



## Supremely Undemocratic: The Revolutionary Guards Engineer Iran's Elections

By Ali Alfoneh

*As presidential elections near in Iran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) is more active than ever in its support for President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Although IRGC intervention in elections is hardly a new phenomenon, its involvement in 2009 is its most direct. Regardless of the ultimate victor at the June 12 polls, in the short term, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei will be the winner. The long-term winner, however, may be the IRGC, which will have carved out a new, much more heavy-handed role for itself in the political process, one that will be difficult for even the supreme leader to reverse.*

Iranian officials often point to the Islamic Republic's vigorous election contests both to assert that the regime enjoys popular legitimacy and to lay claim to the mantle of democracy. The holding of elections does not necessarily equate democracy, however, especially in a system in which candidacy is constrained by unelected bodies such as the Guardian Council. Much has been written about the role of these bodies in the Iranian political system, but the 2009 election marks the rise of the IRGC as a key participant in electoral politics, one that necessitates a change in the way analysts approach Iranian politics.

This augmentation of the IRGC's role comes with the blessing of Khamenei, who has never supported a presidential candidate as vigorously as he now supports Ahmadinejad. Not only has Khamenei issued subtle statements of support for the incumbent and criticism of his opponents, but he has also encouraged IRGC intervention to support Ahmadinejad, despite statutory provisions that ostensibly call for IRGC neutrality.

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### The IRGC versus the Constitution

Iranian law prohibits the IRGC from political activity. The 1982 Statute of the Revolutionary Guards restricts IRGC personnel from "membership of parties, groups, and political organizations" and stipulates that the IRGC should be nonpartisan and play no role in politics by establishing that it "is politically and ideologically subject to the Guardian Jurist and is independent from all political parties and groups, and it must not itself become a party in society and operate as a political party or institution."<sup>1</sup>

#### Key points in this Outlook:

- Elections in Iran offer the illusion of democracy, but candidates must be approved by the unelected Guardian Council.
- In its support of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the 2009 presidential election, the IRGC is assuming an unprecedented role in politics.
- Emboldened by their activity in this election, IRGC commanders will not likely relinquish their newfound power.

Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Republic, to whose words and deeds all Islamic Republic political factions turn to justify their positions, also emphasized the principle of IRGC political nonintervention, declaring in his “last will and testament”:

My empathic counsel to the armed forces is to observe and abide by the military rule of noninvolvement in politics. Do not join any political party, group, or faction. No military man, security policeman, no Revolutionary Guardsman or Basij may enter into politics. Stay away from politics and you’ll be able to preserve and maintain your military prowess and be immune to internal division and dispute. Military commanders must forbid political ties by the men under their command.<sup>2</sup>

Proponents of IRGC intervention make two arguments to sidestep the prohibition. First, they cite a portion of Khomeini’s will in which he warns against internal enemies who “want to overthrow the Islamic Republic . . . and toss you down into the laps of one of the two world [war] mongering poles” (a reference to the United States and the Soviet Union).<sup>3</sup> Khomeini did use the IRGC to suppress his rivals, although in the vortex of both revolutionary politics and the external threat manifested in the 1980 Iraqi invasion of Iran, the fissures among factions were much greater than they are now. By continuing to depict opponents in ordinary political debate about matters as mundane as privatization policy or the role of the police in enforcing hairlines as foreign agents and fifth columnists, the IRGC today justifies any political activity.

Second, those seeking a larger political role for the IRGC argue that, because the Statute of the Guards charges the IRGC with “realization of divine ideals and expansion of the authority of divine law according to the Islamic Republic of Iran’s legislation,”<sup>4</sup> they can use their authority to “guard the revolution” in order to carve out a political role.<sup>5</sup> In recent months, the IRGC has also sought to redefine its membership by bifurcating the corps and its intertwined paramilitary Basij into strictly military divisions in which members’ political activities would be forbidden and other categories in which officers and commissars would encourage, if not order, their rank and file to become politically active.<sup>6</sup> In effect, this would give the IRGC the ability to determine the acceptability of candidates and to use its cadre not only

to get out the vote for its chosen candidates, but also to employ physical force to prevent other candidates from campaigning.

