



Nuclear-Armed Terrorists

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Four years after terrorists slaughtered 3,000 innocent Americans it should go without saying that the "international community" would not let a terrorist-sponsoring nation acquire nuclear weapons.

But it does not go without saying. On the contrary, the rulers of Iran, who subscribe to an ideology not appreciably different from Osama bin Laden's, are moving closer than ever to getting their own nukes.

And they are not bothering to disguise the uses to which the weapons may be put. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has infamously threatened to wipe Israel "off the map."

Less well known: He promises a "world without America," adding recently that such a goal is "attainable, and surely can be achieved."

Europeans who hear such statements and think: "Oh well, too bad for those

Israelis and Americans, but not my problem," need to think again. "The message of the [Islamic] Revolution is global," Ahmadeinejad also has said. "Allah willing, Islam will conquer what? It will conquer all the mountain tops of the world."

Hassan Abbassi, "intelligence" advisor to the Iranian president, has been more specific: "We have a strategy drawn up for the destruction of Anglo-Saxon civilization," he boasted. "We must make use of everything we have at hand to strike at this front by means of our suicide operations or by means of our missiles."

In response to all this: Nothing serious has been done. It does now appear that what British Foreign Minister Jack Straw calls Iran's "history of concealment and deception" regarding its nuclear programs finally will be referred to the U.N. Security Council. That could lead to economic sanctions against Iran.

Or not. China and Russia are both Security Council members and both enjoy lucrative trade ties with Iran. China relies on imports of Iranian oil. Russia has long been selling its nuclear expertise to the Iranian theocrats.

"If the Russians and the Chinese, for reasons that would be abominable, do not join us," Sen. John McCain, an Arizona Republican, said recently, "then we will have to go with [a coalition of] the willing."

Sen. Bill Nelson, a Florida Democrat, agrees, arguing that the administration needs to tell the EU-3 -- Britain, France and Germany -- that "the time has come for them to join us in imposing economic pain on Iran. Trade sanctions, freezing assets and an embargo on refined petroleum, which Iran imports, would get the Iranians' attention."

He proposes that American diplomats begin persuading our European allies that if Iran doesn't change course immediately, ambassadors be withdrawn from Tehran, while their Iranian counterparts are sent packing.

Nelson also wants the U.S. to insist that Lebanese authorities disarm Hezbollah, the Iranian- and Syrian-backed terrorist organization that is second only to al-Qaeda in number of Americans it has murdered. An added benefit: A disarmed Hezbollah

is a necessary pre-condition for full Lebanese sovereignty and freedom.

Nelson recommends, too, that the U.S. make every effort to shut down al-Manar, Hezbollah's satellite television station which broadcasts incitement to terrorism around the world day after day. Why the U.S. Treasury Department has not yet placed al-Manar on its Specially Designated Global Terrorist list -- which would help choke off the financing that keeps it on the air -- is a mystery.

Adopting these and other measures would isolate Iran diplomatically, cause it economic pain and weaken its primary transnational terrorist proxy.

I would add this: There should be a significant effort to assist -- overtly or covertly or both -- Iran's pro-freedom dissidents in their efforts to bring about regime change.

Finally, military options -- particularly those aimed at destroying as many of Iran's nuclear facilities as possible -- must remain on the table.

"To say under no circumstances would we exercise a military option," McCain noted, "that would be crazy." He added: "There is only one thing worse than the United States exercising a military option -- that is a nuclear-armed Iran."

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