STOP THE ATTACK ON IRAN. Iran presents no threat to the US or Israel. Threatening Iran with bombs or embargo violates the UN Charter. No peacemaking is as important as opposing and trying to prevent unjust war. Speak up, write, call, donate, don’t give up on reason and diplomacy; don’t let the fear/warmongers control us.

Contents Nos. 13-17 at end.

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Petition Not to Attack
Pledge of Resistance
Abrahamian, The 1953 CIA Coup

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Iran No? US No! Abolish Nuclear Weapons.
Brodhead, Iran War Weekly July 22
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Greenwald, Blaming

Contents #20
Tehran NAM Summit
NYT Fails to Report Call
Non-nuclear Option
Credo: Tell Obama
Frank Brodhead’s Weekly Continued, August 19
Interview: Tehran NAM summit setback for U.S., Israeli campaign to isolate Iran

Just Foreign Policy talks to Tehran Times about the NAM summit. The summit was a setback for the US-Israeli campaign to isolate Iran, not because anyone behaved differently than would be expected, but because it showcased the fact that most of the world doesn't see Iran the way Washington and Tel Aviv do.


NYT fails to report Non-Aligned Movement-Iranian call for nuclear abolition. Thu Sep 6, 2012 (PDT) . Posted by: "Ward Reilly" brwardno via Veterans for Peace

Iran Calls for Nuclear Arms Ban Goes Unreported By Alice Slater "The New York Times, which has been beating the drums for war with Iran, just as it played a disgraceful role in the deceptive reporting during the lead-up to the Iraq War, never mentioned Iran's proposal for nuclear abolition."

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), formed in 1961 during the Cold War, is a group of 120 states and 17 observer states not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. The NAM held its opening 2012 session yesterday under the new chairmanship of Iran, which succeeded Egypt as the Chair.

Significantly, an Associated Press story in the Washington Post headlined, “Iran opens nonaligned summit with calls for nuclear arms ban”, reported that “Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi opened the gathering by noting commitment to a previous goal from the nonaligned group, known as NAM, to remove the world’s nuclear arsenals within 13 years. ‘We believe that the timetable for ultimate removal of nuclear weapons by 2025, which was proposed by NAM, will only be realized if we follow it up decisively,’ he told delegates.”

Yet the
New York Times, which has been beating the drums for war with Iran, just as it played a disgraceful role in the deceptive reporting during the lead-up to the Iraq War, never mentioned Iran’s proposal for nuclear abolition. The Times carried the bland headline on its front page, “At Summit Meeting, Iran Has a Message for the World”, and then went on to state, “the message is clear. As Iran plays host to the biggest international conference ...it wants to tell its side of the long standoff with the Western powers which are increasingly convinced that Tehran is pursuing nuclear weapons”, without ever reporting Iran’s offer to support the NAM proposal for the abolition of nuclear weapons by 2025.
http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article32308.htm

ALTERNATIVE TO NUCLEAR WAR
Interesting suggestion by a retired Iranian energy engineer: that the West cooperate with Iran in technology transfer of renewable energy and energy efficiency methods that would make building nuclear reactors unnecessary. That would remove the locus for all the fear and loathing.
Mahmood Khaghan, "Get nuclear option off the table"
www.atimes.com/atimes/printN.html

Tell President Obama: We support diplomacy with Iran, not an unnecessary and costly war.
http://act.credoaction.com/campaign/obama_iran/?p=obama_iran&r=6899923&id=45222-600974-DFXGWex
Dear James,
There's no good reason for the United States or Israel to bomb Iran in the near future. And a host of prominent American and Israeli defense officials have catalogued a litany of reasons why it would be deeply unwise and counterproductive to do so.1 But that hasn't stopped top Israeli politicians from irresponsibly suggesting that Israel is preparing to launch a unilateral attack in the near future — whether the United States likes it or not.2 The aim of this talk is clear: to push President Obama either into abandoning diplomacy with Iran (which puts us on a path to war) or else publicly breaking with Israel (a move seen as politically damaging in the context of his re-election campaign).3
Tell President Obama: We support diplomacy with Iran, not an unnecessary and costly war. Click here to automatically sign the petition. To his credit, President Obama is clearly not rushing to start another war.
But the Obama administration is under tremendous pressure to abandon
diplomacy with Iran and follow a path that would make war inevitable. Members of Congress — including many Democrats who seem to have learned nothing from the catastrophic mistake and tremendous moral failure that was the war in Iraq — are actively trying to limit President Obama's ability to negotiate with Iran.4 And they are making common cause with warmongers like John Bolton (an ambassador to the United Nations under George W. Bush) who want diplomacy to fail.

