

IRAN DAILY ON THE NET

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 Subject: Time for an "Agonizing Reappraisal"
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Gazing across what Zbigniew Brzezinski once called the "arc of crisis," US foreign policy appears to be disintegrating.

On the Horn of Africa, Islamic warriors have seized Mogadishu. The warlords, our allies, are on the run. In Islamist Sudan, the Darfur horror rages on.

In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, whom our secretary of state was only recently snubbing for undemocratic behavior, now appears again to be persona grata as our only alternative to the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet the Egyptian president scarcely seems chastened. His judges just confirmed a five-year jail sentence for his democratic opponent Ayman Nur, and his regime just ordered the International Republican Institute of John McCain to cease operations in Egypt.

While Ehud Olmert promises to work with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Israel moves inexorably to wall off the desired slices of the West Bank, annex Beit-ul-Moqaddas and its suburbs, retain military control of the Jordan Valley, and get an America awash in debt to pick up the tab for a reported \$10 billion.

Further east, the US position appears to be crumbling. Despite installation of a new government, the Iraqi insurgency shows no signs of abating, and a religious civil war has begun. From January through May, 6,000 corpses, most showing gunshot wounds and others signs of torture, turned up in Baghdad's morgue. May was the worst month, with 35-50 bodies coming in every day.

In Basra, once considered pacified, murderous violence among Shiite militias has forced Baghdad to declare a state of siege.

Whatever happened at Haditha, Baghdad is demanding apologies for US atrocities and charging that American troops are callously cold to the collateral killing of Iraqi civilians.

We are building Crusader castles inside the country, but we seem to be losing support among both Americans and Iraqis. Democrats like John Edwards and John Kerry have moved into the antiwar base of their party where Russ Feingold and Al Gore already reside. Can Hillary be far behind?

In Afghanistan, the resurgent Taliban roam half a dozen of the southeast provinces. A traffic accident in which a US military vehicle injured several Afghans and killed one resulted in a shootout, anti-American riots, and a Karzai condemnation of US brutality. NATO is moving troops into the Taliban-infested region, but the insurgency is stronger than it has been since Americans arrived, and the opium trade the Taliban once virtually abolished is flourishing.

Under pressure from the EU3 and Republican Party wise men, Bush has begun to engage Iran. And as Iran and we have common vital interests, both would suffer from all-out war. Neither wants to see a breakup of Iraq or return of the Taliban, so the makings of a deal are present.

But US intervention in elections in Ukraine, Georgia and Belarus and our in-your-face belligerence toward Putin's Russia are producing the predicted blowback. The decade-old Shanghai Cooperation Organization, consisting of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, is evolving into an alliance to expel the United States from Central Asia. The SCO appears about to offer membership to India, Pakistan, Mongolia and Iran.

Already, the SCO has effected the expulsion of the US military from Uzbekistan; and Kyrgyzstan has demanded, as the price for retention of US bases, a 10,000-percent increase in rental fees. In Afghanistan and Iraq, it is impossible today to see a day when America and her allies can eradicate the insurgency or effect a US withdrawal without inviting strategic collapse. We seem to be on a treadmill. And Americans, concerned over the immigrant invasion from Mexico, soaring gas prices, falling stock prices and deficits ad infinitum are demanding a timetable to get us off.

Today, the Bush doctrine that the world's worst regimes will not be allowed to acquire the world's worst weapons has been defied by North Korea. US military interventions to create democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan are draining us of blood and treasure. Both, as of now, appear open-ended with no assurance of ultimate victory.

Bush's democracy crusade has been exploited by Islamists in Egypt, Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran. The National Endowment for Democracy may claim victories in Georgia and Ukraine, but the cost of its meddling appears to be the loss of Russia and creation of an anti-American bloc from the Baltic Sea to the Taiwan Strait.

But while the Bush foreign policy appears to be falling at every turn, in neither party can one see another vision. Emerson's words come to mind: "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." In Dulles's phrase, it's time for an "agonizing reappraisal".

Patrick J. Buchanan

Judicial Counseling At Embassies

TEHRAN, July 2—A lawmaker said on Sunday judicial counselors will be stationed in Iran's embassies and diplomatic missions worldwide to help solve the problems of Iranian expatriates.

Head of the Majlis faction following up on the affairs of Iranian expatriates, Seyyed Ali Riaz, also said the move aims to defend the rights of Iranian expats, maintain their national and religious identity, facilitate their affairs and reinforce

their effective participation as cultural and economic envoys, Fars News Agency reported.

"We should consider this as an opportunity and not a threat to the cultural and economic sectors of the country," he said, referring to a meeting held with the Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Seyyed Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi on Saturday for discussing issues related to Iranian expats.

