

## **PRESIDENT KHATAMI AND THE SIXTH MAJLES: PROSPECTS AND EXPECTATIONS**

Gholamreza Vatandoust,<sup>1</sup> Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran

In the Presidential election of the 2nd Khordad 1376 (23 May 1997) whereby Mohammad Khatami won a landslide victory, the electorate was clearly divided into two groups, those supporting Khatami and his proposed reforms, and those in league with the old guards, i.e. Mr. Nateq Nouri, the Speaker of the Fifth Majlis, and his conservative supporters. Not so surprisingly, however, Mr. Khatami managed to emerge as the spokesman for change, reform and moderation. He was essentially supported by millions of the young, the unemployed, and the disenchanting, as well as the intellectuals, the women and the religious left<sup>2</sup> -- in short all those who felt themselves out-powered and neglected in the previous elections, if not since the victory of the Islamic Revolution itself.

### **The Preceding Majlis Sessions**

Perhaps of the five parliamentary sessions that the Islamic Republic has experienced since the revolution, the one that was most open and representative was the 1st Majlis (1980). It can even be favorably compared with the Constitutional period, where the Majlis met for the first time on October 7, 1906, thus inaugurating a new phase in Iran's history.<sup>3</sup> Nearly all groups who had had a share in the Islamic revolution were somehow represented. Consequently the prevalent and predominant views in the 1st Majlis were as diverse and varied as the nation itself.<sup>4</sup> However, soon thereafter, political groups whose inclinations were different from the official line of thought, or were in opposition to the official clerical thinking were gradually ostracized from the political scene, either directly or indirectly. Among these were the Fada'iyan, the Mojahedin, the Tudeh, the National Front and the Liberation Movement of Iran, to mention just a few. Consequently, the only political organization that gained momentum and support and managed to emerge during the early years of the Revolution was the Hezb-e Jumhurey-e Islami (the Islamic Republic Party), chaired by Ayatollah Beheshti. It soon became apparent that the line of thought which could find its way into the Majlis was that sponsored by the Hezb-e Jumhurey-e Islami. This was further intensified following the bombing by the Mojahedin their headquarters which resulted in the death of more than 70

high ranking party leaders and national figures, particularly Dr. Beheshti, who was one of the key leaders of the Revolution, and an intimate confidant of Ayatollah Khomeini. As a result, in the 2nd Majlis (1984), a large majority of the candidates elected were from among the Islamic Republican Party. Students who called themselves *Khat-e Imam* or those who supported Ayatollah Khomeini's line of thought, called *Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat* (Office for strengthening Unity) also had wide participation.<sup>5</sup>

In the 3rd Majlis (1988), the majority of the seats were won by the left, particularly with the clerical split into two groups and the emergence of the *Majma Ruhaniyun-e Mobarez* (The Organization for Clerical Resistance), from its mother organization known as *Jame'e Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez* (The Society for Clerical Resistance). The former is a leftist inclined group of religious leaders who were opposed to the conservatism and the slow pace of economic and social reforms that were in progress. Apparently the left seemed to have won a majority, along with the students representing the *Khat-e Imam*,<sup>6</sup> despite the fact that the Majlis was chaired by Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a moderate cleric and a strongman of the regime since the victory of the revolution itself.

Elected well after the war was over, the 4th Majlis (1992) led once again by Mr. Rafsanjani had proposed to convert the war economy into economic and cultural development. Mr. Rafsanjani thus wanted a Majlis that would serve his political needs. His criticism of deputies on the left as well as his promises for economic reform after eight years of war devastation was a foremost reason why the electorate overwhelmingly endorsed his candidacy. The coalition that now began to take shape and later, under the 5th Majlis, became known as the *Kargozaran-e Sazandegi* (The Technocrats for Development), together with the support and propaganda of the Iranian Radio and Television services, (then headed by Mr. Rafsanjani's brother) resulted in a broad electoral campaign in favor of Mr. Rafsanjani. As a result, the left, most of whose candidates had been rejected by the *Shoray-e Negahban* (The Jurisprudence Consul)<sup>7</sup> met with little success.

