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Iran hangs Obama in effigy even as it negotiates nuclear deal with US

Published February 25, 2015

FoxNews.com



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The Feb. 11 event marked Iran's overthrow of the Shah, and featured anti-American and anti-Israel sentiments. (MEMRI)

Just weeks before Secretary of State John Kerry held new nuclear talks with Iran's foreign minister in Geneva, Iranians were hanging Kerry's boss in effigy at a huge Tehran-sponsored rally marking the Islamic Revolution's 36th anniversary, an event that critics say underscores the absurdity of the ongoing diplomatic effort.

The U.S. and Iran are trying to reach a final nuclear agreement by a March 31 deadline against a backdrop of ongoing anti-American hatred in the Islamic republic. Photos posted by the [Middle East Media Research Institute](#) this week show Iranians marching in front of a display depicting President Obama hanging from a gallows and carrying signs of Kerry, portrayed as a devious fox.

Hundreds of thousands of Iranians took part in the Feb. 11 Revolution Day, which commemorates the 1979 overthrow of the U.S.-assisted Shah of Iran. The Iranians, as they have in past, chanted, "Death to America" and "Death to Israel." They also burned and trampled an American flag.

"The Iranians on the one hand want to get as many concessions as they can from America during the

nuclear talks but on the other hand they are not ready to give up their anti-Americanism.”

- Ali Alfoneh, Foundation for Defense of Democracies

MEMRI said other photos from the rally show Iranians waving posters of Obama looking like Pinocchio.

The U.S. and other superpowers want to stop Iran from developing a nuclear bomb. Iran says its nuclear intentions are peaceful, a claim that experts dismiss.

“The Iranians on the one hand want to get as many concessions as they can from America during the nuclear talks but on the other hand they are not ready to give up their anti-Americanism,” said Ali Alfoneh, a senior fellow with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies in Washington.

Alfoneh said Iran’s ‘anti-Americanism’ gives the country some degree of legitimacy in the Muslim world.

“They’re using their hatred of America and their promotion of hatred of America to take over the mantel of leadership in the Muslim world,” he said.

“This of course to me shows that even if a nuclear deal is reached between Iran and the U.S. it does not necessarily mean that Iran is going to change its ideological fundamental line against the U.S.”

The Iran expert said the Feb. 11 rally doesn’t necessarily mean Iran doesn’t want a nuclear deal.

“But what they are demonstrating is that if there is a deal they are not going to change their view of the U.S. as an enemy,” Alfoneh said.

Another Iran expert, Ilan Berman, vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council, said the Revolution Day footage indicates that Iran still views the U.S. as the main enemy.

“And that is not going to change even if we make a deal,” Berman said. He said the problem for the White House is the expectation that a deal on the nuclear front will lead to a broader reconciliation with Iran, which is not going to happen.

“What you have is an unreconstructed revolutionary regime and they’re not interested in relations with the U.S. in a long-term, meaningful way,” Berman said.

For months now, the U.S. and the world’s other superpowers have been trying to hammer out a deal with Iran that would freeze the Islamic republic’s nuclear program for a period of time. In exchange the U.S. would lift billions of dollars in sanctions that have damaged Iran’s economy. Last weekend Kerry flew to Geneva to join the negotiations and then on Tuesday went to Capitol Hill to make his case for a deal with Congress.

Also Tuesday an Iranian opposition group urged inspection of an “underground top-secret site” outside Tehran that it said was being used to enrich uranium intended for nuclear weapons beyond the detection of U.N. inspectors.

MEMRI said the day before Iran’s Revolution Day, the Facebook page of Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei called on Iranians to participate to show the U.S. that sanctions had not harmed the country.

Related Image



Presidents Bush and Obama were portrayed as being hanged in effigy. (MEMRI)

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Secretary of State John Kerry was portrayed as a “devious fox” in the event, which took place even as the U.S. was in talks with Iran about its nuclear program. (MEMRI)

"A U.S. official said that sanctions have trapped Iranians; On (Feb. 11) they will receive a decisive answer, God willing," Khamenei said in his call-to-action poster.

MEMRI that at a Revolution Day event in Kermanshah, Basij commander Mohammad Reza Naqdi called the U.S. and the other superpowers at the nuclear talks—Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany, the 5 + 1 coalition—"a coalition against humanity and against Islam."

"The enemies always fear Islam and the progress of the Iranian nation, but do not (openly) say so," Naqdi said. "Iran's significant regional and global role has put an end to their exclusive hegemony."

MEMRI also found a sermon Assembly of Experts member Ahmad Khatami gave on Feb. 13 in which he said that "this year's processions" produced two new slogans: "'No to sanctions an no to humiliation, (yes to) dignified negotiations,' and '(our) response to all the (American) options on the table is: death to American that opposes Islam.'"

He added, "So the Iranian people's hatred for America grows from year to year."

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