

Iran's Nuclear Theater Meant to Divert Attention

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World events have taken an interesting turn recently, with the Goldstone report, which wreaked havoc in the beginning of the week being nearly completely overshadowed by Iran's revelation of another nuclear facility, according to diplomats in Vienna on September 25.

The Iran nuclear threat - although theater is a more suitable term - was highlighted repeatedly, first by US President Barack Obama during a UN speech on September 23, then again by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the next day. The latter came armed with maps and relentlessly provoked Holocaust memories, following the ever so predictable, albeit insensitive and deceptive pattern.

This charade was meant to distract from the nearly 600 page UN report, prepared by South Africa judge Richard Goldstone and others, dedicated mostly to Israeli war crimes in Gaza.

Confirming that Israel wantonly used weapons, including illegal weapons, against a defenseless civilian population in Gaza and going so far to say that Israel did not only commit war crimes, but indeed may have also committed crimes against humanity, the findings of the report were all set by the wayside. The report was utterly rebuked by Netanyahu and his ilk, arrogantly disregarded and shelved.

Concurrently, Israel's official statement regarding the IAEA's pressure on Israel to sign on to the Non-Proliferation Treaty was that Israel "deplored" such a notion. The Israeli conceit may be redundant, but is as ever infuriating.

Many of Israel's devoted supporters accused the Goldstone mission of fabricating conclusions before the investigations even came to a close.

And so yet again, Israel unhesitatingly established that they it's above the law, promptly and successfully turning the world's attention to the greater menace: Iran.

It seems that President Obama is also learning some painful lessons regarding the balance of power between the US and Israel, going into negotiations in Washington this past week - along with Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas - with a strong stance for the complete freeze of all settlement activity, and ending with clear and potent calls for the Palestinians to continue down the road of diplomacy in spite of Israel's refusal to consider the option of adhering to international law. In the words of Israeli writer, Uri Avnery, "No point denying it: in the first round of the match between Barack Obama and Binyamin Netanyahu, Obama was beaten."

Learning from past history, one can hardly be optimistic to expect a US victory in the second

round, or anytime soon for that matter.

And thereafter, the Israeli cue was emulated, and Obama followed it to the letter. Israel's recent use of illegal weapons on civilians, its arsenal of hundreds of nuclear weapons and its refusal to consider disarmament paled in comparison to the potential threat that could arise should Iran seek a nuclear weapon some time in the future.

Obama's words to Ahmedinejad and the people of Iran at the UN were decisive: "They are going to have to make a choice: Are they willing to go down the path to greater prosperity and security for Iran, giving up the acquisition of nuclear weapons ... or will they continue down a path that is going to lead to confrontation."

This is sure to ignite a war of words, to the pleasure of Netanyahu and his extremist government.

But the outcome of this duel will certainly exceed the realm of words.

It seems that Obama's rebuke and Netanyahu's declarations could actually lead to the detriment of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and indeed to us all, by encouraging nations who until this point do not possess nuclear weapons to expedite the creation of their own arsenal. After all, what we have learned from this episode is that nations who do not yet possess weapons of mass destruction had better get on the band-wagon and make some, for it seems that without them, they are nothing more than sitting ducks.

How ironic it is, and what a sweet-talker Netanyahu is, to successfully divert the world's eye, ears and conscience away from what he has indeed done, to the dangerous notion of what another man with up until this point can only be branded for fiery speeches, could do some time in the future.

As for Ahmedinejad's crusade for Iran, it could be very possible that in the end, the ones who will pay for his bold declarations will be as usual, the Palestinians, who after the scourge of Israel's Operation Cast Lead nearly one year ago, still await the bare necessities to rebuild, still thirst for clean water and basic sustenance. Netanyahu has been tireless at drawing parallels between Iran and Gaza, presenting them both to the world as dire threats to the existence of the Jewish State. When addressing the UN in New York on September 24, he branded Iran once again, exhorting that. "The struggle against Iran pits civilization against barbarism. This Iranian regime is fueled by extreme fundamentalism. What starts as attacks on Jews always ends up engulfing others. This regime embodies the extremes of Islamic fundamentalism."

Interesting words from a man whose former administration and current administration could very well face the International Criminal Court for the endorsing the carrying out of crimes against humanity.

Such utterances make one wonder, just who in the world are we to trust, and who in the world are we to fear?

For the time being however, one can only hope that the international community reject all attempts to be blinded by Netanyahu's fear mongering, and insist on a stern and decisive investigation into the alleged war crimes in Gaza, as presented in the Goldstone report so that the real culprits, not the imagined ones in Tehran, pay for their heinous crimes against the defenseless people of the Strip.

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