

USADI Dispatch

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USADI Commentary

Elements of a Sensible Iran Policy

On Sunday, Iran admitted that it had achieved proficiency in the full range of activities in enriching uranium. Several top Iranian nuclear negotiators had previously admitted that the clerical regime was not at such a point in October 2003 when they signed a nuclear agreement with Europe's big-3.

The loophole-laden agreement left lots of wiggle room for Tehran, effectively providing perfect diplomatic cover for the mullahs to gain the most precious thing they needed to advance their weapons program: Time

If in fact Tehran has now "achieved proficiency" in enriching uranium, the EU-3 must accept responsibility, considering their "soft power" nuclear diplomacy since October 2003. By giving Iran yet another diplomatic olive branch, the EU-troika made it easy for Tehran to continue its nuclear hide-and-cheat game and "achieve proficiency."

When it comes to ideologically driven rogue regimes, the bitter truth is that appeasement is an exercise in futility. The root cause of the nuclear crisis with Iran is not a shortage of "economic incentives"; it is the nature of regime in power in Tehran. In formulating a viable solution to the mullahs' nuclear challenge, the United States must take into account the following:

1- Having a nuclear arsenal is at the heart of Iran's foreign policy doctrine. Iran has been seeking political and military regional hegemony - a cornerstone of the Khomeini's vision for an Islamic Empire - since 1979.

2- The depraved nature of the fundamentalist terrorist regime in Tehran is the cause of the nuclear crisis with Iran, its sponsorship of terrorism, export of fundamentalism to Iraq and beyond, and crackdown on political dissent at home.

3- To assume that the mullahs abide by their international obligations, is at best naive. No amount of incentives would convince Tehran to do otherwise.

4- Diplomatic engagement, and all of its aliases such as "grand bargain" and "direct dialogue," must therefore be thrown out the door.

5- Given their lucrative trade with Tehran and geopolitical jockeying in the region, the EU countries have self-serving reasons for their "soft approach" toward Tehran. The specter of a nuclear-armed Iran is far too ominous to let appeasers in the EU dictate the policy on Iran.

6- Serious consideration must be given to suggestions that Iran's nuclear threat and its sponsorship of terror could only be halted through a regime change by Iranians and democratic opposition groups.

7- Unlike its neighbors to the east and west, Iran has a century-long history of relentless struggle against despotism. The call for regime change in Iran goes back to more than two decades. Tens of thousands of Iranian democracy activists have been sent to the gallows and thousands more have languished in prisons.

8- That said, any meaningful option on Iran must by necessity include reaching out to Iranian democratic and anti-fundamentalist opposition groups who have been fighting for a secular and representative government for the past quarter century. We must help create a better balance of power between the regime and its opposition.

The sooner we grasp the sheer extent of the destructive and multi-faceted threat Iran poses to the well-being of Iranians and to the security and stability of the region, the sooner we would realize that the call by Iranians for a regime change must be heeded and the door to engagement of Iran's tyrant rulers must be shut.

The US Alliance for Democratic Iran (USADI), is an independent, non-profit organization, which aims to advance a US policy on Iran that will benefit America's interests, through supporting Iranian people's aspirations for a democratic, secular, and peaceful government, free of tyranny, fundamentalism, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism. The USADI is not affiliated with any government agencies, political groups or parties.

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The Washington Times

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Carrots for Tehran?

Director-General Mohammed ElBaradei and the International Atomic Energy Agency, under fire from Washington for failing to vigorously challenge Iran's nuclear-weapons program, are taking a tougher line toward Tehran. As President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice prepare to discuss joining the European Union's efforts to use some incentives to persuade Iran to change its behavior, they must certainly keep in mind the mounting evidence that Tehran has never come clean about its nuclear program and shows no inclination to cooperate with international inspectors. In the wake of new revelations that in 1987, at the height of Iran's war with Iraq, the regime was approached by aides to AQ. Khan, the rogue Pakistani nuclear scientist at the center of a nuclear smuggling network, a senior diplomat close to the IAEA suggested Monday that there is ample reason to be suspicious of the Iranian government's behavior...

But Iran is doing everything it can to frustrate the IAEA. On Tuesday, IAEA Deputy Director-General Pierre Goldschmidt delivered a report to the agency's board of governors in Vienna documenting how Iran continues to stonewall and prevent inspectors from traveling to suspected weapons sites. For example, Iran refused to answer IAEA questions about dual-use material and equipment that could be used in uranium enrichment at Lavizan, a suspected weapons site in Tehran, and a military facility at Parchin, where the United States charges that Iran is simulating atomic-weapons tests.

At Parchin, IAEA inspectors who went there in January were only permitted to visit a small percentage of the locations where weapons activity is believed to be taking place. According to Mr. Goldschmidt, of the four areas at the facility the IAEA identified as being of potential interest, Iran only permitted inspectors to visit one...

Even if Iran were to miraculously respond to Washington and European promises of unspecified rewards for shutting down its nuclear-weapons program, another question needs to be answered: What would the allies do if Tehran, after jettisoning nuclear weapons, continued to promote terrorism by supporting Hezbollah and other terrorists? There are myriad real-world obstacles, all of them relating to Iranian behavior, to any rapprochement between this Iranian government and the West.

Newsday

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Iran sends killers abroad to silence dissent

QUETTA, Pakistan - When Abdulrahim Raeesi, an Iranian political science professor, wrote in an underground newspaper that Iran needs more democracy, men from the Ministry of Intelligence and Security soon found him. They arrested and tortured him, so badly, he said, that he had to be hospitalized. Last year, Raeesi escaped from the hospital and fled with his wife and son across the desert into Pakistan to seek political asylum.

A few months later, he said, the secret police reached him again. Men with Iranian accents began calling his telephone, warning him to return to Iran and surrender. "Do you think you're safe?" they asked me" in an e-mail message, Raeesi said. "We have a group for you. Don't make us send this group to get you." Raeesi sent his family to shelter with friends, but he stayed in Quetta to pursue his plea for asylum with the U.N. refugee agency here.

On Feb. 7, men with guns kicked in the flimsy door of the grubby rented room that Raeesi shared with two other Iranian asylum-seekers. One roommate, Ahmed Mashoof, was killed in a volley of bullets. Raeesi and the other roommate escaped, scampering from a courtyard to the rooftop.

While enforcers of Iran's conservative ruling mullahs killed scores of dissidents overseas in the 1980s and '90s, the shooting last month was the first such attack in years. It has raised fears that Iran's secret police forces, emboldened by a widening crackdown on dissent at home, may resume hunting and killing dissidents abroad...

For the past five years, the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, the Revolutionary Guard militia and more informal groups loyal to the mullahs have stepped up intimidation and attacks on political dissidents and religious and ethnic minorities.

On Nov. 10, Amnesty International cited new reports of "around 25 Internet journalists and civil society activists arbitrarily arrested in recent weeks," saying it was evidence of "an alarming rise in human rights violations in Iran."

With the Quetta attack "the uptick in repression at home may now be leading to an uptick in killings abroad," said Allister Hodggett, an Amnesty International spokesman in Washington. A Pakistani intelligence official said security agencies here believe the attack was conducted either by Iran's intelligence ministry or by local gunmen it hired.

Pakistani officials say as many as 20,000 Iranians have settled in this country, mostly to escape harassment or the threat of arrest for their political, religious or ethnic affiliations. But UNHCR says it recognizes only 57 Iranians in Pakistan as refugees eligible for asylum.