

US War Plans and the “Strait of Hormuz Incident”: Just Who Threatens Whom?

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

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Instigated by the Pentagon, a bungled media disinformation campaign directed against Iran has unfolded.

Five Iranian patrol boats, visibly with no military capabilities, have been accused of threatening three US war ships in the Strait of Hormuz. According to a Pentagon spokesman:

The Iranian vessels “showed reckless, dangerous and potentially hostile intent,” Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said. The encounter [on 6 January 2008] lasted between 15 and 25 minutes, he said.

“We haven’t had an event of this serious nature recently,” Whitman said, referring to encounters between U.S. Navy vessels and Iranian warships. ([Bloomberg, January 7, 2008](#))

At one point the U.S. ships received a threatening radio call from the Iranians, “to the effect that they were closing (on) our ships and that the ships would explode — the U.S. ships would explode,” Cosgriff said. (The Associated Press Pentagon Says Ships Harassed by Iran)

The Pentagon said the incident was serious. It described the Iranian actions as “careless, reckless and potentially hostile” and said Tehran should provide an explanation. (Arab Times, 7 January 2008)

Media Disinformation

Coinciding with Bush’s Middle East trip, the intent of the Pentagon’s propaganda ploy is to present Iran as the aggressor.

The patrol activities of these boats are presented as “a serious threat” and an act of “provocation”. The London Times goes even further: in its January 7 morning headlines the Iranian speed boats, barely 30 feet long, were apparently preparing “a suicide attack” against US war ships equipped with advanced state of art weaponry:

“Iran speedboats ‘threatened suicide attack on US’ in Strait of Hormuz” (London Times headlines, January 7, 2008)



Iranian patrol boats to be used in a kamikaze style “terrorist” mission, to “explode the American vessels”? (see photos above)

What US war vessels are we dealing with?

How do the speedboats compare in size and military capabilities to the US destroyers and frigates, which Iran is allegedly threatening to blow up?

According to the reports there were five Iranian speedboats and three American warships which had entered the Strait of Hormuz:

Guided Missile Destroyer USS Hopper (DDG-70)

Guided Missile Cruiser USS Port Royal

Frigate USS Ingraham

USS Hopper (DDG-70) is an [Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer](#) equipped inter alia with Tomahawk cruise missiles, which could instantly blow the “living day lights” out of the Iranian speed boats.



USS Hopper (DDG-70) (source: US Navy)



Tomahawk cruise missile (source: US Navy)

The second vessel threatened by the Iranian suicide speedboats is a Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser [USS Port Royal CG73](#) which carries a sophisticated weapons arsenal including Tomahawk and Harpoon missiles, a Phalanx CIWS 2, not to mention Sikorsky SH-60 and Seahawk LAMPS III helicopters. Again the threatening speedboats would be destroyed almost instantly.



(source: [USS Port Royal CG73](#) US Navy)



Phalanx CIWS



Harpoon Missile (source: US Navy)

The third vessel threatened by the Iranian patrol boats is frigate [USS Ingraham](#) also equipped inter alia with launchers for Mark 46 torpedoes and LAMPS III helicopters



([USS Ingraham](#) source: US Navy)

What we are dealing with?

“Iranian speedboats harassed US warships and threatened to blow them up in a radio communication.” A naval “suicide attack” in international waters says the Times of London.

But in fact with the exception of alleged verbal abuse on the part of the Iranian coastguard, which Tehran denies in a carefully worded statement, nothing happened other than a routine patrol operation.

Just Who is Threatening Whom?

The incident must be put in a historical perspective.

Realities are turned upside down. Known and documented since 2003, the Pentagon has drawn up detailed and precise plans for U.S. sponsored attacks on both Iran and Syria. Israel and NATO are partners in this military adventure.

Moreover, barely mentioned by the Western media, there has since Summer 2006, been a massive concentration of US Naval power in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, which are part of those war preparations. Since 2006, US war ships with advanced weapons systems have been stationed almost continuously within proximity of Iranian territorial waters.

Large scale US war games have been conducted.

Numerous acts of provocation directed against Iran have been undertaken.

These war vessels are deployed in the context of US-NATO-Israeli war plans in relation to Iran. The first phase of these war plans was formulated in the immediate wake of the US led Iraq invasion in July 2003, under a scenario entitled "Theater Iran Near Term". (TIRANNT). (See [Michel Chossudovsky, "Theater Iran Near Term", Global Research, February 2007](#))

The alleged Iranian Nuclear Threat

The Pentagon's war plans continue to be based on the justification that Iran is in defiance of the "international community" and is actively involved in developing nuclear weapons.

