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BINOY KAMPMARK

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Nuclear Fever: War Mongering on Iran



Photo by Mika Baumeister

The recent string of exaggerated military successes – or at least as they are understood to be – places Israel in a situation it has been previously used to: prowess in war. Such prowess promises much: redrawing boundaries; overthrowing governments; destroying the capabilities of adversaries and enemies. Nothing, in this equation, contemplates peace, let alone diplomatic resolution. It's playground pugilism that rarely gets out of the sandpit.

In Washington, a fever has struck regarding Israel's advances. The outbreak has stirred much enthusiasm in a doctrine that has been shown, time and again, to be wretchedly uncertain and grossly dangerous. With no concrete evidence of imminent harm to US interests, it featured in the highest policy planning circles that oiled an invasion of Iraq in 2003. While the stated objective was the disarming of Saddam Hussein's regime for having Weapons of Mass Destruction it turned out *not* to have, the logic was one of pre-emptive strike: we attack the madman in Baghdad before he goes nuclear and loses it.

The establishment wonk on empire and espionage at *The Washington Post*, David Ignatius, offers a fairly meaningless assessment in terms of claimed Israeli dominance over Iran and its proxies. After a year of conflict, Israel had “gained what military strategists call ‘escalation dominance’”. The implication: a decisive attack on Iran is imminent.

The point here (at this juncture, the mind lost seeks sanctuary in a mental asylum of lunatic reassurances), is that attacking Iran in toto will not result in much by way of retaliatory detriment. Some bruising, surely, but hardly lingering flesh wounds. Israel has, it would seem, been working some magic, spreading its own view that Iran has a gruesome plan in its military vault: eliminating Israel by 2040.

In *Foreign Policy*, Matthew Kroenig, generously self-described as a national security strategist, blusters for war. “Indeed, now is an ideal opportunity to destroy Iran’s nuclear program,” he asserts with childish longing. The reason for such an attack lies in a presumption. Yet again, the doctrine of pre-emption, one hostile to international law and the UN Charter, plays out its feeble rationale. Evidence, in such cases, is almost always scanty. Kroenig, however, is certain. Iran will secure one bomb’s worth of weapon-grade material within a matter of weeks. The rest is obvious. No evidence is offered, nor does it even matter, given Kroenig’s longstanding zeal in wishing to rid Iran of its nuclear facilities.

The Atlantic Council has also suggested a policy that what is good for the goose of Christian-Jewish freedom is not good for the gander of Persian Shia ambition. It is exactly this full-fledged hypocrisy that the despots of the secular tyranny in North Korea realised in dealing with Washington. Beware the nostrums against nuclear armament.

In a report authored by both Democrats and Republicans for the Council, a warning of chilling absurdity is offered: “The United States needs to maintain a declaratory policy, explicitly enunciated by the president, that it will not tolerate Iran getting a nuclear weapon and will use military force to prevent this development if all other measures fail.”

Instead of resisting belligerent chatter, the authors suggest that the US threaten Iran through announcing “yearly joint exercises with Israel, such as Juniper Oak and seek additional funding in the next budget cycle to speed research and development of next-generation military hardware capable of destroying Iran’s nuclear program.”

Kroenig shows his usual stuffing. Iran can never have nuclear weapons, because the United States and Israel say so. (The Sunni powers, for their own reasons, agree.) This form of perennial idiocy could apply to all the powers that have nuclear weapons, including Israel itself. At one point, *no* state should have had that relic of sadism’s folly. Then they came in succession after the United States: the Soviet bomb, the Britannic bomb, the Gallic

bomb. Throw in China, India, Pakistan, Israel. Plucky, deranged North Korea, was wise to note the trend, showing lunacy to be eternally divisible.

It is precisely that sort of logic that has drawn such comments as this from the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a May interview: “Iran’s level of deterrence will be different if the existence of Iran is threatened. We have no decision to produce a nuclear bomb, but we will have to change our nuclear doctrine if such threats occur.” This month, almost 40 legislators penned a letter to the Supreme National Security Council calling for a reconsideration of current nuclear doctrine. The greater the fanatic’s desire to remove a perceived threat, the more likely an opponent will give basis to that threat.

For all the faux restraint being officially aired in Washington regarding Israel’s next round of military assaults, there is enormous sympathy, even affection, for the view that wrongs shall be righted, and the mullahs punished. Bedding for a more hostile response to Iran also features in the inane airings of the presidential election. Vice President Kamala Harris, in an interview with 60 minutes, remarked that, “Iran has American blood on its hands, okay?” In making that claim, she suggested that Tehran was somehow Washington’s greatest adversary. In response to this fatuous remark, Justin Logan of the Cato Institute offers an ice-cold bath of reason: “This is not the Wehrmacht in 1940.” The path to dominating the Middle East hardly involves such tools as propaganda, proxy operations and psychological warfare “much less becoming the greatest threat to the United States.”

The nuclear option is now available to governments that should never have had them. But acquiring the dangerously untenable followed. To assume that brutal, amputation loving theocrats in Tehran should not have them defies the trajectory of a certain moronic consistency. The Persian bomb is probably imminent, and it is incumbent on the murderous fantasists in Israel and the United States to chew over that fact. Unfortunately for the rest of us, the fetish against acquisition risks expanding a conventional conflict through testing the will and means of a power that, while wounded, hardly counts as defeated.

Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com

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