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Retired Generals to Obama: No War of Choice with Iran

By John Glaser

March 5, 2012

Several former high-level military and intelligence officials took out a full page ad in Monday's *Washington Post* urging President Obama to resist pressure to attack Iran nuclear program.

Mr. President: Say No to War of Choice with Iran



Dear Mr. President,

The U.S. military is the most formidable military force on earth. But not every challenge has a military solution.

Unless we or an ally is attacked, war should be the option of last resort. Our brave servicemen and women expect you to exhaust all diplomatic and peaceful options before you send them into harm's way.

Preventing a nuclear armed Iran is rightfully your priority and your red line. Fortunately, diplomacy has not been exhausted and peaceful solutions are still possible.

Military action at this stage is not only unnecessary, it is dangerous -- for the United States and for Israel. We urge you to resist the pressure for a war of choice with Iran.

Sincerely,

Major General Paul Eaton (USA, Ret.)
Tom Engar, Fmr. Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Analysis
Lt. General Robert G. Gard, Jr. (USA, Ret.)
General Joseph Hoar (USMC, Ret.)

Brigadier General John H. Johns, PhD (USA, Ret.)
Major General Rudolph Ostovich III (USA, Ret.)
Paul Pillar, Fmr. National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia
Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson (USA, Ret.)

National States American Council - www.nstates.org

The letter retired Army Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton, retired Army Lt. Gen. Robert G. Gard Jr., retired Marine Gen. Joseph Hoar, retired Army Brig. Gen. John H. Johns, retired Army Maj. Gen. Rudolph Ostovich III, former deputy director of National Intelligence for analysis Thomas Fingar, former CIA national intelligence officer Paul Pillar, and retired Army Col. Lawrence Wilkerson.

The page is headlined “Mr. President: Say No to a War of Choice with Iran,” and is sponsored by the National Iranian American Council, a non-partisan, non-profit organization headquartered in Washington. The letter states that “not every challenge has a military solution” and “unless we or an ally is attacked, war should be the option of last resort.

The ad also features quotations by current and former senior military and intelligence officials explaining why attacking Iran is the wrong move. Those include Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, former CENTCOM Commander Gen. Anthony Zinni, and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen.

The ad is an indication of the [widespread belief within the military and intelligence community](#) that a war with Iran is both unnecessary and extremely dangerous. President Obama has faced pressure from hawks in Congress, from Israel, and from domestic lobbies bent on U.S. intervention. He has resisted this pressure, at least for now, but his stated policy is still one of preventive war with Iran, something many saw as an extreme justification for international aggression when it was stated as policy in the George W. Bush administration.

Although the Obama administration has decidedly held off on a military strike for now, they are still heaping harsh economic warfare against Iran for a nuclear weapons program that the U.S. military and intelligence community agrees does not exist.