From his initial term in office as the President of the Islamic Republic, Mr. Rafsanjani introduced himself as the Government of Construction (*Duulat-e Sazandegi*). His display of moderation as well as an attempt to reconcile his rivals and potential critics at the time, brought him and his government widespread support and popularity, particularly after the economic and social hardships which eight years of war had imposed. Thus it was to be expected that elections to the 5th Majlis (1996) would heavily serve the interest of Mr. Rafsanjani's party, namely the *Kargozaran-e*

Sazandegi.<sup>8</sup> A major conflict which made itself apparent during the 5th Majlis was the schism between the political right and the Kargozaran. The former had all along lingered behind, holding on the coat tail of the latter, presenting itself as reform minded and willing to support policies which were less discriminatory and more liberal in content. They had even displayed an interest for a more open and democratic economic policies. However, conflict began to appear in the economic as well as the political domain which gradually separated the right from the Kargozaran, as more and more the right sought to separate and present itself as the upholders of the *Khat-e Imam va Rahbari*, those faithful to the Imam's line of thought and his Leadership.<sup>9</sup> It was under such circumstances that the scenario was set for the elections to the Sixth Majlis.

### The Sixth Majlis

The elections to the sixth Majlis took place at a time when more than two years had elapsed from the presidential election of Mr. Khatami. The latter's immense victory and overwhelming popularity was essentially centered around his respect for people and his policy of open and responsive government. His ability to accept criticism was the key factor adding to his popularity. Mr. Khatami's policies, particularly towards freedom of the press, had opened a Pandora's box, to the extent that very many illegalities in the economic and political domains as well as abuse of individual rights and freedoms were now making themselves apparent.

The Jebheyeh Mosharekat (The Cooperative Front) which initially registered itself as a political party and then organized into a coalition, was made up of 18 groups led by Mohammad Reza Khatami, brother of President Mohammad Khatami, a physician by training, but one who entered the political scene a few months prior to the elections by establishing a popular daily newspaper called *Mosharekat* (Cooperation). This newspaper was born as a response to the arrest and censor of Abdullah Nouri,<sup>10</sup> the editor of an equally popular newspaper entitled *Khordad*, representing the month in which President Khatami was elected as President of the Islamic Republic. What the Jebheyeh Mosharekat attempted to do was to enlist all groups who supported the 2nd of Khordad movement, with the popular slogan of "Iran belongs to all Iranians." Ahmad Burghani, an active member of the Jebheyeh Mosharekat and the former deputy minister for the press, referring to this slogan reiterated that dividing the people of Iran into discriminatory groups such as "*khodi va ghyr-e khodi*," that is "us versus

them,” is totally unacceptable and no one has the right to deprive an individual from his basic rights.<sup>11</sup> Here he openly criticized an important cleric, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, who had attacked the above slogan most vehemently.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to the present elections, the Jebheyeh Mosharekat announced two general guidelines required for the acceptance of potential members. Foremost that if individual candidates or groups were endorsed by the Central Committee of the coalition, their names should not appear on other lists of nominees who did not belong to the Jebheyeh Mosharekat. Secondly, it was accepted that proposals put forward should be in accordance with that announced by the organization itself. The Jebheh had constantly emphasized its programs for the future, one such program being that the electorate should feel itself responsible enough to closely watch over the executive branch and its performance.<sup>13</sup>

Among other major political platforms of the Jebheyeh Musharakat was to institute a uniform system of legal procedures within the country and to eliminate duplicate centers of authority 2) to reform electoral laws and allow political parties to flourish 3) initiate legislation defining “political crime,” establish procedures and means for jury selection of political crime, 4) initiate legislative reforms on the freedom of the press 5) remove discriminatory rules and regulations which limit freedom of access to information, thus depriving most professionals, i.e. university professors, researchers, writers and journalists, from obtaining information at the national and international levels,<sup>14</sup> 6) remove discriminatory rules for employment (i.e. *guzinesh*) of individuals which is a barrier for an equal opportunity employment of Iranian nationals. 7) initiate legislation which fosters equal rights for both men and women 8) legislate laws which would attract foreign capital, thus clarifying laws pertaining to private investment, and 9) initiate comprehensive programs of social welfare, decentralization of government and economic activity throughout the country.<sup>15</sup>

The national-religious groups such as the Nehzat-e Azadi (The Liberation Movement)<sup>16</sup> and Nehzat-e Melli (National Movement) were ostracized from public participation shortly after Mr. Mehdi Bazargan resigned as the Premier of the transitional government. The Nehzat-e Azadi has had a distinguished history of political activity against the Shah's regime extending back to the National Front, Dr. Mussadeq's era and the Iranian oil nationalization movement of 1952.<sup>17</sup> One prominent leader, Mehdi Bazargan, who died several years back, served as the Prime Minister during the provisional government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Bazargan finally

resigned when he was confronted with an attack on the U.S. Embassy on November 4, 1979 by radical Muslims, resulting in the hostage crisis.

