



**INTRODUCTION**

Four years since the US-UK led illegal invasion of Iraq, which has brought the ongoing catastrophe for Iraqi people, all peace loving people and antiwar organizations in the world are appalled by the current Iran-US standoff that has a shocking resemblance to the run-up to the invasion of Iraq. The same neo-conservatives and hawks, headed by Dick Cheney in Washington, who championed the cause of invasion of Iraq, are now shamelessly calling for a military attack on Iran. The same Israeli lobby which pushed for the invasion of Iraq, is now pushing for a military attack on Iran. The same strategy of lies and distortions which was used to dupe the international community and soften it up for the invasion of Iraq, is again used to pave the way for another illegal pre-emptive war of aggression against Iran. As in the case of Iraq, the UN Security Council Resolutions against Iran, obtained by massive US pressure and coercion, would provide a veneer of legitimacy for such an attack.

Contrary to the myth created by the western media, it is not Iran, but the US and its European allies which are defying the overwhelming majority of the international community, in that, they have resisted the call to enter into direct, immediate and comprehensive negotiations with Iran without any pre-conditions. The US and its European allies show their lack of good faith in a diplomatic solution to the standoff by demanding that Iran concede the main point of negotiations, namely, suspension of enrichment of uranium which is Iran's legitimate right under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, before the negotiations actually start.

Here, we examine and debunk the common myths and charges against Iran and provide a list of twenty reasons to oppose sanctions and military intervention in Iran. The Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran (CASMI) calls for immediate and direct negotiations between the US and Iran without any pre-conditions in order to avert a new even more horrifying catastrophe in the Middle East.

**IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME: FACTS AND LIES**

**1.** *There is no evidence of a nuclear weapons programme in Iran.* The US and Israel pressure Iran to prove that it is not hiding a

nuclear weapons programme. This demand is logically impossible to satisfy and only serves to make diplomacy fail in order to force regime change. Numerous intrusive and snap visits by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors, totalling more than 2,700 person-hours of inspection, have failed to produce any shred of evidence for a weapons programme in Iran. Traces of highly enriched uranium found at Natanz in 2004, were determined by IAEA to have come with imported centrifuges.

In June 2005, Bruno Pellaud, former IAEA Deputy Director-General for safeguards, was asked by Swissinfo if Iran was intent on building a nuclear bomb. He replied: "My impression is not. My view is based on the fact that Iran took a major gamble in December 2003 by allowing a much more intrusive capability to the IAEA. If Iran had had a military programme they would not have allowed the IAEA to come under this Additional Protocol. They did not have to." Even the ex-British Foreign Minister, Jack Straw, admitted on 9/4/2006 that "there is no smoking gun and therefore no justification for a military attack". Still, for the US the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

**2.** *Iran's need for nuclear power generation is real.* Even when Iran's population was one-third of what it is today, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, negotiating on behalf of President Gerald Ford, persuaded the former Shah that Iran needed nuclear power and over twenty nuclear reactors. [1] Today Iran's electricity output forecast falls so much short of projected needs that even concerns over the preservation of historic sites did not impede Tehran's plans to dam a river near the national heritage ruins near Pasargad. With Iran's population of 70 million fast growing, and its oil resources fast depleting, Iran will be a net importer of oil productions in just over a decade from now. Nuclear energy is thus a realistic and viable solution for electricity generation in the country.

**3.** *The "crisis" over Iran's nuclear programme lacks the urgency claimed by Washington.* Even if it were to militarize its nuclear programme, for which there is no evidence at all, Iran would be many years away from mastering the technology, giving proliferation concerns ample time to be



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resolved by negotiation. Weapons grade uranium must be enriched at least to 85%. A 2005 CIA report determined that it could take Iran 10 years to achieve this level of enrichment. Many independent nuclear experts have stated that Iran would face formidable technical obstacles if it tried to enrich uranium beyond the 3.5% required for electricity generation. According to Dr Frank Barnaby of the Oxford Research Group, because of contamination of Iranian uranium with heavy metals, Iran cannot possibly enrich beyond even 20% without support from Russia or China [2]. IAEA director, Dr. Mohammad ElBaradei, too, has declared that there is no imminent threat and "We need to lower the pitch."

**4.** *Iran has met its obligations under the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).* Iran has fully cooperated in the last three years with the IAEA and had voluntarily accepted and enforced safeguards well above the Additional Protocol until Iran's nuclear file was reported under the pressure of the US to the Security Council in February 2006. (The U.S., by contrast, has neither signed nor implemented the Additional Protocol, and Israel has refused to sign the NPT.)

