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Freedom is a precious commodity but nobody knows with any degree of certainty where and when the situation in Iran will finally end. However, its people have sent an indisputable message to the mullahs and the revolutionary guard that enough is enough and their time is up. The people must always come first; the indicators are that the wind is in their sails. Arabian and Middle Eastern near-neighbour states are already pushing back against regime change but now is the time for the Government in London to become more assertive and be on the right side of history by supporting root-and-branch change away from corruption, illegal imprisonment, capital punishment, the confiscation of homes and the pillaging of the wealth of the nation.

Since the regime controls the economy, joining the revolutionary guard is an assured way to advance in a difficult life exacerbated by crippling sanctions. A long-term necessity is that the conditions are such that the economy can be opened up, to the benefit of all. The new generation in the IRGC is far removed from the original purpose of the Islamic revolution; given the incentive to do so, lower ranks could come out as sympathetic to the uprising given that the regime is now recognised as being so unpopular. The flight of capital from the country by senior members of the Government is testament that the end could be near.

However, I make a note of caution: the Islamic Republic has a strong lobby outside Iran, most particularly in Washington. A certain leftist ex-Prime Minister is being groomed to take over the mantle and, if this ploy is successful, will serve as a puppet of the regime by implementing cosmetic change only. The “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement has not yet found a single voice. It should be encouraged to do so post-haste in the same manner as the way in which Khomeini orchestrated the uniting of disparate factions in 1979. There is a consensus in Iran that the West is not doing enough. However, I remain of the belief that the leadership will buckle when faced with continued condemnation and pressure. Frankly, everything hinges on the strategic support that the uprising receives from the United Kingdom Government and others.

I join others in saving my concluding remarks for matters relating to the pending BBC closure. I can do no better than join the dots with what I said the other day in the Chamber:

“Our foreign policy and strategy should deem this an entirely illogical move ... closure will send conflicting messages about the support we have in this country for the uprising.”