

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

Asia Times Online

Raging US pulls no punches on Iran

By Kaveh L Afrasiabi

10/17/2011

TEHRAN - United States officials may be busy plotting the sequences of action against Iran that began with the allegation of a terror plot in Washington last week and has now extended to the nuclear issue. This is in light of President Barack Obama's call on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to go public with its evidence of Iran's alleged proliferation activities - but in Tehran the mood is defiant and many analysts wonder what is behind the new well-orchestrated US offensive against Iran.

The US is considering how to respond after accusing Iran of sponsoring a plot to assassinate Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States. Obama said last week there were "direct links" to Iran's government, which has rejected the claim. The US president is calling on inspectors at the IAEA, the United Nations nuclear watchdog, to release data showing Iran is designing atomic weapons technology in a bid to further isolate Tehran, the

New York Times reported on Sunday.

The US moves, according to some media pundits, are rooted in insecurities caused by the Arab Spring, an Islamic revival and the power vacuum sure to follow the departure of US forces from Iraq this year, which will undoubtedly increase Iran's sphere of influence in the region. This has prompted a powerful US jab at Iran aimed at putting Tehran on the defensive and to reverse the country's fortunes.

An important aspect of this explanation is the role of Saudi Arabia, which is seeking a game-

changing approach to Iran and its rising power by pressuring the US to escalate threats against Tehran. Saudi Arabia has accused Iran of fomenting trouble both in Bahrain and (increasingly) among the Shi'ite population in Saudi Arabia itself.

A political science professor at Tehran University, who spoke with the author on the condition of anonymity, said Obama was exploiting this for re-election purposes, given the fact that most pro-Israel forces "lambasted him for a tardy reaction to the Palestinian initiative at the United Nations for statehood". According to this theory, Obama is compensating for his shortcomings in defending Israel, and prioritizes the Iran threat in terms of how it can be used to secure his re-election next year for another four-year term.

While the above perspectives focus on external or internal factors, other theories are also float around, one of which is that Obama has been forced into the new hawkish anti-Iran corner by certain institutional forces, such as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), nowadays headed by General David Petraeus. The former top US military man in Iraq and Afghanistan has by all accounts an extreme dislike of the Islamic Republic, which he has repeatedly accused of engaging in a proxy war against US forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

This interpretation relies on reports in the US media that the CIA has been involved in the investigation of the terror plot from the outset, contrary to initial information that portrayed the September 29 arrest of Iranian-American Mansour Arabsiar simply as an FBI (sting) operation.

On the more pessimistic side, some analysts in Tehran have regarded the timing of Israel's unequal exchange of prisoners with Hamas (ie one Israeli soldier for over 1,000 Palestinians) with the alleged Iran terror plot as a bad omen, indicating that Israel's intention is to quiet the Palestinian front as part of a military strategy against Iran. This is at a time when Iran's key ally in Syria, President Bashar al-Assad, is under siege and would be practically incapable of coming to Iran's assistance in any showdown between Israel and Iran.

In this "war scenario", the impending IAEA report on Iran plays a pivotal role in completing the US-Israeli justification to commence a wave of air strikes and carpet bombardment of Iran's nuclear facilities, or at a minimum, targeting some military installations as an act of retaliation against Iran's alleged terror plot.

One advantage of a military campaign against Iran would be domestic in terms of deflecting the public's attention from the mounting economic problems that have caused a new and rising social movement dubbed "Occupy Wall Street". But, if capitalism is theft, as an anarchist saying goes, a self-justified "pre-emptive" or retaliatory strike on Iran is by all indications tantamount to political theft, capitalizing on a highly suspicious and yet-to-be substantiated terror plot to pursue a long-term strategy of defanging the assertive Islamic Republic, which has refused to consent to the American hegemony for the past 33 years.

Bottom line, this would be a new leaf in the ongoing superpower strategy to sustain its hegemony in oil-rich Middle East in the face of mounting challenges.

The trouble with the war scenario would be its cost and drain on the US economy and the

possible shocks such as a disruption in the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf, the extension of insecurity to the oil sheikdoms, and the chances that world economic recovery could be imperiled. Skyrocketing oil prices are a sure bet in this scenario, and would hurt the already weak European economies, among others.

Still, the so-called realists and neo-realists in international relations who find it improbable that the US would attack Iran due to high costs and the regional ramifications may put too much faith in the rationality of decision-making in the United States, which at times believes its own lies and succumbs to the irrationality of expelling the cost-benefit mode of reasoning in favor of a blind power approach rooted in psychological insecurity.

Perhaps this was the story of the multi-trillion dollar Iraq war, that is now about to conclude by, for all practical purposes, folding business and dishing out a harvest into Iran's hands. That is too much for the likes of Petraeus, who sees this as a unique moment to isolate Iran by a combination of powerful jabs, including more sanctions.

"Iran will not be a passive recipient of US blows and it will reciprocate where it can," says a Tehran analyst who hopes that both sides can step back from further escalation and allow "reason to prevail". That may be a hope against hope.