

Iran and nuclear power, the next Iraq?

By Osman Abdalla
Staff Reporter
oaa106@psu.edu

The American and Iraqi experience is a tough issue, whether it is madness or genius. Either way, the effects will be wide ranging and will significantly shape the rest of our lives. These are just random, not necessarily connected, thoughts floating in my head, along with a great deal of wonder about how the American administration would do if there was a similar situation - or what the world would do. Iran's non-cooperation with the inspectors shows that while it is easy to make agreements by dialogue - as many will say it is better - it remains a great challenge, and is time consuming if, for instance, it seemed not doable in our case with Iran.

We have different nations in the world right now that are asking the same question, which makes it difficult for Iran to cooperate. How can we stop producing weapons of mass destruction if others are doing that and no one is talking to them? Is power a reflection of balance or integrity?

The possibility of Iran developing nuclear weapons is unacceptable to countries willing to do more than negotiate and embrace diplomacy, in particular the U.S. and Israel. In the meantime, it was looked at differently by the Iranians; the nation has a mentality of "they have to stop me so that I will remain weaker compared to the U.S. and Israel" - both of which (U.S. and Israel)

have the capability and the motivation to stop Iran from achieving nuclear status. Iran knows this.

The political sidelining of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and Ahmed Chalabi, as well as the dissolution of the Iraq Interim Governing Council coincide with renewed Iranian posturing and defiance. But if the price of

alienating the rest of the world. Then there is Saudi Arabia and the necessity (if jobs are to be kept, food delivered, hospitals supplied etc.) to keep Saudi oil flowing along with Iraqi oil while the nations simultaneously manage a domestic terror campaign. The balls are in the air, how will they land? Perhaps, more inter-

on them. But so far, there has not been any serious counter-revolution, just students demonstrating by strikes here and there. There were some rumors among some Iranians around the world about someone coming from the U.S. to start a counter-revolution against the mullas of Iran. Iran's economy is in very good

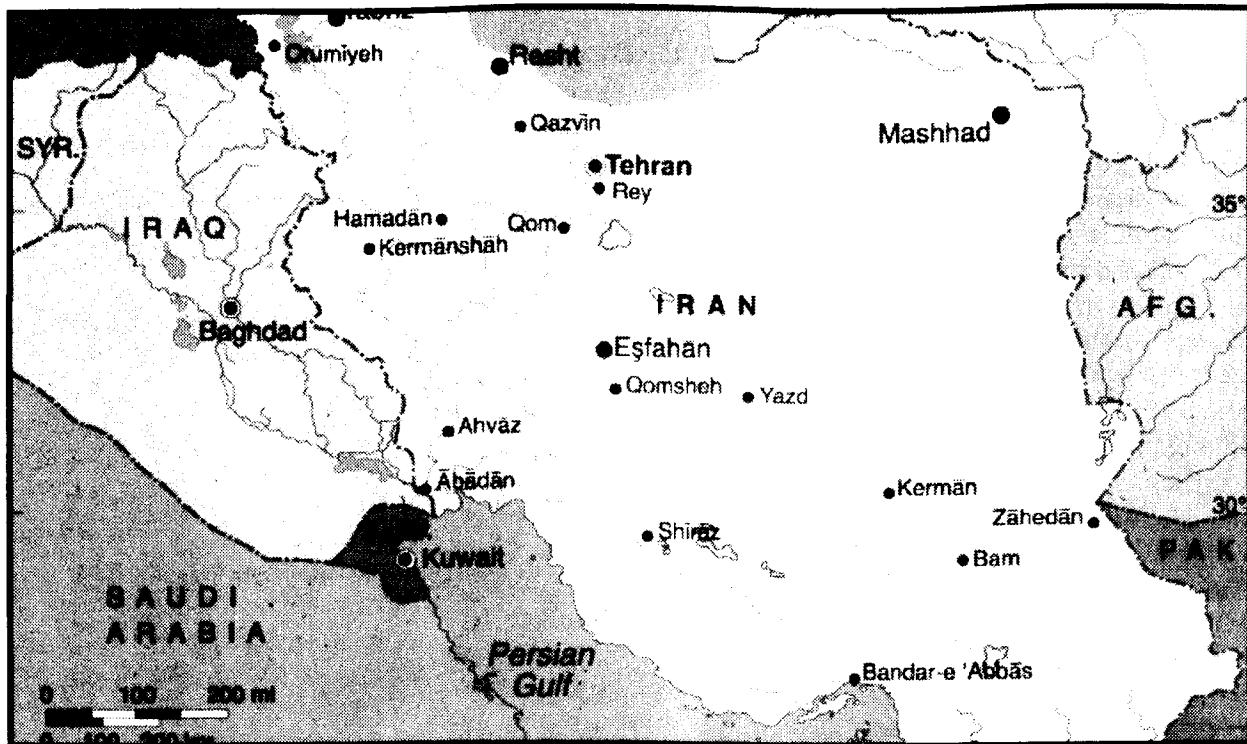
decreasing oil prices have forced the Iranian regime to rethink their domestic and foreign politics.

