

1 **General Chuck F. Wald**

2 **US military and Iran's nuclear programme**

3 *(Original at <http://www.economist.com/debate/days/view/442>)*

4 It would be foolhardy to argue that military action is the preferred policy  
5 option for stopping Iran's nuclear aspirations. No American general is  
6 eager for war. There are measures left, such as biting sanctions, that have  
7 yet to be tried. But, should all other options fail to thwart Iran's nuclear  
8 ambitions, a US-led military strike is preferable to an Israeli attack, and  
9 certainly preferable to a nuclear weapons-capable Iran. Thus, I believe  
10 that maintaining and asserting publicly that military action is an option of  
11 last resort is the best hope we have for international security and peace.

12 We are running out of both time and options. Diplomacy has failed. The  
13 Obama administration's efforts to reach out to Tehran for the past year  
14 have yielded no progress, as the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, has  
15 acknowledged. Given continuing Russian reluctance, Chinese indifference  
16 and EU apprehension, it seems unlikely that we will see internationally-  
17 backed biting sanctions soon, if at all.

18 Nor does the prospect of regime change strike me as a particularly likely  
19 solution to this problem. The Iranian government appears to be ready to  
20 use violence to quell protests. But even if the opposition somehow  
21 succeeded and seized power, there are no indications that it would curtail  
22 Iran's nuclear programme. Whether a new regime would be friendly  
23 towards the West is questionable, and I fear that they certainly will not be  
24 nuclear-adverse.

25 We must be realistic about the positive role the military option can play in  
26 averting a nuclear weapons-capable Iran. War games or an additional  
27 battle carrier group in the area might do more than any sanction to  
28 persuade Tehran that to constantly refuse compromises is too dangerous.  
29 And that without necessarily firing a single shot.

## Questions

- 1) According to the text, is bombing Iran nuclear facilities the favourite option among the U.S. military command?
- 2) What are the other options of stopping Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons? How realistic are they?
- 3) What ways to dissuade Iran from its nuclear programme have been tried in the past and to what success?
- 4) Does the author of the text view a potential regime change in Iran as a solution to the problem? What are his arguments in this respect?
- 5) What role could the military play according to the last paragraph (lines 25-29)
- 6) Paragraph 2 (lines 12 to 17) uses *present perfect* (e.g. 'Diplomacy has failed.' in line 12). Can you explain why?
- 7) Explain the word 'thwart' (line 7) in your own words and then look for synonyms of this word throughout the article. Can you think of more synonyms?
- 8) Paraphrase 'And that without necessarily firing a single shot' (line 29).
- 9) What is your opinion on Iran? Do you feel unsafe due to its nuclear programme or are you at ease with it? Do you agree with the article? What do you think the international community should do?

## Vocabulary

fail (line 7) – be unsuccessful; fall short; not work out;  
be preferable to (line 8) – more desirable; better  
given (a situation, etc.) (15) – because of (the situation, etc.), due to (the situation, problem, etc.)  
strike me (18) – seem; enter the mind of; occur to: *A happy thought struck him.*

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, or <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

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