## **When the Supreme Leader Does It, It’s Not Illegal**

While many Western diplomats and academics hoped for change after Khomeini’s death and foresaw a new age for pragmatism when the Assembly of Experts confirmed Khamenei as his successor, there has been no substantive change in the willingness of the supreme leader to act as an absolute and arbitrary ruler when need be, albeit one much more likely to control by veto and proxy than by fiat. Regardless of how he enforces his will, it is Khamenei’s wishes, rather than the law, that count in the Islamic Republic. And it is clear that Khamenei has given the green light to the Guards to intervene in the presidential election.

As former president Mohammad Khatami began touring major cities in Iran to mobilize support for his candidacy, Khamenei humiliated him by likening Khatami’s 2005 decision to suspend uranium enrichment temporarily<sup>7</sup> with the capitulation of Soltan Hossein, the last shah of the Safavid Dynasty, who, in 1722, capitulated to Afghan tribesmen, ushering in a period of looting and chaos. Warning against submitting to the U.S. government’s call in 2008 for Iran to change its behavior, Khamenei ordered Iranian authorities not to fear the enemy, lest similar “great calamity fall upon the nation.”<sup>8</sup> The IRGC’s media outlets parroted Khamenei’s attacks with an intense campaign against the former president that culminated in Khatami’s withdrawal from the 2009 race.

Khamenei then began to signal his support for Ahmadinejad. In a speech in Nowruz on March 21, 2009, for example, Khamenei said that he would intervene “when I see that a government is more attentive to the needy, resists injustice and imperialism, and is also unjustly subjected to attacks,”<sup>9</sup> thereby parroting the rhetoric of Ahmadinejad supporters. While Khamenei was careful to note that his vote would remain secret, IRGC media suggest its rank and file has little doubt not only that Ahmadinejad is the supreme leader’s favored candidate, but also that former prime minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi, perhaps the leading “reformer” remaining in the race, should be considered suspect, given Khatami’s close relationship to him.

Khamenei has since turned his attention to Mehdi Karrubi, another reform candidate in the race, and

former president Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a key supporter of Mousavi.<sup>10</sup> Both Karrubi and Rafsanjani voiced concern about the fairness of the 2009 election, as they earlier openly accused the IRGC, and even Khamenei's son Mojtaba, of orchestrating fraud during the 2005 elections.<sup>11</sup> Khamenei responded angrily, attacking "those ungrateful friends who unjustly criticize the health of the election."<sup>12</sup> This was enough to silence Karrubi, who has subsequently refused to address the issue.<sup>13</sup> Rafsanjani, however, has a more independent power base and has stood firm, reiterating his concern and leading IRGC media to rail against him.<sup>14</sup>

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The IRGC's blatant mobilization of voters raised a storm of criticism. Unsurprisingly, these protests had absolutely no effect on the Guards.

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As the campaign has progressed, Khamenei's support for Ahmadinejad has become more direct. In May, Khamenei gave two speeches urging the public to vote for "someone who knows the problems of the country and the sorrows of the people, who feels distress at the sorrows of the people, someone who is a man of the people and sincere, with a simple lifestyle and who himself, his family members, and those close to him are not aristocratic or wasteful since tendency toward aristocratic life and luxury is a great threat."<sup>15</sup> Any Iranian would interpret such statements as endorsement of Ahmadinejad, who has made his ascetic lifestyle central to his image, as well as an attack on Rafsanjani, perhaps the richest man in Iran. Khamenei next championed Ahmadinejad's hard-line foreign policy, encouraging people "not to vote for those who by bowing their heads to foreigners do away with our honor."<sup>16</sup> Khamenei's open criticism of Ahmadinejad's attempt to organizationally subject the Pilgrimage Organization to the Presidency's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization in May 2009 hardly changes the overall picture of Khamenei's preference for a second term for Ahmadinejad.

