

The Next War

Given the bleak prospects of international peace movement gaining momentum anytime soon, only Americans can force Bush from going to another war in the Middle East. A war against Iran is very much on the agenda of Bush and his White House warriors. And the impact of America's Iran war is likely to be felt beyond Middle East. In Vietnam the American troops mutined. Navy ratings pushed aircraft off the side of air craft carriers. In 1971 more than half of US ground forces openly opposed war while ordinary Americans fought the draft or simply fled it. But Bush's war plan does not face any serious challenge on the home front. Occasional demonstrations do not count. So he continues his gameplan.

Despite its menacing naval build up in the Persian Gulf, the US has repeatedly denied any plans for war against Iran. But they are in reality ready for the next war.

The Pentagon seems to have completed contingency planning for extensive air strikes on Iran that go "beyond nuclear sites and include most of the country's military infrastructure".

The Bush administration insists it is pursuing diplomatic means to force Iran to shut down its enrichment facilities. The statement is another of the Bush administration's lies.

Citing senior Pentagon, State Department and intelligence sources, veteran US journalist Seymour Hersh has published several detailed articles in the *New Yorker* over the past year outlining the US plans for attacking Iran, including the possible use of nuclear weapons. Several British newspapers, including the *Times*, have described advanced US and Israeli military preparations against Tehran.

'American military operations for a major conventional war with Iran could be implemented any day. They extend far beyond suspect WMD facilities and will enable President Bush to destroy Iran's military, political and economic infrastructure overnight using conventional weapons'.

In truth 'the US military switched its whole focus to Iran' as soon as Saddam Hussein was kicked out of Baghdad. It continued this strategy, even though it had American infantry bogged down in fighting the insurgency in Iraq. The US army, navy, air force and marines have all prepared battle plans and spent four years building bases and training for 'Operation Iranian Freedom'.

As in the lead up to the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration is quite capable of fabricating evidence to provide "confirmation" of an Iranian nuclear weapons programme. To use this trigger, however, the White House would, formally at least, need to seek approval for a new war from the Democratic-controlled Congress and also the UN Security Council, raising the prospect of opposition, even if very limited, and delays.

The second trigger would provide an excuse for immediate action on the grounds of defending US troops in Iraq. President Bush has already laid the basis for such a provocation, accusing Iranian and Syrian networks of arming and training anti-US insurgents in Iraq. Over the past month, the US media has published increasingly lurid accounts of the alleged activities of Iranian agents inside Iraq.

Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, the two top UN weapons inspectors dealing with Iraq prior to the 2003 US invasion, have joined growing chorus of voices warning of the dangers of a US war against Iran.

In an article in the *International Herald Tribune*, Blix asked: “Will the United States use armed force against Iran? Hardly any foreign policy issue is hotter right now. American planes are reported to be patrolling along the borders between Iraq and Iran, and US forces have been authorised to kill Iranian agents in Iraq. Two US aircraft carriers are in the Gulf and missile defences have been installed in Gulf states. The military build up is either to scare Tehran or to prepare for American attacks on Iran.”

Blix noted that Iran had refused to abide by the UN Security Council resolution passed in December calling for the suspension of its uranium enrichment and other nuclear programmes. “Iran is thus on collision course with the resolution adopted by the council”.

The Bush administration’s hostility to negotiations with Iran over its nuclear programmes and alleged support for anti-US insurgents in Iraq stems from the fact that these issues are pretexts for the pursuit of broader US ambitions for economic and strategic dominance throughout the energy-rich regions of the Middle East and Central Asia. The Bush administration’s “diplomacy” is simply a smokescreen behind which it is preparing for military action against Iran to achieve these ends. ~~///~~
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