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OPINION | OUR VIEW

Talking With Iran: A Place To Start

There is something to be said for talking. After all, it beats not talking. It beats rattling sabers and cultivating tensions that keep everyone on edge and perpetually suspicious. It beats years and years of glacial deadlock between two nations and two world views. Therefore, when President Barack Obama called Iranian President Hassan Rouhani last Friday while the latter was on his way to a New York City airport after appearing at the United Nations, it marked more than one leader chatting up another for a few short moments.

It was the U.S. talking to Iran, and vice versa. It was not the two sides talking AT each other, lobbing threats halfway across the planet and utilizing hard words to set up thick walls of diplomatic paralysis.

According to numerous reports, Obama reached out by telephone to Rouhani, marking the first time in 34 years that the leaders of the two nations have spoken to one another.

Of course, a lot has happened in those 34 years that have so hardened each side in its adversarial view of the other. We have come to reflexively look at Iran as an opponent, something that must be countered, something that cannot be trusted. In all likelihood, that's how Tehran also views Washington.

In retrospect, where has it gotten us? Perhaps it has helped contain Iran's nuclear ambitions, or perhaps it has fueled them. Iran certainly has emerged as a threatening influence in the Middle East, much to the alarm of other nations in the region. Tehran's nuclear ambitions had been well stated and, likely, overstated.

Friday's short talk between Obama and Rouhani was a metaphorical cherry on top of a larger plan to address Iran's nuclear intentions. Washington (and others) are concerned about Tehran's possible development of nuclear weapons, and this issue seems non-negotiable. Meanwhile, Rouhani claims his nation merely wants nuclear power for peaceful uses. These two visions (if they are genuine) are not incompatible. And that's where negotiations may begin.

Of course, talking is the easy part. Since last week's overtures and communications, Israel — which must live within striking range of whatever Iran really has in mind — has expressed rigorous skepticism about the process and Tehran's intention. Meanwhile, Rouhani returned to Tehran to be greeted by what the BBC described as hundreds of hard-line protesters at the airport chanting "Death to America." On the other hand, a few of Rouhani's supporters were also on hand to hail the advancements.

Frankly, that kind of apportionment found in Iran seems about typical of the whole process. There is a reason, after all, that it took 34 years for the two nations to even speak. There is a reason why these negotiations have been stalled for so long.

There are positive things in talking — and in listening. It does not equal caving in or undercutting long-held principles. And one must certainly bear in mind Iran's track record for the last 30 years. But this is a place to start and a place to at least try cultivating some understanding. It beats the alternative every single time.

kmh

ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the *Press & Dakotan's* Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Which do you watch more: network television, cable television or streaming video?

Cable television	62%
Network television	21%
None of these	10%
Streaming video	7%
TOTAL VOTES CAST	257

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Did the Minnesota Twins do the right thing by extending manager Ron Gardenhire's contract?
To vote in the *Press & Dakotan's* Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press
Today is Tuesday, Oct. 1, the 274th day of 2013. There are 91 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Oct. 1, 1908, Henry Ford introduced his Model T automobile to the market.

On this date: In 1861, during the Civil War, the Confederate navy captured the Union steamer Fanny in North Carolina's Pamlico Sound.

In 1910, the offices of the Los Angeles Times were destroyed by a bomb explosion and fire; 21 Times employees were killed.

In 1932, Babe Ruth of the New York Yankees made his supposed called shot, hitting a home run against Chicago's Charlie Root in the fifth inning of Game 3 of the World Series, won by the New York Yankees 7-5 at Wrigley Field.

In 1936, Gen. Francisco Franco was proclaimed the head of an insurgent Spanish state.

In 1937, Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black delivered a radio address in which he acknowledged being a former member of the Ku Klux Klan, but said he had dropped out of the organization before becoming a U.S. senator.

In 1940, the first section of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, 160 miles in length, was opened to the public.
In 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China during a ceremony in Beijing. A 42-day strike by the United Steelworkers of America began over the issue of retirement benefits.

In 1961, Roger Maris of the New York Yankees hit his 61st home run during a 162-game season, compared to Babe Ruth's 60 home runs during a 154-game season. (Tracy Stallard of the Boston Red Sox gave up the round-tripper, the Yankees won 1-0.)

In 1962, Johnny Carson debuted as host of NBC's "Tonight Show," beginning a nearly 30-year run; after being introduced to the audience by Groucho Marx, Carson received his first guests, actor-singer Rudy Vallee, actress Joan Crawford, singer Tony Bennett and comedian Mel Brooks.

In 1984, the Free Speech Movement was launched at the University of California at Berkeley.

In 1972, the book "The Joy of Sex" by Alex Comfort was first published by Mitchell Beazley of London.

In 1982, Sony began selling the first commercial compact disc player, the CDP-101, in Japan.

In 1987, eight people were killed when an earthquake measuring magnitude 5.9 struck the Los Angeles area.

