

Everyone has a different view of Iran these days. Some will say it is the land of the Great Cyrus. Others will point to the current dictators and call it the land of terrorism. An Iranian girl from the green generation told me. I've never lived in the era of the Great Cyrus, so I don't like to talk about it. And I've never terrorized anybody in the world. My thought... Its better to say, the thoughts of the new generation there in Iran, is full of freedom and respect. Full of democracy for Iran. They are different from the leaders above and their lies. They love us. And don't want to be brought into conflict with any nation.

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Barack Obama
Speech To The People Of Iran June 2013

I would like to directly speak to the people of Iran. As President of the United states of America, I am well aware of the mistakes we have made in regards to your country. You struggled for your freedom and democracy for decades and when it was finally being achieved in the early 1950's, we orchestrated, organized and financed a military coup to overthrow your elected government and bring back the Shah who ruled the country with an iron fist for over a quarter of a century more. Intellectuals were routinely arrested, imprisoned and tortured. His regime executed many, some even in their teenage years, with the general label of terrorists. We could have and should have supported your struggle, instead of crushing it. But my predecessors chose to focus on the opportunity to buy your resources at a discount and sell you multi-billion dollar contracts on items you may or may not have needed. That is the legacy of the United States in Iran, and the main factor that led to your uprising in 1979 to throw out our puppet once again, and eventually lead to the tragedy that we now know as the Hostage Crisis. To be frank, I do not know if we would have done things differently if it was YOUR country that had interfered in the internal politics of OUR country for so long. Let me say it once and for all, we are humbled by your resolve and apologize from the bottom of our hearts for the previous wrongs against your country and it's people. We know you may never forget our wrongdoings, but I am asking for your forgiveness as the commander in chief of our country.

We have learned from our mistakes and I am here to promise and commit to never interfering with the natural course of events in your country. That means no military threats, no sanctions, not orchestrating any pressure against you and your chosen governments. If it becomes necessary for you to change your government, that is solely YOUR decision and we will honor what your decisions are. We now extend our hand in friendship and ask that you allow us to participate in rebuilding of your country. It's the least we can do to pay for our previous deeds. Thank you for your friendship, your kindness towards Americans despite it all for as long as we have had any contact with each other, and thank you for teaching the humanity a lesson in your non-stop advances towards gaining your rights. We all owe you our sincere gratitude. Thank you and our best wishes for a friendship of equals, based on respect and cooperation for years to come.

(Pedram Moallemian <pmoallemian@gmail.com>)

We, politicians, talk among ourselves. We try to address the conflicts. We work on issues. This time, however, I want to talk directly to the people of Iran. I have done this before, on Norouz and other occasions. But this time, this time I want to be more frank. I will step away from my position as the President of the United States of America, or the president of any country, for that matter. I will be frank.

Iranian citizens! We don't care about you, until you care about yourselves. Until you decide that your well-being is important, until that very moment, you are the occupants of a land which has a grip on the price of oil and can threaten our allies and support activities which end up hurting our troops and our nation. You don't exist, as long as you want to be bystanders, enjoying your cynical perspective on politics, boycotting elections, limiting your interaction with your leaders to nasty jokes. You must realize that you have the right to a good life. To a life which is not pressed down to the mud underneath financial hurdles. To a life which is not tarnished by the decency police. To a life which is yours and whose terms are mandated by you, to the full extent of the possibility.

You must knock on our doors and insist that you are. That you exist. That you function. That you get involved in the game of politics, how dirty and filthy it looks, and to tell you the truth, it is dirty and filthy, independent of the geographical location, whether it is played out in Washington or in Tehran. As long as you are not a player in the game, you are a bystander, and bystanders have the security of not being hurt, not being pushed down to the ground, not getting a bruised shoulder. But, and this is what is at stake here, bystanders don't have any right in the game. They are merely asked to keep it down and if they are too much of a disturbance, well, they are kicked out.

Let me tell you citizens of Iran, that politics are like the Koobideh Kabab, that I know many of you love. You want to have it with Dough and Reyhoon, and you have loved the afternoon nap after it. What must be realized here, is that no one is going to grill some Kabab for you. That time is over. You have to get your hands into the bowl, you have to press on the meat, mix it with onions, and taste it, have the raw taste of meat in your mouths, you must put it on blades, endure the sight of some of that delicious food dropping onto the ashes, you have to blow on the fire, and wait by it, wait for the moment, when the Kabab is ready to be eaten. Then, you can enjoy it hot and juicy. Do that, get involved in the process, prove to us, and more importantly, to your own fellow people and to yourselves, that you are worthy of a hot blade of Kebeb. No one else will bother to do that for you.

(Arash Kamangir <arash@kamangir.net>)

"I know the sanctions have affected many iranians' lives,they are in deep trouble. But to tell you the truth it's not that important. Our policy is more important!

(Karen_nev <karen_nev@yahoo.com>)

To all my fellow Americans and Yinz guys in Pittsburgh:

The last few years in office have not been easy -- there has been a lot conflict. But ... (pause & and gesture) .. : There is hope.

I believe, that, with the help of the United Nations and the Conflict Kitchen in Pittsburgh we can solve these problems. Yes, we can. (pause). Knowledge is power.

