

We negate; resolved: Unilateral military force by the United States is justified to prevent nuclear proliferation.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy explains, “A state may resort to war only if it has exhausted all plausible, peaceful alternatives to resolving the conflict in question, in particular diplomatic negotiation.”

This is because military force necessarily entails lives and money lost on either side. If alternative methods that do not cause the same losses exist, the US is not justified in pursuing military intervention.

Contention One: Unilateral military force undermines stability.

This can be seen in three ways.

First, lacking lines of communication exacerbate the problem. **The Wilson Center explains**¹

Any Iranian retaliation could lead to Israeli or U.S. responses that in turn might provoke additional Iranian responses. The consequences are uncertain, but an escalation spiral certainly could result, with either or both sides taking actions that neither side contemplated before an initial strike—particularly since **what one side sees as a completely justified retaliation may very well be perceived by the other side as a deliberate escalation. Given the “fog of war,” high levels of mutual distrust, the absence of communication among regional combatants, and the ability of events to overtake even the most careful planning, miscalculation and uncontrollable escalation to full scale combat cannot be discounted.**⁵⁰

Second, a regime change is usually required. **The RAND Corporation notes**²

Preventive attacks to eliminate nuclear threats call for extremely effective intelligence and strike capabilities. **Permanently removing a state-level nuclear threat by using military force will generally require not only destroying weapons (if they have been built) and production facilities, but replacing the regime that chose to develop them; doing this against any plausible future adversary would be a far more ambitious and costly undertaking than the relatively easy invasion of Iraq.** If the goal is merely to degrade an enemy nuclear program temporarily, more limited force may be sufficient, but the attack usually must be powerful and thorough enough to cripple the enemy’s efforts for a substantial period, and in the post-Osiraq world no state developing such weapons will make this easy to do. Against a target state that already possesses nuclear weapons, the ability to destroy not just some but all of the weapons in a preventive attack is likely to be a minimum strategic requirement under any but the most desperate circumstances. The greatest constraint on doing all of these things will be intelligence regarding the targets, though the ability reliably to destroy the elements of the target sets, which are likely to be limited in number but very well protected, may require powerful defense-suppression capabilities and specialized ordnance for attacking hardened and deeply buried targets, or for destroying targets while minimizing nuclear or other environmental contamination. To the extent that preventive attacks are less likely to be supported by allied and other states than more clearly defensive operations, preparing to carry out such attacks may also call for emphasizing forces that can be employed with relatively little in the way of international cooperation, including basing and overflight permission, such as reconnaissance, surveillance, strike, and support aircraft able to operate at very long ranges or from the sea, and to reach their targets stealthily or by flying above denied airspace. (See pp. 112–113.)

Third, Iranian retaliation could undermine US interests as well as close the Strait of Hormuz. **The Wilson Center writes**³

While some might argue that Iran might hold back using force in order to avoid provoking a larger scale conflict, we believe that **Iran would retaliate, costing American lives; damaging U.S. facilities in the region; and affecting U.S. interests [in the region]** in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Gulf, and elsewhere. Iran would draw on its extensive conventional rocket capability and IRGC anti-ship missiles, small

¹ http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/IranReport_091112_FINAL.pdf

² <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG403>

³ http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/IranReport_091112_FINAL.pdf

submarines, fast attack boats, and mine warfare in the Gulf. **Iran might attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz, which could rattle global markets and cause a significant spike in oil prices** (as well as blocking the main artery for export of Iran's own oil).

Dependence on oil would undermine governments if the Strait were closed. **The New York Times explains⁴**

Since Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates all rely on the strait to ship their oil and natural gas exports, a blockade might undermine some of those governments in an already unstable region.

Undermining stability has a two-fold impact.

Just the idea of regional instability spikes oil prices. **The Council on Foreign Relations writes⁵**

A growing number of analysts say oil-price trends can no longer be explained simply through supply and demand. While **energy analysts** still see those factors as the foundation of the oil market, they also **view oil investor behavior as a factor in recent prices.** Increasingly speculative behavior by a more diverse set of investors outside the oil industry—including hedge funds, pension funds, and investment banks—has made oil-market trends harder to predict, say analysts. **Many believe speculative investments** from financial firms **contributed to record-high global oil prices seen in early 2008, and that a selloff** by firms **contributed to the subsequent massive price decline** later in the year. **As major political events rock the Middle East, analysts also worry about market speculation** in 2011, which has already experienced the largest increase in oil's history.

