

“Theater Iran Near Term” (TIRANNT). The Ongoing Planning of War against Iran

A Review of War Plans since the mid-1990s

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

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Nuclear War](#)

Author's Note and Update

The following article first published in February 2007 focusses on the history of war planning: The “War on Iran” has been on the drawing board of the Pentagon since the mid-1990s under US Central Command’s (USCENTCOM) “Strategy of Dual Containment” directed against “the Rogue States of Iraq and Iran” formulated during the Clinton administration.

“First Iraq, then Iran”: The stockpiling and deployment of advanced weapons systems directed against Iran started in the immediate wake of the 2003 bombing and invasion of Iraq. From the outset, these war plans were led by the US, in liaison with NATO and Israel.

Following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration identified Iran and Syria as the next stage of “the road map to war”.

Under the Trump administration, a US Attack on Iran is currently contemplated with the support of Israel and Saudi Arabia. The US design is to incite its Middle East allies “to threaten Iran on behalf of Washington”.

The article reviews the details of a leaked secret 2003 plan and scenario of a war on Iran entitled “Theater Iran Near Term” (TIRANNT).

This Pentagon blueprint had identified several thousand targets inside Iran as part of a “Shock and Awe” Blitzkrieg. In all likelihood, these targets are still on the drawing board of the Pentagon.

Economic Warfare vs. The Military Option

In recent developments, US sanctions against Iran have gone into high gear. Washington’s strategy is to “Force Iranian Oil Exports to Zero” with a view destabilizing Iran’s national economy. Formulated by Mike Pompeo:

“The goal of the policy is to drive up the costs of Iran’s malign behavior and more strongly address the broad range of threats to peace and security their regime presents,” according to State Department official. (quoted by WaPo).

While the “military option” against Iran is “temporarily” on hold, a “surprise war” on Lebanon is contemplated by Israel with the support of the US as part Washington’s broader Middle East military agenda.

According to Elijah J. Magnier, “Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah held a private meeting this week with his top military commanders in which he warned them to prepare for a hot Summer because [Israel plans to launch a surprise war against Lebanon](#).”

How this planned “surprise war” against Lebanon will evolve is uncertain. The structure of geopolitical alliances is crucial: Turkey’s rapprochement with Iran has created an unspoken crisis within NATO which for the moment tends to undermine America’s military option against Iran. Moreover, Putin’s personal relationship with Netanyahu is also of significance.

For US military planners, the “surprise war” on Lebanon is part of a military time-line. It constitutes a strategic stepping stone for war on Iran.

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, April 27, 2019

Code named by US military planners as TIRANNT, “Theater Iran Near Term” has identified several thousand targets inside Iran as part of a “Shock and Awe” Blitzkrieg, which is now in its final planning stages.

According to the Kuwait-based Arab Times, an attack on Iran under TIRANNT could occur any time between late February and the end of April. This assessment, however, does not take into account the disarray of US ground forces in Iraq as well as the untimely withdrawal of several thousand British troops from the Iraq war theater, many of whom were stationed in Southern Iraq on the immediate border with Iran.

Revealed last April by William Arkin, a former US intelligence analyst, writing in the Washington Post, TIRANNT was first established in May 2003, following the invasion of Iraq.

“In early 2003, even as U.S. forces were on the brink of war with Iraq, the Army had already begun conducting an analysis for a full-scale war with Iran. The analysis, called TIRANNT, for “theater Iran near term,” was coupled with a mock scenario for a Marine Corps invasion and a simulation of the Iranian missile force. U.S. and British planners conducted a Caspian Sea war game around the same time. And Bush directed the U.S. Strategic Command to draw up a global strike war plan for an attack against Iranian weapons of mass destruction. All of this will ultimately feed into a new war plan for “major combat operations” against Iran that military sources confirm now exists in draft form. [This contingency plan entitled CONPLAN 8022 would be activated in the eventuality of a Second 9/11, on the presumption that Iran would be behind it]