In an election year, when many of President Obama's traditional allies are either opposed or highly skeptical of his strategy, President Obama must know that Americans support diplomacy that can prevent an unnecessary war. This is especially true now that Israeli politicians are seeking to use the presidential election as a vehicle to pressure Obama to adopt a more belligerent foreign policy toward Iran. The more we can do to demonstrate support in the United States for diplomacy, the more leverage we give to the president to reject the calls for war.

Tell President Obama: We support diplomacy with Iran, not an unnecessary and costly war. Click here to automatically sign the petition. Make no mistake, if Israel attacks Iran, it will set the entire Middle East on fire, send oil prices through the roof and our economy off a cliff, and drag the United States into another costly and unnecessary war.

Those who would welcome a war with Iran are trying to suggest that the window for a diplomatic solution is rapidly closing. But both American and Israeli intelligence services agree that Iran neither has made a decision to build a nuclear bomb nor currently has the capacity to do so.5 So there is no short-term imperative to wage war.

While there is no easy solution to the challenges we face with Iran, it is imperative that we pursue diplomacy in good faith and give diplomatic solutions the time they need to bear fruit. President Obama has created the space for a meaningful attempt to resolve this situation diplomatically. We need to speak out to give him the political support to continue down this path.

Tell President Obama: We support diplomacy with Iran, not an unnecessary and costly war. Click the link below to automatically sign the petition: http://act.credoaction.com/r/?r=6899924&p=obama_iran&id=45222-600974-OFXGWex&t=10 Thank you for speaking out against war with Iran.

Matt Lockshin, Campaign Manager
CREDO Action from Working Assets
2. " Who is Bibi preempting — Obama or Iran?," The Daily Beast, 08-15-12.
3.Ibid.
4. " 44 Senators urge Obama to cut off Iran negotiations unless progress made," Foreign Policy, 06-15-12.
5. "Israeli Intelligence Agrees With U.S. And IAEA That Iran Has Not Decided On Nuke Weapons," Think Progress, 03-19-12
**Iran War Weekly  August 19, 2012**

Hello All – Once again the civil war in Syria and the question of whether or not Israel will bomb Iran before the US elections captured the media spotlight this week. There were no negotiations about Iran’s nuclear program, as both parties (the United States and Iran) focused on whether the sanctions were “working” and what impact they were having. As has been true for months, the issue of “Iran” was largely submerged in the US presidential elections. Each of these issues is explored in some good/useful reading linked below.

A few extra words about Israel. For the past three weeks the Israeli news media have been in a frenzy, with claims that Israel – or rather Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Barak – will launch military strikes against Iran’s nuclear sites sometime in September or October. Naturally, this media tsunami has reached North American shores; how could it not, in an election year? And now a critical mass of media punditry has been reached, and there is a meta-story, or stories about the many stories. In terms of user-friendly pedagogy, I especially recommend the Democracy Now! segments, Ray McGovern’s cogent arguments that Iran is preparing to attack, and Gareth Porter’s equally cogent article that Israel is just trying to manipulate Obama’s “red lines” re: Iran.

There is little to add re: the Syrian tragedy that hasn’t been said in the past newsletters, except that this week things are worse than last week. I encourage readers to check out the useful overviews by Phyllis Bennis and Robert Fisk, and the Aljazeera “Inside Syria” program on the possibilities that the UN ambassadorship of Lakhdar Brahimi might have a more favorable outcome than the efforts of Koffi Annan.
Once again, I appreciate the help that many of you have given in distributing the Iran War Weekly and/or linking it on websites. Previous “issues” of the IWW can be read at http://warisacrime.org/blog/46383. If you would like to receive the IWW mailings, please send me an email at fbrodhead@aol.com.

Best wishes, Frank Brodhead Concerned Families of Westchester (NY)

[haw-info] Iran War Weekly - September 10, 2012

fbrodhead@aol.com via uark.edu

Historians Against the War is posting Frank Brodhead's "Iran War Weekly," as a helpful resource for our members and friends. Frank earned a PhD in history at Princeton University and has co-authored several books on US foreign policy. He is a scholar and political activist who has worked with peace and social justice movements for many years. In 2010-2011 he produced the “Afghanistan War Weekly,” which was widely used by antiwar groups across the country.

