



Has War Against Iran Already Begun?

Either Iranian forces shot it down or it fell out of the sky. We may never know which, but now the Obama administration wants it back. Iran says no. It is apparently studying the craft's advanced stealth and other technology — and perhaps attempting to reverse engineer it.



This is not analogous to playful kids who accidentally throw a baseball into a neighbor's yard and ask for it back. The U.S. government has been making war sounds in Iran's direction for years, and these belligerent noises have grown louder in recent months. While there are grounds for believing the U.S. military does not want to attack Iran, which is far larger and more populous than Iraq and would require a long, bloody involvement throughout the region, President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton insist that "all options are on the table."

Those who insist that the U.S. government is a benevolent force in the world ought to take note that the Obama administration has not excluded nuclear weapons from the list of options.

But the present trouble only scratches the surface. For years the U.S. government has menaced Iran with a military presence in the region, including warships in the Persian Gulf. Indeed, Iran is virtually surrounded by American military bases. The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq put thousands of troops just across Iran's east and west borders. Other close U.S. allies in the region include Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Israel.

Admittedly, the Bush administration's overthrow of Iran's nemesis, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, seems to have introduced



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an incoherent note in an otherwise consistently anti-Iran policy. The now Shiite-ruled Iraq is closer to Iran's regime than Saddam's Sunni Ba'athist regime was. (The U.S. government supported Saddam when his military attacked Iran in 1980.)

Moreover, U.S. troops are leaving Iraq, as called for by the agreement negotiated between the Iraqi regime and the Bush administration. But the troops are not going far. As the Department of Defense puts it, the forces are simply being "repostured," that is, moved elsewhere in the region, including Kuwait. Iran surely has noticed.

The U.S. government wants the American people to believe that there are sound reasons for this belligerence, namely, that it is defensive and preemptive. Nonsense. As many have pointed out, U.S. intelligence agencies say Iran dropped its nuclear-weapons program over eight years ago, and the International Atomic Energy Agency has regularly certified that Iran has complied with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Every speck of Iran's uranium is accounted for by the IAEA — none has been diverted to weapons production.

Of course, U.S. regimes have portrayed Iran as aggressively anti-American since its 1979 Islamic revolution. But that narrative conveniently leaves out the fact that the CIA helped overthrow a democratic government and install the brutal Shah in 1953. Iran did not start the hostilities.

So is war against Iran ahead? Who can say for certain? The economic sanctions the U.S. has long maintained against Iran, which have been intensified of late, already constitute an act of war under international law and could be the prelude to overt war.



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The sanctions are apparently supposed to persuade the Iranian people, who unlike their rulers suffer privation, to overthrow their government. The problem for the U.S. policy is that sanctions more often than not have the opposite effect: they prompt the people to rally around the government to counter the external enemy.

But something even more ominous is becoming clear: a covert war against Iran. [Fox News](#) called the downed drone the latest in a series of mysterious events, including explosions and assassinations targeting Iran's nuclear scientists and its ballistic missile program. Some argue that the covert war against Iran's nuclear program is under way, but it began more than a year ago.

War without the American people's knowledge? It wouldn't be the first time.

A war with Iran would be catastrophic — for Iranians, Americans (government contractors excepted), and Israelis. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta believes that's the case, as do former Israeli Mossad chiefs. President Obama must do the decent thing and take all forms of warfare off the table.

Sheldon Richman is senior fellow at [The Future of Freedom Foundation](#) and editor of The Freeman magazine.



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