

What will the United States do about the Nuclear Deal with Iran?

Cole Porter was not writing about the foreign policy of the Obama administration when he gave words of advice 70 years ago. In his 1936 song *I've got you under my skin* in a complicated melody with repeated notes, Porter advised "use your mentality, wake up to reality." In view of a number of recent international events that advice and a repeated wake up call for President Barack Obama is long overdue and is essential.

New alarm bells for a coherent U.S. foreign policy have come from a number of these event , from the ungracious omission by the White House of words of French President Francois Hollande, from the apparent underplaying of the threat of home grown Islamist terrorists, and from the increasing belligerence of Iran.

On March 31. 2016 at a meeting in Washington D.C. with Obama, President Hollande called for cooperation between the U.S. and France on the crucial issue of what Obama has called "violent extremism." Hollande uses more correct terminology. He remarked, "But we are also well aware that the roots of terrorism, Islamist terrorism (sic) are in Syria and Iraq. We therefore have to act both in Syria and in Iraq, and this is what we are doing within the framework of the coalition."

In most undiplomatic behavior, the initial White House transcript including the English translation of Hollande's remarks initially erased his words "Islamist terrorism." To save grace, the bad behavior was later labeled "technical error," and the correct language was made public, but the unwillingness of the U.S. President to acknowledge the reality

expressed by the French President of the real nature of the terrorism was evident once again.

The evidence of Islamist terrorism has long been clear and frightening for Europeans. From September to September 2015, more than 30,000 Islamists from 104 countries went to fight for ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The reality of the problem has been made more precise by a study commissioned by the Netherlands National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) and issued on April 1, 2016 by the International Center for Counterterrorism (ICCT). It deals with the threat and the policy responses in Europe both at the EU level and within the individual EU member states.

The study analyzed 9 European countries in depth concerning the number of foreign fighters who came from the EU countries to join ISIS, and the danger they constituted. It estimated the total number as between 3,922-4,294 jihadists from the EU countries, about 30 % of whom have returned home. Of the total, 2,338 came from 4 countries, Belgium, France, Germany, and UK., with Belgium having the highest per capita contingent. The returnees have acquired basic military training, and battlefield experience. They pose a real potential danger, especially to Belgium and France.

Among other details in the study are the facts that almost all of the fighters came from metropolitan areas or suburbs, that about 17 per cent are women, and that a minority, ranging between 6 and 23 per cent were converts to Islam.

Increasingly serious to the worlds is the recent provocative behavior of Iran in two ways, its flamboyant arms deals, and its missile launches.

On March 28, 2016, a US ship in the Arabian Sea stopped a large Iranian arms shipment, containing thousands of weapons, AK-47 rifles, and rocker-propelled grenade launchers headed to Yemen where Iran has been supporting the Houti rebel in the

fight against a Saudi led coalition.

Even more provocative are the military actions. Iran test fired two Qadr-H ballistic missiles from northern Iran on March 23, 2016 with the words "Israel must be wiped out" written in Hebrew on their sides. A major figure in Iran's Revolutionary Guard said that the 2,000 kilometer range of the missiles is "to confront the Zionist regime," and indeed they could hit Tel Aviv.

In addition to the display of Iran's combative role the firing of the missiles showed the Iranian contempt of for the U.S. in an even more stark fashion than usual because the launching occurred while Vice-President Joe Biden was in Israel on an official visit. Moreover, in what appears to be a deliberate mocking at Obama's non-action over his red line in Syria, the deputy chief of the Iran Revolutionary Guard issued the warning that Iran's defense capacities and missile power was among the Iranian nation's red lines, and "we won't allow anyone to violate it."

The launching of the missiles is of course a violation of UN Security Council resolution 2231 that forbids Iran from developing missiles that can carry nuclear warheads. Iran persists that its missiles are solely conventional, but clearly this is untrue.

Though the US administration acknowledges this, it still persists that the launching is not a violation of the nuclear deal with Iran. Mr. Biden has said that the US will act if it finds evidence that Iran broke the terms of the nuclear agreement. Obama, rather puzzlingly, has commented that Iran was obeying the "letter" of the deal but not the "spirit."

Neither Obama nor Biden had heeded the declaration of the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, on March 30, 2016 that missiles will be part of Teheran's relations with the outside world, rather than diplomacy. He made clear that

the whole concept of negotiating with the US was flawed.

The missile launching is a provocative act of aggression, not a sign as Obama had hoped that Iran would become more moderate. No one can now doubt that part of the \$150 billion Iran will obtain as a result of the nuclear deal will be used for a serious military build up, and that it will continue to pursue its program to obtain nuclear weapons.

In addition, one can now expect an arms race in the Middle East. It was noticeable that Saudi Arabia hosted a military exercise, Operation Desert Thunder in which 20 Muslim countries took part as a coalition to defend themselves against terrorism and against Iran.

It was clear from the beginning that the US and its associates had made an ill-advised nuclear deal with Iran. It is equally clear that Iran is committed to maintain its aggressive stance towards the west, especially as one views the role and power of the Revolutionary Guards and its leader Qassem Suleimani. The problem of Iran has become even more serious as it is working with Russia to upgrade its anti aircraft defense systems, making an attack on Iran increasingly less likely and more dangerous.

For the U.S. the warning of Iran does not come in the night as Cole Porter might have suggested, but in clear daylight, and it has been repeated, repeated in the ear of the U.S. administration.