

Expanding Middle East War. Planned US-Israeli Attack on Iran, The War on Energy, Strategic Waterways

Genocide is on The Drawing Board of the Pentagon. The Zionist Lobby is firmly aligned with U.S. Foreign Policy

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)
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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)
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In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

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This article originally published on November 11, 2023 was revised on January 14th, 2024 with a focus on the dangers of escalation and the role of "False Flags".

In recent developments, in response to Israel's bombing of Iran's Consulate in Damascus, according to media reports:

Iran has launched [more than 300](#) cruise and ballistic missiles and [drones](#) at Israel, IDF officials said, a retaliatory attack weeks after an [Israeli strike](#) on the Iranian consular building in Syria killed two of Tehran's top commanders.

"There were explosions visible in the air over Jerusalem as air sirens rang throughout the country."

"Iran said that after tonight's attack, the "matter can be deemed concluded" unless there is more violence."

The fundamental question is whether this retaliatory attack will lead to escalation, including an Israeli counter-attack on Iran.

Video Interview

Video produced in November 2023

Expanding Middle East War. Planned US-Israeli Attack on Iran, The War on Energy, Strategic Waterways

by

Michel Chossudovsky

1. In Solidarity with Palestine

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We stand in Solidarity with Palestine. But we must recognize that the United States Military and Intelligence apparatus is firmly behind Israel's genocide directed against the People of Palestine.

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And this must be part of the solidarity campaign, namely to Reveal the Truth regarding Washington's insidious role, which is part of a carefully planned military agenda directed against Palestine and the broader Middle East. Netanyahu is a proxy, with a criminal record. He has the unbending support of Western Europe's "Classe politique".

The U.S. led War on the People of Palestine and the Middle East is a Criminal Undertaking

Israel and the Zionist lobby in the U.S. are NOT exerting undue influence AGAINST U.S. Foreign Policy as outlined by numerous analysts.

Quite the opposite. The Zionist lobby is firmly aligned with U.S. foreign policy, and Vice Versa. It targets those who are opposed to war, who call for a cease fire. It exerts influence in favour of the conduct of the U.S. military agenda in support of Israel.

The US military-intelligence establishment in coordination with powerful financial interests is calling the shots in regards to Israel's genocidal intent to "Wipe Palestine off the Map".

2. Triggering “False Flags”

Inciting Escalation in The Red Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean

Let us be under no illusions. Remember Pearl Harbor, The Gulf of Tonkin, 9/11. “False Flags” are part of the history of modern warfare. They are sophisticated intelligence operations often requiring infiltration into enemy ranks.

Starting in the immediate wake of the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack, US-NATO war ships –including aircraft carriers, combat planes, naval vessels have been deployed in both the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

These deployments have been described in chorus by the mainstream media as a response to “Palestine’s [alleged] Aggression against the Jewish State”.

They are tagged as humanitarian undertakings: Coming to the rescue of Israel. Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

The False Flag concept requires inciting your enemy or an armed jihadist group to confront or “attack America” thereby providing a justification to strike back in self defense: The Houthis in the Red Sea and Hezbollah in the Eastern Mediterranean both of which are allies of Iran.

Trigger one or more incidents with a view to justifying a process of military escalation.

In recent developments, the “False Flag agenda” has evolved towards US-NATO air and naval attacks against Yemen.

“Sadeh, Zubaydah, Abs, Bani, Sana, Hudaydah, and Taiz have been attacked by American forces, initiating yet another war without Congressional approval, a branch of the US government emptied of power.

The New York Times, of course, blames the expansion of the conflict on the Houthis for interfering with shipping to Israel.” (Paul Craig Roberts)

The endgame is to incite Iran through various means to enter the Middle East battlefield, which would lead eventually to a process of escalation. The media is now using the term: “Iranian Proxies” in an ambivalent report by the NYT:

[According to US officials, there is no direct evidence linking Iran to Red Sea attacks](#)

There is no direct evidence to show senior Iranian commanders ordered Yemen’s Houthi rebels to launch attacks on ships in the Red Sea, according to a New York Times report citing US intelligence officials. The unnamed sources said they continue to assess that Iran isn’t interested in a wider war, even though it encouraged Houthi operations in the Red Sea.

“The whole purpose of the Iranian proxies, they argue, is to find a way to punch at Israel

and the United States without setting off the kind of war that Iran wants to avoid,” the news report said.

“There is no direct evidence that senior Iranian leaders, either the commander of the elite Quds Force or the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, ordered the recent Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea.” ([Quoted by Al Jazeera](#))



3. America's Military Doctrine: Targeting and Killing Civilians

The targeting of civilians and the killing of children in Gaza is modelled on [numerous US sponsored massacres of civilians](#) (1945-2023) including the 2004 attack on Fallujah. (More than 30 Million mainly civilian deaths in US-led wars in what is euphemistically called the “post War Era”).

Veteran War correspondent Felicity Arbuthnot reflected on the [indescribable barbarity of the 2004](#) Fallujah massacre, which resulted in countless deaths and destruction. It was a genocide conducted by the U.S military:

“The Americans invaded, chillingly: “house to house, room to room”, raining death and destruction on the proud, ancient “City of Mosques.”

Marines killed so many civilians that the municipal soccer stadium had to be turned into a graveyard ...

One correspondent wrote: "There has been nothing like the attack on Fallujah since the Nazi invasion and occupation of much of the European continent - the shelling and bombing of Warsaw in September 1939, the terror bombing of Rotterdam in May 1940."



Fallujah, 2004

. The U.S. is supportive of the Israeli genocide directed against the people of Palestine. Prime Minister Netanyahu is a criminal. He is Washington's proxy, unreservedly endorsed and supported by the Biden Administration as well as the U.S. Congress.

. Zionism constitutes the ideological underpinnings of contemporary U.S. imperialism and its unending war against the people of the Middle East.

. The Zionist "Greater Israel" dogma -as in all wars of religion since the dawn of mankind- is there to mislead people Worldwide as to "who is really pulling the strings".

. Zionism has become a useful instrument which is embodied in U.S. military doctrine. The "Promised Land" broadly coincides with America's hegemonic agenda in the Middle East, namely what the U.S. military has designated as the "New Middle East".

Cui Bono: "To Whom Does it Benefit"

There are strategic, geopolitical and economic objectives behind Israel's genocide directed against the People of Palestine. "Crimes are often committed to benefit their perpetrators":

Who are the Perpetrators?

Israel's War against the People of Palestine serves the interests of Big Money, the Military

Industrial Complex, Corrupt Politicians... The Genocide is implemented by Netanyahu on behalf of the United States.

The US military and intelligence apparatus are behind Israel's criminal bombing and invasion of Gaza. The unfolding Middle East War is largely directed against Iran.

