

# Can War on Iran Be Prevented?

From an article by **Bridget Moix**, of the **Friends Committee on National Legislation (fcnl.org)**

**You might think a war with Iran is inevitable** and coming soon. But no war is inevitable until it is underway, and there are real diplomatic solutions to the escalating crisis with Iran - if diplomats can muster the political courage to pursue them and space for real diplomacy isn't closed off entirely by the rush toward war by Congress and the media.

Gary Sick of the Tehran Bureau: *"Iran has almost certainly **not made a decision** to actually build a bomb and we are very likely to know if they should make such a decision....Would Israel actually attack while [IAEA] international inspectors are at work? No, they would need to give them warning, thereby giving Iran warning that something was coming. **The IAEA presence is a trip wire that works both ways.** It is an invaluable resource. Risking its loss would be not only foolhardy but self-destructive to Israel and everyone else."*

**There are nuclear weapons inspectors in Iran?! Yes**, though you'd hardly know that from the mainstream US media. And, **Iran has just invited the IAEA inspectors to extend their mission**, an opening for ratcheting down the rhetoric for war and reigniting diplomacy.

**Isn't Iran already pursuing nuclear weapons?** Secretary of Defense Panetta, on 60 Minutes: "the consensus is that, **if** they decided to do it, it would probably take them about a year to be able to produce a bomb and then possibly another one to two years in order to put it on a deliverable vehicle of some sort in order to deliver that weapon." Wait, they haven't even decided to pursue nuclear weapons yet?! Why, no. But military strikes would surely convince them to do so.

**What would be the result of a military attack on Iran?** 28-year veteran of the CIA Paul Pillar noted that many of the predictions circulating assume worst-case Iranian behavior when talking about getting the bomb, but best-case Iranian behavior in the face of an attack against them. His prediction, similar to other military experts', is that an assault on Iran would quickly escalate into a devastating regional war, a new wave of anti-US sentiment across the Muslim world, offer a political gift to hardliners in Iran, lead to "incalculable economic consequences" for the world, fuel a nuclear arms race in the region, and guarantee generations of bad relations between the US and Iran.

**Alternatives to dangerous military action?** Some elements of a negotiated solution to the crisis can be imagined: an **agreement to accept Iran's nuclear energy program** while outlining clear technical no-gos to **avoid weaponization**. More ambitious: lay out a path that includes **US-Iran cooperation** on shared areas of concern, including Afghanistan; provide a **security guarantee** that the US and Israel will not attack in exchange for an end to Iran's support of violent disruption in the region; chart a course for a **nuclear free weapons zone** in the Middle East; **bring Iran back into the international community** with a long-term goal of restored US-Iranian relations.

**The best hope for preventing a war now lies with us:** an engaged citizenry insisting that **war is not inevitable** and calling on our policymakers to pursue diplomacy vigorously, including **direct, sustained, bilateral talks with Iran**.

**Want to take action?** Many groups are working against war with Iran - as well as Afghanistan, Iraq, ... including: <http://fcnl.org> **Friends Committee for National Legislation** (from which most of above text comes); <http://worldcantwait.net> **World Can't Wait**; <http://vcnv.org> **Voices for Creative Nonviolence**; <http://justforeignpolicy.org> **Just Foreign Policy**

And, we are **AWARE – the Anti-War, Anti-Racism Effort of Champaign Urbana**. Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/groups/305897426305](https://www.facebook.com/groups/305897426305) ; on UPTV channel 6, 10pm Tuesdays; or meet with us 5pm every Sunday in McKinley Foundation's Dean Clark room (5<sup>th</sup> and Daniel, Champaign).