

The Iran Threat in the Age of Real-Axis-of-Evil Expansion

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It is intriguing to see how whoever the United States and Israel find interfering with their imperial or dispossession plans is quickly demonized and becomes a threat and target for that Real-Axis-of-Evil (RAE), and hence their NATO allies and, with less intensity, much of the rest of the “international community” (IC, meaning ruling elites, not ordinary citizens). If and when the need arises, any bit of news that is damaging to the targeted state will be fed into the demonization process — and in the marvelous propaganda system of the West, the grossest distortions will be swallowed and regurgitated without much guilt or apology, even upon the exposure of exceptional gullibility and dishonesty.² The dishonesty, gullibility, double standard, and hypocrisy are handled with an aplomb that Pravda and Izvestia could never muster in the Soviet era.

Thus, Iran is a threat, for one thing, because it has relations with the Iraqi Shiites, has supported them in the struggle within Iraq, and may even have supplied some of their factions with training and weapons.³ Of course Iran is a neighbor of Iraq, was invaded by it in 1980, with generous U.S. help provided to then-ally Saddam Hussein, and Iran obviously has an important political stake in the outcome of any struggle for power in Iraq. But only the United States has a right to invade and fight in Iraq and provide arms to the Iraqis of its choice. As a superpower with dominant military capability, and unlimitedchutzpah, it has Aggression Rights, acknowledged by the IC, and the UN Security Council, who not only did nothing to oppose the 2003-2010 invasion-occupation of Iraq, but quickly sanctioned the U.S. right to manage the occupation, in contrast with its indignant vote and action to force the Iraqi eviction from invaded and occupied Kuwait in 1990. This is the imperial double standard in action, and Iran, trying to interfere in Iraq, despite the IC and Council’s approval of the U.S. aggression and conquest, is clearly out of order. The aggressor may have made false or inflated accusations about Iranian interference, partly to cover over its own aggression-resistance problems, but also to prepare the ground for its next planned aggression, that against Iran itself. This is not discussible in the establishment U.S. media.

Iran is also a threat because it is hostile to Israel, objects to what Israel has been doing in Palestine and Lebanon, and is a local power rival to Israel. But Israel, like its patron, has Aggression Rights, and is free to invade Lebanon, as it did on a massive scale in 1982 and 2006, without penalty. And it has ethnic cleansing and even slow-motion genocide rights, which it has been exercising in Palestine for many years, with U.S. and EU support. During its last few days in Lebanon in 2006 before its final withdrawal, Israel dropped a million cluster bombs in the countryside in an act of state terrorism and crime against humanity that would have produced huge outrage and possibly sanctions if carried out by a state that was not a U.S. client. The same is true of its assault on the Gaza Palestinians in December of 2009, where this very civilian-oriented campaign against an essentially defenseless

population was openly supported by U.S. officials and hence presented no problem for Israel except for some damage to its image as “a light unto the Nations” (Anthony Lewis⁴).

Furthermore, Iran has given active support to Hezbollah in Lebanon and to Hamas in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, both “terrorist” organizations by the power rule of language usage;⁵ Israel and the United States only “retaliate” and engage in “counter-terror” in accord with this rule, firmly adhered to by the establishment U.S. media. Because of such support in Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories, Iran automatically qualifies as a “state sponsor of terrorism,” and its global profile as a “threat” rises for this reason as well. Yet Iran has not moved beyond its borders in our lifetimes, whereas the United States has regularly attacked and invaded Iran’s neighbors, sometimes on a massive scale, and the United States actively aided Iraq’s 1980 invasion of Iran, in addition to organizing the 1953 coup within Iran that brought into power an amenable client, the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.⁶ The United States has even been engaging in and sponsoring terrorist attacks on Iran — at the same time as it complains about Iran’s interference in Iraq — which, with consistent and unpoliticized word usage, would qualify the United States itself as a state sponsor of terrorism.⁷ But this is all irrelevant (and largely suppressed) history for the Western media guardians of power — the immediate point of concern is Iran’s support of two officially-designated “terrorist” organizations, both of which weaken the effectiveness of Israel’s Aggression Rights and Western domination of this region.

Most frightening, Iran has a nuclear program, which it is implementing within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).⁸ This fright comes primarily from the United States and Israel, both major nuclear weapons states. Given their own extensive and sophisticated nuclear weapons capability, the RAE’s fright over the threat of Iran’s nuclear “ambitions” is profoundly dishonest and hypocritical, and carries the imperial double standard to another impressive peak. Contrary to rhetoric about the “existential” threat that an Islamic bomb would pose to Israel and the West, the threat is not based on any genuine fear over Iran’s offensive, first-strike use of nuclear weapons (which would entail national suicide), but on the deterrent effect that Iran’s possession of nuclear weapons would exercise on the RAE’s capacity to engage in offensive military operations against Iran and the greater Middle East. The other important element in this cultivated fright is that the mythical “threat” alleged to be emerging in Iran can be exploited by the RAE and its allies as a rationale for politically destabilizing and possibly directly attacking Iran.

The further elements of fraud and hypocrisy in this contrived fright are numerous, but it must be recalled that each U.S. target is carefully and vigorously demonized as a prelude to attack, with the help of the IC, UN, UNSC, and Free Press. From tiny Guatemala (1950-1954) and Nicaragua (1979-1990) to Saddam’s “weapons of mass destruction” in 2002-2003, the demonization-lies-hysteria combination has never failed to do its job, making both hypocrisy and aggression workable. It never elicits laughter or contributes a lesson that interferes with the next round of the same process. The service being provided is too important for either learning or jokes.

