Here is the link to all the newsletters archived in the OMNI web site.

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/ These newsletters offer information that enables us to examine morality and judgment of our leaders and their policies, of power.

STOP THE ATTACK ON IRAN. Iran presents no threat to the US. Threatening Iran violates the UN Charter. No peacemaking is as important as opposing and trying to prevent unjust war. Speak up, write, call, donate, don’t give up on reason and diplomacy; don’t let the fear/warmongers control us.

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Same Guys, Same Lies
Kevin Martin, Peace Action
June 28, 2012 to jbenne
peaceact@mail.democracyinaction.org

Tell President Obama: Give Diplomacy the time it needs to work! Sign Peace Action's petition to prevent a military strike on Iran.

Dear James,
“The essential facts are known. We know of the weapons in Saddam's possession: chemical, biological, and nuclear in time. We know of his unequaled willingness to use them” Sen.Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) told us in September, 2002. He was just one of many voices in the public ear stating as fact what proved to be a big lie.

A compliant media featured William Kristol and his ilk from Think-Up-Lie-Tanks like the Project for a New American Century telling Americans “NATO should actively support efforts to secure and destroy all of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction stockpiles and production facilities...” as if there was no question - Iraq had them.
And now, I need your help to counter a new tsunami of lies. Sign our petition to prevent a disastrous war with Iran. Then, please send it to your friends.

Along with Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), it was Sen. Lieberman who led the charge in the Senate two weeks ago with a letter calling on President Obama to break off talks with Iran and “focus on significantly increasing the pressure on the Iranian government through sanctions and making clear that a credible military option exists.”

Same guys, same bad advice based on the same lies. An attack on Iran would send energy prices through the ceiling and reverberate throughout the vulnerable global economy.

Given time and patience, diplomacy can prevent a disastrous war.

Earlier this year, Peace Action, and our allies at Credo, turned in over 70,000 signatures to President Obama and I’m convinced it helped steel him and his administration against the war cries from AIPAC and war hawks in the U.S. Now, the pressure is mounting again.

Sign our petition to prevent a military strike on Iran based on the same lies we were told to justify war with Iraq. The war in Iraq is a great human tragedy in terms of lives lost and lives ruined. We will pay the trillions of dollars in cost for decades to come.

And once again, absent any proof of Iranian plans to become a nuclear weapons state and lacking any credible evidence that Iran has a nuclear weapons program, many of the these same voices are telling us we must once again prepare for another disastrous war.

Please take a moment to sign Peace Action's petition calling on the President to use all means at his disposal to prevent a military strike on Iran – by either the US or Israel.

Diplomacy, not war.

Humbly for Peace,

Kevin Martin
Executive Director
Peace Action

PS: Please act today. A strong response will have a powerful impact at a critical moment. After you sign a 'tell a friend' page

March 21, 2012 | 0 Comments

Sign the Iran Pledge of Resistance

Go here to join thousands who are joining to Stop a War with Iran!
**The Coup: 1953, The CIA, and The Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations**

*From a leading historian of the Middle East, a lucid account of the CIA’s 1953 coup in Iran and how it paved the way to today’s diplomatic gridlock*

Abrahamian has done for Iran what de Tocqueville did for France.

—Edward Mortimer, author of *Faith and Power: the Politics of Islam*, on Ervand Abrahamian’s *A History of Modern Iran*

In August 1953, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency orchestrated the swift overthrow of Iran's democratically elected leader and installed Shah Mohammad-Reza–Pahlavi in his place. Over the next twenty-six years, the United States backed the unpopular, authoritarian Shah and his secret police; in exchange, it reaped a share of Iran's oil wealth and became a key player in this volatile region.

The blowback was almost inevitable, as this new and revealing history of the coup and its consequences shows. When the 1979 Iranian Revolution deposed the Shah and replaced his puppet government with a radical Islamic republic under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the shift reverberated throughout the Middle East and the world, casting a long, dark shadow over U.S.-Iran relations that extends to the present day.

In this authoritative new history of the coup and its aftermath, noted Iran scholar Ervand Abrahamian uncovers little-known documents that challenge conventional interpretations and also sheds new light on how the American role in the coup influenced U.S.-Iranian relations, both past and present. Drawing from the hitherto closed archives of British Petroleum, the Foreign Office, and the U.S. State Department, as well as from Iranian memoirs and published interviews, Abrahamian's riveting account of this key historical event will change America's understanding of a crucial turning point in modern U.S.-Iranian relations.

**Ervand Abrahamian** is the author of several books, including *Tortured Confessions*, *Khomeinism*, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, and *A History of Modern Iran*. He is Distinguished Professor of Iranian and Middle Eastern History and Politics at the City University of New York. He lives in Brooklyn.

