

GREEN LIGHT FOR A CRACKDOWN

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OBAMA'S SILENCE FAVORS THE MULLAHS

Ralph Peters



A'jad: O's script is for talks with him.

SILENCE is complicity. Our president's refusal to take a forthright moral stand on the side of the Iranian freedom marchers is read in Tehran as a blank check for the current regime.

The fundamentalist junta has begun arresting opposition figures, with regime mouthpieces raising the prospect of the death penalty. Inevitably, there are claims that dissidents have been "hoarding weapons and explosives."

Foreign media reps are under house arrest. Cellphone frequencies are jammed. Students are killed and the killings disavowed.

And our president is "troubled," but doesn't believe we should "meddle" in Iran's internal affairs. (Meddling in Israel's domestic affairs is just fine, though.)

We just turned our backs on freedom.

Again.

Of all our foreign-policy failures in my lifetime, our current shunning of those demanding free elections and expanded civil rights in Iran reminds me most of Hungary in 1956.

For years, we encouraged the Hungarians to rise up against oppression. When they did, we watched from the sidelines as Russian tanks drove over them.

For decades, Washington policymakers from both parties have prodded Iranians to throw off their shackles. Last Friday, millions of Iranians stood up. And we're standing down.

That isn't diplomacy. It's treachery.

Despite absurd claims that Obama's Islam-smooching Cairo speech triggered the calls for freedom in Tehran's streets, these politics are local. But if those partisan claims of the "Cairo Effect" were true, wouldn't our president be obliged to stand beside those he incited?

Too bad for the Iranians, but their outburst of popular anger toward Iran's oppressive government doesn't fit the administration's script -- which is written around negotiations with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

To Obama, his dogmatic commitment to negotiations is infinitely more important than a few million protesters chanting the Farsi equivalent of "We Shall Overcome."

This is madness. There is no chance -- zero, null, nada -- that negotiations with the junta of mullahs will lead to the termination (or even a serious interruption) of Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. Our president's faith in his powers of persuasion is beginning to look pathological. Is his program of negotiations with apocalypse-minded, woman-hating, Jew-killing fanatics so sacrosanct that he can't acknowledge human cries for freedom?

Is the Rev. Jeremiah Wright a better role model than Martin Luther King? It's a damned shame that our first minority president wasn't a veteran of our civil-rights struggle, rather than its privileged beneficiary.

An ugly pattern's emerging in our president's beliefs:

He's infallible. This is rich, given all the criticism of the Bush administration's unwillingness to admit mistakes. We now have a president with Jimmy Carter's naivete, Richard Nixon's distaste for laws, Lyndon Johnson's commitment to the wrong war, and Bill Clinton's moral fecklessness.

Democracy isn't important. Our president seems infected by yesteryear's Third-World-leftist view that dictatorships are essential to post-colonial development -- especially for Muslims.

Look where Obama has gone and who he supports: the pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, his groveling speech in Egypt, his embrace of Hamas, his hands-off approach to the gory regime in Sudan -- and now his dismay at the protests in Iran.

Strict Islam is true Islam. This is bewildering, given Obama's childhood exposure to the tolerant Islam practiced in most of Indonesia. The defining remark of his

presidency thus far was his Cairo demand for the right of Muslim women to wear Islamic dress in the West -- while remaining silent about their right to reject the hijab, burqa or chador in the Middle East.

History's a blank canvas -- except for America's sins. Of course, we've had presidents who presented the past in the colors they preferred -- but we've never had one who just made it all up.

Obama's ignorance of history is on naked display -- no sense of the brutality of Iran's Islamist regime, of the years of mass imprisonments, diabolical torture, prison rapes, wholesale executions and secret graves that made the shah's reign seem idyllic. Our president seems to regard the Iranian protesters as spoiled brats.

Facts? Who cares? In his Cairo sermon -- a speech that will live in infamy -- our president compared the plight of the Palestinians, the aggressors in 1948, with the Holocaust. He didn't mention the million Jews dispossessed and driven from Muslim lands since 1948, nor the ongoing ethnic cleansing of Palestinian Christians from the West Bank.

Now our president's attempt to vote "present" yet again green-lights the Iranian regime's determination to face down the demonstrators -- and the mullahs understand it as such.

If we see greater violence in Tehran, the blood of those freedom marchers will be on our president's hands.

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