OMNI IRAN NEWSLETTER # 21, December 14, 2012,  

Here is the link to all the newsletters archived in the OMNI website.

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/  These newsletters offer information that enables us to examine morality and judgment of our leaders and their policies, of power.  Here is the link to the Index:  http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

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.

Contents of #18
Petition Not to Attack
Pledge of Resistance
Abrahamian, The 1953 CIA Coup

Cumings, et al., Inventing the Axis of Evil
Special Section: Frank Brodhead, Iran War Weekly

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Iran No?  US No!  Abolish Nuclear Weapons.
Brodhead, Iran War Weekly July 22
Brodhead, Iran War Weekly August 12
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Leverett, Misunderstanding Iran
Pro-Israel Meet the Press
Lendman, An Alternative History
Brodhead, Iran War Weekly, Dec. 12, 2012

Iran Fact Check: Wall Street Journal Corrects False Claims for War
The Wall Street Journal issued a rare, formal correction to its op-ed setting a deadline for the "crippling" of Iran's economy and war with Iran. In that op-ed, Reul Marc Gerecht and Mark Dubowitz of the neocon "Foundation for Defense of Democracies" falsely claimed Iran's enrichment facilities are subject to international inspections less often than they really occur to justify deadlines for war that were premature even under their own metric.

"We Love You - Iran and Israel"
If you've been to PEACE PLEASE in the last while you'll have seen the video running on our home page by Ronnie Edry, an Israeli and founder of the movement "We Love You - Iran and Israel". Edry posted this video of friendship to the people of Iran on YouTube and within 24 hours his
message had been passed along and shared by thousands. People in Iran responded, sending messages of peace and friendship back to the people of Israel. http://www.peaceplease.com/

Jim Morrison of The Doors once sang in the song 'Five to One', "They got the guns, but we got the numbers" - this "We Love You" campaign proves the point. Tens of thousands of people from around the world have added their name to this campaign, in hopes that we the people can stop yet another war in the Middle East.

Join up with the movement on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/israellovesiran and be part of the majority for peace.

Forthcoming Book by Flynt Leverett and Hillary Leverett, Going to Tehran: Why the United States Must Come to Terms with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Their latest publication on Iran:

A few earlier publications by the Leveretts:
1. Flynt Leverett on Israeli and Iranian Decision-Making « The Race for ...
   www.raceforiran.com/flynt-leverett-on-israeli-and-iranian-decision-...Cached
   You +1’d this publicly. Undo
   Sep 9, 2012 – Video of the Leveretts on Charlie Rose Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett appeared on The Charlie Rose Show. Subscribe by RSS ...
   2. Iran, U.S. Sanctions, and the Emergence of a True “New World ...
   www.raceforiran.com/iran-u-s-sanctions-and-the-emergence-of-a-tru..Cached
   You +1’d this publicly. Undo
   3. IRAN, CHINA’S RISE, AND AMERICAN STRATEGY « The Race for ...
   www.raceforiran.com/iran-chinas-rise-and-american-strategyCached
   You +1’d this publicly. Undo
   Apr 6, 2012 – Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett. Share. Email ...... Clearly these are not the words of a “mad mullah” (as the warmongers like to say).
4. How Washington's Determination to Dominate Iran Corrodes U.S. ...
www.raceforiran.com/how-washington's-determination-to-dominate--... Cached
You +1'd this publicly. Undo
Aug 15, 2012 – Video of the Leveretts on Charlie Rose Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett appeared on The Charlie Rose Show. Subscribe by RSS ...

5. The Myth of The Iranian Nuclear Crisis, Part I | Alternative beforeitsnews.com/.../the-myth-of-the-iranian-nuclear-crisis-part-i-16... Cached
You +1’d this publicly. Undo
Jan 12, 2012 – Read what Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett had to say about ... of the U.S. sanctions, the most fundamental aim of the mullah's regime, ...

6. Obama Is Helping Iran - By Flynt and Hillary Mann Leverett | Foreign ...
www.foreignpolicy.com/node/674716Cached
You +1’d this publicly. Undo
Feb 23, 2011 – Hillary Mann Leverett teaches international affairs at Yale and American University. ..... MEK rhetoric in which everyone is an "agent of the Mullahs" except for the MEK. .... Mad Dog Qaddafi is making Human rights excuse to occupy his ..... The Myth That Screwed Up 50 Years of U.S. Foreign Policy · Murder ...