Iran War Weekly
September 10, 2012

Hello All – Nuclear talks between Iran and the United States-led “P5+1” remained stalled this week, with expectations that nothing will happen until after the UN convenes later this month. The P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) appears to be relying on economic sanctions to force Iran to bargain on terms that would essentially bring Iran’s nuclear program to a halt. While minor issues, such as the alleged nuclear activity at Iran’s military base at Parchin (see below), continue to be in play, Iran’s offers to resume negotiations have been ignored.

For the last month or so the political turmoil inside Israel, and between Israel and the United States, over fears that Israel would attack Iran’s nuclear sites before the US elections have been front-burner issues in the international media. This week temperatures seem to have cooled – seem to have cooled – as the Netanyahu government appears to be digesting the strong opposition from both the United States and from its own political and military elite to any military attack on Iran. Indeed, the Israeli press has been reporting incidents of disturbingly erratic behavior by Israel’s prime minister (see below). Is this Nixon’s “mad man theory” redux, or the genuine article?

Among the good/useful readings linked below, I especially recommend the interesting essays by Noah Shachtman on a recent assessment of what would be involved if the United States were to attack Iran
(lots); by Gareth Porter on the US diplomatic offensive to bring Israel to heel; and by Yousaf Butt on the counterproductive outcome of Israel’s strike on Iraq’s nuclear site in 1981 (often referenced to justify the value of a preventive military attack). I’ve also pasted in links to several interesting articles on what’s going on inside Iran today, and some perspectives on the significance of the Non-Aligned Movement meeting in Tehran a week ago.

Regarding Syria, links between the civil war in Syria and the Western campaign against Iran became stronger this week, with US accusations that Iraq was allowing Iran to conduct overflights of planeloads of military equipment for the Syrian government, and demands from the United States that Iraq put a stop to this. I’ve also linked two interesting articles about the spillover of Syria’s civil war into Lebanon, and the dangers that this poses for Lebanon.


Once again, I appreciate the help that many of you have given in distributing the Iran War Weekly and/or linking it on websites. Previous “issues” of the IWW can be read at http://warisacrime.org/blog/46383. If you would like to receive the IWW mailings, please send me an email at fbrodhead@aol.com.

Best wishes,
Frank Brodhead
Concerned Families of Westchester (NY)

IRAN’S NUCLEAR PROGRAM
Push to unclog nuclear talk ‘gridlock’ awaits Iranian president at United Nations
By Associated Press, [September 8, 2012]

--- As Iran’s president crafts his talking points for his annual trip to New York, one message is likely to remain near the top: Tehran has not closed the door on nuclear dialogue and is ready to resume negotiations with world powers. The offer is not very different from those coming out of Washington and other capitals. The challenge is figuring out how to overcome the huge divides after three rounds of high-level meetings since April failed to make headway. Questions over whether the diplomatic effort still has a pulse will closely follow Mahmoud Ahmadinejad during his time at the U.N. General Assembly later this month — his last as Iranian president before elections next June for his successor.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/push-to-unclog-nuclear-talk-gridlock-awaits-iranian-president-at-united-
Was Iran’s Military Base at Parchin a Nuclear Site?
Pink Shrouds Aimed to Draw Attention to Iran Military Site, Analysts Say
By Gareth Porter, Inter Press Service [September 7, 2012]

---- Diplomats from an unidentified country and a Washington research organisation considered close to the International Atomic Energy Agency have alleged in recent weeks that Iran has covered two buildings at a military site to hide a clean-up of evidence of nuclear weapons related testing. But two former intelligence analysts with experience in interpreting satellite photographs of military facilities say the coverings on the two buildings in published images of the site don’t appear to be aimed at hiding anything. The images show bright pink coverings on the buildings, which the former intelligence officers say are a clear signal of an Iranian desire to focus U.S. and Western attention on the site – probably to ensure that it would not be focused on activities at another site at the huge Parchin military base.

http://original.antiwar.com/porter/2012/09/07/pink-shrouds-aimed-to-draw-attention-to-iran-military-site-analysts-say/

IAEA shows diplomats images of suspected Iran nuclear clean-up
From Reuters [September 9, 2012]