### The IRGC Answers Khamenei's Call

The IRGC responded swiftly to Khamenei's green light to attack Ahmadinejad's opponents (see table 1). Not all IRGC commanders' speeches to the men under their command have been published, but it appears that after

Khamenei's speech likening Khatami to Shah Soltan Hossein, IRGC chiefs in all thirty-one regional command centers started or strengthened efforts to mobilize support for Ahmadinejad. In the Greater Tehran district, for example, IRGC chief Colonel Abdollah Eraghi's speech beseeched his men to support the incumbent.<sup>17</sup>

The second phase of the IRGC's operation against Ahmadinejad's critics began with a speech by Major General Hassan Firouz-Abadi, chief of the Armed Forces Command Council, which not only openly endorsed Ahmadinejad, but also labeled his rivals as "too old and frail" to be president.<sup>18</sup> The attacks against Ahmadinejad's rivals continued as former IRGC chief and current senior security adviser to the supreme leader Yahya Rahim Safavi praised Ahmadinejad as a role model for members of the Basij<sup>19</sup> and attacked "the liberals" who "have dealt the greatest blows to the Islamic Republic."<sup>20</sup> Such an open and direct assault against Ahmadinejad's rivals marks a significant shift from earlier elections in which the IRGC engineered attacks indirectly, using proxies like Ansar-e Hezbollah.

The third phase in the IRGC's operation also signifies a major shift. It began with current IRGC chief Mohammad Ali Jafari's speech to the Basij in which he urged Basij members to intervene in politics in order to defend the Principalist camp, the faction with which Ahmadinejad identifies that seeks to return to the "principles" of the early revolutionary years.<sup>21</sup> The IRGC's subsequent blatant mobilization of voters raised a storm of criticism among Ahmadinejad's critics and opponents of armed forces intervention in politics (see table 2). Tabnak News, close to Mohsen Rezaei, one of the four candidates in this election, disclosed that the lower ranks of the Basij are deeply engaged in a campaign on behalf of Ahmadinejad,<sup>22</sup> and even parliament speaker Ali Larijani, who is generally in line with the supreme leader, called for the security services to withdraw from politics.<sup>23</sup> Unsurprisingly, these protests had absolutely no effect on the Guards, based on their new doctrine enabling if not encouraging such political activity.

### Conclusion

Considering the current trajectory, the IRGC's political activity could very well tip the elections in favor of Ahmadinejad. Iranian voters are notoriously unpredictable, however, and Khamenei's involvement has backfired before. His implicit endorsement of Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri's candidacy in 1997 was counterproductive,

paving the way for Khatami's landslide. What we see now, ironically, may be the result of the lesson Khamenei drew from the experience: not leaving anything to chance, both subtly endorsing Ahmadinejad and using the IRGC as a proxy.

This pattern suggests a victory for Khamenei regardless of who prevails. But this may only be in the short term, and the IRGC may be the ultimate victor. Now empowered to interfere in the political process, IRGC commanders will

not be willing to relinquish such power. Nor does it appear that any political institution inside the Islamic Republic could force the IRGC to step back, as Khamenei, in order to consolidate his own power, has systematically weakened the civilian institutions that traditionally work to restrain the power of the military. Khamenei will be pleased if Ahmadinejad is president for the next four years, but that happy mood will sour if he becomes hostage to his own Praetorian Guard.

**TABLE 1**  
**RECENT IRGC STATEMENTS ON ARMED FORCES INTERVENTION IN POLITICS, ENDORSEMENTS OF MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD'S CANDIDACY, AND ATTACKS AGAINST HIS CRITICS**

