

Panetta is Raising the Specter of Preemptive War: Avocates of a “Hot War with Iran” Take Some Heavy Media Hits

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Global Research, December 26, 2011
26 December 2011

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Advocates of a hot war with Iran have just taken some heavy hits from a Harvard professor of international relations and two prominent journalists.

Harvard's Professor Stephen Walt has savaged an article in the forthcoming "Foreign Affairs" magazine (Jan.-Feb.) by Matthew Kroenig titled, "Time to Attack Iran: Why a Strike Is the Least Bad Option." Kroenig is an Assistant Professor of Government at Georgetown University who wrote:

"The truth is that a military strike intended to destroy Iran's nuclear program, if managed carefully, could spare the region and the world a very real threat and dramatically improve the long-term national security of the United States."

Calling this "a remarkably poor piece of advocacy," Harvard's Walt writes that Kroenig "makes the case for war by assuming everything will go south if the U.S. does not attack and that everything will go swimmingly if it does. This is not fair-minded 'analysis'; it is simply a brief for war designed to reach a predetermined conclusion," Walt writes of the "Foreign Affairs" piece.

"He (Kroenig) is openly calling for preventive war against Iran, even though the United States has no authorization from the U.N. Security Council, it is not clear that Iran is actively developing nuclear weapons, and Iran has not attacked us or any of our allies—ever," Walt writes.

"He is therefore openly calling for his country to violate international law. He is calmly advocating a course of action will inevitably kill a significant number of people, including civilians...and Kroenig is willing to have their deaths on his conscience on the basis of a series of unsupported assertions, almost all of them subject to serious doubt."

Writing in UK's "The Guardian" newspaper December 7th, journalist Seumas Milne points out that Iran is a peaceful nation that "has invaded no one in 200 years" while "the US. and Israel have attacked 10 countries or territories between them in the past decade." What's more, Milne adds, "Britain exploited, occupied and overthrew governments in Iran for over a century. So who threatens who exactly?"

He goes on to write, "For months the evidence has been growing that a US-Israeli stealth war against Iran has already begun, backed by Britain and France. Covert support for armed

opposition groups has spread into a campaign of assassinations of Iranian scientists, cyber warfare, attacks on military and missile installations, and the killing of an Iranian general, among others.”

Milne also called it an “extraordinary admission” that British defense officials said if the U.S. planned to attack Iran, as they believed it might, America would receive “UK military help,” including sea and air support. “The British military establishment fully expects to take part in an unprovoked US attack on Iran—just as it did against Iraq eight years ago,” he said.

(This admission shouldn’t be that astonishing as the U.S. and U.K. are inextricably tied together militarily and in a number of other significant ways and appear to be bent on advancing the imperial goals of the old British Empire. A superficial difference today is that the Empire’s capital has moved from London to Washington. In reality, from their joint intelligence operations to their collaborating oil companies to their defense contractors, etc., US/UK operate as One. Maybe the long-time partners should rebrand themselves the United States of England?)

Meanwhile, American journalist Patrick J. Buchanan pointed out that Defense Secretary Leon Panetta “dropped some jolting news” when he told CBS, “If we get intelligence they (Iranians) are proceeding with developing a nuclear weapons, then we will take whatever steps necessary to deal with it.”

In his column of December 22, Buchanan charged, “Panetta is raising the specter of preemptive war,” adding, “This is no minor matter. For not only have Panetta and Barack Obama talked about ‘all options on the table’ regarding Iran—i.e., we do not rule out military strikes—so, too, have the GOP presidential candidates, save Rep. Ron Paul.”

Responding to Pentagon Press Secretary George Little’s statement, “We have no indication that the Iranians have made a decision to develop a nuclear weapons,” Buchanan wrote it “coincides with the consensus of all 16 U.S. intelligence agencies, including the CIA and Defense Intelligence Agency, in December, 2007.”

Or, to put it another way, in the blunt words of “The Guardian’s” Milne, “The case against Iran is...spectacularly flimsy.”

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