

Red Tape, Iron Nerve: The Iranian Quest for U.S. Education

by [Steven Ditto \(/experts/steven-ditto\)](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Steven Ditto, a 2013 adjunct fellow with The Washington Institute, is an independent Middle East researcher who specializes in law, human rights, and education. He reads French, Arabic, and Farsi and has written extensively on topics related to Islamic law and history, religious freedom and women

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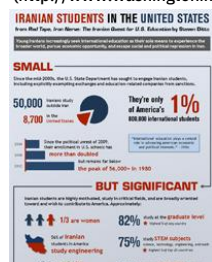
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The rising number of Iranian exchange students presents an opportunity to revitalize U.S. public diplomacy outreach to Iran. In this new report, Steven Ditto demonstrates how lowering barriers, reaffirming America's commitment to human rights, and fulfilling past pledges can help pave the way for long-term and short-term change in Iran.

(<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/infographic-iranian-students-in-the-united-states>)

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Every year, greater numbers of bright, driven Iranian students take significant risks to seek their education in America and escape repression back home. Yet they continue to face major financial, logistical, and consular challenges on their path to U.S. colleges, as well as physical and emotional hardships once they pass those obstacles and begin their studies.

In this Policy Focus, analyst Steven Ditto assesses the scope of these challenges through extensive historical research as well as personal interviews and surveys of Iranian students. He concludes that lowering certain barriers, reaffirming America's commitment to human rights, and fulfilling past pledges to these students can help Washington revitalize its public diplomacy efforts and pave the way for short- and long-term change in Iran.

THE AUTHOR

Steven Ditto is an independent Middle East researcher who specializes in law, human rights, and education and has written extensively on topics related to Islamic law and history, religious freedom and women's rights, and education and public diplomacy. Most recently, he authored the in-depth historical study *Nuclear Weapons in Iranian Religious Discourse, 1962-Present*. He holds a master's degree in international education from George Washington University and blogs at selfscholar.wordpress.com. ❖

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