Video Interview: Michel Chossudovsky and Caroline Mailloux

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4. Iran and the Nuclear Issue

Historical Antecedents. Using Israel As a Means to Attacking Iran



In 2003, the war on Iran project (Operation Theatre Iran Near Term, TIRANNT)) was already Déjà Vu. It had been on the drawing board of the Pentagon for more than 15 years.

Let us recall that at the outset of Bush's Second Term, Vice President Dick Cheney dropped a bombshell, hinting, in no uncertain terms, that Iran was "right at the top of the list" of the rogue enemies of America. And that Israel would, so to speak,

"be doing the bombing for us" [paraphrase] , without US military involvement and without us putting pressure on them "to do it". For further details see my article below was first published by Global Research in May 2005, as well as [PBS Interview with Z. Brzezinski](#)

This Dick Cheney-style option is currently (November 2023) once more on the drawing board of the Pentagon, namely the possibility that Israel which is already bombing Lebanon and Syria, would be incited to wage an attack on Iran (acting on behalf of the United States).

US Congress Resolution (H. RES. 559) Accuses Iran of Possessing Nuclear Weapons

Careful timing: In June 2023, the US House of Representatives adopted Resolution (H. RES.

559) which provides a “Green Light” to wage war on Iran.

The US House passed a resolution that allows the use of force against Iran, intimating without a shred of evidence that Iran has Nuclear Weapons:

Resolved, That the House of Representatives declares it is the policy of the United States—

(1) that a nuclear Islamic Republic of Iran is not acceptable;

(2) that Iran must not be able to obtain a nuclear weapon under any circumstances or conditions;

(3) to use all means necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon; and

(4) to recognize and support the freedom of action of partners and allies, including Israel, to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

[Click below to access the complete text of H. RES 559](#)

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 559

Declaring it is the policy of the United States that a nuclear Islamic Republic of Iran is not acceptable.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 27, 2023

Mr. McCaul (for himself, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. GOLDEN of Maine, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. MCCORMICK, and Ms. MANNING) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Declaring it is the policy of the United States that a nuclear Islamic Republic of Iran is not acceptable.

Whereas an Islamic Republic of Iran that possesses a nuclear weapon would be an unacceptable threat to regional and global security;

Whereas Iran continues to enrich and stockpile uranium far in excess of the limits set under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015);

Whereas the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed in May 2023 that Iran continues to enrich uranium to 60-percent purity;

Whereas the United States Ambassador to the Vienna Office of the United Nations and to the IAEA, Laura Holgate,

Israel's Undeclared Nuclear Weapons Arsenal

Whereas Iran is tagged (without evidence) as a Nuclear Power by the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington fails to acknowledge that Israel is an undeclared nuclear power.

In recent developments, *Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu*, [“admitted to the world that Israel has nuclear weapons ready to be used against Palestinians”](#)

[The Times of Israel](#) reported that: "Amichai Eliyahu said Sunday [November 5, 2023] that one of Israel's options in the war against Hamas was to drop a nuclear bomb on the Gaza Strip"

Video on Israel's Nuclear Weapons Facility

English subtitles

5. The War on Energy

Unspoken Objective of a US-NATO-Israel War against Iran: Natural Gas

Reserves of Natural Gas: Iran ranks Second after Russia. Russia, Iran and Qatar possess 54.1 percent of the World's reserves of natural gas.

-Russia 24.3%,

-Iran 17.3%,

-Qatar, 12.5 % (in partnership with Iran)

versus

-5.3 % for the US

President Joe Biden ordered to "blow up" (September 2022) the Nordstream Pipeline, which constitutes a **U.S. Act of War against the European Union**.

In the words of Joe Biden:

"There will be no longer a Nord Stream 2". [Statement at White House Press Conference \(February 7, 2022\)](#)

America's strategic objective is, despite its meagre reserves of natural gas:

To Force the European Union to buy LNG "Made in America".

What this implies is that America's military agenda against Russia and Iran constitutes a means to hike up EU energy prices, which is an [Act of Economic Warfare](#) against the People of Europe.

#	Country	Gas Reserves (MMcf)	World Share
1	Russia	1,688,228,000	24.3%
2	Iran	1,201,382,000	17.3%
3	Qatar	871,585,000	12.5%
4	United States	368,704,000	5.3%
5	Saudi Arabia	294,205,000	4.2%

The Iran-Qatar Natural Gas Partnership

The maritime gas reserves of the Persian Gulf are under a (joint ownership) partnership between Qatar and Iran (See diagram below).



The Biden Administration is Intent upon Destabilizing the Iran-

Qatar Partnership

This partnership is supportive of the People of Palestine.

In March 2022, “President Joe Biden following a meeting with Qatar’s Emir Sheik Tamim “designated Qatar as a major non-NATO ally of the United States, fulfilling the promise that he had made to Qatar earlier this year [2022], the White House said” ([Reuters, March 10, 2022](#))

Biden designates Qatar as major non-NATO ally of U.S.

Reuters

March 10, 2022 4:20 PM EST · Updated 2 years ago



U.S. President Joe Biden holds a bilateral meeting with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, U.S., January 31, 2022. REUTERS/Leah Millis [Acquire Licensing Rights](#)

“The designation is granted by the United States to close, non-NATO allies that have strategic working relationships with the U.S. military.

Biden promised Qatar’s emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, in January [2022] during a meeting at the White House that he would grant Qatar the special status.” [Reuters](#) See also [Reuters](#) (January 31, 2022)

What is at stake are cross-cutting coalitions. Qatar is a “Partner” of Iran in relation to the strategic reserves of maritime gas in the Persian Gulf. There is no formal military cooperation between the two countries.

Washington’s unspoken agenda is to break and/or destabilize Qatar’s Partnership with Iran, by integrating Qatar into the US-NATO military orbit.

It is worth noting that a few days prior to the October 7, 2023 Hamas operation, the Emir of Qatar Sheik Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani “[laid the foundation stone for the Northern Dome expansion project](#)” in Iran’s Pars South Field (See map above).

“the Emir of Qatar said the groundbreaking for the Northern Dome expansion project was laid today, which is in line with Qatar’s strategy to strengthen its position as a global LNG producer ...

This joint gas field, known as “South Pars” in Iran, [is the largest natural gas field in the world](#) and contains 50.97 trillion cubic meters of gas and about 7.9 billion cubic meters of natural gas condensate.



At the time of writing, the implications of Sheik Tamin’s October 2023 expansion project in South Pars Fields (which is in Iranian territorial Waters) as well as Qatar’s “Special Status” Military Alliance with the U.S. remain unclear.

America’s Al-Udeid military base in Qatar (left) is the largest US base in the Middle East.

Have the status and functions of Al Udeid changed since the signing of the March 2022 agreement designating Qatar as a “Major Non NATO Ally of the US”

Qatar is both A Partner of Iran as well as a Major Non NATO Ally of the U.S. Reports confirm the development of a [close relationship between the commanders of the US Air Force and the Qatari Emiri Air Force](#).

