

Iranian nuclear crisis / United States should attack Iran

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Position: United States should attack Iran

This position addresses the topic Iranian nuclear crisis.

For this position

“ Even without initiating an attack on us or an ally, Tehran would use its nuke as an umbrella over its drive to dominate the Middle East and beyond. Like Lenin and Hitler, Admadinejad has a grand vision. "Thanks to the blood of the martyrs, a new Islamic revolution ... will soon reach the entire world," he crows. Bolstered by nukes, Iran's aggressive ambitions would not be stopped without a big war. Only strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities can forestall these terrible scenarios.”

From Iranian bomb 'intolerable', by Joshua Muravchik (*USA Today*, November 20, 2007) ([view](#))

“ We have considerable information about these facilities; by some estimates they comprise about 1,500 targets. If we hit a large fraction of them in a bombing campaign that might last from a few days to a couple of weeks, we would inflict severe damage. This would not end Iran's weapons program, but it would certainly delay it.”

From Bomb Iran, by Joshua Muravchik (*Los Angeles Times*, November 19, 2006) ([view](#))

“ A manifestly divided and corrupt United Nations, a feckless and gun-shy intelligence establishment and an administration trying to use a kinder, gentler approach in the face of a gathering threat - that is a formula for trouble, if not disaster. Together, it all signals to any would-be aggressor that there will be no real consequences for defying the world, that Western-style diplomacy is only a fig leaf for weakness and indecision.”

From How not to deal with Iran, by Arthur Herman (*New York Post*, March 14, 2008) ([view](#))

“ ... we might consider countering this act of Iranian aggression with a military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities. Why wait? Does anyone think a nuclear Iran can be contained? That the current regime will negotiate in good faith? It would be easier to act sooner rather than later.”

From It's Our War, by William Kristol (*The Weekly Standard*, July 24, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “Already Iran has begun to ration gasoline, setting off major riots. Because of Iran's heavy subsidies and failure to attract new investment, some analysts believe it will have to start importing oil within five to 10 years — even though it has the world's No. 2 oil reserves. A well-targeted strike on Iran's main gasoline refinery would ruin its economy. So would a strike, now rather than later, on its nuclear facilities at Natanz and Bushehr.” ”

From *Cracking Iran, From Inside And Out*, by Investor's Business Daily editorial board (*Investor's Business Daily*, July 10, 2007) (view)

“ “Realistically speaking, the point of this multilateral exercise cannot be to stop Iran's nuclear program by diplomacy. That has always been a fantasy. It will take military means. There would be terrible consequences from an attack. These must be weighed against the terrible consequences of allowing an openly apocalyptic Iranian leadership to acquire weapons of genocide.” ”

From *The Perils of Using 'The Allies'*, by Charles Krauthammer (*The Washington Post*, August 25, 2006) (view)

“ “Resolution 1701 shows that, for the time being at least, the balance has likewise shifted to the terrorists and their state sponsors. Like Munich, it marks the triumph of the principle of putting off until tomorrow what needs to be done today. Like Munich, it will mean not peace in our time, but a bigger war in our future.” ”

From *The Mideast's Munich*, by Arthur Herman (*New York Post*, August 16, 2006) (view)

Against this position

“ “But nukes are useful only if they are not used. If Iran gets them, it will quickly learn--if it doesn't know already--what Kim, Mao Tse-tung, Nikita Khrushchev and Josef Stalin came to understand: Launching a nuclear attack guarantees your destruction. It violates the first mission of every government, which is self-preservation.” ”

From *Misreading Iranian threat*, by Steve Chapman (*Chicago Tribune*, September 28, 2006) (view)

“ “It is both possible and desirable to solve the problems between the United States and Iran through direct talks. Such diplomacy will best serve the interests of the American and Iranian people if it is conducted in a transparent fashion. This transparency would not only make it impossible for advocates of war to increase tensions but also would help isolate them.” ”

From *Letter to America*, by Akbar Ganji (*The Washington Post*, September 21, 2006) (view)

“ “But however one judges the risks, the one thing we should have learned from Iraq and Lebanon is that military “solutions” can leave us worse off than before.” ”

From *Starting Another War*, by Nicholas D. Kristof (*The New York Times*, September 12, 2006) (view)

“ "Tehran's nuclear ambitions are real and dangerous, but its program is not nearly as advanced as is often implied. Most serious estimates suggest that Iran would need between five and 10 years to achieve even a modest, North Korea-type, nuclear capacity." ”

From *The Year of Living Fearfully*, by Fareed Zakaria (*Newsweek*, September 11, 2006) (view)

