THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE IRAN 'THREAT'

The Iran Versus the U.S.-Israeli-NATO Threats

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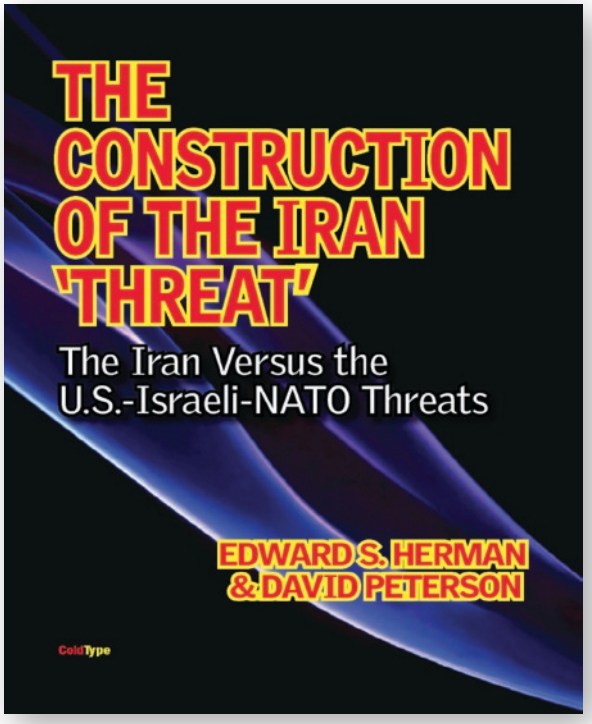

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It is spell-binding to see how the U.S. establishment can inflate the threat of a target, no matter how tiny, remote, and (most often) non-existent that threat may be, and pretend that the real threat posed by its own behavior and policies is somehow defensive and related to that wondrously elastic thing called "national security."

We should recall that this establishment got quite hysterical over the completely non-existent threat from Guatemala in the years 1950-1954, a very small and very poor country, essentially disarmed, helped by a U.S. and "allied" arms boycott, quickly overthrown in June 1954 by a minuscule U.S.-organized proxy force invading from our ally Somoza's Nicaragua.

But a telegram drafted in the name of Eisenhower's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles shortly before the 1954 regime change in Guatemala warned that this country had become a "challenge to Hemisphere security and peace" and was "increasingly [an] instrument of Soviet aggression in this hemisphere" and a "menace to [the] stability of strategic Central America and Caribbean area," so that U.S. policy was "determined [to] prevent further substantial arms shipments from reaching Guatemala."[1]

Nicaragua under the Sandinistas, even tinier Grenada, the nutmeg capital of the world, and of course Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction," all posed dire threats that caused the U.S. Free Press to leap into active propaganda service

And the *New York Times* featured this terrible threat repeatedly (one favorite, the lying headline of Sidney Gruson's "How Communists Won Control of Guatemala," March 1, 1953), a propaganda campaign dating back to 1950 that extended throughout the media, even reaching *The Nation* magazine (Ellis Ogle, "Communism in the Caribbean?" March 18, 1950).

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So the present intense focus on Iran's

supposed nuclear weapons threat is in a great tradition. But it never ceases to amaze the extent to which the media journalists and editors, reliably following the official party line, are able to apply a truly laughable double standard as well as to make another victim into an aggressor and dire threat. It's déjà vu all over again, for the umpteenth time!

With minor exceptions journalists are now, and have been for many years, spiritually "embedded" in the military and corporate system.

"Free trade" and the U.S. right to intervene and straighten out everybody across the globe - while of course protecting our "national security" - are premises of the professional embedsmen and embedswomen.

Harking back again to Guatemala in 1954, we have the classic but still salient and cynical observation of United Fruit Company's PR man Thomas McCann about the journalists given guided "fact-finding" tours of Guatemala in the late democratic era (1952-1954): "It is difficult to make a convincing case for manipulation of the press when the victims prove so eager for the experience."[2]

Think William Broad, Michael Gordon, David Sanger, Judith Miller, Marlise Simons, Steven Erlanger, Ethan Bronner, Seth Mydans, Simon Romero, Bill Keller, etc., etc., just scratching the surface of one large U.S. newspaper.

This has to be coming from the deep structure of the U.S. system, with the corporate and financial sectors and military-industrial complex increasingly affluent and powerful in a system of growing inequality, shaping and limiting political choices and interlocked with and dominating the media via ownership and advertising power. [3]

The pro-Israel lobby, closely linked to the military-industrial-complex and other elements of the power structure, pushes politics, the media, and foreign policy in the same direction.

Much more important is the structural lunacy that causes supposed "centrists" to choose the funding of a growing war machine, constantly improved methods of killing, and permanent war as an unchallengeable centerpiece of policy and resource use in a world of growing inequality, huge infrastructure needs, and major environmental threats

There is much talk these days about the growth of a lunatic fringe on the right that threatens political rationality and even the governability of the country.

But much more important is the structural lunacy that causes supposed "centrists" to choose the funding of a growing war machine, constantly improved methods of killing, and permanent war as an unchallengeable centerpiece of policy and resource use in a world of growing inequality, huge infrastructure needs, and major environmental threats. Indeed, structural lunacy is now built into the system and poses a greater threat than rightwing lunacy, which flows in good part from the impact and propaganda of the primary lunacy.[4]

A sad fact is that U.S. power and global (mainly Western) elite interests are so great that U.S. and Israeli imperial projects can also mobilize the support of the "international community" (i.e., political leaders and international institutions, not popular majorities), which regularly transforms the chosen villain into the target, not only of the superpower, but also of the United Nations - especially the Security Council and some of the UN agencies. A dramatic case in point has been the U.S. and U.K. use of the UN in their attacks on Iraq over two decades, first with the Persian Gulf war and follow-up "sanctions of mass destruction" (1990-2003), then with their outright aggressions beginning in the spring of 2002 and in their classic "shock and awe" attack and invasion starting in March 2003.

The United States, with UN assistance, refused to allow Saddam to negotiate his way out of Kuwait in 1990-1991, and in

the bombing war that followed, it deliberately destroyed Iraq's electrical and water purification and sanitation systems; and then, during the sanctions regime that followed, it refused to allow the import of repair equipment, with the resultant death of 500,000 children (along with a fair number of adults), declared "worth it" in Madeleine Albright's famous words. This was war-criminal and genocidal activity, but unnoticed by the international community or by Samantha Power and the "responsibility-to-protect" cadres.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the Iraq experience is how the UN was used to prepare the ground for the forthcoming aggression and occupation, and then to ratify it afterwards!

The U.S. and U.K. pressed evermore onerous UN inspections of Iraq's alleged "weapons of mass destruction" programs, always claiming that the previous inspections weren't sufficiently thorough, and that those (non-existent) WMD posed a serious threat to international peace and security. When the weapons inspectors of UNMOVIC found nothing despite the most stringent and intrusive inspections regime in history,[5] and a strong majority of the 15-member Security Council wouldn't provide the U.S. and U.K. with a vote in favor of war[6], the Bush and Blair administrations attacked Iraq anyway, in a gross violation of the UN Charter.

But the Security Council not only failed to condemn this clear act of aggression, it soon voted for the United States occupation rights.[7] And the subsequent death of a million more Iraqis and creation of four million Iraqi refugees has in no way impeded the U.S.'s ability to manage the UN and international community.

This is dramatically displayed in the U.S., UN, EU, and media treatment of Iran.

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In fact, the media, whose leaders had not yet even begun to apologize for their gullibility in disseminating the pre-March 2003 lies on Iraq,[8] and the UN leadership, which ought to have been embarrassed by having been lied to and played a sucker and made an aggression-collaborator in the run-up to the war, and then an occupation-collaborator, both quickly resumed the same service when the United States turned its attention to the alleged threat posed by Iran's nuclear program in May 2003.[9]

But it is not that the media and UN never learn. Instead, what makes them look so foolish and so much like instruments of the imperial state is that power rules - and they are instruments of the imperial state. And there is nobody with enough political muscle and courage to tell the emperor and the agents-prostitutes of his imperial court in a voice loud enough to be heard that "he has nothing on at all." Even some of the victims can be bullied or bought to stay quiet, or to join the "coalition of hegemonist power-projection" (e.g., Russia and China, in joining the sanctions parade against the Iran menace).

The misrepresentations and hypocrisy in the construction of the Iranian threat, and of the need for the United States and the "international community" to police and counter this threat, are numerous indeed. In what follows, we address some of them.

1. The most remarkable feature of the construction of the Iran "threat" is that it has been organized by the world's three preeminent gangster regimes: The United States, Britain, and Israel (though Israel is largely forbidden from playing a public role).

