

What Should the US Be Doing to Stop Iran and North Korea?

On Monday, I met with James Woolsey, the former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. I've long been impressed with Woolsey's analysis of global trends, but had not previously had the honor of meeting him.

We spent about an hour in his Washington, D.C. office, discussing the growing threats posed by Iran, Syria and North Korea and how the U.S. should be handling them. I gave him a signed copy of *Damascus Countdown*, and we spent some time discussing the book and then various "worst case scenarios" I may write about in future novels.

Most of our conversation was off-the-record. But I took careful notes and Woolsey graciously agreed to allow me to make some of his comments public. His analysis was particularly interesting to me in light of Tuesday's headline in the *Times of Israel*: "UN nuke chief fears Iran secretly working on a bomb: Intelligence shows Tehran was and is involved in nuclear weapons project, says International Atomic Energy Agency head Yukiya Amano."

Woolsey was appointed CIA Director by President Clinton and served from 1993 to 1995. Previously he had served as Under Secretary of the Navy and as Ambassador and U.S. Representative to the negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Since leaving the CIA, Woolsey has continued to write and speak extensively on national security and energy security issues.

A self-described "Scoop Jackson" Democrat—more conservative on foreign policy and military issues than traditional liberals—he endorsed Senator John McCain's presidential bid in 2008 and served as a foreign policy advisor to McCain.

Here are some excerpts from our conversation:

JR: Do you think Israel will use military force, and if so, how soon?

JW: The problem is that the Israeli air force is one of the two best in the world, but they are not big. We have the capacity to launch a sustained bombing campaign—multiple sorties over many days or weeks—and really damage or completely destroy Iran's nuclear infrastructure. But a brief Israeli air strike won't suffice. It's not like hitting the Osirak reactor in Iraq in 1981. It's not like hitting the Syrian reactor that the North Koreans built in 2007.

This is what the U.S. should be doing:

- Put four or five carriers in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean region.
- Send B-52, B-1, and B-2 bombers to Diego Garcia
- Stockpile our most effective conventional earth-penetrating weapons in the Western Pacific or Indian Ocean (Diego Garcia, Guam)
- Start running military exercises in the Indian Ocean
- Don't say anything publicly, officially about what we're doing – but let it be known through a well-timed leak that what these forces are doing is preparing for is a sustained bombing campaign to destroy everything they can reach that is related to Iran's Revolutionary Guards, everything they've got. Let it be known that, at much as possible, we won't target the Iranian people, their civilian infrastructure, or their regular army. But we are going to destroy anything and everything related to the Revolutionary Guards, starting with the nuclear facilities, but also the factories they own, and their headquarters, and their bases, and Hezbollah in Lebanon.
- And then wait for a little bit and see if the Iranian regime gives some ground.

I laid this out in an op-ed with Bud McFarlane a couple of years ago. Of course, maybe it's too late for that now. It's definitely getting late.

JR: What if President Obama won't do this? He's sending B-52s and Stealth bombers and others military assets to South Korea and the Pacific to send a strong message to North Korea. But he's doing just the opposite with regards to Iran—pulling carrier battle groups out of the Persian Gulf area, and so forth. So this brings us back to Israel. Are you saying the Israelis don't have the military capabilities to neutralize the Iran nuclear threat?

JW: I'm concerned because I don't think Israel can take out all of Iran's nuclear facilities using air strikes—some yes, but all? I don't think so.

JR: Then what does Netanyahu do? I ask that because my impression is that Netanyahu brought in Ehud Barak, a long-time political rival, to serve as his Defense Minister for the past four years precisely to lead the IDF into devising and practicing and be preparing to execute a decisive plan to stop Iran from getting the Bomb. And my impression is that Barak feels like he accomplished that objective and stepped down feeling confident that he gave Netanyahu a viable plan, should it become necessary to use.

JW: You may be right. Israel's air assets are limited in numbers, but Netanyahu may have to attack anyway. He may have no other choice. He can't just sit there and do nothing. The one thing that gives me a little bit of optimism is that Bibi and Barak are the two most experienced men in the art of unconventional warfare serving in the leadership of any country anywhere in the world. No other country has one Bibi, or one Barak—much less both. These are men who understand how to defeat an enemy using every trick in the book. And they may have something up their sleeve, a plan that doesn't simply involve attacking from the air. These two guys are used to

thinking about the art of war the way Sun Tzu told us to. I don't think they'd limit themselves to an airstrike or two.

Joel C. Rosenberg is the author of numerous New York Times best-selling novels and non-fiction books, with nearly 3 million copies sold. He is also the founder of The Joshua Fund (). His books include: The Last Jihad (2002), The Last Days (2003), The Ezekiel Option (2005) and The Copper Scroll (2006).

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