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USADI Commentary

Illusion of a Nuclear "Grand Bargain" with Mullahs

When it comes to ideologically driven terrorist regimes, appeasement, even if billed as "grand bargain," would be an exercise in futility. If the 1938 Munich experience were not a wake-up call, the 9/11 tragedy should serve as one.

Earlier this week, Democratic vice Presidential nominee John Edwards spoke of a nuclear "grand bargain" with Tehran, whereby Iran would be "allowed to keep its nuclear power plants in exchange for giving up the right to retain the nuclear fuel that could be used for bomb-making."

Senator Edwards and those of like mind fail to recognize that it takes two people to tango. They would only need to ask the unscrupulously "bargain" minded Europeans who naively boasted of striking a faltering nuclear deal with Tehran last fall.

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.

Those advocating accommodation with Tehran are the very same voices that have also been poignantly ignorant of Tehran's egregious human rights abuses and mounting legitimacy crisis at home, not to mention its meddling in Iraq and sponsorship of terror.

Yesterday, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that Tehran plans to process 37 tons of raw uranium, which could eventually yield material for five atomic bombs. This is in addition to Tehran's announcement in July that it had resumed building centrifuge machines needed to produce highly enriched uranium.

And on Tuesday, days before the upcoming IAEA's meeting, in an apparent move to pre-empt potentially damaging revelations about its secret nuclear weapons program, Iran announced that it had arrested several "spies" who had been providing nuclear information to the Mujahedeen-e Khalq, the main Iranian opposition group.

A spokesman for the umbrella coalition National Council of Resistance of Iran, which includes the MEK, told Reuters, "The individuals arrested have had nothing to do" with the nuclear disclosures made by his group, adding, "The clerical regime's objective is to terrorize and intimidate the personnel of nuclear facilities and prevent them from cooperating with the resistance."

So, there you have it; lies and more lies, the arrest and, quite possibly, the execution of poor souls charged with spying.

The "soft approach" espoused by the mullahs' apologists runs counter to the interests of the Iranian people and the United States. Despite its proven futility in the past quarter century, the notion of conciliation toward Tehran still lurks in our policy making circles because of incoherence among those who promote getting tough with Iran.

Doubtless, only when the ruling theocracy in Iran is replaced with a secular and democratic government, would Iran be free of tyranny, WMD and sponsorship of terror. Similarly, our pro-democracy pronouncements would not be taken seriously by the Iranian people and their oppressors so long as we continue to shun or blacklist Iranian opposition forces. The U.S. ought to match its rhetoric with action and work with the Iranian people and the anti-fundamentalist opposition groups in Iran.

Reuters

September 2, 2004

EU's Engagement with Tehran "Gone Backward"

BRUSSELS - Britain, France and Germany will meet Friday to review their faltering initiative to persuade Iran to curtail its nuclear program, amid mounting pressure from the United States for punitive action.

EU diplomats said the foreign ministers of the Big Three European powers would meet in the Netherlands to discuss the way forward with Tehran in the light of a U.N. nuclear agency report that highlights lingering suspicions about Iran's efforts, and a fresh broadside from Washington.

EU External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten acknowledged in the European Parliament this week that EU attempts to build ties with Iran based on engagement had "gone backwards."

Secretary of State Colin Powell said he planned to talk to the Big Three foreign ministers -- Jack Straw, Michel Barnier and Joschka Fischer -- Thursday to seek consensus on referring Iran to the UN Security Council for possible action.

Diplomats said Powell sent the three a stern message this week saying the EU initiative had failed and it was time to stop offering Tehran "carrots" and move toward threatening sanctions unless the Iranians halted uranium enrichment efforts.

EU officials say they are disenchanted with Iran's failure to cooperate more with the EU in any of the four fields in which it sought progress in exchange for a trade and aid agreement -- the nuclear program, human rights, terrorism and Tehran's support for groups hostile to Middle East peace efforts.

