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### November 29, 2009: The Iranian Bomb

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Title: The Iranian Bomb

Date: 2009-11-29T06:25:00.003-05:00

11/29/2009—As a young Jew, I did not participate in the debates, so common for American Jews, about what Israel should do with regard to the Palestinian conflict that drives so much of the Muslim-West divide in the world. It never seemed to me honorable for someone safe here in America to urge the Israelis to take risks for peace. It also seemed to me that American Judaism had lost its center and was using Israel as a substitute for religious reform. I still think both those things. But, of course, American policy is a different matter. Every American has a personal stake in that. Friday, the International Atomic Energy Agency demanded that Iran freeze operations at its formerly secret uranium plant and voiced concern about Iran's intentions. The rebuke to Iran was regarded as a serious warning because China and Russia joined in it. The Obama Administration is seeking new sanctions against Iran. While no sane person wants to see Iran with a bomb, and while sanctions might succeed in forestalling Iran's ambitions (I doubt it), some facts need to be remembered before concerns about Iran lead us to military action against Iran or to endorse military action by Israel. First, Israel has the bomb. It has never threatened its use, but it is a fact of life that Israel's foes must always consider. So why would its opponents not seek to have the same? Second, despite its bombastic rhetoric, that Israel must be wiped out, Iran has not been an aggressor nation. Its war with Iraq was instigated by Iraq. It has armed and supported Hamas and Hezbollah, but it has been scrupulous in not sending "advisers" and so forth. Israel's position is that we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud, as the Bush Administration put it before invading Iraq, but there is not any reason to think that a nuclear Iran will attack Israel. Third, if anyone failed to notice, when the Bush Administration targeted its axis of evil, Iraq, Iran and North Korea, it did not attack the most threatening of the three, North Korea, in part because North Korea has the bomb and might have used it. Maybe the U.S. has brought on some of Iran's desire to have a bomb to deter attack.