

War With Iran Might Be Closer Than You Think

By [Philip Girdali](#)

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There is considerable speculation and buzz in Washington today suggesting that the National Security Council has agreed in principle to proceed with plans to attack an Iranian al-Qods-run camp that is believed to be training Iraqi militants. The camp that will be targeted is one of several located near Tehran. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates was the only senior official urging delay in taking any offensive action.

The decision to go ahead with plans to attack Iran is the direct result of concerns being expressed over the deteriorating situation in Lebanon, where Iranian ally Hezbollah appears to have gained the upper hand against government forces and might be able to dominate the fractious political situation. The White House contacted the Iranian government directly yesterday through a channel provided by the leadership of the Kurdish region in Iraq, which has traditionally had close ties to Tehran.

The US demanded that Iran admit that it has been interfering in Iraq and also commit itself to taking steps to end the support of various militant groups. There was also a warning about interfering in Lebanon. The Iranian government reportedly responded quickly, restating its position that it would not discuss the matter until the US ceases its own meddling employing Iranian dissident groups. The perceived Iranian intransigence coupled with the Lebanese situation convinced the White House that some sort of unambiguous signal has to be sent to the Iranian leadership, presumably in the form of cruise missiles. It is to be presumed that the attack will be as "pinpoint" and limited as possible, intended to target only al-Qods and avoid civilian casualties. The decision to proceed with plans for an attack is not final. The President will still have to give the order to launch after all preparations are made.

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