



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on April 9, 2015

Senator Cotton Calls for Bombing Iran Nuke Sites

Saying a successful aerial attack on Iran's nuclear facilities could be carried out in "several days," Senator Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), shown, said Tuesday President Obama should follow the example of President Bill Clinton's December 1998 bombing of Iraq. In an [interview](#) on the Family Research Council's *Washington Watch* radio program, first reported by BuzzFeed, Cotton said Obama wants Americans to think military action against Iran would require "150,000 heavy mechanized troops on the ground in the Middle East again as we saw in Iraq, and that's simply not the case."



The attack would be "something more along the lines of what President Clinton did in December 1998 during Operation Desert Fox. Several days air and naval bombing against Iraq's weapons of mass destruction facilities for exactly the same kind of behavior," Cotton said. "For interfering with weapons inspectors and for disobeying Security Council resolutions, all we're asking is that the president simply be as tough as in the protection of America's national security interest as Bill Clinton was."

The benefit to national security from Clinton's bombing of a nation thousands of miles away that had neither attacked nor threatened the United States might be hard to find. On the contrary, the campaign added fuel to the fires of a growing anti-American sentiment in the Middle East. The *Vanguards of Conquest* issued a communiqué to Islamist groups at the time calling for attacks against the United States "for its arrogance" in bombing Iraq.

Clinton may have been less concerned about "national security interest" than in diverting interest and attention away from the impeachment hearings nearing a conclusion in the House of Representatives over allegations of perjury against the president stemming from the investigation of his admittedly "inappropriate relationship" with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. The House vote to impeach the president came at the end of the four-day bombing campaign.

Similar suspicions had been aroused months earlier when Clinton ordered the August 20 missile strikes against suspected terrorist bases in Sudan and Afghanistan. Ostensibly a response to attacks two weeks earlier on two U.S. embassies in Africa, "Operation Infinite Reach" came just three days after Clinton was called to testify before a grand jury about the Lewinsky affair, prompting some to dub the missile attacks "Monica's War."

Like many congressional Republicans, Cotton has been harshly critical of the negotiations U.S. and European allies have conducted with Iran over its nuclear program. Under the interim, or "framework," agreement announced last week, the economic sanctions against Iran would be eased in return for Tehran's acceptance of limitations on material and technology that could be used to make an atomic weapon and its cooperation with international inspectors to monitor its nuclear program. Negotiators have until the end of June to reach a final agreement.



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While warnings of an imminent development of nuclear weapons by Iran go back decades, the Tehran government has insisted that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, including energy production and medical applications. Neither the International Atomic Energy Agency nor the National Intelligence Estimates produced by all 16 U.S. intelligence agencies in recent years have found evidence that Iran has been engaged in nuclear weapons production.

“There is no deal. There is no framework. There is only a list of dangerous U.S. concessions,” Cotton said, while predicting the final agreement “would be a very dangerous setback for America” and its allies. More dangerous, apparently, than launching an attack on Iran that could trigger a larger Middle East war than the U.S.-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan produced.

But the freshman senator is far from alone among Washington hawks in urging the “military option.” Former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton recently had an op-ed published in the *New York Times* under the heading “To Stop Iran’s Bomb, Bomb Iran.” As Jon Rainwater noted at *Huffington Post*, Bolton was a leading cheerleader for the Iraq War, having confidently asserted that “Saddam Hussein has hidden weapons of mass destruction and production facilities in Iraq.” Arizona Senator John McCain, the Republican presidential nominee in 2008, said on the Senate floor that Israel “may have to go rogue,” suggesting Prime Minister Netanyahu’s government might need to attack Iran with or without U.S. approval or assistance. “Let’s hope their warnings have not been mere bluffs,” McCain said.

Senate hawks seem determined to do whatever they can to torpedo the agreement being worked out with Iran through diplomatic channels. It is customary for political leaders to say during international crises that they view war as “a last resort.” For some in Washington, however, war is neither the last nor necessarily the first resort. It’s just their favorite resort.



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