

Does Iran's President Want Israel Wiped Off The Map - Does He Deny The Holocaust?

An analysis of media rhetoric on its way to war against Iran - Commenting on the alleged statements of Iran's President Ahmadinejad .

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04/19/06 "Kein Krieg!" -- -- - *"But now that I'm on Iran, the threat to Iran, of course -- (applause) -- the threat from Iran is, of course, their stated objective to destroy our strong ally Israel. That's a threat, a serious threat. It's a threat to world peace; it's a threat, in essence, to a strong alliance. I made it clear, I'll make it clear again, that we will use military might to protect our ally, Israel, and -- (applause.)"* George W. Bush, US-President, 2006-03-20 in Cleveland (Ohio) in an off-the-cuff speech (source: www.whitehouse.gov)
But why does Bush speak of Iran's objective to destroy Israel?

Does Iran's President wants Israel wiped off the map?

To raze Israel to the ground, to batter down, to destroy, to annihilate, to liquidate, to erase Israel, to wipe it off the map - this is what Iran's President demanded - at least this is what we read about or heard of at the end of October 2005. Spreading the news was very effective. This is a declaration of war they said. Obviously government and media were at one with their indignation. It goes around the world.

But let's take a closer look at what Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said. It is a merit of the 'New York Times' that they placed the complete speech at our disposal. Here's an excerpt from the publication dated 2005-10-30:

"They say it is not possible to have a world without the United States and Zionism. But you know that this is a possible goal and slogan.

Let's take a step back. [[[We had a hostile regime in this country which was undemocratic, armed to the teeth and, with SAVAK, its security apparatus of SAVAK [the intelligence bureau of the Shah of Iran's government] watched everyone. An environment of terror existed.]]] When our dear Imam [Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Iranian revolution] said that the regime must be removed, many of those who claimed to be politically well-informed said it was not possible. All the corrupt governments were in support of the regime when Imam Khomeini started his movement. [[[All the Western and Eastern countries supported the regime even after the massacre of September 7 [1978]]]] and said the removal of the regime was not possible. But our people resisted and it is 27 years now that we have survived without a regime dependent on the United States. The tyranny of the East and the West over the world should have to end, but weak people who can see only what lies in front of them cannot believe this. Who would believe that one day we could witness the collapse of the Eastern Empire? But we could watch its fall in our lifetime. And it collapsed in a way that we have to refer to libraries because no trace of it is left. Imam [Khomeini] said Saddam must go and he said he would grow weaker than anyone could imagine. Now you see the man who spoke with such arrogance ten years ago that one would have thought he was immortal, is being tried in his own country in handcuffs and shackles [[[by those who he believed supported him and with whose backing he committed his crimes]]]. Our dear Imam said that the occupying regime must be wiped off the map and this was a very wise statement. We cannot compromise over the issue of Palestine. Is it possible to create a new front in the heart of an old front. This would be a defeat and whoever accepts the legitimacy of this regime [Israel] has in fact, signed the defeat of the Islamic world. Our dear Imam targeted the heart of the world oppressor in his struggle, meaning the occupying regime. I have no doubt that the new wave that has started in Palestine, and we witness it in the Islamic world too, will eliminate this disgraceful stain from the Islamic world."

*(source: www.nytimes.com, based on a publication of 'Iranian Students News Agency' (ISNA) -- insertions by the New York Times in squared brackets -- passages in triple squared brackets will be left blank in the **MEMRI** version printed below)*

It's becoming clear. The statements of the Iranian President have been reflected by the media in a manipulated way. Iran's President betokens the removal of the regimes, that are in power in Israel and in the USA, to be possible aim for the future. This is correct. But he never demands the elimination or annihilation of Israel. He reveals that changes are potential. The Shah-Regime being supported by the USA in its own country has been vanquished. The eastern

governance of the Soviet Union collapsed. Saddam Hussein's dominion drew to a close. Referring to this he voices his aspiration that changes will also be feasible in Israel respectively in Palestine. He adduces Ayatollah Khomeini referring to the Shah-Regime who in this context said that the regime (meaning the Shah-Regime) should be removed.

Certainly, Ahmadinejad translates this quotation about a change of regime into the occupied Palestine. This has to be legitimate. To long for modified political conditions in a country is a world-wide day-to-day business by all means. But to commute a demand for removal of a 'regime' into a demand for removal of a state is serious deception and dangerous demagoguery.

This is one chapter of the war against Iran that has already begun with the words of Georg Meggle, professor of philosophy at the university of Leipzig - namely with the probably most important phase, the phase of propaganda.

