

## *The Betty Letters*

*My Dear Grandchild,*

*It is said that a patient will, eventually, tell his doctor what is wrong with him if the doctor permits him to talk long enough. With regard to the Government of Iran, the more that its senior Government officials talk, the more that they make it very clear that this nation of fundamentalistic Muslims cares little for human life and would not think twice about declaring war on the West at the slightest provocation. A fortnight ago, the United Nations gave Iran thirty days to cease and desist in its programme of uranium enrichment and to return to the negotiating table in order for the United Nations to try to resolve its differences with this theocracy. The West maintains that Iran wants nuclear technology in order to have the ability to manufacture weapons of mass destruction. Iran claims that it only wants to join the international nuclear 'club' for peaceful purposes. In response to the United Nations, issuing a communiqué to Iran to stop uranium enrichment with almost immediate effect, the Government of Iran announced that it would be holding military manoeuvres in The Persian Gulf, starting from last Friday. The Gulf, as The Persian Gulf is commonly called, extends from the Strait of Hormuz to Shatt al Arab, a river formed by the confluence of the Tigris River and the Euphrates River. You will recall, My Dear Grandchild, that I told you, more than one month ago, of the importance of the Strait of Hormuz, that narrow waterway, linking The Persian Gulf on the west, with The Gulf of Oman and The Arabian Sea on the east. Separating The Arabian Peninsula from Iran, it is about one hundred and seventy miles long and between thirty miles and fifty miles wide, similar, in many respects, to the English Channel, which separates the United Kingdom from France/Europe. One of the important facets of The Strait of Hormuz is that worldwide shipments of crude oil pass through it. During Iran's military exercises in The Gulf, at which time, some seventeen thousand soldiers and one thousand five hundred war ships took part, it was announced that Iran had successfully test-fired its upgraded Shahab-3, medium-range missile, which has a range of about two thousand kilometres. The Shahab-3 is, if one may believe Iranian Government reports, a stealth missile with multi-targeting capabilities. In an official announcement, Iran's Air Force Commander Hossein Salami said: 'We have successfully test-fired a new missile, which can attack several different targets with great accuracy and avoid the detection of radar ... a prominent achievement of the country's defense capability ...'. Last Sunday, it was announced, officially, along with photographs as proof, that Iran had successfully launched an underwater torpedo with a top speed of 360 kilometres per hour. Dubbed as being an underwater missile, this weapon, it was claimed, could never miss its mark because no ship at sea could manoeuvre as fast as the speed of this torpedo. Previously, Admiral Morteza Saffari, Naval Force Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Iran's elite militia, said: 'The entire armed forces (of Iran) are fully ready to defend the territorial integrity of the motherland ...'. If that is not fighting talk, then, nothing is.*

*Whether or not Iran is putting on a show of bravado, I do not know, but it is quite likely that the West will not care about such political posturing and will assume that the Government of Iran is preparing for a skirmish with the West, if not a war, probably under the guise of a Holy War (a Muslim jihad against infidels). The very bellicose statements, issuing forth from the mouths of Iran's military leaders of late, cannot be dismissed curtly as being just bravado because of the timing of the military manoeuvres, coming as they did immediately after the United Nations urged Iran to stop its uranium enrichment programme. Clearly, the world cannot, now, permit Iran to press ahead with its plans to enrich uranium, which is a precursor to the production of a weapons-grade, nuclear fuel. If the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, et al had acted smartly, prior to September 1, 1939, and attacked Germany, it would have saved*

more than fifty million lives over the period of six years of that horrible global conflict. Led by Germany's Chancellor Adolf Hitler, Germany, Italy and Japan created more havoc in that world than had ever been witnessed in history. Germany is credited with killing more than six million Jews and more than twenty million Russians, alone. If the Germany of Adolf Hitler had had the capability of creating an atomic bomb, no doubt, it would have used it and World War II would have lasted longer than six years and, probably, more than one hundred million lives would have been lost. The devastation, caused by the detonation of just one atomic bomb, even of 1945 vintage, cannot be overlooked. One recalls the United States, dropping two atomic bombs on Japan, one on Hiroshima and one on Nagasaki, the last atomic bomb, being detonated on August 9, 1945, thus forcing Japan to surrender, unconditionally. The death and destruction, caused by the detonation of the first two atomic bombs of 1945, shocked the world. It is estimated that more than two hundred thousand Japanese nationals, mostly women, children and the elderly, lost their lives, during and after that horror. Today's nuclear bombs, no doubt, would be even more lethal than the 1945 vintage atomic bombs. Iran does not appear to be concerned that the West does not trust this Islamic country. Respect, like love, has to be earned: It is not given freely. Iran has yet to demonstrate to the United Nations that it is a country, whose government is to be respected and trusted. It has yet to convince the West that it would not act hastily in the event of an international political impasse. Its actions of late have sent a very frightening message to the United Nations. That message is this: Beware! Iran has advanced weapons of war and we know how to use them. Iran has about sixteen million men and women, ready to fight in defense of the motherland. What the West fears, and, now, with some justification, is that Iran has the inclination to act in haste and regret in leisure. The West cannot take the chance of allowing Iran to perfect its nuclear technology in such an atmosphere of widespread distrust and consternation. Against the military might of the West, it is highly unlikely that Iran would be able to withstand an attack on its borders for any extended period of time. On the assumption that Iran does have the capability of sending its Sahab-3 missiles more than two thousand kilometres to seek out targets in Israel, that death and destruction would be minimal, weighed against the death and destruction, which could be rained down on Iran by the United States/United Nations. One must not forget, also, that the French gave to Israel sufficient nuclear technology to enable that country to build a nuclear arsenal. This Jewish State is known, covertly, to possess weapons of mass destruction, although it has never used them and continues to claim that it does not possess such weaponry. However, the United States and Israel have warned Iran that it would not hesitate to initiate a pre-emptive strike on Iran's nuclear facilities should it be deemed necessary. Iran may well have the largest fighting force in the world, but, today, a shooting war of any consequence would be fought from long distance: A push-button war, if you will. The number of bodies, which make up the fighting force of a State, is not as important as the military weaponry that a country can bring to bear on an enemy. Japan learned this lesson at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives when Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed in 1945. The world does not want to witness another tragedy of this dimension. It would be the horror of all horrors. The world ought to be grateful for the existence of the International Atomic Energy Agency, a branch of the United Nations, established in 1957, and its Director-General, Mr Mohamed el Baradei. Without this objective, international policing agency, no doubt, Iraq would have developed weapons of mass destruction since only after the International Atomic Energy Agency came up with the proof of the intentions of the former President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, did the West take definitive steps to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in that Middle Eastern country. Iraqi scientists came forward after Saddam Hussein was ousted from power and said that Iraq, prior to the 1990 invasion by a United Nations coalition force, was well ahead in its plans to build a nuclear arsenal. Had it not been for the inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it is likely that Saddam Hussein would have perfected its nuclear technology, leading to the manufacture of weapons-grade uranium and, then, of course, a nuclear arsenal.

Enough! I am worried! Are you?

Talk to you next week.

Chief Lady

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