

[By Bob Kinzel](#)

(Host) Congressman Peter Welch says members of Congress who want to take military action to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, don't fully understand how that approach could unleash a major war in the Middle East.

Welch says the military plan should be one of the options on the table, but he argues that it should be used only if all other approaches are unsuccessful.

VPR's Bob Kinzel reports:

(Kinzel) Welch says he's growing more and more concerned about the future of the Middle East because a group of Congressional Democrats and Republicans are urging President Obama to bomb facilities in Iran to destroy that country's nuclear program.

Iran claims its program is designed for peaceful uses but many western officials believe Iranian leaders are developing a nuclear weapon.

Welch says he doesn't think backers of the military option have fully thought through the consequences of bombing Iran.

(Welch) "There's a mistake that the people who are rushing to war are making. They act as though using a military option will be definitive, decisive and declarative and in fact we all know just look at Iraq, look at Afghanistan that all kinds of things happen beyond your control beyond your imagination once the military card is played."

(Kinzel) And Welch the growing call for military action makes it harder to have a peaceful resolution to this crisis.

(Welch) "The sanctions are very tough, they're actually having an effect and folks who were in the campaign mode talking about a military strike are doing that for political reasons and undercutting the ability of sanctions to work."

(Kinzel) Last month, Welch was part of a congressional fact finding trip to the Middle East. He says he received a clear message from many of the foreign leaders who he met.

(Welch) "They were extremely cautious when it came to the use of the military option and they were because they have a real appreciation for the collateral consequences that would follow, economic and the safety to their people."

(Kinzel) Welch says he's not totally rejecting the military option but he argues this isn't the time to use it. First, he wants to see if imposing tougher financial sanctions will bring Iranian leaders back to the negotiating table.