

CLEARING THE AIR ON IRAN: LEDEEN V. CIRINCIONE

I'd like to recommend Teri Gross' Fresh Air (Part One Part Two). She juxtaposed the Neocon crazyman Michael Ledeen with the sane Joseph Cirincione to show both sides in the battle over our next war, with Iran. But rather than simply expose Ledeen's nuttiness, the juxtaposition served to show the holes in both the Neocon exhortations and the pragmatists' rationality.

I knew it was going to be an intriguing program when I found myself almost immediately agreeing with Ledeen. He admitted that the tensions with Iran are not really about nuclear weapons. (Geez, I thought to myself, do you think maybe he could tell Bolton and the rest of the UN?) But then, predictably, I disagreed, this time when he explained we had been at war with Iran for 27 years. Ledeen, who calls himself a revolutionary, dates the start of our "war" with Iran to the moment when a bunch of revolutionaries overthrew an oppressive regime. Our oppressive regime.

When Teri challenged Ledeen to prove that we had been in a war with Iran for almost three decades, Ledeen at first named only four attacks (the hostage crisis in Iran, the Lebanese embassy bombing, the Marine barrack bombing, and the Khobar towers attack)—all but the one least verifiably tied to Iran occurring back when Ledeen was getting into trouble with Iran-Contra. Teri pointed out that was only four attacks, far in the past, so Ledeen grasped onto the insurgency in Iraq (including the largely discredited accusation that Iran is supplying the insurgents with IEDs) and the discredited claim that Iranian advisers were sitting besides the Hezbollah fighters as they shot rockets into Israel (thereby, betraying Ledeen's belief that he sees Israel and the US as one and the same).