Riaz quoted Shahroudi as saying that the judiciary

has a positive approach towards issues concerning Iranian expats, as the government and Majlis have set up a high council and faction respectively for following up the affairs of Iranian expats.

The MP further said that Shahroudi had earlier raised the issue with Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki who agreed to set up judicial departments in Iranian embassies.

He noted that the presid-

ing board of the Majlis faction following up the affairs of Iranian expatriates has proposed that an Internet-based court and counseling be established.

"We, as a parliamentary faction, are ready to remove legal obstacles while we have decided to conduct studies in this regard," he said.

Riaz hoped that the legal rights of Iranian expats would be safeguarded with the joint efforts of the government, Majlis and the judiciary.

Hassan Khomeini Meets Bashar, Nasrallah

DAMASCUS, Syria, July 2—Seyyed Hassan Khomeini, grandson of the late founder of the Islamic Revolution Imam Khomeini, on Sunday stressed that Muslim unity is among the main teachings of the late Imam to confront the conspiracies of Islam's enemies.

Khomeini made the remark in a meeting with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, IRNA reported.

The two sides condemned foreign pressures on Iran and Syria, and stressed the importance of further bolstering relations in all fields.

Bashar and Khomeini denounced the occupation of Iraq and called for the withdrawal of occupiers at the earliest.

Referring to the atrocities of the Zionist regime in Gaza, they called on Muslims worldwide to support the oppressed Palestinian people.

The Syrian president condemned foreign pressures on Iran over its peaceful nuclear program and added that progress is an inalienable right of all countries, including Iran.



Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad (l) talks with Seyyed Hassan Khomeini in Damascus, July 2. (SANA Photo)

Also on Sunday, Lebanon's Hezbollah Secretary-General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah met with Khomeini in Iran's Embassy in Syria, which was also attended by Iran's Ambassador to Syria Mohammad Hassan Akhtar.

According to ISNA, Khomeini described Lebanon's Hezbollah as the "hope" of Muslim combatants.

"Under your capable management as one of the revolutionary and wise personal-

ities, Hezbollah has revived resistance in the hearts of Muslims," Khomeini said, adding that Hezbollah is the continuation of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Pointing to the recent crimes of Israelis in Palestine, Khomeini noted that resistance and unity of the Muslim community are the only way for confronting the Zionist regime.

"The Iranian nation and government are allies of the

Palestinians," he said.

Nasrallah said Hezbollah is a movement which was inspired by Iran's Islamic Revolution.

He hoped that Palestinian resistance, coupled with the support of Muslim nations, will lead to their victory.

Seyyed Hassan Khomeini and his entourage are currently on a three-day visit to Syria upon the invitation of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad.

Vessel in Court

TEHRAN, July 2—Former managing director of the Persian daily "Iran", Abdolrosoul Vessal, appeared in Tehran Penal Court's Branch 76 on Sunday.

Representative of the prosecutor, Megdadi, read the charges brought against Vessal, ISNA reported.

He noted that the charges include spreading fabrications, insulting people, publishing illegal medical and health advertisements in Iran and publication of materials harmful for the Islamic System.

"Complainants in Iran's case are the public prosecutor and private plaintiffs," he added.

Meanwhile, Vessal's representative told Judge Saremi that unfortunately legalities have not been observed while preparing the indictment.

Judge Saremi rejected the statements of Vessal's representative and noted that the complaint of the private plaintiff cannot be ignored. "The legal representative of Education Ministry as a private plaintiff has complained against the publication of a caricature showing a teacher who works three shifts (one as a teacher, the other as a taxi driver and third as a beggar)," he said.

Commenting on the publication of illegal medical and health advertisements, Vessal said all those who have published their advertisements have the relevant certificates. Commenting on a complaint by Education Ministry about the caricature, Vessal said no one dares to insult teachers because everyone has been a student.

"I don't think that the caricature aimed at insulting anyone. However, we have apologized to teachers for publishing that caricature," he said.

Vessal's lawyer, Gholamali Riyahi, said the charges brought against Vessal are not transparent. Referring to a complaint by a subsidiary company of the Housing Foundation, Riyahi said although former President Mohammad Khatami and the incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called for flexibility toward criticism, state organizations do not abide by the same.



Abdolrosoul Vessal

Guidance Patrols For N. Khorasan

BOJNOURD, North Khorasan, July 2—Policewomen are conducting Guidance Patrols in the province of North Khorasan against those who do not observe the Islamic dress code.

Deputy commander of North Khorasan Police for social and guidance affairs, Colonel Hossain Beshkani, said on Sunday that two teams of policewomen have started their activities in this respect, IRNA reported.

He further said that the patrols are obliged to notify women and young girls about their dress and appearance.

