Neo-cons 'furiously blowing smoke' on Iran

Why is the Register still sounding the alarm about Iran?

First it runs an editorial and then an inflammatory cartoon showing a Democrat with his head in the sand while supposed serious evidence swirls around about the Iranian danger. Let's take the charges in the cartoon one by one.

- "Iran had a nuclear weapons program until 2003." That is alleged by the National Intelligence Estimate on Iran, but not one bit of evidence is in the published report to support it. The charges that Iran has such a program originated with an exile Iranian army (the MEK) based in Iraq and protected by Saddam Hussein — hardly a credible source of information. Remember how worthless the stories of the intelligence source "Curveball" proved to be about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction.
- "Iran is processing highly enriched uranium." This program started under Iran's shah with full U.S. approval. It's a way of being self-sufficient in the generation of electricity from nuclear reactors.
- Iran "wants to wipe Israel off the map." Iran's president never said those words. He said it must "vanish from the pages of time": harsh rhetoric, indeed, but not a threat that Iran was intending to do anything. Iran is run by religious zealots, but when state interests demand, ideology is set aside. During the 1980s, the regime in Iran worked hand-in-glove with Israel when it was threatened by Saddam and was happy to buy weapons from it.
- Iran "is a major supporter of terrorism." Iran may supply Hezbollah, but Hezbollah is regarded by most Lebanese as their defender from an Israel that has repeatedly invaded the country, causing tens of thousands of deaths. It's true that Hezbollah has shot missiles into Israel and many have killed or injured civilians, but to call it a terrorist group is just propaganda.
- "Iran is an immediate threat to us." This is total nonsense. Iran has no nuclear weapons, and its conventional armaments are second rate. In 2005, Anthony Cordesman of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies said that Iran has 1,600 tanks and 260 military aircraft, many of them obsolete. This is not a force that can remotely threaten to attack the United States.

The Register is falling prey to the ideas of neo-cons such as U.S. Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman and Vice President Dick Cheney, who are furiously blowing smoke to try to cover up U.S. government findings that conclude that Iran is no menace.

Thousands of American families are grieving from what they said would be a cakewalk in Iraq. We don't need a repeat in Iran.

Stanley Heller
West Haven

Editor's note: Stanley Heller is a member of the organizing committee of Connecticut United for Peace.