



## Hoped-for change

September 18, 2012

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Gasoline rockets past \$5 a gallon, and even at that price there are shortages and long lines at the pumps. The U.S. economy goes into a tailspin. Meanwhile, the trigger of these developments — a Middle East eruption — has reduced Tel Aviv and Tehran to vast tracts of smoking rubble. Around the world, radical Islamists are in full-throated, blood-lusting outcry.

It's no far-fetched scenario. But how can it be avoided. CAN it be avoided? The questions have no clear answer. But this much all should be able to agree on: The Obama policy on Iran isn't working and isn't likely to. To state this plain reality isn't to commend some blustery, bombs-away, rightwing alternative. It's merely to suggest setting aside the Obama mishmash of muddled policy and delusional assessments of that policy and reboot strategy.

There are those who argue that the Islamic Republic of Iran can be contained just like the old Soviet Union was. The libertarian Cato Institute, for one, issued a paper asserting this position. Others are doubtful, noting that Stalin et al. were staunch Marxist-Leninist atheists, in contrast to the mullahs who rule Iran according to rigid religious dogma. Yet others say the mullahs are more rational than their bellicose, anti-Semitic rhetoric indicates.

President Obama numbers himself among those who discount the possibility of containment. His policy, he has stressed repeatedly, is not to contain Iran after it achieves nuclear capability but to stop it before it does. A nuclear Iran, Obama has said repeatedly, is “unacceptable,” period.

But how does he propose to stop it? Apparently through diplomacy and sanctions. And how's that working out? Not so well, according to the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It says that despite sanctions, Iran has achieved significant increases in its stocks of enriched uranium and nearly doubled its enrichment centrifuges since the last count in May — all indications that Iran is hellbent on “developing a nuclear payload for a missile,” says the IAEA.

Obama says his policy is crafted to isolate Iran. And how's THAT working out? Some 120 nations recently showed up in Tehran for a conference of the “Unaligned Movement,” with the U.N. Secretary General among the VIPs

attending. Meanwhile, the Wall Street Journal reports that several big European banks are continuing their billion-dollar transactions with the regime despite pledges not to.

Despite these developments, the Obama administration now serves notice of its rejection of suggestions that it draw “bright lines” with stated consequences, rather than continuing the futile attempts to “engage” the regime in diplomatic kabuki dancing, allowing Tehran to buy more time to reach its goal of rendering itself unassailable via possession of a nuclear arsenal.

Obama’s approach seems to be a retooled version of hope and change — hoping Tehran’s apocalyptic attitude will miraculously change. A full-of-himself Obama seems convinced that if only he goes on reading his set teleprompter script, his mellifluous voice and celebrity charisma will be sufficient to save the day.