

Iranian President Ahmadinejad's 'Letter-Bomb' Boxes-In Bush

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

"It's a letter-bomb," quipped Lyndon LaRouche, in reference to the unprecedented letter, sent by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to President George W. Bush, on May 8. The 18-page letter, delivered to the White House through the Swiss Embassy, which has served as a liaison since diplomatic relations were severed in 1979, aimed at forcing the question of direct talks between Tehran and Washington. Given Bush's psychological profile, it was clear that he would reject the offer out of hand, thus discrediting himself totally in the eyes of the international community. It was, in short, a set-up. LaRouche mooted that the Iranian initiative may have been supported by, or coordinated with other forces, perhaps in Russia, Germany, or the like.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice heaped discredit on herself as well, when she said in interviews on May 10, that the letter had been rejected before it had even been read! "We've gotten the letter," she said. "We've not had a chance to do our own translation, and of course we'll do that, but an initial reading of the letter would suggest that there is nothing in it that addresses the major issues between the United States and the rest of the world and Iran on the one hand. So, no concrete issues on the nuclear side or on any of the other issues that we face. It's very philosophical, I would say. But again, I think we want to take a harder look at it, look at the actual translation and get a better sense of what's there. But that's the initial reading."

Bush was reportedly "briefed" on the letter. A cartoon in the *International Herald Tribune* on May 10 summed up the matter. Bush, facing an envoy with the letter, is seen hammering his fist on his desk, and saying: "Make my position clear to Iran. I have *never* and will *never* read an 18-page letter!"

Although some cynics and interested parties, like the *Wall Street Journal*, dismissed the letter as a ploy, serious political forces worldwide spoke out, urging Washington to respond to the initiative, by conducting direct talks. Simon Jenkins, in a *Guardian* op-ed, argued that both Britain and the United States need Iran's cooperation, especially in Iraq, and, "so, if he writes a letter inviting talks, it's a good idea to reply. If it's a bluff," he concluded, "It's a bluff worth calling." Inside the United States, leading figures, including Senators John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), called for direct talks. Lugar suggested that Iran join an energy dialogue with the United States, China, India, and other countries. Re-

publican Sen. Chuck Hagel (Neb.), former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, former National Security Advisor Sandy Berger, and Dennis Ross—a rabidly pro-Israeli former Middle East negotiator—have put heavy pressure on the Administration to give up its obstinance, and open up to talks. Judith Kipper, director of the Middle East Forum for the Council on Foreign Relations, said that, "Iran has, privately and publicly, awkwardly, made many gestures to try and get our attention, and this was obviously an important one."

What Ahmadinejad Said

Ahmadinejad framed his communication to Bush in the context of their shared commitment to the values of the three great monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The Iranian President presented "contradictions" between professed respect of these values, and concrete political actions. How, for example, can one proclaim respect for human rights and "work towards the establishment of a unified international community," while at the same time destroying a country (Iraq), killing hundreds of thousands of people, putting young troops in harm's way, and so forth? How can Christian values be reconciled with practices at Guantanamo Bay and secret prisons abroad? Ahmadinejad presented a defense of the right of all nations to the fruits of science and technology, for their own development.

Among the political evils he lists, are the Anglo-American coup d'état against Iran in 1953, and support for Iraq against Iran in the eight-year war (1980-88). Quite striking is Ahmadinejad's reference to the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the first such open questioning, by a head of state, of what really was behind the terrorist attacks. (See *Documentation*.)

One important point of psychological pressure, at a time of sinking approval rates for Bush, is the Iranian President's assertion that "those in power have a specific time in office, and do not rule indefinitely, but their names will be recorded in history and will be constantly judged in the immediate and distant futures. The people will scrutinize our Presidencies. Did we manage to bring peace, security, and prosperity for the people, or insecurity and unemployment? Did we intend to establish justice, or just support special interest groups, and by forcing many people to live in poverty and hardship, make a few people rich and powerful—thus trading the approval of the people and the Almighty with theirs?"

