

Who Wants War on Iran?

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There are those who would have bombed or invaded Iran years ago to make sure there would be no Iranian Bomb, and their voices are getting louder again as another day of high level [talks](#) approaches. Even though Iran's Supreme Leader has spent years [forswearing](#) nuclear weapons, which he calls a "[crime against humanity](#)," skeptics demand proof that there's nothing to worry about.

The Iranian nuclear program, whatever it may be, was the only item on the agenda for the seven-nation [discussion](#) in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on February 26, and cautious [optimism](#) has been expressed by participants including the [United States](#), [Russia](#), and [Iran](#). Known as the P5+1 because the group includes the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States) plus Germany, the group is called the E3+3 in Europe.

Perhaps the clearest framework for understanding what the Iranian nuclear development program might or might not be is to keep in mind that the most intense claims that Iran is building nuclear weapons comes from the region's undisputed nuclear-armed state, Israel. Much like Iraq's Saddam Hussein playing cat-and-mouse with WMDs he didn't have, Iran has cooperated with weapons inspectors only to a point of uncertainty as to whether the program is or is not military.

Iran is one of the 190 countries that have signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation [Treaty](#), which allows for non-military development of nuclear power, nuclear medicine, and other nuclear applications. Iran claims it has the legal right to enrich uranium as part of its civilian nuclear energy [program](#).

Iran also claims that it has met its obligations to the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), although in 2005 the IAEA, in a vote with 12 abstentions, found Iran in non-compliance over its enrichment program (but even the Congressional Research [Service](#) was uncertain whether "non-compliance" constituted a "violation" of the treaty). The dispute had continued ever since, with IAEA inspectors getting inconsistent [access](#) to Iran's nuclear infrastructure. During 2012, four IAEA reports continued to provide inconclusive indications of a possible Iranian nuclear weapons program.

Israel Rejects Nuclear Transparency

[Israel](#) has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty and is a presumed nuclear power along with other non-signatories who have nuclear weapons: India, Pakistan, and

North Korea. In 2010, the [IAEA](#) sought to bring Israeli nuclear facilities within the safeguards of IAEA, with only limited success, as Israel did not reveal all its facilities and has not yet does so. Estimates of the Israeli nuclear stockpile vary from 75 to 400 warheads, with 200

thought most likely, which Israel could deliver by missile, aircraft, or submarine.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has suggested more than once that Israeli might act alone against the perceived Iranian nuclear threat, telling the New York [Times](#) in November:

“If someone sits here as the prime minister of Israel and he can’t take action on matters that are cardinal to the existence of this country, its future and its security, and he is totally dependent on receiving approval from others, then he is not worthy of leading...

“I am not eager to go to war.... I have been creating very heavy pressure, and part of this pressure comes from the knowledge some of the most powerful nations in the world have that we are serious. This isn’t a show, this is not false.”

Netanyahu first called for an attack on Iran at least as early as [1992](#), when he said the Iranians were only three to five years from producing a nuclear weapon. But warnings like that are much older, going back to the 1970s and concerns that the Shah of Iran might arm his police state with nuclear weapons.

In Jerusalem on February 12, Netanyahu again [threatened](#) Iran:

“They have to know that if the sanctions and diplomacy fall, they will face a credible military threat. That is essential, and nothing else will do the job, and it is getting closer.... This has to be stopped for the interest of peace and security for the entire world.”

Iran Denies Nuclear Weapons, Rejects Transparency

Iran’s President Mahmoud [Ahmadinejad](#) has often [denied](#) the existence of an Iranian nuclear weapons program, as he did in 2008 during an [interview](#) with [NBC](#) anchor Brian Williams, when he also questioned the utility of nuclear weapons as a source of security:

“Again, did nuclear arms help the Soviet Union from falling and disintegrating? For that matter, did a nuclear bomb help the U.S. to prevail inside Iraq or Afghanistan, for that matter? Nuclear bombs belong to the 20th century. We are living in a new century ... Nuclear energy must not be equaled to a nuclear bomb. This is a disservice to the society of man....”

On February 10, Ahmadinejad, whose term as president ends in a few months, [indicated](#) Iran’s willingness to discuss its nuclear program in bi-lateral talks with the U.S., adding that: “You pull away the gun from the face of the Iranian nation, and I myself will enter the talks with you.”