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**Inventing the Axis of Evil**

*The Truth About North Korea, Iran, and Syria*

*Now in Paperback* An "authoritative and informative" (*The Nation*) primer on the countries caught in the crosshairs of the Bush administration, by three renowned experts

A persuasive argument that the axis-of-evil trope is as illusory as those elusive WMDs.

—KIRKUS REVIEWS
Ever since the “axis of evil” label was first applied by President Bush in his 2002 State of the
Union address, the hawks in his administration have left little doubt as to where they intend to
turn their attention after Iraq: North Korea, Iran, and Syria. Yet most Americans know very little
about these three countries beyond what the Pentagon has told them.

For those wanting to know more about “who’s next,” this “timely exposition on global
(in)stability” (Korean Quarterly) by three leading experts on each country sets the record
straight, confronting relentless fear-mongering with hard facts. The authors explore each
country’s history and internal politics alongside the spotty record of past U.S. interventions,
including the Korean War and the CIA-sponsored overthrow of Iran’s elected prime minister in
1953. As one reviewer pointed out: “The most important thing we know about Syria is that we
really don’t know what’s going on in Syria” (Slate). While entertaining no illusions about these
despotic regimes, Inventing the Axis of Evil demonstrates that the truth is far more
complicated than some would have us believe.

Bruce Cumings is the author of North Korea, Korea’s Place in the Sun, and Parallax Visions.
He teaches at the University of Chicago. Ervand Abrahamian is the author of Tortured
Confessions, Khomeinism, and Iran Between Two Revolutions. He is Distinguished Professor
of History at the City University of New York. Moshe Ma’oz is the author of Syria and Israel
and Assad. He is a professor of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University
of Jerusalem.

SPECIAL SECTION BY FRANK BRODHEAD, FORWARDED BY
HISTORIANS AGAINST THE WAR

Iran War Weekly - July 8, 2012

fbrodhead@aol.com via uark.edu

Historians Against the War is posting Frank Brodhead’s "Iran War Weekly," as a helpful
resource for our members and friends. Frank Brodhead earned a PhD in history at Princeton
University and has co-authored several books on US foreign policy. He is a scholar and
political activist who has worked with peace and social justice movements for many years. In
2010-2011 he produced the “Afghanistan War Weekly,” which was widely used by antiwar
groups across the country.

Iran War Weekly

July 8, 2012

Hello All – Nuclear diplomacy stepped into the background this week. The focus of the US-
Iran standoff is now the new round of economic sanctions against Iran and the possible
effect/non-effect of these sanctions on Iran’s negotiating positions about its nuclear program.
Iran views the sanctions as economic warfare, and an indication that the US-led diplomacy in
the UN Security Council and with its European partners is aimed at regime change, and not simply Iranian compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The discourse in “the West” seems to be shifting from “diplomacy or sanctions?” to “sanctions or military action?”

Because of the importance of sanctions – both as symbol and as economic warfare – I’ve included below a substantial section of links to good/useful readings about their nature, their impact, and their role in “coercive diplomacy.” Also below are links to surveys of last week’s “technical” meeting in Istanbul, as well as to articles about new military maneuvers by the United States and Iran in the Persian Gulf. I especially encourage you to read the comprehensive article by Gareth Porter about Iran’s alleged nuclear activities at its Parchin military base, by Paul Rogers about “America’s war plan in Iran,” and Barbara Slavin’s article on Iran’s most recent statement of its nuclear negotiating positions. I think you will also find Hamid Debashi’s article on Nicholas Kristof – “the journalist as tourist” – very interesting.

After 10 weeks of unsuccessful pleading and negotiating, former UN chief Kofi Annan told the French newspaper Le Monde today that his peace efforts in Syria have been unsuccessful. This of course has been apparent almost from the outset, as none of the many parties active in and around Syria have shown the least interest in nonviolent resolution of the conflicts. While the US media focuses 100 percent of the blame for this on the Russians and on Syria’s Assad, Annan told Le Monde that “little is said about other countries which send arms, money, and have a presence on the ground.” He also called again for the inclusion of Iran in diplomatic efforts, something currently forbidden by the Obama administration.

The articles linked in the Syria section this week include good/useful updates on last week’s meeting of “the Great Powers” (minus Iran) in Geneva, the stormy Cairo meeting of the many Syrian opposition forces, the defection of an important figure from Assad’s inner circle (and its significance), and an excellent “media tutorial” on the western news coverage of the “Houla Massacre” in Syria.

Finally, I very much appreciate the help that many of you have given in distributing the Iran War Weekly and/or linking it on websites. Previous “issues” of the IWW can be read at http://warisacrime.org/blog/46383. If you would like to receive the IWW mailings, please send me an email at fbrodhead@aol.com.

