

IRAN-WHAT TO DO?

Speech at MOWW Region VI Convention, Bradenton, FL 19 May 06

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When I was Inspector General for the US European Command in 1975-1977, each year we would inspect our US MAAGS and Missions in 24 countries in Europe, Middle East and Africa. I remember we stayed in the Hilton Hotel in Tehran that had a Disco night club in the basement of the hotel. Beautiful Persian women were everywhere in western clothing. Driving in Tehran was impossible as the cars were 5 abreast trying to get into one or two lanes. The further up the hill in Tehran, the more expensive the homes, many with swimming pools.

The Shah's economic development program was in full swing and I was given a copy of his book that described it in detail. His military program was supported by the United States in many ways from procurement of hardware to training assistance. I got to know the Generals/Admirals of each of the services during these visits. General Toufanian was what we might call the combat developer of the Staff. One day he said he would like to show me his artillery factory producing artillery shells. I expected to be driven out of the country, but instead the factory was in the middle of Tehran.

On the training side we had advisors with the different military units. One interesting training program I visited was in Isfahan south of Tehran. I walked into the helicopter training headquarters and saw an old friend Nick Psaki. I asked him; "What are you doing here?" I will never forget his reply: "We are training young men who do not even know how to ride a bicycle to fly a helicopter!" The airstrip was the largest piece of concrete I have ever seen. Next door the Iranians had a large building containing a very expensive F-14 Training simulator. So off we went to see it work. But guess what? The roof had been leaking and shorted out all the power, so it sat inoperable and no one was working to repair the roof or the problem.

Bottom line, Iran, in spite of many problems like the above, was modernizing their military with our help and was making great strides in their economic development program. People appeared happy and prosperous. We had a true friend in Iran. But all that changed in late 1978 and early 1979.

The Shah was sick and was leaving the country for medical treatment. Without telling General Haig, President Carter and his National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski sent General Dutch Huyser, Haig's Deputy Commander-in-Chief, US European Command into Tehran to tell the Generals not to stage a coup and to permit the Ayatollah Khomeini to return from Paris. So Khomeini returned and had all the leading Generals/Admirals executed, except my friend Toufanian who managed to escape. Since then the Iranian Mullahs have been exporting terrorism

worldwide with money, weapons and training support. The goal is to spread Islamic radicalism into every country and ultimately impose the Sharia Law as the law of the land. Basically, Iran declared War on the United States when it took over the US Embassy in 1979.

Since 1979 Iran has been working on an effort to become a nuclear power. The best year by year explanation of their efforts is in a book by Kenneth R. Timmerman titled: "Countdown to Crises, The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran". From his book and other information I received from many other sources, including open literature on the Internet, Iran is well ahead in their goal to be a member of the nuclear club.

Iran has been building massive underground caves for uranium enrichment centrifuge systems for the last 20 years. They have 24 of them that we know about, but one report says there are at least 30 or more of the caves. One at Natanz, near Isfahan, south of Tehran, has a cavernous well designed underground production plant, scaled to accommodate 50,000 enrichment centrifuges with all the "fittings, pipes, chillers, power invertors"- the works. All in a hardened military facility capable of withstanding missile strikes. Today they have over 1,000 centrifuges completed, and are working on the 50,000, which can produce 15 to 20 nuclear bombs a year. Some say that within 2 years they will have nuclear weapons. Some say within 6 months. One unsubstantiated report I read says they already have nuclear warheads.

In addition, they successfully tested the Shahab 3 Missile which can cover the Middle East, to include Israel. The Russians just delivered them the SS-6 Missile capable of holding a nuclear warhead, with a range of 1600 miles that can reach Europe. And they are developing an Intercontinental Missile which may be the Shahab 4 or 5. So it is not just the Middle East in jeopardy, but Europe and the United States. Couple this with the loon they have for a President, and they lie a lot and continue their programs regardless of any talks, IAEA Inspections or threats of sanctions, and we have a serious problem that must be tended- and soon!

So-What to Do?