"There's increasing worry and disappointment on the European side about Iran, a sense that things are not going in the right direction," a senior EU diplomat said.

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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Chicago Tribune (Editorial)

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How to Halt Nuclear Terrorists

For decades, the Cold War standoff between the Soviet Union and America contributed, paradoxically, to a sense of security. Both sides knew that firing a nuclear weapon would guarantee a catastrophic retaliation... The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, however, have changed that calculus... The main threat is no longer a single nation, but at least two rogue regimes--Iran and North Korea--and thousands of terrorists around the world...

Meanwhile, Iran is playing a cat-and-mouse game with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), gulling credulous officials in France, Germany and Britain with promises to stop its nuclear weapons program, hoping to avoid a UN confrontation. So far, unfortunately, that's working. On Saturday, Iran's president, Mohammad Khatami, vowed that his country would not abandon its nuclear program, but that it was willing to "provide any guarantee" to prove its nuclear program was for peaceful purposes. Those are empty words, coming from a regime that spent the better part of two decades hiding its nuclear programs from the world.

There is genuine danger in allowing Iran, with its extensive history of Al Qaeda contacts and proud support of the Hezbollah terrorist organization, to develop nuclear weapons.

One thing is certain: Iran will not be stopped unless the world speaks with one voice. The IAEA and the UN Security Council must force Iran to choose: Give up its nuclear weapons ambitions or be isolated from the world. Iran must be convinced, as Libya was, that seeking nuclear weapons is not a guarantee of strength, but a road to economic ruin. That can happen only if a broad array of nations agree to apply political, economic and, if necessary, military pressure on Iran to halt its activities.

The first step is the IAEA's. The agency has been reluctant to declare Iran is developing nuclear weapons in violation of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. It should reach that logical conclusion now. That declaration would set the stage for a crucial Security Council debate on sanctions that could squeeze Tehran.

So there are certain steps that nations can take in concert to prevent rogue states and terrorists from possessing the knowledge and material to wield nuclear weapons. The confounding thing is that the UN and IAEA know what is needed and have been unwilling or unable to do it. Iran and North Korea have been able to develop weapons programs under the gaze of the IAEA, in part because of a loophole in the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. They can summarily toss out international inspectors, as North Korea did, and exit the treaty in favor of building nukes without much fear of consequence.

That game won't be stopped by diplomats wagging their fingers over broken pledges. It will be stopped by putting a chokehold on those nations' nuclear ambitions.

Associated Press

September 2, 2004

US Says Iran Preparing Enough Uranium For 4 Nukes

WASHINGTON -- Raising new alarms about Iran, the Bush administration concluded Wednesday that the country is getting ready to produce enough enriched uranium for four nuclear weapons.

Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton, the administration's point man on nuclear proliferation threats, said "we view with great concern" revelations in a classified report circulated among member governments by the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency that Iran is about to convert 37 tons of "yellowcake" uranium into uranium hexafluoride gas.

Bolton said that move combined with Iran's recent announcement that it intends to test its gas centrifuges "are further strong evidence of the compelling need to take Iran's nuclear program to the U.N. Security Council."

Uranium hexafluoride is spun in centrifuges to produce enriched uranium, which in turn can be used to generate power or make nuclear warheads, depending on the degree of enrichment.

The United States will continue to urge other members of the U.N. agency's board of governors "to join with us in this effort to deal with the Iranian threat to international peace and security," Bolton said.

Another senior Bush administration official said after Bolton left for talks in Europe that Iran was positioning itself to produce 220 pounds of enriched uranium, enough for four nuclear weapons.

"You are talking serious business here," the official said in an interview in which his identity was withheld. Despite denials by Iran, he said the United States remained convinced that Iran was proceeding to develop nuclear weapons.

Tom Casey, a State Department spokesman, said the report being circulated by the IAEA "continues to document the fact that through the past 18 years Iran has amassed a record of deception and denial about its nuclear activities."