Date	Name	Position	Subject
February 7, 2008	Mohammad Ali Jafari	IRGC chief	Urged the Basij to intervene in politics in order to defend the Principalist camp. <sup>a</sup>
April 29 and April 30, 2008	Ali Saidi	Representative of the supreme leader in the IRGC	April 29: Attacked the "lax attitude that began during the era of the reformists . . . especially under Ata'ollah Mohajerani, Khatami's minister of Islamic guidance and culture." <sup>b</sup> April 30: Condemned Khatami's meeting with a group of IRGC commanders as "politicization of the Guards." <sup>c</sup>
January 20, 2009	Abdollah Eraghi	Mohammad Rasoul-Allah IRGC Unit chief in Greater Tehran	Urged members of the Basij and the IRGC to support Ahmadinejad and his cabinet ministers. <sup>d</sup>
January 27, 2009	Hassan Firouz-Abadi	Armed Forces Command Council chief	Praised Ahmadinejad and accused other presidential contenders of being too old for the presidency. <sup>e</sup>
February 1 and February 4, 2009	Yahya Rahim Safavi	Former IRGC chief, security adviser to the supreme leader	February 1: Praised Ahmadinejad as a role model for members of the Basij. <sup>f</sup> February 4: Accused "the liberals" of having dealt the "greatest blows to the Islamic Republic." <sup>g</sup>
February 17, 2009	Mohammad-Bagher Zolghadr	Former IRGC commander, former interior minister deputy	Attacked former president Mohammad Khatami for betraying the ideals of the 1979 revolution. <sup>h</sup>
March 27, 2009	Masoud Jazayeri	Psychological operations defense strategic council chief	Warned against soft threats toward the Islamic Republic—NGOs and political parties working to subvert state ideology. <sup>i</sup>
April 20, 2009	Mojtaba Zolnour	Deputy representative of the supreme leader in the IRGC	Said the society is "sensing danger from the quarters of Mir-Hossein Mousavi" and declared his support for the Ahmadinejad government. <sup>j</sup>
April 23, 2009	Mohammad Hejazi	IRGC deputy chief	Promised that the IRGC will not intervene in the presidential elections but will engage whenever and wherever needed by the revolution. <sup>k</sup>
March 3, 2009	Yadollah Javani	IRGC political department chief	Demanded the candidates "clarify their position with regard to the line of the Imam [Khomeini]" <sup>l</sup> and claimed that the reformists are planting discord among the Principalists. <sup>m</sup>
May 7, 2009	Mohammad Ali Jafari	IRGC chief	Stressed the role of the IRGC in securing the "permanence of the revolution" and endorsed Ahmadinejad's social justice slogan. <sup>n</sup>
May 14, 2009	Ali Shirazi	Representative of the supreme leader in the IRGC Navy	Attacked reformist criticism of Basij intervention in the presidential election and warned against a coup being planned by the Iran Freedom Movement to reinstall monarchy in Iran. <sup>o</sup>
May 17 and May 18, 2009	Ali Saidi	Representative of the supreme leader in the IRGC	May 17: Endorsed Ahmadinejad's candidacy, mentioning everything but Ahmadinejad's name. <sup>p</sup> May 18: Said Khamenei's warnings convinced people to bring the Principalists to power. <sup>q</sup>
May 18, 2009	Yadollah Javani	IRGC political department chief	Attacked the reformers who criticize Basij intervention in the presidential election. <sup>r</sup>
May 20, 2009	Mojtaba Zolnour	Deputy representative of the supreme leader in the IRGC	Praised the piety of Ahmadinejad and accused Mohsen Rezaei of secret cooperation with the reformists by stealing votes from Ahmadinejad. <sup>s</sup>

NOTES: a) "Farmandeh-ye Sepah: Basij Bayad Az Osoul-garayan Moraghebat Konad" [The Guard's Commander: Basij Must Protect the Principalists], Shahab News (Tehran), February 7, 2008, available in Persian at <http://shahabnews.ir/vdce.n8zbfh87f9bj.html> (accessed May 10, 2009).

b) "Namayandeh-ye Vali Faghih Dar Sepah: Jaryani Ke Be Donbale Tasahol va va Tasamoh Bashad Barandaz Ast" [Representative of the Supreme Leader in the Guards: A Movement Seeking Tolerance and Coexistence Is a Regime Toppling Movement], *E'temad-e Melli* (Tehran), April 29, 2008, available in Persian at <http://etemadmeli.com/1387/2/10/EtemadMelli/908/Page/2> (accessed May 10, 2009).

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

- c) "Vakonesh-e Namayandeh-ye Vali-ye Faghih Dar Sepah Be Didar-e Khatami Ba Pasdaran" [Reaction of the Representative of the Supreme Leader in the Guards to Khatami's Meeting with Guardsmen], Aftab News Agency (Tehran), April 30, 2008, available in Persian at [www.aftabnews.ir/vdcdzj0jyt05f6a22y.html](http://www.aftabnews.ir/vdcdzj0jyt05f6a22y.html) (accessed May 10, 2009).
- d) "Faramandeh-ye Sepah-e Tehran-e Bozorg: Bayad Az Dowlat-e Ahmadinejad Hemayat Konim" [Greater Tehran IRGC Chief: We Must Support the Ahmadinejad Government], *Aftab-e Yazd* (Tehran), January 20, 2009, available in Persian at [www.aftab-yazd.com/pdf/2549/2.pdf](http://www.aftab-yazd.com/pdf/2549/2.pdf) (accessed May 18, 2009).
- e) "Dar Morede Ahmadinejad Baz-Ham Mortakeb-e Eshtebal-e Entekhabat-e Nohom Shodand" [With Regard to Ahmadinejad They Have Again Committed the Same Mistake as the Ninth Election], Raja News Agency (Tehran), January 27, 2009, available in Persian at [www.rajanews.com/detail.asp?id=23887](http://www.rajanews.com/detail.asp?id=23887) (accessed May 18, 2009).
- f) "E'teghad Be Basij Ra Dar Modiriat-Ha Ba Bamameh-Rizi-Ha Piadeh Konim" [We Should Realize Our Belief in Basij by Engaging It in Executive and Planning Affairs], Agah-Sazi (Tehran), February 1, 2009, available in Persian at [www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=2459&cat=7](http://www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=2459&cat=7) (accessed May 18, 2009).
- g) "Sardar Safavi: Liberal-Ha Bozorgtarin Zarbe Ra Be Keshvar Zadand" [Commander Safavi: The Liberals Dealt the Greatest Blows to the Country], Alef News Agency (Tehran), February 4, 2009, available in Persian at <http://alef.ir/content/view/40400> (accessed May 18, 2009).
- h) "Mohammad-Bagher Zolghadr: Dowrani Be Nam-e Eslahat Nadarim" [Mohammad-Bagher Zolghadr: There Is No Such Thing as a Reform Era], Agah-Sazi, February 17, 2009, available in Persian at [www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=2623&cat=7](http://www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=2623&cat=7) (accessed May 18, 2009).
- i) "Shokhesel-ha-ye Barandazi-ye Nam" [Soft Regime Change Indicators], Pelak News (Tehran), March 27, 2009, available in Persian at [www.pelaknews.com/index.php/?????????????????.html](http://www.pelaknews.com/index.php/?????????????????.html) (accessed May 18, 2009) (banned by the Islamic Republic authorities).
- j) "Hemayat-e Mofasssate Janeshin-e Namayandeh-ye Rahbari Dar Sepah Az Dowlat-e Nohom" [All-Out Support from Deputy Representative of the Supreme Leader in the Guards to the Ninth Government], Shahab News, April 20, 2009, available in Persian at <http://shahabnews.com/vdcsiqs.2bq1e8laa2.html> (accessed May 17, 2009).
- k) "Sepah Vared-e Jenah-ha-ye Siasi Nemishavad" [The Guards Will Not Enter Factional Politics], Jame Jam Online (Tehran), April 23, 2009, available in Persian at [www.jamejamonline.ir/newstext.aspx?newsnum=100904901710](http://www.jamejamonline.ir/newstext.aspx?newsnum=100904901710) (accessed May 17, 2009).
