

Irresponsible Anti-Iranian Fear-Mongering

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Global Research, February 23, 2012

[SteveLendmanBlog](#) 23 February 2012

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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Irresponsible anti-Iranian political and pack journalism rhetoric sound ominously like spurious Iraqi WMD threats in the run-up to the 2003 war.

In his January State of the Union address, Obama said:

“Let there be no doubt: America is determined to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon and I will take no options off the table to achieve that goal.”

At the same time, Netanyahu told Israel’s Knesset:

“Only a combination of crippling sanctions and putting all the options on the table can make Iran stop” its nuclear program.

Republican presidential aspirants also use the issue irresponsibly. Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum all support bombing Iran’s nuclear sites and assassinating its scientists. Only Ron Paul’s strongly opposed but hawkish din drowns him out.

Daily reports heighten the alleged “Iranian threat.” Multiple rounds of sanctions were imposed. In late January, Israel’s Mossad connected [DEBKAfile](#) reported Obama ordering a “massive US military buildup around Iran: up to 100,000 troops by March.”

America’s heaviest concentration of regional might matches its strength before invading Iraq in 2003. DEBKA suggested “May as (a) tentative date for clash(ing) with Iran.”

On February 22, [DEBKA](#) stoked more fear headlining, “Iran cuts down to six weeks timeline for weapons-grade uranium,” saying:

“Tehran this week hardened its nuclear and military policies in defiance of tougher sanctions and ahead of international nuclear talks.”

Washington, NATO allies, Israel, and IAEA inspectors know Iran poses no nuclear threat. Nonetheless, pro-Western IAEA head Yukiya Amano said Tuesday night:

“It is disappointing that Iran did not accept our request to visit Parchin during the first or second meetings. We engaged in a constructive spirit, but no agreement was reached.”

DEBKA claims its where Tehran “conducts experiments in nuclear explosives and triggers.”

In fact, no evidence suggests Parchin Military Complex conducts nuclear related activities. IAEA’s been there before, took environmental samples, and found nothing. Parchin manufactures and tests conventional explosives.

IAEA found none consistent with nuclear weapons research and development. Amano knows it but stoked tensions anyway. So did IAEA’s Herman Nackaerts saying its team members “could not find a way forward.” As a result, talks were “inconclusive.”

An official February 22 IAEA statement said “Iran refuse(d) access to suspect nuke site.” Saying it contradicts IAEA inspectors who found nothing suspicious about Parchin.

In response, Iran’s Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said the IAEA came for talks, not inspections.

In fact, no country’s nuclear facilities are more closely monitored round the clock than Iran’s, and none cooperate more fully. Suggesting otherwise is a spurious canard, yet it’s suggested daily.

At the same time, [Reuters](#) said, “Iran says would act against enemies if endangered,” quoting Iranian General Mohammad Hejazi telling Fars news agency:

“Our strategy now is that if we feel our enemies want to endanger Iran’s national interests, and want to decide to do that, we will act without waiting for their actions.”

Whether or not the translation’s accurate, Washington and Israel both maintain first-strike nuclear options (including against non-nuclear states) against real or manufactured threats. Western reports say virtually nothing, but ratchet up unjustifiable fears about non-belligerent Iran.

On February 22, senior Israeli military and intelligence officials said “(s)ince Wednesday, the rules of the game have changed.”

On February 15, [AP](#) headlined, “Israeli minister: Iran near ‘point of no return,’ ” saying:

Deputy Prime Minister Silvan Shalom said Iran achieved two major advances to produce nuclear fuel. They believe it’s “an insurance policy to their regime.” Tehran’s latest claims “show no intention to abandon plans for a nuclear bomb.”

“Israel and the world (can’t) live with Iran having the ability to develop a nuclear bomb.”

Other Israeli officials claim Iran’s nuclear capability is so advanced that unless it’s confronted within months or a year it’ll be too late. Their rhetoric belies the facts and they know it. Nonetheless, pressure keeps building for potential confrontation.

All Iranian nuclear facilities are closely monitored. No evidence suggests a military related program. US and Israeli officials know it. Responsible ones admit it, yet hawks in both

countries drown them out.