7. Who's Really Misreading Tehran? - By Flynt Leverett and Hillary ...
www.foreignpolicy.com/node/285616Cached
You +1’d this publicly. Undo
Jun 14, 2010 – Hillary Mann Leverett is CEO of Stratega, a political-risk consultancy. ... Once you deal with religious extremists of the Taliban caliber, MAD does not apply. .... But the Leveretts' drivel isn't just the usual garbage about "the mullahs. .... about the truth as opposed to the concocted myth about the "evil" Iran.

8. My FDL | CTuttle's myFDL diary
my.firedoglake.com/ctuttle/Cached
You +1’d this publicly. Undo
And look. it's the old 'Mad Mullah' dodge, too…! Despite ..... As Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett asked today at their The Race For Iran blog... Can The ...

9. Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran ...
www.campaigniran.org/casmii/index.php?q=node&page=75...
You +1’d this publicly. Undo
WHY THE MYTH OF IRAN'S "STOLEN" ELECTION STILL MATTERS. by Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett on Sep 7 .... weapons program, and the Iranian Mullahs have issued
repeated assurances that it has no intention to start one, but we are suspicious. ...'Mad Dog' Diplomacy: A cornered Israel is baring its teeth ...

10. 88 - Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran campaigniran.org/casmii/index.php?q=node&page=87&nid... Cached
You +1’d this publicly. Undo

WHY THE MYTH OF IRAN'S "STOLEN" ELECTION STILL MATTERS. by Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett on Sep 7. ... weapons program, and the Iranian Mullahs have issued repeated assurances that it has no intention to start one, but we are suspicious. ... 'Mad Dog' Diplomacy: A cornered Israel is baring its teeth ...

*Action: JFP/NIAC: Tell Meet the Press: Real Journalism Requires Challenging False Information on Iran

On Sunday, Meet the Press allowed Netanyahu to give his stump speech for war on the Iran nuclear issue, without challenging his scaremongering with reference to known facts. Just Foreign Policy and the National Iranian American Council are teaming up to challenge pro-war distortions in the mainstream media with our "Iran Fact Check" campaign. Our first target: Meet the Press. Tell Meet the Press: real journalism requires challenging politicians when they spew false information on Iran.

http://www.iranfact.org/tell-mtp-challenge-false-information-on-iran/

Neocons Slither Back

Neocon puppet master" Dan Senor is now driving the foreign policy agenda of Romney and Ryan, writes Maureen Dowd in the New York Times. A moral, muscular foreign policy; a disdain for weakness and diplomacy; a duty to invade and bomb Israel's neighbors; a divine right to pre-emption - it's all ominously familiar. You can draw a direct line from the hyperpower manifesto of the Project for the New American Century, which the neocons used to prod an uninformed president into invading Iraq - a wildly misguided attempt to intimidate Arabs through the shock of overwhelming force, Dowd writes.


ALTERNATIVE HISTORY OF MODERN IRAN

In 1953, CIA operative Kermit Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt's grandson and Franklin's cousin, engineered the Agency's first coup. Democratically elected Mohammad Mossadeq was ousted. The New York Times called him Iran's "most popular politician."

As late as 1977, Jimmy Carter declared Iran an "oasis of stability." He ignored years of brutal Shah repression. In January 1979, he fled the country. Ayatollah Khomeini returned. He proclaimed the Islamic Republic with overwhelming public support.

US officials thought they could control him. They thought wrong. Iran was free from Western dominance and didn't look back. Tensions escalated. Washington planned regime change. It remains US policy.

In 1975, Iran and Iraq negotiated the Algiers Agreement. It settled border disputes between the two countries. In March 1980, Saddam Hussein unilaterally abrogated it. Carter officials encouraged him.

Journalist/historian Dilip Hiro noted:

"According to the Iranian president, Bani-Sadr, in early August 1980 his government had purchased secret documents containing a detailed account of the conversations in France between several deposed Iranian generals and politicians, Iraqi representatives, and American and Israeli military experts."

"If so, the administration of President James Carter had an inkling of Iraqi plans. By supplying secret information, which exaggerated Iran's military weakness, to Saudi Arabia for onward transmission to Baghdad, Washington encouraged Iraq to attack Iran."