Members of this group were forbidden from being nominated for the 6th Majlis on charges that their faithfulness to Islam and the Valayat-e Faqih is doubtful, in addition to the fact that these people have shown a favorable attitude towards improving relations with the U.S. -- which is regarded a taboo at the present moment. However, the national-religious coalition, having been overtly ostracized from direct participation, have joined forces with the Jebheyeh Musharakat and have presented their support for particular candidates. Not too surprisingly, their nominees met with favorable support. Their publication, a monthly journal entitled *Iran-e Farda* (Tomorrow's Iran), edited by Ezattullah Sahabi, a prominent individual noted for years of imprisonment and resistance against the Shah, put forward a detailed program of guidelines for its supporters to follow.<sup>18</sup>

### The Press and the Electorate

Perhaps the free press played the most critical role before and during the election, particularly newspapers affiliated with the 2nd of Khordad movement. In the absence of political parties, they have filled this vacuum rather well, and in certain instances they have managed to function more or less as political parties. For example, the reform minded newspapers recently published a list of 30 candidates whom they recommended as their nominees to represent Tehran. By such a class action they directly entered into the political process. The newspapers which officially supported and sponsored these candidates were *Aftab-e Emruz*, *Ariya*, *Azad*, *Akhbar-e Eqtasad*, *Bayan*, *Hayat Nuw*, *Subh-e Emruz*, *Asr-e Azadeghan*, *Fath*, and *Musharakat*, all of whom belong to the liberal end of the political spectrum and are firm supporters of President Khatami and the 2nd of Khordad movement. One reason why the newspapers and their editors have entered directly into the electoral process, was the decision reached by the *Anjuman-e Defa' az Azadi Matbu'at* (The Society for the defense of the freedom of the Press) in which the editors of the 2nd of Khordad movement who play an active role in that Society, agreed to actively involve themselves in the elections, the goal stated was to create a national unity and to encourage a wider participation in the forthcoming elections.<sup>19</sup> Today, very many who are engaged in the publication of pro-reform newspapers are experienced men of politics and letters. This only proves that in a society where political organizations and parties are non-existent, the press is naturally forced to assume such a role.<sup>20</sup>

The pro-reform press has created an atmosphere for dialogue, re-evaluation and change,<sup>21</sup> a position which apparently Iranians are willing to grant the press for assuming a critical role towards political development and democracy.<sup>22</sup>

The sixth Majlis will essentially consist of four major groups. The first and undoubtedly the overwhelming majority belong to the Musharakat coalition that won, along with the second group, the Karguzaran, more than 72% of the seats within the Majlis. The first group, known as 2nd of Khordad movement, support President Khatami, while the second, the Karguzaran, or the technocrats, were also Khatami supporters during the elections. In the 5th Majlis they were led by Karbaschi, the former mayor of Tehran, who headed this group and served as its Secretary General. Many of its chief members are those presently serving under President Khatami, such as Dr. Mahajerani, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, who was foremost responsible for the freedom of the press prevalent since President Khatami took office. Their loyalty and behavior within the Majlis will depend on the role Mr. Rafsanjani assumes. A major criticism directed at the Karguzaran is that it is individual centered (i.e. towards Mr. Rafsanjani) rather than program oriented. However, if they do not change their overall policies, they shall run into conflict with the Jebheh Musharakat in the not too distant future.<sup>23</sup>

The third group consists of deputies who introduced themselves as independents. Some of these candidates were inclined towards the right in the previous Majlis, while others consisted of candidates who were not willing to alienate either the right or the left.

The fourth group was a coalition of the right. It is estimated that perhaps they will hold 15% of the Majlis seats. Its slogan throughout the election was *A'tela'f-e Khat-e Imam va Rahbari*, i.e. "Coalition of those in league with the Imam and the Leadership." In other words, those who accept what is authorized from above, by the Valiy-e Faqih. Several factions also fall in this latter group, among them Mr. Bahonar, a former deputy and spokesman of the right.<sup>24</sup> Among other groups that could be identified is the Hey'at-e Mu'talifeh, a conservative right with a strong base in the bazaar, who control much of the economy and have many supporters both in Qom and the economic circles of the traditional market centers. Among these are the Revolutionary Guards and the Basij, the latter consisting of volunteer youth Corp who claim to make up an army of 20 million, and who take orders from none except the Valiy-e Faqih. Mr. Dehnamaki, Mr. Hussainpanah and Mr. Allahkaram are their foremost spokesmen. Mr.

