

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد
بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

http://www.sfexaminer.com/politics/Rising-speculation-about-bombing-Iran_s-nukes-1002107-98879894.html

Rising speculation about bombing Iran's nukes

By: Michael Barone

July 21, 2010

Many years ago I was privileged to attend a dinner with James Rowe, one of the "passion for anonymity" young aides to Franklin Roosevelt, original author of the winning strategy for Harry Truman's 1948 campaign and close confidant of then-President Lyndon Johnson.



Rowe described how Johnson tested insider opinion. He would call an ideologically wide range of acquaintances and ask their views on an issue of the day. Most responded as he expected. But when one or two said something he hadn't expected he would take notice. Maybe things weren't going as he thought.

That memory returned as I read three recent articles saying there's an increasing chance that the United States -- or Israel -- might well bomb Iran's nuclear facilities. One was by Time's Joe Klein, who has been a harsh critic of George W. Bush's military policies and a skeptic about action against Iran. The other was by self-described centrist Walter Russell Mead in his ever-fascinating American Interest blog.

Former CIA agent Reuel Marc Gerecht in the Weekly Standard argues cogently that an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities would not lead to all the negative consequences widely feared and could shatter the mullah regime. This is not out of line with his views over the years.

Gerecht assumes that the United States will not launch an attack. Klein, contrary to his past views, disagrees. He cites American diplomats who feel that Iran's spurning of a reasonable deal justifies military action and American military officers who say they know more about potential targets than they did two years ago. Also, he says the Gulf Arab states favor a strike, as evidenced by the United Arab Emirates ambassador's July 6 statement saying that it would be preferable to a nuclear Iran.

Klein thinks President Obama is still dead set against bombing Iran. Mead is not so sure. He thinks Obama is motivated by a Wilsonian desire for "the construction of a liberal and orderly world." Or "the European Union built up to a global scale." A successful Iranian nuclear program, in Mead's view, would be "the complete, utter and historic destruction" of Obama's long-term goals of a non-nuclear world and a cooperative international order.

This may sound far-fetched. But recall that Woodrow Wilson was re-elected in 1916 on the slogan "He kept us out of war." Then in 1917 he went to war and quickly built the most stringent wartime state -- with private businesses nationalized and political dissenters jailed -- in modern American history. A Wilsonian desire for international order is not inconsistent with aggressive military action. Sometimes the two are compatible.

It would be ironic if the professorial Barack Obama launches a military attack when his supposedly cowboy predecessor George W. Bush declined to do so. I remember attending meetings of conservative columnists with Bush in which his words and body language convinced me he would not order the bombing of Iran.

The fact is that Iran has been at war with the United States since 1979, when it seized and held our diplomats for 444 days -- an act of war under settled principles of international law. Few in the United States then wanted to regard it as such (though Pat Moynihan said we should "bring fire and brimstone to the gates of Tehran").

Later, the mullah regime sponsored the 1983 attack on our Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon and attacks on our soldiers in Iraq -- more acts of war. Six presidents have chosen not to retaliate for reasons of prudence that have much to commend them. War with Iran would be a terrible thing. But one can also believe, as the UAE ambassador incautiously said, a nuclear-armed Iran would be even worse.

Joe Klein may be right that "this low-level saber-rattling" he describes may be "simply a message that the U.S. is trying to send the Iranians: It's time to deal." Walter Russell Mead may be right in saying "there's a possibility that [Obama] will flinch." But I take it seriously when these two nonhawks say Obama might bomb Iran. LBJ would have taken it seriously, too.