

If Israel Attacks Iran, Russia Is Not Going to Stay on the Sideline. Mike Whitney

"An Attack on Iran Would be an Act of Political Folly"

By [Mike Whitney](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

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I don't think there is an implicit obligation for the United States to follow like a stupid mule whatever the Israelis do. If they decide to start a war, simply on the assumption that we'll automatically be drawn into it, I think it is the obligation of friendship to say, 'you're not going to be making a national decision for us.' I think that the United States has the right to have its own national security policy." —[Zbigniew Brzezinski](#)

The US foreign policy establishment used to include men who were capable of strategic thinking. No more. What passes for strategic thinking now is the endless reiteration of Israeli talking points uttered by retired generals who are owned by the weapons industry and the Israeli lobby. These men—who represent the views of an infinitesimal percentage of the overall population—are an essential part of the larger machine that prepares the public for intervention, escalation and war. Their current assignment is to convince the American people that Israel's impending attack on Iran serves America's national security interests which, of course, it doesn't. In fact, the country is being boondoggled into a bloody conflagration that will, in all probability, precipitate a sharp decline in US global power followed by a swift end to the so-called American Century.

All of this was forecast by one of America's most scholarly foreign policy analysts, **Zbigniew Brzezinski**, who delivered a warning on the topic of Iran more than a decade ago in an op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times*. Here's what he said:

....an attack on Iran would be an act of political folly, setting in motion a progressive upheaval in world affairs. With the U.S. increasingly the object of widespread hostility, the era of American preponderance could even come to a premature end. Although the United States is clearly dominant in the world at the moment, it has neither the power nor the domestic inclination to impose and then to sustain its will in the face of protracted and costly resistance....

It is therefore high time for the administration to sober up and think strategically, with a historic perspective and the U.S.... It's time to cool the rhetoric. The United States should not be guided by emotions or a sense of a religiously inspired mission... our choice is either to be **stampeded into a reckless adventure profoundly damaging to long-term U.S. national interests** or to become serious about giving negotiations with Iran a genuine chance.....

Treating Iran with respect and within a historical perspective would help to advance

that objective. **American policy should not be swayed by the current contrived atmosphere of urgency ominously reminiscent of what preceded the misguided intervention in Iraq.** [Been there, done that](#), Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Los Angeles Times*

Well-said. One can only wish that the lamebrain pundits on cable news would circulate the article among themselves.

Like him or hate him, Brzezinski provided a coherent, well-researched analysis that dispassionately evaluated whether the costs of a particular operation were greater than the benefits. In this case, there is simply no comparison. The US is rushing towards a conflict that serves no national interest, that it can't win, and that will have a catastrophic impact on the nation's future. Here's Brzezinski again:

We do not need to increase the scale of the conflict in the region because **an increase in that conflict involving the Iranians ...would likely reignite the conflict in Iraq, would set the Persian Gulf ablaze, would increase the price of oil 2-fold, 3-fold, 4-fold...**Europe would become even more dependent on Russia for its energy.... So, what is the benefit to us?

All I know as an analyst of international politics is **(a war with Iran) this would be a disaster.** And, frankly, I think it will be a disaster for us more than for Israel because, as a result of the war.... **we will be forced out of the region...** because of the dynamic hatred that develops. And, have no illusions about it, if the conflict spreads, we're going to be alone... **And if we are driven out, how much would you bet on the survival of Israel for more than five or ten years?** [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#), *Real News Network*, 2:15 min

So, it would not just be disastrous for the United States, but disastrous for Israel as well, which—absent Washington's "unconditional" support—would wither on the vine in 5 or 10 years. Perhaps, there are some who would disagree with this analysis? Perhaps there are some who think that a tiny belligerent colony at the heart of the Arab world—that has made every effort to make itself a damned nuisance for the last 75 years—could survive without US assistance?

It's possible, I suppose. But not likely. This is from an article at *NBC News* on Saturday:

U.S. officials believe **Israel has narrowed down what they will target in their response to Iran's attack, which these officials describe as Iranian military and energy infrastructure.**

There is no indication that Israel will target nuclear facilities or carry out assassinations, but U.S. officials stressed that the Israelis have not made a final decision about how and when to act....

The U.S. does not know when Israel's response could come but officials said the Israeli military is poised and ready to go at any time once the order is given....U.S. and Israeli officials said a response could come during the Yom Kippur holiday. ..