Marginally we want to mention that it was the former US Vice-Minister of Defence and current President of the World Bank, Paul D. Wolfowitz, who in Sept. 2001 talked about ending states in public and without any kind of awe. And it was the father of George W. Bush who started the discussion about a winnable nuclear war if only the survival of an elite is assured.

Let's pick an example: the German online-news-magazine tagesschau.de writes the following about Iran's president on 2005-10-27: "There is no doubt: the new wave of assaults in Palestine will erase the stigma in countenance of the Islamic world." Instead of using the original word 'wave' they write 'wave of assaults'. This replacement of the original text is what we call disinformation. E.g. it would be correct to say: "The new movement in Palestine will erase the stain of disgrace from the Islamic world." Additionally this statement refers to the occupation regime mentioned in the previous sentence.

As a precaution we will examine a different translation of the speech - a version prepared by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), located in Washington:

"They [ask]: 'Is it possible for us to witness a world without America and Zionism?' But you had best know that this slogan and this goal are attainable, and surely can be achieved. [[[...]]] "'When the dear

Imam [Khomeini] said that [the Shah's] regime must go, and that we demand a world without dependent governments, many people who claimed to have political and other knowledge [asked], 'Is it possible [that the Shah's regime can be toppled]?' That day, when Imam [Khomeini] began his movement, all the powers supported [the Shah's] corrupt regime [[[...]]] and said it was not possible. However, our nation stood firm, and by now we have, for 27 years, been living without a government dependent on America. Imam [Khomeini] said: 'The rule of the East [U.S.S.R.] and of the West [U.S.] should be ended.' But the weak people who saw only the tiny world near them did not believe it. Nobody believed that we would one day witness the collapse of the Eastern Imperialism [i.e. the U.S.S.R], and said it was an iron regime. But in our short lifetime we have witnessed how this regime collapsed in such a way that we must look for it in libraries, and we can find no literature about it. Imam [Khomeini] said that Saddam [Hussein] must go, and that he would be humiliated in a way that was unprecedented. And what do you see today? A man who, 10 years ago, spoke as proudly as if he would live for eternity is today chained by the feet, and is now being tried in his own country [[[...]]] Imam [Khomeini] said: 'This regime that is occupying Qods [Jerusalem] must be eliminated from the pages of history.' This sentence is very wise. The issue of Palestine is not an issue on which we can compromise. Is it possible that an [Islamic] front allows another front [i.e. country] to arise in its [own] heart? This means defeat, and he who accepts the existence of this regime [i.e. Israel] in fact signs the defeat of the Islamic world. In his battle against the World of Arrogance, our dear Imam [Khomeini] set the regime occupying Qods [Jerusalem] as the target of his fight. I do not doubt that the new wave which has begun in our dear Palestine and which today we are also witnessing in the Islamic world is a wave of morality which has spread all over the Islamic world. Very soon, this stain of disgrace [i.e. Israel] will vanish from the center of the Islamic world - and this is attainable."

(source: <http://memri.org>, based on the publication of 'Iranian Students News Agency' (ISNA) -- insertions by MEMRI in squared brackets -- missing passages compared to the 'New York Times' in triple squared brackets)

The term 'map' to which the media refer at length does not even appear. Whereas the 'New York Times' said: "Our dear Imam said that the occupying regime must be wiped off the map" the version by MEMRI is: "Imam [Khomeini] said: This regime that is occupying Qods [Jerusalem] must be eliminated from the pages of history."

MEMRI added the following prefixed formulation to their translation as a kind of title: "Very Soon, This Stain of Disgrace [i.e. Israel] Will Be Purged From the Center of the Islamic World - and This is Attainable". Thereby they take it out of context by using the insertion 'i.e. Israel' they distort the meaning on purpose. The temporal tapering 'very soon' does not appear in the NY-Times-translation either. Besides it is striking that MEMRI deleted all passages in their translation which characterize the US-supported Shah-Regime as a regime of terror and at the same time show the true character of US-American policy.

An independent translation of the original (like the version published by ISNA) yields that Ahmadinejad does not use the term 'map'. He quotes Ayatollah Khomeini's assertion that the occupation regime must vanish from this world - literally translated: from the arena of times. Correspondingly: there is no space for an occupation regime in this world respectively in this time. The formulation 'wipe off the map' used by the 'New York Times' is a very free and aggravating interpretation which is equivalent to 'razing something to the ground' or 'annihilating something'. The downwelling translation, first into English ('wipe off the map'), then from English to German - and all literally ('von der Landkarte löschen') - makes us stride away from the original more and more. The perfidious thing about this translation is that the expression 'map' can only be used in one (intentional) way: a state can be removed from a map but not a regime, about which Ahmadinejad is actually speaking.

