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## Ahmadinejad challenges the big boys

There is nothing better than standing up to a giant to make you feel like one

by Kouross Esmaeli (https://iranian.com/author/kouross-esmaeli/) · September 21, 2005 (https://iranian.com/2005/09/21/ahmadinejad-challenges-the-big-boys/)



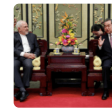
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Last week's UN meeting of heads of state was yet another attempt at balancing – or pretending – multilateral diplomacy in a world where America is recognized-yet-resented as the biggest bully on the block. The very visible presence of the Iranian delegation was one of the main news items from the proceedings of the summit, with most of the coverage centering around President Ahmadinejad's pronouncement that Iran is willing to share its nuclear capability with other countries.

Considering the fact that this was the precise excuse that Bush used to justify his invasion of Iraq, the comment seemed like a diplomatic faux pas and the American media, dutifully, drummed up the hysteria. But there is a logic behind this comment from the Iranian President which came through later on in the week .

I did not attend the President's two speeches at the UN, but I did attend the dinner that the Iranian Mission to the UN had organized for the Iranian-American community at the Hilton Hotel. The President spoke as did Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, , and that is where they

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laid out their vision to the most friendly crowd they could find in the US.

The basic attitude of the President and the rest of the delegation to the question of nuclear capability had all the workings of the kid who's feeling big, if only because he's standing up to the bully. The fanfare was greatest in Iran where the Iranian press made much with the President's trip to New York. In Iran, the President was shown walking gallantly down the corridors of world diplomacy, anticipated by all the heads of states, respected by the Third World as well as the West, sitting at the table with the big boys.

And President Larijani spoke of Iran in surprisingly nationalistic terms. He spoke of our legacy as an ancient people, our contribution to all aspects of world civilization, and our rightful place in the world today as a major player who cannot be ignored or bullied. The speech sounded more like the hyper nationalism associated with the Shah before he was overthrown than the very tempered nationalism of the Islamic Republic. It was a reiteration of the sentiments that we've heard all our lives, so it won much praise and applause from the habituated crowd.

The more revealing speech from the Iranian delegation came from the nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani. With impeccable logic, Larijani laid out Iran's right, both legally and morally, to attain nuclear fuel. "Why can Britain have nuclear power, but we can't?" he asked, to much applause. And fact is that under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran has every right to pursue nuclear fuel for public consumption.

Larijani spoke of the nuclear question in terms of the nationalization of Iranian oil in the 1950's: we are once again being obstructed from gaining access to our resources. Our nuclear technology is the product of indigenous scientific development and we have the right to develop it. The nationalization of Iranian oil was the first successful anti-colonial struggle in the post-World War II era. The fact that that legacy is being revived by the current leaders in Iran speaks volumes to their policies and strategies.

So what seemed like a diplomatic mistake by new the Iranian President in announcing openly the country's willingness to share it's nuclear knowledge with other countries, was justified in full detail by Larijani. The claim is actually a strategic step to bolster Iran's standing in the (Third) World community. "We refuse to be made to depend on fossil fuels especially since fossil fuels will eventually run out," Larijani said frankly, "in order for us to secure a secure future for our children, we need to develop other fuel technologies."

And the Iranians are seeing this as a right for all people's in the world. "Iran is the hope of all those countries that are being held back and denied access to the technologies of the future. These countries are looking at us as a bulwark against the continued polarization of the world between the first class and second class countries."

Iranians are pushing this question to the world community with much confidence. And from their point of view, the only reason that Europe and the US are denying this capability to other countries is their arrogance and superpower mentality. Iranian are finding limits to that power and they are poised to exploit it to their own benefit. "And don't worry about America attacking us, they will be stewing in the soup they've cooked for themselves in Afghanistan and Iraq for years to come," Larijani ensured the audience.

"We have absolutely no intention to build nuclear weapons, and there is no proof that we ever have. But it's this arrogance that allows the Americans and the Europeans to try to stop us by making an issue of 'our intentions.' How can you accuse someone of their intentions? This is the same kind of arrogance that has led to this 'pre-emptive strike' that is now a pillar of American policy."



([https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/top-trump-appointees-promoted-selling-nuclear-power-plants-to-saudi-arabia-over-objections-from-national-security-officials-house-democratic-report-says/2019/02/19/6a719762-3456-11e9-af5b-b51b7ff322e9\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/top-trump-appointees-promoted-selling-nuclear-power-plants-to-saudi-arabia-over-objections-from-national-security-officials-house-democratic-report-says/2019/02/19/6a719762-3456-11e9-af5b-b51b7ff322e9_story.html))



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There is nothing better than standing up to a giant to make you feel like one. But much the same way that the struggle to nationalize the country's oil in the 1950's succeeded, it is not clear how the current regime will fare. In the 1950's Mossadegh, the leader of that movement, won the battle but lost the war. He became a hero for much of the Iranian population and an inspiration for the anti-colonial struggles throughout the Third World. And after the oil was nationalized, he was exiled by the Shah until his death.

The current regime in Iran is positioning itself in much the same terms. For them, that sense of greatness and resistance could prove to be real and they will get away with building and keeping nuclear capability. Or this might turn out to be a product of a momentary snag in America's long term strategies in the region: an unsubstantiated sense of power for Iran that could end up in tragedy rather than heroism.

The question remains in the hands of the Iranian people as much as the American administration. To what degree the Bush administration's strong-arm tactics will help or

hinder internal Iranian politics remains to be seen. But for now, the Iranians will pursue their national right to attain nuclear fuel. And they will win much support from many countries.

China and Russia are siding with Iran in the Security Council, but the promises of developing independent fuel technologies could resonate with a lot more countries that seek to escape permanent second-class status in our world. And the question remains: why should the Americans (the only nation to have ever actually used nuclear technology for non-peaceful purposes) have nuclear capability, but not Iran?

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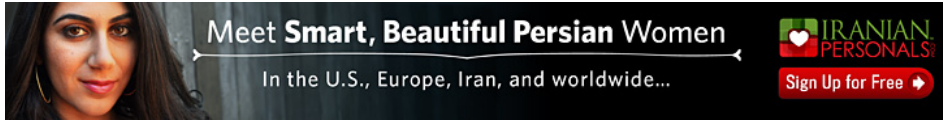
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