---- The U.N. nuclear watchdog showed a series of satellite images on Wednesday that added to suspicions of clean-up activity at an Iranian military site it wants to inspect, Western diplomats said, but Tehran's envoy dismissed the presentation. The pictures, displayed during a closed-door briefing for member states of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), indicated determined efforts in recent months to remove any incriminating evidence at the Parchin site, the diplomats said.

http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/09/05/uk-nuclear-iran-iaea-idUKBRE88415M20120905

US POLICY & PERSPECTIVES
U.S. Attack on Iran Would Take Hundreds of Planes, Ships, and Missiles
By Noah Shachtman, Wired [September 7, 2012]

---- Should the U.S. actually take Benjamin Netanyahu’s advice and attack Iran, don’t expect a few sorties flown by a couple of fighter jocks. Setting back Iran’s nuclear efforts will need to be an all-out effort, with squadrons of bombers and fighter jets, teams of commandos, rings of interceptor missiles and whole Navy carrier strike groups – plus enough drones, surveillance gear, tanker aircraft and logistical support to make such a massive mission go. And all of it, at best, would buy the U.S. and Israel another decade of a nuke-free Iran. [Based on the recent analysis by Anthony Cordesman.] http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/09/iran-war-plan/
Nuclear Mullahs
---- This strikes me as a good time to address an unnerving question that confronts any concerned student of this subject: Can we live with a nuclear Iran? Given a choice of raining bunker-busting munitions on Iran’s underground enrichment facilities, or, alternatively, containing a nuclear-armed Iran with the sobering threat of annihilation, which is the less bad option?

Democratic Platform on Iran
http://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2012/sep/05/democratic-platform-iran

GOP Platform on Iran
http://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2012/aug/30/gop-platform-iran

The United States and Israel
To Calm Israel, U.S. Offers Ways to Restrain Iran
---- With Israel openly debating whether to strike at Iran’s nuclear facilities in the coming months, the Obama administration is moving ahead with a range of steps short of war that it hopes will forestall an Israeli attack, while forcing the Iranians to take more seriously negotiations that are all but stalled. Already planned are naval exercises and new antimissile systems in the Persian Gulf, and a more forceful clamping down on Iranian oil revenue. The administration is also considering new declarations by President Obama about what might bring about American military action, as well as covert activities that have been previously considered and rejected.

After Dempsey Warning, Israel May Curb War Threat
By Jim Lobe and Gareth Porter, Inter Press Service [September 5, 2012]
---- President Barack Obama’s explicit warning that he will not accept a unilateral Israeli attack against Iran may force Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to step back from his ostensible threat of war.
Netanyahu had hoped that the Obama administration could be put under domestic political pressure during the election campaign to shift its policy on Iran to the much more confrontational stance that Netanyahu and Defence Minister Ehud Barak have been demanding. But that political pressure has not materialised, and Obama has gone further than ever before in warning Netanyahu not to expect U.S. backing in any war with Iran.
http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/09/after-dempsey-
warning-israel-may-curb-war-threat/


US complicit in Israel war plans for Iran
By Kaveh L Afrasiabi, Asia Times [September 2012]
---- After supplying Israel with the massive bunker-buster bombs that would be critical in any Israeli military strike on Iran, the US government now wants to have it both ways, trying to shield itself from any backlash by insisting it would not be "complicit" in such an Israeli gambit. Henceforth, the only scenario whereby Iran would not retaliate against the US would be a US guarantee that the US-made bombs would not be used by Israel, i.e., a virtual impossibility. http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Global_Economy/NI05Dj03.html

ISRAELI POLICY & PERSPECTIVES
An Israeli strike won’t delay Iran’s nuclear weapons program. It will start it.
By Yousaf Butt, Christian Science Monitor [September 6, 2012]---- Recent analysis shows that a previous Israeli strike – in 1981, on Iraq’s civilian Osirak nuclear reactor complex – led Saddam Hussein to demand a nuclear deterrent and was actually the trigger for Iraq launching a full-scale effort to weaponize. A decade later, by the time of the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq was on the verge of a nuclear weapons capability. As researcher Malfrid Braut-Hegghammer explains in a recent International Security article, such ostensibly “preventive attacks can increase the long-term proliferation risk posed by the targeted state.” Her research suggests that the conventional wisdom that Israel’s 1981 attack on Osirak denied Iraq a nuclear weapons capability no longer holds up: The strike actually created unprecedented pressure inside the Iraqi national security apparatus to pursue the bomb more vigorously than ever. http://www.campaigniran.org/casmii/index.php?q=node/12910