Saddam was supported by CIA-sponsored Iranian military officers given refuge in Iraq.
Soviet Russia feared revolutionary Islam spreading to central Asia.

Saddam saw his chance to wage war and win. He hoped to defeat a regional rival, annex parts of Iran, and strengthen his regional position.

Washington wanted its own regional influence enhanced. The Carter Doctrine pledged Middle East military intervention if US interests were threatened.

According to columnist Jack Anderson, he considered invading Iran, seizing its oil fields, and boosting his electoral prospects, he hoped. Soviet Russia threatened intervention if he followed through.

Carter abandoned his plans. At the same time, his administration remained hostile to Ayatollah Khomeini's government.


Support for the Shah was a key element of US regional policy. Iran's 1979 revolution changed things. Saddam became Washington's weapon to defeat a government it opposed.

On September 22, 1980, Iraq invaded Iran. Border clashes preceded all-out conflict. Nearly eight years of war followed. Over a million died, including civilians. America and other Western countries call it the Iran/Iraq war.

Saddam hoped it would be a "whirlwind war." He renamed it Qadisiyyad Saddam. It was an emotive reference to Arabs defeating Persians in 636. Tehran calls it the "Sacred Defense" or "imposed war."

On September 21, Press TV headlined "Iran marks (32nd) anniversary of Iraq imposed war with military parades," saying:

Ceremonies opened "Sacred Defense Week." They began symbolically at Ayatollah Khomeini's Tehran mausoleum. Planned events include parades, commemorative concerts, and photo exhibits.

Commemorating the occasion, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad delivered a nationally televised address, saying:

"Our sacred defense was not defending a territory, a nation or a school of thought alone. It was well beyond that. It was defending human dignity, the rights of all nations and those of the oppressed people of the world."
Iran will "stand and defend its rights," he asserted. He called the blasphemous anti-Muslim film inciting violence an Israeli plot "to divide (Muslims) and spark sectarian conflict."

He and Ayatollah Khamenei days earlier noted Western hypocrisy. Condemn Washington, other NATO allies, or Israeli crimes and be denounced. At the same time, insulting Islam is called free expression.

He criticized nations backing Saddam's invasion. They revealed their imperial regional aims. They're also fake human rights advocates. They say one thing and do another. Scoundrels operate that way.

Iranian officials turned out in force. High-ranking military ones were present. Iran's latest military hardware was showcased. On display was its new domestically made air defense system.

Called Raad, or Thunder, it's more advanced than its Russian predecessor. It's designed to confront jet aircraft, cruise missiles, smart bombs, helicopters, and drones.

Its capability ranges up to 30 miles. It can strike targets high as 75,000 feet. It's a formidable defense against attack.

"Sacred Defense Week" commemorates Iran's commitment to deter aggressors and remain free.

Western and Israeli long knives remain threatening. Tensions are especially high. Netanyahu's bluster aside, longstanding Washington plans call for regime change.

Iran's peaceful nuclear program is red herring cover used as pretext. If not that, something else would substitute. Excuses are easy to fabricate. Western media scoundrels regurgitate them ad nauseam.

Fear is generated. Other false charges follow. America is hell bent for war. It has a willing partner in Israel provided Washington plays the lead role.

Potentially catastrophic consequences are ignored. Apparently, so is opposition expressed by current and past high-ranking military and government officials in both countries. Updated war plans are ready to be implemented unless cooler heads go all out to prevent it.

Iran is falsely called an existential threat. Netanyahu and Israeli hardliners claim it constantly. Washington does it on and off. It's wearing thin but take it seriously. One day
crying wolf won't be bluster or bluffing.

On September 20, Haaretz reported the latest outburst. It headlined "US warns Iran: Time is running out on diplomacy over nuclear program."

This time UN envoy Susan Rice issued the warning. She gives diplomacy a bad name. She's one of America's worst ever ambassadors. Her style is belligerent, arrogant, and offensive.

Addressing the Security Council, she said:

"We believe there is still time and space for diplomacy," but not much.

"(T)he onus is on Iran to respond constructively." She added that Washington seeks a "clear, united resolution" regarding Tehran's nuclear enrichment program.