When I grew up, there was this saying : " The way to a man's heart is through his stomach" . While this saying is both sexist and archaic, it does hold "some" "truth" ... Now I believe that : " the way to Understanding a nation is through their and our stomach".

We have much to learn about and from each other -- and other nations .. in life and in the kitchen. We have to make a distinction between the "Ruler" and the "people". We can only learn about a nation , a people or a country by observing the things they do every day -- like what they eat every day. The Conflict Kitchen in Pittsburgh is a shining example of educating us about other nations.

We must support the people. We all believe in : " .. that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.! " We will always believe in that, and the Conflict Kitchen in Pittsburgh re-affirms my believe that knowledge is power --- and that, sometimes food feeds the brain too!

(Re Arnzen)

On July 3, 1988, the United States Navy fired two surface-to-air missiles at Iran Air 655, an civilian passenger plane carrying 290 people. All aboard, including 66 children, were instantly destroyed, or died as they fell from the air or landed in the water thousands of feet below. In reference to this incident, on August 2 of that year, Vice President George Bush said, "I will never apologize for the United States- I don't care what the facts are."

The incident itself was not a wound to America's honor, because, tragic and perhaps reckless though it was, it was unintentional. Mr Bush's remark, however, expressing with undeniable clarity the view that we prefer comfort and delusional pride before truth and virtue, is a wound to our honor- and, until we can bear the sting of truth it will take to heal from it, the wound will grow, and putrefy, and will finally prove to be a mortal threat, if not to our nation's citizens, but to its honor.

My fellow Americans, Abraham Lincoln once asked, "From whence shall we expect the approach of danger? Shall some transAtlantic military giant step the earth and crush us at a blow? Never. All the armies of Europe and Asia...could not by force take a drink from the Ohio River or make a track on the Blue Ridge in the trial of a thousand years. No, if destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of free men we will live forever or die by suicide."

Are we a nation that does not care what the facts are? And are we a great or even a good nation? After all, a great or good person is not afraid to apologize for an inadvertent mistake. This is an enormous question, for as a great nation, we not only have our fate in our hands, but the fates of other, smaller nations.

My fellow Americans, I submit to you that we are now faced with a mortal danger, by the only power that can convincingly threaten us, which is, of course, ourselves. As a strong nation, we can only be harmed by the truth if we hide from it, irrationally fear it, and stubbornly refuse to admit it's there. To that end, I wish to state a few ordinary facts which are well-known to the rest of the world, but will seem shocking to anyone who is accustomed to taking Washington politicians seriously.

America is capable of committing crimes, betraying friends, supporting dictators and torturers, and even training them ourselves.

America helped to overthrow a democratically elected government in Iran in 1953 by handing out cash to rioters and arming a small force of insurgents under the command of a traitorous army officer.

In the 1980, we did not have diplomatic relations with the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq when it invaded its neighbor, Iran. In 1983, after the first credible reports of his use of chemical weapons had emerged, we sent Donald Rumsfeld to shake Saddam's hand and pledge our support to him. We refused to allow the United Nations to condemn Saddam's use of chemical weapons and deliberately confused the investigations by repeating allegations that Iran had used them as well, allegations which were baseless. We gave Saddam logistical support and detailed satellite maps, even as our allies in France and West Germany were still sending it the chemicals that would be made into poison and dropped on Iranians, and eventually Iraqis.

Nevertheless, we also saw fit to sell weapons to Iran as well at the same time. We, the United States, was arming both sides of a bloody war between two small countries half a world away.

Quotes by Eisenhower:

Here in America we are descended in blood and in spirit from revolutionists and rebels - men and women who dare to dissent from accepted doctrine. As their heirs, may we never confuse honest dissent with disloyal subversion.

The hand of the aggressor is stayed by strength — and strength alone.

We look upon this shaken Earth, and we declare our firm and fixed purpose — the building of a peace with justice in a world where moral law prevails. The building of such a peace is a bold and solemn purpose. To proclaim it is easy. To serve it will be hard. And to attain it, we must be aware of its full meaning — and ready to pay its full price. We know clearly what we seek, and why. We seek peace, knowing that peace is the climate of freedom. And now, as in no other age, we seek it because we have been warned, by the power of modern weapons, that peace may be the only climate possible for human life itself. Yet this peace we seek cannot be born of fear alone: it must be rooted in the lives of nations. There must be justice, sensed and shared by all peoples, for, without justice the world can know only a tense and unstable truce. There must be law, steadily invoked and respected by all nations, for without law, the world promises only such meager justice as the pity of the strong upon the weak. But the law of which we speak, comprehending the values of freedom, affirms the equality of all nations, great and small. Splendid as can be the blessings of such a peace, high will be its cost: in toil patiently sustained, in help honorably given, in sacrifice calmly borne.

~~features would be several cities lying in ruins, several cities where many, many thousands of people would be dead and injured and mangled, the transportation systems destroyed, sanitation implements and systems all gone? That isn't preventive war; that is war.~~

~~I don't believe there is such a thing; and, frankly, I wouldn't even listen to anyone seriously that came in and talked about such a thing.~~

~~... It seems to me that when, by definition, a term is just ridiculous in itself, there is no use in going any further.~~

~~There are all sorts of reasons, moral and political and everything else, against this theory, but it is so completely unthinkable in today's conditions that I thought it is no use to go any further.~~

(Babak Shahrak)
