

Reza Kahlili

The author of "A Time to Betray"

A true story about how he infiltrated Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards as a CIA agent to betray but help the country he loved.

Interview-Steffan Piper

1) Why did you wait so long to tell your story and what made you go through with the book?

I never intended to tell my story to a single soul, let alone the entire world! Being a spy and feeling like a betrayer had penetrated every cell in my body for so long, and after I ended my collaboration with the CIA out of frustration over US policies toward Iran, I found peace and tranquility in the simple new life of a free man - in my wife's eyes and my son's smile. I was me again! However, I never lost my desire to see Iran be free and I knew that everything I'd risked over the years would have been wasted if I remained quiet. My wife Somaya encouraged me to get back and finish what I had started almost three decades earlier. Three years of hard work on my book, remembering all the suffering I had witnessed, has brought another measure of understanding to my life. Iran must become free and the whole world needs to know what life is like inside Iran and for each Iranian family...and I have to be their voice!

2) In the coming years, what fate do you see in store for Iran in terms of its intertwined relationship with the Islamic Mullah's?

Iran is on the verge of change. The Mullahs can arrest, torture and kill in God's name for their survival, but they can't extinguish the fervor and hope for freedom and democracy building in the young generation. Barely a year and half after the Iranian Revolution the majority of Iranians wanted this regime gone. Tens of thousands have lost their lives in that pursuit, and thousands await a horrific fate in prisons across Iran. Today Iranians resent their rulers and their religion more than ever before. This will lead to change.

3) How much longer do you believe Iran's relationship with Ahmadinejad will continue?

Ahmadinejad is part of a system that represents the Islamic regime. However, the real power remains with the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. Though there are serious divisions among the Iranian leadership, such as the one between the Supreme Leader and Ahmadinejad, the problem with the regime itself will not change if Ahmadinejad loses power. The establishment as a whole must be changed, otherwise the regime will continue what it does best - terrorizing its own people and the rest of the world.

Justice is teenage girls not being raped before execution because in Islam, virgins go to heaven.

4) A lot of people have said 'A Time to Betray' is an incredibly important book, and a must-read for our times. Do you think that the notion of courage is the book's most important message?

I often think about the courage that has kept me going. The courage of a teenage boy raising his fist and demanding his rights from a brutal regime, knowing he will be arrested and likely executed; the courage of all those boys and girls accepting torture but not giving up their fight for freedom; the courage of a mother burying her teenage daughter but still keeping her head high and demanding justice; the courage of a nation of people under siege that remains steadfast in its resistance. I believe my book is carrying this message of how courageous these innocent souls are.

5) What has inspired you most about Iran's recent socio-political uprising?

The recent uprising over the fraudulent 2009 presidential election was yet another courageous act by the Iranians. The whole world for the first time (thanks to cellphone videos) witnessed how brutal this Islamic government is. I am so proud of these spirited young people who so bravely stand up for their rights and pay with their blood to send a message to the world that freedom is their right, not a privilege. Every day I pray to God for the day that we get our country back from these barbarians. Iranians deserve so much better. **next page >>**