



Weekly National Security Working Group Update

Congressman Jim Jordan (R-OH), RSC Chairman
Congressman Trent Franks (R-AZ), NSWG Chairman

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The National Security Working Group (NSWG) comprises Trent Franks (R- AZ), Connie Mack (R-FL), Duncan Hunter (R-CA), Allen West (R- FL), and John Fleming (R-LA). We look forward to providing RSC members updates on national security issues and matters using this forum.

Obama October Surprise May be a Strike on Iran (Rep. Franks)

The head of Israel's military forces, Lieutenant General Benny Gantz, doubts an Israeli attack on nuclear facilities would be effective. He expressed his concerns in April, and repeated them last week in an interview with an Israeli television reporter. Gantz said he believed an Israeli attack would have "limited effect" and that the Israeli public was not prepared for an Iranian response to such an attack.

Gantz's remarks are being reported broadly in the Islamist and Iranian press. There is a note of victory in these reports, as if Gantz's comments are a confession of weakness, surrender, and acquiescence to a nuclearized Iran.



However, speaking to reporters following a speech to Israel Defense Force recruits last week Gantz insisted, "All options are on the table." He said Israel "should not ignore [Iran's nuclear capabilities] because [Iran] is the only country in the world that is developing nuclear weapons while calling to annihilate another country." In stating that Iran is developing nuclear weapons, Gantz appears to have changed his opinion from April when he said he did not believe Iran would develop nuclear weapons.

Clearly, Gantz is not raising a surrender flag. But he does seem to be suggesting the day is too far spent for him to have any confidence that an Israeli strike could erase Iran's nuclear capability. If Israel's conventional capability to defeat Iran's nuclear ambitions is in doubt, the possibility of a U.S. strike is one of the few remaining options. Secretary of Defense Panetta is preparing to meet with Israeli leaders. Iran will be at the top of the agenda. Secretary Panetta denied he will discuss specific attack plans with Israeli leaders, but affirmed the talks would more generally include "various contingencies" including military force.

For nearly his entire presidency, the national security threat of a nuclear Iran has loomed over the free world. However, President Obama may now be planning an October surprise in the form of a military attack on Iran to increase his chances of being reelected in November. Such an attack will make it obvious that a nuclear Iran not only is, and has been, a dangerous threat to America and her allies, but that the impulse of this president seems to stem more from political considerations than the nation's national security. It is profound irony that it may take the fear of losing an election to motivate this president to address one of the greatest security threats facing America and human family.

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*Ecuador Security Concerns Should Convince Congress to Reject Renewal of Trade Benefits
(Rep. Mack)*

Ecuador's relationship with Iran and poor high-level counternarcotics cooperation should not be rewarded with a renewal of trade benefits that give the country preferential access to U.S. markets. Ecuador is the only remaining beneficiary country to receive U.S. trade preferences under the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA), as amended by the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA), which expires on July 31, 2013. ATPA/ATPDEA gives "beneficiary countries duty-free access to the U.S. market for any product not specifically excluded" and was designed to promote economic development, strengthen democracy, and combat drug trafficking. In addition to the deteriorating conditions of democracy, human rights, and business in Ecuador, security concerns should convince Congress to reject a renewal of ATPA/ATPDEA.

Despite the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration stating that Ecuador is a haven for international drug trafficking and criminal activity and the U.S. Department of State counting Ecuador as a "major transit country for illegal narcotics," high-level counternarcotics cooperation is lacking. According to the State Department's 2012 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, "maritime seizures continue to suffer following the 2009 closure of the Manta [Forward Operating Location]" and maritime counternarcotics cooperation has declined with no joint counternarcotics exercises in the past year. Ecuador's expanded relationship with Iran is also of concern. Recently, Bloomberg reported on talks between Ecuador and Iran to purchase \$400 million of fuel which, if completed, would help Iran evade U.S. sanctions and could put Ecuador in line to be sanctioned under the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act. Reports of Ecuadoran banks helping Iran evade sanctions should also raise red flags in Congress.



This week I introduced a bipartisan resolution that details and condemns conditions in Ecuador and expresses Congress' disinclination to renew ATPA/ATPDEA for Ecuador.

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New Sanctions Won't Break Stalemate with Iran (Rep. Fleming)

Congress may soon consider a new round of sanctions against the Iranian regime, sanctions which thus far Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has declared "have not set back the Iranian program by one iota." While the new round of sanctions would tighten up loopholes within current policy, they would in no way create the type of economic warfare needed to bring Iran to the negotiating table. Specifically, the new sanctions do not bar all business or service providers from dealing with the Iranian petroleum sector, do not extend sanctions currently placed on the Central Bank of Iran to other Iranian financial institutions, and do not impose sanctions on businesses such as Swift, the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications for providing services to the Central Bank of Iran. It is time for the Obama Administration to acknowledge its hubris in thinking it can contain Iran through watered-down sanctions.

President Obama and Secretary Clinton should stop pretending that sanctions are working while publicly downplaying the benefits of a military strike. Instead, the Administration should bolster the credibility of its military threat. While focusing on sanctions in lieu of military options, the Administration is not even willing to go to the mat on the kind of sanctions that will actually bring Iran to the table. Although the recent strengthening of U.S. air and naval force posture in the Persian Gulf is welcome, this should accompany actions that demonstrate U.S. willingness to employ force. The Administration's failure to take the Iranian threat seriously has led to the scenario that Iran's leaders desire most: an indefinite stalemate. Continued pursuit of toothless sanctions and failed negotiations without the threat of force ensures that Iran will be able to continue stonewalling the international community while simultaneously enriching uranium to the point of weapons-grade capability.

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Each NSWG item reflects the position of the authoring office. Questions or comments regarding the NSWG can be directed to Derek Khanna, Derek.Khanna@mail.house.gov, 6-0718