... Under TIRANNT, Army and U.S. Central Command planners have been examining both near-term and out-year scenarios for war with Iran, including all aspects of a major combat operation, from mobilization and deployment of forces through postwar stability operations after regime change.” (William Arkin, Washington Post, 16 April 2006)

First Iraq, then Iran

The 2003 decision to target Iran under TIRANNT should come as no surprise. It is part of the broader military roadmap. Already during the Clinton administration, US Central Command (USCENTCOM) had formulated in 1995 “in war theater plans” to invade first Iraq and then 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,
<http://www.milnet.com/milnet/pentagon/centcom/chap1/stratgic.htm#USPolicy> ,
emphasis added)

Consistent with CENTCOM’s 1995 “sequencing” of theater operations, the plans to target Iran were activated under TIRANNT in the immediate wake of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Confirmed by Arkin, the active component of the Iran military agenda was launched in May 2003 “when modelers and intelligence specialists pulled together the data needed for theater-level (meaning large-scale) scenario analysis for Iran.” (Arkin, op cit). In October 2003, different theater scenarios for an Iran war were contemplated:

“The US army, navy, air force and marines have all prepared battle plans and spent four years building bases and training for “Operation Iranian Freedom”. Admiral Fallon, the new head of US Central Command, has inherited computerized plans under the name TIRANNT (Theatre Iran Near Term).” (New Statesman, 19 Feb 2007)



[Former] CENTCOM Commander Admiral Fallon

Concurrently, the various parallel components of TIRANNT were put in place including the Marines “Concept of Operations”:

“The Marines, meanwhile, have not only been involved in CENTCOM’s war planning, but have been focused on their own specialty, “forcible entry.” In April 2003, the Corps published its “Concept of Operations” for a maneuver against a mock country that explores the possibility of moving forces from ship to shore against a determined enemy without establishing a beachhead first. Though the Marine Corps enemy is described only as a deeply religious revolutionary country named Karona, it is — with its Revolutionary Guards, WMD and oil wealth — unmistakably meant to be Iran.

Various scenarios involving Iran’s missile force have also been examined in another study, initiated in 2004 and known as BMD-I (ballistic missile defense — Iran). In this study, the Center for Army Analysis modeled the performance of U.S. and Iranian weapons systems to determine the number of Iranian

missiles expected to leak through a coalition defense.

The day-to-day planning for dealing with Iran's missile force falls to the U.S. Strategic Command in Omaha. In June 2004, Rumsfeld alerted the command to be prepared to implement CONPLAN 8022, a global strike plan that includes Iran. CONPLAN 8022 calls for bombers and missiles to be able to act within 12 hours of a presidential order. The new task force, sources have told me, mostly worries that if it were called upon to deliver "prompt" global strikes against certain targets in Iran under some emergency circumstances, the president might have to be told that the only option is a nuclear one. (William Arkin, Washington Post, 16 April 2006)

"Shock and Awe"

US military planning includes specific roles to be performed by NATO and Israel in the event of an attack on Iran. The German navy is deployed formally under a UN mandate in the Eastern Mediterranean. NATO bases in Europe would also be involved.

Documented by Global Research, extensive war games were conducted since last Summer by Iran and its allies of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, including Russia and China. In turn, the US has conducted war games off the Iranian coastline.

The Pentagon's Second 9/11

What is now being contemplated by Washington is an overwhelming use of military force in retaliation to Iran's alleged non-compliance. This of course is the pretext, the justification for waging war. The Pentagon has also contemplated retaliating against Iran in the case of a second 9/11 attack:

"A third plan sets out how the military can both disrupt and respond to another major terrorist strike on the United States. It includes lengthy annexes that offer a menu of options for the military to retaliate quickly against specific terrorist groups, individuals or state sponsors depending on who is believed to be behind an attack. Another attack could create both a justification and an opportunity that is lacking today to retaliate against some known targets, according to current and former defense officials familiar with the plan.

