

# Dances With Foxes!

“Many foxes grow gray, but few grow good.” —Benjamin Franklin

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Almost 40 years ago, in his famous play “Shahr-e Ghesseh” (“The City of Fable”), Bijan Mofid, one of Iran’s greatest contemporary playwrights, very creatively presented the Iranian Mullahs (Islamic clergymen) as “foxes” scattered throughout society who bring no real benefits to the Iranian people. In that entertaining play he showed the Mullahs as hypocritical personalities who continuously lie and deceive the Iranian masses. Other Iranian playwrights, poets, and thinkers, such as Mirza Agha-Khan Kermani, Iraj Mirza, Obaid-e Zakani, and Hafez, have shared the same message with the Iranian people in different eras.

## Foxes at Work!

Well, if the western movie “Dances With Wolves” was a smash hit, winning Best Picture and Best Director Oscars for Kevin Costner in 1990, we Iranians should propose multiple Oscar nominations for one of the longest-running soap operas, “Dances With Foxes,” directed and played by the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) and running since the beginning of their 1979 victorious Islamic Revolution.

IRI leaders (yes, the “foxes”) have used this ongoing and entertaining soap opera “Dances with Foxes” to divert the attention of the Iranian people from Iran’s significant internal issues and to keep everyone busy with daily new scenarios written by either internally or externally created events or situations. Sometimes they used internally created chaos such as 444 days of hostage-taking or eight years of dog-and-pony reformist movements, and sometimes they used externally created events such as the eight-year war with Iraq or dealing with U.S. imposed sanctions as inspirations for this ongoing IRI’s soap opera.

On September 22, 1980, when Iraqi troops launched a full-scale invasion of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini’s foremost reaction was “God has sent us this war.” One of the key reasons that Khomeini—who was still astonished by his unbelievably easy Islamic Revolution victory of 1979—prolonged this imposed war for eight years was to buy time for his neophyte and incompetent proletarian Islamic government while everyone’s attention was focused on the war.

In the hands of mullahs this policy of “diversion and distraction” has been a handy instrument to continuously blame the disastrous, catastrophic, and tragic outcomes of the Islamic Revolution of Iran on external forces such as Iraq, the U.S., Israel, economic sanctions, or even God’s will!

Anything could be used as a means of diverting the attention of the Iranian people from their most important internal problems and keeping them busy with chaotic situations, lies, dog-and-pony shows, military confrontations, deceptions, etc. IRI leaders are willing to resort to anything in order to continue their daily soap operas by creating new scenarios. Sadly, it is the Iranian people who are paying the price for these soap opera productions!

## “Economy Belongs to Donkey” (“Eghtesad mal-e Khar Ast”)

Twenty-seven years ago, the Ayatollah Khomeini said, “Economy Belongs to Donkey.” Therefore, no one should be surprised that the Islamic Revolution has created a disastrous economy in Iran that benefits only an elite group of mullahs and their cronies. Despite ample natural resources and a young energetic population, more than 40% of Iranians are now living below the poverty line—even with higher oil prices in recent years. The consensus among domestic and foreign observers remains that Iran’s economy is now in worse shape than ever before; inflation is significantly higher than the 16% reported by the IRI; double-digit unemployment is increasing as a million young Iranians enter the job market every year and the IRI economy produces far less than half that many jobs each year. As if these economic miseries and melancholies were not enough, Iran is suffering from major social scourges such as widespread drug addiction, prostitution, and urban crimes.

## **New President, New Episodes, Same Soap Opera!**

The saga continues . . . No one should be surprised that Mr. Ahmadinejad restarted the IRI's uranium-enrichment program, dismissed the Holocaust as "a myth," suggested a Holocaust conference in Iran that would call into question evidence that the Nazis conducted a mass murder of European Jews during World War II, suggested that Israel be moved to Germany or North America, etc.