Her comments were a clear warning. At the same time, she and other US officials know Iran's nuclear program is peaceful. So do others in Israel, European nations and elsewhere.

Nonetheless, warnings persist. This one comes as Washington, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia, and other US allies stage large-scale Gulf naval drills. Doing so is provocative. It heightens tensions. Make no mistake. Provocation is Washington policy.

This one is codenamed IMCMEX-12. It involves minesweeping and other measures to keep the Strait of Hormuz open if Iran blocks it defensively. It warned about doing it if attacked.

In September, Tehran plans its own drills. It knows the risks and stands ready to confront them.

So do Israelis wanting no part of war. A mid-August Haaretz article headlined "We'll all pay on doomsday," saying:

Attacking Iran is madness. It means sharply higher oil prices, deeper global recession, and Israel becoming "even less popular in Europe and the United States than we already are."

The Bank of Israel and Finance Ministry predict attacking Iran will cause "serious economic damage." They're concerned about bankruptcies, mass layoffs, potential panic, and other protracted effects.

World condemnation will follow. Countries, companies, labor organizations, and
consumer groups already boycott Israel for good reason. Attacking Iran will intensify their ire.

When "rockets fall on Tel Aviv," expect investors to flee. Financial assets will suffer. Tax revenues will drop. Deficits will rise.

Iran's response will be far more robust than anything Israel previously experienced. "You can't live a normal life under a daily threat like that."

Israelis will be fearful. They'll hunker down. Normal activities will be curtailed. Business will suffer. Tourists won't come. International airlines will cancel flights. Ports will be "paralyzed."

The shekel will drop sharply. Inflation will rise. Goods will become scarce. The only good news is that unaffordable housing prices will fall. Who'll buy property vulnerable to destruction?

Haaretz omitted what's most important. How many millions of Iranian and Israeli lives will be lost? Bombing nuclear facilities in both countries assures widespread irradiation.

Immediate casualties will be huge in both countries. Longer-term ones will be catastrophically high. War on Iran assures all sides lose. Regional countries will be affected. So will most others from economic fallout.

Haaretz is right saying "We'll all pay on doomsday." Assuring it doesn't happen is the only sensible policy. It's not rocket science. It's common sense.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

His new book is titled "How Wall Street Fleeces America: Privatized Banking, Government Collusion and Class War"

http://www.claritypress.com/Lendman.html

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network Thursdays at 10AM US Central time and Saturdays and Sundays at noon. All programs are archived for easy listening.

http://www.progressiveradionetwork.com/the-progressive-news-hour
Iran War Weekly
December 12, 2012

Hello All – With the US election behind us, the next round of negotiations about Iran’s nuclear program begins. On Saturday, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will convene in Tehran, where Iran’s failures to comply with IAEA requests and UN Security Council demands will be the focus of discussion. Shortly after the New Year, the other arena of negotiations, the negotiations that involve the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) are expected to resume. These negotiations, which were broken off late last summer as the US election approached, pit demands from the P5+1 that Iran essentially cease its nuclear program against Iranian claims that it has the right to develop nuclear power under the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. I’ve linked good/useful reading below relevant to both sets of negotiations.

Over the past 10 days there have been some important developments that impact both sets of negotiations. A US spokesperson stated that Iran has until March to comply with the demands of the P5+1, though the consequences of a failure to comply were not specified. But with Iran’s presidential election taking place in June, it is apparent that there is only a narrow negotiating window before the presidential election in Iran – as was the case with the US presidential election – precludes serious negotiations on Iran’s nuclear program. As for the IAEA negotiations this Saturday, blowback from the Israeli-instigated media hoax regarding Iran’s alleged weapons-related studies more than a decade ago may have undermined the IAEA’s ability to press Iran on these issues. Readings linked below will, I hope, clarify some of these complexities.

I’ve also linked below more accounts of the impact of the economic sanctions against Iran. The Obama administration is attempting to water down the sanctions legislation now
making its way through Congress, fearing that it will make negotiations with Iran more difficult. In the eyes of many in Congress, of course, this is the purpose of the sanctions legislation.

Other topics covered in the good/useful readings linked below include an interesting essay by a former Iranian nuclear negotiator on why Iran doesn’t want nuclear weapons; more analysis on the US cancellation of scheduled talks on a nuclear free zone in the Middle East (at the behest of Israel); Israel’s rejection of a resolution by the UN General Assembly calling on it to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; and several articles on significant changes in the world’s oil supply.