Dehnamaki initially published a newspaper known as *Chalamcheh*, which because of its use of derogatory terms was forced to cease publication. He now publishes another newspaper by the name of *Jebheh*, meaning the “front,” presumably the battlefield in which he believes the country is domestically engaged in against the opposition.<sup>25</sup>

### Prospects and Expectations

One essential difference between the 5th and the 6th Majlis is bound to be in the atmosphere governing the two. The political atmosphere of the 5th Majlis was a closed one. The candidates that were able to enter the Majlis after a tight scrutiny and final approval were essentially supporters of the official line of thought. Thus they allowed very few independent-minded candidates to prevail.<sup>26</sup> On the contrary, the 6th Majlis is expected to represent a broad cross-section of the electorate.

The status of the 6th Majlis is significant. Since deputies were elected on the basis of their political affiliations, it is to be expected that the 6th Majlis will be less subject to influence from powerful individuals, or particular groups, as they need be more accountable to the platform which they represent.<sup>27</sup> Although the 6th Majlis is generally reform minded, numerous groups and divisions will be represented, and their views regarding policies for change is bound to be varied.<sup>28</sup> Majid Ansari, a reform minded cleric, summed up the task of the 6th Majlis as one which would have to assume a more active and responsible role than it did during the 5th Majlis, where the internal committees never took their responsibilities very seriously, and for most, their elected profession as deputies served more as a lucrative business enterprise than a grave public responsibility.<sup>29</sup>

It is expected that in the future the Majlis will tend towards becoming more party oriented -- with each political party having a specific platform for the electorate to identify and support.<sup>30</sup> Thus the 6th Majlis should be more representative of the people, than a particular individual or interest group.<sup>31</sup>

By voting “no” to a “patriarchal system” in which the electorate is told how to behave and who to vote for, the 6th Majlis is expected to guarantee respect for individual rights regarding freedom of thought and expression within the constitutional framework. The relatively high turnouts by participants clearly indicate a direct connection between legitimacy and mass participation as foreseen by the public.

Public expectation of the 6th Majlis run high, and at times is totally unrealistic. It is expected that the Majlis will instantly set about to correct all

ills that have befallen Iran through discriminatory and arbitrary injunctions imposed by individuals and officials since the Revolution. Such an expectation is certainly beyond achievement, particularly in the short term, since most of the problems that exist are not within the jurisdiction of the legislative authority to change. Some problems in fact pertain to the Constitution itself, in which individuals as well as institutions and authorities must be reassessed and redefined in many areas. Accountability to the Majlis or the President by various sectors and agencies of the government, still remain a sensitive issue. Such institutions as the Shoray-e Negahban (Jurisprudence Consul) which has an immense responsibility for reviewing and approving the qualifications of potential electoral candidates is a particular case in point.<sup>32</sup> One of the responsibilities of the Shoray-e Negahban, according to Article 3(9) of the Iranian Constitution, is to remove all forms of discrimination. However, not only has it failed to do so, it has acted rather arbitrarily in the assessment of candidates for the 6th Majlis. At the initial stage, it rejected the application of 758 potential candidates for the 6th Majlis. Of these, 162 were candidates from Tehran. Reasons provided were that these candidates were either not faithful to Islam or that they sympathized with groups and parties whose loyalties to the Islamic Republic were dubious.<sup>33</sup> It is estimated that at least 50 popular candidates from Tehran who were pro-reform were thus prevented from participation in the elections.<sup>34</sup>

It is suggested that the 6th Majlis should 1) reduce subsidies for bread and energy, 2) reduce the government's role in economic affairs, 3) bring under the government's control agencies and institutions that are outside its control and are mostly accountable to no one, although they have a great stake within the economy such as the Bunyad-e Mustazafan, Bunyad-e Ponzdah Khordad, etc., 4) grant academic institutions and universities their independence from the Shoray-e 'Aly-e Engelab-e Farhangi and Vezarat-e 'Uloom,<sup>35</sup> 5) legislate bills that would correct the economic chaos of the country, 6) control the rampant unemployment, 7) rejuvenate hope and joy among the youth and, 8) reduce tension on the domestic and international levels.<sup>36</sup>

