Twitter Thread by Xiyue Wang



Xiyue Wang
@XiyueWang9

1. Ben Rhodes's comment dismissing the concerns of former political prisoners and US hostages in Iran regarding Rob Malley's potential appointment as Iran envoy is deeply unprofessional and offensive. As my own story illustrates, not everything is about partisan DC politics.

> I think Joe Biden should pick his Iran envoy, not Tom Cotton and a bunch of cheerleaders for MBS and American authoritarianism. Elections have consequences.
>
> — Ben Rhodes (@brhodes) January 22, 2021

2. In 2016 I was a Princeton graduate student who excitedly supported the JCPOA and the new era of Iran-US diplomacy it was meant to usher. Such was my optimism that I actually went to Iran for dissertation research. That's when my nightmare began. https://t.co/LvyvuDlvoO

3. I was arrested by Iranian security forces and held hostage in Evin prison-away from my wife and infant son-for more than 3 years. The regime knew I was innocent and told me so. It took me 40 months in Evin to comprehend what had happened to me.

4. As a political prisoner I've likely had more intensive contact with Iranian hardliners than most Iran watchers in the US, especially US govt officials like Mr. Rhodes and Malley. I believe the insights derived from that experience have a unique value. https://t.co/qGH6YAbdSv

5. I support strengthening the nuclear deal, but am convinced the JCPOA of 2015 is well-intended yet inadequate. Simply lifting pressure against Iran and allowing it to benefit from economic integration produced NO further incentive for the regime to change its behavior.

6. During my imprisonment Mr. Malley was a senior White House official. He played no positive role in facilitating my release, a view shared by present and past hostages and their families. If he is appointed, it'd suggest releasing US hostages from Iran won't be a priority.

7. More importantly, Malley's appointment will convey to Tehran that Sec. Blinken's principled remarks on strengthening the JCPOA, working with regional partners, and standing up for human rights in Iran were merely empty words.

8. Pres. Biden has said, personnel is policy. Malley has long opposed pressure against Iran & its regional proxies and apathy about Iran’s human rights abuse. It’s telling that official Iranian media are already celebrating his potential appointment.
https://t.co/KptDxI3gf0

9. America’s Iran policy requires balance. There are lessons to be learned from both Obama and Trump’s approaches to Iran. Mr. Malley’s appointment signals to Tehran that the US is simply lurching from one extreme policy to another.