

# **MEI MEDIA WATCH**

**(A Survey of Editorials)**

**No. 26**

**Thursday, 2 February 2012**

## **Oil sanctions and threats to close Hormuz**

[**Note:** The possible imposition of new rounds of oil-sanctions by the European Union against Iran intensified verbal dual between the Islamic Republic and the West. On 27 December 2011 Iran threatened to close Strait of Hormuz to international shipping if it was punished. This led to wide spread reaction from other countries which depend upon the Strait for their trade. On 23 January the EU decided to stop importing Iranian oil from July. Editorial commentaries from the international and Middle Eastern media on this issue are reproduced here. **Editor, MEI@ND**]

\*

# **The National**

Abu Dhabi, Editorial, 29 December 2011, Thursday

### **1. Iran's threat is dangerous even if improbable**

**W**ords can be dangerous by themselves. Iran's threat on Tuesday (27 December) to close the Strait of Hormuz is almost certainly just that - only words - but it is the sort of ill-conceived bluster that could have unintended consequences. "If sanctions are adopted against Iranian oil, not a drop of oil will pass through the Strait of Hormuz," said Mohammad Reza Rahimi, a vice president. The sanctions Mr. Rahimi was referring to is a possible EU embargo on Iranian oil that will be considered next month (January 2012).

**For the full text:** <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/editorial/irans-threat-is-dangerous-even-if-improbable>



Editorial, 29 December 2011, Thursday

## 2. Iran and the Strait

Iran's threat to shut the Strait of Hormuz — one-fifth of the world's oil trade passes through there — if the United States and Europe press ahead with new sanctions is unacceptable. The Obama administration is right to signal, in deliberately moderated ways, that Washington will not back off if Tehran ever attempts to carry it out.

**For the full text:** [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/30/opinion/iran-and-the-strait.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/30/opinion/iran-and-the-strait.html?_r=1)

---

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Beirut, Editorial, 30 December 2011, Friday

## 3. Dangerous game

This week's escalation of rhetoric about the Strait of Hormuz by Iran might be entertaining for the most cynical of people, anxious to hear about something other than popular uprisings in Arab countries. But it is an extremely dangerous game of brinkmanship, which could have catastrophic consequences. The actual closure of the Strait might be aimed at the United States, and depending on how the developments play out, such an act would truly be devastating, on the level of a Sept. 11 (2001) moment.

**For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2011/Dec-30/158319-dangerous-game.ashx#axzz1kZLeuMBR>

---

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Beirut, Editorial, 4 January 2012, Wednesday

## 4. Crisis in the Gulf

Half a century ago, the eyes of the world were on Cuba and the water surrounding it; there was the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion, followed by the tension of the Missile Crisis that saw Washington threaten Moscow over what it was sending to its ally on the island. Today, there are different players, but an eerily similar situation of international tension centred on Iran and the Strait of Hormuz.

**For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2012/Jan-04/158753-crisis-in-the-gulf.ashx#axzz1kZLeuMBR>

---

**gulfnews.com**

Dubai, Editorial, 8 January 2012, Sunday

## 5. US gesture does little to ease tensions

Direct diplomatic talks between Tehran and Washington are urgently required. A few days after its naval exercises in the Gulf, Iran has threatened another round, which the naval commander of the Revolutionary Guards has said would focus on the Strait of Hormuz. He

added chillingly that "today the Islamic Republic of Iran has full domination over the region and controls all movements within it".

**For the full text:** <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/us-gesture-does-little-to-ease-tensions-1.962646>



**Editorial, 11 January 2012, Wednesday**

### **6. The U.S. needs to intensify sanctions on Iran**

**T**he flurry of initiatives and threats launched by Iran in the last couple of weeks may betray panic by the regime as it faces a crumbling economy and mounting pressure from the West. The measures are insubstantial; the threats implausible. For example, a tour by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Latin America, limited to Venezuela and its allies, serves mainly to underline Iran's isolation, since regional powers such as Brazil, Mexico and Argentina are not on his itinerary. A threat to close the Strait of Hormuz is hollow; the U.S. Navy could unquestionably reopen it. A death sentence imposed Monday (9 January) on a U.S. citizen and former Marine is despicable, but most likely it won't be carried out.