Ahmadinejad’s superior, Iran’s clerical Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei gave a foreign policy [speech](#) in February 2012 in which he said much the same thing about nuclear weapons that he had said before:

“The Iranian nation has never pursued and will never pursue nuclear weapons.

There is no doubt that the decision makers in the countries opposing us know well that Iran is not after nuclear weapons because the Islamic Republic, logically, religiously and theoretically, considers the possession of nuclear weapons a grave sin and believes the proliferation of such weapons is senseless, destructive and dangerous.”

Not being able to confirm reality, in either Israel or Iran, American and European policy makers tend, unquestioningly in public, to trust the former and demonize the latter. And now as the world enters the fourth decade of fear-mongering about Iran’s “nuclear weapons program,” some are ratcheting it up again in advance of the Kazakhstan meeting, with front page [stories](#) that start like [this](#) from the February 13 Washington [Post](#):

“Iran recently sought to acquire tens of thousands of highly specialized [magnets](#) used in centrifuge machines, according to experts and diplomats, a sign that the country may be planning a major expansion of its nuclear program that could shorten the path to an atomic weapons capability.”

If that assertion seems to have a familiar ring, perhaps it’s because it’s so similar in structure and content to what then-President Bush [falsely](#) stated, in his 2003 state of the union speech, now known as the infamous “Sixteen Words”:

“The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of [uranium](#) from Africa.”

Washington *Post* Works to Create Crisis

On February 14, under a headline about “the Iranian nuclear crisis,” the *Post* [re-hyped](#) the apparent 2011 order of “ring-shaped magnets” from China as a setback to the “Western-led effort to slow or halt Iran’s nuclear development.” Even though the *Post* had no idea if the magnets were ever delivered or whether they were actually for centrifuges with a benign purpose.

Taking the *Post* reports apart on [Consortiumnews.com](#), Robert Parry drew attention to details buried in the [story](#) that contradicted the breathless lead – that the centrifuges were old and that Iran had long since told the IAEA of its plans to build 50,000 of them and not some “major expansion of nuclear capacity.”

Parry notes that the sole source for the magnet story was a private entity called the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) whose head is David Albright and that

“Though Albright insists that he is an objective professional, ISIS has published hundreds of articles about Iran, which has not produced a single nuclear bomb, while barely mentioning Israel’s rogue nuclear arsenal....

“The articles not only hype developments in Iran but also attack U.S. media critics who question the fear-mongering about Iran.”

Albright has hyped the threat of weapons of mass destruction before. In 2002 when the Bush administration was lying the country into a war against Iraq, claiming that Iraq had “a clandestine nuclear weapons effort” as well as “chemical and biological weapons” – *none of*

which was true. As Parry sums it up,

“A decade ago, Albright and the ISIS were key figures in stoking the hysteria for invading Iraq around the false allegations of its WMD program. In recent years, Albright and his institute have adopted a similar role regarding Iran and its purported pursuit of a nuclear weapon, even though U.S. intelligence agencies say Iran terminated that weapons project in 2003.”

And Who Decides What Is Necessary?

In his 2013 state of the union, President Obama dealt with Iran in a single, misleading, and threatening sentence:

“Likewise, the leaders of Iran must recognize that now is the time for a diplomatic solution, because a coalition stands united in demanding that they meet their obligations, and we will do what is necessary to prevent them from getting a nuclear weapon.”

Since 1979, the United States has waged a long twilight war against its former puppet state with no apparent understanding of why Iran may still resent the U.S. for overthrowing Iran’s elected government in 1953 and imposing one of the world’s nastier police state on 70 million people. There is credible evidence that the U.S. has not only imposed for economic sanctions that are tantamount to acts of war on Iran, but has also colluded in assassinations of at least five Iranian nuclear scientists as well as cyber attacks on the country’s infrastructure.

Secretary of State John [Kerry](#) suggested on Valentine’s Day that if Iran’s nuclear program is peaceful, Iran should have no trouble proving it. He urged the Iranians to make “real offers and engage in real dialogue.”

Both the President and the Secretary of State are lawyers, and is aware, most likely, that they don’t have enough evidence of Iran’s “nuclear weapons program” to show probable cause for a get a search warrant from any fair court, never mind an indictment.

That suggests, to use Obama’s words, that perhaps “what is necessary to prevent them from getting a nuclear weapon” might be to stop attacking them.

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