



I have been meaning for a week to get around to addressing this absurd question asked by George Stephanopolous, of Mickey Mouse dot com, at last week's Democratic Presidential debate in Pennsylvania:

MR. STEPHANOPOULOS: Senator Obama, let's stay in the region. Iran continues to pursue a nuclear option. Those weapons, if they got them, would probably pose the greatest threat to Israel. During the Cold War, it was the United States policy to extend deterrence to our NATO allies. An attack on Great Britain would be treated as if it were an attack on the United States. Should it be U.S. policy now to treat an Iranian attack on Israel as if it were an attack on the United States? (as per Council for Foreign Relations [transcript](#))

I held off because there has been such a din off criticism of the debate, and criticism of the criticism, i figured someone else would raise this.

The responses to this question varied from Sen. Obama's rather restrained

...I will take no options off the table when it comes to preventing them from using nuclear weapons...

which was wrapped up in an answer which dealt mostly with the unasked question of non-proliferation and containment, and on follow up,

...it is very important that Iran understands that an attack on Israel is an attack on our strongest ally in the region, one that we — one whose security we consider paramount, and that — that would be an act of aggression that we — that I would — that I would consider an attack that is unacceptable, and the United States would take appropriate action.

to Sen. Clinton's more bellicose response

Of course I would make it clear to the Iranians that an attack on Israel would incur massive retaliation from the United States

which then lead to a more extensive explanation of the importance of non-proliferation and containment.

This was only the beginning, though.Â Here is further bellicosity from Sen. Clinton on Good Morning America (also a Mickey Mouse property) when asked by Andrew Cuomo to expand

on her earlier comments she said this:

I want the Iranians to know that if I'm the president, we will attack Iran...In the next 10 years, during which they might foolishly consider launching an attack on Israel, we would be able to totally obliterate them.

So, what is my complaint here? Is it the apparent inconsistency in Sen. Clinton's position with regard to attacks, diplomacy or, for that matter, hypotheticals? No, tho that is ably covered by Jake Tapper [in this piece](#) No, my complaint is the absurdity of the question, and why neither candidate demonstrated an understanding of the region by answering simply: While such hypothetical scenario as an Iranian nuclear attack on Israel may seem stark, there is more heat there than light. The more likely threat in the region is that with Iran's expanding capability to enrich uranium, and their complicity in the training, arming and command and control of Hessbollah, and now Hamas; the more likely scenario is one in which the Iranians supply one of these terrorist forces, these avowed enemies of Israel, with a suitcase bomb. If we are to be serious about such threats then we need to find productive means to engage Iran and bring them back into the community of nations who demonstrate through deeds as well as words their willingness to comply with the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. And should they fail to, we must make sure that they know that they will be held responsible not just for their actions, but for their client's actions.

Of course the right question was not asked, and the right answer was not given. Oh well, we can now look forward to World War III.