This plan details "what terrorists or bad guys we would hit if the gloves came off. The gloves are not off," said one official, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the subject. (emphasis added, WP 23 April 2006)

The presumption of this military document, is that a Second 911 attack "which is lacking today" would usefully create both a "justification and an opportunity" to wage war on "some known targets [Iran and Syria]".

Civilian Targets

Press reports in the Middle East confirm that the planned air strikes are by no means limited to Iran's nuclear facilities. Central Command Headquarters in Florida (CENTCOM) has already selected a comprehensive list of military and civilian targets. Industrial sites, civilian infrastructure including roads, water systems, bridges, electric power plants telecommunications towers, government buildings are part of the assumptions underlying the Blitzkrieg. "A single raid could result in 10,000 targets being hit with warplanes flying

from the US and Diego Garcia” (Gulf News, 21 Feb 2007, emphasis added)

Meanwhile, the US has been mustering support for its agenda following the holding of a regional Security Conference in the UAE.

Nuclear War

Military planners are said to favor the use of conventional weapons. The use of tactical nuclear weapons, which are now part of the Middle East war theater arsenal, are not explicitly contemplated, at least in the first round of the US sponsored Blitzkrieg. However, the fact that nuclear weapons are acknowledged as a possible choice in the conventional war theater is indicative that their use is an integral part of military planning.

In November 2004, US Strategic Command conducted a major exercise of a “global strike plan” entitled “Global Lightning”. The latter involved a simulated attack using both conventional and nuclear weapons against a “fictitious enemy” [Iran]. Following the “Global Lightning” exercise, US Strategic Command declared an advanced state of readiness.

In this context, CONPLAN is the operational plan pursuant to the Global Strike Plan. It is described as “an actual plan that the Navy and the Air Force translate into strike package for their submarines and bombers,”

CONPLAN 8022 is ‘the overall umbrella plan for sort of the pre-planned strategic scenarios involving nuclear weapons.’

‘It’s specifically focused on these new types of threats — Iran, North Korea — proliferators and potentially terrorists too,’ he said. ‘There’s nothing that says that they can’t use CONPLAN 8022 in limited scenarios against Russian and Chinese targets.’ (According to Hans Kristensen, of the [Nuclear Information Project](#), quoted in Japanese economic News Wire, op cit)



The use of tactical nuclear weapons is contemplated under CONPLAN 8022 alongside conventional weapons, as part of the Bush administration’s preemptive war doctrine. In May 2004, National Security Presidential Directive [NSPD 35 entitled Nuclear Weapons Deployment Authorization](#) was issued. While its contents remains classified, the presumption is that NSPD 35 pertains to the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in the Middle East war theater in compliance with CONPLAN 8022.

(For further details on the US nuclear option, see Michel Chossudovsky, [Nuclear War against Iran, January 2006](#), [The Dangers of a Middle East Nuclear War, February 2006](#), [Is the Bush Administration Planning a Nuclear Holocaust, February 2006](#))

Israel in a State of Readiness

War preparations in Israel have been ongoing since late 2004. The Israeli Air Force would attack [Iran’s nuclear facility at Bushehr](#) using US as well Israeli produced bunker buster bombs. The attacks are slated to 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, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/MAD410A.html>)

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, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CH0112C.html> , see also http://www.thebulletin.org/article_nn.php?art_ofn=jf03norris) .



Left: B61-11 at the Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri

According to a recent report in the London’s Sunday Times (7 January 2007): “Two Israeli air force squadrons are training to blow up an Iranian facility using low-yield nuclear “bunker-busters”, according to several Israeli military sources.”

If Iran were to respond to US-Israeli attacks in the form of targeted strikes on US military facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Gulf States, the war would escalate to the entire region. In this case, the US could retaliate in the form of “pre-emptive” nuclear attacks on Iran using bunker buster tactical nuclear war heads.

The most likely scenario is that Iran, in the logic of its own military planning, would indeed respond to the US sponsored attacks as well as deploy ground forces inside occupied Iraq.