From the beginning, it has appeared that the US intervention in the Syrian uprising/civil war was motivated largely by the possibility that regime change in Syria would weaken Iran. Indeed, it is hard to imagine the current Syrian regime surviving indefinitely, or to see Syria as a very useful ally to Iran anymore. By the same token, however, the greater involvement of the United States in Syria – having now recognized the legitimacy of the newly formed opposition coalition and having participated in the restructuring of the Syrian armed opposition – may mean that it is the United States, not Iran, that will be bogged down in an irresolvable conflict that is increasingly beyond the ability of the United States to control. In addition to the good/useful reading linked below about Syria, I recommend the websites of Syria Comment (www.syriacomment.org), War in Context (www.warincontext.org), and Aljazeera (www.aljazeera.com) to keep up to date on events in Syria.

A new book by David Patrikarakos, Nuclear Iran: The Birth of an Atomic State, provides readers interested in this subject with a useful and insightful overview, from the birth of Iran’s nuclear program under that Shah in the 1970s to the present. While Patrikarakos’ presentation of the events of the last decade is not as good as the more-developed accounts in books by Sayed Hossein Mousavian, Mohammed El-Baradei, or Trita Parsi, it is a good, not-too-long introduction to Iran’s nuclear program.

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)

OVERVIEWS/THE BIG PICTURE

Ten Reasons Iran Doesn’t Want the Bomb
By Seyed Hossein Mousavian, National Interest [December 4, 2012]
FB – Mousavian was formerly an Iranian diplomat, and is now at Princeton. His recent book, The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir, is an important resource in understanding the dynamics of the Iranian nuclear issues.

Since the beginning of Iran's nuclear crisis, the West has been convinced that one approach offers the best hope of altering Tehran's nuclear policy and halting its enrichment activities: comprehensive international sanctions and a credible threat of military strike. During the same period, I have repeatedly warned my friends in the West that such punitive pressures, no matter how severe, will not change the Iranian leadership's mindset, and that a military option would be catastrophic for Iran, the region and beyond. Almost a decade has passed and the unrelenting Western pressures applied on Iran have not achieved the objectives they set. Instead, they have resulted in Iran having an expanded and more sophisticated nuclear program. It is time for the West to acknowledge these realities. The question that remains is whether Iran ultimately aims to get a nuclear weapon. If Iran isn't after the bomb, then the Western accusations and concerns would be reduced enough to allow a diplomatic solution. The following reasons aim to strengthen the case for why Iran is not after a nuclear bomb. http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/ten-reasons-iran-doesnt-want-the-bomb-7802

The Iranian Nuclear Threat
By Karim Sadjadpour and George Perkovich, Carnegie Endowment [November 29, 2012]

The United States and the rest of the P5+1 must decide whether they are prepared to offer Iran incentives that would be sufficient to induce it to compromise, and what a potential U.S.-Iran nuclear breakthrough might look like. The practical question, then, is what specific commitments could be negotiated, verified, and enforced to keep Iran far enough away from having a nuclear weapon that the world would have confidence it could detect an Iranian breakout and mobilize an appropriately robust response, and at the same time allow Iran to exercise its “right” to enrich for purely civilian purposes.

http://carnegieendowment.org/globalten/?fa=50140

Why Obama's Version of 'Engagement' Has Failed
By Pepe Escobar, Tom Dispatch [December 6, 2012]

The second half of this interesting essay puts US-Iranian issues into an Asian context, which is important as both countries see themselves as increasingly turning East.

Will Obama 2.0 finally admit that Washington doesn't need regime change in Tehran to improve its relationship with that country? Only with such an admission (to itself, if not the world) are real negotiations leading to a Wall of Mistrust-blasting deal possible. This would undoubtedly include a genuine détente, an acceptance of Iran's lawful pursuit of a peaceful nuclear program, guarantees that the result would not be a covert weapons project, and a turning away from the possibility of a devastating war in the Persian Gulf and the oil heartlands of the Greater Middle East. Theoretically, it could also include something else: an Obama “Nixon in China” moment, a dramatic journey or gesture by the U.S. president to decisively break the deadlock. Yet as long as a barrage of furiously misinformed anti-Iran hawks in Washington, in lockstep with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Israeli government, deploy a relentless PR offensive burning with incendiary rhetoric, “red lines,”
deadlines, and preemptive sabotage of the P5+1 negotiations, such a moment, such a gesture, will remain the faintest of dreams.