“ "Iran has the reach to deliver an unconventional armed response in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf - as well as on the streets of London. The economic impact could be even greater, given Iran's grip on the 20% of global oil supplies that are shipped through the Strait of Hormuz. It would also certainly set back the cause of progressive change in Iran." ”

From *The fallout from an attack on Iran would be devastating*, by Seumas Milne (*The Guardian*, October 5, 2007) (view)

“ "Large numbers of Iranians are fed up with their government's corruption and repression and with being branded a pariah state. Rain down American bombs, however, and the mullahs and Iran's Holocaust-denying president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, are more likely to be turned into national heroes than hung from lampposts. And that's not even calculating the international fury or the additional mayhem Tehran could wreak in Iraq or what would happen to world oil prices." ”

From *Trash Talking World War III*, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, October 29, 2007) (view)

“ "Practically speaking, the United States doesn't even have enough soldiers to fight in Iraq. We've outsourced the war to mercenaries. We haven't even had enough National Guard troops to help with the California wildfires." ”

From *Rein in the rush to a war in Iran*, by Chicago Sun-Times editorial board (*Chicago Sun-Times*, October 28, 2007) (view)

“ "An American invasion is out of the question. But perhaps we could do to Iran what the Iranians are doing to us in Iraq, where they are funneling weapons and money to militias that are killing our soldiers." ”

From *How to handle Iran*, by Max Boot (*Los Angeles Times*, October 25, 2006) (view)

“ "As the antiapartheid movement found, divestment helps put more starch in government sanctions. If the 400 or so European and Asian companies doing business in Iran were forced by global investors to withdraw, they would be upset about it, but less motivated to weaken sanctions imposed by their own countries. Isolation and the threat of economic collapse wouldn't necessarily drive the regime from power, as Gaffney thinks, but it could strengthen the opposition in ways that angry rhetoric from Washington won't." ”

From *Before We Bomb Iran ...*, by Jonathan Alter (*Newsweek*, October 15, 2007) (view)

“ "Finally, Muravchik provides his real reason for wanting to bomb Iran: "An Iranian bomb would constitute a dire threat to Israel's 6 million-plus citizens." But, beyond falsely assuming an Iranian bomb, Muravchik fails to mention the threat posed to Iran by both Israel's and America's nuclear arsenals." ”

From Neocon Militarist Joshua Muravchik: Stoking the Conflagration in the Middle East, by Walter C. Uhler (*The Huffington Post*, November 27, 2006) (view)

“ "Iran is fully capable of using its clients to initiate hostilities that, among other things, could send oil prices soaring to a level that makes \$100-a-barrel look like a bargain. There's also the risk that the attacks would fail because Iran has strong air defenses and is thought to have buried and dispersed its nuclear facilities. Captured U.S. pilots would recall the Iran hostage crisis of 1979-80. Further, attacks would rally Iranians behind the ayatollahs just as opposition to hard-liners might be gaining strength." ”

From U.S.-Iran collision course calls for diplomatic brakes, by USA Today editorial board (*USA Today*, November 20, 2007) (view)

“ "If the pressure is not to be military, it can only be economic. The US has now done almost all it can economically, including frightening European banks off financing trade with and investment in Iran, but it does not itself have a major commercial relationship to withhold. Europe does. According to the European commission, 27.8% of Iran's trade last year was with the EU, making it the country's biggest trading partner." ”

From Facing disaster in Iran, Europe must finally make the hard choices, by Timothy Garton Ash (*The Guardian*, November 1, 2007) (view)

“ "The American belligerence and its threats to use force only strengthens the argument of those who suggest that the best way of deterring America is through the possession of the bomb. It is hard for advocates of diplomacy to get far when Washington deploys a large armada off Iran's coast and asserts the right to preemptive use of force. In one of the many paradoxes of Iran, the cause of nuclear defiance is enhanced by Washington's rhetorical excess and aversion to meaningful dialogue with Tehran." ”

From Taking threats off the table before sitting with Iran, by Ray Takeyh (*The Boston Globe*, May 3, 2007) (view)

“ "This latest report is alarming, but it must not be used as an excuse by Washington hard-liners to launch another war. There are no good military options. The United States and the other major powers — Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany — have yet to put together a serious package of incentives and sanctions that might persuade Iran to change course. That must include a credible American offer of security guarantees and normalized relations if Tehran abandons any nuclear weapons ambitions." ”

From Iran and the Inspectors, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, May 28, 2008) (view)