It may be recalled that with the Shah of Iran in power, the United States actually encouraged this dictator to develop a nuclear capability, accepting the argument (now rejected) that Iran needed this additional energy source, and not worrying about any possible diversion of nuclear material from civilian to weapons development with a manageable client-dictator in power. Back in the mid-1970s, the Ford administration “endorsed Iranian plans to build a massive nuclear energy industry, but also worked hard to

complete a multibillion-dollar deal that would have given Tehran control of large quantities of plutonium and enriched uranium — the two pathways to a nuclear bomb,” the Washington Post recalled. “Ford’s team commended Iran’s decision to build a massive nuclear energy industry, noting in a declassified 1975 strategy paper that Tehran needed to ‘prepare against the time — about 15 years in the future — when Iranian oil production is expected to decline sharply’.”⁹

But the ouster of the Shah in early 1979 and his replacement by an unfriendly and independent Islamic Republic led quickly to a U.S.-Israeli concern over Iran’s nuclear capability and its supposed threat. Whereas then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger now says that he doesn’t “think the issue of proliferation ever came up” in the Ford administration’s talks with the Shah, Kissinger adds that “[Iran] was an allied country, and this was a commercial transaction. We didn’t address the question of them one day moving toward nuclear weapons.”¹⁰ The blatantly political basis for this transformation from support for the Shah’s nuclear capability to rejection of any rights to nuclear capability for the successor regime, even under the terms of the NPT, has escaped the West, aided of course by the demonization process (and in the earlier phase, by the portrayal of the Shah, whose torture chambers were notorious,¹¹ as a “modernizer”).

The history of the growth of the Iran threat (especially since 2003) has centered on Iran’s alleged quest for nuclear weapons and Iran’s noncompliance with its obligations as a party to the NPT.

But the fact of the matter is that Iran did join the NPT (as have all states in the Middle East but one) and has for many years subjected itself to inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), while Israel not only has never joined the NPT, it has built up a substantial nuclear weapons arsenal with the material and diplomatic aid of the United States and other Western powers. And along with supporting Israel’s nuclear arms buildup, the United States allowed its client Pakistan to develop nuclear weapons and recently cooperated with India in nuclear agreements that seriously violated the principles of the NPT. As The Hindu’s Siddharth Varadarajan wrote in July 2005, shortly after the first joint statement on the U.S.-India nuclear deal was made at the White House by President George Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh:

The non-proliferation lobby argues that President Bush’s decision to sell nuclear technology and equipment to India will encourage other countries to go down the nuclear path. Not so say the advocates. Mr. Tellis — a former RAND Corporation analyst who served as an advisor to Robert Blackwill when he was U.S. Ambassador to India — is most forthright. He acknowledges the contradiction between the two goals of U.S. foreign policy — building India up as a counter to China and upholding the non-proliferation regime — but says the circle can be squared. His solution: don’t jettison the regime “but, rather, selectively [apply] it in practice.” In other words, different countries should be treated differently “based on their friendship and value to the U.S.” With one stroke of the Presidential pen, India has become something more than a “major non-NATO ally” of the U.S. It has joined the Free World. It has gone from being a victim of nuclear discrimination to a beneficiary. India is not alone. Israel is already there to give it company.¹²

Pakistan also gives it company, but clearly not Iraq, Iran, or North Korea — without a suitable regime change.

Like Iran, the United States signed the NPT in 1968, and both states deposited their

ratification of the NPT with the United Nations by the date it entered into force. But as one of the five declared nuclear weapon states-parties to the NPT (together with the Soviet Union [Russian Federation], Britain, France, and China), the United States undertook to “pursue negotiations in good faith . . . on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control,” which of course it has not done — and in fact the United States keeps refining its nuclear weapons and, along with its many-headed NATO puppet, has made nukes a continuing integral part of its “defense” planning.¹³ Because of its enormous buildup of nuclear overkill in past years (peaking in the mid-1980s), U.S. officials have been able to negotiate cuts in active nuclear weapons as well as phase out obsolete weapons, but at this point it maintains an estimated 3,000 operational nuclear weapons and with a number of these on constant alert. Under the Obama administration, funding for nuclear weapons has increased, and whether to claim first-strike rights for the United States is alleged to be one of the points under discussion in finalizing his 2010 Nuclear Posture Review.¹⁴ But whether or not the forthcoming NPR literally affirms U.S. first-strike rights, U.S. planners have long presumed such a right; for example, in Clinton’s *Essentials of Postwar Deterrence* (1995), we read that “it is undesirable to adopt declaratory policies such as ‘no first use’ which serve to specifically limit U.S. nuclear deterrence goals without providing equitable returns,” and that “We must be ambiguous about details of our response (or preemption) if what we value is threatened, but it must be clear that our actions would have terrible consequences.”¹⁵ Furthermore, the continued enlargement of NATO and the “out-of-area” rights and responsibilities that it asserts for itself,¹⁶ the expansion of the wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the aggressive placement of both missile and anti-missile systems near Russia and China and the encirclement and systematic provocations of them both, which have caused Russia to depend more on nuclear weapons, have increased armaments and tensions across the globe.¹⁷