Ten years ago: The United States took over the month-long presidency of the U.N. Security Council at a time when it was campaigning for approval of a new resolution aimed at getting more countries to contribute troops and money to Iraq. Conservative commentator Rush Limbaugh resigned from his ESPN sports job after stirring controversy by suggesting Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb was overrated because the media wanted to see a black quarterback succeed.

Five years ago: After one spectacular failure in the House, the \$700 billion financial industry bailout won lopsided passage in the Senate, 74-25, after it was loaded with tax breaks and other sweeteners. Nick Reynolds, a founding member of the Kingston Trio, died in San Diego at age 75. TV actor House Peters Jr., the original "Mr. Clean," died in Los Angeles at age 92.

One year ago: Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem, addressing the U.N. General Assembly, accused some Security Council members of supporting "terrorism" in his country. North Korea warned that a "hostile" U.S. policy had left the Korean peninsula a spark away from a nuclear war. "Family Guy" creator Seth MacFarlane was named as host of the 2013 Academy Awards.

Today's Birthdays: Former President Jimmy Carter is 89. Actress-singer Julie Andrews is 78. Actress Stella Stevens is 75. Rock musician Jerry Martini (Sly and the Family Stone) is 70. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Rod Carew is 68. Jazz musician Dave Holland is 67. Actor Stephen Collins is 66. Actress Yvette Freeman is 63. Actor Randy Quaid is 63. Rhythm-and-blues singer Howard Hewett is 58. Alt-country-rock musician Tim O'Reagan (The Jayhawks) is 55. Singer Youssou N'Dour is 54. Actor Esai Morales is 51. Retired MLB All-Star Mark McGwire is 50. Actor Christopher Titus is 49. Actress-model Cindy Margolis is 48. Rock singer-musician Kevin Griffin (Belter/Tian Ezra) is 45. Actor Zach Galifianakis is 44. Singer Keith Duffy is 39. Actress Sarah Drew is 33. Actress Jurnee Smollett is 27. Actress Brie Larson is 24.

Thought for Today: "Anything one man can imagine, other men can make real." — Jules Verne, French author (1828-1905).

FROM THE BIBLE

Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." James 4:15. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



A Lose-Lose Scenario

BY KATHLEEN PARKER
© 2013, Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — Ask most people on Capitol Hill and they'll say: 50-50. Those are the odds they give for a government shutdown.

An alternative to the shutdown would be a proposed delay of the individual mandate, the most painful part of Obamacare, which may seem like a Republican victory but upon closer inspection would be a win for President Obama and Democrats.

Historians — or commentators in the meantime — might view either of these possible outcomes as yet another "Putinesca" victory for the president: Saved by the enemy.

Just as Russian President Vladimir Putin emerged at the brink of the U.S. bombing of Syria to orchestrate an alternative solution, Republicans may have provided a rip cord for Obama.

Postponement of the individual mandate is part of the GOP bargaining package on raising the debt ceiling. Delay it for a year, say Republican leaders, and they'll raise the debt limit for a year to keep the government operating.

At least one Democrat, Joe Manchin, has conceded that this would be a pretty good idea since the health care overhaul obviously isn't ready. The many flaws have been fully vetted for months, though new ones continue to reveal themselves as we approach the insurance-exchange shopping spree scheduled to begin (today).

Latest to the fraying Affordable (now "Adorable") Care Act is a technological glitch in online applications for small businesses. It isn't ready yet and will be delayed.

What is ready, and adorable, is a sampler of new ads aimed at children who are still fretful about the new plan. Oh, wait, no. The ads, featuring baby ducks and kittens — purring and feeling ducky about Obamacare — are aimed at adults. They're certifiably cute, but one can't escape the thought that the federal government has skipped all pretense at treating Americans as adults. Nap-time, anyone?

To be fair, Sen. Ted Cruz read Dr. Seuss' "Green Eggs and Ham" to his children during his 21-hour un-filibuster. The muse whispers: "Ted Cruz would send Ronald Reagan back to the Democratic Party."

Here's the problem for Republicans, which will not be news to those with a view of the long game. The short game is to stall Obamacare, but to what end ultimately? Until Republicans can seize the Senate in 2014 and the White House in 2016, at which point they can repeal the whole thing?



Kathleen PARKER

Skinny chance, that. More likely, whether the government shuts down or, should Tinker Bell suddenly materialize and convince Obama to cave and postpone his personal dream act, Republicans will be viewed by a greater majority than previously as having no talent for leadership.

And if the debt ceiling isn't raised and the United States defaults, threatening our full faith and credit around the world and sending countries looking favorably for other currencies, not to mention the financial fallout here, then blame will fall at the feet of the Republican Party. No surprise there.

Now consider the alternative scenario: Suppose Republicans succeed in getting the individual mandate delayed for a year — right up to the 2014 midterm elections. Bravo, right? Not necessarily. If voters don't have to experience the uncertainty and discomfort of being forced to buy insurance in an unwieldy, dysfunctional system — all the while noticing that millions are still without coverage — who benefits?