Naval Deployment

Three strike groups including the Stennis, the Eisenhower and the Nimitz are being deployed in the Persian Gulf. According to Gulf News, “The Stennis strike group... is now strengthening a high level of US Navy presence in the Gulf. The Stennis and the carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower, already in the region, will soon be joined by the carrier Nimitz. (Gulf News, 21 Feb 2007). According to British military sources, the US navy can put six carriers into battle at a month’s notice.



USS Nimitz and USS Dwight Eisenhower

Redeployment of US Troops

Confirmed by military sources, some 8500 of US troops are being redeployed from US military facilities in Germany and Italy to Afghanistan and Iraq, both of which border on Iran. One assumes that they are being dispatched to the Middle East war theater in the eventuality that the air strikes will lead into a ground war with Iran.

The Pentagon, contradicting its own statements, has dismissed as “ludicrous” the press reports that the US is planning an all out attack on Iran in the “near term”.

Meanwhile, Iran has launched a three days war games entitled Eghtedar or Grandeur. These exercises which involve naval, air and ground forces are larger than those conducted last Summer. They are slated to take place in 16 out of Iran’s 30 provinces. The stated objective is to establish a state of readiness to defend Iran in the eventuality of a US attack.

Vigilant Shield 07 War Games

From September through December 2006, the US conducted a New Cold War scenario of all out war directed against Iran and its Cold war era enemies: Entitled Vigilant Shield 07, the war games are not limited to a single Middle East war theater (e.g. Iran), they also include Russia, China and North Korea.

The details of the Vigilant Shield 07 exercise scenario, is contained in a U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) briefing dated August 2006 [\(revealed by William Arkin in a WP article\)](#).

The enemies are Irmingham [Iran], Nemazee [North Korea], Ruebek [Russia], Churya [China]

Details and Sequencing:

“• Road to Conflict (RTC): 11 Sep – 15 Oct 06

- Initial Irmingham Enrichment I&W [indications and warning]
- Initial Ruebeki & Irmingham Involvement
- Ruebek I&W, PACFLT [U.S. Pacific Fleet] Sub Deployments
- Initial Nemazee ICBM [intercontinental ballistic missile] I&W
- Initial MHL D [homeland defense?] I&W
- Strategic IO [information operations (cyber warfare)] operations (Ruebek & Churya)
- Ruebek & Irmingham Conduct Joint AD [air defense] Exercise

• Phase 1 / Deployment: 4 – 8 Dec 06

- Rogue LRA [Russian long-range aviation] w/CALCM [conventional air launched cruise missile] Launch
- Continue Monitoring Strategic Situation
- Continue Monitoring Nemazee Situation

- Possible Nuclear Testing
- Probable ICBM Preparation

- Continue Monitoring MHL D Situation

- Five VOIs [vessels of interest]
- Churya Flagged VOI into Dutch Harbor Supports BMDS [ballistic missile defense system] Threat to Ft Greely

- Continue Monitoring IO Activities
- Nemazee Conducts SLV [space launch vehicle] Launch – 8 Dec 06

• Phase 2 Minus 42 Days:

- Additional Nemazee ICBM Shipments to Launch Facilities
- RMOB [Russian main operating bases] Acft Conduct LR Navigation Flights
- AS-15 [nuclear armed cruise missile] Handling at RMOBs