Best wishes,
Frank Brodhead
Concerned Families of Westchester (NY)

LAST WEEK’S NUCLEAR TALKS IN ISTANBUL
Analysts Say Nuclear Talks Should Continue Despite Sabre-Rattling

By Jasmin Ramsey, Inter Press Service [July 5, 2012]

---- The one agreement that talks between Iran and the P5+1 – the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany – produced after a “technical meeting” in Istanbul was a decision to schedule more talks. But even while the United States and Iran engage in threatening behaviour, Iran-focused experts say that continuing meetings is the first step to advancing the diplomatic process. “Diplomacy doesn’t happen at a twitter speed,” Daryl Kimball, the executive director of the nuclear non-proliferation-focused Arms Control Association, told IPS. “After these meetings we finally saw the two sides putting down specific proposals on the nuclear issue, and there are significant gaps as (EU foreign affairs chief) Catherine Ashton said, but there are also areas of overlap.” To move forward, Kimball said three things need to be done: “Further details are needed about the proposals, they need to sort out the sequencing issues and both sides need to be a little more creative than they’ve been up until this point.”

http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/07/analysts-says-nuclear-talks-should-continue-despite-sabre-rattling/

Iran nuclear talks: limited progress as both sides send military 'messages'

By Scott Peterson, Christian Science Monitor [July 3, 2012]

---- In a sealed-off conference room at an unpublicized Istanbul hotel, experts from Iran and world powers met today for a critical “technical meeting” on Iran's nuclear program. Out of the media spotlight, specialists from both sides met to narrow the chasm between competing proposals, the fourth and lowest-level installment of a series of talks this year aimed at curbing Iran's controversial nuclear efforts. Progress here will determine whether the diplomatic track eventually resumes at a high political level, or whether the differences are so great that negotiations fail altogether. It was not clear if experts narrowed the gap while exploring technical details. Agreement was reached, near midnight, for a meeting in the near future of top negotiators' political deputies, diplomats close to the talks said. That meeting will focus on charting next steps and continuing discussions that in the one-day talks only addressed part of the proposal put to Iran last May. http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2012/0703/Iran-nuclear-talks-limited-progress-as-both-sides-send-military-messages

An Iranian Perspective

Iran, P5+1 expert level talks in Istanbul

By Hassan Beheshtipour, Press TV [Iran] [July 6, 2012]

---- The trajectory of the talks between Iran and the P5+1 group of world powers had already twice passed through Istanbul before the two sides convened in the Turkish city again on July 3, for expert-level technical meetings. The objective of the latest talks was declared as finding a common ground between the packages of proposals earlier exchanged by both sides. And now, as announced by the European Union, the talks will continue with EU Deputy Secretary General for the External Action Service Helga Schmid and Deputy Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Ali Baqueri. But why such a tortuous and protracted path? Was there no shorter route to finding a resolution to the Iranian nuclear energy issue? A look back at the 2012 talks will pay dividends in the quest to find an answer to these questions.


MILITARY MANEUVERS IN THE GULF

U.S. Adds Forces in Persian Gulf, a Signal to Iran


---- The United States has quietly moved significant military reinforcements into the Persian Gulf to deter the Iranian military from any possible attempt to shut the Strait of Hormuz and to increase the number of fighter jets capable of striking deep into Iran if the standoff over its nuclear program escalates. The deployments are part of a long-planned effort to bolster the American military presence in the gulf region, in part to reassure Israel that in dealing with Iran, as one senior administration official put it last week, “When the president says there are other options on the table beyond negotiations, he means it.” But at a moment that the United States and its allies are beginning to enforce a much broader embargo on Iran’s oil exports, meant to force the country to take seriously the negotiations over sharply limiting its nuclear program, the buildup carries significant risks, including that Iran’s powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps could decide to lash out against the increased presence.


(Video) Is Iran’s show of force a real threat?

From Aljazeera [July 6, 2012] - 25 minutes

---- This week saw a three-day Iranian military exercise in the Gulf, in which the country’s long and short range missile technology was on display. The show of force came at the same time as a new European Union (EU) ban on the import of Iranian crude came into effect. Sanctions are being intensified as the EU together with the US continue to press demands that Iran give total international access to its nuclear technology programme - demands that Tehran sees as a direct attack on the country's national sovereignty. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osYx1xX5VKU
THE US STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

America's War on Iran: The Plan Revealed

By Paul Rogers, Open Democracy [June 30, 2012]

---- The United States is more seriously preparing for military action against Iran than is widely realised. An attack - obviating the need for one by Israel - may not be immediate and is not yet certain, but it is being intensively planned. At least some European (especially German) politicians recognise that any substantial delay in negotiations could well create the space for a unilateral Israeli military strike on Iran, an act that would inaugurate a lengthy period of deep instability and perhaps an intensely destructive war. The high European commitment to diplomacy over Iran has in part been motivated by the risk of Israel attacking Iran. There is little doubt that Israel would be prepared to make such a move at a time of its choosing. It is of even greater concern to the Europeans, then, that indications have emerged in recent weeks of the Pentagon's own serious engagement in comprehensive multi-option war-planning.

http://www.opendemocracy.net/paul-rogers/americas-war-on-iran-plan-revealed

Will Iran crack? Sanctions may help, but economic pain can't be the sole pressure point.