These three regimes have been engaged in major violations of international

law over the same years that they brought Iran into the crosshairs of the "international community." Whereas the U.S. and U.K. have invaded and occupied both Afghanistan and Iraq (countries to Iran's east and west) during this decade alone, and they aided Saddam Hussein's Iraq as it carried out a bloody war of aggression against Iran in the 1980s, Iran has not moved outside its borders in the last century and beyond. Yet, these unclean U.S. and U.K. hands have made no difference to the exercise of their right and capacity to organize international sanctions against Iran. Along with their allies in the NATO bloc (see the Concluding Note, below), they are committed to the permanent expansion of their military alliance and to permanent war and the militarization of vast areas of the planet.

As the unquestioned leader of this gang of super rogues, the United States is escalating its wars against distant Afghanistan and Pakistan and it is still occupying Iraq following its massive attack and invasion of 2003, which has virtually destroyed that country; and Israel, after its UN Charter violation and war in Lebanon in 2006, has accelerated its dispossessions and settlements in the Occupied West Bank in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and more recently carried out a brutal onslaught against the Gaza Palestinians.

Israel regularly prevents unwanted negotiations from reaching a settlement with the Palestinians because a defined, internationally recognized border would make Israel's further dispossession of Palestinians more difficult. The United States underwrites a phony "peace" – but really ethnic-cleansing – process in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Meanwhile, it wages its own serial wars and prepares for future wars because U.S. power projection is institutionalized in this highly militarized society, and weapons, threats, and violence rank among the United States' primary (and booming) export businesses.[10] The vested interests at work here are clearly immense. As Madeleine Albright once said to Colin Powell, "What is the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?"[11]

Meanwhile, Israel has built up a nuclear weapons arsenal that includes some 150-250 warheads, plus delivery systems by land, sea, air, and ballistic missile, with the help of the United States, France, and Germany, and has managed to maintain and improve this capability for more than 40 years while refusing to sign the NPT and subject itself to IAEA inspections

2. The United States organized the overthrow of the then-democratic government of Iran in 1953 and installed a torture-prone dictator, the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi,[12] his torturers trained by U.S. and Israeli experts. With the Shah in power, the United States actually encouraged Iran's development of nuclear energy.[13] But with his overthrow in 1979, the United States reversed course and nuclear energy was no longer permissible for Iran. This crude politicization of nuclear energy rights and perversion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)[14] does not influence the UN, EU, or media treatment of this issue.

3. Meanwhile, Israel has built up a nuclear weapons arsenal that includes some 150-250 warheads, plus delivery systems by land, sea, air, and ballistic missile, with the help of the United States, France, and Germany, and has managed to maintain and improve this capability for more than 40 years while refusing to sign the NPT and subject itself to IAEA inspections. It is well established that a secret agreement was struck between U.S. President Richard Nixon and Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meier back in 1969 to accept and to maintain silence over the Israeli nuclear weapons program, often referred to as the "U.S.-Israeli nuclear understanding."[15]

Less well known but reported of late is that this understanding was reaffirmed in discussions between Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during the latter's visit to the White House in May of this year.

After U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller had lumped Israel together with three other nuclear-weapons states (India, Pakistan, and North Korea) in her remarks at a preparatory session for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, stating that "Universal adherence to the NPT remains a fundamental objective of the United States," the reaction in Israel was hysterical.[16] By the date Netanyahu sat down with Obama on May 18, Avner Cohen and George Perkovich explain, Israel's "ultimate nightmare" faced Netanyahu. "[I]f Iran is willing to negotiate seriously, it might agree to substantial concessions only on a regional basis, as a step towards the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone. In such a case, Israel could be pressed to make its own nuclear concessions, possibly even to shut down the Dimona reactor as part of the price for effectively halting Iran's enrichment activities at Natanz. This last point may have far-reaching ramifications on Israel's entire bargain with the bomb."[17]

According to the *Washington Times,* however, Obama "reaffirmed" the not-so-secret "understanding that has allowed Israel to keep a nuclear arsenal without opening it to international inspections." Netanyahu even boasted over Israel's Channel 2 television that when he met with Obama in May, he "asked to receive from him an itemized list of the strategic understandings that have existed for many years between Israel and the United States on that issue." Obama obliged, Netanyahu added. In effect, "The president gave Israel an NPT treaty get out of jail free card," one Senate staffer told the *Washington Times*.[18]

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With this reaffirmation of the 1969 understanding, the 40-year-old double standard is officially institutionalized and the issues at stake are not discussible in the Free Press. As was the case with the Shah of Iran, a U.S. client is exempt from the stern rules that apply to a target like present-day Iran, and the political leadership and media can get hugely excited and indignant at Iranian "secrecy" on its nuclear facilities, while maintaining complete silence and zero indignation at Israeli secrecy on its Dimona nuclear facilities in the southern Negev desert. This double standard is of course helped along by target demonization and suppression or playing down of murderous and illegal behavior by "our side," and it is carried out by both the internalization of bias and professional levels of pretended objectivity.

So thoroughly institutionalized is this double standard that when, for the first time in its history, the annual General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, held in Vienna in mid-September, voted 49 to 45 to adopt a binding resolution that "calls upon Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards," that is, for Israel's nuclear weapons program to be treated like Iran's civilian nuclear program, thereby "realizing the universality of the NPT in the Middle East,"[19] the English-language news media observed near total silence about the vote. As best we can tell, the only major English-language print daily that reported this resolution was the next day's *Irish Times*,[20] and nothing showed up in any major U.S. print media.

4. Also unmentionable is the fact that the United States is itself in violation of the

NPT (as is every other state that tested a nuclear weapon prior to January 1, 1967 [21]), as Article VI requires that all parties to the NPT "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."[22]

But they have not done this, and the United States has openly striven to improve its nuclear weapons to make their use more practicable in warfare,[23] and both the United States and NATO have openly declared the importance of a "credible" nuclear posture to the Alliance "to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war."[24] Moreover, Security Council Resolution 1887, adopted with much fanfare during the opening week of the United Nations in late September, when a sitting U.S. president chaired the Council session for the first time in UN history, calls upon all Parties to the NPT to live up to the NPT's nuclear disarmament demands under Article VI, just as it calls upon all states that are not Parties to the NPT "to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States so as to achieve its universality at an early date, and pending their accession to the Treaty, to adhere to its terms."[25]

But as power rules, the multiple NPT violations of the five declared nuclear-weapon states that claim membership in the NPT while rejecting disarmament (the United States, Russia, Britain, France, and China), the violations of the three declared nuclear-weapon states outside the NPT (India, Pakistan, and North Korea), and the violations of the sole nuclear-weapon state never to have declared its status as a nuclear power while also remaining outside the NPT (Israel) are ignored (excepting for North Korea, among the most isolated UN members in the world). Nor do these violations interfere in the least with UN, international community, and mainstream media indignation over the alleged NPT violations of the target country, Iran.

Both the United States and Israel have threatened to attack Iran. Both have nuclear arms and delivery systems. But Iran is not to be permitted to enrich uranium within its national territory, much less build a single nuclear weapon, although given these credible threats by its declared enemies, it urgently needs such weapons as part of its self-defensen

5. Both the United States and Israel have threatened to attack Iran. Both have nuclear arms and delivery systems. But Iran is not to be permitted to enrich uranium within its national territory, much less build a single nuclear weapon, although given these credible threats by its declared enemies, it urgently needs such weapons as part of its self-defense. The Israeli military analyst Martin van Creveld has even argued that, given the destruction that the United States has caused to the nuclear-weaponless Afghanistan and Iraq, "Had the Iranians not tried to build nuclear weapons [to deter an attack], they would be crazy."[26]

As one senior Pentagon adviser told Seymour Hersh: The Bush administration "believe[d] that that the only way to solve the problem is to change the power structure in Iran and that means war. . . . [The danger is that] it also reinforces the belief inside Iran that the only way to defend the country is to have a nuclear capability."[27] But in a world dominated by super rogues and structural lunacy, Iran can be threatened with nuclear attack, literally even attacked by conventional forces (see Point 6, below), but it cannot enrich uranium for peaceful purposes without running afoul of the super rogues and UN agencies. In short, Iran has no right of self-defense. And because even civilian nuclear capability would advance Iran toward weapons capability, it cannot exercise its rights to civilian nuclear facilities as guaranteed by its membership within NPT.

6. The United States and close allies have been engaged in a campaign to destabilize Iran's government and national life for several years running (at minimum). Of course there is the massive destabilization caused by militarily invading and occupying Iran's neighbors, Afghanistan and Iraq, and by saturating the Middle East with weapons of war and human grievances that span generations. There are also the economic sanctions unilaterally imposed on Iran by the United States, but now expanded and enforced by the Security Council.

