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Please contact Rachel Selkirk (director) rselkirk@shaw.ca or 660-BOSC (2672)

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7 pm to 9:30 pm
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GUARANTEE YOUR SPACE
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Wednesday / Saturday

JANUARY 16: 7:30pm–9:00pm, or
JANUARY 19: 11:00am–12:30pm

At later dates ask for your name to be added to the waiting list for possible openings.

FOR INFORMATION
CONTACT:

Tel. 472-0532

E-mail: info@ehba.org

Mail in registration form at
www.ehba.org



SPECIAL REPORT

CONAL PIERSE

Iran not the unstable nuclear terrorists they're made out to be



CODY CIVIERO

"I don't wish to portray Iran as a completely innocent victim that's being bullied by the Wicked World Power of the West. I believe that narrow and simplistic worldviews on foreign policy are dangerous—which is exactly the manner in which we currently view Iran."

Throughout last year, tensions over the Iranian nuclear program dominated headlines. The US launched new allegations and condemnations against Iran on an almost daily basis, and the news networks got plenty of use out of their scary "evil Iran" graphics.

But despite so much attention being given to the issue, the majority of people are still unaware of what Dr Mohamed El Baradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, had to say: they have found no undeclared nuclear facilities in Iran nor any concrete evidence that their current nuclear program is being weaponized, and the IAEA is "moving forwards towards a position to declare Iran's programs are exclusively for peaceful purposes."

However, for some reason, his statements went largely unreported by mainstream media. In light of the constant bombardment of fear-mongering on the issue, it's not surprising that 52 per cent of Americans told a recent Zogby poll that they would support a US military strike to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Of course, if all Iran were to do is develop nuclear power plants for civilian use, then such an action would be a violation of international law, since the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (of which the US is technically in violation) permits Iran to have such facilities.

Why is Iran interested in pursuing nuclear energy? It was once argued that "introduction of nuclear power will both provide for the growing needs of Iran's economy and free remaining oil reserves for export or conversion to petrochemicals," a

statement that was uttered by none other than Henry Kissinger, secretary of state for president Ford. The US was strongly supportive of Iran's nuclear program in the 1970s, but now they're singing a different tune.

I don't want anyone to get the impression that I'm summing up the situation as "Iran=good, US=bad." I don't wish to portray Iran as a completely innocent victim that's being bullied by the Wicked World Power of the West. I believe that narrow and simplistic worldviews on foreign policy are dangerous—which is exactly the manner in which we currently view Iran.

Iran's human rights records are very sketchy, and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has made statements that should rightfully be condemned. His alleged reference to "wiping Israel off the map" is still up to interpretation in context, but his description of the Holocaust as "a myth" is an astoundingly ignorant statement which could only come from someone filled with hate. At the same time, this certainly doesn't warrant an invasion. All this suggests is that Ahmadinejad is a bit of a moron who likes to run his mouth—though he isn't the only leader who fits that description.

My concern over this issue was heightened when the sentiment spread north of the border. This past Christmas, Defense Minister Peter McKay appeared in Kandahar and asserted that "we're very concerned that weapons are coming from Iran; we're very concerned that these weapons are going to the insurgents and are keeping this issue alive." However, NATO's second-in-

command in southern Afghanistan, Brigadier General Marquis Hainse, expressed skepticism and questioned as to where McKay got this information. Gary Sick, who served on the National Security Council under US presidents Ford, Carter, and Reagan, also cast doubt on McKay's claims, stating, "It's clear that Iran is not supporting the Taliban. They may be doing deals with warlord types in various places basically for their own strategic reasons. But they really despise the Taliban, and the Taliban despise them." McKay has subsequently failed to provide evidence backing his accusations.

I'm pessimistic over what the future holds as far as Iran is concerned. Mike Gravel, Dennis Kucinich, and Ron Paul are the only US presidential candidates actively supporting diplomacy with Iran, and they collectively have about as much a chance of being elected as an inanimate carbon rod. From Clinton's vote to declare the Iranian National Guard a "terrorist organization" to Giuliani's blunt statement that he would strike Iran without congressional approval if they went nuclear (he then upped the ante by saying that Iran was "more dangerous than Iraq"), every mainstream candidate seems poised to kick some Iranian ass with little apparent reason.

The greatest problem with this issue is the level of ignorance the general populace currently has about Iran due to the shamefully one-sided coverage by the mainstream media. We all need to start questioning the stories we're being fed and decide the truth as we see it, not how we're told to view it.

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