

# Former Iranian President Says 'No' to a War Against Iran

*Abolhassan Bani Sadr was the first President of the Islamic Republic of Iran (February 1980 to June 1981). An opponent of the regime since he was impeached and ousted by Ayatollah Khomeini, he was forced into exile in France, as some his closest collaborators went to prison, or were murdered by the regime.*

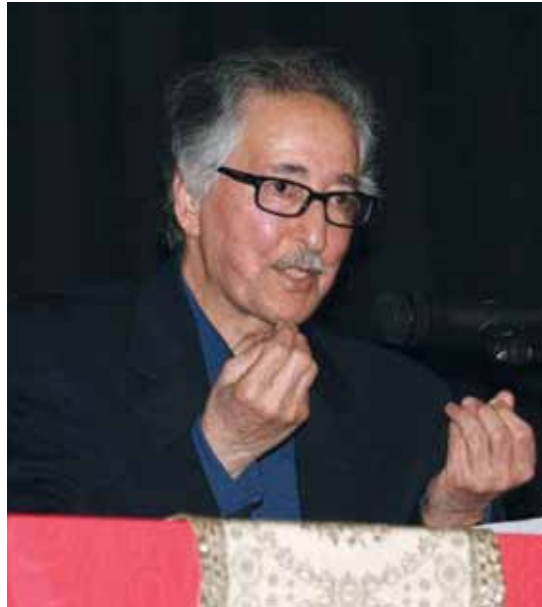
*However, Bani Sadr is totally opposed to war and to economic sanctions targeting the Iranian population, because, as he explains in 25 proposals published since the beginning of the present tensions, these would only reinforce the dictatorship.*

*From his exile, Bani Sadr continues to express his views on the Iranian situation through a regular publication in the Farsi language. In his responses to this interview, he also has a particularly sharp view of the world's affairs.*

*In publishing this interview our aim is neither to support any faction in the Iranian nation, nor to meddle in any way in its internal affairs. We give the opportunity to speak out to all those who are determined to stop an armed conflict in the region, which would not only be disastrous for Iran, but could ignite a new world war.*

*The interview was conducted on Dec. 6 by Christine Bierre, editor-in-chief of **Nouvelle Solidarité**, the newspaper of the LaRouche movement in France. It was translated from French and made available to **EIR**.*

**NS:** Mr. Bani Sadr, your country is once again threatened by war. There is talk of airstrikes against its nuclear installations. You published recently a text rejecting



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those measures, denouncing the fact that they will only lead to a reinforcement of the regime, a text where you formulate your own proposals to change things in Iran.

**Bani Sadr:** The proposals I make are based on two principles: rejection of a military intervention, and rejection of an economic boycott which would hurt the Iranian people. One can talk about two economies in Iran: a rentier economy which concerns the top-level officials of the regime who enrich themselves, and an economy of the Iranian people who are more and more impoverished. We should not, by im-

posing economic sanctions from outside, impoverish people even more, because the consequence would be to deter them from rising up [against the government]. I have thus made 25 proposals on this question which touch upon the military, political, economic, and human rights domains.

The West says there is a problem with the Iranian atomic program, claiming it has a military dimension. But, you know, Wikileaks published secret reports, some of which concern the Japanese official who is leading the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency], Yukika Amano. According to those reports, it was the Americans who supported his nomination to become director of the IAEA, and he committed himself to go along with the U.S. strategy.

According to those same reports, Amano has good contacts with the Israelis. In a region where the Israelis have atomic weapons, and where the Pakistanis have them too, to threaten Iran with a war using the pretext

that the country has the intention of having an atomic weapon, is too much. In Iran, among the people, nobody believes that; no people can believe in the sincerity of the West when it pretends that Iran has become a danger for the whole world.