They will continue their policy of domestic and international terror in a quiet fashion instead of a confrontational and obvious manner like we are used to. Convinced that Iran is covertly speeding toward making nuclear weapons, the Bush administration has begun a diplomatic campaign to sharply increase the pressure on Tehran. The sudden sense of urgency follows the apparent collapse of a three-nation European initiative to persuade Iran to freeze its nuclear program. Iran is trying to renegotiate the deal and insists that its nuclear program is for civilian energy purposes only.

The Bush administration faces a fundamental dilemma similar to the one it faced two years ago in Iraq. Should the United States continue to work with allies who favor negotiation, or should it take pre-emptive, unilateral action (like Iraq) to stop Iran?

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on the Islamic Republic to end torture of opponents and political prisoners, exactions against ethnic and religious minorities, particularly the Bahai and discrimination against women, by 67 votes against 54 and 46 abstentions.

The bothersome part about the UN is that things are prioritized - a global organization that is always needing some motivation by other entities.



Map courtesy of Google Images

Map of Iran and key cities

Iranian cooperation is swaying democracy in Iraq, then to the 'liberating' U.S. that is surely too high a price. So the alternative for President Bush is to use or threaten hard force, along with conviction and without losing an election and without further

estingly, what really is the plan for where they land?

As you probably already know, there is an ongoing anger among the youth of Iran, especially in Tehran (the capital). They are not happy with the restrictions that the religious regime is inflicting

shape. The government controls 95 percent of the economy. Their main income is oil. With the recent drop in oil prices their estimated revenue has decreased by about half. On one hand the financial debt increases, and on the other hand

Canadians call for drug export ban

Canadian pharmacist, seniors groups call on Ottawa to ban cross-border drug shopping

By COLIN McCLELLAND
Associated Press Writer

TORONTO - Canadians must stop Americans from using Internet pharmacies to raid its medicine chest or face a drug shortage, a coalition of Canadian groups representing seniors, pharmacies and patients has warned.

The groups, claiming to represent 10 million Canadians, or about one-third the population, called on the Canadian government Monday to ban prescription drug exports.

They argue that Canada cannot afford to address U.S. drug shortages and soaring prescription costs with its own stock, which are often considerably cheaper for Americans because of government price controls.

An estimated 65 million Americans, most elderly, don't have drug coverage or can't afford drugs in the United States. Internet pharmacies and Canadian doctors willing to write prescriptions for Americans send an estimated \$1 billion a year in Canadian drugs south of the border.

"It is completely untenable to think that Canada could supply their needs and our own for even one month, let alone on an ongoing basis," said Louise Binder of the Canadian Treatment Action Council and Best Medicines Coalition.

Binder said she has heard that in Winnipeg, Manitoba, there is a shortage of desperately needed cancer drugs that are readily available to American consumers through Internet pharmacies based in Canada.

But Canada's health department insists Americans don't pose a threat to the country's drug supply. For example, Health Minister Ujjal Dosanjh said Monday he believes

Canada has a surplus of vaccine that could be provided to the United States, though probably not enough to meet the U.S. demand.

The United States is grappling with a shortage of flu vaccine after contamination problems prevented a major supplier in England from shipping.

Canada regulates drug prices

"It is completely untenable to think that Canada could supply their needs and our own for even one month, let alone on an ongoing basis."

- Louise Binder

as part of its national health care system, while the market dictates pricing in the United States. Many popular medications for chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol can be bought in Canada at less than half the U.S. price.

Earlier this month, Illinois and Wisconsin started state-sponsored programs to help residents buy cheaper prescription drugs from both Europe and Canada. Several states, seeing the potential for huge savings in the costs of insuring employees, have Web sites designed to help citizens buy Canadian medications. Also, visitors to Canada can buy as much as three

months of medication in Canada for personal use with a U.S. prescription.

U.S.-based drug makers Pfizer Inc., GlaxoSmithKline, AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals LP and Wyeth have cut supplies to some Canadian pharmacies when they suspected orders were too large for the Canadian market and were being sold to Americans.

Lothar Dueck, president of the Coalition for Manitoba Pharmacy, said he is under restrictions by U.S. drug companies and often must call colleagues to scrounge enough medicine to fill prescriptions for his customers in Vita near the U.S. border. Recently he ran out of Imuran, a drug used to treat immune system deficiencies such as lupus.

"I don't want to see our health system decimated by forcing Canadians to compete with Americans for our drug supply," Dueck said.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration opposes commercial prescription drug imports, arguing that it cannot vouch for their safety.

Binder said Canada's reputation could be on the line if drugs imported from countries where quality cannot be verified, such as China, Iran, India and Thailand, cause problems after being resold to the United States.

Jeff Poston, executive director of the Canadian Pharmacists Association, also expressed concerns about safety.

"Drugs are a therapy; they should not be treated as a commodity to be bought from anywhere in the world at the cheapest price," Poston said.

Binder objected to the argument of U.S. drug companies that cheaper Canadian drugs don't help pay for expensive research and development.

"Most R&D is started by the government and when it becomes lucrative, the patent rights are bought up by the drug companies," Binder said.

