



From President Bush: *“Iran poses a dangerous threat to world peace... We’ve got a leader who wants to destroy Israel...So I’ve told people that, if you’re interested in avoiding World War III, it seems like you ought to be interested in preventing them from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon.”* – Oct. 17, 2007

Here Are the Facts.

- U.S. leaders in both parties justified the invasion of Iraq with the claim that Saddam Hussein had a nuclear weapons program and would soon acquire the bomb. Most Americans believed this. But the shocking fact is that Saddam Hussein was telling the truth. It is no longer in dispute: Iraq had no nuclear weapons program, or weapons grade uranium, or any other “weapons of mass destruction”. A war that has taken the lives of 3876 U.S. soldiers, and has caused the violent deaths of over one million Iraqis since March 2003, *was not necessary* as a means to any defensive purpose.
- Iran’s economy is the size of Finland’s. Its \$4.8 billion annual defense outlay is dwarfed by U.S. military expenditures 140 times greater. Iran is surrounded on all sides by allies of the United States -- two with nuclear arms -- and by U.S. bases and fleets capable of wiping Iran off the face of the earth. Iran has not invaded a country since the late 18th Century – although it was invaded by Iraq in 1980, with the full military, economic, and political support of the United States. Objectively, who is the threat to whom?
- Does Iran have a program to develop nuclear weapons? The world’s expert authority on this topic is the International Atomic Energy Agency, headed by Nobel Peace Prize winner Mohamed ElBaradei. Based on IAEA investigations he has said repeatedly that *we do not know* that Iran is enriching uranium to build a nuclear warhead. All intelligence agencies agree that *if* Iran had such a program it would take at least five years to build one or two nuclear warheads. El Baradei emphasizes that, on the *unproven* hypothesis that Iran desires this weapon, “there is plenty of time for diplomacy, sanctions, dialogue and incentives to bear fruit”. Until the IAEA says otherwise, Iran’s current program of uranium enrichment is lawful under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- The United States now claims the right to wage “preventive war” – a war started to prevent a hypothetical future threat. So did Japan justify its attack on Pearl Harbor, and the Nazis their invasion of Holland and Norway. At the historic 1946 Nuremberg Trials the United States and the world firmly rejected this doctrine. Starting a war when one is not attacked, or not in response to an immediate and overwhelming threat, constitutes a *crime of aggressive war* under international criminal law.
- Contrary to press reports and U.S. officials, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad did not threaten to destroy Israel by armed attack. Accurately translated, Ahmadinejad said that the “regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the pages of time”. This can be understood as a confident prediction that Israel’s illegal occupation of Jerusalem will one day end, or possibly that the land of Israel and Palestine will eventually become a single multi-ethnic state. Nothing in this statement implies the intent to destroy Israel by military means.
- The United States has no principled objection to nuclear weapons proliferation in the Middle East. The U.S. allowed Great Britain to help equip Israel with 200 or more nuclear warheads. We now know that the Reagan and first Bush administrations secretly helped Pakistan’s develop its nuclear arsenal, all the while denying that Pakistan had a program to build the bomb. The policy was aimed at enlisting Pakistan in the military defeat of the Soviet neighboring Afghanistan, and consolidating Pakistan as a trusted U.S. ally for U.S. control of the Middle East. On nuclear proliferation only one thing matters to Washington: Will a country submit to American power over the vast oil reserves of the Middle East, or will it

demand respect for itself as a sovereign state, with independent control over its own resources and influence in its region of the world? Iran's demand for sovereignty is its one unforgivable sin – because it blocks U.S. ambition for total dominance over 2/3 of the world's low-cost oil reserves.

But What If One Day Iran Does Get a Nuclear Weapon?

Iran could not use its bomb as an aggressive act against other countries. This has been noted by U.S. and Israeli military and intelligence experts, including Robert Gates. Iran's bomb would only serve as a defensive deterrent against an Israeli or U.S. attack on its own territory.

Gen. John Abizaid, retired commander of the U.S. Central Command, responsible for all U.S. forces assigned to the Middle East: "I believe the United States, with our great military power, can contain Iran. Let's face it -- we lived with a nuclear Soviet Union, we've lived with a nuclear China, and we're living with nuclear powers as well...The United States can deliver clear messages to the Iranians that makes it clear to them that while they may develop one or two nuclear weapons, they'll never be able to compete with us in our true military might and power." (CNN, Sept. 18, 2007).

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in a response to a question at the Senate hearing confirming him as Secretary of Defense. Senator Lindsay Graham: "Do you believe the Iranians would consider using that nuclear weapons capability against the nation of Israel?" Gates: "I don't know that they would do that, Senator. I think that the risks for them obviously are enormously high...I think that they would see it in the first instance as a deterrent. They are surrounded by powers with nuclear weapons -- Pakistan to their east, the Russians to the north, the Israelis to the west, and us in the Persian Gulf."

Martin van Creveld, a professor of military history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: "...Since 1945 hardly one year has gone by in which some voices — mainly American ones concerned about preserving Washington's monopoly over nuclear weapons to the greatest extent possible — did not decry the terrible consequences that would follow if additional countries went nuclear. So far, not one of those warnings has come true. To the contrary: in every place where nuclear weapons were introduced, large-scale wars between their owners have disappeared. ("The World Can Live with a Nuclear Iran", *Jewish Daily Forward*, Sep 24, 2007).

Dr. Reuven Pedatzur, Senior Lecturer at the Strategic Studies Program, Tel Aviv University, Director of the Galili Center for Strategy and National Security, and a fighter pilot in the Israeli Air Force reserves: "It is almost certain that when the threat of Israeli reprisal involves nuclear missiles, the Iranian leaders will refrain from using nuclear weapons. There is no Iranian national interest that could justify the country's total destruction. ("Let them have nukes", *Haaretz*, 07/09/2006).

For Our Sources and Additional Information

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