HOPE FOR IRAN

Shiraz, Iran. "Where are you from?" the Iranian man asked me.

With a big smile, I happily answered, "America." He responded with a smile of his own. "Ah, America... America Number One!"

He hooked his two index fingers together. "American people, Iranian people, good... friends." He unhooked his fingers and waved his hand in a gesture of contempt. "Governments, no good." We both belly-laughed.

I and my friends with me repeatedly had the same experience, whether in Tehran, Sari, Mashad, Yazd, Isfahan, Shiraz or Tabriz. We lost count of the people - men and women - who approached us to ask where we were from, and upon being told we were Americans, without exception they would react with surprise, then a beaming smile and say "Welcome."

We never once received a negative reaction or a frown. Collectively we've had encounters with hundreds of people over the past twelve days with people all over Iran who spoke some English, some well, some just a few words, and the one thing they wanted us to know was the abyss of difference between them - the people of Iran - and their government.

The mullahs who ran their government and preached hate for America did not speak for them. One lady covered in a black hejab tightly grasped the hand of one of the women among us to plead, "Please tell your friends in America that we Iranians are not their enemy."

As one shopkeeper in Isfahan's bazaar told us, "What I want is for more Americans to come to Iran, and for all the mullahs to leave."

The anti-American propaganda cranked out by the Mullah Regime is astonishing. Iran is a Shia Moslem country. "Shia" is the abbreviation of "Shiat Ali," the Party of Ali, an invention of the Persians who were conquered by invading Arabs in the 640s who forced their Islam upon them. Arabs called their religion "Islam," which is "submission" in Arabic, meaning everyone must submit to them. Their set of beliefs was "Sunni," or "The Path" that must be submitted to.

Shia Islam is based on an invention of a mythology about the family of Mohammed. It is all "sacred history" as there is no historical evidence whatever for any of it, including that of Mohammed (a title, not a name) himself. It goes like this: For all his wives, Mohammed had no sons, only one daughter, Fatima, who married his brother's son, Ali. They had a son named Hussein - which is where Zero's middle name comes from.

When Mohammed died in 632, his father-in-law Abu Bakr (Mohammed had married his six-year old daughter Aisha) seized control of the community of Moslem Arabs from Ali. Followers of Ali who

didn't recognize Abu Bakr's authority formed the Party of Ali, or Shias. Although Ali retired to his garden and didn't fight Abu Bakr, he was assassinated in 661.

Ali's son (thus Mohammed's grandson) Hussein raised a force to resist, and refused to submit to the Sunnis. In 680 at Karbala, south of Baghdad, his small force was surrounded by the army of the Sunni Caliph, Yazid. With his soldiers denied water and dying of thirst, Hussein rode out to Yazid's forces carrying his six-month old baby, Ali al-Ashgar ibn Hussein, held up the child and begged for water to save his life.

The Sunni commander ordered his best archer, Hurmala, to fire a three pointed arrow at the baby, which struck him in the neck and killed him. The attack was then launched, which slaughtered Hussein and almost all his followers. The day of the Battle of Karbala, October 10, is the birthday of Shia, or Persian, Islam known as *Ashura*, the Day of Mourning.

It is the way Persians could become Moslemized but not Arabized. Persians hate Arabs to this day. Arab evil is epitomized by Hurmala's arrow in baby Ali al-Ashgar's neck, as in this poster hanging in the Tabriz bazaar:

Bear all this in mind as you stare at this billboard in Tehran put up by the Mullah Regime (specifically the gang of government thugs known as the Basij):

It is a man holding up the baby of Palestine (that's the Palestinian flag behind them), with Obama as Hurmala aiming a three-pointed arrow at him. Note that the white arrowhead has the Israeli Star of David. The Great Satan (us) and the Little Satan (Israel) as evil as the baby-murderers of Karbala.

There can be no peace with the Mullah Regime of Iran. This is their choice not ours, giving us no choice but to rid the world of it. Were it not for Zero, it would be easy. For there certainly can be peace with the people of Iran, as opposed to their rulers. Indeed, the way to rid the world of the Terror Masters of Tehran would be to enable the people of Iran to get rid of them for us (and themselves).

We'd need a president as smart and as committed to freedom as Ronald Reagan to do it, so we'll have to wait for Ted Cruz in 2017. But a GOP Congress can do a lot to prime Iran's anti-Mullah pump in the meantime.

The first item on the GOP agenda should be to block any agreement to end sanctions on Iran in exchange for Tehran's lying about ending its attempt to build nukes. Congress should then increase the sanctions which are now leaking like a sieve.

Then a Reagan Doctrine strategy for Iran can be initiated, targeting Tehran's plethora of vulnerabilities. The most obvious is freedom for women. The way to reach them, and men as well, is through the internet.

The Mullah Firewall blocks Facebook, YouTube, and thousands of other sites. Millions of young cyber-savvy Iranians use firewall bypassing software like Freegate. So it's easy to reach them. What they need is hope, to know that Americans are on their side, despite the schmuck in the White House who betrayed their anti-mullah protests in 2009.

I have to tell you, Persian women are gorgeous. They love to wear dramatic make-up and will look you straight in the eye. For some reason, it's de rigueur for them to get a nose job, and they even flaunt the bandage after getting one.

