

Let's fret about our own tyrants

Written by Ilana Mercer

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What a relief. The demonstrations in the Islamic Republic, pursuant to the disputed election, have failed to cue the staple presidential speech we'd become accustomed to from George Bush.

Barack Obama spared the country a lecture about the all-American duty to crusade everywhere and always for democracy and against tyrants and terrorists.

Instead, the president confined himself to diplomatic, obligatory statements: He was "deeply troubled by the violence" perpetrated against supporters of opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, by the government and its military and paramilitary forces (the Revolutionary Guard and the Basij).

Despite the divisions between the two countries, Obama rededicated the U.S. to "tough, direct dialogue" with Iran. Ultimately it was up to Iranians to decide who Iran's leaders would be. "We respect Iranian sovereignty and want to avoid the United States being the issue inside of Iran."

How refreshing. Unless the world bowed to America, Bush and his warbots saw no basis for diplomacy. The neoconservatives believe America has national interests; other nations merely manage to demonstrate varying degrees of success in aligning their interests with ours.

Contrast Obama's political detachment with Bush's delirium at getting news, in early in 2008, of Kosovo's defiant declaration of independence. Our imam practically danced in the streets in celebration. He was joined (in spirit, at least) by the al Qaida-backed Islamic Kosovo Liberation Army. Orthodox Christian Serbs, on the other hand, took to the streets to protest the actions of the Albanian Muslims and express rage at U.S. meddling, past and present.

In the dying days of the Bush administration, the Georgians attacked the breakaway provinces of South Ossetia and the neighboring Abkhazia. Some say they were abetted militarily by Americans and Israelis. The Russian Bear rose on its hind legs, agitated, first by the neoconservatives' insistence on bringing Georgia and Ukraine into NATO, and then by the same clique's constant crowing, "We are all Georgians now."

Those were tense times. Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili took to channeling Ahmed Chalabi, the man who fed a willing administration phony intel on Iraq so as to fire up the War Party. In fairness to that phony, neoconservatives need no force-feeding when it comes to creative ploys for war. Ditto their ideological handymen.

No prompting required, Krauthammer, Kristol and company rushed to resuscitate Cold War II.

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These days, Mona (Charin), Mark (Steyn) and [McMussolini](#), respectively, have denounced Obama's "foreign policy as social work," "impotence as moral virtue" and any kind of "tepid" response. Understandably, many diasporic Iranians share their convictions.

Americans are still in the grips of a Bush foreign-policy hangover. Obama refocused a drunk-on-democracy country by reminding it that "the difference between Ahmadinejad and Mousavi in terms of their actual policies may not be as great as has been advertised. Either way, we were going to be dealing with an Iranian regime that has historically been hostile to the United States; that has caused some problems in the neighborhood and is pursuing nuclear weapons."

In other words, thumping majorities in the Middle East do not necessarily coincide with American national interests. Or as Dr. Johnson said, "There is no settling the point of precedence between a louse and a flea."

This simple thing Bush had failed to grasp.

America's former [Majnun](#) -in-chief had cheered Iraqis as they turned out en masse for Shariah law; and he blithely egged on "the great people of Egypt" to replace Hosni Mubarak's ruling party with the banned Muslim Brotherhood. When Bush's agitation for democratic elections in the Palestinian Authority gave us Hamas – a rib in the ribcage of the Muslim Brotherhood – he grew disoriented, but continued to insist that the "yes" to Hamas was merely a yen for health care and other welfare.

Iran's leading reformist, the mullahs-approved Mousavi, backs Iran's nuclear weapons program and has said he would not suspend uranium enrichment. Most Iranians concur. Like President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Mousavi doesn't recognize Israel. Since the Holocaust appears to have become a centerpiece □ and a precondition for diplomacy □ in neoconservative talking points, they might be interested in this tidbit: On Holocaust denial, Mousavi and Ahmadinejad are on the same pseudo-scientific page.

While neoconservatives and neoliberals declared that the elections in Iran had been rigged, the president noted cautiously that he could not "state definitively one way or another ..." because, "We weren't on the ground, we did not have observers there; we did not have international observers on hand."

Ahead of Iran's presidential elections, a poll, the culmination of a collaboration between "Terror Free Tomorrow: The Center for Public Opinion" and "The American Strategy Program at the New America Foundation," disputed "that the margin of victory of incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was the result of fraud or manipulation."

Conducted three weeks before the vote, this nationwide public opinion survey of Iranians "showed Ahmadinejad leading by a more than 2-to-1 margin □ greater than his actual apparent margin of victory in Friday's election," report the authors, Ken Ballen and Patrick Doherty, in a Washington Post editorial.

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Moreover, "Much commentary has portrayed Iranian youth and the Internet as harbingers of change in this election. But our poll," write Ballen and Doherty, "found that only a third of Iranians even have access to the Internet, while 18-to-24-year-olds comprised the strongest voting bloc for Ahmadinejad of all age groups. The only demographic groups in which [this] survey found Mousavi leading or competitive with Ahmadinejad were university students and graduates, and the highest-income Iranians."

Real or not, the possibility that the vote in Iran is the product of widespread fraud is simply none of the United States' business.

Our country has been pulverized economically and constitutionally. American livelihoods and liberties have been put into peril. In case the advocates of a muscular response have failed to notice, we're pinned down like butterflies by our own tyrants.

Ilana Mercer is a columnist at [Taki's Magazine](#) and a contributor at [VDARE.COM](#), which is devoted to the analysis of immigration policy. Ilana is also a fellow at the [Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies](#), an independent, nonprofit, economic policy think tank. To learn more about her work, visit [IlanaMercer.com](#). To comment on this column, go to [Ilana's blog](#).