Again following the independent translation: "I have no doubt that the new movement taking place in our dear Palestine is a spiritual movement which is spanning the entire Islamic world and which will soon remove this stain of disgrace from the Islamic world".

It must be allowed to ask how it is possible that 'spiritual movement' resp. 'wave of morality' (as translated by MEMRI) and 'wave of assaults' can be equated and translated (like e.g. tagesschau.de published it).

Does Iran's President deny the Holocaust?

"The German government condemned the repetitive offending anti-Israel statements by Ahmadinejad to be shocking. Such behaviour is not tolerable, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier stated. [...] Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel proclaimed Ahmadinejad's statements to be 'inconceivable'" (published by tagesschau.de 2005-12-14).

But not only the German Foreign Minister Steinmeier and the Federal Chancellor Merkel allege this, but the Bild-Zeitung, tagesschau.de, parts of the peace movement, US-President George W. Bush, the 'Papers for German and international politics', CNN, the Heinrich-Böll-Foundation, almost the entire world does so, too: Iran's President Ahmadinejad denies the Holocaust.

What is this assertion based on? In substance it is based on dispatches of 2 days - 2005-12-14 and 2006-02-11.

"The Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has stepped up his verbal attacks against Israel and the Western states and has denied the Holocaust. Instead of making Israel's attacks against Palestine a subject of discussion 'the Western states devote their energy to the fairy-tale of the massacre against the Jews', Ahmadinejad said on Wednesday in a speech at Zahedan in the south-east of Iran which was broadcasted directly by the news-channel Khabar. That day he stated that if the Western states really believe in the assassination of six million Jews in W.W. II they should put a piece of land in Europe, in the USA, Canada or Alaska at Israel's disposal." - dispatch of the German press agency DPA, 2005-12-14.

The German TV-station n24 spreads the following on 2006-12-14 using the title 'Iran's President calls the Holocaust a myth': "The Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has stepped up his verbal attacks against Israel and called the Holocaust a 'myth' used as a pretext by the Europeans to found a Jewish state in the center of the Islamic world . 'In the name of the Holocaust they have created a myth and regard it to be worthier than God, religion and the prophets' the Iranian head of state said."

The Iranian press agency IRNA renders Ahmadinejad on 2005-12-14 as follows: "'If the Europeans are telling the truth in their claim that they have killed six million Jews in the Holocaust during the World War II - which seems they are right in their claim because they insist on it and arrest and imprison those who oppose it, why the Palestinian nation should pay for the crime. Why have they come to the very heart of the Islamic world and are committing crimes against the dear Palestine using their bombs, rockets, missiles and sanctions.' [...] 'If you have committed the crimes so give a piece of your land somewhere in Europe or America and Canada or Alaska to them to set up their own state there.' [...] Ahmadinejad said some have created a myth on holocaust and hold it even higher than the

very belief in religion and prophets [...] The president further said, 'If your civilization consists of aggression, displacing the oppressed nations, suppressing justice-seeking voices and spreading injustice and poverty for the majority of people on the earth, then we say it out loud that we despise your hollow civilization.'

There again we find the quotation already rendered by n24: "**In the name of the Holocaust they created a myth.**" We can see that this is completely different from what is published by e.g. the DPA - the massacre against the Jews is a fairy-tale. What Ahmadinejad does is not denying the Holocaust. No! It is dealing out criticism against the mendacity of the imperialistic powers who use the Holocaust to muzzle critical voices and to achieve advantages concerning the legitimization of a planned war. This is criticism against the exploitation of the Holocaust.

CNN (2005-12-15) renders as follows: "If you have burned the Jews why don't you give a piece of Europe, the United States, Canada or Alaska to Israel. Our question is, if you have committed this **huge crime**, why should the innocent nation of Palestine pay for this crime?"

The Washingtonian 'Middle East Media Research Institute' (MEMRI) renders Ahmadinejad's statements from 2005-12-14 as follows: "...we ask you: if you indeed committed this great crime, why should the oppressed people of Palestine be punished for it? * [...] If you committed a crime, you yourselves should pay for it. Our offer was and remains as follows: If you committed a crime, it is only appropriate that you place a piece of your land at their disposal - a piece of Europe, of America, of Canada, or of Alaska - so they can establish their own state. Rest assured that if you do so, the Iranian people will voice no objection."

The MEMRI-rendering uses the relieving translation 'great crime' and misappropriates the following sentence at the * marked passage: "Why have they come to the very heart of the Islamic world and are committing crimes against the dear Palestine using their bombs, rockets, missiles and sanctions." This sentence has obviously been left out deliberately because it would intimate why the Israeli state could have forfeited the right to establish itself in Palestine - videlicet because of its aggressive expansionist policy against the people of Palestine, ignoring any law of nations and disobeying all UN-resolutions.

