

# Iran: Diplomacy-The First Resort

**If we attack Iran, your constituents will face at least \$6/gallon gas and a deepening recession, among other serious consequences.**

**Let's consider more responsible options.**

America is still embroiled in a ruinous, potentially three-trillion-dollar experience in Iraq which we entered based upon assumptions about threats of WMDs, including nuclear weapons, now proven false. Amazingly, today there is a precipitous rush to consider severe sanctions or military action against Iran, based on surprisingly similar and unproven assumptions. We do not even have diplomatic relations with Iran to discuss the perceived threat. In such an information vacuum, we urge rational dialogue.

## **Our Objectives:**

- **To keep America secure, while defusing the volatile relations with Iran**
  - **To promote stability in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf**
- **To restore America's position as a trusted and moral world leader**

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## **Let's Keep Perspective....**

Historically relations with Iran have been strained, but recently the possible nuclear threat has been blown out of any reasonable proportions. For decades we have lived with the potential of nuclear war with the former USSR and other countries which actually possessed nuclear weapons, but skillful diplomacy has avoided such a disaster. Iran has no such weapons, and there is time for diplomacy.

Demonizing Iran and fanning fear are not helping. Ironically, Iran helped the US effort in Afghanistan in 2001 and is in a position to aid other US goals in the Middle East, particularly with regard to stability in Iraq. Name calling, threats of attack and active efforts at regime change only serve to strengthen the Iranian hard-liners. There is a better way if we deal fairly and rationally with the situation.

## **Iran's Nuclear Program**

- As a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran has the right to a peaceful nuclear energy program, of which uranium enrichment is a normal and accepted operation.

- The 2007 US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) concluded that Iran had a covert nuclear weapons program, but stopped it in 2003.
- Iran's nuclear *energy* program is inspected by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and Iran is known to be years away from the capability to produce bomb grade uranium, if that were its goal.

Iran is not going to give up what it considers its right by international treaty to have a peaceful nuclear power program. **The intelligent approach would be to negotiate with them to assure they do not develop a nuclear weapon.**

## **Attack on Iran would be disastrous**

With our over-extended military and weak economy, we are in no position to attack Iran. If we do, **the most likely result would be swift retaliation by Iran that would disrupt oil flow from the Persian Gulf, trigger a major spike in gas prices, and a global recession.** Other likely results include:

- Iranian attacks on US troops in Iraq, Kuwait, and other countries, and **further chaos in Iraq.**
- The killing of thousands, inspiring even greater hostility toward the US in Iran and worldwide.
- Increasing any Iranian extremists' potential desire for nuclear weapons.

### **Diplomacy, the Smart Alternative**

The smart approach is to do what true statesmen have always done: sit down and diplomatically negotiate a peaceful resolution. Historically, the American way was to have our military at the ready to back up our diplomacy as a last resort, not the first resort.

Talking with those with whom we disagree is not a sign of weakness, or an encouragement to terrorists. It is the most effective way to understand their position, know their capabilities, and explore ways to find a win-win outcome, like a good business deal. Rhetoric about attacks and sanctions is naïve and non-productive. Bills such as HC Res. 362 and S Res. 580 (military blockade of Iran) are provocative and lend credence to the idea that we should not talk with Iran but force them to a certain point of view.

### **Bi-Partisan Bill: H. Con. Res. 321**

We urgently need to push for a comprehensive, multi-national diplomatic initiative, as recommended by the Iraq Study Group. This regional effort must be inclusive of all nations and major representative groups, including Iran and Syria. It must be serious, sustained, and have the highest level of support. Half-hearted, low-level, un-sustained efforts will not suffice. HCR 321 is a sound bi-partisan approach with many benefits including:

- An opportunity to create a forum for dealing with regional issues, which would include Iran and could diffuse the current stalemate.
- Reduced isolation of Iran, leading eventually to trust and a working relationship.
- Iranian cooperation in Iraq, allowing the US to withdraw without fear of interference and later undermining of the country's stability.

### **Signs of Iranian Cooperation**

Notwithstanding their government, most Iranians are not religious militants. Iranians have been struggling to make their country an independent, secular democracy since their Constitutional Revolution of 1905-06. On the whole, the Iranian people like America and our democratic ideals. They helped us defeat the Taliban in 2001, and in 2003 made a clear offer to the US to restrict their nuclear program to domestic energy and to discontinue support for Hezbollah, to which the US never responded.

### **Learning from History**

One of the main reasons we have troubled relations with Iran today is that the US and other Western powers have long attempted to manipulate its government. **In 1953 Iran had a secular, democratic government, which was overthrown by a CIA-instigated coup.** This put Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in power with a regime so oppressive it eventually led to the Islamic Revolution and establishment of the current fundamentalist Islamic Republic. Just as we supported Saddam Hussein in Iraq for years, we have an abysmally misguided record of interference in Iran. Calls for regime change must be replaced with responsible diplomacy as a matter vital to our own best interest and that of the world.

### **Actions We Endorse**

- Please do not co-sponsor or vote for HC Res 362 or S Res 580 or similar bills that call for a military blockade or similar provocative measures which could be precursors to war.
- Co-sponsor HCR 321, which calls for comprehensive diplomacy in that region.
- Help provide the leadership to return us to diplomacy, not military force, as our most effective tool of foreign policy.

**The Council for the National Interest**  
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