Qatar is a “Powder Keg”?

The U.S. foreign policy objective is to ultimately destroy and undermine that “friendship” with Iran which is highly valued and supported by Qatari citizens.

The export of gas from South Pars North Dome transits through Iran, Turkey and Russia.

Qatar, Russia and Iran (the 3 largest holders Worldwide of natural gas reserves) reached an agreement in 2009 to create a ‘**Gas Troika**’, a trilateral gas cooperation entity including the development of joint projects.

A large number of countries including South Korea, India, Japan, China are importing LNG from Qatar.

Last year (November 2022), “QatarEnergy signed a 27-year deal to supply China’s Sinopec with liquefied natural gas”. Qatar has also a strategic alliance with China.

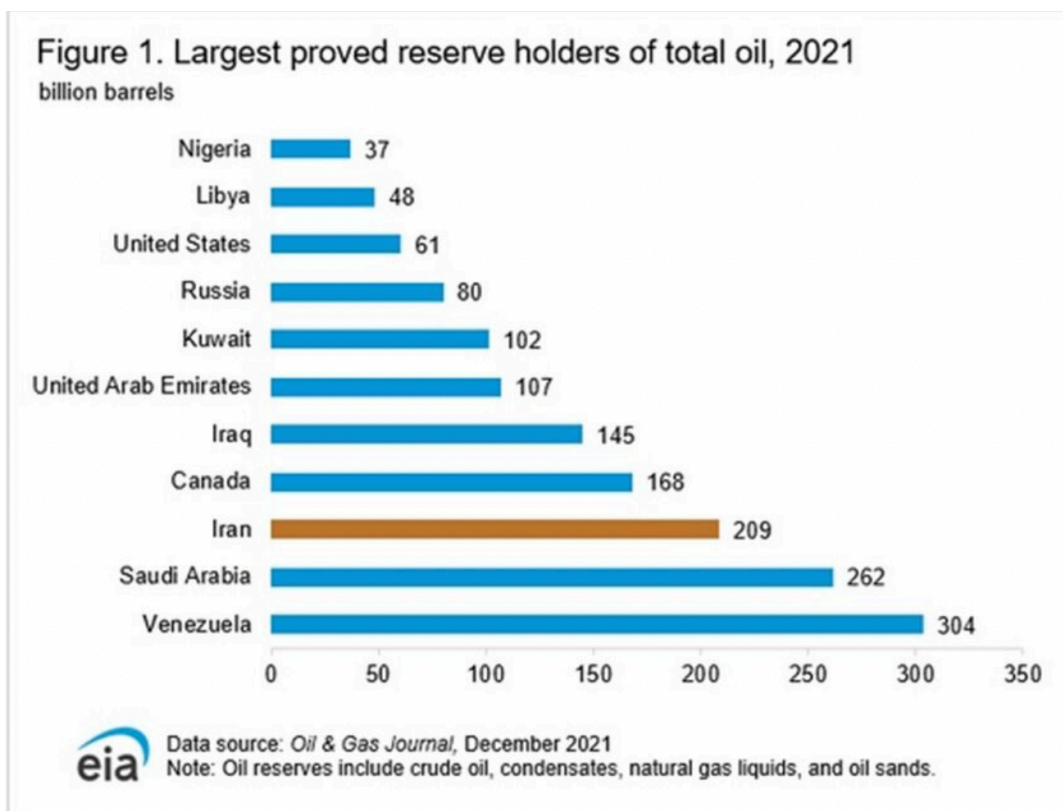
[Washington’s objective under the disguise of America’s “Major Non-NATO Alliance”](#) with Qatar is to:

- Break the Qatar-Iran Partnership

- Exclude Iran from the Joint Maritime Gas Field
- Exert US Control over the Maritime Gas Field in the Persian Gulf
- Weaken and Disable the “Gas Troika” (Russia, Iran, Qatar)
- Create Chaos in the Global Energy Market,
- Undermine the Trade in Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) to Numerous Countries

Iran. Third Largest Reserves of Oil Worldwide

Iran is not only second in terms of its gas reserves after Russia, it ranks third Worldwide in relation to its oil reserves (12% of Worldwide oil reserves) versus a meagre 4% for the U.S.



6. Strategic Waterways: The Ben Gurion Canal Project

U.S. Seeks Dominance over Strategic International Waterways

[The Ben Gurion Canal Project](#) was initially a “secret” (classified) U.S. project formulated in 1963 by the [Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory](#) LLNG, a strategic think tank (focussing on nuclear radiation) on contract with the U.S Department of Energy. The LLNG project was formulated in response to the nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956 by President Gamal Abdel Nasser (1956-1970). Its intent was to bypass the Suez Canal.

The Ben Gurion Canal project is currently contemplated as means control the channels of international maritime trade to the detriment of the people of the Middle East. It also seeks to destabilize China’s maritime commodity trade.



In the context of the broader US-led Middle East War, the Ben Gurion Canal Project is part of America's hegemonic military agenda. It is consistent with Netanyahu's "Plan to Wipe Palestine Off the Map".

According to Yvonne Ridley:

"The only thing stopping the newly-revised [Ben Gurion Canal] project from being revived and rubber-stamped is the presence of the Palestinians in Gaza. As far as Netanyahu is concerned they are standing in the way of the project" ([Yvonne Ridley](#), November 10, 2023, emphasis added)

The U.S led war is intent upon confiscating all Palestinian territories, which would be appropriated by the State of Israel, acting as a strategic "Anglo-American Hub" in the Middle East:

The Ben Gurion Canal will give Israel in particular and other friendly nations the freedom from blackmail arising out of access to the Suez Canal.

Arab states have been leveraging the Red Sea to pressure Israel and in response, Israel has decided to gain more control of the Red Sea. These African countries have cultural and economic affinities with the Arab states. One of the main military benefits for Israel

is that it gives Israel the strategic options as the Ben Gurion Canal will totally take away the importance of Suez for the US military if needed in the aid for Israel.

Israel aims to push Egypt further into a corner by eliminating Suez in the global trade and energy corridor and becoming a global trade and energy logistics center.

Experts are of the opinion that this situation will shake the strategic-energy balance of China's Belt and Road Project initiative in the Mediterranean, along with the Strait of Hormuz, which is the transfer point of 30 percent of the world's energy. The Ben Gurion Canal would have the solid backing of the West. ([Eurasia Review](#), November 7, 2023, emphasis added)

7. “Greater Israel”. Strategic “Anglo-American Hub”

The Promised Land of Greater Israel coincides with America's Colonial Design in the Middle East

The Greater Israel design is not strictly a Zionist Project for the Middle East, it is an integral part of US foreign policy, its strategic objective is to extend US hegemony as well as fracture and balkanize the Middle East.