Yet it's the mullah law that they must cover their hair with a scarf anywhere in public, even in restaurants. Seeing a woman's hair somehow uncontrollably "provokes" a man so it must be hidden. I'd like to see a Congressman go on Voice of America (all young Iranians listen to or watch

it) to suggest that this law is far too inadequate.

What Iran needs to inhibit sexual promiscuity, he'd say, is for the scarf requirement to apply to men as well. Men must hide their hair so as not to uncontrollably provoke women into demanding sex. Mullahs cover their hair with turbans, obviously to maintain their piety and not provoke women. All men should do the same with a tasteful and chaste scarf.

You can't imagine how that Congressman would be the hero to millions of Iranian women. Then, of course, after the mullahs sneer at him and milking all the resultant publicity, he'd say to the world press, "Well, if no scarves hiding men's hair, then no scarves hiding women's. A basic requirement of civilization is that men control their urges. Iran deserves a civilized government."

The scarf law's application is sliding just as fast as women's scarves. Older women wearing full black gown chadors are always tucking in any stray strand escaping their hood. All younger women now wrap their hair in a high bun on the back of their head which holds the scarf up allowing half their hair to show.

Another Congressista - say from Kentucky - could give advice on how to make better booze. It's completely illegal, yet just about anyone under 40 in Iran today knows how to make or buy moonshine vodka made with raisins. Well, how about telling them how to make smooth Kentucky

bourbon?

Iran or Persia has a ancient history of over 2,500 years but it is one of the youngest countries on earth. Only 11½% of Iranians are 55 and older, meaning over 88% of Iranians have no adult memory of life under the Shah. Over 42% of Iranians are under 25. They could care less about Ayatollah Khomeini - whose picture is everywhere - and his Revolution of 1979. What they hate is the religious suffocation it has imposed.

A Senator could publicly suggest that the constant quoting of the Koran, men attempting to sing Islamic hymns more discordant than rap music, and calls to prayers all by ear-splitting electronic loudspeaker is un-Islamic. There was no electricity in Mohammed's time. Muezzins called people to prayer high in minarets with their own unaided voice. Iran needs to return to those days of Islamic purity.

On a more serious note, a focus should be on the growing interest and belief in Persia's original religion of Zoroastrianism. For well over a thousand years, the monotheism preached by Zoroaster (known also as Zarathustra or Zardosht) who lived around 600 BC, was fervently believed by Persians until they were forced at sword-point by Arabs into becoming Moslems.

You see the Faravahar symbol of the religion all over the place now. Here it is above the Fire Temple in Yazd, where devotees may worship freely.

You see kids wearing Faravahar pendants and t-shirts with the Zoroastrian mantra of morality: "Good thoughts, good words, good deeds." They know that the founder of the Persian Empire, Cyrus the Great (600-530 BC) was a Zoroastrian, as were all the great Persian kings of antiquity.

This requires subtlety, for you have to avoid direct criticism of Islam and its Shia variant in particular. Millions of young Iranians are alienated from Islam today, however, thanks to the mullahs shoving it constantly down their throats. So discretely encouraging Zoroastrianism as a viable competitor to Islam would further subvert mullah authority.

These are just a few examples of what so many Iranians are ripe for. The Iran of the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi overthrown by Khomeini thanks to the treachery of Jimmy Carter, was pro-American and pro-Israel. There is no reason whatever that there cannot be such an Iran again.

There is no reason whatever that there cannot be a peaceful Iran that has abandoned the sponsorship of terrorism, the acquisition of nuclear weapons, and the desire to destroy Israel.

It will take Regime Change. It will take an American government dedicated to getting rid of the Mullah Regime, not appeasing or making deals with it. Or rather, an American government dedicated to supporting and materially enabling the Iranian people to get rid of it.

Over the last 12 days here, I've become convinced that this is possible because so many Iranians desperately want it. They want to breathe free and no longer be suffocated.

This won't be soon as it cannot be under Zero. Iran is such a clear example of what an extraordinary impediment to freedom Zero is, not just for America but many other countries across the world. But we can prepare the way. A GOP Congress can start now.

These last 12 days here have been a powerful and illuminating experience for all us. We'll remember all the breathtaking beauty and history of what we've seen, from the travertine terraces of Badab-e-Surt,

To architectural wonders like the giant mosque of Shah Abbas in Isfahan and the Jameh in Yazd,

And the astonishing Mirror Shrine in Shiraz, with its interior of millions of individually placed pieces of colored mirrored glass,

To the Stone Village of Kandovan, whose inhabitants have carved cave homes out of volcanic tufa for close to 2,000 years,

Plus of course the ruins of Persepolis, the ancient Persian royal capital burnt down by Alexander in 334 BC in revenge for Xerxes putting Athens to the torch in 480 BC.

This is only the tiniest glimpse of what we saw. But what we'll most remember above all are the smiles, the warmth, the friendliness of Iranians, men, women and kids. They have suffered what we cannot imagine. They have chosen not to believe the mullahs' demonization of America. They look upon us not with hate but with hope and admiration.

Forty-one years ago I traveled through Iran. The place that moved me the most was the austerely magnificent tomb of Cyrus standing alone in the Valley of the Pars.

I never dreamed that this pro-American land would experience the horrors it has with a monster regime of Terror Masters. Here I was again at the Tomb of Cyrus the Great where I could see that Persia's nightmare may end, and that its people may be free to be the friends with us that they want to be.

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