- l) "Zarurate Shafaf-Sazi-ye Mavaze" [The Necessity of Clarifying Positions], *Sobh-e Sadegh* (Tehran), March 3, 2009, available in Persian at [www.sobhesadegh.ir/1387/0391/p02.pdf](http://www.sobhesadegh.ir/1387/0391/p02.pdf) (accessed May 10, 2009).
- m) "Morteza Haji: Nezamian Sahneh-ye Siasat Ra Bara-ye Ashab-e Siasat Khali Konand" [The Military Men Should Leave the Arena of Politics to Statement], Agah-Sazi, March 3, 2009, available in Persian at [www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=2744&cat=7](http://www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=2744&cat=7) (accessed May 10, 2009).
- n) "Faramandeh-e Kolle Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enghelab-e Eslami: Enghelab-e Eslami Bar Khalafe Sayere Enghelab-h-ye Jahan Hargez Mottevaghef Nakhahad Shod" [Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Commander in Chief: Unlike Other Revolutions Our Revolution Will Never Stop], Borna News (Tehran), May 7, 2009, available in Persian at [www.bornanews.ir/Nsite/FullStory/?id=265453](http://www.bornanews.ir/Nsite/FullStory/?id=265453) (accessed May 17, 2009).
- o) "Basij Vared-e Siasat Nashavad Ya'ni 20 Million Be Sameveshte Khod Tavajoh Nakanand" [Nonintervention of the Basij in Politics Equates 20 Million People Not Paying Attention to Their Destiny], Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) (Tehran), May 14, 2009, available in Persian at [www.ima.ir/View/FullStory/?NewsId=487009](http://www.ima.ir/View/FullStory/?NewsId=487009) (accessed May 18, 2009).
- p) "Hazrate Hojjat al-Eslam Saidi: Kapshen-e Kandida-ye Morede Nazare Shoma Che Rangj Ast?" [The Honorable Hojjat al-Eslam Saidi: What Is the Color of the Candidate to Your Liking?], Entekhab News Agency (Tehran), May 17, 2009, available in Persian at [www.entekhabnews.com/portal/index.php?news=4724](http://www.entekhabnews.com/portal/index.php?news=4724) (accessed May 20, 2009).
- q) "Mardom Ba Houshyari Dar Salh-ye Gozasteh Osouh-garayan Ra Bar Sare Kar Avarandand" [During the Last Couple of Years in Their Wisdom the People Brought the Principalists to Power], IRNA, May 18, 2009, available in Persian at [www.ima.ir/View/FullStory/?NewsId=493881](http://www.ima.ir/View/FullStory/?NewsId=493881) (accessed May 20, 2009).
- r) "Aghayane Montaghd Be Basijian Pasokh Dahand" [The Gentlemen Critical of the Basij Do Answer], *Sobh-e Sadegh*, May 18, 2009, available in Persian at [www.sobhesadegh.ir/1388/0399/p01.pdf](http://www.sobhesadegh.ir/1388/0399/p01.pdf) and [www.sobhesadegh.ir/1388/0399/p08.pdf](http://www.sobhesadegh.ir/1388/0399/p08.pdf) (accessed May 18, 2009).
- s) "Janeshin-e Namayandeh-ye Vali-ye Faghih Dar Sepah Ya Sokhangoye Hezbe Siyasi-ye Nezamian?" [Deputy Representative of the Supreme Leader in the Guards or Spokesman of the Political Party of the Military?], Agah-Sazi, May 20, 2009, available in Persian at [www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=3396&cat=7](http://www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=3396&cat=7) (accessed May 20, 2009).

