

## Iranian Voices: Defending Iran

Iran's growing power in the Middle East had become eminent. President Ahmadenijad's regime has gained influence in Iraq and Lebanon, and some think it has its eyes set on Bahrain. The US government is critical of Tehran expanding its power, and, in fact, much of the talk about Iran in the US centers around Iran's aggressive foreign policy.

This can make things difficult for people like 31-year-old Kowsar Gowhardi, a law student at the University of Baltimore. Her father is a former Iranian diplomat and she struggles to defend the country she's proud to be from.

"The whole thing emotionally was really hard for me because I always sided with the Iranian government for years and years. But the situation since the Iranian elections has been very hard for me to really defend the actions of the Iranian government. Although I definitely strongly oppose foreign intervention in Iran, it's really emotionally hard for me to defend the actions of the government.

I have a lot of hopes and basically wishes for my country, but one thing that I really want is Iranians to be respected outside of Iran. I want this respect to come for my government, and my flag, and my national anthem. I want Iranian values to be appreciated all over the world and to have more friends than enemies."