I'm not favorable at all to Iran having the atomic weapon. I wish that all countries that have it would get rid of it as fast as possible, because this weapon is very dangerous. And when some claim that with those weapons one becomes "untouchable," I reply simply that the Pakistanis have the nuclear weapon and that that didn't deter the Americans from treating them with the most unbelievable arrogance. What's are atomic weapons good for then?

Everybody in the West knows that even if Iran had the bomb, it couldn't use it. Because to be able to use it, you have to have the means not only to launch a first strike, but to protect the country against a counterstrike by the enemy, and then be able to launch another strike. At best, at this point, Iran only has the possibility of responding to a strike, contrary to Israel, which has the full gamut of possibilities. To speak about the atomic bomb [in Iran] is only a pretext.

What Western officials refuse to say is that the key question for them is to control the region. [Former President George W.] Bush had his own project for what he called "democracy" in the Greater Middle East, even though he himself had been elected by electoral fraud, and didn't respect the law of the United States. He was part of the anti-democratic elements of the United States. The aim of Bush's Greater Middle East was to establish United States control in the area going from Northern Africa to Pakistan.

### The 'Arc of Crisis,' Continued

**NS:** That reminds me of the policies of the "arc of crisis," promoted by Zbigniew Brzezinski in his time, and of the Bernard Lewis plan,<sup>1</sup> which the United States, under British control, has been trying to implement in this region over the last 30 years, and whose aim is to explode all existing nations into warring ethnic and/or religious entities.

**Bani Sadr:** It is a continuation of the same policies. They intervened in Libya, destroying a whole country

in order to install a so-called democracy. But nobody has seen this democracy. What one sees there is greater insecurity, greater poverty. In reality, their aim was to destroy, in order to rebuild afterwards, paying a very high price to the Western companies that are sent later to "reconstruct." Despite all this, Libya is nonetheless sending weapons to the Syrian opponents!

**NS:** Don't you think the objectives of the new Western offensive in the Middle East go beyond that? They are targeting Iran, but also Syria, two economic and military powers in the region, something which will no doubt provoke a regional and even a world war, because Russia has a military agreement with Syria.

We, along with the Russians and the Chinese, believe that the West, on the verge of a total financial collapse, will try, by launching military provocations in the Middle East, to create the conditions for a Pax Americana—or rather, a Pax Britannica, because the Americans are riding on a British kite—in order to counter the emerging powers in Asia.

**Bani Sadr:** I don't think that the United States has the means to impose its hegemony on China, or even on the smaller countries of the Pacific region, not to say on India. Because the United States is no longer a superpower; it is becoming a country like any other. It doesn't have the means to impose itself on China, which has become the second economy in the world. Along with Japan and the rest of Asia, they are more important today than the whole of the West.

Neither does the U.S. have the military means to do so. We have observed in Iraq and Afghanistan what the American army has become. What they are aiming at is at controlling oil and gas. They think that by controlling the two centers of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, they will be able to dialogue on equal footing with Asia, and in reality, establish a marginal superiority over Asia. What they want is to control the oil and gas.

Their justification is that after the U.S. departure from Iraq, Iran will become the hegemonic power in the region, because of the famous "green belt" of Shi'ism<sup>2</sup> which is hegemonic in Iran, in Iraq, in Syria, where the Alawites are a branch of Shi'ism, in Lebanon where the Hezbol-

1. For more on the Bernard Lewis Plan, see Scott Thompson and Jeffrey Steinberg; "Bernard Lewis: British Svengali Behind Clash of Civilizations," *EIR*, Nov. 30, 2001 ([http://www.larouche.com/other/2001/2846b\\_lewis\\_profile.html](http://www.larouche.com/other/2001/2846b_lewis_profile.html)).

2. The Shi'a green belt or axis is the alliance among the nations of Iran, sections of Iraq—those now dominated either by Iran or by Syria—through Syria and Lebanon, and including Hamas, which is Sunni, but politically allied with the axis.

lah dominates, and in Palestine, where even though Hamas is Sunni, it depends more and more on Iran.

