



Written by [Sheldon Richman](#) on December 13, 2011

Neocons Don't Believe Their Own Anti-Iran Propaganda

We're being lied to about the purported Iranian nuclear threat, and the war party knows it. In ways eerily reminiscent of the 2002 buildup to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the American people are being fed a steady diet of war propaganda about Iran and its alleged quest for a nuclear weapon. As with Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein, comparisons to Hitler circa 1938 abound. Max Boot, the neoconservative columnist, is just one of many propagandists working to agitate Americans into supporting a military attack on Iran.



He wrote recently, "After the failure to stop Hitler and Bin Laden, among others, Westerners were said to have suffered a 'failure of imagination.' We are suffering that same failure today as we fail to face up to the growing threat from the Islamic Republic."

The message is unmistakable: Time is running out. Get Iran now before it's too late.

But despite what Boot and his ilk would have us think, there is no evidence that Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapon. The U.S. government's dozen and a half intelligence agencies have twice said so. The latest International Atomic Energy Agency report recycled some old, discredited claims and fabricated "evidence" while nevertheless certifying that Iran has diverted none of its uranium to weapons production.

Yet those who are bent on war are undeterred. Republican president candidates (except for Ron Paul) try to outdo each other in their anti-Iran saber-rattling. Michele Bachmann has gone the furthest, recklessly peddling the falsehood that Iran's president (who doesn't control the military) has vowed to launch a nuclear attack on Israel and the United States as soon as a bomb is in hand. This is a lie.

An attack on Israel or the United States would be suicidal, and no one seriously thinks the ayatollahs seek the destruction of Persia. Moreover, Iran's leadership has issued a fatwa against nuclear weapons.

Now we know that even the neocon vanguard doesn't believe its own propaganda.

Occasionally, leading neoconservative intellectuals forget that the wider world is listening and say things that belie their own case for war. Take, for example, Danielle Pletka, vice president for foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute. In a recent video statement Pletka said:

The biggest problem for the United States is not Iran getting a nuclear weapon and testing it, it's Iran getting a nuclear weapon and not using it. Because the second that they have one and they don't do anything bad, all of the naysayers are going to come back and say, "See, we told you Iran is a responsible power. We told you that Iran wasn't getting nuclear weapons in order to use them immediately. ..."

And they will eventually define Iran with nuclear weapons as not a problem.

Let that sink in: the biggest — biggest — problem with Iran's acquiring a nuclear weapon is that it



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might not use it. Got that? And why would that be bad? Because “naysayers” (that is, people against war) would be able to point to Iran’s responsible conduct as proof that Iran is not irresponsible. Imagine that!

Pletka leaves the implication that the U.S. government should attack Iran, which would devastate that country and murder countless innocent people, in order to stop it from demonstrating that it is not a reckless, insane, and suicidal power in the Middle East. Has there ever been a worse reason to launch a war?

This is what passes for reason and logic among our “serious” foreign-policy thinkers in Washington. These are the same people who gave us Operation Iraqi Freedom, which killed or injured hundreds of thousands and created four million refugees.

But those who are prepared to sacrifice innocent Iranians to solve this “problem” aren’t mad. In their worldview, they are right to worry about Iran being perceived as a responsible power. Pletka’s colleague Thomas Donnelly spelled it out in *The Weekly Standard*: “We’re fixated on the Iranian nuclear program while the Tehran regime has its eyes on the real prize: the balance of power in the Persian Gulf and the greater Middle East.”

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