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Muslim CEO & Christian Pastor Promote Democracy and Regime Change in Iran

Donald Fareed, a former Iranian Shiite Muslim turned evangelical Christian and President of the non-profit organization Persian Ministries International, is partnering with Sattar Deldar, a moderate Muslim television broadcasting executive, to encourage democracy and regime change in Iran.

SAN JOSE, CA—February 16, 2005—Donald Fareed, a Christian pastor and founder of the non-profit organization Persian Ministries International (PMI) (www.PersianMinistries.org), and Sattar Deldar, a Muslim and CEO of Appadana International (www.appadanatv.com), an international global satellite television station, have joined forces to support the pro-democracy movement in Iran and encourage regime change in that key Middle Eastern country. Despite holding dramatically opposed religious beliefs, this Christian and Muslim share a political agenda to effect major political change in Iran.

Fareed, a former Shiite Muslim, is now a U.S. citizen and evangelical Christian pastor, and is preaching a radical message of politics, referendum and religion, encouraging democracy in Iran and urging its citizens to press the fundamentalist-controlled government for religious freedom using civil disobedience and nonviolent, passive resistance. His provocative message is televised, and reaches up to 30 million Persian-speaking Muslim viewers in the Middle East each week. Fareed's long-time friend and associate, Sattar Deldar, who is a moderate Muslim, makes these broadcasts possible by providing Fareed several timeslots on Appadana International, his Muslim satellite-linked television station. Today, the two friends are a one-of-a-kind partnership promoting democracy and religious freedom in the Middle East.

Fareed and Deldar's goal is to gather support for the people of Iran in their pro-democracy movement so the Iranian people can topple the existing Islamic government and create a secular, democratic republic. "Iran is ready for democracy, and America needs to know that," says Fareed. "We believe that by supporting the people of Iran in this effort, we will be able to eliminate the roots of terrorism in the world."

"Sattar has been a close friend of mine for nearly 20 years, and I am excited about working together to bring democracy to Iran," says Fareed. "He has supported my broadcast at great cost to himself, because he really believes in freedom of religion and democracy. Despite our very different religious beliefs, we both support and promote freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom for all political parties, equal treatment of all people, and peaceful assembly, demonstrations and strikes."

"Fareed and I have a great friendship and partnership," agrees Deldar. "It is so important to educate the Iranian people, and Fareed has done great work bringing attention to the atrocities being committed in Iran by the Islamic-controlled government, and promoting democracy and religious freedom there." Deldar says the Iranian government tries to equate democracy with sex and drugs and the like. "Through television programs like Fareed's, we are letting the Iranian people know what true freedom really means. This is not just a religious freedom issue, but a human rights issue as well," he explains.

Iran is the world's only fully theocratic regime. It harshly suppresses the evangelization of Muslims, and lists apostasy from Islam as a capital offense. Not surprisingly, preaching against the Islamic-controlled Iranian government has put Fareed in a precarious position. He has faced severe political and religious persecution, with associates being tortured and martyred, and personally being blacklisted by the Iranian government. Iran National TV also aired his photograph, accusing him of "anti-Islamic activities with the intent to topple the government of Iran."

There is an unquestionable timeliness to Fareed and Deldar's political activities. President Bush signaled his support for the growing pro-democracy movement in Iran in his recent State of the Union address,

saying, "As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you." And, while the State Department opposed legislation that made regime change in Iran a policy for America last year, Republican Senator Rick Santorum from Pennsylvania just introduced the Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2005, which commits America to "actively support a national referendum in Iran."

The Iran Freedom and Support Act also authorizes the president to "provide financial and political assistance (including the award of grants) to foreign and domestic individuals, organizations, and entities that support democracy and the promotion of democracy in Iran. Such assistance may include the award of grants to eligible independent pro-democracy radio and television broadcasting organizations that broadcast into Iran."

"One of my biggest goals is to encourage the people of Iran by showing them that America stands with their pro-democracy movement," says Fareed. "If America supports the pro-democracy movement in Iran, it will lead to the downfall of the current Iranian regime, and that will send shockwaves throughout the entire Muslim world. One way American can support Iran is by supporting Persian Ministries International and Appadana International as we work to bring democracy to Iran."

About Appadana International

Appadana International is a privately owned secular Muslim satellite television station that broadcasts over Telstar 5 and 12 into North America, Europe, and the Middle East. Chief Executive Officer Sattar Deldar established Appadana in 1980 with a cable television station in the San Francisco bay area, and began broadcasting internationally over satellite in 2002. Appadana International strives to stay culturally, socially and politically sensitive and relevant as it covers all angles and brings the best in balanced programming to its viewers. Appadana carries several pro-democracy programs with a vision of promoting freedom and democracy worldwide. For more information, please visit www.appadanatv.com

About Persian Ministries International (PMI)

Persian Ministries International (PMI) is an evangelistic non-profit Christian organization with a vision of encouraging Muslims around the world to press their governments for religious freedom and democracy, while reaching over 100 million Persian-speaking Muslims worldwide with the gospel. PMI encourages Muslim-Christian dialog, working to bring the Church to an awareness of the needs and opportunities for ministering to Muslim people, and challenging and equipping the Church to love Muslims and reach them for Jesus Christ. For more information, please visit www.PersianMinistries.org.

Donald Fareed and Sattar Deldar are not affiliated or supported by any political organizations.