
Preventing War Takes All Our Voices

Calling for Diplomacy - NOT WAR - With Iran

While the President and others in the administration publicly stress diplomatic efforts with Iran, many credible reports have been published outlining steps which are being taken toward military action. Actions and strategies used in the lead-up to the Iraq War are again being utilized. Reportedly these actions have included covert operations within Iran; use of dissident groups within Iran; conducting war gaming scenarios, and updating of war plans. In October, warships were deployed to the Persian Gulf.

As in the lead-up to the Iraq War, much of the media coverage and commentary is apocalyptic in nature with images of mushroom clouds, depictions of good (US) vs evil (Iran), and military conflict as inevitable. **We are told we have two options: do nothing and face doomsday or take military action against Iran now before they get a nuclear weapon.** Voices of reason find it hard to get their message out. Messages of fear lead us to feel manipulated, disturbed and confused.

There is another option – Diplomacy:

Women In Black Frederick mourns the devastating consequences of war and violence. We join with a growing number of voices - Mid East experts, military and intelligence professionals, religious and political leaders, peace organizations - expressing opposition to military action and calling for diplomatic negotiations with Iran.

There is no imminent crisis. We have time to pursue a peaceful solution - and to have a full and informed national debate. A broad consensus exists among experts that it will take Iran at least 5 to 10 years to build a “deliverable” nuclear weapon. No credible experts have said Iran’s nuclear program poses an imminent threat either to U.S. or regional security in this decade, **if ever.** *Iran maintains that its program is for peaceful purposes only and that it has no desire to acquire nuclear weapons. No credible evidence to the contrary has been provided by the U.S. or its allies.*

Military action is not the answer: Our first line of defense against the threat of nuclear weapons is threat reduction, confidence building, and diplomacy. The use of proven strategies like smart, tough diplomacy and rigorous international monitoring is needed— not counterproductive use of force. Senior military and intelligence officials agree that military action against Iran, whether air strikes or a full-scale invasion, would entail enormous risks (including risks to U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan). As we’ve seen in Iraq, military action can unleash unforeseen forces beyond our control and cause unintended consequences. Experts tell us war with Iran would be far worse and that no good or effective military solutions exist.

Diplomacy is far more likely than force to produce a satisfactory resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue and to protect America’s security. Serious, effective diplomacy requires a willingness to engage in face-to-face give-and-take negotiation balancing strongly held positions and tough bargaining with meaningful incentives and respectful treatment of all parties. The U.S approach to dealing with Iran has too often put threats and preconditions in the foreground causing predictable hardening of Iran’s position and undermining international support for the American position.

America’s long-term national interests in an interconnected world are not served by policies that increase violence in the greater Middle East. Most Iranians aspire to greater integration with the global economy and community; military threats and diplomatic insults will strengthen hardline leaders who play on Iranian nationalism. Reckless strategies will not resolve current problems but will only make matters worse.

As rational, moral people we have the duty and the power to ask questions and to hold our elected leaders responsible for their policy decisions. In the recent elections Americans voiced their dissatisfaction with

current policies in Iraq. Our voices were clearly heard. **Now it's time to exercise our influence before another ill advised, destructive war begins.**

What you can do:

Tell your elected officials to use diplomacy not military action in Iran:

Congressman Bartlett: <http://www.bartlett.house.gov/> 202/225-2721 or 888-297-8006

Senator Mikulski: <http://www.mikulski.senate.gov/mailform.html> 202/224-4654

Senator Cardin: U.S. Senate switchboard: 202/224-3121 - ask for Sen. Cardin's office

<http://www.cardin.senate.gov/mailform.html>

White House Comment Line: 202/456-1111

Sign Peace Action's petition: www.peace-action.org/Iranpetition.html

Get involved locally: No Iran War Campaign, an initiative of the Peace Resource Center; www.frederickpeace.org; frederickpeace@juno.com or call 301/663-6117

Two of many groups involved in the issue:

Friends Committee on National Legislation: <http://www.fcnl.org> http://www.fcnl.org/issues/issue.php?issue_id=123

Resources on Iran - open letters from Congressional Representatives, Mid East Experts, and religious leaders opposing military action in Iran; segments of an in depth report "Iran: Consequences of a War"

Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran: www.campaigniran.org/

Other resources on this issue:

Two op-eds by Charles A. Kupchan and Ray Takeyh, Council on Foreign Relations Senior Fellows:

The wrong way to fix Iran: "Instead of isolating Iran and seeking to undermine the regime from the outside, Washington should engage Iran, bringing about a natural process of political reform from within.

http://www.cfr.org/publication/9963/wrong_way_to_fix_iran.html

Dealing with Tehran: The key lies in Iran's history http://www.cfr.org/publication/10281/dealing_with_tehran.html

NPR Fresh Air (audio) Aug. 30, 2006 Excellent commentary on US policy on Iran and nuclear proliferation.

Nuclear Weaponry, Yesterday and Today: Joseph Cirincione, formerly Non-proliferation expert, Carnegie Endowment for Peace; currently Senior V.P. National Security and International Policy, Center for American Progress <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5736786>

History of 1953 CIA coup which overthrew the democratically elected government of Prime Minister

Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran: <http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/>

Two New Yorker articles by Seymour M. Hersh on threat of war with Iran: The Iran Plans: Would President

Bush go to war to stop Tehran from getting the bomb? "The Bush Administration while publicly advocating diplomacy in order to stop Iran from pursuing a nuclear weapon, has increased clandestine activities inside Iran and intensified planning for a possible major air attack." http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/060417fa_fact

Last Stand: The military's problem with the President's Iran policy. "Inside the Pentagon, senior commanders have increasingly challenged the President's plans, according to active-duty and retired officers and officials."

http://www.newyorker.com/printables/fact/060710fa_fact

The Next War: Daniel Ellsberg relates how he and others have failed to warn the US Congress and the American public in a timely manner about false, misleading and dangerous policy decisions leading to wars in Viet Nam and Iraq. He calls for principled insiders to stop the next war now to prevent a disastrous war with Iran.

<http://www.harpers.org/TheNextWar.html>

To the US and Iran: Do Not Wage War: Negotiate: Open letter from Shirin Ebadi and Jody Williams calling for the people and governments of both countries to back away from a disastrous war. http://www.progressive.org/media_mpebadi082906

Statement for Peace Between Iran and the US initiated by Nobel laureates, Shirin Ebadi and Jody Williams

http://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/news.php?WEBYEP_DI=8

http://www.parstimes.com/news/archive/2006/peace_statement.html

Women In Black is an international grassroots movement of women united in their commitment to peace, restorative justice and human rights. WIB vigils are present in 40 countries and in 38 US states. **Vigil Schedule:** 1st Friday, 12 - 12:30 & 2nd Wed. 6:30 - 7 of each month, intersection of Market & Patrick Streets. For more information about Women In Black Frederick, Md. see www.wibfrederick.org; info@wibfrederick.org or call 301/834-7581.