

## **Hidden Hostility: Unmasking the true U.S. intentions toward Iran**

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“And if Washington judges that it cannot afford another Middle Eastern war in the near term, it will do everything short of military confrontation to isolate, pressure and coerce Tehran – perhaps even try to negotiate a limited nuclear deal with the Islamic Republic – until war becomes affordable again.”<sup>1</sup>

— Former U.S. State Department officials Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett

With the agreement reached last November between Iran and the P5+1 nations over the Islamic Republic’s peaceful nuclear program now in the implementation phase, U.S. Congressional hawks, under intense pressure from the Zionist lobby, continue to push forward legislation to intensify the already draconian economic sanctions. The White house has insisted that a new sanctions bill would propel the U.S. towards war with Iran,<sup>2</sup> while one hawkish Senator has contended that new sanctions are necessary to avoid military strikes.<sup>3</sup>

“I am worried the administration's policies will either lead to Iranian nuclear weapons or Israeli airstrikes,” said Illinois Republican Senator Mark Kirk, a primary sponsor for the new Iran sanctions legislation.<sup>4</sup> Threatening to veto Kirk’s bill, U.S. President Obama warned, “Imposing additional sanctions now will only risk derailing our efforts to resolve this issue peacefully.”<sup>5</sup> Given such contradictory statements on the part of U.S. lawmakers, what are the true U.S. intentions toward Iran? While the U.S. administration and Congress claim their actions are to prevent war, a closer look reveals a lack of commitment for improved U.S.-Iran relations.

In order to see through Washington’s veil of peaceful intent and unmask its true intentions towards Iran, it is instructive to compare past U.S. policy actions toward another great Asian power, the People’s Republic of China. The U.S. reactions to the victory of the peoples revolution in China in 1949 and the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran were similar: in both cases, the U.S. perceived both countries’ respective revolutions to have inflicted severe damage to U.S. strategic interests in their respective regions. U.S. foreign policy reaction was also practically identical in both cases: refusal to officially recognize the government installed by the popular revolution, economic embargoes and sanctions, covert and overt efforts to incite internal uprisings, and an unceasing barrage of demeaning and defamatory rhetoric directed at the fledgling governments.

In the case of China, Nixon and Kissinger realized the futility of the existing U.S. policy in Southeast Asia and took bold, unilateral steps to produce real change. Let us examine some of the bold policy steps taken by Nixon and Kissinger to foster improvement in U.S.-China relations, and then compare these to the current U.S. administration’s actions toward Iran.

1- Nixon personally went to China three times to foster improvement of bilateral relations: in July and October 1971, and February 1972;

With Iran, so far at least, Obama has not gone to Tehran nor are there any official plans for him to do so.

- 2- Nixon and Kissinger discretely developed their bold China policy, with perhaps only ten other bureaucrats aware of it;  
With Iran, Obama developed his Iran policy only after consulting with a plethora of governmental agencies, think tanks and lobbyists.
- 3- Nixon was acutely aware that U.S. policy in Vietnam and Southeast Asia was failing;  
With Iran, U.S. policy has failed, as it has elsewhere in the Middle East, but neither Obama nor a majority of U.S. politicians seem to be cognizant of this fact.
- 4- Nixon took the approach of establishing improved relations first and then tackling the strategic issues upon which the U.S. and China differed;  
With Iran, the U.S. has it backwards by demanding that a single issue, i.e. the nuclear one, be resolved before relations can be improved.
- 5- Nixon and Kissinger were acutely aware that incremental diplomatic approaches would not lead to breakthroughs;  
With Iran, the U.S. continues to employ an incremental approach that historically has been proven to fail.
- 6- Nixon realized that the U.S., as the stronger party with a track record of aggression, would have to be the one to make the decisive first move to prove serious intent;  
With Iran, the Washington regime seems stuck in thinking that Tehran must be the party to prove its good intent.
- 7- Nixon realized that after 20 years of hostility towards China, improving relations would require a bold application of leadership without regard to internal political flak;  
With Iran, Obama has not shown any leadership in this regard, only brief bursts of leadership-like rhetoric.
- 8- Nixon and Kissinger understood that peaceful relations with China would be the best approach to safeguarding U.S. strategic interests in the Far East;  
With Iran, the U.S. still does not comprehend that peaceful bilateral relations would be the best approach to safeguarding U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, by 1964 China already had an atomic bomb and had come close to a nuclear confrontation with the former Soviet Union over a territorial dispute. So certainly, since Iran has disavowed the use or possession of nuclear weapons as against Islam, there is that difference with respect to the parallel with China.<sup>7</sup> However, if the U.S. truly desired to improve its relations with Iran, the U.S. president would have to take the same kinds of bold steps that Nixon took to improve relations with China over 40 years ago. Such actions would have to include a mandatory Nixonian-style trip by Obama to Tehran to personally meet with President Rouhani.

