

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 31, 2023

General Anthony J. Cotton
U.S. Strategic Command
900 SAC BLVD
Offutt Air Force Base, NE 68113-6020

Dear General Cotton,

We write with deep concern regarding the appearance of a notorious Iranian propagandist and former senior regime official, Seyed Hossein Mousavian, as a keynote speaker to the 2023 STRATCOM Deterrence Symposium on August 17, 2023.

A propagandist of the regime since 1980, 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.¹

In the subsequent decades, Mousavian served as spokesman for the Iranian nuclear negotiating team and as a senior staffer for the regime's Supreme National Security Council. Despite Mousavian's past claims that he is an exile of the Iranian government, former Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif stated in 2016 that Mousavian has remained a loyal friend of the Iranian regime and "continued to, and continues to, work hard for the [Islamic Republic of Iran]."²

Recent actions and remarks by Mousavian demonstrate his continued support for the Iranian regime. For example, in 2020, Mousavian attended the funeral in Iran of Qassem Soleimani, the Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – Qods Force that was responsible for the deaths of at least 603 U.S. servicemembers in Iraq. Mousavian claimed that Soleimani was "a hero fighting terrorism".³

Mousavian has also repeatedly mocked U.S. officials under assassination threat from the Iranian regime. In a 2022 documentary paying homage to Soleimani, Mousavian smiled while referring to Iranian death threats against former Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook. He

¹ Behrouz, R. and Kohanloo P. (2020, January 1). *Teaching at Princeton – with blood on his hands*. New York Post. <https://nypost.com/2020/01/01/teaching-at-princeton-with-blood-on-his-hands/>

² Aarabi, K. (2021, April 30). *The future of Javad Zarif: A foreign asset in waiting*. Middle East Institute. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/future-javad-zarif-foreign-asset-waiting>

³ Mousavian, Seyed Hossein. [@hmousavian]. (2020, January 28). At today's Eu-Parliament event a pro-MEK member claimed Iranians celebrated killing of Gen.Soleimani echoing Trump calling him a terrorist! I responded that 7million attending funeral in Tehran and millions across Iran and Iraq proves Gen.Soleimani was a hero fighting terrorism! [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/hmousavian/status/1222199772909645827>.

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!”⁴

While we appreciate the importance of improving our understanding of adversary perspectives and motivations in formulating deterrence policies, providing Mousavian with an officially sanctioned U.S. Government platform for spreading historical falsehoods and Iranian regime propaganda is profoundly ill-advised. The decision to invite Mousavian to address its Deterrence Symposium calls into question the judgement of any personnel involved in such a decision, and leads us to question whether the command is appropriately focused on meeting the rapidly growing strategic threats to the United States and its allies.

We request answers to the following questions by September 29, 2023.

1. Please provide the names and positions of all officials responsible for approving the invitation to Mousavian.
2. Did STRATCOM provide compensation for transportation, lodging or a per diem to Mr. Mousavian? Was Mousavian provided with an honorarium? If so, how much?

Sincerely,



Rep. Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services



Sen. Roger F. Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services

⁴ Middle East Media Research Institute. [@MEMRIReports]. (2022, January 14). Princeton Guest Professor Hossein Mousavian, Former Iranian Ambassador to Germany: The Americans Are Terrified of Iranian Retribution for the Killing of Soleimani #Iran @hmousavian @Princeton #JCPOA. [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/MEMRIReports/status/1481922657209786373>.