



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on December 16, 2011

Debate: Bachmann, Santorum Say Attack Iran; Paul Warns That's Overreacting

Fox News Channel host Bret Baier started the discussion on Iran in the Sioux City, Iowa, debate with a question that claimed "GOP nominee Paul would be running left of Obama on the issue of Iran." Baier had noted that Paul proposes removing economic sanctions against Iran, including the sanctions that Obama had imposed.

Paul responded by claiming the war-weary American people would be on his side. "But I would be running with the American people because it would be a much better policy," Rep. Paul replied, stressing that there's no evidence Iran is near to obtaining a nuclear weapon. "To me, the greatest danger is that we would overreact." Paul also likened the anti-Iran propaganda to the lead-up to the Iraq war, a war he opposed because he [discounted](#) exaggerated claims that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein possessed stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. "That's how we got involved in the useless war in Iraq and lost so much in Iraq."



Paul's argument drew a sharp response from former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum, who argued:

They've been at war with us since 1979. The IEDs that have killed so many soldiers, they are manufactured in Iran. Iran is not any other country. It is a country that is ruled by the equivalent of al Qaida on top of this country. They are a radical theocracy. The principle virtue of the Islamic Republic of Iran according to President Ahmadinejad is not freedom or opportunity, it's martyrdom. The idea, Ron, that mutual-assured destruction, like the policy during the cold war with the Soviet Union, would work on Iran when their principle virtue is martyrdom, mutual-assured destruction with respect to Iran would not be any kind of idea of preventing a war, it would be an inducement to war. This is what their objective is, their objective is to in fact to create a calamity. This is what their theology teaches. They believe that it is their mission to take on the West. They don't hate us because [of] what we do or the policies we have; they hate us because of who we are and what we believe in. And we need to make sure that they do not have a nuclear weapon, and we need to be working with the state of Israel right now. We need to use covert activities. And we need to plan a strike against their facilities and say to them that if you do not open up those facilities and close them down, we will close them down for you.

Rep. Paul stressed that Santorum's claim that Islamic theology is founded upon killing everyone is not based in reality: "To declare war on 1.2 billion Muslims and say all Muslims are the same, this is



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dangerous talk. Yeah, there are some radicals. But they don't come here to kill us because we're free and prosperous. Do they go to Switzerland and Sweden? I mean, that's absurd. If you think that's the reason, we have no chance of winning this. They come here and they explicitly explain it to us. The CIA has explained it to us. They said they come here and want to do us harm because we're bombing them."

Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann also took a shot at Paul, saying that Paul's claim that "the danger is us overreacting" would itself be a terrible danger. Bachmann said the opposite was true. "And the problem would be that the greatest underreaction in world history if we have an avowed madman who uses that nuclear weapon to wipe nations off the face of the Earth and we have an IAEA report that recently came out that said literally, Iran is within just months from being able to obtain that weapon."

I think I have never heard a more dangerous answer for American security than the one we just heard from Ron Paul. And I'll tell you the reason why. And the reason I say that is because we know without a shadow of a doubt Iran will take a nuclear weapon, they will use it to wipe our ally Israel off the face of the map. And they've stated that they will use it against the United States of America. Look no further than the Iranian constitution, which states unequivocally that their mission is to extend jihad across the world and eventually to set up a worldwide caliphate. We would be fools and knaves to ignore their purpose and their plan.

Rep. Paul stressed that an Iranian attack was far from certain and that the IAEA report Bachmann mentioned did not contain any evidence of an imminent Iranian nuclear weapon. CNN's "Truth Squad" fact checkers [concluded](#) that Paul — and not Bachmann — was factually correct after the debate.

On the Ron Paul campaign website, blogger Jack Hunter [made clear](#) that Ron Paul should be listened to because he has a history of being on target. In addition to being [amazingly accurate on the housing bubble/bust](#), Paul was [correct on the dire Iraq war alarmism](#) on alleged "weapons of mass destruction" possessed by Iraq's Saddam Hussein which turned out to be erroneous:

What is more likely? Circa 2003: That Iraq has WMDs and poses a great threat to the United States? Or what Ron Paul said — that America was overreacting and we would find ourselves in a quagmire?

In 2003, everyone said Ron Paul was wrong. In 2011, most Americans agree that Paul was right.

What is more likely? Circa 2011: That Iran might have a WMD and poses a great threat to the United States? Or what Ron Paul says — that America is overreacting concerning Iran and going to war with that country will find the US in a quagmire once again?

The notion that Paul is being "absurd" in his policy toward Iran does not make sense if history, experience and common sense have any bearing on the matter.

Photo of Ron Paul: AP Images

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