“ "This resolution finally passed in part because President Bush is so weakened by the latest National Intelligence Estimate on Iran, by domestic economic woes and by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that the Russians, Chinese and Europeans no longer fear that he'd attempt to take advantage of a tougher U.N. stance to justify a military attack on Iran in his waning days in office. If Bush would clench his teeth and stop threatening Iran, perhaps the rest of the world will feel the need to do more to contain it." ”

From Putting Iran on notice, by Los Angeles Times editorial board (*Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 2008) (view)

“ “Unlike in 1981, when Israel destroyed Iraq’s nuclear reactor at Osirak, there is no single target. A sustained bombing campaign would end up killing many civilians and still might not cripple Iran’s nuclear program. Tehran also has many frightening ways to retaliate. And even Arab states who fear Iran shudder at the thought of America, or its ally Israel, bombing another Muslim country and the backlash that that could provoke.” ”

From Threatening Iran, by The New York Times editorial board (*The New York Times*, June 10, 2008) (view)

“ “There is little doubt that financial sanctions that punish Iran's elite and its business class are, over time, more likely to crimp President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's nuclear ambitions than any U.S. military action, which would only rally the Iranian people around their unpopular leader.” ”

From Sanctions with sense, by Los Angeles Times editorial board (*Los Angeles Times*, July 9, 2007) (view)

“ “'Why wait?' Well, one reason is that the United States has not been attacked. A second is a small thing called the Constitution. Where does George W. Bush get the authority to launch a war on Iran? When did Congress declare war or authorize a war on Iran? Answer: It never did. But these neoconservatives care no more about the Constitution than they cared about the truth when they lied into war in Iraq.” ”

From This is not our war, by Pat Buchanan (*The Miami Herald*, July 26, 2006) (view)

“ “'Why wait?' Perhaps because the U.S. military has enough on its plate in the deteriorating wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which both border Iran. And perhaps because containment, although of uncertain success, did work against Stalin and his successors, and might be preferable to a war against a nation much larger and more formidable than Iraq.” ”

From Transformation's Toll, by George F. Will (*The Washington Post*, July 18, 2006) (view)

“ “For an action to qualify as ‘preemptive’ (as opposed to the uncontroversially illegal ‘preventive’), it must be in response to “incontrovertible evidence that an enemy attack is imminent”. Now, it is obvious that no such evidence exists in the case of Iran. Thus, any use of force aimed at destroying Iran’s nuclear capacity would be preventive, not preemptive, and would thus be illegal.” ”

From Iran Has A Right To Attack Israel, by heathlander (*Daily Kos*, January 7, 2007) (view)

“ “If Iranians no longer feel the need to rally around their leaders under the threat of an imminent confrontation with the West, might they now start to look harder at their shambles of an economy, unemployment and inflation in double digits, gasoline rationed, and start to demand more? Might they ask the obvious question: Is the drive to enrich uranium worth it?” ”

From A hard winter in Iran, by Chicago Tribune editorial board (*Chicago Tribune*, February 9, 2008) (view)

“ “We have not yet done everything we can. Broadly speaking, the US needs to offer more carrots, the EU needs to brandish more sticks.” ”

From We must stop Bush bombing Iran, and stop Iran getting the bomb, by Timothy Garton Ash (*The Guardian*, February 8, 2007) (view)

“ "Not only would a foreign invasion of Iran vitiate popular support for human rights activism, but by destroying civilian lives, institutions and infrastructure, war would also usher in chaos and instability. Respect for human rights is likely to be among the first casualties." ”

From The Human Rights Case Against Attacking Iran, by Shirin Ebadi, Hadi Ghaemi (*The New York Times*, February 8, 2005) (view)

“ "Iran is still years away from being a nuclear threat, and our experience with "preventive war" in Iraq should teach us a thing or two. Launching another such war without international approval would leave us even more politically isolated and militarily overstretched." ”

From Congress must stop an attack on Iran, by Leonard Weiss, Larry Diamond (*Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 2007) (view)

“ "But only Obama can overcome the gridlock. He must break with the Bush years in more than words. That requires a solemn declaration that the United States recognizes and no longer seeks to destabilize the Islamic Republic — an implicit renunciation of force. A threat, in Iranian eyes, can only come from a domineering power, the very U.S. attitude this country cannot abide." ”

From The Unthinkable Option, by Roger Cohen (*The New York Times*, February 4, 2009) (view)

“ "Iran's nuclear program is a threat to peace, but it also presents an opportunity to start rebuilding America's credibility and leadership, which have been weakened by six years of incompetence. This is no time for chest-beating and dangerous brinkmanship. It is time for alliance-building, direct engagement and tough face-to-face negotiations." ”