On February 22, the [Jerusalem Post](#) headlined, “Iran missiles may be able to hit US in 2-3 years,” saying:

Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz told CNBC Wednesday that “Iran may develop inter-continental missiles that can reach the east coast of the United States in two to three years.”

Tehran’s investing “billions of dollars,” he claimed. “Their aim is clearly not only to be able to threaten Israel and the Middle East, but to put a direct nuclear ballistic threat to Europe and to the United States of America.”

Former IDF head General Gabi Ashkenazi also said Iran’s threat must be taken seriously.

Both men and other top officials in both countries know Iran threatens no one. But the big lie repeated often enough gets most people to believe it and risks potentially catastrophic war.

On February 22, [Washington Post](#) writer Joel Greenberg headlined, “Israelis seem resigned to a strike on Iran,” saying:

Israelis “are talking about a possible war come summer, or later this year....The prospect of devastating counter-strikes and possible mass casualties seems to be taken in stride, seen as a lesser evil than facing a nuclear-armed Iran.”

US and Israeli polls weigh an alleged Iranian threat and advisability of preemptively confronting it. A recent [Pew Research Center](#) one said 58% of those surveyed said America should use military force to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Only 30% want confrontation avoided.

Nuclear expert Graham Allison sees parallels between Iran today and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Despite little threatening evidence then and now, heightened tensions risked potentially devastating conflict. When politics and heated rhetoric spin out of control, anything’s possible including nuclear war.

Earlier US Hawks

In July 1961, General Curtis LeMay believed nuclear war with Soviet Russia was inevitable and would erupt later that year. As a result, he argued for preemptively launching thousands of missiles to destroy their nuclear capability even though retaliatory strikes could destroy major US cities.

At the same time, at a National Security Council meeting, General Lyman Lemnitzer presented John Kennedy with a surprise nuclear attack strategy. Kennedy was so disgusted he walked out, and later told Secretary of State Dean Rusk: “And we call ourselves the human race.”

In his book, [“Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years,”](#) David Talbot wrote about former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara saying:

“LeMay’s views w(ere) very simple. He thought the West, and the US in particular, was going to have to fight a nuclear war with the Soviet Union, and

he was absolutely certain of that. Therefore, he believed that we should fight it sooner rather than later, when we had a greater advantage in nuclear power, and it would result in fewer casualties in the United States.”

Like Kennedy, McNamara categorically rejected the idea. Nonetheless, other extremists then and later urged the same strategy. Cooler heads throughout the Cold War prevailed. A potential nuclear holocaust was avoided.

A Final Comment

On February 22, inflammatory White House and State Department rhetoric included spurious statements.

Commenting on Iranian/IAEA talks, White House spokesman Jay Carney said:

“We regret the failure of Iran to reach an agreement this week with the IAEA that would permit the agency to fully investigate the serious allegation raised in its November report.”

“Unfortunately, this is another demonstration of Iran’s refusal to abide by its international obligations. This particular action by Iran suggests that they have not changed their behavior when it comes to abiding by their international obligations.”

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

State Department Deputy spokesman Mark Toner added:

“This is a disappointment. It wasn’t all that surprising, frankly. But, you know, we’re going to look at the totality of the issue here and the letter and what we think is the best course of action moving forward”.

“Let’s be very clear that we consult very closely with Israel on these issues. We are very clear that we are working on this two-track approach. We believe, and are conveying to our partners, both Israel and elsewhere, that this is having an effect.”

At issue is whether greater regional conflict’s planned.

What goes around, comes around. Today, hawkish Israeli and US officials urge bombs away preemptively. Even though nuclear armed Soviet Russia posed only a retaliatory threat if attacked, potentially devastating war would have been waged if belligerent hawks prevailed.

Today, Iran threatens no one. Yet latter day LeMay types urge preemptive war. Spurious accusations aren’t at issue. It’s about replacing an independent regime with a client one.

Wars against Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya were for the same reason. So is Syrian insurgency.

Notably, post-WW II, US aggression achieved nothing but millions of deaths, mass destruction, incalculable human suffering, and bitter global anti-American sentiment.

Waging war on Syria and Iran will send it higher. At issue is possible WW III, the first nuclear war if waged, threatening humanity.

Yet aggressive hawks advocating damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead don't consider that in their calculus. Hopefully cooler heads will prevail today like decades earlier.

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