

### **IRANIAN PRAGMATISM COULD WELL WIN THE DAY**

The very suggestion that the theocratic regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran sponsors terrorism by supplying sustenance, weapons and ammunition to select insurgency groups, those who believe in the teachings of the Holy Q'ran, and, in the case of Syria, weapons and ammunition to the militia of President Bashar Hafez al-Assad, is ludicrous in the extreme.

Terrorism is not in the vocabulary of either Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran, or Hasan Fereidun Ruhani, the newly elected President of the country.

To assist Moslem brothers and sisters, wherever they may be, cannot, to the thinking of the Iranian Government, be considered terrorism, but, instead, a sworn and honourable duty.

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, adopted by referendum on October 24, 1979, states, at Article 150, that the **Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)** is the '*guardian of the Revolution and of its achievements*'.

The IRGC is a military force of some 125,000 men and women; it is the country's most-powerful militia.

Clearly, the IRGC is, also, a political force.

Traditionally, the IRGC has been a known bastion of ideological beliefs, as passed down by Ruhollah Mostafavi Musavi Khomeini, the leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, who was responsible for the overthrow of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, The of Iran.

Following the 1979 Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, as he was labelled in the West, became the country's Supreme Leader, a position that was created in the Constitution as the highest ranking, political and religious authority of the country that, today, boasts of having a human population of about 80 million, men, women and children.

#### **Let's Be Friends**

Iran, today, is locked in negotiations with what has come to be called, P5+1 – the United States of America, France, Russia and the People's Republic of China plus Germany.

The first round of talks collapsed, late last week, and they are scheduled to resume on Wednesday, November 20, 2013.

Iran has blamed France for the failure of last week's meeting, with Iran's Foreign Minister, Mr Mohammad Javad Zarif, making statements to the effect that France had gutted more than half of the draft of a US proposal.

Iran is intransigent, stating that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes, only, but few leaders of the West believe the statement: They maintain that it is for both, peaceful and military purposes.

For the most part, the West would like to castrate Iran's ability to be in a position to manufacture weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear bombs/missiles and the like.

Iran maintains that it has the right to enrich uranium and that it will not budge from that position.

However, enriching uranium to a level of 20 percent purity, which the country has, already, achieved and has a stockpile of uranium, enriched to this level, suggests that enriching part or all of that stockpile to 90 percent – the level required to be used in a nuclear bomb/missile, known as weapons-grade uranium – can be achieved in a very short space of time.

And that is a worrying factor as far as the West is concerned.

### **Sanctions**

Calls have been suggested, recently, by both the United Kingdom and the US, that further and more-draconian sanctions should be considered in order to force the government of this autocratic regime to agree to abide by the concerted will of the West: That Iran shall not be another nuclear power.

The reasoning: The country and its government cannot be trusted if it should have the capability of manufacturing the '*bomb*'.

Threats of further sanctions must be of concern to the Supreme Leader of Iran because, inter alia, the imposition of further sanctions could result in the destabilisation of the existing, rather frail, status quo.

For Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei, further sanctions, imposed by the United Nations on Iran, could upset the applecart in Tehran, with widespread unrest among the hoi polloi.

That, undoubtedly, would be a very dangerous situation.

For Iran, coming to the negotiating table in order to try to appease nemeses would be very nice, of course, but the price of such appeasement has become the sticking point.

This was made only too clear, last week, when the negotiations between the delegates of the P5+1 and Iran determined to halt proceedings.

Time may well be on the side of the P5+1 because Iran is in a hurry to settle the matter of its avowed intent to continue with the country's nuclear programme due to concerns that, not to have an agreement that is acceptable to all, could lead to further complications, not too far down the road.

Questions, also, have been raised as to the reason that Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei embraced the Presidentship of Hasan Fereidun Ruhani, who made the claim of being a moderate, during last August's elections.

The strong suggestion has been made that Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei sees the new President as being likely to ease the current economic distress, plaguing Iran, a goodly part of which is the result of United Nations's sanctions, imposed on the country.

### **The Call Goes Out**

There are three legs to the stool of Government of Iran: Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei; the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps; and, President Hasan Fereidun Ruhani.

That is the pecking order, it appears to **TARGET** ().

It is highly unlikely that the majority of the members of the IRGC would want to be forced to accept an Iran without its nuclear programme, but, at the same time, even within the ranks of the IRGC, there are those who would welcome an agreement on the nuclear issue with the P5+1 and, then, there are those hard-liners who are strongly opposed to any compromise with regard to the present direction of the country's nuclear programme.

President Hasan Fereidun Ruhani has tried to speed up the process of obtaining an agreement between the US and its allies on Iran's nuclear programme: This might well suggest that he fears a backlash from the hard-liners of the IRGC if he fails to achieve his goals in a timely fashion.

On the last day of September, following US President Barack Hussein Obama's very brief telephone call to President Hasan Fereidun Ruhani, Mohammad Ali Jafari, Chief of the IRGC, went on record to state that that which the President Hasan Fereidun Ruhani had said and done (in the United Nations) was '*a tactical error*'.

Mohammad Ali Jafari said that his forces would be watching the situation carefully.

About a fortnight later, Mohammad Ali Jafari stated, among other things:

*'The people have figured out what (the reformists) are up to and will not be duped by their provocations in the interests of the enemy.'*

On the same day, IRGC General Yahya Rahim Safavi made the statement to the effect that Washington could not be trusted.

This should not be meant to imply that the IRGC would want to go to war with the US because the outcome of any such conflict is a foregone conclusion.

It is in the interests of the IRGC not to engage in violent conflicts with the US or any nation – because there is just too much to lose by engaging in an armed conflict, regardless of the winner.

The IRGC is not just a powerful (although still quite small) militia, but it is also an economic powerbase, being responsible for about 10 percent of Iran's Gross Domestic Product.

While the private sector of Iran is suffering a dire shortage of funds, not so in respect of the coffers of the IRGC.

It is only too apparent that, in the ranks of the IRGC, as in the ranks of politicians, the world over – even within The Russian Federation –

**Money still talks; and, bullshit still walks.**

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