

Letters from our readers

27 June 2006

The following is a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.

On “Miami ‘terror’ arrests—a government provocation”

The FBI must be reading *Mein Kampf* and the Gestapo SOPs. The whole episode is right out Germany in the late '20s and early '30s.

FBR

Thailand

24 June 2006

Please keep following this story. All I had to do was see their pictures, and I knew that it was a setup. I figured (just from their photos and the indecency of this administration) that they are poor, and now I know how poor.

DD

24 June 2006

On “The killing of US soldiers in Yusufiya: who’s responsible?”

Your article on the death of two captured US soldiers at Yusufiya was compelling and articulate; however, I am curious as to how much responsibility there is to blame on those who actually perpetrated the killings. These men were not killed in a firefight, but were kidnapped and brutally tortured and slain. The insurgency may be justified given your accurate depiction of US atrocities against the Iraqi people, but no level of suffering or repression justifies cold-blooded murder, especially one as gruesome and barbaric as this.

MD

25 June 2006

On “An exchange with an American worker on ‘illegal immigrants’ ”

Well-written response. I have long looked at immigration through a global humanist perspective. I have sent e-mails battling with William Gheen of the Americans for Legal Immigration PAC. His responses are always ones of “nationalistic” tendencies. I have

always felt his leanings were geared toward Americans as any propaganda from a politician. I have long felt it’s not my place as a US teacher, relatively well-off compared to anyone else in the third world, to advocate denying the poor from bettering themselves regardless of the “legality” of their immigration status. Thanks for the well-written article, which speaks the views I have always felt. I am going to share your web site with many. Again, well said and thanks.

JR

Davidson, North Carolina, US

22 June 2006

On “As violence spreads in Iraq, Prosecutor demands death penalty in Hussein show trial”

I just visited your site and would like to tell you the following: About two years ago, I read an article about the attack on Halabja. I think it was in a German newspaper; unfortunately, I cannot remember in which one it was published. An American specialist for chemical warfare visited Halabja directly after the attack. He came to the conclusion that the symptoms of the victims were typical for being poisoned with phosgene and were not typical for being poisoned with the gases used by the Iraqi army.

Phosgene, COCl₂, is a highly reactive chemical compound. It is very easy to produce phosgene using carbon monoxide and chlorine. It is used as a key chemical compound for the synthesis of many organic compounds worldwide. It is a very toxic gas.

According to this specialist, phosgene was used during the Iran-Iraq war as a poison gas by the Iranian army. He came to the conclusion that Halabja was attacked probably inadvertently during fighting between the two armies, being located between the two fighting parties.

I cannot judge the truth of this article. But if the events really happened as described above, one of the standard arguments for the present war against Iraq might be considered in a new way. And then there is

the question of why the events around Halabja were never told to us this way. For me this is not a justification for a brutal regime, but it is a question of what happened in reality.

EW

Germany

22 June 2006

On “Bush administration reverses US ban on talks with Iran”

In a significant shift of policy, the United States offered to join Europe in talks with Iran on its nuclear program, if Tehran suspends its enrichment of uranium. One must remember that in 2003, Bush refused to allow any response to the Iranian offer to negotiate an agreement that would have accepted the existence of Israel.

The decision to change tactics towards Iran is definitely a major policy shift for the Bush administration, which earlier had refused to join the talks or make other diplomatic overtures to Iran, despite calls from European nations, other leading diplomats and former US secretaries of state, overturning a high-level decision by Washington last March to freeze Iranian talks.

For the past five years, the Bush administration has followed a failed policy towards Iran, leading to the current dangerous impasse. It is time for the administration to reassess its strategy, think out of the box and enter into direct talks with Iran. The Bush administration has been bullying Iran, and, quite understandably, the Iranians have become more resolute in their right to attain nuclear power.

But the story of how a president, who rarely changes his mind, did so in this case could also illustrate the changed dynamics between the State Department and the White House in Mr. Bush’s second term. Following a meeting she had attended in Berlin, days earlier, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice delivered the grim news to her boss: Their coalition against Iran was at risk of falling apart.

The Chinese had warned the United States “not to have any preconditions” for negotiations. However, that warning went unheeded in spite of the fact that the US offer is also aimed at persuading China and Russia that Washington is doing all it can to find a diplomatic solution to the dispute. If you had believed the Iraq WMD fable, you would probably also fall for this!

In one particularly ominous comment, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that the negotiations would give Iran “one last excuse” to resist American demands. This tells us clearly that US diplomacy is just a smokescreen for the eventual hostilities.

But could the US afford to ignore participating in direct negotiations? Analysts hold that the United States changed its rigid position as a result of various obvious factors and reasons, mainly: The US threat of force became weaker following the Iraq war quagmire for Bush, as his public support rate has decreased to a new record low of less than 31 percent; there isn’t much hope that the US would win any support from most foreign countries, especially from China and Russia, as long as there is a possibility of a diplomatic solution to the issue; there has been a growing pressure of a strong demand by the international community for US direct involvement in the negotiations, as most countries are rapidly losing patience with what they increasingly see as US intransigence; with its military commitments stretched out in Afghanistan and Iraq, can the US take on another, most probably unilateral, decision on war on Iran?; the decision for participation in direct negotiations was approved by the Israeli government, despite the Israeli unabashed and relentless warmongering against Iran.

Despite the unforeseeable prospects, dialogue is always better than confrontation and negotiation is always more preferable to threat.

JC

Vittoriosa, Malta

23 June 2006



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