

Control Of the World's Oceans. Prelude To War?

Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and the US 1,000-Ship Navy

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

Global Research, January 30, 2009

Stop NATO 30 January 2009

In of the most monumental and sweeping, though frequently overlooked, efforts by the former Bush administration to project worldwide military dominance and in so doing further vitiate international relations is what its initiator, John Bolton, in his capacity of Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security at the time called the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

Officially launched on May 31, 2003, the PSI was the broadest application of international power projection by the US in the post-Cold War era, entailing as it does nothing less than the ability to conduct naval surveillance, interdiction and eventually unbridled military action in all the world's oceans.

Following and supplementing Operation Enduring Freedom and its six areas of responsibility from South Asia to the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean to the Caribbean Sea, and the NATO prelude to and prototype of the Proliferation Security Initiative, so-called Operation Active Endeavor which has for over seven years now placed the entire Mediterranean Sea under its control, the PSI is a military operation unilaterally devised and implemented by Washington without prior consultation with the nations and peoples in the targeted areas.

And like Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Active Endeavor (in the second category that follows), its self-proclaimed mission is unlimited in geographical scope and in historical time.

The PSI was announced with the alleged objective to, according to the ever complacent New York Times, "interdict nuclear materials and contraband". A broad enough charter to include most any naval operation anywhere and for any actual purpose Washington wants to employ it.

One that, though, right off paralleled Washington's manipulative conflation of weapons of mass destruction with 'global terrorism,' as will be seen further on.

And simply to extend US and allied naval presence and war fighting capabilities to geostrategically vital and coveted sea lanes, waterways, coastal regions, energy and military transit routes and into whichever seas at whichever times doing so meets current political and strategic exigencies.

The main focus of the PSI in the preponderance of allusions to it in its early days was North Korea.

Later Iran would be increasingly identified as a putative rationale for extending it into the

Persian Gulf and, if the US and its allies could devise some method of getting there, the landlocked Caspian Sea. Indeed former Defense Secretary Donald Misfield was an avid advocate of what he deemed a Caspian Guard.

The Caspian Sea is, of course, an inland body and not accessible to navies except for those of its five littoral states.

As will be demonstrated below, the PSI didn't take long to hunt for 'North Korean contraband' in the Aegean and Black Seas, the Persian Gulf and the South China Sea, inter Alia, if its main concentration remains Asia.

The same May 22, 2006 New York Times article from which the earlier citation emanates also included this revealing addendum: "The initiative also involves efforts to restrict financing and suspect commercial transactions for Iran, North Korea, Syria, Cuba and other countries."

The countries mentioned are four of the seven indicted by the US government immediately after the 9/11/2001 attacks as "state supporters of terrorism," to wit Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Syria, and Sudan.

The current author wrote on September 12, 2001 that of the above seven states, only one, Sudan, had any previous connection with Osama bin Laden, one severed over five years before; that none of them had recognized the Taliban order in Afghanistan (though firm US allies Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had, and the Emirates is the only Arab nation with a military contingent in Afghanistan to compound the irony); and that three of the seven targeted countries - Iran, Iraq and Syria - had been victims of the very extremism that they were accused of supporting.

The "state supporters of terrorism" were supplemented and in most cases superseded by then National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice during her Senate confirmation hearing for Secretary of State in January of 2005 when she unveiled the new hit list, the "outposts of tyranny": Belarus, Cuba, Iran, Myanmar (Burma), North Korea and Zimbabwe.

Of the above nations, some have multi-party parliamentary systems; some are one party states; five have secular governments, one has a religious one; regarding religious background, three are predominantly Christian, two Buddhist and one Muslim.

The sole conceivable link they have in common is that each has been the subject of intense and unrelenting efforts by the US and the West in general to isolate it locally and stigmatize it internationally preparatory to intended 'regime change.'

And all six have close state-to-state relations with both Russia and China.

One has to assume that an adversary, a 'threat' is required in each continent and critical region, so Europe has Belarus; Africa, Zimbabwe; Latin America, Cuba; the Middle East, Iran; and Asia, presumably because of its comparative size, Myanmar and North Korea.

Cuba, Iran and North Korea are the only states to have been passed on from "state supporters of terrorism" to "outposts of tyranny."