By Meghan L. O'Sullivan, Los Angeles Times [July 6, 2012]

[FB - Meghan L. O'Sullivan was a high-level official in the Bush administration with responsibility for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. She is now an international affairs professor at Harvard University's Kennedy School and the author of Shrewd Sanctions.]----

The latest Iran sanctions came into full effect this week, adding to a byzantine array of unilateral and multilateral measures that prohibit Iranian oil imports, other trade and financial transactions, and freeze Iranian assets by countries concerned that Tehran's nuclear program is intended for military purposes, not civilian ones. The international community is now on watch for cracks in Iran's defiant stance: Will increased sanctions compel Tehran to make real concessions and allow for a diplomatic solution to the standoff? ...The transmission belt between economic pain and political change is, of course, dynamic. As policymakers and market watchers evaluate the new sanctions, the economic barometer may not be the best predictor of whether Iran's leaders are going to make a strategic shift. Here's what else to focus on:

IRAN’S STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

Iran Seeks Sustained Dialogue

By Barbara Slavin, Al Monitor [July 4, 2012]

[FB - Barbara Slavin was among a dozen Iran experts who were given a copy of the Iranian paper.]---- As Iran and world powers agreed to continue talking, Iranian officials put forward a detailed explanation of their point of view including a proposal for high-level negotiations every three months. A 10-page document given Tuesday (July 3) to Iran experts by Iran’s mission to the United Nations also calls for lifting all sanctions against Iran and a framework for “comprehensive and targeted dialogue for long term cooperation” that goes beyond the nuclear issue. It includes elements of a bigger bargain normalizing Iran’s status in the international community. Among four “objectives” for the proposed dialogue, sanctions relief is listed first. The goal, the paper says, is “to normalize Iran’s nuclear file in the UN Security Council and in the [International Atomic Energy Agency] Board of Governors by total termination of the UNSC, unilateral and multilateral sanctions against Iran.”


Why Iran Does Not Want the Bomb

By Kaveh L Afrasiabi Jul 4, 2012

---- Western sanctions on Iran and heated policy debate on Tehran's nuclear program go hand and hand, but the latest foray into the latter by Kenneth Waltz, a prominent international relations theorist, is emerging as one of the most controversial. Turning conventional wisdom on its head, in a brief but weighty article in the influential Foreign Affairs magazine, Waltz defends Iranian nuclear proliferation as a stabilizing factor in the turbulent Middle East, citing the regional imbalances and insecurities wrought by Israel's nuclear monopoly and the rationality of Iranian regime. Not only that, Waltz questions the wisdom of Western and Israeli pressure tactics against Iran, pointing out that tactics such as military threats and coercive sanctions only heighten Iran's national security concerns, thus strengthening the country's proliferation resolve. By expressing academic sympathy for Iran's nuclear program, Waltz appears to have single-handedly reinvigorated debate on Iran while supplying policy-makers with a theoretical framework they can use to make better sense of their options.

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/NG04Ak04.html

SANCTIONS

Introduction

In the last 10 days two new rounds of economic sanctions against Iran have gone into effect. June 28th was the beginning of the European Union’s mandatory phase in boycotting Iran's
oil, and on July 1 US congressional sanctions against foreign companies buying Iranian oil and banks facilitating such purchases went into effect. On top of earlier UN and US sanctions, this is now the most aggressive instance of economic warfare in modern times. In the articles and essays linked below, I’ve tried to provide perspectives on 1) What and who are being sanctioned? 2) What is the impact of the sanctions on Iran, to-date and prospectively? And 3) How have the oil sanctions affected the international oil market? This latter point is important because sanctions – and related regional instability – could raise the price of oil significantly, off-setting somewhat Iran’s loss of income, as well as contributing to economic stagnation in Europe and the United States as the price of energy rises.

The main focus of debate at the moment is on the impact of the sanctions. There are several parts to this question: 1) How will sanctions affect Iran’s state income, which comes mostly from oil sales? 2) How do the sanctions affect the standard of living of ordinary Iraqis? And 3) How does/will a combination of 1) and 2) affect/change Iran’s negotiating positions about its nuclear program? On this latter question, there are contradictory viewpoints, often expressed by the same speaker. “The sanctions will deeply affect Iran, and especially the standard of living of ordinary Iranians. This will cause suffering and discontent. However, it will not affect regime behavior or modify Iran’s negotiating positions, nor will it lead to regime change from within Iran.” Sanctions “are working” and “are not working,” and therefore “they must be continued” … “they are not enough and must be supplement by ----- [fill in the blank]” This incoherent discourse will be fought out in the US and European news media in the weeks to come. - FB

What Are the New Sanctions?

