

# USADI Dispatch

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## USADI Commentary

### Fallacy of Normalization with Tehran

Here we go again!

Another roadmap to establish diplomatic relations between Tehran and Washington is on the administration's table according to the Financial Times. This time around though it sounds like a great opportunity since Iran will supposedly stop its sponsorship of terrorism, promote security and construction of Iraq, and halt its nuclear weapons program. (Conspicuously, respect for human rights at home is missing from the list).

There have been similar overtures in the past but this one looks different. But does it really?

The Iranian "grand bargain," as the Times described it, appears plausible, except for one thing: It take two to tango. One party to the roadmap is still a theocratic tyranny, which has reneged on virtually every pledge it has made to its own citizens or the world community. The "realists" in Washington have been sounding eagerly the drumbeats of creating an "opening" with Tehran's tyrants for more than two decades. Of course, so far, they have nothing to show for, except for humiliating successive U.S. administrations and bolstering a loathed and isolated regime in Iran. The misperception that the clerics are capable of and disposed to reform explains the reluctance to abandon engaging Tehran.

Many Washington pundits maybe fascinated with the "neo-conservative" vs. the "realist" to frame the Iran policy debates, where "regime change" is attributed to the "neo-cons" and "engagement" is attributed to the "realists." Nothing could be further from the truth in suggesting that the call for regime change in Iran is the brainchild of the "neo-cons." Iranians in their millions have been demanding regime change for two decades. Cemeteries and secret mass graves in Iran, where political dissents are buried, are testimony to price paid by regime change advocates inside Iran. The Student uprising of 1999 in Tehran gave us all just a glimpse of this undeniable yearning for a secular and democratic government

Learning from the century old tradition of resisting despotism, Iranians have shown their disdain of the mullahs on the daily basis by waging protests of various types in virtually all Iranian cities. Over the weekend, residents in the northern Iranian city of Feraydoon Kenar took the streets for four days. Tuesday evening, during the traditional Festival of Fire that precedes the Iranian New Year, Nowrouz, Iranians in many major cities, especially Tehran, came to streets and turned the festivities into an anti-regime act of defiance.

Rather than pursuing a phantom roadmap, it is indeed our active support for the movement for secular democracy in Iran and the democratic opposition organizations there, which would ultimately remove many of security threats posed by the fundamentalist regime in Tehran. This fact was very well illustrated by the report that the new roadmap was put on table by Tehran right after the war's end in May. Without question, the clerics could see the writing on the wall: They will not stay in power for long either. *(USADI)*

### "Serious concerns" over Iran

WASHINGTON - The White House on Wednesday reaffirmed its "serious concerns" over Iran ahead of President George W. Bush's meeting here with the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Mohamed ElBaradei.

"There is a number of serious concerns we have regarding Iran," White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters.

"Our policy toward Iran is quite clear and has been quite clear. We continue to insist that Iran abide by all IAEA and NPT commitments," McClellan said.

The policy also urges "that it ends the abuse of its citizens' human rights, stop supporting terrorism, halt meddling in its neighbors internal affairs and turn over to their home governments the al-Qaeda terrorists that it is now holding," he added.

*[Reuters, March 17:* The White House played down suggestions that a new U.S. dialogue with Iran could help resolve a growing controversy over Tehran's nuclear program on Wednesday, just as President Bush prepared to meet with the chief of the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

*["We have not received any official proposals from Iran," White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters.]*

*AFP, March 17, 2004*

### Bush Renews Iran Criticism

The Bush administration renewed its criticism of Iran on Tuesday, saying a two-week suspension of international inspections of its nuclear facilities "is a continuation of a pattern of delay and deception and denial."

State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said, "It's time to come clean fully, unequivocally and completely."

*[Reuters, March 17:* The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog, Mohamed ElBaradei, said on Wednesday he could not rule out the possibility that Iran had an atomic weapons program.

"We have not yet seen that, but I am not excluding that possibility," said ElBaradei. "The jury's still out," he added.

*Associated Press, Mar 16, 2004*

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@usadيران.org](mailto:dispatch@usadيران.org)

## Wall Street Journal Asia (Editorial)

Mar 15, 2004

### An Unwelcome Visit

Iran's nuclear pointman Hassan Rohani begins his official visit to Japan today. That's right, Tokyo is hosting the man who only last week practically admitted Tehran is intent on pursuing nuclear weapons.

"We want Iran to be recognized as a member of the nuclear club, that means Iran be recognized as a country having the nuclear fuel cycle, and enriching uranium," said Mr. Rohani, who is also head of Iran's Supreme Council for National Security, prior to an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meeting in Vienna last Friday. At that meeting, Tehran announced a freeze on all further inspections of its nuclear program.

Tehran is well versed in the art of trying to drive a wedge between America and its allies. In recent weeks, it's been trying to do this with Europe, offering lucrative oil contracts and warning countries such as Britain, France and Germany to "resist U.S. pressure" for tougher action against its nuclear program.

Now it's Japan's turn. Indeed Mr. Rohani's already been laying the groundwork for the sort of message he's likely to be delivering in Tokyo today. In January, he warned Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi not to let "third parties" influence foreign policy...

It's a strategy that's already reaped dividends elsewhere in the world. At the board meeting of the IAEA in Vienna last week, Washington gave in to European demands to tone down a resolution criticizing Iran's clandestine nuclear program. It now praises Tehran's "cooperation" with the IAEA, cooperation which Iranian President Mohammed Khatami had threatened to end in the event of a strong rebuke. The resolution also makes no mention of referring the issue to the United Nations Security Council, despite Iran's nuclear cheating.

The latest evidence of this came when inspectors recently revealed they'd found traces of bomb-grade, 90%-enriched uranium-235. There is no civilian application for uranium of that quality. Iran has also been forced to fess up to the military links of what it had claimed was merely a civilian enrichment program. And of course Tehran had denied having any enrichment program at all until an Iranian resistance group and Western intelligence proved otherwise. IAEA inspectors have also found traces of polonium-210, a radioactive element primarily useful as the trigger for a nuclear explosion.

No serious person can doubt that the Iranians are bent on building a nuclear arsenal. And there's no shortage of steps which could be taken to stop them, if the world would get serious.

The only question is whether America's allies will support Washington in pushing for such measures. So far, Europe has shown few signs of being willing to do so. We'd like to believe Japan is made of sterner stuff, but the signs are not encouraging. Mr. Rohani's visit follows similar trips to Tokyo by high-ranking officials from two other rogue states-Libya and Syria.

It's probably too late to rescind his invitation. But Japan should use Mr. Rohani's visit to make clear there will be no deals with Iran until it allows inspections to resume and comes clean about its nuclear program.

## New York Sun - Editorial

Mar 17, 2004

### Yes, Sir

Iranians once again have challenged the ruling clerics there in demonstrations that turned violent, according to reports from Iran. The occasion this time was a feast to commemorate the last Wednesday on the Persian calendar known as Chaharshambeh Soori. For the particulars please see Eli Lake's dispatch at page one. \*

After much hemming and hawing, Tehran's chief of police allowed the citizens of his city to celebrate the festival in 40 cordoned-off areas over objections from powerful ayatollahs who tried to stop the celebrations because they fell at the wrong time on the Islamic calendar, two weeks after Shiites are supposed to celebrate Ashura, the somber holiday commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. It is the tension between the Arab dictates of Islam and the indigenous traditions of Persia that was at play last night when some Iranians threw homemade explosives at the feet of the anti riot police and set patrol cars ablaze.

The protesters are extraordinarily brave. Few secret police services in the world are as ruthless as Iran's Pasdaran, and many of the students who directly challenged the government in the fall and winter of 2002 are still missing. The regime has even arrested close associates of President Khatami, sending the message that no one will be spared.

All the more reason, though, for the Bush administration to give these protesters moral, material, and, to the degree practical, diplomatic support. It was in October of 2003 that the deputy state secretary, Richard Armitage, answered "no, sir," when asked by Senator Hagel whether the Bush administration supported regime change. The thing to remember is that on the streets of Tehran this week, the Iranians are risking their lives for freedom, and they deserve a resounding "Yes, sir," in Washington.