

Real Liars go to Tehran

By [Pepe Escobar](#)

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Marx never thought about this one: history repeating itself as double tragedy after already being a farce in the first place. Let's examine the case in hand. First of all, take a close look at this Wall Street Journal op-ed from September 2002, in the hysterical run-up towards the invasion of Iraq.

Title: [The Case for Toppling Saddam](#). Author: Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu - then out of the Israeli government.

It's all here: a "dictator who is rapidly expanding his arsenal of biological and chemical weapons" and "who is feverishly trying to acquire nuclear weapons"; the Saddam equals Hitler parallel; the portrayal of (de facto nuclear power) Israel as helpless victims of Palestinian "terror"; the claim that Saddam could produce nuclear fuel "in centrifuges the size of washing machines that can be hidden throughout the country - and Iraq is a very big country"; the cheerleading of a unilateral pre-emptive strike; and the inevitable conclusion that "nothing less than dismantling his regime will do".

Fast-forward over 10 years to this week in Israel. The scene: press conference of Israeli Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu and visiting US President Barack Obama. Anyone watching it live on al-Jazeera, from the Middle East to East Asia, must have thought they were watching a geopolitical Back to the Future - and frankly, Michael J Fox at least oozed charm.

No charm here; this was more like an eerie, suit-and-tie Return of the Living Dead. Bibi and Obama were at pains to stress the US-Israel bond was "eternal". Actually Bibi preferred to stress that Iran's (non-existent) nuclear weapons posed an existential threat to Israel. He repeated, over and over again, that Obama was adamant; Israel was entitled to do anything to defend itself, and its security would not be anyone's responsibility, even Washington's.

Obama, for his part, once again stressed that Washington's official policy towards Iran was not containment - but to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. He stressed the "window of opportunity" was getting narrower; and, of course, that all options were on the table.

The thought that the president of the United States (POTUS) willfully ignores the verdict of his own alphabet soup of intel agencies on Iran might raise eyebrows in a rational world. But this is not reality; more like a trashy reality show.

Dream, dream, wet settler dream

The powers that be in Israel - neocon-infested US corporate media avalanche of denials notwithstanding - were absolutely essential in the whole Iraq War cheerleading operation;

Ariel Sharon, at the time, boasted that the strategic coordination between Israel and the US had reached “unprecedented dimensions”.

Bibi was just a cog in the wheel then – as Jim Lobe details [here](#) – quoting Bibi’s pearls of wisdom dispensed to a misinformed-to-oblivion US Congress in 2002.

Every usual “Israeli official” suspect at the time was breathlessly spinning that Saddam was only months away from a nuclear weapon. The bulk of WMD “intelligence” presented to Congress and faithfully parroted by corporate media was filtered if not entirely fabricated by Israeli intelligence – something duly detailed, among others, by Shlomo Brom in his study *An Intelligence Failure*, published by the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies of Tel Aviv University in November 2003.

Of course it didn’t matter that UN inspectors found no nuclear weapon program evidence on site. Of course it didn’t matter that Saddam son-in-law Hussein Kamel, who had defected to Jordan in 1995, had told UN inspectors in detail there had been no WMDs whatsoever since 1991.

Now it’s double tragedy, and double farce, all over again. Yet even Nepalis building glitzy towers in Dubai know that the “Bomb Iran” hysteria is Tel Aviv’s tactic to change the subject from the relentless land confiscation/ethnic cleansing in slow motion in Palestine and consequently the de facto total impossibility of a two-state solution.

[Here](#), Jonathan Cook succinctly details the frankly scary political configuration in Israel after the recent elections. The Israeli website Ynet has reported that Israeli settlers can’t stop hailing their brand new “wet dream” cabinet. Translation: the ultimate nail in the coffin of the already dead and buried “peace process”.

So here’s a modern geopolitical parable that would puzzle Aesop. Bibi publicly insults POTUS. He unabashedly supports Mitt Romney (who?) in the US presidential elections. He hits the “peace process” with a barrage of Hellfire “facts on the ground” (with loads of Palestine “collateral damage”). He sticks to his one and only message; Bomb Bomb Bomb, Bomb Bomb Iran. And then POTUS, in theory the mighty Double O Bama with a license to kill (list) but actually behaving like an accidental tourist, lands in Israel with his kill list between his legs, to bask in Bibi’s glory.

No wonder the rabid American neo-con/Israeli firster/Bomb Iran crowd is gloating. Over 10 years ago their mantra was “Real Men go to Tehran”. The question now is whether POTUS will be able to grow a set of proper cojones and stare them down.

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