Then there are the more conventional kind of attacks that the United States has used against dozens of countries. The Bush administration wasn't shy about publicizing its intention to "mount a covert 'black' operation" against Iran, even leaking (i.e. publicizing via anonymous sources fed to the media) the fact that Bush had "signed a 'nonlethal presidential finding' that puts into motion a CIA plan that reportedly includes a coordinated campaign of propaganda, disinformation and manipulation of Iran's currency and international financial transactions," as ABC TV News reported in 2007.[28] The word 'nonlethal' needs to be taken with a large grain of salt: ABC also reported that Bush "supported and encouraged an Iranian militant group Jundullah, that has conducted deadly raids inside Iran from bases on the rugged Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan 'tri-border region'," with Jundullah ("Soldiers of God") itself claiming that it had "been recruiting and training 'hundreds of men' for 'unspecified missions' across the border in Iran." Scores of terrorist bombings, kidnappings, assassinations, and shootdowns of Iranian military aircraft inside Iran provide some evidence of what these "unspecified missions" really entail. On Iran's periphery, Bush recruited minority Baluchis in the southeast, minority Kurds in the northwest, and minority Azeris in the north, and threw hundreds of millions of dollars at them. The purpose, as Hersh reports it, was to develop a "secret military task force" inside Iran "designed to destabilize the country's religious leadership" and, as one Bush insider told Hersh, to "undermine the government through regime change."[29]

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Planning for the final attack on Iran was "enormous" under Bush, a senior intelligence official told Hersh. "Space assets, SLBMs [submarine-launched ballistic missiles], tactical air, and sabotage, cooperation from the Turks and the Russians . . . . significant air attacks on [Iran's] countermeasures and anti-aircraft missiles – a huge takedown." Also various combinations of "bunker-buster" bombs, including "tactical nuclear weapons, such as the B6-11, against underground nuclear sites."[30] (Israel and the United States have kept the threat or potential use of "bunker-buster" bombs [by whatever name] against Iran's nuclear facilities a recurring topic for the international media since at least September 2004.[31])

When Hersh reported this in the spring of 2006, the only primary underground nuclear site was Iran's pilot fuel enrichment plant at Natanz, some 200 miles south of Tehran, and under IAEA surveillance since 2003. Now, of course, a second underground site, built into a mountainside at Fordo, near the holy city of Qom, has also been disclosed. It is significant that, when discussing the facility at Fordo, Iranian political figures explain its location in terms of Iran's need to defend it against possible Western bombing attack. "Given the threats we face every day," Iran's Atomic Energy Organization head Ali Akbar Salehi said, "we are required to take the necessary precautionary mea-

sures, spread our facilities and protect our human assets. Therefore, the facility is to guarantee the continuation of our nuclear activities under any conditions."[32] In September, the Israeli Air Force General Ido Nehushtan told the Jerusalem Post that Israel is concerned about the Russian-built S-300 surface-to-air missile defense system, which is "very advanced with long ranges and many capabilities. We need to make every effort to stop this system from getting to places where the IAF needs to operate or may need to operate in the future."[33] During an interview with the Russian Interfax news service in May, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller stated that the "U.S. is very concerned about the potential sale of S-300s to Iran, because they could be very destabilizing in that region."[34] Her reason was the same as General Nehushtan's: The S-300s are very good at defending sites targeted by aerial attack. The largest purchaser of the S-300 in the Middle East is Iran. An Iran that can defend itself could destabilize the region, goes the U.S. and Israeli argument – that is, could make other states more likely to attack Iran, before it acquires the means to better defend itself.

In short, both the United States and Israel not only have openly threatened Iran with military attack – itself a violation of the UN Charter's prohibition that "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force" (Art. 2.4) – but the United States has been directly and indirectly carrying out military and terrorist moves against Iran for years, just as the United States and Britain did in bombing Iraq's surface-to-air defense systems well before they launched the actual invasion in March 2003. In fact, a large suicide bombing was carried out on October 18, 2009 in the city of Pisheen, in Iran's far southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, near its border with Pakistan.

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The bombing killed a number of Iranian Revolutionary Guard commanders as well as civilians, and led immediately to suspicions of indirect U.S. involvement. Mohammad Marzieh, the chief prosecutor for the province, told the media that the Sunni-Baluchi ethnic minority organization Jundullah had claimed responsibility for the attack, one of many it has carried out since 2005, leaving hundreds of victims, and once again putting the lie to the "nonlethal" side of the presidential finding signed by Bush in 2007.[35] All of this is in violation of international law, but it is normalized in the establishment media and international community, where it poses no obstacle to the relentless focus on the perfidy of the Iranian regime – including the massive attention devoted to Iran's presidential election last June, along with major efforts to discredit it[36] – and the alleged threat that the target of these attacks poses to its attackers.

7. In presiding over the session of the Security Council at which Resolution 1887 was unanimously adopted, President Barack Obama told the Council: "We must demonstrate that international law is not an empty promise and that treaties will be enforced." But, as with the decades-long U.S.-Israeli "nuclear understanding" by which the United States singles out Israel to protect it against demands that it accede to the NPT and open its nuclear program to IAEA inspections (or dismantle its weapons program altogether), the Obama administration reaffirmed the United States' special understanding with India within 24 hours of 1887's adoption.

The Bush administration had reached

a series of major deals with India and the U.S. Congress beginning with the July 2005 Joint Statement on civilian energy cooperation with India, and culminating in the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act of October 2008.[37] Throughout these deals, the so-called "India anomaly," the fact that India has been a wildcat nuclear-weapons proliferator since its first weapons test in 1974, and refuses to join the NPT, lurked in the background. The United States pressured India to accept a "separation" between its civilian and its military nuclear programs such that any U.S. assistance India receives will go strictly to the peaceful, civilian side; although this wall is largely if not completely imaginary, the pretense that it helped to bring India into conformity with the NPT was a critical selling point for the rest of the U.S.-India deal. The Bush administration then joined with Congress in creating India-specific exemptions under the 1954 U.S. Atomic Energy Act that will enable the United States to export nuclear technology and material to India. Perhaps most remarkably, the United States also pressured the Nuclear Suppliers Group to lift its ban on the export of fissile material to India, under the just-mentioned separation pretense. Last, the United States pressured the IAEA to reach a watered-down "safeguards" agreement with India, but on condition that India not be forced to join the NPT, a move India adamantly opposes.

What has driven this new "strategic partnership" between the United States and India are the rapid development of China as an economic (and no doubt eventual military) power[38] and the desire of U.S.-based firms in the nuclear energy as well as military sectors to sell nuclear reactors and weapons to India. The government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has announced plans to increase India's nuclear energy capacity some one-hundredfold by 2050 (from 4,120 megawatts today, up to 470,000 megawatts); while the projections may be unrealistic, "each reactor sale to India by companies such as Areva and Westinghouse signifies contracts worth billions of dollars and translates into thousands of jobs for Americans, French and Russians."[39] Another potential windfall to U.S. firms, India plans to spend $100 billion on military imports over the next decade as it begins replacing its Soviet-era hardware; "India is steering away from traditional ally Russia, . . . and looking toward the United States to help upgrade its weapons systems and troop gear."[40]

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But India being an active nuclear weapons rogue since its first atomic test in 1974, one of three nuclear-weapons states outside the NPT, which is now reportedly capable of building "high-yield" bombs of 200 kilotons or more,[41] U.S. law unambiguously prohibits such deals. Hence, the many bilateral agreements and new U.S. laws exempting India since 2005. Thus when asked at a September 25 news conference in New York City whether the "U.S. side" could comment on India's letter to the UN "saying that India was not in a position to sign the NPT," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert O. Blake said the "resolution [1887] that was passed yesterday unanimously by the Security Council does not have any bearing on our bilateral civil nuclear cooperation. . . . So we've provided reassurances to that effect to our friends in the Indian Government."[42] Attending the Group of 20 summit in Pittsburgh, India's Prime Minister Singh was more direct: "We have been assured that this is not a resolution directed at India and that the U.S. commitment to carry

out its obligations under the civil nuclear agreements that we have signed with United States remains undiluted. That we have been assured officially by the United States government."[43]

Of course, both Singh and Blake are right, and the U.S. President wrong: Security Council resolutions, the NPT, international law, and the like are enforced not according to their letter or their spirit, but according to the asymmetries of world power. The Superpower Gang gets to gang up on Iran, and to rattle whatever resolutions and treaties it can muster over the heads of the managed populations in countries such as the United States, Britain, France, and Germany to keep their minds properly fixed on the targeted villain. India, on the other hand, one of the genuine rogue states in the field of nuclear weapons proliferation (exactly like Israel and Pakistan, but not like Iran), gets its own unique version of the "NPT treaty get out of jail free card," compliments first the Bush and now the Obama administrations. The "India anomaly" stands – though there is nothing in the least anomalous about it.

