Kenneth R. Timmerman's Nov 17 Commentary column, "VOA's duplicitous broadcasts," is off the mark.

Voice of America's Persian News Network (PNN) was one of the first international broadcasters to air footage of the tragic killing of Neda Agha-Soltan during the post-election demonstration in Iran on June 20, 2009. PNN did not, as Mr. Timmerman claims, wait three days to air this video.

PNN editors never told reporters to cover nonpolitical subjects to the exclusion of news, including interviews with dissidents. Mr. Timmerman's claim that they did is incorrect, as any viewer of PNN and its numerous interviews with dissidents can attest.

PNN extensively covered President Obama's speech to the United Nations and aired commentary—including remarks from Mr. Obama to the BBC—counteracting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's assertion about the United States being responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The March 2009 inspection of PNN by the State Department's Office of the Inspector General concluded, "The Persian News Network is performing a vital function. It is the only platform from which the U.S. Government can reach an Iranian audience with unbiased news and information about U.S. foreign policy and American life."

Contrary to Mr. Timmerman's assertion, the report did not fault management for "failing to exercise proper editorial control...and allowing themselves to be manipulated by subordinates with a pro-regime agenda."

The father of PNN Managing Editor Seyed Ali Sejjadi taught Arabic studies at the University of Tehran until the Islamic revolution of 1979, when he was forced to resign from his post. Afterward, he farmed a small plot near the capital, where he still lives. That Mr. Timmerman would paint the 87-year-old father of this valuable VOA employee as a confidant of Iran's supreme leader is laughable.

The facts that aren't in dispute and that Mr. Timmerman never mentions are that PNN is the most popular international broadcaster in Iran, reaching nearly 20 percent of Iranians weekly, and that it is jammed repeatedly, if not always effectively, by the very regime Mr. Timmerman claims it supports. Indeed, we at VOA are committed to continuing to improve PNN, and our viewers are already seeing the results.

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