Turmoil Inside Israel
 Israeli army names new operations chief, signaling reduced likelihood of Iran attack
By Times of Israel [September 4, 2012]
The Israeli army is making a series of high-level appointments, including naming a new operations chief, after previously delaying the top-level reshuffle amid talk of a possible Israeli military strike on Iran. News of the fresh appointments, released on Tuesday, was interpreted by military commentators as an indication that the likelihood of an imminent Israeli military strike at Iran’s nuclear facilities had receded. “You don’t appoint a brand new operations chief when you’re about to go to war,” said Alon Ben-David, military analyst at Israel’s Channel 10 News. [1]

Netanyahu Angrily Breaks Up Key Cabinet Meeting on Iran, Citing Leaks By John Glaser, Antiwar.com [September 5, 2012] --- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu angrily broke up a key cabinet meeting on Iran on Wednesday, accusing one participant of leaking details of the secretive meetings to the press. Israel’s Security Cabinet meeting convened on Tuesday to discuss regional threats, primarily Iran. When the group reconvened on Wednesday, Netanyahu sent everyone home saying whoever spoke to the media violated “the most basic trust.” Netanyahu didn’t specify what information was leaked, but Israel’s top newspaper, Yediot Ahronot, did report that Israeli intelligence organizations disagreed over Israel’s ability to strike Iran’s nuclear facilities effectively on its own. [2]

Also useful – Herb Keinon, “Netanyahu considering polygraph tests for cabinet,” Jerusalem Post [September 5, 2012] [3]; Jason Ditz, “Israeli Judge Winograd Warns against Iran Attack,” Antiwar.com [September 2, 2012] [4]; and Meir Javedanfar, “Israel Finance Minister Wants Military Deadlines to Be Issued To Iran,” Iran-Israel Observer [September 7, 2012] [5]

Israel and Saudi Arabia Unspoken Israeli-Saudi alliance targets Iran By Chris Zambelis, Asia Times [September 8, 2012] --- The boilerplate rhetoric out of Washington and US media regarding Iran is well known. But sorting through the cacophony of public threats of war, psychological operations, and propaganda broadcast by Israel and Saudi Arabia – Iran's primary regional adversaries – is equally crucial toward understanding the geopolitics surrounding the Iranian nuclear question and, in a broader sense,
Iran's place in the region. Alongside the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia have taken the lead in articulating a litany of purported threats emanating from the Islamic Republic.

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/NI08Ak01.html

IRANIAN POLICY & PERSPECTIVES

Iranian People Act More Resigned Than Revolutionary These Days
By Barbara Slavin, Al-Monitor [September 2012]

---- For an American returning to Tehran after four years, what is most striking is the growing feeling that life will not get better anytime soon. Iran seems to have become a nation of Scarlet O’Hara’s who live for today and try not to think about the future. This pessimism contrasts with sentiment in the 1990s and early 2000s that Iran could overcome its post-Islamic Revolution difficulties. Iranians who left the country before the 1979 overthrow of the secular shah or during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war began returning in the '90s to reclaim property, see relatives and start businesses. Adult children of diaspora Iranians came back to work for foreign companies eager to buy Iranian oil and sell manufactured goods to a growing middle class. Under the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, however, the direction of the flow has reversed. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2012/al-monitor/iran-beyond-the-slogans-a-nation.html

To Participate or Boycott? Challenges of the 2013 Election and the Iranian Opposition
By Mohammad Ali Kadivar, Jadaliyya [September 4, 2012]

---- The upcoming 2013 presidential election in Iran seems to be activating and deepening the fissures within the Iranian opposition. While parts of the opposition have started deliberating and discussing about participation in the election, other sections oppose participating on principle. A prominent reformist strategist, for example, suggested that election is “an opportunity for organizing and action.” Meanwhile, another famous activist journalist wrote that the only possible election in 2013 is one with the participation of regime “insiders” and no chance for pro-democracy forces to participate. These debates about the opportunities and constraints of the 2013 election reflect a deeper divide in the Iranian opposition about the most effective strategies to transform the polity and build a democratic regime in the future.


