

Unlike Obama, Trump will not be silent on Iran



A demonstrator outside the Iranian Embassy in Rome on Tuesday. (Gregorio Borgia/AP)

By Mike Pence

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Mike Pence is vice president of the United States.

Eight-and-a-half years ago, Americans watched the people of Iran rise up to claim their birthright of freedom. In the “Green Revolution,” [millions](#) of courageous young men and women filled the streets of Tehran and Tabriz, Qazvin and Karaj, and what seemed like every city and village in between. They denounced a fraudulent election, and as the days went on, they began to demand that the unelected ayatollahs end their decades of repression and release their iron-fisted grip on Iran and her people.

Those brave protesters looked to the leader of the free world for support. But as I saw first hand as a member of Congress, the president of the United States stayed silent.

In the wake of the demonstrations and the regime's brutal attempts to suppress them, President Barack Obama repeatedly failed to express America's solidarity with the Iranian protesters. As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I recognized the lack of action for what it was: an abdication of American leadership.

The United States has long stood with those who yearn for freedom and a brighter future, and yet the president declined to stand with a proud people who sought to escape from under the heavy weight of a dictatorship, [issuing only a delayed response](#) condemning the regime's violence. At the same time, the United States was failing to confront the leading state sponsor of terrorism — a mistake that endangered the safety and security of the American people and our allies.

The last administration's refusal to act ultimately emboldened Iran's tyrannical rulers to crack down on the dissent. The Green Revolution was ruthlessly put down, and the deadly silence on the streets of Iran matched the deafening silence from the White House. To this day, many Iranians blame the United States for abandoning them in their hour of need.

Today, the Iranian people are once again rising up to demand freedom and opportunity, and under President Trump, the United States is standing with them. This time, we will not be silent.

Months before the protests started in Iran, the president predicted that the days of the Iranian regime were numbered. Speaking at the United Nations in September, [he said](#), "The good people of Iran want change, and, other than the vast military power of the United States, Iran's people are what their leaders fear the most." Much like another president who made similar predictions about the Soviet Union, the president was mocked.

These words now ring truer than ever. Where his predecessor stayed silent in 2009, Trump swiftly offered the Iranian people America's unwavering support. He [has also committed](#) to provide assistance in the days ahead.

More broadly, the president declined to certify the previous administration's nuclear deal with Iran, which [flooded the regime's coffers](#) with tens of billions of dollars in cash — money that it could use to repress its own people and support terrorism across the wider world. We have already issued new sanctions on Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and the president is weighing additional actions to punish the regime for its belligerent behavior and assault on its own citizens.

The United States has spoken clearly and unequivocally. Unfortunately, many of our European partners, as well as the United Nations, have thus far failed to forcefully speak out on the growing crisis in Iran. It's time for them to stand up. The suppression of the Green Revolution in 2009 shows the disastrous price of silence. The president and I call on leaders of freedom-loving nations across the world to condemn Iran's unelected dictators and defend the Iranian people's unalienable right to chart their own future and determine their own destiny.

The president has said that "oppressive regimes cannot endure forever," and our administration will continue to support the protesters in their calls for freedom and demand that Iran's leaders cease their dangerous and destabilizing actions at home and abroad.

We stand with the proud people of Iran because it is right, and because the regime in Tehran threatens the peace and security of the world. That is the essence of American leadership, and as the people of Iran now know, the United States is leading on the world stage for freedom once again.