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THE BIG QUESTION, June 16: Justin Logan

The Big Question for Tuesday, June 16:

Has the Obama administration done enough to support protesters in Iran? If not, what else can or should be done?

See all responses here.

[Justin Logan](#), Associate Director of Foreign Policy Studies at [The Cato Institute](#), said:

President Obama should keep quiet on the subject of Iran's elections. At least two pernicious tendencies are on display in the Beltway discussion on the topic. First is the common Washington impulse to "do something!" without laying out clear objectives and tactics. What, after all, is President Obama or his administration supposed to do to "support protesters" in Iran in the first place? What would be the ultimate goal of such support? Most importantly, what is the mechanism by which the support is supposed to produce the desired outcome? That we are debating how America should intervene in Iran's domestic politics indicates the sheer grandiosity of American foreign policy thought.

The second, related tendency is that of narcissism: to make foreign countries' domestic politics all about us. In this game, American observers anoint from afar one side the "good," "pro-Western" team and the other the "bad," "radical" one and urge Washington to press its thumb on the good side of the scale. But doing so would risk winding up Iranian nationalism, a very real force that binds Iranians together more tightly than their differences pull them apart.

If Iran's government has overreached, the right response is schadenfreude. It couldn't have happened to a nicer group of guys. Meanwhile, President Obama has a full plate of problems to deal with in his own country. Whatever government emerges from the Iranian political process, we're going to have to deal with it. Until then, whatever President Obama's personal prayers or wishes are for Iran, he ought to keep them to himself.

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