

## Can the West win Muslims' Goodwill?

“You are a nation without principles and manners. Values and principles to you are something which you merely demand from others, not that which you yourself must adhere to... Allah, the Almighty, legislated the permission and the option to take revenge. Thus if we are attacked, then we have the right to attack back. Whoever has destroyed our villages and towns, then we have the right to destroy their villages and towns. Whoever has stolen our wealth, then we have right to destroy their economy. And whoever has killed our civilians, then we have a right to kill theirs. ... We also advise you to pack luggage and get out of our lands. ...Or expect us in New York and Washington... Do not force us to send you back as cargo in coffins”.<sup>1</sup>

These are the words of a man, who is graded as a world No. 1 terrorist. Therefore the quotation could easily be referred to as a talking of a madman.

The figures, polls and the public opinion in general however point to something very different.

Most god fearing Muslims do not dislike Western world and the US, in particular, because of its freedoms but of the inconsistent and unjust application of those principles they claim to value. Many Muslims, especially the European residents hear the US appraisal of human rights but they also know what happens to the Muslims in Guantanamo. They hear America speaks of democracy and of its ideals however they know America and other NATO member states support anti-democratic regimes in various Muslim and non-Muslim states. Since the policies are the manifestations of values confusion, to say the least, arises.

More than 28 million Muslims live, work and experience development in the EU and America. Therefore if America cannot win Muslim hearts and minds along this Western front, it has a little chance of winning them in the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, or beyond. “Simply put, America’s attractiveness abroad affects its security at home”.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, three factors are exacerbating the overall state of affairs. The first is globalization, the second, fundamentalism and the third demographics. Let’s briefly examine how these three work against the Western credibility.

In nowadays *Globalized* world internet and networks like Al Jazeera are bringing the news of suffering and the voices of embattled Muslims from Chechnya to Kashmir, from Philippines to Afghanistan to quiet places in Paris and Berlin. Muslims living there can see that the US backs up those oppressors of other Muslims: Israelis against Palestinians, Russians against Chechens, etc.

*Fundamentalism* is also experiencing its raise especially after the most developed European countries, acting after France, introduced a headscarf ban in the schools. The ban had to touch all the religious symbols of all the religions. Its true target however was *hijab* (the Muslim headscarf and veil). Consequently, over 33 percent of European

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<sup>1</sup> “Letter To America”, Osama Bin Laden, Observer, Nov. 24, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> “Can the West win Muslim hearts and minds?”, Shore, Z. in *Orbis - A Journal of World Affairs*, Vol.49, N.3, p. 476, Summer 2005.

Muslims insisted that if it serves Islam they are ready to use violence against nonbelievers. Almost 40 percent stated that Zionism, The EU and the US threaten Islam<sup>3</sup>. There is no doubt that all the above mentioned contributes to the alienation, frustration and cultural exclusion of the Muslim population. This in combination with the *demographic* changes in favor of the Muslim population is leading to the catastrophe. It is estimated that the Muslims will be the majority within a generation in the major German, French and Dutch cities.

Further, I would like to examine several “techniques” the West could install that in my opinion could improve things.

First of all, there should be created what is called the Intentional Interdependence. Some say America missed a golden chance by underestimating the help, offered by the Muslim states in particular, after September 11. It is true that Washington is ready to offer help to the ones who suffered from an earthquake in Iran or tsunami in India but this means that they are perpetually dependent on someone or something from without, having no sense of their assistance being, at some points, vital too.

Another thing that I think is also very important is the hearts-and-mind campaign, targeting the “second-circle group”. As Richard Clark puts it, “the largest outermost circle contains the worlds 1.3 billion Muslims,... with no inclination to terror or extremism. The innermost circle consists of the hardened extremists, a relatively small group Clarke estimates at between 50.000 and 100.000. These are the jihadists (who have been encouraged by “provocative weakness” (explained at the end of this section) and have also been aided by a lack of precise actions internally in most of the NATO countries, including an all too liberal freedom to operate in open societies and to promote hate).