8. Since early 2002, when Bush first lumped Iran, Iraq, and North Korea into the "axis of evil," states "seeking weapons of mass destruction" and "arming to threaten the peace of the world,"[44] the United States has accused Iran of pursuing a secret nuclear weapons program. Prior to 2003, Iran had indeed failed to meet certain obligations under its NPT-Safeguards Agreement "with respect to the reporting of nuclear material, the subsequent processing and use of that material and the declaration of facilities where the material was stored and processed," as the IAEA concluded at the time.[45] The IAEA then placed the relevant facilities under its surveillance, according to its standard safeguards protocol.

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From roughly May-June 2003 on,[46] the U.S. strategy has been to claim incessantly that Iran is in violation of the NPT. Although Iran has rights under the NPT to research and develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes,[47] the United States maintains that it will not accept certain Iranian nuclear activities, whether lawful or not. In particular, this relates to Iran's enrichment of uranium – "mastering the nuclear-fuel cycle" – at one or more uranium enrichment plants, most notably the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant at Natanz. As the Bush administration's former UN Ambassador John Bolton once stated: "This is a test of the Security Council. If the Iranians insist, as they have for years now, that they want an indigenous uranium enrichment capability, that's something we can't accept."[48]

Through early 2006, the United States pressed the IAEA's Board of Governors to take action against Iran based on the "absence of confidence that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively for peaceful purposes," where this "absence of confidence" is a function, not of Iran's conduct, but of its accusers' unwillingness to accept any measure that Iran undertakes. When the IAEA's Board finally agreed in February 2006 to pass along its "dossier" on Iran's nuclear program to the Security Council, the Board's resolution (among other things) "[deemed] it necessary for Iran to re-establish full and sustained suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities," stated that Iran needed to provide "credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran," and referred the matter to the Security Council.[49] The Security Council obliged the United States and, by December 2006, began imposing

sanctions on Iran.[50]

These sanctions remain in place today, almost three years later. But now there are greatly heightened pressures from the U.S., U.K., and France to tighten the sanctions, despite the IAEA's latest (and its 27th overall) report in late August that it "continues to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran."[51]

The whole seven-year-plus charade by which the United States and its allies have been able to exploit the IAEA to harass Iran over its nuclear program can be summed up by a sentence from the August report (repeated many times over the years): The IAEA is not yet "in a position to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran"[52] – a condition deliberately structured so as to be impervious to refutation by Iran or, crucially, as the world witnessed in the case of Iraq, until such time as it is too late to make a material difference.

Iran's inability to prove a negative to the satisfaction of states that won't accept the existence of Iran's nuclear program anyway is the intellectual and moral loophole that enables one IAEA report after another to come up empty-handed and yet provide the impetus for the next round of U.S.-driven allegations, and the next report. Phrasing such as this was evident in the very first of the IAEA's published reports in June 2003 (i.e., "the Agency's ability to provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear activities is limited"[53]), and phrasing like it has been used in virtually every other one of the IAEA's published reports on Iran since then.

The belief in the West that the Iranians (or the Persians) are so cunning and dangerous that the absence of undeclared nuclear activities in Iran is far more threatening than anything concrete the IAEA can investigate helps to explain why the incoming director of the IAEA, Yukiya Amano, can state in July that he "[doesn't] see any evidence in IAEA official documents [that Tehran is seeking nuclear weapons capability],"[54] but his words have zero impact: Iran simply is building nuclear weapons.

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It also explains why the current director of the IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei, after 12 years in his post and the recipient of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize for the IAEA's "efforts to prevent nuclear energy from being used for military purposes,"[55] can tell the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists –

In many ways, I think the threat has been hyped. Yes, there's concern about Iran's future intentions and Iran needs to be more transparent with the IAEA and international community. But the idea that we'll wake up tomorrow and Iran will have a nuclear weapon is an idea that isn't supported by the facts as we have seen them so far.[56] – yet almost nobody listens, and the search for Iran's nuclear weapons program gains momentum.

It explains why, based strictly on leaks from anonymous sources, first Associated Press and then the *New York Times* can publish spectacular, headline-grabbing allegations about an internal IAEA "Secret Annex" to its periodic reports that is said to prove Iran "has the ability to make a nuclear bomb and worked on developing a missile system that can carry an atomic warhead" (AP, September 17) and "acquired 'sufficient information to be able to design and produce a workable' atomic bomb" (*New York Times*, October 4) – and even ElBaradei's counter-claim that the IAEA "has no concrete proof that there is or has been a nuclear weapon program in Iran" is drowned out by the allegations.[57]

And it explains why Barack Obama,

Gordon Brown, and Nicolas Sarkozy can call a special news conference ahead of the opening round of the Group of 20 Summit in Pittsburgh in late September, where they pretended that their intelligence services had caught Iran red-handed with a covert, undeclared nuclear facility, even though this facility at Fordo, near Qom, already had been declared by Iran, exactly as Iran is supposed to do under agreements related to the NPT – and this non-revelation about an already-declared facility becomes the gotcha moment, after several days of using the start of the 64th session of the United Nations to single out Iran and "draw a line in the sand" that the "international community" mustn't permit Iran to cross: "Iran must abandon any military ambitions for its nuclear program" (Brown).[58]

9. As we've just seen, in the current establishment hysteria over the Iran threat, one important feature has been demonization of the target state; and the more successfully the targeted state is demonized, the more the principle of anything goes holds true.

Indeed, demonization is standard operating procedure when a U.S. attack and regime change are in the offing. In the case of Guatemala back in 1950-1954, there was a steady official and mainstream media outcry over an alleged takeover by the Reds (which was untrue). In a notable episode the importation of a boatload of small arms from Czechoslovakia by the threatened country was the basis of great publicity and worry in the U.S. media.

The CIA, however, greeted this news with glee as the agency "had long been searching for a credible pretext under which to 'unleash' Castillo Armas [the CIA's contra leader based in Nicaragua]," and the CIA had already begun to plant

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weapons with conspicuous Soviet markings for discovery by the Guatemalan police.[59] In the 1980s, Nicaragua's Sandinista leaders were accused of supplying weapons to Salvadoran rebels, were allegedly importing MIGs from the Soviet Union at the time of – and distracting attention from – their 1984 election, and were said to be sponsoring a "revolution without borders." Iraq was allegedly building those WMD and threatening U.S. national security. And then Iran was accused of supplying various Iraqi groups with weapons – only the U.S. invader had a right to supply arms in Iraq – and Iran is of course pursuing a nuclear energy program that has the United States and Israel trembling as both rattle their nuclear arsenals.

And the media tremble also

Iranian words are also frightening, just as were Krushchev's "I will bury you," the alleged Sandinista threat of a "revolution without borders," and Grenada's reported threat to cut off the supply of nutmeg. Notoriously, in the rich load of disinformation that surrounds Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the West, it is held that Ahmadinejad once claimed that "Israel must be wiped off the map of the world,"60 and that he is a "Holocaust denier."[61] Actually, in the first case, what Ahmadinejad really said was "This occupation regime over Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time"[62] – that is, he never threatened or predicted that Israel would be militarily attacked, but asserted that it would disappear as a "Jewish," i.e., racist, state, and he went on to make an analogy with the disappearance of the Soviet Union.

In the case of the holocaust, Ahmadinejad doesn't deny Nazi Germany's efforts in the 1930s and 1940s to kill or drive away as many Jews and other victims as pos-

sible. Instead, he says repeatedly that the Europeans compounded this crime when, in the aftermath of World War II, in classic imperial fashion, they tried to solve their "Jewish problem" by imposing a "Jewish state" upon the Palestinians. Ahmadinejad also says that these topics ought to be studied, and no one ought to assume that the final word on history has been established. In other words, first the Europeans carried out the holocaust, then they transferred it to the Middle East. And these are the same Europeans (and Americans, the West) who lecture Iranians about the difference between "civilization" and "barbarism," and warn that the "greatest threat facing the world today is the marriage between religious fanaticism and the weapons of mass destruction"![63]

But it was convenient to misinterpret his words as a military threat, just as in parallel it was convenient to ignore the fact that Israel has repeatedly made actual threats to bomb Iran, has openly discussed plans for such an attack, and has aggressively sought U.S. action along the same line or approval of an Israeli attack.[64] As regards holocaust denial, even if true what would it prove beyond ignorance and gross insensitivity? Is it a worse crime than the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians on the West Bank? Isn't the West's support of this ethnic cleansing and unwillingness to penalize Israel in any way for its murderous attack on Gaza more despicable than holocaust denial, given that it protects actual and ongoing killing and dispossession based on religious-ethnic bias rather than merely misrepresenting history? Isn't this protection of Israel a form of "slow-genocide denial"?

