

Open letter

Ardeshir Zahedi former Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to USA

The America I want to remember is the America of the founding fathers, of Jefferson, Washington and Franklin, of the nation described by Abraham Lincoln: **«With Malice toward none, with charity for all»**, the America in the dream of Martin Luther King that one day **“we will all sit down at the same table of brotherhood.”**

It is the America of just after liberation of Europe to Marshall and his plan to relieve the suffering nations; the America that contributed to the freedom of nations, to the independence of colonies, to world health, education and food, to the liberty and dignity of all nations as we see in the charter of United Nations; yes, an America devoted to humanity and welfare of mankind, irrespective of sex, colour or origin, an America that saw no frontiers for liberty, health, education and science. It was the America of Eisenhower who initiated the Civil Rights Bill and ended the Korean War, of Truman and his Point Four to help the developing countries, of the great figures of courage like John Foster Dulles, Franklin Roosevelt who saved Egypt from foreign aggression and liberated the Suez Canal bringing US to the peak of popularity in the developing world; or America of Roland Reagan who helped tear down the Berlin Wall.

I want to keep the memories of the days America was a land of opportunity for all, a country that created dreams, that was in the hearts of millions, that promoted peace and progress instead of producing arms of destruction and sending messages of arrogance and division.

Today we all live in a virus-disease-famine-war stricken- divided world, a world dominated by greed, selfish material pursuits. More than ever in history we need to unite our forces and work together to save humanity. Rather than building walls of hatred, we must start removing the dividing barriers, bringing medicine and food to millions struggling between life and death all over the globe.

Let us all remember and follow the words of wisdom from our great Iranian poet, Saadi of the thirteenth Century, inscribed at the very entrance of the United Nations:

***The sons of Adam are limbs of each other,
Having been created of one essence.
When the calamity of time affects one limb
The other limbs cannot remain at rest.
If you have no sympathy for the troubles of others,
You are unworthy to be called by the name of a Human.***

Iran, my beloved country, and the United States which used to be my second home were introduced one hundred and sixty-three years ago and remained good friends and allies till the recent years. Iranians have grateful souvenirs of the great Americans like Howard Baskerville, Morgan Shuster, Arthur Millspaugh, Arthur Upham Pope and Richard Frye who contributed to Iran's movements towards its territorial unity,

peace, stability and progress, health and education. They are in Iranian hearts and minds, the hearts that are still open to all American people.

The American administration should have learnt better lessons from the futile wars in which they engaged. From the Vietnam War to Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Iraq, Yemen and Syria what have they achieved but dust and death. A tragic trace in history. The hundreds of billions of dollars wasted on destruction of nations could have saved mankind from disease and hunger, millions of lives that have been lost, the youth that have fallen, cities that have been devastated, hospitals and schools that were ruined, museums and places of worship that crumbled.

The present situation of the world, the deadly virus that massacres our people can be turned to an opportunity for the changing of attitude, to forget and forgive, to replace hatred by love and war by reconciliation, to look into a future, a better and brighter future built upon understanding, coexistence and cooperation. Today we all need to live together and help each other to surmount the global threats to our environment, health and very existence.

The strangulating sanctions that the US has unilaterally imposed upon Iran and its over eighty million noble and innocent people, in total disregard of international commitments, have been counterproductive. They have, as I had foreseen in my writings, strengthened and legitimized radicalism and impoverished the people who continue to suffer from lack of vital necessities.

It is time, sagacity dictates, for America to remove the unjust sanctions and above all release billions of dollars of the Iranian assets that have been illegally confiscated.

America has begun, though belatedly, to retreat from Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen and Iraq. But the key to restoration of peace and tranquillity in the region and the return of America to the prestigious position it enjoyed in the 50's and 60's is in leaving Iran to the will of its people and ending the futile hostilities.

The opportunity is there and this can be achieved with a little good will and some diplomatic wisdom for the benefit of all. I have said it again and again that there is no winner in any war and that the age of colonialism and gunboat diplomacy is over.

How beautifully Shakespeare puts it when he says: “*A peace is of the nature of a conquest; for then both parties nobly are subdued, and neither party loser.*”

Montreux

Ardeshir Zahedi