

Senators say report of planned US strikes on Iran untrue

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An anonymously sourced report that emerged Wednesday claims President Bush plans to launch an attack against Iran before summer's end, but aides to two Senators who were supposedly told of the plan tell [RAW STORY](#) that the report is absolutely untrue.

Asia Times correspondent Muhammad Cohen, reporting from New York, [writes](#) that an "informed source" has clued him in to plans from the Bush administration "to launch an air strike against Iran within the next two months."

Cohen's source told him that Sens. Diane Feinstein (D-CA), who is on the Senate Intelligence Committee, and Richard Lugar (R-IN), the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, were secretly briefed on the administration's plans and were prepared to write a New York Times op-ed condemning Bush. Aides to the two senators were quick to deny the report.

"That story was inaccurate. Senator Feinstein has not received any briefing - classified or unclassified - from the Administration involving any plans to strike Iran," Philip J. Lavelle, the California Democrat's press secretary, wrote in an e-mail to [RAW STORY](#) Wednesday. "In addition, she has not submitted an op-ed to the NYT, or any other paper, on this subject in recent days. She has been a strong advocate for diplomacy with Iran, and will continue to be one."

Lugar spokesman Andy Fisher was more succinct: "No briefing. No oped. No conversations. No story."

Speculation that the US might launch an attack on Iran has fluctuated over the last year or so, as the Bush administration and its allies on Capitol Hill have accused the regime of seeking to build a nuclear weapons arsenal and aiding insurgents in Iraq. Back in September, onetime Democrat Sen. Joe Lieberman [asked](#) US Gen. David Petraeus whether Iran should be invaded as part of an extension of the Iraq war.

Cohen said his source for the latest report was a "retired US career diplomat and former assistant secretary of state still active in the foreign affairs community" who was an ambassador under President Bush's father, George H.W. Bush. Few precise details about the supposed strike were offered in the *Asia Times* report.

Lawmakers, including Sen. Joe Biden (D-DE), have said that an unauthorized strike on Iran would be [grounds for impeachment](#).

The Bush administration has not said explicitly that an Iran attack is completely out of the question, but White House officials have emphasized that they prefer to work through diplomatic channels to counteract Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The White House [flatly denied](#) a similar report last week that an Iran attack was imminent before he leaves office in January.

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