But of all the states-parties to the NPT with nuclear programs, Iran by far is under the closest scrutiny for adherence to all the rules of an NPT signer, and the imperial rights double standard is accepted and here rigorously enforced by the IC, UN, UNSC, and establishment media. According to the IAEA’s most recent Annual Report (2008), as of December 31, 2008, Iran’s Bushehr nuclear power plant, five different nuclear research reactors (at Esfahan, Arak, and Tehran), two uranium conversion plants (Esfahan), two fuel fabrication plants (Esfahan), a reprocessing plant in Tehran, two nuclear enrichment plants (Natanz), and a nuclear storage facility in Karaj were under IAEA safeguards;¹⁸ to this list we now may add the Fordow fuel enrichment plant near Qom, which Iran declared to the IAEA in September 2009, just days before this formal declaration was upstaged by the heads of state of the U.S., U.K., and France at a Group of 20 summit in Pittsburgh.¹⁹ The point is, the most heavily inspected nuclear program of the past decade most certainly is Iran’s, and only Iraq’s old and effectively liquidated nuclear program that had been inspected jointly by UNSCOM and the IAEA during the 1990s was more heavily inspected than is Iran’s.²⁰ Indeed, of the 48 written reports the IAEA has devoted to its member-states’ nuclear programs since January 2003 (through February 2010), it devoted 58% of them (28 in all) to Iran’s implementation of its NPT-related obligations, while the IAEA also devoted six to Syria, five to Libya, three to North Korea, three to South Korea, two to Iraq, and one to Egypt.²¹ During the same period, the IAEA thus devoted only 7% of its written reports to the nuclear programs of states that are allied with the United States — a remarkable testament to the IAEA’s U.S.- and NATO-dominated politicization, which appears to have worsened with the December 1, 2009 succession in its Director General, with Egypt’s Mohamed ElBaradei unable to secure a third term, and his replacement by Japan’s Yukiya

Amano.

The U.S. government initiated a high-profile series of allegations about Iran's nuclear program in May of 2003, and with few interruptions, this series of allegations has continued straight through to the present. Because it was the U.S. government that accused Iran of violating its NPT obligations, these allegations have been major news stories. Although the IAEA has produced 28 written reports since June 2003, all of which in one form or another have "continue[d] to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran,"²² the Agency has never resolved what it variously calls the "outstanding questions" and "outstanding issues" still facing it, political terms for any allegation the U.S. government throws at Iran, but all of which neatly can be summed up by the IAEA's inability to "provide credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran,"²³ and to "confirm that all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful activities."²⁴

In short, the IAEA's focus on Iran is the result of the sheer power of the United States on the international stage, and the fact that once the U.S. latched onto any signs of imperfect cooperation by Iran, and lobbied the IAEA as well as other states about the Iranian "threat," the IAEA and "international community" accepted the seriousness of this threat. Given the impossibility of proving a negative — during her statement to the Security Council on Iran's nuclear program, U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice quoted the appropriate Alice-in-Wonderland phrase from the most recent IAEA report: the "IAEA cannot confirm that 'all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful activities'"²⁵ — Iran can be alleged guilty by its pursuer for years, with the IAEA always unable to definitively disprove or support U.S. claims and quest.

There is a striking similarity between the U.S.'s ability to use the IAEA these past seven years for its aggressive purposes against Iran, and its use of the inspections-regime of both the IAEA and the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspections Commission (UNMOVIC) during the run-up to the U.S. and U.K. war of aggression against Iraq in March 2003.²⁶ In the earlier case, however, the United States and Britain eventually discarded the IAEA and UNMOVIC, because of impatience with their failure to find Iraq's non-existent "weapons of mass destruction," a mission that never could have borne fruit. But once again, power and the cooperation of establishment media have assured that there won't be any undue dwelling on the similarity of abusive and dishonest manipulation of a UN agency. Also, U.S. power is so great that even Russia and China tag along with this pretense of honest concern over inspections and NPT rules, dragging their feet in rejecting or approving sanctions on Iran, but still acknowledging Iran's failure to do the U.S.'s and the IAEA's bidding, and calling for patience instead of denouncing the blatant double standard, hypocrisy, and obvious push toward aggression.

Iran's June 2009 presidential election has to be looked at in the same light. There is no doubt that there are serious flaws in Iran's electoral process, and that there are real internal grievances that justify public protests. But there can also be little doubt that the huge global focus on Iran's electoral flaws and its "stolen election," and on the protests and violent repression of dissidents within Iran, runs parallel with the campaign of regime change that shows itself in the IAEA's multi-year focus on Iran's nuclear program, the open destabilization effort, the ensuing sanctions, and U.S. and Israeli threats of military action against Iran. In the great metropolitan centers of the West, no comparable levels of indignant media focus, displays of international solidarity, and demands for states to respect the democratic rights of their citizens were directed towards the violent repression of protesters following the coup d'état and "demonstration election" in Honduras last year, or towards the "demonstration elections" in U.S.-occupied Afghanistan (which took the

occupier two tries rather than one before it got the outcome it sought²⁷), or towards the March 7 parliamentary election in U.S.-occupied Iraq, either.²⁸ Indeed, a good case can be made that Iran's 2009 presidential election was more credible and more closely in line with majority desires than those in Honduras and Afghanistan, as well as Iraq's parliamentary election this year.²⁹

As Table 1 underscores, the U.S. and U.S.-allies' focus on Iran's nuclear program has borne tremendous fruit throughout much of the past decade.

Table 1: Differential Media Focus on Ten Nuclear Programs for the Seven-Year Period, January 1, 2003 - December 31, 2009 ³⁰

Wire Services and Newspapers

New York Times

Egypt

245

1

India

6,237

14

Iran

36,778

276

Iraq

4,265

72

Israel

323

3

North Korea

4,008

13

South Korea

775

0

Libya

632

8

Pakistan

626

0

Syria

106

4

What these data show is that the United States defines what constitutes a “threat” to international peace and security, and as it demonizes the entity alleged to pose the “threat” the establishment media fall into line, help inflame passions about the “threat,” and thus facilitate U.S. policy goals towards it, irrespective of the validity or the direction of any real threat. Thus, Israel may have a substantial nuclear arsenal and may have engaged in cross-border wars and threatened to attack Iran, and Iran may have no nuclear weapons, not engage in cross-border wars, and not threaten to attack the United States or Israel, but the ratio of media attention paid to Iran’s and Israel’s nuclear programs for the seven-year period we studied was 92-to-1 in the New York Times, and 114-to-1 in a very large sample of wire services and newspapers.

