

Iranian University Chancellors Ask Bollinger 10 Questions

By [Global Research](#)

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Seven chancellors and presidents of Iranian universities and research centers, in a letter addressed to their counterpart in the US, Columbia University, denounced Lee Bollinger's insulting words against the Iranian nation and president and invited him to provide responses to 10 questions by Iranian academics and intellectuals.

The following is the full text of the letter:

Mr. Lee Bollinger
Columbia University President

We, the professors and heads of universities and research institutions in Tehran, hereby announce our displeasure and protest at your impolite remarks prior to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent speech at Columbia University.

We would like to inform you that President Ahmadinejad was elected directly by the Iranian people through an enthusiastic two-round poll in which almost all of the country's political parties and groups participated. To assess the quality and nature of these elections you may refer to US news reports on the poll dated June 2005.

Your insult, in a scholarly atmosphere, to the president of a country with a population of 72 million and a recorded history of 7,000 years of civilization and culture is deeply shameful.

Your comments, filled with hate and disgust, may well have been influenced by extreme pressure from the media, but it is regrettable that media policy-makers can determine the stance a university president adopts in his speech.

Your remarks about our country included unsubstantiated accusations that were the product of guesswork as well as media propaganda. Some of your claims result from misunderstandings that can be clarified through dialogue and further research.

During his speech, Mr. Ahmadinejad answered a number of your questions and those of students. We are prepared to answer any remaining questions in a scientific, open and direct debate.

You asked the president approximately ten questions. Allow us to ask you ten of our own questions in the hope that your response will help clear the atmosphere of misunderstanding and distrust between our two countries and reveal the truth.

1- Why did the US media put you under so much pressure to prevent Mr. Ahmadinejad from delivering his speech at Columbia University? And why have American TV networks been broadcasting hours of news reports insulting our president while refusing to allow him the opportunity to respond? Is this not against the principle of freedom of speech?

2- Why, in 1953, did the US administration overthrow Iran's national government under Dr Mohammad Mosaddegh and go on to support the Shah's dictatorship?

3- Why did the US support the blood-thirsty dictator Saddam Hussein during the 1980-88 Iraqi-imposed war on Iran, considering his reckless use of chemical weapons against Iranian soldiers defending their land and even against his own people?

4- Why is the US putting pressure on the government elected by the majority of Palestinians in Gaza instead of officially recognizing it? And why does it oppose Iran's proposal to resolve the 60-year-old Palestinian issue through a general referendum?

5- Why has the US military failed to find Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden even with all its advanced equipment? How do you justify the old friendship between the Bush and Bin Laden families and their cooperation on oil deals? How can you justify the Bush administration's efforts to disrupt investigations concerning the September 11 attacks?

6- Why does the US administration support the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) despite the fact that the group has officially and openly accepted the responsibility for numerous deadly bombings and massacres in Iran and Iraq? Why does the US refuse to allow Iran's current government to act against the MKO's main base in Iraq?

7- Was the US invasion of Iraq based on international consensus and did international institutions support it? What was the real purpose behind the invasion which has claimed hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives? Where are the weapons of mass destruction that the US claimed were being stockpiled in Iraq?

8- Why do America's closest allies in the Middle East come from extremely undemocratic governments with absolutist monarchical regimes?

9- Why did the US oppose the plan for a Middle East free of unconventional weapons in the recent session of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors despite the fact the move won the support of all members other than Israel?

10- Why is the US displeased with Iran's agreement with the IAEA and why does it openly oppose any progress in talks between Iran and the agency to resolve the nuclear issue under international law?

Finally, we would like to express our readiness to invite you and other scientific delegations to our country. A trip to Iran would allow you and your colleagues to speak directly with Iranians from all walks of life including intellectuals and university scholars. You could then assess the realities of Iranian society without media censorship before making judgments about the Iranian nation and government.

You can be assured that Iranians are very polite and hospitable toward their guests.

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