Karzai team believes victory "secure" with one-quarter of votes counted

By STEPHEN GRAHAM
Associated Press Writer

KABUL, Afghanistan - Interim leader Hamid Karzai is certain to win Afghanistan's landmark presidential election, his campaign spokesman said Tuesday, after early returns gave him a commanding advantage.

With one-quarter of the votes from the Oct. 9 ballot counted, Karzai has captured 61.6 percent. His closest challenger, former Education Minister Yunus Qanooni, trails with 18.2 percent.

"We think we are secure now," Karzai's spokesman, Hamed Elmi, told The Associated Press. "When they announce it formally, then we will celebrate."

Elmi said that Karzai was "quite pleased" with the results so far and his campaign staff was "100 percent" sure that the U.S.-backed incumbent would win the majority of the 8 million votes needed to avoid a run-off.

Qanooni has so far refused to concede defeat and claimed on Monday that only fraud has given Karzai the lead in the race to become the country's first popularly elected leader.

On Tuesday, the running-mate of ethnic Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, currently third in the vote count, conceded defeat.

Chafiga Habibi, vice-presidential candidate on Dostum's ticket, told AP, "I think Karzai is going to win because he's a long way ahead in the results, and we can't ignore this reality."

Election officials say they will not call the result until the winner is certain, but have also said that the tallies are unlikely to change much once 20 percent of the votes have been counted.

Despite poor weather and Taliban threats of more attacks, an estimated 8 million Afghans cast their ballots in a democratic experiment supposed to cement the country's re-emergence since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

In a reminder of the country's continuing insecurity, a doctor who helped to organize the election was killed along with four other civilians when an explo-

sion tore through their vehicle on Monday, police said.

The government strongly condemned the blast as "the negative action of terrorists."

"We know they are the enemy of our country and they were not able to do anything on polling day, but still they are trying to disrupt the process," presidential spokesman Jawed Ludin told a news conference Tuesday.

Meanwhile, six rockets were fired at U.S. military camps in eastern Kunar and Nangahar provinces late Monday and early Tuesday, but caused no injuries or damage, spokesman Maj. Mark McCann said.

Karzai, Afghanistan's interim leader since the Taliban's ouster in 2001, is seen by many Afghans as a bridge to its international backers and a leader untainted by its bloody past.

Many Afghans are impatient at the slow pace of reconstruction, and minorities are wary of his strong support in the Pashtun-dominated south.

Qanooni, an ethnic Tajik, said on Monday that he believed he would be leading in the vote-count if the ballot had been fair.

He alleged that ballot boxes had been stuffed with votes in favor of Karzai in at least four provinces.

Karzai's rivals have lodged dozens of complaints with a panel of foreign experts set up to head off their threat to boycott the results.

Associated Press writers Matthew Pennington and Amir Shah contributed to this report.



Photo courtesy of Google Images

Votes for Afghanistan's landmark presidential election took place on Oct. 9.

World View

By Osman Abdalla
Staff Reporter
oaa106@psu.edu

People are fundamentally the same - they just do things in different ways.

Dear readers, I decided to write about different aspects of societies in this column, World View, to share with you the similarities and the differences between the people in the world. People live in different eras and different places, but why are they not the same at a given time or a given place?

Physical differences, mental differences, environmental differences and many other differences exist between people in the world, but they still share fundamental features which are universal. Let us look at some.

People, whether they are in an industrialized, egalitarian, nomadic pastoralist or horticultural society all have some sort of political organization, by which they maintain order in the society. Societies in which the political organization is centralized have laws and law enforcement to maintain the order; societies in which the political organization is un-centralized use very peaceful and intellectual tools like negotiation or mer...ion - the only enforcement they use may be the individual reputation, and this system is working for them. In these societies that we call primitive or savage in our disapproval, one can actually find a better and stronger social structure, caring hearts, and unlimited non-mutual cooperation.

Let us together look at this phenomenon of so-called revitalization which is, in other words, to bring back to consciousness. I believe this is the one motivational factor that led to many revolutions. For example if you believe in Islam, Christianity, Judaism, or any other set of beliefs, and you want the people to follow you and you want to remind them how good this belief is, and the good it has done to the people before you, you are practicing revitalization, especially when you gain followers. This phenomenon is available in every society. People want to look back for values, want to rely on a legendary or religious story to prove what they think is right. I believe revitalization is the seed for extremism, and therefore it produces no progress in terms of ideology. Speaking of progress, do you think the human being has progressed ideologically as it has progressed technically?

People in today's world vastly abide to beliefs which were found at least one century ago, so logically we can claim that people tend to preserve what they found. Now, let us examine one more phenomenon, called ethnocentrism, which means that one will judge others according to the one's own preserved culture, regardless of another culture's beliefs.

I believe there is no such right culture or wrong culture; there are conflicts in every given culture that are not overcome by the same culture. These conflicts can possibly be overcome by diversity, just like the environment - it won't stand if it is not diversified. At this point I came to the conclusion that these two interconnected conflicts, revitalization and ethnocentrism, are universal and are true.

In the next issue I am going to bring vivid examples of these two conflicts from today's real life for you to examine, and to wonder, and please always ask yourself - what is better?