... But the second circle – the middle ring – is of the greatest concern for the hearts and mind campaign”<sup>4</sup>. These are those millions of Muslims who live in Europe, US and throughout the world and under the according circumstances could either support extremists and join terrorist groups or back the true, not cheating Western values. These Muslims in the “second circle” are those who need to be “cultivated” by the West. Additionally, there is an urgent need for a new long-term transatlantic NATO Double-Track decision “*A Challenge to Terrorism and a Partnership with the Islamic States.*” The need is crucial with respect to the background news of the latest terrorist attacks in Great Britain. It should consist of two equally important elements: The first is assured stability and containment of the radicals and their networks with equality and justice, based on the entire gamut of anti-terrorist activities. These include legal systems, police, intelligence and armed forces. The second is a very active and open dialogue with the more than 1.5 billion moderate Islamic people on all levels of contacts. This theme should embrace a basic principle: The strengthening of cooperation through international contacts among NATO, the United States, the European Union, and the Islamic world with the goal of achieving mutual respect and tolerance for the moderates along with an intolerance of terror. The citizens of the Moslem faith in Europe and America will be treated with respect. As a

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<sup>3</sup> Can The West Win Muslim Hearts and Minds? op. cit. p.478.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Clark 9/11 Prepared Testimony, Clark Richard, MSNBC interactive, March 24, 2004, at [www.msnbc.msn.com](http://www.msnbc.msn.com)

result, as Rowny and Hoffman put it: “We in turn, expect nothing less from our Islamic partners than the renunciation and elimination of terrorism and respect for our Western values of freedom, democracy and human rights. (According to them) Those international contacts (discussed above), should take place in three arenas.

The first priority should be the youth organizations. Young academics of Islamic (and Western countries-*note of the author*) countries should be assisted in developing new concepts of advancing mutual understanding and tolerance... The second arena of international contacts should be journalistic groups with an aim to revise media policies. Extending the policies of youth organizations, these media commissions should draft concepts for the containment of hate propaganda and for the promotion of mutual understanding... The third arena of international contacts should be organizations promoting a dialog among our respective religions.”<sup>5</sup>.

The Islamic world needs a renaissance of its true values: tolerance, a better education system, more freedom of the press, anti-totalitarian politics and women’s rights. Stereotypes and ignorance must be overcome on both sides.

The leaders of NATO should agree to a new Double-Track decision as soon as possible, similar to the Harmel Report of 1967 and the framework of the NATO Double-Track decision of 1979. This should be put into action on a worldwide basis.

As a conclusion, I’d like to demonstrate the plan of how to defend our world that was drawn just few hours after the September 11 events:

## **7 Bullet Point Plan to defend our Free World**

written by: Hubertus Hoffmann, 12-Sep-01

### **-Written just a few hours after 9/11-**

1. Prevent “provocative weakness” by immediate and massive retaliation against terrorist leaders, networks and their harboring governments.
2. Preempt a possible 2nd wave of terror by increasing security measures at all levels.
3. Deal with the Islamic world like NATO did successfully with the two track decision in December 1979: isolate the aggressive negative forces from the moderate majority. i.e. Koran says: “Do not kill innocent people!”. Therefore there is no religious basis for the attacks. The terrorists are anti-Islamic.
4. Stop financing or else embargo governments with educational programs for their children based on hate and aggression towards the Free World.
5. Form new alliances with countries, especially from the Islamic community, which actively oppose this attack and measurably support the defensive anti-terrorist-program.
6. Incentivise substantially all Islamic governments and organizations which distance themselves now from their terrorist supporting past.

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<sup>5</sup> “A New NATO Double-Track Decision on Terrorism and Dialogue with Islam Is Needed”, 31.08.05, at [www.worldsecuritynetwork.com](http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com)

## **Prospects and Consequences of the Nuclear Proliferation in the Greater Middle East**

According to the Spanish newspaper El Pais one of the ten major undecided problems of 2007 for the world is the Iranian crisis and its nuclear dossier.

I think, there is lot more generally to focus on when debating Iran. When identifying those issues raised by the Iranian political and clerical establishment there are several concerns to emphasize.

While, experts argue about whether nuclear armed Iran can or can not be deterred, guessing whether the Cold War doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (**MAD**) that worked in case of the Soviet Union would work with Iran or not, there is another striking issue coming to the fore. Namely, the apparent feeling of insecurity spilling over from Iran and exacerbated by *others*, non-regional actors, in the region called the Greater Middle East. This insecurity stems from Iran possessing strong nuclear capability. The consequences are alarming and directly point out that Iran can not be dealt with separately in this matter.

Several countries in the region have expressed their wish to pursue nuclear programs. The Gulf Cooperation Council for example, which consists of six member countries stopped its opposition to nuclear technology and decided to develop a joint nuclear program. So did Egypt and Turkey. In the late November, 2007 president of the latter approved the law that allows construction of the three nuclear power plants, the first to be operational by 2012.

