

Iran: The Neocons Are At It Again

by Ralph Nader

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The same neocons who persuaded George W. Bush and crew to, in Ron Paul's inimitable words, "lie their way into invading Iraq" in 2003, are beating the drums of war more loudly these days to attack Iran. It is remarkable how many of these war-mongers are former draft dodgers who wanted other Americans to fight the war in Vietnam.

With the exception of Ron Paul, who actually knows the history of U.S.-Iranian relations, the Republican presidential contenders have declared their belligerency toward Iranian officials who they accuse of moving toward nuclear weapons.

The Iranian regime disputes that charge, claiming they are developing the technology for nuclear power and nuclear medicine.

The inspection teams of the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) that monitor compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which Iran belongs, have entered Iran numerous times and, while remaining suspicious, have not been able to find that country on the direct road to the Bomb.

While many western and some Arab countries in the Gulf region have condemned Iran's alleged nuclear arms quest, Israel maintains some 200 ready nuclear weapons and has refused to sign the non-proliferation treaty, thereby avoiding the IAEA inspectors.

Israelis in the know have much to say. Defense minister, Ehud Barak, responded to PBS's Charlie Rose's question "If you were Iran wouldn't you want a nuclear weapon?" with these words:

"Probably, probably. I don't delude myself that they are doing it just because of Israel. They have their history of 4,000 years. They look around and they see the Indians are nuclear. The Chinese are nuclear, Pakistan is nuclear as well as North Korea, not to mention the Russians."

The Iranian regime, with a national GDP smaller than Massachusetts, is terrified. It is surrounded by powerful adversaries, including the U.S. military on three of its borders. President George W. Bush labeled Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, one of the three "axis of evil," and Teheran knows what happened to Iraq after that White House assertion. They also know that North Korea inoculated itself from invasion by testing nuclear bombs. And all Iranians remember that the U.S. overthrew their popular elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953 and installed the dictatorial Shah who ruled tyrannically for the next 27 years.

Recently, Iran has experienced mysterious cyber sabotage, drone violations of its air space, the slaying

of its nuclear scientists and the blowing up of its military sites, including a major missile installation. Israeli and American officials are not trying too hard to conceal this low level warfare.

Israel military historian--strategist Martin van Creveld said in 2004, that Iranians "would be crazy not to build nuclear weapons considering the security threats they face." Three years later he stated that "the world must now learn to live with a nuclear Iran the way we learned to live with a nuclear Soviet Union and a nuclear China....We Israelis have what it takes to deter an Iranian attack. We are in no danger at all of having an Iranian nuclear weapon dropped on us...thanks to the Iranian threat, we are getting weapons from the U.S. and Germany."

U.S. General John Abizaid is one of numerous military people who say that the world can tolerate a nuclear Iran--which, like other countries, does not wish to commit suicide.

Using the "Iranian threat," served Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who on his first tour of duty back in 1996, speaking to a joint session of Congress, made a big point of the forthcoming Iranian bomb.

Somehow the Iranians, who were invaded in 1980 by a U.S.-backed Saddam Hussein, resulting in a million casualties, and who have not invaded anybody for 250 years, are taking a very long time to build a capability for atomic bomb production, much less the actual weapons.

In mid-2011, Meir Dagan, recently retired head of Israel's "CIA," repeated his opposition to a military attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, adding it would engulf the region in a conventional war.

He further took the Israeli government to task for failing "to put forth a vision," noting that "Israel must present an initiative to the Palestinians and adopt the 2002 Saudi Arabia peace proposal, reiterated since, that would open full diplomatic relations with some two dozen Arab and Islamic countries in return for an Israeli pullback to the 1967 borders and recognition of a Palestinian state."

The war-mongers against Iran have often distorted Iranian statements to suit their purpose and kept in the shadows several friendly Iranian initiatives offered to the George W. Bush Administration.

Flynt L. Leverett, now with Brookings and before a State Department and CIA official, listed three initiatives that were rejected. Right after the Sept. 11 attacks, Iran offered to help Washington overthrow the Taliban. The U.S. declined the offer. Second, in the spring of 2003, top Iranian officials sent the White House a detailed proposal for comprehensive negotiations to resolve questions regarding its weapons programs, relations with Hezbollah and Hamas and a Palestinian peace agreement with Israel. This proposal was rebuffed and ignored.

Third, in October 2003, European officials secured an agreement from Iran to suspend Iranian uranium enrichment and to pursue talks that Mr. Leverett said "might lead to an economic, nuclear and strategic deal." The Bush administration "refused to join the European initiative, ensuring that the talks failed," he added.

A few days ago, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Iran was developing a capability for making nuclear weapons someday but was not yet building a bomb. So why is the Obama Administration talking about a western boycott of Iran's oil exports, so crucial to its faltering, sanctions-ridden economy? Is this latest sanction designed to squeeze Iranian civilians and lead to the overthrow of the regime? Arguably it may backfire and produce more support for the government.

Backing the Iranian regime into such a fateful corner risks counter-measures that may disrupt the gigantic flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz. Should that occur, watch the prices of your gasoline, heating bill and other related products go through the roof--among other consequences.

Isn't it about time for the abdicator Congress to reassert its constitutional responsibilities? It owes the American people comprehensive, public House and Senate hearings that produce knowledgeable testimony about these issues and all relevant history for wide media coverage.

The drums of war should not move our country into a propagandized media frenzy that preceded and helped cause the Iraq invasion with all the socio-cide in that country and all the costly blowbacks against U.S. national interests?

It is past time for the American citizenry to wake up and declare: Iran will not be an Iraq Redux!

Ralph Nader

Ralph Nader is a consumer advocate, lawyer, and author. His most recent book - and first novel - is, *Only The Super-Rich Can Save Us*. His most recent work of non-fiction is *The Seventeen Traditions*.