

Khamenei Rejects Offer of American Help with Coronavirus (Part 1)

by Hugh Fitzgerald



After the American government offered help to coronavirus-stricken Iran this March, Ayatollah Khamenei rejected the offer as “strange.” It must have seemed so from his Islamic perspective. Why would American Infidels offer to supply medical and other humanitarian aid to Iran, the Muslim country where crowds routinely cry “Death to America” and stomp on the flag of the Great Satan? It made no sense. Surely there was something else going on.

His ungrateful reaction to the American offer, and his baseless assurance that he’ll be able to soon contain the virus, is discussed [here](#).

The United States' offer to help Iran in its fight against the new coronavirus pandemic is strange, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a televised speech on Sunday, describing US leaders as "charlatans and liars."

"Charlatans and liars"? What base ingratitude. But for Khamenei, the offer of aid from Infidel America is not to be trusted. There must be a trick somewhere. Perhaps the trick is simply this: by offering such aid, the Americans hope that the Iranian people just might begin to feel that the regime is wrong in consigning America to the outer darkness, might begin to reconsider all that "Death to America" and "Great Satan" cursing that is the Iranian regime's substitute for thought. Then where would the mullahs – and the ayatollahs! – be?

Washington has offered humanitarian assistance to its longtime foe, the Middle Eastern country most affected by the coronavirus, with 1,685 deaths and 21,638 people infected.

Tensions between the two countries have been running high since 2018, when US President Donald Trump exited Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with six world powers and re-imposed sanctions that have crippled the Iranian economy.

Tensions have "been running high" between Iran and the United States for quite a bit longer than "since 2018." That date was chosen in order to lay the blame for those "tensions" on President Trump, who re-imposed sanctions that year. In fact, "tensions" with Iran began in 1979, when the virulently anti-American Ayatollah Khomeini came to power. That was the year when Iranian students seized the American Embassy in Tehran, and held the diplomatic personnel hostage for 444 days.

"Several times Americans have offered to help us to fight the pandemic. That is strange because you face shortages in America. Also you are accused of creating this virus," said Khamenei, an anti-US hardliner who has the final say in Iran.

Khamenei cannot comprehend America's charitable impulse. And why should he, given that in Muslim societies no one would think of offering similar aid to Infidels? Theologically, it would make no sense for Muslims, the "best of peoples," to offer aid to non-Muslims, the "most vile of created beings," unless of course those non-Muslims were prepared to convert to Islam. So he is suspicious. Why have the Americans not once, but repeatedly, "offered to help us fight the pandemic"? Can they really mean it? They can't be on the level.

Khamenei finds this American offer "strange." It's strange for several reasons.

First, America itself has shortages of medical supplies – especially masks, ventilators. Can it still be willing to share what it has with Iran? Why such a display of kindness? Perhaps the Great Satan isn't quite so satanish after all. But how do we explain that to our people? We've been denouncing the Great Satan for forty years. We can't stop now. America is the perpetual enemy that can be blamed for all our woes. As just now, when America has been "accused of creating this virus." Khamenei doesn't say whether he believes the accusation – "I do not know whether it [the accusation that America created the virus] is true" – but tantalizingly leaves the accusation hanging.

He asks: "But when there is such an allegation, can a wise man trust you and accept your help offer? ... You could be giving medicines to Iran that spread the virus or cause it to remain permanently."

Yes, of course. The diabolical American Infidels are only pretending to help Iran fight the virus, while offering vaccines and therapies that will only spread it, or make it impossible for the stricken to ever shake it off. That must surely be it. They are out not to save but to destroy us and all Muslims. But here's a puzzlement: why then did they bother to so catastrophically infect non-Muslim lands, such as China

and Italy? Was that done just to throw the world off the scent?

Frictions increased when Trump ordered a US drone strike that killed the top commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Qassem Soleimani, on Jan. 3. Iran retaliated by hitting US targets in Iraq on Jan. 8.

"Our number one enemy is America. It is the most wicked, sinister enemy of Iran ... its leaders are terrorists ... Liars and charlatans," said Khamenei.

It would be fascinating to be provided by Khamenei with examples of what he considers to be American "terrorism" against Iran, and examples, too, of how Americans have proven themselves to be "liars and charlatans." There are many examples of Iranian lies about their nuclear program, the most recent having been revealed in 2018, when Israeli agents smuggled 50,000 pages of documents about the program out of a warehouse in Iran. The Iranians have lied, too, about their attacks on Saudi oil installations. They have lied to the world, and to their own people, about the amounts they have been spending—until recently, at least \$15 billion a year – to keep Assad in power in Syria. They have lied about the bases they have been building in Syria, and for years they lied about supplying Hezbollah with missiles and rockets.

Iranian authorities have blamed US sanctions for hampering its efforts to curb the outbreak and President Hassan Rouhani has urged Americans to call on their government to lift sanctions as Iran fights the coronavirus.

How have U.S. sanctions "hampered [Iran's] efforts to curb the outbreak"? Iran needs medical aid, including masks and ventilators. It's been offered, and turned down, such aid from the U.S. It also needs, like the rest of the world, effective therapies for the stricken that do not yet exist, and for

those not stricken, vaccines that have not yet been developed. If the Americans, or any other Infidels, produce such vaccines or therapies to cure the disease, they will doubtless make them available to Iran. Several things are “hampering” Iran’s efforts to deal with the coronavirus. The first is its deep suspicion of the West, and its consequent refusal to accept American humanitarian and medical aid. The second is its inability – so far – to deal firmly with the many clerics who refuse voluntarily to close their mosques and instead actively encourage Iranians to visit mosques and shrines en masse to pray – the very worst thing they can do.

The Iranian government does not need American sanctions to be lifted in order to amass sums for combatting the coronavirus. It can simply re-order its priorities. Given the spread of the virus in Iran, the country’s rulers should be willing, and its populace would be more than willing – to end its aid to the Houthis in Yemen, the Shi’a militias in Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and – most costly of all – its support for Assad in Syria. If it did all of those things, it would save at least \$15 billion a year. If it merely cut that aid in half, it would still save \$7.5 billion yearly, that could be used to pay for the testing of tens of millions, for buying hundreds of high-acuity ventilators, for building – just as the Chinese did – new hospitals overnight, for creating much larger ICU units in existing hospitals, and for converting spaces of all kinds—from apartments to dormitories to gymnasiums – into hospital wards for those suffering from conditions other than the coronavirus, while the coronavirus patients would occupy all the regular hospital beds and ICU units. Even more money would be available if Iran decided as well to halt its nuclear program. It’s Iran’s choice. What is more important to the rulers in Tehran – the health of the Iranian people, or the continued care and feeding of Bashar al-Assad and Hassan Nasrallah?

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