Also useful – Associated Press, “Afghanistan and Iran sign deal giving land-locked Afghanistan access to major seaport,” [September 5, 2012]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/afghanistan-and-iran-sign-deal-giving-land-locked-afghanistan-access-to-major-seaport/2012/09/05/7e876466-f759-11e1-a93b-7185e3f88849_print.html
The Effect of Sanctions on Iran
US-Led Iran Sanctions Blocking Medical Treatment to Thousands of Infirm
By John Glaser, Antiwar.com [September 4, 2012]
---- The sweeping US-led economic sanctions being imposed on Iran are blocking necessary pharmaceuticals and medical treatment for Iran’s sick and infirm, in what appears to be a cruel for of collective punishment that deliberately puts innocent lives at risk. Although the sanctions don’t target medicine and humanitarian needs, they are “increasingly hitting vulnerable medical patients as deliveries of medicine and raw materials for Iranian pharmaceutical companies are either stopped or delayed,” reports the Washington Post.

In Iran, Sanctions Take Toll on the Sick
By Najmeh Bozorgmehr, Washington Post [September 4, 2012]
---- The tightening of U.S. banking sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program has had an impact on all sectors of the economy but is increasingly hitting vulnerable medical patients as deliveries of medicine and raw materials for Iranian pharmaceutical companies are either stopped or delayed, according to medical experts. The effect, the experts say, is being felt by cancer patients and those being treated for complex disorders such as hemophilia, multiple sclerosis and thalassemia, as well as transplant and kidney dialysis patients, none of whom can afford interruptions or delays in medical supplies.

Also useful – Gulf States News, “Sanctions target Tehran, but it is West that is losing goodwill,” [August 30, 2012] http://www.gsn-online.com/sanctions-target-tehran-but-it-is-west-that-is-losing-goodwill-0

Iran’s Economy
Iran Oil Exports Plummet as Prices Rise
By Jason Ditz, Antiwar.com [September 7, 2012]
---- The Obama Administration is worried. About a lot of things really, but in this case about the rising cost of oil, spiking both on inflation fears and a seriously tight supply, with officials warning that even tapping the Strategic Petroleum Reserve would provide at best a very temporary benefit. Unspoken in all this concern about supply shortages is that one of the world’s largest oil producers, Iran, saw their exports drop nearly 45 percent in July as US and EU sanctions kept that oil off the market at a time when it is desperately needed. http://news.antiwar.com/2012/09/07/iran-oil,exports-plummet-as-prices-rise/

Iran's Currency Falls to Record Low Against Dollar
The Non-Aligned Movement Meeting in Tehran

Three Revelations from the Non-Aligned Summit
By Farideh Farhi, LobeLog [September 4, 2012]

The Non-Aligned Movement summit in Tehran highlighted three aspects about Iran’s foreign relations and domestic politics. First, given Iran’s geographic location and resources, many countries in the neighborhood believe it is simply not good business to isolate Iran. Second, the presence of U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and new Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi reflected the benefit of engaging Iran directly. Third, the NAM summit revealed that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei sees himself in charge of implementing Iran’s foreign policy—not just setting the general direction of the country and then letting the president execute his directives.


Canada Breaks Ties with Iran

Canada Severs All Ties With Iran, Expels Diplomats
By Jason Ditz, Antiwar.com [September 7, 2012]

Much to the delight of Israeli hawks, the Canadian government announced today that it is severing all diplomatic ties with Iran, closing its Tehran embassy and expelling every Iranian diplomat from Canada. Foreign Minister John Baird, detailing the move, condemned Iran as a “threat to global security” and insisted the move was a response to Iran’s hostility toward Israel. Israel has regularly been threatening to attack Iran, though in recent days it is suggested that they are climbing down off that threat.

Canada's cut ties with Iran: Who will pay?
By D. Parvaz, Aljazeera [September 10, 2012]

Lost in the power plays between Canada's Conservative government, which has taken an increasingly hard-line view of Iran in recent months, and Iran's apparent refusal to budge on thorny issues such as Syria and Israel, are the roughly 500,000 Iranian-Canadians who call Canada home.