The U.S. is poised to defend its assets in the region from any immediate counterattack from Iran but is not likely to provide direct military support to the operation.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin spoke with his Israeli counterpart, Yoav Gallant, last night and they discussed broad strokes about an Israeli response. However, it's not clear that Gallant provided any concrete details. [NBC News](#)

On Saturday, more than 10 articles appeared on Google News with the exact same byline: "Israel has narrowed down what they will target." The impression this mantra is supposed to create is that Israel's blatant act of aggression is actually a measured and thoughtful act of self-defense. What a joke; and what a humiliation for the Biden administration who are not even informed as to how their bombs, their jets, their refueling aircraft, and their logistical support are going to be used. When did the US become such a spineless patsy that allows itself to be pushed around by the gangsters in Tel Aviv? It's shocking.

What's lost in the hullabaloo surrounding Israel's upcoming attack on Iran, is the fact that Russia has been stealthily conducting its own diplomatic campaign aimed at strengthening Iran's defenses and preparing for the hostilities ahead.

On Friday, Putin met with Iranian **President Massoud Pezeshkian** in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan to discuss the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and the probability of a regional war. The carefully choreographed meeting was intended to show that Russia regards Iran as both a friend and ally who can depend on Russia's support if hostilities break out. Hours earlier, Russia's **Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov** issued an ominous warning that an Israeli strike on Iran's civilian nuclear facilities would constitute a "serious provocation."

Speaking at a news conference in Laos, Lavrov emphasized that—according to the International Atomic Energy Agency—Iran has remained compliant with current regulations and has not diverted any nuclear material to banned weapons programs. (Israel's spurious claims on this matter are pure propaganda.)

If any plans or threats to attack the Islamic Republic of Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities are realized, it would indeed be a very serious provocation.

Between Lavrov's comments and Putin's meeting, there's little doubt that Moscow supports Iran in its clash with Israel although it is not possible to know whether Russia will actively intervene if war breaks out. (We should also remember that Russia's Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin visited Tehran just two days before Iran launched its ballistic missile attack on Israel. This suggests that Iran got the green light from Moscow to take action that corresponds with Putin's idea of a "proportionate response.")

The point we're making, is that Russia is following developments very closely and has moved military assets to within range of the prospective battlespace. It is logical to assume that Russia will engage Iran's enemies if that is what the situation requires. Military analyst Will Schryver summed it up like this:

I cannot understand how more people do not fully appreciate that **fighting alongside Iran against the empire is not a choice for Russia, but an existential imperative.** It is also something for which the Russians have feverishly prepared since no later than the summer of 2022. —[Will Schryver](#)

Keep in mind, Russia and Iran have significantly strengthened their military ties over the last few years to the point they are openly committed to each other's security. Here's Schryver

again:

Russia, China, and Iran have now formed a de facto military and economic alliance — what they prefer to call a “partnership”. In the case of Russia and China, a comprehensive full-spectrum partnership has emerged: military, economic, and monetary....

Russia, China, and Iran conduct regular joint exercises in the Arabian Sea. Those exercises have increased in both scope and frequency in recent years.

Both Russia and China are investing vast sums of capital in Iran, much of it in the energy sector and in ambitious transportation projects aiming to construct fast and efficient trade corridors linking China, Iran, and Russia as primary nodes of Eurasian commerce...**Arms and technology transfers between the three countries have reached unprecedented levels....**

It is increasingly evident that Russia, China, and Iran recognize that an attack against any one of them would constitute an existential threat to them all. The strategic interests of all three countries are now inextricably intertwined. Most importantly, they are united in a single overriding strategic objective: to dismantle the dominion of the long-reigning Anglo-American empire....

In a putative war between the United States and Iran, both Russia and China would actively support Iran... Iran would simply be supplemented with arms and other logistical necessities from both its partners — and quite possibly taken under their nuclear umbrella in an explicit act of deterrence.

To the extent Russia, China, and Iran are determined to act all for one and one for all, they represent a combination of global military and economic power that cannot be defeated. [All for One and One for All](#), Will Schryver, Twitter

Schryver’s view is shared by a great many analysts who (naturally) are banned from sharing their opinions in the major media. But that doesn’t change the underlying fact that Russia and Iran are strategic allies that will intervene militarily if they find themselves in peril.

