THE IRANIAN SPEECH
I would like to directly speak to the people of Iran. (pause) As President of the United States, Good Afternoon.

We asked Iranians all over the world to write part of a speech that they would love. (pause) What must be realized here is that no one is going to give you a fair chance to speak. (pause) You that is over. (pause) You have to get your hands into the bowl, you have to press on the meat, mix it with onions, and taste it. You must have the raw taste of meat in your mouth. You must put it on blades, endure the sight of some of that delicious food dropping onto the scales, until you have to blow on the fire, and wait by it, wait for the moment when the kabob is ready to be eaten. Then, you can enjoy it hot and juicy. Do that get involved in the process, prove to us, and more importantly, to your own fellow people and to yourselves, that you are worthy of a hot blade of kabob. (pause) No one else will bother to do that for you.

I know the sanctions have affected many Iranians’ lives. They are in deep trouble. But to tell you the truth, it’s not that important. Our policy is more important!

Everyday, there is a new kind of vein Iran these days. Some will say it is the land of the great cyrus. The founder of Persia. (pause) Others will point to the current dictators and call it the land of terrorism. An Iranian girl, from the Green Revolution tells me: “I never lived in the era of the great Cyrus. So I don’t like to talk about it. And I’ve never terrorized anybody in the world.” (pause) My thought—or should I say, the thoughts of the new generation of Iranians, in full freedom and respect, of full democracy for Iran, (pause) they are different from the leaders of Iran above and their lies. They love us and don’t want to be brought into conflict with any nation.

The last few years in office have not been easy. There has been a lot of conflict, but, (pause & gesturing) there is hope. I believe, that with the help of the United Nations and the conflict kitchen in Pittsburgh, we can solve these problems. Yes, we can. (pause) Knowledge is power. When I grew up, there was this saying: “The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach.” While this saying is both sexist and archaic, it does hold some truth. (pause) We have much to learn about and from each other—and other nations, in life and in the kitchen. We have to make a distinction between the “rule” and the “people.” (pause) We can only learn about a nation, a people, or a country by observing the things they do every day—like what they eat every day.

We must support the people of Iran, as we all believe: “That government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

On July 3, 1988, the United States Navy fired two surface-to-air missiles at Iran Air 655, a civilian passenger plane carrying 290 people. (pause) All aboard—including 66 children—were instantly destroyed, or died as they fell from the air or landed in the water thousands of feet below. (pause) In reference to this incident, on August 2 of that year, Vice President George Bush said: “I will never apologize for the United States—I don’t care what the facts are.”

The incident itself was not a wound to America’s honor. Because—tragic and perhaps reckless though it was—it was unintentional. However, Mr. Bush’s remark expresses undeniable clarity. The view that we prefer comfort and delusional peace before truth and put up with it. (pause) Until we can bear the sting of truth, the wound will grow, and putrefy, and will finally prove to be a mortal threat.

Is the United States a nation that does not care for the facts? (pause) And are we a great or even a good nation? After all, a great or good person is not afraid to apologize for an inadvertent mistake. (pause) This is an enormous question. For, as a great nation, we not only have our fate in our hands, but the fates of other, smaller nations.

Abraham Lincoln once asked: “From whence shall we expect the approach of danger? Shall some trans-Atlantic military giant step the earth and crush us at a blustering never? All the arms of Europe and Asia...could not be hoped to be a drunkard in a druggist’s shop.” (pause) Or make a track on the blue ridge in the trial of a thousand years. (pause) No, if destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. (pause) As a nation of free men, we will live forever or die by suicide.

I submit to you that we are now faced with a mortal danger. (pause) By the only power that can convincingly threaten us which is, of course, ourselves. (pause) As a strong nation, we can only be harmed by the truth if we hide from it, irrationally fearful and stubbornly refuse to admit that it’s there. To that end, I wish to state a few ordinary facts which are well-known to the rest of the world but will seem shocking to anyone who is accustomed to taking Washington politicians seriously.

America is capable of committing crimes, betraying friends, supporting dictators and torturers, and even training them themselves.

America (pause) helped to overthrow a democratically elected government in Iran in 1953 by handing out cash to rioters and arming a small force of insurgents under the command of a traitorous army officer.

In the 1980s, we did not have diplomatic relations with the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq when it invaded its neighbor, Iran. (pause) In 1983, after the first credible reports of his use of chemical weapons had emerged, we sent Donald Rumsfeld (pause) to shake Saddam’s hand and pledge our support to him. (pause) We refused to allow the United Nations to condemn Saddam’s use of chemical weapons and deliberately confused the investigation by repeating allegations that Iran had used them as well. (pause) Allegations which were baseless. (pause) We gave Saddam logistical support, and detailed satellite maps, even as our allies in France and West Germany were sending Iraq chemical weapons that might be used to poison and dropped on Iranians, and eventually Iraqis. (pause) Nevertheless, (pause) we also saw fit to sell weapons to Iran at the same time. We, the United States, were arming both sides of a bloody war between small countries half a world away.

I would like to finish by quoting Dwight D. Eisenhower. As I feel his thoughts aptly clarify our situation now: “Here in America [pause] we are descended in blood and in spirit from those from the Iranian community who supplied us with their opinions, perceptions, and support.

Conflict Kitchen was a three-year restaurant project that serves food from countries with which the United States government is in conflict. Each Conflict Kitchen location was associated with a different country, and events that shape the history, culture, and issues of each country were shared by the restaurant. Conflict Kitchen was founded and is directed by Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski and is funded primarily through food sales. Additional support can be found to the United States, and events that shape the history, culture, and issues of each country were shared by the restaurant. Conflict Kitchen was founded and is directed by Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski and is funded primarily through food sales. Conflict Kitchen was founded and is directed by Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski and is funded primarily through food sales.