Also useful – Kaveh Afrasiabi, “Canada appeases Israel on Iran,” Asia
CIVIL WAR/INTERVENTION IN SYRIA
U.S. intervention in Syria appears unlikely, say officials
By Anne Gearan and Karen DeYoung, Washington Post [September 2, 2012]
--- A sharp escalation in fighting and civilian deaths in Syria, pleas for help from rebel fighters and a tide of war-zone refugees are focusing American attention on a high-stakes Mideast conflict nine weeks before the U.S. presidential election. Yet, as bad as the Syrian fighting looks, with an estimated 20,000 dead and hundreds of thousands of refugees in neighboring countries, intervention by the United States or international authorities appears remote. Even a limited expansion of the minimal U.S. role is unlikely for the next several months and perhaps beyond, according to American and foreign officials. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-intervention-in-syria-appears-unlikely-say-officials/2012/09/02/c1cd4e9a-f2bb-11e1-a612-3cfc842a6d89_print.html

Iranian Soft Power, Lakhdar Brahimi, and the Prospects for Peace in Syria
From The Race for Iran [September 2, 2012]
--- Twenty years ago, Harvard University’s Joseph Nye famously defined soft power as the ability to get others to “want what you want,” which he contrasted with the ability to compel others via “hard” military and economic assets. Hillary Mann Leverett’s CNN interview explores what we have called the Islamic Republic’s “soft power offensive” in the context of the geopolitical and sectarian (Shi’a-Sunni) rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia. As Hillary points out, Iran’s rise is fundamentally about soft power. “We always think of Iran as a military dictatorship, but the Iranian message is clear: they want free and fair elections” in countries like Egypt, Afghanistan, and Iraq. http://www.raceforiran.com/iranian-soft-power-lakhdar-brahimi-and-the-prospects-for-peace-in-syria


Syria, Iran, and Iraq
Iraq the Latest Dragged Into Syria Proxy War Intrigue
By Jason Ditz, Antiwar.com [September 5, 2012]
--- Few wars in recent history have been such overt proxy wars as
the Syrian Civil War. The Assad regime is clearly losing popularity domestically, and reliant on foreign backing to keep itself in power. And while the rebels try to claim some connection to the anti-Assad protests, it is clear that they are more interested in selling themselves to the international community than to the public of cities they capture. Even nations that seem keen to stay out of the proxy war are getting dragged in, with Iraq suddenly finding itself accused of backing Assad, who they’ve never particularly cared for in the first place, on the grounds that are allowing their close ally Iran to use their airspace for shipments to Syria. Sen. Joe Lieberman (I - CT) blasted Iraq, warning that their ties with the US, which occupied them from 2003-2011, were at risk.

http://news.antiwar.com/2012/09/05/iraq-the-latest-dragged-into-syria-proxy-war-intrigue/

Iran Supplying Syrian Military via Iraqi Airspace

---- Iran has resumed shipping military equipment to Syria over Iraqi airspace in a new effort to bolster the embattled government of President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, according to senior American officials.

The Obama administration pressed Iraq to shut down the air corridor that Iran had been using earlier this year, raising the issue with Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki of Iraq. But as Syrian rebels gained ground and Mr. Assad’s government was rocked by a bombing that killed several high officials, Iran doubled down in supporting the Syrian leader. The flights started up again in July and, to the frustration of American officials, have continued ever since.


Also useful – Karen DeYoung, “U.S. calls on Iraq to inspect Syria-bound Iranian planes for arms,” Washington Post [September 5, 2012]
http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-09-05/iraq-us-must-show-proof-of-iranian-arms-flights

Syria and Lebanon
Will Lebanon Be Sucked Into the Syrian Vortex?
By Graham Usher, The Nation [September 2012]

---- Syria ruled Lebanon ruthlessly for nearly three decades, ending its occupation only in 2005. Yet whatever grip Damascus once had on Lebanese politics is clearly weakening, as the Syrian regime sinks deeper into crisis. One reason for Lebanon’s new relative freedom lies in history, especially in the differences between the Syrian and
Lebanese civil wars. The Syrians have only recently entered theirs, which is becoming a bloody fight to the finish. The Lebanese remember theirs as a collective nightmare that no party or sect wants to revisit.  

Is the Syrian Crisis Being Leveraged to Weaken Hezbollah?
By Franklin Lamb, Counterpunch [September 3, 2012]

--- Pressures, often intense, resulting in being sucked into the vortex of the powerful maelstrom and violent whirlpool of Lebanese and regional politics can’t be bringing much pleasure to Lebanon’s National Resistance led by Hezbollah and that includes this observer’s Dahiyeh neighborhood. Following their one on one meeting last weekend, US secretary of state Clinton and Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan Hezbollah are seeking to intensify pressure on both Hezbollah and Syria. One project is reported to be US instructions to their March 14 allies to force a vote in Lebanon’s Parliament allowing the deployment of international troops along Lebanon’s northern border with Syria.  

