

Wednesday, November 26, 2008

TIMMERMAN: Pro-Iranian fabrications

WASHINGTON TIMES - COMMENTARY

KENNETH R. TIMMERMAN

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Should the next administration reach out to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and open negotiations "without preconditions" on a broad array of security issues?

Would expanding ongoing diplomatic exchanges with Iran increase the chances of convincing Iran's clerical leaders to halt nuclear weapons-related work and stop their support for international terrorist groups?

These are serious questions, worthy of a serious debate based on facts and a careful analysis of the Iranian regime's 30-year track record as a negotiating partner. But that is not what the pro-Iranian lobby wants to happen.

Tehran's advocates in Washington believe they are on a roll. With a president-elect who has stated repeatedly that he would conduct negotiations "without preconditions" with the Islamic Republic of Iran, they feel the time now has come to advance Tehran's agenda openly in Washington.

Leading the charge is a group calling itself the National Iranian American Council, NIAC, which has been lobbying Congress to win support for an agenda that mirrors the goals of the Tehran regime.

The name of this group itself is misleading. Rather

than assemble a broad cross-section of Iranian-Americans, most of whom came to this country to escape the totalitarian clutches of the Islamic dictatorship, NIAC has alienated them by brazenly portraying the Tehran regime as moderate, reasonable, and misunderstood.

Victims of the regime such as Ahmed Batebi would have a hard time swallowing such a benign view of the thugs now running Iran. Mr. Batebi's sole crime was to hold up in public the bloody T-shirt of a Tehran University student who had been pushed to his death by regime agents from a third-floor dormitory balcony. For his audacity, Mr. Batebi was thrown in jail, tortured, threatened with death, then locked up for nearly a decade. He escaped to the United States earlier this year after being let out from prison on a furlough.

NIAC's latest ploy has been to trot out a jolly band of "useful idiots" (to use V.I. Lenin's term) to parrot Tehran's line, while misleading Congress with false facts and dangerously mistaken theories.

With grant money from a congeries of left-wing organizations, some of them funded by George Soros, NIAC has devised a five-point "plan" that calls for the new administration to "open the door to direct, unconditional and comprehensive negotiations" with Tehran.

NIAC would have us believe Supreme Leader Ali "Khamenei's track record reveals a cautious decision-maker who acts after consulting advisers holding a range of views," and therefore he is a man we can do business with.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has discovered that on Ayatollah Khamenei's "cautious"

orders Iran was conducting secret and prohibited nuclear weapons work for 15 years. Equally cautious - apparently, in NIAC's eyes - was Ayatollah Khamenei's decision to order Hezbollah to launch more than 4,000 rockets against civilians in Israel during the summer war in 2006.

Also cautious, from this point of view, was Iran's decision to evacuate hundreds of al Qaeda fighters and top leaders from Afghanistan shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on America, and provide them with safe haven, material support and a new base of operations inside Iran.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who is touted as the only Republican with a chance of keeping his job in the Obama administration, questioned the vanity of seeking "moderates" in Tehran in a Sept. 29 speech at the National Defense University.

"I have been involved in the search for the elusive Iranian moderate for 30 years," he said. "Every administration since then has reached out to the Iranians in one way or another and all have failed. ... [T]he reality is the Iranian leadership has been consistently unyielding over a very long period of time in response to repeated overtures from the United States about having a different and better kind of relationship."

The techniques used by the pro-Tehran lobby are reminiscent of those pioneered by Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels, who wrote in 1941: "When one lies, one should lie big, and stick to it."

An essential part of the big lie technique involves silencing critics. This is what NIAC tried to do on Tuesday in a U.S. Senate forum hosted by Sen. Thomas Carper, Delaware Democrat, by refusing entry to an

accredited reporter unsympathetic to its cause and by turning off microphones for audience questions. While Tehran's track record is too extensive to be developed here, a top adviser to French President Nicolas Sarkozy warned the incoming U.S. administration it would be folly to pursue a new round of talks with Tehran.

"We've been negotiating with the Iranians since 2003," said Therese Delpech said during a visit to Washington. "We came to the conclusion that they are not interested at all in negotiating, but in buying time for their military [nuclear] program."

Whatever decision the Obama administration makes regarding Iran should be based on an appreciation of U.S. national security interests and the real threats from Iran, as described by Mr. Carper on Tuesday, not upon the advice of groups spouting the prescriptions of our adversaries.

Kenneth R. Timmerman is a contributing editor for Newsmax Media. His latest book is "Shadow Warriors: The Untold Story of Traitors, Saboteurs, and the Party of Surrender"(Crown Forum, 2007).

Original: <http://washingtontimes.com/news/2008/nov/26/pro-iranian-fabrications/>

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Kenneth R. Timmerman

Contributing editor: Newsmax.com

Tel: 301-946-2918

Reply to: timmerman.road@verizon.net

Archive: www.newsmax.com/timmerman/