Surely not the Republicans, who, on the one hand, can be blamed for depriving insurance coverage to those poor sick kittens and ducklings. On the other, they accrue no benefit from having prevented the pain of implementing Obamacare.

Republicans lose either way, but they may lose biggest if they win.

Alternatives to present circumstances do not abound. Republicans have drawn their red line in the sand. Democrats have drawn theirs. Obama says no negotiating over the debt ceiling, period.

There is one alternative that is both perhaps best for the country and hardest for Obama. He could relent not to Republicans but to the greater good. He could delay full implementation past the 2014 elections, which would accomplish two things: One, he could iron out the wrinkles that are now apparent. Two, Democrats would get to slide through another election cycle without the most visibly painful part of Obamacare — the individual mandate.

What, really, does Obama have to lose? Only face, the pain of which passes. What he would gain is the legacy that escapes so many these days — proof that he is a leader who does the right thing, even if it hurts his pride just a little.

Republicans, who will have banished themselves to wander a while longer in the desert, may have drawn a line too far.

Kathleen Parker's email address is kathleen-parker@washpost.com.

Two Parts Of The Same City

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.
Tribune Content Agency

It was the suddenness that shocked me. This is one night 22 years ago. I had just moved to Miami and was visiting Coconut Grove for the first time. I remember being charmed. The side streets were lined with cozy bungalows.

On the main streets there was light and music and an air of bohemia going upscale that made you want to linger and people-watch as women who looked as if they just stepped from the pages of Vogue were squired to and from nightclubs, restaurants and boutiques by handsome men in guayaberas.

Leaving, I drove west on Grand Avenue and ... bang. Just like that, I was in another place. Here, there was less light and no music, nor flocks of date-night couples, nor really anybody except a few guys standing around, silently marking my passage. The buildings rose shadowy and quiet in meager pools of illumination cast by street lights. These were not streets for lingering. These were streets for passing quickly through.

I didn't know it then, but I was in West Grove, the handscreable, historically black area that abuts Coconut Grove. I had driven less than a mile — and ended up on the other side of the world.

Ever since that night, the two Groves have struck me as a vivid illustration of the stark duties of race and class in a nation that likes to tell itself it has overcome the former and made immaterial the latter. If you're one of those who still believes that fiction, consider this scenario: Dangerous levels of contaminants have been found in the soil of a residential neighborhood. What happens next?

Turns out — though not to the surprise of anyone who understood the fiction to be just that — that it depends very much upon race and class. Just days after the discovery of toxins in the soil of a park in Coconut Grove, residents were alerted, the park closed, the soil capped. All within the last few weeks.

Down the street on the other side of the world, it was a different story. There, in 2011, soil was found to be contaminated on the site of an inciner-



Leonard PITTS

ator — Old Smokey — that had belched ash into the air from the 1930s until it was closed in 1970.

County environmental officials ordered the city to find out if the contaminants posed a risk and draft a plan for dealing with it. They gave the city a 60-day deadline. The city missed it. They gave the city another deadline. It missed that, too.

Residents were told none of this, knew nothing about it, until the initial finding was unearthed this year — two years later — by a University of Miami researcher. Now we learn that city tests have found this land, which sits next to a park and a community center, to be chock full of poisons, among them arsenic, lead, and benzo(a)pyrene, a carcinogen.

Just days ago, officials declared the site is not a health risk. West Grove residents can perhaps be forgiven if they are skeptical.

People often profess to be confused when I write about systemic inequity. Absent the caricature of some guy in a pointy white hood, they can see no racism. Absent the cliché of some society lady with nose elevated and pinky extended, they have no conception of classism. They can understand these as individual failings, yes. But what in the world is systemic oppression?

Well, it is this, right here. It is a child whose health is zealously safeguarded at one end of the street and a child who is allowed to play on soil saturated with carcinogens and heavy metals on the other. It is the city making a determination, albeit de facto, that the latter child's life has less worth.

Shame on Miami for that. Shame on us all. These inequities exist because we allow them, because we condone by our silence the two-tiered treatment and second-class citizenship of those who are not us. Well, in this country, people have the right to expect they will be treated as if they matter.

Even if they live along shadowed streets on the other side of the world.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for *The Miami Herald*, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

YOUR LETTERS

Great Garden Sale

Bob Neibergall, Yankton
For the Missouri Valley Master Gardeners
The Missouri Valley Master Gardeners would like to thank all who purchased plants at our annual plant sale at the Territorial Capitol Building on Saturday, Sept. 7. It was a huge success and the proceeds will be used for educational outreach projects.

Special thanks to area businesses that contributed plants for our sale; Diane Dicks (Diane's Greenhouse, Fordyce, Neb.); Jay Gurney (Yankton Nurseries LLC); and Cindy Nelsen (Garden Gate, Mission Hill).

Also a special thanks to all the individuals who donated plants and other garden items for our plant sale.