

NAM Summit: Ban Ki-Moon in disgraceful show of US puppetry

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(UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (C), Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (R) and Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi at the opening ceremony of the 16th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Tehran on August 30, 2012.)

Seated alongside Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on the day that Iran took over presidency of the NAM of 120 nations, the presence of Ban could be seen as a blow to the diplomatic machinations of the United States and its Western allies, including Israel.

But, rather than making a forthright statement of support for Iran, the veteran South Korean diplomat showed his true colours as a servile puppet of American imperialism.

In the weeks leading up to the 16th summit of the NAM, Washington had been calling on the UN top official to decline attending the conference in Tehran. When Ban announced last week that he was going ahead, the US government was evidently peeved, calling his decision "a bit strange".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was predictably more strident, denouncing Ban's visit to Iran as "a big mistake". In typical vulgar and provocative language, Netanyahu subsequently attacked the NAM summit as "a stain on humanity".

What the United States and its Western allies feared most from the NAM summit was a global display of goodwill and solidarity towards Iran. For more than three decades now, Washington has invested huge political capital in a global campaign of vilification against Iran, denouncing the Islamic Republic as a "rogue state", a sponsor of "international terrorism" and, over the last 10 years, as "a threat to world peace" from alleged nuclear weapons development.

The Western powers of the US, Britain and France in particular continually arrogate the mantle of "international community" to browbeat Iran, claiming that the nation is in "breach of its obligations".

In attempting to portray Iran as a "pariah state" these powers, along with Israel, have partly succeeded in turning reality on its head and to assume the outrageous right to threaten Iran with pre-emptive military strikes and enforce crippling economic sanctions.

However, the attendance of some 120 nations in Tehran this week – two-thirds of the UN

General Assembly – is a clear statement by the international community that resoundingly rejects this Western campaign of vilification.

Clearly, the majority of the world's people do not see Iran as a rogue state or a threat to world peace. Indeed, the endorsement of Iran's presidency of the NAM for the next three years is vindication of the country's right to develop on its own terms, including the pursuit of peaceful nuclear technology.

In one fell swoop, the NAM summit liquidated Washington's political capital for denigrating and isolating Iran as worthless. Seated at the top of the summit's gathering in Tehran, the mere presence of the UN General Secretary to witness the appointment of Iran as the new leader of the Non-Aligned Movement was partially a symbolic vote of confidence.

But then, in his speech on this historic day, Ban engaged in a disgraceful diplomatic offensive. He pointedly denounced those who "deny the [Nazi] holocaust" and who call for the Zionist state's destruction. Ban championed "Israel's right to exist" without a word of condemnation of Israel's decades-long crimes against humanity on the Palestinian people and its violation of countless UN resolutions. In that way, the UN chief was peddling the spurious Western propaganda that seeks to besmirch Iran's principled opposition to the Zionist state's record of criminality.

Ban went on to cast bankrupt Western aspersions on Iran's nuclear rights. He said that Iran needed to use its presidency of the NAM to demonstrate peaceful intent, allay fears that it was developing nuclear weapons and to engage positively with the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Western-dominated P5+1 group – the group that has used every step in bad faith to hobble and hamper a negotiated agreement with Iran.

The question is: what planet has Ban Ki-Moon been living on? The fact is that Iran has done everything to comply with the IAEA and its obligations to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Iran has consistently demonstrated its peaceful nuclear ambitions and its responsibility to the NPT – unlike the Western powers and their illegal nuclear-powered Zionist rogue state. Just this week, Iran even invited the member states of the NAM to visit its nuclear facility at Natanz – an unprecedented show of openness.

For Ban to reiterate such unfounded, scurrilous suspicions against Iran on the day that it assumes the presidency of the NAM is a reflection more of his abject servility to Western powers – and it underscores the urgent need for a total structural reformation of the UN to make it more democratically accountable.

What was even more telling was what Ban omitted to say in his speech at the NAM summit. Unlike his pointed jibes at Iran, he only used the vaguest language to condemn the violence raging in Syria whenever the evidence is glaring that the US, Britain, France and their Turkish, Israeli and Persian Gulf Arab allies are now openly flouting international law by fuelling a covert war of aggression in that country.

Just this week, a US Congressional report revealed that the United States is responsible for nearly 80 per cent of all global arms sales in 2011 – some \$66 billion worth – a figure that has tripled on previous years. Half of this trade in weapons and death has been plied by the US to the Persian Gulf monarchies who are in turn laundering the arms to Syria. No words of condemnation from Ban on that.

Nor did the UN chief speak out to condemn the illegal economic sanctions that Washington and its coterie of imperialist allies have slapped on Iran – sanctions that are, in effect, an act of war and are viciously imposing hardship on Iranian civilians, including thousands of infirmed people in need of vital medicines.

Nor did Ban condemn the Western powers’ covert war of sabotage and assassination of Iranian scientists, some of whose bereaved families were attending the NAM summit as he spoke.

In a further reprehensible omission, the UN General Secretary lauded the Arab Spring pro-democracy movements. He mentioned several countries by name, but significantly did not include Bahrain even though the people of that country are being butchered and incarcerated daily since their uprising in February 2011. The Western powers and their corporate media do not mention the depredations of their despotic ally in Bahrain against women and children. And neither does Ban Ki-Moon.

No, he would rather engage in pejorative, baseless innuendoes against Iran, while disgracefully covering up Western crimes of aggression in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Iran and the ongoing slaughter of innocents with US drones in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen.

NAM stands for solidarity against imperial aggression. In his address to the NAM, Ban Ki-Moon was acting like an ambassadorial puppet for his Western masters. Maybe in reforming the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement should from now on seek to ensure that any future head of the United Nations be truly representative of the concerns and anguish of the world’s majority, and not a diplomatic salesman for imperialist powers.

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