10. We started this catalogue by saying that the most remarkable feature of the construction of the Iran "threat" is that it is has been organized by the world's three

As regards holocaust denial, even if true what would it prove beyond ignorance and gross insensitivity? Is it a worse crime than the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians on the West Bank?

preeminent gangster regimes. But equally remarkable, we believe, is that, like the Guatemalan threat of Soviet proxy aggression, the Nicaraguan threat of a "revolution without borders," and Iraq's WMD ready to raise "mushroom clouds" over Western capitals, the Iran threat is mythical. The Iranians have no nuclear bomb, may well have no intention of building a nuclear bomb, and, even if they ever did build one, could only use it in an act of desperate self-defense against their enemies, who have lots of nuclear bombs and the means of delivering them,[65] and regularly threaten to use them against Iran.

U.S. power has made the Iran nuclear program into a global fright and forced the IAEA to focus incessantly on whether Iran is abiding by its commitments under the NPT or hiding something from IAEA inspectors. In a way this is comical, as the U.S. violates its own NPT promise without notice, let alone penalty; its client Israel is permitted to stay outside the NPT, build nuclear weapons, and threaten Iran, without notice or penalty; the U.S. can exempt from NPT rules other states like India and Pakistan in accord with its current calculations of political and/or economic advantage; and the U.S. can still mobilize the IAEA, Security Council, and international community to contain the menacing Iran – still bombless, and still threatened with attack.

Concluding Note: The Struggle for Western Hegemony

Since the collapse of the Soviet bloc (symbolized by the downing of the Berlin Wall in November 1989), the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself in 1991, and the termination of the Warsaw Pact military alliance that same year, the allegedly "defensive" North Atlantic Treaty Organization has expanded from 16 members to

28, disregarding an agreement between the first Bush administration and the last Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev in which Bush I pledged that the "borders of NATO would not move eastward" if the Soviet Union agreed to the peaceful reunification of East and West Germany in October 1990.[66] In its wholesale violation of this agreement, NATO added to its membership the Czech Republic (1999), Hungary (1999), Poland (1999), Bulgaria (2004) Estonia (2004), Latvia (2004), Lithuania (2004), Romania (2004), and Slovakia (2004), and it added Slovenia (2004), Albania (2009) and Croatia (2009) as well.[67] NATO also maintains Partnership for Peace relations with 22 other countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia,[68] and Mediterranean Dialogue relations with 7 others (Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia).[69] One of the great myths of the past two decades holds that the collapse of the Soviet bloc signaled the passing of the East-West "bloc era" of the global order. But in fact it has ushered in an era of U.S.-led Western bloc hegemony, as signaled by the first war against Iraq in early 1991, the more extensive invasions and occupations of this first decade of the 21st Century, and the buildup of NATO as an instrument of global domination.

Although it served as NATO's rationale for more than 40 years, the threat posed by the Soviet bloc to Western Europe and the United States was wildly exaggerated, and NATO's post-Soviet expansion has taken place in an environment where the United States and other great Western powers have faced no real military challenge. However, there was the challenge that dismantling NATO would harm military establishment interests and those of weapons dealers in both the United States and Europe, and would end the justification for U.S. bases in Europe and weaken the United States' ability to dominate Western military and even economic policy and to mobilize Europe for its program of global domination (under the rubric of a "war on terror"). Along with this challenge was the opportunity for the United States to continue and even enlarge its domination, making NATO into an instrument of the war on terror – in reality, a war of terror and conquest.

If real enemies and threats aren't available, then manufactured enemies and threats are called for, and it was also possible to manufacture real ones by sufficient provocation of relatively weak powers and forcing their armament or movement to trigger-ready violence

For the United States to accomplish this requires enemies and threats. If real enemies and threats aren't available, then manufactured enemies and threats are called for, and it was also possible to manufacture real ones by sufficient provocation of relatively weak powers and forcing their armament or movement to trigger-ready violence. As a key member of NATO, the United States was heavily responsible for that organization's military attacks on Russia's ally Yugoslavia, 1995-1999, its putting the KLA-dominated Kosovo Protection Corps (and later the Armed Forces of Kosovo) in power in this southern Serbian province, eventually giving it independent state status and recognition (from February 2008 on), and setting the stage for NATO-member Albania and its Kosovo ally to threaten a military struggle for a unified Greater Albania.[70] NATO and the United States have seriously threatened Russia by incorporating into NATO the Baltic countries and Eastern Europe; by building military bases in Romania, Bulgaria, and Kosovo; by threatening anti-missile sites in Czechoslovakia and Poland, now cancelled in favor of more numerous mobile sites throughout Europe and the Middle East along with planned Aegis missile-carrying ships, still allegedly devoted to that monumental threat from nuclear-bomb-free Iran; and by "democracy-promotion" intervention

and the aggressive militarization of Russia's southern flank, including the arming, training, and active support of Georgia in its 2008 conflict with Russia and ongoing attempts to bring both Georgia and the Ukraine into NATO. This is threat manufacture of an especially blatant sort, but the Free Press has made Russia's very lagged hostile reaction into a new Russian pugnacity.[71]

There are other "threats" with which NATO's "New Strategic Concept" must allegedly contend. In various speeches and conferences, NATO leaders have claimed a need for NATO military preparedness to deal with what are now referred to as "Third-Millennium concerns." Current NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen recently listed 17 different "deadly threats" among the "growing list of responsibilities" to which NATO must be prepared to respond, most of which read like they derived from survivalist literature, including global warming, drought, food security, population migrations, energy security, storms, natural and humanitarian disasters, nuclear threats, cyber attacks, and piracy.[72] Why these are the "responsibility" of a U.S.-EU-based "defensive" military organization is not clear, except that its dominant powers choose to displace the more multilateral and democratically representative United Nations with something more controllable and willing to rely heavily on force.

In the case of "energy security," there is a question of whose security is at stake, and how it may be obtained. Isn't China's "energy security" threatened by the U.S. and NATO conquest of Afghanistan and Iraq, by their political penetration of the Caspian basin countries, and by their threat of war against Iran? Isn't the U.S.-U.K. invasion-occupation of Iraq, with NATO collaboration, an attempt to gain

Isn't China's "energy security" threatened by the U.S. and NATO conquest of Afghanistan and Iraq, by their political penetration of the Caspian basin countries, and by their threat of war against Iran?

"energy security" by force in violation of international law? Could it be that all of these threats, including the "nuclear," are being defined by the NATO powers strictly in accord with the economic and political interests of their principals, who represent a small minority of the global population?

The United States is still expanding the number and reach of its military bases, moving into Africa, planning multiple bases in Colombia, and building them throughout Eastern Europe, the Caspian basin, and the Balkans. The United States and NATO have brought Finland and Sweden into cooperative military arrangements and have gotten many of the new NATO entrants and NATO "partners" to re-arm and to contribute forces to the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan. As the U.S.-based analyst Rick Rozoff observes, "A major function of the Afghan war is to train military forces from over fifty nations – in five continents, the Middle East and Oceania – under NATO command for counterinsurgency and other combat operations both in South Asia and afterwards in other parts of the world. In doing so numerous NATO partnership countries . . . are to varying degrees being integrated into the bloc's plan for history's first global army."[73] But this army will not serve the interests of the populations of the newly mobilized "partners," nor will it keep the peace and security of the world. In fact, it will be a mercenary army, one ready to be deployed at the behest of its dominant members, who are now searching desperately for "grunts" to relieve themselves of the growing burdens of their global "responsibilities."

Even now the United States is helping rebuild Georgia's armed forces, and the U.S. and NATO stage regular war games and exercises with the Baltic, Scandina-

vian, Caspian basin, and Balkans states, all serving to provoke and threaten Russia and Iran, and to manufacture an environment of conflict and fear conducive to militarization and war. To cover over their own power projection and systems of permanent warfare and ethnic cleansing (in the case of Israel), the United States and Israel need villains and "threats." Both Iran and Russia have been demonized and mobilized to serve this purpose. And this program designed for permanent tension and war has been working well.

