

US-UN Fears Assad Win in Free Syrian Election?

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Every now and then we have a chance to peek through a tiny window to see how “diplomacy” is done behind closed doors. Last week the leaked conversation between US diplomats [plotting the overthrow](#) of Ukraine’s government was one such dramatic moment.

Another came yesterday, in [an interview](#) with Iran’s Ambassador to Lebanon, Ghazanfar Roknabadi, which appeared in the respected Lebanese Daily Star newspaper. In a sweeping interview, the Ambassador discussed the recent bombing of the Iranian embassy in Beirut and the regional threat of the growing number of jihadist groups in Syria.



Then he let loose with this bombshell. Roknabadi told the Daily Star that **the Iranian government had been under pressure to convince Syrian president Bashar al-Assad not to run again for president.** As Syria’s only regional ally, Iran presumably has a good deal of influence with the Assad government.

Ambassador Roknabadi:

[U.N. Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey] Feltman, during a visit to Iran last summer, **asked officials to convince Assad not to run in the elections.** The Iranian officials asked him: ‘What’s the problem if he runs,’ to which Feltman responded: **‘If he runs, he will win the elections.’**

Feltman is not just any UN bureaucrat. In the revolving door between the UN and US government, he previously served as US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs from August 2009 to June 2012 and as United States Ambassador to Lebanon from July 2004 to January 2008. Before that he served in post-“liberation” Iraq.

More recently, Feltman was an important cast member in the above-mentioned “Ukraine-gate” phone call between US undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland and US Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt. In the Ukraine drama, his former State Department colleagues agreed that Feltman could be trusted to appoint a UN official to “glue” together the deal they were cooking up.

If Ambassador Roknabadi is accurate in his account, this confirms much about the US

government's cynical regime-change ploy in Syria. Not that it is any surprise to those paying attention. It is in keeping with US ambivalence toward actual electoral democracy in those places which it purports to democratize. From Gaza to Egypt to Afghanistan to Libya to Iraq, it seems what US democratization efforts fear most is actual democracy.

No wonder Secretary Kerry keeps desperately clinging to the US [misread](#) of the "Geneva I" communiqué, claiming without evidence that it is a regime-change agreement among signatories. Assad must be kept out of the picture, because the US is terrified of his [popularity](#) in Syria.

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