

Don't Start a War With Iran

by Rep. Ron Paul

Statement on H. Con. Res. 398: Expressing the concern of Congress over Iran's development of the means to produce nuclear weapons, 6 May 2004.

I rise in strong opposition to this ill-conceived and ill-timed legislation. Let's not fool ourselves: this concurrent resolution leads us down the road to war against Iran. It creates a precedent for future escalation, as did similar legislation endorsing "regime change" in Iraq back in 1998.

I find it incomprehensible that as the failure of our Iraq policy becomes more evident – even to its most determined advocates -we here are approving the same kind of policy toward Iran. With Iraq becoming more of a problem daily, the solution as envisioned by this legislation is to look for yet another fight. And we should not fool ourselves: this legislation sets the stage for direct conflict with Iran. The resolution "calls upon all State Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including the United States, to use all appropriate means to deter, dissuade, and prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons..." Note the phrase "...use all appropriate means...."

Additionally, this legislation calls for yet more and stricter sanctions on Iran, including a demand that other countries also impose sanctions on Iran. As we know, sanctions are unmistakably a move toward war, particularly when, as in this legislation, a demand is made that the other nations of the world similarly isolate and blockade the country. Those who wish for a regime change in Iran should especially reject sanctions – just look at how our Cuba policy has allowed Fidel Castro to maintain his hold on power for decades. Sanctions do not hurt political leaders, as we know most recently from our sanctions against Iraq, but rather sow misery among the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society. Dictators do not go hungry when sanctions are imposed.

It is somewhat ironic that we are again meddling in Iranian affairs. Students of history will recall that the US government's ill-advised coup against Iranian leader Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953 and its subsequent installation of the Shah as the supreme ruler led to intense hatred of the United States and eventually to the radical Islamic revolution of 1979. One can only wonder what our relations would be with Iran if not for the decades of meddling in that country's internal affairs. We likely would not be considering resolutions such as this. Yet the solution to all the difficulties created by our meddling foreign policy always seems to always be yet more meddling. Will Congress ever learn?

I urge my colleagues to reject this move toward war with Iran, to reject the failed policies of regime-change and nation-building, and to return to the wise and consistent policy of non-interventionism in the affairs of other sovereign nations.

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