



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on September 28, 2023

## Report: Biden Pentagon Appointee Part of Iranian Influence Network

As a new report raises alarm about foreign influence within the upper echelons of America's national security apparatus, government officials are jumping to defend one Biden appointee with clear ties to Iran.

Pentagon senior policy advisor Ariane Tabatabai, a Biden appointee and political scientist with expertise on Iranian-American affairs, was named in a Tuesday report by [Semafor](#) as being part of an Iranian influence network designed to push talking points favorable to Tehran among the American policymaking establishment.



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As Semafor reports: "In the spring of 2014, senior Iranian Foreign Ministry officials initiated a quiet effort to bolster Tehran's image and positions on global security issues — particularly its nuclear program — by building ties with a network of influential overseas academics and researchers. They called it the Iran Experts Initiative."

The program was exposed due to the emergence of a cache of Iranian government correspondence and emails.

Tabatabai is currently chief of staff for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations — a role that requires a security clearance. She previously served as a diplomat on the team of Robert Malley, the lead negotiator on the infamous 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal (which President Donald Trump abandoned), who was placed on unpaid leave on June 29 of this year and had his security clearances suspended due to an FBI probe into the possible mishandling of classified material.

According to Semafor, Tabatabai "on at least two occasions checked in with Iran's Foreign Ministry before attending policy events, according to the emails." She was a strong advocate of the Iran Nuclear Deal, authoring articles [in its support](#).

Despite the Semafor report, the Department of Defense stands by Tabatabai.

"Dr. Tabatabai was thoroughly and properly vetted as a condition of her employment with the Department of Defense," a spokesman for the department told the [Washington Free Beacon](#). "We are honored to have her serve."

And Matthew Miller, a spokesman for the State Department, pushed back against the Semafor story, arguing that its information is from "almost a decade ago."

Tabatabai's appointment to the Pentagon in 2021 was met with backlash from Republicans and Iranian dissidents, who had concerns about her ties to Tehran.

As the Beacon notes:

Tabatabai's father, Dr. Javad Tabatabai, is a senior faculty member at the state-controlled



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University of Tehran and is allegedly part of [former Iranian president Hassan] Rouhani's inner circle, according to information published by Iranian dissident groups.

At the time, the State Department dismissed these claims as racist "smears and slander."

"We will not sit idly by as our employees—dedicated public servants—face personal smears and slander," then-spokesman Ned Price told the *Free Beacon* at the time. "The administration appointed Ariane Tabatabai to a key role in the State Department because she is one of the United States' leading experts on Iranian nuclear policy. The State Department is honored to have her serving in this capacity."

After publication of the Semafor piece on Tuesday, members of the House Armed Services Committee sent an [investigatory letter](#) to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin demanding to know why Tabatabai has access to top-secret government information.

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.), who sits on the Armed Services Committee, told the Beacon: "A high-level official at the Biden [Defense Department] was briefing Iran's foreign ministry and ghostwriting essays for the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. Congress needs to investigate any communications between Ariane Tabatabai and the Iranian regime since Biden took office [and] the Pentagon must review Ms. [Tabatabai's] security clearance."

"The House Armed Services Committee should see if Ms. Tabatabai was involved in STRATCOM's [U.S. Strategic Command's] indefensible decision to host former Iranian nuclear negotiator and propagandist Hossein Mousavian," Banks added.

Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), another member of the committee, criticized the Biden administration's penchant for handing out security clearances to allegedly untrustworthy individuals, citing the case of Malley. "The Biden administration owes the American public an explanation on the extent of Iran's influence operations in the United States and whether officials in the Biden administration have been compromised."

Rep. Kevin Hern (R-Okla.) echoed Wilson's remark, lamenting that "multiple people within the Biden administration have ties to the Iranian Regime" and asserting that "The world's leading state sponsor of terrorism should have zero friends in the U.S. government."

But it isn't only Iran that has influence agents acting in its favor within the American government. As *The New American* [previously reported](#), U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm met with her Chinese counterpart, China National Energy Administration Chairman Zhang Jianhua, right before the administration's 2021 announcement that it would release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to fight nationwide high gas prices caused by Biden's own energy policies.

While the content of these meetings is not known, the news suggests that the White House may have discussed its plans with Beijing and was thus influenced by the communist regime in making policy decisions that have weakened America's energy independence while simultaneously strengthening China's global position.

All of this sends one clear message: America's public officials are for sale to the highest bidder.



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