What else could he be doing? The IRI (and its Ahmadinejad) cannot do anything about Iran's unemployment of over 25%; they cannot help the over 40% of the Iranians who are living below poverty line; they cannot offer any positive hope for an overwhelmingly young Iranian population (around 70% of population is under the age of 30); they cannot help the very much destroyed private sector of Iran's economy; they cannot do anything about the very much destroyed middleclass segment of the country; they cannot do anything about the inefficient IRI command economy with a bloated bureaucracy; they cannot do anything about inefficient state-owned enterprises draining the government budget; they cannot do anything about the vast gray market of commercial entities that has been spun off from the IRI's corrupted government ministries; they cannot do anything about thousands of Iranian engineers, doctors, and technocrats who are leaving Iran due to IRI-created internal problems; and so on and so on.

That is why the IRI (and its Ahmadinejad) are now concentrating on moving Israel to Europe, keeping everyone entertained with their atomic bomb building episodes, and questioning the Holocaust. The policy of "diversion and distraction" is being used to overlook and ignore Iran's fundamental social and economic disasters and waste everyone's time on preposterous issues and ridiculous matters.

## **A Dilemma . . . What Is the Solution?**

The Islamic Republic of Iran and its Ahmadinejad are literally begging for some kind of U.S. unilateral reaction toward Iran. IRI needs new scenarios; either internally created or externally imposed. They would love to see some sort of military attack on Iran or severe economic sanctions against the Iranian people. In either case, the real winner is the Islamic Republic of Iran and the real losers—as always—are the Iranian people.

What, then, *are* the options? Here are some potential options and their corresponding pros and cons:

**Sanctions:** For any sanctions (political or economical) to work, they must be universal. This will never happen as long as China and Russia are supporting the IRI. Iran is already supplying over 16% of China's energy requirements, and the mullahs know very well how to play this card to their best advantage. Sanctions will also hurt innocent Iranians who are already suffering from one of the most oppressive systems that mankind has ever experienced. Sanctions will also fuel the policy of "diversion and distraction" to the Mullahs' advantage.

**Military Attacks:** Any sort of military attack against Iran (including surgical attacks) will only strengthen the oppressive Islamic system base in Iran by fueling the policy of "diversion and distraction" to the Mullahs' advantage for a long time—in addition to killing and hurting many innocent Iranians who have nothing to do with this corrupt and oppressive system. Even though a surgical attack might appear to delay the development of nuclear energy in Iran, the IRI would then blame all of Iran's economic issues and shortcomings—for the next 27 years!—on U.S. military attacks.

**Supporting the Opposition:** The only practical solution to Iran's dilemma is universal support (excluding China, Russia, and North Korea) for the Iranian people who want to establish a secular democratic system in Iran.

Even though Europe, Japan, Russia, China, Korea, etc., have been able to benefit from Iran's chaotic economy for so many years—due to the IRI's incompetent government and the absence of direct U.S. presence in Iran's market—all these countries should know that they would be able to make even more money if Iran had a secular democratic government. And everyone would be better off (short and long term) once the cancer of the Islamic Republic has been removed from the ill body of the Middle East.

*A gentle reminder: Someday soon, the IRI will fall . . . Iranians will remember who supported the IRI and who supported the Iranian people's democratic rights when they are choosing their new business partners!*

Ignoring the Mullahs' usual defamation and slurs against Jews and others and allowing them to continue their uranium-enrichment program will not hurt anyone if the West universally decides on supporting the Iranian people and their opposition forces with the mission of overthrowing the IRI before they have completed their uranium-enrichment program.

Once and for all, the entire modern world needs to think long term and stop putting Band-Aids on the cancer of the Middle East (i.e., the IRI). Playing the IRI's cards, providing them with further scenarios for their "Dances With Foxes" soap operas, and further fueling and enabling their policy of "diversion and distraction" by giving them more excuses will only make it much more difficult to remove this oppressive system in the future.

Supporting the Iranian people's struggle in pursuit of freedom to establish a secular democratic government in Iran is the only thing that is expected from the modern world.

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P.S. Join the company of lions rather than assume the lead among foxes. —The Talmud

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