If, as with the above contrived designations, the initial rationale for the PSI was both nebulous enough to serve any purpose and sufficiently malleable to adjust to the desire for

planned deployments against new adversaries of convenience, the evolution and extension of it gave the lie to its foundation myth and revealed its advocates' real intentions.

A brief chronology of the PSI since its infancy and into its current state will illustrate that its purview is far broader than chasing cargo coming out of and heading to North Korea.

As the Initiative started to gain steam into its second year, veteran Indian journalist Siddharth Varadarajan emphasized the skepticism if not suspicion it aroused among major world, and especially Asian, powers:

“Rather than extra-legal instruments to check proliferation like the Proliferation Security Initiative, Russia and China are emphasizing the need for multilateral legal systems. And anticipating that the U.S. programme of missile defence will very soon lead to the militarisation of space, the two countries are demanding a ban on any arms race in outer space.” (The Hindu, July 4, 2005)

The above is an inspired linking and juxtaposition of genuine proliferation concerns versus largely phantom versions serving ulterior geopolitical objectives.

That is, the US regularly thwarts otherwise unanimous opposition in the United Nations to the militarization of space while raising the specter of smuggling in often obscure corners of the world which other, including local, nations fail to observe or register concerns about.

A major Indian daily commented on PSI three days before the above quote that:

“The PSI [Proliferation Security Initiative] is a controversial U.S.-led multinational initiative involving the interdiction of third-country ships on the high seas. Apart from its dubious legality, the PSI explicitly undercuts a genuinely multilateral and balanced approach to the problem of proliferation. Among the major countries in Asia opposed to the PSI are China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Iran.” (The Hindu, July 1, 2006)

That two of the four countries just mentioned border the Strait of Malacca which connects the Indian to the Pacific Ocean is not a coincidence.

The significance of the Strait has been commented upon by major US military leaders in relation to the US's 1,000-ship global navy plan examined later in this article.

Less than a year after the inauguration of the PSI, Malaysia's then deputy prime minister and defense minister Najib Razak said of a regional manifestation of the PSI that “this touches on the question of our national sovereignty. “

The London Financial times characterized the concern as follows:

“Malaysia and Indonesia oppose a proposal by Washington to deploy US marines with high-speed boats to guard the Malacca Straits, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.... “The Regional Maritime Security Initiative was disclosed during congressional testimony last week by Admiral Thomas Fargo, head of the US Pacific Command. “The proposal grows out of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)....” (Financial Times, April 5, 2004)

Almost two years later Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda, in rejecting participation in the PSI, explained his nation's opposition:

“If Indonesia joined the initiative, the United States or others big countries can conduct an interdiction to check whether the ships passing the waters carrying out materials links to mass destruction weapon,’ said [FM Hassan Wirajuda] “In addition, the initiative was not initiated through a multilateral process, but only a group of nations that have a common goal to conduct a certain initiatives, Wirajuda said. “The initiative was against the convention of international law on marine, the United Nations Convention on the Law on the Sea of 1982, Wirajuda stressed.” (Xinhua News Agency, March 17, 2006)

It didn’t take much time to confirm Indonesia’s and Malaysia’s apprehensions.

In August of 2005 the US, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Japan conducted Exercise Deep Sabre as part of the Proliferation Security Initiative from Singapore’s Changi Naval Base in the South China Sea.

China’s Xinhua News Agency provided this description:

“Exercise Deep Saber (XDS)...involves some 2,000 personnel from the military, coast guard, customs and other agencies of 13 PSI countries including Singapore, the United States, Britain and Australia, as well as ten surface vessels and six maritime patrol aircraft.” (Xinhua News Agency, August 15, 2005)

Another nation in the Far East that has refused to join the PSI, which now has 70 affiliated countries, is South Korea.

It fears that its neighbor to the north will interpret a unilateral naval blockade of its shoreline and forcible storming and impounding of its vessels as what they are – acts of war – and that a new full-scale peninsular war might ensue.

Three years ago North Korean state media raised just such a prospect.

“North Korea warned South Korea against sparking a ‘nuclear war’ by joining a US-led international drill aimed at intercepting weapons of mass destruction, state media reported. “South Korea said last month it would send a team to ‘observe’ a US-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) drill off Australia in April “Minju Joson, the North’s government-published newspaper, also warned Saturday that Seoul’s joining the drill would ‘bar the inter-Korean relations from favorably developing and entail ... a nuclear war to the Korean Peninsula.” (Agence France-Presse, February 12, 2006)

Today’s Agence France-Presse reports on a ‘study’ by the American Council on Foreign Relations which states “The United States and its allies might have to deploy up to 460,000 soldiers to North Korea to stabilize the country if it collapses and an insurgency erupts, a private U.S. study said Jan. 28.”

