**How Obama enables Iran's defiance**

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May 4, 2010

New York Daily News

Original Source: *http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2010/05/04/2010-05-04\_how\_obama\_enables\_irans\_defiance.html*

Yesterday the UN handed the world's leading would-be nuclear proliferator - Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad - a platform to open a UN conference about preventing nuclear proliferation.

A year ago, fully aware of Ahmadinejad's genocidal ambitions, the UN handed the same man a stage to open an "anti-racism" conference.

The reaction in both cases was similar. The UN majority gave Ahmadinejad a round of applause. And a few Western governments made a show of walking out and then came right back in a short while later.

Yesterday, international relations were all about theater.

No lessons will be drawn in Washington about the UN's actual potential to help defeat violence and intolerance. On the contrary. While Ahmadinejad uses the UN to spew contempt for America and run out the clock on an Iranian bomb, the American President uses the UN as the centrifuge for his foreign policy.

Yesterday's embarrassment, therefore, lies more at the feet of the President of the United States than those of the president of Iran.

It is President Obama who decided last September to be the first American President to preside over a session of the Security Council and then deleted "nuclear nonproliferation - Iran" from the draft agenda. Obama himself chose the subject matter of that summit. He added nuclear disarmament to nuclear nonproliferation and turned nonproliferation into a game of "you first."

It is  Obama who decided to host an April Security Summit touted as "the largest gathering of countries hosted by an American President . . .  since the conference in San Francisco around the United Nations." He selected the subject matter and then refused to add Iran.

It is Obama who, for the first time, has linked the issue of Israeli concessions to the prospect of getting serious about an Iranian bomb - a policy that has all the hallmarks of looking for a Jewish scapegoat when an Iranian bomb becomes a reality.

And it is Obama who has now told European leaders that he will insist on an international conference to create a Palestinian state regardless of whether Palestinians move an inch to throw out their elected leaders, who continue to reject coexistence with Israel. Again, Obama's move places the UN in center court, since the conference is to be organized by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's brainchild, the Quartet. The Quartet is composed of the UN, Russia, the European Union and the United States. Rather than being an independent actor, "the UN" plays the role of errand boy for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

So it is hardly surprising that Ahmadinejad leaped for the UN microphone.

Unfortunately, however, his speech is not just a rant about Jewish self-determination, America or liberty. It is a declaration of war against every decent living thing.

The only question that remains is not which New York playhouse will host the President's next big production. The question is whether there is anybody left who will refuse to slink back inside the General Assembly and insist that international peace and security is not a game of charades.

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