But these numbers actually understate the degree of bias as they do not take into account placement, tone, and honesty. Just considering the last, we may note the front-page article in the February 19, 2010 New York Times by David E. Sanger and William J. Broad titled [“Inspectors Say Iran Worked on Warhead”](#)³¹ — an article in the same class as Michael R. Gordon and Judith Miller’s notorious [“U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Parts”](#) (Sept. 8, 2002), and, further back, Sidney Gruson’s 1953 classic [“How Communists Won Control of Guatemala”](#) (March 1, 1953).³² In fact, nowhere in the IAEA’s February 18 report ([GOV/2010/10](#)) does the IAEA assert that “Iran worked on a warhead,” only that “information available to the Agency . . . raises concerns about the possible existence in Iran of past or current undisclosed activities related to the development of a nuclear payload for a missile” (para. 41), and that the Agency has “sought clarification” from Iran as to “whether [certain] engineering design and computer modeling studies aimed at producing a new design for the payload chamber of a missile were for a nuclear payload” (para. 42).³³ A second Sanger-Broad lie is that the IAEA’s specific mention on February 18 of the “possible existence” of “undisclosed” work on a “nuclear payload” constituted the “first time” the IAEA had mentioned such activities during its seven-year focus on Iran. In fact, not only did the IAEA start using the phrase “possible military dimension” in its published reports on Iran as early as February 2008 ([GOV/2008/4](#), para. 54.³⁴), and not only has the IAEA used this phrase in every one of its eight reports since, but the latest report has nothing new to say at all.

Instead, under the new General Director Yukiya Amano, the IAEA merely rephrased and re-emphasized past allegations to make it easier for establishment reporters to single out specific charges and inflame passions over them — as when Sanger-Broad predicted this report will “accelerate Iran’s confrontation with the United States and other Western countries” — and help the push towards war, as the Times also did in dealing with Iraq in 2002-2003, Guatemala in 1953-1954, and other U.S. targets. As Peter Casey asks in his analysis of Sanger-Broad’s “transparently dishonest” article: “Is America’s ‘paper of record’ consciously misrepresenting facts to ‘accelerate confrontation’ between Iran and the West?”³⁵ The clear answer is: Yes.

The IAEA did not officially release its February 18 assessment until March 3. This means that the earliest news reports about the content of the document were based on leaked copies, excerpts handed-out by motivated leakers, word-of-mouth, and one reporter repeating what others were reporting. We find it enlightening, therefore, that the most often-quoted and paraphrased passage from the IAEA document, referring to the “possible existence in Iran of past or current undisclosed activities related to the development of a nuclear payload for a missile” (para. 41), turned up as immediately and as widely as it did.³⁶ What it shows is that not only the eyes of the New York Times’s ever-reliable Sanger and Broad were successfully trained on this phrase and the frightening (and misleading) allegation that it expresses — but the eyes of a preponderance of journalists around the world.³⁷ As in the buildup to the 2003 Iraq invasion, the media are partners of the war-makers.

Concluding Note

The real threat that Iran poses to the United States and Israel is that of a local rival to Israel which might hamper Israel’s dispossession and expansion program in the Palestinian Territories, as well as U.S. domination of this region of the world. From a global viewpoint, the real threat is that Iran’s independence and refusal to grovel might lead to a war of aggression against it by Israel and/or the United States, and such a war could in turn spark an even larger conflagration. However, the nature of this latter threat is such that it can not be addressed by the “international community,” which consistently defers to the power and demands of the Real Axis-of-Evil, as do the United Nations, the Security Council, and the IAEA.

That Iran poses an offensive threat to Israel or the United States is obviously a sick joke. Both Israel and the United States possess operational nuclear weapons and superior conventional forces — and while they can attack Iran without facing unbearable retaliation, Iran cannot do the same and couldn’t even do so if it developed a small arsenal of nuclear weapons.

But if Iran did possess a small nuclear arsenal, it would be better able to defend itself, and Israel and the United States would have to be act more cautiously — their own regular cross-border attacks would have to be considered more carefully, and might be effectively deterred. Their longstanding domination of the Middle East, with its “stupendous source of strategic power, one of the greatest material prizes in world history,”³⁸ would be threatened. Thus Iran has no right of self-defense, let alone deterrence.

In short, while nuclear-armed Israel and its patron commit aggression, dispossess, and threaten more of the same, they have managed to transform nuclear-weapons-free Iran into

the “threat” that the UN and IC worry about. The IAEA has never established that Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons,³⁹ and Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei continues to reject the acquisition and use of nuclear weapons as contrary to the religious beliefs of the Islamic Republic.⁴⁰ Yet the mere possibility that Iran might switch its nuclear program to a military dimension, along with a lot of rhetorical heat from the West, have provided the basis for organizing a sanctions regime and potential U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran. It has even provided a rationale for the installation of missile and anti-missile systems on the periphery of Russia and China, allegedly to counter the Iran menace! This is the triumph of chutzpah once again, as the Real Axis-of-Evil clears the ground for its ongoing programs of local dispossession and global expansion.

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Notes

1 Also see Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, [“Chutzpah, Inc.: ‘The Brave People of Iran’ \(versus the Disappeared People of Palestine, Honduras, Afghanistan, Etc.\)”](#) MRZine, February 20, 2010.

