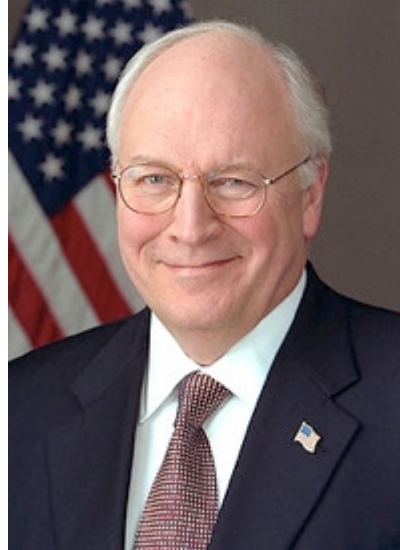




Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on December 14, 2011

Cheney: Obama Should Have Bombed Downed Drone In Iran

Former Vice President Dick Cheney has faulted President Barack Obama for requesting the return of an unmanned U.S. spy plane downed in Iran. Cheney said in an interview with CNN News that the United States should have taken military action to destroy the plane before the Iranians could gather critical intelligence and technological data from it.



"The right response would have been to go in immediately after it had gone down and destroy it," Cheney said. "You can do that from the air and, in effect, make it impossible for them to benefit from having captured that drone," said George W. Bush's Vice President, President Obama "asked nicely for them to return it, and they aren't going to," said Cheney, who predicted the Iranians will eventually send the drone back "in pieces after they've gotten all the intelligence they can out of it." Obama announced the request during a joint news conference with Iraq's prime minister, Nuri al-Maliki at the White House on Monday. "We have asked for it back," he said of the unmanned reconnaissance and surveillance aircraft. "We'll see how the Iranians respond."

Neither secretary of Defense Leon Panetta nor Secretary of State Hillary Clinton U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta are optimistic about getting the plane back intact, the [Daily Mail](#) of London reported. Secretary Clinton spoke at the U.S. State Department at a news conference with British Foreign Secretary William Hague. "We submitted a formal request for the return of our lost equipment as we would in any situation to any government around the world," said Clinton. "Given Iran's behavior to date, we do not expect them to comply but we are dealing with all of these provocations and concerning actions taken by Iran in close concert with our closest allies and partners." Clinton warned that "the path that Iran seems to be going down is a dangerous one for themselves and the region." The British foreign secretary agreed.

"We're not giving up on engagement with Iran, but on a number of occasions Iran has behaved in a way in recent weeks and months which has intensified confrontation with the rest of the world," Hague said. "We have seen an increasing predilection for dangerous and illegal adventures on the part of at least



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parts of the Iranian regime.” Clinton and Hague referred to a storming of British diplomatic compounds in Tehran, allegations that Iran tried to arrange the assassination of the Saudi ambassador to the U.S., Iran’s ongoing support for militant groups and its continued defiance of demands to prove its nuclear program is peaceful, the Daily Mail reported.

While the Iranians claimed they brought down the plane by “electronic ambush,” or cyber attack, the United States claims the plane went down due to an internal malfunction. Tehran has also disputed suggestions by U.S. officials that Iran would likely seek help from either Russia or China in culling intelligence from the downed spy plane. Iranian officials have said that using “reverse engineering,” they will be able to duplicate and mass produce spy planes for themselves.

Defense Secretary Panetta said it’s hard to estimate how much intelligence Iran will be able to get from the drone. But the President’s request for its return is appropriate, he said.

“I don’t expect that that will happen. But I think it’s important to make that request.”

News of the downed plane and the President’s reaction is widely perceived as an embarrassment to Obama , who is facing what will likely be a difficult battle for reelection in the coming year. Yet to some the embarrassing feature of the incident is not that the United States has been flying spy missions over a sovereign nation with whom we are not at war, but that Obama’s response has not been tough enough . The incident may prove to be added fuel to growing tensions between the United States and Iraq that may yet lead to another American war in the Middle East at a time when we are winding down our military involvement in Iraq and are still engaged in the Afghanistan War. The possibility of yet another war will also make it more difficult to achieve reductions in military spending at a time when the United States is trying to come to grips with deficits of more than a trillion dollars annually and a national debt now calculated to be in the neighborhood of \$15 trillion.



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