

# The Drums of War are Beating: Iran's Nuclear Program, Pretext to Justify Further Military Intervention

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According to Article IV of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (N.P.T.), all signatory member nations possess the “inalienable right” to “develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.”<sup>1</sup>

As a signatory nation, the Islamic Republic of Iran is entitled to this most basic right, just like any other nation. However, the U.S. and its allies are seeking to infringe upon and limit Iran's right to produce nuclear energy for civilian purposes, asserting that the Iranian government is using its civilian nuclear program as a smokescreen for an alleged covert nuclear weapons program.<sup>2</sup> These assertions are backed by no credible evidence, just the assurances of the U.S. and Israeli governments respectively. It is further insinuated that once Iran develops nuclear weapons, it will certainly use them to “wipe Israel off the map of nations,”<sup>3</sup> presenting an existential threat to the Jewish people.

Despite the belligerent public tone of the U.S. government, however, its intelligence community has consistently reported to Congress that Iran's military strategy is strictly geared towards “*deterrence, asymmetric retaliation, and attrition warfare*” (emphasis mine).<sup>4</sup>

Even the US National Intelligence Director, James Clapper, recently admitted to Congress that “we do not know if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons” and implicitly confirmed that Iran is not presently seeking to do so because if it were, such activities would certainly be discovered by the “international community.”<sup>5</sup> In spite of all this, President Obama maintains that “all options are on the table” to thwart Iran's nuclear program, with a military attack on Iran taking place as early as June 2013.<sup>6</sup> As we shall see, the U.S. is merely using Iran's nuclear program as a pretext to justify further military intervention in the region in a larger effort to redesign the landscape of the Middle East in order to secure the continued global hegemony of the U.S. empire.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. remained standing as the world's lone superpower. In 1991, President Bush declared the establishment of a “New World Order,” that is, a unipolar global system completely subjected to the imperial dictates of the United States and its junior partners.<sup>7</sup> Foreign policy experts and government policy think tanks immediately began mapping out blueprints for a new century of what can be called *trilateral*

*imperialism* (the U.S., Western Europe and Japan).<sup>8</sup>

To this end, the Bush I administration called for “the integration of the leading democracies into a U.S.-led system of collective security, and the prospects of expanding that system, (to) significantly enhance our international position and provide a crucial legacy for future peace.”<sup>9</sup> Within this collective framework, the U.S. would act to “preclude any hostile power from dominating a region critical to our interests, and also thereby to strengthen the barriers against the reemergence of a global threat to the interests of the United States and our allies.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, the first world should unite under the leadership of the United States to dominate and exploit the resources of the third world (cheap labor, oil, cobalt, etc.), while preventing any other power from emerging which could disrupt this neocolonial relationship.

At the time, Russia was deemed to be the only military power capable of potentially deterring U.S. imperialism. Thus, during the late 1990’s Council on Foreign Relations member and Clinton foreign policy advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski advised that Russia “ought to be isolated and picked apart” in order to extend “America’s influence in the Caucasus region and Central Asia,” both formerly under Russian control.<sup>11</sup> In doing so, the U.S could secure its domination over Eurasia, long deemed to be the strategic “heartland” of global power.<sup>12</sup> The NATO-led “humanitarian intervention” in the former Yugoslavia during the late 1990’s must be understood in this light.

The Middle East has long been assigned a very narrow role within the imperialist world system, being seen as “a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history.”<sup>13</sup> This is of course only because of the regions’ massive natural gas and oil reserves, which the U.S. considers to be vital to its national interests. U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East in the post-war period has been geared towards three main objectives: 1) securing and maintaining “an open door” for Western companies to the regions vast oil and gas reserves; 2) maintaining a “closed door” for potential rival powers (i.e., Russia and China) to Middle Eastern oil; and 3) preventing Middle Eastern “radical and nationalist regimes” from coming to power that might use their oil and gas resources for the “immediate improvement in the low living standards of the masses” and development for domestic needs.<sup>14</sup>

In the bipolar world of the Cold War, the Soviet Union was able to counter U.S. ambitions in the Middle East, supporting various secular nationalist regimes relatively hostile towards U.S. imperialism. After the collapse of the USSR and the subsequent isolation of Russia however, the U.S. was in a position to fundamentally alter the political map of the Middle East so as to “ensure that the enormous profits of the energy system flow primarily to the United States, its British client, and their energy corporations, not to the people of the region” or potential rival powers.<sup>15</sup> It is in this light that we must view the recent wave of “humanitarian interventions” conducted by the U.S. and NATO in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the current confrontation with Iran.

In 2000, the Project for a New American Century published a report entitled “Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century,” which was extended and adopted as official national security policy in 2005. Drawing on the themes of the first Bush administration and Brzezinski, the report recommends that U.S. military forces

become “strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States.”<sup>16</sup> As noted above, there was nothing new in this goal of American hegemony per se, but what was new was the emphasis placed on “transforming” the political landscape of the Middle East. Due to the rise of Islamic terrorism and the stubborn existence of “rogue states,” the “stability” of the Middle East, North Africa, and their oil reserves were deemed to be essential objectives of U.S. national security and foreign policy.