- Minus 41 Days:
 - Additional Nemazee ICBM Preps at Launch Pad # 2
 - Minus 40 Days:
 - Activity at Nemazee Nuclear Test Facilities
 - Minus 35 Days:
 - DOS [Department of State] Travel Warning
 - Minus 30 Days:
 - Ruebek LRA Deploys Acft to Anadyr & Vorkuta
- Phase 2 Minus 30 Days:
 - Growing International Condemnation of Ruebek
 - Ruebek Deploys Submarines
 - Minus 20 Days:
 - Nemazee Recalls Reservists
 - Minus 14 Days:
 - DOS Draw-down Sequencing
 - Minus 13 Days:
 - Ruebek Closes US Embassy in Washington DC
 - Minus 11 Days:
 - Nemazee Conducts Fueling of Additional ICBMs
 - Ruebeki Presidential Statement on Possible US Attack
- Phase 2 Minus 10 Days:
 - POTUS Addresses Congress on War Powers Act
 - Minus 6 Days:
 - Ruebek President Calls "Situation Grave"
 - Minus 5 Days:
 - CALCM Activity at Anadyr, Vorkuta, and Tiksi
 - Ruebeki SS-25 [nuclear armed mobile ICBMs] Conduct out of Garrison Deployments
 - Nemazee Assembling ICBM for Probable Launch
 - Minus 4 Days:
 - Ruebek Closes US Embassy in Washington DC
 - Ruebek Acft Conduct Outer ADIZ [air defense identification zone] Penetrations
 - Mid-Air Collision w/NORAD Acft During ADIZ Penetration
- Phase 2 Minus 4 Days:
 - Nemazee ICBM Launch Azimuth Threatens US
 - Minus 3 Days:
 - NATO Diplomatic Efforts Fail to Diffuse Crisis
 - USAMB to Ruebek Recalled for Consultation
 - POTUS Addresses Nation
 - Minus 2 Days:
 - Nemazee Leadership Movement
 - Minus 1 Day:
 - Ruebek Expels US Mission

- Phase 2 / Execution: 10 – 14 Dec 06

- Pre-Attack I & W
- Imminent Terrorist Attack on Pentagon Suggests Pentagon COOP [continuity of operations plan]
- Nemazee Conducts 2 x ICBM Combat Launches Against United States
- Ruebek Conducts Limited Strategic Attack on United States
 - Wave 1 – 8 x Bear H Defense Suppression w/CALCM
 - Wave 2 – Limited ICBM & SLBM Attack
- 2 x ICBM Launched (1 impacts CMOC [Cheyenne Mountain], 1 malfunctions)
- 2 x SLBM Launched Pierside (1 impacts SITE-R [“Raven Rock” bunker on the Maryland-Pennsylvania border], 1 malfunctions)
- 3 x Bear H from Dispersal Bases w/ALCM (Eielson AFB, CANR, Cold Lake)
- US Conducts Limited Retaliatory Attack on Ruebek
 - 1 x ICBM C2 Facility
 - 1 x ICBM Against ICBM Launch Location
 - Phase 2 / Execution:
- Ruebek Prepares Additional Attack on United States
 - Wave 3 – Prepares for Additional Strategic Attacks
- 1 x ICBM Movement, NO Launch
- 3 x SLBM PACFLT Pierside Missile Handling Activity (NO Launch)
- 6 x BEAR H (launch & RTB [return to base]) w/6 x ALCM (NO launch)” [\[source Northern Command and William Arkin\]](#)

Complacency of Western Public Opinion

The complacency of Western public opinion (including the US anti-war movement) is disturbing. No concern has been expressed at the political level as to the likely consequences of these attacks, which could evolve towards a World War III scenario, with Russia and China siding with Iran.

With the exception of the Middle East, the war on Iran and the dangers of escalation are not considered “front page news.” All of which contributes to the real possibility that the war could be carried out, leading to the unthinkable: a nuclear holocaust over a large part of the Middle East. It should be noted that a nuclear nightmare would occur even if nuclear weapons are not used. The bombing of Iran’s nuclear facilities using conventional weapons would contribute to unleashing a Chernobyl type disaster with extensive radioactive fallout.

[Michel Chossudovsky](#) is the author of the international best [America’s “War on Terrorism”](#) Second Edition, Global Research, 2005. He is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Center for Research on Globalization.

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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 taught as visiting professor in Western Europe, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. He has served as economic adviser to governments of developing countries and has acted as a consultant for several international organizations. He is the author of 13 books. 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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