

"Writing the truth
as I see it;
trying not to
offend
those who will
disagree."

The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



Craig L. Bosley, MD

Russia, Libya and Iran

June 22, 2009

Iran is a terrorist nation pursuing nuclear capabilities and is a threat to the security of the United States. Is the president's approach of "diplomacy with no illusion (while) pursuing a tough, direct dialogue" enough? The president said Iran should "take its rightful place in the community of nations," but does it have any intention of abandoning terrorism or nuclear expansion?

According to Fawaz A. Gerges of Sarah Lawrence College and author of "The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global," Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and his ruling Guardian Council of clerics are convinced their approach has led to prestige and recognition of Iran in world politics.

Iran continues aiding and abetting terrorists who kill our military personnel. And it ignores the world's empty demands and moves ahead with its nuclear program. So, what do we do? Let's look at similar difficult situations the United States had with Russia and Libya.

When President Reagan took office, he refused to continue the Cold War impasse with Russia; instead, publically calling Russia what it was, an "evil empire." Further, he challenged Mikhail Gorbachev to "tear down" the Berlin Wall.

Along with the public reproaches, Reagan met face to face with Gorbachev; his opening statement to the Russian leader, "Mr. Gorbachev, let me explain why

it is we distrust you." Blunt and to the point; simple, straightforward honesty.

President Reagan's approach to Libya was decidedly different, though equally honest and straightforward. Why? He was not dealing with someone who wanted change, who wanted to develop a long term relationship. Instead, he was dealing with an unpredictable terrorist bent on our destruction.

Again abandoning the prior policy toward Libya, he ordered the closing of the Libyan People's Bureau in Washington, held naval maneuvers in the Gulf of Sidra leading to United States jets shooting down two Libyan fighters, and ordered American citizens in Libya to return to the United States. This continued until, in 1986, Libyan terrorists planted a bomb in a Berlin nightclub frequented by United States military personnel.

Just 10 days later, the United States launched air strikes on Tripoli and Benghazi. Although some experts debate the correctness of this action, Gadhafi has been remarkably quiet since.

President Reagan understood each of these men's character. He knew Gorbachev was a man with whom he could negotiate and befriend and he knew Gadhafi was just an unpredictable thug.

So, is Ahmadinejad more like Gorbachev or Gadhafi? How do we deal with Iran? We cannot continue, like children in a sandbox, drawing a line in the sand and telling the bully

to not cross it or else; and then when he does, re-draw the line and re-issue the same empty threat. We cannot continue to speak softly and not carry a big stick. Iran is and will continue to be a threat to our troops and a threat to our national security. President Obama needs to return to the tough talk he used during the campaign, when he described Ahmadinejad as "reckless, irresponsible, and a threat to all of us." He needs to follow through with his warning that global leaders must do whatever it takes to stop Iran from enriching uranium and acquiring nuclear weapons.

Although the president's willingness to meet with Ahmadinejad is commendable; he must demand, rather than suggest, a precondition to any dialogue is Iran stopping all terrorist activities and dismantling its nuclear program. If that occurs, the president's first statement to Ahmadinejad should be, "Mr. Ahmadinejad, let me explain why it is we distrust you."

Iran has control of its future and its relationship with the United States. It alone dictates the response of the United States--diplomacy or hostility. If it continues as a terrorist nation, then we will eliminate the terrorists in Iran. If it continues developing nuclear capabilities, then we will destroy its nuclear program. Iran is a threat to the United States and it must choose our response - an olive branch or a club.