It’s worth noting, that Iran provides China with 15 percent of its oil (China’s top oil producer), is an active participant in the International North–South Transport Corridor (which is a 4500 mile long multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between India, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.), and is “situated at the crossroads of Central Asia, South Asia, and the Arab states of the Middle East.” **Iran’s strategic positioning and its vast natural resources make it a critical part of the emerging multipolar world order that is fast replacing Washington’s threadbare rules-based system. Neither Russia nor China can allow Iran to be decimated or its government to be ousted.** Here’s more background from author Dr Digby James Wren on Substack:

Russia’s president has authorized the signing of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement with Iran. This follows a Tehran visit by the secretary of the Russian Security Council, preceded by a trip to St. Petersburg by the Iranian national security advisor.... **Putin reportedly describing it as “expedient” and to be signed “at the highest level.”...**

According to Iranian media, Putin hailed the “strategic” relations between Tehran and Moscow, which he said had grown stronger in recent years.... **Relations between Moscow and Tehran have deepened considerably** since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in Feb. 2022.

Cooperation between the two countries has become particularly pronounced in the military domain. Iran has supplied drones to Russia, which have reportedly been deployed against Ukraine. Additionally, Iran is believed to be supporting Russia’s efforts to localize drone production....

“Relations with Iran are a priority for us,” Putin told Pezeshkian...

Reports also emerged in August about alleged Russian arms shipments being delivered to Iran. The New York Times cited Iranian officials at the time as saying that Russia had begun to transfer advanced radar and air defense equipment to Tehran following a request made to the Kremlin. [Persian Fire](#), Dr Digby James Wren, Substack

In other words, Putin anticipated the crisis that is unfolding today and began vigorously shoring up Iran’s defenses. Now, they are ready to go. Check it out:

The Supreme Commander-in-Chief Vladimir Putin discussed the situation in the Middle East and... set tasks that could only be discussed face to face. We will monitor the development of events; the army is combat ready, (and) the initiative is on our side... Victory will be ours, maybe not quickly, but we will definitely win. - [Andrey Gurulev, Russian Lieutenant General @DD_Geopolitics](#)

What we should expect now, is an Israeli attack on Iran’s vital infrastructure amplified by a decapitation operation aimed at its political and military leaders. The attack will have to exceed what US advisors have suggested in order to increase the chances of an exaggerated retaliation from Iran that will prompt Washington’s entry into the war. (which is Israel’s main objective) Iran’s response will be shaped in part by Russia who will emphasize a ‘proportionate response’. Putin will give Israel and the United States every opportunity to ‘lower the temperature’ and deescalate, but if they decide to intensify their attacks, we should expect the worst-case scenario.

There’s no way the United States comes out of a war with Iran unscathed. These are momentous times in which the cornerstone upon which the old order rests, is disintegrating before our eyes.

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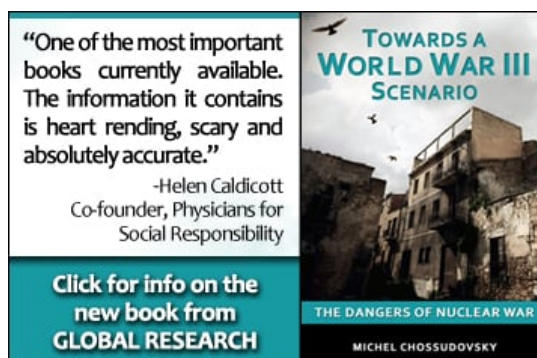
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["Towards a World War III Scenario: The Dangers of Nuclear War"](#)

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Michel Chossudovsky is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), which hosts the critically acclaimed website www.globalresearch.ca. He is a contributor to the Encyclopedia Britannica. His writings have been translated into more than 20 languages.

Reviews

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Michel Chossudovsky exposes the insanity of our privatized war machine. Iran is being targeted with nuclear weapons as part of a war agenda built on distortions and lies for the purpose of private profit. The real aims are oil, financial hegemony and global control. The price could be nuclear holocaust. When weapons become the hottest export of the world's only superpower, and diplomats work as salesmen for the defense industry, the whole world is recklessly endangered. If we must have a military, it belongs entirely in the public sector. No one should profit from mass death and destruction.

-Ellen Brown, author of 'Web of Debt' and president of the Public Banking Institute

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