US And EU Impose Crippling Sanctions On Iran

By Peter Symonds, World Socialist Web Site [July 5, 2012]

----- A European Union (EU) oil import embargo on Iran that came into force yesterday marks a sharp escalation of the dangerous US-led confrontation with Tehran. The EU decided to ban oil imports from Iran in January, but offered a five-month phase-in period for existing contracts to allow member states to find alternative supplies. Italy and Greece, which already confront an economic crisis, will be especially affected. An EU ban on providing shipping insurance for tankers carrying Iranian oil also came into effect yesterday. The London-based International Group of P&I Clubs provides insurance to about 95 percent of the world’s tankers. US legislation imposing penalties on foreign corporations involved in trading with the Iranian central bank came into force last Thursday. This measure has already impacted on Iranian oil exports, especially to Asia, as countries scrambled to lower crude purchases in order to be granted a six-month waiver by President Obama. Some 20 countries, including India, Japan, South Korea and Sri Lanka, have been granted temporary exemptions. Obama only granted a waiver to China at the last minute. http://www.zcommunications.org/us-and-eu-impose-crippling-sanctions-on-iran-by-peter-symonds

The Impact of the Sanctions on Iran
US-Led Sanctions Cut Iran’s Oil Exports in Half

By John Glaser, Antiwar.com [July 5, 2012]

---- The international sanctions regime placed on Iran has cut the country’s oil exports almost in half, as the US and its allies develop a harder line after several rounds of nuclear negotiations. In 2011, Iran was exporting an average of 2.2 million barrels of oil per day. Under additional US-led economic sanctions, Iran’s exports declined to about half that in June, to about 1.2 million barrels per day and is expected to be even worse for July. July’s deficit translates into a loss of about $3.4 billion in monthly government revenue compared to a year ago, a devastating loss for a country with rampant consumers price inflation and mounting unemployment.

Also useful – From Reuters, “Iran losing billions as oil exports extend slump,” [July 5, 2012]

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/07/05/the_sanctions_aren_t_working?page=full

An Iranian Perspective

US and Europe Are Running Out Of New Sanctions On Iran

By Mohammad Ali Shabani, Al-Monitor [July 2, 2012]

---- Iran can be described by three ‘R’s: recalcitrant, resourceful and resilient. Despite new European Union sanctions on Iranian oil that went into effect this week (July 1), the Islamic Republic has the experience and capabilities to survive and even prevail in the nuclear standoff because its adversaries are running out of new economic “bullets” to target the regime. Calculating that the sanctions will weaken Iran and make it less recalcitrant, the EU and the US refuse to soften their positions enough to allow Iran to back down. This calculation is dead wrong. Four points should serve as warnings to Western governments about the consequences of dragging their feet on the nuclear negotiations…. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2012/al-monitor/iran-can-wait-until-after-us-ele.html

The Oil Markets

Iran embargo spurs refiners’ rush for oil
By Javier Blas, Financial Times [July 6, 2012]

---- The current rally in oil prices very much resembles the surge witnessed in February. As then, the cost of low quality, high-sulphur crude is leading the charge as refiners, caught wrong footed by Iranian sanctions, scramble for supplies. Five months ago refiners were surprised by the European Union’s decision to impose an embargo on Iranian oil exports from July 1. This time, they seem to have misjudged the impact of a ban on insurance for Iranian crude oil tankers. http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/2b820a68-c744-11e1-8865-00144feabdc0.html#ixzz1zxkNusbP


Some Additional Perspectives on Sanctions

Getting Iran Sanctions Wrong

By Peter Hart, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) [July 5, 2012]

---- Much of the media analysis of Iran at the moment dwells on the punitive economic sanctions targeting Iran’s economy. An additional round of more restrictive sanctions took effect at the beginning of this month, drawing renewed attention from the press. The clear message from that media coverage is this: If Iran were to come clean about its nuclear program, they could get relief from the sanctions that are starting to wreak serious havoc on the country’s economy. That is one of the primary assumptions in the coverage of the Iran crisis. But is it correct? Mostly not.

http://www.commondreams.org/view/2012/07/05-7

A Tale of Two Oil Shocks - Part 2: 2007-12

By Andrew Scott Cooper, PBS [July 1, 2012]

Andrew Scott Cooper is the author of The Oil Kings: How the U.S., Iran and Saudi Arabia Changed the Balance of Power in the Middle East. [Part 1 covers 1973-76]

After their discussions with Bush, the Saudi royal family agreed, albeit reluctantly, to open the spigots and exceed their OPEC production quota by 250,000 barrels a day. It wasn't nearly enough. Oil prices broke through the $100 ceiling in April 2008, cracked $120 in May, and rocketed to $147 in July. As the world economy deteriorated and the banking sector trembled, the Saudis finally put their foot to the floor and pumped enough cheap crude to break the very pricing structure that had served them so well over the preceding years. By January 2009, thanks to a combination of the Saudi flood and the American financial crisis, oil prices had fallen to $33 a barrel. Analysts may debate why the Saudis waited so long to act, and also why their initial efforts to ease supply did not initially take hold. What is indisputable is that oil
played an important role in causing the October 2008 financial collapse in the first place.