In this regard, Washington's strategy consists in destabilizing and weakening regional economic powers in the Middle East including Turkey and Iran. This policy –which is consistent with the Greater Israel– is accompanied by a process of political fragmentation.



Since the Gulf war (1991), the Pentagon has contemplated the creation of a “Free Kurdistan” which would include the annexation of parts of Iraq, Syria and Iran as well as Turkey



“The New Middle East”: Unofficial US Military Academy Map by Lt. Col. Ralph Peters

8. “America’s Promised Land”. Global Warfare

When viewed in the current context, including the siege on Gaza, the Zionist Plan for the Middle East coincides with America’s long war against the Middle East. As we mentioned earlier the Zionist agenda provides an ideological and religious justification of America’s long war against the Middle East.

- The 1979-80. the so-called Soviet Afghan War, engineered by the CIA
- The 1980-88 Iraq-Iran War engineered by the U.S.
- The 1991 Gulf War against Iraq,
- The 2001 The US-NATO Invasion of Afghanistan,
- The 2003 Invasion of Iraq
- The 2006 War on Lebanon,
- The Arab Spring,
- The 2011 war on Libya,
- The 2015 war on Yemen
- Obama’s 2014-2017 “Counter-Terrorism” Operation against Iraq and Syria
- The ongoing wars against Syria, Iraq and Yemen

The “Greater Israel” project consists in weakening and eventually fracturing neighboring Arab states as part of a US-Israeli expansionist project, with the support of NATO.

Needless to say, the ideological and religious underpinnings of the “Greater Israel” project are consistent with America’s imperial design.

While the Zionist agenda is not the driving force, it serves the useful purpose of misleading public opinion concerning America’s long war against the people of the Middle East.

The Historical Context: A Sequence of Military Plans and Scenarios to Wage War on Iran

Since the launching of the [Theater Iran Near Term \(TIRANNT\)](#) war games scenario in May 2003 (leaked classified doc), an escalation scenario involving military action directed against Iran and Syria had been envisaged, of which Syria was the first stage.

TIRANNT was followed by a series of military plans pertaining to Iran. Numerous post 9/11 official statements and US military documents had pointed to an expanded Middle East war, involving the active participation of Israel.

Israel is America’s ally. Military operations are closely coordinated. Israel does not act without Washington’s approval.

U.S.-Israeli Air Defense

Barely acknowledged by the media, the US and Israel have an integrated air defense system, which was set up in early 2009, shortly after the Israel invasion of Gaza under “Operation Cast Led”.

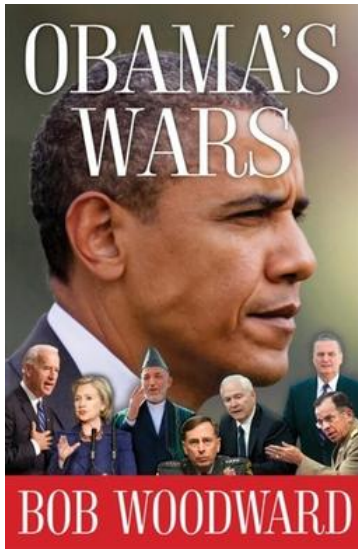
The X-band radar air defense system set up by the US in Israel in 2009 would

“integrate Israel’s missile defenses with the U.S. global missile detection network, which includes satellites, Aegis ships on the Mediterranean, Persian Gulf and Red Sea, and land-based Patriot radars and interceptors.” (Sen. Joseph Azzolina, [Protecting Israel from Iran’s missiles](#), Bayshore News, December 26, 2008).)

What this means is that Washington calls the shots. Confirmed by the Pentagon, the US military controls Israel’s Air Defense:

“This is and will remain a U.S. radar system,’ Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said.

‘So this is not something we are giving or selling to the Israelis and it is something that will likely require U.S. personnel on-site to operate.’” (Quoted in [Israel National News, January 9, 2009](#), emphasis added).



At the outset of Obama's Second Term, the US and Israel initiated discussions pertaining to a "US personnel on site" presence in Israel, namely the establishment of a "permanent" and "official" military base inside Israel.

And on September 17, 2017, a US Air Defense base located in the Negev desert was inaugurated.

According to the Israeli IDF spokesperson, the objective is to send a "message to the region," including Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine.

Of utmost relevance:

Israel would not be able to act unilaterally against Iran, without a green light from the Pentagon which controls key components of Israel's air defense system.

In practice, a war on Iran, would be a joint US-NATO-Israeli endeavor, coordinated by US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) with America's allies playing a key (subordinate) role.

Michel Chossudovsky, November 11, 2023, Updated January 14, 2024

Below is my May 2005 Global Research article which provides a detailed historical perspective on US war plans to attack Iran.

* * *

Part II

Planned US-Israeli Attack on Iran

by

Michel Chossudovsky

[Global Research](#)

May 2005

At the outset of Bush's second term, Vice President Dick Cheney dropped a bombshell. He hinted, in no uncertain terms, that Iran was "right at the top of the list" of the rogue enemies of America, and that Israel would, so to speak, "be doing the bombing for us", without US military involvement and without us putting pressure on them "to do it":

"One of the concerns people have is that Israel might do it without being asked... Given the fact that Iran has a stated policy that their objective is the destruction of Israel, the Israelis



might well decide to act first, and let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterwards," (quoted from an MSNBC Interview Jan 2005)



[Israel is a Rottweiler on a leash: The US wants to "set Israel loose" to attack Iran](#). Commenting the Vice President's assertion, former National Security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski in an interview on PBS, confirmed with some apprehension, yes: Cheney wants Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to act on America's behalf and "do it" for us:

"Iran I think is more ambiguous. And there the issue is certainly not tyranny; it's nuclear weapons. And the vice president today in a kind of a strange parallel statement to this declaration of freedom hinted that the Israelis may do it and in fact used language which sounds like a justification or even an encouragement for the Israelis to do it."

The foregoing statements are misleading. The US is not "encouraging Israel". What we are dealing with is a joint US-Israeli military operation to bomb Iran, which has been in the active planning stage for more than a year. The Neocons in the Defense Department, under Douglas Feith, have been working assiduously with their Israeli military and intelligence counterparts, carefully identifying targets inside Iran (see [Seymour Hersh](#))

Under this working arrangement, Israel will not act unilaterally, without a green light from Washington. In other words, Israel will not implement an attack without the participation of the US.

Covert Intelligence Operations: Stirring Ethnic Tensions in Iran

Meanwhile, for the last two years, Washington has been involved in covert intelligence operations inside Iran. American and British intelligence and special forces (working with their Israeli counterparts) are involved in this operation.

“A British intelligence official said that any campaign against Iran would not be a ground war like the one in Iraq. The Americans will use different tactics, said the intelligence officer. ‘It is getting quite scary.’” ([Evening Standard](#), 17 June 2003)

The expectation is that a US-Israeli bombing raid of Iran’s nuclear facilities will stir up ethnic tensions and trigger “regime change” in favor of the US. (See [Arab Monitor](#)).