2 In the arena of media-service to imperial power, there are many competitors to wear the crown of the most dishonest and gullible. But it would be hard to top the U.S. and British media’s performance on Iraq’s alleged “weapons of mass destruction” during the U.S. and U.K. buildup to their March 2003 aggression against Iraq. For one very fine critique of this process, see Charles Lewis and Mark Reading-Smith, [Iraq: The War Card. Orchestrated Deception on the Path to War](#), Center for Public Integrity and the Fund for Independence in Journalism, January 2008. In the immortal words of the so-called [“secret Downing Street memo”](#) drafted after a meeting of some of Tony Blair’s top advisors on July 23, 2002 (Sunday Times, May 1, 2005): “C reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy. The NSC had no patience with the UN route, and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime’s record. There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action.” For three examples where the “intelligence and facts” were in fact “fixed around the policy” of invading Iraq, see [Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction — The assessment of the British Government](#), Office of the British Prime Minister, September, 2002; [Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Program](#), Director of Central Intelligence, United States, October, 2002; and [“U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell Addresses the UN Security Council,”](#) White House Office of the Press Secretary, February 5, 2003.

3 See, e.g., Qassim Abdul-Zahra, [“Anti-American Bloc Gains Ground ahead of Iraq Vote,”](#) Associated Press, February 25, 2010.

4 Anthony Lewis, [“A Light Unto the Nations,”](#) New York Times, September 14, 1999, echoing what Lewis alleged U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis and “other early Zionists saw for a Jewish state,” as well as [Isaiah 42:6](#): “a light for the Gentiles.”

5 See [“Foreign Terrorist Organizations ,”](#) Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, January 19, 2010. Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) is No. 13 on the list; Hezbollah (the Party of God) is No. 16.

6 See Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne, Eds., [Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran](#) (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004).

7 Seymour M. Hersh has written extensively about U.S. campaigns of destabilization as well as terrorism inside Iran. See, e.g., Hersh’s [“Preparing the Battlefield: The Bush Administration Steps Up Its Secret Moves against Iran,”](#) New Yorker, July 7, 2008. It is our opinion that these campaigns have continued under the Obama administration.

8 See [Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons](#), which was adopted on June 12, 1968, and entered into force on March 5, 1970.

9 Dafna Linzer, [“Past Arguments Don’t Square with Current Iran Policy,”](#) Washington Post, March 27, 2005, citing the Ford administration’s “National Security Decision Memorandum 292, titled ‘U.S.-Iran Nuclear Cooperation’, which laid out the administration’s negotiating strategy for the sale of nuclear energy equipment projected to bring U.S. corporations more than \$6 billion in revenue. At the time, Iran was pumping as much as 6 million barrels of oil a day, compared with an average of about 4 million barrels daily today.”

10 Linzer, [“Past Arguments Don’t Square with Current Iran Policy.”](#) Also see the treatment of the U.S. reversal on Iran’s nuclear program in Noam Chomsky, [Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy](#) (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), Ch. 2, “Outlaw States,” esp. pp. 69-78. As Chomsky comments: “Washington’s charges about an Iranian nuclear weapons program may, for once, be accurate. As many analysts have observed, it would be remarkable if they were not. Reiterating the conclusion that the invasion of Iraq, as widely predicted, increased the threat of nuclear proliferation, Israeli military historian Martin van Creveld writes that ‘the world has witnessed how the United States attacked Iraq for, as it turned out, no reason at all. Had the Iranians not tried to build nuclear weapons, they would be crazy’. Washington has gone out of its way to instruct Iran on the need for a powerful deterrent, not only by invading Iraq, but also by strengthening the offensive forces of its Israeli client, which already has hundreds of nuclear weapons as well as air and armored forces larger and more advanced than any NATO power other than the United States” (p. 73). But, as Chomsky continues (writing in 2006): “It is likely that Washington’s saber rattling is not a sign of impending war. It would not make much sense to signal an attack years in advance. The purpose may be to provoke the Iranian leadership to adopt more repressive policies. Such policies could foment internal disorder, perhaps weakening Iran enough so that the United States might hazard military action. They would also contribute to Washington’s efforts to pressure allies to join in isolating Iran” (p. 74) — a campaign to which the in-all-probability fraudulent “stolen election” response among the Western powers to Iran’s June 12, 2009 presidential election has contributed most decisively. (See Herman and Peterson, [“Chutzpah, Inc.: ‘The Brave People of Iran’ \(versus the Disappeared People of Palestine, Honduras, Afghanistan, Etc.\)”](#))

11 As William Blum has written: “The notorious Iranian secret police, SAVAK, created under

the guidance of the CIA and Israel, spread its tentacles all over the world to punish Iranian dissidents. According to a former CIA analyst on Iran, SAVAK was instructed in torture techniques by the [CIA]. Amnesty International summed up the situation in 1976 by noting that Iran had the 'highest rate of death penalties in the world, no valid system of civilian courts and a history of torture which is beyond belief. No country in the world has a worse record in human rights than Iran.' See William Blum, [Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II](#) (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, Rev. Ed., 1995), p. 72.

12 Siddharth Varadarajan, ["The Truth behind the Indo-U.S. Nuclear Deal,"](#) The Hindu, July 29, 2005.

13 At a recent speech in Warsaw, Poland, devoted to NATO's "Strategic Concept," NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated that NATO needs "to decide what kind of capabilities will ensure that no one ever thinks that an attack against a NATO member country can be successful. For our deterrence to remain credible, I firmly believe it must continue to be based on a mix of conventional and nuclear capabilities. And our new Strategic Concept should affirm that" (["Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen,"](#) Warsaw, Poland, March 12, 2010.) On the question of nuclear weapons, this speech reiterated NATO's current "Strategic Concept," adopted in Washington at NATO's 50th anniversary summit in April 1999. Therein, we read: "Nuclear weapons make a unique contribution in rendering the risks of aggression against the Alliance incalculable and unacceptable. Thus, they remain essential to preserve peace" ([The Alliance's Strategic Concept](#), North Atlantic Council, Washington, D.C., April 23-24, 1999, para. 46). Also see the webpage that NATO devotes to its ["Strategic Concept."](#)

14 See David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker, ["White House Is Rethinking Nuclear Policy,"](#) New York Times, March 1, 2010; and Mary Beth Sheridan and Walter Pincus, ["Obama Must Decide Degree to Which U.S. Swears Off Nuclear Weapons,"](#) Washington Post, March 6, 2010.