**For the full text:** [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-needs-to-intensify-sanctions-on-iran/2012/01/10/gIQADy6MpP\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-needs-to-intensify-sanctions-on-iran/2012/01/10/gIQADy6MpP_story.html)



**Beijing, Editorial, 12 January 2012, Thursday**

### **7. Sanctions harm all**

**S**ince the beginning of the year (2012), confrontation between the United States and Iran has shown no sign of abating, instead it continues to escalate, fuelling concern that it might soon get out of control. To press Iran to abandon its nuclear program, the US-led West has stepped up efforts to impose more sanctions on the country. The European Union is mulling over when to start an embargo on Iranian oils.

**For the full text:** [http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-01/12/content\\_24388164.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2012-01/12/content_24388164.htm)



**Toronto, Editorial, 14 January 2012, Saturday**

### **8. Counter Iran's nuclear program with sanctions, not assassinations**

**S**laughtering scientists in the streets of Tehran isn't going to derail Iran's covert nuclear program. Not for long, anyway. It merely plays into the hands of that nation's most ruthless elements in the turbulent run-up to March parliamentary elections. Thousands

thronged the funeral Friday (13 January) of nuclear expert Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan chanting “Death to America” and “Death to Israel.” He was murdered by assailants on a motorbike who slapped a magnetic bomb to his car. And he’s not the first to be targeted.

**For the full text:** <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/article/1115508--counter-iran-s-nuclear-program-with-sanctions-not-assassinations>

---



**Editorial, 15 January 2012, Sunday**

### **9. Stopping Iran’s nukes**

Combination of covert operations, sanctions, diplomatic pressure, military threat necessary against Iran. Iran seems intent on pushing forward with its nuclear program and there seems to be no sure-fire way of stopping it. If the current situation continues, we might have to face the horrific prospect of learning to live with a nuclear Iran.

**For the full text:** <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/Article.aspx?id=253763>

---



**Karachi, Editorial, 16 January 2012, Monday**

### **10. Flashpoint Iran**

International oil politics, the murder of an Iranian nuclear scientist and reports of renewed uranium enrichment by the Islamic Republic are all factors contributing to keeping tensions between the West and Iran at an uncomfortable level. A car bomb in Tehran claimed the life of Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan recently; the scientist worked at the Natanz nuclear facility and his assassination brings the number of Iranian scientists killed in similar fashion to four since 2010. It appears the assassination had Israel’s fingerprints all over it.

**For the full text:** <http://www.dawn.com/2012/01/16/flashpoint-iran.html>

---



**London, Editorial, 23 January 2012, Monday**

### **11. Europe gets tough**

Iran's ayatollahs need to understand that if they persist with the illegal enrichment of uranium, their country will pay a heavy price. Yesterday’s (22 January) decision by European Union foreign ministers to implement a wide-ranging oil embargo against Iran represents a welcome show of unity by an organization that, in the past, has been deeply divided on the fraught issue of Tehran’s nuclear programme. While countries such as Britain and France have taken a robust approach, others – such as Germany, which has extensive trading ties with the ayatollahs’ regime – have been more inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt.

**For the full text:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/9033459/Europe-gets-tough.html>

---



Editorial, 24 January 2012, Tuesday

### 12. Iran's oil shock

"EU" and "bold action" don't often share the same sentence. But they did on Monday (23 January). The 27 nations of the European Union dealt a huge oil shock to Iran. They agreed to ban Iranian oil to stop its rogue nuclear program. The Europeans will *immediately* stop signing new contracts to buy Iranian oil. Countries with existing contracts may honour them until July 1 (2012).

**For the full text:** [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-01-24/news/ct-edit-iran-20120124\\_1\\_nuclear-program-iranian-oil-oil-prices](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-01-24/news/ct-edit-iran-20120124_1_nuclear-program-iranian-oil-oil-prices)

---



Islamabad, Editorial, 25 January 2012, Wednesday

### 13. Rising war clouds over Iran

The United States, Britain and France have raised the ante in the Gulf by dispatching warships to the highly sensitive waters of Straits of Hormuz. The move coincided with an escalation in the West's confrontation with Iran over the country's nuclear programme. A decision by the European Union to ban imports of Iranian oil has also dramatically raised the temperature of the rhetoric about Iran's nuclear programme, threatening to destabilize the region even further than two US-led wars.

**For the full text:** <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=137108>

**Compiled by Alvite N**

---

*Alvite N is a Doctoral candidate at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Email: [alvite\\_n@yahoo.com](mailto:alvite_n@yahoo.com)*

As part of its editorial policy, the MEI@ND standardizes spelling and date formats to make the text uniformly accessible and stylistically consistent. *The views expressed here*

MEDIA WATCH-26/ALVITE

*are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views/positions of the MEI@ND.*  
Editor, **MEI@ND**: P R Kumaraswamy