Bush advisers believe that the “Iranian opposition movement” will unseat the Mullahs. This assessment constitutes a gross misjudgment of social forces inside Iran. What is more likely to occur is that Iranians will consistently rally behind a wartime government against foreign aggression. In fact, the entire Middle East and beyond would rise up against US interventionism.

Retaliation in the Case of a US-Israeli Aerial Attack

Tehran has confirmed that it will retaliate if attacked, in the form of ballistic missile strikes directed against Israel (CNN, 8 Feb 2005). These attacks, could also target US military facilities in the Persian Gulf, which would immediately lead us into a scenario of military escalation and all out war.

In other words, the air strikes against Iran could contribute to unleashing a war in the broader Middle East Central Asian region.

Moreover, the planned attack on Iran should also be understood in relation to the timely withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, which has opened up a new space, for the deployment of Israeli forces. The participation of Turkey in the US-Israeli military operation is also a factor, following an agreement reached between Ankara and Tel Aviv.

In other words, US and Israeli military planners must carefully weigh the far-reaching implications of their actions.

Israel Builds up its Stockpile of Deadly Military Hardware

A massive buildup in military hardware has occurred in preparation for a possible attack on Iran.

Israel has recently taken delivery from the US of some 5,000 “smart air launched weapons” including some [500 BLU 109 ‘bunker-buster bombs](#). The (uranium coated) munitions are said to be more than “adequate to address the full range of Iranian targets, with the possible exception of the buried facility at Natanz, which may require the [more powerful] [BLU-113 bunker buster](#)”:

“Given Israel’s already substantial holdings of such weapons, this increase in its inventory would allow a sustained assault with or without further US involvement.” (See [Richard Bennett](#))



Gbu 28 Guided Bomb Unit-28 (GBU-28)

The Israeli Air Force would attack [Iran's nuclear facility at Bushehr](#) using US as well Israeli produced bunker buster bombs. The attack would be carried out in three separate waves "with the radar and communications jamming protection being provided by U.S. Air Force AWACS and other U.S. aircraft in the area". (See [W Madsen](#))

Bear in mind that the bunker buster bombs can also be used to deliver tactical nuclear bombs. The [B61-11](#) is the "nuclear version" of the "conventional" [BLU 113](#). It can be delivered in much same way as the conventional bunker buster bomb. (See [Michel Chossudovsky](#), see also [this](#))

According to the Pentagon, tactical nuclear weapons are "safe for civilians". Their use has been authorized by the US Senate. (See [Michel Chossudovsky](#))

Moreover, reported in late 2003, Israeli [Dolphin-class submarines](#) equipped with [US Harpoon missiles](#) armed with nuclear warheads are now aimed at Iran. (See [Gordon Thomas](#))

Even if tactical nuclear weapons are not used by Israel, an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities not only raises the specter of a broader war, but also of nuclear radiation over a wide area:

"To attack Iran's nuclear facilities will not only provoke war, but it could also unleash clouds of radiation far beyond the targets and the borders of Iran." (Statement of Prof Elias Tuma, Arab Internet Network, Federal News Service, 1 March 2005)

Moreover, while most reports have centered on the issue of punitive air strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities, the strikes would most probably extend to other targets.

While a ground war is contemplated as a possible "scenario" at the level of military planning, the US military would not be able to wage a an effective ground war, given the situation in Iraq. In the words of former National Security Adviser Lawrence Eagleberger:

"We are not going to get in a ground war in Iran, I hope. If we get into that, we are in serious trouble. I don't think anyone in Washington is seriously considering that." (quoted in the National Journal, 4 December 2004).

Iran's Military Capabilities

Despite its overall weaknesses in relation to Israel and the US, Iran has an advanced air defense system, deployed to protect its nuclear sites; "they are dispersed and underground making potential air strikes difficult and without any guarantees of success." (Jerusalem Post, 20 April 2005).

It has upgraded its Shahab-3 missile, which can reach targets in Israel. Iran's armed forces have recently conducted high-profile military exercises in anticipation of a US led attack. Iran also possesses some 12 X-55 strategic cruise missiles, produced by Ukraine. Iran's air defense systems is said to feature Russian SA-2, SA-5, SA-6 as well as shoulder-launched

SA-7 missiles (Jaffa Center for Strategic Studies).

The US “Military Road Map”

The Bush administration has officially identified Iran and Syria as the next stage of “the road map to war”.

Targeting Iran is a bipartisan project, which broadly serves the interests of the Anglo-American oil conglomerates, the Wall Street financial establishment and the military-industrial complex.

The broader Middle East-Central Asian region encompasses more than 70% of the World’s reserves of oil and natural gas. Iran possesses 10% of the world’s oil and ranks third after Saudi Arabia (25 %) and Iraq (11 %) in the size of its reserves. In comparison, the US possesses less than 2.8 % of global oil reserves. (See [Eric Waddell](#), The Battle for Oil)

The announcement to target Iran should come as no surprise. It is part of the battle for oil. Already during the Clinton administration, US Central Command (USCENTCOM) had formulated “in war theater plans” to invade both Iraq and Iran:

“The broad national security interests and objectives expressed in the President’s National Security Strategy (NSS) and the Chairman’s National Military Strategy (NMS) form the foundation of the United States Central Command’s theater strategy. The NSS directs implementation of a strategy of dual containment of the rogue states of Iraq and Iran as long as those states pose a threat to U.S. interests, to other states in the region, and to their own citizens. Dual containment is designed to maintain the balance of power in the region without depending on either Iraq or Iran. USCENTCOM’s theater strategy is interest-based and threat-focused. The purpose of U.S. engagement, as espoused in the NSS, is to protect the United States’ vital interest in the region – uninterrupted, secure U.S./Allied access to Gulf oil. ([USCENTCOM](#), USPolicy , emphasis added)

Main Military Actors

While the US, Israel, as well as Turkey (with borders with both Iran and Syria) are the main actors in this process, a number of other countries, in the region, allies of the US, including several Central Asian former Soviet republics have been enlisted. Britain is closely involved despite its official denials at the diplomatic level. Turkey occupies a central role in the Iran operation. It has an extensive military cooperation agreement with Israel. There are indications that NATO is also formally involved in the context of an Israel-NATO agreement reached in November 2004.

Planning The Aerial Attack on Iran

According to former weapons inspector Scott Ritter, George W. Bush has already signed off on orders for an aerial attack on Iran, scheduled for June.(See [this](#))

The June cut-off date should be understood. It does not signify that the attack will occur in June. What it suggests is that the US and Israel are “in a state of readiness” and are prepared to launch an attack by June or at a later date. In other words, the decision to launch the attack has not been made.

