

USADI Dispatch

A publication of the U.S. Alliance for Democratic Iran

Volume 2, No. 19

Thursday, May 26, 2005

USADI Commentary

EU Continues to Appease Rogue Mullahs

Iran's theocratic regime has an appalling human rights record. Public hangings are daily occurrence in Iran and just a few days ago it was reported that another Iranian woman was sentenced to death by stoning, bringing the total number of women killed or sentenced to death to 11 since 1997. At least 109 persons have been either hanged or sentenced to death since January 2005.

The clerical regime has been also appropriately named as the most active state sponsor of terrorism. It is also actively working to spread and consolidate its sphere of influence in Iraq and has been charged by top Iraqi officials with providing military, ideological, financial, and logistical support to the ongoing insurgency in that country.

Last but not least, Tehran had lied for 18 years about its secret nuclear weapons program. Ever since revelations about its nuclear weapons facilities in August 2002 by the opposition coalition, the Paris-based National Council of Resistance of Iran, Tehran has perused a campaign of hide and cheat, taking advantage of the diplomatic cover its talks with the European Union has provided.

Its parallel program to advance WMD warhead capable long-range missiles has gone on unabated.

In the face of all the facts to the contrary, the cunning mullahs of Tehran insist on their benign intentions. Is any one accepting their pledges at face value? Yes, the European Union led by its three main powers, Germany, France and Britain.

On Wednesday, the much anticipated "make-or-break" nuclear talks in Geneva between Iran and the EU-3 ended with the clear acquiesces of EU to Tehran. According to the New York Times, "much to Iran's satisfaction, Jack Straw, the British foreign secretary... underscored that Iran's right to pursue a peaceful nuclear program remained in place."

Referring to a similar statement by the French foreign minister, the Times commented that "statement suggested the Europeans were ready to present a concrete plan to satisfy Iran's demand that Europe help it gain access to nuclear reactors to generate electricity and a reliable nuclear fuel supply."

But this was not all. Iran also gained at least several precious months before the start of debate on sending its case to the United Nations Security Council.

Of course, the EU's diplomats did their best to put a self-congratulatory spin on the Wednesday talks, describing it as a major success as if they had really extracted some concessions from Tehran.

Indeed, the reported agreement is not a concession at all. Iran was obligated to do exactly that consistent with the last November agreement in Paris.

Once again, Tehran with the help of the EU-3 has averted the possibility of being referred to Security Council. Thanks to the EU's zeal to appease rogue regimes, the mullahs remain comfortably in the driver seat while the nuclear clock is dangerously ticking away.

In 1938, the Western world turned the other way when the fascist regime of Hitler invaded and occupied Austria. Western Europe led by Britain launched a response: Appeasing the Nazi Germany to dissuade it from capturing all of Czechoslovakia and beyond. That of course did not stop Hitler from overrunning Czechoslovakia.

The 1938 Munich Pact put forth by British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was one of the most shameless accords signed in modern history. It plunged Europe, the Middle East and North Africa in the inferno of a devastating war, which left tens of millions killed.

Sixty seven years later, the EU-3 is again at it. They have promised to reward the murderous mullahs with a comprehensive trade, political and security incentive package in two months time.

The pro-appeasement European capitals and their allies on this side of Atlantic are pitching the tread-bare and baseless notion that somehow the nuclear crisis with Iran is going to be salvaged if Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani became president. This reoccurring triumph of hope over reality of the rogue nature of the theocratic regime in Iran, is indeed one of the main reasons that we have a nuclear crisis on our hand.

The bitter fruit of appeasement of Iran rulers during Rafsanjani's two terms and then Khatami's two terms in office must not be compounded by making further concessions to Tehran. The world could ill afford another Munich Pact.

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.

