



Written by on August 17, 2010

Iran Threatens “Israel’s Existence” If It Attacks Nuke Plant

Citing an interview with the Iranian National News Agency (IRNA), the Jerusalem Post reported on August 17 that Iranian nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi warned that an attack on Iranian nuclear facilities would be an “international crime.”

In his interview with IRNA, noted the *Post*, Salehi said that the impact of such a strike would be global. “This is stipulated in the resolutions passed by the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] and the UN Security Council as well as in the resolution adopted at the close of the NPT Review Conference,” he emphasized.



A Bloomberg News report carried by *Businessweek* on August 17 quoted from a strongly worded statement made by Iran’s defense minister, Ahmad Vahidi, in reply to questions about the possibility of an attack by Israel on the Russian-built atomic facility at Bushehr. “In that case we will lose a power plant, but Israel’s existence will be in danger,” answered Vahidi, in a statement carried by Iran’s state-run Mehr news agency.

Bloomberg quoted Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman, Ramin Mehmanparast, who said on August 17 that he “doubts” that Israel would “make such a dangerous move.” Mehmanparast said on Iran’s state television: “Any aggression against this power plant will result in a serious reaction.”

Sergei Novikov, the spokesman for Rosatom Corp., the Russian state nuclear holding company that built the 1,000-megawatt plant, said on August 13 that the Bushehr power plant will begin producing electricity in several months.

On August 13, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs told reporters: “Russia is providing the fuel [for Iran’s Bushehr power plant] and taking the fuel back out,” concluding that this means that Iran does not need its own enrichment program.

In response to Gibbs’s statement Iran’s Mehmanparast dismissed U.S. demands on Iran to suspend nuclear enrichment activities, stating that Gibbs should have known that when a nuclear power plant is launched in a country, it would need nuclear fuel too.

The Iranian nuclear fuel program enriches uranium to a 20-percent level of U-235 — required for a reactor in Tehran that is used to make medical isotopes. However, weapons-grade uranium must be enriched to about 90 percent U-235.

This latest controversy over Iran’s nuclear fuel enrichment and plant-building program was brought to a head by statements made by former U.S. ambassador to the UN John R. Bolton — a member of the internationalist Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and a participant in the neoconservative Project for the New American Century (PNAC).



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The *Jerusalem Post* noted that in an interview early on August 17 with Fox Business Network, Bolton warned that once the Bushehr facility is operational it will be too late for a military air strike against Iran because such an attack would spread radiation and harm Iranian civilians. "Once that uranium, once those fuel rods are very close to the reactor, certainly once they're in the reactor, attacking it means a release of radiation, no question about it," Bolton said. "Iran will achieve something that no other opponent of Israel, no other enemy of the United States in the Middle East really has and that is a functioning nuclear reactor."

Bolton initially said the deadline for destroying the plant was eight days. But in an Israel Radio interview later in the day, Bolton revised his estimate to three days, saying that Iran and Russia had announced they would begin fueling on August 20.

Speaking in language that was unusually provocative for a veteran diplomat, Bolton appeared to be giving advice to the Israelis when he said: "It has always been optimal that military force is used before the fuel rods are inserted. That's what Israel did in Osirak in 1991 [note: this actually occurred in 1981], and when they attacked the North Korean reactor built in Syria."

Retreating just a bit, Bolton said he did not foresee an Israeli strike against the reactor, stating: "Obviously if Israel were going to do something it wouldn't exactly be advertising it. But time is short."

The *Post* reported that Bolton also criticized Russia for assisting Iran in fueling the nuclear reactor. "The Russians are, as they often do, playing both sides against the middle. The idea of being able to stick a thumb in America's eye always figures prominently in Moscow," said Bolton.

Bolton seems more concerned about Russia's role in providing fuel for a reactor whose threat to anyone outside of Iran is merely speculative than he is about the role of Russia and its predecessor the Soviet Union in radicalizing the Middle East. Left to their own devices, moderate Arabs would be more interested in commerce, which is dependent on exporting oil, than in engaging in terrorist activities and exporting a militant brand of Islam. It is also a strong possibility that without the existence of Soviet-backed organizations such as the PLO, Israel and its more moderate neighbors would have settled their differences long ago.

But extensive research by writers from *The New American* and elsewhere has demonstrated time after time that the most radical and aggressive elements in the Middle East have long been financed and directed largely from Moscow and its communist allies.

The United States can also be held accountable for its interference in Iran's internal affairs, which directly contributed to the pro-Western Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi being forced from power in 1979, to be replaced with anti-Western clerics. If the Pahlavi dynasty still ruled in Iran, would anyone care how many nuclear plants Iran built?

As Thomas R. Eddlem observed in his article: "[The Soviet Roots of Terrorism](#)":

The roots of Soviet sponsorship of international Islamic terrorist organizations go all the way back to the beginning. And the beginning of "Islamic" terrorism can be laid at the feet of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The entire article is a valuable primer for those who would understand the real roots of Middle East terrorist organizations, which were inspired much more by the hammer and sickle than by the crescent.

Photo: Former Iranian Vice President and head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization Gholamreza Aghazadeh (left) and Russian Atomic Agency Chief Sergei Kiriyenko arrive to attend a joint press



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conference at the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran in 2009: AP Images



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