

Ambassador Houssein Mousavian visits the University and addresses Iran's current nuclear position

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At the request of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Ambassador Seyed Hossein Mousavian was arrested and placed in jail for espionage, accused of conspiring with western officials.

Although in prison for less than two weeks, Mousavian was barred for five years from serving in Iran's diplomatic corps. Despite his unfounded arrest, Mousavian, who spoke at Tuesday evening's event, Global Politics and the Nuclear Crisis in Iran, still wholeheartedly supports Iran and its efforts to improve its nuclear technology.

"Iran is not after nuclear bombs. I'm 100 percent convinced."

That was only one of many claims that Mousavian addressed at the event, sponsored by the Iranian Culture Society and Global Zero, a student group advocating the international elimination of nuclear weapons. Around 60 people gathered into DUC Room 234 to hear Mousavian speak about the current tensions between Iran and the United States and the threat of nuclear war in the Middle East.

Involved in the realm of Iranian security for more than 25 years, Mousavian has served in a number of positions, as Iran's ambassador to Germany from 1990-1997 and as head of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran. Mousavian served on Iran's team in nuclear negotiations with the European Union and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from 2003-2005, and today he is a scholar at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University.

Mousavian began his speech by directly stating that nine years of negotiations between the U.S. and Iran have completely failed and are likely to continue in this manner if hostilities between the two countries remain. He is not optimistic for the future of U.S. Iranian relations.

"The U.S. says they have extended their arm to Iran, but what kind of hand?" Mousavian asked the audience at one point. "If it is an iron hand covered with a velvet glove, then it will not make any good sense."

Mousavian's speech shed light on the Iranian perspective regarding U.S. security policies over the past few decades. He proceeded to list more than 10 grievances regarding Iran's justification for mistrusting the U.S., including the U.S.'s support of Iraq in the Iran-Iraq wars in 1980 and the U.S.'s persistent refusal to recognize the rights of Iran to develop nuclear technology under the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty.

Reflecting on President Obama's approach to Iran's nuclear enrichment, Mousavian condemned the recent economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. as both harmful to the Iranian state and ineffective in halting nuclear progress.

"No doubt, Obama has done more to undermine Iran over the course of three years than any other U.S. president since 1979," Mousavian said.

Mousavian ended his speech with recommendations for the movement towards peace. He stressed that the U.S. must recognize Iranian rights to nuclear enrichment under the NPT, and Iran must comply with transparency requests by the IAEA, which, according to Mousavian, Iran has both encouraged and complied with in the past.

A question and answer period followed his speech, and Mousavian took the chance to speak more about Ahmadinejad's radical rhetoric, the unlikelihood of the Arab revolutions taking hold in Iran and the improbability of a strike against Israel.

"I thought it was really interesting to hear things from a perspective that we probably couldn't get

otherwise," Seiko Shastri, a freshman member of Global Zero, said. "I appreciated how candid he was given that a lot of these topics are pretty controversial."

"He obviously has a very high-up position that no matter which perspective you're looking from you're not likely to get [that information] as a normal person," sophomore Nay'Chelle Harris said. "So, he was able to answer some questions that you can't find on Google. He's generally just very knowledgeable, and you can tell he's done some things that he could kill you if he told you about them."

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