In fact, it has been working much better than it did in the case of the 1954 regime change in Guatemala. At that time, the disarmed target, about to be attacked by a mercenary army funded and directly assisted by the United States, appealed to the UN and international community for assistance. It got none, U.S. power assuring that the UN would deflect this appeal, and the other great powers failing to respond.[74]

But in the case of Iran, the UN actually helps the aggressor by providing a politicized instrument, the IAEA, which the aggressor can use – like it used the weapons-inspections program of UNMOVIC against Iraq in 2002-2003 – to focus attention on Iran's inability to prove that it possesses no secret, undeclared nuclear weapons program beyond the reach of the IAEA's inspectors, while the IAEA and the entire Western establishment ignore the vastly more serious NPT and other international law violations of the United States, its closest allies, and its clients. And in contrast with Guatemala in 1954, Britain and France are actively collaborating in the preparation for an attack on the U.S. target, Iran.

In this context, it is vital to recall that in 1996, the fourteen judges of the International Court of Justice ruled unanimously

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that "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control" – "without any doubt an objective of vital importance to the whole of the international community today."[75]

Yet, every one of the five declared nuclear weapon states have failed to meet this obligation from 1970 on, while one of these five, the United States, has shielded three other nuclear weapon rogue proliferators from acceding to the NPT, even as it singles out Iran for sanctions, threats, subversion – and perhaps much worse.

Thus in his remarks before the General Assembly (Sept. 23) and the Security Council on the day that Resolution 1887 was adopted (Sept. 24), Barack Obama said "this is not about singling out individual nations."[76] But he then proceeded to single out by name Iran (and North Korea), as did Gordon Brown and Nicolas Sarkozy, even as the United States was reaffirming the special exemptions from the NPT that it has arranged for both Israel and India. For the Great-Power rogues, the opening of the 64th Session of the UN was an orchestrated ganging-up on Iran.

And this is all part of a U.S.-NATO program for providing the world "peace and security" through strength and war. This is a Kafka-world advance over Guatemala 1954.

Endnotes

1 See The American Republics, "Guatemala," viz. "The Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic Offices," May 28, 1954, in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952 - 1954, Vol. IV, 1137-1139, here 1137.

2 Thomas McCann, An American Company: The Tragedy of United Fruit (New York: Crown, 1978), 47.

3 Leslie Gelb's tenure as foreign affairs and diplomatic editor at the New York Times was interrupted by a stint as director of policy planning at the Pentagon and later as policy planner in the State Department. On the revolving door and co-optation process at the New York Times, see Edward S. Herman, The Myth of the Liberal Media: An Edward Herman Reader (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999), 76-78.

4 About the class- and professional biases of the establishment's primary lunacy, a study commissioned by the British government's Panel on Fair Access to the Professions compared social mobility trends for two different birth cohorts in Britain (1958 and 1970) and found that, beginning in the 1960s, the apprenticeship route to professional careers began to decline; this trend has accelerated since. But the "biggest decline in social mobility occurred in the professions of journalism and accountancy" (19), with some 98% of entrants to the profession of journalism already possessing a degree in journalism or other post-graduate qualification (25). By this decade, less than 10% of new entrants into the field of journalism in Britain came from working-class backgrounds, and only 3% from homes headed by semi-skilled or unskilled labor. The "consequence is that some professions draw their interns from a limited pool of talent," the profession of journalism in particular (101). See the White Paper by Alan Milburn et al., Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions (U.K. Government, July, 2009). We are confident that a similar study of journalism in the United States would produce similar findings.

5 The UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspections Commission (UNMOVIC) was created by Security Council Resolution 1284 on December 17, 1999. But it was Resolution 1441 on November 8, 2002 that stated the Council was giving Iraq one "final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations" (para. 2), although, as history shows, Iraq already had complied, its WMD programs having been destroyed by the UNSCOM inspectors by 1995, and that Res. 1441's assertions that Iraq was then "in material breach of its [disarmament] obligations" (para. 1) were Great-Power fabrications designed to advance the imminent and criminal U.S.-U.K. aggression against Iraq.

6 See, e.g., "UK, US and Spain Won't Seek Vote on Draft Resolution, May Take 'Own Steps' to Disarm Iraq," UN News Center, March 17, 2003. As France's UN Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière stated upon hearing of the U.S.-U.K. decision to drop their effort to gain Security Council approval: "During the last days members of the Council repeatedly stated that, and it is a majority in the Council, that it would not be legitimate to authorize the use of force now while the inspections set up by the resolution are producing results. And now I understand that the [U.S.-U.K. cosponsors of the draft resolution] made some bilateral consultations last night and this morning and the result is that the majority of the Council confirms that they do not want to authorize the use of force. The majority considers that it would not be legitimate."

7 UN Security Council Resolution 1483 of May 22, 2003 lifted the 13 year economic siege of Iraq (para. 10), turned Iraq over to the United Nations to begin mopping up the humanitarian disaster that the sanctions and invasion had caused, and initiated the scramble for Iraq's resources. Security Council Resolution 1546 of June 8, 2004, by creating a Multinational Force for Iraq, and placing the United States in

charge of it, granted retroactive de jure legitimation to the U.S. and allied military occupation of Iraq.

8 The most memorable of the high-profile mea culpas (however narrow) on the part of the news media did not begin to emerge until May 2004, when the New York Times famously acknowledged its partial liability for "coverage that was not as rigorous as it should have been," printing "questionable" allegations that were "insufficiently qualified or allowed to stand unchallenged," and failing to be "more aggressive in re-examining the claims as new evidence emerged or failed to emerge" (see "The Times and Iraq," Editorial, May 26, 2004). It is worth noting that, by May 2004, the Times already had been printing questionable allegations about Iran's nuclear program for some 12 months.

9 Speaking on the deck of the U.S. aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln on May 1, 2003, President George Bush proclaimed "one victory in a war on terror that began on September 11, 2001, and still goes on." Less than one week later, the Bush administration began to express concerns that "Iran has stepped up its covert nuclear program," sought "broad international support for an official finding that Tehran has violated its commitment not to produce nuclear weapons," and began "pressing nations that sit on the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency . . . to declare that Iran has violated the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty" (Steven R. Weisman, "New U.S. Concerns on Iran's Pursuit of Nuclear Arms," New York Times, May 8, 2003). Before the end of May 2003, the National Council of Resistance of Iran held a news conference in Washington D.C. to announce that Iran is covertly enriching uranium – "information that, if proven, might add to the Bush administration's argument that Iran is violating its commitment not to produce nuclear weapons" (Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Group Says Iran Has 2 Undisclosed Nuclear Laboratories," New York Times, May 27, 2003).

The same month, both houses of the U.S. Congress "approved a series of provisions sought by the White House and the Pentagon that could open the door to development of new nuclear weapons. . . . [T]he House eased a 10-year-old ban on research into smaller nuclear weapons while the Senate lifted it entirely. Lawmakers also rejected proposals to block spending on turning existing nuclear warheads into weapons capable of piercing underground bunkers" (Carl Hulse and James Dao, "Cold War Long Over, Bush Administration Examines Steps to a Revamped Arsenal," New York Times, May 29, 2003).

A communiqué released in early June at the Group of Eight summit in France warned of the "proliferation implications of Iran's nuclear program," and one U.S. official commented anonymously that, at the IAEA meeting later that month, "Iran's going to be on the griddle" (John Tagliabue and Elizabeth Bumiller, "Group of 8 Summit Leaders Talk Tough On Spread of Nuclear Arms," New York Times, June 3, 2003).

Speaking in Germany, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld warned against "Iran's nuclear activities and called on the Atlantic alliance to find new ways of combating 'the nexus of terror and weapons of mass destruction', which he called the biggest threat facing the countries of both 'old' and 'new' Europe" (Richard Bernstein, "Rumsfeld Says Iran Is Developing Nuclear Arms Under Guise of Civilian Program," New York Times, June 12, 2003). Also in June, the IAEA published the first

of what would become a total of 27 written reports on Iran's nuclear program through the time of this writing (October, 2009). According to the New York Times, the "debate over Iran's nuclear ambitions intensified today at the United Nations' watchdog agency on atomic weapons, as the United States and other countries tried to rally support for a resolution urging Iran to accept stricter supervision of its nuclear program" (Mark Lander, "U.S.and U.N. Agency Press Iran on Its Nuclear Program," June 18, 2003).

"President Bush said for the first time today that the United States and its allies 'will not tolerate the construction of a nuclear weapon' in Iran," the New York Times also reported (David E. Sanger, "Bush Says U.S. Will Not Tolerate Building of Nuclear Arms by Iran," June 19, 2003).

