

The August 9 Chomsky Interview - Apocalypse Near

By Mark H Gaffney

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Yesterday, two new extraordinary new facts came to light that have profound bearing on the deteriorating situation in the Mideast. They surfaced during an interview with Noam Chomsky. (Which follows.)

If the celebrated MIT linguist is correct, our US government and media are keeping back vital information from the American public. The key information has to do with Iran's actual positions regarding its nuclear program, and also its relation to Israel. While the US press has focused exclusively on inflammatory remarks by Iranian president Ahmadenijad, even more important statements by Iran's head mullah, Ayatollah Khamenei, who is Ahmadenijad's boss, have never been reported here in the US.

After some checking I was able to confirm that Chomsky is correct. In 2003 Iran offered to negotiate directly with the US. In its proposal the Iranian government agreed to accept the most stringent new International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) protocols on its nuclear program. The protocols would involve onsite inspection of all nuclear sites, something that our own government has never accepted. These tough verification measures would make cheating virtually impossible.

Iran also changed its long standing rejectionist policy on Israel. It agreed to support the 2002 Arab peace initiative, which offered Israel an end to the conflict if the Israelis would abide by UN Security Council resolutions (242 and 338) on Palestine. This was an extraordinary development, yet, it was not even reported in the US.

But Iran went still further. It also agreed to end its logistical support of Hezbollah in the event of a political settlement with Israel. Gareth Porter's excellent backgrounder provides details about the 2003 initiative.

[http://www.prospect.org/web/page.www?
section=root&name=ViewPrint&articleId=11539](http://www.prospect.org/web/page.www?section=root&name=ViewPrint&articleId=11539)

According to Chomsky, Iran's head mullah Ayatollah Khamenei again reiterated these offers in June 2006.

Chomsky also mentions a UN vote on a proposed UN Fissile Materials

Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), wherein all fissile materials worldwide would be placed under the control of the IAEA. Again, Chomsky is correct. The UN General Assembly vote occurred on April 11, 2004. On that day 147 nations, including Iran, voted in favor of UN resolution A/RES/48/75L. The resolution calls for the immediate drafting of such a treaty. Clearly, the whole world is demanding that the nuclear powers consent to be disarmed. The USA cast the sole "no" vote. Israel and the UK abstained. For more details regarding this important UN resolution go to:

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/gadis3291.doc.htm>

Today, Americans need to ask: Why did the Bush administration reject offers by Iran that held promise to resolve the crisis? And why has our government refused to join the community of nations on the crucial matter of nuclear disarmament?

The UN vote -- and, indeed, all of these facts -- reveal the hypocritical nature of US policy, and of escalating attempts here to demonize Iran. Obviously, the IAEA protocols could become an interim step leading to a FMCT, which would not only prevent Iranian nuclear weapons proliferation, but also make possible the implementation of article VI of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT); which calls for full nuclear disarmament.

The facts suggest that the endgame of the Bush administration is not peace; but maintaining the status quo. The bottom line appears to be US support of Israel's continuing refusal to withdraw from occupied Palestine, i.e., the West Bank, and the Golan, which is Syrian land.

Clearly, this is unacceptable, as it only leads to deepening conflict. Perhaps this is why Chomsky, normally so restrained, ended the interview on an apocalyptic note. I have never seen Chomsky use such language.

Will there be a regional meltdown, possibly involving nuclear weapons, because of two otherwise inconsequential patches of real estate? Everything now depends on us.

Here is the Chomsky interview:

<http://informationclearinghouse.info/article14462.htm>

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