In spite of the variability referring to the rendering of the statements of Iran's President we should nevertheless note down: the reproach of denying the Holocaust cannot be sustained if Ahmadinejad speaks of a great and huge crime that has been done to the Jews.

In another IRNA-dispatch (2005-12-14) the Arabian author Ghazi Abu Daqa writes about Ahmadinejad: "The Iranian president has nothing against the followers of Judaism [...] Ahmadinejad is against Zionism as well as its expansionist and occupying policy. That is why he managed to declare to the world with courage that there is no place for the Zionist regime in the world civilized community."

It's no wonder that such opinions do not go down particularly well with the ideas of the centers of power in the Western world. But for this reason they are not wrong right away. Dealing out criticism against the aggressive policy of the Western world, to which Israel belongs as well, is not yet anti-Semitism. We should at least to give audience to this kind of criticism - even if it is a problematic field for us.

2006-02-11 Ahmadinejad said according to IRNA: "[...] the real holocaust should be sought in Palestine, where the blood of the oppressed nation is shed every day and Iraq, where the defenceless Muslim people are killed daily. [...] 'Some western governments, in particular the US, approve of the sacrilege on the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), while denial of the >Myth of Holocaust<, based on which the Zionists have been exerting pressure upon other countries for the past 60 years and kill the innocent Palestinians, is considered as a crime' [...]"

The assertion that Ahmadinejad denies the Holocaust thus is wrong in more than one aspect. He does not deny the Holocaust, but speaks of denial itself. And he does not speak of denial of the Holocaust, but of denial of the Myth of Holocaust. This is something totally different. All in all he speaks of the exploitation of the Holocaust. The Myth of Holocaust, like it is made a subject of discussion by Ahmadinejad, is a myth that has been built up in conjunction with the Holocaust to - as he says - put pressure onto somebody. We might follow this train of thoughts or we might not. But we cannot equalize his thoughts with denial of the Holocaust.

If Ahmadinejad according to this 2006-02-11 condemns the fact that it is forbidden and treated as a crime to do research into the Myth of Holocaust, as we find it quoted in the MEMRI translation, this acquires

a meaning much different from the common and wide-spread one. If the myth related to the Holocaust is commuted to a 'Fairy Tale of the Massacre' - like the DPA did - this can only be understood as a malicious misinterpretation.

By the use of misrepresentation and adulteration it apparently succeeded to constitute the statements of the Iranian President to be part and parcel of the currently fought propaganda battle. It is our responsibility to counter this.

Concluding:

A dispatch by Reuters confirms 2006-02-21: "The Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki has [...] repudiated that his state would want the Jewish state Israel 'wiped off the map'. [...] Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had been misunderstood. 'Nobody can erase a country from the map.' Ahmadinejad was not thinking of the state of Israel but of their regime [...]. 'We do not accredit this regime to be legitimate.' [...] Mottaki also accepted that the Holocaust really took place in a way that six million Jews were murdered during the era of National Socialism."

The next step is to connect the Iranian President with Hitler. 2006-02-20 the Chairman of the Council of Jews in France (Crif) says in Paris: "The Iranian President's assertions do not rank behind Hitler's 'Mein Kampf'". Paul Spiegel, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, 2005-12-10 in the 'Welt' qualifies the statements of Ahmadinejad to be "the worst comment on this subject that he has ever heard of a statesman since A. Hitler". At the White House the Iranian President is even named Hitler. And the German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel as well moves over Iran's President towards Hitler and National Socialism by saying 2006-02-04 in Munich: "Already in the early 1930's many people said that it is only rhetoric. One could have prevented a lot in time if one had acted... Germany is in the debt to resist the incipencies and to do anything to make clear where the limit of tolerance is. Iran remains in control of the situation, it is still in their hands."

All this indicates war. Slobodan Milosevic became Hitler. The result was the war of the Nato against Yugoslavia. Saddam Hussein became Hitler. What followed was the war the USA and their coalition of compliant partners waged against Iraq. Now the Iranian President becomes Hitler.

And someone who is Hitler-like can assure a hundred times that he only wants to use nuclear energy in a peaceful way. Nobody will believe him. Somebody like Hitler can act within the scope of all contracts. Acting contrary to contract will nevertheless be imputed to him. "Virtually none of the Western states recognize that uranium enrichment is absolutely legal. There is no restriction by contract or by the law of nations. Quite the contrary: Actually the Western countries would have the duty to assist Iran with these activities, according to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. As long as a state renounces the bomb it is eligible for technical support by the nuclear powers." (Jörg Pfuhl, ARD radio studio Istanbul 2006-01-11) But - all this does not count if the Head of a state is stigmatized as Hitler.

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