"These patrols are supported by their men colleagues throughout their missions," he said, adding that women law-enforcement officers are also active in other divisions of the disciplinary forces.

Presently, policewomen are serving in women detention houses, police stations, inspection posts, traffic and passport departments and the campaign against social corruption.

On April 18, Tehran's police chief, Morteza Taleai, warned that women wearing short or tight-fitting coats, loose or small scarves that failed to cover the hair properly, capri pants, or those who refused to wear socks in public, would be "confronted". However, following this announcement, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad responded with a statement supporting women's right to wear the clothing of their choice.

Kyrgyzstan Honors Envoy

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan, July 2—Kyrgyzstan's highest friendship and solidarity medal was awarded to Iran's Ambassador in Bishkek Mohammad Reza Sabouri on Saturday.

In a ceremony on the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Ministry of Emergency Situations in Kyrgyzstan, the minister, Jenish Rostam Beykov, presented the prize while Kyrgyz Prime Minister Felix Kulov and some ministers were also present in the ceremony, IRNA reported. Referring to Iran's aid to the Kyrgyz people during natural disasters in the past, the minister said Iran's assistance proved the humanitarianism of Iranians.

Persian Press Watch

Fed Up

RESALAT: In the latest audio cassette released by Al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden, he praised the dead Al-Qaeda commander in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, for what he had done in Iraq. Bin Laden further said that Zarqawi never killed anyone for religious reasons. Nearly everyone knows that many killings inside Iraq, including the bombings of the holy Asgaria shrine, were all linked to Zarqawi. However, the question that might occur to one's mind here is why Bin Laden is trying to acquit Zarqawi from the crimes that he already committed in the Arab country. It seems that Bin Laden is trying to change Al-Qaeda's strategy in Iraq by pretending that Al-Qaeda is not against Shiites. Al-Qaeda leaders have come to realize that they cannot continue their killings of Shiites in Iraq and at the same time be popular in that country. Hence, Bin Laden is trying to distract the attention of Muslims from the anti-Shiite attitude of Al-Qaeda. Even the Iraqi Sunni minority are fed up with the murder of their Shiite brothers.

African Cause

QODS: The summit of the member-states of the African Union was held in Banjul, Gambia at a time when Africa is facing important internal problems, especially civil wars in different African states. Although the Gambia summit tried to adopt economic strategies to help create a common African market, the slow pace in regional convergence has created obstacles in the way of creation of this common market. A glance at the economies of different African countries shows that African countries are flexible vis-à-vis implementing joint economic programs only when regional interests are not harmed. Global arrogance has abused the poverty of African nations and created a chaotic atmosphere in Africa in order to meet its ominous political and economic objectives. Hence, the African Union shoulders the crucial duty of fighting arrogant powers.

Tighter

HAMBASTEGI: During different eras Iran has been the scene of different political developments. Politicians have always faced many ups and downs that are attributed to the manner in which the people judge the performance of officials. Various electoral races of the past, including the presidential, parliamentary and local city elections clearly hint at the difficulties faced in achieving the declared targets. Nevertheless, it seems that as a whole competition was tighter in the last presidential election the previous race. Furthermore, candidates with different viewpoints nominated themselves in the course of the election, which in itself provided the people with greater choices.

Perspective

Rationing Fuel

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 Moreover the cost of fuel subsidies has reached prohibitive levels and simply cannot be sustained in the near future.

Distribution of gasoline at the pumps has emerged as the most complicated national issue in recent weeks after the nuclear dispute fanned by the western powers. Previous theories and instructions related to improve public transport and curb fuel consumption seem to have fallen along the wayside.

For instance, it was announced that all taxis and a large number of private cars would be equipped with dual fuel system. Fuel consumption in newer models manufactured/assembled at home by the large of rich companies should have been curtailed. The public transport network was due to be upgraded to encourage car owners not to clog the already bursting metropolis. Older models were set for the junkyard... But nothing happened!

This is where we are. Those at the middle and lower end of the economic ladder must now pay a heavier price for the mistakes and mismanagement of higher-ups as has been the case for almost two decades.

Let us assume that we are in the rationing months. Each car owner would have to remain content with a three-liter daily quota.

Will the problem be resolved? Why is it that our officials tend to ignore the paramount problem of high gasoline consumption and instead lean on short-term and controversial solutions?

Do the people who pay huge sums for inferior quality vehicles produced locally, or who tolerate the snarling traffic jams everyday, or wait in long queues in the terrible winters and summers for the scarce public transport services deserve such a raw deal?

The time has come to settle the issue of fuel and energy subsidies once and for all. Every few months we see reports about lack of funds for fuel import and the tussle between the lawmaking body and the executive over the subject. This has to stop. It would also help if our authorities take a closer look at the experience of other countries more or less similar to ours.