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While delivering his speech during the fourth annual party convention, presented as “New thought and a second leap toward the future”, Gamal Mubarak, son of the current president/ruler Hosni Mubarak, an assistant secretary general of the governing National Democratic Party and head of its powerful policies committee proposed that his country pursue the development of nuclear energy. Mubarak junior added that: “We do not accept visions from abroad that try to dissolve the Arab identity and the joint Arab efforts within the framework of the so-called Greater Middle East Initiative.”

This might seem to some as sort of pre-election campaign, especially when Gamal Mubarak is widely believed to be the successor in the office of his father. He probably is trying to compensate his lack of a military background and the impression that he and his father are Washington’s lackeys. Promotion of the nuclear program might help him win over support among the military and the indirect disapproval of Washington might help him restore some authority in the public.

Whatever versions might float, it still is important not to forget that the US provides around 2 bil a year in military assistance and development aid to this country under the existing regime.

In a big picture, the keenness of Middle Eastern countries to overcome the lack in the nuclear effectiveness looks like a consensus to contain Iran however not without an external assistance. In 2006 the US State Department and Ministry of Energy elaborated the cooperation agreement in the nuclear sphere with the countries of the region, namely, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Libya and just recently with Saudi Arabia. Probably, not having in mind (or maybe having in mind) what fatal end results this cooperation might lead to. Of course, all of these countries declare that their nuclear programs are for the energy production only – not much of a relief to the world.

Just by the way, I thought it would be interesting to cite Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei here, as follows: “to support Palestine is to support Iran. To support Lebanon is to support Iran. To support Iraq is to support Iran”, just for the sake of a simple comparison that would fit into context.

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So the consequences of nuclear armed Iran might go far beyond Western-Iranian confrontation. It might cause nuclear proliferation within the region which poses no less danger to the world peace and should not be overlooked.

When discussing the security matters within the above mentioned region it is also interesting to have a look at the report provided by the Washington based CSIS analytical team. According to the American estimates, in the case of Iran – Israeli nuclear confrontation 16-20 mil. Iranians and only around 200-800 thousand Israelis would loose their lives. In case if Syria engages in warfare fatalities on the Israeli side would increase to the maximum, that is 800.000. Syria however would loose 18 mil. of its citizens. The Role of Egypt is also taken into consideration here. Egypt however would suffer no fewer casualties than its other possible allies when fighting against Israel. All “thanks” to the Israeli satellite defense/assault systems.

However, there are people full of “optimism” and enthusiasm in Iran who would not care even if under certain circumstances the above mentioned scenario comes true one day. As former Iranian President Rafsanjani once mentioned: “If a day comes when the world of Islam is duly equipped with the arms Israel has in its possession, application of an atomic bomb would not leave anything in Israel, but the same thing will *just* produce damages in the Muslim world, it is not irrational to contemplate such an eventually”. So the MAD for some might not seem mad enough to become a deterrent however visa a versa an inducement.

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Author  
Konstantine Otkhmezuri

- **(MAD), the Gulf Cooperation Council, Egypt, Turkey, Gamal Mubarak.**

## **The Wrong Ways To Exert Pressure On Iran**

Some Western statesmen as well as experts insist that it is worth invading Iran since it is totally rotten from within and there is nothing to hold on to there in hope of bringing changes to the country; that different components within the Iranian political establishment deserve ruthless attitude and no mercy. To have this in mind is a big mistake. Maybe there is a common sense in the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner's words that when dealing with Iran : “We have to prepare for the worst ...and the worst is war”. Maybe the war is really the worst however it is not as close yet as some might think it is. There are in my opinion serious grounds to believe in this.

In September, 2008 the Bush administration along with Senate contemplated whether to classify Iran's central and fearsome military force the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization. This would have been a serious tactical inaccuracy. Since it is wiser to exploit the breaches within the opposing party while denouncing it wholly would unite it.

Good examples for that is the case of the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc. One of the main reasons that the reforming process in these countries succeeded was that the

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influential members of the Communist party stopped preventing collapse of their own system realizing that they would be better off in a different system.

Another example that we have is of more a recent origin. It is from Iraq. When the most members of the Baathist army (around 300,000) joined the various rebellious organizations after having found out that they were denounced, totally stripped of their livelihoods and had no perspective in Iraq's future. Although, the Accountability and Justice Law designed by the Iraqi Parliament and enforced by the Presidency Council in December-February, 2007-08, clears the way for those lower ranking Baathist government officials rejected during the so called de-Baathification. Aim of this measure is two fold: dealing with the crisis in government administration which lacks experienced personnel as well as national reconciliation.