http://original.antiwar.com/engelhardt/2012/12/06/washingtons-iranian-future/

NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

P5+1 to propose new meeting dates to Iran
By Laura Rozen, Al-Monitor [December 10, 2012]

----- Diplomats from six world powers, following further unpublicized consultations in recent days, have decided to propose to Iran dates for holding a new round of nuclear talks as early as this month, diplomatic sources told Al-Monitor Monday. However, a meeting is not expected to materialize before January, they said. Diplomats from five of the six nations in the so-called P5+1 also agreed in their latest consultation to "update" the package presented to Iran at a meeting in Baghdad last May, the diplomatic sources said, although they downplayed expectations for major changes to the package. In addition, one country, believed to be Russia, had not yet formally signed on to that decision, one expert briefed by the US administration told Al-Monitor Monday, adding that it was his understanding the dissenting nation wanted a more revamped, generous package. That position is apparently now at odds with the consensus of other members of the international negotiating group, comprised of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, China and Russia.

http://backchannel.al-monitor.com/index.php/2012/12/3437/p51-to-propose-new-meeting-dates-to-iran/#ixzz2En4cZvok

Three Worries About Next Iran Talks
By Trita Parsi, Al-Monitor [December 10, 2012]

----- Sometime in the next few weeks, the permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany (P5+1) will meet with Iran to pick up diplomacy from where it left off last summer. So far, neither side has shown much appetite for compromise. Both sides have insisted on maximalist objectives; consequently, progress has been absent. This time around it might be different. Fabricated or not, there is a sense that the end game is near. The window for this breakthrough likely closes by March of next year as Iran enters its New Year festivities followed by its paralyzing presidential elections. But there are three things that worry me, that can cause the parties to lose yet another opportunity for peace.


The November 2012 IAEA Report on Iran and Its Implications

[FB – This week’s talks between the IAEA and Iran will be focused on the concerns raised in this, the latest IAEA report.]


The Middle East NFZ Meeting Postponed
Zoning Out in the Middle East
By Paul R. Pillar, The National Interest [December 6, 2012]

--- This was supposed to be the month for an international conference to discuss a possible weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East. The concept of such a zone has been addressed in past review conferences of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty (NPT), sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, and meetings at the International Atomic Energy Agency. Postponing the conference was a missed opportunity. As one of the convening powers, the United States, along with its British and Russian partners, could have simply gone ahead and convened the conference as scheduled. Israel could decide whether or not it would attend. The conference would be better with Israeli attendance, but could still do some good even without it. Meanwhile, refusal to talk about any of these matters does not make the issue go away. http://nationalinterest.org/blog/paul-pillar/zoning-out-the-middle-east-7823

WMD-Free Middle East Proposal at a Glance
http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/mewmdfz


The AP Hoax/Leak
Israel suspected over Iran nuclear programme inquiry leaks
By Julian Borger, The Guardian [UK] [December 10, 2012]

--- Israel is suspected of carrying out a series of leaks implicating Iran in nuclear weapons experiments in an attempt to raise international pressure on Tehran and halt its programme. Western diplomats believe the leaks may have backfired, compromising a UN-sanctioned investigation into Iran's past nuclear activities and current aspirations. The latest leak, published by the Associated Press (AP), purported to be an Iranian diagram showing the physics of a nuclear blast, but scientists quickly pointed out an elementary mistake that cast doubt on its significance and authenticity. An article in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists declared: "This diagram does nothing more than indicate either slipshod analysis or an amateurish hoax." The leaked diagram raised questions about an investigation being carried out by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors after it emerged that it formed part of a file of intelligence on alleged Iranian nuclear weapons work held by the agency. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/dec/10/israel-suspected-iran-nuclear-programme-leaks

US POLICIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Obama Pledges Push to Resume Iran Talks
By Kelsey Davenport, Arms Control Today [December 2012]

[FB – This is a good overview of the recent US positions in the Iranian nuclear negotiations and sanctions regimes, as well as some perspective on what’s coming down the road.]

