

Miscalculation, Provocation or a Staged False Flag Op.? Resist U.S. War Threats on Iran

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Global Research, January 21, 2012

[International Action Center](#) 21 January 2012

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

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There is growing apprehension that through miscalculation, deliberate provocation or a staged false flag operation, a U.S. war with Iran is imminent.

The dangerous combination of top U.S. officials' public threats, the Pentagon's massive military deployment, continued drone flights and industrial sabotage against Iran provides an ominous warning. The corporate media have been more than willing to cheer industrial sabotage, computer viruses and targeted assassinations. War maneuvers with Israel scheduled for mid-January were suddenly postponed Jan. 15 until May or later.

The U.S. Congress overwhelmingly voted to include binding provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act, and President Obama signed the legislation Dec. 31 ordering Iran's economic strangulation. These NDAA provisions demand that every other country in the world joins this economic blockade of Iran or face U.S. sanctions themselves. This itself is an act of war.

Iran has directly charged the CIA for the Jan. 11 assassination of physicist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan, which has outraged Iranians. Roshan is the fourth scientist killed in five targeted assassinations in two years.

Whether or not a war will actually erupt, it is essential to look at the powerful forces that lay the groundwork for such a conflagration.

A U.S. war would kill hundreds of thousands of Iranians and create regionwide destabilization. It would cause a wild, speculative hike in oil and gas prices, devastating fragile economies of the poorest countries and unhinging the increasingly shaky eurozone.

Revolutionary Marxists like Fidel Castro, political leaders in China and Russia, and even a hardened Israeli general have joined many political commentators to warn that a U.S. or U.S.-supported Israeli attack on Iran could quickly become a far wider war.

While defending its sovereign right to develop energy self-sufficiency, Tehran has made every effort to deflect U.S. threats and charges. Iran has submitted to years of intrusive inspections of its research and industrial facilities to confirm its compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

But Washington insists on stopping Iran's development — and not only its nuclear energy development to assure its future as oil production declines. For decades Iran was forced to import refined oil. Washington has tried to stop Iran from importing parts to build oil refineries, as it has tried to stop all Iran's development since the 1979 revolution.

The myth of stimulus from war

David Broder, Washington Post political correspondent for 40 years and news show pundit, described in an Oct. 31, 2010, article how Obama could deal with his weakened situation when the Republicans swept Congress. He argued that to fix the economy and regain popularity, the solution is obvious and unavoidable: "War with Iran."

Broder had more than 400 appearances on "Meet the Press." He even won a Pulitzer Prize. Broder could be counted on to reflect political thinking and planning in Washington. Only the war machine can pull the U.S. out of economic stagnation, Broder argued.

"Look back at FDR and the Great Depression," wrote Broder. "What finally resolved that economic crisis? World War II. [A showdown with the mullahs] will help [Obama] politically because the opposition party will be urging him on. And as tensions rise and we accelerate preparations for war, the economy will improve."

Upon Broder's death in March, Obama called him "the most respected and incisive political commentator of his generation." (New York Times, March 9)

Broder's statement shows an absolutely criminal mindset. It also shows a dangerous illusion. Broder calmly proposed the murder of tens of thousands of people, the devastation of entire cities, the destruction of a whole culture as a temporary economic fix to win a U.S. election.

Others commentators just as coldly argued with Broder that war with Iran would not be large enough, because all the weapons needed already exist and are in place. So no surge of military orders would follow. A larger war would be needed to give a big enough push!

In 1939 reviving shuttered U.S. steel, rubber and textile clothing plants with government orders for tanks, ships, jeeps, helmets, uniforms and life vests for sale to Europe was a big stimulus. The entry of the U.S. into World War II in 1941 provided an enormous surge of productive capacity that pulled the U.S. economy out of a 10-year economic depression. What worked as an economic stimulus 70 years ago, before the existence of the gargantuan, bloated, high-tech military-industrial complex, is long past.

Today the U.S. has a military machine and a military budget larger than that of the rest of the world combined, exceeding \$1 trillion a year in stated and hidden costs, even without another war. It is guaranteed to grow at a rate of 5 percent to 10 percent a year. This is built into the Pentagon's budget projections even without cost overruns.

World won't bow to U.S. dictates

Washington's plans to easily conquer Afghanistan and Iraq and set up stable puppet regimes were frustrated. The U.S. plan for economic war on Iran has also exposed U.S. weaknesses.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner launched a tour of East Asian nations in early January to convince south Korea, China, India and Japan to cut their massive Iranian oil imports and abide by the sanctions.

China and India — both major economies — refused directly. China buys a third of Iran's oil exports.

The Obama administration said that the U.S. would offer countries that applied for a temporary waiver to continue oil purchases from Iran while they made other arrangements. An Indian cabinet minister said India will continue to do business with Iran. South Korea said it would apply for a U.S. waiver because it planned to increase oil purchases from Iran.

Japanese officials, when meeting with Geithner, seemed to agree. But after his departure Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba backtracked, saying, "The United States would like to impose sanctions. We believe it is necessary to be extremely circumspect about this matter." (AFP, Jan. 13)

Russia announced its refusal to comply with sanctions. So did NATO member Turkey. The European Union insisted on a six-month delay, due to fears of the economic consequences to debt-ridden Italy, Spain and Greece. The Greek government said it needs at least a year.

Saudi Arabia's crude oil contains more sulfur than lighter Iranian oil and requires substantially higher refining costs. In a time of global capitalist recession, this added cost is no easy sell.

Even outright U.S. collaborators are refusing Washington's demands. Pakistan, for example, refused to abandon a pipeline to transport Iranian natural gas into Pakistan and in the future even into India.

All of this would be good news. But the danger is that U.S. corporate power, seeing on every side its declining ability to ram through its dictates, is increasingly driven to military solutions.

This is exacerbated by U.S. setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan that have weakened the U.S. superpower's dominance of Southwest Asia relative to Iran. The more the U.S. loses its grip on the region, the more desperate imperialism may become to risk all in a mad adventure to recoup its past position.

Every voice must be raised at this urgent hour against sanctions and war.

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