

Blunders Down Under...writes Michael Kuttner

March 18, 2016 by Michael Kuttner

A visit by the Iranian Foreign Minister to New Zealand was always going to be a duplicitous charm exercise, but in actual fact it turned out to be even more nauseating than one could have anticipated.

At least in Australia one Member of the Federal Parliament was prepared to buck the sycophantic embrace of the Iranian admiration chorus. In New Zealand however there was a deafening silence from those usually jumping up and down over alleged Israeli "crimes". Far worse were the embarrassing, inane and totally unbelievable comments from the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

New Zealand's fervent desire to re-establish itself as a major trading partner with Iran was always going to mean that a suitably weak response to that country's abysmal human rights record and its ongoing threats to wipe out a fellow United Nations member would prevail. Murray McCully as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade provided the perfect person for this morally bankrupt policy to be peddled. In the second year of a UN Security Council membership and with precious little achievement to show for it, this was an ideal opportunity for some grandiose gestures. What better opportunity than embracing a fatally flawed (non) agreement that was promoted by the Obama Administration, reviving a lucrative trading opportunity and at the same time blaming Israel for the sick state of the Middle East. Nobody can fault the desire to encourage trade where possible but when this comes at the expense of giving a free pass to a regime which executes more people than any other country and threatens genocide against Israel then one has to wonder about political hypocrisy and double standards.

All these factors were on full display during the brief visit by the Iranian Foreign Minister.

Missile testing: The French Government, amongst others is seriously concerned about this breach of developing and testing long-range missiles. It is being discussed by the EU and possibly the UN. Mr. Key reported that this subject was "briefly" raised. Presumably this means that it hardly featured and after Iranian assurances of complete compliance and innocence the matter was dropped in favour of far more lucrative matters.

Israel must be wiped off the Earth: As widely reported, this message of fraternal greetings was inscribed in Hebrew on the missiles which were launched. The NZ Prime Minister's observation that "it's an unhelpful and far from useful action" is as mild a rebuke as one can muster in the circumstances. However, this innocuous remark was nothing compared to what came next. In all seriousness and without even a hint of incredulity he then went on to claim that he suspected a soldier rather than the Iranian Government was responsible for it. This infantile and totally pathetic whitewashing of yet another Iranian gesture of evil intentions is mind-boggling. Obviously it never crossed the PM's mind that in the strictly controlled theocratic regime, no ordinary soldier would dare to write such messages on a missile without the express permission of the highest authorities. Moreover, how many soldiers have such a perfect command of the Hebrew language that they can compose such a sentence? If Mr. Key

and his advisers had taken the trouble to do some elementary research of past similar expressions of anti Israel hate they would have discovered that this was a common occurrence at countless demonstrations and military parades, all orchestrated and sanctioned by the Iranian Government.

Iran has never threatened to use force against another nation: Failing to challenge this claim by the Iranian Foreign Minister, the NZ Government in effect decided to ignore facts to the contrary. No challenge was mounted to the Iranian occupation of Lebanon via its support of terror designated Hezbollah and its active support in propping up the dictator of Damascus. No mention of Iranian material support for other terror groups, the supply of missiles (all pointed in Israel's direction) and other deadly weapons to these groups and the financial backing which enables terrorists to perpetrate murder against Israelis and others.

As far as Iranian intentions about Israel are concerned the statements below are just one of many:

Discussing the nuclear deal in his speech to a large audience at the Imam Khomeini Mosque, Khamenei referred to some of the agreement's measures which will remain in place for 25 years. Seizing on that time frame, Khamenei noted that some observers say it should allay Israel's fears about a nuclear Iran during that time – "I'd say [to Israel] that they will not see [the end] of these 25 years...God willing, there will be no such thing as a Zionist regime in 25 years. Until then, struggling, heroic and jihadi morale will leave no moment of serenity for Zionists."

Brigadier General Mohsen Kazzemeini, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' senior commander in the province of Tehran, said that Iran would continue to expand its military capabilities until it brought about the collapse of Israel.

"They [the United States and Israel] should know that the Islamic Revolution will continue enhancing its preparedness until it overthrows Israel and liberates Palestine," Kazzemeini told military personnel gathered for an extensive drill in the Iranian capital on Wednesday.

"And we will continue defending not just our own country, but also all the oppressed people of the world, specially those countries that are standing on the forefront of confrontation with the Zionists," continued Kazzemeini.

Any dispassionate observer of Iranian intentions cannot fail to notice their obvious objectives. Now, they have been given a nuclear pass and their development of offensive missiles is forging ahead. No wonder they feel immune to any further censure. With the UN Security Council and other UN bodies turning a blind eye to Iranian incitement and threats against a fellow member I suppose it was too much to expect that at least one Security Council member country would show some moral fortitude.

Persecution of Bahais: The Iranian FM assured Mr. Key that there was no persecution. This link speaks for itself:

<https://www.bic.org/focus-areas/situation-iranian-bahais/current-situation#as4qWUkDMsURzCDv.97>

Executions and arrests: The arrests of many human rights activists and religious dissidents plus the record number of executions were brushed aside without any serious challenge. Surely the NZ Government has access to the same reports as anyone else:
http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/11/world/middleeast/iran-executions-at-highest-level-since-89.html?_r=0

To round off a vintage week, the NZ Foreign Minister, fresh from hobnobbing with his Iranian counterpart, popped up in Sydney and once again asserted that Jews living in Judea, Samaria and suburbs of Israel's Capital were all threats to peace and a fatal impediment to a two State solution. Deliberately oblivious to historical facts and reality he advised that NZ would be proposing that the UN force a solution. Has Mr. McCully ever wondered why when there were no settlements prior to 1967 there was terror and the yet to be invented Palestinians had not the slightest desire to have a two State solution? Has it ever crossed his closed mind that the reason countless such proposals have been turned down since 1947 is precisely because the real objective is the dissolution of the Jewish State? Has anyone in the NZ Foreign Ministry bothered to study the daily incitement and hate education taking place amongst the very people who are expected to establish yet another dysfunctional, non democratic terror State in our very midst? Has it occurred to anyone in Wellington that the current mayhem of Islamic terror has nothing to do with Israel and everything to do with Jihad, intolerance and fanaticism?

If Mr. McCully is desperate to make a splash at the UN then presumably no amount of logic or common sense will deter him. As both these attributes seem to be in short supply we can only expect further obsessive outbursts from him. Meanwhile, no doubt, New Zealand lambs, cattle and other products will be heading to Iran and it can be business as usual, regardless of the consequences.

During World War 2 a popular song called "Bless 'em all" was popular. With apologies to the writer of the original lyrics I have rewritten the chorus so as to fit current circumstances:

"Bluff 'em all, bluff 'em all,

The long and the short and the tall,

Bluff all the politicians, UN and similar ones

Bluff all the media, their editors who speak with forked tongues

'Cos we are sick of them all

As at the feet of human rights abusers they fall

You'll get no promotion on this side of the ocean

So carry on with the charade

Bluff 'em all!!"

Michael Kuttner is a Jewish New Zealander who for many years was actively involved with various communal organisations connected to Judaism and Israel. He now lives in Israel and is J-Wire's correspondent in the region.