

Attachment I

June 29, 2009

Mr. C K Lau

Editor, South China Morning Post

It is interesting to see an extensive coverage by SCMP of the recent developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially of its historic Presidential election; an election which set an astonishing record of 85 percent voter turnout – President re-elected with 62% of the 40 million votes cast – by the wise, freedom- and-justice-seeking people of Iran.

It is incumbent upon us to mention a few points to you and your esteemed readers:

A few months ago when signs of recent financial crisis were emerging and the world's trade centers, including Hong Kong, were on high alert for its dire consequences, some in the trade and economic sectors in Hong Kong expressed deep concerns for putting too many of their eggs in the Western and American baskets while calling for a revision of such policies.

It is hoped SCMP would not turn itself to a mouthpiece for western media, especially in coverage of political news so that its respected editors would not have to regret for putting too many of their eggs in baskets of the western media; and only then would it be able to maintain its 100-or-so-year independence as a credible source of information.

It seems turning a professional paper in South East Asia which is a leading newspaper by the way in the region into a simple quoting machine for the newsfeed from New York Times, AFP, AP, FP and Reuters without any conscientious and thorough analysis of their contents, is chipping away at the credibility SCMP holds in the readers' eyes. It would also turn your paper into a printer only; most especially at a time when information is at readers' fingertip.

The unprofessionalism exhibited by SCMP in coverage of Iran's news is to such an extent that even in your editorials those points mentioned above are quite reflected without a thoughtful analysis.

May we also add that not only reprinting the news prepared by other agencies (as it is the general practice by SCMP) would tarnish the image of your daily, you would also run the risk of damaging your readers' confidence by quoting the stories of the sources that have proven over the past 30 years to be at least incomplete and/or in most cases wrong. And

without a doubt, when the true nature of such stories was revealed, the public confidence in SCMP would be greatly damaged.

Just as a reminder of the negative role played by such news agencies and media, we feel the need to refer you below to how they have covered the news and developments pertaining to Iran:

- The massacre of Iranians by the regime of Shah in 1970s (most of these media supported the dictator and interference of the foreign forces in Iran)
- The 8-year war that was waged by Iraq's Saddam Hussein against Iran resulting in the loss of thousands of Iranians with missiles and even with biological and chemical weapons (they kept it quiet and or sided with invader)
- Numerous assassinations of Iranians by terrorist MKO members (the members were taken refuge in Europe and then moved to Iraq for easy access to Iran. They are now taken off of the terrorist list by some European states including England. There are documents attesting to the recent killing of innocent Iranians in street rallies by MKO members over the past few days. And the western media have turned into a mouthpiece for such terrorist groups.)
- The USS Vincennes shooting down of an Iranian passenger plane over the waters of the Persian Gulf
- And now their distorted coverage of the developments in Iran. Their reporters went so far as to declaring one of the candidates as the winner 5 to 6 hours before the polls closed; quite opposite of the outcome coming from the vote count. The move was to sow seeds of discord in the country.
- Instigating violence and flouting the law was encouraged extensively by such media since the election. The commonsense dictates that all candidates should kowtow to the rules of the game and respect the Constitution and its respective laws as the only way for settling the ambiguities.
- It is not unusual to find a losing side in the election to be fully satisfied with the result and that explains the reasons for laws and regulations to make sure the confidence is well placed. The contrast is quite evident in the call by the sources you get your news feed from, for violating the laws and for anarchy.
- Is it not a common practice to get a permit from security apparatus for public protests? Is it not within the discretion of such security apparatus to issue such a permit by taking into account the security concerns? Then how is it that such media are supporting such unlawful demonstrations and violation of the laws?

- Do you not think credible intelligence indicating to the penetration of MKO members – who are by the way controlled and managed from London – from Ashraf Camp in Iraq to my country with the aim of killing innocent civilians in such gatherings is a convincing enough reason to refuse such a permit?
- Now the question is how far would such media go in encouraging such unlawful demonstrations with the sole purpose of feeding their news outlets?

Having borne the above in mind, the Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Hong Kong and Macao has on several occasions expressed its readiness to help establish a connection between SCMP and original source of information in Iran. We went even so far as to expressing our preparedness for arranging a visit to Iran by some members of your editorial board prior to the recent presidential election.

It is therefore expected the South China Morning Post to publish this letter in its entirety in your immediate issue.

With Regards

Press Section

Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran – Hong Kong and Macao