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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PAAIA SURVEY: IRANIAN AMERICANS PROUD OF THEIR HERITAGE WANT TO SEE A SECULAR DEMOCRATIC IRAN THAT RESPECTS HUMAN RIGHTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 8, 2011) - The Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA) today released the findings of its 2011 national public opinion survey of Iranian Americans, showing that Iranian Americans regard their culture and heritage as an important component of their identity in the United States and their aspirations for Iran to become a secular democracy that supports human rights.

"An integral component of better understanding the Iranian American community and having its voice heard is the availability of on-going accurate statistical data about the Iranian American community," said Ali Mojdehi, Chairman of PAAIA's Board of Directors. "In striving to become an accurate source of information about the Iranian American community, PAAIA, through Zogby Research Services, has once again taken the lead in conducting its third nationwide scientific survey of Iranian Americans."

According to the survey, 83% of Iranian Americans believe that their heritage is either very important or somewhat important to them. Their desire and ability to maintain close contact with their families and friends in Iran is a clear testament to this strong affinity. Sixty-two percent (62%) of Iranian Americans communicate with their family and friends in Iran at least several times a month.

Iranian Americans want the regime in Iran to change. Two-thirds of Iranian Americans believe that Iran should be a secular democracy. In contrast, only six percent (6%) believe that any form of an Islamic Republic would work well in Iran. The survey indicates that by far the greatest number of Iranian Americans (63%) cite the promotion of human rights and democracy as the most important issue relating to U.S.- Iran relations.

Although a large majority of Iranian Americans are opposed to military action against Iran, Iranian Americans differ in their views between diplomacy and regime change as the best course of action for the U.S. to take towards Iran. Thirty-eight percent (38%) favor diplomatic negotiations or establishing diplomatic relations. In contrast 32% believe that the promotion of regime change would be in the best interest of the United States and only 3% support military action against Iran.

While support for both tightening (7%) or removing economic sanctions (10%) against Iran as policy options receive little support, a significant number of Iranian Americans (44%) find the restrictions imposed by the sanctions as burdensome on them and their families.

A large majority of Iranian Americans (73%) favor the establishment of a U.S. Interest Section in Iran that would provide consular services and issue U.S. visas, but would not constitute the resumption of diplomatic relations with Iran.

Despite the push by some U.S. politicians, most Iranian Americans are not supportive of efforts to "delist" the Mujahedeen-E Khalq (MEK) from the State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. In fact, only 22% support "delisting," with twice as many opposed (45%) and a third unsure.



Zogby Research Service (formally known as Zogby International) was commissioned by PAAIA to conduct a telephone survey of Iranian American adults. The survey was conducted between October 3rd - 6th, 2011 and is based on successful interviews in English with a representative sample of 400 Iranian American respondents. The margin of error is +/- 5.0 percentage points.

For the complete report, please visit PAAIA's website at <http://www.paaia.org/CMS/Data/Sites/1/PDFs/2011surveyofiranianamericans.pdf>

ABOUT PAAIA

The Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian, independent organization that represents the domestic interests of the Iranian American community before U.S. policymakers, opinion makers and the American public at large. PAAIA seeks to achieve its mission by focusing on three major areas of activities: Community Building, Image Building, and Influence Building.

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