THE IAEA AND THE PARCHIN MILITARY BASE

Introduction

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the UN agency that oversees the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is under the terms of this treaty that Iran claims the right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes. Claiming that Iran’s purposes are not “peaceful,” the United States has led a bureaucratic struggle inside the IAEA to stop Iran’s uranium enrichment program, eventually succeeding in having the Iran “nuclear file” referred to the UN Security Council, which in turn has imposed a series of sanctions on Iran. The IAEA conducts surveillance and investigates “declared nuclear sites,” but under present circumstances it does not have the power to investigate other sites. Several years ago the United States charged (based on what is imo fabricated “evidence”) that Iran had conducted military-related nuclear tests at a military base near Tehran call Parchin. The IAEA demand to inspect Parchin, and Iran’s refusal to allow such an inspection without what amounts to a search warrant (What are you looking for, and where do you want to go?) serves to keep media stories Iran’s “noncompliance” on the front page. Gareth Porter has written several important articles that examine the Parchin charges and evidence; here is his latest contribution. - FB

How a Nonexistent Bomb Cylinder Distorts the Iran Nuclear Issue

By Gareth Porter, Inter Press Service [July 3, 2012]

---- For many months, the most dramatic media storyline on Iran’s nuclear program has been an explosives-containment cylinder that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says was installed at Iran’s Parchin military base a decade ago to test nuclear weapons. The coverage of the initial IAEA account of the cylinder in its report last November has been followed by a steady drip of reports about Iran refusing to allow the agency’s inspectors to visit the site at Parchin and satellite photos showing what are said to be Iranian efforts to “sanitize” the site. But unknown to consumers of corporate news, the story of the Parchin bomb-test cylinder has been quietly unraveling. A former IAEA expert on nuclear weapons has criticized the story as technically implausible; the account itself turns out to be marked by a central internal contradiction, and even satellite images published to the IAEA account have been found by experts to contradict it. The evidence detailed below leaves little room for doubt that the whole story of an explosives cylinder designed with the help a former Soviet nuclear weapons scientist was a falsehood, foisted on the world by a state that is never named, but with an obvious political interest in promoting the idea of a covert Iranian nuclear arms program. http://original.antiwar.com/porter/2012/07/02/how-a-nonexistent-bomb-cylinder-distorts-the-iran-nuclear-issue/

MORE ON THE MEK

Introduction

Beginning in the mid-1970s as an anti-Shah opposition and then fighting group,
the Mujaheddin-e Khalq, (MEK) has had a complicated history. Today it is commonly described as a cult; it is listed by the US State Department as a terrorist organization; it is based in Iraq and is seeking the overthrow of the current Iranian regime; it is widely regarded as an asset of US and Israeli intelligence and assassination operations inside Iran; and it has enlisted the support (for a lucrative fee) of prominent US politicians to campaign for its de-listing as a terrorist organizations. A book published this week about Israel’s Mossad and assassinations of Israel’s political opponents – including Iranian nuclear scientists - is skeptical that that MEK would be hired for such work. In the shadowy world of spy vs. spy and media disinformation, constructing a narrative about the life and times of the MEK is not easy. Some of these issues have been reported on in previous issues of the Iran War Weekly; here is this week’s MEK update. – FB

High-priced advocacy raises questions for supporters of Iranian exile group

By Joby Warrick and Julie Tate, Washington Post [July 5, 2012]

---- A well-financed lobbying campaign by prominent U.S. politicians and former officials on behalf of a designated terrorist organization is focusing new attention on the group and its influential advocates. Supporters of the Iranian opposition group Mujaheddin-e Khalq, or MEK, have met with senior Obama administration officials to push for the organization’s removal from the State Department’s terrorist list and better treatment of its members at a camp in Iraq. Public appearances on behalf of the MEK by such people as former New York mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, former Pennsylvania governor Edward G. Rendell and former Obama national security adviser James L. Jones had already sparked an investigation by the Treasury Department into whether payments of tens of thousands of dollars to some of them violated anti-terrorism laws. In recent weeks, new questions have been raised about whether private meetings, conference calls and other contact with officials at the State Department and elsewhere in the administration over the past year require the advocates’ registration as lobbyists or agents of a foreign entity.  
http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/high-priced-advocacy-raises-questions-for-supporters-of-iranian-exile-group/2012/07/05/gJQABoacWQ_print.html


