative security system. This would make possible a Nuclear Free Zone in the Persian Gulf.

Finally, launch a comprehensive dialogue between Iran and the US to end 40 years of animosity, and restore normal relations based on mutual respect and non-interference. Cooperate on issues of common interests because the list of issues on which American and Iranian interests converge is a long one.