Ritter’s observation concerning an impending military operation should nonetheless be

taken seriously. In recent months, there is ample evidence that a major military operation is in preparation:

- 1) several high profile military exercises have been conducted in recent months, involving military deployment and the testing of weapons systems.
- 2) military planning meetings have been held between the various parties involved. There has been a shuttle of military and government officials between Washington, Tel Aviv and Ankara.
- 3) A significant change in the military command structure in Israel has occurred, with the appointment of a new Chief of Staff.
- 4) Intense diplomatic exchanges have been carried out at the international level with a view to securing areas of military cooperation and/or support for a US-Israeli led military operation directed against Iran.
- 5) Ongoing intelligence operations inside Iran have been stepped up.
- 6) Consensus Building: Media propaganda on the need to intervene in Iran has been stepped up, with daily reports on how Iran constitutes a threat to peace and global security.

Timeline of Key Initiatives

In the last few months, various key initiatives have been taken, which are broadly indicative that an aerial bombing of Iran is in the military pipeline:

November 2004 in Brussels: NATO-Israel protocol: Israel's IDF delegation to the NATO conference to met with military brass of six members of the Mediterranean basin nations, including Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania. NATO seeks to revive the framework, known as the Mediterranean Dialogue program, which would include Israel. The Israeli delegation accepted to participate in military exercises and "anti-terror maneuvers" together with several Arab countries.

January 2005: the US, Israel and Turkey held [military exercises in the Eastern Mediterranean](#), off the coast of Syria. These exercises, which have been held in previous years were described as routine.

February 2005. Following the decision reached in Brussels in November 2004, Israel was involved for the first time in military exercises with NATO, which also included several Arab countries.

February 2005: Assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The assassination, which was blamed on Syria, serves Israeli and US interests and was used as a pretext to demand the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon.

February 2005: Sharon fires his Chief-of-Staff, Moshe Ya'alon and appoints Air Force General Dan Halutz. This is the first time in Israeli history that an Air Force General is appointed Chief of Staff (See [Uri Avnery](#))

The appointment of Major General Dan Halutz as IDF Chief of Staff is considered in Israeli political circles as "the appointment of the right man at the right time." The central issue is

that a major aerial operation against Iran is in the planning stage, and Maj General Halutz is slated to coordinate the aerial bombing raids on Iran. Halutz's appointment was specifically linked to Israel's Iran agenda: "As chief of staff, he will in the best position to prepare the military for such a scenario."

March 2005: NATO's Secretary General was in Jerusalem for follow-up talks with Ariel Sharon and Israel's military brass, following the joint NATO-Israeli military exercise in February. These military cooperation ties are viewed by the Israeli military as a means to "enhance Israel's deterrence capability regarding potential enemies threatening it, mainly Iran and Syria." The premise underlying NATO-Israeli military cooperation is that Israel is under attack:

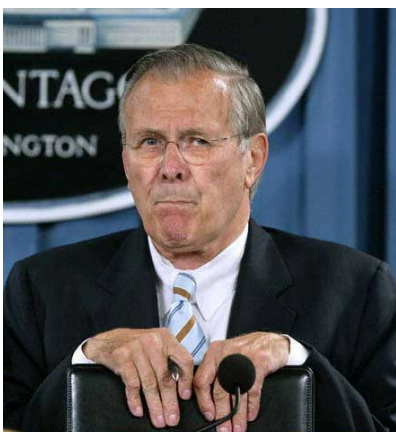
"The more Israel's image is strengthened as a country facing enemies who attempt to attack it for no justified reason, the greater will be the possibility that aid will be extended to Israel by NATO. Furthermore, Iran and Syria will have to take into account the possibility that the increasing cooperation between Israel and NATO will strengthen Israel's links with Turkey, also a member of NATO. Given Turkey's impressive military potential and its geographic proximity to both Iran and Syria, Israel's operational options against them, if and when it sees the need, could gain considerable strength. " (Jaffa Center for Strategic Studies, <http://www.tau.ac.il/jcss/sa/v7n4p4Shalom.html>)

The Israel-NATO protocol is all the more important because it obligates NATO to align itself with the US-Israeli plan to bomb Iran, as an act of self defense on the part of Israel. It also means that NATO is also involved in the process of military consultations relating to the planned aerial bombing of Iran. It is of course related to the bilateral military cooperation agreement between Israel and Turkey and the likelihood that part of the military operation will be launched from Turkey, which is a member of NATO.

Late March 2005: News leaks in Israel indicated an "initial authorization" by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of an Israeli attack on Iran's Natanz uranium enrichment plant "if diplomacy failed to stop Iran's nuclear program". (The Hindu, 28 March 2005)

March-April 2005: The Holding in Israel of Joint US-Israeli military exercises specifically pertaining to the launching of Patriot missiles.

US Patriot missile crews stationed in Germany were sent to Israel to participate in [the joint Juniper Cobra exercise](#) with the Israeli military. The exercise was described as routine and "unconnected to events in the Middle East": "As always, we are interested in implementing lessons learned from training exercises." (UPI, 9 March 2005).



April 2005: Donald Rumsfeld (right) was on an official visits to

Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan. His diplomatic endeavors were described by the Russian media as “literally circling Iran in an attempt to find the best bridgehead for a possible military operation against that country.”

In Baku, Azerbaijan Rumsfeld was busy discussing the date for deployment of US troops in Azerbaijan on Iran’s North-Western border. US military bases described as “mobile groups” in Azerbaijan are slated to play a role in a military operation directed against Iran.

Azerbaijan is a member of [GUUAM](#), a military cooperation agreement with the US and NATO, which allows for the stationing of US troops in several of the member countries, including Georgia, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. The stated short term objective is to “neutralize Iran”. The longer term objective under the Pentagon’s “Caspian Plan” is to exert military and economic control over the entire Caspian sea basin, with a view to ensuring US authority over oil reserves and pipeline corridors.

During his visit in April, Rumsfeld was pushing the US initiative of establishing “American special task forces and military bases to secure US influence in the Caspian region:

“Called Caspian Watch, the project stipulates a network of special task forces and police units in the countries of the regions to be used in emergencies including threats to objects of the oil complex and pipelines. Project Caspian Watch will be financed by the United States (\$100 million). It will become an advance guard of the US European Command whose zone of responsibility includes the Caspian region. Command center of the project with a powerful radar is to be located in Baku.” (Defense and Security Russia, April 27, 2005)

Rumsfeld’s visit followed shortly after that of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami’s to Baku.

April 2005: Iran signs a military cooperation with Tajikistan, which occupies a strategic position bordering Afghanistan’s Northern frontier. Tajikistan is a member of “The Shanghai Five” military cooperation group, which also includes Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia. Iran also has economic cooperation agreements with Turkmenistan.

