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Iran: is war inevitable ?

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"Iran, the inevitable war", in the affirmative form, is the title of the weekly editorial which Guy Senbel published on Friday 11 December on the site of Guysen International News www.guysen.com, of which he is the founder and chief editor.

In the last few years - at least since 2005 - there has often been talk of a war against Iran, presented sometimes as imminent, without the war actually eventuating. The result is that after too many cries of "wolf", people don't believe it. However, Guy Senbel's analysis of the situation deserves to be taken seriously, all the more because among the supporters of Israel he is a moderate editorialist, and of course a very well-informed one. We would have liked to copy his piece in full, but repeated requests have remained unanswered, and so we will limit ourselves to substantial extracts.

Iran, according to Guy Senbel, by its *"its obstinate refusal to abandon its nuclear programme and to bow to international law"* is giving nourishment to *"legitimate fears, which are confirmed by repeated comments by western experts saying that nothing can now prevent Iran from obtaining an atomic bomb. Despite the loud condemnations, and the current sanctions, Tehran continues to despise the US overtures, and dialogue, and peace. Iran has gone too far. After lies come provocations, and the danger for international security is immense. After years of diplomatic efforts, war seems inevitable."*

(...) "Too many of the AIEA's questions have gone unanswered. Too many political opportunities have been missed, for us to still believe in the sincerity of the 'non-military nuclear technology' argument pushed by the Iranian government."

Guy Senbel reminds us that *"Tehran has hidden another uranium-enrichment site in the Qom region. Tehran has begun developing ballistic missiles. Tehran has chosen to enrich uranium in Iran although a proposal had been made and accepted for enriching it in France and Russia. Finally, Tehran is announcing a programme to build ten new uranium-enrichment sites. And according to the Daily Telegraph, Iran is seeking to obtain nuclear fuel via some companies based in Taiwan.*

"All those circumstances together mean that the Iran crisis will result in war."

(...) "Israel is not only an ideological target or an occasion for new solidarity among all those who are encouraged to resist 'the Zionist entity'. The slogan 'Wipe Israel from the map' is part of a strategy that is becoming clearer. On 10 December, Iran's Minister of Defense gave an assurance that he would support all wars against Israel, 'as far as the liberation of Jerusalem'"

(...) "Barack Obama still thought a year back that the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict would make possible an easing of tensions in the region and would calm the Iranians, to whom he was holding out a hand in friendship. His strategy has failed, and the USA knows that he must find a new one.

(...) "Barack Obama knows that a 'nuclear Munich' is impossible. He knows also, as do the other Security Council members, that sanctions would not be easy to apply and that they would initially have direct consequences on the Iranian people.

"On Thursday 10 December, accused by Tehran of causing the abduction of Iranian citizens, Barack Obama was in Sweden to receive his Nobel Peace Prize. The first Nobel for work 'yet to be done'. He took the opportunity to justify his Afghanistan policy.

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" 'War is horrible, but servitude is worse', wrote Winston Churchill."

So, according to this last sentence of the editorial, it seems that we are back to the situation of autumn 2007 - only worse, since Iran has made more progress towards nuclear weapons - that situation which prompted the **Appeal to All Europeans to Prevent War Against Iran**, launched here and in *Libération* by Michel Rocard, Yehuda Atai & Jean-Marie Matagne.

Now on the day before Guy Senbel foretold an inevitable war with Iran, the same three authors again co-signed an article entitled **For a Middle East without weapons of mass destruction** and published this time in *Ouest-France,* in which they do not exclude the risk of war but reaffirm the only solution they see as reasonable: an overall diplomatic solution treating, with the help of each party involved, all the problems of the Middle East, transforming it into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, and guaranteeing at once to Israelis and Palestinians a just and lasting peace within two states with secure and universally recognized borders - recognized also by Iran.

But that would imply that Israel agrees to put its nuclear weapons on the table. This hypothesis is probably not shared by Guy Senbel - we offered to open our columns to him for him to explain himself. These are weapons which no Israeli official ever speaks of (except, briefly, their supposed father Shimon Peres), weapons which Guy Senbel doesn't mention either, having his eyes fixed only on the Iranian ones that don't yet exist. It is certainly not desirable for the Islamic regime of Iran and its president to acquire the bomb. The regime pretends not to want it, while leaving pointers to the contrary. But those who accuse the Iranians know very well, in their hearts, that it is their own weapons which justify those of Iran, or which at least have motivated them. That was understood long ago by the members, including Yehuda Atai, of the Israeli Committee for a Middle East without nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. It is a pity that so few have listened to them in their own country.

According to Guy Senbel, Obama *"knows also, as do the other Security Council members, that sanctions would not be easy to apply and that they would initially have direct consequences on the Iranian people."* But one would have to have completely forgotten the Israeli offensive *'Cast Lead'* to believe or pretend to believe that the bombings now threatened against Iran will not have *"direct consequences for the Iranian people".*

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