

Majlis Speaker Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's Reflections on the Onset of War

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[...] The real reason behind Iraq's attack on Iran and the outbreak of the war was the stated desire to destroy the Islamic revolution and the young Islamic Republic, and especially the fact that both Eastern and Western powers were unhappy with the results of the revolution. The West, which had the biggest set of interests in Iran, treated the revolution as an affront to its economic and political interests from the outset. They wished to create a situation whereby the revolution, from its very inception, would remain dependent and subordinate to Western and Eastern power interests. Therefore, one of the central purposes behind the outbreak of the war was to weaken and eventually reverse the revolution. Yet, neither the Marxist powers of the East nor the imperial powers of the West proved successful in achieving this task, but they still managed to find in Saddam a useful front through which they could exert pressure on Iran. [...]

[...] We had to face down daily campaigns of terrorism and foil numerous coup attempts to keep the revolution afloat. One such instance was the attempted Nuzhah coup, which occurred several weeks before the beginning of the war with Iraq. Therefore, it was impossible for Iran, while it was facing down so much instability and tumult domestically, to have provoked a war with Iraq, as some have ludicrously implied. Even if we wanted to implement insidious plots against neighboring countries, the revolution was nowhere near the level of readiness that would have been required of such an effort. Even our armed forces were not ready for the most simple of defensive tasks, and so Iraq's ridiculous charge that somehow we [Iran] were bent on provoking Iraq to start a war against Iran is simply unacceptable and against conventional logic. Of course, we had announced the aims and principles of our revolution to the whole world, but no one anywhere could ever interpret the stated revolutionary sentiments and ideals of a nation as an international affront or a provocation against others. [...]

[Source: "Opening Remarks at the International Conference on Aggression and Sacred Defense," in *Rethinking Aspects of Aggression and Defense*, 1989. p. 41.]