

## Iran Closes Straits of Hormuz No Shots Fired

Iran has managed to close the Straits of Hormuz for some five hours without firing a shot.

*By a media trick, Tehran proved its claim that closing the [Strait of Hormuz](#) is as "easy as drinking water," debkafile reports. First thing Saturday morning, Saturday, Dec. 31, Iran's state agencies "reported" long-range and other missiles had been test-fired as part of its ongoing naval drill around the Strait of Hormuz. Ahead of the test, Tehran closed its territorial waters. For five hours Saturday, not a single warship, merchant vessel or oil tanker ventured into the 30-mile wide Hormuz strait, waiting to hear from Tehran' that the test was over.*

*Instead, around 0900 local time, a senior Iranian navy commander Mahmoud Moussavi informed Iran's English language Press TV that no missiles had been fired after all. "The exercise of launching missiles will be carried out in the coming days," he said. (<http://www.debka.com/article/21608/>)*

Almost simultaneously Iran is inviting the six powers back to the negotiating table.

*TEHRAN, (AFP) — Top negotiator Saeed Jalili has said Iran is ready to rejoin EU-led talks with major powers on assuaging Western concerns over its nuclear programme even as tensions with the United States soar in the Gulf.*

*"We will give a resounding and many-pronged response to any threat against the Islamic Republic of Iran," Jalili told Iranian diplomats gathered in Tehran in comments reported on Saturday.*

*But both he and other officials left the door open to resuming long-stalled talks led by European Union foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton on Western concerns over Iran's nuclear programme.*

*"We officially told them to come back to the negotiation based on cooperation," Jalili said.*

*Iran's ambassador to Germany, Alireza Sheikh-Attar, told the Mehr news agency on Saturday: "We will soon send a letter, after which (new) talks will be scheduled."*

*Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi was also quoted by a website of the state broadcaster as telling a visiting Chinese foreign ministry official that "Iran is prepared for the continuation of nuclear negotiations" on the basis of a Russian proposal. (<http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=27919>)*

Please read both of the cited articles for more important information.

**Analysis.** Sun Tzu said, "For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. **To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.** What is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy." (Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Translated by Samuel B. Griffith, Brigadier General, USMC (Retired), ISBN 0-19-501476-6, pg.77)

"I love it when a plan comes together". (Hannibal Smith, *The A-Team*)

Score one for the Iranians. If our strategy is intimidation by sanctions, theirs is intimidation by oil. And it worked according to the Debka article. Now we must decide whether or not we will challenge them the next time they schedule a missile drill. We may not have a lot of choice here. If we do not challenge them they continue to win by default. If we do challenge them and they actually fire a missile, do we consider that an act of war and respond or not?

All of the governments in the area must think long and hard about this one. Their nations are at risk also to an enemy who is not afraid to go to war. As Muslims say on occasion, "we love death as much as you love life." The mullahocracy will happily sacrifice as many Iranian civilian "martyrs" as they

must do accomplish their goals. I suspect that the Sunni states will do as much except that they do not have the population size to be as generous sending martyrs to Allah.

Now we must add to the population of Iran a large part of the population of Iraq. Whether or not the Iraqi Shiites will actively support sectarian civil war against the Sunnis is open for debate. However it appears that most will not oppose it. The legacy of Saddam Hussein is well remembered. Given the acts of terrorism against the Shiite population over the last week, the Shiites may well adopt an ethnic cleansing strategy of eliminating the Sunni population of Iraq or substantially reducing it and scaring the rest into submission.

Perhaps an indication of where United States policy is going will be whether or not President Obama signs the new Iran sanctions bill. If he signs the bill he is calling Iran's bluff. It was a bluff this time. Next time it may not be. If he does not sign the bill, the mullahs win. After this little demonstration of Iran's intent to close the Gulf, the President may have no choice but to sign the bill. He may also have no choice but to start reinforcing the Fifth and Sixth Fleets with additional carrier groups.

Whether or not negotiations with Iran will restart is open to discussion. It depends upon what was in the Russian proposal referenced above. However, I doubt that the Iranians will either stop enriching uranium or provide truly open access to the entirety of their nuclear program so the IAEA can check for a weapons program. This proposal is probably a stall. It is also a way for the Iranians to judge the cohesion of the six nations and judge exactly how far the Iranians can push the issue in their favor. And they will keep pushing.

Their goal is to bring forth the Mahdi. They will do whatever is necessary for that to occur. After King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia dies, the next Iranian move will be the war to reconquer Jerusalem. They are already preparing for that by, I believe, pushing for the reunification of the PLO. They want Hamas in charge and an active armed resistance movement in the West Bank to force Israel to defend itself and cause a lot of civilian deaths. Bad press for Israel.

The Iranians are ready to sacrifice as many people as necessary, theirs and ours, to cause the Mahdi to levitate himself out of that well in Karbala. The Sunnis, principally Saudi Arabia, are prepared to do the same to prevent the return of the Mahdi. Are we prepared to sacrifice a whole lot of our people in this sectarian civil war?

Addendum: The President has signed the Defense Authorization Act that establishes sanctions against Iran's central bank.

*The bill also applies penalties against Iran's central bank in an effort to hamper Tehran's ability to fund its nuclear enrichment program. The Obama administration is looking to soften the impact of those penalties because of concerns that they could lead to a spike in global oil prices or cause economic hardship on U.S. allies that import petroleum from Iran. (<http://news.yahoo.com/obama-signs-defense-bill-despite-reservations-200818531.html>)*

Now it is up to the Iranians.