



Counting the Cost of War With Iran

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert seems confident that the course is set. "We reached agreement on the need to take care of the Iranian threat," Olmert said after his June 4 meeting with President Bush. "I left with a lot less question marks [than I had entered with] regarding the means, the timetable restrictions and America's resoluteness to deal with the problem," he said. According to Olmert, "George Bush understands the severity of the Iranian threat and the need to vanquish it, and intends to act on the matter before the end of his term in the White House."



Shortly after Olmert's U.S. visit, Israel conducted a drill over the eastern Mediterranean with over 100 warplanes, widely seen as a rehearsal for an Israeli attack on Iran's primary uranium enrichment facility at Natanz. Throughout June, Israeli Air Force jets also, reportedly, carried out flights over Jordanian airspace.

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Not surprisingly, Iran responded with a little saber-rattling of its own, test-firing a few of its Russian-supplied Shahab missiles. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice quickly warned Iran that the White House viewed its missile demonstrations as a threat against Israel that Washington would not tolerate. "We are sending a message to Iran that we will defend American interests and the interests of our allies," Secretary Rice said on July 10 during a trip to Eastern Europe. "We take very, very strongly our obligations to help our allies defend themselves and no one should be confused about that," she said.

The Democrat-controlled Congress is jumping on board the war wagon, with the blessing of Speaker Nancy Pelosi. House Concurrent Resolution 362, introduced on May 22, calls on the president to stop Iran from importing "all refined petroleum products." It has gained 238 cosponsors. A similar blockade measure in the Senate (S. Res. 580) has 35 cosponsors.

Since so many Democrats and Republicans alike seem completely impervious to moral and constitutional arguments against starting a war against Iran, let's consider a few of the compelling *practical* reasons for all Americans to oppose this mad folly.

Sky-high gas and diesel prices: Former CIA official Robert Baer suggests that an attack on Iran could translate into a quick jump to the \$12-a-gallon range for gasoline. OPEC Secretary-General Abdalla Salem El-Badri said recently that in the event of conflict with Iran, "prices would go unlimited.... I can't give you a number." According to El-Badri, OPEC "really cannot replace Iran's production — it's not feasible to replace it."

More crushing debt and soaring inflation: Our economy already is reeling from the effects of the hundreds of billions of dollars we have expended in our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (not to mention two or more *trillions* in future commitments). Taking on Iran is a far larger challenge and will result in



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much more government borrowing — *and* a vast increase in printing more dollars (that will be steadily depreciating in value).

A military stretched to the breaking point: The late Col. David Hackworth noted in 2004 that “right now the Army is trying to do the work of 14 divisions with 10 under-strength, active-duty divisions.” And he predicted the strain would cause “a mass exodus” from the armed services. Addressing the issue of a possible strike on Iran, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen told reporters at a July 2, 2008 press conference that “from the United States’ military perspective in particular ... opening up a third front right now would be extremely stressful on us.”

Potential military disaster: Russia has provided Iran with the Tor-M1 anti-aircraft missile systems, and reportedly the even more advanced S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems, both of which present a serious threat to our pilots. More worrisome still are reports that Russia has provided Iran with the super-fast Sunburn anti-ship missiles, against which our Navy has dubiously effective countermeasures.

Add to this the instability that an Israeli-U.S. attack on Iran would bring not only to the Middle East, but to the entire Muslim world. Besides tripping the wire for increased violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, we could expect new terror outbreaks in Turkey, Lebanon, Pakistan, Indonesia, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip — to name but a few powder kegs. And we have not even mentioned the havoc that could be caused here at home by the terrorists and Muslim radicals who continue to take advantage of our still criminally lax immigration policies and porous borders.



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