From Diplomacy, Not War, With Iran, by Bill Richardson (*The Washington Post*, February 24, 2007) (view)

“ "Cannot the world's most powerful nation deign speak to the resentful and scheming regional power that is Iran? Can we not speak of the interests of others, work to establish a sustained dialogue, and seek to benefit the people of Iran and the region? Could not such a dialogue, properly conducted, begin a process that could, over time, help realign hardened attitudes and polarizing views within the region?" ”

From StopIranWar.com, by Wesley Clark (*The Huffington Post*, February 21, 2007) (view)

“ "Someday a future president may decide, in consultation with a future Congress, that the risks of seeking to contain a nuclear-armed Iran are greater than the risks of seeking to degrade or destroy its nuclear capability by force. Most intelligence estimates suggest that such a decision need not be faced in the next two years." ”

From The Iran Options, by The Washington Post editorial board (*The Washington Post*, February 18, 2007) (view)

“ "Such an attack would provide an excuse for the most reactionary and violent elements within the ruling elite to stifle any voice of dissent not just from within the civil society, but from the divided and factional ruling elite." ”

From Fight Iran with a war of ideas, by Azar Nafisi (*Los Angeles Times*, February 15, 2007) (view)

“ “[...] we don't know where all Iran's nuclear facilities are located, which is not a minor problem if we are contemplating their destruction. Even if we could hit a few of them, which we probably could, that would merely delay Iran's nuclear programme by a few years.” ”

From War with Iran is in no one's interests, by Anne Applebaum (*The Daily Telegraph*, February 14, 2007) (view)

“ “Don't be fooled by talk of a "surgical" strike on Iran's nuclear facilities. It would probably require thousands of sorties by our air force, over two to three weeks. It would mean bombing Iran's radar sites and air force, repeatedly striking multiple targets across the country, securing the Straits of Hormuz and oil facilities throughout the Persian Gulf, and preparing for attacks against our troops, citizens, allies, and interests across the region and beyond.” ”

From Meeting the Iranian Challenge, by Joe Biden (*The Huffington Post*, December 6, 2007) (view)

“ “The Iranian military's equipment is outdated and essentially incapable of mounting offensive operations. So Iran is trying to build nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver them. Under the circumstances, wouldn't you? Don't you think a little deterrence capability would serve the country well under those circumstances?” ”

From "The Iran debate has really...", by Matthew Yglesias (*Talking Points Memo*, August 30, 2006) (view)

“ “But if sanctions are doomed to failure, what about military options? As a last resort, couldn't America or Israel stop the nuclear programme by threatening to bomb Iran? Sadly or happily (depending on your worldview), the answer is a very clear “no”.” ”

From The Iranian paradox: to gain victory the West must first concede defeat, by Anatole Kaletsky (*The Times*, August 24, 2006) (view)

“ “Washington could authorize the European negotiators to make certain conditional offers, and see how Tehran responds. What's the worst that can happen? It doesn't work, the deal doesn't happen and Tehran resumes its nuclear activities. That's where we are today.” ”

From Talk to Tehran, by Fareed Zakaria (*The Washington Post*, August 16, 2005) (view)

“ “Military command and control is the prerogative of the clerical elite, which more than anything is concerned with preserving its own power structure. Even anti-Zionist posturing is rationally grounded in Iran's desire to increase its regional clout despite the limitation of being a non-Arab state. Militancy on behalf of the Palestinians is often just another instrument of statecraft, and a particularly cynical one. It isn't going to be pushed to the point where the Islamic Republic's survival is in jeopardy.” ”

From Military action is dangerous fantasy. We could live with a nuclear Iran, by David Clark (*The Guardian*, August 14, 2009) (view)

“ "Four wars simultaneously? Led by this crew? After what we've seen in Iraq and Afghanistan? Is it me, or are the people who run this country dangerously out of their minds?" ”

From Neocon Dreams, American Nightmares, by Eric Alterman (*The Nation*, August 10, 2006) (view)

“ "But the Bush doctrine of pre-emptive war, as laid out in the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States and reiterated in 2006, claims for the President the power to attack other countries--like Iran--simply because he asserts they pose a threat. It thereby removes the decision of war and peace from Congress and gives it the President. It is, as Senator Robert Byrd put it, 'unconstitutional on its face.'" ”

From Attack Iran, Ignore the Constitution, by Jeremy Brecher, Brendan Smith (*The Nation*, April 21, 2006) (view)

Mixed on this position

“ "By using America's full economic, political, and diplomatic clout and by working with dissident groups, the Soviet Union was defeated without firing a shot. This can be our goal in Iran as well." ”