- 1. Continue tough negotiations-but this is fruitless as we have seen in the past.**
- 2. Impose Sanctions through the UN- but the Russians and Chinese will not agree since they have economic ties with Iran. The Chinese just signed a \$100B oil deal with Iran for example. The Russians have a \$1B Arms deal.**
- 3. Enhanced verifiable nuclear program inspections by the IAEA. The usual lack of aggressive efforts by the IAEA will not work.**
- 4. Failing any UN Sanctions, impose an Embargo in consort with our Allies**
- 5. Covertly encourage and support an uprising of the people to take back their country from the Mullahs or**
- 6. Failing these-take military action.**

So, what about the military option?

Iran has a population of 68 million, 70% are under 30, 51% are Persian and 35% are Kurds or Azerbaijanis. Unemployment is around 20%.

LTG (Ret.) Tom McInerney USAF proposes the following if it comes to a military solution. Using GBU-28 bomb bunker-busters and cruise missiles; we could take out 1500 targets in 24-48 hours. This would include the nuclear facilities, their command and control, airfields, naval bases, SAM sites (The Russians recently sold 29 SA-15's to Iran), and their Shahab 3 missiles. Open literature shows nuclear facilities at Natanz, Isfahan, Bushehr, Arak, Yazd, Saghand, Tehran, Bonab, and Ramear. But as mentioned earlier there may be 30 or more underground nuclear facilities to be hit.

It is difficult to get an accurate up to date account of the Iranian military forces; however the following is my best estimate from a number of open sources. Here is our potential enemy.

The Iranian Air Force has about 300 combat aircraft including 25 F-14's, 60 F-5 E/F's, 65 F-4 D/E (5 RF-'4Es), 25 F-7 (China), 7 SU-25's, 30 SU-24's, 25 MIG-29's 25 Mirage F-1, 15 MIG-13, 1 IL-76 (AEW), 4 Tanker/Transport (Boeing 707/747), 67 Cargo Transport (including C-130's), 180 Trainer Aircraft and 250 Surface-to Air Missile Launchers. About 35,000 personnel. 14 operational Air Bases are located throughout the country. Iran has spare parts problems for their aircraft and they are actively trying to procure them.

The Iranian Army has an estimated 475,000 soldiers including the reserves, about 1600 main battle tanks (480 T-72,75 T-62,540 T-54/55,100 Chieftain, 150 M-60A1, 168 M-47, 100 Zulfigar, 80 Scorpion), 600 BMP's, 600 APC's, over 2,000 artillery pieces (Towed and SP), over 300 SCUD type missiles and 50 AH-1J combat helicopters. The Army has six major garrisons and 13 major casernes. One additional source of manpower is the Iranian Basiji children under the age of 17. They were taught in the Iraq-Iran War to walk into minefields to explode the mines ahead of the combat soldiers. The current President was one of their trainers and is seen today wearing the Basiji scarf. One third of the current Army and a majority of the infantrymen are Basiji survivors from that war.

Iranian Navy has an estimated 18,000 personnel, 6 submarines, 2 Destroyers, 3 Frigates, 2Corvettes, 25 Missile Craft, 3 Coastal Patrols, 41 Inland Patrols, 200 miscellaneous small craft, 2 Minelayers, 5 Mine Counter Measures, 18 Amphibious Vessels and 25 Support Ships. Naval Bases are located at Bandar-e Abbas, Bushehr, Khorramshahr, Khark Island, Bandar-e Khomeini, Bandar Beheshti and Bandar-e Anzelli (on the Caspian Sea).

So what to do?

First, the United States and its Allies should now go through the process of the numbered options (Negotiations, Sanctions, and Enhanced Inspections by the IAEA, Embargo and Covert Operations) quickly as possible.

We should immediately update our military option plans for a massive Air Campaign, a Naval Blockade and reinforce our Coalition Forces along the Iraq-Iran Border. I do not favor use of nuclear weapons or a ground assault into this large country. We can gain a few years of no Iranian nuclear capability with this strategy, but it must be executed as soon as possible.

We must punish the Iranian Government to the point that this current regime will fall. We must make it perfectly clear to that crazy Iranian President, and to the Chinese and Russians as well, that we mean business, and if the enriching of uranium and nuclear weapons development is not stopped, that we are serious, that we have the capability and that we fully intend to use force. We cannot let the nuclear genie out of the bottle in the Middle East in the hands of the Islamic Radicals! Our very existence and that of the Free World depends on stopping it.