Using the 9/11 terrorist attacks as a pretext for this grand imperial project, the Bush administration outlined a list of seven “rogue states” targeted for regime change in order to secure de facto U.S. control over global oil supplies. Those seven countries were Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Iran.<sup>17</sup> Of course, Iraq was invaded, occupied and democratized by the U.S. in 2003. The threat of Hezbollah in Lebanon has been satisfactorily neutralized as a result of Israel’s 2006 invasion, the Jamahariya government of Libya was utterly destroyed by NATO and Al Qaeda in 2011, the Assad regime of Syria is on the verge of collapse today as it is under attack from NATO and its Islamic mercenary forces, while there are ongoing covert military operations being conducted against Somalia and the Sudan. Only Iran remains intact as a nation-state out of the seven countries targeted by the U.S. for regime change.

The current U.S. propaganda campaign would have us believe that the U.S. is targeting Iran because it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons with which it will destroy Israel. As we have seen however, U.S. intelligence – that is, the agencies responsible for obtaining such information – does not have strong evidence to prove that Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons. Further, in its assessment, Iran’s military strategy is not geared towards aggression or the offensive, but strictly deterrence and defense. Therefore, there must be some other reasons why the U.S. is gearing up for war against Iran.

In light of U.S. policy objectives to dominate global oil supplies and to subvert or overthrow “nationalist regimes” that seek to use their natural resources to benefit their domestic populations or to promote independent development, it should be fairly obvious that Iran is a target because its oil is nationalized and it pursues a program of independent development. Indeed, when Iran first nationalized its oil in 1953 under Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, the CIA and British MI6 quickly organized a coup d’état to overthrow Mosaddegh and reprivatize Iranian oil.<sup>18</sup> The oil industry wasn’t nationalized again until the 1979 Islamic revolution, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, which quickly set Iran on a path of independent nationalist development.

Also of grave concern to the U.S. is Iran’s growing commercial and economic relations with Russia and China. Iran exports 22% of its oil exports to China,<sup>19</sup> while it has cultivated a strong economic relationship with Russia on various fronts, especially in military equipment and nuclear infrastructure.<sup>20</sup> The Iranian regime’s independence from Washington has afforded Russia and China a foot in the door of the Middle East, which hinders the ability of the U.S. to completely dominate the region and prevent the rise of potential rival hegemon in the world system, perhaps the greatest threat posed by Iran.

Iran itself is deemed as a threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East, as it is devoted to “countering U.S. influence” and becoming a regional hegemon.<sup>21</sup> To this end, Iran has been

fostering political, economic and security ties with other actors in the region, appealing to Islamic solidarity and resistance to imperialism. Iran has become influential in both Iraq and Afghanistan, undermining U.S. objectives in those countries, and has maintained its support for the Assad regime in Syria, thwarting NATO's efforts there.<sup>22</sup> All of these factors make Iran a formidable obstacle to U.S. objectives in the Middle East, halting Washington's ability to totally redesign the political landscape of the region.

Iran also gives financial and military support to various politico-military organizations in the region. As the U.S. considers many of these organizations "terrorists", Iran is then a "state sponsor of terrorism" for supporting them. Most of its support is channeled to Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Both of these groups are opposed to the Zionist colonization of Palestine and to U.S. imperialism in the region more generally. Through Hezbollah and Hamas, Iran is able to exert its influence in the Middle East, creating political "destabilization" in Lebanon and Palestine.<sup>23</sup> The continued existence of such armed groups is considered a threat to U.S. objectives in the region and is another main reason why the U.S. is seeking to attack Iran.

When we place the current threats towards Iran in their proper geopolitical and historical context, it becomes clear that Iran's nuclear program is not the real reason why the U.S. is gearing up to attack it. In fact, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the alleged threat posed by Iran's nuclear program is merely a propaganda fabrication designed to garner popular support for the imminent invasion of Iran, similar to the lie that Saddam Hussein possessed "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq. In truth, Iran was targeted for regime change at least ten years ago, but because of its resistance to the "Washington Consensus," its economic nationalism, its growing commercial and economic ties to Russia and China, its potential to become a regional hegemon, and its support of politico-military organizations opposed to the U.S. and Israel, not because of its nuclear program.

The drums of war are now beating in America as Washington prepares to launch the final phase of its grand strategy to remake the Middle East. This plan is merely one component of a much larger plan to maintain the world system of trilateral imperialism. In order to maintain the global supremacy of the West, the U.S. and its junior partners are determined to prevent the rise of Russia and China to hegemonic status. Thus, an attack on Iran will surely be viewed as an indirect attack on both Russia and China. A war on Iran may very well quickly escalate into a global military conflagration, consuming other states in the region, as well as Russia and China. To prevent such a scenario from unfolding, academics and intellectuals must dispel the propaganda about Iran's nuclear program and expose the imperialist ambitions behind the U.S. government's agenda to the American people.

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## Notes

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