"One of the central challenges of the coming decade is to stop nuclear weapons from falling into the hands of dictators and terrorists," the New York Times editorialized. "Iran has just shown us the nature of the problem" ("Iran and Nuclear Weapons," June 22, 2003). Although limited to the New York Times, these excerpts illustrate the early stages of the U.S. government-driven construction of the Iranian nuclear weapons threat, and an uncritical, conduit function similar to that which the Times had performed in passing along the U.S. government's construction of the Iraqi "weapons of mass destruction" threat, ca. 2002 - March, 2003.

10 See John Bellamy Foster, Hannah Holleman, and Robert W. McChesney, "The U.S. Imperial Triangle and Military Spending,"Monthly Review, October 2008.

11 Colin Powell (and Joseph E. Persico), My American Journey(New York: Ballantine, 1995), 576.

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

13 See William Burr, Ed., "U.S.-Iran Nuclear Negotiations in 1970s Featured Shah's Nationalism and U.S. Weapons Worries," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 268, January 13, 2009, esp. Documents 31a-b, "Final Agreement." Even then, however, in 1978, recognizing the tenuousness of the Shah's hold on power, the Carter administration was reluctant to permit Iran to "reprocess spent fuel or enrich uranium supplied by the U.S. 'unless the parties agree'."

14 See the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (INFCIRC/140).

15 See Avner Cohen, Israel and the Bomb (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); and "Israel Crosses the Threshold," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 189, April 28, 2006.

16 See Statement by Rose Goettemoeller [on the NPT], U.S. Department of State, May 5, 2009. Also see "The Israeli nuke kerfuffle," Foreign Policy - The Cable, May 7, 2009.

17 Avner Cohen and George Perkovich, "The Obama-Netanyahu Meeting: Nuclear Issues," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 14, 2009.

18 Eli Lake, "Obama Agrees to Keep Israel's Nukes Secret," Washington Times, October 2, 2009.

19 See "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities" (GC(53)/RES/17), IAEA, September 18, 2009.

20 Mark Weiss, "Israel Spurns Nuclear Watchdog's Call to Open Atomic Sites to Inspection," Irish Times, September 19, 2009. The print media's silence is worsened by the fact that several readily available wire services reported the vote, in-

cluding Agence France Presse, Al Jazeera, Associated Press, Dow Jones International News, FARS News Agency, IHS Global Insight Daily Analysis, Kyodo News, Morning Star Online, Plus News Pakistan, States News Service, Trend News Agency, and Xinhua News Agency. Also see "Iran: The Wardance," Media Lens, October 1, 2009.

21 Article IX(3) of the NPT defines a "nuclear-weapon State" as "one which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967." At the time the NPT entered into force on March 5, 1970, the five internationally recognized (or declared) nuclear-weapon states were the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France, and China. Of course, the sixth actual nuclear-weapon state, Israel, had not declared itself, though it had already reached its secret understanding with the Nixon administration to keep its nuclear weapons program "invisible" (Cohen and Perkovich).

22 NPT.

23 See Matthew Cardinale, "U.S. Nukes Agency Pushes New Bomb Production," Inter Press Service, September 30, 2009 (as posted to Truthout). Known within the U.S. Department of Energy as the Complex Modernization program, it is but "another title to give [the National Nuclear Security Administration] permission to build new bombs," said anti-nuclear weapons activist Bobbie Paul. "It flies in the face of what [Barack Obama] told the rest of the world."

24 See The Alliance's Strategic Concept, adopted by the North Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C., April 23-24, 1999, esp. "Characteristics of Nuclear Forces," para. 62-64. "To protect peace and to prevent war or any kind of coercion, the Alliance will maintain for the foreseeable future an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces based in Europe and kept up to date where necessary," NATO's 1999 reaffirmation of nuclear weapons states. "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" (para. 46).

25 UN Security Council Resolution 1887, September 24, 2009, para. 5, para. 4.

26 Martin van Crevald, "Sharon on the Warpath: Is Israel Planning to Attack Iran?" New York Times - International Herald Tribune, August 21, 2004.

27 Seymour Hersh, "The Iran Plans," New Yorker, April 17, 2006.

28 Brian Ross, "Bush Authorizes New Covert Action Against Iran," ABC News, May 22, 2007.

29 Seymour M. Hersh, "Preparing the Battlefield: The Bush Administration Steps Up Its Secret Moves against Iran," New Yorker, July 7, 2008.

30 Hersh, "The Iran Plans."

31 See, e.g., Dan Williams, "Eying Iran Reactor, Israel Seeks U.S. Bunker Bombs," Reuters, September 21, 2004.

32 Ali Akbar Dareini, "Iran to Allow IAEA Visit Nuclear Site," Associated Press, September 26, 2009.

33 Yaakov Katz and David Horovitz, "Eye in the Sky," Jerusalem Post Magazine, September 17, 2009.

34 See the Interview, "U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller Outlines the U.S. Position on a New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia," Interfax Information Services, May 4, 2009.

35 See Jay Deshmukh and Farhad Pouladi, "Suicide Bomber Kills 30 in Attacks on Iran's Guards," Agence France Presse, October 18, 2009; Ali Akbar Dereini and Nasser Karimi, "Revolutionary Guard Commanders Killed in Bomb," October

18, 2009; Fredrik Dahl and Reza Derakhshi, "Suicide Bomber Kills 29 in Attack on Iran Guards," Reuters, October 18, 2009; "FACTBOX: Sunni Group Suspected of Killing 29 in Iran," Reuters, October 18, 2009; Ali Akbar Dareini, "Iran: US, Britain, Pakistan Linked to Militants," Associated Press, October 19, 2009; Fredrik Dahl, "Iran Threatens Britain and U.S. after Guard Bombing," Reuters, October 19, 2009; "Russian Analyst Expects More Suicide Bombings in Iran," RIA Novosti, October 19, 2009; Robert Tait and Mark Tran, "Iran Blames Pakistan and West for Deadly Suicide Bombing," The Guardian, October 19, 2009; Michael Slackman et al., "Iran Says U.S., Britain Behind Attack," New York Times, October 19, 2009.

36 See Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, "Riding the 'Green Wave' at the Campaign for Peace and Democracy and Beyond," MRZine, July 24, 2009. In drafting this analysis, we were astounded over how willing left analysts in the States and elsewhere were to conclude that the official outcome of Iran's June 12, 2009 presidential election was fraudulent, and the election rigged. Based on what evidence, we wondered? Iran's June 2005 presidential runoff election between Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Ali Akbar Rafsanjani resulted in a 2 to 1 margin of victory for Ahmadinejad, who received 62% to Rafsanjani's 31%. Turning to Iran's June 2009 presidential election, the official results for the first round were 63% for Ahmadinejad, and 34% for Mir Hussein Mousavi, or slightly less than a 2 to 1 margin of victory for Ahmadinejad. But this result simply could not be true, the objections to Iran's "stolen" election have maintained. In rejecting the legitimacy of the official results, the leftist Campaign for Peace and Democracy stated that "there is very powerful evidence that either no one emerged with a majority [in the first round], or that Mousavi won outright" (Stephen R. Shalom et al., "Question & Answer on the Iran Crisis," Campaign for Peace and Democracy, July 7, 2009, Point No. 3). Yet, a poll of Iranian public opinion taken from August 27 - September 10 by WorldPublicOpinion.org on behalf of the Program on International Policy Attitudes found that 55% of Iranians who agreed to take the poll reported that they had voted for Ahmadinejad in June, while 14% reported they had voted for his nearest rival, Mousavi. When also asked "If the same election were to be repeated tomorrow, who would you vote for?" 49% responded Ahmadinejad, and only 8% Mousavi (Steven Kull et al., Iranian Public on Current Issues, PIPA-WorldPublicOpinion.org, September 19, 2009, 8-9. Also see the accompanying Questionnaire, Q20 and Q23). Similarly, a pre-election poll in May by three U.S.-based organizations had also found "Ahmadinejad leading [Mousavi] by more than a 2 to 1 margin" (Ken Ballen and Patrick Doherty, "The Iranian People Speak," Washington Post, June 15, 2009). For the actual poll, 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, Q27, 52). Although PIPA-WPO reports that the interview refusal rate for its September 2009 poll was 52%, and that "only in the question on the presidential vote [Q20] were there large numbers of refusals," we believe that the combined results of the Terror Free Tomorrow poll in May, Iran's official election results in June, and the results of the PIPA-WPO poll in September, clearly reinforce each other, just as they reinforce the conclusion that Ahmadinejad was the actual winner in Iran's

2009 presidential election, independently of whether some vote fraud did occur.