Symbolic of the hidden hostility towards Iran embedded in every U.S. policy action was the insulting remark made by top U.S. nuclear negotiator Wendy Sherman who, concerning Iranians, said that “we know that deception is part of the DNA.”<sup>8</sup> Sherman’s racist slur notwithstanding, she has misinterpreted deception for Tehran’s fully justifiable suspicion of Washington’s intentions. After all, Iran is negotiating with a deceptive regime that has an established record of fomenting enmity with Iran over the past 35 years, the highlights of which include a U.S.-engineered coup, supporting the dictator Mohamed Reza Pahlavi and backing Saddam’s bloody 8-year imposed war on Iran. As Middle East historian Mark LeVine pointed out, “If the U.S.

has good reasons to suspect Iranian intentions, Iranians have far greater reasons to fear and suspect U.S. intentions.”<sup>9</sup>

Part of the U.S. self-inflicted delusional mythology on Iran stems from the incessant reiteration of the phrase “Iran's nuclear weapons program” in the western media. This nonstop promulgation of propaganda predisposes the western mind to believe the Zionist regime’s calumnies of an “Iranian nuclear threat,” when in fact there is none. Even those western pragmatists who concede the validity of Washington’s own intelligence assessments, which concluded that Iran does NOT have a nuclear weapons program, nevertheless trumpet noisily about the dangers of Iran developing nuclear “breakout capability.” This is while Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has unequivocally stated that Islam forbids the “production, stockpiling and use” of nuclear weapons,<sup>10</sup> starkly contrasting the U.S. track record of demonic aggression in pursuit of global hegemony, having caused the deaths of over 10 million of Planet Earth's citizens since 1945.<sup>11</sup>

It is instructive to note that in the cases of the former Soviet Union and China, the Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations had considered and subsequently rejected the military option – limited nuclear strikes – to incapacitate those countries' advancing nuclear capabilities. The main arguments for rejecting military attacks on Russia and China then – and equally valid now – were the enormous economic costs involved combined with the improbability of containment of consequential hostilities. Likewise, the military option cannot seriously be on the table for Iran, since a U.S. strike (or a U.S.-backed Zionist strike) would expose U.S. military assets to justifiable retaliatory strikes by Iran, most likely dragging Washington into another expensive, protracted Middle Eastern war it cannot afford. As Iranian Defense Minister Ali Shamkhani pointed out in 2004, “The U.S. military presence near us is not power for the United States because this power may under certain circumstances become a hostage in our hands.”<sup>12</sup>

Therefore realistically speaking, contrary to the chronic U.S. manic mythos of once again subjugating Iran, the Obama administration cannot truthfully say “all options are on the table,” since the cost of the military choice is currently beyond Washington's means. As a result, Washington really had no choice but to negotiate an agreement with Tehran and now must be prepared to yield significant concessions and grant meaningful security assurances to the Islamic Republic in order to save face and any vestige of its collapsing hegemonic empire. However, as CFR scholar Scott Sagan wrote in 2006, “None of this will happen, however, if U.S. officials keep threatening to topple the Iranian government.”<sup>13</sup> And beneath the mask of nuclear negotiations, regime change still seems to be first among the true U.S. intentions toward Iran.

So we see, in fact, it was not U.S. economic sanctions that brought Tehran to the negotiating table, rather it was Washington’s realization of its current inability to absorb the colossal costs of confronting its self-induced mythological delusion of an Iranian nuclear threat by military force. But Washington’s hidden hostility pushes the U.S. toward war with Iran once it again becomes affordable. After all, when it comes to U.S. politicians, aggression is part of the DNA.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett, *Going to Tehran* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2013), 229-230.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Richter, "White House suggests Iran sanctions bill could draw U.S. into war," *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 2014, accessed January 20, 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-white-house-iran-nuclear-deal-20140110.0.1510706.story#axzz2qz0Mi7Df>.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Richter, "Iran, 6 world powers OK plan to launch first phase of nuclear deal," *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 2014, accessed January 20, 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-us-iran-20140113.0.341164.story#axzz2qz0Mi7Df>.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Richter, "Iran, 6 world powers OK plan to launch first phase of nuclear deal," *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Barack Obama, "Statement by the President on the Implementation of the First Step Agreement on the Islamic Republic of Iran's Nuclear Program," *The White House*, Office of the Press Secretary, January 12, 2014, accessed January 20, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/01/12/statement-president-implementation-first-step-agreement-islamic-republic>.

<sup>6</sup> Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett, *ibid.*, 379-387.

<sup>7</sup> Scott Sagan, "How to Keep the Bomb From Iran," *Foreign Affairs*, Sep/Oct 2006; 3, accessed January 20, 2014, [http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/21236/How\\_to\\_Keep\\_the\\_Bomb\\_From\\_Iran.pdf](http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/21236/How_to_Keep_the_Bomb_From_Iran.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Paul Richter, "State Dept. official urges Congress to delay new Iran sanctions," *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 2013, accessed January 20, 2014, <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/oct/03/world/la-fg-wn-state-congress-iran-sanctions-20131003>.

<sup>9</sup> Mark LeVine, "Iranian nuclear deal and US foreign policy schizophrenia," *Al Jazeera*, November 25, 2013, accessed January 20, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/11/iranian-nuclear-deal-us-foreign-policy-schizophrenia-20131125482661720.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Paul R. Pillar, "The U.S. is misreading Iran's nuclear intentions," *Japan Times*, November 5, 2013, accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2013/11/05/commentary/the-u-s-is-misreading-irans-nuclear-intentions/#.Ut4MpdLNxR0>.

<sup>11</sup> "USA A Threat To The World , Killed More Than Ten Million People Around The World," *Jafria News*, January 10, 2014, accessed January 21, 2014, <http://jafrianews.com/2014/01/10/usa-a-threat-to-the-world-killed-more-than-ten-million-people-around-the-world/>.

<sup>12</sup> Sagan, *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Sagan, *ibid.*, 9.