Failed states contribute to regional instability. **The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace furthers⁶**

Failing and failed states present a grave danger to international stability as well as to the well-being of their populations.

Internationally, **they can become safe havens for terrorist organizations, centers for the trade of drugs and arms, and breeding grounds for dangerous diseases.** Regionally, **they can spill instability well past their borders and create a conflict dynamic affecting neighboring countries.** Domestically, they cannot provide security for their citizens or deliver essential public goods. Beyond these immediate threats, failure of states also means the appearance of a growing number of stateless territories, a phenomenon with which the governments of Western countries are poorly prepared to deal. Despite all the astute reflections on the importance of non-state actors in international affairs and on the need to rethink the concept of sovereignty, states are still the central actors and units of global governance.

Contention Two: Military force undermines negotiation efforts.

Robert Pape explains⁷

Third, **soft balancing is likely to become more intense if the United States continues to pursue an**

aggressively unilateralist national security policy. Although soft balancing may be unable to prevent the United States from achieving specific military aims in the near term, **it will increase the costs of using U.S. power, reduce the number of countries likely to cooperate with future U.S. military adventures, and possibly shift the balance of economic power against the United States.**

For example, Europe, Russia, and China could press hard for the oil companies from countries other than the United States to have access to Iraqi oil contracts, which would increase the economic costs of U.S. occupation of the country. Europeans could also begin to pay for oil in euros rather than in dollars, which could reduce demand for the dollar as the world's reserve currency and so increase risks of inflation and higher interest rates in the United States. Most important, soft balancing could eventually evolve into hard balancing. China and European states could also increase their economic

⁴ www.nytimes.com/2012/01/05/business/oil-price-would-skyrocket-if-iran-closed-the-strait.html?_r=0&pagewanted=print

⁵ <http://www.cfr.org/oil/oil-market-volatility/p15017>

⁶ <http://d11j51l9p3qzy9.cloudfront.net/handle/10207/bitstreams/6593.pdf>

⁷ http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/1019-is-30-1_final_02-pape.pdf

ties with Russia while the Kremlin continues or even accelerates support for Iran's nuclear program, a step that would negate U.S. economic pressure on Russia while signaling the start of hard balancing against the United States.

An attack on Iran would prove counteractive. **Paul Rogers explains⁸**

However badly Iran's nuclear infrastructure was damaged in an attack, an immediate response would be to reconstitute the infrastructure and **work rapidly and in secret towards** a clear **nuclear weapons capability.**

This would probably involve giving formal notice of withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, followed by the immediate reconstitution of the nuclear infrastructure, developing it wherever possible in a more survivable manner. This would include systems redundancy, dispersal of research, development and production capabilities and the use of deep underground facilities for future work wherever feasible. Furthermore, there may already be elements of redundancy built in to the current Iranian civil nuclear programme and there may be elements of which the United States is unaware. If so, this would aid the reconstitution of capabilities. **More generally, any hope of negotiating away Iran's suspected nuclear weapons programme** in the years after a US attack **would vanish, undermining global non-proliferation efforts.** Rather than living with an Iran that had the potential to produce nuclear weapons, the **US action would almost certainly guarantee an overtly nuclear-armed Iran for decades to come** or, alternatively, further instances of military action.

The Wilson Center furthers⁹

With the breakdown of cooperative international efforts to isolate Iran, there is the possibility that Iran might receive new support for its military capacity. For example, **Russia might be willing to sell Iran advanced surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) that would make future attacks on Iran more costly and difficult. Russia is currently withholding sales of these systems because they fall under U.N. sanctions, but this decision and others could be revisited after strikes on Iran.**⁵³ Also, Iran now faces severe limits on its ability to acquire from abroad a variety of dual-purpose materials and components for its centrifuges and other nuclear technology. **States that see Iran as the victim of an unjustified attack might become more willing to share information and material with Iran. This could potentially enable Iran to produce more advanced centrifuges than the country is currently able to produce,** given material and technical shortages.⁵⁴

⁸ <http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/sites/default/files/IranConsequences.pdf>

⁹ http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/IranReport_091112_FINAL.pdf