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Noam Chomsky: Why America and Israel Are the Greatest Threats to Peace

Imagine if Iran -- or any other country -- did a fraction of what American and Israel do at will.

September 3, 2012 AlterNet


TIKKUN RESPONSE

Noam Chomsky on the Immorality of the US and Israel Proposed Attack on Iran

Rabbi Michael Lerner miriam@tikkun.org via uark.edu to jbenne

Editor's Note: Noam Chomsky powerfully presents the case against US and Israeli policy toward Iran. Yet I'm troubled by an aspect of the situation to which Chomsky gives only brief lip-service. Millions of people demonstrated against the stealing of the Iranian election by the fundamentalist mullahs who control the state apparatus in Iran. Thousands of them were either killed, wounded or ended up in the Iranian regime's prisons where they were tortured or disappeared. Tikkun has called for the people of Iran to overthrow their own government the way the people of the Soviet Union were able to do, but we know that this is not in the cards in the short run, given the brutality of repression and the ferocity of the current regime's supporters based on their interpretation of how they are serving Islam. Hey, you at Tikkun always talk about the obligation to care about the well-being of others, and in this case, this shouldn't be empty words or pious thoughts--a real intervention on the side of the people of Iran who are oppressed is the only hope of overthrowing the cruel regime in power, some will argue.
This same regime talks glibly about destroying Israel and denies the Holocaust. If you were living in Israel, you might cheer-on any path that sought to eliminate the ability of these fundamentalist extremists, who systematically oppress and terrorize the women of Iran (not to mention the Bah'ai and other religious minorities, and homosexuals), to destroy the Jewish people of Israel. So, an intervention, some argue, would not only be good for Israel, it would be good for universal human rights.

I DO NOT AGREE WITH THAT REASONING BECAUSE I BELIEVE SPIRITUAL PROGRESSIVES MUST TESTIFY AGAINST THE USE OF VIOLENCE NO MATTER HOW LEGITIMATE THE END TO WHICH THE VIOLENCE IS BEING USED. Moreover, I believe that the strategy we presented in our magazine and in our NY Times ad would be far more likely to support the people of Iran than an armed attack which might force even the dissidents to back their repressive government. I've at times been inconsistent on this point of the validity of human rights pursuing military interventions in the past (e.g. in regard to the genocidal and mass rape campaigns against Bosnia and other parts of the former Yugoslavia, and in regard to the genocidal struggle between Hutus and Tutsis, and in the genocide in Darfur) but this is the path we must seek to legitimate else the world will continue on its path toward increasingly sophisticated weapons of violence (imagine when other countries have drones and electronic warfare that could elude US safeguards and start killing US citizens deemed a danger to other countries' interests). But I can certainly empathize with those who believe that their only alternative is to be destroyed themselves, which is what many Israelis feel. That's why I think it so important to follow the strategy I've presented in Embracing Israel/Palestine, because it is the only plausible way a non-violent strategy could actually work to transform the regimes of the Middle East (including both Israel and Palestine) and the U.S. as well. I hope you'll read the book and get others to study it with you. When forced to choose between a US/Israeli assault, and the logic of Chomsky, I choose Chomsky, but with some trepidations articulated above. And we at Tikkun, and many of you readers, bought a full page ad in the NY Times calling on Obama and Netanyahu to not accept the "first strike" strategy and adopt instead the NSP/Tikkun strategy. So far, I know of no mass demonstrations (say of more than 10,000 people) explicitly dedicated to oppose the assault on Iran, so Tikkun has really been in the leadership of this opposition to a first strike. We are, I believe, correct in calling for this, and at the same time correct in nuancing our concerns and acknowledging the complexity of the situation and how some very decent people might disagree with us not because they support US or Israeli policy (we certainly don't with regard to the Palestinians) but because they genuinely care about the well-being of the people of the region. But in the final analysis, we hold to our strong opposition to a US or Israeli first strike against Iran, believe our Global Marshall Plan is a far more effective way to achieve humanitarian goals, and hold to our ethical commitment to non-violence.--Rabbi Michael Lerner rabbilerner.tikkun@gmail.com (your comments on this are welcome).