1201 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20004
Tel: 202-661-4675, Fax: 202-318-0402, E-mail: dispatch@usadIran.org

The Financial Times

May 25, 2005

World Should Not Pin its Hopes on Rafsanjani

As they gather on Wednesday in Geneva, foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany, the so-called EU3 which is negotiating with Iran over its nuclear programme, are intent on deterring an increasingly intransigent Tehran from resuming its nuclear enrichment activities. Shielding itself behind the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, Iran claims it has an "inalienable" right to complete the fuel cycle, granting it an enhanced nuclear capacity that potentially could be exploited for military purposes.

In their frustration, the European diplomats are looking to Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the wily politician and recently declared Iranian presidential candidate, as a potential saviour. Should the nuclear talks stretch past Iran's June 17 presidential contest, they hope a newly inaugurated Mr Rafsanjani will quickly resolve the nuclear stalemate. However, in their euphoric embrace of Mr Rafsanjani, the Europeans neglect both Iran's recent history and its political peculiarities.

Contrary to the popular images of Mr Rafsanjani as the only politician who can transcend Iran's factionalised politics and produce results, his previous tenure as president was far from successful. ... After eight years in office, Mr Rafsanjani had neither liberalised Iran's economy nor resolved its inherent distortions. Government borrowing from international markets left Iran saddled with a huge debt burden while state subsidies curbed growth rates. High unemployment and inflation plagued the economy. Culturally, Iran remained a largely repressive society laden with religious impositions.

Neither did the Rafsanjani presidency usher in a foreign policy of moderation and pragmatism. To be sure, after the prolonged Iran-Iraq war, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iran's foreign policy was bound to change, with national interest calculations eclipsing ideological convictions.

Despite a modest rapprochement with the Gulf sheikhdoms, however, Mr Rafsanjani could not develop a consensus behind mending fences with the US or normalising relations with the European community. On issues of terrorism and the Arab-Israeli peace process, Iran remained implacable and dogmatic...

Moreover, the younger generation of conservatives, many of whom covet the presidency themselves, resent not just Mr Rafsanjani's pragmatism but also his opportunism in terms of seeking yet another presidential term and thus denying them the opportunity.

In a strange twist, Mr Rafsanjani's candidacy has generated more optimism in western capitals than on Iran's streets. Since the failure of the popular reform movement, Iranians have become disenchanted with the political process, viewing the Islamic polity as incapable of responding to its constituency...

Excerpts from an article by Ray Takeyh, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations

The Guardian

May 26, 2005

Iran gains time to strike deal with EU on nuclear plans

Iran yesterday pulled back from the brink of confrontation with Europe and the US over its nuclear programme, gaining more time to try to strike a bargain with the European Union and delaying the chances of being referred to the UN security council for possible sanctions.

In talks in Geneva involving senior Iranian officials and the foreign ministers of Britain, Germany, and France, a two-month breathing space was agreed, meaning that Tehran would continue to keep its nuclear fuel enrichment programme frozen, while the three EU states prepare an offer meant to obtain a halt to its enrichment activities...

The agreement - if it sticks, and according to western diplomats the Iranians are notoriously tricky negotiators, regularly "reinterpreting" what had been agreed - means that Tehran should avoid being referred to the security council when the UN nuclear authority, the International Atomic Energy Agency, has a board meeting in Vienna next month...

The Iranians appear determined to restart processing raw uranium ore into uranium hexafluoride gas, the substance that is fed into high-speed centrifuges to be converted into nuclear fuel for power stations - or into fissile material for nuclear warheads.

Iran insists that its purposes are purely peaceful, a claim that lacks credibility in western capitals. Iran agreed with the EU trio last November to suspend the uranium enrichment while talks proceeded. It is now itching to resume the enrichment, and sounds disenchanted with the incentives being offered by the Europeans in return for a permanent suspension...

There is also dissension within the western camp, with Britain taking a hard line on the talks that is closer to the US stance, Germany reluctant to go down the road of sanctions against Iran, and France in between... The Iranians are recognised as being astute bargainers, exploiting every crack in the European position. As previously in the two-year game of diplomatic brinkmanship, yesterday's agreement suggests that a short-term truce has been reached before the battle is rejoined.