Created after the Revolution of 1979, the Guard developed impressively. So did its economic capabilities: in the past few years the Guard front companies were awarded oil contracts worth 10 billion. Additionally, they make billions by importing, exporting and smuggling gasoline, liquor and cars.

The Guard gradually overrode clergy as a major decision maker in the country's political life.

Besides clergy, the Guard is not totally subordinated, as is widely believed, to the president Ahmadinejad. Moreover the latter has to be cautious in asking the former for assistance. All these seem little odd (and tempting for those who would like to exploit this in their interest), especially when having occurred in Islamic country.

To further consolidate my arguments it is worth mentioning that according to polls conducted at barracks in 1997 and 2001 the bigger and better part of the Guard supported then president Khatami; so have the senior commanders voted for their former colleague Ghalibaf as opposed to Ahmadinejad in the presidential elections 2005. Both Khatami and Ghalibaf are considered to be reformers enjoying the public support, latter being the mayor of Tehran and becoming more and more popular than Ahmadinejad.. Last but not least, Mohsen Rezai, longtime head of Guard who is strongly in favour of the US-Iran reconciliation at the same time reflecting the

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interests of many mid/high level military men in Tehran – sort of those who have seen horrors of war and men slaughter and do not want it any more.

Therefore it would not be exaggerated if argued that Guard is thoughtful to the public opinion. It would be a huge mistake to denounce this corps totally, because then you would have enemy consolidated with nowhere else to go than to wage a battle...Maybe they have sins but they are not as monolith of Islamic radicals as Al Qaeda.

At this stage, let us examine more closely what the public opinion in Iran really says.

To start with, on the night of September 11, 2001, Tehran was the only place in the Middle East where people walked out in the streets holding candles and expressing grief to those who perished during the attacks.

Further, the poll conducted on a nationwide scale by Terror Free Tomorrow shows that four out of five Iranians would give a preference to the democratic system rather than unelected, authoritarian rule of the current regime. When developing nuclear weapons was seen as necessary for Iran by 29%, 80% think it is necessary the government be transparent to the international atomic agencies and not conduct nuclear development for military ends. At the same time, 88% see economic development and cooperation with the rest of the world as vital for Iran's future well being. As Terror Free tomorrow reports these polls were conducted by safe, unsecured (unbugged) telephone lines.

Another heavy allegation that some pose to Iran's leadership is that they are smuggling arms to Afghanistan. Which makes sense. Especially, when radical elements within Iranian govt. would achieve at least two goals by disturbing situation in Afghanistan: weakened Afghanistan is less likely to become the US ally against Iran; it also shifts focus elsewhere from the uranium-enrichment program and gives clear message, if anybody pushes us we can make life hell in Iraq as well as in Afghanistan.

The above mentioned would perfectly fit into the formula once presented by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei: "to support Palestine is to support Iran. To support Lebanon is to support Iran. To support Iraq is to support Iran."

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On the other hand, however it is not to forget that Iran's success is also to huge extent affected by stability in Afghanistan. According to the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Iran has given around 600 mil for reconstruction in Afghanistan. Those refugees from Afghanistan, around 900.000, is a heavy burden for Iran's economy. It is necessary to send them home. The drug traffic across the Afghan border to Iran that already made around 2 mil. Iranians drug addicts. Finally, those arms smuggled to Afghanistan could be from somewhere else than Iran. From the illegal arms factories that operate across Pakistan's northwest frontier province and copy those weapons manufactured in Iran.

If it is about putting necessary pressure, besides sanctions put by Western countries, coordinated by the UN or by the EU, governments interested should actively discourage foreign companies from working with the Guard business agents as well as target financial counts of the elite Quds force within the Guard corps. I think, this would be a clear and present message (danger too).

To sum up, the goal in relation with Iran should be to further the divisions among various parties in Iran. Since there is not much of a hope that liberal values would prevail, this could prove effective. Especially when bearing in mind that the government, different fractions within Guard, Foreign ministry, the Business community all of them have different, sometimes contradictory agendas. A range of them might have little affinity to Ahmadinejad's methods. It is less likely however that they somehow reveal this if branded terrorists altogether.

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Author  
Konstantine Otkhmezuri

- Bernard Kouchner, Bush administration, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Baath, de-Baathification, Khatami; Ghalibaf, Ahmadinejad, Mohsen Rezai, Al Qaeda, Terror Free Tomorrow, Afghanistan, Ayatollah Khamenei, UN, EU, elite Quds force.

**October 24, 2007**

**OP-ED COLUMNIST**

## **Madness as Method**

**By MAUREEN DOWD**

Washington

Dick Cheney's craziness used to influence foreign policy.

