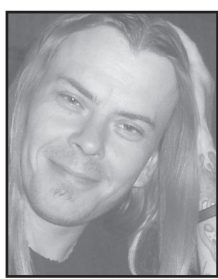


Axis of evil? Axis of ignorance



CHRISTIAN MCPHATE
STAFF REPORTER

"There was nothing left for us to do but to take them and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them."

And the words of President William McKinley still ring true in this country today with the media's treatment of the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who visited Washington, D.C. and the University of Columbia this week.

Newspapers across New York and the nation try to provoke the president and stir readers' emotions with catchy terms like "The Evil Has Landed," "Madman Iran Prez" and a "Guest of Dishonor."

And hundreds of protestors, from politicians to Christians and Jews, filled the grounds of the university to protest the Iranian president's speech.

"He should be arrested when he comes to Columbia University, not speak at the university, for God's sake," Assemblyman Dov Hikind stated in *The New York Times*. "I call on New Yorkers to make the life of Ahmadinejad as he is in New York miserable."

People come up with numerous reasons to advocate their hatred for the Iranian people, ranging from the current president's statement that Israel should be wiped off the face of Earth to their seemingly hard-lined stance on women's rights.

And with President Bush screaming his war rhetoric on the axis of evil, which includes Iran, and his firm belief that Iran is the supplier of terrorism in the area, what is the average American supposed to believe?

I mean it's not like our evangelical president made the same statement about the former Iraqi ruler Saddam—

Oh, wait! He did.

And unless the disease of Alzheimer's has stricken my mind, and I am thinking about another dictator, our president (with the use of some magic supplied by "the almighty God") created supposed proofs that

proved Iraq was guilty—and one of the main reasons for the bombings on 9/11—to Congress and the American people.

And yet the roots of our relationship with Iran have twist and intertwine through the tangled vines of history.

After World War I, a popular military officer (who was backed by Britain) Reza Khan seized power from King Ahmad Shah in 1926 and began an era of reform by lifting some social restrictions on women, improving public transportation and "shoring up" the nation's economy.

In 1941, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi succeeded his father and began modernizing Iran with a little help for his friends in the land of the free—America. He marries his third wife who looks like a model from New York and dresses like a modern American woman. However, corruption, inflation and growing disparity—as well as his dictatorial style and secret police—led to resentment and protest from the Iranians.

Years of discontent among religious leaders and the populace rose to a boiling point and on Sept. 8, a day that would forevermore be recognized as Black Friday, government troops gunned down a crowd of demonstrators. The public outcry thundered across the heavens, and the democratic Islamic state movement began with religious leaders calling for the release of Ruhollah Khomeini, a religious radical who preached the songs of democracy exiled in Paris.

The Ayatollah Khomeini returned to a euphoric greeting from millions of Iranians. Of course, like most politicians, as soon as he received the power, he abused the power and turned his rhetoric of democracy to a strict theocracy with a little help from his Muslim cleric friends.

The distrust with America began in November 1979 after a group of Iranian students occupied the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, took hostages and demanded the release of the Shah (he was visiting America for cancer treatment). President Carter ordered U.S. banks to freeze billions of assets of the Iranian government and then secretly landed a team of trigger-happy rescuers into the borders of Iran.

The not-so-secret mission ended in disaster with a helicopter and

transport aircraft colliding, killing eight American soldiers—in turn damaging Carter's chances for another term and the psyche of the American people's attitudes toward Iran. And yet, our dislike did not last long.

From 1980 to 1988, the American government secretly armed Iran during the eight-year war between Tehran and Baghdad, which led to another twist in our ever-twisting Iranian relationship—the Iran-Contra affair.

Of course, we cannot reflect on our rocky relationship without admitting our faults in the relationship that was built on trust and a common enemy.

In 1988, the U.S. cruiser Vincennes shot down an Iranian Airbus airliner in the Persian Gulf and killed 290 people. U.S. investigators said the officers were not guilty because they had thought the Airbus was attacking the war ship.

After the death of the Ayatollah, President Hashemi Rafsanjani, a very rich man, took over the government and began a decade of economic reforms, but still held the west and capitalism at a distance.

In 1997, Mohammad Khatami was elected president with overwhelming support from the young and women. Tensions between America and Iran began to wane, and the U.S. government lifted some of the sanctions and restrictions.

After the attacks on 9/11, the president of Iran vowed to help the United States in the war on terror.

Does this sound like a country of evil masterminds?

Exactly how is their history different from our history?

Didn't the forefathers of America commit genocide on the Native Americans and enslave the Africans?

Didn't President McKinley enter the Spanish-American war under the pretense to "educate the Filipinos and uplift and civilize and Christianize them"—even though the Filipinos were Roman Catholic?

And the bombers of 9/11... didn't they all come from our friends in the oil industry—Saudi Arabia?

In a world where our friends become our enemies, and our enemies become our friends, who are the real terrorists? Government? Religion? Or humanity?

Christian's Horrorscopes

Today's birthday (09-26-07): A person who is ugly and annoying is your new best friend. You'll learn to avoid them at all cost (even going so far as to skip class), trying to avoid hurting their feelings. Your concept of "people person" will take on a new meaning.

