

THE UPSIDE OF EVIDENCE-FREE NUKE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST IRAN? WE CAN DECLARE VICTORY!

One would think that, within a month of the US finally withdrawing its troops (leaving behind a vast mercenary force) from the nearly nine year nightmare in Iraq that was launched on the basis of evidence-free accusations, and only days after President Obama signed into permanency his ability to detain citizens forever without providing a shred of evidence, the Washington Post would refrain from giving Joby Warrick a chance to yammer again from the basis of unsupportable allegations that Iran is actively pursuing nuclear weapons. But this is the Post we're talking about, and the same bill that gave Obama indefinite detention powers also tightened the screws on Iran, so it was necessary to bring Warrick out to put forth the latest transcribed version of US spin.

Warrick's piece, at the time of this writing, is occupying the most prominent position on the home page of the Post's website, where it has the teaser headline "Iran fears worst as West steps up pressure". Clicking through to the article gives the headline "As currency crisis and feud with West deepen, Iranians brace for war". The overall spin that the US is projecting through this transcription is that both the Iranian government and Iranian citizens are feeling the almighty power of the US sanctions and that they are in a state of depressed resignation to the inevitability of war, while the US government is seeing that its brilliant moves are paying off and we just might not need to proceed to the point of an overt attack. I guess that is the upside of moving forward with public sanctions (and covert actions that already constitute a full-on war) based on

manufactured evidence: it is also possible to manufacture evidence that allows us to declare victory and (hopefully) move on.

There is, of course, a flip side to that same argument. As commenter Dan succinctly put it in my post from yesterday where we were discussing the risk of all-out war stemming from the US sanctions:

All this risk to punish a country for something no one has proven it has done.

With that as background, here is how the Post article opens:

TEHRAN – At a time when U.S. officials are increasingly confident that economic and political pressure alone may succeed in curbing Iran’s nuclear ambitions, the mood here has turned bleak and belligerent as Iranians prepare grimly for a period of prolonged hardship and, they fear, war.

A bit further along, we get the US gloating on its “successful” approach:

The sense of impending confrontation is not shared in Washington and other Western capitals, where government officials and analysts expressed cautious satisfaction that their policies are working.

Former and current U.S. government officials did not dismiss the possibility of a military confrontation but said they saw recent threats by Iranian leaders – including warning a U.S. aircraft carrier this week not to return to the crucial Strait of Hormuz – mainly as signs of rising frustration. U.S. officials say this amounts to vindication of a years-long policy of increasing pressure, including through clandestine operations, on Iran’s

clerical rulers without provoking war.

Yes, Iran did threaten the US not to put a carrier back into the Persian Gulf yesterday and also even announced that now the Revolutionary Guard will hold wargames in the Gulf, but Warrick's administration controllers did not pass on to him the fact that Iran also is offering to return to the multinational talks aimed at diffusing the nuclear issue:

Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi says Tehran is ready to resume talks with the six world powers as soon as both sides agree on a venue and date for negotiation.

"We are prepared for negotiations and we hope talks would be held in a venue agreed upon by both sides," Salehi said at a joint press conference with his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu on Thursday.

/snip/

Tehran says it is ready to continue negotiations based on common ground, adding, however, that it has no intention of backing down from its nuclear rights.

The United States, Israel and some of their allies accuse Tehran of pursuing military objectives in its nuclear program and have used this pretext to impose four rounds of sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Iran has refuted the allegations, arguing that as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Tehran has a right to use nuclear technology for peaceful use.

Warrick's article would have us believe that the new sanctions (which, as I pointed out in

yesterday's post, have not yet been fully implemented) are a tremendous breakthrough:

"The reasons you're seeing the bluster now is because they're feeling it," said Dennis Ross, who was one of the White House's chief advisers on Iran before stepping down late last year. With even tougher sanctions poised to take effect in weeks, the White House had succeeded in dramatically raising the costs of Iran's nuclear program, he said.

And then we have the most important bit of transcription of all in the very next paragraph:

"The measure, in the end, is, 'Do they change their behavior?' " Ross said.

Remember, the "behavior" on which all of this posturing and counter-posturing is based has not been proven with evidence that can withstand public scrutiny. Despite that, we now are told that the key development will be whether Iran changes this "behavior". Presumably, since the behavior itself is not based on evidence, the US now is free to claim the behavior has improved and is no longer a threat. Let us hope that will be the outcome and that the multinational talks will resume, producing an outcome that allows the US and Iran to achieve a level of mutual transparency that diffuses tensions.

Note, I did say "hope"...