The precise number of troops stipulated suggests the CFR analysis is hardly an academic one.

And it rather blithely mentions in passing that:

“North Korea abuts two great powers – China and Russia – that have important interests at stake in the future of the peninsula. That they would become actively engaged in any future crisis involving North Korea is virtually guaranteed.’ “

Not that the US has not recklessly ignored South Korea's concern in pressuring Seoul on the matter.

The PSI is the international naval component of a far larger US-dominated effort to expanded Western military domination worldwide through NATO.

An article called "U.S. Wants Korea to Forge Military Ties With NATO," observed:

"[A South Korean official] said Washington aims to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by North Korea by taking advantage of NATO in addition to the PSI...." (Chosun Ilbo, November 23, 2006)

In a news dispatch titled "Incoming administration may consider joining U.S. missile defense program," a South Korean newspaper reported that:

"South Korea has been reluctant to join the PSI in the past for fear of inciting the North, though it was recently reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade proposed to the transition team that the matter be given serious consideration." (Hankyoreh, January 21, 2008)

The PSI has also been exploited to shore up other components of Asian NATO, including Australia and New Zealand.

In April of 2006 the US, Australia, Britain, Japan, New Zealand and Singapore held a three-day "international anti-terror exercise" in northern Australia.

In July of last year a similar exercise was held in New Zealand, which once prided itself on its alleged neutrality, that was reported on by a local newspaper:

"In what will be seen as another step in breaking down the 20-year freeze by the Americans on joint participation in routine military exercises, its military will be strongly represented in a contingent of more than 30 coming to Auckland for Exercise Maru. "The exercise...is being organised as part of New Zealand's commitment to the Proliferation Security Initiative." (The Dominion Post, July 22, 2008)

In the interim between the Australian and New Zealand PSI military exercises a 41-nation drill, Pacific Shield 07, was conducted off Japan:

"Ships and planes from Australia, Britain, France, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States were deployed on day one of the three-day drill in the Sea of Sagami off Tokyo Bay...under the Proliferation Security Initiative put forward by US President George W. Bush in 2003."

As an element of India's incorporation into both Asian and Global NATO, it too has been targeted for inclusion in the PSI.

An Indian commentary from 2007 remarks:

“In recent years, New Delhi seems to be bending over backwards to accommodate the “strategic interests” of Washington. Joint military exercises involving the armies of the two countries have intensified in scope and magnitude since they began in the mid-1990s. “Washington’s desire to encircle China with a pro-US alliance is well known. The Japanese leadership has been calling on New Delhi to join in Washington-inspired projects such as the Proliferation Security Initiative.” (Frontline, July 14-27, 2007)

And in the same year Siddharth Varadarajan wrote:

“Though India remains opposed to the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), the last two ‘Malabar’ naval exercises have seen PSI-related drills such as maritime interdiction and VBSS (visit-board- search-seizure) operations.” (The Hindu, July 5, 2007)

The worldwide and ever expanding search for “North Korean contraband” has followed a curious path from the Indian Ocean into the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean and the Black Seas.

In October of 2006 warships from US, Britain, France, Italy, Australia and Bahrain participated in a PSI exercise off the Iranian coast in the Persian Gulf.

John Bolton’s successor in the State Department Robert Joseph had prepared the groundwork earlier by having “recently visited Iran’s neighbors, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, in addition to Egypt, for discussions about how to handle the threat from Iran. The consultations dealt with working together within the context of the Proliferation Security Initiative. . .” (U.S. Department of State, April 21, 2006)

Five months before the Persian Gulf exercise the US led Anatolian Sun-2006, a multinational naval exercise off the Mediterranean coast of Turkey.

An Italian news source issued this report:

“Turkey will host a joint military exercise with US troops in the eastern Mediterranean beginning on Wednesday - a show of strength that comes as Washington is increasing pressure on Tehran over its nuclear programme. “Ostensibly part of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) against Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), US officials cited in the New York Times newspaper described the manoeuvres as a sign of Washington’s determination to stop missile and nuclear technology from reaching Iran.” (ADN Kronos International, May 23, 2006)

In reference to the same operation the New York Times added that, “The United States is trying to persuade friendly countries near the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean to join in the exercises. . .” (New York Times, May 22, 2006)

Moving further west, the US recruited Cyprus to the PSI in April of 2005.