In his concluding section, Ahmadinejad stresses the im-

portance of divine judgment on what political leaders do or do not do, and invites Bush to “return to the teachings of prophets, to monotheism and justice, to preserve human dignity and obedience to the Almighty and His prophets.”

Following upon this letter, Hassan Rowhani, former head of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran, (and thus, chief negotiator), and currently representative of Ayatollah Khamenei on the Iranian National Security Council, sent a letter to *Time* magazine with an eight-point program for solving the nuclear dispute through negotiations (see box). The plan provides concrete proposals for solving all outstanding issues, between the International Atomic Energy Agency and Iran, and between the United States and Iran.

Ahmadinejad has made an extraordinary gesture, extending a hand to the Bush Administration, if it were seriously interested in settling the issues under dispute. Condi Rice said the letter had “no concrete issues on the nuclear side.” Rowhani, a highly authoritative, experienced figure, has spelled out the concrete issues that Tehran is ready to address. Now, the ball is in Bush’s court.

Documentation

Ahmadinejad to Bush

Here are excerpts from President Ahmadinejad’s May 8 letter to President Bush.

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America:

For some time now I have been thinking, how one can justify the undeniable contradictions that exist in the international arena—which are being constantly debated, especially in political forums and amongst university students. Many questions remain unanswered. These have prompted me to discuss some of the contradictions and questions, in the hopes that it might bring about an opportunity to redress them.

Can one be a follower of Jesus Christ (PBUH*), the great Messenger of God, feel obliged to respect human rights, present liberalism as a civilization model, announce one’s opposition to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and WMDs, make “War on Terror” his slogan, and finally, work towards the establishment of a unified international community—a community which Christ and the virtuous of the Earth will one day govern—but at the same time, have countries attacked; the lives, reputations, and possessions of people destroyed and on the slight chance of the . . . [apprehension] of criminals in a village, city, or convoy for example, the entire village, city, or convey set ablaze?

*Peace Be Unto Him—ed.



www.khamenei.ir

Ayatollah Khamenei (left), Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Ahmadinejad’s letter to President Bush, the first direct contact between the two governments since 1979, placed Bush in the position of discrediting himself before world opinion, by flatly rejecting the overture.

Or because of the possibility of the existence of WMDs in one country, it is occupied, around one hundred thousand people killed, its water sources, agriculture, and industry destroyed, close to 180,000 foreign troops put on the ground, sanctity of private homes of citizens broken, and the country pushed back perhaps fifty years. At what price? Hundreds of billions of dollars spent from the treasury of one country and certain other countries and tens of thousands of young men and women—as occupation troops—put in harm’s way, taken away from family and loved ones, their hands stained with the blood of others, subjected to so much psychological pressure that every day some commit suicide and those returning home suffer depression, become sickly, and grapple with all sorts of ailments; while some are killed and their bodies handed to their families.

On the pretext of the existence of WMDs, this great tragedy came to engulf both the peoples of the occupied and the occupying country. Later it was revealed that no WMDs existed to begin with. Of course Saddam was a murderous dictator. But the war was not waged to topple him; the announced goal of the war was to find and destroy weapons of mass destruction. He was toppled along the way towards another goal; nevertheless the people of the region are happy about it. I point out that throughout the many years of the war on Iran, Saddam was supported by the West.

Mr. President, you might know that I am a teacher. My students ask me, how can these actions be reconciled with the values outlined at the beginning of this letter and duty to the tradition of Jesus Christ (PBUH), the Messenger of peace and forgiveness? . . .

Young people, university students, and ordinary people have many questions about the phenomenon of Israel. I am sure you are familiar with some of them. Throughout history many countries have been occupied, but I think the establishment of a new country with a new people, is a new phenomenon that is exclusive to our times. Students are saying that

Rowhani Proposes Talks With U.S.A.

Hassan Rowhani, representative of Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei on the Supreme National Security Council, former National Security Council head, and negotiator in nuclear matters, issued a “personal” proposal for negotiating a solution to the conflict over Iran’s nuclear program. The proposal, sent to *Time* magazine, has the following points:

“Iran would make an active contribution, provided that other countries with similar sensitive fuel cycle programs also do the same, to fixing the loopholes in the non-proliferation system and to developing a technically credible international control regime.