Mid April 2005: Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon meets George W Bush at his Texas Ranch. Iran is on the agenda of bilateral talks. More significantly, the visit of Ariel Sharon was used to carry out high level talks between US and Israeli military planners pertaining to Iran.

Late April 2005. President Vladimir Putin is in Israel on an official visit. He announces Russia’s decision to sell short-range anti-aircraft missiles to Syria and to continue supporting Iran’s nuclear industry. Beneath the gilded surface of international diplomacy, Putin’s timely visit to Israel must be interpreted as “a signal to Israel” regarding its planned aerial attack on Iran.

Late April 2005: US pressure in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been exerted with a view to blocking the re-appointment of Mohammed Al Baradei, who according to US officials “is not being tough enough on Iran...” Following US pressures, the vote on the appointment of a new IAEA chief was put off until June. These developments suggest that Washington wants to put forth their own hand-picked nominee prior to launching US-Israeli aerial attacks on Iran’s nuclear facilities. (See [VOA](#)). (In February 2003, Al Baradei along with UN chief weapons inspector Hans Blix challenged the (phony) intelligence on WMD presented by the US to the UN Security Council, with a view to justifying the war on Iraq.)

Late April 2005. Sale of deadly military hardware to Israel. GBU-28 Buster Bunker Bombs: Coinciding with Putin's visit to Israel, the [US Defence Security Cooperation Agency](#) (Department of Defense) announced the sale of an additional 100 bunker-buster bombs produced by Lockheed Martin to Israel. This decision was viewed by the US media as "a warning to Iran about its nuclear ambitions."

The sale pertains to the larger and more sophisticated "[Guided Bomb Unit-28 \(GBU-28\) BLU-113 Penetrator](#)" (including the WGU-36A/B guidance control unit and support equipment). The GBU-28 is described as "a special weapon for penetrating hardened command centers located deep underground. The fact of the matter is that the GBU-28 is among the World's most deadly "conventional" weapons used in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, capable of causing thousands of civilian deaths through massive explosions.

The Israeli Air Force are slated to use the GBU-28s on their F-15 aircraft. (See text of [DSCA news release](#))



Late April 2005- early May: Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) in Israel for follow-up talks with Ariel Sharon. He was accompanied by his Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul, who met with senior Israeli military officials. On the official agenda of these talks: joint defense projects, including the joint production of [Arrow II Theater Missile Defense](#) and Popeye II missiles. The latter also known as the Have Lite, are advanced small missiles, designed for deployment on fighter planes. Tel Aviv and Ankara decide to establish a hotline to share intelligence.

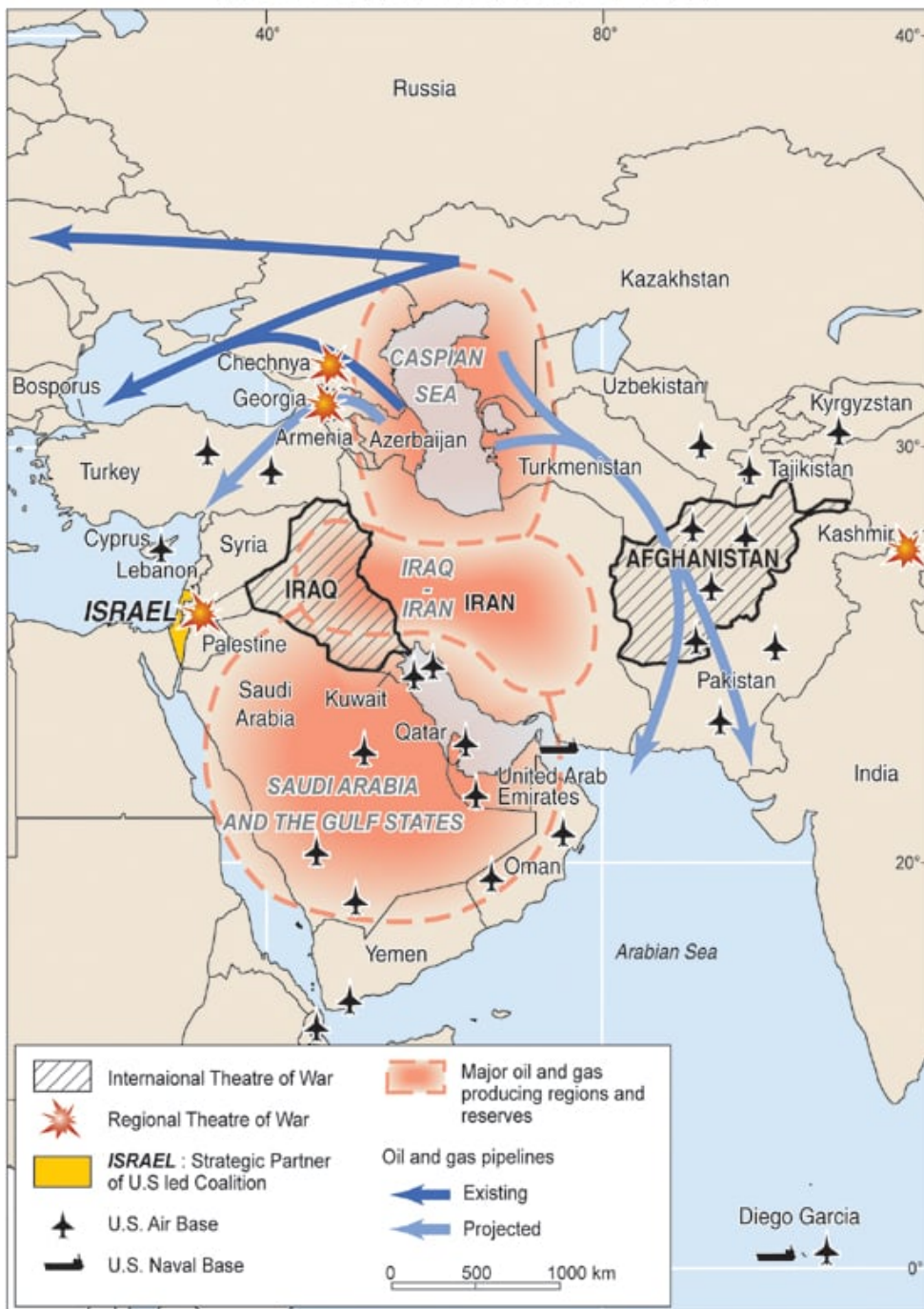
May 2005: Syrian troops scheduled to withdraw from Lebanon, leading to a major shift in the Middle East security situation, in favor of Israel and the US.

Iran Surrounded?

The US has troops and military bases in Turkey, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, and of course Iraq.

In other words, Iran is virtually surrounded by US military bases. (see Map below). These countries as well as Turkmenistan, are members of [NATO's partnership for Peace Program](#) and have military cooperation agreements with NATO.