Iran's earlier concealment of its nuclear programme took place in the context of the US-backed invasion of Iran by Saddam; Iraqi chemical weapons provided to Saddam by the US, German and UK companies with the approval of their governments which were used against Iranian soldiers and civilians and Israel's destruction of Iraq's Osirak reactor in 1981 with impunity. Iranian leaders concluded from these gross injustices that international laws are only "ink on paper" as Rafsanjani put it.

But the most direct reasons for Iran's concealment were the American trade embargo on Iran and Washington's organized and persistent campaign to stop civilian nuclear technology from reaching Iran from any source. For example, in 1995 Germany offered to let Kraftwerk Union (a subsidiary of Siemens) finish Iran's Bushehr reactor, but withdrew its proposal under US pressure [3]. The following year, China cancelled its contract to build a nuclear enrichment facility in Isfahan for the same reason [4]. Thus Washington systematically violated, with impunity, Article IV of the NPT, which allows signatories 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".

Nevertheless, Iran's decision not to declare all of its nuclear installations did not violate any rules. According to David Albright and Corey Hinderstein, who first provided satellite imagery and analysis of the facilities at Natanz and at Arak in December 2002 [5], under the safeguards agreement in force at the time, "Iran is not required to allow IAEA inspections of a new nuclear facility until six months before nuclear material is introduced into it."

**5.** *Iran has given unprecedented concessions on its nuclear programme.* Unlike North Korea, Iran has resisted the temptation to withdraw from the NPT. Besides accepting snap inspections under Additional Protocol until February 2006, Iran has invited Western companies, including American companies, to participate in a consortium to develop Iran's civilian nuclear programme. Such joint ventures combined with Iran's pledge to ratify the Additional Protocol for intrusive IAEA inspections, would create the best assurance that the enriched uranium would not be diverted to a weapons programme. Such concessions are very rare in the world, but the U.S. and its allies have refused Iran's offer.

**6.** *Enrichment of uranium for a civilian nuclear programme is Iran's inalienable right.* Every member of the NPT has the inalienable right to enrich uranium for a civilian nuclear programme and is entitled to full technical assistance.

But with the US as the back seat driver and in violation of their assistance obligations, France, Germany, and the UK insisted in three years of negotiations, that Tehran forfeit its right, in return for incentives of little value. Some European diplomats admitted to Asia Times-on-line on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2005, that the package offered by the EU-3 was "an empty box of chocolates." But "there is nothing else we can offer," the diplomats went on to say. "The Americans simply wouldn't let us."

**7.** *The Western alliance has not tried true diplomacy.* Washington has refused to participate in talks with Iran and instead outsourced the task to the EU. But negotiators



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for France, Britain, and Germany were hamstrung by the Bush Administration, which disapproved any substantive incentives, including a US guarantee not to attack Iran. This was the reason Iran ended its two-year voluntary suspension of uranium enrichment.

### WESTERN HYPOCRISY

**8.** *The UN resolutions against Iran in contrast to the treatment of South Korea, India, Pakistan, and Israel smack of double standards.* The UN Security Council sanctions on Iran expose the double standards of the Western powers, which ignore the NPT violations by Washington's allies. For example, in the year 2000, South Korea enriched 200 milligrams of uranium to near-weapons grade (up to 77%), but was not referred to the UN Security Council.

India has refused to sign the NPT or allow inspections and has developed an atomic arsenal, but receives nuclear assistance from the US which is a violation of the NPT. More bizarrely, India has a seat on the governing board of IAEA and, under US pressure, voted to refer Iran as a violator to the UN Security Council. Another non-signatory, Pakistan, clandestinely developed nuclear weapons but is supported by the US as a "war on terror" ally.

Israel is a close ally of Washington, even though it has hundreds of clandestine nuclear weapons, has dismissed numerous UN resolutions and has refused to sign the NPT or open any of its nuclear plants to inspections.

The US itself is the most serious violator of the NPT. The only country to have ever used nuclear bombs in war has refused to reduce its nuclear arsenal, in violation of Article VI of NPT. The US is also in breach of the treaty because it is developing new generations of nuclear warheads for use against non-nuclear adversaries. Moreover, the US has deployed hundreds of such tactical nuclear weapons all around the world in violation of Articles I and II of the NPT.

**9.** *Iran has not threatened Israel or attacked another country.* The track records of the US, Israel, the UK and France are very different. These so called "democracies" have a bloody history of invading other countries for resources and domination. On the contrary, Iran's

supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, has stated repeatedly that Iran will not attack or threaten any country. He has also issued a fatwa against the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and banned nuclear weapons as sacrilegious. Iran has been a consistent supporter of the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and called for a nuclear weapons free Middle East.