“Iran would consider ratifying the Additional Protocol, which provides for intrusive and snap inspections.

“Iran would address the question of preventing breakout from the NPT [Non-Proliferation Treaty].

“Iran would agree to negotiate with the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] and states concerned about

the scope and timing of its industrial-scale uranium enrichment.

“Iran would accept an IAEA verifiable cap on enrichment limit of reactor grade uranium.

“Iran would accept an IAEA verifiable cap on the production of UF₆—uranium hexafluoride, which is used for enrichment—during the period of negotiation for the scope and timing of its industrial scale enrichment.

“Iran and the IAEA would agree on terms of the continuous presence of inspectors in Iran to verify credibly that no diversion takes place in Iran.

“Iran’s readiness to welcome other countries to partner with Iran in a consortium provides additional assurance about the peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear program. It is not Iran’s intention to disregard Security Council decisions. The way out is for the Security Council to mandate the IAEA to address this issue and establish a negotiating process for a fixed period to formulate a credible plan taking into account the suggestions I made in my personal capacity.

“Iran is prepared to work with the IAEA and all states concerned about promoting confidence in its fuel cycle program. But Iran cannot be expected to give in to United States’ bullying and non-proliferation double standards.”

sixty years ago, such a country did not exist. They show old documents and globes and say, try as we might, we have not been able to find a country named Israel. I tell them to study the history of World War I and II.

One of my students told me that during World War II, which more than tens of millions of people perished in, news about the war was quickly disseminated by the warring parties. Each touted their victories and the most recent battlefield defeat of the other party. After the war, they claimed that six million Jews had been killed. Six million people that were surely related to at least two million families.

Again let us assume that these events are true. Does that logically translate into the establishment of the state of Israel in the Middle East or support for such a state? How can this phenomenon be rationalized or explained? . . . [continues on the behavior of Israel]

Mr. President, As you are well aware, I live amongst the people and am in constant contact with them—many people from around the Middle East manage to contact me as well. They do not have faith in these dubious policies either. There is evidence that the people of the region are becoming increasingly angry with such policies.

It is not my intention to pose too many questions, but I need to refer to other points as well. Why is it that any technological and scientific achievement reached in the Middle East regions is translated into and portrayed as a threat to

the Zionist regime? Is not scientific R&D one of the basic rights of nations? You are familiar with history. Aside from the Middle Ages, in what other point in history has scientific and technical progress been a crime? Can the possibility of scientific achievements being utilized for military purposes be reason enough to oppose science and technology altogether? If such a supposition is true, then all scientific disciplines, including physics, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, engineering, etc., must be opposed.

Lies were told in the Iraqi matter. What was the result? I have no doubt that telling lies is reprehensible in any culture, and you do not like to be lied to. . . .

The brave and faithful people of Iran too have many questions and grievances, including: the coup d’état of 1953 and the subsequent toppling of the legal government of the day, opposition to the Islamic Revolution, transformation of an Embassy into a headquarters supporting the activities of those opposing the Islamic Republic (many thousands of pages of documents corroborate this claim), support for Saddam in the war waged against Iran, the shooting down of the Iranian passenger plane, freezing the assets of the Iranian nation, increasing threats, anger and displeasure vis-à-vis the scientific and nuclear progress of the Iranian nation (just when all Iranians are jubilant and collaborating in their country’s progress), and many other grievances that I will not refer to in this letter.

Mr. President, September 11 was a horrendous incident. The killing of innocents is deplorable and appalling in any part of the world. Our government immediately declared its disgust with the perpetrators and offered its condolences to the bereaved and expressed its sympathies. All governments have a duty to protect the lives, property, and good standing of their citizens. Reportedly your government employs extensive security, protection, and intelligence systems—and even hunts its opponents abroad.

September 11 was not a simple operation. Could it be planned and executed without coordination with intelligence and security services—or their extensive infiltration? Of course this is just an educated guess. . . .