Certain changes are also certainly expected from the 6th Majlis. A sincere implementation of the Constitution and a guarantee of the Constitutional rights for all Iranians are a foremost expectation and one which Mr. Khatami has avowed to pursue. The Majlis can reform its administrative structure, and when Mr. Khatami will set about to reshuffle his cabinet and to replace the ministers who were not of his own choice but

were dictated by expediency, he will certainly be supported by the Majlis.<sup>37</sup> The Majlis is expected to add speed to the proposed reforms of President Khatami<sup>38</sup> and it is certainly hoped that the 6th Majlis will proceed towards institutionalizing democracy.<sup>39</sup> It remains to be seen how the Kargozaran (the technocrats) behave in the 6th Majlis. While politically they support the pro-reform movement, economically they are closely affiliated with the conservatives and the traditional elements in the bazaar.<sup>40</sup> It is also expected and feared that should Mr. Rafsanjani, a founding father of the Kargozaran finds his way into the Majlis,<sup>41</sup> his presence would amply slow down the democratic process because of his vast influence and ability to manipulate power. Should this happen, it could certainly slow down the development of civil institutions within the country.<sup>42</sup> However, while this is a remote possibility, it remains to be seen how much Mr. Rafsanjani aligns himself with the prevailing tendencies in the Majlis. Considering his natural acumen, it is quite possible that he would join the bandwagon and even serve as its spokesman, rather than take a position opposite to the prevailing trend.

In terms of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy, the results of the 6th Majlis has certainly improved the country's credibility at the international level to a significant degree.<sup>43</sup> The elected deputies certainly think that Iran's Foreign Policy is in dire need of re-evaluation. A more democratic procedure must be adopted and Iran's own shortcomings should not be attributed to international or national "conspiracy," and that whoever disagrees should not be instantly labeled as an enemy. In fact one newspaper deduced that "our domestic policy will be projected in our foreign policy."<sup>44</sup>

Women's participation and demands in the 6th Majlis will also certainly be prominent. Of the eleven women deputies elected, only one served as a deputy in the 5th Majlis. All are well educated and reform minded, and a few have already voiced their opinion that they will not be coerced into wearing a *chador* while attending the parliamentary sessions. This could also cause further tension between the conservative and liberal elements. However, the Majlis has certain leverage that it could utilize when pressed from all angles, particularly the Shoray-e Negahban. It could call for a referendum on particular issues or deadlocks. The Supreme Leader could of course always have such a request over-ruled, but at the cost of jeopardizing his own prestige and popularity.

While expectations should not be unrealistically high, the 6th Majlis would be a success if only it remains faithful to itself. Ahmad Burghani summed up this point just prior to the elections, when he stated that "the politics of monopoly and elimination is over. We do not want a Parliament in

which no conservatives exist, nor do we want a Parliament in which only supporters of the 2nd of Khordad are present. Rather, we embrace a Majlis in which all groups, regardless of their political stance or affiliations, will speak their minds.”<sup>45</sup> Perhaps the 6th Majlis marks a new and an irreversible phase in Iran's Revolutionary history, one of moderation and toleration.

#### Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> The author wishes to thank Mr. Reza Dehdashti for his assistance in collecting the information required for this research. The author of course assumes full responsibility for the content and analysis of the article.
- <sup>2</sup> The religious left entitled Majma' Ruhaniyun Mobarez (The Organization for Clerical Resistance) is organized under the leadership of a popular cleric, Ayatollah Karubi, who was the Speaker of the Majlis while Mr. Rafsanjani served as the President of the Islamic Republic. However, he soon fell out for his unorthodox views and his criticism of the government. He was therefore not elected to the 4th Majlis, although he had served as a deputy during the 2nd and as its Speaker during the 3rd Majlis, after Mr. Rafsanjani was elected as the President of the Islamic Republic.
- <sup>3</sup> For the composition and performance of the 1st Majlis, see Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*. London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1966, pp. 124-29; and Zahra Shaj'e'i, *Nukhbegan Siyasi Iran as Inqalab-e Mashrutiyat ta Inqalab-e Islami*. Vol. 4. Tehran: Intisharat-e Sukhan, 1372, pp. 251-306.
- <sup>4</sup> *Bayan*, 26/11/78, p. 5.
- <sup>5</sup> *Musharakat*, 23/11/78, p. 8.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>7</sup> Shoray-e Negahban (The Jurisprudence Consul) according to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran has a widespread power to overlook and exercise power in different areas, particularly over the qualifications of candidates for election. See also *Musharakat*, 23/11/78, p. 8.
- <sup>8</sup> *Asr Azadegan*, 20/10/78, p. 5.
- <sup>9</sup> *Bayan*, 25/11/78, p.2.
- <sup>10</sup> Abdullah Nouri, a cleric, served as President Khatami's Minister of interior before impeachment for his liberal policies by the conservative 5th Majlis. Next he took up the publication of a popular newspaper entitled *Khordad*, which had more than half a million readers daily. When he declared his candidacy for the 6th Majlis, he was accused and charged for conspiracy to weaken the Islamic Republic and sentenced to five years of imprisonment. Among charges against him were that he had expressed views contrary to Islam, that he had insulted the religious sentiments of the people and that he had advocated normalization of relations with the United States and Israel. A book containing his defense statements has been published nine times in less than six months.
- <sup>11</sup> *Sobh-e Emruz*, 24/11/78.
- <sup>12</sup> Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi had stated that the slogan "Iran belongs to all Iranians" simply caters to and is most pleasing to the Bahai sect, a minority group who at best is simply tolerated, but are officially not recognized by the government.
- <sup>13</sup> *Sobh-e Emruz*, 24/11/78.
- <sup>14</sup> Access to the Internet and satellite TV was made available for a select group of individuals

such as the Majlis deputies, the clerics and anyone with influential friends in high offices. Mr. Khatami's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Dr. Mahajerani has promised to remove such arbitrary standards and to make information more readily available to all.

- <sup>15</sup> *Pars*, 27/11/78, p.11.
- <sup>16</sup> For a review of the Nehzat-e Azadi in the past and how it shaped form a united front in support of Ayatollah Khomeini see H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism. The Liberation Movement of Iran Under the Shah and Khomeini*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1990.
- <sup>17</sup> See Alan W. Ford, *The Anglo-Iranian Oil Dispute of 1951-1952. A Study of the Role of Law in the Relations of States*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1954.
- <sup>18</sup> See *Iran-e Farda* (Special Election Issue), 23/11/78, p.3.
- <sup>19</sup> *Asr-e Azadegan*, 24/11/78.
- <sup>20</sup> *Hamshahri*, 23/10/78.
- <sup>21</sup> *Bayan*, 7/12/78, p. 7.
- <sup>22</sup> *Bayan*, 5/12/78, p. 2.
- <sup>23</sup> *Musharakat*, 8/12/78, p. 12.
- <sup>24</sup> Mr. Bahonar was a candidate for re-election to the Sixth Majlis, but lost his seat by a significant margin. In an interview prior to the election he had predicted a possible loss of votes and had attributed this to the probable fact that he had been on the forefront of the movement for impeachment of Dr. Mahajerani. The latter was charged for his liberal policies towards the press.
- <sup>25</sup> In expressing the measure of his faithfulness towards the Supreme Leader, Mr. Dehnamaki is noted to have said that if he is told that yogurt is black, he will accept it as such, with no questions asked.
- <sup>26</sup> *Azad*, 27/11/78, p. 3.
- <sup>27</sup> *Hamshahri*, 4/12/78, p. 2.
- <sup>28</sup> *Bayan*, 25/11/78, p. 5.
- <sup>29</sup> *Azad*, 24/11/78, p. 2.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>31</sup> *Musharakat*, 78/11/78, p. 2.
- <sup>32</sup> The Shoray-e Negahban has acted rather unevenly in the past elections, approving or disapproving candidates on broad and uncertain terms. For instance, a number of the candidates who were deputies in the previous sessions of the Majlis, were disapproved for re-election. They were mostly charged for not upholding the *velayat-e Mutlaqeyeh Faqih*.
- <sup>33</sup> *Sobh-e Emruz*, 25/10/78, p. 2.
- <sup>34</sup> *Asr-e Azadeghan*, 23/11/78, p. 2.
- <sup>35</sup> *Abrar*, 7/12/78, p. 10.
- <sup>36</sup> *Bayan*, 28/11/78, p. 9.
- <sup>37</sup> *Hamshahri*, 3/12/78, p. 2.
- <sup>38</sup> *Fath*, 25/10/78, p. 3.
- <sup>39</sup> *Aftab-e Emruz*, 1/12/78, p. 3.
- <sup>40</sup> *Fath*, 25/10/78, p. 2.
- <sup>41</sup> Of the 30 candidates elected from Tehran, Mr. Rafsanjani was the 30th individual to get in. Another candidate Mr. Rahmani, who was the 31st, objected and requested a

recounting of votes, which is currently in progress. There is a remote possibility that Mr. Rafsanjani may not acquire the necessary votes to enter the Majlis.

<sup>42</sup> *Aftab-e Emruz*, 1/12/78, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> *Arya*, 7/12/78, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> *Sobh-e Emruz*, 9/12/78, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> *Azad*, 27/11/78, p. 2.