---- President Barack Obama said last month that he would “try to make a push in the coming months” to resume talks with Iran over its controversial nuclear program, but did not specify when negotiations were likely to resume. … In December, the Obama administration will have to decide whether to renew waivers that allow nine countries to continue importing oil from Iran. Under a provision of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2012, these countries were granted exemptions in June that allow them to continue purchasing Iranian oil without penalty after demonstrating that they “significantly reduced” the volume of such imports. However, the law stipulates that the waivers must be renewed every 180 days, during which the country must demonstrate again that it reduced its imports. The waivers for four of Iran’s top oil importers—China, South Korea, India, and Turkey—all will expire before the end of the year if the administration does not grant renewals. The United States renewed the waivers for Japan and 10 European countries on Sept. 14. http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2012_12/Obama-Pledges-Push-to-Resume-Iran-Talks

Has the US Set a March Deadline for War on Iran?
By John Glaser, Antiwar.com [December 5, 2012]

---- Last month the US issued an ultimatum to Iran, demanding it fully cooperate with the IAEA by March or else face further action and possible measures at the UN Security Council. Micah Zenko, fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, speculates that this “could indicate that the Obama administration is moving toward the zone of immunity logic.” Zenko is referring to the Israeli standard for deciding to go to war with Iran. Up to now, the Israeli standard to attack Iran is not when it has nuclear weapons or presents an imminent threat to Israel, but rather when Iran’s nuclear program is sufficiently advanced and redundant across the country – although not being weaponized – that Israeli military action would be inadequate to significantly retard it. The US standard, at least as commonly understood, has been a little stricter. Washington has implied it will resort to war only if Iran is demonstrably weaponizing its nuclear program and on the verge of having a nuclear bomb. Despite the semantic differences, the two postures are essentially the same. http://antiwar.com/blog/2012/12/05/has-the-us-set-a-march-deadline-for-war-on-iran/

See also – Micah Zenko, “Did the United States just set a March deadline for war with Iran?” Foreign Policy [December 4,
IRANIAN POLICIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Iran Shows Signs of Resilience Ahead of Potential Bilateral Talks

By Richard Javad Heydarian, *Lobe Log* [December 5, 2012]

---- A key foreign policy consequence of President Barak Obama’s reelection is the growing possibility of face-to-face talks between the United States and Iran. Both the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Iran’s Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi have expressed, albeit conditionally, their respective governments’ openness to engage in comprehensive bilateral talks — for the first time in almost three decades — to primarily resolve the ongoing nuclear standoff. In some ways, it is Iran’s relative resilience — and ability to avoid a total collapse — that may explain its willingness to explore direct talks with Washington. Tehran feels that it has enough wiggle room to avoid total unilateral concessions and negotiate a more mutually-favorable, face-saving outcome — perhaps, before it’s too late. [http://www.lobelog.com/iran-shows-signs-of-resilience-ahead-of-potential-bilateral-talks/](http://www.lobelog.com/iran-shows-signs-of-resilience-ahead-of-potential-bilateral-talks/)


“The Fatwa”

[FB – An academic list serve that focuses on the Gulf had an active discussion this week about whether or not there was a Fatwa from Ayatollah Khamenei that forbade nuclear weapons, whether it was written or oral, and whether it meant anything. Mousavian (article above) includes the Fatwa as one of the reasons why he thinks that Iran doesn’t want a nuclear weapon. Though it doesn’t answer all the questions, here is a link to a letter submitted by Iran to the IAEA in 2005 asserting that there was such a Fatwa, and that it forbade the production, etc. of nuclear weapons.]

Iran’s Statement at IAEA Emergency Meeting [August 10, 2005]

---- “The Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has issued the fatwa that the production, stockpiling, and use of nuclear weapons are forbidden under Islam and that the Islamic Republic of Iran shall never acquire these weapons. President Mahmud Ahmadinejad, who took office just recently, in his inaugural address reiterated that his government is against weapons of mass destruction and will only pursue nuclear activities in the peaceful domain.” [http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/iran/nuke/mehr080905.html](http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/iran/nuke/mehr080905.html)

ISRAELI POLICIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Israel Rejects UN Call to Open Nuke Program to Inspections

By John Glaser, *Antiwar.com* [December 5, 2012]