TABLE 2  
CIVILIAN PROTESTS AGAINST IRGC INTERVENTION IN POLITICS, 2009

Date	Name	Position/Venue	Subject
January 9	Mosharekat Participation Front	Political faction supporting former president Mohammad Khatami	Criticized statements made by a representative of the supreme leader in the IRGC and some IRGC commanders and warned against IRGC and Basij intervention in the 2009 presidential election. <sup>a</sup>
January 22	Editorial staff writer	<i>Samayeh</i>	Criticized the Mohammad Rasoul-Allah IRGC Unit in Greater Tehran, which urges members of the IRGC and the Basij to support Ahmadinejad and his cabinet ministers. <sup>b</sup>
January 27	Anonymous editorial staff writer	<i>Aftab-e Yazd</i>	Criticized IRGC intervention in politics and asked if Ahmadinejad really is worth the support of the armed forces. <sup>c</sup>
January 28	Mehdi Karrubi	Presidential candidate and E'temad-e Melli Party general secretary	Launched a direct and personal attack against Armed Forces Command Council chief Hassan Firouz-Abadi, who had praised Ahmadinejad and called his rivals too old to run for president. <sup>d</sup>
April 28	Mohammad Khatami	Former president	Complained about government control of all means of propaganda and communication to a select group of former IRGC commanders and warned that some factions are abusing the IRGC and the Basij to advance their factional political interests. <sup>e</sup>
May 5	Ali Larijani	Speaker of the parliament	Urged the armed forces not to intervene in the elections. <sup>f</sup>
May 7	Editorial staff member	Tabnak News	Disclosed lower levels of the Basij being instructed to support Ahmadinejad. <sup>g</sup>
May 9	Mehdi Karrubi	Presidential candidate and E'temad-e Melli Party general secretary	Warned the Basij against intervention in the presidential election and threatened the IRGC and the Basij with scandal if there is manipulation of the election. <sup>h</sup>
May 9	Abdollah Naseri	<i>Samayeh</i> (editorial staff member)	Condemned announced Basij intervention in the presidential election. <sup>i</sup>
May 9	Hossein Mousavi Tabrizi	Former East Azerbaijan province IRGC chief	Condemned announced Basij intervention in the presidential election as illegal and counter to Islamic law. <sup>j</sup>

TABLE 2 CONTINUED

May 19	Mohsen Rashid	Former IRGC commander	Criticized why the Basij is allowed to intervene on behalf of a certain political group but not serve in the Mir-Hossein Mousavi campaign. <sup>k</sup>
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- NOTES: a) "E'teraz-e Jebhe-ye Mosharekat-e Iran-e Eslami Be Dekhlat-e Mojaddad-e Nezamian Dar Siasat" [Protest of the Islamic Iran Participation Front against Renewed Military Intervention in Politics], Agah-Sazi (Tehran), January 9, 2009, available in Persian at [www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=2248&cat=7](http://www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=2248&cat=7) (accessed May 18, 2009).
- b) "Enteghad-e Eslah-Talaban Az Barkhi Ezharat-e Nezamian Dar Astaneh-ye Entekhabat" [Reformist Critique of Some Military Statements with the Elections in Horizon], Agah-Sazi, January 22, 2009, available in Persian at <http://emruz.biz/ShowItem.aspx?ID=20121&p=1> (accessed May 18, 2009).
- c) "Sarmaghaleh-ye Aftab-e Yazd: Khatami, Karrubi va Mir-Hossein Zahmat Ra Kam Konand" [Aftab-e Yazd's Editorial: Khatami, Karrubi and Mir-Hossein Should Get Lost], Alef News Agency (Tehran), January 27, 2009, available in Persian at <http://alef.ir/content/view/39697> (accessed May 18, 2009).
- d) "Nameh-ye Bi-Sabegheh-ye Mehdi Karrubi Be Sarlashgar Firouz-Abadi" [Mehdi Karrubi's Unprecedented Letter to Brigadier General Firouz-Abadi], Shahab News (Tehran), January 28, 2009, available in Persian at <http://shahabnews.com/vdcdnxOf.ytOff6a22y.html> (accessed May 18, 2009).
- e) "Sepah Bayad Faratar Az Jaryana-e Gorouhi va Bandi Bashad" [The Guards Must Be above Factional Issues and Movements], Agah-Sazi, April 28, 2009, available in Persian at [www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=3213&cat=7](http://www.agahsazi.com/article.asp?id=3213&cat=7) (accessed May 17, 2009).
- f) "Ba Tavvahom Nabayad Harf Zad" [One Must Not Speak with Delusional Fear], Abrar (Tehran), May 5, 2009, available in Persian at <http://abrarnews.com/politic/1388/880215/html/rooydad.htm#:356799> (accessed May 17, 2009).
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