

On the Warpath

By [Felicity Arbuthnot](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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Felicity Arbuthnot reports on indications that Washington's warmongering policymakers are back on the campaign trail

Surreal. Ten days ago, Laura Bush told the BBC: "Everyone is anti-war - the president is anti-war. No-one wants war."

Heaven help the planet if he ever gets militant.

Then, Tony Blair mooted a "fast track" new generation of British nuclear power stations. This was on top of his aspirations with regards updated nuclear warheads.

Given the threats towards Iran for the same concept, it should have been time to seek out the nearest nuclear bunker.

The crocuses, snowdrops and daffodils will herald spring soon and lime leaves will dress the trees again, in denial-driven hope that the earth's entire surface is not to be scorched. Fingers crossed that it will just be the odd surgical strike and mushroom cloud.

But no charge was levelled at Britain by the anti-war President. Instead, there was sabre-rattling from US allies in Tel Aviv who claimed that the tragic restaurant bombing there last week had been bankrolled by Iran and planned in Damascus.

Like September 11 2001, the culprits were known in an instant.

Since then, Afganistan and Iraq have been destroyed in retaliation, yet no Afghan or Iraqi has ever been cited as hijackers. Any excuse to bomb an independent-minded oil or natural-gas rich nation.

In Britain over recent years, there has been much talk of "institutionalised racism." Indeed.

White-skinned Westerners can have nuclear power - for all their feckless irresponsibility with it - olive-skinned others with coveted assets cannot.

The peaceful President was already talking up the threat of Iran just two months after invading Iraq and a month after his dinky little flying-suited "mission accomplished" photo stunt on a State Department hijacked aircraft carrier.

The US "would not tolerate ... a nuclear weapon" in Iran, he said. Another "bring 'em on" moment.

In 2001, he extended the Iran-Libya Santions Act of 1996 for five years. This penalises any

non-US company which invests in Iran.

Iran blocks easy access to the Persian Gulf's abundant oil facilities, the shortest regional export route for oil and gas. It also hampers energy development from outside investors of Caspian Sea oil and gas reserves.

Washington further fears Iran's potential threat to oil outflow via the Straits of Hormuz, a "vital waterway that connects the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean," as it is described in Michael Klare's indispensable book *Blood and Oil*.

A key architect of US plans for Iran, writes Klare, is Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's former adviser Zalmay Khalizad, who headed the Bush-Cheney transition team at the Defence Department.

Khalizad, who has Afghan origins, was appointed US ambassador to Afghanistan after the US invasion. He is now post-invasion US ambassador to Iraq.

His plans for neighbouring Iran include pressure on the regime, support for anti-government forces and telling the world of Iran's "unacceptable behaviour ... sponsorship of terror, pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, repression."

These are central to Khalizad's O-I-L policy (Operation Iranian Liberation this time.)

"Once the regime has been swept away, economic sanctions can be lifted ... freedom ... prosperity ... human rights and democracy" will sweep through a joyous, grateful nation is how Klare paraphrases Khalizad's vision. Familiar eh?

Coincidentally, the vision coincides with Iran - the world's fifth largest oil producer - raising oil output from 89.7 million barrels in 2003 to 125.8 million barrels in 2004.

If Klare creates deep concern, Wayne Madsen (www.waynemadsenreport.com) terrifies.

Madsen is no lightweight. He worked for the National Security Agency during the Reagan administration, Naval Data Automation Command at the State Department and is senior fellow of the Electronic Privacy Information Centre.

He believes that an attack, possibly involving tactical nuclear weapons, on Iran's nuclear facilities is in the final planning stages.

Likely saturation bombing targets "are the Bushehr nuclear power plant, a uranium mining site in Saghand, near the city of Yazd, the uranium enrichment facility in Natanz, a heavy water plant and radioisotope facility in Arak, the Ardekan Nuclear Fuel Unit, the Uranium Conversion Facility and Nuclear Technology Centre in Isfahan."

Also hit would be the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre and Molybdenum Radioisotope Production Facility, a vast multipurpose laboratory and the Kalaye Electric company in the city's suburbs.

The Lashkar Abad former uranium enrichment plant and radioactive waste storage units will be struck, along with missile launch sites, air bases, the international and domestic airports, TV and radio stations, telecommunications centres, government buildings - Madsen's list is

apocalypse now.

Oil installation and ports would be avoided. They would be preserved for US oil and business interests.

Also cited are numerous US military installations where training and readiness levels have increased dramatically recently.

The withholding of natural gas supplies to Ukraine by Russia's giant Gazprom has been seen by some as a warning to 15 client countries across Europe not to get involved.

A few months ago, Burma switched its capital abruptly from Rangoon to remote northern Pyinmana. Thousands of government employees were given just two days to leave.

Madsen cites intelligence sources reporting fears in Burma that Rangoon and coastal Indian Ocean cities could be caught in a Chernobyl-like cloud which would be distributed groundwards in monsoon rains, intensifying fallout.

Ancient arch-hawk Richard Perle, the architect of destructions spanning the cold war and now the anti-Islamic one, addressed the American-Israel public affairs committee in 2004 and called for an attack in Iran.

It was at just about that time that unmanned US spy drones began appearing over – and crashing – in the country. Iran complained of the violations in a letter to the UN on August 25 2005.

Two weeks ago, Colin Powell addressed fundraisers for the Jewish National Fund in London and Glasgow and upped the ante.

Astonishingly, his central theme was that Iran had a secret nuclear programme, just like Saddam. What faulty information, dodgy dossiers and resultant calls for impeachment had been airbrushed out?

Senior Shia clerics from neighbouring Iraq travelled to Iran recently. They have vowed that their followers will defend the country in the event of an attack.

If predictions are correct, there will be nothing left to defend.

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