15 See [Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence](#), U.S. Strategic Command, 1995 (as posted to the website of the Nautilus Institute). (For the [PDF version](#) of the same document.) This remarkable testament to nuclear madness included many memorable passages, as when it reminded the world: "Because of the value that comes from the ambiguity of what the U.S. may do to an adversary if the acts we seek to deter are carried out, it hurts to portray ourselves as too fully rational and cool-headed. The fact that some elements may appear to be potentially 'out of control' can be beneficial to creating and reinforcing fears and doubts in the minds of an adversary's decision makers. This essential sense of fear is the working force of deterrence. That the US may become irrational and vindictive if its vital interests are attacked should be part of the national persona we project to all adversaries." And in this document's last five paragraphs, we read:

Just as nuclear weapons are our most potent tool of deterrence, nevertheless they are blunt weapons of destruction and thus are likely always to be our weapons of last resort.

Although we are not likely to use them in less than matters of the greatest national importance, or in less than extreme circumstances, nuclear weapons always cast a shadow over any crisis or conflict in which the US is engaged. Thus, deterrence through the threat of use of nuclear weapons will continue to be our top military strategy.

Unlike [chemical weapons] or [biological weapons], the extreme destruction from a nuclear

explosion is immediate, with few if any palliatives available to reduce its effects. It is no wonder then that the use of nuclear weapons has become elevated to the highest level of threat that is possible. The U.S. has now eschewed the use of either chemical or biological weapons and is seeking the complete elimination of such weapons by all nations through the [chemical and biological weapons conventions], but we would consider the complete elimination of our nuclear weapons only in the context of complete and general disarmament. Thus, since we believe it is impossible to “uninvent” nuclear weapons or to prevent the clandestine manufacture of some number of them, nuclear weapons seem destined to be the centerpiece of U.S. strategic deterrence for the foreseeable [sic] future.

In the context of non-Russian states, the penalty for using Weapons of Mass Destruction should not be just military defeat, but the threat of even worse consequences. President Clinton’s statement of July 11, 1994, about North Korea gave some of the flavor of these “other consequences” when he said: “. . .it is pointless for them to develop nuclear weapons. Because if they ever use them it would be the end of their country.” Similarly, President Bush’s statement to Saddam Hussein on January 13, 1991, also telegraphed greater consequences: “You and your country will pay a terrible price if you order unconscionable acts of this sort [the use of chemical or biological weapons or terrorist acts against the coalition nations].” Should we ever fail to deter such an aggressor, we must make good on our deterrent statement in such a convincing way that the message to others immediately discernible is to bolster deterrence thereafter.

We should always attempt to respond to any such breaches of deterrence in ways that minimize the numbers of civilian casualties. Particularly when dealing with the less than nation-threatening aggression which is likely to characterize WMD conflicts with other than Russia, the U.S. does not require the “ultimate deterrent” — that a nation’s citizens must pay with their lives for failure to stop their national leaders from undertaking aggression. A capability to create a fear of “national extinction” (as discussed above) by denying their leaders the ability to project power thereafter, but without having to inflict massive civilian casualties, will not only galvanize the deterrence convictions of the U.S. leadership, but will simultaneously help to prevent misinterpretation on the part of the enemy as to whether the U.S. would be willing to act.

16 See [The Alliance’s Strategic Concept](#), North Atlantic Council, Washington D.C., April 23-24, 1999, esp. paras. 1, 42, 48, 49, 52, and 53.

17 See, e.g., Rick Rozoff, [“Bases, Missiles, Wars: U.S. Consolidates Global Military Network,”](#) Stop NATO, January 26, 2010; Rick Rozoff, [“U.S. Tightens Missile Shield Encirclement of China and Russia,”](#) Stop NATO, March 4, 2010; and Rick Rozoff, [“Rasmussen in Poland: Expeditionary NATO, Missile Shield and Nuclear Weapons,”](#) Stop NATO, March 14, 2010.

18 [Annual Report 2008 \(GC\(53\)/7\)](#), IAEA, 2009; see Table A23, [“Facilities under Agency Safeguards or Containing Safeguarded Material on 31 December 2008,”](#) here pp. 18-33.

19 See [“Statements by Obama, Brown and Sarkozy,”](#) New York Times, September 26, 2009.

20 UN Security Council Resolution 687 ([S/RES/687](#) (April 3, 1991), Sect. C, para. 7-14) created the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM), and empowered both UNSCOM and the IAEA to destroy Iraq’s chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs, as well as Iraq’s ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 k.