ISRAELI DEVELOPMENTS

New Israeli Deputy PM Undercuts Strategy of Pressure on Obama

By Gareth Porter, Inter Press Service [June 30, 2012]

---- By staking out a policy line on Iran reflecting the views of the Israeli national security
leadership, Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz has undercut the Benjamin Netanyahu government's carefully planned strategy to get U.S. President Barack Obama to threaten war against Iran if it doesn't give up its nuclear programme. It could be the beginning of a process by which Netanyahu begins to climb down from a militarily aggressive policy that has provoked unprecedented dissent from high-ranking active and retired military and intelligence officials. Mofaz has publicly contradicted the whole thrust of Netanyahu's strategy by downgrading the threat from Iran and suggesting that a peace settlement with the Palestinians is actually more important. [http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/06/new-israeli-deputy-pm-undercuts-strategy-of-pressure-on-obama/]

**THE NEW YORK TIMES' “ORIENTALISM”**

Kristof: The Journalist as Tourist

By Hamid Debashi, Professor of Iranian Studies, Columbia University [July 3, 2012]

---- "Iran is a relatively rich and sophisticated country, more so than most of its neighbours." Nicholas Kristof's seemingly unconscious invocation of some of the oldest and most tiresome orientalist clichés in his recent columns in the New York Times, following a short visit to the beleaguered Islamic Republic, once again raises the question of recycled tropes and their instrumental function in not so much revealing the misperceptions of the Muslim world at large - for no-one should really care what Kristof or his "paper of record" thinks about anything - but far more immediately, the dire state of critical awareness at the heart of a floundering empire about the world at large. The journalistic recycling of orientalist clichés should no longer be irksome because they distort and abuse reality, for they are in fact revelatory - they indeed say very little about the orientalised, but reveal a lot about the orientalist. The significance of writings such as Kristof's is that they reveal the decline of the ideological apparatus that used to accompany imperial projects. [http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/07/201271131925534684.html]

**CIVIL WAR/INTERVENTION IN SYRIA**

Military Intervention in Syria would be Disastrous for its People

By Sami Ramadani, The Guardian [July 3, 2012]

---- What goes unreported in relation to Syria is that democratic opposition organisations, at the receiving end of decades of regime repression and probably representing the will of majority of Syrians, strongly opposed the militarisation of the protests. They argued that militarisation weakened the growing mass movement for radical democratic change, left the door wide open for foreign intervention, threatened the social fabric of Syrian society and helped Israeli forces occupying the Syrian Golan Heights, where Israeli tanks are an hour's drive away from Damascus. They also draw lessons from the destruction of Iraq and the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees who fled Iraq's fires to Syria after the US-led invasion. [http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jul/03/military-intervention-syria-disastrous-people]
NATO Nixes Syria Action Plan

By Serkan Demirtaş, Hürriyet Daily News [Turkey] [July 6, 2012]

---- NATO rejected Turkey’s request for the adoption of a contingency plan to include the establishment a no-fly zone over Syrian airspace, which was made during a meeting last week in Brussels. Turkey brought its proposal to the table at a meeting June 26 where it invoked Article 4 of the treaty, after Syria downed its RF4-E jet in international airspace. Although Turkey’s request came right after the June 22 attack, it based its request on its year-long concerns that it could face security problems stemming from a massive refugee influx toward Turkey as hundreds of thousands of Syrians flee Bashar al-Assad’s government. There is no chance that the NATO Council would adopt any plan entailing military deployment in the region, such as establishing a no-fly zone, sources said.


Terror Group Claims Syria Attacks, TV Station Murders

By Jason Ditz, Antiwar.com [July 4, 2012]

---- Al-Qaeda-styled militant faction al-Nusra has issued a statement claiming credit for a number of major terrorist attacks inside Syria over the past few weeks, including the attack on a private television station and the murder of several of its employees. The statement focused on and defended the attack on al-Ikhbariya TV, saying that the private station was “an arm of the regime” and the deaths of its employees would make others wonder when they will be attacked. They also released photos of 11 employees kidnapped during the attack.

http://news.antiwar.com/2012/07/04/terror-group-claims-syria-attacks-tv-station-murders/

The Geneva Conference

(Video) Can Foreign Powers Determine Syria's Future?