Aries (March 21-April 19): Try to keep your mouth shut today. Don't say anything. Avoid speaking at all cost, or there will be consequences for your non-action.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): You have been accused of being an ass, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. Continue with your attitude and you will go far in politics.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): Your friends pretend to admire you even more when you attempt to deal with a tough situation with tact that you sometimes lack. Ditch your friends and make new ones - your situation will improve.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): Your schedule is full. No time for your friends. No time for your family. It is time to panic. Rush down to your local shrink and grab a handful of anti-depressants and prepare for the onslaught of negativity.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Your horoscope sucks... wait for next week.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You never learned your lesson on buying, selling and saving. If you plan on purchasing, then stop. You need to start saving... bad mojo for next month.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Try doing something a little crazy like skinny dipping, smoking a cigarette in the men's bathroom (especially, if you are of the opposite sex). It's boring to be good, and you are a little on the innocent side. Try the darkside... you may like it.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You are over worked. Your life is shit. Luckily, your month to shine is right around the corner. Try releasing your frustration on Halloween... scare some kids. It may not solve your workload problem, but you will have a hell of time watching the kids run away in terror (and you will have lots of candy to share).

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Love is in the air... run!

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Continue with your daydreaming, and you will finally cash in on that insurance policy. You can try to be a little impulsive and stop, but we both know that your cooler side never prevails.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Want more freedom from rules and regulations? Become an anarchist. Fortunately, this state of mind is easy to achieve. You just need to practice. Put in a death metal album, turn the music up and scream... the rest will fall into place.

Blind advantages in the Falls



JASON KIMBRO
FOR THE WICHITAN

As some of you may know, I am legally blind. For those of you who did not know this little tidbit about

moi, you would not have known it by seeing me. I can see straight ahead just fine but I do lack peripheral or field vision (tunnel vision), and I am night blind.

A lot of legally blind individuals usually have some type of physical appearance or accessory that pretty much tells the world, "HEY! I'M BLIND OVER HERE!"

In a world that is not used to people with such disabilities, this, in an off-hand way, is an advantage.

People are far more understanding when a man with a cane or a guide dog bumps into everyone in crowded places, knocks over a counter stacked with crystal figurines, or "accidentally" cops a feel.

It is the individual such as I who do not wear three inch thick glasses, nor carries a cane (usually) who have to deal with an angry world and be understanding of their irritation.

If you have kept up with my columns over the past few years you would have noticed the many times I have mentioned my local favorite bar, Toby's. One of the main reasons I stick to this facility of carnal refreshment is because most of the employees there know about my visual impairment.

This is important since most of these places are dark and can end up somewhat crowded. Due to my night blindness I arrive there and right off the bat I appear to be somewhat intoxicated. I stumble around chairs and people trying to make my

rounds through the various rooms and, of course, the bathroom.

Kimbro, Luke, Cassie, Katie, the professor and Mary-Anne all realize (at least now they do) that if I do knock a chair over it isn't because of my inability to hold my drink. I do not have this understanding anywhere else mainly because they do not know me.

If I were to go to, let's say Old Town for example, and walk in stumbling over chairs and accidentally grabbing a girl's posterior, the trained bartender/server would refuse to sell me a drink thinking I have already become a liability to their establishment.

So, for many reasons, including this one, I stick to Toby's, my neighborhood bar and an all-round great place to hang out (free drink plus).

As for everyday experiences (and contrary to popular belief, Toby's is not an everyday experience, at least not anymore) the complications rise. I somehow make my way through places like Albertson's and Wal-Mart without too much trouble, to the amazement of my eye doctor. But I still have my bad days.

My number one enemy would have to be the wet floor sign. No matter where I go, if there is a wet floor sign somewhere in the building I will knock it over. I give kudos to wally world for their transition from using the bulky plastic signs that sound like an earthquake to using the nylon, pyramid shaped signs that usually go unnoticed, even by me, when kicked around.

Stairs can be an issue if they are in an unexpected place. This was a problem in the old Bennigan's building when the place was open. MSU has its share of phantom steps that have taken a chunk or two out of my pride, even if it seemed that nobody was around to see my fall on my ass.

I have a pair of pants that have been complimented by several in-

dividuals. They were at one time a plain pair of jeans that I purchased at wally world but I would receive compliments because there was a hole in the left knee that seemed to be symmetrically in tune with my left leg and the jeans themselves.

I have no qualms, though, telling all who have their nice words that the hole was due to an accident right outside the offices to Sunwatcher Village, a set of steps I have fallen from on more than one occasion. Both my clothing and my legs (particularly my shins) bear the scars.

So pity me. Feel sorry for me. I cannot drive. My poor fiancé has to chauffeur me around everywhere. My friends must deal with the fact that I do not ever have to be the designated driver. Resentment abounds!

I kid of course. I want no part of pity. I say this mainly as a warning.

So take a good look at my picture. Remember that face well. And if you are out, and I "accidentally" run my wandering hands into some inappropriate area of your body, it isn't because I am bi-curious nor is it due to my overly-aggressive, trucker-style of flirting.

If I stumble down some steps, go ahead and take glee for I myself will laugh in the near future.

If you see me in any of the grocery stores, veer far away for I may shove my basket directly into your path unintentionally, thus causing a four cart pile up on the toilet paper aisle.

But most of all, do not pity anyone who has a disability. They have the potential and the resources to be independent and secure in their surroundings.

Unfortunately for many individuals with disabilities, the ones who do not make it are the sheltered individuals who did have an over abundance of commiserate feelings. Adios!

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