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## Politicians Want War with Iran

Eric Margolis

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The war of words between the US, Israel, and Iran intensifies by the day.

All the parties involved are shamelessly playing to domestic audiences in this election year. Israel keeps issuing threats it will attack Iran's nuclear power installations, though some of its senior security officials downplay an alleged threat from Iran.

US intelligence still maintains Iran is not working on nuclear weapons. UN nuclear inspectors confirm this view, though they have been pressured by the US, which pays a quarter of UN salaries, to suggest Iran might be working on something nefarious – though all Iran's nuclear sites are under strict UN inspection and satellite surveillance.

Not a peep from the UN about what global damage would be caused by an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear sites. Radioactive dust storms, to say the least.

The US Congress pulsates with war fever, fuelled by oncoming elections and huge cash donations. North America's media pounds the war drums.

Iran shows spectacular public relations ineptitude by fulminating against Israel, calling it a "tumor" that must be removed, and firing obsolete tactical missiles and staging flamboyant military exercises by its feeble armed forces.

In fact, Iran is doing the work of Israel's hard-right Likud government by convincing the world that the Jewish state faces another Holocaust. Canada's blustering, ill-informed foreign minister just repeated this absurd canard even though Iran is not believed to have any nuclear weapons. He preposterously compared Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Hitler.

Even Israel's hawkish defense minister recently opined that Iran is still some years away from having the ability to deploy a nuclear-armed missile.

Few ask the sensible question: why would Iran risk nuclear vaporization by Israel and or the US just to launch a small number of its inaccurate missiles at Israel? US and Israeli early warning satellites would spot any Iranian missiles at launch and bring down a nuclear holocaust on the Islamic Republic.

Israel's North American partisans, whipped into a frenzy of alarm by a clever scare campaign designed to boost the fortunes of Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party, reply that Iran is run by madman who seek nuclear martyrdom.

Over in the Mideast and parts of Europe, Israel's Likud leadership, notably the Russian-born foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, who Israeli leftist often denounce as a deranged fascist, is regarded with as much alarm as Iran's hot-headed leaders. "Those crazy Iranians and Israelis are going to start a nuclear disaster on our doorstep," one European politician said to me.

The Iran crisis has benefitted politicians in the US and Israel by defocusing public anger from the ongoing economic crisis in both nations, and by almost totally obscuring the Palestinian's quest for recognition and statehood. Little wars are famously beneficial for politicians.

Both Barack Obama and Netanyahu expect to reap dividends from "getting tough" on the latest miscreant in a long line of Muslim bogeymen. Think back to the western power's demonization of Gamal Abdel-Nasser, whom Anthony Eden called, "Hitler on the Nile;" to "arch terrorist" Yasser Arafat; to "mad dog of the Mideast" Muammar Khadafi; to "Butcher of Baghdad" Saddam Hussein; "Mr 9/11" Osama bin Laden; and now "the new Hitler" Ahmadinejad.

Here we go again. These targets of western wrath and vilification actually seem to enjoy their starring roles as villains and hate figures. Any publicity is better than no publicity.

Lost amid all the threats is another simple question. Why are Iran and Israel at scimitar's drawn? After all, under the late, unlamented Shah, Israel and Iran used to be bosom buddies. Even under the late Ayatollah Khomeini, a big hate figure in the Jewish world, Israel secretly sold some \$5 billion worth of US arms and spare parts to Iran during its long, bloody, 1980's war with Iraq.

The main reason is that Islamic Iran has become the primary champion of the Palestinians now that the Arab states – and notably Syria – are on the ropes. Iraq, formerly a leading champion of the Palestinians, was crushed by the US. Iran is next on the chopping block if the US American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee has its way.

A fair Israel-Palestinian deal would end the crisis between Israel and Iran. So would a Mideast nuclear-free zone. But no one dares pose this simple solution.