

One Click Closer to Nuclear Annihilation

Last week Washington threatened Iran, Syria, China, Venezuela and Russia

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Region: [Asia](#), [Latin America & Caribbean](#),
[Middle East & North Africa](#), [Russia and FSU](#)
Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

The nuclear war doomsday clock maintained on the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists website [has advanced to](#) two minutes before midnight, the closest point to possible atomic apocalypse since the end of the Cold War. In 1995 the clock was at fourteen minutes to midnight, but the opportunity to set it back even further was lost as the United States and its European allies took advantage of a weakened Russia to advance NATO into Eastern Europe, setting the stage for a new cold war, which is now underway.

It is difficult to imagine how the United States might avoid a new war in the Middle East given the recent statements that have come out of Washington, and, given that the Russians are also active in the region, a rapid and massive escalation of something that starts out as a minor incident should not be ruled out.

President Donald Trump set the tone when he harangued the United Nations last Tuesday, warning that the United States would go it alone in defense of its perceived interests, with no regard for international bodies that exist to limit armed conflict and punish those who commit war crimes.

Trump's [35-minute speech](#) featured an anticipated long section targeting Iran. He commented that:

"Iran's leaders sow chaos, death, and destruction. They do not respect their neighbors or borders, or the sovereign rights of nations. Instead, Iran's leaders plunder the nation's resources to enrich themselves and to spread mayhem across the Middle East and far beyond... We cannot allow the world's leading sponsor of terrorism to possess the planet's most dangerous weapons. We cannot allow a regime that chants 'Death to America,' and that threatens Israel with annihilation, to possess the means to deliver a nuclear warhead to any city on Earth."

There are a number of things exaggerated or incorrect in Trump's description of Iran as well as in the conclusions he draws. The Middle East and other adjacent Muslim countries are in chaos because the United States has destabilized the region starting with the empowering of the Islamist Mujadeddin in the war against Soviet Afghanistan in the 1980s. It then invaded Afghanistan in 2001 followed by Iraq in 2003, enabling the rise of ISIS and giving local al-Qaeda affiliates a new lease on life, before turning on Damascus with the Syria Accountability Act later in the same year and then destroying the Libyan government under Barack Obama. These were, not coincidentally, policies promoted by Israel that received, as a result, bipartisan support in Congress.

The emotional description of disrespecting “neighbors, borders and sovereign rights” fits the U.S. and Israel to a “T” rather than Iran. The U.S. has soldiers stationed illegally in Syria while Israel bombs the country on an almost daily basis, so who is doing the disrespecting? Washington and Tel Aviv are also the principal supporters of terrorists in the Middle East, not Iran, – arming them, training them, hospitalizing them when they are injured, and making sure that they continue their work in attacking Syria’s legitimate government.

And as for “most dangerous weapons,” Iran doesn’t have any and is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which Israel and the U.S. have not signed. Nor would Iran have any such weapons in the future but for the fact that Trump has backed out of the agreement to monitor and inspect Iranian nuclear research and development, which will, if anything, motivate Tehran to develop weapons to protect itself.

Trump also elaborated on the following day regarding Iran’s alleged but demonstrably non-existent nuclear program when he indicated to the Security Council that [Washington would go after](#) countries that violate the rules on nuclear proliferation. He clearly meant Iran but the comment was ironic in the extreme, as Israel is the world’s leading nuclear rogue nation with an arsenal of two hundred nuclear devices, having stolen the uranium and key elements of the technology from the United States in the 1960s.

Trump’s new appraisal of the state of the Middle East is somewhat a turnaround. Five months ago he said that [he wanted to “get out” of Syria](#) and bring the soldiers home. But in early September, the secretary of state’s special representative for Syria engagement, James Jeffrey, [indicated that](#) the U.S. would stay to counter Iranian activities.

And John Bolton has also recently had a lot to say about Iran, Syria and Russia. Last Monday he confirmed that Washington intends to keep a [military presence in Syria](#) until Iran withdraws all its forces from the country. “We’re not going to leave as long as Iranian troops are outside Iranian borders, and that includes Iranian proxies and militias.” On the following day, speaking at a Sheldon Adelson funded United Against Nuclear Iran Summit, he said the “murderous regime” of “mullahs in Tehran” would face serious consequences if they persist in their willingness to “lie, cheat and deceive. If you cross us, our allies, or our partners; if you harm our citizens there will indeed be hell to pay. Let my message today be clear: We are watching, and we will come after you.”

John Bolton also warned the Russians about their decision to upgrade the air defenses in Syria in the wake of the recent Israeli bombing raid that led to the shooting down of a Russian intelligence plane. He said absurdly and inaccurately “The Israelis have a legitimate right to self-defense against this Iranian aggressive behavior, and what we’re all trying to do is reduce tensions, reduce the possibility of major new hostilities. That’s why the president has spoken to this issue and why we would regard introducing the S-300 as a major mistake.”