From Aljazeera – Inside Syria [July 1, 2012]

---- On Saturday, foreign ministers from several countries including the US, Britain, France and key Syrian allies, Russia and China, met in Geneva to discuss a new proposal for Syria brokered by the UN and Arab League envoy Kofi Annan. Annan's proposal calls for the formation of a transitional government paving the way for multi-party elections, with an offer for "significant" international funding to rebuild war-torn Syria. Although the proposal is supported by some of the major powers, Russia warned that it should not "predetermine" Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's fate. Inside Syria, with presenter Ghida Fakhry, discusses Annan's new plan for to end the crisis, with guests: Bassam Imadi, a member of the foreign relations committee of the Syrian National Council and former Syrian ambassador to Sweden; Robert Jordan, a former US ambassador to Saudi Arabia; and Alexander Nekrassov, a former political adviser to the Kremlin.

http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidesyria/2012/07/2012628142225151490.html

The Cairo Conference
After 2 Days of Quarreling, Syrian Opposition Draws Up Goals for Transition


---- A broad spectrum of the Syrian opposition pieced together a united set of goals on Tuesday meant both to speed the demise of President Bashar al-Assad’s government and to convince other nations that the various factions represent a government in waiting. The major dispute at the gathering, which was under the auspices of the Arab League, was rooted in fierce opposition by members of the Syrian National Council to an attempt to grant extended powers to a new committee created to follow up on the unified goals. Critics said the council had failed to provide needed political leadership, accusing it of being intent on squabbling over positions more than supporting the opposition. But supporters of the council suspected that the effort to extend powers to a new committee was an attempt by the council’s staunchest critics to undercut its role as the main umbrella opposition group.


Syrian Rebels Call Cairo Summit a Conspiracy

By Loveday Morris, The Independent [UK] [July 3, 2012]

---- Fractures within the Syrian opposition were laid bare again yesterday as elements of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) slammed a summit in Cairo as being part of a "conspiracy" that will allow the regime more time to kill. A statement from the Joint Command of the FSA came even as Arab League Secretary General Nabil Elaraby urged the 250 delegates at the two-day conference to put aside their differences, saying "the sacrifices of the Syrian people are bigger than us". In a further signal of the challenge ahead, delegates at the conference dismissed a new peace plan put forward by the UN special envoy for Syria, Kofi Annan, and accepted by an international conference in Geneva on Saturday. Under pressure from Russia and China, that proposal did not specify that President Bashar al-Assad should be excluded from a transitional unity government, a key demand of most opposition groups.

http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syrian-rebels-call-cairo-summit-a-conspiracy-7904496.html#

Defections from the Regime

Manaf Tlas Defection Confirmed: His Statement from Paris

By Joshua Landis, Syria Comment [July 6, 2012]

---- How important is the Tlass Defection? Absolutely important – The Tlass family has been at the heart of the regime from the beginning. They are the keystone of the Sunni-Alawi alliance that has cemented the regime for 4 decades. Manaf got the golden parachute into Paris. His family is all out – his father, brother, wife and children. He planned this carefully. He has the power and the means. Other generals have no bodyguards, no visas, no money…. It will be a long and painful process for most to defect. What is more the Alawite officers have their backs to the wall. The regime will not just collapse. This is not “The Tipping Point” but it is very significant for morale. It sends a message: the game is up.

http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/?p=15233
Also useful – From Aljazeera, “(Video) Syria: Abandoning the sinking ship?” [July 8, 2012]  
http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidesyria/2012/07/20127885448998277.html

Wikileaks and the “Syrian Files”

Wikileaks Publishes the 'Syrian Files'
From Common Dreams [July 5, 2012]

---- Beginning this morning, the international media organization and whistleblower group WikiLeaks began publishing what they are calling the "Syria Files" – more than two million emails from Syrian political figures, ministries and associated companies, dating from August 2006 to March 2012. "The Syria Files shine a light on the inner workings of the Syrian government and economy, but they also reveal how the West and Western companies say one thing and do another," the group said. "It is only through understanding [the Syrian] conflict that we can hope to resolve it."  
http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2012/07/05-1


Media Tutorial – The Houla Massacre

Houla Massacre Update - The UN Report
By David Edwards, Medialeus [July 7, 2012]

---- The UK corporate media system instantly found, not just the Syrian government, but its leader Bashar Assad, responsible for the May 25 massacre of 108 people, including 49 children, in Houla, Syria. Houla was not reported as just one more ugly event in world news. It was sold to the British public as an historic ‘something must be done’ tipping point on a par with the contested Racak and hypothetical Benghazi massacres used to justify the West’s attacks on Serbia in 1999 and Libya in 2011, respectively. Last week, on June 27, a UN Commission of Inquiry delivered its report on the massacre. In considering those responsible, the UN described the three most likely possibilities: ‘First, that the perpetrators were Shabbiha or other local militia from neighbouring villages, possibly operating together with, or with the acquiescence of, the Government security forces; second, that the perpetrators were anti-Government forces seeking to escalate the conflict while punishing those that failed to support – or who actively opposed - the rebellion; or third, foreign groups with unknown affiliation.’ The report’s assessment: ‘With the available evidence, the Commission of Inquiry could not rule out any of these possibilities.’  
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