Now it is foreign policy.

He may have lost his buddy in belligerence, Rummy. He may have tapped out the military in Iraq. He may not be able to persuade Congress so easily anymore — except for Hillary — to issue warlike resolutions. He can't cow Condi into supporting his bullying as he once did, and Bob Gates is doing his best to instill some common sense.

Besides, Cheney is running out of time to wreak global havoc; he's working for a president who is spending his waning days on the job trying to prevent children from getting health insurance.

But the vice president may have hit on a devious tactic used by his old boss Richard Nixon.

President Nixon and Henry Kissinger liked to use madness as a method. In 1969, Nixon told Kissinger to caution the Soviet ambassador that Nixon was "out of control" on Indochina, and could do something drastic.

Three months earlier, as Anthony Summers wrote in "The Arrogance of Power: The Secret World of Richard Nixon," "Kissinger had sent that

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very same message by proxy when he instructed Len Garment, about to leave on a trip to Moscow, to give the Soviets ‘the impression that Nixon is somewhat “crazy” — immensely intelligent, well organized and experienced to be sure, but at moments of stress or personal challenge unpredictable and capable of the bloodiest brutality.’ Garment carried out the mission, telling a senior Brezhnev adviser that Nixon was ‘a dramatically disjointed personality ... more than a little paranoid ... when necessary, a cold-hearted butcher.’ ” All of which, his aides later reflected, was kind of true.

Cheney seems to enjoy giving the impression that he is loony enough to pull off an attack on Iran before leaving office — even if he has to do it alone, like Slim Pickens riding the bomb down in “Dr. Strangelove” to the sentimental tune of “We’ll Meet Again.” He has even begun referring to his nickname, Darth Vader, noting that it “is one of the nicer things I’ve been called recently.”

Darth shook his fist against Iran again on Sunday, calling Tehran “the world’s most active state sponsor of terror” and vowing “serious consequences.”

Yet the administration’s policy in northern Iraq is another adventure in hypocrisy, according to a story yesterday by The Times’s Richard Opiel. The administration expresses solidarity with Turkey and tries to negotiate when Kurdish militants make raids against the Turks. But when Kurdish guerrillas stalk and kill Iranian forces, “the Americans offer Iran little sympathy.”

“Tehran even says Washington aids the Iranian guerrillas, a charge the United States denies,” Opiel writes.

The neocons who have their heart set on bombing Iran to stop I’m-a-Dinner-Jacket and the mullahs from getting nuclear capability were thrilled and emboldened by the placid reaction to the Israeli air strike on Syria.

The hawks are pounding the drums on Iran as they once did on Iraq, acting as if the hourglass is running out and we have to act immediately or, as the president apocalyptically suggested last week, we could be facing World War III.

7. Support Israel's self-defense openly as this country is endangered of being destroyed by this historical terroristic hate wave  
*Munich, Germany, 12th September 2001* <sup>6</sup>

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Or World War IV, as Norman Podhoretz, a neocon who is a top Giuliani adviser, says. Podhoretz urges bombing Iran "as soon as it is logistically possible" and likened Ahmadinejad to Hitler, as Poppy Bush did with Saddam.

Rudy is using his more martial attitude toward Iran as a weapon against Hillary, painting her as a delicate ditherer on the topic, and Obama is using his more diplomatic attitude toward Iran as a weapon against Hillary, painting her as a triangulator and a two-time administration patsy.

In his new book, the former U.N. Ambassador John Bolton scornfully accuses Colin Powell, and later Condi Rice, of appeasing Iran, including some carrots to get them to cease their nuclear plans.

A top Bush 41 national security official told me shortly after Bush 43 got under way that the younger Bush team's foreign policy was dangerous because it was so "black and white," so dependent on "bogymen."

President Bush has settled on his new bogymen, once more ignoring the obvious choice of Osama. Yesterday, he defended his plans to build a missile defense system in Europe by raising the specter of Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Hit with sticks, the bogymen responded with sticks. He said that Iran will not negotiate with anyone about its right to nuclear technology.

As Pat Buchanan noted on "Hardball," "Cheney and Bush are laying down markers for themselves which they're going to have to meet. I don't see how ... Bush and Cheney can avoid attacking Iran and retaining their credibility going out of office."

In other words, once our cowboys have talked their crazy talk, they have to walk their crazy walk.

Author:  
Konstantine Otkhmezuri

- **Osama Bin Laden, “Letter To America”, Guantanamo, globalization, fundamentalism, Intentional Interdependence, NATO Double-Track decision, Young academics of Islamic countries, September 11.**