The comments of Iran's President Ahmadinejad against Israel have been repeated statesmen since 1979 and indicate no practical threat. The statement attributed to him that "Israel should be wiped off the map" has been reported by Jonathan Steele in the Guardian and by Professor Juan Cole, amongst other Farsi language experts, to have been a mistranslation and these clarifications have been widely disseminated. What he actually said was "the regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time". Ahmadinejad has made clear that he envisions regime change in Israel through internal decay, similar to fashion of the demise of the Soviet Union. Iranian leaders have said consistently for two decades that they will accept a two-state solution in Palestine if a majority of Palestinians favour that option.

This is in sharp contrast to the explicit threats by Israeli and the US leaders against Iran, including current operations to destabilize the Islamic Republic as described by Seymour Hersh [6] and plans to foment ethnic unrest and separatist movements to wipe Iran off the map [7].

Iran is no match for Israel, whose security and military needs are all but guaranteed by the US. Iran is surrounded on all sides by the US Navy and American bases. The Western media try to portray a picture which is quite opposite to the truth. The threat to security and stability in the region comes not from Iran but from the US, whose forces have occupied Afghanistan and Iraq and from Israel which continues its illegal occupation of Palestinian land.

Iran has not invaded or threatened any country for two and a half centuries. The only war the Islamic Republic fought was the one imposed by Saddam's army, which invaded Iran with the backing of the US and its allies. When Iraq used



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chemical weapons, supplied by the West, against Iranian soldiers, Iran did not retaliate in kind. When the Taliban regime murdered eight Iranian diplomats in 1996 and remained unapologetic, Iran did not respond militarily.

**10.** *The US "democratization" programme for Iran is a hoax.* Although violations of human rights and democratic freedoms do occur too often in Iran, the country has the most pluralistic system in a region dominated by undemocratic client states of the US. It is sheer hypocrisy for the US, which turns a blind eye to the gross human rights abuses by its client states, such as Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Libya, and Egypt, to misrepresent its agenda in Iran as a "democratization" programme. Washington's pretensions ring especially hollow when one remembers that in 1953 Iran's nascent democracy under Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq was overthrown by the CIA, which restored a hated military dictatorship for the benefit of American oil conglomerates.

#### **UN SECURITY COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT TOTALLY UNJUSTIFIED**

**11.** *There are no legal bases for Iran's referral to the UN Security Council.* Since there is no evidence that Iran is even contemplating its nuclear programme, no grounds exist within the NPT to refer Iran to the UN Security Council.

Michael Spies of the New York-based Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy has clarified the issue: "Under the Statute (Art. 12(C)) and the Safeguards Agreement, the Board may only refer Iran to the Security Council if it finds that, based on the report from the Director General, it cannot be assured that Iran has not diverted nuclear material for non-peaceful purpose. In the past, findings of 'non-assurance' have only come in the face of a history of active and ongoing non-cooperation with IAEA safeguards. The pursuit of nuclear activities in itself, which is specifically recognized as a sovereign right, and which remain safeguarded, could not legally or logically equate to uncertainty regarding diversion." [8]

Dr ElBradei has consistently confirmed that there has been no diversion of safeguarded nuclear material in Iran. He has also said, under pressure from Washington, that he cannot rule out the existence of undeclared nuclear activities in the

country. However, according to the IAEA's Safeguards Implementation Report for 2005 (issued on 15 June 2006), 45 other countries, including 14 European countries, in particular Germany, are in this same category as Iran. Moreover, according to the UK-based Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, such findings and a clear bill for any given country will take an average of six years of inspections and verification by the IAEA. In the case of Iran, these investigations have been going on for only about four years now.

Thus, all concerns regarding Iran's nuclear programme must be dealt with under the auspices of the IAEA. The US and its allies violated the rules by exerting massive pressure on the IAEA to report Iran without any legitimacy to the UN Security Council. In fact, David Mulford, the US Ambassador to India, warned the Government of India in January 2006 that there would be no US-India nuclear deal if India did not vote against Iran in the Governors' Board of the IAEA. On February 15<sup>th</sup> 2007, Stephen Rademaker, the former US Assistant Secretary for International Security and Non-proliferation, confessed that the US coerced India to vote against Iran in the two crucial meetings of the IAEA in 2005 and 2006 which resulted in Iran's file to be reported to the UN Security Council. This shows clearly that reporting Iran to the UN Security Council and the subsequent adoption of the Security Council Resolutions 1696 and 1737 have been carried out with US coercion and have thus no legitimacy at all [9].

#### **SANCTIONS NOT A GOOD IDEA**

**12.** *Dr ElBradei, the head of the IAEA, has said that sanctions are counterproductive.* Economic sanctions on Iran will harm the people of Iran, as they were devastating to Iraqis, resulting in the death of at least 500,000 children. Sanctions would not however bring the Islamic Republic to its knees. Instead, any kind of sanctions, including the so-called targeted or smart sanctions, are viewed by the Iranian people as the West's punishment for Iran's scientific progress (uranium enrichment for reactor fuel). As sanctions tighten, nationalist fervour will strengthen the resolve of Iranians to defend the country's civilian nuclear programme.