37 See the "Joint Statement Between President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh," Bush White House Archives, July 18, 2005; Fact Sheet, "The United States and India: Strong Global Partners," July 18, 2006; "President Signs U.S.-India Peaceful Energy Cooperation Act," December 18, 2006; Fact Sheet, "The United States - India Peaceful Energy Cooperation Act," December 18, 2006; "President's Statement on H.R. 5682, the 'Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006'," December 18, 2006; and United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act (HR 7081), October 8, 2008. Also see Esther Pan and Jayshree Bajoria, "The U.S.-India Nuclear Deal," Council on Foreign Relations - Backgrounder, October 2, 2008.

38 See Siddharth Varadarajan, "The Truth behind the Indo-U.S. Nuclear Deal," The Hindu, July 29, 2005. Varadarajan cites the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's Ashley Tellis, who in 2005 had advised: "[D]on't jettison the [non-proliferation] 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 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."

39 Ravi Velloor, "India's Big Shift to Nuclear Power," Straits Times (Singapore), September 30, 2009.

40 Emily Wax, "U.S. Eyes Bigger Slice of Indian Defense Pie,"Washington Post, September 27, 2009.

41 See James Lamont and James Blitz, "New Delhi Admission Raises Nuclear Stakes," Financial Times, Sept 28, 2009.

42 Robert O. Blake, Jr., "Readout of Indian and Tajik Bilateral Meetings," U.S. Department of State, Sept 25, 2009.

43 "Security Council Call to Join NPT Not Directed at India: PM," Indo-Asian News Service, September 26, 2009.

44 George W. Bush, "President Delivers State of the Union Address," Bush White House Archives, January 29, 2002.

45 See Implementation of the IAEA safeguards agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran (GOV/2003/40), June 6, 2003, para. 32-34. The Annex to this report lists the Iranian nuclear facilities that had subsequently been brought under IAEA safeguards.

46 For a brief recapitulation of the U.S. government's shift of its focus away from Iraq's alleged nuclear weapons program onto Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program in May-June 2003, see n. 9, above.

47 NPT, Article IV.1 states: "Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. . . ." Article IV.2 begins: "All the Parties to the Treaty undertake to facilitate, and have the right to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy."

48 Bradley Brookes, "Bolton: India, Pakistan nukes legitimate as they never signed proliferation treaty," Associated Press, March 2, 2006. At the same event hosted by the World Jewish Congress in New York, Bolton also explained the U.S. focus on Iran, rather than on India and Pakistan (or Israel): "In the context of

the NPT, India and Pakistan had never signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty and therefore they weren't in violation of it by having nuclear programs, in contrast with Iran that is a state party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and that's violating its obligations."

49 Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran (GOV/2006/14), February 4, 2006, para. (g), 1, 7, and 8.

50 See S/RES/1696 (July 31, 2006), S/RES/1737 (December 23, 2006), S/RES/1747 (March 24, 2007), and S/RES/1803, March 3, 2008.

51 See Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement . . . in the Islamic Republic of Iran (GOV/2009/55), August 28, 2009, para. 26.

52 GOV/2009/55, para. 29.

53 GOV/2003/40, para. 35.

54 Sylvia Westall, "No Sign Iran Seeks Nuclear Arms – New IAEA Head," Reuters, July 3, 2009.

55 See "The Nobel Peace Prize 2005," Nobelprize.org.

56 "Interview: Mohamed ElBaradei," Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, September/October, 2009.

57 George Jahn, "Nuclear Agency Secret Report Says Iran Can Make Bomb, Developing Delivery System," Associated Press, September 17, 2009; William J. Broad and David E. Sanger, "Report Says Iran Has Data To Make A Nuclear Bomb," New York Times, October 4, 2009.

58 See "Statements by Obama, Brown and Sarkozy," New York Times, September 26, 2009.

59 Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1982), 150.

60 For two from among many of these allegations, see Dan Gillerman, Letter from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations (S/2005/681), October 27, 2005; and Nazila Fathi, "Iran's New President Says Israel 'Must Be Wiped Off the Map,'" October 27, 2005. Ahmadinejad's comments were made at the World Without Zionism conference in Tehran on October 26, 2005.

61 The charge that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a "Holocaust denier" was repeated from the lectern of the UN General Assembly in September by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. See Statement by H.E. Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, General Debate of the 64th General Assembly, New York, September 24, 2009.

62 See Juan Cole, "Hitchens the Hacker," Informed Comment, May 3, 2006; and Juan Cole, "The Importance of Cole v. Hitchens,"Informed Comment, May 4, 2006. Also see Anneliese Fikentscher and Andreas Neumann (Trans. Erik Appleby), "Does Iran's President Want Israel Wiped Off the Map?" Information Clearinghouse, April 19, 2006; and Jonathan Steele, "Lost in Translation," The Guardian, June 14, 2006.

63 Statement by H.E. Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, September 24, 2009.

64 Israeli threats of attack on Iran's nuclear facilities have been commonplace for several years. For an analysis of the likely success or failure of such an attack, see Abdullah Toukan and Anthony Cordesman, Study on a Possible Israeli Strike on Iran's Nuclear Development Facilities, Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 16, 2009; also see Reuven Pedatzur, "Here's How Israel Would Destroy Iran's Nuclear Program," Haaretz, May 21, 2009. And for some mid-summer 2009 expressions of belligerence by the Israeli government, see Yaakov Katz, "Israel Sends Sub through Suez Canal," Jerusalem Post, July 3, 2009; Dan Williams, "Is-

raeli Sub Sails Suez, Signalling Reach to Iran," Reuters, July 3, 2009; Yaakov Kaatz, "IAF to Train Overseas for Iran Strike," Jerusalem Post, July 5, 2009; Uzi Mahnaimi and Sarah Baxter, "Saudis Give Nod to Israeli Raid on Iran," Sunday Times, July 5, 2009; Sheera Frenkel, "Israeli Navy in Suez Canal Prepares for Potential Attack on Iran," The Times, July 16, 2009.

65 See Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Kristensen, "Nuclear Notebook: U.S. Nuclear Forces 2009," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, March/April, 2009.

66 See Mark Kramer, "The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia," Washington Quarterly, Vol. 32, No. 2, April 2009. Kramer is quoting the former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Jack F. Matlock, from House testimony in 1996. Remarkably, as indicated by the title of his essay, Kramer himself rejects the claim (amply documented in the sources he surveys) that Bush I and the Gorbachev Kremlin ever discussed – let alone agreed on – a no-enlargement plan for NATO beyond its then-16 members.

67 See the 28 "NATO Member Countries."

68 See the 22 "NATO Partner Countries."

69 See the "NATO Mediterranean Dialogue."

70 See Rick Rozoff, "Threat of New Conflict In Europe: Western-Sponsored Greater Albania," Stop NATO, October 8, 2009.

71 For the New York Times' editors, Vladimir Putin is engaged in "constant snarling at the West" (Ed., "Putin Strengthens His Legacy," February 13, 2008); their news articles matter-of-factly speak of "the growing assertiveness of Russia" (Judy Dempsey, "U.S. Stance Toward Russia Again Divides Europe," September 10, 2009); and their guest oped columnist Victor Erofeyev writes that Putin's "biggest mistake was his longing to make Russia the successor to the Soviet Union; . . . the imperial discourse . . . [and] his defense of the Soviet Union's aggressive foreign policy. . ." ("Russia's Last Hope," February 29, 2008).

72 See Lord Levene and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "Piracy, Cyber-crime and Climate Change – Bringing NATO and Insurance Together," Daily Telegraph, September 30, 2009; and "Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen on Emerging Security Risks, Lloyd's of London," NATO Speeches and Transcripts, October 1, 2009. Also see Rick Rozoff, "Thousand Deadly Threats: Third Millennium NATO, Western Businesses Collude On New Global Doctrine," Stop NATO, October 2, 2009; and Rick Rozoff, "U.S. Expands Asian NATO Against China, Russia," Stop NATO, October 16, 2009.

73 Rick Rozoff, "Afghanistan: West's 21st Century War Risks Regional Conflagration," Stop NATO, October 12, 2009.

74 On this earlier UN role, see Schlesinger and Kinzer, Bitter Fruit, 179-182.

75 See Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, International Court of Justice, July 8, 1996, Opinion F, and para. 103. Although an "advisory opinion," and thus not legally binding on states, to date this counts as the most authoritative legal decision to have been produced on issues stemming from the existence of nuclear weapons and states' obligations under the NPT.

76 Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President to the United Nations General Assembly," New York City, White House Office of the Press Secretary, September 23, 2009; and "Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" (S/PV.6191), UN Security Council, September 24, 2009, 3.

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