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The Honorable Judge Blanche M. Manning
The United States District Court
Northern District of Illinois
Everett McKinley Dirksen Building
20th Floor
219 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604

August 3, 2006

Re: The Islamic Republic of Iran

Dear Honorable Judge Manning:

The following petition is being kindly submitted to you in support of briefs filed by University of Chicago, the Iranian government and friends of the court in the above-referenced matter. As Iranian-American citizens and residents, we recognize and respect your role in administering justice. But as a nation built on the backs of immigrants, we also recognize and respect the right of international community as a whole to preserve and safeguard their national treasures. As children, we are taught to look into the past not only for inspiration and pride, but for guidance as well. We look upon our own ancient history and monuments with pride and sentiment. They are reminders of the obstacles our country has faced, the trials we have won to be where we are today: a country of freedom and diverse cultures unique in the world.

Dear Judge Manning, we, having immigrated to the United States but born in Iran, bring a wealth of culture to enrich and spread the idea of mutual respect and understanding. Your recent decision, in regard to ancient Persian tablets held in trust by University of Chicago, demonstrates a different vision and version of our U.S. history. The subject of your decision, the 2500-year old tablets, constitutes the history of Iran and thus belongs to the people of Iran. They do not belong to any specific government or administration. They were discovered in 1933 and delivered to University of Chicago, in trust, to be studied to shed more light into our own past; humanity, in 1937. Then, there was a different administration in Iran and as such, the subject tablets did not belong to that administration. A subsequent government did not gain possession thereof as they belonged to the Iranian people and the present government in Iran has no possessory interests therein as they again belong to the Iranian people.

A judgment authorizing the plaintiff to auction off such national belongings to compensate for their right damages will set an incorrect precedent in the international

community. As Sir Philip Francis once said in 1769 "one precedent creates another. They soon accumulate and constitute law. What yesterday was fact, today is doctrine". By auctioning off these ancient tablets, we are putting a price on history, on life, and most of all, on a past culture. These tablets do not belong to the Iranian government but to the world as well. As Americans, principal defenders of a nation's right to its heritage, it is critical to preserve 2500 years of knowledge of early Persian civilization for present research and for the future generations.

Dear Judge Manning, we truly and deeply sympathize with the victims/plaintiffs in this case and they are entitled to a fair and just compensation, however, imagine if the items at issue here were two of the most important symbols of American pride instead of another country's tablets. What if, on loan to another country, a foreign court ordered auctioning off of Liberty Bell or the Declaration of Independence to the highest bidder to compensate for a personal judgment. Wouldn't we want our own priceless items, documents and relics preserved and protected in a similar case? Wouldn't we want a foreign court to uphold our rights to history and to our own identity?

The people of Iran take pride in their history despite the recent upheavals in their lives. In the words of James Monroe "national honor is national property of the highest value." The Iranian people enjoy a rich culture which transcends the present situation. These tablets provide a unique glimpse into the once great Persian Empire. These tablets were "loaned" to University of Chicago to be studied and as they were loaned, 300 of them were returned in May 2004, 179 were returned in 1948 and more than 37,000 tablet fragments was returned in 1951 to Iran, not to an individual in the Iranian government. Even the Iranian government cannot impose its ownership on such cultural heritages.

Dear Judge Manning, the brevity of this petition will in no way be able to convey the true sad feelings of the Iranian people. These tablets are dear to the hearts of the Iranian people. We must not allow the heart of the Iranian culture to be sold off to the highest bidder. I pray that you will reconsider your decision and re-evaluate the depth of this case so that the plaintiffs will be compensated for their damages through different resources.

I hereby authorize James S. Irani, an attorney in New York, to arrange for submission of this letter to your chambers.

Very truly yours,

Name: _____

(Signature)

Address: _____

Telephone: _____