Bolton then elaborated that “We think introducing the S-300s to the Syrian government would be a significant escalation by the Russians and something that we hope, if these press reports are accurate, they would reconsider.” And regarding who was responsible for the deaths of the Russian airmen, Bolton also has a suitable explanation “There shouldn’t be any misunderstanding here... The party responsible for the attacks in Syria and Lebanon and really the party responsible for the shooting down of the Russian plane is Iran.”

Bolton's desire to exonerate Israel and always blame Iran is inevitably on display. He is curiously objecting to the placement of missiles that are defensive in nature, presumably because Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has asked him to do so. The only way one can be threatened by the S-300 is if you are attacking Syria, but that might be a fine point that Bolton fails to grasp as he was a draft dodger during the Vietnam War and has since that time not placed himself personally at risk in support of any of the wars he has been promoting.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis also spoke on Monday, at the Pentagon. His spin on Iran was slightly different but his message was the same. "As part of this overarching problem, we have to address Iran. Everywhere you go in the Middle East where there's instability you will find Iran. So in terms of getting to the end state of the Geneva [negotiations] process, Iran, too, has a role to play, which is to stop fomenting trouble."

To complete the onslaught, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, speaking at the same United Against Nuclear Iran Summit as Bolton, accused European nations seeking to avoid U.S. sanctions over the [purchase of Iranian oil](#) as "solidifying Iran's ranking as the number-one state sponsor of terrorism. I imagine the corrupt ayatollahs and IGRC [Revolutionary Guards] were laughing this morning."

Even the U.S. Congress has figured out that something is afoot. A bipartisan group of U.S. senators, who were carefully briefed on what to think by the Israeli government, warned after a trip to the Middle East that war between the United States and Iranian proxies [is "imminent."](#)

Iran is fun to kick around but China has also been on the receiving end of late. Last Wednesday the U.N. Security Council meeting was presided over by Donald Trump, [who warned that](#) Beijing is "meddling" in U.S. elections against him personally. It is a bizarre claim, particularly as the only country up until now demonstrated as having actually interfered in American politics in any serious way is Israel. The accusation comes on top of Washington's [latest foray](#) into the world of sanctions, directed against the Chinese government-run Equipment Development Department of the Chinese Central Military Commission and its director Li Shangfu for "engaging in significant transactions" with a Russian weapons manufacturer that is on a list of U.S. sanctioned companies.

The Chinese sanctions are serious business as they forbid conducting any transactions that go through the U.S. financial system. It is the most powerful weapon Washington has at its disposal. As most international transactions are conducted in dollars and pass through American banks that means that it will be impossible for the Chinese government to make weapons purchases from many foreign sources. If foreign banks attempt to collaborate with China to evade the restrictions, they too will be sanctioned.

So if you're paying attention to Trump, Bolton, Mattis, Pompeo and Haley you are probably digging a new bomb shelter right now. We have told Iran that it cannot send its soldiers and "proxies" outside its own borders while Syria cannot have advanced missiles to defend its airspace, which Russia is "on notice" for providing. China also cannot buy weapons from Russia while Venezuela is also being threatened because it has what is generally believed to be a terrible government. Meanwhile, America is in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan to stay while nearly all agree a war with Iran is coming soon. Everyone is the enemy and everyone hates the United States, mostly for good reasons. If this is Making America Great Again, I think I would settle for just making America "good" so we could possibly have that doomsday clock

go back a couple of minutes.

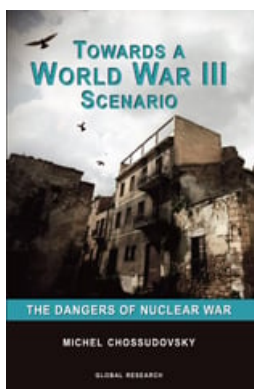
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[“Towards a World War III Scenario: The Dangers of Nuclear War”](#)

by Michel Chossudovsky

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Reviews

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Michel Chossudovsky exposes the insanity of our privatized war machine. Iran is being targeted with nuclear weapons as part of a war agenda built on distortions and lies for the purpose of private profit. The real aims are oil, financial hegemony and global control. The price could be nuclear holocaust. When weapons become the hottest export of the world’s only superpower, and diplomats work as salesmen for the defense industry, the whole world is recklessly endangered. If we must have a military, it belongs entirely in the public sector. No one should profit from mass death and destruction.

-Ellen Brown, *author of ‘Web of Debt’ and president of the Public Banking Institute*



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