- 21 We'd like to thank the IAEA's Press Office for providing us with these figures.
- 22 See [Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement...in the Islamic Republic of Iran \(GOV/2010/10\)](#), IAEA, February 18, 2010, para. 46.
- 23 See [Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement . . . in the Islamic Republic of Iran \(GOV/209/74\)](#), IAEA, November 16, 2009, para. 36.
- 24 See [GOV/2010/10](#), para. 46.
- 25 ["Remarks by Ambassador Susan E. Rice . . . on Iran and the 1737 Committee ,"](#) United States Mission to the United Nations, New York, USA, March 4, 2010.
- 26 UN Security Council Resolution 1284 ([S/RES/1284](#) (December 17, 1999)) created the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspections Commission (UNMOVIC), and empowered it to ensure Iraq's continued compliance with Resolution 687. (See n. 20, above.)
- 27 For a brief narrative of the 2009 U.S. electoral scam in Afghanistan (though the author does not use such terminology), see Kenneth Katzman, [Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance](#), Congressional Research Service, January 11, 2010, pp. 22-25. As Katzman describes it: "The various pre-runoff scenarios were mooted on November 1, 2009, when Dr. [Abdullah] Abdullah, addressing hundreds of supporters at Kabul University, said he would not compete in the runoff. . . . On November 2, 2009, the [Independent Electoral Commission] issued a statement saying that, by consensus, the body had determined that [Hamid] Karzai, being the only candidate remaining in a two-person runoff, should be declared the winner and the second round not held. The United States, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon (visiting Kabul), and several governments congratulated Karzai on the victory. U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Clinton, praised Dr. Abdullah for his relatively moderate speech announcing his pullout, in particular his refusal to call for demonstrations or violence by his supporters, and called on him to remain involved in Afghan politics. Dr. Abdullah denied that his pullout was part of any 'deal' with Karzai for a role for his supporters in the next government. Amid U.S. and international calls for Karzai to choose his next cabinet based on competence, merit, and dedication to curbing corruption, Karzai was inaugurated on November 19, 2009, with Secretary of State Clinton in attendance" (p. 24).
- 28 This point also holds true on the Left (in the States and elsewhere), which focused indignantly on Iran in 2009, but at the same time virtually ignored Honduras, and failed to reject the "demonstration elections" in Afghanistan and Iraq on the elementary grounds that genuinely free elections cannot be held under conditions of foreign military occupation. (See Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, ["Riding the 'Green Wave' at the Campaign for Peace and Democracy and Beyond,"](#) MRZine, July 24, 2009.)
- 29 On Iran's June 12, 2009 presidential election, and the probability that, even if some fraud did occur, the official results were valid, see: [Results of a New Nationwide Public Opinion Survey of Iran before the June 12, 2009 Presidential Elections](#), (May 11 - 20), Terror Free Tomorrow, Center for Public Opinion, and New America Foundation, June, 2009; Ken Ballen and Patrick Doherty, ["The Iranian People Speak,"](#) Washington Post, June 15, 2009; Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann-Leverett, ["Ahmadinejad Won. Get Over It,"](#) New America Foundation, June 15, 2009; Reza Esfandiari and Yousef Bozorgmehr, [A Rejoinder to the Chatham House Report on Iran's 2009 Presidential Election Offering a New Analysis on the](#)

[Results](#) (Self-Published PDF), Summer, 2009; Steven Kull, [“Is Iran Pre-revolutionary?”](#) openDemocracy.net, November 23, 2009; Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann-Leverett, [“Another Iranian Revolution? Not Likely,”](#) New York Times, January 5, 2010; Steven Kull et al., [An Analysis of Multiple Polls of the Iranian Public](#), PIPA - WPO.org, February 3, 2010 (and the accompanying [Press Release](#)); Alvin Richman, [Post-Election Crackdown in Iran Has Had Limited Impact on the Minority Expressing Strong Opposition to the Regime](#), PIPA - WPO.org, February 18, 2010; Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, [“Chutzpah, Inc.: ‘The Brave People of Iran’ \(versus the Disappeared People of Palestine, Honduras, Afghanistan, Etc.\)”](#) MRZine, February 20, 2010; and, last, Eric A. Brill, [Did Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Steal the 2009 Iran Election?](#), Unpublished Manuscript, 2010.

30 Factiva database searches carried out under the “Wire” (twir) and “Newspapers: All” (tnwp) categories, and separately under the New York Times (nytf), on March 8, 2010, for the seven-year period January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2009. The exact search parameters are described below. We used the database-limiter not to exclude from our reported totals all items that also mentioned any one or more of the other search terms.

1a. rst=(twir or tnwp) and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Egypt and nuclear) not (India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 245

1b. rst=nytf and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Egypt and nuclear) not (India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 1

2a. rst=(twir or tnwp) and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (India and nuclear) not (Egypt or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 6,273

2b. rst=nytf and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (India and nuclear) not (Egypt or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 14

3a. rst=(twir or tnwp) and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Iran and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 36,778

3b. rst=nytf and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Iran and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 276

4a. rst=(twir or tnwp) and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Iraq and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 4,265

4b. rst=nytf and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Iraq and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 72

5a. rst=(twir or tnwp) and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Israel and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 323

5b. rst=nytf and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Israel and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 3

6a. rst=(twir or tnwp) and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (North Korea and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or South Korea or Libya or

Pakistan or Syria): 4,008

6b. rst=nytf and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (North Korea and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 13

7a. rst=(twir or tnwp) and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (South Korea and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 775

7b. rst=nytf and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (South Korea and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or Libya or Pakistan or Syria): 0

8a. rst=(twir or tnwp) and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Libya and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Pakistan or Syria): 632

8b. rst=nytf and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Libya and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Pakistan or Syria): 8

9a. rst=(twir or tnwp) and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Pakistan and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Syria): 626

9b. rst=nytf and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Pakistan and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Syria): 0

10a. rst=(twir or tnwp) and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Syria and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan): 106

10b. rst=nytf and (international atomic energy agency or iaea) and (Syria and nuclear) not (Egypt or India or Iran or Iraq or Israel or North Korea or South Korea or Libya or Pakistan): 4

31 David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, [“Inspectors Say Iran Worked on Warhead,”](#) New York Times, February 19, 2010.