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**13.** *Sanctions are not better than war; they are a prelude to bombing.* Sanctions are increasing tensions in the region and can soon push the dispute to the point of no return. Since sanctions do not exert significant pressure on the Iranian government, they only pave the way for the illegal use of force against Iran, as they did in Iraq. Thus, countries which support sanctions against Iran are only falling into the US trap in aiding the war drive on Iran.

#### ILLEGALITY OF A MILITARY ATTACK

**14.** *Foreign state interference in Iran violates the UN charter.* The US is reported, for example by Seymour Hersh in the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2006 issue of the *New Yorker*, to be running covert operations in Iran to foment unrest and ethnic conflict for the purpose of regime change. Unmanned US drones have also entered into Iranian air space to spy over Iranian military installations and to map Iranian radar systems. These actions violate the UN Charter's guarantee of the right of self-determination for all nations.

The Bush Administration has also confirmed, in the 2006 US National Security Strategy, its long term policy for pre-emptive military action against its adversaries. Tony Blair supported this policy in his 21<sup>st</sup> March 2006 foreign policy speech. However, unprovoked strikes are illegal under international law. To remove this obstacle, John Reid, the British Secretary of Defence, in his speech on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2006 to the Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies, proposed a change in international law on pre-emptive military action.

Reports of nuclear attack scenarios by the US or Israel against Iran can serve to raise the public's tolerance for an act of aggression with conventional military means. People of conscience must therefore not only condemn a possible nuclear attack as the maddest of criminal insanities by the Bush Administration, but also denounce any conventional assault.

#### UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF AN ATTACK ON IRAN

**15.** *A military attack on Iran could sharply raise the price of oil.* A US or Israeli attack on Iran would, according to Iranian government leaders, provoke immediate retaliation by Tehran, which

may include a blockade of the Persian Gulf. Such a response could cause a major disruption in energy markets and double the price of oil, with a global economic depression to follow.

**16.** *Bombing cannot end Iran's nuclear programme.* Since Iran already has the expertise to enrich uranium up to the 3.5% grade for a fuel cycle, no degree of bombing will halt Iran's civilian nuclear programme. On the contrary, the resulting mass casualties and destruction would strengthen the voices that argue Iran, like North Korea, should build a nuclear deterrent.

**17.** *A nuclear attack on Iran would fuel a new nuclear arms race and ruin the NPT.* Washington has in recent years blurred the distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons in its military strategy declarations, including in the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, which now allow the US to employ its nuclear arsenal against non-nuclear countries if they are not in compliance with the NPT.

Many leaked policy discussions indicate that the US will consider it "justified" to repeat its act of genocide in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and use tactical nuclear bombs to destroy hardened Iranian targets. Ominously, President Bush has characterized these as "wild speculation" but has not denied them.

**18.** *An attack on Iran will unite Iranians against the US and its allies.* A great majority of the public in Iran support the country's right to enrich uranium for civilian purposes. Therefore, a bombing campaign will not lead to an uprising by the Iranian people for regime change as envisaged by the US. Rather, it would ignite nationalist feelings in the country and unite the population, including most of the government's critics, against the West.

**19.** *An attack on Iran will lead to a regional catastrophe and expanded terrorism.* Senator McCain, the Republican presidential hopeful, who has himself advocated the use of force on Iran, has predicted that an attack against Iran will lead to Armageddon. Hosni Mubarak, the President of Egypt, has also strongly warned the US against an attack.



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American or Israeli aggression on Iran, coming on the heels of the Iraq disaster, would inflame the passions of Muslims worldwide and help jihadi extremists with their recruitment campaign. The region wide conflagration that an Israel/US attack on Iran would create will dwarf the catastrophe that US-UK led invasion of Iraq has brought up for the people of Iraq [10].

**20.** *The cause of establishing democracy in Iran will suffer gravely if the country is attacked.* President Bush's "axis of evil" rhetoric severely undermined the reformist movement in Iran at a time when the country's president promoted Dialogue Among Civilizations. Bush's hostile posture strengthened the hands of Iranian hardliners and led to the reformist movement's electoral defeat. That setback would be dwarfed by the consequences of a military assault on the country. Iran's burgeoning civil society would be among the first victims of US or Israeli aggression.

This is precisely why leading reformists and human rights activists in Iran, such as the popular Nobel Laureate, Shirin Ebadi, have strongly opposed sanctions and military interventions against Iran. By contrast, the Mojahedin-e Khalgh (MEK), which has no support in the country and is listed as a terrorist organization by the EU and the US, can have a future only if all democratic rights are totally suppressed in Iran. The CIA and the Pentagon support MEK in covert operations to destabilize the Islamic Republic [11].

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