In May of last year the US and Poland officiated over another PSI operation, Adriatic Shield 08, hosted by Croatia, which included participation from Bosnia, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia.

Seven months later the US Congress would praise Croatia – it of the notorious US-directed Operation Storm of 1995 and of lingering nostalgia for the Nazi collaborationist Ustasha – with a resolution expressing the US’s certitude that “Croatia can give a significant contribution to NATO and that it has already sent its contingent to Afghanistan “as part of NATO-led International Security Assistance Force [and] Croatia “is participating in the Proliferation Security Initiative with like-minded nations across the world....” (Hina, December 15, 2005)

At last year’s NATO summit in Romania, Croatia was invited to join the Alliance as a full member and will be inducted as one at the April 3-4 60th Anniversary NATO summit.

Likewise the Ukraine’s American proxy Viktor Yushchenko, NATO’s ticket to a 2,400 kilometer border with Russia, a year ago vowed that “Ukraine actively interacts with NATO member-states within the new mechanisms of cooperation in the compliance and implementation of fundamental treaties related to international security. In particular, our state has acceded to the Proliferation Security Initiative.. ..” (ForUm, January 16, 2008)

Regarding the general issue of the relationship of the PSI with Global NATO, these excerpts from a 2005 speech by Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in Japan will clarify matters:

“[W]e want to ensure that a much larger proportion of our military forces are readily available for operations far away from home. “We also realize full well that tackling today’s global threats requires the broadest possible international cooperation and so we are enhancing relations with our partner countries across Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, and in North Africa and the Middle East. “And like many NATO Allies, you [Japan] are also an active participant in the Proliferation Security Initiative.. ..” (NATO International, April 4, 2005)

The preceding accounts establish that, just as with Washington’s stationing of third position, potential first strike, interceptor missile sites in Eastern Europe, North Korea and Iran are pretext rather than cause.

And the underlying, unremitting, ruthless strategy is for expanding and maintaining global military deployments for both blackmail and attacks.

If the US’s Operation Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan aims at insuring among other tasks US and allied naval control of the Indian Ocean; if Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines brings Western naval power into Southeast Asia; if Operation Enduring Freedom – Horn of Africa solidifies control of the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, with recent assistance from NATO and the EU in Operation Atalanta; if NATO’s Operation Active Endeavor controls all navigation into and throughout the Mediterranean, complemented by the German and other NATO nations’ naval blockade of Lebanon, soon to be replicated with Gaza; if all these operations secure domination of critical parts of the world’s oceans and seas, the Proliferation Security Initiative is increasingly the overarching structure that integrates them all.

And lying behind and underpinning the PSI is what the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US armed forces Michael Mullen, while developing this strategy as Chief of Naval Operations, called the Thousand-Ship Navy in an October 29, 2006 column in the Honolulu Advertiser.

The 1,000-Ship Navy, Mullen said, “[Is] a global maritime partnership that unites maritime forces, port operators, commercial shippers, and international, governmental and nongovernmental agencies to address mutual concerns.”

The following year the US Navy publication Navy Newsstand summarized the matter:

“Vice Adm. John G. Morgan, Jr., deputy chief of Naval Operations for Information, Plans and Strategy and Rear Adm. Michael C. Bachman, commander of the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, explained that the 1,000-ship Navy is a network of international partner navies who will work together to create a force capable of standing watch over all the seas. “Vice Adm. John G. Morgan, Jr., deputy chief of Naval Operations for Information, Plans and Strategy and Rear Adm. Michael C. Bachman, commander of the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, explained that the 1,000-ship Navy is a network of international partner navies who will work together to create a force capable of standing watch over all the seas. “A new naval era is coming and we’re doing exciting things in preparation for it,” Morgan said. ‘The Navy is being challenged.. ..The Navy’s traveling around and getting the idea of a 1,000-ship Navy to patrol the seas, out to the world.” “This 1,000-ship Navy idea is all about a global maritime network, a huge network of sharing,’ said Morgan. ‘That’s the biggest challenge we’re facing: a network of many integrated countries’ navies with one goal in mind of patrolling the world’s seas.”

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