In a bitter irony, the first phase of these war plans under TIRANNT was formulated at a time when US intelligence confirmed that Iran had abandoned its nuclear weapons program.

The existence of this Fall 2003 intelligence was made available in the recently released 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE):

"We judge that in the fall of 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program... We continue to assess with moderate-to-high confidence that Iran does not currently have a nuclear weapon." (See Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities, NIE 2007. http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/20071203_release.pdf)

This classified 2003 intelligence, declassified four years later in the 2007 was in all likelihood available to the White House and Pentagon in Fall 2003, which suggests that the main justification for US and allied war preparations is based on a big lie. The 2007 NIE report states that Iran abandoned its nuclear weapons program. There is no concrete evidence to the effect that Iran had a nuclear program.

US Naval Buildup in the Persian Gulf

Let us return to the speedboat incident and examine how realities can be twisted by the Western media. .

There is currently a massive concentration of naval power in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.

In addition to the three war ships which apparently had been harassed by Iran speedboats, the entire US Fifth Fleet is stationed within proximity of the Strait of Hormuz and the Iranian coastline. The Fifth Fleet is under U.S. Naval Forces Central Command stationed in the Bahrain off the Strait of Hormuz Fleet.

The Fifth Fleet is a massive arsenal of vessels, aircraft carrier with F18 fighters, cruise missiles "and the works"... "threatened by Iranian speedboats, it reminds one of "David and Goliath".

"[The Fifth Fleet is composed of] Carrier Strike Group, Amphibious Ready Group or Expeditionary Strike Group, and other ships and aircraft with

approximately 20,000 people serving afloat and 3,000 support personnel ashore. Whether launching combat aircraft from a carrier, landing Marines ashore, firing cruise missiles at targets hundreds of miles away, or conducting peacetime military exercises with allies in the region, it remains the world's premiere naval force and America's force of choice.

This force can operate forward from the sea, carrying out its mission free of shore-based political encumbrance. It is a highly trained, motivated, mobile and potent force that remains capable and ready to strike — anywhere, anytime!

United States Naval Forces Central Command is the naval pillar of the joint team responsible for executing U.S. military operations in the Central Command theater.”

(See <http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/command/index.html>)

The commander of the 5th Fleet, however is now saying that “there was no way to know” if the threat “came from Iranian speedboats”, suggesting that it could be another larger and more threatening Iranian vessel which was harassing the US Navy:

“There is no way to know where this (radioed threat) exactly came from. It could have come from the shore... or another vessel in the area,” Lieutenant John Gay told AFP

With all the communications equipment radar, satellite monitoring and imaging, “there is no way” we could have known. According to Lieut. Gray: “The Iranian fast boats were acting in a very provocative and aggressive manner”.

Carrier USS Harry Truman arrives in the Persian Gulf

Carrier USS Harry S. Truman, arrived in the Persian Gulf on January 4, two days before the speedboat incident.

The short term mandate of .USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) accompanied by fast combat support ship USNS Arctic (T-AOE 8) was to apparently) rescue “seven mariners adrift in a raft on Dec. 23, in the central Persian Gulf.”

“Harry S. Truman, attached to Commander, Carrier Strike Group 10 (CCSG 10), and Arctic are currently deployed to the Persian Gulf as part of the ongoing rotation to support Maritime Security Operations (MSO) in the region.” MSO is an operation to “ensure security and safety in international waters so that all commercial shipping can operate freely while transiting the region.”

The Truman Carrier Strike Group is also composed of an arsenal of destroyers and frigates, F-18 Fighter jets operate from the Truman aircraft carrier.



Michel Chossudovsky is the author of the international bestseller [America's "War on Terrorism"](#) Global Research, 2005.

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About the author:

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Editor of Global Research. He has undertaken field research in Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific and has written extensively on the economies of developing countries with a focus on poverty and social inequality. He has also undertaken research in Health Economics (UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UNFPA, CIDA, WHO, Government of Venezuela, John Hopkins International Journal of Health Services (1979, 1983) He is the author of 13 books including *The Globalization of Poverty and The New World Order* (2003), *America's "War on Terrorism"* (2005), *The Globalization of War, America's Long War against Humanity* (2015). He is a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His writings have been published in more than twenty languages. In 2014, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit of the Republic of Serbia for his writings on NATO's war of aggression against Yugoslavia. He can be reached at crgeditor@yahoo.com

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