The West believes that the power of Iran cannot be balanced out by any other nation, except by Saudi Arabia and the small states of the Persian Gulf, which are governed by figures that are totally corrupt and hated by their people.

Therefore, Iran must be contained, and for this reason they first attack Syria, to try to replace the regime there with a Sunni regime, the practical consequence being to cut off Iran from Lebanon. Only a part of Iraq, the Shi'ite part, would then remain with Iran. According to the Western experts, Iran would no longer be then a hegemonic power. But who could play that role then?

**NS:** Well, Turkey is putting itself upfront to play that role, claiming a renewed desire to reconstitute a sort of neo-Ottoman Empire.

**Bani Sadr:** There's Turkey and Israel. What is the Israeli policy? To divide those countries into small ethnic and religious entities, so that no real power can exist in the region. But can Turkey play that role?

Let's first take note of the fact that Turkey was inca-

pable of assuming that role in Central Asia, where it would have been natural that it do so. To play such a role means to have a strong currency and economy, to be able to lead the other countries in the region. Yet, it doesn't have those means.

### No Sense of Mission in the West

**NS:** Let us come back to our hypothesis that the new offensive against the Middle East is a desperate attempt by a West, panicked over the perspective of losing its hegemony to the new centers of power and growth in Asia and in Eurasia, such as China, Russia, and India. You are in the position of an oriental wise man, living in France, at the heart of Europe; you also lived in Paris when you were a student. What are your thoughts about this Western crisis ?

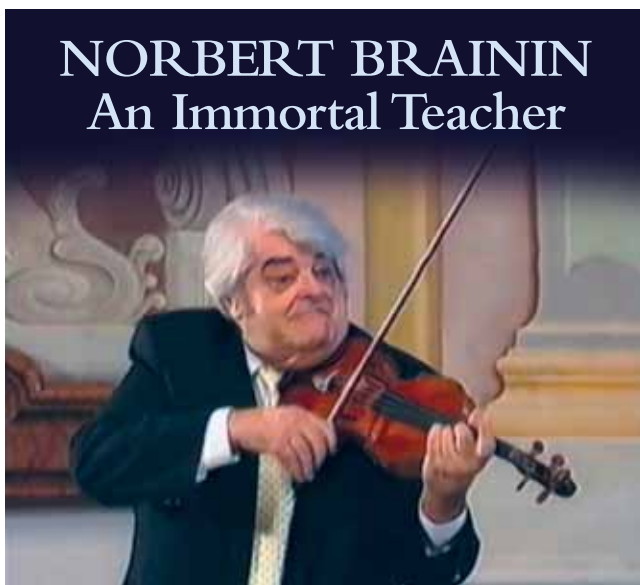
**Bani Sadr:** There are several important causes to the crisis in the West. First, the lowering of the standards of living of the populations: After Second World War, the distribution of wealth between capital on the one hand and the workforce on the other was 50/50. Today, that proportion is 70 to 30 in favor of capital.

Another essential problem: The West abandoned the control of its economies to the financial markets. According to certain sources, in the United States, much more money goes to the financial markets than to the real economy, in a proportion of 7 to 1. The West is no longer a production economy, but a consumption economy.

And finally, there is no sense of mission in the West for the youth. It is that perspective of decline which panics certain networks in the West, some going as far as to ponder whether the atomic bomb can be used to reduce population!

It is all that that must be changed, but the Western leaders are not ready to go for the deep reforms which are necessary. Yet, it is all totally feasible. I did it in Iran when I was President. We nationalized all the banks, launched investments into fundamental research and production to develop a national economy for the people. We replaced the money cycle—which was coming in from foreign countries via purchases of raw materials, and transformed itself in Iran into oil and gas rent, which was distributed to the wealthiest, and went out of the country again to purchase luxury goods for that small group—with a national cycle aimed at developing the public good.

The real question is thus: Are there enough revolutionaries throughout the world to change the course of affairs for the better today?



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