

Prelude to War? US Sanctions: No Coup de Grace for Iran

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Will Washington dispense with a new round of sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran? Or will the warmongers in the White House march for war against the country?

In a dramatic move which was apparently contrary to his desire, US President Barack Obama on Saturday signed into law tough new sanctions against Iran targeting the country's Central Bank and financial sector in a bid to administer an economic coup de grace against Iran.

Foreign firms are now to make a choice between doing business with the Iranian financial sector and Central Bank or the US economy and financial sector. In signing the bill, Obama harbored some secret fear that such an act would skyrocket the oil prices and that it would be terminally detrimental to the ailing economy of Washington as well as to global economy.

Needles to say, such a measure was encouraged and propelled by the warmongers in the White House and the powerful Zionist lobby.

The UN Security Council has already imposed four rounds of sanctions against Iran for 33 years, inflicting adverse damage on the economy albeit with no determining impact on the political approach of the country. However, decades of anti-Iran US-engineered sanctions have failed to stall the progress of the Islamic country which is moving towards self-sufficiency in all economic spheres. Therefore, Washington officials have been ill advised in believing that by slapping more sanctions on Iran, they will be able to bring to knees a nation who adheres to their ideology of no submission.

In a show of prodigious naval prowess, Iran launched a ten-day military drill codenamed Velayat 90 and successfully test-fired indigenous missiles e.g. a surface-to-sea Qader cruise missile, a shorter range Nasr and later, a surface-to-surface Nour missile and other warefares. Despite Washington's claim that the naval exercises were a distracter from the US sanctions, they were in fact carried out under the prudent instructions of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who had ordered Iranian Armed Forces to be on alert and thwart any potential threat in view of the anti-Iran war rhetoric the US hawks have renewed in recent weeks.

In a military brinkmanship, Iran has announced that it will block the Strait of Hormuz if oil sanctions are imposed on the country. Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said that closing the Strait of Hormuz is "as easy as drinking water for Iranian naval forces," and that "we would close it if need be."

In Iowa on Thursday when asked if Iran would be justified in responding to the sanctions by blocking the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz, US Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul meticulously compared the Western sanctions to a hypothetical move by China to block the Gulf of Mexico, which Americans would consider an act of war. He also said the tough sanctions against Iran are “acts of war,” warning of a war with devastating consequences in the Middle East.

On Tuesday (December 30, 2011), the Iranian Navy identified and recorded footage of the USS John C. Stennis in the area where Iran was conducting military drills.

With commendable courage, Commander of Iran’s Army Major General Ataollah Salehi warned the US aircraft carrier not to return to the Persian Gulf, saying that Iran is not in the habit of repeating a warning.

The USS John C. Stennis left the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. One of the US navy’s biggest warships, the nuclear-powered vessel can accommodate around 3,300 personnel with the capability to carry 50 fighter jets and 6 helicopters.

The war of words which ensued between Iranian army commanders and the American military men testifies to the fact that the wall of fear has collapsed before the eyes of the Iranians and that the US is no longer seen as an indomitable enemy.

It is very painful to see that political ignorance is rife in the West and the Western powers are seeing the whole illusion of the saga of Iran threat through the purblind eyes of Washington. On Tuesday, France urged the EU to follow in the footsteps of the US government by slapping an embargo on its oil exports and freezing its Central Bank assets by next month, thereby crippling the entire economic system of the country.

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said he was convinced “Iran is pursuing the development of its nuclear arms.”

“I have no doubt about it... The last report by the International Atomic Energy Agency is quite explicit on this point,” he told French network i-Tele.

“This is why France, without closing the path of negotiation and dialogue with Iran, wants stricter sanctions,” he added.

To France and the rest of the West, Iran is essentially seen as a threat with or without a nuclear weapons program as they have been mainstreamed into this ill manner of thinking. Despite the fact that Iran has repeatedly announced that its nuclear program is geared for peaceful purposes, the West is reluctant to listen and instead turns a deaf ear to Iran and disregards the country’s efforts for nuclear transparency.

Clearly, sanctions are currently the only available tool in the hands of Washington but behind-the-scene efforts are being made to prove that sanctions cannot mollify the threat in the long run and that the threat of the so-called nuclear Iran will only be eliminated through a war thus justified thanks to the sinister powers long at work.

The table Washington has set for Iran seems to be big enough to hold more options for the Islamic Republic. This is a point Iran has grasped well and the ten-day military drill in the strategic Strait of Hormuz is to be taken as a message to the warmongers that threat is the only answer to threat.

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