The main pretext for an attack on Iraq was the existence of WMDs. This was repeated incessantly—for the public to, finally, believe—and the ground set for an attack on Iraq. Will the truth not be lost in a contrived and deceptive climate? Again, if the truth is allowed to be lost, how can that be reconciled with the earlier mentioned values? Is the truth known to the Almighty lost as well? . . .

What has been said, are some of the grievances of the people around the world, in our region and in your country. But my main contention—which I am hoping you will agree to some of it—is: Those in power have specific time in office, and do not rule indefinitely, but their names will be recorded in history and will be constantly judged in the immediate and distant futures. The people will scrutinize our Presidencies. Did we manage to bring peace, security and prosperity for the people or insecurity and unemployment? Did we intend to establish justice, or just supported especial interest groups, and by forcing many people to live in poverty and hardship, made a few people rich and powerful—thus trading the approval of the people and the Almighty with theirs? Did we defend the rights of the underprivileged or ignore them? Did we defend the rights of all people around the world or impose wars on them, interfere illegally in their affairs, establish hellish prisons and incarcerate some of them? Did we bring the world peace and security or raise the specter of intimidation and threats? . . .

Mr. President, it is not my intention to distress anyone. If prophet Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ishmael, Joseph, or Jesus Christ (PBUH) were with us today, how would they have judged such behavior? Will we be given a role to play in the promised world, where justice will become universal and Jesus Christ (PBUH) will be present? Will they even accept us? My basic question is this: Is there no better way to interact with the rest of the world? Today there are hundreds of millions of Christians, hundreds of millions of Muslims, and millions of people who follow the teachings of Moses (PBUH). All divine religions share and respect one word and that is “monotheism” or belief in a single God and no other in the world. The holy Koran stresses this common word and calls on followers of divine religions and says: [3.64] “Say: O followers of the Book! Come to an equitable proposition

between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah and [that] we shall not associate aught. With Him and [that] some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah, but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.” (The Family of Imran).

Mr. President, According to divine verses, we have all been called upon to worship one God and follow the teachings of divine prophets. “To worship a God which is above all powers in the world and can do all He pleases.” “The Lord which knows that which is hidden and visible, the past and the future, knows what goes on in the hearts of His servants and records their deeds.” . . .

I have been told that Your Excellency follows the teachings of Jesus (PBUH), and believes in the divine promise of the rule of the righteous on Earth. We also believe that Jesus Christ (PBUH) was one of the great prophets of the Almighty. He has been repeatedly praised in the Koran. Jesus (PBUH) has been quoted in the Koran as well [19,36]. And surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serves Him; this is the right path, *Marium*. . . .

Divine prophets have promised: The day will come when all humans will congregate before the court of the Almighty, so that their deeds are examined. The good will be directed towards Heaven and evildoers will meet divine retribution. I trust both of us believe in such a day, but it will not be easy to calculate the actions of rulers, because we must be answerable to our nations and all others whose lives have been directly or indirectly affected by our actions. All prophets speak of peace and tranquility for man—based on monotheism, justice, and respect for human dignity. Do you not think that if all of us come to believe in and abide by these principles—that is, monotheism, worship of God, justice, respect for the dignity of man, belief in the Last Day—we can overcome the present problems of the world—that are the result of disobedience to the Almighty and the teachings of prophets—and improve our performance? Do you not think that belief in these principles promotes and guarantees peace, friendship, and justice? Do you not think that the aforementioned written or unwritten principles are universally respected? Will you not accept this invitation? That is, a genuine return to the teachings of prophets, to monotheism and justice, to preserve human dignity and obedience to the Almighty and His prophets?

Mr. President, history tells us that repressive and cruel governments do not survive. God has entrusted the fate of man to them. The Almighty has not left the universe and humanity to their own devices. . . .

Mr. President, whether we like it or not, the world is gravitating towards faith in the Almighty, and justice and the will of God will prevail over all things.

Vasalam Ala Man Ataba'al hoda Mahmood Ahmadi-Najad
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran