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USADI Commentary

EU's Iran Nuclear "Grand Bargain" Dead on Arrival

Let's take a crash course of Iran Theocracy 101. If we don't understand the basics, as is the case with the European Union, we will end up believing that a nuclear "grand bargain" with Iran, even accepted by the clerical regime, will rid the world from the nuclear threat. Here are the main course outlines:

- 1- Iran is ruled by a theocratic tyranny intrinsically and structurally incapable of meeting the basic and legitimate political, social and economic demands of people. As such, the mullahs lack long-term stability and legitimacy.
- 2- Recognizing its inherent vulnerability, the clerical regime has tried to ensure its permanence by making it the driving force of its domestic and foreign policy since coming to power in 1979.
- 3- Unbridled crackdown at home, export of fundamentalism and sponsorship of terrorism abroad, and development of weapons of mass destruction are the essential components of Iran's strategy of survival.
- 4- Total disregard for human life, including the torture and execution of tens of thousands of political dissidents and the dispatch to the war fronts of thousands of Iranian schoolchildren as mine sweepers during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, as well as public execution of teenage girls and boys, reflect blatant disrespect for international laws, covenants, and standards.
- 5- In the mullahs' view, the people of Iran who demand regime change, and not foreign governments, pose the gravest threat to the regime's increasing fragile rule.
- 6- Appeasing the ideologically driven totalitarian regime in Iran is ultimately ineffective and only emboldens it.

A logical conclusion to the above points is that the "dream offer" by Germany, France and Britain, the EU-3, to Iran was DOA even before being presented. No amount of concessions and incentives would dissuade the clerics to give up their nuclear weapons program for good.

The "compromise" package prepared by the EU-3 amounted to no more than a mere appeasement of the fundamentalist regime, which had flouted a similar deal with Germany, France and Britain a year ago. Thanks to them, Iran gained more than a year of precious time to advance its nuclear capabilities while playing the "engagement" game with the EU.

Equally disturbing is the EU making a charade of the war on terror by putting a "For Sale" sign on the EU's list of terrorist organizations. The French news agency reported yesterday that the EU would reward the mullahs' compliance by "continu[ing] to regard the MEK (Iranian resistance group) as a terrorist organization."

Last week, Tehran made the point that it "might be willing" to give up its uranium enrichment capabilities in exchange for an "assurance of the status quo" in Iran, according to Reuters news agency. The mullahs unambiguously demanded that no Western country should support or recognize the opposition groups seeking the theocracy's overthrow. Tehran has unwittingly revealed that its Achilles' heel is "regime change." The fear of potential international support for the Iranian people's movement for democracy has clearly exposed the frailty of the ruling theocracy.

The most recent carrot offered to Tehran has made it clear that a combination of political and business considerations prompted it to include the Iranian People's Mujahedeen in the list of terrorist organizations three years ago. By doing so, Europe cast doubts on the credibility of its list and undermined its war on terrorism. Ironically, it was the information from the MEK's network inside Iran about two secret nuclear sites in city of Natanz and Arak, which prompted the IAEA to ask for inspection of these sites. The information revealed in Washington by the National Council of Resistance in August 2002, and subsequent disclosures by the group exposed the vast scope of Iran's clandestine atomic weapons program.

The root cause of the nuclear crisis with Iran is not a shortage of "bargain" proposals; it is the nature of regime in power in Tehran. With billions of dollars in annual trade with the mullahs, rather than acknowledging the bankruptcy of their wrong-headed approach, the EU recklessly continues on the path of appeasement and in doing so, endangers the stability of an already explosive Middle East region and beyond. This reality, however, has been lost to the architects of "engagement" policy.

Recognizing and backing the democracy movement in Iran is exactly what we need to have any leverage in dealing with the mullahs' nuclear intransigence and terrorist mischief making. That would definitely get the mullahs' attention. More importantly, it would be a welcome beginning for the formulation of a sound and effective policy toward the religious tyranny ruling Iran.

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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Agence France Presse

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Iran's Delaying Nuclear Tactics and US elections

VIENNA (AFP) - Iran still has room for diplomatic maneuvering and will certainly wait until after the November 2 US elections to respond to a European offer to avoid possible UN sanctions and receive nuclear technology by indefinitely suspending uranium enrichment, analysts predicted.

Britain, France and Germany presented Iran Thursday with a deal to receive valuable nuclear technology, including a light-water reactor which would produce less fissionable material than the heavy-water reactor Tehran wants to build, if the Islamic Republic indefinitely suspended all uranium enrichment activities, according to a confidential document prepared by the Europeans ahead of the talks and obtained by AFP.

Iran said the talks would continue. "We are at an initial stage, matters have to be considered on both sides," Iranian official Sirus Naseri told reporters after the three-hour meeting in Vienna.

"It was pretty clear that this meeting would not be decisive," Gary Samore of the London think tank the International Institute of Strategic Studies told AFP by telephone. "This is the beginning of the endgame, not the endgame," he said.

Samore said he thought the Iranians were "waiting for the US elections," on November 2, with different calculations then following for Tehran depending on whether incumbent President George W. Bush or his challenger John Kerry wins.

The Iranians might try to take advantage of a Kerry victory by agreeing to a three-month full extension from November until when Kerry takes office in January.

"I think if Kerry wins, Iran would strike a compromise that would essentially delay the issue until early next year," Samore said.

"I don't get a sense that Iran is ready to agree to the suspension. I could see the Iranians restoring the suspension for only a brief period of time," Samore said.

David Albright, a former IAEA inspector and president of the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security, said he was concerned about offering Iran a light-water reactor, since this can still produce fissionable material, but he said he thought the risks could be managed by using the right fuel, namely 19 percent enriched uranium.

Associated Press

October 22, 2004

Iran Exile Group Slams European Nuclear Incentives

VIENNA (AP)--An Iranian exile group bristled Friday at a European offer of incentives aimed at getting the Tehran regime to stop uranium enrichment, saying it included a promise that the European Union would continue viewing one of its key members as a terrorist organization.

In a statement made available to The Associated Press, the Paris-based National Council of Resistance of Iran said the text - formally presented to Iran this week by the U.K., France and Germany - "makes a mockery of the war against terrorism."

European negotiators included a reference to the Iranian resistance group MEK in their last-chance offer of a trade deal and peaceful civilian nuclear technology to entice Iran to give up enrichment and avoid the looming threat of U.N. sanctions.

The document presented to an Iranian delegation in Vienna Thursday included a pledge that the Europeans "would continue to regard the MEK as a terrorist organization." The MEK, the main group in the resistance council's coalition, also is on the U.S. State Department's list of terrorist organizations.

The council called the continued terrorist designation "shameful," and it accused the Iranian authorities of using the E.U.'s characterization as a pretext "to torture, execute and suppress dissidents."

The council urged the international community to stop blacklisting the group, which it contends will "only lead to the rise in human rights abuses in Iran and the increasing role of the mullahs in international terrorism."

Last month, the National Council of Resistance of Iran claimed to have uncovered more evidence that Iran's nuclear activities are broader than it has publicly admitted. It alleged that Iran has a hidden uranium processing plant near Bandar Abbas, a major industrial port in southern Iran that is home to a missile production facility, an oil refinery and a large thermal power plant.

Two years ago, the Iranian opposition was the first to make public that Iran was running a secret uranium enrichment program.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said Thursday that the issue of Iran's nuclear program needs to now be referred to the U.N. Security Council.

In an interview with Abu Dhabi television, Powell said "it is time for the matter to be referred to the Security Council unless there is a complete change in attitude on the part of the Iranians, and they come into compliance with their obligation under IAEA strictures, and also in compliance with the commitments they made to the European Union."