---- Israel on Tuesday dismissed a United Nations resolution calling on it to adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and open its nuclear program to international inspections.
Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor said Israel rejects the overwhelming global consensus that Israel allow the IAEA to inspect its nuclear facilities and to recommit to the NPT, describing it as a “meaningless mechanical vote.” The resolution was approved on Monday by a vote of 174-6 with 6 abstentions and calls on Israel to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty immediately and open its nuclear facilities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency. It also offered support for a high-level conference to ban nuclear weapons from the Middle East which was just canceled by the US and Israel, in order to protect Israel’s regional nuclear monopoly.  http://news.antiwar.com/2012/12/05/israel-rejects-un-call-to-open-nuke-program-to-inspections/

March as a key month for Iran’s nuclear program
By Jasmin Ramsey, Lobe Log [December 5, 2012]
 http://www.lobelog.com/netanyahu-also-established-march-as-a-key-month-for-irans-nuclear-program/

MILITARY MANEUVERING
Iran’s long-range missiles said to lag U.S. intelligence fears
By Jim Wolf, Reuters [December 7, 2012]

---- An internal report for the U.S. Congress has concluded that Iran probably is no longer on track, if it ever was, to having an ocean-crossing missile as soon as 2015. The study casts doubt on a view long held by U.S. intelligence agencies that Iran could be able to test-fly by 2015 an intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM, if it receives "sufficient foreign assistance."  http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-iran-usa-missilebre8b61c9-20121207,0,1731493.story

SANCTIONS
[FB – There are now UN sanctions, US sanctions, and EU sanctions. Some US sanctions date back to the 1979 hostage crisis, but many have been passed in the last few years and have been drafted primarily by AIPAC. A new round of sanctions is now nearing passage in Congress. They are in part a de facto effort by Congress to prevent the Obama administration from successfully negotiating with Iran, which would interfere with the much-desired military attack (or a pre-emptive Iranian abject surrender, I suppose). For that reason, the Obama people are attempting to limit the scope and increase the President's flexibility re: the current legislation.]

Weighing Benefits and Costs of International Sanctions Against Iran
From The Iran Project [December 3, 2012] – 46 pages
[FB - In September the Iran Project issued a similar report on “The Costs and Benefits of a War Against Iran.” Both reports are signed on to by a long list of Establishment foreign policy figures.
Administration Pushes For Lighter Iran Sanctions In Legislative Fight

By Rosie Gray, BuzzFeed [December 10, 2012]

----- The Obama administration is requesting a number of changes to congressional sanctions on Iran that would make the sanctions less strict, according to a redlined version of the legislation sent to the Armed Services Committees of the House and Senate. The document, provided to BuzzFeed by a Democratic source who is privy to the negotiations, proposes a number of alterations to a package aimed at raising the pressure on Iran to abandon a nuclear program most American observers believe is aimed at building a weapon. The administration's changes would include waiting 180 days for the sanctions to take effect, as opposed to the 90 days as passed by the Senate. http://www.buzzfeed.com/rosiegray/administration-pushes-for-lighter-iran-sanctions-i


OIL AND ENERGY

Oil, Iran, and stability in the Gulf: Why the Gulf states want to keep Iran in a box

By Stephen M. Walt, Foreign Policy [December 5, 2012]

----- The Gulf states' interest in keeping oil prices high enough to balance their own budgets, in a period where heightened social spending and other measures are being used to insulate these regimes from the impact of the Arab Spring. According to the IMF, these states need crude prices to remain upwards of $80 a barrel in order to keep their fiscal house in order. Which in turn means that Saudi Arabia et al also have an interest in keeping Iran in the doghouse, so that Iran can't attract foreign companies to refurbish and expand its oil and gas fields and so that it has even more trouble marketing its petroleum on global markets.http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/12/05/oil_iran_and_stability_in_the_gulf


What About Solar and Wind?

[FB – While nuclear power might have seemed like a good idea when the Shah got it going 40 years ago, the program's inertia has carried it into an era when nuclear power is increasingly looked at as a dinosaur technology that makes no sense. It was interesting,
therefore, to see this article by Robert Kennedy on the Aljazeera site this week. It turns out Iran is ideal for solar power; check out [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_power_stations_in_Iran#Solar].

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END IRAN NEWSLETTER #21

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