From Attacking Iran is not a long-term solution, by Newt Gingrich (*The Guardian*, September 9, 2006) (view)

“ "Upon leaving this puzzling country, I ask myself what policy would make sense for America and its allies. The best answer may be the same one George Kennan proposed in 1947 for countering a rising Soviet Union: a policy of containment -- backed by the threat to use military force -- that seeks to limit the damage Iran can do while its revolution runs its course." ”

From Tehran's Two Worlds, by David Ignatius (*The Washington Post*, September 8, 2006) (view)

“ "The awkward reality is that Iran will only reconsider its plans if it decides that there is a plausible chance of a military strike against it. The equally inconvenient situation is that it has absolutely no reason at the moment to assume this." ”

From What a shambles over Iran, by Tim Hames (*The Times*, September 4, 2006) (view)

“ "Without a self-inspired reversal, a sanctions-prompted about-face or a revolution, Iran will further isolate itself, heighten its pariah status and invite a war beyond proxies." ”

From U.S.-Iran war need not happen, by John C. Bersia (*Orlando Sentinel*, September 4, 2006) (view)

“ "So far, Iranian leaders have suffered little for their nuclear ambition--in fact they have gained as oil prices have risen. But if they were to suffer severe and personal financial losses, it might affect their calculus." ”

From Hammerin' Hank, by Marc Sumerlin (*The Weekly Standard*, September 18, 2006) (view)

“ "Against millenarian fanaticism glorying in a cult of death, deterrence is a mere wish. Is the West prepared to wager its cities with their millions of inhabitants on that feeble gamble? These are the questions. These are the calculations. The decision is no more than a year away." ”

From *The Tehran Calculus*, by Charles Krauthammer (*The Washington Post*, September 15, 2006) (view)

“ "An emboldened nuclear Iran is no more in the interest of the Middle East's Sunni Arabs than it is of Australia or the US. The process of international diplomacy must still be given more time. But the world cannot wait forever. Thwarting the mad Iranian regime's nuclear ambitions by any means necessary should be a project that unites the world." ”

From *A nuclear Iran is not an option*, by The Australian editorial board (*The Australian*, September 1, 2006) (view)

“ "Thus, instead of debating how much longer to continue five years of failed diplomacy, we should be intensively considering what cooperation the U.S. will extend to Israel before, during and after a strike on Iran. We will be blamed for the strike anyway, and certainly feel whatever negative consequences result, so there is compelling logic to make it as successful as possible. At a minimum, we should place no obstacles in Israel's path, and facilitate its efforts where we can." ”

From *Israel, Iran and the Bomb*, by John Bolton (*The Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 2008) (view)

“ "The time may come sooner than we think when it is necessary for the protection of Iran's neighbors and the world to interrupt their bomb-making plans through unpeaceful means, by blowing up Natanz and similar operations. There would be howls in the U.S. and Europe, just as there were about Iraq. But the world would be a lot safer." ”

From *Getting Serious About Iran*, by George Melloan (*The Wall Street Journal*, January 17, 2006) (view)

“ "The West will have to decide what is more dangerous - to attack the infrastructure of the Iranians sooner rather than later or to deal with an Iranian nuclear capability after the fact. The choices are not between good and bad but between bad and worse - and the longer we delay, the more dire those bad and worse choices will become." ”

From *The nature of the beast*, by Mortimer Zuckerman (*New York Daily News*, December 4, 2006) (view)

“ "The point is to inch forward and allow no daylight to open up among allies. If and when it becomes clear that Iran won't budge, the alliance against it can be solid enough to inflict what pain is possible. Iran's economy depends on oil riches and handouts. Reducing trade and the refined gasoline Iran that imports (because it doesn't have enough refineries) are potential pressure points." ”

From *Iran's double talk leaves U.S., allies plenty of bad options*, by USA Today editorial board (*USA Today*, August 23, 2006) (view)

“ "We are all aware of the dangerous Middle East conditions the United States faces today after five and a half years of President Bush's leadership. So let's consider what the world might well look like if, in his remaining two and a half years, he were to follow the recommendations of his critics." ”

From Are Bush's critics right?, by Tony Blankley (*The Washington Times*, August 23, 2006) (view)

“ "If Iran gets nuclear weapons, there will be no diplomacy capable of protecting Israel. If Iran continues to fund and equip Hezbollah, there will be no stability or security for Israel. Diplomacy cannot substitute for victory against an opponent who openly states that he wants to eliminate you from the face of the earth." ”

From The Only Option Is to Win, by Newt Gingrich (*The Washington Post*, August 11, 2006) (view)

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