

# Global Threat? US Policymakers Admit Iran is Defending Itself

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In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

*US policymakers admit that Iran's strategy is "largely defensive," and both aggressive and defensive tendencies are largely in response to US policy in the Middle East and Central Asia.*

The US-based RAND Corporation, which describes itself as "a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis," produced a report in 2009 for the US Air Force titled, "[Dangerous But Not Omnipotent : Exploring the Reach and Limitations of Iranian Power in the Middle East](#)," examining the structure and posture of Iran's military, including its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and weapons both present, and possible future, it seeks to secure its borders and interests with against external aggression.

The report admits that:

Iran's strategy is largely defensive, but with some offensive elements. Iran's strategy of protecting the regime against internal threats, deterring aggression, safeguarding the homeland if aggression occurs, and extending influence is in large part a defensive one that also serves some aggressive tendencies when coupled with expressions of Iranian regional aspirations. It is in part a response to U.S. policy pronouncements and posture in the region, especially since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The Iranian leadership takes very seriously the threat of invasion given the open discussion in the United States of regime change, speeches defining Iran as part of the "axis of evil," and efforts by U.S. forces to secure base access in states surrounding Iran.

Such a narrative stands in direct contradiction of daily propaganda emanating from Western media monopolies portraying Iran as a global threat to peace and stability, and in particular, "bent on" attacking the US and its allies, particularly Israel, for no other reason but fulfilling fanatical, ideological hatred.

The recent political theater centered around the US and Israel, portrays a US attempting to accommodate Iran versus an Israel fighting an existential battle against a determined aggressor. Behind the rhetoric, however, the RAND Corporation lays out the specific facts, revealing a reality quite to the contrary.

It reveals an embattled, besieged Iran seeking to stave off foreign encirclement,

destabilization, and literal invasion. RAND openly notes that the conflict is not about “defending” Israel or preserving US national security, but instead, centered on America’s attempts to project power into the Middle East – half a world away from its own shores, and Iran’s attempts to resist foreign hegemony.

The question of Iran’s potential menace, should it obtain nuclear weapons is also covered in the report. The report openly admits that Iran sees nuclear weapons as a psychological deterrence, not a practical means of war fighting. It would state:

Others have argued that Iran will seek to challenge the prevailing orthodoxies on deploying, posturing, and targeting nuclear weapons, believing that the mere acquisition of the bomb (or even nuclear technology itself) will be a sufficient psychological deterrent. Press statements, writings in military journals, and other glimpses into Iranian thinking on this issue appear to support the conclusion that Tehran regards nuclear weapons as powerful psychological assets but poor warfighting tools.

It would also state:

The actual military components of this deterrence strategy include, most obviously, the drive for an indigenous enrichment capability and a potential nuclear weapon; short- and medium-range ballistic missiles; asymmetric warfare and terrorism; and popular mobilization to defend the homeland, should an invasion occur. While this may appear to Western observers as a push for hegemony, Tehran likely sees it as a multilayered form of strategic defense that extends deep into the enemy’s camp and encompasses a variety of political, military, and economic levers.

Claims made by politicians and commentators across the Western media, portraying Iran as a hegemonic regime bent on nuclear holocaust are betrayed by the actual tactical, strategic, and political assessments of the West’s very own policymakers.

Nowhere in RAND’s report is it mentioned that Iran seeks to pass nuclear weapons onto non-state actors. In fact, possession and control of any potential nuclear weapon would fall under Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) which currently controls the nation’s chemical and biological stockpiles, estimated [in another RAND document](#) to include an inventory of up to 2,000 tons. If, for decades, these weapons of mass destruction have remained safely under the control of the IRGC without being proliferated among Iran’s many regional proxies, why would Iran risk proliferating a nuclear weapon among these groups?

Of course, US policymakers admit, Iran is hesitant to wage even a conventional war against its enemies. Also in 2009, another prominent US policy think-tank, the Brookings Institution, would build an entire document around lamentations over Iran’s reluctance to be provoked into war with the US and its regional partners, including Israel.

In its report, “[Which Path to Persia? Options for a New American Strategy Toward Iran](#),” Brookings would first openly admit to a conspiracy aimed not at defending against Iranian aggression, but to intentionally, and maliciously provoke it. It would state:

...it would be far more preferable if the United States could cite an Iranian provocation as justification for the airstrikes before launching them. Clearly,

the more outrageous, the more deadly, and the more unprovoked the Iranian action, the better off the United States would be. Of course, it would be very difficult for the United States to goad Iran into such a provocation without the rest of the world recognizing this game, which would then undermine it. (One method that would have some possibility of success would be to ratchet up covert regime change efforts in the hope that Tehran would retaliate overtly, or even semi-overtly, which could then be portrayed as an unprovoked act of Iranian aggression.)

It would add:

In a similar vein, any military operation against Iran will likely be very unpopular around the world and require the proper international context—both to ensure the logistical support the operation would require and to minimize the blowback from it. The best way to minimize international opprobrium and maximize support (however, grudging or covert) is to strike only when there is a widespread conviction that the Iranians were given but then rejected a superb offer—one so good that only a regime determined to acquire nuclear weapons and acquire them for the wrong reasons would turn it down. Under those circumstances, the United States (or Israel) could portray its operations as taken in sorrow, not anger, and at least some in the international community would conclude that the Iranians “brought it on themselves” by refusing a very good deal.

And despite overt provocations Brookings policymakers conspired to carry out against Iran, they feared Iran might still not retaliate. It would claim:

It would not be inevitable that Iran would lash out violently in response to an American air campaign, but no American president should blithely assume that it would not.

The report continues:

However, because many Iranian leaders would likely be looking to emerge from the fighting in as advantageous a strategic position as possible, and because they would likely calculate that playing the victim would be their best route to that goal, they might well refrain from such retaliatory missile attacks.

Behind the West’s rhetoric of a “dangerous” Iran committed to a policy of “regional hegemony” and “nuclear holocaust,” more honest, if albeit less public assessments of Iran, reveal the nation to be committed to self-preservation, so much so that it may resist attempts to provoke it into war despite the West arming and funding both political sedition and armed terrorism within their country, and outright, unprovoked military attacks upon it.

In this light, the global public might find an interestingly different conclusion as to who is behind regional and even global chaos – those who secretly assess the non-threat of a nation, while publicly manufacturing threats to justify otherwise unjust wars built on hegemony, not self-defense.

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