32 See Michael R. Gordon and Judith Miller, [“U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Parts,”](#) New York Times, September 8, 2002; and Sidney Gruson, [“How Communists Won Control of Guatemala,”](#) New York Times, March 1, 1953.

33 See [GOV/2010/10](#), para. 41 and para. 42.

34 See [Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement . . . in the Islamic Republic of Iran \(GOV/2008/4\)](#), February 22, 2008, para. 54.

35 See Peter Casey, [“Read the IAEA Reports on Iran,”](#) AntiWar.com, March 1, 2010. Also see Robert Parry, [“U.S. Media Replays Iraq Fiasco on Iran,”](#) ConsortiumNews.com, February 18, 2010; Ray McGovern, [“New Grist for Hype on Iran,”](#) ConsortiumNews.com, February 21, 2010; Kaveh L. Afrasiabi, [“IAEA Douses Furor over Iran Report,”](#) Asia Times Online, February 24, 2010; and Paul McGeough, [“Mutually Assured Destruction,”](#) Sydney Morning Herald, March 6, 2010.

36 For examples of wire-service and print-media reports that singled-out the phrase “nuclear payload for a missile” (or that paraphrased something very close to it without quoting it) during the first 48 hours after the IAEA’s February 18 report on Iran was completed, see: Simon Morgan, [“IAEA ‘Concerned’ Iran Working on Nuclear Weapon,”](#) Agence France Presse, February 18, 2010; George Jahn, [“UN Nuke Agency Worried](#)

[Iran May be Working on Arms,](#) Associated Press, February 18, 2010; [“Iran Nuclear Missile Fear Raised by UN Report,”](#) BBC News, February 18, 2010; Warren P. Strobel, [“Iran May Be Seeking Nuclear Warhead, U.N. Watchdog Says,”](#) McClatchy Newspapers, February 18, 2010; Peter Greir, [“Inspectors: Iran Possibly Working on Nuke. What’s the Evidence?”](#) Christian Science Monitor, February 19, 2010; Anna Fifield and Daniel Dombey, [“US Uses Iran Nuclear Report to Push Case for Sanctions,”](#) Financial Times, February 19, 2010; Julian Borger, [“Iran Could Be Building a Warhead, Says UN Inspector,”](#) The Guardian, February 19, 2010; David Osborne, [“Iran May Be Closer than We Think to Having Nuclear Missiles, Says UN,”](#) The Independent, February 19, 2010; Borzou Daragahi and Julia Damianova, [“U.N. Nuclear Agency Expresses Concern on Iran,”](#) Los Angeles Times, February 19, 2010; David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, [“Inspectors Say Iran Worked on Warhead,”](#) New York Times, February 19, 2010; Mark Heinrich, [“New Chief Amano Gives UN Watchdog More Bite on Iran,”](#) Reuters, February 19, 2010; David Crawford and Jonathan Weisman, [“IAEA Suspects Iran Seeks Nuclear Arms,”](#) Wall Street Journal, February 19, 2010; Joby Warrick and Scott Wilson, [“Iran Might Be Seeking to Develop Nuclear Weapons Capability, Inspectors Say,”](#) Washington Post, February 19, 2010; [“IAEA Report Highlights More Cause for Iranian Sanctions: U.S. Envoy,”](#) Xinhua News Agency, February 19, 2010; Simon Mann, [“Watchdog’s Report Bolsters Iran’s Nuclear Critics,”](#) The Age, February 20, 2010; Catherine Philp, [“Russia Hints It Will Back New Calls for Iran Sanctions,”](#) The Times, February 20, 2010; and Paul Koring, [“UN Watchdog Raises Stakes in Showdown with Iran,”](#) Toronto Globe and Mail, February 20, 2010.

37 For an earlier example of reporting anonymous leaks to the New York Times and Times of London about the “Possible Military Dimensions of Iran’s Nuclear Program” alleged to be contained in an unpublished “Secret Annex” to a series of IAEA reports, see, e.g., William J. Broad and David E. Sanger, [“Report Says Iran Has Data to Make Bomb,”](#) New York Times, October 4, 2009; and Catherine Philp and Giles Whittell, [“Iran Could Make an Atomic Bomb, according to UN Report’s ‘Secret Annex,’”](#) The Times, October 5, 2009.

38 See [“Draft Memorandum to President Truman”](#) in [Diplomatic Papers, 1945: The Near East and Africa](#), p. 45, [Vol. VIII, Foreign Relations of the United States](#), U.S. Department of State, [University of Wisconsin Digital Collections](#) (Homepage).

39 As the Director of National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair told the U.S. Congress in early February: “We continue to assess Iran is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons . . . should it choose to do so. We do not know, however, if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons. . . . We continue to judge Iran’s nuclear decisionmaking is guided by a cost-benefit approach, which offers the international community opportunities to influence Tehran. Iranian leaders undoubtedly consider Iran’s security, prestige and influence, as well as the international political and security environment, when making decisions about its nuclear program. That is as far as I can go in discussing Iran’s nuclear program at the unclassified level” (see Dennis C. Blair, [Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community](#), Text of Prepared Unclassified Testimony before the U.S. Senate and House Committees on Intelligence, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, February 2-3, 2010, pp. 13-14. Also see the National Intelligence Estimate, [Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities](#), Office of the Director of National Intelligence, November 2007).

40 See, e.g., Farhad Pouladi, [“Supreme Leader Denies Iran Wants Atomic Weapons,”](#) Agence France Presse, February 19, 2010. This report quotes Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as saying: “Recently some Western and US officials have been repeating some

outdated and nonsensical comments that Iran is seeking to build nuclear weapons. Iran will not get emotional in responding to these nonsensical comments, since our religious beliefs are against the use of such weapons. We in no way believe in an atomic weapon and do not seek one."

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