MIDDLE EAST THEATRE OF WAR



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In other words, we are dealing with a potentially explosive scenario in which a number of countries, including several former Soviet republics, could be brought into a US led war with Iran. IranAtom.ru, a Russian based news and military analysis group has suggested, in this regard:

“since Iranian nuclear objects are scattered all over the country, Israel will need a mass strike with different fly-in and fly-out approaches – Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and other countries... Azerbaijan seriously fears Tehran’s reaction should Baku issue a permit to Israeli aircraft to overfly its territory.” (Defense and Security Russia, 12 April 2005).

Concluding remarks

The World is at an important crossroads.

The Bush Administration has embarked upon a military adventure which threatens the future of humanity.

Iran is the next military target. The planned military operation, which is by no means limited to punitive strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities, is part of a project of World domination, a military roadmap, launched at the end of the Cold War.

Military action against Iran would directly involve Israel's participation, which in turn is likely to trigger a broader war throughout the Middle East, not to mention an implosion in the Palestinian occupied territories. Turkey is closely associated with the proposed aerial attacks.

Israel is a nuclear power with a sophisticated nuclear arsenal. (See text box below). The use of nuclear weapons by Israel or the US cannot be excluded, particularly in view of the fact that tactical nuclear weapons have now been reclassified as a variant of the conventional bunker buster bombs and are authorized by the US Senate for use in conventional war theaters. ("they are harmless to civilians because the explosion is underground")

In this regard, Israel and the US rather than Iran constitute a nuclear threat.

The planned attack on Iran must be understood in relation to the existing active war theaters in the Middle East, namely Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine.

The conflict could easily spread from the Middle East to the Caspian sea basin. It could also involve the participation of Azerbaijan and Georgia, where US troops are stationed.

An attack on Iran would have a direct impact on the resistance movement inside Iraq. It would also put pressure on America's overstretched military capabilities and resources in both the Iraqi and Afghan war theaters. (The 150,000 US troops in Iraq are already fully engaged and could not be redeployed in the case of a war with Iran.)

In other words, the shaky geopolitics of the Central Asia- Middle East region, the three existing war theaters in which America is currently, involved, the direct participation of Israel and Turkey, the structure of US sponsored military alliances, etc. raises the specter of a broader conflict.

Moreover, US military action on Iran not only threatens Russian and Chinese interests, which have geopolitical interests in the Caspian sea basin and which have bilateral agreements with Iran. It also backlashes on European oil interests in Iran and is likely to produce major divisions between Western allies, between the US and its European partners as well as within the European Union.

Through its participation in NATO, Europe, despite its reluctance, would be brought into the Iran operation. The participation of NATO largely hinges on a military cooperation agreement reached between NATO and Israel. This agreement would bind NATO to defend Israel against Syria and Iran. NATO would therefore support a preemptive attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, and could take on a more active role if Iran were to retaliate following US-Israeli air strikes.

Needless to say, the war against Iran is part of a longer term US military agenda which seeks to militarize the entire Caspian sea basin, eventually leading to the destabilization and conquest of the Russian Federation.

The Antiwar Movement

The antiwar movement must act, consistently, to prevent the next phase of this war from happening.

This is no easy matter. The holding of large antiwar rallies will not in itself reverse the tide of war.

High ranking officials of the Bush administration, members of the military and the US Congress have been granted the authority to uphold an illegal war agenda.

What is required is a grass roots network, a mass movement at national and international levels, which challenges the legitimacy of the military and political actors, and which is ultimately instrumental in unseating those who rule in our name.

War criminals occupy positions of authority. The citizenry is galvanized into supporting the rulers, who are “committed to their safety and well-being”. Through media disinformation, war is given a humanitarian mandate.

To reverse the tide of war, military bases must be closed down, the war machine (namely the production of advanced weapons systems) must be stopped and the burgeoning police state must be dismantled.

The corporate backers and sponsors of war and war crimes must also be targeted including the oil companies, the defense contractors, the financial institutions and the corporate media, which has become an integral part of the war propaganda machine.

Antiwar sentiment does not dismantle a war agenda. The war criminals in the US, Israel and Britain must be removed from high office.

What is needed is to reveal the true face of the American Empire and the underlying criminalization of US foreign policy, which uses the “war on terrorism” and the threat of Al Qaeda to galvanize public opinion in support of a global war agenda.

Israel's Nuclear Capabilities

John Steinbach,

March 2002

(This article describes Israel's Nuclear Arsenal. Several of the statements are no longer valid or relevant in 2023

It is understood that in the course of the last 21 years, Israel's nuclear capabilities have significantly evolved).

With between 200 and 500 thermonuclear weapons and a sophisticated delivery system, Israel has quietly supplanted Britain as the World's 5th Largest nuclear power, and may currently rival France and China in the size and sophistication of its nuclear arsenal. Although dwarfed by the nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and Russia, each possessing over 10,000 nuclear weapons, Israel nonetheless is a major nuclear power, and should be publicly recognized as such.

Today, estimates of the Israeli nuclear arsenal range from a minimum of 200 to a maximum of about 500. Whatever the number, there is little doubt that Israeli nukes are among the world's most sophisticated, largely designed for "war fighting" in the Middle East. A staple of the Israeli nuclear arsenal are "neutron bombs," miniaturized thermonuclear bombs designed to maximize deadly gamma radiation while minimizing blast effects and long term radiation- in essence designed to kill people while leaving property intact.⁽¹⁶⁾ Weapons include ballistic missiles and bombers capable of reaching Moscow...

The bombs themselves range in size from "city busters" larger than the Hiroshima Bomb to tactical mini nukes.

The Israeli arsenal of weapons of mass destruction clearly dwarfs the actual or potential arsenals of all other Middle Eastern states combined, and is vastly greater than any conceivable need for "deterrence."

Many Middle East Peace activists have been reluctant to discuss, let alone challenge, the Israeli monopoly on nuclear weapons in the region, often leading to incomplete and uninformed analyses and flawed action strategies.

Placing the issue of Israeli weapons of mass destruction directly and honestly on the table and action agenda would have several salutary effects.

First, it would expose a primary destabilizing dynamic driving the Middle East arms race and compelling the region's states to each seek their own "deterrent."

Second, it would expose the grotesque double standard which sees the U.S. and Europe on the one hand condemning Iraq, Iran and Syria for developing weapons of mass destruction, while simultaneously protecting and enabling the principal culprit.

Third, exposing Israel's nuclear strategy would focus international public attention, resulting in increased pressure to dismantle its weapons of mass destruction and negotiate a just peace in good faith.

Finally, a nuclear free Israel would make a Nuclear Free Middle East and a comprehensive regional peace agreement much more likely. Unless and until the world community confronts Israel over its covert nuclear program it is unlikely that there will be any meaningful resolution of the Israeli/Arab conflict, a fact that Israel may be counting on as the Sharon era dawns.

From John Steinbach, Israel's Nuclear Arsenal, [Global Research](#)

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